

To: **Members of the Cabinet**

## ***Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet***

**Tuesday, 27 February 2024 at 2.00 pm**

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

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



Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

February 2024

Committee Officer: **Chris Reynolds**  
Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: [chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Membership**

#### *Councillors*

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Dr Pete Sudbury	Deputy Leader of the Council with responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Neil Fawcett	Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services
Andrew Gant	Cabinet Member for Transport Management
Kate Gregory	Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement
John Howson	Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
Dan Levy	Cabinet Member for Finance
Dr Nathan Ley	Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety
Judy Roberts	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy

*The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting  
will become effective at the end of the working day on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
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 March 2024*

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies for Absence

### 2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

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

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (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

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

*To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024. Requests to speak should be sent to [chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

*If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be*

*provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.*

## **6. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 19 - 46)**

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Support for People Leaving Hospital; the Oxfordshire Way

Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Draft Customer Experience Strategy

## **7. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Functions: Transition Arrangements (Pages 47 - 56)**

*Cabinet Member:* Leader of the Council

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/346

*Contact:* Chloe Taylor, Head of Economy

*chloe.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Corporate Director: Environment & Place **(CA7)**

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) Note the government announcement on the transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership core functions;**
- b) Approve the creation of a County Council controlling interest in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP Ltd), subject to agreement by OxLEP Ltd's board**
- c) Consent to a change to OxLEP Ltd's governance to amend the Articles of Association and By-Laws to enable the County Council to take a controlling interest, if agreed by the OxLEP board;**
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy to take such operational decisions as are required to conclude the integration process, including concluding the Articles of Association.**

## **8. Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Q3 October - December 2023 (Pages 57 - 62)**

*Cabinet Member:* Community & Corporate Services

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2024/005

*Contact:* Michael Fletcher, Head of HR Business Partnering

Michael.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA8)**

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

## **9. Capital Programme Approvals - February 2024 (Pages 63 - 64)**

*Cabinet Member:* Finance

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/266

*Contact:* Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager,

[natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA9)**

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **approve the inclusion of a 3 Form Entry Primary School, located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme with capital budget of £2.19m, to be fully funded from secured S106 contributions.**

## **10. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 65 - 70)**

*Cabinet Member:* All

*Contact Officer:* Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

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 **CA10**. 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.***

## **11. For information only: Cabinet responses to Scrutiny items (Pages 71 - 74)**

Vision Zero

## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

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

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

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

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

### **Declaring an interest**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Agenda Item 3

## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 January 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.35pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Andrew Gant  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor John Howson  
Councillor Dan Levy  
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley  
Councillor Judy Roberts

**Other Members in Attendance:**

Councillors David Bartholomew, Donna Ford and Eddie Reeves

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Stephen Chandler, Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance), Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Karen Fuller (Corporate Director Adult Social Care), Lisa Lyons (Corporate Director Children's Services), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

*The Cabinet 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.*

**1/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury.

**2/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

**3/24 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

**4/24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

See annex.

**5/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

8 Future Council Governance Group – Final Report

Cllr Charlie Hicks

14 Oxford City Centre Accommodation Strategy

Cllr Susanna Pressel

**6/24 APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda Item. 6)

There were none to report.

**7/24 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair of the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the reports and recommendations on:-

Employee Engagement Survey  
Capital Asset Disposal Process  
Social Value Policy  
City Centre Accommodation Strategy

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

**8/24 FUTURE COUNCIL GOVERNANCE GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report and recommendations from the Future Council Governance Group. It had been presented to the Audit and Governance

Committee on 29 November 2023 by Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak, chair of the cross-party group. Members of the committee welcomed the findings and recommendations.

The group's recommendation relating to the formation of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was supported at the full Council meeting on 12 December 2023. The terms of reference for the new committee were developed ahead of Council and were approved at the meeting.

The other recommendations made by the group, including the inter-relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny, participatory process, locality working and futures planning, would need to be taken forward by the Cabinet, Leader of the Council and individual Cabinet Members.

Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak, Chair of the Future Council Governance Group, presented the report. He welcomed the establishment of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the implications for future generations were now being taken into consideration in the Council's governance processes. Councillor Gawrysiak then summarised the Group's other recommendations. He referred, particularly, to the proposals for a Citizens Panel.

During discussion members commented on the following:-

- The challenges and benefits of Cabinet and Scrutiny functions working together more effectively
- The work that had taken place on Citizens' Juries

Councillor Fawcett moved, and Councillor Gant seconded the amended recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED:-**

- a) to note the work undertaken by the Future Council Governance Group including the following recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet:**
- b) to review the inter-relationship between the Cabinet and Scrutiny and introduce an integrated forward plan which brings together the individual work plans of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.**
- c) to evaluate the cost and processes for a citizens' panel with a view, subject to budget, to selecting one topic in 2024-25 for**

**review by a citizens' panel and review its success or otherwise before committing to any future panels.**

- d) to reinvigorate locality meetings by inviting local stakeholders as necessary and undertake a wider review of locality working including the practicalities of delegating some budgets and allowing recommendations to be made to the Cabinet and Cabinet Members.**
- e) to take steps to embed 'futures planning' across the Council and for it to become integral part of the decision-making process and scrutiny work plans.**

## **9/24 PEOPLE AND CULTURE STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report introducing the "Our People and Culture Strategy" which set out the vision for developing and maintaining high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities that the Council served. The strategy referred to the importance of nurturing an environment that supported diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allowed all employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.

The strategy focused on four priorities:

- (a) Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people
- (b) Enabling our people to thrive and perform.
- (c) Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future.
- (d) Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, presented the report.

The Director of Workforce and Organisational Development then referred to the four priorities set out in the strategy. In response to questions, she explained the reasoning for the KPI measurements in the strategy and that these would be subject to further development. She confirmed that monitoring of statistics on maternity leave returners would be included within the performance monitoring statistics.

The Chair welcomed the report and noted the ambitious objectives during the initial year.

**RESOLVED to**

- a) approve the "Our People and Culture Strategy" annexed to the report outlining four priority areas of focus:**

- a. **Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people**
- b. **Enabling our people to thrive and perform.**
- c. **Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future.**
- d. **Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future.**

- b) **note the programme in place to support the delivery of the strategy.**

**10/24 REPORT ON THE AUTHORITY'S POLICY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATION OF THE INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 , THE USE OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS ACT AND THE RECENT INSPECTION BY THE INVESTIGATORY POWERS COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report providing a summary of the covert activities undertaken by the council between April 2022 and March 2023 under the provisions of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and supporting Codes of Practice. The Council's existing Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 was updated annually but had not been subjected to a full refresh since 2017. The report provided Cabinet with an opportunity to review and approve the council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy. The policy required Cabinet approval in the absence of a delegation in the Constitution to another body or committee for approval.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, presented the report.

The Director of Law & Governance explained that, when the Council used the powers in the RIPA act, there was an additional level of oversight by the magistrates' courts.

Councillor Fawcett moved, and Councillor Ley seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to :**

- a) **consider and note the use of activities within the scope of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act by the Council, and**
- b) **approve the revised Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 included in the annex of this paper**

- c) **note the comments provided by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office regarding assurance of ongoing compliance with RIPA 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and that a further inspection is not required until 2026.**

## **11/24 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2023**

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered a report presenting the September 2023 performance, risk, and finance position for the council. The business management reports were part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

Councillor Levy moved, and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

### **RESOLVED to:-**

- a) **note the report and annexes.**
- b) **note the virements set out in Annex 2b to the report**

## **12/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - JANUARY 2024**

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out requests for changes to the Capital Programme requiring Cabinet approval that would be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next quarterly update to the Capital Programme in March 2024.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

In response to a question, the Executive Director of Resources confirmed that funds had been allocated to rail feasibility studies for a number of routes within the County.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) approve the inclusion of 'Great Mead', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £3.1m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
- b) approve the inclusion of 'Willow Bank', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £1.8m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
- c) approve the inclusion of a new Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School for Social and Emotional High Needs (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme, with an indicative capital budget of £14.4m to be met by section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

**13/24 FREEHOLD DISPOSAL CHILTERNES END FORMER CARE HOME, HENLEY ON THAMES**

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed disposal of land comprising the former elderly persons' home at Chilternes End.

The property was let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership under a project agreement dated 20 December 2001, for a term of 60 years, for use as an elderly persons' home. The property had been empty since 2016 when the residents moved to a new facility elsewhere in Henley. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) took back occupation in October 2019.

The property had been considered for several uses within OCC since late 2019, but with no viable business case forthcoming. It has been allocated in the Henley on Thames Neighbourhood Plan for a mix of open market and affordable housing.

The property had been formally declared surplus and been marketed for sale for the last two months.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Levy seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) approve, as a key decision, the freehold sale of land comprising the former elderly persons home at Chilterns End to a named purchaser in consideration of the Council receiving a capital receipt.**
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to consider officer recommendations and agree the final purchaser and sale price.**

**14/24 OXFORD CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet agreed that there was no need to go into private session for this item.

Cabinet had before it a report regarding the options for the Council's office accommodation in Oxford City Centre which were being considered as part of the Property and Assets Strategy approved in November 2022. This strategy set out the Council's 10-year ambition for its property portfolio driven by the need to repurpose the estate to enable new ways of delivering services, support agile working and decarbonise existing buildings.

The Strategy had confirmed the continued need for a core central office and democratic facilities in Oxford city centre based on its central location, historical significance, strong public transport links, access to a larger workforce and the range of facilities in the city. A cross party Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) was established in February 2023 to provide guidance and feedback to the Cabinet Member for Finance, on the development of options and a business case to deliver the objectives.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

The Director of Property Services referred the benefits of the move to a Council-owned property and the associated regeneration of an area of Oxford City Centre which were explained in the report.

During discussion, members referred to the need for careful consideration of the future use of the County Hall site in view of its historic social and value and the benefits for residents and staff resulting from the move to a refurbished building more suited to present day needs. Members also referred to the economic factors involved in the consideration of the options and the need to ensure that best value was taken into account.



Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Gant seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) progress Option 2: ‘Consolidation in Speedwell House and disposal of County Hall’ as the preferred option and progress the project through the Council’s capital governance and reporting processes, noting the financial position.
- b) To engage the market to assess interest in both New and Old County Hall to inform a final decision on Old County Hall’s future.

**15/24 DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2023**

(Agenda Item. 15)

**RESOLVED to note the executive decision taken under delegated powers, set out in paragraph 4 of the report.**

**16/24 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 16)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

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

**17/24 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM**

(Agenda Item. 17)

Cabinet noted the following response to the Scrutiny report:-

SEND and staffing changes

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....

<p><b>1. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS</b></p> <p>The council website says: "From early 2024 we will be enforcing the LTN traffic restrictions on Crescent Road (Temple Cowley), Littlehay Road (Florence Park) and Littlemore Road (Church Cowley) with ANPR cameras in place of physical bollards".</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member give a precise date (or to the closest week possible) for when these ANPR cameras will be installed?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT.</b></p> <p>Subject to successful implementation and testing we plan to go live with the cameras at the beginning of April 2024.</p>
<p><b>2. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS</b></p> <p>Following the cross-party support in Full Council of a motion in September to pursue public control of buses, what steps have been taken so far by the Cabinet and/or officers towards a feasibility study on introducing: (a) Oxfordshire bus franchising, and/or (b) an Oxfordshire municipal bus company, and/or (c) a "Transport for Oxfordshire" public transport body (as set out in part 1 of the motion). Will funding for a feasibility study be included in the Cabinet's</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT.</b></p> <p>As the proposer of the motion, Cllr Hicks will know that it did not agree "to pursue public control of buses." It asked Cabinet to investigate options. That process is underway and I will report the results at the appropriate moment. On the specific question of allocation of funds for a feasibility study in the 2024/25 budget, the administration's proposals have of course been published.</p>

2024/5 budget proposals?	
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## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.00am

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Andrew Gant  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor John Howson  
Councillor Dan Levy  
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley  
Councillor Judy Roberts

**Other Members in**

**Attendance:** Councillors David Bartholomew, Ian Corkin and Eddie Reeves

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Stephen Chandler, Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance), Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Karen Fuller (Interim Corporate Director Adult Social Care), Lisa Lyons (Corporate Director Children's Services), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

*The Cabinet 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.*

**18/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none.

**19/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

**20/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 3)

There were no requests received.

**21/24 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT**

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and observations on the Budget and Business Planning Report.

Councillor Reeves thanked the Cabinet members and officers who had attended the Committee's meetings during consideration of the Budget report. He referred, in particular, to the following observations:-

- The impact of the proposals for the workplace parking levy
- Concerns regarding the proposals for "delaying", particularly the need for consultations with trade unions and the impact of the proposals on the "Delivering the Future Together" initiative
- The need for clarity on the position regarding the High Needs Block funding in Children's Services
- The need for more priority to be given to developing career opportunities for staff in Children and Adults' services and the financial benefit to the Council.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their thorough report and said that the Cabinet would take on board the observations. She confirmed that the trade unions had been briefed on the budget proposals and there were national discussions taking place on Higher Needs education funding.

During discussion members commented on the need to consider the impact of the labour market on the recruitment and retention of staff in the County Council.

**RESOLVED to note the report and observations of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

## **22/24 BUDGET & BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT - 2024/25 - JANUARY 2024**

(Agenda Item. 5)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out the Cabinet's revenue budget for 2024/25, medium term financial strategy to 2026/27, capital programme to 2033/34 plus supporting policies, strategies and information.

This report included the budget engagement and consultation 2024/25 findings the Cabinet's proposed Revenue Budget Strategy and the Capital & Investment Strategy (Section 5). Alongside this, the report also set out the Review of Charges for 2024/25 and the High Needs budget changes for 2024/25 to 2026/27

The Cabinet's revenue budget proposals took into consideration the latest information on the council's financial position outlined in this report. In finalising the proposals, Cabinet had taken into consideration feedback from Phase 1 of the public consultation on the revenue budget proposals and council tax increase. Feedback from Phase 2 was broadly consistent with Phase 1 and would be used to develop plans for 2025/26 onwards.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. He began by thanking all those had been involved in the budget considerations including the Scrutiny Committee, members of the public who had participated in the consultation and the Executive Director of Resources, the Head of Financial Strategy and all staff in the Finance department for their work in preparing the report and recommendations.

Councillor Levy then outlined the main points in the report and referred to the recent Government announcement on additional funding for local government.

The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer clarified a number of aspects of the Council's medium term financial strategy and the format of the recommendations that would be presented to the Council on 20 February 2024.

During discussion, members welcomed the provisions in the budget for special educational needs, particularly with regard to early intervention and the government grant for residential children's homes to be provided in the County. Members also commented on the implications of reductions in local government funding for the Council's strategic objectives, investment in infrastructure and provision of services to residents and the need to fund the shortfall in central government funding raising increased income through fees and charges.

In response to a question, Councillor Levy explained the priorities and sources of funding for capital projects as outlined in the report.

Councillor Howson moved and Councillor Sudbury seconded the following recommendations and they were approved:-

**RESOLVED to**

**to:**

- a) **approve the Review of Charges for 2024/25 and in relation to the Registration Service, charges also for 2025/26 (Annex A);**
- b) **approve the changes to the High Needs budget for 2024/25 – 2026/27 (Annex B Appendix 1);**
- c) **Receive the observations from Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- d) **approve the Financial Strategy for 2024/25 (Section 4.5);**
- e) **approve the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2024/25 (Section 4.6); and approve the creation of new reserves, as set out in Section 4.6, for:**
  - (i) **Collection Fund**
  - (ii) **IFRS9.**
- f) **delegate to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, acting jointly, to make any appropriate changes to the proposed budget following any final funding changes as a result of the final Local Government Settlement and information from the district and city councils in relation to business rates or council tax.**

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Roberts seconded the following recommendations and they were approved:-

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND Council to:**

- g) **approve a Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Section 4.2);**
- h) **agree the council tax and precept calculations for 2024/25 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:**
  - (i) **a precept of £498,633,415;**
  - (ii) **a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,820.56.**

Councillor Howson moved and Councillor Roberts seconded the following recommendations and they were approved:-

**RESOLVED to recommend Council to:**



- i) **approve the Capital and Investment Strategy for 2024/25 - 2034/35 (Section 4.1) including;**
  - (i) **the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement (Section 5.1 Annex 1);**
  - (ii) **the Prudential Indicators (Section 5.1 Annex 2) and**
  
- j) **approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 (Section 5.2); and**
  - (i) **continue to delegate the authority to withdraw or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer;**
  - (ii) **approve that any further changes required to the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;**
  - (iii) **approve the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators; and**
  - (iv) **approve the Specified Investment and Non - Specified Investment instruments as set out in Section 5.2.**
  
- k) **approve the new capital proposals for inclusion in the Capital Programme and proposed pipeline schemes (Section 5.3)**
  
- l) **approve the capital programme (Section 5.4).**

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....

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## Divisions Affected – All

### CABINET 27 February 2024

#### Support for People Leaving Hospital; the Oxfordshire Way Report of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Agree to (delegate to the responsible person to) respond to the recommendations contained within this report within 28 days.
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will provide an additional progress update on these recommendations to Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 6 months' time.

### REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 provide that the committee may require a response from the responsible person to whom it has made the report or recommendation, and that person must **respond in writing within 28 days of the request.**

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care (Karen Fuller) and the Lead Commissioner for Age Well (Ian Bottomley); on the Oxfordshire Way and the support provided to people leaving hospital.
4. The Committee would like to thank the Leader of the Council (Cllr Liz Leffman); the Director of Adult Social Care (Karen Fuller); the Deputy Director for Adult Social Care (Victoria Baran); the Lead Commissioner for Age Well (Ian Bottomley); the Deputy Director for Joint Commissioning for Health, Education and Social Care (Pippa Corner); and the BOB Integrated Care Board Place Director for Oxfordshire (Daniel Leveson) for attending and answering questions in relation to the report.

5. The Committee would like to express that it recognises the ongoing work being invested into developing ways in which to support people who leave hospital as part of the Oxfordshire way.
6. This report was scrutinised by Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) given that it has a constitutional remit over all aspects of health as a whole; and this includes initiatives by the Council and its partners (including the NHS) to provide support for patients who are discharged from hospital. When commissioning this report on the support for people leaving hospital, some of the insights that the Committee sought to receive were as follows:
  - Details around the national target of 95% of people being discharged home, what this looks like for Oxfordshire, and how system working has been changing to achieve this.
  - Details on the discharge pathways, and on what has been done differently through the Transfer of Care (TOC) team, Discharge to Assess (D2A), as well as the impact all of this has had to date.
  - The system work that has been undertaken thus far in relation to urgent care and associated pathways.
  - How resources are being used in Oxfordshire, including through community hospital beds/hub beds, including some insights into cost comparison data relating to pathways and different costs.
  - The degree to which there has been any learning to date from changes that have been made, including the impact for all communities.
  - Details around the nature of hubs bed, and where these sit from a legal perspective.
  - Details on the reasons behind the closure of short stay hub beds in Henley.
  - The extent to which there has been any stakeholder/public engagement around the closure of hub beds as part of the broader initiatives to support people in their own homes.
  - The degree to which there are sufficient resources available to support people leaving hospital and to provide care in peoples' homes.

## **SUMMARY**

7. The Chair highlighted that the purpose of this item was to receive an update on the support for people leaving hospital and the Oxfordshire Way. It was emphasised that upon commissioning the paper for this item, the Committee sought an outline as to the kind of support that residents could receive upon being discharged from hospital, and to look at this in the context of the

Discharge to Assess (D2A) Process and the Oxfordshire Way. It was also specified that key attention should be placed on the rationale behind prioritising care at home, and any national directives and nationally set targets around this; and that it was also important for the Committee to understand how effectively the D2A process was working, and how it met people's healthcare needs.

8. The Lead Commissioner for Age-Well informed the Committee that Oxfordshire was on a journey to improve how the system helped people leaving hospital. Oxfordshire needed to ensure that 95% of people leaving hospital returned to their usual place of residence. Oxfordshire was focused on getting people home and had rolled out a Home First D2A to achieve this. It was more possible to move to this approach due to operational and commissioning improvements that had been made, and the Home First D2A was better for Oxfordshire's residents.
9. The Committee was informed that Oxfordshire also utilised short-term bed options each winter to increase flow out of hospital and to keep A&E moving, leading to the short stay hub model. Short-term beds created a further step in the onward journey, and they needed social work, therapy and medical cover to each bed. Most of the people in those beds eventually went home (over 70% of people in short stay hub beds). Oxfordshire was required to get 95% of people directly home from hospital; however, the current achievement was 91-92%. There had been an improvement to the flow home through reablement, where 78% of people were now discharged without requiring any further care. In order to reach the 95% target, there was a need to support 15-20 people to move from bed-based to home-based pathways. The learning from the discharge to assess pilots indicated that only 33% of people waiting in beds for long-term care actually required that care. Getting people home first was therefore in line with national policy; the right thing to do for residents in line with the Oxfordshire Way; and was now possible because of changes that had been made in the Oxfordshire system.
10. The Committee was also informed about the Transfer of Care Hub in the hospital; which allocated patients to the appropriate discharge pathway, anticipated and pre-empted any barriers to discharge, and promoted a discharge to assess approach. In regard to the Home First D2A model, there had been extended reablement through national Additional Discharge Funding to extend the reablement model to include:
  1. Short-term live-in reablement care and/or
  2. Short-term waking nights to support reablement
  3. Discharge to assess pick-ups
11. It was also explained to the Committee that there had been increases in capacity to enable people to be supported at home including:
  1. Short-term additional support from local providers to deliver the Home First D2A model funded from Additional Discharge Funding.

2. Increases in care hours delivered at home under the Live Well at Home framework from 27,888 to 31,095 per week from December 2022 to December 2023, an increase of 7.65%.
12. The Director of Adult Social Care also reiterated that it was important that the support for people leaving hospital is looked at as a system. Historically, Oxfordshire had not performed well with regards to Delayed Transfer of Care, and therefore, something had to be done differently. Oxfordshire was, in comparison to other areas, ahead of the curve in terms of the Transfer of Care Hub. The Adult Social Care Director emphasised that the Transfer of Care Hub was genuinely a multidisciplinary team, with input from Adult Social Care also.
13. The BOB ICB Place Director added that Oxfordshire was working well as a system, and that the NHS and the local authority should be congratulated for this. There was a commitment to continue to work toward building the Partnership between the NHS and the County Council, as well as to support people to live well independently in their homes.
14. In response to a query from the Committee regarding the level of public or stakeholder engagement around prioritising support for people in their homes and the decisions made in this context, the BOB ICB Place Director explained that the engagement could have been better, and that lessons will be learned from the public engagements undertaken in Wantage as part of determining the future of Wantage Community Hospital. The Director of Place outlined that the system needed to find ways of communicating with the public and stakeholders regarding some of the ensuing changes as well as some of the positive developments and activities undertaken by the system; including around the Transfer of Care team, the D2A, the Urgent Community Response, the Virtual Wards, and the Hospital at Home. All the improvements in these aforementioned areas were enabling the system to provide better support for people in their own homes and giving people the independence that they want.
15. The Committee made some enquiries in relation to the withdrawal of Short Stay Hub Beds (SSHBs) in Henley including; who was responsible for commissioning these beds; what engagement had there been around the withdrawal of these beds, and whether there were any potential consequences of delaying the closure of these beds. The Director of Adult Social Care responded that the County Council had commissioned these beds on behalf of the system. SSHBs were initially put in place in Oxfordshire at a time when the system did not have the capacity to enable the flow of patients. It was emphasised to the Committee that these were not statutorily required beds and were established at a point in time to help with system flow. Another important consideration was how the Oxfordshire Pound was maximised to ensure that people received the best benefits from services. Therefore, the system would flex the number of beds up and down as required. The Director of Adult Social Care also explained that 17 SSHBs were already closed in the north of the county, and that the flexing of SSHBs was an indication of business as usual. The Committee was informed that initially, the hub beds were commissioned by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and that this had destabilised the market. It was decided

that the County Council was best placed to commission these beds as it had the best relationship with the market.

16. It was also reiterated to the Committee that considerations of how to best maximise the use of the Oxfordshire pound was a factor in determining the closure of the SSHBs in Henley, which had cost £11000 a week to maintain. However, the Director of Adult Social Care emphasised that the withdrawal of the beds was not driven purely by financial considerations but was also a crucial element of supporting people at home and helping them to regain independence. The Director of Adult Social Care also explained that it was difficult to determine what people needed when they were in a hospital bed. Therefore, if people were enabled to go home with the necessary wraparound care, including with Occupational Therapy, Social Workers, as well as Urgent Care at home, this would also make decisions regarding people's long-term care needs much more effective.
17. The Committee urged there to be more effective communication with the public and key stakeholders around the broader context in which the withdrawal of SSHBs was taking place. This would allow for both a greater understanding as to why such withdrawals were occurring as well as a reassurance to residents as to the alternative services that would be provided to them in the absence of these beds.
18. The Committee enquired as to whether there was adequate support for people being discharged from hospital whilst they were at home within the 72 hours. It was queried as to who the assessor would be upon arriving home from hospital, and as to how soon after arriving home the assessment would take place. The Deputy Director of Adult Social Care responded that the Transfer of Care Hub, which operated in the hospital, would review all the referrals that came in when a patient was ready for discharge. As part of this process, a multidisciplinary team in the Hub would determine whether there were concerns with a patient's home environment. If any concerns were identified, such as equipment needing to be provided or furniture needing to be moved, efforts would be made to put things in place in preparation for the patient's return home.
19. The Committee emphasised that some patients who were discharged may require ongoing support in taking their medications appropriately, and queried as to whether this was being taken into account, and the measures that would be taken to provide support in this regard. It was responded that support for patients and their medications is undertaken as part of the original setup with the domiciliary provider, who are certainly experienced in being able to support people with their medication needs. The Home First team was also looking at a range of technologies that could support with medication reminders and in helping people to be able to take charge of their own recovery journey and their ongoing needs when it was appropriate to do so. However, for individuals who had a broader package of care, support with medication was incorporated into their ongoing care plan.

20. The Committee referred to the Live Well at Home providers, and enquired as to how many organisations were being worked with that provided this care, how flexible they were, and whether there was an appropriate level of workforce in this area. The Lead Commissioner for Age Well responded that there was a need for flexibility in their teams, and that things were improving in that regard. A lot of work was undertaken with the providers, and that providers had been expected to be much more sophisticated in their ability to recycle the right staff. Providers had also been encouraged to think about how they organise the right people to the right space so that they could work 7 days a week. There had also been an advantage from the additional discharge funding, which had been used to fund some short-term arrangements with other providers.
21. The Committee enquired as to whether a hierarchy existed for the purposes of monitoring providers, particularly if something were to go wrong in the services that were supposed to be provided. It was also queried as to whether there was a clear and accessible complaints process for discharged patients to be able to access if they were not satisfied with the services they were receiving. The Deputy Director of Adult Social Care explained that it was crucial to take into account that all the relevant teams were working across the board providing many care hours every week. All providers worked to a quality assurance framework that ensured that mechanisms were in place to escalate with health professionals if there were any concerns. Having multiple teams working collaboratively provided the advantage of identifying any issues or challenges with a discharged patient early on. Work was also undertaken with providers to look at incidents and to determine whether the right escalations were made at the right time and whether the right health professional was contacted. It was also highlighted to the Committee that the Adult Social Care team were not medical professionals, although they were competent in being able to recognise the changes in an individual's circumstances and in being able to send up the signal to relevant providers who will help them to resolve such issues.
22. The Committee enquired that given the system's commitment to ongoing learning and evaluation, would the system consider the outcomes and feedback of the recent Public Engagement Exercise held in Wantage around the future of Wantage Community Hospital. The ICB Director of Place responded that the Wantage engagement exercise was discussed at the ICB's executive management committee, and the case of Wantage was being utilised across the BOB footprint as an example.
23. The Committee enquired as to how effective the communication and coordination was between the NHS and care providers. It was explained to the Committee that system meetings were held daily, where points of escalation or concern are raised. Therefore, there were daily escalations within the system that were being heard and addressed.
24. The Committee queried that despite the positive factor of most people having a preference for being at home as opposed to in a bed, were there any potentially



negative consequences if Oxfordshire was not meeting nationally set discharge targets, such as reductions in funding, and whether this might have been a vital context for the closure of beds. It was responded that the system had to demonstrate how effectively the money had been invested to make a difference to the residents of Oxfordshire. The case for having additional discharge funding was dependent on meeting discharge targets, and it would be difficult for Oxfordshire to argue the need for further funding if such targets were not being met. In response to a query by the Chair as to how this would influence the public or stakeholder engagements that took place, the BOB ICB Director of Place explained that at times decisions had to be made in an agile a manner as possible and that some of the system's capacity had to be flexed on some occasions. The Director of Place also specified that the system needed to find ways to have conversations with communities in regard to some of the changes that the system would need to make. But this would require bandwidth, capacity, and immense time and effort on the part of senior officers to be able to reach out and talk to all communities.

25. The Committee queried whether there were any indications to suggest that the use of D2A had actually resulted in an improvement of hospital flow within Oxfordshire. It was outlined to the Committee that the D2A process was slowing the growth in the demand for hospital services and was also reducing delays to discharging. Additionally, the Committee enquired as to whether there were consistent criteria that were utilised to determine which patients would be more suited to the D2A process. The Deputy Director of Adult Social Care responded that the Transfer of Care team were charged with looking at the initial referrals and making a pathway decision. The system was working hard collectively to make such discussions around a patient's discharging arrangements were as robust as possible. People working in the Transfer of Care team had access to a whole range of health and social care systems to help understand what was most appropriate for each patient.
26. The Committee queried how long the system had tracked outcomes for people discharged home, and how long subsequent trips to hospital were observed. It was responded that the system worked collectively to track individuals who have had made frequent subsequent trips to hospital. Data was also looked at by the system to monitor if a particular individual has had regular trips to hospital after being discharged, and decisions could be made as to how to provide an alternative service to such individuals that may be more suited to their needs.
27. The Committee emphasised that there were existing pressures within primary care, and queried how well-resourced neighbourhood teams were in the context of such pressures, and whether there was further funding for these teams or if it was a case of joining up existing provision. The BOB ICB Director of Place specified that there was some funding that was secured for integrated neighbourhood teams. However, part of this would also include utilising

resources that had already existed in the system, as well as attempts to secure further avenues of funding.

## KEY POINTS OF OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

28. Below are some key points of observation that the Committee has in relation to the support for people leaving hospital. These key points of observation relate to some of the themes of discussion during the meeting on 16 January 2024, and have also been used to shape the recommendations made by the Committee. Beneath each observation point is a specific recommendation being made by the Committee. The Committee understands that given that this work is systemwide in nature, it will be ideal to receive a systemwide response to each of the recommendations below.
29. **Please note:** the Committee had also asked questions relating to D2A in its 08 February 2024 meeting as part of its scrutiny of Oxford University Hospitals NHSFT (OUH) and the CQC improvement journey around the John Radcliffe Hospital. There may be other relevant recommendations that the Committee will be issuing in a separate report directed at OUH.

***Process of Learning and Evaluation:*** The Committee is supportive of the ongoing work being invested into developing ways in which to support people who leave hospital as part of the Oxfordshire Way. This could help to reduce unnecessary length of stay, which would not be ideal for both a patient that is clinically ready to leave hospital on the one hand, and for those who are in need of a hospital bed. Therefore, the ambition to prioritise care in people's homes when it is appropriate to do so is something that should be worked towards. However, it is vital that throughout the process of this transition toward prioritising care in people's homes, important processes of learning and evaluation are adopted. If national directives require Oxfordshire to reach the 95% target, this could result in rapid changes to how residents are discharged from hospital, and there is therefore a need for consistent and routine monitoring and evaluation of how the ambitions and measures taken to reach the aforementioned target are actually playing out.

The experience of patients is crucial in this regard, and service users should be encouraged to share their feedback on how the process of discharging them from hospital into their homes has actually turned out. The Committee firmly believes that if residents and key stakeholders are to be supportive of these initiatives, then it is imperative that they are reassured that routine processes of learning and evaluation will be established. The Committee recommends that the System makes use of and provides opportunities for input from Healthwatch Oxfordshire. As a leading avenue for the patient voice, the input from Healthwatch could help the system regularly monitor, evaluate, and reflect on what is working well and where there may be areas for improvement.

The system therefore needs to work collaboratively, and there is also a point about regular sharing of information for the system to be able to

identify where challenges may exist and how to tackle these. The role of learning and evaluation would not be for the purposes of questioning or altering the overall direction of travel in terms of prioritising care in people's homes, but more for ensuring that the system is pursuing these objectives in a manner that involves the least risk and disadvantage for residents.

**Recommendation 1:** *That a process of learning and evaluation is reviewed and developed. It is recommended that input from Healthwatch Oxfordshire and service users is also enabled inasmuch as possible so as to improve the process of learning and evaluation.*

**Monitoring Performance and KPIs:** The Committee strongly believes in the importance of monitoring the performance of the services being delivered under the D2A and the Oxfordshire Way. The D2A process is an early one, and the Committee understands and recognises that the system is gradually becoming accustomed to this new way of working. However, aside from the process of ensuring that the voices of service users are heard (as per the previous recommendation), it is crucial that the system is able to monitor its performance. Such performance monitoring should not solely include the monitoring of how many patients are discharged straight home in line with nationally set targets, but also the examining of how effective each part of the process of ensuring support for discharged patients has been.

The Committee also urges there to be clear transparency around the process of monitoring and evaluating the performance of these services. This would also help provide reassurances to stakeholders and the wider public and could instil further confidence in the system and its ability to deliver support services effectively for those leaving hospital.

Furthermore, the Committee strongly recommends that the role of lived-experience is also incorporated into the process of evaluating long-term outcomes of the D2A process and the Oxfordshire Way. Lived experience can provide important and valuable contributions to the system's reflections on what has worked well, and on what could be improved moving forward. The Committee welcomed the data collected from residents on D2A in Wantage as part of determining the future of Wantage Community Hospital that could be used for this purpose.

**Recommendation 2:** *For the establishment of clear KPIs for the purposes of measuring the performance of services delivered under Discharge to Assess and the Oxfordshire Way. It is recommended that there is clear transparency around this, alongside the inclusion of lived experience (including the learnings from the data in the Wantage co-production work) and the evaluation of long-term outcomes.*

**Communications and Public Engagement:** The committee firmly believes in the importance of raising awareness and understanding amongst the public as to the nature of any changes in system working that are taking place. Some residents may remain uncertain as to the

NHS reforms and the changes to the structures of health and social care that are taking place more broadly. Even more important is for residents to understand and appreciate the changes being made in the nature of the services they would receive from the system. Hence, it is important for there to be clear communication with the public for two reasons:

- For the public to understand how services are changing regarding the support they could expect to receive upon being discharged from hospital.
- For the public to be reassured as to the nature of these changes, and as to how such changes may, as the system is promulgating, work more greatly in their favour as opposed to any older models of discharging and aftercare.

There will be understandable anxieties by some Oxfordshire residents as to how the prioritisation of care in people's homes would work, and whether there is an adequacy of resources for this. It is for this very reason that there may be objections to the closure of short stay hub beds for instance. Therefore, the committee is recommending that there are clear communications and regular engagements with the public and key stakeholders so as to better inform residents of the D2A process and the Oxfordshire way, and what the changes in the pathways would mean for patients leaving hospital.

Furthermore, the importance of engagement is not simply for the purposes of raising awareness of the support available for patients upon being discharged from hospital and for helping residents to understand the Oxfordshire Way but is also for utilising such engagements as an avenue through which to receive feedback from residents or those with lived experience. This could help better inform the system's understanding of how the services for people leaving hospital are actually being received by discharged patients. Feedback may also be a useful means to understand not merely how residents feel about any support mechanisms in place, but also about where residents may have had negative experiences. This could help inform the system's process of evaluation of the support services in place and the extent to which these services are proving effective.

**Recommendation 3:** *For communications and regular public engagement to be adopted so as to provide reassurances to the public as to the quality of the services they could expect to receive upon being discharged from hospital; and for any additional feedback from the public or stakeholders to be heard.*

**Clear Communication with Patients and Relatives:** The Committee understands that in many cases, patients who no longer need to be in hospital may actually prefer to have the opportunity to return to their own homes. This often means that it is not only the system that wishes to avert undue delays in discharging, but also the patient themselves. Therefore, it is crucial that patients and their family are abundantly clear

regarding the specific support services they are eligible for, and that they could expect to receive, subsequent to leaving hospital. This is crucial for two reasons. Firstly, patients would prefer to have absolute clarity on the next steps in the process of continuing to receive support or being assessed at home after they are discharged. Secondly, patients would feel a strong sense of reassurance if they were aware of what these next steps are. If patients are uncertain as to what the next steps will be, they could feel anxious about leaving hospital, particularly if they do not have a strong support base at home or in their community, or if they are not aware of how such post-discharge services would operate to begin with. This reassurance factor is also vital in that patients need to be able to understand who would be responsible for their assessment/care, as well as who they are to contact if they have any concerns or potentially complaints regarding the services they have received.

The Committee understands that new leaflets are being worked on. Therefore, the Committee recommends that written information is produced which would provide patients with the following:

1. Information on the services they will receive when leaving hospital.
2. Details of key contacts of those responsible for managing or providing their care.
3. An outline of any potential complaints process that may be in place that the patient could invoke in circumstances where they have significant concerns.

**Recommendation 4:** *For patients to be clearly communicated with in relation to the services they will receive upon being discharged from hospital. It is also recommended that leaflets for patients include an outline of the complaints processes in place.*

**Importance of Staff Training:** The Committee is pleased to hear that there are a vast array of staff members that would be involved in discharging and supporting patients who leave hospital. It is positive to see that the process of discharging patients and providing support to them after discharge is one that is multidisciplinary in nature. This is certainly one of the strengths of the system and the Committee would like to see a continuation of this. Nonetheless, the Committee feel that it is vital for all staff involved in the entire process of discharging and providing support to patients to be sufficiently trained. It would be ideal for such staff to be trained in both their own relevant areas of work, as well as in being made aware of the role of other relevant teams/support services that they would have to work closely with in order to provide a network of support to patients who leave hospital and who require ongoing support at home.

The Committee also believes that it is pivotal for any such training to include guidance on how to deal with the close network of individuals (be

these relatives or friends) that a discharged patient has. This would help to keep a patient's loved ones well informed of who is responsible for the care of the patient as well as who such loved ones could contact if they noticed anything or had any concerns regarding the patient that they might wish to bring to their support workers' attention.

Furthermore, there is also a point about training being ongoing, particularly in the sense of keeping up to date with any new/additional national developments or best practice guidance. However, training should not only be about "telling" staff members what it is that they should be doing, but could also help staff to reflect on scenarios they have been involved in with patients, and on how they could potentially learn from previous actions they had taken to potentially reflect on how to improve the manner in which they support patients.

**Recommendation 5:** *To ensure that staff who provide support for discharged patients at home receive adequate and ongoing training.*

**Resourcing for Neighbourhood Teams:** The Committee is supportive of the role of integrated neighbourhood teams and considers that such teams have the potential to provide an immense network of support for those leaving hospital (particularly those with long-term conditions or vulnerability). Whilst it is crucial that those involved in these teams are sufficiently trained and closely connected in being able to provide support to discharged patients, there is also a point about such teams being adequately resourced for the purposes of being able to meet demand within both urban and rural areas throughout the County. The process of ensuring such teams are adequately resourced would involve the need to assess the demand for services that provide support for those leaving hospital. This is understandably not a simple undertaking, and may require some time, although it is a vital element of the system being able to assess the degree to which neighbourhood teams should be resourced and to seek additional national funding for this work.

The Committee was pleased to hear from the BOB ICB Director of Place that there was some funding that was secured for integrated neighbourhood teams. However, the Committee recommends that further funding is sought (subject to the outcomes of any assessment of demand), and that considerations are given to utilising resources that already exist in the system for the purposes of ensuring adequate resource for the relevant workforce for neighbourhood teams.

Furthermore, it is also vital that neighbourhood teams are geographically spread in a manner that caters for both urban and rural areas. For instance, rural areas tend to have ageing populations that could require long-term care after leaving hospital.

**Recommendation 6:** *To ensure that integrated neighbourhood teams are sufficiently resourced and geographically spread in as appropriate a way possible so as to meet demand across both rural and urban areas. It is recommended that any available*

*resources are maximised to meet demand for support at home, and that further funding is sought to support vital local transformation and prevention work in local communities.*

**Recommendation 7:** *As agreed during the meeting on 16 January, for site visits to be arranged to provide the Committee with insights into how the Discharge-to-Assess process functioned in practice.*

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

30. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
31. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.
32. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 provide that the committee may require a response from the responsible person to whom it has made the report or recommendation and that person must respond in writing within 28 days of the request.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Annex 1 – Scrutiny Response Pro Forma

Contact Officer: Dr Omid Nouri  
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February 2024

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## Appendix 1: Health Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro Forma

*Where a joint health overview and scrutiny committee makes a report or recommendation to a responsible person (a relevant NHS body or a relevant health service provider[this can include the County Council]), the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 provide that the committee may require a response from the responsible person to whom it has made the report or recommendation and that person must respond in writing within 28 days of the request.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

### **Issue: Support for People Leaving Hospital; the Oxfordshire Way**

#### **Lead Cabinet Member(s) or Responsible Person:**

- Cllr Tim Bearder- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.
- Karen Fuller- Corporate Director of Adult Social Care.
- Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well.
- Pippa Corner- Deputy Director – Joint Commissioning; Health, Education and Social Care.
- Daniel Leveson- BOB ICB Place Director for Oxfordshire.

It is requested that a response is provided on behalf of the system to each of the recommendations outlined below:

**Deadline for response:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Response to report:**

## Appendix 1: Health Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro Forma

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (including if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale.
<p>1. That a process of learning and evaluation is reviewed and developed. It is recommended that input from Healthwatch Oxfordshire and service users is also enabled inasmuch as possible so as to improve the process of learning and evaluation.</p>		
<p>2. For the establishment of clear KPIs for the purposes of measuring the performance of services delivered under Discharge to Assess and the Oxfordshire Way. It is recommended that there is clear transparency around this, alongside the inclusion of lived experience (including the learnings from the data in the Wantage co-production work) and the evaluation of long-term outcomes.</p>		
<p>3. For communications and regular public engagement to be adopted so as to provide reassurances to the public as to the quality of the services they could expect to receive upon being discharged from hospital; and for any additional</p>		

## Appendix 1: Health Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro Forma

<p>feedback from the public or stakeholders to be heard.</p>		
<p>4. For patients to be clearly communicated with in relation to the services they will receive upon being discharged from hospital. It is also recommended that leaflets for patients include an outline of the complaints processes in place.</p>		
<p>5. To ensure that staff who provide support for discharged patients at home receive adequate and ongoing training.</p>		
<p>6. To ensure that integrated neighbourhood teams are sufficiently resourced and geographically spread in as appropriate a way possible so as to meet demand across both rural and urban areas. It is recommended that any available resources are maximised to meet demand for support at home, and that further funding is sought to support vital local transformation and prevention work in local communities.</p>		
<p>7. As agreed during the meeting on 16 January, for site visits to be arranged to provide the Committee with insights into how the Discharge-to-Assess process functioned in practice.</p>		

# Appendix 1: Health Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro Forma

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 27 February 2024**

#### **Draft Customer Experience Strategy Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Agree to delegate to the Cabinet member for Community and Corporate Services to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report on behalf of the Cabinet, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Draft Customer Experience Strategy at its meeting on 19 January 2024.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet portfolio holder for Community and Corporate Services, Mark Haynes, Director of Customer and Culture, Emily Schofield, Head of Strategy, Clare Martin, Quality and Performance Manager, and Susmita Dave, National Graduate Trainee, for their work in preparing and/or introducing the and answering questions.

## SUMMARY

5. Cllr Fawcett introduced the draft strategy as the Council's means to level up the approach to customer service when interacting with residents via the Council's many services across the county. It intended to learn from and build on those areas providing good service in order to drive improvements and provide a consistently good level of service across the entire Council. An area of particular strength was the level of satisfaction recorded by those using the Customer Service Centre. Less successful with the public was the Council's Fix My Street platform. Investment in the training and development of staff would be key.
6. Susmita Dave, National Management Trainee, provided further detail. The draft strategy was intended to be run over a three year period with the express vision of 'put[ting] the customer at the heart of our service delivery'. The need for such a strategy was driven by multiple factors. New groups of people were interacting with the Council owing to technological development, which had also raised expectations of how frictionless interactions with an organisation should be; there was a need to assure customers that standards of service existed; more positive interactions with the public would underpin the morale of staff. Feedback from the Residents' Survey, budget consultation and other sources indicated that in some areas trust with residents had been dented. Tackling this successfully would rely both on political support and officer prioritisation.
7. The Strategy sought to use national data, resident survey information and mapping of customer data, profiles and interactions against customer service levels to focus on making the greatest difference.
8. The four key pillars of the Strategy focused on the following: 1) Embedding a customer ethos within the Council's culture 2) Developing a better understanding of the Council's customers and what they want, 3) Optimising access to customer services, particularly through new technology, whilst protecting the access of those for whom such technology would prove a barrier, and 4) Designing an excellent end to end customer experience so that more complex cases - drawing on input from multiple areas of the Council - could receive the same high standard of service as simpler interactions.
9. An important element of the Strategy was that it should be flexible to respond to new data. The Council intended to encourage feedback from its staff, service users as well as continuing to reference and engage with information gleaned from local and national data-sets.
10. The overwhelming majority of issues discussed by the Committee in response to the presentation have resulted in its six recommendations, which are detailed below and relate to the language the Council uses to describe those it is trying to serve by this strategy, areas of public misperception and unrealistic expectation, and extensions to the focus proposed draft.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Use of Language

11. The question of how the Council refers to those people it delivers services for is actually a very complex one; indeed, this report does not take a consistent position. This is largely because of the sheer variety of services the Council provides, making a single, accurate umbrella term elusive. For instance, road maintenance is provided universally and without charge. Such users have a very different relationship with the Council than, say, a specific couple opting to get married in a Council registry office. This relationship is, in turn, is very different to the relationship the Council has with, for example, academies for whom it provides services on a commercial basis.
12. Notwithstanding the above, the Committee is wary of using 'customer' as the primary means to describe those for whom the Council provides services. 'Customer' implies a commercial relationship when actually the bulk of the Council's resources are devoted to delivering public services which are paid for through taxation. This point of difference is one which the Committee values but is diminished by using a descriptor which inaccurately implies that the Council's relationship with its residents is primarily commercial. The wrong tone is set.
13. As referenced, the Committee recognises that finding an accurate short-hand for the variety of the Council's interactions is very difficult and it does not have any easy solutions to propose. However, it hopes that the Cabinet will note the level of concern at the consequences of the current proposals, and finds a way to refer to service-users which is accurate and reinforces the Council's values.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council reviews within the Customer Experience Strategy - and more widely - its use of the word 'customers' as the preferred term to refer to those in receipt of collectively paid-for public services.**

### Public Perception and Understanding

14. A crucial influence on the experience of residents in their interactions with the Council are their initial expectations, which are based on their perceptions and understanding. The Committee identifies three areas where public understanding is at variance with the reality and may cause friction: the constraints of the Council's financial situation, the scope of the Council's responsibilities vis a vis other public bodies, and who actually works for the Council.
15. The issues that are brought up below are too wide-ranging for the Committee to give detailed recommendations on, but rather it is necessary to flag areas which it feels would benefit the outcomes of the strategy if given greater focus.

16. One of the most valuable consultations the Council undertakes is the Residents' Survey and this backs up the Committee's view that the public do not fully comprehend the degree of financial pressure the Council is under, and the degree to which much of its spending is non-discretionary. For example, the table below, taken from the Residents' Survey, shows public support for efficiency measures within the Council but far reduced support (and even opposition) to measures which increase cost to the public or reduce service levels.

APPROACH <i>(base totals shown after each)</i>	% disagree	% agree	Net % agreement
Generate additional income by maximising the use of buildings and land the council owns (our assets) (1,096)	3%	86%	+83%
Reduce costs by using digital technology to deliver services more efficiently (1,093)	9%	73%	+65%
Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (1,093)	9%	64%	+55%
Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (1,091)	15%	61%	+47%
Reduce spending on services the council is not legally required to provide (1,089)	21%	43%	+22%
Use the council's financial reserves (money set aside for unexpected events), to provide one-off funding (1,095)	23%	42%	+20%
Generate additional income from sales, fees, and charges (1,074)	26%	42%	+16%
Generate additional income by increasing council tax (1,095)	59%	19%	-40%
Reduce spending on frontline services (1,079)	69%	12%	-56%

17. In reality, the challenge to produce the legally-required balanced budget is such that it cannot be met by efficiencies alone; the public must be asked to share some of the costs. The solution is not either/or but both/and. One of the tools the Committee wishes to highlight for particular praise is the budget calculator, released as part of the Council's consultation on its proposed budget. This made members of the public confront the constraints around and consequences of allocating money towards particular priorities. Members are reminded of a quotation by a member of the public as reported in the Council's budget packs: "I have newfound appreciation for the work the council does, the scope of its duties and the decisions it makes." It is exactly this that the Committee wishes to see more of – greater transparency and communication over the financial constraints it is operating within. As with this resident, the Committee believes that the better the public are informed of the financial pressures faced by the Council, the more they will adjust their expectations and appreciation of the services it does provide.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council takes further measures to increase public understanding of its financial limitations**

18. To those working outside the public sector, the breakdown of responsibilities is complex. In Oxfordshire, the majority of residents are served by three layers of



local government – parish/town, district/city and county councils. As across the country there are large amounts of cross working between health and social care. Public Health is not an NHS function but a County Council responsibility. Some schools are academies whilst others are run by the local authority. County and district/city councils both have responsibilities around planning for which they run committees. These points are listed to illustrate the fact that, for members of the public, it is often difficult to know which body is actually responsible for a particular service.

19. Of these, the Committee's view is that the multiple tiers of local authority are least intuitive. The Committee therefore encourages the Council, as part of this strategy, to give consideration as to how the Council can work more closely with district/city and parish councils so that there is more of a one-stop shop for residents; even perfect delivery of the strategy will not fully achieve its objectives if many residents' interactions with the Council take place after a frustrating journey through other councils before finding out to whom they need to speak.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council works more closely with district/city and town/parish councils to reduce for residents the impact of the complexity of multiple layers of local authority**

20. Another distinction which many members of the public do not make, but which the Council may well do, is between staff who are employed by the Council, and staff of organisations doing work on behalf of the Council. The Council may draw a hard line between 'its' staff and those of sub-contractors, but the interaction with the Council of a wheelchair user who is forced onto the road by a pavement-blocking van will not be improved if the van belongs to a sub-contractor.
21. The Committee recognises that the Council outsources vast quantities of work and that the overwhelming majority of work done on behalf of the Council is not undertaken by Council staff. It is not plausible, therefore, to suggest that the Council extend its levelling up of service standards to include sub-contractors. However, the point raised by the Committee does still stand: members of the public are unlikely to differentiate between work undertaken by the Council and work undertaken on behalf of the Council, and poor interactions with subcontractors will trace over into a poor interaction with the Council. The Committee recommends, therefore, that the Customer Experience Strategy recognises this problem and undertakes to consider the steps it can take to deliver closer alignment between the processes, behaviours and service standards of sub-contractors and the Council's values, behaviours and service standards.

**Recommendation 4: That the Council identifies the steps it can reasonably take to extend improvements in service standards to subcontractors.**

## Extensions to the Draft Strategy

22. One of the observations made by the Committee as to the Customer Experience Strategy is that it is strong on the preventative side of poor interactions, but it is quiet on what the Council will do when things go wrong. The Council has, within the last six months, refreshed its Complaints Policy and Guidance, which incorporates the statutory requirements around complaints handling with the Council's own corporate processes. There are clear overlaps between this and the Strategy and the Committee is pleased to note that the two documents are working in tandem and that the draft strategy undertakes to 'examine complaints, comments and compliments to identify what is working well, and what is not so good'. However, the Committee would wish to see a second step taken.
23. The complaints handling process can be characterised as a discrete interaction with the Council, separate to the initial cause of the complaint. This process is important not only because it is regulated by statute, but also because it comes on the heels of a negative interaction with the Council. Successive negative interactions are likely to compound the sense of frustration by a complainant.
24. The Committee would like to see, therefore, specific reference to not only learning from complaints, which the Council intends to do, but also monitoring how satisfied complainants are that their complaints have been handled in accordance with the Council's complaint-handling principles. There are significant potential improvements to be made in service standards, particularly given the number of ombudsman findings against the Council recently, in knowing that when it does fall short of its own standards that the Council is effective at righting errors when it is made aware of them.

### **Recommendation 5: That the Council monitors the effectiveness of its complaints-handling as part of its Customer Experience Strategy.**

25. As part of its drive towards improvement, the strategy seeks to '[Develop] a better understanding of the Council's customers and what they want.' Part of this work includes profiling customer groups and the types of interactions they have with the Council. Further to this, the Council will seek to 'understand the needs of our more vulnerable customers.' The Committee welcomes both these undertakings but seeks to extend them slightly.
26. When the Council talks about 'vulnerable' individuals it is very easy to revert to the template provided by the Equality Act, which provides a list of protected characteristics where the threat of discrimination is deemed sufficiently serious that statutory protections are required. The list, however, is not exhaustive of all characteristics of people which might make them vulnerable to discrimination or difficulty in accessing services. The Committee wishes to identify two additional groups of people which might afford worthwhile insights into the particular challenges of accessing Council services: those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and those with English as a second or other language.

27. It is interesting to note that a socio-economic duty was actually placed upon public sector organisations in the early drafts of the Equality Act. In s.1 public sector bodies were to “have due regard to the desirability of exercising [their functions] in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage”. However, this requirement was not implemented, though in Wales and Scotland it has been subsequently adopted.
28. It is clear that there is some overlap between those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and protected characteristics in the Equality Act. For instance, even pre-pandemic, rates of poverty amongst disabled people were over 50% higher than amongst the non-disabled population (31% vs 20%).<sup>1</sup> Likewise, there are correlations between race and income. However, there are other prescient factors which would be missed. Taking one example, the challenges of single-parent families would be overlooked. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2023 annual report, 40% of children in single parent families are in child poverty yet the needs of such families would not be identified. Taking time to profile and learn from socio-economically disadvantaged groups would provide a voice and influence on service design, raising the standard of service received by those who may be in greater need of support.
29. Whilst there is a clear correlation between race and English being a second or other language, the Committee does see value in considering issues around this as a particular standalone category. In some areas of the county, concentrations of those for whom English is not their first language is high; according to ONS data from the 2021 census, Oxford City – the highest in the county – had 18% of people speaking English as a second or other language, almost one in five.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, not every one of those people will face challenges in accessing services or getting the outcomes they want owing to English being their second language but the risk of that for this group does remain elevated. A second reason for looking at this as a discrete strand is because of how significant a barrier being unable to read Council communications, to write to the Council or to speak with staff can be. As such, this group faces a particularly high chance of experiencing poor service outcomes from their interactions with the Council and would benefit from particular attention.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council includes within its profiles of user groups those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and those for whom English is a second or other language.**

## FURTHER CONSIDERATION

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<sup>1</sup> [Nearly half of everyone in poverty is either a disabled person or lives with a disabled person | Disability Rights UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [TS024-2021-3.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

30. The Committee does not intend to consider this item again prior to its consideration at Cabinet but may, in due course, seek an update on progress.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

31. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
32. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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February 2024

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

### Issue: Draft Customer Experience Strategy

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services

**Date response requested:**<sup>2</sup> 27 February 2024

### Response to report:

*Enter text here.*

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council reviews within the Customer Experience Strategy - and more		

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<b>widely - its use of the word 'customers' as the preferred term to refer to those in receipt of collectively paid-for public services.</b>		
<b>That the Council takes further measures to increase public understanding of its financial limitations</b>		
<b>That the Council works more closely with district/city and town/parish councils to reduce for residents the impact of the complexity of multiple layers of local authority</b>		
<b>That the Council identifies the steps it can reasonably take to extend improvements in service standards to subcontractors.</b>		
<b>That the Council monitors the effectiveness of its complaints-handling as part of its Customer Experience Strategy.</b>		
<b>That the Council includes within its profiles of user groups those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and those for whom English is a second or other language.</b>		

**Divisions Affected - All**

**CABINET**

**27 February 2024**

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Functions: Transition Arrangements**

**Report by  
Corporate Director for Environment and Place**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to
  - a) Note the government announcement on the transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership core functions;
  - b) Approve the creation of a County Council controlling interest in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP Ltd), subject to agreement by OxLEP Ltd's board
  - c) Consent to a change to OxLEP Ltd's governance to amend the Articles of Association and By-Laws to enable the County Council to take a controlling interest, if agreed by the OxLEP board;
  - d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy to take such operational decisions as are required to conclude the integration process, including concluding the Articles of Association.

## **Executive Summary**

1. Government has announced that from 31 March 2024, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will cease to have official recognition and that existing LEP functions will transfer to upper-tier local authorities or combined authorities, where they exist.
2. Following this announcement, it is important to establish a new governance framework to ensure local arrangements continue to meet government guidance. It is proposed that the County Council creates a controlling interest in OxLEP Ltd. To enable this to happen the OxLEP Ltd Board would need to consider and approve a revision its Articles of Association and By-Laws whereby the County Council will become the sole 'member' of the company, exercising its membership functions through Cabinet.
3. Cabinet is recommended to delegate the operational conclusion of the negotiation and integration process to the Corporate Director for Environment and Place in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources, the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy.
4. Subsequent to the change of ownership, there will be an opportunity in conjunction with the LEP and local stakeholders to revise the local framework of economic planning and partnerships and the system's capacity and capability requirements for the future.

## **Background**

5. Formally launched in March 2011, OxLEP Ltd was initially established as a partnership with the local authorities, businesses and education sector in the area, and was incorporated as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee on 31 March 2015.
6. The OxLEP Ltd company board consists of six local authority directors (Leaders), three further and higher education directors and nine private sector directors alongside the LEP Chief Executive. OxLEP Ltd Board meetings are also attended by the Council's S151 Officer.
7. Oxfordshire County Council acts as OxLEP's Accountable Body in respect of OxLEP Ltd's core funds and any additional central government funding received.
8. The Spring Budget 2023 set out that government was minded-to withdraw government support (core funding) for LEPs from April 2024 and to transfer LEP functions to local authorities, where appropriate and where not already delivered by combined authorities.
9. Subsequently in August 2023, government confirmed that from April 2024, the government's sponsorship and funding of LEPs will cease. The associated guidance states that the government expects the functions currently delivered by LEPs – namely, business representation, strategic economic planning, and the delivery of government programmes where directed – to be exercised by upper



tier local authorities, where they are not already delivered by a combined authority. In Oxfordshire's case this means Oxfordshire County Council.

10. As private enterprises, LEPs may choose to continue operating, but government will now support local authorities to take on LEPs' functions as set out in the March 2022 LEP integration guidance. The integration of LEP functions into upper tier local authorities is to 'be undertaken as quickly as possible, ensuring a smooth and orderly transition'. Published guidance also expects that assets built up using public funds will remain within the public domain. There is an expectation that decisions on the transfer of assets should be agreed by LEPs, Accountable Bodies, and respective local authorities by March 2024, however the guidance is not prescriptive in the approach local areas should take. There is a significant degree of flexibility given to allow for local solutions to be agreed by relevant parties and the guidance also recognises that practical elements of integration and the transfer process may need to extend beyond March 2024.
11. Government guidance outlines that government expects areas to publish their (existing, new, or updated) economic strategy within six months of receiving funding, that the principles of effective, independent and diverse business representation should remain in any new arrangements, and that upper tier local authorities should seek input to their integration and future delivery plans from all relevant partners, including district and borough councils and the LEP, as appropriate.

## **Current LEP Functions and Resources**

12. OxLEP Ltd delivers a wide range of activities across Oxfordshire. The work programme is agreed annually. In summary OxLEP Ltd:
  - Leads on business engagement to support economic development activities and prioritisation
  - Convenes and engages with the Oxfordshire Whole System on behalf of Oxfordshire businesses
  - Is responsible for the production the strategic economic plan, and other related strategies, including Destination Management Plan, Clean Growth Strategy and PAZCO
  - Delivers Department for Business and Trade (DBT) funded Growth Hub.
  - Delivers Careers Enterprise Company provision
  - Delivers Skills Boot camp
  - Leads Internationalisation and Inward Investment with DBT
  - Leads Social Contract programme
  - Leads Visitor Economy Renaissance Programme
  - Manages legacy capital programmes
13. OxLEP Ltd also currently has responsibility for the delivery of agreed Enterprise Zone (EZ) outcomes and the allocation of associated retained business rates across the two Enterprise Zones amounting to 216 hectares (ha) these are

Science Value UK (EZ1) and Didcot Growth or Science Vale Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone (EZ2).

14. The Enterprise Zones (EZs) were established to facilitate collaboration between public and private sectors and between different authorities by focusing on areas of genuine economic opportunity in order to maximise the positive effect on the wider economic area. EZ status was awarded on the basis that retained business rates would be used to support a LEP's economic priorities. As such, OxLEP is able to retain business rates growth in the two EZs for a 25 year period and to use those funds for key economic priorities, related to the zones themselves or elsewhere within its functional economic area of Oxfordshire.
15. The Vale of White Horse District Council (The Vale) acts as Accountable Body for the two EZs under terms set out in Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between the Vale, OxLEP Ltd, the County Council (as OxLEP Ltd's Accountable Body) and the respective billing and collection authorities.

## **Proposed Approach**

16. To ensure an orderly transfer of functions and then subsequent development and design to support the delivery of future strategy, a three-phase approach to transition has been developed to cover transition, implementation, and establishment. This is set out below:
  - a. **Phase 1 – Transition (By 1 April 2024)**

During this phase, interim governance arrangements will be put in place, to be agreed in consultation with the current LEP board, but to establish Council control as per government guidance, demonstrating that the functions move to the County Council. The Corporate Director of Environment and Place will have day to day responsibility for the LEP functions (within the company arrangements to be agreed, dependent on the transition option supported by Cabinet) and company registered office address (if relevant) will be amended to County Hall.
  - b. **Phase 2 – Implementation (1 April – 30 September 2024)**

During the first six months there will be a review of purpose and economic planning, including updates to the Strategic Economic Plan. A medium-long term business plan will be developed along with ongoing review of operational alignment with existing council economic and related functions. The medium-term approach to business engagement and broader partnership bodies will also need review in-line with the new operating model and strategy. Alignment of policy and processes, ensuring optimum operational efficiency with the County Council will also form part of this review. The current board will be asked to continue to serve to support the implementation process.
  - c. **Phase 3 – Establishment (1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025)**

Having developed a new medium-long term business plan we would expect revised operating model, structure and governance to be fully implemented during this period. The revised links and interactions with wider economic development resources within the Oxfordshire system will be reviewed.

## Governance Framework

17. Given the Government's decision to devolve LEP responsibilities to upper tier local authorities before the end of March 2024 a revised governance framework is needed that ensures that the County Council, as the body accountable for decisions, retains ultimate control.
18. Three options have been considered as part of phase 1:
  - Option 1 – Transfer current LEP staff directly into County Council employment
  - Option 2 – Create a new County Council owned company and transfer LEP staff and functions to this
  - Option 3 – Create a County Council controlling interest within the existing company structure
19. With Option 1 there are several disadvantages including potential redundancies, resignations or TUPE issues as staff are transferred to the County Council, costs and deliverability of winding up the existing LEP company within the time-period, the risk that business representation becomes less-engaged, and a loss of focus of board expertise. There would be a need to establish a new Business Board or mechanism to meet the requirements of business engagement as detailed in the guidance. It may also be the case that losing the flexibility of a company structure may reduce the opportunities to act in innovative ways in the future.
20. For Option 2, disadvantages include the cost and deliverability of creating a new company to fulfil largely the same role within the timescales; staff would still need to go through TUPE to transfer staff between the 'old' and 'new' companies; a replacement or revised board would be needed which would need to meet the requirements for strong business engagement, and potential loss of involvement from other parties.
21. Therefore, both Options 1 and 2 have been discounted due to the potential costs and ability to be delivered within the time period. Instead, Option 3 is recommended as the preferred option, and it is proposed that the County Council supports the creation of a controlling interest in OxLEP Ltd to adhere to government guidelines and the OxLEP Ltd Board is approached to revise its Articles of Association and By-Laws to enable this to happen.
22. The proposal in Option 3 is that the County Council will become the sole member of OxLEP Ltd. The company member function will be exercised by Cabinet during the implementation phase. However, this function may be delegated to an individual cabinet member, sub-committee or officer in future, following a review of the mechanisms through which the County Council exercises governance of its entities and the future governance structure of the LEP itself.
23. Future OxLEP Ltd board membership would need to be agreed within this approach and the Council would seek to maintain broad engagement at board level. Such an amendment would need to be agreed by the current LEP board.

24. Under Option 3, to avoid public procurement and VAT reclaim issues, the company would most likely need to qualify as a “Teckal” company. A Teckal company is a type of company that is wholly owned by a local authority and is exempt from certain procurement regulations. To be Teckal compliant, the local authority must control all of the shares in the company and must also exercise effective day-to-day control over its affairs. The company must be “inwardly and not outwardly focused”. At least 80% of the activity of the Teckal company must be for its public sector owners.
25. Option 3 is preferred because it is deliverable within the timescales, maintains continuity of service and meets government guidance. It also preserves the legacy expertise, experience and engagement of the current LEP, as far as possible, and if agreed, this will provide the structure for the council to demonstrate that the appropriate future governance is in place. The approach will ensure an orderly transfer of functions and form the basis for subsequent development and design to support the delivery of future strategy.
26. This option enables the County Council to demonstrate it meets the government guidance of delivering the core functions currently delivered by LEPs, including local economic planning. Government have outlined an expectation that areas publish their (existing, new, or updated) economic strategy within six months of receiving funding. This will provide the opportunity for the County Council to reconsider the Strategic Economic Plan and economic planning more broadly in line with the strategic priorities for the area and the emerging devolution deal.
27. OxLEP Ltd sits within a wider economic partnership landscape that includes the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. As part of the transition a review of how the new operational arrangements relate to these partnerships will be undertaken to ensure continued positive engagement within the wider system.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

28. LEP transition aligns with the vision set out in the County Council’s Strategic Plan to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. It also supports the priorities of:
- Putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
  - Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
  - Investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
  - Working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

## **Financial Implications**

29. Government guidance is that assets of the LEP should be transferred to the public sector, and this includes those reserves retained to cover the potential risk of future redundancies. Similarly, in relation to Enterprise Zones, the future functioning, management, and governance of these should be agreed locally, in

line with any pre-existing arrangements. Where LEPs cease operations, areas should reach locally agreeable and workable solutions to ensure a smooth transition of functions. Government expects that all decisions on the transfer and future management of assets will be taken by the LEP and its Accountable Body by March 2024 but recognises that the actual transfer process may stretch beyond that.

30. The Government confirmed on 19 December 2023 that they will provide up to £240,000 per local authority area in 2024/25 to deliver the functions previously delivered by LEPs – namely business representation, local economic planning, and delivery of Government programmes where directed – subject to final business case approval and the approval of integration plans. Funding beyond 2024/25 will be subject to future spending review decision. This core funding is separate to any programme funding that may be provided to support the delivery of, for example, Growth Hubs or Careers Hubs. Funding for the delivery of government programmes as directed will be communicated to authorities by the responsible government department or body as per usual processes.

31. Oxfordshire County Council is the accountable body for OxLEP Ltd. As an accountable body, the Council takes responsibility for receipt and financial probity of external funding on behalf of the OxLEP Ltd and ensures the proper and effective use of those funds. As required in Financial Regulations, where the Council acts as an Accountable body, a formal agreement (memorandum of understanding) is in place which sets out the operational protocols between the Council and OxLEP Ltd.

32. The Council has undertaken due diligence to ensure it understands the financial position of OxLEP and any risks associated with the transfer of ownership of the company to the Council under the three options outlined in paragraph 18.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources

## **Legal Implications**

The Council has taken external legal advice jointly with OxLEP in relation to company law issues, and separately has taken its own legal advice regarding employment issues. The various legal implications in each of these areas are summarised within the body of this report, in particular within the Governance Framework and Staffing Implications sections. As stated elsewhere in this report and within the recommendations, the preferred option is dependent on the agreement of the OxLEP Board and any legal changes will not take effect until that agreement is obtained.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

## Staff Implications

33. Under the recommendation, OxLEP Ltd remains the legal entity employing staff even though control of OxLEP Ltd moves to the Council. OxLEP Ltd staff would be notified of the change of ownership/control. No further changes are required by the Council. There would be no TUPE transfer and staff would remain employed by OxLEP Ltd.
34. In the event that OxLEP Ltd's status changes in the future, OxLEP Ltd has maintained a level of financial reserves to mitigate the operational risks of future funding challenges. As at March 2023, OxLEP Ltd's audited financial statements show total reserves held of £1.83 million, £225,000 of which is retained by the Council on its Balance Sheet in its capacity as Accountable Body. This reserves balance is budgeted to reduce only modestly (by £39,000) by 31 March 2024, the point at which OxLEP Ltd's net assets are due to transfer to the Council's control. The total reserves figure exceeds any potential staff costs in the event of termination of employment.
35. As stated above, Options 1 and 2 would have more significant staff implications and would both be likely to involve a transfer of staff under TUPE, either to the County Council or another company. Whilst recommending Option 3, there has been consideration of the employment law risks in relation to all three Options and how these risks can be managed, whilst also maintaining effective operational delivery and working relationships.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

36. There are no direct equality and inclusion issues arising from this report. Equalities will be considered when reviewing board membership and HR implications. Equality and inclusion will also be considered through the review of economic policy and strategy and business engagement, as set out above.

## Sustainability Implications

37. There are no direct sustainability implications from this report. Sustainability will be considered within new policy development and service areas as they are developed

## Risk Management

38. There are a number of opportunities and risks associated with the process to integrate LEP functions in order to begin delivery from 1 April 2024, including:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Responsiveness of LEP	Maintaining regular engagement with LEP to ensure continued progress against deadlines to develop a transition plan.
Costs exceed those planned	Due diligence on LEP structure and reserves.

Legacy programmes not meeting contracted outcomes	S151 Officer oversees the management and reporting of these programmes and latest position and forecasts indicate the programme outcomes are on track.
Current Contracts and New Contracts	Current contracts mapped and due diligence being undertaken.

## Consultations

39. Key stakeholders across the business have contributed to the report.  
Background papers:

1. Letter confirming government decision on future of LEPs (4 August 2023)  
[Transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\) core functions to combined and local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
2. Letter providing final guidance on transfer of LEP Core Functions (19 December 2023)  
[Correspondence related to the publication of guidance for local authorities delivering business representation and local economic planning functions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## BILL COTTON

Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Contact Officer: Robin Rogers, Programme Director (Partnerships and Delivery) [robin.rogers@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:robin.rogers@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Chloe Taylor, Head of Economy  
[chloe.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chloe.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

February 2024

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**CABINET - 27 FEBRUARY 2024****WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA  
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023 – Q3 2023/24****Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer****RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

**Executive Summary**

2. This report provides the workforce profile for quarter 3 2023/24 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators (Appendix A). This report also sets out some of the actions being taken to address the trends identified.

**Workforce Profile**

3. Appendix A of this report provides data and information about the Council's directly employed workforce. The highlights from this data and information are:
4. The Council's directly employed headcount (excluding agency workers) equates to 5353 people (4473.4 FTE) at the end of Q3. This is an increase of 394 people over the past 5 years and an increase of 14 since Q1 2023/2024. A project group has been set up to help identify the underlying reasons.
5. Total agency spend in Q3 equates to £8,969,483 compared to £9,593,378 in Q2, representing a 6.5% decrease. A task group is underway aimed to reduce the reliance on agency spend and target hotspot areas with the Council Management Team tracking progress and introducing appropriate interventions as required.
6. 5% of the Council's workforce is 25 or under which remains static from the previous quarter. The average age of our workforce is 46.
7. Benchmarking data from across a pool of 71 other councils across England including County, City and District councils has been gathered. The average age across the sample group is 47. Initiatives to address this include growing our early careers talent through our apprenticeship offering, graduate programmes, internships and training and development plans.
8. The rolling 12 monthly voluntary turnover is 11.9%, down from 13.1% at the same time in 2022 / 2023. The average voluntary turnover across the sample pool of 71 other councils is 13%. There is an aim to reduce this through the following actions:
  - Develop and embed more employee-centred leadership styles through the 12.3.2 Managing for Performance programme;

- Ensure managers are having discussions during induction, team meetings and 1-1s and setting clear objectives linked to the Council's vision and values;
- Encourage and celebrate applications for external recognition awards for individuals e.g. apprenticeship awards; and
- Plan and schedule a programme of celebratory events e.g. Long Service, qualification / apprentice graduations.

9. For Q3 2023/2024, sickness absence per FTE has increased by 0.3 days to 8.9 days in the 12 months previous. The average across our sample pool of 71 other councils is 11 days per FTE. The top reason for sickness absence remains as stress, anxiety and depression at 27.8% and this has increased when compared to the same period in 2022/2023 when it was 21.3%. Steps being taken to address this include:

- Undertaking a 'deep dive' into sickness management data, trends, policy, training etc;
- Addressing the top 5 priority health focus through targeted plans in areas such as back pain and musculoskeletal issues, long term health and covid related problems; and
- Upskilling managers to better support and manage absences with an emphasis on mental health and neurodiversity.

10. 10% of the workforce are recorded as non-white which remains static from the previous quarter. The data from the sample pool of 71 councils is difficult to compare due to the way in which the data is collated and reported. 7% of the workforce are recorded as having a disability, up from 6% since the last quarter (versus 8% across 71 other councils). Actions being taken include:

- Raising awareness of the value of a diverse workforce through initiatives such as reciprocal mentoring which is underway, staff network events and celebrating diversity;
- Ensure hiring managers have received appropriate training and follow objective, structured assessment and selection processes designed to maximise fairness and minimise adverse impact on different candidate groups;
- Review policies and procedures to ensure they capture diversity responsibilities throughout, that they are consistent, easy to follow and employee-centred; and
- Introduce future leadership development programmes including a targeted programme for under-represented groups.

11. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet.

### **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

12. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

### **Sustainability Implications**

13. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **Risk Management**

14. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

## **Financial Implications**

15. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end directorate overspend for 2022/23 and it continues to impact on forecast pressures in 2023/24.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

## **Legal Implications**

16. There are no potential legal implications of any actions/outcomes detailed within this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal

## **Lorna Baxter**

Executive Director of Resources

Annex: Appendix A - Workforce Profile Q3

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Michael Fletcher, Head of HR Business Partnering  
Advisory

February 2024

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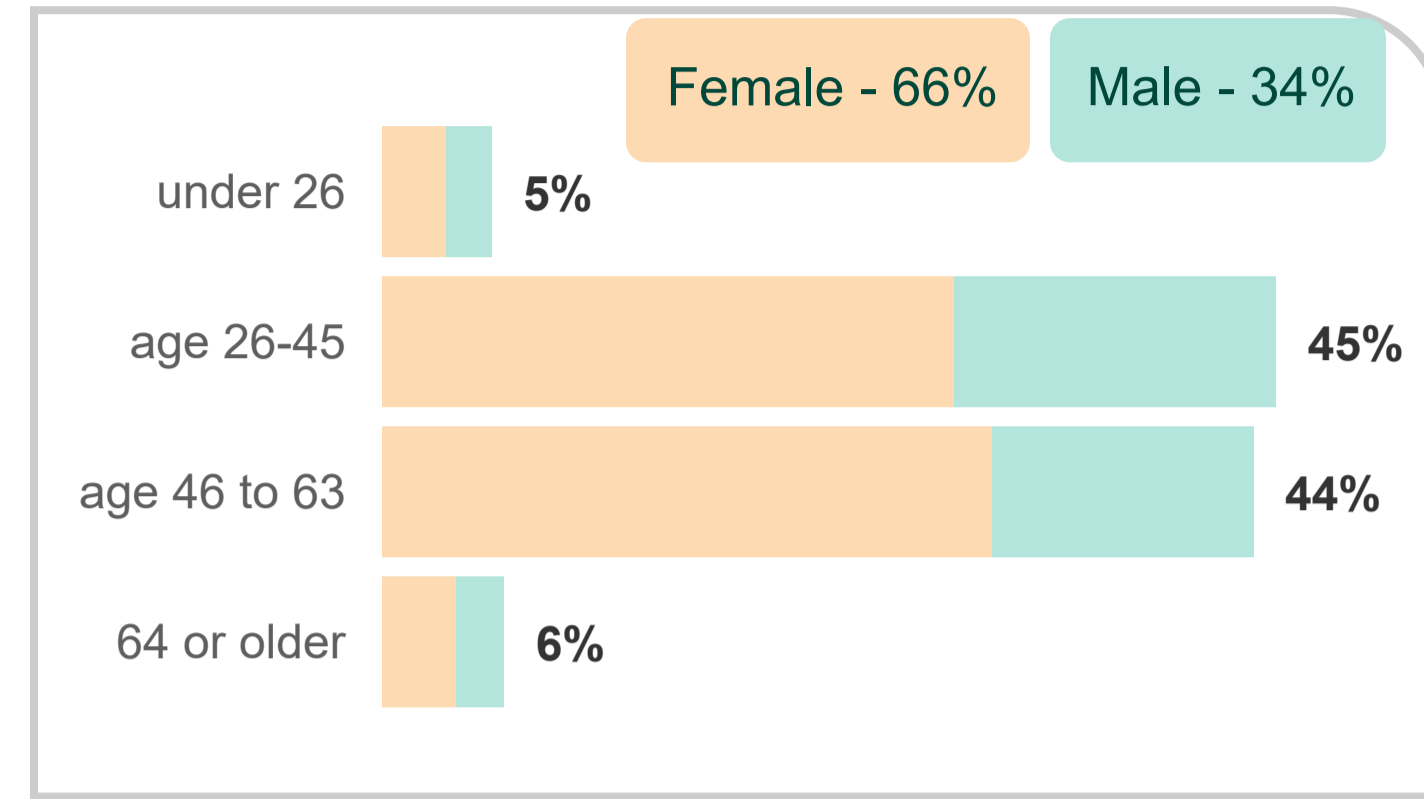
### Our workforce - Q3 23/24

At the end of Q3 23/24, we had **5353** (4473.9 fte) people, an increase of **14** employees from last quarter. Of these **219** were apprentices, which accounted for **4.1%** of directorate workforce. During Q3 23/24, there were **418** agency workers, compared to **480** agency workers in last quarter.

Headcount as at 31 March in the past 5 years

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>4959</b>	<b>5079</b>	<b>5087</b>	<b>5116</b>	<b>5310</b>

### Gender and Age

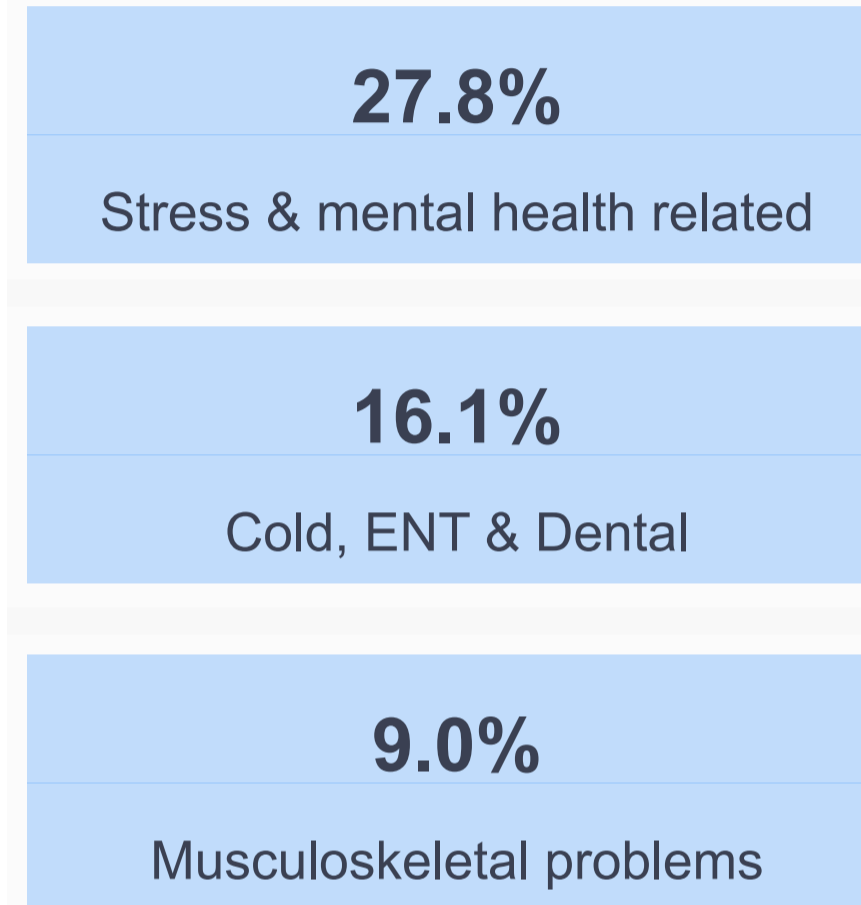


### Sickness

**8.9 days**

were lost per employee to sickness in the past 4 quarters ending Q3 23/24

#### Top 3 Reasons - Q3 23/24



**4.4 days per fte** were lost to **long term** sickness, which accounts for **50%** of all sick days in the past 12 months

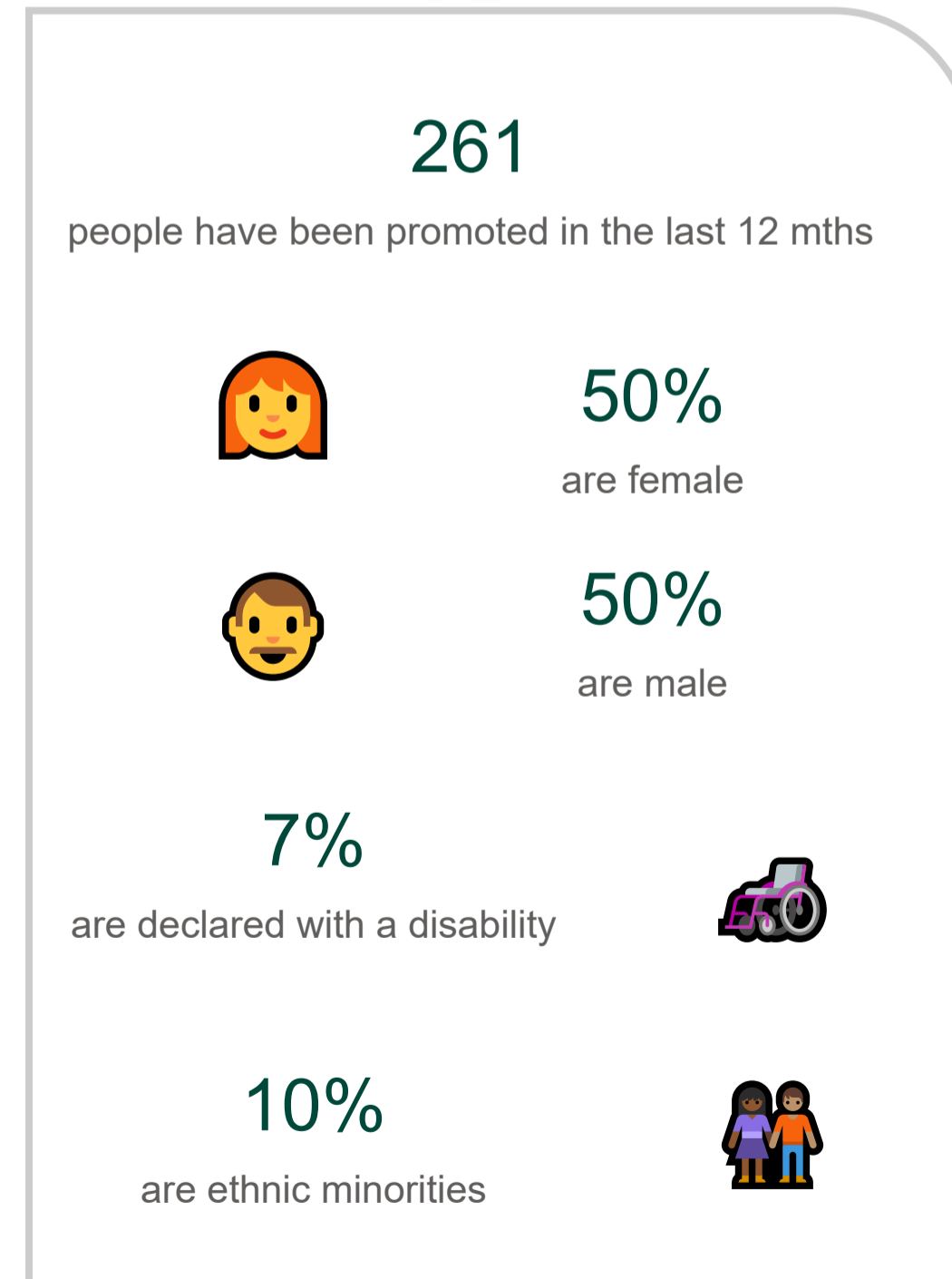
**2.7 days per fte** were lost to **stress** related sickness, which accounts for **30%** of all sick days in the past 12 months

### Length of Service

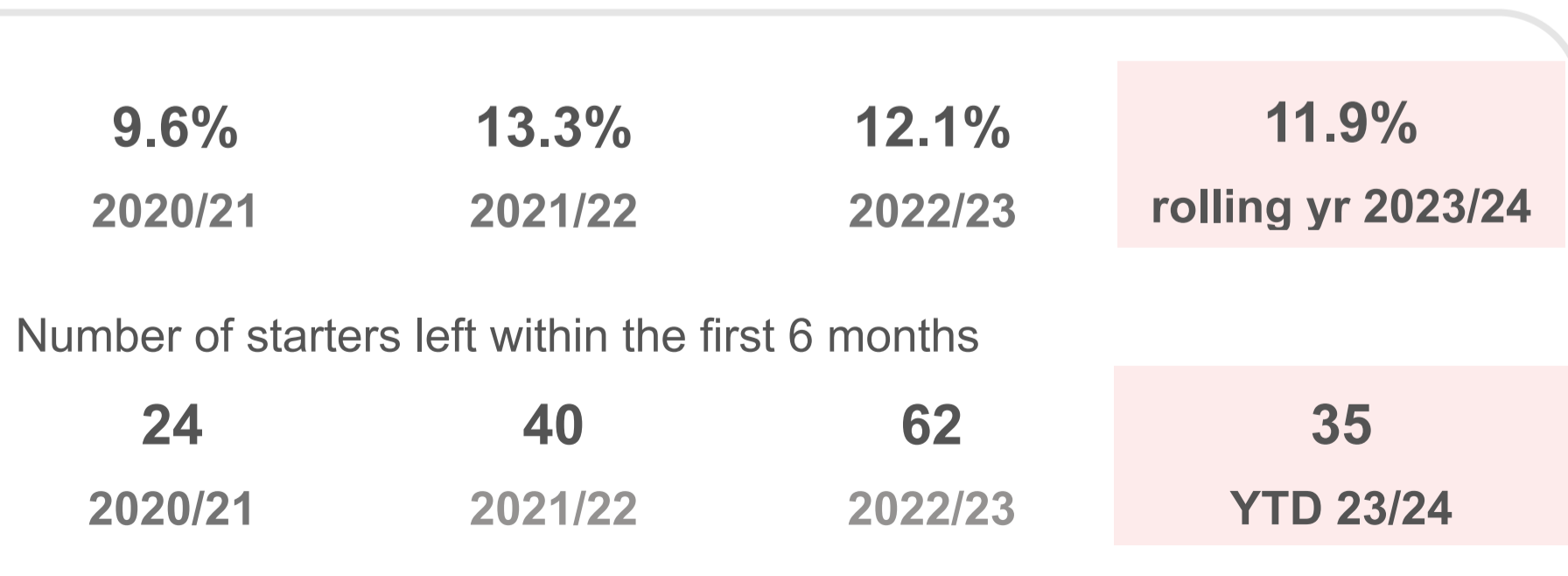
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### Promotions



### Annual Turnover Rate

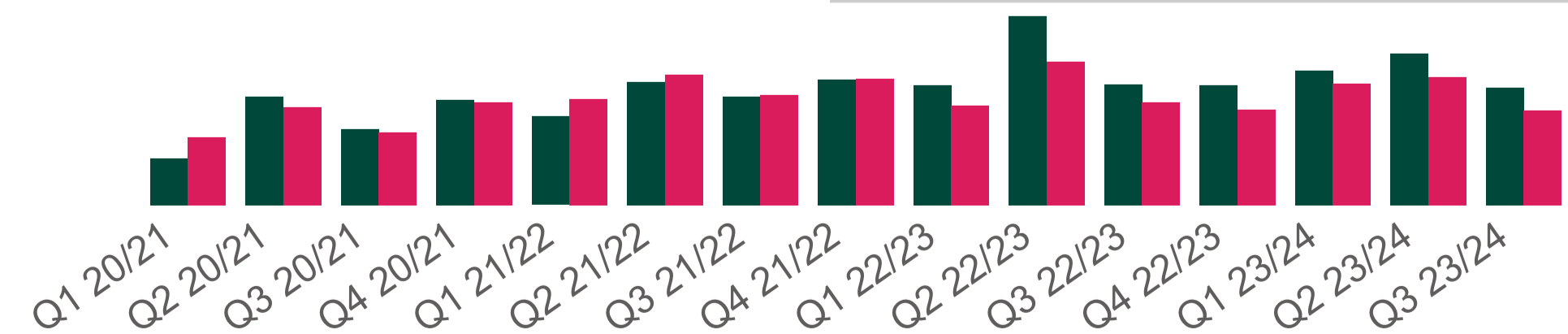


### Starters

We had **168** starters in Q3 23/24. **21%** of these were under 26. New starters account for **3.1%** of total workforce.

### Leavers

We had **136** leavers in Q3 23/24. **10%** of these were under 26. Leavers account for **2.5%** of our workforce.





Apprenticeship - celebrate our success

**114** apprentices have successfully completed their programmes so far. **56%** of these are now OCC employees. Actual spend in Q3 was **£260,758**. Spend of the levy has increased every year since 2017.



Also in Q3, our first 4 Social Work apprentices graduated after their 3 year programme, all these are now **qualified Social Workers** and working across our teams in Adults and Childrens.

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No. of apprentices on programme - end of Q3 23/24

**281**

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

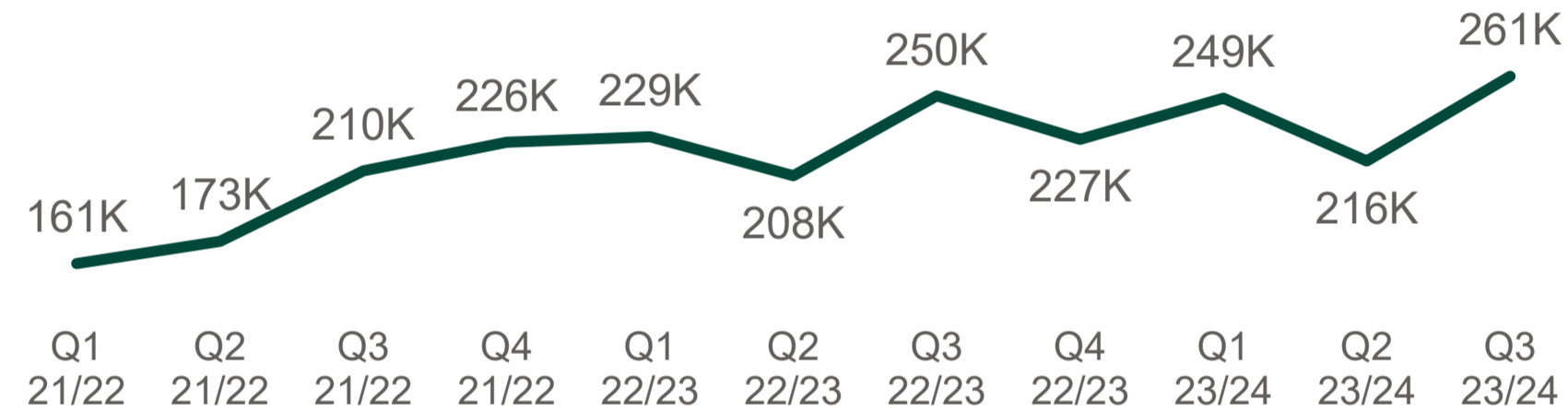
% new apprentice

**20.3%**

% doing CPD

**79.7%**

actual spend on apprenticeship by quarter



Number of new apprentices enrolled in Q3 23/24

**27**

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

% new apprentice

**37.0%**

% doing CPD

**63.0%**

In Q3 23/24 there were

Completions

**22**

Withdrawals

**4**

Agency Spend

Total agency spend in Q3 23/24 was **£8,969,483**, which has decreased by **6.5%** compared to the spend in the last quarter at **£9,593,378**

Agency spend for the previous 9 quarters and the latest quarter in Q3 23/24

Q1 21/22	6.14M	Q2 21/22	8.15M	Q3 21/22	7.59M	Q4 21/22	8.33M
Q1 22/23	8.98M	Q2 22/23	9.88M	Q3 22/23	10.47M	Q4 22/23	10.39M
Q1 23/24	8.40M	Q2 23/24	9.59M	Q3 23/24	8.97M		

**CABINET – 27 FEBRUARY 2024**

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – FEBRUARY 2024**

**Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151  
Officer**

**Recommendations**

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
  - a) approve the inclusion of a 3 Form Entry Primary School, located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme with capital budget of £2.19m, to be fully funded from secured S106 contributions.

**Executive Summary**

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2023 and updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in March 2024.

**Introduction**

3. The Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use Capital expenditure to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-25. The Capital Programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned to the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
4. On occasion, variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. There are no variations included in this report.

**Property**

5. 'Didcot Valley Park', Didcot  
A new Primary school is to be delivered to serve the first phase of the new housing development located in Didcot Valley Park. The 3 Form Entry primary school, to be delivered by the developer, will cater for 630 pupils, with 4 class nursery provision and a 12 place Specially Resourced Provision (SRP) to provide support for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, in line with the Council's SEND Sufficiency of Places Strategy.

## **Financial Implications**

6. The financial implications are contained within the report. Funding for the scheme mentioned in this report is to be met from secured S106 developer contributions.

Comments checked by:  
Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

## **Staff Implications**

7. There are no staffing implications arising directly from the report.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

8. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

## **Legal Implications**

9. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Financial Regulations and in particular paragraph 5.1.1(iv) permitting Cabinet to agree resource inclusion into the capital programme via a periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Strategic Capital Board (chaired by the Chief Executive). Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

## **LORNA BAXTER**

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:  
Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager  
February 2024



Division(s): N/A

**CABINET – 27 FEBRUARY 2024****FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS****Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision**

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
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**Cabinet, 19 March 2024**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Business Management &amp; Monitoring Report - December 2023 / January 2024</b> The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/278 - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Capital Programme Monitoring Report - January 2024</b> Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals.</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/276 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Treasury Management Quarter 3 Report (2023/24)</b> To provide an update on Treasury Management Activity in 2023/24 in accordance with the CIPFA code of practice.</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/277 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Oxfordshire Councils Charter</b> Adoption of a charter to underpin our ways of working and commitment with Town and Parish Councils across Oxfordshire. This is a joint charter with Districts and City Councils and OALC.</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/351 - Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Commercial Strategy</b> Approve the Commercial Strategy</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2024/022 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Procurement Strategy</b> Approve the Procurement Strategy</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2024/021 - Cabinet Member for Finance

## Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 21 March 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Market Street, Oxford: temporary public realm enhancement</b> Whether to approve the scheme following consultation on an ETRO</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2023/321 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>School Streets Phase 2 Programme</b> The County Council is consulting on new locations for phase 2 of a rolling programme of School Street initiatives. These restrict access around schools to improve safety and encourage active travel. Schools in scope of the preliminary consultations include: Didcot – Manor Primary School Oxford – St Mary and St John CE Primary School, Oxford – Sandhills Community Primary School, Oxford – Tyndale Community School Oxford – New Hinksey CE Primary School</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/023 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Eynsham - Old Witney Road - Traffic Calming Scheme - Cuchions</b> Eynsham PC have carried out a detailed informal consultation and have provided a summary of results showing a good level of acceptance. Scheme is proposed following the previously no through road being opened up to serve a new housing development with consequential increase in volume of traffic. Scheme to be funded by the Developer and OCC on a match funding basis.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/016 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Bicester - Proposed Parking Restrictions 2023</b> Proposals have been brought forward to introduce further restrictions that prohibit parking at any time (double yellow lines) in some residential streets within the Bure Park &amp; Bucknell Road areas of Bicester. The majority of the proposals seek to address road safety problems and the obstruction of traffic, particularly where parking currently is too close to junctions or bends, and thereby not in accordance with the Highway Code.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/015 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Bus Services Contracts Autumn 2024</b> Bus service contracts associated with developer funding and council transport policy will be required to commence in Autumn 2024. This paper requests approval to proceed with a tender process to procure these services, as they exceed £500,000 in value and therefore require CMD approval as per our Key Decision protocol.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/014 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Oddington: 20mph Speed Limit Proposals</b> Part of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/012 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Elsfield: 20mph Speed Limit Proposals</b> Part of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limit project.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/011 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Proposed 20mph Speed Limits - Harwell</b> 20mph speed limit previously approved at CMD November 2021, this has expired due to delay in agreeing the traffic calming element of the scheme – which is now approved. Developer legally obligation to deliver works further to the S106 agreement for Great Western Park, linked to planning approval P02/W0848/O.</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/010 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Wheatley waiting restriction review 2023/24</b> To seek approval for proposals to make changes to waiting restrictions in Wheatley to address local concerns around</li> </ul>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member</p>

parking.	for Transport Management, 2023/294 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ <b>Oxford: Proposed Parking Permit Eligibility &amp; CPZ Admin Amendments</b></p> <p>Minor amendments to parking permit eligibility for properties within Oxford City. These changes are generally required to meet planning conditions associated with new developments and change of use.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/025 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ <b>Oxford: Proposed Parking Permit Eligibility &amp; CPZ Admin Amendments</b></p> <p>Minor amendments to parking permit eligibility for properties within Oxford City. These changes are generally required to meet planning conditions associated with new developments and change of use.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

### Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 8 March 2024

<p>▪ <b>Property Decarbonisation Programme</b></p> <p>To seek approval for Capital Proposal and delegated authority for works to properties to bring them in line with the 2030 net zero target</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 2024/030 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<p>▪ <b>Sale of Glebe House and The Moors, Kidlington</b></p> <p>Both Glebe House and The Moors have been declared surplus to the councils need and are currently being marketed for sale. We have asked for final bids by the end of January 2024. We are expecting a range of bids to be received on both sites. A decision will need to be made on which offer to accept.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 2024/008 - Cabinet Member for Finance

**Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 19 March 2024**

<p>▪ <b>Recommissioning of Learning Disability Respite Services</b> Key Decision needed to proceed with the procurement of Learning Disability Respite services.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2023/234 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>
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# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

## Issue: Vision Zero

**Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup> 18 July 2023**

## Response to report:

*Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee received an update on Vision Zero at its meeting on 07 February 2024 at which the below responses to its recommendations were provided in the report. Cabinet is recommended to **NOTE** them as its formal response to the Committee.*

## Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council provides an audit of what is included in contracts, commissions, and briefings for	Accepted	Plan is to carry out audit in March 2024 through the council's audit team.

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>infrastructure delivery and how far Vision Zero, Active Travel, and the LTCP are emphasised.</p>		
<p>2. That the Council provides an audit of training undertaken to date of those responsible for implementing infrastructure delivery and how far Vision Zero, Active Travel, and the LTCP are emphasised.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Aiming to carry out audit in March 2024, and review training for those within Environment and Place responsible for the implementation of Vision Zero, Road Safety, Active Travel or LTCP applicable infrastructure schemes.</p> <p>All officers are employed with the necessary qualifications for their posts and undertake regular reviews and personal development plans as required within their posts and agreed by their managers.</p> <p>Some initial Vision Zero focussed training has been undertaken.</p>
<p>3. That the Council should endorse additional targets and geographically focused targets within the Vision Zero workstreams.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Vision Zero Strategy has detailed how it will use the SATN mapping of the population density across Oxfordshire (showing the urban areas in Oxfordshire using Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA)) as the basis of the analysis for the Vision Zero target review. The SATN mapping is being used to show parity across Oxfordshire, based on urban population spread, and not town specific positioning.</p> <p>The Vision Zero headline target of zero fatalities by 2050 sets the overall countywide ambition; however, it is recognised that for high density population urban areas, due to the higher volume of road traffic, such as some town centres, there will be a targeted aim to bring forward the zero target from 2050, to 2030, and reduce road fatalities and serious injuries in these areas to zero by 2030. The strategy action is review and develop the ways in which we can do this.</p>



## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>4. That the Council should move towards the CLOCS Standard as soon as is reasonably practicable.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Aiming for implementation early 2025.</p>
<p>5. That the Council prepares a road safety campaign focusing on the need for behavioural change and, in accordance with the Highway Code's hierarchy of users, gives the highest responsibility for change to those with most power whilst recognising the need for all to act responsibly.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>OCC's Marketing Team resource has been identified and is in place. This is funded via Vision Zero revenue funding to support and develop our Vision Zero Marketing Campaign.</p> <p>This has been set up initially to align closely with Fire &amp; Rescue's Road Safety campaigns (which are aligned to National Road Safety Campaigns) so that a consistent marketing presence is established prior to the Vision Zero Strategy being approved. The Vision Zero campaigns are currently social media based and are using the hashtag '# committed to vision zero'.</p> <p>Following the Vision Zero Strategy approval, a wider road safety behaviour change campaign will be developed and set up to focus on the hierarchy of users and wider behaviour change across Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>6. That the Council prepares metrics, by, for example, commissioning external polling agencies to conduct surveys, regarding perception of risk as part of the Vision Zero workstreams that could be tracked with the intention of reducing them.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Vision Zero Strategy details 13 metrics that combined, will help measure the delivery of the Vision Zero programme. The proposed metric P4 within the Strategy is about using the Health Streets Assessment Tool to analyse how safe a street or junction feels once road safety improvements have been made to it.</p> <p>We are planning to work with the Fire and Rescue Service further to develop metrics on the perception of risk that can be set up and used via the Road Safety Education Programme.</p>
<p>7. That the Council recognise the important need for Vision Zero and that funding for it is a priority in the upcoming budget cycle.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Cabinet approved £4m towards Vision Zero infrastructure improvements as part of the council's capital programme.</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma