

To: **Members of the Cabinet**

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 17 December 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

December 2024

Committee Officer: **Chris Reynolds**
Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: 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 27 December 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: 21 January 2025

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 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. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@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. Appointments

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 13 - 28)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

Community Asset Transfer Policy

Commercial Strategy

Budget 2025-26 (any formal recommendations to Cabinet from the PCSOSC meeting on 06 December will be issued as an addendum)

8. Henley Short Stay Hub Beds (Pages 29 - 64)

Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/346

Contact: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well Support
(Ian.Bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Adult Social Care (**CA8**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) **Note the history of step-down bed provision in Oxfordshire and to endorse the Home First Discharge to Assess model of care that has been implemented countywide since January 2024**
- (b) **Note the impact of Home First Discharge to Assess for users, hospital flow and on business efficiency across the County and in the South Oxfordshire area**
- (c) **Agree that the former Chiltern Court beds are not reinstated for the reasons set out in the paper**
- (d) **Note the decision of the Secretary of State for Heath not to “call in” the decision to close the Chiltern Court beds**
- (e) **Note the engagement that has taken place with the public and stakeholders during 2024**
- (f) **Endorse ongoing engagement with Oxfordshire residents around out of hospital care**

9. Beyond NetZero - Growing the Market for Carbon Dioxide Removals (TO FOLLOW)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/330

Contact: Sarah Gilbert, Head of Climate Action (Sarah.Gilbert@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Economy and Place (CA9).

10. Infrastructure Funding Statement (TO FOLLOW)

Cabinet Member: Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/322

Contact: Chris Stevenson, Planning Operations Manager

(Chris.Stevenson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Economy and Place (CA10).

11. Response to Government Consultation on Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Council Meetings (Pages 65 - 74)

Cabinet Member: Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/357

Contact: Helen Mitchell, Interim Head of Strategy, Helen.Mitchell@oxfordshire.gov.uk ;

Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,

colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Public Affairs, Strategy and Partnerships & Director of Law and Governance (CA11)

The Chair of the Council has agreed that this item is exempt from Scrutiny call-in.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree to the proposed consultation response outlined in Appendix 1.

12. Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 2 - July to September 2024 (Pages 75 - 94)

Cabinet Member: Community and Corporate Services

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/336

Contact: Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of HR and Cultural Change

Cherie.cuthbertson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (CA12)

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

13. Capital Programme and Monitoring Report - October 2024 (Pages 95 - 116)

Cabinet Member: Finance

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/224

Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (**CA13**)

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

Capital Programme

- a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2024/25 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.
- b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Budget Changes / Budget Release

- c. Note the reduction of £0.5m budget provision from the Defect Liability Programme funded from corporate resources, thereby returning £0.5m to the capital programme which will contribute towards funding for the 2025/26 the capital budget setting process (para 68).

Additions to the Capital Programme

- d. Approve the inclusion of the William Fletcher CE Primary School (Expansion) scheme in the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £3.9m to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding (para 65).
- e. Approve the inclusion of a programme of work which will create breathing apparatus and cleaning / decontamination areas across Oxfordshire's fire stations, with an indicative budget of £1.8m, to be funded from earmarked reserves, agreed by Council in February 2024 (para 66).

14. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 117 - 124)

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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 **CA14**. 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.

15. For information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny item (Pages 125 - 126)

Community Wealth Building

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, 19 November 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.05 pm

Present:

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

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Donna Ford

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive) Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director of People and Transformation), 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.

140/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Neil Fawcett.

141/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillor Liz Leffman declared an interest in item 13 on the agenda, as a director of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Leffman participated in the debate on this item but did not vote thereon.

142/24 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

143/24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See annex.

144/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

7 Reports from Scrutiny Committees

Shaun Picken

10 Including Everyone Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework: 2025 – 2029

Shaun Picken

11 LTCP5 Monitoring Report

Cllr Charlie Hicks

145/24 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to this meeting.

146/24 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

The Chair read out a statement by Councillor Jane Hanna, Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on the report on Epilepsy Services.

In the absence of the Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members considered the reports on Oxfordshire Flood Response and LTCP Monitoring.

Cabinet noted the reports and will respond in due course.

147/24 CABINET RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION ON SEND SERVICES

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report on a proposed response to a motion on SEND services by Cllr Sally Povolotsky carried by the Full Council. Following an inspection of the local area partnership (the local authority and integrated care board) in Summer 2023, the LAP was found to have 'systemic

weaknesses'. As a result, a priority action plan (PAP) was developed to tackle the key issues raised by the inspection. The PAP was approved by the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2023. At its heart, the PAP has a commitment to making the voices of children and young people 'heard' as part of the improvement journey.

Councillor Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for SEND services, presented the report. She highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of children with SEND and emphasised the need for a comprehensive review of the current SEND services to ensure they met the needs of all children and young people.

During discussion, several members spoke about the existing challenges in the SEND services including long waiting times for assessments and support. There were ongoing concerns about the adequacy of funding and resources allocated to SEND services. The impact of these challenges on families and children was discussed, with a focus on the need for timely and effective support.

The motion passed by Full Council proposed several improvements, including increased funding for SEND services and better training for staff. There was a call for more collaboration between different agencies and stakeholders involved in providing SEND support. The importance of involving parents and carers in the decision-making process was highlighted.

Some members raised concerns about the feasibility of the proposed improvements, particularly in terms of funding and resource allocation.

There was a discussion on the need for a detailed plan to implement the proposed changes effectively.

The Chair expressed disappointment that although she had invited two members of the opposition to take on the proposed position of SEND champion, neither had accepted, and she hoped this would be resolved in the near future.

Councillor Gregory moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to approve the Cabinet's response to the following recommendations included in the motion to Council as detailed in the report:-

- a) More meaningfully involve young people and youth organisations throughout all policy-making processes within SEND improvement and the PAP.**
- b) Any consultations or engagement with young people by this council must have a visible public follow-up to the outcomes and tangible metrics to ensure outcomes are delivered.**

- c) **All Council policies that affect young people, must include an impact assessment, and ensure that reasonable mitigation measures are put in place.**
- d) **Ensuring that where appropriate all future events, in person/online, run or funded by OCC, especially those related to the PAP, LAP, and SEND improvement, are open to appropriate young people with the attendance of their parent or carer.**
- e) **Launching a rapid task force for the voice of the young person and SEND users, and task them to create a framework for a Youth Forum within three months.**
- f) **The leader to appoint a SEND Champion from an opposition group to enable that a wider range of voices in the SEND community are able to feed into SEND improvement and services, and that such person sits on the SEND Improvement board.**

148/24 OUTLINE ALLOCATION OF COST OF LIVING AND ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING FUNDING FOR OCTOBER TO MARCH 2024/25

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out the intended approach to support those residents who are most negatively impacted by cost-of-living pressures over the remainder of the current financial year. This followed the government announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund from 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025. The report also provided the latest position on the impact of the cost of living, as well as providing a summary of Cost-of-Living expenditure for the first half of the year.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, presented the report. He emphasised the importance of community wealth building as a strategy to create sustainable economic growth and resilience within local communities. The proposed allocation of funds was explained, with specific amounts earmarked for various initiatives aimed at alleviating the cost-of-living pressures. Key areas of funding included support for low-income households, food security programs, and initiatives to reduce energy costs for vulnerable residents.

During discussion, members made the following points:-

- the importance of community wealth building and the need to invest in local businesses and social enterprises. The potential long-term

benefits of the initiatives, including job creation, increased local economic activity, and improved social cohesion were highlighted.

- Some members raised concerns about the adequacy of the proposed funding and whether it would be sufficient to meet the needs of all residents.
- There was also discussion about the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of the funded initiatives to ensure they delivered the intended outcomes.
- Some reservations were expressed about certain aspects of the allocation, particularly the distribution of funds and the criteria for selecting beneficiaries.

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

RESOLVED to:-

- a) note the cost-of-living support measures delivered during the first half of 2024/25, as summarised in table 2;**
- b) agree to the support package for the second half of 2024/25, as summarised in table 2;**
- c) delegate authority to the Director of Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, to amend the programme during the year in response to changing and emerging need, within the overall programme budget**

149/24 INCLUDING EVERYONE EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK 2025 – 2029

(Agenda Item. 10)

The Equality Act (2010) required local authorities to publish equality objectives at least every four years to comply with the public sector equality duty. The previous Including Everyone framework was published in 2020. Cabinet considered a report on the proposed updated framework which was required to be published by the end of 2024.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report and highlighted the council's commitment to ensuring that all residents, regardless of their background, had equal access to opportunities and services. The proposed framework outlined several key objectives, including reducing inequalities, promoting diversity, and fostering an inclusive culture

within the council and the wider community. Specific goals included improving representation of underrepresented groups, enhancing accessibility of services, and addressing systemic barriers to equality.

During discussion, the framework received broad support from members, who agreed on the importance of promoting EDI and the positive impact it can have on the community.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) agree to adopt the refreshed Including Everyone Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion framework, 2025-2029.**
- b) endorse the data-led approach to implementing the new Including Everyone framework through corporate key performance indicators (KPIs).**

150/24 LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN MONITORING REPORT

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report providing an overview of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) monitoring report. It summarised the background to the report and key issues. It also provided an overview of proposed changes to the LTCP. It is proposed that the monitoring report (annex 1) and updated LTCP (changes summarised in annex 2) were agreed by cabinet for publication.

The LTCP adopted by the council in July 2022, outlined the long-term vision for transport and travel in the county and the policies required to deliver this. The LTCP also included a set of headline targets to track delivery of the vision. This included targets to replace or remove one out of every four current car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030, deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040 and have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or serious injuries by 2050.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, presented the report.

During discussion, members referred to the importance of data and reporting to enable better understanding of how the activities of the Council related to delivering LTCP targets.

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

RESOLVED to:-

- a) **note the progress made on delivering the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan to date.**
- b) **approve the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan monitoring report for publication (Annex 1).**
- c) **approve the proposed changes to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan for publication (Annex 2).**

151/24 CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME SIX MONTH UPDATE

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided a six-monthly update on the delivery of the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme workstreams.

The report also provided an overview of the council's Carbon Management Plan 2030 delivery. Capital programme workstreams were progressing to support the decarbonisation and resilience of the council's fleet and property. This investment will reduce emissions by a further 64% compared to 2019/20 over the next three years.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report.

The Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Manager gave a presentation on the main aspects of the report and answered questions.

During discussion, members referred to the importance of the initiatives in meeting the Council's long-term climate goals and the need for continuous monitoring and updating of the programme to ensure its effectiveness.

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) **note the biannual update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme (Annex 1) and linked requests in the budget setting process.**
- b) **note the greenhouse gas emissions reports for wider Oxfordshire area (Annex 2) which will be presented to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Board on 26 November 2024**

152/24 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP INTEGRATION - PHASE 2

(Agenda Item. 13)

(Councillor Sudbury, Deputy Chair, in the Chair)

Cabinet had before it a report providing an update following the integration of functions previously exercised by the Local Enterprise Partnership into the council on 1 April 2024.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, presented the report.

During discussion, members made the following points:-

- The discussion focused on the continued engagement and operation of the company and its future directors.
- The integration of the LEP was seen as crucial for the ongoing development and support of local enterprises.
- Members discussed the financial implications of the proposals and the strategic importance of the LEP integration for the local economy.
- Members emphasised the need for a seamless transition to ensure that the LEP continues to function effectively and support local businesses.
- The importance of maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the integration process.
- Members discussed various measures to ensure that the integration aligns with the council's broader economic development goals. The discussion concluded with a consensus on the importance of the LEP integration and the need for careful planning and execution to achieve the desired outcomes

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

RESOLVED, 7 voting in favour and 1 against, to:-

- a) note that the county council is now responsible for economic development functions previously the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), including strategic economic planning.**
- b) agree to retain the existing council owned company OxLEP, for the delivery of some of these economic functions as set out in a revised contract and based on the business case attached at Annex A.**
- c) agree to establish a Shareholder Committee as a committee of Cabinet, comprising all members of the Cabinet, with Terms of Reference as set out in Annex B and, with the assumption that**

this is first agreed by Cabinet, that the Shareholder Committee will meet within one month of this Cabinet meeting.

- d) recommend to the to be established Shareholder Committee that they then make changes to the Articles of Association as attached at Annex C and change the trading name of the company to Enterprise Oxfordshire.**
- e) agree to the Shareholder Committee immediately appointing the company directors and make any appointments that are required from time to time in accordance with revised Articles of Association.**
- f) agree that the Cabinet will be responsible for developing a new Strategic Economic Plan, in consultation with other partners, founded on the strategic priorities of the council.**
- g) agree to the Shareholder Committee tasking the company directors to oversee the development of a business plan and budget for 2025/26 and future years for sign off from the Shareholder Committee, in line with the economic priorities set out by Cabinet.**
- h) agree to establish an Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Board to support the Cabinet in the discharge of its economic development functions.**
- i) delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to agree and conclude the details of amendments to the contract with OxLEP Ltd including the revisions in recommendation 2 above, the extension of the contract to 31 March 2026 and confirmation of arrangements regarding the delivery of the Skills Bootcamps initiative**

153/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID TERM REVIEW 2024/25

(Agenda Item. 14)

(Councillor Leffman resumed the Chair)

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. Cabinet received a report which set out the position at 30 September 2024.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. The report provided insights into the council's investment strategies, borrowing activities, and overall financial health. Members referred to the importance of maintaining a balanced and prudent approach to treasury management to ensure the council's financial stability and sustainability.

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

RESOLVED to note the council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2024/25 and recommend Council to note the council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2024/25.

154/24 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2024

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet considered a report presenting the September 2024 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 and explained the reasons for the performance exceptions illustrated by the indicators set out in the report and annexes.

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

RESOLVED to:-

- a) note the report and annexes.**
- b) approve the virement requests in Annex B-2a and note the requests in Annex B-2b.**
- c) approve an introduction of a new charge in 2024/25 for monitoring of biodiversity net gain compliance.**
- d) approve the increased charges in 2024/25 for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

155/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - NOVEMBER 2024

(Agenda Item. 16)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed Capital programme and included in the next update for Cabinet in December 2024.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and explained the background to the development of the Mini Holland project.

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

RESOLVED to approve the inclusion of East Oxford Mini Holland project into the capital programme with a value of £6.646m. £6.000m is to be funded from corporate resources, agreed by Council in February 2024, with the remaining £0.646m to be funded by S106 developer contributions.

156/24 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT SERVICE

(Agenda Item. 17)

Cabinet agreed that there was not a need to exclude the public during consideration of this item as the details in the exempt annex to the report would not be discussed.

Cabinet had before it a report requesting approval, as per the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Contract Procedure Rules, to join appropriate Framework/s to provide Educational Psychology Services (EPS), to meet the needs of the local authority for the provision of high-quality Educational Psychologists.

Educational Psychology assessments and reports were required for children and young people who were being assessed for an Education, Health and Care assessment under the Children and Families Act 2014.

Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, presented the report and explained the background to the increased demand for psychology services.

Councillor Howson moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve Oxfordshire County Council (“the Council”) joining appropriate single supplier framework agreements set up by external organisations to enable the Council access to call off contracts with the supplier/s for Educational Psychology services.
- b) approve the Council entering call-off contracts under such framework agreements in November/December 2024 and for a budgetary commitment for a period of 3 years.

157/24 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 18)

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.

158/24 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM

(Agenda Item. 19)

Cabinet noted the response to the Scrutiny item on Circular Economy Strategy.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

17 December 2024

Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to the Voluntary & Community Sector

Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 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 Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Tenants at its meeting on 15 November 2024.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets, Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, Michael Smedley, Head of Estates Asset and Investment, and Emily Urquhart, Policy Officer – Inclusive Economy Lead, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Cabinet Member introduced the report, noting that the relationship with voluntary groups had become unclear, with two separate issues – what the Council does with its property portfolio, and how it supports the work of the VCS – having become closely entwined. The purpose of the recommendations in the report before the Committee was to illustrate how the two important issues could be successfully disentangled. The focus of the report was written primarily from a property team perspective, but it was important to be clear that the Council was nonetheless fully committed to supporting VCS groups who were Council tenants and, indeed, those who were not.
6. In response to the introduction, the Committee began its questioning. Topics explored by the Committee included: local member responsibilities and involvement in discussions around properties in their areas; balancing the tension between commercial and social value outcomes; the length of time it was taking for some properties to find uses and the commercial and resident-relation impacts of such delays; partnership working; and effective and equitable governance procedures.
7. The Committee makes three recommendations, focusing on member involvement, communications, and operating more effectively with key stakeholders. Further to this, the Committee makes one overriding observation as to the value of services typically provided by VCS organisations to whom the Council leases property.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

8. As referenced in the summary of discussion, there is some degree of tension between the Council's commercial imperatives and ambitions and its social value ambitions. The report to the Committee showed that the 92 leases to voluntary sector organisations generated an average of £3500 in income each. By the time rent payment risk, repairs and maintenance, and administrative costs are factored in, does the value accrued to the Council by the tenants of leased buildings outweigh the foregone income of renting on a commercial basis? This is a particularly pertinent question in light of the other discussion held by the Committee on the same day which detailed the Council's movement towards becoming more commercial in its approach.
9. The Committee takes on board the comments made in response to this challenge, namely that overall value generated is what is important, not its source. The Council has options to leverage the value of its estate for the benefit of residents in different ways. These charging commercial rents and recycling the value produced into Council services, or charging below-commercial rents to organisations generating high social value through their activities, both of which are legitimate means of enhancing the lives of local residents. Ensuring

that all properties are being used and generating value in the most appropriate way possible is therefore a key challenge for the Council.

10. The Committee wishes to express its support for this approach, but it is concerned that, with a growing move towards commercialisation in the Council, there is a danger that this balance might shift in the future. The benefits and value of commercial rent are easily understood and immediate. The social value of VCS tenants – the outputs of allowing day centres, children’s centres and libraries – are more indirect and subtle, but in the Committee’s view carry significant cumulative benefits for both users and, ultimately, for the Council itself through reduced demand on other services. It would not be difficult, however, for those long-term and indirect benefits to be overlooked in the future, and the Committee wishes to place on record its wish that this does not happen.

Observation 1: That the social benefits provided by buildings provided to VCS organisations were difficult to quantify, but nonetheless significant.

11. This section is prefaced by the fact that the Committee was advised of ‘likely next steps’ rather than agreed actions, of which one was that ‘the Council continues to hold a dialogue with current and prospective tenants in the VCS sector about their needs to understand any issues/barriers early and prevent risks to tenancies later down the line.’ The following recommendation assumes the Council will proceed with this action.
12. The Committee’s response to this action is one of support. However, it is noted that there is no reference made to the inclusion of local members in such discussions. VCS groups are likely to seek the support of the local member in almost any scenario, whether it be for reassurance that a lease will continue or maintenance undertaken, for help in finding alternative ways of continuing operations if a lease is to finish, or help with developing and testing a business plan if a lease is to be commenced. Consequently, it makes sense for the local member to be aware and to be involved at the earliest opportunity, so that they have the best opportunity to provide the necessary support. As such, the Committee’s recommendation is that local members should be involved in any such dialogue as a matter of course.
13. Related to the observation above, discussions about issues and barriers to tenancies are necessary and prudent. However, as explained previously, recognition must be made in such instances that many of the risks are easily quantified, whereas the benefits are not. The Committee seeks that all discussions about future use of property gives full consideration to both risk and reward, and it hopes that member involvement may support this.

Recommendation 1: That the Council ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.

14. Empty and under-used properties are highly visible, which means that residents are keenly aware of missed opportunities or the loss of character of an area by having long-term unused buildings. Having said this, the Committee appreciates that sometimes taking a commercial approach can require delays. For instance, it can take a significant time to go through the full process of identifying opportunities, developing proposals for and then seeking planning permission prior to a sale, which would ultimately increase the sale price and returns to the Council. Equally, it is recognised that changes have been made internally which will reduce this in the future; four-year business planning, for example, will allow surplus properties to be identified further in advance and allow greater preparatory activity to be undertaken whilst the properties are still in use.
15. In light of the above, the Committee's issue is not so much in the fact of the Council's empty properties, but its communications around them. Residents are unaware of the work that is often going on behind the scenes. They simply see the empty buildings and ask the local member, who equally does not know what is happening. This is frustrating for all involved and paints the Council in a worse light than its efforts deserve.
16. The Committee's suggested solution to this problem is: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans. Doing so would set expectations more realistically and evidence the work being undertaken, which would lessen any frustrations experienced by the public.

Recommendation 2: That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.

17. Finally, it must be remembered that the County Council is not the only organisation VCS groups may approach when seeking accommodation. If the County Council is being approached, the district and/or city councils are likely to be also. In other instances, the NHS or major private landowners such as the Oxford colleges or major estates may be approached. In committee, it was determined that there is not a systematic way of sharing information appropriately with other local organisations. This is a missed opportunity as it can help reduce duplication or wasted effort in different organisations trying to support the same prospective VCS tenant, but it also reduces the opportunity to plan and place-shape in partnership with these organisations more effectively.

18. For instance, the Council was unable to provide a site to the Hindu community in Oxfordshire, but the City Council did have a former sports pavilion which could be developed. It is not known what level of partnership working was undertaken in this particular instance, but it is known that the Council's interest and involvement rarely ends at the point where it is unable to provide accommodation. Early and systematic sharing of information between relevant parties would allow earlier awareness of potential issues and allow more time to plan to mitigations, such as traffic issues, for example.
19. As representatives of their local community, members also wish to be kept informed of the demand for Council land by VCS organisation, the land currently available and intended upcoming leases to contribute their on-the-ground knowledge and improve outcomes accordingly.

Recommendation 3: That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

20. The Committee is not anticipating having this item return as a formal item. However, it hopes that the Cabinet will take on board its suggestion for improved communications, and that members will be availed of progress through this.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. 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.'
22. 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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December 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 requested¹ 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: Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to VCS Organisations

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

Date response requested:² 17 December 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 ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with		

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.</p>		
<p>That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.</p>		
<p>That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.</p>		

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

17 December 2024

Commercial Strategy Update

Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 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. Following the Cabinet's agreement of the Commercial Strategy at its meeting on 19 March 2024, the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a six-month update report on its progress at its meeting on 15 November 2024.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, highlighting the necessity for a commercial strategy as the means to underpin a shift in the County Council's mindset to enable the pursuit of appropriate, risk-assessed commercial opportunities to enhance revenue for essential resident services.
6. The Director of Financial and Commercial Services provided an update on the commercial strategy's implementation following its agreement by Cabinet in March. A commercial maturity assessment had been undertaken, indicating a low initial level of commercial thinking, but high willingness to engage. The primary areas of focus during the implementation followed those recommended by the maturity assessment and were: strategic direction and partnerships, governance and performance management, capability, and visibility and insights. However, progress had been slower than expected due to the Council undergoing organisational design changes simultaneously, into which the Commercial Strategy would need to fit, and complexity of adjustments required around contract management and data and insights.
7. In response to the introduction, the Committee raised questions around the progress made to date and future ambitions, issues in relation to contract management, the approaches of other Councils and the learning taken from elsewhere, governance structures around commercial activity, and how effectively the Council might grow its commercial maturity.
8. The Committee makes five recommendations, offering its suggestion on how future iterations of the Commercial Strategy might be made clearer, how the Council might increase its commercial capacity, and how it should monitor its progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

9. The strongest overall feedback from the Committee in response to the report received is its frustration at how light and un-granular in detail it was. The Committee does recognise that there are reasons for this, and that officers and Cabinet members share its frustration. It does not make sense to proceed at pace when the Council is in the process of restructuring. Equally, the low base from which the Council is beginning its commercial journey means a lot of investment in the foundations, a period of a project which requires a lot of work for which there is frustratingly little to show.
10. Notwithstanding the above, however, Cabinet agreed the Commercial Strategy eight months before the Committee received its update report, eight months in which the only concrete output has been the completion of a maturity assessment. Members were informed that concrete examples of the organisation's commercial plans would become clear over the next 12 months. This is indeed slow progress. When the Council harbours ambitions to be successful in an arena which relies on being quick to identify opportunities and nimble enough to take them, the pace of progress to date should act as

something of a reality check as to how far the Council needs to travel and the amount of work which needs to be devoted to it in order to make it work.

Observation 1: The pace of the Commercial Strategy to date, particularly in relation to developing specific commercial proposals, has been disappointingly slow

11. Following on from the above, the Committee does want to see regular and up to date progress reports on the Commercial Strategy to inform whether additional formal scrutiny is required. The information the Committee wishes to see would include a detailed project plan with activities, timeframes and progress against those timeframes. It would wish to see adopted commercial activities listed with targeted savings or income generation expectations, the progress made since the previous report, risks and be RAG-rated on confidence that the expected savings or income will be delivered to time. The Committee fully supports the prospect of the Council becoming more commercial, but successfully realising that ambition is not simple and regular monitoring is required. Oxfordshire is not the first council to try to be more commercial; some have been damaging failures. Many of the high-profile failures have been criticised for embarking on ventures with insufficient scrutiny. This request is made to enable Oxfordshire to avoid this risk.
12. Although not a formal recommendation of the Committee, if the Council feels that it should justifiably be able to rely on the Commercial Strategy to improve efficiencies by between a helpful 3% and a deeply consequential 10%, it may wish to include specific progress reporting on the impact and progress of the Commercial Strategy in its regular BMMR reporting as a way of ensuring it remains a priority area of activity. Equally, as referenced above, members should be well informed on a regular basis of the risks the Council's commercial approach is exposing it to.

Recommendation 1: That the Council develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings.

13. As detailed in the commentary around the committee's observation above, one criticism made of the Commercial Strategy and accompanying update report was a difficulty in understanding the granular steps which would be taken to achieve the intended outcome of becoming more commercial. One issue, it was suggested, was that the current iteration of the Commercial Strategy conflates three distinct types of commercial behaviour: saving money, which the large focus on procurement and contract management indicated was the strategy's primary focus, making money, and using money better. Recognising that there are these distinct types of commercial behaviour, each with their own underpinnings, governance and outcomes, would help the organisation provide more clarity on next steps. When the Council issues a new iteration of the Commercial Strategy, the Committee recommends that it delineate what it proposes to do along these lines.

Recommendation 2: That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money will be used more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.

14. The Council's commercial maturity assessment shows, not unsurprisingly, that overall commercial maturity within the Council is low. Many of the Council's staff have developed their experience within local authorities and other areas of the public sector and have had commensurately less exposure to commercial activity and approaches. The Committee appreciates that improvements in commercial thinking can be achieved through training and book-learning. However, as recognised at committee, the Commercial Strategy seeks to bring about a culture change in the way the Council operates. To effect something that significant may require deeper immersion in commercial activity than teaching, and the Committee suggests that the Council give serious consideration as to the value of seconding staff to commercial organisations in the private sector. The integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership into the Council provides a great opportunity to identify opportunities with high-performing organisations with high standards of practice within whose culture staff members can become immersed in a way they cannot whilst working within the Council.

Recommendation 3: That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.

15. As referenced, making improvements to procurement is a key pillar of the Commercial Strategy. However, it would be easy to imagine this as meaning the Council intends to drive a harder bargain to begin with, when actually it is just as important to recognise where opportunities exist to renegotiate more favourable terms during the contract. Equally, improving visibility of service area-level contracts by a central group can unearth efficiencies and economies of scale. These are both facts which were recognised by officers and members at committee, and are areas which both wish to see the Council improve in. As such, the Committee wishes to endorse greater investment in strategic procurement and mid-contract management of contracts, and encourages the Cabinet to ensure sufficient resource is invested to ensure these are possible.

Recommendation 4: That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.

16. The Commercial Strategy Board oversees business cases, spending control and strategic commercial opportunities within the organisation, thereby playing a significant role in the commercial strategy of the Council as a whole. It is made up of the Director of Financial and Commercial Services, Head of Procurement Contract Management, Strategic Property Advisor, Head of Law,

Head of Highways Maintenance, and Capital Programme Manager. Absent from this list are any representatives of adult or children's social care.

17. The Committee's view is that this is a missed opportunity. Combined, two thirds of the Council's service area revenue spending comes from these two areas alone. They are respectively four and three times larger than the spending on Highways, which is involved in the Commercial Strategy Board. Failing to include representatives of the areas of the Council's biggest spend makes little sense, particularly when adult social care in particular has such a significant and active role in shaping the local social care market. Where there is spending at the scale of these two areas there will be commercial opportunities. The Committee would like both to see specialist knowledge and experience in those areas be represented on the Board, and to provide these areas of significant spend with greater exposure to commercial thinking.

Recommendation 5: That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

18. The Committee has not scheduled a further specific item on the Commercial Strategy. However, as in recommendation 5, it has requested ongoing updates to be provided. It is hoped that the Cabinet will agree to develop and provide this information to allow ongoing monitoring by the Committee without having to commission a specific item unless the situation requires it.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. 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.'
20. 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 and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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December 2024

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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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: Commercial Strategy Progress Update

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

Date response requested:² 17 December 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 develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed		

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings.</p>		
<p>That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money will be used more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.</p>		
<p>That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.</p>		
<p>That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.</p>		
<p>That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board</p>		

CABINET – 17 December 2024

Henley Short Stay Hub Beds

Report by Director of Adult Social Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) Note the history of step-down bed provision in Oxfordshire and to endorse the Home First Discharge to Assess model of care that has been implemented countywide since January 2024
 - (b) Note the impact of Home First Discharge to Assess for users, hospital flow and on business efficiency across the County and in the South Oxfordshire area
 - (c) Agree that the former Chiltern Court beds are not reinstated for the reasons set out in the paper
 - (d) Note the decision of the Secretary of State for Health not to “call in” the decision to close the Chiltern Court beds
 - (e) Note the engagement that has taken place with the public and stakeholders during 2024
 - (f) Endorse ongoing engagement with Oxfordshire residents around out of hospital care

Executive Summary

2. This report addresses the Motion agreed by the Council on 5/11/2024 and questions subsequently raised by Councillor Gawrysiak addressed to Cabinet (see Annexes 1 and 2). It sets out the background to the decisions made in 2023 and the actions taken subsequently to address the concerns raised in the Motion.
3. The decisions and actions set out below form part of a transformational shift to support more people live in their own homes in their own communities. The Council and NHS and other partners have made a series of strategic changes to how the health and care system supports residents in Oxfordshire in line with
 - (a) best clinical practice of out of hospital care
 - (b) national policy directives
 - (c) most efficient use of the Oxfordshire pound
 - (d) support for our residents in line with the ambitions set out in the Oxfordshire Way.

4. The Council and partners acknowledge the concern set out in the Motion and elsewhere that it did not engage residents and stakeholders in Henley sufficiently prior to the decisions made in 2023. This report sets out the engagement that has been undertaken to share our vision and seek views in relation to out of hospital care and the Oxfordshire Way during 2024.
5. Since Council agreed the motion at (2) the Secretary of State has responded in full to Councillor Gawrysiak's request to "call in" the decision to close the short stay hub beds in Henley. This letter is attached as Annex 3. This confirms the expectations of the NHS in respect of consultation on changes to health services but states that the closure of the beds at Chiltern Court, Henley does not meet the threshold for intervention.
6. The Council is currently developing the replacement model for step down beds on expiry of current contracts. Subject to the agreement of the business case for that new model by the Council and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB) as joint funders, the integrated commissioning team will procure replacement services in 2025.
7. In response to the Motion of 5/11/2024 the report
 - (a) Sets out why the Chiltern Court beds need not – and therefore should not – be reinstated
 - (b) Confirms the engagement approach that the Council and partners have taken and will take going forward, but also confirms that there are no plans for formal consultation on the closure of beds at Chiltern Court

Short Stay Hub Beds

8. "Short-stay hub beds" are a local Oxfordshire initiative to support discharge from hospital where someone cannot directly go home. The model was developed in 2015-16 in response to extreme winter pressures when there was insufficient reablement and homecare to help people go directly home but where there was capacity in the care home market. There is no statutory requirement on a Council or local NHS system to maintain "step-down" beds to support flow from hospital and where there are alternatives to a bed-based pathway. It is now national policy that these opportunities should be prioritised and maximised.
9. In Oxfordshire there has been a heavy reliance on step down beds which grew significantly in the period 2015-2019, and then again in response to the Covid pandemic in 2021-2023. During the earlier period Oxfordshire was often the worst-performing system in the country for delayed transfer of care with as many as 200 people unable to move on from hospital when medically fit to do so.
10. The numbers of beds, the type of beds and support model into those beds developed over time in response to immediate system pressures (see Annex 4). The Chiltern Court beds in Henley were contracted by the Council at the request of the then Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) in November 2016.

11. This mix of bed types and contracts created confusion in discharge practices; created as many delays as it solved; and had a level of risk in relation to outcomes arising from the range of in-reach support models. Overall, this “portfolio” of step-down bed models did not reduce days lost to delay in the acute hospital and it risked pushing patients towards long-term residential or home care.
12. In 2019 the Oxfordshire health and care system agreed that the model of step-down beds needed to be rationalised and streamlined as part of system demand and capacity planning led by the then Accident & Emergency Delivery Board in response to the ongoing poor performance in relation to delayed transfers of care. It was agreed that the Council would:
 - (a) Commission on behalf of the system 56 short stay hub beds on the open market against a revised specification focussed on supporting people on a pathway home
 - (b) Align the 41 intermediate care beds contracted from Order of St John Care Trust [OSJ] within the Oxfordshire Care Partnership Agreement [OCP] to the new short stay hub specification
13. It was agreed that the funding for the beds would be pooled and shared pro-rata between the Council, OCCG and Oxford University Hospitals FT [OUH] and that the support into the beds would be provided by the multidisciplinary Hub team hosted by OUH.
14. The number of beds in the system continued to flex up and down. During the Covid pandemic there was a requirement to develop an additional covid-secure pathway (“Designated beds”) and ongoing pressures on the system meant that the Council purchased additional winter interim beds in 2021/22 and 2022/23. See Annex 4 for more information.

The development and impact of Home First Discharge to Assess

15. In response to the Covid pandemic in March 2020 the NHS “cleared the hospitals” to create emergency capacity. This approach was then written into the Hospital Discharge Guidance published in August 2020 and frequently updated [Hospital discharge service guidance - GOV.UK](#)
16. In summary the guidance sets out that
 - (a) Hospital is an inappropriate and potentially risky place for people who do not have a medical need to be in an acute bed
 - (b) Assessment of people’s long-term needs should take place away from the acute wards, and be focused on strengths rather than deficits if the discharge is to support recovery towards maximum possible independence
 - (c) When people are discharged home reablement ensure that they recover full independence in 65% of cases and reduced care needs as part of a reablement approach in most cases

- (d) 95% of people leaving hospital should be discharged home, with or without support
17. The figure of 95% has become a target in the Better Care Fund metrics and has replaced the old “delayed transfers of care” metric.
 18. Oxfordshire has created several roles and reshaped structures to support the implementation of the Guidance:
 - (a) A Home First lead, jointly funded from the Better Care Fund and hosted by the Council was created in 2022 to lead on Discharge to Assess [D2A] and improve practice with care providers;
 - (b) Transfer of Care [TOC] team was set up by the system in January 2023 to manage discharges and allocate resources to support flow
 - (c) A jointly funded TOC manager was established for April 2023 and the team expanded from managing OUH discharges to Oxfordshire patients in other hospitals (e.g. Royal Berkshire Hospital-RBH) in August 2023.
 19. In spite of these developments, Oxfordshire did not make significant progress towards the 95% metric in 2021/22 and 2022/23. The system Urgent and Emergency Care [UEC] Board resolved to address this problem as a key part of the Oxfordshire Better Care Fund for 2023/24 by the following actions:
 - (a) Move to a D2A model to take people directly home from hospital by default. The Council:
 - (1) Piloted a D2A model in July-December 2023 with Strategic Partners within the Council’s Live Well at Home [LWAH] Reablement and Home Care Framework and achieved proof of concept. The model was implemented county-wide in January 2024.
 - (2) Extended the LWAH service to include additional live-in and waking nights care. This meant the TOC team could divert people home who might previously have been discharged to a bed. These changes ensured that reablement could be delivered safely and effectively and offered assurance to residents and their families about going home.
 - (3) Reorganised the former Hospital Social Work teams in winter 2023/24 to support the “pull” model to help people home from hospital
 - (b) Reduce the number of short stay hub beds as capacity to take people home increased. The number of beds was reduced from 94 in March 2023 to 63 in April 2024. This reduction included the 7 beds at Chiltern Court.
 20. In 2024/25 the Better Care Fund Plan has further extended this model
 - (a) The system invested Additional Discharge Funding in an expansion of live-in and waking night support to D2A and reablement
 - (b) The Home First manager has developed a Trusted Assessor model with LWAH framework providers which has increased efficiency in the pathway by removing assessment delays

- (c) The Council has increased the number of providers working within the D2A and reablement pathway
- (d) The number of people discharged home has increased weekly by on average 30% from 2023/24
- (e) The Council has significantly increased the amount of reablement being delivered in the community since Jan 2024 to avoid admissions to hospital. The monthly number of new starts in the community has increased from 18-90 over this period.
- (f) The D2A model has:
 - (1) Enabled people who might previously waited for reablement to go home, find their feet and return to independence with a brief intervention from LWAH providers
 - (2) Avoided people being stuck in hospital awaiting a long-term home care package
 - (3) Continued to support >70% of people to full independence after reablement and a further 15% to a reduced care package
 - (4) Not seen an increase in readmission rates from the D2A process- of 392 D2A discharges in September 2024 only 12 were readmitted to hospital
 - (5) Information on the performance of D2A is set out in Annex 5 for Oxfordshire as a whole and for South Oxfordshire specifically
- (g) Overall, the Oxfordshire focus on co-ordination of discharge processes and on strengths-based assessment and D2A approaches has contributed to:
 - (1) A reduction in bed days lost to delay from 3796 in January 24 to 3105 in October, a reduction of 18%
 - (2) A reduction in average waiting time in the Home First pathway of 1.5 days per patient from Sep 23 to Oct 24
 - (3) A reduction in average waiting time for people awaiting a Community Hospital or Short Stay Hub bed of 3.5 days per patient and an overall reduction in bed occupancy in Oxford University Hospital sites from 96.54% in Nov 2023 to 94.10% in Oct 2024. This increases the capacity of OUH to manage Emergency Department pressures, and also reduce the risk of cancellation of planned procedures.

21. There remains work to be done. Generally, the system needs to stop people coming into hospital and there are a range of initiatives funded by Better Care Fund and ICB urgent care funding to support that approach which are under review by the UEC Board. There is a risk that D2A becomes a victim of its own success if it creates space in acute beds that are “filled behind them”. This is recognised by UEC Board as a system risk.

22. The increased level of activity also creates financial challenges for the Council and the Integrated Care Board within the Better Care Fund which will need to be considered in the Better Care Fund Plan for 2025/26. But overall, the cost of looking after people at home is much more efficient:

- (a) The costs of taking someone home for reablement is £**1174** per episode; if on assessment at home they do not need reablement the cost is £250

- (b) Where people go home with D2A and reablement the overwhelming majority end up with no or reduced ongoing home care needs. This represents a significant cost avoidance for the Council compared with the costs of larger care packages direct from a hospital bed. It is also better for the person who has the maximum opportunity to regain as much of their independence as possible
- (c) By contrast the average cost of a Short Stay Hub bed is (2024/25 rates) is £1500 a week, plus the cost of the Hub team and medical cover. There are some people who do benefit from bed-based assessment and reablement, but this pathway should only be used when consistent with the patient's needs on discharge from hospital

23. The experience of people and professionals of D2A has been the subject of a recent Healthwatch Oxfordshire report which can be accessed at [People's experiences of leaving hospital in Oxfordshire – a report summary - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#). The report details both good practice and challenges around- especially-communication to people in the discharge pathways, involvement of unpaid carers, join up between hospital and community teams when people are discharged, and general information around discharge pathways. The Council and partners have developed an action plan which will be reviewed in the system Urgent Care Delivery Group [UCDG] and the Carers Strategy working group. A new discharge information leaflet is now being finalised as part of the response. The report did not identify any significant levels of concern around D2A as opposed to bed-based pathways and provided positive statements regarding the level of quality of care being delivered into people's own homes.

Questions raised by Councillor Gawrysiak

24. Councillor Gawrysiak has raised specific questions further to the Motion agreed by Council on 05/11/2024:

(a) **Were the Chiltern Court beds NHS beds?**

The Chiltern Court beds were contracted by the Council from OSJ on behalf of OCCG in November 2016 as a variation to the OCP agreement. The funds to pay for the beds were pooled between the Council and OCCG as part of the then s75 NHS Act 2006 agreement. The beds were treated as part of the system discharge capacity as set out in Annex 4. These were jointly commissioned and funded beds contracted by the Council. They were not "NHS beds".

In her response to Councillor Gawrysiak, the Minister of State confirms that, *"a service being funded from the BCF does not impact duties on NHS commissioners or local authorities to involve patients and the public, through engagement or consultation"*; but also, that, *"as local joint commissioners, the NHS BOB ICB and OCC are best placed to determine the needs of their local population"*.

(b) **To remove them needs a consultation?**

The Minister of State has confirmed that, *"the Secretary of State has decided that this does not meet the threshold for intervention"*, and notes

that the view of the Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16 January 2024 that this was not a material change needing consultation.

That said, the Director of Adult Social Care and the ICB Director of Place have both acknowledged that there could and should have been greater engagement to communicate the changes and that has been reflected in later work. See paragraph 25 below

- (c) **Full and transparent Data from RG9 Henley, RG4 Sonning Common, RG 8 Goring Woodcote, OX 9 Thames, OX 49 Watlington, HP18 Chinnor and OX 10 Wallingford of discharge paths for patients?**

See Appendix 5. In broad terms, demand and delivery for D2A and step-down beds is consistent in these post codes as with the rest of the County. Outcomes for people from these postcodes is also consistent.

It should be noted that people in post codes in the north and south-west of the District Council are more likely to have been admitted to the John Radcliffe site and then discharged to City or South Oxfordshire sites should they need Short Stay Hub beds.

- (d) **Beds are being provided at Burcot which is 17 miles by car away. We have no bus service from Henley so that is not an option. How can it be justified that Geography was not taken into account such that there is no provision in South Oxfordshire to serve a population of 140,000 residents?**

It is acknowledged that the journey by public transport is difficult to the Short Stay Hub bed site in Burcot for Henley residents. As noted above the same is true in reverse for perhaps the majority of South Oxfordshire residents who by contrast can reach the City or Burcot.

It is important to note that the District Council area is not a planning unit for step-down beds. These beds are specialist and will be more so in the new model (see below paragraph 26ff). The Council will seek to ensure a geographical spread and accessibility in the upcoming procurement but that will be subject to location of suitable bids.

- (e) **What is the RBH view on this and its impact on delayed discharges?**

See Annex 5. RBH has confirmed that the number of people discharged into bed-based pathways has reduced by on average 1 patient per month since April 24. There have been no referrals for short stay hub beds since March.

RBH has fed back that the TOC team “decides pathways very quickly. Our Hospital Discharge Team speak well of the new TOC process and have good working relationships with them. There are daily updates and twice weekly opportunities for wards to discuss cases”.

RBH does however flag that “Patients and relatives often do not understand the rationale of patients with relatively high needs going home with D2A and this can cause an amount of anxiety. A patient information leaflet [referenced above, para 23] has been developed with Oxford TOC colleagues”

This feedback is entirely consistent with the experiences in OUH across the implementation of the TOC and Home First D2A model.

Data on RBH discharges is supplied in Annex 5. Broadly the number of discharges has remain the same each month across 2023 and 2024 to date, with an increase of people going home under D2A.

In terms of length of stay, the waits for D2A have broadly reduced on average and those for step down beds have remained largely the same

25. As noted at paragraph (24b) the Council and the ICB has recognised that there was insufficient communication and engagement re the changes at Chiltern Court. Further it is acknowledged that the transformation to home-based out of hospital care needed to be shared and discussed with residents and stakeholders in Oxfordshire. This was the conclusion of HOSC in January 2024 (drawing a comparison with the work with local people in Wantage around planned changes to the use of the Community Hospital site) and led to the Healthwatch Oxfordshire report discussed at paragraph 23. A series of engagement roadshows has been undertaken during 2024 to promote understanding and debate around these crucial changes to the way we support our vulnerable population.

Next steps for step down beds

26. The Short Stay Hub bed contracts issued in November 2019 have been extended but come to an end in March 2025.
27. A business case is in development for the future provision of step-down beds. The new model will change and be focussed on:
 - (a) People with complex nursing needs who might otherwise be considered for long-term residential care on discharge from hospital. The aim of the beds would be to allow those people for whom there is not a safe, sustainable home-first option the opportunity to settle, recover and be assessed in an environment which maximises their independence. Some of these people may then return home with support, some may need long-term nursing care, but the needs and costs may have reduced delivering the least restrictive care for the individual and the most efficient long-term care for Council, the NHS via Continuing healthcare or indeed the individual if self-funding.
 - (b) People with dementia and/or delirium presentations where a spell of specialist support (possibly with access to a Registered Mental Health Nurse) will enable clinicians to work with the user and their family to

identify the most appropriate onward pathway. This group do badly in acute bed settings but in a pilot that has been running since July 2024 some people have been able to return home once their delirium has resolved. These beds will address a key gap in Oxfordshire's discharge offer.

28. The new beds will continue to be supported by the Hub and the ICB is working with local GPs to develop an appropriate medical cover model.
29. The procurement will be subject to approval of a business case by both the Council and the ICB as joint funders. The new beds will be procured from within the Council's Care Home Framework from January 2025.
30. Views have been sought from past users and carers of short stay hub beds, but feedback to date has been limited. The Council will seek further input from stakeholders before the business case is finalised and communicate any changes to current provision as part of the ongoing engagement regarding the out of hospital care model.
31. The procurement will be via the Council's Care Home Framework. As noted above the location of the beds that are procured will be subject to the quality of bids. The Council will seek to make the beds accessible to carers and family members across the County, but the increasingly specialist provision may limit scope to reflect the County's geography.

Recommendations

32. Cabinet is asked to:
 - (a) Note the history of step-down bed provision in Oxfordshire and to endorse the Home First Discharge to Assess model of care that has been implemented countywide since January 2024
 - (b) Note the impact of Home First Discharge to Assess from a user outcome, system performance and business efficiency point of view both across the Council and in the South Oxfordshire area
 - (c) Agree that the former Chiltern Court beds are not reinstated for the reasons set out in the paper
33. Cabinet is asked to:
 - (a) Note the decision of the Secretary of State for Health not to "call in" the decision to close the Chiltern Court beds
 - (b) Note the engagement that has taken place with the public and stakeholders during 2024 and to endorse ongoing engagement with Oxfordshire residents around out of hospital home first care

Corporate Policies and Priorities

34. Supporting people home from hospital and in their own community supports the delivery of
 - (a) Priority 3: supporting the health and wellbeing of residents and

- (b) Priority 4: support carers and the social care system

Financial Implications

35. **There are no financial implications directly linked to this paper.**

Comments checked by:

Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business partner,
Stephen.rowles@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

36. There is no specific requirement for the local authority to conduct a formal consultation regarding these bed closures. Formal consultation is only required where there is a statutory requirement, or a legitimate expectation to do so has been identified. Clearly, the more serious or significant the impact of any proposed changes are, the more likely the views of those affected should be sought.
37. In this instance, it has been observed that the Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee determined on 16 January 2024 that this was not a material change needing consultation and as noted above by the Minister '*local joint commissioners, ... are best placed to determine the needs of their local population*'. The report identifies however that there has been engagement with stakeholders regarding the proposals and, despite there being no specific requirement for consultation, there is an ongoing commitment to engagement with stakeholders and interested parties.

Comments checked by:

Janice White
Head of Law and Legal Business Partner, ASC and Litigation
Janice.White@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

38. None. There are no direct staffing implications for the Council.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

39. The Short Stay Hub beds are designed to meet the needs of the individuals whose needs are too complex to return home under D2A programme. These are mostly people over the age of 65. This gap is filled by these step-down beds. In the new model the individuals' needs are set out clearly and emphasis is drawn on personalised care in line with care bandings and inputs set out in the

Council's Care Home Framework. Particular emphasis is given to the providers understanding of the impact of health conditions and being able to deliver care for people living with dementia and other health conditions. Short-stay hub beds address the needs of some of our most vulnerable elderly residents.

Sustainability Implications

40. The Short Stay Hub bed model does not directly create any sustainability benefits or issues. As part of the evaluation of bids the Council will assess providers commitment to and plans to move to a carbon neutral model for their businesses.

Risk Management

41. There are plans for procurement of the Short Stay Hub Beds under a new model to meet the needs of those individuals whose needs are too complex, and where they are unable to return home under the D2A programme. The aim is to run this model covering City, South and North parts of the county however the priority is to procure a high-quality standard of beds that can meet this level of complexity and intensity. This coupled with a reduction in the bed numbers in the procurement means there may not be beds available in each part of the County. This has not been the case so far and people who use this service will be informed of this at the outset to manage expectations and to work with any exceptional circumstances.

Consultations

42. As set out at paragraphs 24 and 25 there is no requirement for consultation, but the Council and the ICB have engaged subsequent to the decision to close beds in Henley and have and will continue to engage people around the Home First model.

NAME Karen Fuller, Director of Social Care
[Member of SLT]

Annex: Annex 1- Motion of the Council dated 05/11/2004
Annex 2-supplementary questions to Cabinet from Councillor Gawyrsiak
Annex 3-Letter from Minister of State for Health
Annex 4-History of step-down bed provision
Annex 5-Datapak

Background papers: None other than referenced in the report

Contact Officer:

Ian Bottomley Lead Commissioner for Age Well 07532
132975 ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

December 2024

Cabinet 17 December 2024
Henley Short Stay Hub beds
Appendix 1-Motion Agreed by Council 05/11/2024

1. Council agreed the following motion by Councillor at its meeting on 05/11/2024
 - a) In December Oxfordshire County Council removed seven beds from the Chiltern care home without any consultation with the GP's, Henley Town Council or the community of South Oxfordshire. This lack of consultation by the Council is unacceptable and must not be repeated.
 - b) These beds were originally provided as 'NHS beds'.
 - c) Following FOI requests to the Integrated Care Board Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West (ICB BOB) and the Council, it has been established that these beds are NHS beds funded by the ICB, this Council and the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. They should not therefore have been closed without full and proper public consultation.
 - d) Dr Broughton interim Chief Executive of the ICB BOB states 28th February 2024 : "The beds have not 'lost NHS funding', "The beds continued to be overseen by the Oxford University Hospital Hub team."
 - e) These beds are therefore NHS beds which cannot be removed without consultation.
 - f) This Council:
 1. Deplores the beds' removal without said consultation.
 2. Believes that a full and objective account as to why these beds, which serve a population of 140,000 of South Oxfordshire, were removed and what replacement measures have since been taken.
 - g) This Council requests that Cabinet:
 3. Asks partners to seek to account for the reasons why the seven Chiltern Court Beds serving South Oxfordshire cannot be reinstated, bearing in mind the new measures that have since been in place and, in the absence of such an account, take steps to reinstate them.
 4. Conduct all necessary public consultations

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**Cabinet 17 December 2024
Henley Short Stay Hub beds**

Appendix 2-Questions raised by Councillor Gawysriak to Cabinet further to the Motion Agreed by Council 5/11/2024

Q1 A clear statement that these 7 Chiltern Court Beds were NHS?

Q1a I repeat this question one because this has NOT been addressed. These Beds are NHS therefore warrant a consultation for removal.

Q1a To remove them needs a consultation?

It is irrelevant that OCC held the contract because they were being contracted on behalf of Oxford Health and the NHS, they still warrant a consultation. This question was avoided by HOSC.

Q2 Full and transparent Data from RG9 Henley, RG4 Sonning Common, RG 8 Goring Woodcote, OX 9 Thames, OX 49 Watlington, HP18 Chinnor and OX 10 Wallingford of discharge paths for patients?

There are in many patients who cannot be discharged home because they are on their own or have frail relatives who cannot look after them. It has been stated that **zero patients** -who fall into this category -were discharged in the whole of Oxfordshire. I find this unbelievable OR the data is not being captured.

Q3 Beds are being provided at Burcot which is 17 miles by car away. We have no bus service from Henley so that is not an option. How can it be justified that Geography was not taken into account such that there is no provision in South Oxfordshire to serve a population of 140,000 residents?

Provision should be made in the south of South Oxon with an explanation of journey times for relatives and friends visiting.

Q4 What is the RBH view on this and its impact on delayed discharges?

Please recognise that the Chiltern Beds serve Henley, Thame, Wallingford and all their surrounding villages. They also serve communities in Berkshire covered by the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

I have highlighted the relevant passages of the motion.

BUT I again repeat Q1 which has not been answered by OCC, cabinet and ICB BOB.

These beds were and are NHS beds- statement of fact- therefore cannot be removed.

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06/11/2024

Dear Freddie van Mierlo MP,

Thank you for your letter of 22 July 2024, asking the Secretary of State to use the powers under Schedule 10A of the National Health Service Act 2006 to call in the decision by the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to close seven step-down beds at Chiltern Court Care Home.

Summary of your request

You requested that the closure of seven step-down beds at Chiltern Court Care Home be called in because you have concerns with the process that has been followed by the NHS BOB ICB and OCC, specifically a lack of public engagement and consultation on the closure of the beds.

Ministerial intervention powers

The Department has published statutory guidance on the call-in powers in [Reconfiguring NHS services - ministerial intervention powers](#), which sets out how call-in requests may be considered. As explained in the statutory guidance, it is likely that a reconfiguration will not be called in before:

- NHS commissioning bodies and local authorities have taken all reasonable steps to try to resolve any issues; and
- those making a request, or others have tried to resolve any concerns through their local NHS commissioning body or have raised concerns with their local Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

To inform a decision on whether to call in a proposal, ministers may consider whether the proposed change meets at least one of the following criteria:

- there are concerns with the process that has been followed by the NHS commissioning body or NHS provider; or
- a decision has been made and there are concerns that a proposal is not in the best interests of the health service in the area.

In addition, ministers may consider:

- whether the reconfiguration proposal is considered to be substantial; or
- the regional or national significance of an NHS service reconfiguration and the impact on the quality, safety, or effectiveness of services.

Secretary of State's decision

Your letter and all of the available information has been considered as set out in the statutory guidance, alongside other available information listed below. On balance, the Secretary of State has decided that this does not meet the threshold for intervention.

Key information considered includes:

- Information provided with John Howell's call-in request
- Minutes of Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Tuesday, 16 January 2024
- Information provided to the Department by NHS BOB ICB
- The Oxfordshire Health and Well-Being Board Better Care Fund plan for 2023-2025

I understand that the ICB discussed the issue with Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) on 16 January 2024 and that the JHOSC did not consider it a substantial change. I note that this has been raised with the county council and ICB. I would continue to encourage you to engage with BOB ICB on the aims of the Better Care Fund and provision of out of hospital support in south Oxfordshire.

While we appreciate how patients and the public may feel about the decision, we do not consider this change in particular to be a regionally or nationally significant NHS reconfiguration within the meaning of the guidance.

I would like to clarify that a service being funded from the BCF does not impact duties on NHS commissioners or local authorities to involve patients and the public, through engagement or consultation. I understand that the ICB and LA have, as joint commissioners, agreed approach to hospital discharge which involves less demand for step down beds. This change also supports Home First Discharge to Assess for people who are admitted to hospital, which is a key objective in their 2023-25 BCF plan, by increasing the number of people going home from hospital.

Turning to your concerns about the framework for pooled funding and whether it impacts public consultation, it may be helpful if I explain some background to the BCF. The BCF provides ICBs and local authorities with a framework to make joint plans and pool budgets for the purposes of delivering better joined-up care. The plans produced are signed off by Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs). These plans are then assured by NHS England with LGA input and oversight from DHSC and MHCLG. Local authorities and ICBs can voluntarily pool funds into the BCF year-on-year.

The 2023-2025 BCF policy framework includes four national conditions:

- Plans to be jointly agreed by ICBs and local authorities;
- Maintain NHS spend on adult social care in line with BCF growth and invest in NHS-commissioned out of hospital services;
- Implementing BCF policy objective 1: enabling people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer;

- Implementing BCF policy objective 2: providing the right care in the right place at the right time.


Local authorities and ICBs must make sure that they have placed the funding into a section 75 agreement – a legal agreement for pooling health and social care funding. They will also have to report on actual spend and confirm that the conditions of the BCF have been met at the end of the financial year. This provides assurance that the money has been spent in line with the BCF policy.

As part of the BCF planning and assurance process, local areas and ICBs must agree a plan for their HWB area. BCF partners will need to submit a narrative plan and a planning template, providing details of expenditure from BCF funding sources, capacity and demand as well as ambitions and delivery plans for BCF metrics. BCF plans will be assured and moderated regionally, as well as calibrated across regions. Plans are put forward for approval by NHSE in consultation with DHSC and MHCLG.

The Secretary of State's view is that as local joint commissioners, the NHS BOB ICB and OCC are best placed to determine the needs of their local population. Further, I understand that Oxfordshire's Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) has also made recommendations to support the communication of this change and for the development of an evaluation to learn from the process of this change overall.

As set out in the guidance, it is important that integrated care systems operate with a high degree of autonomy in making decisions in the interests of their populations. However, we also expect the ICB and JHOSC to continue to work together particularly in regard to the recommendations made by the JHOSC.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karin Smyth". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator between the signature and the printed name below.

KARIN SMYTH
MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH

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Cabinet 17 December 2024

Henley Short Stay Beds

Annex 4: development and profile of step-down beds over time

1. The short stay hub model developed as follows

Date	Type of bed	No.	Contract and funding route	Support provision
Pre 2010	intermediate care bed (ICB)	20	Council-Order of St John Care Trust [OSJ] Funding initially from OCC and then the Better Care Fund pooled budget	Therapy support from Oxford Health NHS FT [OH]; social work from Council
2010	ICB	14	Council-OSJ Funding from the Better care Fund pooled budget	Therapy from OH; social work from Council
2015-16	Short stay Hub beds	varied	Oxford University Hospitals NHS FT [OUH]-care homes Funding from OUH	Discharge liaison and therapy from OUH; social work from Council- in Hub team
2016	ICB (Chiltern Court)	7	Council-OSJ Funding from the Better Care Fund pooled budget	Therapy from OH; social work from Council
2016	Step up beds (Chiltern Court)	4	Council-OSJ Funding from the CCG	Therapy from OH; social work from Council
2017 onwards	Interim beds	varied	Council-care homes Funding from the Council	Social work from council
2018 onwards	Mitigation beds (lack of reablement capacity)	varied	Council-care homes on behalf of OUH Funded from Council-OUH contract underspends	Hub team

2. In winter 2015/16 in response to system pressures Oxford University Hospital NHS FT began to buy short stay hub beds to ease pressure in the wards and maintain flow in Emergency Departments at the John Radcliffe and Horton General sites. The beds were called “Hub” beds as they were supported by a multidisciplinary Hub team comprising OUH nursing and therapy staff and Council social workers
3. The success of the Hub model in creating capacity in the acute hospital meant that some of the beds were extended and the Hub team was established and funded by the then Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

4. In November 2016 the Council was asked by OCCG to contract for 11 beds in Chiltern Court, Henley from OSJ. 7 of these beds were intermediate care beds for step-down from hospital and 4 were “step up beds” for short term preventative admissions for people seen in the Henley Rapid Assessment and Care Unit based at Townlands Hospital.
5. From time-to-time further step-down beds were purchased additionally to support flow such that by 2019 there were
 - (a) 67 Hub beds contracted directly by OUH
 - (b) 41 intermediate care beds contracted from OSJ by the Council within the OCP agreement
 - (c) 16 interim beds contracted by the Council to step down people assumed to need long-term residential care
 - (d) 21 “mitigation” beds to reflect the challenges facing the then reablement service
 - (1) And these beds were variously supported by the Hub team; by Council teams alone; some with therapy support from OHT; some with additional cover purchased from local GP practices; some within the core GP business
 - (e) This mix created confusion in discharge practices; created as many delays as it solved; and presented some risk in relation to outcomes arising from the range of in-reach support models
 - (f) In 2019 the system agreed that Oxfordshire would move to one model of short stay hub beds supported by the Hub team and with OCCG commissioned additional medical cover. The Council procured 56 short stay hub beds from the local market against a revised specification and aligned the 41 OSJ intermediate care beds to this model.
 - (1) The new specification sought to prioritise reablement for people who had the potential to go home and assessment for people needing long-term care (including funded by NHS Continuing Healthcare)
 - (2) The funding for the short stay hub beds would now be all within the Better Care Fund within the s75 NHS Act 2006 agreement between the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council
 - (3) The funding for the Hub team was also from the Better Care Fund; the funding for medical cover was directly paid by the Clinical Commissioning Group to local GP practices
 - (g) The 4 step up beds at Chiltern Court, Henley were closed in 2019 after an engagement exercise with the local population on the grounds of lack of use. The funding released supported the development of end-of-life palliative care provision.
6. Notwithstanding the intentions of partners, the number of beds continued to flex
 - (a) In response to Covid pandemic dedicated covid secure beds were commissioned in 2020-21 (20) and 2021-22 (14)
 - (b) The Council continued additionally to purchase “winter beds” on an interim basis in the winters of 2021-22 and 2022-23
 - (c) The Short Stay Hub bed contract has provisions for increasing beds, and this was actioned from time to time

7. By March 2023 there were 94 step-down beds in operation. Some beds had been closed in August 2022 but this reduction had been offset by the winter 2022-23 Covid beds and expansion elsewhere in line with the contract.

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Cabinet 17-12-2024 Henley Short Stay Hub Beds Annex 5

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- Slide 2-OUH discharge profile South Oxfordshire postcodes
- Slide 3- OUH admissions to Short Stay Hub Beds South Oxon postcodes
- Slides 4 and 5-RBH discharge profile Oxfordshire patients
- Slides 6 and 7-Oxfordshire demand and assessment outcome profile for D2A
- Slides 8 and 9-South Oxfordshire demand and assessment outcome profile for D2A
- Slides 10 and 11-year on reablement demand, delivery and outcomes

Data supplied by OUH TOC team; RBH Discharge team; OCC Home First Team

Oxford University Hospitals: total discharges April 2023-Sep 2024 South Oxfordshire postcodes

Number of OUH Discharges (Age 65+)	Pathway	0	1	2	3	Grand Total
Month						
Apr-23		109	9	21	14	153
May-23		111	15	20	7	153
Jun-23		105	17	14	13	149
Jul-23		113	10	16	9	148
Aug-23		122	22	16	11	171
Sep-23		110	15	11	13	149
Oct-23		109	23	14	13	159
Nov-23		131	19	22	12	184
Dec-23		131	20	13	15	179
Jan-24		130	22	18	12	182
Feb-24		114	15	10	11	150
Mar-24		151	18	22	11	202
Apr-24		110	23	9	10	152
May-24		122	18	18	9	167
Jun-24		122	13	13	7	155
Jul-24		137	11	13	11	172
Aug-24		125	21	11	7	164
Sep-24		103	18	17	13	151

Pathway 0 = home unaided
 Pathway 1 = home with support (D2A since Jan 2024)
 Pathway 2 = home via a bed-based pathway (Community Hospital or Short Stay Hub Bed)
 Pathway 3 = permanent residential or nursing home placements

The total number of discharges is higher in the winter period to March 24. The numbers discharged overall and by pathway have fluctuated with overall an increase in people discharged home in the 9 months from Jan 2024, and a reduction discharged to beds in P2 or P3 in the same period compared with the 9 months before.

Oxford University Hospitals: admissions to Short Stay Hub Beds from South Oxon postcodes

SSHB Admissions	SSHB_Name						
Month	Albany (Oxford)	Chilterns Court (Henley)	Henry Cornish (Chipping)	Isis House (City)	St Lukes (City)	The Close (Burcot)	Grand Total
Apr-23		6		1		4	11
May-23	3	6		1		5	15
Jun-23		5			1	4	10
Jul-23	1	4		3	1		9
Aug-23	2	4					6
Sep-23				1	2	3	6
Oct-23				2		4	6
Nov-23	2			1		3	6
Dec-23				1		1	2
Jan-24				6		2	8
Feb-24	1		1	2		1	5
Mar-24						4	4
Apr-24				1			1
May-24						1	1
Jun-24				1		2	3
Jul-24				2		3	5
Sep-24			1	3		3	7
Grand Total	19	67	6	38	8	66	204

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Since the introduction of D2A from Jan 2024 the number of SSHB referrals for people from South Oxfordshire has halved from 71 in 9 months to 34 in 9 months

Chilterns Court closed to new admissions Sep 23; Albany March 24 and St Lukes April 24

Royal Berks Discharges to Oxfordshire 2023-24

RBFT to Oxfordshire Discharge Volume by Pathway 2023

RBFT to Oxfordshire Discharge Volume by Pathway 2024

Pathway 0	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxfordshire SS	2	1	0	2	0	3	0	1	2	1	4	2	3	1	4		3	4	1	3	4	3		
Oxford Home First											1						1							
CHC					1									1				1			1	1		
self-funder																								
Total volume /month	2	1	0	2	1	3	0	1	2	1	5	2	3	2	4	0	4	5	1	3	5	4		

Pathway 1	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxford Home First	12	13	15	15	10	9	11	19	12	20	17	13	10	24	7									
Oxford DTA															4	16	16	9	17	8	11	23		
Oxford Community	9	10	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	3	1	2	2					1	1	3	1	3		
Oxford SS	2	0	3	1	4	3	1	0	0	0	6	0	18	7	5	5	2	1	4	6	7	4		
Self Funder					2		1				1	1							1	1				
Total volume /month	23	23	20	18	17	16	14	21	13	23	25	16	30	31	16	21	18	11	23	18	19	30		

Pathway 2	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxford Community	8	9	8	7	14	9	8	5	9	4	6	6	7	4	3	6	7	9	8	7	3	9		
Oxford Hub bed	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	4	1	2	1	1	2	1	1									
SS DTA bed	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1												
Self-funder	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0												
Total volume /month	10	14	9	8	14	10	8	10	10	6	8	8	9	5	4	6	7	9	8	7	3	9		

Pathway3	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxford SS	0	0	1	1	3	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	2		
Self Funder	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	3	1	0		
Total volume /month	1	1	2	1	4	0	3	2	0	2	2	6	0	2	4	0	1	0	3	4	1	2		

No patients have been discharged from RBH to a Short Stay Hub bed since March 2024.

Royal Berks Discharges to Oxfordshire 2023-24-length of stay to discharge (days from referral)

RBFT to Oxfordshire Discharge **Average LOW** by Pathway 2024

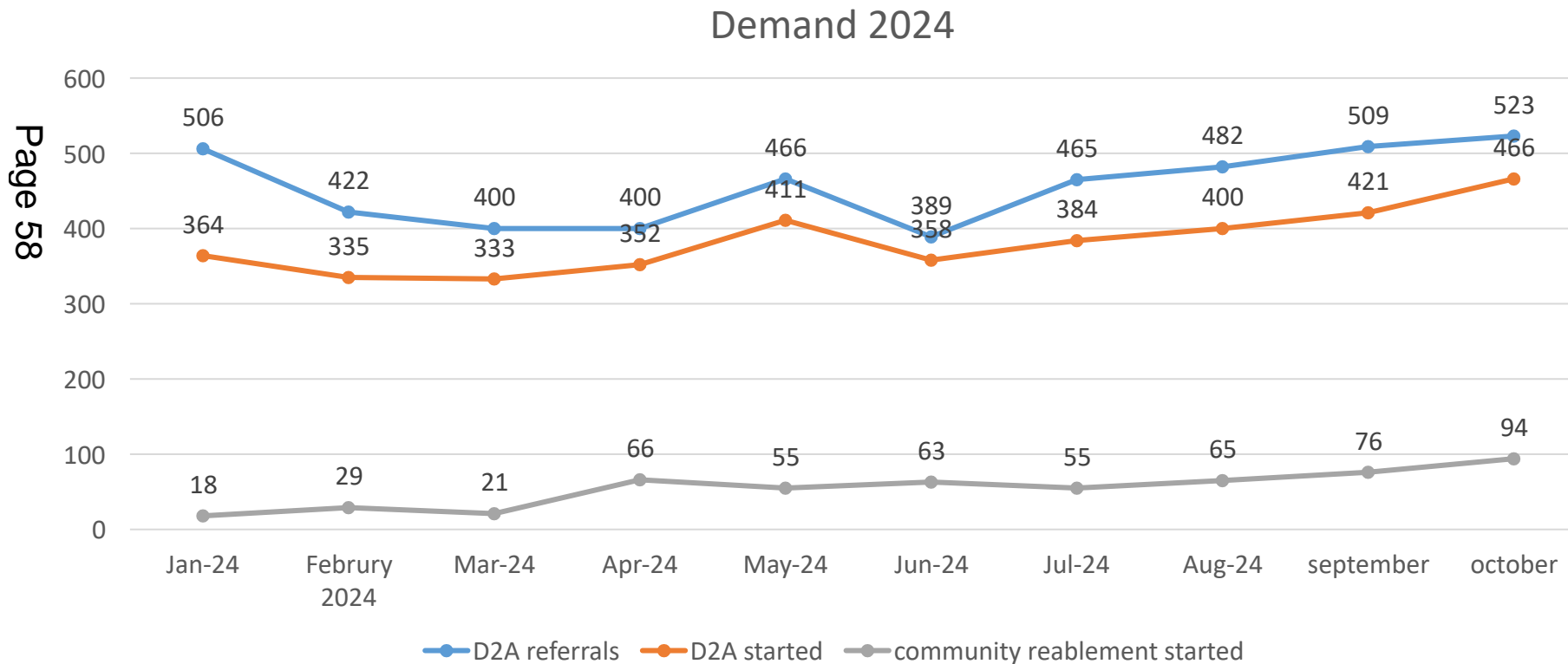
Pathway 0	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxfordshire	2	3		2	0	2.6		1	4	2	2.7	6	3.3	3	0.75		2	2.5	0	0	0.75	2.3		
Oxford Home First											1						1							
CHC					0																			
														1				2			1	0		
AVE LOW to DC all	2	3		2	0	2.6		1	4	2	2.6	6	3.3	2	0.75		1.6	2.2	0	0	0.8	1.75		

Pathway 1	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	
Oxford Home First	12	3.8	8.2	4.6	3.3	3.6	4	4.3	4.9	3.9	3	4.5	2.6	2.5	2.4										
Oxford DTA															6.25	4.3	4.8	7.8	8	3.6	4.2	4.9			
Oxford Community	0.3	1.8	0	0	0	0	2	14	32	4	0	5	1.5					0	2	0.3	0	0			
Oxford SS	3.5		9.3	2	4.5	7	4				6.6														
Self Funder					17.5		7				5	10		16					8	56					
AVE LOW to DC all	4.4	3	7.6	4	5	3.3	4	5.2	7	3.9	3.8	4.9	4.8	3.8	4.9	4	4.3	8.6	7	4	4.2	3.8			

Pathway 2	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxford Community	7.5	5	3.5	6.1	3.7	4.2	6	2.8	5.2	5	4.3	8.6	8.4	11.5	5	6.3	6.1	5.3	8.5	3.8	5.3	5.2		
Oxford Hub bed	3	9		1		1		4	1	2	1	1	10.5	5	10									
SS DTA bed		9.6	9								15	4												
Self-funder	11							3																
AVE LOW to DC all	7.4	6.5	4.1	5.7	3.7	4.5	6	3.7	5	5.2	5.6	7.5	8.8	10.4	6.2	6.3	6.1	5.3	8.5	3.8	5.3	5.2		

Pathway 3	Jan-23	Feb-24	Mar-25	Apr-26	May-27	Jun-28	Jul-29	Aug-30	Sep-31	Oct-32	Nov-33	Dec-34	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Oxford SS			25	23	4.3		11	16		34	15	22		28	9				46	20		24		
Self Funder	12	7	24		17		2	2		3	12	9.2		18	6		9		8	8.3	0			
AVE LOW to DC all	12	7	24.4	23	15		11	9		18.5	13.5	13.5		23	6.7		9		33	11.5	0	24		

Demand for D2A and Reablement-Oxfordshire

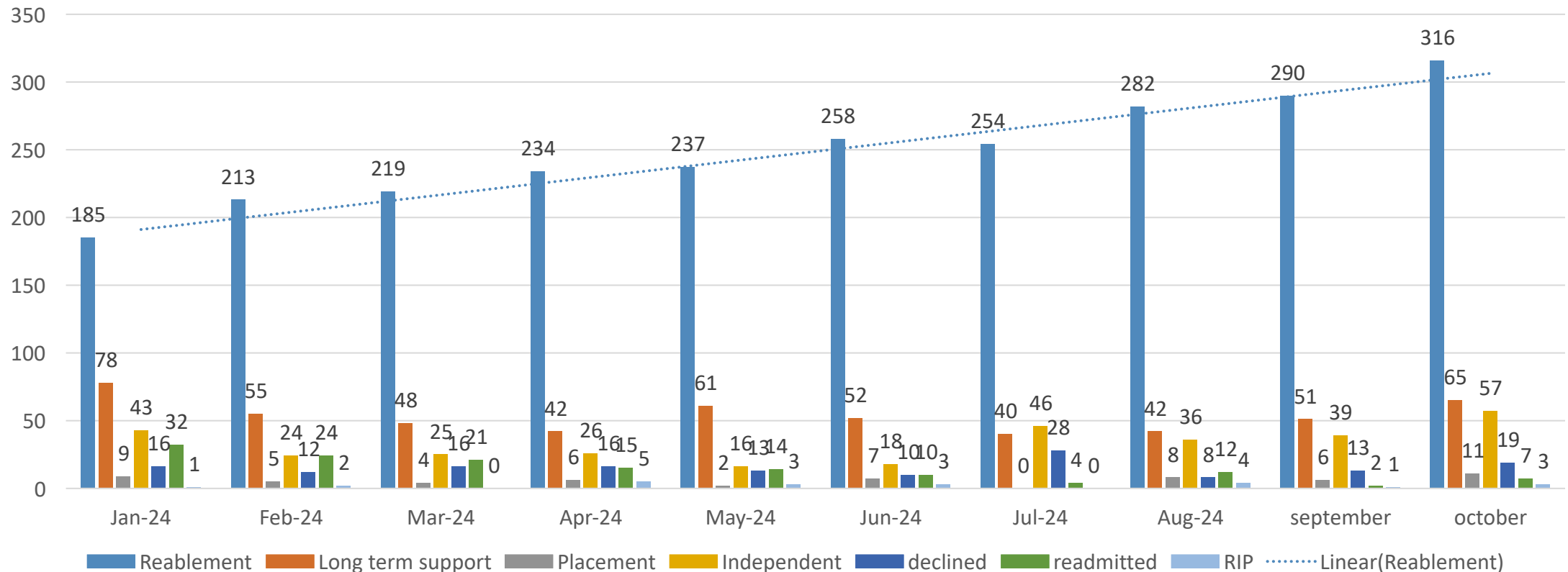


The number of referrals to D2A and the number of people discharged have increased since Feb 2024. Activity in Oct and Nov 24 shows a further increase. Community pick-ups have increased, and we need to shift capacity further to avoid admissions to hospital.

D2A Outcomes-Oxfordshire

This graph shows the outcome of D2A after the person has been home for 72h. Most people proceed into reablement but a significant proportion are already independent. People needing long-term care might previously had an extended wait in hospital. Readmission rates are very low

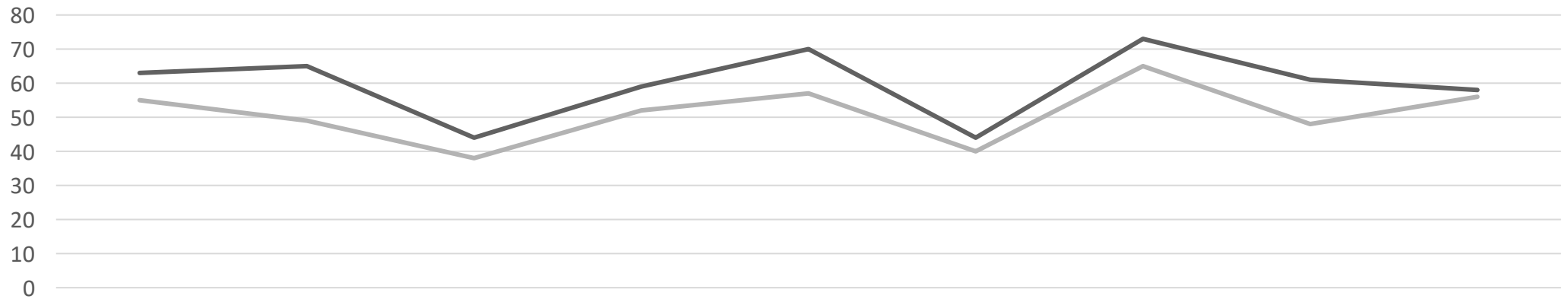
D2A outcomes



D2A totals for RG9, RG8, RG4, OX9, OX10 OX39 & OX49 Referred for and started D2A

This data is broadly consistent with the position for the rest of the County and in fact shows a smaller gap between referrals and pick-up. This indicates a better rate of response

Combined postcodes



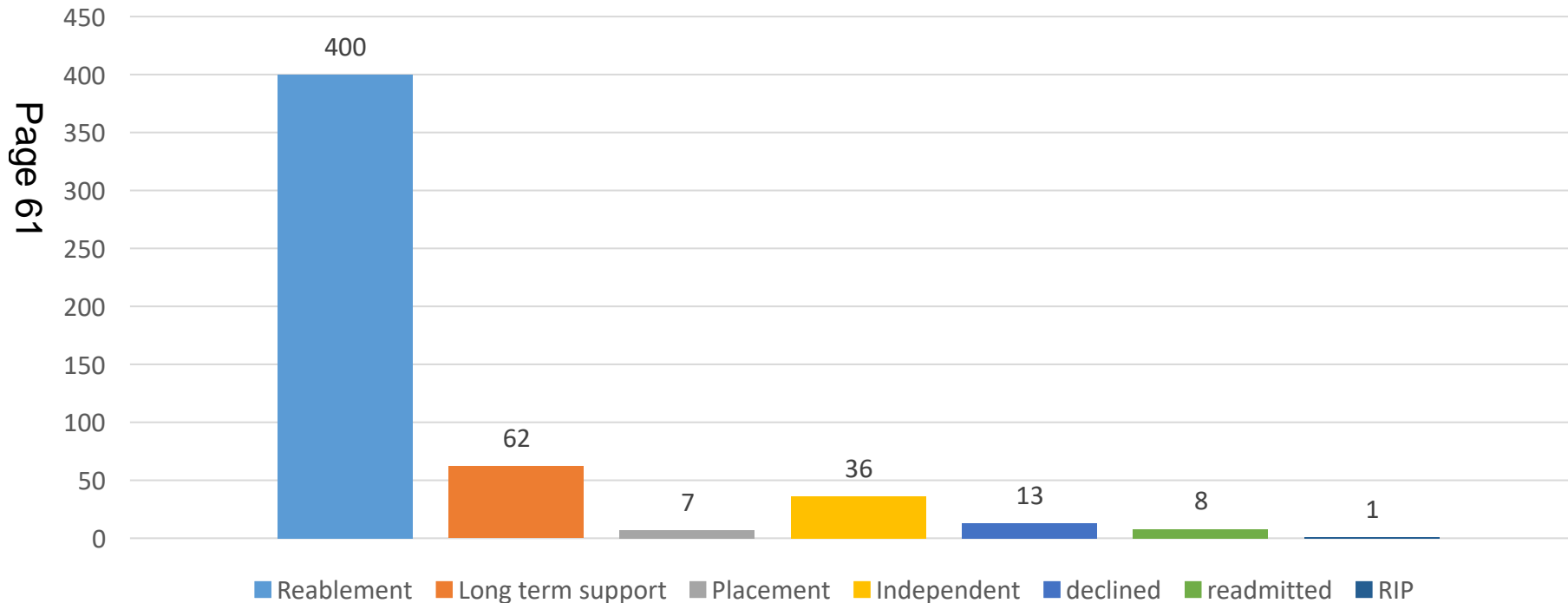
	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
D2A referrals	63	65	44	59	70	44	73	61	58
D2A started	55	49	38	52	57	40	65	48	56

— D2A referrals — D2A started

D2A Outcomes January to September 2024

RG9 Henley, RG4 Sonning Common, RG 8 Goring Woodcote, OX9 Thame, OX49 Watlington, OX10 Wallingford, OX39 Chinnor.

D2A outcomes

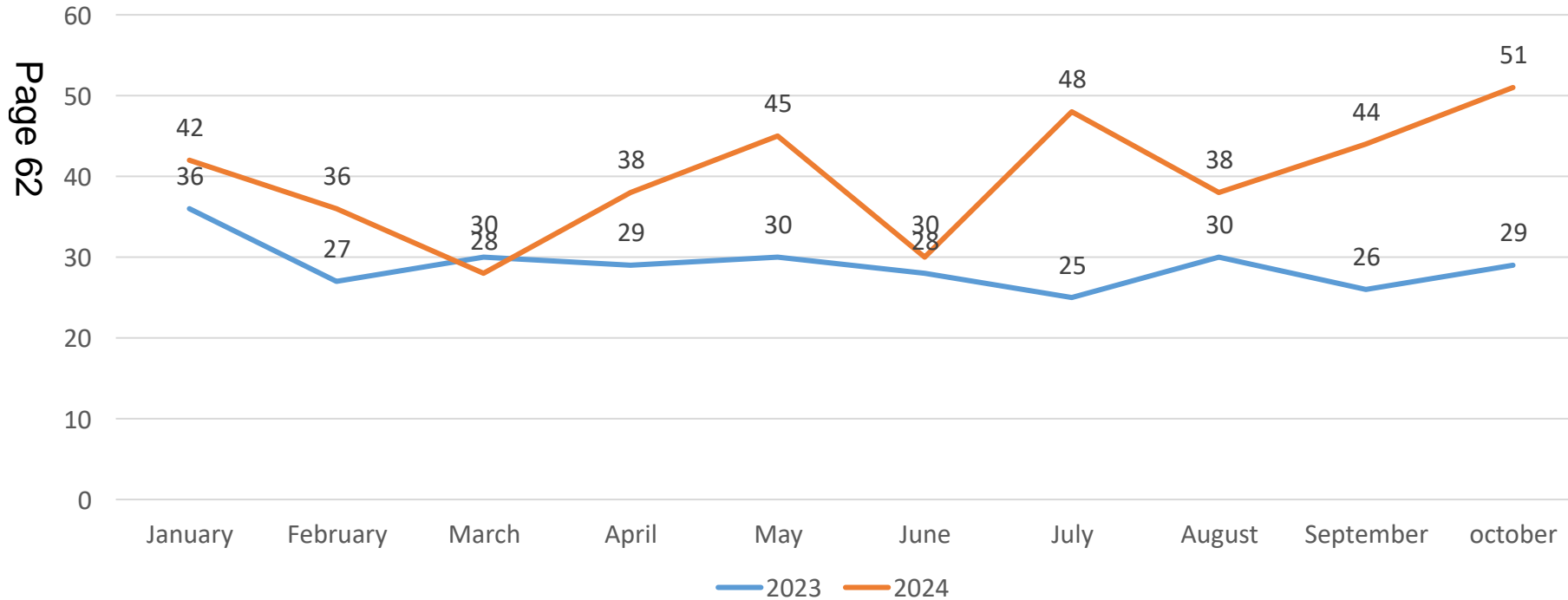


The profile of the impact of D2A in South Oxfordshire is consistent with the impact elsewhere in Oxfordshire

Reablement totals 2023 vs 2024

RG9 Henley, RG4 Sonning Common, RG 8 Goring Woodcote, OX9 Thame, OX49 Watlington, OX10 Wallingford, OX39 Chinnor.

Reablement episodes



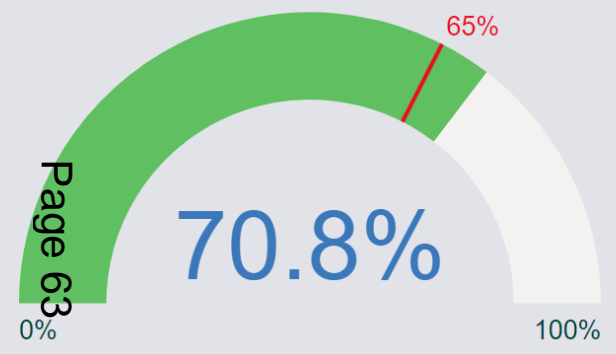
The trend is broadly the same as for the rest of Oxfordshire and shows a significant year on year increase

Reablement Performance (completed episodes)

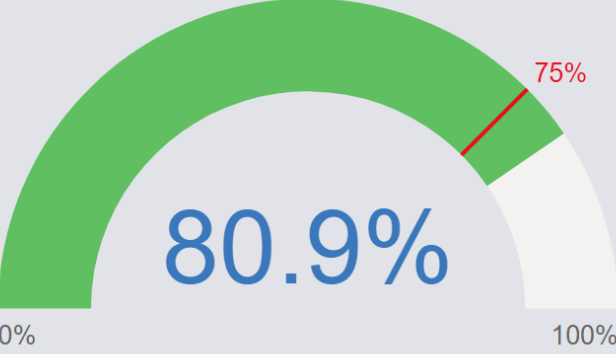
Provider
Team
Zone
Period
Location

87 Episodes (LAS)
 3 Active Episodes
 89 Episode Completed
 63 Independent
 72 Independent/Reduced (ADSS)

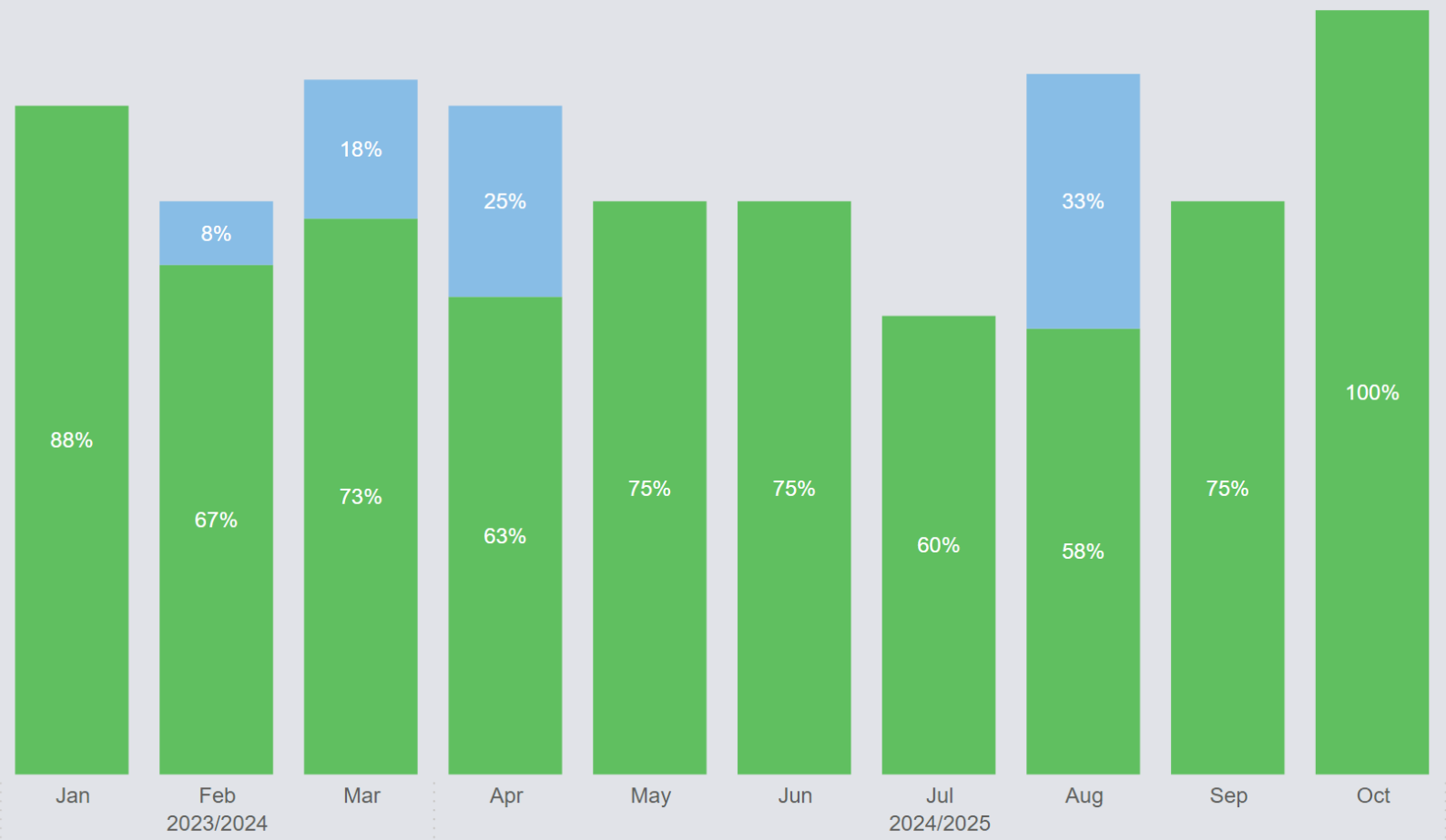
Discharged Independent



Discharged Independent/Reduced



Data from Oxfordshire County Council Home First team



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CABINET 17 DECEMBER 2024

RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON REMOTE MEETINGS AND PROXY VOTING

Joint Report of Director of Public Affairs, Strategy and Partnerships and Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

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

Agree to the proposed consultation response outlined in Appendix 1.

Executive Summary

2. The Government has launched an eight-week consultation on enabling remote attendance, remote and hybrid meetings as well as proxy voting at Council meetings. The purpose of this report is to agree the responses to that consultation for submission on 19 December 2024.
3. The proposed consultation response, outlined in Appendix 1, is to support remote attendance and voting, but caution against proxy voting.

Background

4. The Government has set out its intention to reset the relationship between central and local government to deliver better outcomes for the communities it serves.
5. Key to this is supporting the sector to 'modernise democratic engagement, raise standards and widen the range of candidates standing for council by removing unnecessary barriers'.
6. During the Covid-19 pandemic, remote attendance at meetings was established via time limited regulations. Those regulations expired in May 2021 and since then organisations such as the Association of Democratic Service Officers, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Lawyers in Local Government, have led campaigning efforts in which to place this on a statutory footing.

7. The Government is now seeking the views of relevant stakeholders as part of a short consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting with the intent on bringing both forward through legislation.
8. Remote attendance would give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely. The Government believes that that this modernising measure would have the dual positive impacts of diversifying the representation of those to stand for elected office and enhance the resilience of local authorities in the face of local or national emergencies.
9. Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to another representative to enable a vote in their absence. It is possible some members may find that, due to their personal circumstances, they are temporarily unable to participate in meetings even if remote attendance provisions are in place.
10. Provisions for proxy voting could provide additional flexibility to those who really need it on a time-limited basis, allowing affected members to indirectly exercise their democratic duty, participate in their local authority's governance, and ensure that their views are taken into consideration. In the context of local authorities, the representative would have to be another elected member of the local authority.
11. It should be noted that there are voices within the sector against both remote attendance and proxy voting for reasons such as tradition and disenfranchising Members who do not have internet access for example.
12. Many challenges exist in respect of proxy voting, especially in respect of complexities of declaring of interests and that provision for substitutes already exists in cases where Members cannot attend.
13. Given the Council's stated priorities in respect of a vibrant and participatory local democracy, the Council should contribute to the consultation based on supporting remote attendance and voting but exercise caution against proxy voting.
14. The response to the consultation is enclosed at Appendix 1 which features all relevant questions and answers based on supporting those principles outlined at paragraph 13.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

15. The Council has an agreed priority in which to play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

Financial Implications

16. None immediately arising as part of this report but if more Members chose to attend meetings remotely there would be a reduction in expenses as a result of travel and, in some cases, subsistence. To facilitate each elected Members

role, all Members are provided with a laptop and software such as MS Teams, Zoom and Mod.Gov are installed as standard. There would be no further costs incurred through additional meetings being held which Members could attend remotely for.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources

Legal Implications

17. None immediately arising from this report, but if changes were to be made the Council would look to convene meetings of the Constitution Working Group in which to set out relevant protocols to govern and codify such changes in the Constitution.

Paul Grant
Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Paul.Grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

18. If changes are made, close attention will need to be given to any additional training needs of Officers, especially those in Democratic Services to support Members to lead and transact business remotely. Fully remote and hybrid meetings create differing demands on Officers and Members (including Chairs) and these need to be fully explored and support strategies put in place.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

19. None immediately arising from this report but the Government has made it clear that it believes that remote attendance would support different communities to come forward and stand for public office.

Sustainability Implications

20. None immediately arising from this report but as identified in paragraph 17 fewer journeys may be created if remote attendance were allowed through legislative change and Members took advantage of it.

Risk Management

21. None immediately arising from this report.

Consultations

22. Political Group Leaders, and via Political Group Leaders, all Members have had the opportunity to shape the detail of this consultation.
23. Discussions have taken place with officers in Law and Governance to ensure the ethical and constitutional needs of transacting council business and the ethical frameworks of the Council have been taken into consideration.

Susannah Wintersgill
Director of Public Affairs, Strategy and Partnerships

Annex: Draft consultation responses.

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Helen Mitchell – Head of Public Affairs and Strategy

November
2024

Appendix 1

Response to Questions On The Remote Attendance and Proxy voting Consultation (answers set out in highlighted text)

Question 1

Are You Responding To This Question As:

Answer: Council Body, County Council

Question 2

Do you agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings?

Answer: Yes

If you answered No to the above question please go directly to question 4.

Question 3

If you answered Yes to the above question, do you think that there should be specific limitations on remote attendance?

Answer - c) There should be no limitations placed upon councils with regard to setting arrangements for remote attendance of council meetings, up to and including full remote attendance.

Question 4

If you are an elected member can you anticipate that you personally may seek to attend some of your council meetings remotely?

- yes
- no
- I am not an elected member

Answer – I am not an elected member

Question 4a

If you answered No please use the free text below

Answer– Not Applicable, as answering on behalf of a Council body

Question 4b

If you answered Yes, could you indicate below which of the following options best describes your likely pattern of attending meetings remotely

- very occasionally
- from time to time
- regularly but not always
- all the time

Answer – Not applicable, as answering on behalf of a Council body

Question 5

If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of a council as a whole what proportion of the council's current elected members are likely to seek to attend council meetings remotely over the course of a year?

- less than 10%
- more than 10% but less than 50%
- more than 50% but less than 90%
- most of them 90% to 100%

Answer: More than 50% but less than 90%

Question 6

The government recognises that there may be cases in which it is necessary for councils to hold meetings fully remotely. Do you think there should be limitations placed on the number of fully remote meetings councils should be able to hold?

- a. Councils should be able to allow full remote attendance at up to half of council meetings within a 12-month calendar period
- b. Councils should only have the flexibility to change a meeting from in-person to online, or vice versa, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances
- c. Councils should not have the flexibility to conduct fully remote meetings to ensure there is always an in-person presence

Further Comment: Oxfordshire County Council believes there should be no limitations provided. It should be for local authorities themselves to determine how best to transact business having regard for democratic participation from residents and businesses.

Question 7

Do you think there are any necessary procedural measures that would help to ensure a remote or hybrid attendance policy is workable and efficient? Tick all options that correspond with your view and use the free text box for comments.

- a. Councils should be required to publish a list of attendees joining the meeting remotely and give notice if a meeting is being held with full remote attendance

- b. Councils should be required to ensure that standard constitutional arrangements are followed for hybrid and fully remote meetings
- c. Councils should be required to make arrangements to ensure restricted items (where a council decision is taken in private to protect confidentiality) are managed appropriately and to require remotely attending members to join from a private location

Answer: Oxfordshire County Council would ensure that procedural measures exist within the Council's Constitution but no nationally mandated limitations / guidance should be applied. It should be for local authorities themselves to determine how best to transact business having regard for a range of local factors and democratic participation from residents and businesses.

Question 8

Do you think legislative change to allow councillors to attend local authority meetings remotely should or should not be considered for the following reasons?
Tick all the statements below that apply to your point of view.

Should be considered because

Should not be considered because

It is a positive modernising measure.

Councillors should be physically present at all formal meetings.

It would likely increase the diversity of people willing and able to stand for election in their local area, making councils more representative of the communities they serve.

It could lead to a significant number of councillors habitually attending remotely and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of councils.

Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance.

It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues, and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings.

All the reasons above are relevant.

Free text box – please state any other reasons

Question 9

In your view, would allowing councillors to attend formal local authority meetings remotely according to their needs particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- Answer - It would benefit members
- it would disadvantage members
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

Answer: Oxfordshire County Council is of the view that it would benefit a whole range of Members with such characteristics and those with wider responsibilities who may find travel challenging, especially in time pressured environments, to enable them to balance a range of competing responsibilities. It is however essential to test this with Members on each Committee to ensure that they can play a full and active part in Committee meetings.

Proxy voting

Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to another representative to enable a vote in their absence.

It is possible some members may find that, due to their personal circumstances, they are temporarily unable to participate in meetings even if remote attendance provisions are in place. Provisions for proxy voting could provide additional flexibility to those who really need it on a time-limited basis, allowing affected members to indirectly exercise their democratic duty, participate in their local authority's governance, and ensure that their views are taken into consideration. In the context of local authorities, the representative would have to be another elected member of the local authority.

Question 10

In addition to provisions allowing for remote attendance, do you consider that it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting?

- Answer - no

Question 11

If yes, for which of the following reasons which may prohibit a member's participation in council meetings do you consider it would be appropriate?

Please select all that apply:

- physical or medical conditions
- caring responsibilities
- parental leave or other responsibilities
- other [Free text box]

Question 12

Are there circumstances in which you feel proxy voting would not be appropriate?

Answer: Oxfordshire County Council The use of proxy voting in this way would remove a vital and visible symbol of each elected Member exercising their vote based on the consideration of issues at a particular meeting. If a Member cannot be present to ensure that a substitute can attend, substitutes can be sent in which to consider issues and vote on the matter. Proxy voting would incorporate an unnecessary level of administrative burden and a lack of democratic clarity on the overall decision-making process without any immediate benefits. In addition, there are clear complexities and risks in respect of understanding and declaring interests for Members you are offering to be a proxy for.

Question 13

If you think proxy voting is appropriate, are there any limitations you think should be placed upon it?

[Free text box]

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CABINET

17th December 2024

WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA JULY - SEPTEMBER 2024 (Q2 2024/25)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

1 RECOMMENDATION

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

2 Executive Summary

2.1 The people who work for the Council are the most valuable asset the Council deploys. They make a difference to the county's residents and communities on a daily basis, it is their professionalism that delivers the high-quality services and the council's ambition to become a fairer, healthier and greener county, enabling the Council's ambition to become an Employer of Choice. This ambition is underpinned by the Council's Our People and Culture Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy aims to develop an inclusive and empowering culture, enabling the Council's workforce to be the best they can be to deliver excellent services for the residents.

2.2 This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy whilst also reviews the workforce profile for July - September 2024 (Q2 2024/2025) including the key workforce trends and other relevant management information and performance indicators (Annexes 1 and 2).

3 Key workforce trends in Q2 2024/2025

3.1 a reduction in agency spend via Comensura contract and an increase in the off contract (i.e. non- Comensura) spend

3.2 an increase in the full time equivalent (FTE) figure in terms of directly employed colleagues

3.3 a decrease in voluntary turnover in the 12-month rolling period

3.4 a decrease in sickness absence in the rolling 12-month period

3.5 an increase in diversity figures

4 Our people and culture strategy

4.1 The vision for the Our People and Culture Strategy is that we develop and maintain a high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams,

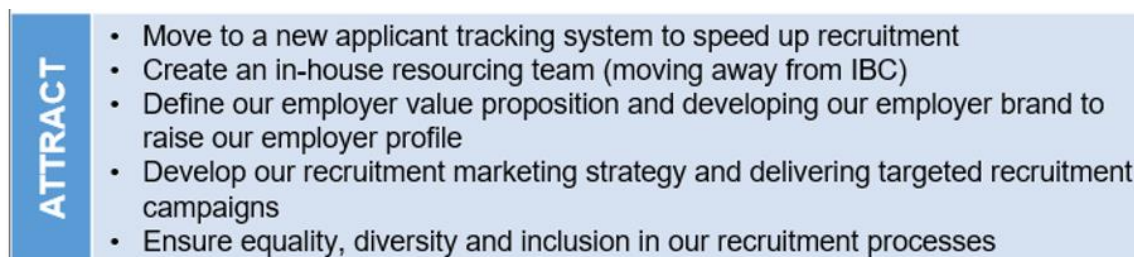
employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents'. The Strategy focuses on priorities under 4 pillars:



5 Our people and culture strategy – the progress the council achieved in Q2 24/25 within each of the 4 pillars

6 Attract

Within the 'Attract - Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people' pillar, the following priorities have been articulated for Year 1 of the programme:



7 Attract - Progress made

- 7.1 A new in-house Talent Acquisition and Resourcing team has been established, which has enabled the Council to move away from using Hampshire's Integrated Business Centre (IBC).
- 7.2 In September 2024 the implementation of the new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) was completed, this new system will improve time to hire and candidate experience which should bring about a reduction in the need for, and the cost of, interim, agency or casual back fill arrangements.
- 7.3 Work on the Employer Value Proposition and employer brand, which will raise the Council's employer profile, has been recently launched. Adverts in the new brand are now on LinkedIn and vacancy campaigns are being designed using the new branding. The brand is being rolled out internally to support engagement and retention of colleagues.

8 Thrive

Within the ‘**Thrive - Enabling our people to thrive and perform**’ pillar, the following priorities have been articulated for Year 1 of the programme:

THRIVE

- Give managers the tools and skills to effectively manage performance, absence and change
- Improve the speed of response to issues raised by our people
- Enhance our wellbeing services through corporate wellbeing initiatives to improve people's resilience and reduce cost of living impact
- Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits, policies and digital systems to support our ambitions

9 Thrive - Progress made

- 9.1 A new policy framework has been created and all policy reviews for 2023/24 have been completed including: agile working, domestic abuse, additions to pay guidance, numerous minor policy updates and a new sickness policy and toolkit. These modern, simple to follow policies and toolkits enable a proactive approach to people related matters and early resolution, as evident in the downwards trend in sickness absence.
- 9.2 Work has now commenced on the 2024/25 policy reviews which will include TUPE guidance, the pensions and retirement policy and change management policies and toolkits, which support organisational design.
- 9.3 The capability, disciplinary and grievance policies and toolkits are being redesigned with manager involvement to provide a streamlined, clear and transparent approach to managing these matters in a timely way.
- 9.4 The results of the 2024 employee engagement survey conducted in February have been shared to guide service-level strategies for enhancing employee engagement. Discovery work has now been completed to shape the 2025 employee engagement survey and the future approach to employee engagement.

10 Grow

Within the ‘**Grow - Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future**’ pillar, the following priorities have been articulated for Year 1 of the programme:

GROW

- Continue to embrace the 12.3.2 performance management tool
- Enhance our early careers offer to improve our talent pipeline specifically to increase numbers of graduates and apprentices
- Develop skills and learning to support transformational change
- Launch a reciprocal mentoring scheme

11 Grow - Progress made

- 11.1 The reciprocal mentoring scheme, which focuses on equality, diversity and inclusion, has, 20 participants Feedback was positive in the midpoint review

and the timescale of the scheme has been extended to allow for the continued development of deeper and more meaningful relationships between co-mentors.

- 11.2 The 12.3.2 managing for performance tool refresh is in progress to ensure alignment with organisational narratives and that quality conversations are happening consistently; workbooks and modules have been redeveloped, additional facilitators have been recruited to deliver upskilling sessions, and an e-learning module is being scoped.
- 11.3 Significant progress has been made in enhancing the early careers offer. Four management trainees started in September, two on a new Chartered Managers Degree Apprenticeship and two on the Local Government Association graduate programme. The first work experience week took place in October and was a success; four young people rotated around services such as Customer Services, IT, Policy, Facilities Management and Transformation. A new internship programme is also in development and the first interns, including supported interns, are due to join the Council in January 2025. These schemes are designed to support succession planning, attract diversity and develop our skills for the future.

12 Lead

Within the '**Lead - Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future**' pillar the following priorities have been articulated for Year 1 of the programme:

LEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within the budget envelope• Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope• Support our leaders to have the tools, skills, behaviour and resilience to lead transformational change
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13 Lead - Progress made

- 13.1 A range of people management controls have been introduced to enable the organisation to operate within budget, focusing on agency usage, honorariums, overtime and purchasing annual leave scheme.
- 13.2 Support is being provided for leaders to have the tools, skills and resilience to lead transformational change.
- 13.3 A leadership specialist, funded through the transformation reserve has started working with senior leaders to scope and shape the future work within this pillar.

13.4 The key priority under the Our People and Culture Strategy has been the Organisation Redesign Programme, which aims to resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions whilst remaining within the budget envelope.

14 Workforce trends – Full Time Equivalent

14.1 In terms of directly employed colleagues (i.e. excluding agency workers), the Council's FTE (Full time equivalent) figure has increased from 4,523.04 to 4,656.19 FTE (which equates to 5,500 people) in Q2. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

15 Workforce trends – agency spend

15.1 The last quarter has seen a reduction in agency spend via Commensura, and an increase in the off contract spend (more details in Appendix 1). The overall trend in agency spend is a steady decrease in the last 2 years- the total annual agency spend (including identified off-contract spend) for the 2023/24 financial year was £36.07m compared to £39.71m for 2022/23.

15.2 The top reasons for agency use include covering a vacancy, additional workload and sickness. In Q2, which spans the summer, it is also likely that the bookings covered additional workload related to providing statutory services during a time when many colleagues take annual leave during school holidays. The highest agency spend continues to remain in Children's Services, Adult Services, Environment and Highway Maintenance, Law and Governance and Property. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

16 Workforce trends – Turnover

16.1 Voluntary annual turnover at the council has decreased from 13.1% to 12.4%, a positive trend towards our People and Culture Strategy KPI target of 11.5% p.a. Top five reasons why colleagues voluntarily leaving the organisation are: to move to alternative employment, retirement, family commitments and moving away/emigrating.

16.2 Involuntary annual turnover has increased from 2.1% to 2.3%, the reasons for involuntary turnover include dismissals and TUPE transfers. The TUPE took place in the cleaning service, part of which was outsourced. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

17 Workforce trends - Sickness Absence

17.1 The annual sickness absence rate in the rolling 12-month period has decreased from 9.01 days absence per FTE to 8.83 days absence per FTE in Q2 24/25. This is a positive overall trend towards the target of 8 days sickness absence per year per FTE as set in the Our People and Culture Strategy.

17.2 There has been a small increase in sickness absence recorded in Q2 24/25 compared to Q1. This increase, which peaked part way through the quarter, is most likely because of the recent training for managers which has prompted

better practice in the recording of sick absence. The council has recently rolled out an improved Managing Attendance Policy and an associated toolkit, which gives line managers the tools to support their teams with maintaining and improving attendance. Attendance management currently constitutes 76.4% of all employment relations cases in the council.

17.3 The five top reasons for sickness absence are anxiety/stress/depression, ENT (ear, nose and throat), Injury/fracture, operations/post ops and gastrointestinal problems. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

18 Workforce trends - Diversity profile

18.1 **Gender** - the majority of colleagues at the Council are female – 66%, which is in line with the overall national trend in Local Government, this proportion has not changed since the last quarter.

18.2 **Age** - 6% of the Council's workforce were under 26 at the end of Q2, which is a considerable increase in the proportion of colleagues in this age group since the previous quarter (up from 5%). This positive trend is likely a result of the recent investment made by the Council in its Early Careers Offer, this programme is designed to attract, recruit, and retain talented individuals who are early in their career, thereby building a pipeline of diverse and aspiring talent. The Early Careers offer was launched in September 2024 and includes a wide range of approaches including building on the Council's existing apprenticeship offer, Graduate and management development programme, T-Levels (government backed, career focused qualification for 16–19-year-olds), internships (including management trainees), work experience programme, schools' outreach and early careers network.

18.3 **Ethnicity** - There is a strong positive trend in terms of the percentage of colleagues declaring as being from an ethnic minority background, with the figure increasing steadily - 9.44% in March 2023, increasing to 10.37% in March 2024, and 11% currently. Representation is moving towards the council's target of 12.25%.

18.4 **Disability** - the percentage of council colleagues declaring a disability has increased steadily over the last 5 years (3.34% overall) and has increased from 6.06% as of 31 March 2023 to 7.97% as at 31st March 2024. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

19 Equality & Inclusion Implications

Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

20 Sustainability Implications

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

21 Risk Management

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

22 Corporate Policies and Priorities

The Our People and Culture Strategy referred to in this report directly underpins the Council's ambition to become an Employer of Choice.

23 Financial Implications

23.1 The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end service area overspend for both 2022/23 and 2023/24. On-going focus through the Our People and Culture Strategy is required so that costs can be managed within agreed service areas budgets for 2024/25.

23.2 The increase in FTE is also a contributing factor in the year end service area over spend.

Comments checked by:

Ian Dyson, Director of Commercial and Financial Services

24 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal, Deputy Monitoring Officer

25 Staff Implications

Staff implications are considered across all our workstreams and covered in this report.

Lorna Baxter

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annexes: ANNEX 1 Quarterly workforce dashboard Q2 2024-2025
 ANNEX 2 Additional workforce data Q2 2024-2025

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Katrina Pennington

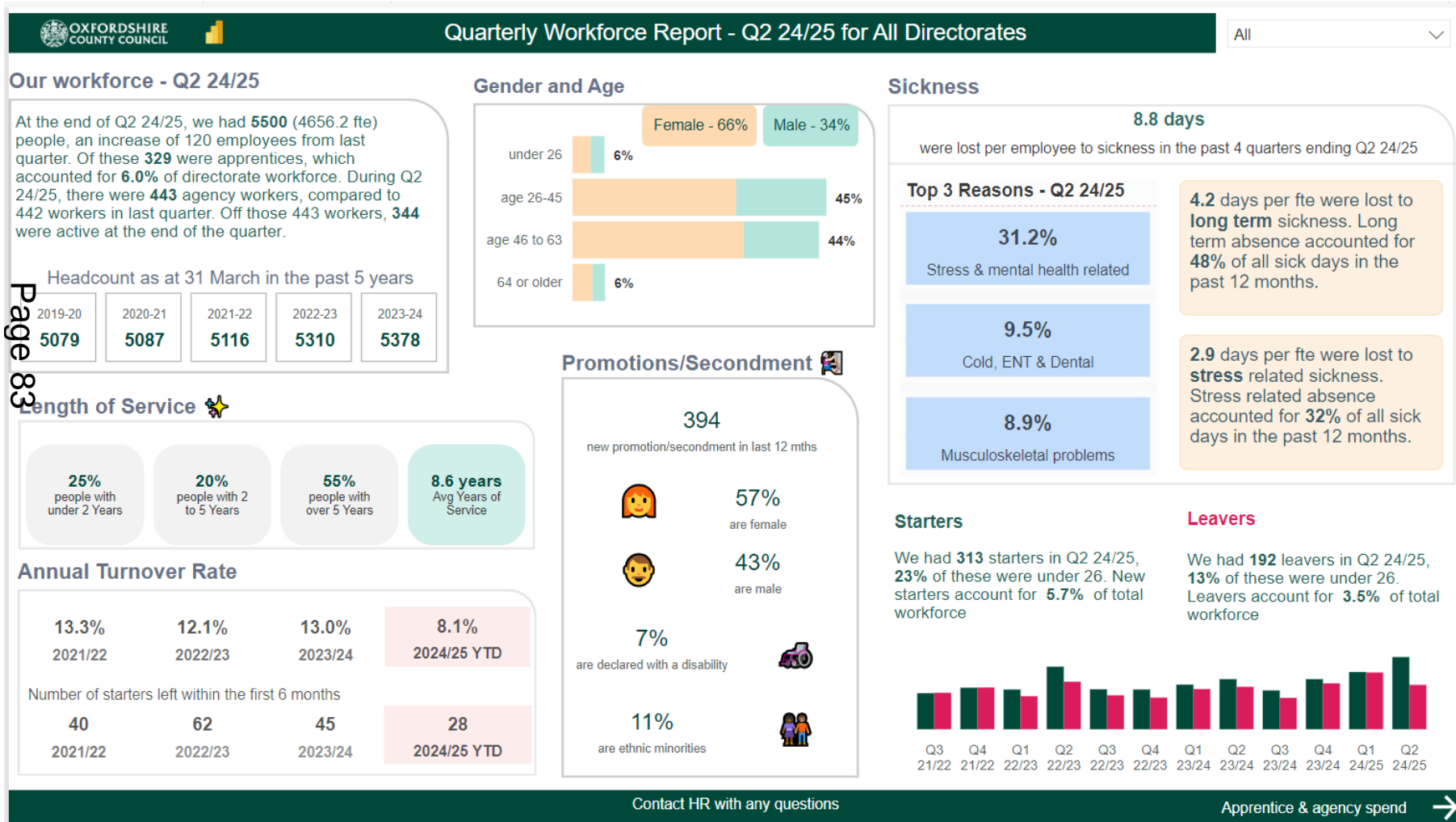
26 November 2024

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APPENDIX 1

QUARTERLY WORKFORCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 2 2024/2025


PART 1



Page 83

QUARTERLY WORKFORCE DASHBOARD QUARTER 2 2024/2025

PART 2



All

Apprenticeship - celebrate our success

During Q2 there were a total of **75** new apprenticeship enrolments. **31** apprentices have successfully completed their training in Q2 24/25.

Q2 24/25 has seen a large number of enrolments - our largest to date. These include enrolments in the following Apprenticeship programmes:

- 20 Social Work degree
- 6 Paralegal and Solicitor
- 2 Chartered Manager degree
- 2 CIPFA Accountancy Professional

Our Data & Skills Academy has also con with 41 apprenticeship enrolments since Feb 2024. 🙌

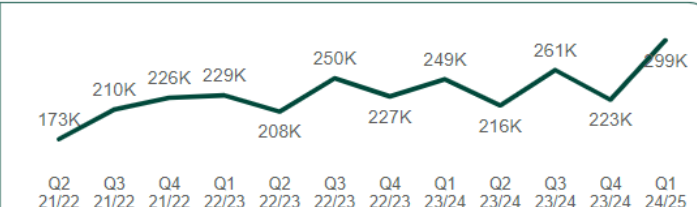
No. of apprentices on programme - end of Q2 24/25

332

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

% new apprentice	% doing CPD
22.3%	77.7%

actual spend on apprenticeship by quarter



Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22	Q4 21/22	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25
173K	210K	226K	229K	208K	250K	227K	249K	216K	261K	223K	299K

Number of new apprentices enrolled in Q2 24/25

75

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

% new apprentice	% doing CPD
44.0%	56.0%

In Q2 24/25 there were

Completions	Withdrawals
31	2

Agency Spend

Agency spend via COMENSURA in Q2 24/25 was **£6,855,824**, which has decreased compared to the spend in the last quarter at **£6,938,577**

Comensura spend by quarter			
Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23
6.52M	7.03M	6.94M	7.28M
Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
6.65M	7.04M	7.28M	7.01M
Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25		
6.94M	6.86M		

Non Conmesura spend by quarter			
Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23
2.45M	2.85M	3.53M	3.43M
Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
1.76M	2.55M	1.69M	2.09M
Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25		
1.05M	1.50M		

[← Back to overview page](#)

[Contact HR with any questions](#)

ANNEX 2 Additional workforce data Q2 2024-2025

1. OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE STRATEGY

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to monitor progress against the Our People and Culture Strategy

	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	TARGET SET
Agency spend	Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation.	Maintain a baseline figure of £27.9 million
Voluntary turnover rate	Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people.	11.50%
Average days lost to sickness per employee	Reduce the number of sickness days per employee.	Reduce the sickness absence to 8 days per FTE
Apprenticeship levy spend	Spend the Apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners.	Utilise 65% of the levy pot
Internal movement and promotion	Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth.	8.50%
Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)	Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation.	Gender pay gap - mean 1.2% Ethnicity pay gap - mean 0.22 %
Employee engagement index (yearly)	Track overall improvement in OCC engagement.	A score of 680 which is an improvement on the last (2024) survey
Employee demographics	Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation.	To increase the representation of our BAME colleagues to 12.25% (of our workforce)
Time to Hire	Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs.	The target for this KPI will be set once the new Applicant Tracking System has been live for a period long enough to allow this measurement

Table 1. The Our People and Culture Strategy KPIs and Targets

2. WORKFORCE TRENDS – FULL TIME EQUIVALENT

There has been an increase in employee FTE (full time equivalent) over the last 5 periods. Over this time the FTE count has increased by 198.

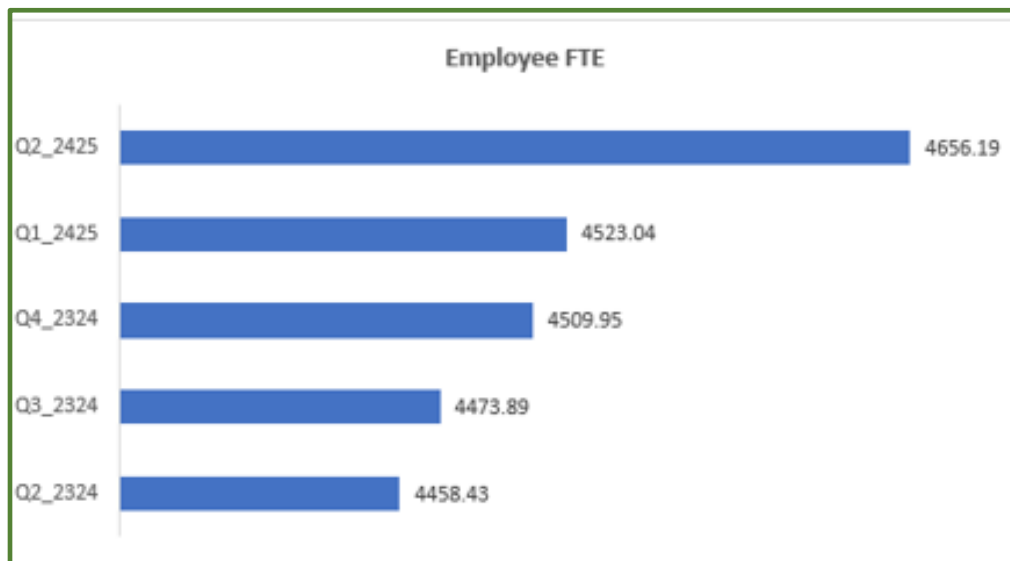


Table 2 Employee FTE Q2 2023/2024 compared with Q2 2024/2025

The increase in the FTE number in Q2 24/25 can be partly explained by the following factors:

- A number of new starters in Q2 24/25 have been hired on either a fixed term or temporary contract, with the overall proportion of directly employed colleagues on temporary contracts increasing from 5.7% to 6% from Q1 to Q2.
- 8 new joiners have transferred to the council under a TUPE transfer (into Catering at schools), which means that the Council was under a legal obligation to become their employer.
- There have been a number of conversions from agency to permanent employment - conversions lead to a saving for the Council as engaging colleagues via agency is usually more expensive.
- 24 of all new starters in Q2 are apprentices, in line with the council's aspiration to grow its own talent from within.

Apprenticeships have been utilised by many local authorities as an effective method of attracting talent, increasing workforce diversity and utilising funds by the use of Apprenticeship Levy. Hiring apprentices is therefore a positive trend which will lead to positive outcomes to the council. Quarter 2 24/25 has seen the highest number of apprenticeship enrolments for the council to date

- A number of roles which have been recruited into in Q2 are roles essential to safe delivery of services, but which had been vacant, such as in Fire and Rescue services, commissioning and operational social work roles.

The table below illustrates the number of starters and leavers per service area in Q2 24/25:

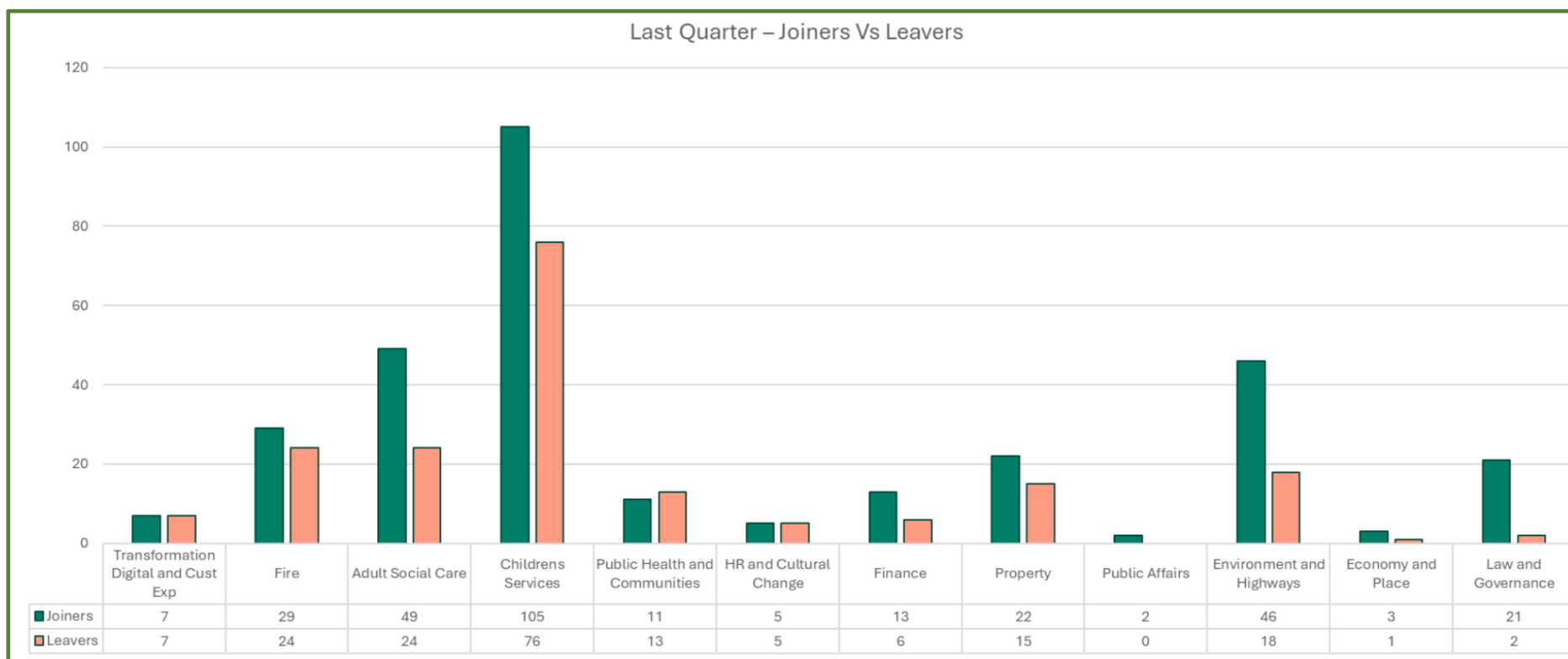


Table 3 Joiners and Leavers per Service Area in Q2 2024/2025

3. WORKFORCE TRENDS - AGENCY SPEND

- The job categories that tend to be covered by agency workers are social work, engineering, surveying and legal roles, all of which are known to have national skills shortages, particularly in the local government. To address this challenge, there are currently projects underway at the council, to develop attraction campaigns and development programmes to attract to the council but also to create an internal skills pipeline for these hard to fill roles.

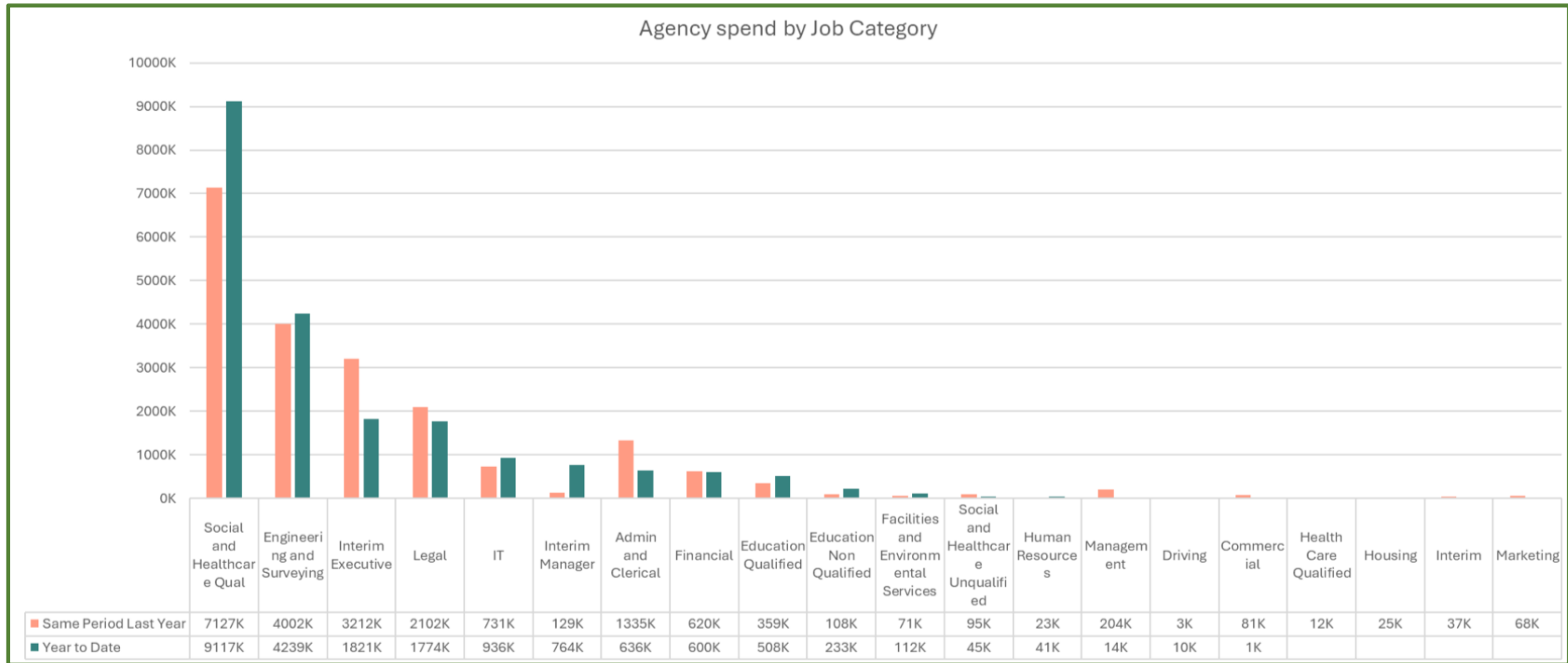


Table 4 Employee FTE Q2 2023/2024 compared with Q2 2024/2025

Commensura agency spend is broken down by service area:

Function	Latest Qtrly Spend	Trend	% Change	SPLY
Children's Services	3,121,858	↑	+15.8%	2,695,904
Adult Social Services	1,171,796	↓	-11.8%	1,329,078
Environment and Highways	1,016,362	↓	-23.2%	1,323,828
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	558,256	↓	-31.6%	815,939
Economy and Place	351,100	↑	+532.2%	55,534
Property and Assets	306,217	↑	+34.5%	227,587
ICT	168,773	↓	-27.7%	233,477
Financial and Commercial Services	107,485	↓	-16.7%	129,021
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	24,661	↓	-76.7%	105,719
HR and Cultural Change	17,407	↑		
Public Health and Communities	11,909	↑	+87.3%	6,358
Total	6,855,824	↓	-1.5%	6,956,797

Table 5 Quarterly spend on agency (via Commensura) per Service Area in Q2 2024/2025, showing trends quarter on quarter and year on year

- A task force remains in place to review monthly agency spend and implement necessary interventions to ensure appropriate scrutiny of agency usage across all service areas.

There has been a reduction in agency spend via Commensura (the Council's current provider of agency workers). Comensura agency spend has decreased both quarter on quarter and year on year.

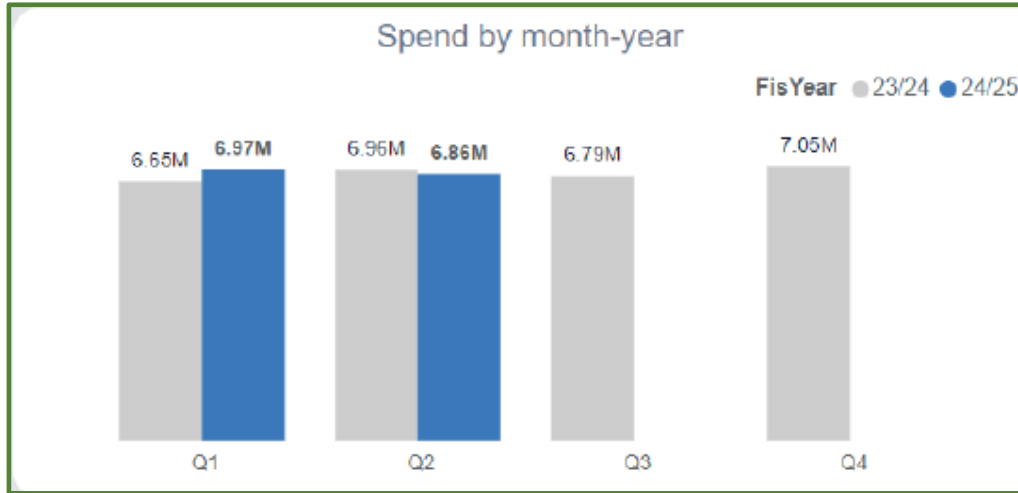


Table 6 Quarterly agency spend via Commensura (the Council's current provider of agency workers) Q1 2/23/2024 to Q2 2024/2025

In terms of cumulative spend year on year, there is a slight increase from 23/24 to 24/25 by the end of Q2 24/25.



Table 7 Cumulative spend on agency (via Commensura) until end of Q2 2024/2025, year on year

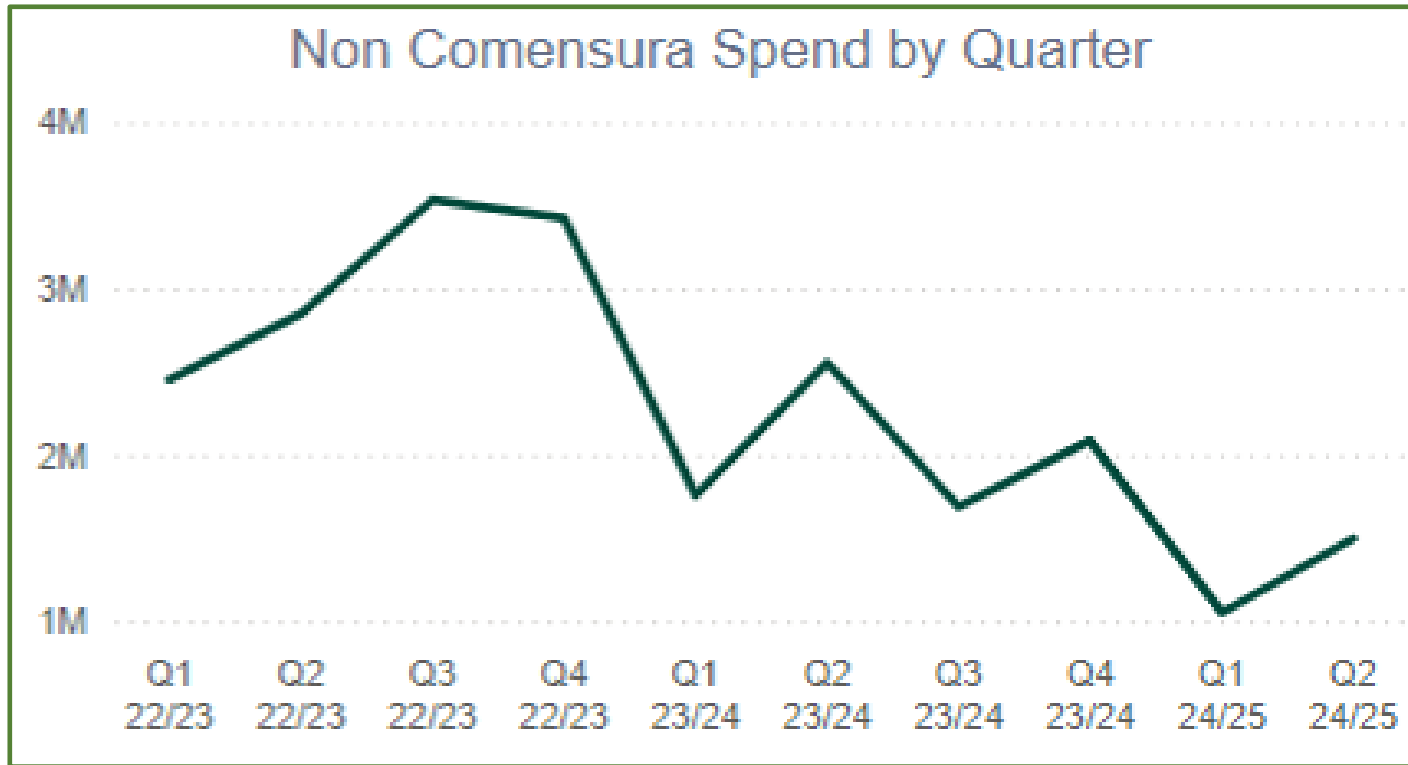


Table 8 non-Commensura spend by Quarter, from Q1 22/23 to Q2 24/25:

- There has been an increase in the non-Commensura spend (with services and workers engaged outside of main agency contract Commensura) quarter on quarter. While the increase in Q2 24/25 has been from £1.05m to £1.50m quarter on quarter, the overall trend in the off-contract agency spend is a gradual decrease over the last 2 years. The vast majority of the increase in off-contract spend has originated in the services such as Transport, Infrastructure, Highways and Highway Maintenance. It should be noted that work is underway to provide further clarity of the off contract (non-Commensura) spend information.

4. WORKFORCE TRENDS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

The five top reasons for sickness absence are:

Rank	Reason	% of total absent hours
1	Anxiety/stress/depression	31.2%
2	Ear, nose, throat (ENT)	9.5%
3	Injury, fracture	8.9%
4	Operations Post Ops	8.3%
5	Gastrointestinal problems	7.5%

Table 9 The five top reasons for sickness absence in Q2 24/25

- The top reason for sickness absence in this quarter remains anxiety, stress, and depression at 31.2%, however this percentage has slightly decreased when compared to the previous quarter when it was 33.2%. This mental health related absence and its prevalence among our colleagues remains a concern. Reducing this trend and improving employee wellbeing is a priority for on the Our People and Cultural Change programme.

5. WORKFORCE TRENDS - DIVERSITY PROFILE - DISABILITY

- The percentage of council colleagues declaring a disability has increased steadily over the last 5 years (3.34% overall) and has increased from 6.06% as of 31 March 2023 to 7.97% as of 31st March 2024. The Council holds the accreditation of being a Disability Confident Employer. The Disability Confident Employer scheme aims to help the council to successfully employ, retain, and provide an excellent employment experience to disabled people. The accreditation is only given to employers who have taken action to evidence they are meeting certain criteria regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. As part of its commitment to the Disability Confident Scheme, the Council

offers a guaranteed interview scheme to candidates who are disabled and meet the essential criteria for the role. The council also utilises the Access to Work scheme by the Department of Work and Pensions. The programme assists individuals with long-term physical and mental health conditions and includes support for neurodiverse characteristics that may impact on their role. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

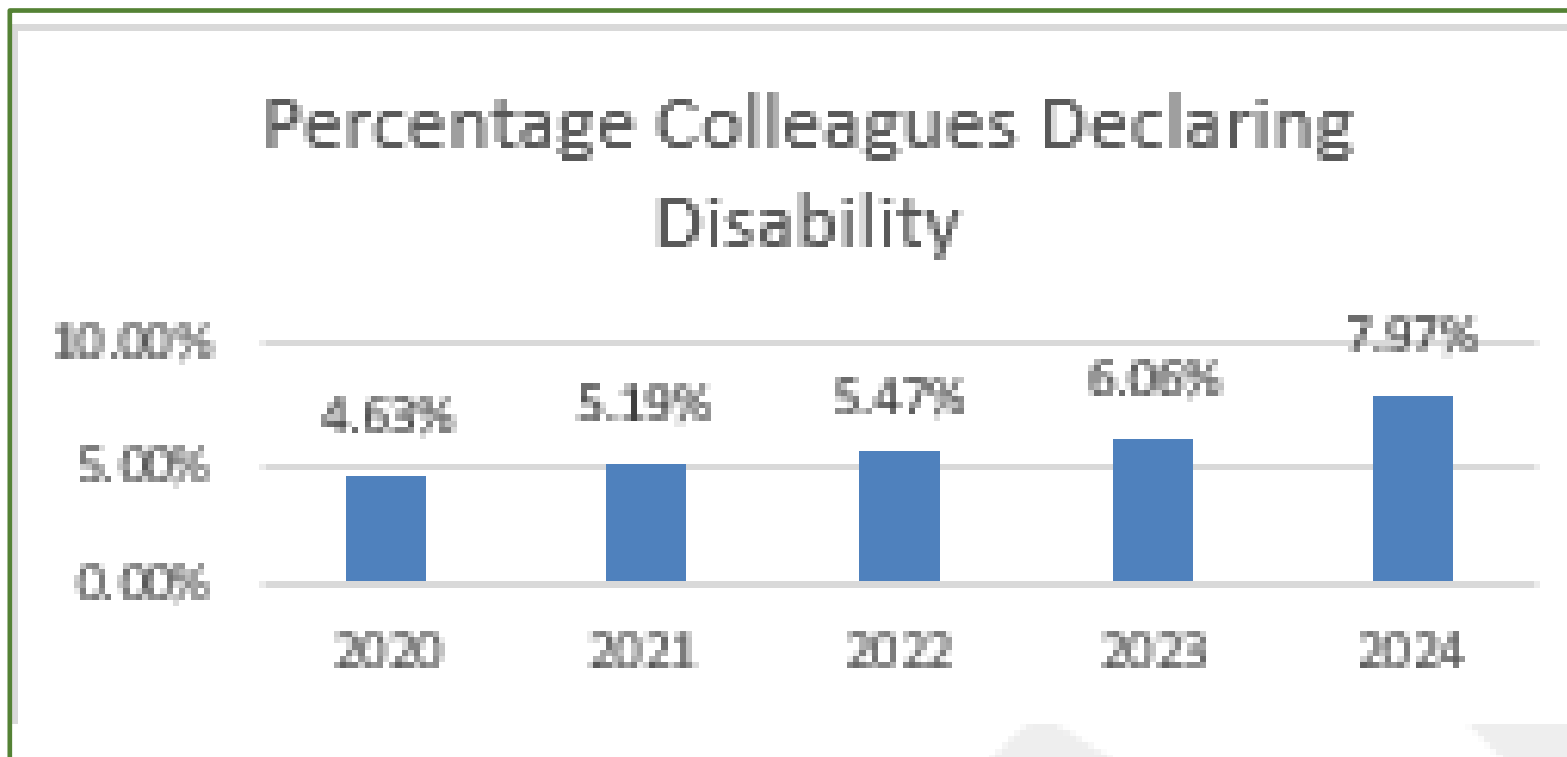


Table 10 Percentage of colleagues declaring disability 2020 – 2024

- The Council continues to embed **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** into all that it does. Specifically, a recent recruitment audit focused on EDI has identified areas of improvement within recruitment practices which will have a further positive impact on the accessibility and transparency of the appointment processes. The council also operates the Including

Everyone Framework that is integrated into business planning to ensure EDI is woven into the individual service areas' ambitions. Functions and service areas are being required and supported to plan actions under the Framework which are specific and actionable, to ensure that change happens.

6. WORKFORCE TRENDS - TURNOVER – EXIT INTERVIEWS

- 18.3 In Q2 24/25, 58 colleagues completed an exit interview which is a response rate of 34.9%, this is an increase of over 10% in comparison to last quarter's response rate. Exit interviews provide valuable insights helping the council make informed decisions that enhance colleague experience, reduce turnover, and ultimately drive organisational success. This feedback has been used to prioritise the Our People and Culture Strategy programme of work
- The council features as an employer on Glassdoor, a popular online platform that provides insights into, and ratings for, companies and workplaces from the perspective of employees and job seekers. A Glassdoor rating is a score given to a company or an organisation by its current and former employees (on a five-star scale, with one star representing poor conditions and five stars indicating excellent conditions) and it is publicly displayed on the Glassdoor website. As they are publicly available, Glassdoor ratings are important to employers to improve their employer branding and successfully attract and retain talent, gain advantage over competitors, and demonstrate transparency and trust with current and prospective employees. The Council's current Glassdoor reviews show a positive trend where the Council achieved a rating of 4 out of 5 stars suggesting that current and previous employee consider Oxfordshire a good place to work.

CABINET – 17 DECEMBER 2024

CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

Capital Programme

- a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2024/25 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.
- b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Budget Changes / Budget Release

- c. Note the reduction of £0.5m budget provision from the Defect Liability Programme funded from corporate resources, thereby returning £0.5m to the capital programme which will contribute towards funding for the 2025/26 the capital budget setting process (para 68).

Additions to the Capital Programme

- d. Approve the inclusion of the William Fletcher CE Primary School (Expansion) scheme in the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £3.9m to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding (para 65).
- e. Approve the inclusion of a programme of work which will create breathing apparatus and cleaning / decontamination areas across Oxfordshire's fire stations, with an indicative budget of £1.8m, to be funded from earmarked reserves, agreed by Council in February 2024 (para 66).

Executive Summary

2. The Strategic Plan sets out our vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county.
3. The Capital and Investment Strategy agreed in February 2024 articulates how capital investment will help achieve this vision and the council's nine

priorities. In addition, the capital programme also supports statutory functions such as school placements and urgent health and safety capital maintenance works.

4. The ten-year Capital Programme sets out how the council will use capital expenditure to deliver these council priorities. 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.
5. This is the third capital programme update and monitoring report for 2024/25 and sets out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of October 2024.
6. The report also updates the Capital Programme approved by Cabinet on 15 October 2024 taking into account additional funding and new schemes. The updated programme also incorporates changes agreed through the Capital Programme Approval Reports to Cabinet during the year as well as new funding.
7. The forecast programme expenditure for 2024/25 is £276.5m (excluding earmarked reserves). This has decreased by £8.7m compared to the previous capital programme for 2024/25 approved by Cabinet in October 2024. The updated programme reflects the spend profile from the latest delivery timeframes and the inclusion of new grants received by the Council.
8. The total ten-year capital programme (2024/25 to 2033/34) is £1,259.2m. The updated capital programme summary is set out in Annex 2. The main changes since the report to Cabinet on 15 October 2024 are set out in this report.

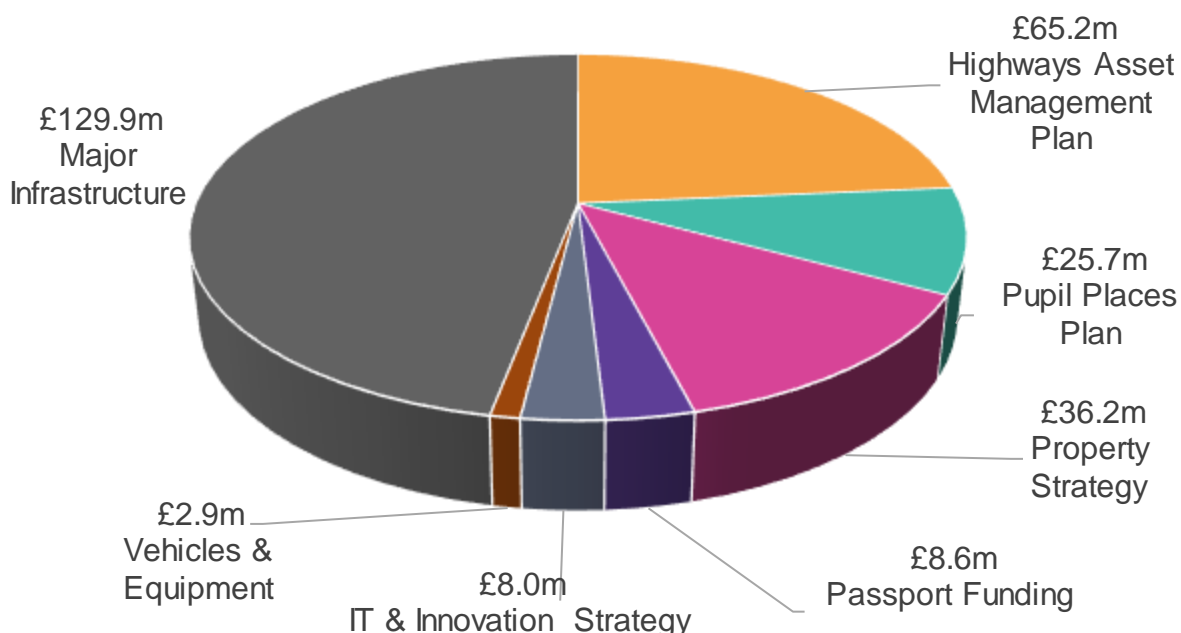
Introduction

9. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the council (e.g. buildings, vehicles, and equipment) as well as spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003. This includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the council such as academies and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.
10. The capital programme supports the delivery of the council's vision and priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan. The programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned with the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
11. The programme comprises the following strategy areas:
 - **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements
 - **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme

- **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges
- **Property Strategy:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements, the Investment Strategy and climate change measures,
- **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy:** including broadband and equipment
- **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital
- **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment

12. The detailed investment profile for the 2024/25 Capital Programme is set out below:

2024/25 Programme - Latest Spend Forecast



13. This is the third capital programme update and monitoring report for the financial year and focuses on the delivery of the 2024/25 capital programme based on projections at the end of October 2024 and new inclusions within the overall ten-year capital programme.

14. The following annexes are attached:

- Annex 1 Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Summary)
- Annex 2 Updated Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2033/34 (Summary)

2024/25 Capital Monitoring

15. The capital monitoring position set out in Annex 1, shows forecast expenditure for 2024/25 of £276.5m excluding earmarked reserves). This has decreased by £8.7m compared to the latest capital programme approved by Cabinet in October 2024. The updated programme reflects the

forecasted year end position for 2024/25 and the impact of re-profiling expenditure in 2024/25 where necessary to reflect the anticipated scheme delivery.

The table below summarises the changes since the monitoring position at August 2024 by strategy area:

Strategy Area	Last Approved Programme 2024/25 * £m	Latest Forecast Expenditure 2024/25 £m	Variation £m
Pupil Places Plan	26.5	25.7	-0.8
Major Infrastructure	139.5	129.9	-9.6
Highways Asset Management Plan	64.9	65.2	+0.3
Property Strategy	35.6	36.2	+0.6
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	7.2	8.0	+0.8
Passported Funding	8.6	8.6	+0.0
Vehicles & Equipment	2.9	2.9	+0.0
Total Strategy Programmes	285.2	276.5	-8.7
Earmarked Reserves / Pipeline Schemes	4.6	2.0	-2.6
Total Capital Programme	289.8	278.5	-10.3

* Approved by Cabinet 15 October 2024 (August Monitoring)

16. Actual capital expenditure at the end of October 2024 was £119.7m (43%). The combined spend to date and current forecasted in-year commitments for the Capital Programme are £180.6m or 65% of the revised estimate for the year. The rate of expenditure is expected to increase in the remaining months of the year due to a number of schemes reaching the delivery stage.

Pupil Places Plan

17. The Pupil Place Programme has forecast spend of £25.7m compared to the latest forecast of £26.5m in 2024/25, a decrease of £0.8m. The Pupil Place Plan includes three main programmes:
- Basic Need - these are usually school expansion projects that are funded by central government grant and/or Section 106 developer funding / Community Infrastructure Levy funding to ensure there are enough school places for children within Oxfordshire.
 - Growth Portfolio – these are usually new school projects within large housing sites allocated in local plans that are funded from contributions sought from developers via a Section 106 agreement towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure.
 - Schools Annual Programmes – this includes the School Structural Maintenance Programme funded from the School Condition Allocation, which addresses the highest condition-based priorities within the school estate enhancing the school stock condition and reducing the backlog maintenance, and the School Access

Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

18. Projects in the basic need and growth portfolio programmes are either delivered directly by the Council, delivered by a housing developer or by a third party (usually an Academy Trust or Diocese) via a funding agreement. Regardless of how they are delivered, each project brings benefits to residents living in Oxfordshire by improving the quality and facilities at existing schools; providing additional pupil places allowing greater parental choice and ensuring that housing developments have the infrastructure necessary for them to become thriving communities.

Basic Need Programme

19. The Basic Needs Programme is forecasting spend of £10.5m in 2024/25 compared to the previous forecast of £10.1m, an increase of £0.4m to reflect the latest delivery timeframe. Currently, four projects are in construction and are due to be completed this financial year creating the following additional pupil places and improved facilities:

- Woodstock Primary School (105 additional pupil places) - complete
- Oxfordshire Hospital School (Remodelling of Cuddeston Corner to accommodate Family Solutions and Oxford Hospital School).
- St Frideswide SEND Resource Base (16 additional SEND pupil places).
- Aston & Cote CE Primary School (35 additional pupil places).
- Bloxham Primary School (New hall and reconfiguration of internal spaces to create new kitchen to support increased pupil numbers).

In addition, there are 9 projects in the pre-construction phase, some of which will commence on site this financial year:

- Oxford, Mabel Prichard Special School (23 additional SEND places).
- Woodstock, Marlborough CE School (150 additional pupil places)
- Witney, Woodgreen School (150 additional pupil places).
- North Hinksey CE Primary School (replacement of temporary accommodation)
- Faringdon Community College (replacement of temporary accommodation)
- Sonning Common, Bishopswood SEN (relocation of accommodation and expansion of secondary base within Chiltern Edge School),
- Grove CE Primary School (105 additional pupil places),
- Chinnor, Mill Lane Primary School (replacement of temporary accommodation),
- Heyford Park School (150 additional pupil places),

Growth Portfolio Programme

20. The Growth Portfolio programme is forecasting to spend £8.0m in 2024/25, a reduction of £0.2m compared to the previous forecast. Currently, one project has been completed since the beginning of the financial year:

- St Edburg's CE Primary School (210 additional pupil places)

In addition, there are 4 projects in the pre-construction phase, some of which will commence on site this financial year:

- Wallingford, St Nicholas CE Primary School (relocation) (70 additional pupil places),
- Didcot, Great Western Park SEND School (120 additional SEND pupil places) and
- Upper Heyford Primary School (315 place new primary + 65 place nursery),
- Didcot Valley Park Primary School (630 place new primary),

Three further schools are being delivered by the ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) and financial contributions towards the schools are included within the capital programme:

- Bloxham, Grove SEND Free School (118 additional SEND pupil places) – completed January 2024.
- SEND Free School, Faringdon (118 additional SEND pupil places).
- Grove Airfield – Secondary phase of a new all-through School (600 additional pupil places).

Schools Annual Programmes

21. The forecast for the School Access Initiative provision is £0.300m to ensure that mainstream school buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Projects at primary and secondary schools will be carried out throughout this financial year.
22. The School Structural Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 has highlighted a total of 58 projects to be completed over a two-year programme. This includes 14 projects which began in 2023/24. Nine of these are Air Source Heat Pump projects which are substantially completed but are awaiting the distribution network operator upgrades to fully complete.
23. A further 44 projects are in various stages of progression for delivery by the end of March 2026. The latest spend forecast in 2024/25 is £6.5m a reduction of £1.0m as school roofing work is rescheduled for Summer 2025.

Major Infrastructure

24. The latest capital forecast for 2024/25 is £130.5m and has reduced by £9.0m compared to the previous forecasted position. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below:

Major Infrastructure	Last Budget	Latest Forecast	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1)	21,004	19,950	-1,054
Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 (HIF2) & A40	20,384	19,228	-1,156
A423 Improvement Programme	2,750	2,750	+0

Active Travel Phase 3 & Mobility Hubs	3,555	3,127	-428
Bicester & Banbury Locality	23,160	21,222	-1,938
Oxford Locality	14,348	13,679	-669
South & Vale Locality	24,418	20,208	-4,210
Major Infrastructure Delivery Sub-total	109,619	100,164	-9,455
Major Infrastructure Placemaking Sub-total	2,126	2,052	-75
Transport Policy Sub-total	27,736	27,736	+0
Major Infrastructure –Total	139,482	129,952	-9,530

Major Infrastructure- Delivery

25. Forecast capital spend of £100.1m is £9.5m less than the latest capital budget of £109.6m. The programme comprises of three main funding areas and the key in-year budget variations are reported below.

HIF1 Programme

26. The HIF1 programme remains in the pre-construction phase awaiting the outcome and decision on the public inquiry. Homes England, in the meantime, have approved the council's Material Change Request, which confirms an extended programme timeline and additional funding, pending the inquiry decision. The current forecast variance (-£1.1m) mainly reflects the impact on the delay caused by extended pre-contract negotiations on the Didcot Science Bridge project.

HIF2 & A40

27. The Council has received the approved Material Change request for an extended timeline for the HIF2 Programme and in particular the Bus Lane Active Travel scheme. The latest in-year spend profile for the Access to Witney Scheme has been revised down by £0.5m due to delays in land assembly access.

A423 & Active Travel Programmes

28. No change is being reported on the A423 programme. The Active Travel Programmes is reporting a slight reduction of £0.4m across the various schemes within the overall programme.

Growth Deal Programme and Other Funding

29. The programme is now forecasting spend of £55.1m, compared to the previous forecast of £61.9m, a decrease of £6.8m. However, the intention is that all available Growth Deal funding will be spent in 2024/25, which may require some funding switches between schemes to release this. The main schemes contributing to the revised forecast are as follows:

- Tramway (-£2.0m) due to delays in entering into contract.
- A34 Lodge Hill (-£4.0m) due to change to the on-site start date of mid- April 2025, resulting from meeting Homes England's Gateway milestone timeframe.

30. The overall Growth Deal programme is currently over-profiled by £0.6m. This compares to the previous over-profiled reported position of £0.7m and £1.6m earlier in the year compared to the available capital grant funding of £142.7m.

Major Infrastructure – Placemaking

31. The programme is forecasting a spend of £2.0m which is £0.1m less than the latest budget.

Transport Policy

32. The programme is forecasting a spend of £27.7m, no change when compared with the previous reported position, which relates to the grant payments to the bus companies (contribution towards the purchase of electric buses under the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area programme). It is forecasted that the delivery of the programme through the £38.8m overall funding provision will be completed during 2024/25.

Highways Asset Management Plan

33. The planned target total surfacing programme (excluding patching) for 2024/25, is calculated at 4.4% of the network. The expectation was that this would enable the council to maintain the 4,656km of network that it is responsible for in as close as possible to a ‘steady state’ within the funding available.
34. The total in-year forecasted capital expenditure for 2024/25 is estimated to be £65.2m and has increased £0.3m compared to the previous forecast. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below:

Highways Asset Management Plan	Latest Budget	Forecast	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Structural Maintenance Annual Programme	42,050	42,540	+490
Improvement Programmes	3,455	3,455	+0
Major Schemes & Other Programmes	13,795	13,583	-212
Network Management Programme	4,773	4,773	+0
Other	800	800	+0
Highways Asset Management Plan – Total	64,873	65,151	+278

35. For the Structural Maintenance Annual Programme, the main variation relates to the latest forecast on the bridges programme (+£0.4m).
36. The planned activities for the main programmes are summarised below:

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Surface Treatments (schemes)	120	121	Schemes to restore the condition or prolonging the life of existing carriageways.
Carriageways (schemes)	10	9	Surfacing/reconstruction/strengthening of roads. Extra scheme planned due to the extra £5million
Structural Highways Improvements (schemes)	68	45	Surface inlay and minor patching schemes across the county. There will also be minor works carried out in addition to this throughout the year. Extra schemes planed due to the extra £5million
Footways (schemes)	75	48	Repair/construction of footways and cycleways. Extra minor reconstruction/ patching included in the planned schemes
Drainage (schemes)	35	20	Repair/renewal of existing drainage infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure to resolve known drainage issues. There is also planned reactive work which will be carried out.
Bridges (schemes)	13	7	Strengthening/replacement/imposition of management measures on weak structures.
Public Rights of Way	4	3	Improved Pedestrian Access Points (delivered as planned-reactive – dependent upon need). In addition to this new/refurbished kit bridges (delivered as planned-reactive with in-house resource).
Electrical	2,822	1,803	LED Replacement units being installed this year.
20mph Speed limit (schemes)	11 100	8 69	Phase 2 – Remaining Schemes reprogrammed from last year. Phase 3 – potential schemes this year – dependant on individual CMD Additional 20mph applications accepted increasing the number of planned schemes
Section 42 contributions (schemes)	39	39	Programme delivered by the City Council and covers all the unclassified roads and footways within the city.

37. The annual Improvement Programme is forecasting to spend £3.5m in 2024/25. This provides road safety and traffic improvements including road markings, cycle provision improvements, pedestrian crossings, footway improvements and speed limit alterations and this includes the Vision Zero Programme which is forecasted to spend £1.5m in 2024/25.

38. Major Schemes & Other Programme is forecast to spend £13.6m in 2024/25, an increase of £0.2m compared to the previous reported programme. Following a fatal road traffic collision near to RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire, a road safety review identified a number of schemes in Oxfordshire that have been approved and funded for delivery by the Department for Transport. The Council has received £3.994m of funding to deliver the programme of improvements. Recognising the importance of these measures, additional resources have been mobilised to deliver the programme within the current financial year.
39. The Highway Network Programme is forecasted to spend £4.8m in line with previous forecasts which includes the enhancement to support journey time reliability, which also aid bus movements, and traffic signal improvement schemes and improvements to Thornhill Park & Ride.

Property Strategy

40. The Property Strategy is forecasting expenditure of £36.2m in 2024/25, an increase of £0.6m compared to the previous forecast.

Estate Decarbonisation Programme

41. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a target of 2030 to bring the council's operations and activities to net zero. Alongside this the UK government target for net zero, which the council is party to, is for an area wide target of net zero by 2050.
42. The council's property accounts for approximately 33% of the emissions within this 2030 target (on 2022/23 data). It is clear there is a long-term plan for decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid, however this target is in line with the UK government commitment of net zero by 2050.
43. As such the strategic approach to reaching the decarbonisation targets is to stop fossil fuelled activities within the council's properties, which is predominantly heating, via the electrification of these components.
44. Although there will be a carbon component remaining by 2030 from the use of electricity, this will be much reduced, and the council will be on the pathway to fully net zero in line with the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. This should enable a reducing need for carbon offsetting by 2030 and beyond.
45. The transition to electric heating will predominantly be via heat pumps and infrared heating. Due to the lower operating temperatures of the heat pumps improvements are required in thermal building fabric (e.g. single glazing to double or triple glazing, insulation installations, etc.) to decrease the potential running costs. Nonetheless even with these improvements because of the, currently, low cost of gas compared to electricity the running costs would be increased. As part of the strategic approach the Council would seek to install renewable electricity measures (solar PV) and upgrade electrical components (particularly lighting to LED), in order to ensure the overall running costs do not increase.

46. A reactive only maintenance approach has left much of the council's estate in a very poor-quality condition, with many components past their expected working life. As a result, there is an anticipated need to replace components, such as boilers, which would represent a cost avoidance.
47. This programme supports both the key objectives within the Climate Action Framework and Carbon Management Plan, but also the property strategy.
48. The Decarbonisation works proposed for the 33 sites totals £9.7m and includes £3.1m of grant funding for decarbonisation (PSDS3c) which needs to be spent by 31 March 2025.

Corporate Estate Development

49. Projects in the construction phase:
 - Deddington Highways Depot – Phase 1 was complete in September 2024.
 - Speedwell House – strip-out works have commenced.

Several projects are in the pre-construction phase including:

- New Fire Station at Rewley Road
- Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre improvement works
- Union Street (Second Phase).
- Oxford Community Support Service.

Office Rationalisation & Co-location

50. The office rationalisation & co-location programme has a spend forecast of £2.3m for 2024/25, a reduction of £0.5m compared to the previous forecast. The Council has vacated Abbey House in Abingdon with staff relocated to new locations.
51. Phase 2 of the Knights Court move will happen this year with further works to Union Street and Oxford Community Support Service (OCSS).
52. Supported Transport will move to Water Eaton later in 2024/25 at an estimated cost of £0.6m.

Resonance Supported Homes Fund

53. As the final £1.0m is being paid under the Resonance Supported Homes Fund in 2024/25, a revised forecast of £2.0m is being reported, an increase of £1.0m compared to the previous reported position. This will bring the total investment to £5.0m in line with the overall budget provision of £5.0m. A total of 5 properties have been purchased, four are in development and one is now occupied. The fund will result in a total of 22 new shared living options. It is forecasted that the remaining sites will be occupied by the end of the year.

Electric Vehicle Charging

54. The project to make EV charging gullies available for Oxfordshire residents has been affected by some technical challenges but the business plan was expected to be signed off in September 2024 with applications opening as soon as possible after that. Due to the later start the amount budgeted for this year is forecasted at £0.2m. The delivery timeframe for the roll out of the public charging across Oxfordshire Local EV infrastructure grant funded programme is forecasted later in the year with the possibility of a contract start before the end of the financial year.

Children's Homes Programme

55. The council is currently forecasting £6.4m in 2024/25 (reduction of £0.2m) from the £10.5m programme towards the delivering of four new Children's Homes. Four sites have been acquired; refurbishment has started at two sites with the remaining two expecting to commence this financial year. The programme will create 12 additional beds.

Green Home's Upgrade (HUG2)

56. This is the second year of a two-year programme, which runs until the end of March 2025, to deliver energy-saving retrofit measures to owner occupied and privately rented properties in Oxfordshire. The programme is fully funded from the Green Homes Grant managed by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).
57. Due to on-going market conditions owing to the availability of accredited installers, the national approval process for installers and the sign up from owners, it is currently forecasted that between 90 to 150 properties will be delivered in 2024/25 with a forecasted spend of £2.7m in 2024/25.

IT, Innovation & Digital Strategy

58. The total forecast expenditure for 2024/25 is £8.0m, an increase of £0.6m compared to the previous forecast. This is due to the revised forecast for the 5G Innovation Region Programme.

Digital Infrastructure

59. IT are working on a number of projects to implement new applications during 2024/25. Projects expected to be completed include:
- Vehicle Management Service – enabling the vehicle asset management system to move towards carbon reduction in vehicle use.
 - Applicant Tracking System - recruitment system – improved offer for managers and potential employees to attract talent and meet our Employer of Choice as part of the council's vision.
 - Power BI and Social Care Dashboards – to meet the provision of data driven decisions for social care and education services.

Projects starting in 2024/25 include:

- Public Services Telephone Network Withdrawal – working with suppliers to reduce risks and impacts of the withdrawal of the copper telephony network.

Broadband

60. Forecast expenditure for the Rural Gigabit Hub Sites programme is £1.0m in 2024/25. The programme is funded from grant and income from the Broadband Gainshare.
61. The 5GIR programme commenced in 2023/24 after being awarded £3.8m of grant funding by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to increase adoption of 5G connectivity. The programme is a regional partnership, known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH) which comprises local bodies from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire with Oxfordshire as the lead authority. ECH will deploy resources from each of the participating authorities to develop joint opportunities with the wireless telecoms supply chain and to create an Advanced Wireless ecosystem. The project plans to deploy two physical 5G infrastructure builds; the Science & Innovation Campus Project at Harwell and the East West Railway Project to utilise trackside fibre between Bicester and Bletchley. It is forecasted that £3.6m could be spent this financial year, an increase of £0.7m compared to the previous forecast.

Passported Funding

62. Expenditure for 2024/25 is forecasted to be £8.6m, no change from the previous reported position.
63. The Disabled Facilities Grant for 2024/25 announced in May 2024 notified funding of £7.3m. This funding, which is part of the Better Care Fund, is issued to the County Council but must be passed directly on to the City and District Councils in accordance with the grant determination.

Vehicles and Equipment

64. Expenditure for 2024/25 is forecasted to be £2.9m, no change from the previous reported position. This area includes the refurbishment of Libraries and the vehicle replacement programme through the Vehicle Management Service.

CAPITAL GOVERNANCE APPROVALS

Property

William Fletcher CE Primary School Expansion

65. In order to meet the County Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, William Fletcher CE Primary School is to expand from 1.5 Form Entry (FE) to 2FE. Approval is required to include this scheme in the Capital programme with an indicative budget of £3.9m to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.

Breathing apparatus and Decontamination areas at Fire Stations

66. Approval is required to enter a programme of work into the Capital Programme at a cost of £1.8m towards the creation of breathing apparatus and decontamination areas across Oxfordshire's fire estate to conform to new guidance. Funding for this programme of work was agreed at Council in February 2024 through the budget setting process.

Ten Year Capital Programme Update

67. The total ten-year capital programme (2024/25 to 2034/35) is now £1,259.2m (excluding earmarked reserves) an increase of £12.1m when compared to the latest capital programme approved by Cabinet in October 2024. This is due to additional S106 funding (£4.6m) coming into the capital programme, the East Oxford Mini-Holland scheme (£6.0m) and the breathing apparatus and decontamination areas at Fire Stations programme (£1.8m) being released from earmarked resources to be included within the capital programme, funds being returned and other minor changes. A summary of the updated capital programme is set out in Annex 2.
68. Defect Liability Programme was set up to address legacy issues arising from the Carillion's liquidation, including rectification of known defects with completed projects and treatment of latent defects. The original provision of £15.0m has been previously reduced by £2.9m. A further £0.5m is being returned towards the capital priority budget setting process. The programme has incurred expenditure to date of £10.4m with a further £0.8m of works identified for the remaining of this year and 25/26 compared to the revised budget provision of £11.6m.

Strategy Area	Last Approved Total Programme (2024/25 to 2033/34) * £m	Latest Updated Total Programme (2024/25 to 2033/34) £m	Variation £m
Pupil Places Plan	227.4	230.1	+2.7
Major Infrastructure	655.0	662.1	+7.1
Highways Asset Management Plan	217.4	217.4	+0.0
Property Strategy	92.7	94.1	+1.4
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	13.8	14.1	+0.3
Passported Funding	14.3	14.6	+0.3
Vehicles & Equipment	26.5	26.9	+0.4
Total Strategy Programmes	1,247.1	1,259.2	+12.1
Earmarked Reserves	106.3	99.2	-7.1
Total Capital Programme	1,353.4	1,358.4	+5.0

* Approved by Cabinet 15 October 2024.

Capital Funding Update

Prudential Borrowing

69. The ten-year Capital Programme includes a requirement to fund £212.4m through prudential borrowing. The latest borrowing expected to be taken in 2024/25 is £64.1m. The majority of this relates to schemes that have already been delivered but have, until now, been funded temporarily by borrowing from other funding sources within the Capital Programme to delay the need to apply the prudential borrowing. The borrowing in 2024/25 is expected to include a further £14.0m from the £120.0m agreed in 2018 (£105.0m in total), and £17.0m from the £88.4m agreed in 2022. A further £15.7m from the £41.7m borrowing supporting the OxLEP City Deals programme, and £16.6m drawdown of the £40.8m supporting the Street Lighting LED replacement programme is also expected to be taken in 2024/25.
70. The use of prudential borrowing will increase the Council's Capital Financing Requirement. The Council is required under statute to set aside a Minimum Revenue Provision to pay down the Capital Financing Requirement. Prudential borrowing is generally paid over 25 years. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy takes account of this cost. As the Capital programme includes the OxLEP City Deal Programme, the borrowing costs relating to this scheme (for which the Council is the Accountable body) will be fully funded through Enterprise Zone 1 retained business rates.

Earmarked Reserves

71. The level of earmarked reserves has decreased by £7.1m from the previous reported position to £99.2m. The main changes are the £6m towards the East Oxford Mini Holland scheme and £1.8m towards the Fire Station programme being released and £0.5m from the Defect Liability Programme being returned. The reserves includes £52.3m of budget provisions approved through the capital budget & business planning process in February 2024 and previous years. The reserves also includes the capital programme contingency for the delivery of the current ten-year capital programme plus other identified provisions.

Capital Reserves

72. The current level of capital reserves (including capital receipts and capital grants reserves) is approximately £197m. This is expected to reduce to approximately £60m at the end of 2026/27. The reduction is mainly due to the delivery of the Growth Deal Programme and the latest spend profile in relation to the A423 Improvement Programme. Reserves can be used to temporarily fund schemes to delay the need for prudential borrowing or to help manage timing difference between the delivery of schemes and the receipt of Section 106 funding. The level of reserves impacts on the cashflow of the capital programme and the overall Council Balances and is already factored into the funding of the overall capital programme.

Risk Management

73. As reported previously, there are a mix of factors continuing to impact on the deliverability and cost of capital schemes. Where those schemes are grant funded there is a risk that slippage could impact on the availability of

grant funding as it is not possible to complete the scheme by the funding deadline. Inflationary pressures may also mean that costs increase further by the point the scheme reaches the construction phase eroding the value of the grant funding so that is insufficient to meet the revised scheme costs.

74. These risks are being managed through the council's capital governance process at both project and programme level and through the Strategic Capital Board. Where necessary action is being taken to adjust scheme deliverables and to use value engineering to maintain spend within the available funding.
75. The deadline for claiming the remaining £30.0m Housing & Growth Deal grant funding is 31 March 2025. Schemes in the programme, and planning decisions impacting on the achievability by that deadline, are being closely monitored during 2024/25 and action will be taken to maximise the use of the grant funding while minimising the risk to the council.
76. There are ongoing negotiations with Homes England in relation to the HIF2 scheme funding and timeline which presents a potential risk if a successful resolution is not reached.
77. The council is assessing and tracking seven strategic risks in 2024/25. One of these risks is that if either HIF1 or HIF2 programmes become undeliverable and/or the potential financial risk to the council. Updates on this risk are being reported through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

78. The report sets out the planned investment and available funding for the ten-year Capital programme including the risks associated with the delivery of the programme.
79. The following risks are inherent within the funding of the capital programme:
 - Certainty over the timing and value of future capital receipts and Section 106 Contributions
 - Certainty over the receipt and security of future grant funding
80. If capital receipts or section 106 contributions are not received within the planned timeframe it may be necessary for the Council to temporarily fund capital expenditure through prudential borrowing. The council has a prudential borrowing reserve to help manage the revenue impact of additional prudential borrowing.
81. Where additional funding is required to fund schemes on a permanent basis this will need to be addressed by reducing investment elsewhere within the programme (reprioritisation) or by permanently funding through prudential borrowing. This would require the identification of long-term revenue funding as the Prudential Borrowing is usually repaid over 25 years through the Minimum Revenue Provision.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

84. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. In particular paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1m then Cabinet can agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme, via the periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendations by Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers:

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance & Deputy S151 Officer
Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

November 2024

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Annex 1

Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25

Strategy / Programme	Capital Programme (Council October 2024)			Latest Forecast			Variation			Current Year Expenditure Monitoring (2024/25)				Performance Compared to Original Programme (Council February 2024)		
	Current Year 2024/25	Future Years	Total	Current Year 2024/25	Future Years	Total	Current Year	Future Years	Total	Actual expenditure to date	Commit- ments	Expenditure Realisation Rate	Actuals & Commitments	Current Year	Variation	Use of Resources Variation
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	%	%	£'000s	£'000s	%
Pupil Places Plan	26,533	200,894	227,427	25,684	204,377	230,061	-849	3,483	2,634	9,843	12,075	38%	85%	26,405	-721	-3%
Major Infrastructure	139,482	515,454	654,936	129,952	532,144	662,096	-9,530	16,690	7,160	55,626	16,469	43%	55%	176,443	-46,491	-26%
Highways Asset Management Plan	65,898	153,506	219,404	65,151	152,278	217,429	-747	-1,228	-1,975	32,210	27,346	49%	91%	63,442	1,709	3%
Property Strategy	34,574	56,165	90,739	36,190	57,887	94,077	1,616	1,722	3,338	12,086	3,402	33%	43%	30,625	5,565	18%
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	7,216	6,632	13,848	7,993	6,105	14,098	777	-527	250	2,448	1,418	31%	48%	6,600	1,393	21%
Parasport Funding	8,612	5,653	14,265	8,612	5,953	14,565	0	300	300	7,263	95	84%	85%	8,008	604	8%
Motor Vehicles & Equipment	2,941	23,556	26,497	2,941	23,956	26,897	0	400	400	213	117	7%	11%	2,500	441	18%
Total Capital Programme Expenditure	285,256	961,860	1,247,116	276,523	982,700	1,259,223	-8,733	20,840	12,107	119,689	60,922	43%	65%	314,023	-37,500	-12%
Pipeline Schemes (Indicative funding subject to initial business case)	3,600	51,367	54,967	2,000	44,930	46,930	-1,600	-6,437	-8,037					5,950	-3,950	0%
Earmarked Reserves	1,000	50,326	51,326	0	52,259	52,259	-1,000	1,933	933					0	0	0%
OVERALL TOTAL	289,856	1,063,553	1,353,409	278,523	1,079,889	1,358,412	-11,333	16,336	5,003	119,689	60,922	43%	65%	319,973	-41,450	-13%

Updated Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34

Strategy/Programme	Capital Investment Programme (latest forecast)						CAPITAL INVESTMENT TOTAL £'000s
	Current Year	Firm Programme	Provisional Programme			up to 2033 / 34 £'000s	
	2024 / 25 £'000s	2025 / 26 £'000s	2026 / 27 £'000s	2027 / 28 £'000s	2028 / 29 £'000s		
Pupil Places Plan	25,684	62,409	34,867	18,712	10,672	77,717	230,061
Major Infrastructure	129,952	134,263	252,708	112,504	25,315	7,354	662,096
Highways Asset Management Plan	65,151	29,427	17,839	15,833	13,660	75,519	217,429
Property Strategy	36,190	28,166	23,596	4,595	325	1,205	94,077
Digital & Innovation Strategy	7,993	4,329	991	678	99	8	14,098
Passport Funding	8,612	1,766	1,000	1,000	603	1,584	14,565
Vehicles & Equipment	2,941	6,257	5,820	5,800	2,076	4,003	26,897
TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE	276,523	266,617	336,821	159,122	52,750	167,390	1,259,223
Pipeline Schemes (Indicative funding subject to initial business case)	2,000	5,000	5,875	10,500	4,000	19,555	46,930
Earmarked Reserves	0	1,000	3,625	2,500	6,000	39,134	52,259
TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL PROGRAMME	278,523	272,617	346,321	172,122	62,750	226,079	1,358,412
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROGRAMME IN-YEAR RESOURCES	256,901	220,993	285,182	172,826	57,516	168,304	1,161,722
In-Year Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)	-21,622	-51,624	-61,139	704	-5,234	-57,775	-196,690
Cumulative Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)	196,690	175,068	62,305	63,009	57,775	0	0

SOURCES OF FUNDING	2024 / 25	2025 / 26	2026 / 27	2027 / 28	2028 / 29	up to 2033 / 34	CAPITAL RESOURCES TOTAL
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
SCE(C) Formulaic Capital Allocations - Un-ringfenced Grant	91,016	83,064	57,266	26,363	23,500	93,300	374,509
Devolved Formula Capital- Grant	1,000	650	650	650	253	0	3,203
Prudential Borrowing	64,142	52,804	17,228	55,121	22,611	542	212,448
Grants	76,731	67,531	177,072	46,914	3,149	927	372,324
Developer Contributions	30,965	64,137	48,676	10,210	3,363	41,444	198,795
Other External Funding Contributions	20	1,070	0	0	0	0	1,090
Revenue Contributions	14,621	3,361	2,436	5,229	800	4,000	30,447
Schools Contributions	28	0	0	0	0	0	28
Use of Capital Receipts	0	0	42,993	27,635	9,074	39,538	119,240
Use of Capital Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	46,328	46,328
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROGRAMME RESOURCES UTILISED	278,523	272,617	346,321	172,122	62,750	226,079	1,358,412
TOTAL ESTIMATED IN YEAR RESOURCES AVAILABLE	256,901	220,993	285,182	172,826	57,516	168,304	1,161,722
Capital Grants Reserve C/Fwd	116,211	89,393	36,329	2,863	0	0	0
Usable Capital Receipts C/Fwd	33,075	39,347	40,787	13,114	16,681	11,447	0
Capital Reserve C/Fwd	47,404	46,328	46,328	46,328	46,328	46,328	0

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 17 DECEMBER 2024

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 21 January 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mental Health Contract New mental health contract to be awarded 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2035. Approval for OCC budget required 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/334 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response to Motion by Councillor Reeves on Winter Fuel Payments A motion was passed at Council on 5 November 2024 requesting Cabinet to consider actions in response to Government means-testing of Winter Fuel Payments. 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/356 - Cabinet Member for Finance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Centre Strategy Review options and officers recommendations with a view to deciding how to proceed on the next stage of the City Centre Strategy, including a Key Decision 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/294 - Cabinet Member for Finance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Update Agreement to the Draft Strategy in advance of public consultation. Under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010, Oxfordshire County Council in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority must prepare a Local flood Risk Management Strategy covering local sources of flooding. The Council already have an existing strategy and this paper and attached strategy is an update to this strategy to cover statutory and non-statutory responsibilities and to provide a framework for managing the local sources of flooding. 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/229 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Management and Monitoring Report - November 2024 The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/212 - Cabinet Member for Finance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital Programme Approvals - January 2025 Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required). 	<p>Cabinet, 2024/225 - Cabinet Member</p>

	for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 	Cabinet, 2024/165 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future Household Waste Recycling Centre Contract Model Agree the approach to determining the future contract model. 	Cabinet, 2024/331 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Warm Homes Local Grant Item to note submission of Expression of Interest under Warm Homes Local Grant. Asking Cabinet to Delegate authority to review terms and agree grant should application be successful. 	Cabinet, 2024/329 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short Stay Hub Beds Procurement of new hospital bed-based step down model from April 2025. 	Cabinet, 2024/289 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A40: Eynsham Park and Ride to Wolvercote Scheme (HIF2) - Request to Delegate Authority to Negotiate and Sign a Deed of Variation with Homes England To agree the proposed changes (Deed of Variation) to the Homes England Grant Determination Agreement, and authorise the Director of Environment and Highways, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 officer, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy and Cabinet Member for Finance to finalise the terms of, and enter into, the amended Grant Determination Agreement. 	Cabinet, 2024/358 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Cabinet, 28 January 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget and Business Planning Report To propose the 2025/26 revenue budget, MTFP and capital programme for recommendation to Council in light of comments from the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and consultation feedback. 	Cabinet, 2024/220 - Cabinet Member for Finance
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Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 23 January 2025

<p>▪ Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) - New CCTV provision with ANPR cameras To approve installation of new enhanced CCTV system across all HWRC's. including new ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition)</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 2024/056 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations</p>
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 8 January 2025

<p>▪ Homes 2 Inspire - Contract Extension and Amendments Homes 2 Inspire have a Block Contract commissioned as a call off from the South Central Framework.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2024/341 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services</p>
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 21 January 2025

<p>▪ Formal Approval of Schools Funding Formula 2025/26 To seek approval for the funding formula for schools.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children,</p>
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<p>The Chair has agreed that this item will be exempt from Scrutiny call-in.</p>	<p>Education & Young People's Services, - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services</p>
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 23 January 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shenington with Alkerton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/178 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eye & Dunsden: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/188 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Burford - Proposed Coach Access Restrictions, Waiting Restrictions and New Pedestrian Crossings To seek approval for the introduction of access restrictions for coaches and parking at various locations, plus a new crossing in Burford. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/339 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Howard Street and Flower Lane, Oxford - Cycling Improvements Changes required in order to improve the visibility splay at the entrance to Flower Lane from Howard Street to prevent any conflict between all road users at this point. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/328 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Introduction of Permit Parking Bays - Corn Street/Church Green, Witney Introduction of permit parking bays. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/325 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shirburn - Proposed Traffic Calming Chicane and Extension of Existing 30mph Speed Limit To seek approval for the introduction of Traffic Calming and speed limit changes in Shirburn 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/273 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Western: B4493 Didcot Road - Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/195 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forest Hill, Shotover, Old Road: 20mph Speed Limit Extension Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/194 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Didcot: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/192 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed 20mph Speed Limit - Land East of Radley Rd, Kennington To seek approval for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit associate with a new residential estate 	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport</p>

	Management, 2024/338 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ B4031, Hempton - Proposed New Traffic Calming Features</p> <p>As part of DfT United States Visiting Forces road safety initiative - traffic calming is proposed on the B4031, Hempton. This is deemed necessary to reduce speeds and improve safety on a route commonly used by USVF drivers which is also a busy HGV route incorporating a pinch point within this section</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/345 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Thame Centre - Parking Review 2024</p> <p>To seek approval for the introduction of a number of new parking measures including residents parking and no waiting restrictions</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/344 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ CPZ Parking Permit Eligibility - Various Locations, Oxford (November 2024)</p> <p>To seek a decision on proposals to amend permit eligibility associated with planning conditions</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/355 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ South & Vale Districts, Various Locations - Proposed New and Deleted Disabled Persons Parking Places (November 2024)</p> <p>To seek approval for the introduction and amendments to, disabled parking places across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/349 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Didcot Central - Proposed Permit Parking Area</p> <p>To seek approval for the introduction of a permit parking area in the central area of Didcot</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/348 - Cabinet Member for Transport

	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower Wolvercote, Oxford - Proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) 2024/25 The County Council is planning to introduce a CPZ in Lower Wolvercote as part of wider strategy to manage on-street parking in the City, which aims to reduce traffic in Oxford. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/295 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bicester: 20 mph Speed Limit Proposals Part of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/013 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Challow: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/184 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 23 January 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure Delivery: Professional and Technical Services Framework To seek approval to enter into a professional and technical services framework and to delegate authority for the award of the professional and technical services framework to the Director of Environment and Highways. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2024/321 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 10 January 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marlborough School, Woodstock To seek approval to enter into contract with a main contractor 	Delegated Decisions by
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<p>for the construction of a new classroom block and associated internal alterations to enable the expansion of Marlborough School, Woodstock from 6FE to 7FE</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance, 2023/347 - Cabinet Member for Finance</p>
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 21 January 2025

<p>▪ Dimensions - Henley, Oxford, Wallingford, Didcot, Abingdon, Banbury lot 1, 2, 4 and 5 contract replacement 4 contracts to be merged into 2 contracts based on the needs of the people supported, and to be put out to tender on the Live Well Supported Services Framework</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2024/359 - 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 requested¹ 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: Community Wealth Building and Wider Social Value

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety

Date response requested:² 15 October 2024

Response to report:

The Community Wealth Building action plan for 2024/25 outlines a large range of actions which support progress across all five pillars of community wealth building. The pillars of community wealth building draw attention to the mechanisms of economic activity in a place (such as employment, procurement, asset management), and set out ways that these mechanisms can be used to redirect wealth back into local communities. Oxfordshire County Council's community wealth building approach recognises that the concept of generating 'social' value can apply across council activity, and that supporting local economic development also supports our place to be fairer, healthier and greener.

The review of the Community Asset Transfer policy(s) held by the council is one action in an extensive list of community wealth building actions. The purpose of this review is to improve the CAT process, clarifying roles and responsibilities and increasing

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

transparency. This will ultimately bring some benefit both to prospective community tenants and to the council officers who manage CATs.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
<p>That the Council works with the Local Government Association to open discussion with central government to clarify s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Council will approach the LGA and work with them to understand the latest research and best practice around Section 123.</p> <p>Since the Local Government Act was passed in 1972, government has developed a broader definition of the term 'value', such as that outlined in the Social Value Act 2012. This Act allows for the consideration of social value alongside monetary value when considering public procurement. However, there is currently no similar legislation with regards to land/asset disposals. The Council will therefore work with the LGA to understand how the implementation of Section 123 could develop in line with this broader definition of value.</p>
<p>That the Council consults on its draft update of the CAT policy with Locality Groups.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Officers will approach Locality Groups at the appropriate time to offer an opportunity for feedback.</p>