OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 28 November 2017 at 2.00 pm

Rooms 1&2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

PG Clark

Peter Clark
Chief Executive   November 2017

Committee Officer: **Sue Whitehead**
                                     Tel: 07393 001213; E-Mail: sue.whitehead@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Councillors

Ian Hudspeth	Leader of the Council
Mrs Judith Heathcoat	Deputy Leader
Lawrie Stratford	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Steve Harrod	Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services
Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Cabinet Member for Property & Cultural Services
Yvonne Constance OBE	Cabinet Member for Environment
David Bartholomew	Cabinet Member for Finance
Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education
Mark Gray	Cabinet Member for Local Communities

*The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting
will become effective at the end of the working day on
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: 19 December 2017

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare…..

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

(a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or

(b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or

(c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *"You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself"* or *"You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned….."*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes"*any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain*".), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members' conduct guidelines. http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/ or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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.

recycled paper

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

    - guidance note opposite

3. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 18)

    To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017(**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. **Questions from County Councillors**

    Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days 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. **Review of Highway Maintenance Policies** (Pages 19 - 34)

    Cabinet Member: Environment
    Forward Plan Ref: 2017/105
    Contact: David Tole, Transition Manager Tel: (01865) 815942

    Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery (**CA6**).

    The County Council's current Highway Maintenance Policy and Strategy are based on the old National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Well Maintained

Highways) which has now been superceded by the new Code of Practice, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure', commissioned by DfT and published in late 2016.

Refreshing the policies and supporting principles will underpin improvements in the effectiveness of highway maintenance delivery, and assist in meeting planned savings in the delivery of frontline services. It is also one of the key steps towards satisfying criteria required by the DfT to achieve the highest level of maintenance funding available through the Incentive Fund process.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
(a)   approve the draft Highway Infrastructure Management Policy;
(b)   agree to the arrangements for sign-off of other documents as set out in the report; and
(c)   establish an Advisory Group as set out in the report.

7.   Treasury Management Mid Term Review (2017/18) (Pages 35 - 54)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2017/066
Contact: Donna Ross, Principal Finance Manager – Treasury Pension Tel: (01865) 323976

Report by Director of Finance (**CA7**).

The report sets out the Treasury Management activity undertaken in the first half of the financial year 2017/18 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report includes Debt and Investment activity, Prudential Indicator monitoring and forecast interest receivable and payable for the financial year.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

 (a)   note the report; and
 (b)   recommend Council to approve the revision to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18.

8.   Transition Fund for Community Initiatives for Open Access Children's Services Round 4 (Pages 55 - 70)

Cabinet Member: Local Communities
Forward Plan Ref: 2017/141
Contact: Sarah Jelley, Senior Policy & Performance Officer Tel: 07554 103437

Report by Assistant Chief Executive (**CA8**).

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a 'one off' fund to provide pump priming to support the provision of open access children's services.

In September 2017 Cabinet agreed the proposed use of the underspend of £232,674 for further rounds of grant funding and a cross party group of councillors bringing proposals back to Cabinet for decision.

The working group have considered the applications under the fourth round of bids against the criteria outlined in the guidance notes with recommendations to Cabinet.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a)   *Approve for funding the following bids:*
     (a)   *Leys Community Church*
     (b)   *Slade Nursery School*

(b)   *Ask that further work is conducted to develop more robust business plans and reapply for funding under the next round of applications:*
     (a)   *Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee*
     (b)   *Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group*

9.   Chiltern Edge School - Progress Report (Pages 71 - 118)

Cabinet Member: Public Health & Education
Forward Plan Ref: 2017/113
Contact: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead for Education Sufficiency Tel: (01865) 816458

Report by Director for Children's Services (**CA9**).

Chiltern Edge School has been placed in Special Measures following an Ofsted rating of 'Inadequate'. On 18 July 2017 Cabinet considered a report on a consultation into the future of Chiltern Edge School, and resolved to commission an external review of the progress made by October 2017 towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted and the construction of an in-year balanced budget and consider a further report on the progress identified by the external review at its November meeting.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
(a)   **note the content of the external review of progress made by the school towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted;**
(b)   **note the progress made by the school in creating an in year balanced budget;**
(c)   **note progress made in identifying an appropriate academy sponsor for the school;**
(d)   ***resolve not to publish a statutory notice proposing closure of Chiltern Edge School.***

10.   Staffing Report - Quarter 2 - 2017 (Pages 119 - 124)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2017/067
Contact: Sarah Currell, HR Manager – IBC Interface Tel: 07867 467793

Report by Director for Human Resources (**CA10**).

This report gives an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1

July 2017 to 30 September 2017. It gives details of the actual staffing numbers at 30 September 2017 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. These are shown by directorate in Appendix 1. In addition, the report provides information on the cost of posts being covered by agency staff and an Agency Trend analysis in Appendix 2.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

11. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 125 - 126)

Cabinet Member: All
Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead, Committee Services Manager Tel: 07393 001213

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 **CA11.** 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

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 October 2017 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.33 pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
	Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
	Councillor Lawrie Stratford
	Councillor Steve Harrod
	Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE
	Councillor David Bartholomew
	Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles
	Councillor Mark Gray
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Jamila Begum Azad
	Councillor Liz Brighouse
	Councillor Helen Evans
	Councillor Susanna Pressel
	Councillor Laura Price
	Councillor Richard Webber

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Peter Clark (Chief Executive); Sue Whitehead (Resources Directorate)

Part of meeting	
Item	Name
6	Katy Jurczyszyn (Corporate Finance)
7	Maggie Scott, Assistant Chief Executive
8	Jonathan McWilliam, Director of Public Health
9	Lara Patel, Deputy Director, Safeguarding; Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships
10	Nick Graham, Director of Law & Governance
11	Steven Jones, Corporate Performance and Risk Manager

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

71/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale.

72/17 MINUTES
(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

73/17 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Bartholomew:

''How much money will be collected from schools in this financial year as a result of the apprenticeship levy and how is the money being spent?'

Councillor Bartholomew replied:

"The Apprenticeship Levy came into effect on 1 May 2017, and has an impact on a school's budget if:

- staff are deemed to be employed by the local authority (community schools or Voluntary Controlled)
- the school is Foundation or Voluntary Aided AND has an annual payroll bill of more than £3m
- the school is an academy or part of a multi-academy trust AND has an annual payroll bill of more than £3m

The Apprenticeship Levy does not apply to every school in the same way as there are a variety of pay bill arrangements in place.

The council's pot of Levy funding, generated from our payroll, includes c.£640,000 for schools where the local authority is the employer (i.e. the Council pays employer national insurance contributions for school employees). Central government funding rules specify that this money can only be used to pay for formal apprenticeship training, and is not available to pay for salaries or other support costs, or other types of non-apprenticeship training. Schools are encouraged to spend as much Levy as they want, there is no restriction on the amount they can access at present. However, in common with many other employers, schools report difficulties in deriving benefit from the Levy. The most significant issue is that schools report that they have very little spare resource available to fund salary costs of new apprentice roles.

Although there are a wide range of apprenticeship training options that can be funded by the Levy as career development for existing staff (see list below), many staff already have such a high level of on-the-job experience,

training providers advise that they are not eligible to receive apprenticeship funding for the qualification. For example, a School Business Manager was recently advised she could not complete an Accountancy qualification as an apprenticeship as she had several years of experience already. However, the range of qualifications available is increasing all the time, so for example a teaching apprenticeship for graduate entry is in development, and due to be available in September 2018.

Apprenticeship training options that are relevant to schools:

Supporting teaching and learning in schools
Early years educator
Lab technician
Business Administration
IT technician
Caretaker/property maintenance
PE teaching
Catering
Cleaning and support services

There is no age restriction applied to apprenticeship training. Candidates may be eligible for funding even if they have existing or higher level qualifications. Some time off normal work duties is required. All qualifications take at least one year to complete, longer if staff are employed on a term-time only basis.

<u>Support available for schools</u>
Where the local authority is the employer, schools can access Levy funds via the council's HR team. The HR team will help to identify a training provider from our approved supplier list, and provide guidance on recruitment (if applicable). For apprenticeship qualifications undertaken as CPD by existing staff, a short business case will be required before funding is agreed.

Where a school is an academy, part of a multi-academy trust, voluntary aided, or a foundation school, other arrangements will apply. These schools can source support and advice from Oxfordshire Apprenticeships on 01865 323477 or info@oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk.

The Education Finance Services team offer support with financial forecasting, helping schools to understand the impact of the Levy on the school's budget.

Following promotion of the Levy via presentations and Schools News, the HR team have had approximately 25 enquiries from different schools around ways of spending the Apprenticeship Levy – mainly focused on apprenticeships as CPD.

At the moment there are 5 apprenticeships progressing in schools (either started already or in the process of doing so):
2 x Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools – 2 x new recruits

1 x Supporting Teaching and Learning in Physical Education – 1 x new recruit.
1 x Early Years Educator – CPD
1 x Food Production and Cookery – CPD
Collected so far for a 5 month period is £192k, so full year looking like £458k

The most common reason why enquiries do not progress is that they are for CPD which is not an apprenticeship, and cannot be funded by the Levy"

Supplementary: Councillor Howson referred to the particular problem where policy was emerging. He queried how the money collected was to be spent and what would happen were it not spent. He further queried whether it was something the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee could discuss and referred particularly to the possible development of an apprenticeship in school leadership. Councillor Bartholomew replied that the question was outside his responsibilities but that he knew that such an apprenticeship would require national effort with a national trailblazer group. There was currently no such group.

Councillor Pressel had given notice of the following two question to Councillor Hibbert-Biles:

Both questions relate to the Director of Public Health's Annual Report:

"Health impacts -- Please can we carry out an evaluation of the health impact resulting from the cutting of our bus subsidies and the withdrawal of money from many of our children's centres and day-care centres?

I know an HIA was done beforehand, but we need to see what the effect on our communities has been, ever since we were regrettably forced to cut these budgets as a result of the government's appalling and mistaken "austerity" programme."

Councillor Hibbert-Biles replied:

"The impact of individual changes/initiatives work their way through and begin to show in the basket of indicators routinely used to monitor public health over long periods of time. The children's centres only closed in their previous form in April last year and the bus subsidy changes happened in 2016. Many of the children's centres are now operating again with assistance from county council grants and due to the impressive endeavour of local communities. Even then it will be difficult to directly attribute any one specific change as the sole reason for a trend of any kind. However our public health team clearly monitor a whole range of indicators all the time and if they see changes of a positive or negative way they will report them through the normal channels."

Councillor Pressel's second question:

"Air quality – It is very welcome to see that the importance of air quality has AT LAST been recognised in this Annual Report. Please can you tell us why

Oxfordshire County Council has apparently only *one* electric vehicle and no hybrid vehicles in its fleet of 479 vehicles? It is embarrassing to compare this with Oxford City Council, which has 17 electric and 22 hybrid vehicles, out of a total of 322. Why has there been such a lamentable lack of leadership in reducing emissions from our own fleet?"

Councillor Hibbert-Biles replied:

<u>"Oxfordshire County Council's Fleet</u>
The 479 vehicles quoted refers to the number of vehicles that we insure, including a range of owned and leased vehicles from across the county council. These include for example trailers, motorbikes, fire engines and highways vehicles.

<u>Oxfordshire County Council's Energy Strategy</u>
Carbon Emissions from our travel activities has been picked up as a priority for action through our energy strategy, signed off by delegated decisions in October 2016 and available online:

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/what-we-are-doing-reduce-our-greenhouse-gas-emissions
This includes an objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our buildings and activities by 3% year on year, on average, in line with the Oxfordshire 2030 Sustainable Community Strategy commitment.
The strategy is monitored annually via CLT; during 2016/17 our green house gas emissions were 11% less than in the previous year and 34% less than in 2010/11 (the baseline for this measure), giving an average annual reduction of 7%.

<u>Organisational Travel Project</u>
Flowing from the strategy, an officer has recently been employed to coordinate a one year project around organisational travel reporting to the Fit for the Future Programme Board. This project includes updating our small pool car resource. Data is actively being gathered to assess the feasibility of using electric vehicles and assess the business case. The project will also develop specifications around emissions standards in our wider fleet for both vehicle purchasing and lease hire. This will improve our emissions over time as vehicles come up for renewal.

<u>Use of OLEV Vehicles within Fleet Services</u>
Fleet services has historically used mostly 16 seat diesel mini bus type vehicles to carry out the majority of their work. Currently about 80% of our vehicles are leased through Automotive Leasing and London Hire. All of the vehicles have to be coach built before arriving with us to have the modifications to make them accessible to wheelchair users. The main adaptations for the vehicles is the raising and fitting of a specialist floor with tracking to enable us to secure wheelchairs and also the fitting of a lift at the rear of the vehicle (usually underfloor but also includes butterfly type).

Until very recently there were no companies manufacturing vehicles that would fit our needs as concentration was pushed to perfecting small cars and

to the much larger double decker type bus's and LGV's. Fleet services have trialled smaller electric vehicles for our low capacity school work, primarily the eNV200 by Nissan which could fit our needs on a few routes. The issue we discovered with these vehicles is that whilst they are advertised as being able to cover 90 miles on a full charge we found that was not accurate. As an example, starting on 90 mile range, when the heating was turned on the range immediately dropped by approx. 15%. It was used on a route that operated between North Oxford and Fitzwarren School in Wantage both am and pm. The vehicle proved to be very capable of operating this route however what became clear was that in between the morning and afternoon runs it could not be used for any other work as it would need to be plugged in to the mains to ensure there was enough range for the afternoon. Currently from flat to full charge the eNV200 takes around 13 hours through a mains charge.

Fleet services have agreed to be part of a stage 1 of a trial being conducted by EDF/Oxfordshire consortium with EV and V2G demonstrators, and are also keeping a close eye on new developments and technologies with a view to recommending any suitable electric vehicles to our suppliers.

Innovation
The Innovation Team within Communities are also actively pursuing funding, for example vehicle to grid projects that support electric vehicles to work smartly with the grid, also electric vehicle bulk buying of electric vehicles with other public sector bodies."

Councillor Dr Johnson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Hudspeth:

"Reports from OCC have been given to various bodies concerning the Oxford- Cambridge Expressway. Can you reassure concerned local residents that OCC has not formed a view as to which corridor the Expressway should take, and OCC will maintain neutrality on this issue until full public consultation has taken place"

Councillor Hudspeth replied:

"I can assure Cllr Johnson and all concerned local residents that OCC has not formed a view as to which corridor the Expressway should take. Whatever corridor is chosen it should ease the situation on the A34 which has to be a key priority for all of Oxfordshire's residents.

As the national organisation responsible for the Strategic Road Network, Highways England is leading work on an Oxford Cambridge Expressway. The next stage is now starting and the consultants Jacobs have recently been appointed to undertake this work, examining in more detail the potential corridors and routes.

No decision has been taken on a preferred route and one is not expected until around 2019. The County Council will be working closely with Highways

England and Jacobs to understand the pros and cons of different options and how well they would meet the project's aims and objectives.

Highways England is planning a programme of stakeholder engagement as part of this next stage of work, beginning with a meeting on 18th October at which we will be represented.

The county council will consider all proposals carefully as they come forward, as well as the views of District Councils, local communities and other stakeholders. We have not yet adopted a position on this project and will not do so without member input. This could be (for example) in the form of a cabinet advisory group followed by a decision by full council. However, this would need to be before the close of Highways England's public consultation as we would be one of the key respondents to their proposals. Whilst the proposed Expressway could be an opportunity to help address longstanding problems on the A34, it does not remove the need for short term safety and capacity improvement measures, for which funding has already been agreed. The County Council is pressing for these to be introduced as soon as possible."

Councillor Dr Johnson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Hibbert-Biles:

"Director of Public Health's Annual Report (p.14) states "the basics of prevention are in good order," but there is no reference to prevention of mental ill-health. P.15 states funding is needed for preventative services. Can the member assure me mental ill-health prevention is high on the priority list for funding?"

Councillor Hibbert-Biles replied:

"The Director of Public Health's Annual Report is an independent report addressed to all organisations and to the public and the recommendations apply to all. The call for funding for prevention is a call to all organisations, including the NHS and District Councils. I am pleased to report that Oxfordshire County Council already makes a major contribution in this area as many of our preventative services have a direct bearing on the promotion of good mental health which cannot be separated from good physical health. These include our Health Visiting Service our Family Nurse Partnership Service, our School and College Health Nursing Service, our drug and alcohol addiction services and our sexual health services. We also lead partnership work to promote physical activity, prevent suicide, prevent female genital mutilation and reduce self-harm. The Council is also playing a major role in the fight against domestic violence and the promotion of safer communities. It is clear that all of these services have a major bearing on the promotion of mental wellbeing and are preventative, and so I am happy to confirm mental ill-health prevention is indeed high on my priority list."

74/17 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

The following request to address Cabinet had been agreed by the Chairman.

Item 6 – 2017/18 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report - Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 7– Corporate Plan - Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader

Item 8 – Director of Public Health Annual Report - Councillor Susanna Pressel Councillor Emma Turnbull

Item 9 – The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report - Councillor Jamila Begum Azad
Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

Item 10 – Governance Review   Councillor Richard Webber, Leader of Liberal Democrat Group (at the invitation of the Leader)
Councillor Liz Brighouse, Opposition Leader (5 mins)

Item 11 – Business Management & monitoring Report Quarter 1 - Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

75/17 2017/18 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY DELIVERY REPORT - AUGUST 2017
(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered the second financial monitoring report for 2017/18 that focused on the delivery of the 2017/18 budget based on projections at the end of August 2017. Parts 1 and 2 included projections for revenue, reserves and balances. Capital Programme monitoring and update was included at Part 3.

Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, highlighted the increased overspend from that reported in July. She detailed the areas of overspend in CEF and the unprecedented levels of demand that had led to the overspend despite additional money in the budget. She queried how realistic it was to deliver the available budget and called on the Leader of the Council to lobby Government to use the Autumn Budget to address the funding crisis in Children's Services.

Councillor Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance responded to the points made commenting that the pressures from raising demand were outside the control of the Council. The Council would always safeguard the vulnerable and managed the central government budget made available. The Council had a long history of managing a balanced budget.

Councillor Bartholomew, in moving the recommendations, introduced the contents of the report and highlighted the management action being taken to reduce the overspend, but that the use of contingency and general budgets at year end was likely.

Kate Jurczyszyn, responding to comments from cabinet explained that the additional numbers in relation to SEND figures were difficult to predict as demand could arise in year as need was identified of those already identified had changing needs.

Councillor Hudspeth added that he regularly wrote to Central Government on behalf of Council following full Council and that he did lobby wherever possible.

RESOLVED: to:

(a)   note the report;

(b)   approve the virement requests set out in Annex 2a;

(c)   note the Virements set out in Annex 2b;

(d)   approve the bad debt write offs set out in paragraphs 43 and 44;

(e)   agree the requests for new reserves set out in paragraphs 51 and 52;

(f)   note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 3; and

(g)   approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 7 and the associated changes to the programme in Annex 6c.

76/17   BUSINESS   MANAGEMENT   &   MONITORING   REPORT   FOR QUARTER 1 - 2017/18 - OCTOBER 2017
(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered a report giving details of performance for quarter one 2017-18 for the Cabinet to consider. The report is required so that the Cabinet can monitor the performance of the Council in key service areas and be assured that progress is being made to improve areas where performance is below the expected level.

Councillor Brighouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, commented that this information had come to Performance Scrutiny Committee in September. It had included the financial information which was not before Cabinet as they had considered this at an earlier meeting. She urged that information come in the right sequence and that the financial information come with the performance figures. This allowed for an overall picture. Councillor Brighouse noted the work being done to allow the Committee to focus on strategic issues and drill down where necessary. Councillor Brighouse highlighted the following areas which had been a focus

of attention by the Committee: CSC placements; reablement and CEF caseloads.

Cabinet responded by thanking Councillor Brighouse and the Performance Scrutiny Committee for their work, commenting that it was useful that the Committee was able to look at performance and feed in concerns. In relation to discharges from care and reablement Councillor Judith Heathcoat stated that although the outcome was still red the situation was improving. Councillor Heathcoat also paid tribute to the additional work of the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Services, and adult social care in response to the issues raised by the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The Leader of the Council also highlighted the increase in planning applications increasing pressure on Environment & Economy.

RESOLVED: to:

(a)   Note the performance set out in this report; and

(b)   Note the ongoing work to improve business management and performance reporting.

77/17   CORPORATE PLAN 2017-2021
(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before them a report asking for consideration of the approach and direction being taken in developing the council's new Corporate Plan (2018-21), and seeking approval to the draft Corporate Plan prospectus.

Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chairman of Performance Scrutiny Committee referred to the session at the Committee that had been really good and had really worked well. The proposal for change was seen by the Committee as very positive. She welcomed that the prospectus now before Cabinet had changed following scrutiny input. Identifies issues around Bicester and how we build infrastructure as a case example. It is good that it went to Performance Scrutiny in time to take into consideration but where does it go from here. Welcomes the fact that it is involving, not top down but growing from bottom up. Published prospectus allows public, stakeholders to feedback and engage before Corporate Plan comes to Full Council. Not consultation but engagement with the public and partners.

Councillor Liz Brighouse supported the prospectus as a means to engage with and inform the full Corporate Plan going to Full Council in due course. The prospectus once approved by Cabinet could be used now for engagement with the public and to inform that full corporate plan.

Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader commented that she had been pleased to join the working group and it would have been good to see more political groups there. She highlighted the big questions raised by the group: what is it for; what does it do. She commended the Prospectus as a

way to produce something quickly in order to make progress. Councillor Price acknowledged how different the County Council and the County look to when the last Corporate Plan was produced. It was important to get a feel from residents about how they felt about the plan and the language used, and particularly about the use of the term thriving. Whilst accepting that growth was a driver there was a demographic that was in danger of feeling left behind. It was important that the Prospectus was used to reach different audiences and that it could be added to or reduced as needed. It should be a living document engendering a sense of pride and taking everyone along with it.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader, in introducing the report commended the work of the Working Group. It had been an all-party group but not everyone had been able to attend. She commented on the draft nature of the document that included the bullet points made by the localities meeting. The final document would be proofread and formatted. The document was a balance between being fulsome and rich but not word heavy. The aim for the prospectus was that it be easy to pick up and read. She stressed that this was the prospectus and that the Corporate Plan would go through appropriate procedures including full Council. She moved the recommendations set out on page 62 of the agenda.

During discussion Cabinet:

- Considered the use of the word thriving, acknowledged concerns but noted that it was linked to the term communities in the first bullet point of the Vision Statement as community was key.
- Members welcomed the idea of a public facing document in plain English and agreed that it be a living document. It was noted that the Prospectus was about engagement rather than consultation.
- Confirmed through the Leader that there would be cross party working on the Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED: to:

(a)   comment on the attached draft prospectus;

(b)   approve the draft prospectus for finalisation and publication in consultation with the Deputy Leader; and

(c)   note the approach being taken to develop the full new Corporate Plan, and suggest any matters for consideration by the Working Group.

78/17 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17
(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered the Director of Public Health Annual Report which summarised key issues associated with the Public Health of the County. It included details of progress over the past year as well as information on future work. Cabinet also had before them the comments of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2017

The report covered the following areas: Demographic Challenge; Building Healthy Communities; Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage; Lifestyles and Preventing Disease Before it Starts; Mental Health and Fighting Killer Diseases.

Councillor Pressel, a member of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee hoped that Cabinet had been able to read the comments of that Committee and would consider the recommendations. She highlighted the importance of assessing the impact on health of council policies, referring to her earlier question. She also queried the lack of progress in terms of lifting Northfield Brook and Rose Hill & Iffley out of the 10% of most disadvantaged areas in the country. Councillor Hudspeth responding to the comments noted that access to good quality housing was a key issue in relation to disadvantage.

Councillor Emma Turnbull, Shadow Cabinet Member for Education, welcomed the Section on children's mental health. She believed that the figures were likely to underestimate demand. The level of new referrals was not a bad thing as it indicated a recognition of the issues but it did present a challenge to the new model. She highlighted that waiting lists were too long with delays in the initial appointments. She would have liked to have seen something in the report about prevention of problems by building resilience and hoped this would receive attention. It was an issue that needed to be monitored and felt that it would benefit from inclusion in the Corporate Plan. She referred to the underspend in Public Health and hoped that resources would be made available to support the issue.

Councillor Hibbert-Biles, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education responded to the points made, highlighting that it was an independent report produced by the Director of Public Health. It was based on facts and within it he was only able to focus on the biggest issues. However, he listened carefully to all the recommendations and comment. In this latest report, Councillor Hibbert Biles saw an emphasis on individual responsibility for health. Prevention was a thread throughout the whole report.

During discussion Cabinet highlighted a number of aspects within the report including:
- The welcome contribution made by School Nurses in identifying and referring children with mental health issues. The increase in referrals was to be welcomed although it was recognised that this did place a pressure on services.
- The issue of loneliness and isolation and the impact this had on good health.

- The need to continue to reduce greenhouse emissions. Cabinet noted that in terms of its own buildings and activities there had been an 11% reduction over the last year and the Council would continue to actively address this issue.

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** Council to receive the report and note its recommendations.

79/17 GOVERNANCE REVIEW
(Agenda Item. 10)

On 11 July this year, Full Council agreed to ask Cabinet to work with Political Group Leaders to bring forward a plan for implementing revised political governance arrangements. The impetus was to ensure that the Council's governance arrangements are transparent, inclusive and reflect the political dynamics of the Council. The timescale envisaged for implementation of any new structures was 'as soon as practicable'.

Cabinet considered a report that set out:

a.   the potential range of outcomes - changes to the form or structure of decision making
b.   the responses from a councillor survey
c.   the setting up of a cross-party task group to work up options for Political Group Leaders and Cabinet – working within an agreed timeframe and to specific terms of reference
d.   the potential use of comparative costs and benchmarked examples

Councillor Richard Webber, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, referring to the proposed Task Group commented that their Group felt less represented than they might wish and that there should perhaps be an independent member included. He was disappointed with the 62% response from councillors to the survey and asked Group Leaders to consider why this was so. He considered that if every group was able to be heard on each committee then this could reduce the need for Group briefings.

Councillor Brighouse, Opposition Group Leader speaking in support of the recommendations and urging the introduction of a committee based system stressed that it was not about going backwards to a committee system. It was about going forward and making the Council work better for everyone. The ruling group would still have a majority on committees but there would be better opportunity to engage all 63 councillors in policy and decision making. Councillor Brighouse agreed that a committee system would reduce the duplication of Group briefings. Councillor Heathcoat, Deputy Leader, responding suggested that in the past Groups had preferred to be briefed separately and care would need to be taken to ensure group preferences were heeded.

Responding to a question from Councillor Bartholomew Councillor Brighouse stated that the Cabinet system was not inclusive and she did think that as a Council we should be including as many members as possible in our decision making. Currently some had a bigger voice than others. Responding to the same question Councillor Webber recognised that it might be possible to come up with a hybrid system and it was important to keep an open mind.

Councillor Hudspeth in moving the recommendations commented that he did believe that there was a need to look at the existing structure to provide engagement and to look at enabling member engagement with their locality. Cabinet supported the need to consider all options. Various views were expressed that would be considered as part of the review.

Councillor Bartholomew commented that the timetable set out in Paragraph 21 and Annex 3 was unrealistic as May 2018 was not achievable. He suggested that the earliest possible date for any changes was May 2019. Cabinet members whilst accepting that the timetable may not prove possible felt that at this stage it provided a framework to ensure that work progressed. A member suggested that the proposed working group once established would determine the timescale for the work. Councillor Bartholomew proposed an amendment to delete paragraph 21 and Annex 3 relating to the indicative timetable, it was seconded and lost by 1 vote for to 7 against.

RESOLVED: (by 6 votes for with 2 abstentions) to:

(a)   agree that the governance review should also include a review of potential improvements to the existing arrangements, in the interests of completeness;

(b)   note the headline themes arising from the councillor survey;

(c)   agree in principle to the setting up of a Governance Review Task Group in accordance with paragraphs 16 -18 of this report;

(d)   note that Group Leaders will be asked to make appointments to a Task Group (once Cabinet has agreed to its constitution and terms of reference); and

(e)   agree that the Task Group report back to Political Group Leaders and to Cabinet with recommended options for change.

80/17   THE OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT/THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT & QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT AND THE CASE REVIEW & GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT
(Agenda Item. 9)

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board's(OSCB) remit is to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each agency on the

Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Oxfordshire. Cabinet had before them the annual report summarising the key achievements in the last year and providing an analysis of safeguarding arrangements.

OSCB's Vice Chair Joe Kidman, Thames Valley Police, attended to present the report.

Cabinet further considered the following two associated reports:

- The Performance Audit & Quality Assurance Report; and
- The Case Review & Governance Annual Report

Councillor Jamila Begum Azad, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services commented on a number of parents who did not get a school in their catchment area and where they had children at up to 3 different schools some over 4.5miles from home raising safeguarding issues. Councillor Hibbert-Biles, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education and Councillor Harrod, Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services undertook to discuss these matters with Councillor Begum Azad outside the meeting although stressing that they were not aware of any significant issues.

Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee noted that at the Committee the report had been taken alongside the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and considering thast there was some overlap felt that this would be useful for Cabinet. The Committee had also considered the missing children report and the number of unaccompanied children asylum seekers was highlighted. Although the Committee had been assured that procedures were in place they picked up on several issues including the timeliness of assessments for children. Councillor Brighouse referred to massive social worker caseloads, the difficulty with recruitment and that case management was difficult even in safeguarding.

Councillor Harrod responding to the last point advised that the position was improving but was likely to take some time.

Joe Kidman, presented the contents of the report, highlighting that the Board was comprised of the right people at the right level and attendance at the Board was excellent. The Board was assisted by the voluntary representatives and had better engagement with the young people's advocacy group. He referred to the work of the Board including work to increase their understanding of exploitation, work on mental health and their relationship with the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships, introduced the Performance Audit & Quality Assurance Annual Report emphasising the 10 key learning points set out in the report. Lara Patel, advised Cabinet on the Senior Case

Reviews held in the last year. Responding to a query as to why the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report was not submitted to Cabinet explained that this had been a decision taken some while ago and could be reviewed for future years.

Councillor Stratford proposed that the reports be welcomed.

In response to a question from Councillor Gray, Cabinet Member for Local Communities querying how the Board was working with the Children's Centres Lara Patel noted that the report predated the changes and was backward looking. This work would be better represented in future reports.

During discussion Cabinet highlighted the lack of specific powers to monitor children being home taught and noted that it was an issue that needed to be resolved nationally. Joe Kidman commented that the Chairman of OSCB would be making representations nationally. Councillor Hibbert-Biles added that she too would write and it was suggested that a joint letter would be useful.

RESOLVED: to welcome the reports.

81/17 DELEGATED POWERS - OCTOBER 2017
(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet noted the following executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.2 of the Council's Constitution.

Date	Subject	Decision	Reasons for Urgency
19 July 2017	Request for Exemption from tendering requirements under the Contract Procedure Rules - Urgent Response and Telecare Service	Approved an exemption from the tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules to enable a direct contract with Eldercare for a period of 7 months to allow sufficient time for a re-procurement of the Services to be completed. The value of the 7 month interim contract would be £490k – circa £70k per month.	To meet an urgent need to provide Urgent Response and Telecare Services.
22 August 2017	Request for Exemption from tendering requirements under the Contract Procedure	Approved an exemption from the tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules to approve a 'top up payment' for additional core costs to be paid to One Housing Group/Season Living for the new Extra Care Housing (ECH) scheme at Millcroft,	To provide an integrated service where the housing and care services are provided by one company.

	Rules - Millcroft-One Housing Group	Wallingford which is due to open in Summer 2017. The value of the contract would be £409,920 over a 4 year period (£8,540 per month).	
5 September 2017	Request for Exemption from tendering requirements under the Contract Procedure Rules - Provision of consultancy services from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).	Approved an exemption from the tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules for the provision of consultancy services from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) at a cost of £98,880 plus expenses, contingency and VAT.	There is no other provider that would be able to deliver the services required by the Council

82/17   FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS
(Agenda Item. 13)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet and noted the addition of an item on the Transitions Fund.

RESOLVED: to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

.... in the Chair

Date of signing   ....

This page is intentionally left blank

Division(s): All

CABINET– 28 NOVEMBER 2017

REVIEW OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE POLICIES

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. The County Council's current Highway Maintenance Policy and Strategy are based on the old National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Well Maintained Highways) which has now been superseded by the new Code of Practice, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure', commissioned by Department for Transport (DfT) and published in late 2016.

2. Refreshing the policies and supporting principles will underpin improvements in the effectiveness of highway maintenance delivery, and assist in meeting planned savings in the delivery of frontline services. It is also one of the key steps towards satisfying criteria required by the DfT to achieve the highest level of maintenance funding available through the Incentive Fund process. The draft Highway Infrastructure Management Policy document is attached as **Annex 1**.

Key Issues

3. The policy includes a framework (section 2) showing how other documents connect to it. Many of these documents already exist in some form – reflecting the reality that highway infrastructure management has been undertaken for many decades – but require updating to comply with the new Code of Practice and to provide consistency, assisting both staff and the public. The aim is to complete this work by the end of March 2018.

4. It is proposed that sign-off of these documents should be via reports to Cabinet Member Decisions Meeting (if the effect is likely to result in a reduction of service levels) or by the relevant Director (if the effect is likely to result in no change or an improvement to service levels).

5. To assist with this it is further proposed to establish a Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) chaired by the Cabinet Member for Environment to explore relevant options and issues. It is proposed that the group comprises around 6 Councillors, based on political proportionality and representing a range of urban and rural areas across the County. If agreed, nominations will be sought from Group Leaders. Recognising the importance of engaging with Oxfordshire's residents we will explore with the CAG ways in which residents can assist in setting the priorities for highway repair and improvement work done in their area, for example through parish councils.

6.   In addition, the outline Highway Infrastructure Asset Programme will be approved by Cabinet and Council as part of the annual budget process.

7.   It is important that the new document aligns with the Council strategic aims, as set out in the Corporate Plan. Rather than referring to the current version the document (in section 6) reflects the themes of the new Corporate Plan currently being developed; if these change when the new Plan is agreed it will be necessary to amend the Highway Policy document accordingly.

8.   The new Code of Practice moves away from reliance on specific guidance and recommendations of the previous Codes to a risk-based approach determined by each Highway Authority. Whilst this method of working has already been adopted in many areas of this Council's highway operations, the new document makes this much clearer (HIMP3 and SP3 in section 5).

Financial and Staff Implications

9.   There are no direct financial implications arising from this review; staffing changes have already been undertaken which align to this policy change and savings delivered as part of the MTFP. As noted above the new policy document will assist in bidding for additional funding from DfT. Staff resource to carry out this review is available from within Infrastructure Delivery.

Equalities Implications

10.   The implementation of the new policies and supporting principles will include a review of existing infrastructure maintenance hierarchies which will better reflect local needs (eg by increasing the frequency of inspections in areas most used by those with mobility problems, leading to more speedy repairs of footway defects).

RECOMMENDATION

11.   **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
        (a)   Approve the draft Highway Infrastructure Management Policy;
        (b)   Agree to the arrangements for sign-off of other documents as set out in the report; and
        (c)   Establish an Advisory Group as set out in the report.

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Appendix 1- Draft Highway Infrastructure Management Policy v5 (002)

Contact Officer: David Tole, Transition Manager david.tole@oxfordshire.gov.uk
                     07920 084148
November 2017

Draft

Oxfordshire County Council Highway Infrastructure Management Policy

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

The County Council has long recognised the important role that the highway network plays in keeping people and places connected, especially in a rural county such as Oxfordshire.

Keeping our highway network in good condition is crucial to support our corporate vision of 'A Thriving Oxfordshire'

Providing and maintaining a highway network that meets the needs of all is something the County Council is committed to. However, we face the challenge of achieving this aim against a backdrop of reducing budgets, increasing costs, historic underinvestment and a growing County with increased levels of use of the network.

The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy and the Highway Infrastructure Management Strategy have been developed to help take account of these challenges. The policy is designed to maintain our highway infrastructure efficiently and drive continuous improvement in the way we look after our highway network to ensure that it continues to be safe, serviceable and sustainable. It sets out the principles that will ensure we adopt and develop a strategic approach that takes account of the expectations of stakeholders and customers and targets the council's resources to deliver a network that supports the future prosperity and well-being of the people of Oxfordshire.

1. The Highway Infrastructure Management Framework

Oxfordshire County Council considers effective infrastructure management to be one of the key factors in creating a 'Thriving Oxfordshire' and to facilitate delivery of significant parts of the corporate priorities as set out in the current and emerging Corporate Plans – section 7 of this document sets this out in further detail.

It also enables the Council to meet its legal obligations (e.g. Highways Act 1980) and supports the over-arching goals of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4):-

- *To support jobs and housing growth and economic vitality;*
- *To reduce emissions, enhance air quality and support the transition to a low carbon economy*
- *To protect and enhance Oxfordshire's environment and improve quality of life (including public health, safety and individual wellbeing)*

The County Council has been applying the principles of a formalised approach to highway asset/infrastructure management for a number of years, publishing our first Highways Asset Management Plan in 2008. More recently we have published a new Plan (September 2014) covering the 5 years up to 2019.

The County Council continues to review its approach to highway asset and infrastructure management in the light of national good practice and as a result we have developed a Highway Infrastructure Management Framework which brings together the core elements of the management of the county highway infrastructure and associated assets. This framework places our approach in context, identifying the enablers that support asset management and the elements of asset management planning and delivery that contribute to our infrastructure management approach.

Diagram 1.1 overleaf shows the Highway Infrastructure Management Framework.

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge

- Corporate Strategy
- Local Transport Policy
- Legal Requirements
- Stakeholder Expectations

Influences

- External Political & Financial Direction
- Asset Management Guidance
- Codes of Practice

DIRECTION

Highway Infrastructure
Management Policy

Highway Infrastructure
Management Strategy

PLANNING

Asset Register

Network Classification & Hierarchy

Condition Assessment

Service Levels & Performance Indicators

REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

OUTPUTS
Treatment
Strategies

ENABLERS

Political, Corporate and Departmental Leadership

Organisational Structure (incl. role of contractors)

Asset Management Systems

Financial Systems

Operational Processes

Performance Monitoring

Competencies and Training

Communication

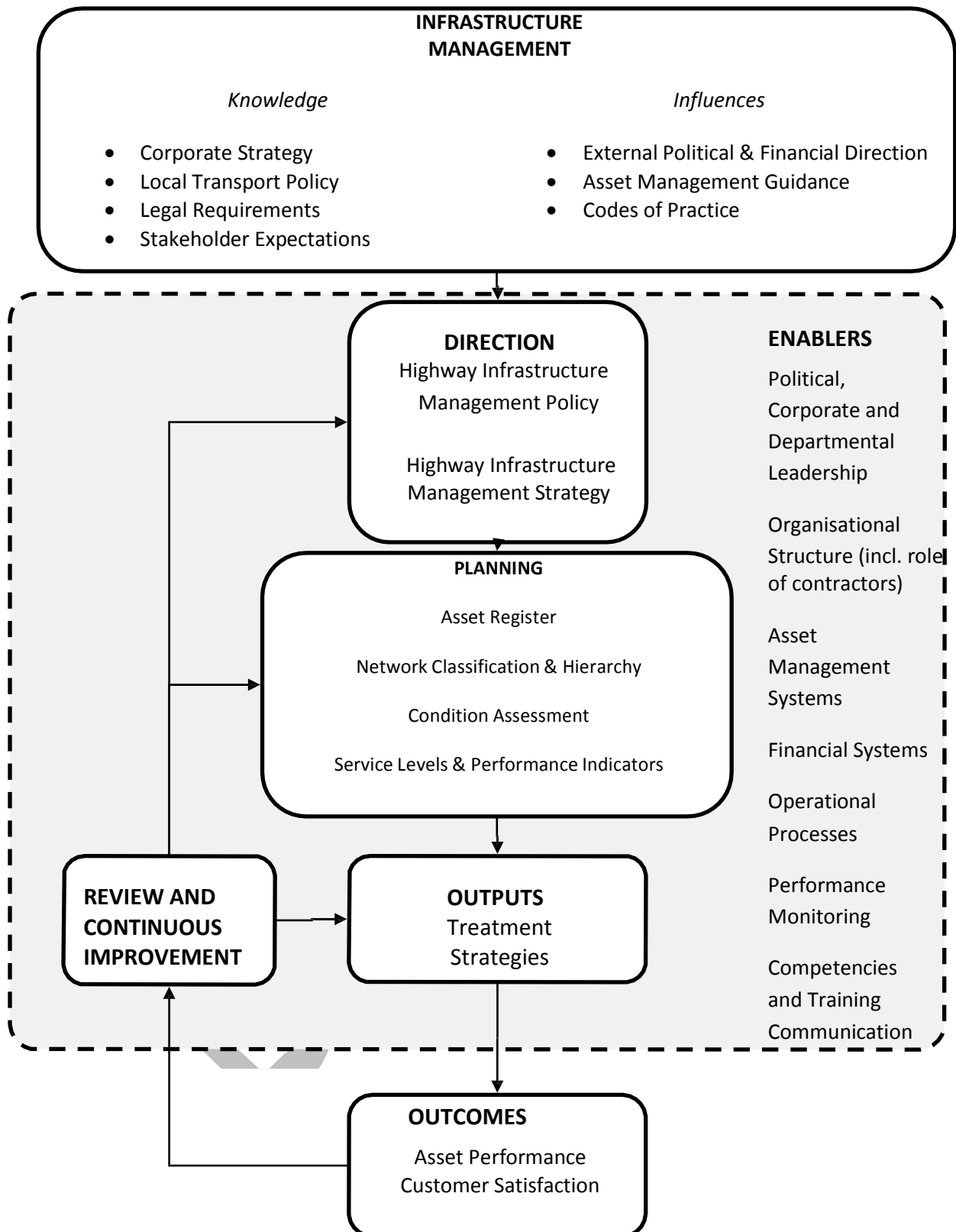**OUTCOMES**

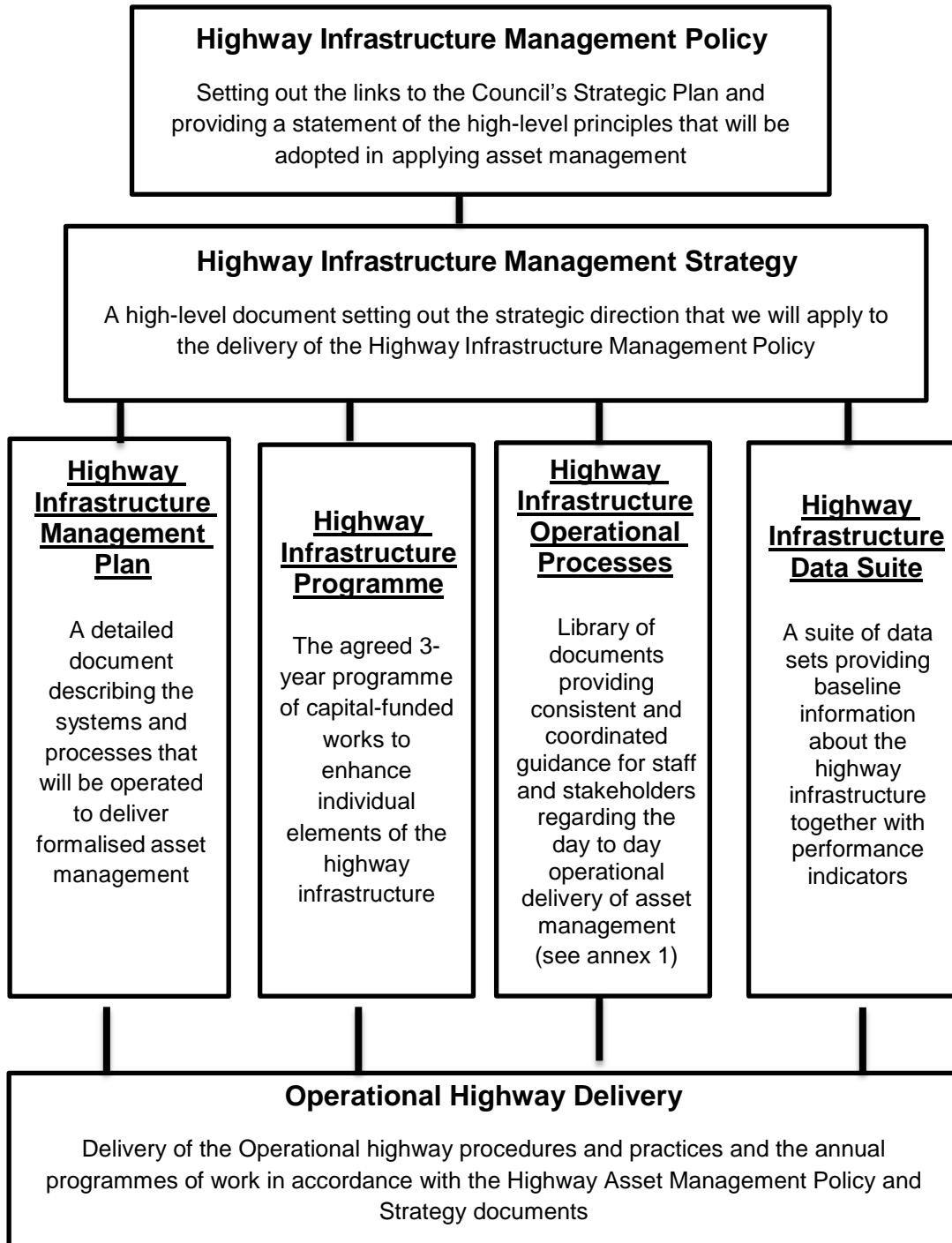Asset Performance
Customer Satisfaction

Diagram 1.1 The Highway Infrastructure Management Framework

2. The Document Framework

2.1. This policy and the associated Highway Infrastructure Management Strategy document have been developed in accordance with the principles set out in the "*Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document*" (Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme: May 2013) and the new Code of Practice "*Well-managed Highway Infrastructure*" (UK Roads Liaison Group: October 2016). These documents take a whole life cost approach to asset management to ensure the most effective use of budgets over the longer term.

2.2. Diagram 2.1 below shows the framework within which these documents will combine to steer the development of a new Highways Infrastructure Management Plan (HIMP) to replace the current Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), a suite of Operational Highway Processes and a library of Data and performance indicators, all of which will guide the delivery of infrastructure management strategy across the network.

Highway Infrastructure Management Policy

Setting out the links to the Council's Strategic Plan and providing a statement of the high-level principles that will be adopted in applying asset management

Highway Infrastructure Management Strategy

A high-level document setting out the strategic direction that we will apply to the delivery of the Highway Infrastructure Management Policy

Highway Infrastructure Management Plan

A detailed document describing the systems and processes that will be operated to deliver formalised asset management

Highway Infrastructure Programme

The agreed 3-year programme of capital-funded works to enhance individual elements of the highway infrastructure

Highway Infrastructure Operational Processes

Library of documents providing consistent and coordinated guidance for staff and stakeholders regarding the day to day operational delivery of asset management (see annex 1)

Highway Infrastructure Data Suite

A suite of data sets providing baseline information about the highway infrastructure together with performance indicators

Operational Highway Delivery

Delivery of the Operational highway procedures and practices and the annual programmes of work in accordance with the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy documents

Highway Infrastructure Management Policy

3. Purpose

3.1. This document sets out the policies and key supporting principles which define the broad objectives, overarching structure and direction that the County Council will adopt in managing the condition of the county highway infrastructure.

3.2. It will allow better informed decisions to be made about the investment choices required to effectively maintain the whole network, both in the short and the long-term and directly supports the strategic aims of the County Council.

3.3. It confirms the role of local communities to assist in determining local priorities for asset maintenance

3.4. It supports the County Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway through compliance with (inter alia) section 41 of the Highways Act (1980).

3.5. Finally, this policy aligns the County Council's approach to managing network condition with the principles set out in the national Code of Practice "*Well- Managed Highway Infrastructure*" (October 2016).

4. Scope

4.1. This policy is applicable to the entire infrastructure forming the highway network that is managed and maintained by the County Council; whilst there is no specific mention of the public rights of way network, it is envisaged that the current Rights of Way Management Plan (2015-2025) will be woven into the 3rd and 4th tiers of documents shown in Diag 2.1 above.

5. The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy and Supporting Principles

Policy

HIMP1. ***The County Council will develop and operate a formalised infrastructure management approach to ensure the optimal use and direction of the County Council's resources in maintaining the county's highway infrastructure and assets for the benefit of current and future users.***

HIMP2 ***The County Council will adopt a whole life cost approach to maintaining its highway infrastructure that, as far as practicable within available budgets, reflects both the structural need of the assets, the strategic importance of the route and local priorities.***

HIMP3. ***The County Council will prioritise available resources for maintenance interventions and treatment choices using a risk-based approach taking account of the safety and needs of different groups of user, network hierarchy and levels of use, network condition, customer expectations, environmental impact, and the implications of approved and anticipated developments.***

Supporting Principles

SP1.   The County Council will aim to extend the operational life of highway infrastructure through the use of appropriately timed preventative and restorative treatments to maintain safety and serviceability whilst minimising reactive repairs, environmental impact and delays to highway users.

SP2.   The County Council will develop "life-cycle models" for all key assets to forecast the consequences of maintenance strategies on budget, network condition (both short and long-term) and environmental impact. We will use these models to inform our decisions about treatment strategy, budget requirements and priorities.

SP3.   The County Council will use a risk-based approach to review existing infrastructure maintenance hierarchies to ensure that they reflect current functional use and need, and will use these to establish appropriate inspection regimes. These hierarchies will be regularly reviewed, particularly in areas of the County where new developments have resulted in changes to travel patterns and volumes.

SP4.   The County Council will identify the strategically critical links and record these as the Resilient Network. We will prioritise the management and maintenance of infrastructure on this network to minimise the impact on economic activity of any 'loss of service' that might arise from occurrences such as structural weight limits, severe weather and other disruptive events. We will review the capability of this Network on a regular basis (particularly after any severe weather events) and in the light of emerging patterns of climate change

SP5.   The County Council will complete and maintain appropriate inventories of highway infrastructure assets to assist in planning future maintenance, improvements and in assessing the implications of new developments

SP6.   The County Council will publish an annual programme of planned works affecting key assets as well as an annual update of our key service levels and performance indicators

SP7.   The County Council will consult with stakeholders to support the identification of treatment priorities and levels of service for forward programmes of work, up to 3 years ahead

SP8.   The County Council will take account of the environmental and biodiversity impact of our maintenance treatments and services and, where feasible, either reduce or mitigate these impacts.

SP9.   The County Council will, wherever possible, take into account the character of local areas and any heritage issues in carrying out our maintenance and management of highway assets

SP10.   The County Council will work with adjacent authorities to review and coordinate maintenance and management on key cross-boundary routes

SP11.   The County Council will collaborate with others, including Town & Parish Councils, main contractors and neighbouring authorities to increase efficiencies reduce costs and sustain local service levels

SP12.   The County Council will, wherever appropriate, encourage additional funding from Districts, Town & Parish Councils to enhance local service levels.

6. How this Policy Supports the County Council's Strategic Aims

6.1. Our corporate vision, set out in the County Council's (draft) Corporate Plan is that there will be "Thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire". To achieve our vision, we will listen to residents so we can continuously improve our services and provide value for money. Our priorities are:-

Thriving communities

• We help people live safe, healthy lives and play an active part in their community

• We provide services that enhance the quality of life in our communities, and protect the local environment

Thriving people

• We strive to give every child a good start in life, and protect everyone from abuse and neglect

• We enable older and disabled people to live independently and care for those in greatest need

Thriving economy

• We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future

6.2. This Policy and supporting principles will further enhance ongoing work to engage with local communities to ensure the delivery of infrastructure management reflects local needs and enables Town and Parish Councils to contribute to the enhancement of their locality, for example by undertaking work to help their areas thrive. Implementation of the Policy will lead to improvements in facilities used by those who walk and cycle, thus encouraging these active modes.

The Policy will also contribute to the 'Thriving People' priority by providing a highway environment that is easy for the old and young to use in a safe manner. We will use available data to develop an analytical "risk-based" approach to infrastructure management to ensure that, within the constraints of reducing budgets, treatments will be more effectively directed to optimise the condition of the network in ways that help people to live independent lives.

The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy will particularly

contribute to delivering the 'Thriving Economy' priority by ensuring that the maintenance and improvement of existing transport links is carried out in ways that support the local economy. The development of our infrastructure management approach will ensure that we are able to make better informed strategic decisions to ensure that we make best use of resources to support this priority. An efficient transport network, in good condition, where disruption and delay is kept to a minimum and where journey times are reliable is essential to support growth.

7. Policy Review

7.1. This policy is closely aligned to other developing policy documents, particularly the Local Transport Plan and the Network Management Plan. It will require regular review and sense-checking, particularly while the Corporate Plan is in development.

7.2. Thereafter it will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier if there are significant changes in national policy or guidance that affects infrastructure/ asset management

Annex 1

Highway Infrastructure Operational Processes

Documents will cover the following subjects:-
- Street Lighting
- Drainage
- Winter Service
- Highway Safety Inspections
- Structures (e.g. bridges)
- Oxfordshire Together (highways activities)
- Externally funded (incl. by Town/Parish) traffic schemes (incl. Tourism signing, street furniture etc)
- Trees, vegetation and planting
- Decluttering and temporary signing
- Roadside memorials

(Other documents may be added from time to time)

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 28 November 2017

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-TERM REVIEW 2017/18

Report by Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Revised) 2011 recommends that members are informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice a year. This report ensures this authority is embracing Best Practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations.

2. The following annexes are attached
   Annex 1   Lending List Changes
   Annex 2   Debt Financing 2017/18
   Annex 3   PWLB Debt Maturing
   Annex 4   Prudential Indicator Monitoring
   Annex 5   Arlingclose Quarter 2 Benchmarking
   Annex 6   Amended Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 – Appendix C

Strategy 2017/18

3. The approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 was based on an average base rate forecast of 0.25%.

4. The Strategy for borrowing provided an option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of 25% of the portfolio through internal borrowing.

5. The Strategy included the continued use of pooled fund vehicles with variable net asset value.

External Context – Provided by Arlingclose

6. **Economic backdrop:** Commodity prices fluctuated since the 1st April 2017 with oil falling below $45 a barrel before inching back up to $58 a barrel. UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) index rose with the data for August showing CPI at 2.9%, its highest since June 2013 as the fall in the value of sterling following the June 2016 referendum result continued to feed through into higher import prices. The new inflation measure CPIH, which includes owner occupiers' housing costs, was at 2.7%.

7. The unemployment rate fell to 4.3%, it's lowest since May 1975, but the squeeze on consumers intensified as average earnings grew at 2.5%, below the rate of inflation. Economic activity expanded at a much slower pace as evidenced by Q1 and Q2 GDP

growth of 0.2% and 0.3% respectively. With the dominant services sector accounting for 79% of GDP, the strength of consumer spending remains vital to growth, but with household savings falling and real wage growth negative, there are concerns that these will be a constraint on economic activity in the second half of 2017.

8. The Bank of England made no change to monetary policy at its meetings in the first half of the financial year. The vote to keep Bank Rate at 0.25% narrowed to 5-3 in June 2017 highlighting that some MPC members were more concerned about rising inflation than the risks to growth. Although at the September 2017 meeting the Committee voted 7-2 in favour of keeping Bank Rate unchanged, the MPC changed their rhetoric, implying a rise in Bank Rate in "the coming months". The Council's treasury advisor Arlingclose is not convinced the UK's economic outlook justifies such a move at this stage, but the Bank's interpretation of the data seems to have shifted.

9. In contrast, near-term global growth prospects improved. The US Federal Reserve increased its target range of official interest rates in June for the second time in 2017 by 25bps (basis points) to between 1% and 1.25% and, despite US inflation hitting a soft patch with core CPI at 1.7%, a further similar increase is expected in its December 2017 meeting. The Fed also announced confirmed that it would be starting a reversal of its vast Quantitative Easing programme and reduce the $4.2 trillion of bonds it acquired by initially cutting the amount it reinvests by $10bn a month.

10. Geopolitical tensions escalated in August 2017 as the US and North Korea exchanged escalating verbal threats over reports about enhancements in North Korea's missile programme. The provocation from both sides helped wipe off nearly $1 trillion from global equity markets but benefited safe-haven assets such as gold, the US dollar and the Japanese yen.

11. Prime Minister Theresa May called an unscheduled General Election in June 2017, to resolve uncertainty but the surprise result has led to a minority Conservative government in coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party. This clearly results in an enhanced level of political uncertainty. Although the potential for a so-called hard Brexit is diminished, lack of clarity over future trading partnerships, in particular future customs agreements with the rest of the EU block, is denting business sentiment and investment. The reaction from the markets on the UK election's outcome was fairly muted, business confidence now hinges on the progress (or not) on Brexit negotiations, the ultimate 'divorce bill' for the exit and whether new trade treaties and customs arrangements are successfully concluded to the UK's benefit.

12. In the face of a struggling economy and Brexit-related uncertainty, Arlingclose expects the Bank of England to take only a very measured approach to any monetary policy tightening, any increase will be gradual and limited as the interest rate backdrop will have to provide substantial support to the UK economy through the Brexit transition.

13. **Financial markets:** Gilt yields displayed significant volatility over the six-month period with the appearing change in sentiment in the Bank of England's outlook for interest rates, the push-pull from expectations of tapering of Quantitative Easing (QE) in the US and Europe and from geopolitical tensions, which also had an impact. The yield on the 5-year gilts fell to 0.35% in mid-June 2017, but then rose to 0.80% by the end of September 2017. The 10-year gilts similarly rose from their lows of 0.93% to 1.38% at the end of the quarter, and those on 20-year gilts from 1.62% to 1.94%.

14. The FTSE 100 nevertheless powered away reaching a record high of 7548 in May but dropped back to 7377 at the end of September 2017. Money markets rates have remained low: 1-month, 3-month and 12-month LIBID rates have averaged 0.25%, 0.30% and 0.65% over the period from January to 21st September 2017.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing

15. Oxfordshire County Council's debt financing to date for 2017/18 is analysed in Annex 2.

16. The Council's cumulative total external debt has decreased from £385.38m on 1 April 2017 to £379.38m by 30 September 2017, a net decrease of £6m. No new debt financing has been arranged during the year. The total forecast external debt as at 31 March 2018, after repayment of loans maturing during the year, is £367.38m. The forecast debt financing position for 31 March 2018 is shown in Annex 2.

17. At 30 September 2017, the authority had 62 PWLB[1] loans totalling £329.38m, 9 LOBO[2] loans totalling £45m and 1 long-term fixed Money Market loan totalling £5m[3]. The combined weighted average interest rate for external debt as at 30 September 2017 was 4.48%.

Maturing Debt

18. The Council repaid £6m of maturing PWLB loans during the first half of the year. The details are set out in Annex 3.

Debt Restructuring

19. The premium charge for early repayment of PWLB debt remained relatively expensive for the loans in the Authority's portfolio and therefore unattractive for debt restructuring activity. No PWLB debt restructuring activity was undertaken during the first half of the year. Opportunities to restructure debt remain under regular review.

LOBOs

20. At the beginning of the financial year the Authority held £45m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. £25m of these LOBOs had options

---

[1] PWLB (Public Works Loans Board) is a Government agency operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office and is responsible for lending money to Local Authorities.
[2] LOBO (Lender's Option/Borrower's Option) Loans are long-term loans which include a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined intervals.
[3] In June 2016, the Councils LOBO with Barclays PLC was converted to a fixed rate loan at its current interest rate of 3.95% to mature on the 29th May 2065 with Barclays waiving their right to change the interest rate on the loan in the future.

during 2017/18, to the 30 September 2017 none had been exercised by the lender. The Authority acknowledges there is an element of refinancing risk associated with LOBOs although in the current interest rate environment lenders are unlikely to exercise their options.

Investment Strategy

21. The Authority holds deposits and invested funds representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Authority's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. The Council continued to adopt a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions and continuously monitored credit quality information relating to counterparties.

22. During the first half of the financial year short term fixed deposits of up to 12 months have been placed with banks and building societies on the approved lending list and Money Market Funds have been utilised for short-term liquidity. Opportunities to place longer-term deposits have been limited.

23. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18 included the use of external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the Council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three year period. The strategy permitted up to 50% of the total portfolio to be invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding Money Market Funds). The performance of the pooled funds will continue to be monitored by the Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST) throughout the year against respective benchmarks and the in-house portfolio.

24. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18 permits the use of covered bonds with a minimum issue rating of A-. The maximum maturity period for in house investments and investments held by fund managers is 3 and 10 years respectively.

25. Covered bonds are conventional bonds (fixed or floating) that are backed by a separate group of loans, usually prime residential mortgages. The issue is over collateralised, meaning that the underlying pool of assets is often greater than the principal amount of the issued security. This lowers the creditor's exposure to default risk meaning covered bonds are usually rated AAA, higher than the rating given to the issuer.

26. Covered Bonds offer an alternative to traditional, unsecured investments and provide a higher level of protection in the form of bail-in exemption, dual recourse and over collateralisation. The additional security means that investors receive a relatively lower return compared to an unsecured deposit. However, the high credit quality of covered bonds means that a longer duration can be taken with counterparties where maturities would usually be limited.

27. Due to the high level of protection provided, it is recommended that the minimum issue rating for covered bonds be increased to AAA rating and the maximum maturity period lengthened to 20 years. These changes require an amendment to Appendix C of the

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18, an updated version of the appendix can be view in Annex 6 of this paper.

The Council's Lending List

28. The Council's in-house cash balances were deposited with institutions that meet the Council's approved credit rating criteria. The approved Lending List is updated to reflect changes in counterparty credit quality with changes reported to Cabinet on a bi-monthly basis. Annex 1 shows the amendments incorporated into the Lending List during the first half of 2017/18, in accordance with the approved credit rating criteria.

29. There were a few credit rating changes during the quarter. The significant change was the downgrade by Moody's to the UK sovereign rating in September from Aa1 to Aa2 which resulted in subsequent downgrades to sub-sovereign entities including local authorities. Moody's downgraded Standard Chartered Bank's long-term rating to A1 from Aa3 on the expectation that the bank's profitability will be lower following management's efforts to de-risk their balance sheet. The agency also affirmed Royal Bank of Scotland's and NatWest's long-term ratings at Baa1, placed Lloyds Bank's A1 rating on review for upgrade, revised the outlook of Santander UK plc, and Nationwide and Coventry building societies from negative to stable but downgraded the long-term rating of Leeds BS from A2 to A3. The agency downgraded long-term ratings of the major Canadian banks on the expectation of a more challenging operating environment and the ratings of the large Australian banks on its view of the rising risks from their exposure to the Australian housing market and the elevated proportion of lending to residential property investors.

30. S&P also revised Nordea Bank's outlook to stable from negative, whilst affirming their long-term rating at AA-. The agency also upgraded the long-term rating of ING Bank from A to A+.

31. The new EU regulations for Money Market Funds were finally approved and published in July and existing funds will have to be compliant by no later than 21st January 2019. The key features include Low Volatility NAV (LVNAV) Money Market Funds which will be permitted to maintain a constant dealing NAV, providing they meet strict new criteria and minimum liquidity requirements. MMFs will not be prohibited from having an external fund rating (as had been suggested in draft regulations). Arlingclose expects most of the short-term MMFs it recommends to convert to the LVNAV structure and awaits confirmation from each fund.

32. In the six months to 30 September 2017 there were no instances of breaches in policy in relation to the Council's Lending List. Any breaches in policy will be reported to Cabinet as part of the bi-monthly Business Strategy and Financial Monitoring report.

Investment Performance

33. Security of capital has remained the Authority's main investment objective. This has been maintained by following the Authority's counterparty policy as set out in its Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

34. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house in the six months to 30 September was £361m. The Council achieved an average in-house return for that period of 0.65%, above the budgeted rate of 0.55% set in the strategy. This has produced gross interest receivable of £1.172m for the period to 30 September.

35. Temporary surplus cash includes; developer contributions; council reserves and balances; trust fund balances; and various other funds to which the Council pays interest at each financial year end, based on the average three month London Interbank Bid (LIBID) rate.

36. The Council uses the three month inter-bank sterling bid rate as its benchmark to measure its own in-house investment performance. During the first half of 2017/18 the average three month inter-bank sterling rate was 0.18%. The Council's average in-house return of 0.65% exceeded the benchmark by 0.47%. The Council operates a number of call accounts and instant access Money Market Funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. The average balance held on overnight deposit in money market funds or call accounts in the 6 months to 30 September was £70.8m.

37. The UK Bank Rate had been maintained at 0.5% since March 2009 until August 2016, when it was cut to 0.25%. Arlingclose currently forecast the bank rate to remain at 0.25%, but with near term upside risk. The Monetary Policy Committee will next meet on the 2nd November 2017 and an update on its outcome will be provided at Audit & Governance Committee. The Council remains unconvinced that the UKs economic outlook justifies a rate increase at this stage but does recognise a change in MPC rhetoric to imply a rise in the "coming months". Short-term money market rates have remained at relatively low levels. Gilt yields are forecast to remain broadly stable across the medium term, but there may be near term volatility due to shifts in interest rate expectations.

External Fund Managers and Pooled Funds

38. The Council continued to use pooled funds with variable net asset value. Weighted by value pooled fund investments produced an overall annualised return of 3.8% for the period. These investments are held with a long-term view and performance is assessed accordingly.

39. Gross distributions from pooled funds have totalled £0.46m in the first six months of the year. This brings total income, including gross interest receivable on in-house deposits to £1.63m for the period.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

40. The Authority confirms compliance with its Prudential Indicators for 2017/18, which were set as part of the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement. The position as at 30 September 2017 for the Prudential Indicators is shown in Annex 4.

External Performance Indicators and Statistics

41. The County Council is a member of the CIPFA Treasury and Debt Management benchmarking club and receives annual reports comparing returns and interest payable against other authorities. The benchmarking results for 2016/17 showed that Oxfordshire County Council had achieved an average total investment return of 0.90% compared with an average of 0.85% for the all member group.

42. The average interest rate paid for all debt during 2016/17 was 4.45%, with an average of 4.06% for the comparative all member group. It should be noted that all of Oxfordshire County Council's debt is long-term, whereas the averages for the comparators include short-term debt which has a lower interest rate and so reduces the averages. Oxfordshire County Council had a higher than average proportion of its debt portfolio in PWLB loans at 87% compared to 72% for the all member group. Oxfordshire County Council had 12% of its debt in LOBO loans as at 31 March 2017 compared with an average of 14% for the comparative group.

43. Arlingclose also benchmark the Council's investment performance against its other clients on a quarterly basis. The results of the quarter 2 benchmarking to 30 September 2017 are shown in Annex 5.

44. The benchmarking results show that the Council was achieving higher than average interest on deposits at 30 September 2017, when compared with a group of 138 other local authorities. This has been achieved by placing deposits over a longer than average duration with institutions that are of higher than average credit quality.

45. Oxfordshire had a higher than average allocation to fixed and local authority deposits when compared with other local authorities in the benchmarking exercise. Oxfordshire also had a notably lower than average exposure to money market funds and call accounts.

Training

46. Individuals within the Treasury Management Team continue to keep up to date with the latest developments and attend external workshops and conferences where relevant.

Financial and Legal Implications

47. Interest payable and receivable in relation to Treasury Management activities are included within the overall Strategic Measures budget. In house interest receivable for 2017/18 is currently forecast as £1.750m, exceeding the budgeted figure of £1.250m by £0.500m. Of the forecast £1.750m interest receivable, £1.172m had been realised as at the 30 September 2017. The increased interest received is due to the achievement of higher than forecast average interest rates. For example, an additional £0.060m has been generated by entering into a Revolving Credit Facility with a Registered Provider which was not factored into the 2017/18 budget.

48. Dividends payable from external funds in 2017/18 are forecast as £0.900m, £0.300m above the 2017/18 budget of £0.600m. This increase is due to higher than anticipated performance by the CCLA Property Fund.

49. Interest payable is currently forecast to be in line with the budgeted figure of £17.6m.

Regulatory Updates

50. **MiFID II:** Local authorities are currently treated by regulated financial services firms as professional clients who can "opt down" to be treated as retail clients instead. But from January 2018, as a result of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), local authorities will be treated as retail clients who can "opt up" to be professional clients, providing that they meet certain criteria. Regulated financial services firms include banks; brokers, advisers, fund managers and custodians, but only where they are selling, arranging, advising or managing designated investments. In order to opt up to professional, the authority must have an investment balance of at least £10 million and the person authorised to make investment decisions on behalf of the authority must have at least one year's relevant professional experience. In addition, the firm must assess that that person has the expertise, experience and knowledge to make investment decisions and understand the risks involved.

51. The main additional protection for retail clients is a duty on the firm to ensure that the investment is "suitable" for the client. However, local authorities are not protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme nor are they eligible to complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service whether they are retail or professional clients. It is also likely that retail clients will face an increased cost and potentially restricted access to certain products including money market funds, pooled funds, treasury bills, bonds, shares and to financial advice. The Authority has declined to opt down to retail client status in the past as the costs were thought to outweigh the benefits.

52. The Council meets the conditions to opt up to professional status and intends to do so in order to maintain their current MiFID status. However, the regulatory changes are creating significant administrative work as the Council is required to provide evidence to meet each financial institutions individual requirements to allow them to complete their assessment that the new requirements for "opting up" to elective professional client status have been met.

53. **CIPFA Consultation on Prudential and Treasury Management Code**s: In February 2017 CIPFA canvassed views on the relevance, adoption and practical application of the Treasury Management and Prudential Codes and after reviewing responses launched a further consultation on changes to the codes in August. The Council submitted responses to both consultations on the 29 September 2017.

54. The proposed changes to the Prudential Code include the production of a new high-level Capital Strategy report to full council which will cover the basics of the capital programme and treasury management. The prudential indicators for capital expenditure and the authorised borrowing limit would be included in this report but other indicators may be delegated to another committee. There are plans to drop certain prudential indicators, however local indicators are recommended for ring fenced funds (including the HRA) and for group accounts. Other proposed changes include applying the principles of the Code to subsidiaries.

55. Proposed changes to the Treasury Management Code include the potential for non-treasury investments such as commercial investments in properties in the definition of "investments" as well as loans made or shares brought for service purposes. Another proposed change is

the inclusion of financial guarantees as instruments requiring risk management and addressed within the Treasury Management Strategy. Approval of the technical detail of the Treasury Management Strategy may be delegated to a committee rather than needing approval of full Council. There are also plans to drop or alter some of the current treasury management indicators.

56. CIPFA intends to publish the two revised Codes towards the end of 2017 for implementation in 2018/19, although CIPFA plans to put transitional arrangements in place for reports that are required to be approved before the start of the 2018/19 financial year. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and CIPFA wish to have a more rigorous framework in place for the treatment of commercial investments as soon as is practical. It is understood that DCLG will be revising its Investment Guidance (and its Minimum Revenue Position guidance) for local authorities in England; however there have been no discussions with the devolved administrations yet.

RECOMMENDATION

57. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

   (a) note the report; and

   (b) recommend Council to approve the revision to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18.

LORNA BAXTER
Director of Finance

Contact officer: Joseph Turner – Financial Manager – Treasury
Contact number: 07392 318984
November 2017

Lending List Changes from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017

Counterparty	Lending Limit	Maximum Maturity
Counterparties added/reinstated		
Nordea Bank AB	**£25,000,000**	13 months
Australia and NZ Banking Group	**£25,000,000**	6 months
Counterparties suspended		
None		
Lending limits & Maturity limits increased		
DBS Bank (Development Bank of Singapore	**£25,000,000**	**13 months**
United Overseas Bank	**£25,000,000**	**13 months**
Oversea Chinese-Banking Corp	**£25,000,000**	**13 months**
Close Brothers Ltd	**£15,000,000**	**6 months**
Lending limits & Maturity limits decreased		
None		

Pension Fund Lending list changes

The Oxfordshire Pension Fund cash balances are held separately from County Council cash and are deposited in accordance with the Cash Management Strategy approved by the Pension Fund Committee. The Strategy for 2017/18 is to use a sub-set of the Councils approved counterparties. There have so far been no changes to Pension Fund lending list in 2017/18.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT FINANCING 2017/18

Debt Profile   £m
1. PWLB   87%   335.38
2. Other Long Term Loans   13%   50.00
3. Sub-total External Debt   385.38
4. Internal Balances   -15.64
5. Actual Debt at 31 March 2017   **100% 369.74**

6. Government Supported Borrowing   0.00
7. Unsupported Borrowing   31.00
8. Borrowing in Advance   0.00
9. Minimum Revenue Provision   -8.44

10. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2018   **392.30**

Maturing Debt

11. PWLB loans maturing during the year   18.00
12. PWLB loans repaid prematurely in the course of debt restructuring   0.00
13. Total Maturing Debt   **-18.00**

New External Borrowing

14. PWLB Normal   0.00
15. PWLB loans raised in the course of debt restructuring   0.00
16. Money Market LOBO loans   0.00
17. Total New External Borrowing   **0.00**

Debt Profile Year End

18. PWLB   86%   317.38
19. Money Market loans (incl £45m LOBOs)   14%   50.00
20. Forecast Sub-total External Debt   367.38
21. Forecast Internal Balances   24.92
22. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2018   **100% 392.30**

Line

1 – 5   This is a breakdown of the Council's debt at the beginning of the financial year (1 April 2017). The PWLB is a government agency operating within the Debt Management Office. LOBO (Lender's Option/ Borrower's Option) loans are long-term loans, with a maturity of up to 60 years, which includes a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined time intervals. Internal balances include provisions, reserves, revenue balances, capital receipts unapplied, and excess of creditors over debtors.

6   'Government Supported Borrowing' is the amount that the Council can borrow in any one year to finance the capital programme. This is determined by Central Government, and in theory supported through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) system.

7   'Unsupported Borrowing' reflects Prudential Borrowing taken by the authority whereby the associated borrowing costs are met by savings in the revenue budget.

8   'Borrowing in Advance' is the amount the Council borrowed in advance to fund future capital finance costs.

9   The amount of debt to be repaid from revenue. The sum to be repaid annually is laid down in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which stipulates that the repayments must equate to at least 4% of the debt outstanding at 1 April each year.

10   The Council's forecast total debt by the end of the financial year, after taking into account new borrowing, debt repayment and movement in funding by internal balances.

11   The Council's normal maturing PWLB debt.

12   PWLB debt repaid early during the year.

13   Total debt repayable during the year.

14   The normal PWLB borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2017/18.

15   New PWLB loans to replace debt repaid early.

16   The Money Market borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2017/18

17   The total external borrowing undertaken.

18-22 The Council's forecast debt profile at the end of the year.

Long-Term Debt Maturing 2017/18

Public Works Loan Board: Loans Matured during first half of 2017/18

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
13/07/2017	0.500	2.35%
31/07/2017	0.500	2.35%
20/09/2017	5.000	7.88%
Total	**6.000**	

Public Works Loan Board: Loans Due to Mature during second half of 2017/18

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
31/10/2017	6.000	5.00%
13/01/2018	0.500	2.35%
31/01/2018	0.500	2.35%
02/03/2018	5.000	8.13%
Total	**12.000**	

Prudential Indicators Monitoring at 30 September 2017

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. To demonstrate that the Authority has fulfilled the requirements of the Prudential Code the following indicators must be set and monitored each year.

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt

Actual debt levels are monitored against the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt below. The Operational Boundary is based on the Authority's estimate of most likely, i.e. prudent, but not worst case scenario for external debt. The council confirms that the Operational Boundary has not been breached during 2017/18.

The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum debt that the Authority can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements. The Authority confirms that the Authorised limit was not breached in the first half of 2017/18.

Authorised limit for External Debt	£455,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£450,000,000
Capital Financing Requirement for year	£406,386,000

	Actual 30/09/2017	Forecast 31/03/2018
Borrowing	£379,382,618	£367,382,618
Other Long-Term Liabilities	£ 30,000,000	£ 30,000,000
Total	**£409,382,618**	**£397,382,618**

Interest Rate Exposures
These indicators are set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest exposures. Fixed rate investments are borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for the whole financial year. Instruments that mature during the financial year are classed as variable rate.

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure
Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 30 September 2017	£124,382,618

Variable Interest Rate Exposure
Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	£0
Actual at 30 September 2017	-£116,914,945

**Principal Sums Invested over 365 days**
Total sums invested for more than 364 days limit	£ 85,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days	£ 58,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing and the actual structure at 30 September 2017, are shown below. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

	Limit %	**Actual %**
Under 12 months	0 - 20	9.75
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	7.64
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	11.86
5 years to 10 years	5 - 40	14.76
10 years +	50 - 95	55.99

Value weighted average (all clients)
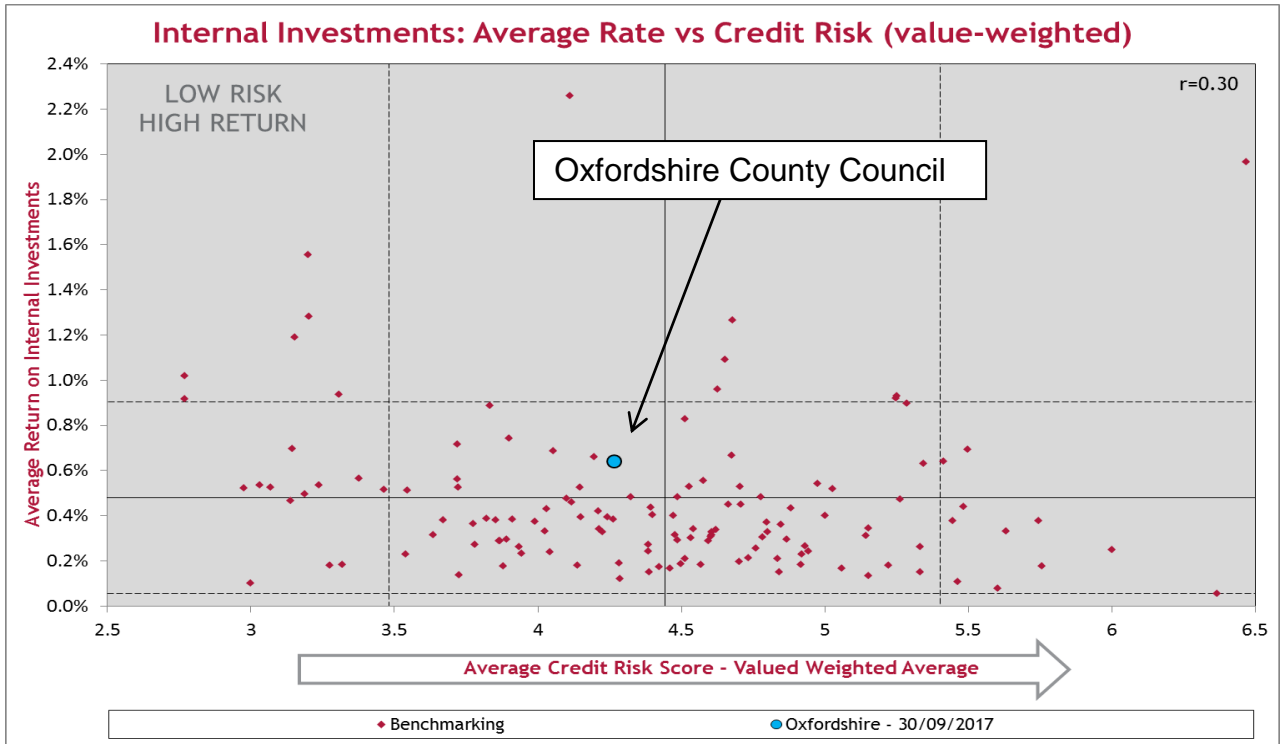
Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Credit Risk (value-weighted)

This graph shows that, at 30 September 2017, Oxfordshire achieved a higher than average return for lower than average credit risk, weighted by deposit size.
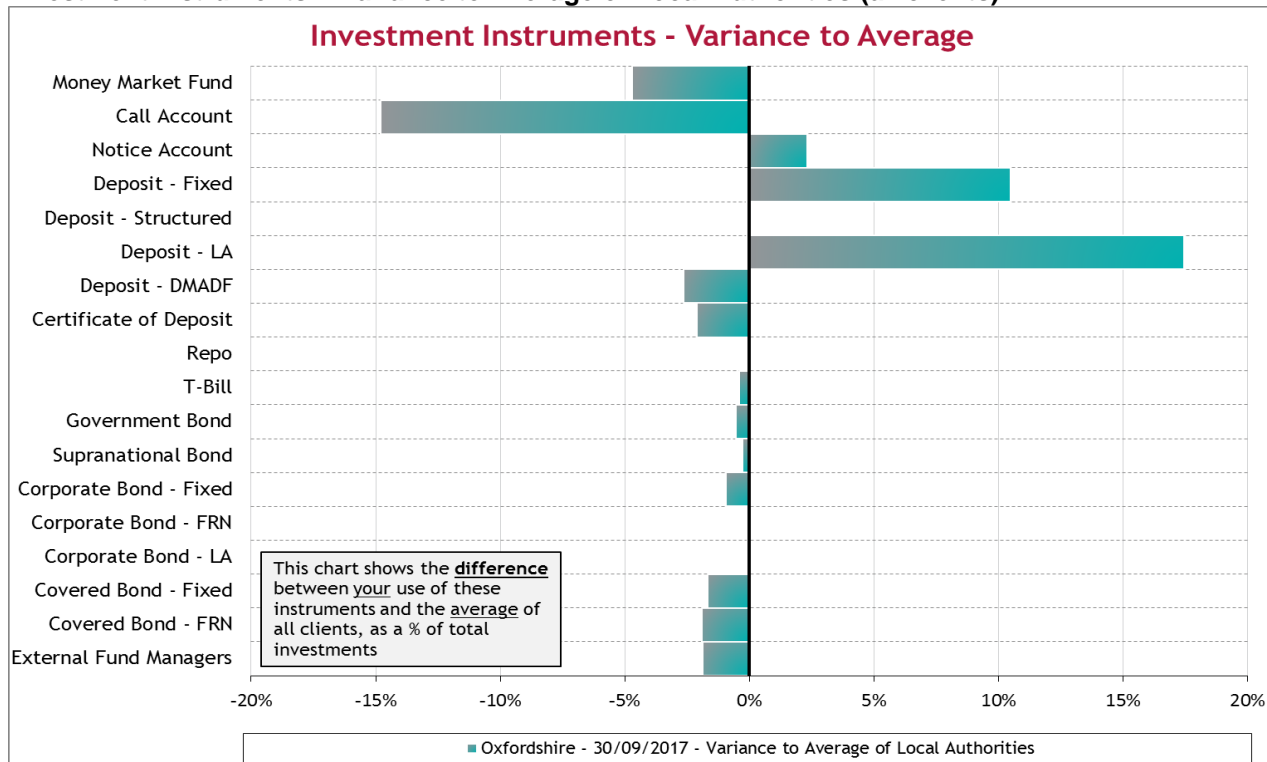
Time weighted Average (all clients)

Average Rate vs Credit Risk (time-weighted)
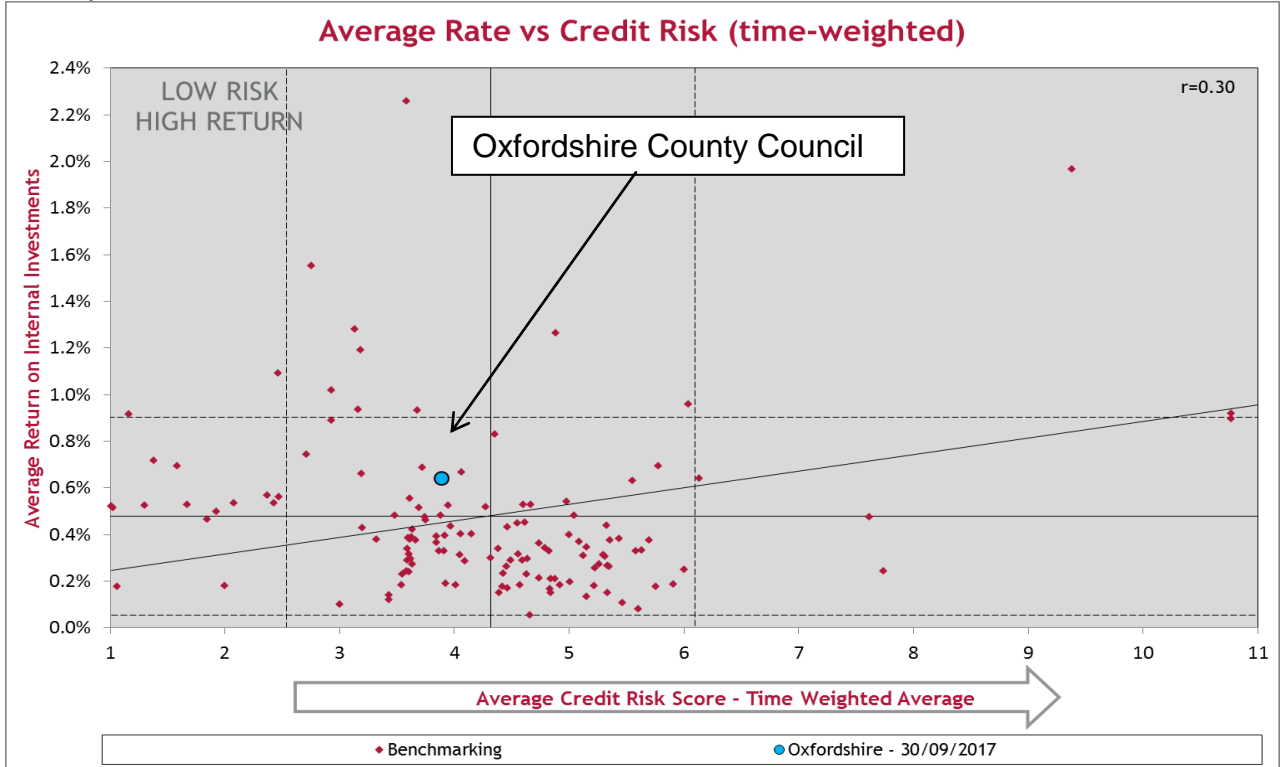
This graph shows that, at 30 September 2017, Oxfordshire achieved higher than average return for lower than average credit risk, weighted by duration.

Average Rate vs Duration (all clients)
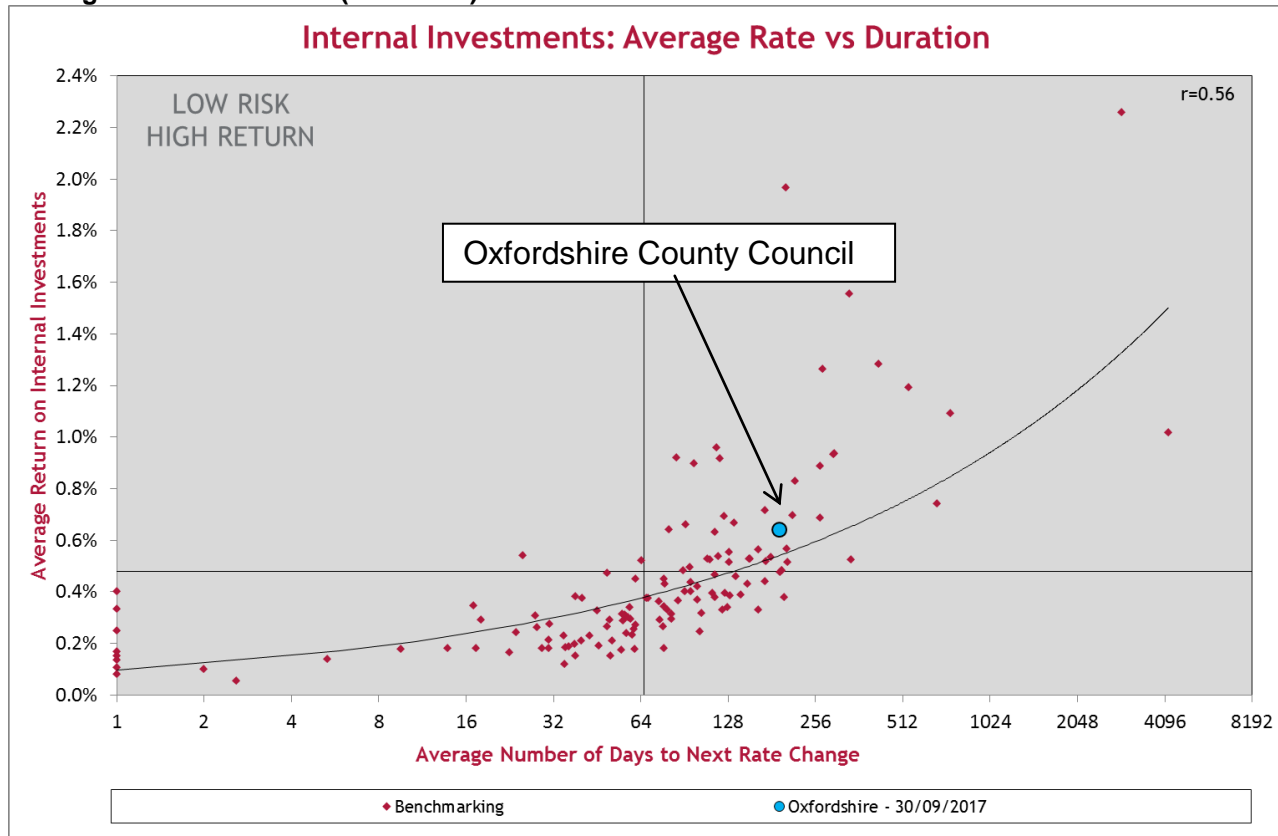
Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Duration

r=0.56

Oxfordshire County Council

LOW RISK
HIGH RETURN

Average Return on Internal Investments

Average Number of Days to Next Rate Change

◆ Benchmarking   ● Oxfordshire - 30/09/2017

This graph shows that, at 30 September 2017, Oxfordshire achieved a higher than average return by placing deposits for longer than average duration.

Investment Instruments – Variance to Average of Local Authorities (all clients)

Investment Instruments - Variance to Average

Money Market Fund
Call Account
Notice Account
Deposit - Fixed
Deposit - Structured
Deposit - LA
Deposit - DMADF
Certificate of Deposit
Repo
T-Bill
Government Bond
Supranational Bond
Corporate Bond - Fixed
Corporate Bond - FRN
Corporate Bond - LA
Covered Bond - Fixed
Covered Bond - FRN
External Fund Managers

This chart shows the **difference** between _your_ use of these instruments and the _average_ of all clients, as a % of total investments

■ Oxfordshire - 30/09/2017 - Variance to Average of Local Authorities

This graph shows that, at September 2017, Oxfordshire had notably higher than average allocation to external funds, fixed and local authority deposits when compared with other local authorities. Oxfordshire also had notably lower exposures to money market funds and call accounts.

Page 51

Amended Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 – Appendix C

Specified Investments

Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria	Use
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers
Term Deposits – UK Government	N/A	In-house
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies	Short-term F1, Long-term BBB+, Minimum Sovereign Rating AA+	In-house and Fund Managers
Certificates of Deposit issued by Banks and Building Societies	A1 or P1	In-house on a buy and hold basis and Fund Managers
Money Market Funds with a Constant Net Asset Value	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers
Other Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes[4]	Minimum equivalent credit rating of A+. These funds do not have short-term or support ratings.	In-house and Fund Managers
UK Government Gilts	AA	In-house on a buy and hold basis and Fund Managers
Treasury Bills	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers
Reverse Repurchase Agreements - maturity under 1 year from arrangement and counterparty is of high credit quality (not collateral)	Long Term Counterparty Rating A-	In-house and Fund Managers
Covered Bonds – maturity under 1 year from arrangement	Minimum issue rating of A-	In-house and Fund Managers

---

[4] I.e., credit rated funds which meet the definition of a collective investment scheme as defined in SI 2004 No 534 and SI 2007 No 573.

Non-Specified Investments

Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	Max % of total Investments	Max Maturity Period
Term Deposits – other Local Authorities (maturities in excess of 1 year)	N/A	In-house	50%	3 years
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies (maturities in excess of 1 year)	Short-term F1+, Long-term AA-	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	3 years
Structured Products (e.g. Callable deposits, range accruals, snowballs, escalators etc.)	Short-term F1+, Long-term AA-	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	3 years
UK Government Gilts with maturities in excess of 1 year	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	5 years in-house, 10 years fund managers
Bonds issued by Multilateral development banks	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Fund	5 years in-house, 10 years fund managers
Bonds issued by a financial institution which is guaranteed by the UK Government	AA	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Fund	5 years in-house
Supranationals	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% of External Fund	5 years in-house, 30 years fund managers

Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	Max % of total Investments	Max Maturity Period
Money Market Funds and Collective Investment Schemes[5] but which are not credit rated	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers	50% In-house; 100% External Funds	Pooled Funds do not have a defined maturity date
Sovereign Bond Issues	AAA	In-house on a buy and hold basis. Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	5 year in-house, 30 years fund managers
Reverse Repurchase Agreements - maturity in excess of 1 year, or/and counterparty not of high credit quality.	Minimum long term rating of A-	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	3 years
Covered Bonds	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	50% in-house; 100% External Funds	20 years
Registered Providers	As agreed by TMST in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance	In-house	50% In-house	5 years

The maximum limits for in-house investments apply at the time of arrangement.

---

[5] Pooled funds which meet the definition of a collective investment scheme as defined in SI 2004 No 534 and SI 2007 No 573.

Division(s): All

CABINET– 28 NOVEMBER 2017

TRANSITION FUND FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Introduction

1. The 2016/17 budget agreed by Council in February 2016 included the creation of a 'one off' £1m fund to provide pump priming to support community-led solutions for delivering open-access services for children and families.

2. The purpose of this £1m fund was to provide pump priming grants to communities to enable them to create sustainable solutions for open access children's services. The approach was flexible recognising the different needs across the county. Through the current support provided to community groups, individual solutions were developed with differing funding requirements.

3. Following three successful grant application rounds where 27 community groups have been awarded funding there is now a remaining balance of £232,674 in the budget.

4. Given that the original council decision provided £1m to try to mitigate the gap left in open access provision (as a result of the move to more targeted provision in the new Children & Family Centres) Cabinet agreed on 18 September 2017 to continue to use the underspend as a grant scheme for open access children's services delivering for the 0-5 age range.

5. It was agreed to broaden the existing criteria to allow for other groups to apply for grants for delivering open access services for the 0-5 age range in locations other than previous children's centres. This would also encourage applications from groups in locations where there was previously a children's centre which has been repurposed i.e. nursery provision.

Transition Fund Approach

6. A gap analysis of the current open access provision against what was previously delivered by the children's centres was undertaken. This has helped to identify shortfall by locality area and would be used as the basis for assessing applications which address this gap.

7. The grant criteria has remained broadly the same, removing the requirement for the provision to be in the same area as a previous children's centre and the addition of not funding previous recipients of the transition fund grant:

- Sustainable solution for open access children's services in the local community
- Ability to self-fund in the long-term, as outlined in the business case
- Clearly defined costs and timescales for implementation
- Evidence of the need for the project
- Community buy-in
- Engagement, partnership working and collaboration
- Projects must benefit Oxfordshire communities, be inclusive and provide good value for money.
- To what extent we can have confidence that the project will have a lasting impact, beyond the funding period.

8. Applicants must be able to demonstrate an identified need in their area as a result of the changes in early intervention services and provide a sustainable business plan beyond the funding period.

9. Previous recipients of transition fund grants would not be eligible to apply again.

10. A cross party group of county councillors has been established to consider applications against the criteria. Councillors were nominated for this group by the party leaders. The group consists of Cllrs Gray, Fenton, Matelot, Brighouse and Webber. The group is chaired by the portfolio holder for Local Communities, Cllr Gray.

Process

11. The fourth round of applications closed on the 25 October 2017. In this round 4 bids were submitted for consideration.

12. The applications were assessed by the cross party working group against each of the criteria outlined in the guidance notes at Annex 1.

13. Applicants, along with their local county councillor will be notified by e-mail of the Cabinet decision.

14. Applicants will only have the first year of funding transferred initially with subsequent years funding subject to monitoring compliance.

15. Successful applicants will be expected to comply fully with the monitoring requests from the council and signing of the funding agreement will be viewed as acceptance of these requests.

16. Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the county council.

Assessment of Applications

17. Having carefully assessed all the bids received against the established eligibility criteria, the cross party working group are recommending the following two bids for funding:

 - Slade Nursery School (Slade & Headington Children's Centre)
 - Leys Community Church

18. A further two bids were considered to require further support to ensure a robust and sustainable model. As such Cabinet is recommended to defer the following bids to the next round of applications:

 - Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee
 - Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group

19. A summary of all the bids received under the fourth round of applications for the Transition Fund is included below:

20. **Applicant:** Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee (Blackbird Leys)
Amount: £6,200 over 1 year
Proportion of proposed budget: 79%

Overview: Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee seeks the resource to deliver two stay and play sessions per week for young children accompanied by parents. The sessions will be delivered by local volunteers supported by a qualified member of staff. The delivery of stay and play sessions needed to address the gap caused by the cut in services previously provided the Blackbird Leys Children & Family Centre. Any grant awarded would support:

 - Recruitment of new volunteers and training of new/ current volunteers.
 - The delivery of stay and play sessions.
 - Two/ three off sight trips within the first year of grant being received.

Panel feedback:

The panel noted that the application met the criteria in terms of evidencing need.

The panel had concerns for the sustainability of the project and noted that only one year of funding had been requested.

The panel noted that the group had not declared any other funding.

The panel noted that it would not be possible for the group to apply to the Transition Fund again if they were successful in this round of applications.

The panel suggested that a revised application was submitted, demonstrating sustainability and outlining a proposal for a second year.

Recommendation: The panel recommends to Cabinet that this bid is deferred to the next round.

21. **Applicant:** Leys Community Church
    Amount: £2,750 over 1 year
    Proportion of proposed budget: 58%

    Overview: Toddler Time is a weekly morning playgroup encouraging 'messy' (creative) play with pre-school children and their parents and carers. It fosters a sense of community and mutual support between parents/ carers and encourages healthy dynamics of play and learning through creative activities. The group is open access, with a nominal charge of £1. The group is run on a purely voluntary basis, through parents/ carers, and members of Leys Community Church. Due to increasing demand, it moved to the nearby hall of the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP) in November 2016. The group is seeking equipment investment due to expanding numbers in the group and the change of venue.

    Panel feedback:

    The panel were supportive of the application overall.

    There were concerns with funding refurbishment for a leased in building and landlord/ tenant relations although Councillor Brighouse advised that the building had been secured as part of a wider community development initiative and she did not think that there would be an issue with the lease.

    It was noted that as it would be funding refurbishment the group should be advised to keep receipts for monitoring purposes.

    Councillors noted that the application did not include any assurances on policies and procedures and insurances as this expenditure was not identified in the application.

    Recommendation: The panel recommend that Cabinet approves this bid for funding.

22. **Applicant:** Slade Nursery School
    Amount: £42,478 over 3 years
    Proportion of proposed budget: 58%

    Overview: Slade Nursery School consulted with parents who attended the groups at Slade & Headington Children Centre before it closed to identify the activities and groups they would continue. Slade Nursery School is keen to

continue the groups to help parents to have positive relationships with their children in an environment with appropriate provision. To provide these local services they intend to use the current premises of Slade Nursery School as a base for open access provision.

Panel feedback:

The panel agreed that the application was strong in terms of demonstrating need and inclusivity.

The panel agreed that allocation of nursery places for two year olds was a separate issue and that there may have been confusion about this as a result of discussion around this at the September 2017 Cabinet meeting.

Councillors noted that given the amount of money requested, increasing the number of Stay and Play sessions would offer greater value for money. Councillor Brighouse thought that there was scope for further sessions once volunteers had been trained but noted that this outcome could be guaranteed.

The panel raised concerns regarding the co-ordinator salary not being a professional role. Councillor Brighouse thought that this might be linked to the role of one of the existing employees and thought that a full-time employee was needed rather than a part-time employee.

Councillors noted the inclusion of Social Care contact sessions within the application and that this should not be funded via the transition fund for open access children's services.

The panel noted that six months of the current financial year had already passed and the full year funding was being requested.

Recommendation: The panel recommend that Cabinet approves a reduced budget of £30,341 phased as Yr1 £12,136.50, YR2 £12,136.50, YR3 £6,068.25 for funding.

23. **Applicant:** Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group
    Amount: £1,418 over 1 year
    Proportion of proposed budget: 78%

    Overview: Sutton Courtenay Stay and Play Group is launching on 1 November 2017 in Sutton Courtenay Village Hall. This group is intended to provide an environment for parents/carers to share in educational play with their babies and toddlers with other parents/carers and their children. South Abingdon Children's Centre ran a similar 'stay and play' group held in the Village Hall until December 2016. The group is requesting funding to cover the first 12 months of operation, to end October 2018, in which they will run 45 group sessions. The group believe that they will generate sufficient revenue year on year to cover these ongoing costs and to fund ongoing investment in equipment.

Panel feedback:

The panel were supportive of the application and agreed that there was evidence of need in the area, based on levels of deprivation and the support previously provided by South Abingdon Children's Centre.

The panel was concerned about the amount of money being requested and the way that funding would be used. It was suggested that further support and guidance could be provided from the Community Coordinator for the area.

Recommendation: The panel recommends to Cabinet that this bid is deferred to the next round.

Financial and Staff Implications

24.   The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report.

25.   Further information in relation to the groups applying for funding is included below:

Organisation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Funding requested	Funding Awarded
Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee	£6,200	£-	£-	£6,200	£-
Leys Community Church	£2,750	£-	£-	£2,750	£2,750
Slade Nursery School	£24,273	£12,136	£6,068	£42,478	£30,341
Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group	£1,418	£-	£-	£1,418	£-
TOTAL				**£52,846**	**£33,091**

26.   A breakdown of the current expenditure to date along with the recommendations made in this report is provided below:

TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE	£1,000,000.00
FUNDING APPROVED IN 1ST ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£162,984.52
FUNDING APPROVED IN 2ND ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£305,883
FUNDING APPROVED IN 3rd ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£268,458**
FUNDING APPROVED FOR FLORENCE PARK	£30,000
REMAINING FUNDING	**£232,674**
FUNDING RECOMMENDED UNDER 4TH ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	**£33,091**

** Includes conditional funding allocations

27. The panel when making its recommendations have ensured due diligence in assessing the applications and ensuring value for money is achieved. This has resulted in a proportion of the funds remaining unspent as outlined in the body of the report and further rounds are planned for 2017/18.

Equalities Implications

28. The Public Sector Equality Duty, under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, places a responsibility on local authorities to exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.'

29. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report, the protected characteristics have been considered when assessing both proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

30. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
    (a) **Approve for funding the following bids:**
         a. Leys Community Church
         b. Slade Nursery School

    (b) **Ask that further work is conducted to develop more robust business plans and reapply for funding under the next round of applications:**
         a. Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee
         b. Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group

MAGGIE SCOTT
Assistant Chief Executive

Annex: Transition Fund Guidance Notes & Transition Fund Application Form.

Contact Officer: Sarah Jelley, sarah.jelley@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07554 103437
November 2017

ANNEX 1

REVISED GUIDANCE NOTES

TRANSITION FUND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

September 2017

Background

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a transition fund to provide pump-priming grants for establishing universal provision of children's services in communities across Oxfordshire.

Further details about the council's decision are available at:
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2016/feb/joint-statement-budget-political-leaders-oxfordshire-county-council

This approach supports the council's commitment to a new way of delivering open access services across communities. Under Oxfordshire Together we have been working with town and parish councils, voluntary sector organisations and local community groups to encourage the continuation of open access sessions such as stay and play and youth group sessions where the council can no longer provide funding for these services. Further information about this work is available at: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/childrens-services.

Having funded majority of the previously owned OCC Children's Centres, Cabinet on the 18th September have agreed that the underspend can now be used to extend the grant scheme to organisations delivering open access services for the 0-5 age range. Read the full details of the decision here:
http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=5023&Ver=4

Our approach

The purpose of this £1m transition fund is to provide pump priming grants for sustainable community solutions for open access children's services. In awarding the grants, our approach will be flexible, recognising the different needs across the county. We will work with community groups on an individual basis to develop individual solutions, so if you would like to apply for a grant you are advised to contact us at an early stage. To get in touch with us, please email us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Any proposals for funding will need to demonstrate sustainability and the ability to self-fund in the long term. This will be a key criterion for assessing all applications. In addition match funding is strongly encouraged, and we will be asking all applicants to put together a robust business case showing how the project will self-fund in the long-term.

There will be four rounds of applications with deadlines in October 2017, December 2017, February 2018 and March 2018, so if your bid is not successful in the first round, we will be happy to work with you to help develop a strong business case and re-apply for funding. Further rounds of applications will be considered, if there are remaining funds, post-March 2018.

What do we fund? (eligibility criteria)

Funding is available for sustainable community solutions for open access children's services. As the county council is withdrawing funding for some non-statutory children's services, we want to see communities come forward with their proposals for open access services for children and their families, reflecting local need and priorities.

It is entirely up to each community to decide what the new arrangements might look like. In order to be eligible for transition funding, projects must meet a number of key eligibility criteria, and we require all applicants to submit a fully developed business case that demonstrates how the criteria will be met.

If you need help developing the business case, you can contact OCVA, who will be able to offer guidance, or you can consult the government's advice on writing a business plan at: www.gov.uk/write-business-plan.

To make sure you have included all the relevant information in your business case we have put together a suggested checklist:

- Description of the project/ activity
- Needs analysis
- Desired outcomes & beneficiaries
- Costs
- Sources of funding & long-term sustainability
- Performance Measures (how results will be monitored)
- Governance

Grant criteria

- Sustainable solution for open access children's services in the local community
- Ability to self-fund in the long-term, as outlined in the business case
- Clearly defined costs and timescales for implementation
- Evidence of the need for the project
- Community buy-in
- Engagement, partnership working and collaboration
- Projects must benefit Oxfordshire communities, be inclusive and provide good value for money.
- To what extent we can have confidence that the project will have a lasting impact, beyond the funding period.

We want to see projects which are rooted in their communities and which have grown out of a specific local need. All applicants must work closely with their local community to ensure their project is properly connected locally, responds to recognised need and does not duplicate other provision. We would also ask to see evidence of a strong buy-in from the local community, and any successful initiative would need to be accessible, inclusive and open to all.

Funding will only be awarded on a one-off basis and must be spent within a maximum of 2 years or 31 March 2020 whichever is sooner (*depending on your business plan, it could be by end of financial year; set number of years or as per the milestones identified in the business case*).

Funding can be awarded for salaries and overheads if these were part of the sustainable business plan. It is important to emphasise though that the grant will be a one-off payment so organisations need to take this into account when building their business case.

Who can apply:

In order to be deemed eligible for funding, applying organisations must have a committee and/or a constitution or appropriate rules setting out aims and objectives and how the group will operate, and a bank account[1].

- Not-for-profit community groups
- Town and parish councils
- Schools
- Social enterprises
- Charity organisations
- Community associations
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Parent teacher associations
- Cooperatives
- Friendly societies
- Youth Clubs

What don't we fund?

Organisations:

- Previous recipients of transition fund grants would not be eligible to apply again.
- Groups that have previously received Transition Funding
- Individuals or sole traders
- Profit-making organisations

---

[1] Please note we will not make any payments into individuals' bank accounts, so it is very important that your group has a bank account.

- Organisations not established in the UK
- Organisations that give funds to other charities, individuals or other organisations

Projects:

- Projects that duplicate an already existing service
- Activities which a statutory body is responsible for
- Activities with a religious or political purpose
- Activities that contradict or act against any of the Council's agreed policies such as Equalities and Safer Recruitment, or fail to comply with all the other relevant statutory requirements, such as health and safety legislation

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and if you are not sure whether you are eligible for funding you should get in touch with us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

How to apply

Application process:

1) Application form & business case
2) Review of bid by transition fund cross party group with recommendations to Cabinet
3) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
4) Decision
5) Notification to bidders

Deadlines
There are four applications round, with deadline dates of:
1) TBC October 2017
2) TBC December 2017
3) TBC February 2018
4) TBC March 2018

We encourage applicants to contact us early with their expressions of interest or any questions they might have, to avoid any delays in the council assessing the bids and making a decision. There is a limited amount left in this budget and early applications are encouraged to avoid disappointment.

How will applications be assessed?

We will assess your application against the key criteria set out above and we may also seek feedback from community stakeholders and the local county councillors.

A cross party panel will review all applications and then make recommendations to Cabinet. The final decisions will be made by Cabinet meeting in public on 28 November 2017 (first round), 23 January 2018 (second round), 20 March 2018 (third round), 17 April 2018 (fourth round). The Cabinet will judge each application on its own merits, giving due regard to local circumstances and need.

Cabinet decisions can be called-in by the Performance Scrutiny Committee, which can decide to approve the decision, ask Cabinet to reconsider, refer it to full council for further debate, or require further information of further work to be done.

Awarding the grant

Applicants, along with their local county councillor, will be notified by email of the Cabinet's decision within a week of the decision being made.

Successful applicants will be asked to sign a legal agreement with the council (for any grants over £5,000). Once the legal agreement is signed, we will then transfer the funding into the organisation's bank account.

For larger grants/ where appropriate, funding might be phased depending on the outcomes achieved following the first stage of delivery.

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on their proposal and, where possible, we will work with organisations to help them identify alternative funding opportunities.

Monitoring

Successful applicants are expected to comply fully with any monitoring requests from the Council and must agree to this when signing the funding request form.

All successful applicants need to be prepared for a review of their project.

This may include:

- Receipts recording how the money was spent
- Reports on the activity funded
- Feedback from individuals impacted
- Any other record of the activity funded (e.g. promotional flyers and posters)

Successful applicants will be strongly encouraged to keep us informed about the progress of their projects. Any setbacks to the implementation of the projects should be reported to the Transition Fund Team. Delivery of the projects will be monitored as per milestones identified in the business case/ project proposal.

Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the county council.

Other sources of support and funding available

- Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA)
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- Community First Oxfordshire

Contact us

Sarah Jelley
Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road,
Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 07554 103437

GRANT APPLICATION FORM

TRANSITION FUND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Scheme and Guidance

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a transition fund to provide pump-priming grants for establishing universal provision of children's services in communities across Oxfordshire.

In awarding the grants, our approach will be flexible, recognising the different needs across the county. We will work with community groups on an individual basis to develop individual solutions, so if you would like to apply for a grant you are advised to contact us at an early stage. To get in touch with us, please email us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Any proposals for funding will need to demonstrate sustainability and the ability to self-fund in the long term. This will be a key criterion for assessing all applications. In addition match funding is strongly encouraged, and we will be asking all applicants to put together a robust business case showing how the activity will self-fund in the long-term.

Please read carefully the **guidance notes** available on the Council's website to check whether your organisation or the activity you wish to fund is eligible for funding under the scheme's criteria.

The Application Process

6) Application form & business case
7) Review of bid by transition fund group with recommendations to Cabinet
8) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
9) Decision
10) Notification to bidders
.
Deadlines
There are four applications round, with deadline dates of:
5) 25 October 2017
6) TBC December 2017
7) TBC February 2018
8) TBC March 2018

Contacting Us

Sarah Jelley, Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall,
New Road,
Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 07554 103437

This page is intentionally left blank

Division(s): Sonning Common, Henley, Woodcote

CABINET– 28 NOVEMBER 2017

Report on the Progress of Chiltern Edge School

Report by Director of Children's Services

Introduction

1. Chiltern Edge School is an 11 -16 school located in the village of Sonning Common in close proximity to the Caversham area of Reading. It has capacity for around 1,000 pupils but currently has only c.500 on roll. Of these, around 150 live in Oxfordshire with nearly all the rest coming from Caversham. The school has been operating with in-year deficit budgets for a number of years and has accumulated a debt of in excess of £$^1/_2$ million. A consultant head teacher was employed by the County Council to work with the school's leadership to produce an in-year balanced budget and a plan to repay the debt.

2. In March 2017 the school was inspected by Ofsted and rated inadequate overall and inadequate in terms of the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and in terms of outcomes for pupils. Consequently Chiltern Edge School was placed in Special Measures, and on 3 May 2017 the DfE issued an academy order to convert the school to sponsored academy status. The Regional Schools Commissioner is responsible for finding a suitable academy sponsor.

3. Given both the severity of concerns raised by Ofsted, and the significant risk that a strong sponsor might not be identified in a timely manner, the council conducted an informal consultation on the school's future, and a report on this was considered by Cabinet on 18 July 2017. At that meeting, Cabinet resolved not to proceed at that time with the publication of a statutory notice proposing the closure of Chiltern Edge School but to commission an external review of the progress made by October 2017 towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted and the construction of an in-year balanced budget and consider a further report on the progress identified by the external review at its November meeting.

Progress on identification of an academy sponsor

4. Discussions continue with Maiden Erlegh Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust based in Wokingham, regarding it becoming the academy sponsor for Chiltern Edge School. It has submitted a proposal to the DfE for consideration at a Head

Teacher Board scheduled for November. An update will be provided to Cabinet at the meeting.

Progress on improving Chiltern Edge's financial status

5.   The school's carry forward from 2016-17 was a net deficit of £561,256, a significant worsening from the opening balance (1 April 2016) of £204,216. The new head teacher and Interim Executive Board have submitted a revised budget, which demonstrates the school's ability to balance the budget in the 2017/18 financial year. They have also completed a major staffing restructure which should reduce the structural deficit in future years. The school budget plan excludes the cumulative deficit to date and the severance costs incurred in meeting the new staffing structure (estimated at around £200,000). These amounts are expected to be financed by the council. Latest budget monitoring for 2017-18 (September 2017) has been received from the school and currently shows the school continues on track to spend as per the budget plan. However, it should be noted that there is little contingency within the budget plan.

6.   Chiltern Edge's future financial health is dependent on attracting and retaining sufficient pupil numbers. On the deadline for on-time applications for 2018, Chiltern Edge had received fewer applications from Oxfordshire families than in 2017, despite there being slightly more primary pupils in the corresponding transfer cohort. Langtree School has received slightly more first preference applications, despite its primary feeder population being stable, so it would appear that there has been a slight shift in preference from Chiltern Edge to Langtree. However, these figures only include Oxfordshire applicants, and as Chiltern Edge admits significant numbers from Reading, until the Reading application data is available, we do not have an accurate indication of the eventual pupils numbers the school could expect.

Applications for the 2018 Year 7 transfer, at the date of the on-time deadline:

School	2017 1st prefs	2016 1st prefs	2017 2nd prefs	2016 2nd prefs	2017 3rd prefs	2016 3rd prefs
Chiltern Edge Admission number 120	12	24	9	25	15	21
Gillotts Admission number 180	172	179	40	41	23	12
Langtree Admission number 120	114	105	83	78	22	34

7.   Longer term, pupil numbers at the Oxfordshire feeder primary schools do not indicate sustained growth in demand; the scale of housing proposed in the local area of Oxfordshire would be expected to generate relatively modest numbers of additional secondary school pupils. However, Reading Borough Council advises that it expects significant growth in secondary school pupil numbers over the coming years, not all of which can be absorbed by Reading schools. It will be increasingly dependent on school capacity outside Reading,

including at Chiltern Edge, and advises that from 2019 onwards the number of Reading pupils being allocated places at Chiltern Edge School would be estimated to increase by 40-60 per year, i.e. up to two additional forms of entry. Such an increase would increase the financial sustainability of Chiltern Edge School, but it would remain vulnerable to changes in the supply of, and demand for, school places outside Oxfordshire.

Progress on improving Chiltern Edge's academic performance

8. Attainment 8, Progress 8 and standard passes in English and Maths are the main performance measures for schools this year. Last year, pupils completing Key Stage 4 at Chiltern Edge achieved results in line with or better than the national average for these three measures. This was not the case in the previous year.

9. An external independent review of the school was carried out on 30 and 31 October 2017. The report opens with "This is an improving school. Leaders are taking effective action to address the issues raised by the most recent Ofsted inspection report." Senior leaders are congratulated on the pace of change that is leading to improved educational provision for its pupils. However, the report goes on to say, "the school remains fragile following recent extensive changes and challenges since being placed in special measures". This is largely due to the uncertain future of the school, the pace of change and the interim nature of some staff. The report is attached at Annex 2.

10. The review provides confidence that senior leaders of the school have the capability and capacity to sustain the continued improvement required to secure good outcomes for its pupils. It is now important to make clear the future of the school in order to secure further improvement.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. Should the recommendation of this report be accepted, and the school remain open, there are financial and staff implications in continuing to support the school to improve and maintain key positions on the IEB. £30k will be spent between September 2017 and March 2018; this level of costs would continue until academy conversion is completed. However, should a decision be made to close the school, significantly higher costs would be incurred against an unknown timeline.

12. If the school becomes a sponsored academy, any cumulative debt at that time would fall to the county council. If the school does not become an academy, the council would expect the school to repay its debt over an agreed time period.

Equalities Implications

13.   Should the recommendation of this report be accepted, and the school remain open, access for all groups to education would be maintained, and there would be no equalities implications.

14.   Should a decision be made to close the school, a statutory notice would be published which would be accompanied by a Service and Community Impact Assessment, assessing the impact of the proposal on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on groups that share the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership). The assessment would also consider the potential impact on individuals and communities (such as carers, rural communities and areas of deprivation), staff, other council services, other providers of services and other / partner organisations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to:
(a)   note the content of the external review of progress made by the school towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted;
(b)   note the progress made by the school in creating an in year balanced budget;
(c)   note progress made in identifying an appropriate academy sponsor for the school;
(d)   resolve not to publish a statutory notice proposing closure of Chiltern Edge School.

LUCY BUTLER
Director of Children's Services

Background papers:
Annex 1:   Cabinet report 18 July 2017
Annex 2:   External review of progress

Contact Officer: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead, Education Sufficiency & Access
November 2017

Division(s): Sonning Common, Henley, Woodcote

CABINET– 18 JULY 2017

REPORT ON A CONSULTATION INTO THE FUTURE OF CHILTERN EDGE SCHOOL

Report by Director of Children's Services

Introduction

1. Chiltern Edge School is an 11 -16 school located in the village of Sonning Common in close proximity to the Caversham area of Reading. It has capacity for around 1,000 pupils but currently has only c.500 on roll. Of these, around 150 live in Oxfordshire with nearly all the rest coming from Caversham. The school has been operating with in-year deficit budgets for a number of years and has accumulated a debt of in excess of £$^1/_2$ million. A consultant head teacher was employed by the County Council to work with the school's leadership to produce an in-year balanced budget and a plan to repay the debt.

2. When the school was inspected by Ofsted in September 2012 it was judged to be good overall. As a good school the amount of support provided by the County Council would be expected to be very limited with the national presumption being that it would assume responsibility for its own continuous improvement. The Council provided annual 'position statements' setting out how the school was performing in comparison with other schools, both locally and nationally. The position statements for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years highlighted declining performance against a range of measures but the school's leadership appears not to have taken remedial action in response to this. In early 2017 the Council deployed an experienced National Leader of Education to work with the school. This coincided with the Ofsted inspection in March 2017.

3. The report of the March 2017 inspection was published in April with the key findings being that the school was inadequate overall and inadequate in terms of the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and in terms of outcomes for pupils. The only judgement which was not of inadequacy was in respect of the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils which were requiring improvement. Consequently Chiltern Edge School has been placed in Special Measures. The full report can be found on the Ofsted web site: https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/123245

4. The Education and Adoption Act 2016 places a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to make an academy order and convert a maintained school to sponsored academy status. To this end, an Academy Order was published on 3 May 2017. The Regional Schools Commissioner is responsible for finding a suitable academy sponsor. The Council is working with the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding this.

5. Both nationally and locally the process of finding a suitable academy sponsor in circumstances where a school appears to be financially unviable and has a large number of significant underperformance issues to address has proven very difficult. In consequence of this there was considered to be a significant risk that a strong sponsor might not be identified in a timely manner to begin the process of rapidly addressing the school's weaknesses. The Department for Education also requires local authorities to consider the option of closure in circumstances where schools are failing (see Annex 1).

The purpose of the consultation

6. Given both the severity of concerns raised by Ofsted, and those set out in paragraph 5, the council decided to open an informal consultation on the school's future. Views were sought on the potential impact of a decision to close the school and whether other solutions could be found to ensure good quality education in this part of Oxfordshire. Throughout this process, the council's number one priority has remained to ensure good educational opportunities are available to local families. Cabinet members have also publicly stated their desire to find a solution that would both enable the school to stay open and deliver the improvements demanded by Ofsted.

7. The Chiltern Edge consultation was initially set to run from the 27th April to the 16th June with the responses to be reported to the June Cabinet meeting. However, in order to ensure that all contributions to the consultation would be reflected in the written report, the consultation period was extended to the 30th June (9 weeks including the half-term holiday) and consideration by Cabinet deferred until its July meeting.

8. A decision is now sought whether to proceed with publishing a statutory notice and proposal to close Chiltern Edge School. If such a decision is made, in order to avoid the school holidays the soonest a notice would be published would be 5 September, with representations then running until 3 October. This would allow a final decision whether to close the school to be taken by Cabinet on 17 October, so that parents applying for places for 2018 would know the decision before the applications deadline of 30 October 2017.

Developments since the launch of the consultation

9. The County Council's application to the Regional School Commissioner for the governing body of Chiltern Edge School to be replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB) was approved and the IEB is now providing the school with strategic direction. It is chaired by an experienced former head teacher and has Finance and Human Resources expertise.

10. An interim head teacher with a proven track record of school improvement was appointed and she took up post on the 5th June. She has begun to implement a range of actions and strategies aimed at addressing the numerous weaknesses identified by Ofsted and to deliver an in-year balanced budget.

11. Following the County Council elections on 4th May a new Cabinet member for Education was appointed. She has met with the interim head teacher, the chair of the IEB, representatives of the 'Save Our Edge' campaign, the Sonning Common Parish Council and members and officers from Reading Borough Council.

12. She has also attended a public meeting where she was able to provide an update on developments since the start of the consultation. Of particular significance was that she was able to report that a potential sponsor had been identified and that initial discussions had been held with the Maiden Erlegh Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust based in Wokingham.

Results of the Stage 1 Consultation

13. The Stage 1 consultation included an online survey; three meetings for parents with children either at the school or due to start at the school in September 2017; and other meetings with interested parties, including other nearby schools and Reading Borough Council. Information was also collated from a number of data sources.

14. The online consultation received 1118 responses. 19% of these respondents identified themselves as parents of children at Chiltern Edge School; 6% as parents of children allocated places at Chiltern Edge School for September 2017; 24% as parents of children at primary school, two thirds of whom identified themselves as living in the designated area for Chiltern Edge School (some of these categories will overlap). There were 60 respondents identifying themselves as pupils at Chiltern Edge School, although from their detailed responses, it was apparent that some of these were actually past pupils, and it is not clear how many current pupils responded.

15. In addition, 92 responses were received by post and/or email – some of these responses were duplicates of those received online.

16. The information gathered through the consultation is detailed in Annex 3. In summary, the very large majority of responses opposed the closure of Chiltern Edge School. The affection and pride felt by those associated with the school was apparent from the detailed responses, as was local anger and concern that the school might be closed. A large number of responses disagreed with the Ofsted judgement, and said that it did not reflect their experience of the school.

17. Many respondents argued that there are not sufficient school places in the area already, and that this situation would worsen given that pupil numbers have grown in local primary schools, and there is housing planned in the local area. Data collated during the consultation identified that sufficient additional

school places could be created, through some capital investment, to accommodate Oxfordshire children who would be displaced by any closure, including allowing for housing growth in Oxfordshire, but the majority of children at Chiltern Edge School live in Reading. On the final day of the consultation (30 June) Reading Borough Council submitted their consultation response (attached as Annex 7), which stated that closure would cause "insurmountable problems with placing children in other schools in Reading".

18. Most responses said that the school should be given more time and support to improve and stay open. Several respondents commented on the positive impact the new interim headteacher and Interim Executive Board were already having, and thought that with strong leadership, the school could quickly improve. Many responses said the school needed more funding, and suggestions were made as to how the school could improve.

19. There was a strong view that the closure of Chiltern Edge School would have a negative impact on the local community, including a large number of community users of the school's accommodation.

20. If Chiltern Edge School were closed, the consultation identified that the schools which would be mostly affected by the consequent displacement would be Highdown, Gillotts and Langtree, with the choice between these schools largely determined by proximity and ease of travel. Parents considered it important that pupils would be only transferred to a good or better school.

21. As the site accommodates Bishopswood Special School, particular attention would need to be given to the future of this provision, as well as to pupils with Special Educational Needs currently taught a Chiltern Edge School.

22. While the large majority of responses opposed closure of Chiltern Edge, concerns were also raised about whether it is viable to continue to maintain the number of small secondary schools currently in southern Oxfordshire. Gillotts School and Langtree School both urged that the county council work with the other interested parties to address how best the quality of education in south-east Oxfordshire can be secured, in terms of number of places and their location, so as to ensure the future viability of schools.

Financial and Staff Implications

23. At this stage, a decision is sought as to whether to publish a statutory notice. The financial and staffing implications are therefore related to the work which would be necessary to develop the detailed proposal and the costs and time required to conduct the representation period. The costs of the statutory process which would be undertaken are planned for and met within the normal CYP&F budget provision. There are no significant financial implications at this stage.

Equalities Implications

24. If a statutory notice to close Chiltern Edge School is published, it would be accompanied by a Service and Community Impact Assessment, which would assess the impact of the proposal on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on groups that share the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership). The assessment would also consider potential impact on individuals and communities (such as carers, rural communities and areas of deprivation), staff, other council services, other providers of services and other /partner organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

   (a) **<u>not</u> proceed at this time with the publication of a statutory notice proposing the closure of Chiltern Edge School;**
   (b) **commission, ideally from Ofsted, an external review of the progress made by October 2017 towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted and the construction of an in-year balanced budget;**
   (c) **consider a further report on the progress identified by the external review at its November meeting.**

LUCY BUTLER
Director of Children's Services

Background papers:
Annex 1:   The decision-making process for closing a maintained school
Annex 2:   Factors for consideration when deciding to close a maintained school
Annex 3:   Information collected through the Stage 1 Consultation
Annex 4:   Gillotts School Response to Chiltern Edge Closure Consultation
             (received 6 June 2017)
Annex 5:   Langtree School Governors' response to the consultation on the future
             of Chiltern Edge School (received 21 June 2017)
Annex 6:   Consultation submission from Matt Rodda MP (Reading East)
             (received 29 June)
Annex 7:   Reading Borough Council's response to the consultation (received 30
             June 2017)

Contact Officer: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead, Education Sufficiency & Access

July 2017

Annex 1: The decision-making process for closing a maintained school

The DfE's statutory guidance on "Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools closing maintained schools" (April 2016) specifies that where a maintained school is failing and there is no viable sponsored academy solution, the local authority can consider closure.

All decisions related to school closures are taken locally following a statutory process to allow those directly affected by the proposals to feed in their comments. All decisions on proposals to close a school must be made in accordance with the factors outlined in the guidance for decision-makers.

The DfE's statutory guidance on "Opening and closing local authority maintained schools" (April 2016) sets out the required process, and is supported by the associated "Statutory guidance for decision-makers deciding prescribed alteration and establishment and discontinuance proposals" (April 2016). The relevant legislative basis for this guidance is Part 2 and Schedule 2 of the *Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006* as amended by the *Education Act (EA) 2011* and *The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013*.

The statutory process for closing a maintained school has five stages:

Stage 1	Consultation	No prescribed timescale.	Informal / pre consultation. Recommended to last a minimum of 6 weeks. School holidays should be taken into consideration and avoided where possible. Likely to be no longer than 12 months.
Stage 2	Publication		Publication of the statutory notice and proposal. The information which would need to be provided in such a proposal is shown in Annex 2.
Stage 3	Representation	4 weeks from date of publication.	Formal consultation. As prescribed in the Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools Regulations and cannot be shortened or lengthened.
Stage 4	Decision	LA should decide a proposal within 2 months of the end of the representation period, otherwise it will fall to the Schools Adjudicator.	Where permitted, appeals must be made within 4 weeks of notification of the decision.

Stage 5	Implementation	No prescribed timescale.	However the date must be as specified in the published notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker.

The consultation covered by this report is the Stage 1 consultation. If Cabinet were to decide to proceed to Stage 2, a statutory closure proposal would be written for publication and statutory representations. As set out in Schedule 2 to the Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations the information below **must** be included in a proposal to close a school:

Contact details
The name and contact address of the local authority or governing body publishing the proposals and the name, address and category of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Implementation
The date on which it is proposed to close the school or, where it is proposed that the closure be implemented in stages, the dates of and information about each stage.

Reason for closure
A statement explaining the reason why closure of the school is considered necessary.

Pupil numbers and admissions
The numbers (distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory school age pupils), age range, sex, and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is currently made at the school.

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

Details of the schools or further education colleges at which pupils at the school to be discontinued will be offered places, including—
a) any interim arrangements;
b) the provision that is to be made for those pupils who receive educational provision recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs; and
c) in the case of special schools, the alternative provision made by local authorities other than the local authority which maintain the school.

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

Impact on the community

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

Rural schools

Where proposals relate to a rural school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the local authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered section 15(4).

Special educational needs provision

Where existing provision that is recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local authority or the governing body (as the case may be) believe the proposals are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Travel

Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use

Annex 2: Factors for consideration when deciding to close a maintained school

There are no prescribed factors for consideration in making the decision whether to publish a statutory notice. However, should such a notice be published, then the subsequent decision whether to close would need to be informed by a number of factors which are set out in Annex 2. The consultation aimed to gather information relevant to these factors, and the key messages resulting from the consultation are detailed in Annex 3.

Closure proposals & sufficiency of school capacity

> The decision-maker should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area, taking into account the overall quality of provision, the likely supply and future demand for places. The decision-maker should consider the popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for those schools.

Consideration of consultation and representation period

> The decision-maker will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposer has given full consideration to all the responses received.

Education standards and diversity of provision

> Decision-makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents; raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

A school-led system with every school an academy

> The 2016 White Paper *Education Excellence Everywhere,* sets out the department's aim that by the end of 2020, all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies. The decision-maker should, therefore, take into account the extent to which the proposal is consistent with this policy. (N.B. The White Paper has not been translated into the primary legislation required to give effect to this aim.)

School size

> Decision-makers should not make blanket assumptions that schools should be of a certain size to be good schools, although the viability and cost-effectiveness of a proposal is an important factor for consideration. The decision-maker should also consider the impact on the LA's budget of the need to provide additional funding to a small school to compensate for its size.

Equal opportunity issues

> The decision-maker must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of LAs/governing bodies, which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination;

- advance equality of opportunity; and

- foster good relations.

The decision-maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed.

Community cohesion

Schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other; by encouraging, through their teaching, an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures, faiths and communities. When considering a proposal, the decision-maker must consider its impact on community cohesion.

Travel and accessibility

Decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. The decision-maker should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes. A proposal should also be considered on the basis of how it will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

Funding

The decision-maker should be satisfied that any land, premises or necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees or religious authority) have given their agreement. A proposal **cannot** be approved conditionally upon funding being made available.

Schools causing concern

In determining proposals decision-makers must ensure that the guidance on schools causing concern (Intervening in falling, underperforming and coasting schools) has been followed where necessary.

Community Services

Some schools may be a focal point for family and community activity, providing extended services for a range of users, and its closure may have wider social consequences. The effect on families and the community should be considered when considering proposals about the closure of such schools. Where the school is providing access to extended services, provision should be made for the pupils and their families to access similar services through their new schools or other means.

Presumption against closing rural schools

There is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and a proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

As there is a presumption against closing rural schools, as Chiltern Edge is classified, any eventual decision to close would need to particularly consider:

- the likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community;

- educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools;

- the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;

- any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and

- any alternatives to the closure of the school.

Any proposal to close a rural school should provide evidence to show that the following have been carefully considered:
- alternatives to closure including the potential for federation with another local school or conversion to academy status and joining a multi-academy trust or umbrella trust to increase the school's viability;

- the scope for an extended school to provide local community services; and facilities e.g. child care facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc.;

- the transport implications; and

- the overall and long term impact on local people and the community of closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility.

Other factors for consideration: Related proposals
Any proposal that is 'related' to another proposal must be considered together. A proposal should be regarded as 'related' if its implementation (or non-implementation) would prevent or undermine the effective implementation of another proposal. Decisions for 'related' proposals should be compatible.

Where a proposal is 'related' to another proposal to be decided by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) the decision-maker should defer taking a decision until the RSC has taken a decision on the proposal, or where appropriate, grant a conditional approval for the proposal.

If Chiltern Edge School were to close, there would need to be expansion of one or more other local schools. As the neighbouring schools are academies, such expansion would need to be approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

According to DfE Departmental Advice issued March 2016, "Making significant changes to an open academy", academies rated 'good' or 'outstanding' at their last inspection, proposing to physically expand their school premises, may follow the fast track approval process, unless the proposal results in an increase of over: 50% in the school's capacity; and/or increases pupil numbers to 2,000 pupils or more. The schools likely to be affected would all qualify for fast track approval to expand under current circumstances.

If a proposal to close Chiltern Edge School is published, the decision on that proposal should not be made until RSC approval has been granted for any resulting expansion of another school, or should be made conditional upon such approval.

Annex 3: Information collected through the Stage 1 Consultation

1. The online consultation received 1118 responses. 19% of these respondents identified themselves as parents of children at Chiltern Edge School; 6% as parents of children allocated places at Chiltern Edge School for September 2017; 24% as parents of children at primary school, two thirds of whom identified themselves as living in the designated area for Chiltern Edge School (some of these categories will overlap). There were 60 respondents identifying themselves as pupils at Chiltern Edge Primary School, although from their detailed responses, it was apparent that some of these were actually past pupils, and it is not clear how many current pupils responded.

2. In addition, 92 responses were received by post and/or email – some of these responses were duplicates of those received online.

3. The consultation period also included three meetings conducted by Oxfordshire County Council and Reading Borough Council officers for parents with children either at the school or due to start at the school in September 2017, and other meetings with interested parties, including other nearby schools and Reading Borough Council.

4. The responses to the consultation are summarised under the following headings. (Where statistics/graphs are provided, these refer to the online responses only.)

Should the county council propose closure of Chiltern Edge School?

5. Nearly all responses to the consultation opposed closure, including those from Reading Borough Council, Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, The Henley College, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and Matt Rodda MP (Reading East) wrote to oppose closure. Sonning Common Parish Council, at its meeting of 15 May 2017, approved the motion "The Parish Council wishes to see Chiltern Edge School successfully brought out of special measures and retained in situ to continue with its important educational and community role in the village. To this end the Parish Council will work with elected representatives, officers, appropriate bodies and school supporters to do everything possible to keep the school in being."

6. The very large majority of responses identified that the closure of Chiltern Edge School would affect their family, the community, and the quality of local education in the area, negatively or very negatively, and thought that closure should not be considered.

Table 1: What impact would closure of Chiltern Edge School have?

Detailed breakdown for 'You and your family, personally?'

Very negatively	51% (590)
Negatively	30% (347)
Neither negatively or positively	18% (215)
Positively	0% (5)
Very positively	1% (6)

Detailed breakdown for 'The local community of Sonning Common?'

Very negatively	86% (1,006)
Negatively	11% (132)
Neither negatively or positively	1% (15)
Positively	0% (5)
Very positively	1% (8)

Detailed breakdown for 'The quality of education in this area?'

Very negatively	82% (953)
Negatively	14% (162)
Neither negatively or positively	2% (21)
Positively	1% (9)
Very positively	1% (14)

7. The affection and pride felt by those associated with the school was apparent from the detailed responses, as was local anger and concern that the school might be closed.

8. A large number of responses disagreed with the Ofsted judgement, and said that it did not reflect their experience of the school. Many respondents praised the school's staff, and argued that many subjects are already achieving good results, although there was some criticism for core subjects. Closure was considered an extreme over-reaction.

9. Some commented that Oxfordshire County Council had not previously given the school sufficient support, and that lessons should be learned about intervening in schools more quickly, and more closely monitoring school performance. Several responses queried the motivation behind closing the school, and in particular whether closure was proposed in order to sell off the site for a capital receipt, and to build more houses.

10. Many respondents argued that there are not sufficient school places in the area already, and that this situation would worsen given that pupil numbers have grown in local primary schools, and there is housing planned in the local area. The need for school places in the area is considered in more detail below.

11. The negative impact on the local community of closing the school was described by several respondents, including the number of community users of the school site and buildings, and how closing the school would reduce the attractiveness of Sonning Common as a place for families to live, and affect local businesses. Being able to walk to school is good for developing pupils' confidence and independence, and their interaction with the local community.

12. Only a few respondents agreed with proposing closure of the school. Some reported negative experiences, including poor behaviour, and thought the school would take too long to turn round.

13. Parents of primary children were asked whether they would choose Chiltern Edge as a preferred school.

Preference for CES	Designated area	All respondents
First	91 [53%]	108 [45%]
Second	49 [28%]	80 [33%]
Third	22 [13%]	34 [14%]
Not a preference	11 [6%]	18 [8%]

The parents who said Chiltern Edge would not be a preference did so mostly due to concerns over standards at the school or distance from home; there were also concerns about the condition of the buildings; lack of support from the council; and the lack of a sixth form.

Alternatives to closure

14. As a rural school, particular attention needs to be given to alternatives to closure, including the potential for federation with another local school or conversion to academy status and joining a multi-academy trust or umbrella trust to increase the school's viability.

15. Most responses said that the school should be given more time and support to improve and stay open. Highdown School was quoted as an example of a school which turned itself around after a poor Ofsted report. Several respondents commented on the positive impact the new interim headteacher and Interim Executive Board were already having, and thought that with strong leadership, the school could quickly improve.

16. Many responses said the school needed more funding, including the funding that would be needed to expand other schools and pay for transport if Chiltern Edge closed, which could instead be spent on improving Chiltern Edge. A few respondents suggested that parents could be asked for donations, but far more thought that there should be more government (local or national) funding for the school.

17. While some respondents rejected the academy option, more accepted that if the school were to stay open, it would need to become a sponsored academy.

It was suggested that the county council should write off the school's budget deficit to encourage a sponsor to take on the school. A few respondents said that the school should become a grammar school, but others said it should not be a grammar school, with no clear balance of views.

18. Suggestions for how the school needs to improve include:

- Improving recruitment and retention of high quality staff at all levels, and ending the dependence on supply staff.

- Considering the nature of education it provides, for example specialising, or providing alternatives to GCSEs to include all range of needs.

- Improving the behaviour of pupils, through stricter discipline.

- Reconsidering the length of the school day to ensure supported homework facilities.

- Closer supervision of the school's performance.

- Better communication with parents.

- Increasing specialist support for SEN/EBD children.

- Focusing on core subjects (English, Maths and Science).

- Changing the classroom set up and looking at how pupils migrate through the school.

- Develop management skills at all levels.

- More professional development for staff.

19. It was suggested that the school could get more support from other local schools and The Henley College, which could be through a school-to-school support network, or through formally federating or joining a multi-academy trust, or even merging.

20. There was support for the existing plan of the school to develop a small portion of its site to generate capital funding to invest in the school, including in providing community facilities which could bring in revenue income. It was thought that building subsidised housing for teachers on some of this land could improve recruitment and retention of staff. Another suggestion was that revenue could be raised through having an on-site shop where pupils could get work experience.

21. Some respondents wanted new accommodation to be built for Chiltern Edge School, or for a new school to be built on the site to replace Chiltern Edge School. Reading families in particular commented that the area needed another secondary school due to a shortage of places north of the river. Other suggestions included relocating Sonning Common Primary School into the Chiltern Edge School to create an all-through school; creating a sixth form – perhaps shared with other schools; restoring adult education to create a lifelong learning centre; increasing the use of the site at weekends and school holidays; making Chiltern Edge an annex of another school; relocating Gillotts

School to the Chiltern Edge site, as Gillotts' accommodation is in poorer condition.

If closure is proposed, what should be taken into account in planning the school's closure?

22. Those factors marked * require particular attention for a rural school.

a. *Sufficiency of school capacity*

Many consultation responses questioned how Chiltern Edge School could be closed when there are insufficient places at other secondary schools in the area to take the displaced pupils.

Chiltern Edge School currently has a capacity of 934 places, admitting up to 180 pupils per year. As of March 2017 it had 507 pupils on roll, so was just over half-full. Of the pupils on roll at Chiltern Edge School in March 2017, only 159 live in Oxfordshire, with most of the rest living in the Caversham area of Reading.

Data collated during the consultation confirmed that there are currently insufficient places at other secondary schools in the area to take the displaced pupils. Langtree School and Gillotts School identified potential to create "bulge" classes to take additional pupils, but did not consider they could accommodate all the pupils currently at Chiltern Edge School. It would be necessary for Reading Schools to accommodate most or all of the Reading pupils.

On 30 June 2017 the county council received Reading Borough Council's consultation response, Annex 7, which stated that closure of Chiltern Edge School would result in Reading pupils having to travel to schools more than three miles distant from where current Reading-resident Chiltern Edge pupils live, and that over 70 per cent of the places currently available are in schools requiring special measures, with 85 per cent in schools that are either requiring improvement or special measures.

In the longer term, pupil planning data indicates that expansion of other schools would be needed to replace the capacity lost at Chiltern Edge School.

Many consultation responses, including that from The Heights Primary School in Caversham, commented that existing bulge classes in local primary schools and planned local housing growth require more, not fewer, secondary school places in this area.

Pupil numbers in the Sonning Common partnership primary schools do not indicate likely growth in demand for places at Chiltern Edge School, and demonstrate how the school is dependent on pupils from outside its immediate area, i.e. Reading, to sustain its numbers:

Current year group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
Year of secondary transfer	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Numbers currently on roll in partnership primary schools	93	103	106	90	106	100	100

Data from the last five years' admissions rounds shows that, on average, 65% of pupils at Chiltern Edge's three partner primary schools (Sonning Common Primary School, Kidmore End Primary School and Peppard Primary School) transfer to Chiltern Edge School. Based on this level of transfer, the partnership schools would be expected to contribute around 60-70 pupils per year to Chiltern Edge's intakes, with the balance being drawn from Reading schools.

In the Woodcote (Langtree) partnership primary schools there is some evidence of growth in demand for places, and in particular a bulge in the cohort due to transfer on 2019, but it is not clear that there will be sustained growth. There is no sustained pattern of growth in the Henley primary schools.

Current Local Plan indications are that housing growth in the Sonning Common area could potentially generate pupils equivalent to around half a form of entry; in the Langtree area there is a similar scale of planned housing growth; in Henley planned housing growth might eventually generate approximately one additional form of entry's equivalent of pupils. Reading Borough Council is consulting on its draft Local Plan, which includes 700 homes in north Reading, broadly equivalent to somewhat less than one form of entry in pupil generation. In each case, much of the impact of housing growth will not affect secondary school numbers for several years.

b. Displaced pupils

Any closure notice would need to specify where pupils displaced by the closure would be offered places, and measures proposed to increase the number of school places in consequence of the proposed closure.

Two other schools are within 3 miles of Sonning Common as the crow flies, although they are more than three miles by transport routes:

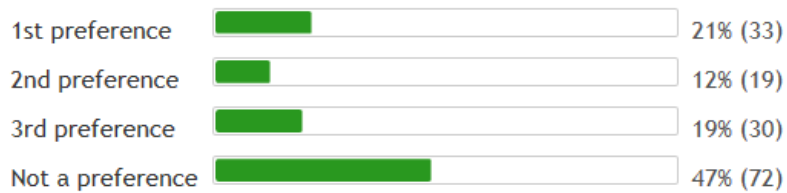| Secondary Schools within 3 miles	Distance in miles from Sonning Common	Ofsted rating
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre (Emmer Green, Reading)	3.5	**Good** (May 2015)
Gillotts School (Henley)	4.6	**Good** (April 2016)

There are a further five secondary schools within 5-8 miles (by travel routes) of Sonning Common:

Other Secondary Schools within 5 miles	Distance in miles from Sonning Common	Ofsted rating
Langtree School (Woodcote, Oxon)	5.0	**Good** (June 2013)
Kendrick (Girls Grammar) School (Tilehurst, Reading)	5.7	Predecessor (non-academy) school: **Outstanding** (October 2008) Not inspected since converting to an academy
Reading (Boys Grammar) School	6.3	**Outstanding** (May 2010)
The WREN School (Reading) Free School, opened Sept 2015	6.4	Not yet inspected
Prospect School (Reading)	7.4	**Requires Improvement** with "Good" features (Sept 2016)

Other than Highdown, the Reading schools are south of the river, which has significant implications for travel times.

Respondents identifying themselves as parents of **Chiltern Edge Year 7-9 pupils** (children in Years 10 and 11 will have left the school before any potential closure) were asked what their preferred schools would be should Chiltern Edge School close:

Detailed breakdown for 'Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre (Emmer Green, Reading)'

1st preference	21% (33)
2nd preference	12% (19)
3rd preference	19% (30)
Not a preference	47% (72)

Detailed breakdown for 'Gillotts School (Henley)'

1st preference	43% (66)
2nd preference	31% (48)
3rd preference	2% (3)
Not a preference	24% (37)

Detailed breakdown for 'Langtree School (Woodcote)'

1st preference	27% (40)
2nd preference	32% (47)
3rd preference	12% (18)
Not a preference	28% (41)
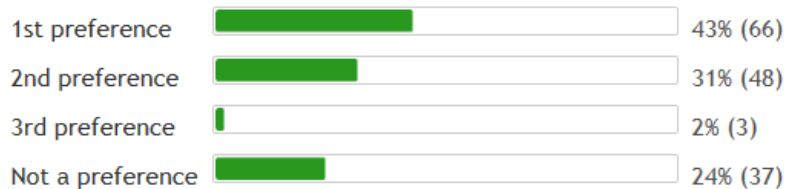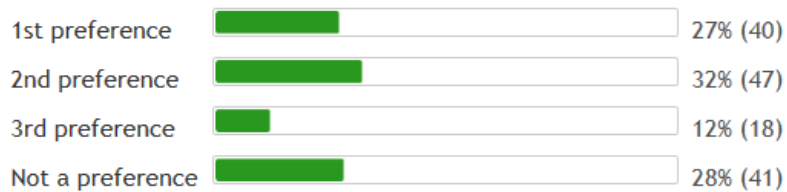
The UTC Reading was also identified as a preferred school by some parents.

Respondents identifying themselves as parents of **Year 6 pupils** allocated places for September 2017 were asked what their preferred schools would be should Chiltern Edge School close:

Detailed breakdown for 'Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre (Emmer Green, Reading)'

1st preference	34% (21)
2nd preference	18% (11)
3rd preference	26% (16)
Not a preference	21% (13)

Detailed breakdown for 'Gillotts School (Henley)'

1st preference	43% (26)
2nd preference	33% (20)
3rd preference	7% (4)
Not a preference	18% (11)

Detailed breakdown for 'Langtree School (Woodcote)'

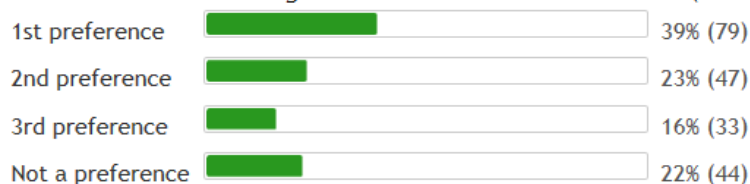|	
1st preference	31% (18)
2nd preference	36% (21)
3rd preference	19% (11)
Not a preference	15% (9)
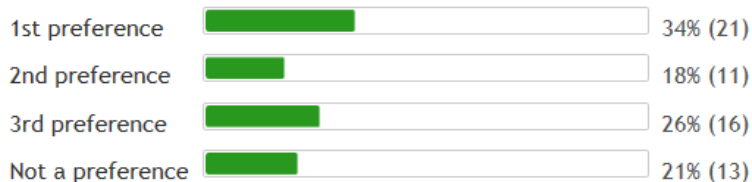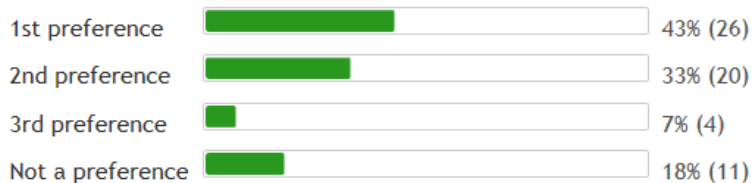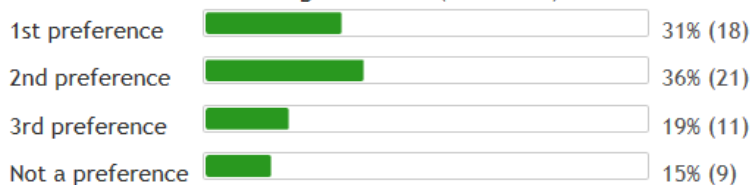
The 287 respondents identifying themselves as parents of **primary school Reception – Year 5 pupils** were asked what their preferred schools would be for secondary transfer:
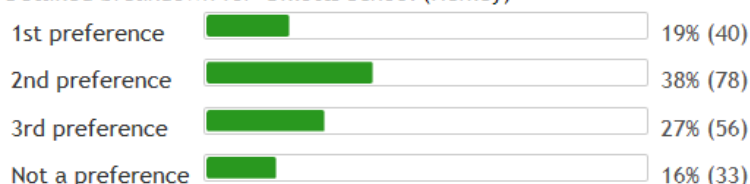
Detailed breakdown for 'Chiltern Edge School'
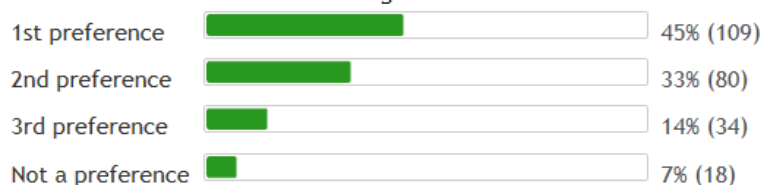
1st preference	45% (109)
2nd preference	33% (80)
3rd preference	14% (34)
Not a preference	7% (18)

Detailed breakdown for 'Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre (Emmer Green, Reading)'

1st preference	39% (79)
2nd preference	23% (47)
3rd preference	16% (33)
Not a preference	22% (44)

Detailed breakdown for 'Gillotts School (Henley)'

1st preference	19% (40)
2nd preference	38% (78)
3rd preference	27% (56)
Not a preference	16% (33)

Detailed breakdown for 'Langtree School (Woodcote)'

1st preference	13% (22)
2nd preference	20% (34)
3rd preference	31% (52)
Not a preference	36% (62)

Kendrick School, Reading School and Wallingford School were also identified as preferences by a few parents, as were independent schools.

Should Chiltern Edge School close, the schools which would be mostly affected by the consequent displacement would clearly be Highdown, Gillotts and Langtree, with the choice between these schools largely determined by proximity and ease of travel.

Respondents considered it important that pupils are given a place at a nearby good school of their choice; that siblings were not separated; that friendship groups should be maintained. There was concern that the allocation of places to other schools should be fair, and not on a "first come" basis.

Catchment areas of surrounding schools would need to be adjusted, but there was a concern that Sonning Common could end up on the edge of other schools' catchments, and always at a disadvantage in the admission process.

The governors of Gillotts School responded that Gillotts School had some vacancies to take transferring pupils, and could create "bulge" classes if

immediate financial support is provided to increase staffing. In the longer term, their site offers potential to expand the school with appropriate capital investment. They raised concerns that despite the school's high standards, Gillotts is not full and has experienced five successive intakes below the school's admission number. The school's partner primary schools are also not full. It is their view that there is an oversupply of school places in south-east which should be addressed by considering how best the quality of education in south-east Oxfordshire can be secured, in terms of number of places and their location. Their full response is shown in Annex 4.

The governors of Langtree School raised particular concerns about pupils at Chiltern Edge about to embark on their GCSE courses at KS4. Consequently, the Headteacher at Langtree School will continue to work in partnership with the interim Headteacher at Chiltern Edge, the Local Authority, the strategic school improvement lead and the Head of the IEB in order to provide whatever help and support it is possible for Langtree to offer during this period of uncertainty. At the time of writing their response to the consultation, Langtree School had only two available places in Year 9. Once these places are taken, the school will be full given its current accommodation and organisation. Like Gillotts, Langtree also raised concerns about the long-standing issue of oversupply of school places in south east Oxfordshire. Their full response is shown in Annex 5.

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre responded that they are "aware that there are many Reading families who have children at Chiltern Edge School. There is not capacity in Highdown for all of these children. Transport time to other Reading schools would be prohibitive. Therefore Highdown believes that Chiltern Edge should be supported to improve and remain open to provide education for children of Reading and South Oxfordshire."

Consultation responses emphasised the importance of additional places being available in Reading for Reading pupils. It was argued that, if Reading pupils could not be accommodated at Highdown, they would be the worst affected by any closure of Chiltern Edge due to the travel difficulties of reaching other schools from the Caversham area.

The consultation responses emphasised the negative impact that having to transfer midway through secondary education would have on children. There was particular concern about children already studying for their GCSE courses (Chiltern Edge starts teaching some GCSE subjects in Year 9).

There was also broader concern that children starting a new school may be vulnerable to isolation, and would need mentoring and other support to support their emotional and mental well-being, as well as their academic progress. Practical issues were raised, including the need for free transport; financial support where families needed to buy new uniforms; and transition days for transferring pupils.

There were mixed views on the speed of closure, with some respondents thinking that a gradual closure would reduce the difficulties of school transfer, and others thinking that it should be as quick and smooth as possible.

As well as displaced pupils, concerns were also raised about staff at Chiltern Edge School, with requests that they would be supported through redeployment, retraining and mentoring.

c. Special educational needs provision

The closure of Chiltern Edge School would not classify as closure of provision for pupils with special educational needs, but as the site accommodated Bishopswood Special School, particular attention would need to be given to the future of this provision, as well as to pupils with SEND currently taught a Chiltern Edge School

Parents of children at Bishopswood School were asked where they would like to see Bishopswood's secondary provision delivered if Chiltern Edge School were to close. Respondents explained that proximity to the primary provision is important, as children are transferred between the two sites. Co-location with a mainstream school is preferred. and Gillott's and Langtree were suggested as alternatives.

Many parents commented on the benefits of a small school for children at Chiltern Edge School with special educational needs, and also raised concerns about children with SEND needing to travel further to other schools if Chiltern Edge School closed.

d. Education standards and diversity of provision*

The schools which would be expected to accommodate displaced pupils should Chiltern Edge School are all rated "Good" by Ofsted.

e. School size

Many respondents made the case that Chiltern Edge School is particularly valued because of its small size, which provides diversity and choice for families who do not want large schools. However, it was also noted that Chiltern Edge School is only currently small because it is not attracting sufficient applicants; its accommodation would enable it to be as big, or bigger than, other local schools which are considered "large".

As school budgets are closely linked to pupil numbers, the school's low numbers have resulted in a long-standing budget deficit which would indicate that it has not been able to maintain the quality of education within its budget. A minority view from the consultation was that, rather than have three schools so close together all struggling for money, it would be better to have two better funded schools.

Some parents of children attending other schools expressed concern that, if Chiltern Edge were to close, their children's schools would become overcrowded or too large, and that standards would suffer at those schools.

f. Equal opportunity issues

Many parents of children with special educational needs responded very positively about the care and attention their children received at Chiltern Edge School, often commenting that this was, at least in part, due to its small size. Parents of children with SEND were also particularly concerned about how their children would be affected if they had to change school, as they would find it difficult to settle into a new, probably larger, school, and may struggle with transport to a more distant school.

g. Community cohesion, community services and impact on rural communities*

Many respondents made the case that the school is a vital part of the local community. Having a secondary school makes the village more attractive to families moving in, and generates local employment.

The school's accommodation hosts a large number of community users, including:

Hirer including number of members	Use	Nights per week
CE Horticultural Society x100	Horticultural shows	Main show in September
CE Orchestra x34	Orchestra	Weekly booking (Tues)
Chiltern Badminton Club x15		Weekly booking (Thurs)
JG Dance x150		Whole site every Saturday Dance studio every Monday
Men's football x12	Local 5 – a – side club	Weekly booking (Thurs)
Ox Adult Learning x12	Upholstery Classes	Weekly booking (Tues)
Reading Ultimate x20	Frisbee	Has been weekly, on hold
Rock Choir x50		Occasional concerts
Rotherfield Football Club x50	Various age groups of youth football	Bookings on Wed and Thurs evenings
Primary school cross country x271	5 meets a year	Monthly October to March.
Scottish Dancing x100		Occasional large group dances
SC Youth Club x70 on roll	Open to young people aged 10 – 16	Twice a week
South Chiltern Choral Society x102 on roll	Choral singing	Weekly rehearsals on Monday, with staged concerts during the year

Women's Frisbee x15	Frisbee	Weekly booking (Wed)

Some of these users come from a wider area, including Caversham, but respondents to the consultation considered it would be difficult to find alternative venues, and that the county council should take responsibility for doing so.

Loss or displacement of these activities would have a negative impact on the local community. One respondent described the crucial role of the Youth Club in an area subject to rural isolation, explaining that the police recognise that the facility reduces anti-social behaviour in the village, and that the Youth Club is particularly valuable to looked-after children placed at the Children's Home & foster carers in the village.

The school is also used by local primary schools for events including music and sports. The secondary school's pupils also take the role of "water helpers" for after-school swimming school at Sonning Common Primary School, which they would not be able to do if they had to travel further to school.

Any proposal to close the school would need to give careful attention to mitigating the potential impact on the community, and in particular whether community facilities could be retained/enhanced.

h. Travel and accessibility*

If Chiltern Edge School were to close, displaced pupils would need to travel to other schools in Oxfordshire or Reading. Statutory guidance requires that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes, and that changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. Respondents, including Reading Borough Council, raised concerns over the amount of travel time pupils would require, particularly if having to travel into Reading, and on how this would increase traffic in the area. It was considered that free direct bus transport should be provided for all affected pupils. Any transport arrangements put in place would need to support pupils' attendance at before/after school clubs. The specific travel needs of children with special educational needs would need particular attention.

i. Funding

Any decision to close a school would require certainty that the necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees or religious authority) have given their agreement. A proposal cannot be approved conditionally upon funding being made available. The consultation identified three strands of funding concerns:
- Schools receiving displaced schools would require additional accommodation, so significant capital investment would be necessary. If part of the current Chiltern Edge School site were to be sold for

redevelopment, the disposal receipt could be reinvested in other schools' accommodation, but this would be subject to the necessary approvals for disposal of schools sites and planning permission. Some consultation responses opposed the building of houses on the Chiltern Edge School site.

- Additional staffing would also be required at receiving schools: although in the longer term this would be funded from increased revenue as a result of higher pupil numbers, schools raised concerns about the time lag between receiving additional pupils and benefitting from higher budgets.

- Oxfordshire County Council and Reading Borough Council would incur additional school travel costs. For Oxfordshire, these have been estimated at £100,000 per year.

Annex 4: Gillotts School Response to Chiltern Edge Closure Consultation

Capacity - as Gillotts is not full, we will clearly be able to take some Chiltern Edge students either through parental choice or when the school closes.

Published Admissions Number - we are working with OCC's Pupil Place Planning team to establish if, in the longer term, Gillotts' PAN may need to be increased, should Chiltern Edge close. We currently have 76 Reading pupils in the school. Were Reading to educate all its students going forward, it would appear likely that the current PAN, or a small increase, would be adequate, especially as some Chiltern Edge students live closer to Langtree than Gillotts. The size of our site means we could accommodate increased pupil numbers, though we may need some capital investment to support.

Managing bulges as Chiltern Edge closes - we anticipate we would need to breach our PAN in some year groups to manage the closure process. This will put pressure on the school as the curriculum and staffing would have to be restructured. However with notice and working in partnership with OCC, we would expect to be able to support.

Funding - a major challenge in managing the closure is the fact that funding is on lagged pupil numbers. Given the current very difficult financial situation for schools, we will be seeking OCC's support to ensure that any pupils who are admitted over the school's published admissions number will be funded immediately.

Appeals - we will be seeking OCC's support in funding exceptional numbers of appeals, should these come to pass.

Long term security of the quality of education at Gillotts - despite the School's high standards, we are not full and have experienced five successive intakes of fewer than our PAN. Our partner primary schools are also not full. The oversupply of school places in south-east Oxfordshire has been an issue for many years and was last formally considered in 2006, though it was not tackled at that time. We welcome this consultation as an opportunity to consider how best the quality of education in south-east Oxfordshire can be secured, in terms of number of places and their location.

Annex 5: Langtree School Governors' response to the consultation on the future of Chiltern Edge School

Governors at Langtree School recognise the close partnership between Langtree and Chiltern Edge which has been a strong feature of our learning community in south east Oxfordshire for many years. In this regard, the governors at Langtree School are very aware of the level of concern which will be felt by all those connected with Chiltern Edge at such an uncertain time.

In particular, governors at Langtree School would like to express their concern for the immediate future of the pupils at Chiltern Edge, especially those who are about to embark on their GCSE courses at KS4. Consequently, the Headteacher at Langtree School will continue to work in partnership with the interim Headteacher at Chiltern Edge, the Local Authority, the strategic school improvement lead and the Head of the IEB in order to provide whatever help and support it is possible for Langtree to offer during this period of uncertainty. Governors at Langtree are fully supportive of this strategy and it is our hope that our close partnership links continue throughout this difficult period.

At the time of writing this response to the consultation, Langtree School has only two available places in Year 9. Once these places are taken, our school will be full. In order to protect the educational provision for students currently studying at Langtree, governors are clear that there will be no increase to this admission number during the period of the consultation.

Clearly, a proposal to close any school in the heart of any community will always be a serious and contentious one. The governors at Langtree school, along with the Headteacher, urge all stakeholders in the local community to submit a response to the current consultation, in order to ensure that the decision makers are fully aware of the views and feelings of all those who could be affected by potential closure.

If the outcome of the consultation is for Chiltern Edge to remain open, governors at Langtree will continue to work with elected representatives and officers at Oxfordshire County Council to address the long-standing issue of oversupply of school places in south east Oxfordshire, in order to ensure that Langtree is a viable school for its local community well into the future.

Annex 6: Consultation submission from Matt Rodda MP (Reading East)

 I would like to raise the following points, after considering the future of Chiltern Edge and speaking to local parents, teachers and colleagues from Oxfordshire County Council and Reading Borough Council.

Basic Need

There is clear evidence of growing basic need in the north Reading area, which has been demonstrated by the lack of school places at local primaries. Given this context I am concerned that a valuable local school could be lost if Oxfordshire proceeded with a formal consultation which led to closure of Chiltern Edge.

 As a result, I believe it is important to keep the school open. In addition the need for school places in the area is linked to a series of other points.

Parental choice

Parents in the north Reading area currently have a choice of two schools offering different and complementary provision. I believe it is important to maintain this element of choice, in particular with regard to areas where Chiltern Edge has a particularly high reputation, such as special needs provision.

Benefits of maintaining a local Community School

Chiltern Edge plays a valuable role as a community school, both for north Reading and the community in south Oxfordshire.

Raising standards

Chiltern Edge recently received a critical Ofsted report, however, the school has also been given much higher gradings in previous Ofsted reports. It currently has a new head who has turned round another school and is showing strong leadership and is supported by an IEB. I believe this process of school improvement should be supported by giving the school time to improve.

Value for Money

If Chiltern Edge was closed at a time of rising basic need Oxfordshire and Reading might have to build other schools or expand existing schools to provide suitable places. They would have to do so at a time when building costs and land values have risen. Maintaining an existing school would appear to offer far better value for money as a result.

Matt Rodda, MP for Reading East, 29th June, 2017

Annex 6: Consultation submission from Reading Borough Council

Contents

Summary

This is an improving school. Many staff and pupils recognise the significant changes that have taken place, especially since September 2017. Parents have expressed their strong support for the school through a public media campaign in response to a possible closure. The school has faced an uncertain future in the last six months. Leaders have not been distracted by these issues. Despite these recent improvements the school remains fragile. This is because too much staffing (including some leadership roles) is interim, systems for managing behaviour are not consistently applied and learning is not consistently interesting and engaging.

Leaders are taking effective action to address the issues raised by the most recent Ofsted inspection report. The school's plans for improvement are fit for purpose. Reasonable progress has been made and the pace of improvement has accelerated significantly since September 2017. Leaders have an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the school remains fragile following recent extensive changes and challenges since being placed in special measures.

The headteacher has provided strong and focused leadership since she started working at the school in June 2017. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) has acted quickly to resolve leadership issues and a rapid staff re-structure. The pace of change achieved in resolving staffing has enabled the school to start to make more rapid progress in other aspects of its provision. The actions taken have also ensured the school is more financially sustainable, with a balanced in-year budget. The headteacher and the chair of the IEB have worked well together. Other senior staff provide strong support for school leadership. The leadership team works cohesively to ensure that priorities are identified and tackled quickly and efficiently. Effective actions have been taken to improve the

leadership of subjects. These middle leaders have benefited from the good range of additional support and training that has been provided for them. Some subject leader roles are, however, still interim and this contributes to the school's fragility. Subject leaders still need to ensure that all staff apply the school's expectations for learning and behaviour more consistently.

Teaching is improving. Teachers have received additional training and support to help them develop their skills and expertise. Many express a keen desire to continue to improve further and appreciate the additional support provided for them. Staffing is more stable since September 2017 and pupils appreciate having consistent teachers for their classes. They feel their learning is now more settled. Some teaching staff are in temporary roles. Staff have developed their understanding and skills in the use of assessment, particularly in relation to examination criteria, since September. Some teaching is still not effective enough. In particular the pace of some lessons, the level of expectation and use of formative assessment requires further improvement.

The attendance of pupils is improving, although for some it is still too low. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND remain a particular priority. Overall attendance is below average still. Staff and pupils recognise that the behaviour of most pupils is now much better and has improved since September 2017. The systems to manage behaviour are used more consistently. In a few lessons, where learning is not interesting, the behaviour of a small group of pupils is not good. This is especially the case for some boys, who engage in low level disruption. Exclusion has been relatively high as new leaders have sought to set out clearer expectations. The level of exclusion reflects the fact that the behaviour of a minority of pupils is not consistently good, including during break and lunch times.

Outcomes for pupils have started to improve. The 2017 Key Stage 4 examination results represented a considerable improvement when compared to 2016. Almost all groups of pupils did better, especially in English and mathematics. Interventions used to provide additional support, for example through a 'Saturday school' are helping current Year 11 pupils to catch up with gaps in their learning. However, improving the attainment and progress made by disadvantaged pupils remains a priority. Progress in science is still too weak. The school is still at a relatively early stage of developing its monitoring of progress across a wider range of subjects and year groups. Pupils are not making good progress yet across all year groups.

Context for this review

This review was commissioned by Oxfordshire local authority and carried out by David Bray on October 30/31 2017.

The review included the following activities:

- Checking plans for improvement and other information on performance provided by school leaders
- Two brief tours of the school during lessons and looking at some work across a range of year groups and subjects
- Interviews with pupils in Years 10 and 11 (his group was chosen by the school)
- Review of an anonymous survey of 90 pupils
- Review of an anonymous survey of 20 staff

Page 106

- Meeting with the chair of the IEB and review of minutes of IEB meetings
- Meeting the headteacher (on several occasions) and an assistant headteacher
- Meeting subject leaders (across core and foundation subjects)
- Checking information on the school website
- A brief review of safeguarding

The school was inspected by Ofsted 7–8 March 2017. The outcomes of the inspection were as follows:

Overall effectiveness	**Inadequate**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Inadequate**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Inadequate**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Requires improvement**
Outcomes for pupils	**Inadequate**

Because leadership and management were grade 4 (inadequate) the school was placed in special measures.

The local authority started the initial phase of a consultation about scope for a possible closure because of the low standards and relative lack of local demand for the school. A relatively high proportion of pupils live in another local authority, but attend this school because it is geographically close to their home. The DfE (through the RSC) has also been consulting stakeholders about possible arrangements to re-open the school as a sponsored academy.

The fate of the school has been closely monitored by the local community. Parents have supported the school strongly and the 'Save Chiltern Edge School from closure' group started a petition to keep the school open. This received a broad range of support. Initial discussions have taken place with the Department for Education about the possibility of his school opening as a sponsored academy. No decision had been reached about this at the time of this review visit.

The school is a smaller than average-sized comprehensive school. The numbers of pupils in the school have reduced over time. Most year groups currently have about 90 pupils. There are significantly fewer in the current Year 9 cohort. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. The small numbers of pupils in each cohort are likely to make the profile of each year group distinctive. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan and/or statement of special educational needs is above average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes are improving, although learning is not consistently strong yet. Key Stage 4 outcomes were especially weak in 2016. The school's progress 8 score was -0.40 (sig) - where 0.0 represents average progress and sig means statistically above or below average. For disadvantaged pupils it was -0.78(sig). The progress made by boys was weak. Progress in English was -0.56 (sig) and mathematics -0.38 (sig). Science and open subjects (subjects

chosen after English, maths, science, languages and humanities options) performed poorly. Overall there were no strengths.

- Progress 8 was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% in the country for the low prior attainment group.
- Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8 was significantly below national other and in the lowest 10% overall.
- Progress 8 in English was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% overall
- Progress 8 in English and mathematics was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% for disadvantaged pupils.
- Progress was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% in at least one of EBacc or open elements or science, languages or humanities for the group: disadvantaged.
- Attendance was low for the groups: FSM, SEN with EHC/statement, SEN support (in the lowest 10%).
- Persistent absence was high for the groups: FSM, SEN with EHC/statement, SEN support (in the highest 10%).

2017 provisional data shows an improved picture in several key areas. The progress 8 score was 0.07 (this is broadly average). English was 0.38 (likely to be sig+) and maths 0.01 (broadly average). Open subjects were 0.26 (partially a result of around one third taking the European Computer Driving Licence) and pupils did better in humanities and languages. Progress in science is still weak. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was sig- in maths and across a range of other subjects.

Across the school pupils are still not making good progress in a wide range of subjects because teaching is not consistently good. The use of a 'Saturday school' has enabled a key group of Year 11 pupils to start to fill the gaps in their understanding of core subjects since September 2017. Many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have still to catch up with their peers as a result of consistently weak teaching over time. Boys are achieving significantly less well than girls. Outcomes in a wide range of subjects are still weak. The school has strengths in PE, geography, dance, drama and design technology.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is improving. The school has experienced a significant turnover of teachers and support staff in the previous six months. A recent re-structuring of staff has started to lead to pupils experiencing a more consistent approach to learning in the large majority of lessons.

Learning varies considerably. Whilst some is well-paced and effective a small, but significant amount is still characterised by:

- low expectations
- inconsistent use of behaviour management systems
- fragile relationships with a few pupils, mainly boys, who find that lessons are not engaging
- activities that occupy pupils' time but which do not support their learning strongly

Staff and pupils believe the school has now managed to ensure that most staff focus more clearly on improving their approaches to learning. Staff who completed a survey recognised

the positive changes that had taken place since September and are committed to helping the school to improve further. The teaching of science remains a concern for some pupils. A few classes still have temporary staff teaching lessons and some have experienced a significant change of staffing over time. This has disrupted their learning. A small number of staff are receiving additional support and challenge.

A few staff are temporary and/or working in a consultant role. This is enabling the school to cover specific lessons with relatively skilled staff. The longer-term capacity of teaching across the school still requires significant development and teaching overall is still not consistently good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The majority of pupils are proud of the school and behave well. They have responded well to the newly introduced expectations for uniform. Pupils recognise and appreciate the improvements made in staff expectations for behaviour since September 2017. Staff and pupils agree that behaviour is improving. The behaviour of a minority pupils is a concern and is having a negative effect on other pupils in the school. The majority of these are boys. Behaviour is not consistently good in a minority of lessons and during break and lunch time.

Exclusions are above average and have risen this term. This partially reflects the aim of new leaders to set out higher expectations. The majority of exclusions involve boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils say they are confident they could talk to someone in school if they had concerns about a particular issue. They feel that staff would respond positively and take their views seriously.

Attendance is below average. The current overall attendance this term is about 94%. Attendance is lower for pupils in Years 10 and 11. It is also lower for disadvantaged and SEND pupils. Actions to improve attendance are showing some signs of positive impact. It is too early to comment on how effective current strategies to improve attendance will be over a longer period of time.

The careers guidance provided for older pupils helps them to make informed choices about A level courses. It does not provide sufficient detail about routes into apprenticeships.

Leadership and management

This is an improving school. The headteacher has brought a clear sense of direction since taking up post. There has been much to do. She has been able to provide staff with clear feedback about strengths and weaknesses and ensured they understand the need for rapid further improvement. She has an accurate understanding of the school. Her energy, enthusiasm and determination have led to a strong focus for staff on achieving greater consistency in the application of the school's expectations for learning. She has introduced additional support and challenge to help staff who require it. Staff and pupils recognise the positive changes that have been introduced since she took up post. It is too early to know about the long-term sustained impact of her work at this school.

Other senior staff provide strong support for the headteacher. The senior team are working well together to drive the school forwards and to ensure the pace of change is maintained.

Middle leaders have taken on the revised expectations for their work with enthusiasm. They participate willingly in the additional training and support provided for them. Middle

leadership is still fragile because it is new, interim, or both. For example a new English leader will start in January, the maths leader is interim and the science leader is currently on maternity leave. Subject leaders have not yet had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching in subjects. This aspect of leadership has been provided by senior leaders and outside consultants. Leadership of subjects is still at an early stage of development.

The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching is improving, although still weak in some key areas. Assessment is becoming increasingly accurate. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities available.

Resources have been manged well. This has enabled the school to set a revised, balanced budget for this year. The local authority has provided strong support through the IEB. The local authority has supported the staff re-structure, despite the fact that this is a foundation school (where governors took on responsibility for these areas of employment).

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Appropriate checks are made to ensure that adults are suitably qualified and experienced. Checks are made to ensure visitors are vetted. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and the systems for reporting any concerns they might have are clear and managed well.

The IEB has provided strong and purposeful leadership for the school during a significant period of change. In the time since the previous inspection took place the school has lost a headteacher, deputy headteacher, business manager and been through a very significant period of staff re-structuring. A new headteacher has started working at the school. Discussions have taken place about a possible academy sponsor for the school. The pace of change has had the potential to de-stabilise the school further. The IEB has supported the school effectively through this period. They have taken on a strong role in the leadership of many of the changes taking place and enabled the headteacher to start in September with a clear agenda for improving the school.

The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Progress against the Ofsted key issues
The previous inspection report identified several areas for improvement, grouped under main key headings.

1. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:

– ensuring that improvement plans have clear targets and success criteria, so that governors and leaders can evaluate school effectiveness more accurately

Improvement plans have been regularly updated and reviewed. They relate closely to the priorities identified in the previous Ofsted inspection. Priorities have been developed further or supplemented where this is relevant. The governing body was replaced by an IEB in May 2017. The IEB has taken robust and timely action in order to provide support for the school in addressing staffing issues, re-structuring of staffing and putting in place actions to address a very significant ongoing budget deficit.

– ensuring that governors challenge school leaders, particularly on the performance of pupils

The Chair of the IEB has a realistic and accurate awareness of the previous under-achievement of pupils and is kept well informed about the progress being made across a wide range of year groups and subjects. The IEB has acted quickly to recruit a new headteacher for the school. This has contributed strongly to the improved capacity for leadership.

– monitoring pupils' progress closely and using what is learned to inform next steps

The process of setting up expectations for information on pupil's progress have been put in place. The first data has been collected across a wide range of subjects. It is too early to comment on the accuracy or effectiveness of this information, although school leaders have taken appropriate actions to try to ensure the data is robust and accurate.

– making sure that the school's behaviour management system is consistently used to monitor and deal with derogatory language, so that bullying is eliminated and pupils feel safe

The school's systems have been reviewed and updated. Views on the effectiveness of the approaches to managing behaviour are mostly positive. Pupils and staff recognise that significant improvements have taken place since September. Behaviour is affected by pupil's experience of particular classes, teachers and subjects. Some lessons are still disrupted. This includes low level, off task behaviour, or a general lack of engagement with learning. This behaviour is reducing, but is still prevalent in too many lessons and having a negative effect on the progress made by some pupils.

– ensuring that leaders and governors routinely evaluate pupil premium expenditure so that it is focused on activities that rapidly improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

A plan has been produced on the use of pupil premium funding for 2017/18. This aspect of leadership has been weak and has not been evaluated routinely. Relevant information is not currently available on the school website (statutory requirement). There is no up to date report on the use of catch up funding. Leaders understand that it is now a priority. Leaders are able to state how they plan to address these issues. Impact is not yet evident.

– strengthening subject leadership in English, mathematics and science

School leaders have taken actions to try to improve leadership in core subjects. In each case the outcome of these actions is more focused attention given to improving the progress made by pupils, especially those in Year 11. At this stage of the school's journey towards improvement actions have necessarily been short term fixes. Leaders are aware of the need to make leadership capacity more sustained. For example, the current Head of Maths is an interim appointment. The head of science is being covered during a maternity leave. The Head of English is leaving and will be replaced in January 2018. Subject leaders are currently working through a programme of training and development. Subject leadership across a wide range of subjects, including English, maths and science, is still at an early stage of development and subject leaders are not yet having sufficient effect on improving their subject areas.

– further improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The staff re-structuring has resulted in support roles with a more focused approach to improving the attendance of this core group of pupils. There are some early signs of improvement. It is not clear yet if this is sustained. This remains an area of priority.

2. Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by:

– ensuring that teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including boys

The targets set for pupils have been increased in order to ensure they are sufficiently challenging. The strategies to achieve these targets are still not secure enough in a minority of lessons because teaching is not effective. Some boys in particular continue to under-achieve.

– making sure that teachers plan tasks that match pupils' starting points sharply, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

School leaders have provided regular training for staff on this aspect of their work. In most lessons activities are planned well to meet the needs of groups if pupils. In a significant minority of lessons expectations are too low and tend to be aimed towards the pupils with lower skills and experience. In some cases insufficient account is taken of prior learning.

– helping pupils to develop a love of reading that supports their access to and engagement with the wider curriculum

School leaders have started to make this a priority and have introduced 'Thinking Reading' in order to secure further improvement. The expectations for the teaching of reading and writing across the school are still inconsistent.

– ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in English and mathematics

These pupils are currently not making good progress. This is a key priority.

– making sure that teachers use assessment information to identify and support pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

Leaders have provided additional training and support for staff in order to improve their awareness and skills in this area. Staff understand that this is a priority and most have begun to improve their use of assessment, especially in relation to examination criteria. Other aspects of assessment and feedback, such as formative assessment and questioning, are still relatively weak.

3. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The governing body was replaced by an Interim Executive Board, making this action inappropriate.

Page 112

4. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

A review has been planned for January 2018. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is still a key priority for improvement.

Other relevant information

- Many improvements are recent, fragile or reliant on external capacity.
- The school experienced a significant staff re-structure in the summer of 2017. This process was handled rapidly and enabled the school to start in September with a settled and relatively stable staff.
- A provisional, in principle, agreement has been reached for a sponsor to take on responsibility for the school
- The school has experienced significant changes in leadership with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and business manager all having left in a relatively short period of time. The arrangements for the current headteacher are interim. The IEB has been in place for a relatively short space of time. The IEB has provided focus support for school and helped to tackle some key barriers to improvement
- The re-structuring has meant that the budget has been managed effectively and the school anticipates a balanced in-year budget for 2017/18.
- Oxfordshire local authority has taken played a strong role in resolving a structural deficit for this Foundation school.
- Provisional invalidated progress data for 2017 shows above average progress or English, average for maths and below average for a range of other subjects (including science).

Suggested further actions

This is a school that is showing the early signs of improvement. Leaders have taken decisive action to address the significant weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Some aspects of staffing and leadership are fragile.

Leaders should:

- Update the school web site so that it meets requirements for information that should be published.
- Continue to review, check and develop actions required to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils
- Continue to provide support and training for staff so that a greater proportion of lessons provide more interest and engagement, higher expectations, greater pace and challenge
- Continue to focus on improving leadership at all levels so the school focuses less on intervention and more effectively on providing quality-first teaching
- Begin to focus the school's resources, actions and attention to Key Stage 3 in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of its school improvement strategies
- Improve consistency of behaviour management, expectations and support for staff in how to engage boys positively

- Continue to improve the attendance of all pupils and ensure that those who currently have low attendance (especially some who are disadvantaged and/or those with special educational needs) attend more regularly
- Continue to develop the skills, experience and capacity of middle leaders so they are able to drive the necessary improvement within their subject areas
- Improve the teaching of reading and writing across subject areas

Summary of surveys completed for the review

Staff survey – 19 responses

1. I am proud to be a member of staff at this school.

Strongly agree   5
Agree   12
Disagree   2
Strongly disagree 0

2. Children are safe at this school.

Strongly agree   3
Agree   15
Disagree   1
Strongly disagree 0

3. Behaviour is good in this school.

Strongly agree   0
Agree   10
Disagree   7
Strongly disagree 2

4. The behaviour of pupils is consistently well managed.

Strongly agree   0
Agree   6
Disagree   11
Strongly disagree 2

5. The school deals with any cases of bullying effectively (bullying includes persistent name-calling, cyber, racist and homophobic bullying).

Strongly agree   3
Agree   15
Disagree   0
Strongly disagree 1

    6.   Leaders do all they can to improve teaching.

Strongly agree   2
Agree   13
Disagree   4
Strongly disagree 0

    7.   The school makes appropriate provision for my professional development.

Strongly agree   1
Agree   10
Disagree   6
Strongly disagree 2

    8.   The school successfully meets the differing needs of individual pupils.

Strongly agree   1
Agree   9
Disagree   8
Strongly disagree 1

    9.   I know what we are trying to achieve as a school.

Strongly agree   5
Agree   13
Disagree   1
Strongly disagree 0

    10. All staff consistently apply school policies.

Strongly agree   0
Agree   11
Disagree   8
Strongly disagree 0

11. The school is well led and managed.

Strongly agree   0
Agree   15
Disagree   3
Strongly disagree 1

Pupil survey 94 responses

1. How well does the school help me to learn?

very well   36
Quite well   46
Fairly well   12
Not very well 0

2. How well do teachers support me with my work?

very well   38
Quite well   43
Fairly well   13
Not very well 0

3. How well do you think the school has improved since you have been here?

very well   41
Quite well   42
Fairly well   7
Not very well 4

4. What is behaviour like at the school?

Very good 5
Good   51
OK   28
Not good   7

5. I feel safe at this school.

All of the time   53
Most of the time 36
Some of the time 4
Rarely   0

6. I feel confident that a member of staff would help me if I had a problem.

Yes 86
No 7

7. I have no concerns abut bullying - either verbal or physical.

I agree   74
I disagree 19

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET – 28 NOVEMBER 2017

STAFFING REPORT – Quarter 2 2017/18

Report by Director of Human Resources

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on staffing numbers and related activity for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2017. Progress will be tracked throughout the year on the movement of staffing numbers from those reported at 31 March 2017 as we continue to deliver our required budget savings. We also continue to track reductions since 1 April 2010 to reflect the impact on staffing numbers via delivery of our Business Strategy and Transformation programme.

Current numbers

2. The staffing number (FTE) as at 30 September 2017 was 3356.8 employed in post. These figures exclude the school bloc. 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. The numbers as at 30 September 2017 were as follows - Full time 2450 and Part time 1582. This equates to a total of 4032 employees; 3356.8 FTE employed in post.

3. The changes in staffing numbers since 31 March 2017 are shown in the table below.   A breakdown of movements by directorates is provided at Annex 1.

	FTE Employed	Quarterly Change (FTE)
Q4 (31 March 2017)	3404.86	-15.26
Q1 (30 June 2017)	3367.20	-37.66
Q2 (30 Sept 2017)	3356.80	-10.40
Q3 (31 Dec 2017)		
Q4 (31 March 2018)		

Quarter 2 Update

4. We remain committed to redeploying displaced staff wherever possible. This is getting more difficult as staffing numbers reduce across the Council.   There were three employees redeployed this quarter. We will review policy and practice in this area as part of our broader approval process (see paragraph 5).

5.   Work continues with finance colleagues to incorporate the alignment of establishment and budget data as part of the approval process.   This will ensure that rigorous checks continue to be in place prior to any recruitment, but also give managers more flexibility to determine the types of roles best suited to their service needs while maintaining their establishment budget.

6.   We recognise that operational services are critical and cannot be left without any cover. Prudent use of agency staff is therefore deployed to ensure continuity of service. In common with all employers, the council deploys agency staff as cover for instances of maternity leave, illness and short-term gaps in recruitment where a permanent replacement is not due to arrive until sometime after an employee has left. Agency spend remains significant with an increase recorded for this quarter, but overall is continuing to reduce on last year as indicated in Paragraph 7.

7.   The cost of agency and consultancy staff this quarter is reported as £2,358,803, an increase on last quarter which follows the same trend as 2016/17 – a detailed breakdown of Agency spend is shown at Annex 2. We have also now appointed Comensura as our single supplier to provide our agency requirements which will strengthen the control of spend and demand management.   The contract will commence in December.   An update on this will be provided with the Quarter 3 report.

8.   We will continue to track progress on staff number movements during the year ahead. The overall reduction in FTE employed since 1 April 2017 is 1.4% The Council has seen a reduction of 1927 FTE (36.47%) employed since 31 March 2010.

Accountability

9.   Staffing numbers continue to be monitored rigorously. All requests for recruitment continue to be reviewed by the HR Business Partners and Directorate Leadership Teams. Only posts which are considered business critical will be authorised.
    .

Recommendation

10.   The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

STEVE MUNN
Director of Human Resources

10 November 2017
Contact Officer: Sarah Currell, HR Manager (Business Systems),
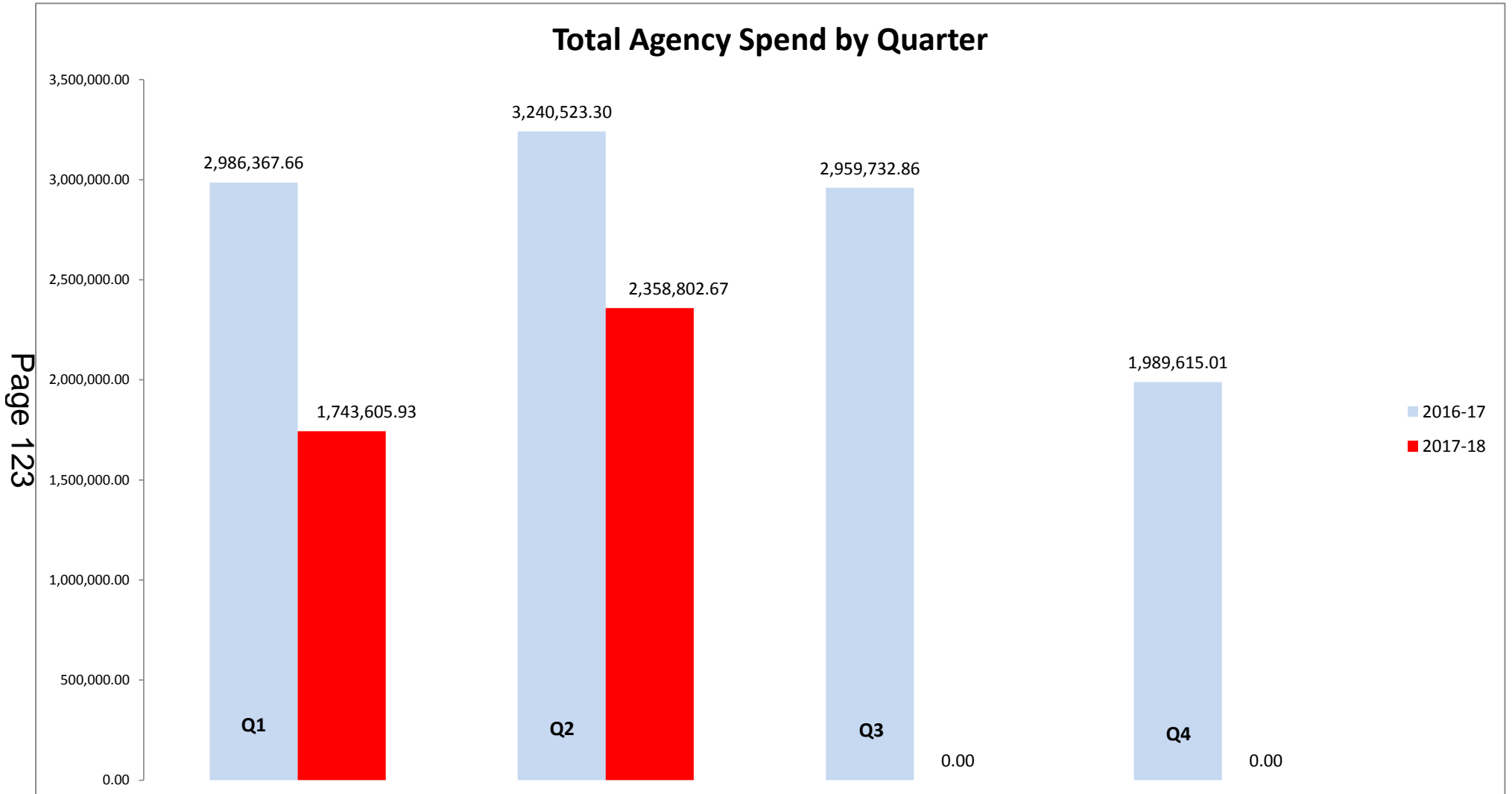Tel: 07867 467793.

DIRECTORATE	FTE Employed at 30 September 2017	Changes in FTE Employed since 1 April 2017	Cost of Agency Staff * £
PEOPLE	**1769.10**	**13.20**	**1,573,826**
Childrens	1085.6	-6.6	
Adults **	660.4	19.40	
Public health	23.08	0.4	
COMMUNITIES*	**812.6**	**14.10**	**251,989**
Communities exc FRS	489.8	14.5	
FRS and Community Safety	322.8	-0.40	
RESOURCES **	**775.1**	**-37.7**	**532,988**
TOTAL	**3356.80**	**-10.40**	**2,358,803**

* Transfer in of some Capita staff into Communities

**Reorganisation of Policy and Performance - transfer of some staff from Resources into Adults

Please note: 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 page is intentionally left blank

Total Agency Spend by Quarter

	2016-17	2017-18
Q1	2,986,367.66	1,743,605.93
Q2	3,240,523.30	2,358,802.67
Q3	2,959,732.86	0.00
Q4	1,989,615.01	0.00

This page is intentionally left blank

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 28 NOVEMBER 2017

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 19 December 2017

▪ **Business Management & Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 - 2017/18 - December 2017**
To note and seek agreement of the report.

Cabinet, Deputy Leader
2017/101

▪ **Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment 2017**
To seek approval of the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment 2017.

Cabinet, Environment
2017/129

▪ **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme 2017**
To seek approval of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme 2017.

Cabinet, Environment
2017/130

▪ **Highway Maintenance Capital Programme**
To seek approval for the programme of works for Highway Maintenance for the years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Cabinet, Environment
2014/143

▪ **Drayton and Deddington Depot Improvements - Business Case**
To seek approval for the business case.

Cabinet, Environment
2017/144

▪ **2017/18 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report - October 2017**
Financial report on revenue and capital spending against budget allocations, including virements between budget heads and any necessary capital programme approvals.

Cabinet, Finance
2017/081

▪ **Service & Resource Planning Report - 2018/19 - December 2017**
To provide background and context to the service and resource planning process for 2018/19.

Cabinet, Finance
2017/082

This page is intentionally left blank