



## ***Notice of a Meeting***

### **Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 24 September 2025 at 10.00 am Room 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

**These proceedings are open to the public**

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).  
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

#### **Membership**

**Chair:** Councillor Liam Walker  
**Deputy Chair:** Councillor Bethia Thomas

**Councillors:** Thomas Ashby      Emily Kerr      Leigh Rawlins  
Chris Brant      Lesley McLean  
Laura Gordon      Susanna Pressel

**Date of Next Meeting:** 24 September 2025

#### **For more information about this Committee please contact:**

Committee Officer: *Scrutiny Team*  
Email: *Email: [scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

September 2025

## **What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**

Climate change, transport, highways, planning and place-based services. Including the delivery of regulatory services, fire and rescue, community safety and community services such as libraries. NB This Committee will act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee'.

## **How can I have my say?**

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working day before the date of the meeting.**

## **About the County Council**

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents.

These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

## **About Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

## **What does this Committee do?**

The Committee meets at least 4 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting**

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

# AGENDA

## 1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

## 2. **Declaration of Interests**

See guidance note on the back page.

## 3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 24)**

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2025 and to receive information arising from them.

## 4. **Petitions and Public Addresses**

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

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 09.00 three working days before the meeting, i.e., Friday, 19 September 2025.

Requests should be submitted to the Scrutiny Officer at [scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am on the day of the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

Where there are a number of requests from persons wishing to present similar views on the same issue, the Chair may require that the views be put by a single spokesperson. It is expected that only in exceptional circumstances will a person (or organisation) be allowed to address more than one meeting on a particular issue in any period of six months.

## 5. **Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker (Pages 25 - 36)**

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the progress of previous recommendations and actions arising from previous meetings, having raised any questions on the contents.

## 6. **Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations (Pages 37 - 48)**

Attached is the Cabinet response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on the Transport Working Group Report. The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the response.

## 7. **Committee Forward Work Plan (Pages 49 - 54)**

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** its work programme for forthcoming meetings, having heard any changes from previous iterations, and taking account of the Cabinet Forward Plan and of the Budget Management Monitoring Report.

The Cabinet Forward Plan can be found

here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=433&RP=115>

The most recent BMMR, submitted to Cabinet in March 2025, can be found here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=33404>

## **8. Verge and Vegetation Management (Pages 55 - 188)**

The Committee has requested an update on the implementation of the Verge and Vegetation Policy. It has invited Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, to present the report and has also invited Paul Fermer, Director of Environment, Highways & Transport, Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety, and Paul Wilson, Operational Manager (Operations) to attend and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## **9. Part Night Lighting Consultation (Pages 189 - 336)**

The Committee has requested an update on the consultation relating to Part Night Lighting. It has invited Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, to present the report and has also invited Paul Fermer, Director of Environment, Highways & Transport, and Caroline Coyne, Project Manager, to attend and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## **10. Future Bus Regulations Options (Pages 337 - 442)**

The Committee has requested a report on Future Bus Regulation Options ahead of its consideration by Cabinet.

It has invited Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, to present the report and has also invited Paul Fermer, Director of Environment, Highways & Transport, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping, and Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead – Bus Service Improvement, to attend and to answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## **11. City Centre Development Strategic Context (Pages 443 - 466)**

Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet member for Finance, Property, and Transformation, Lorna Baxter, Executive Director (Resources) and Section 151 Officer, and Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Transformation, have been invited to present a report on progress relating to the redevelopment and regeneration of Oxford city centre, arising from the City Centre Accommodation Strategy.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.



## **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.

## **PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Wednesday, 27 August 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.44 pm.

**Present:**

**Voting Members:**

Councillor Liam Walker - in the Chair  
Councillor Bethia Thomas (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Ron Batstone  
Councillor Will Boucher-Giles  
Councillor David Henwood  
Councillor Gavin McLauchlan  
Councillor Lesley McLean  
Councillor Susanna Pressel  
Councillor Leigh Rawlins

**Other Members in**

**Attendance:**

Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council  
Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place,  
Environment and Climate Action

**Officers:**

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive  
Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping  
Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead – Central (Infrastructure  
Delivery)  
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

*The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **33/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Ashby (substitute: Cllr Henwood), Cllr Gordon (substitute: Cllr Boucher-Giles), Cllr Kerr (substitute: Cllr McLauchlan), and Cllr Brant (substitute: Cllr Batstone).

### **34/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

### **35/25 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 25 June 2025, were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

## **36/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES**

(Agenda No. 4)

Cllr Brighthouse criticised the proposed temporary congestion charge as inequitable and inconsistent with Council policies.

Cllr Malik argued that the congestion charge and bus filter proposals conflicted with Council policy and would not help residents, especially those on Oxford Road

Richard Parnham argued bus speeds had not worsened since 2019 and criticised the lack of supporting data. Graham Jones questioned whether the scheme's inconvenience and harm to businesses were justified. Emily Scaysbrook highlighted business opposition, poor timing before Christmas, and issues with consultation. Nicholas Hardiman warned of increased traffic and pollution near schools, and negative effects on local shops. Peter West doubted the scheme's effectiveness. Philippa Jackson cited hospital staff shortages, road safety risks, and a contradiction with Vision Zero policy. Paul Major suggested the scheme was rushed for funding and would hurt retailers during the holiday season.

Danny Yee addressed the committee in support of the temporary congestion charge, suggesting that inaction on congestion would only worsen the congestion in and around Oxford.

*Those addresses which were provided in written form are appended to this minute.*

## **37/25 OXFORD TEMPORARY CONGESTION CHARGING POINTS**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Liz Leffman, was invited to present a report on the proposed Oxford temporary congestion charging points before it was submitted to Cabinet for determination. Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping, and Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead – Central (Infrastructure Delivery) also attended to answer the Committee's questions.

The Leader of the Council presented the Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge report, explaining that Botley Road closures had caused congestion and unreliable buses, which had led the City Council to request interim measures. She acknowledged a level of public opposition, emphasised the aim to support bus users, and noted exemptions would be included to reduce negative impacts.

The Committee raised a number of questions and concerns related to the proposed Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge Points, including the following:

- Whether the Council had plans to mitigate the impact of the congestion charge on SEND students, referencing report sections that stated pupils at certain schools would face longer journey times. The Programme Lead replied that SEND pupils attending affected schools would be able to apply for permits to pass through congestion charge points, and that the equalities impact assessment would be

kept under review, though this was challenged as not being a concrete mitigation. Follow-up questions raised concerns about children awaiting SEND assessment, asking how their needs would be addressed, and officers advised that they would discuss this with SEND colleagues but could not promise anything immediately.

- Whether the Council could work with councillors on school streets and drop-off points in the north of the county to help parents who drop off children before onward journeys. The Programme Lead confirmed they would be happy to collaborate and would connect the councillor with the relevant school travel planning staff. Further discussion covered the need to accelerate school traffic reduction schemes, including working with private schools on shuttle buses and encouraging more schools to adopt school streets, with officers stating that extra staff were being brought in to expedite these programmes and that engagement with schools was already underway.
- Concerns around the quality and frequency of bus services, particularly on Botley Road and in rural areas outside Oxford. It was noted that Botley Road bus services had declined in popularity and quality owing to the road closure, with fewer and smaller buses running, and that elderly residents were increasingly using the subsidised Botley Flyer instead of regular buses.

Officers responded that bus usage on Botley Road had dropped, but that subsidies had been provided to maintain services, and a recovery plan was in place to encourage people back onto buses once the road reopened. Regarding rural areas, officers stated that Oxfordshire had a relatively good rural bus network compared to other counties, but acknowledged gaps and the need for further improvement. They explained that, given most bus service start or end in Oxford, reducing congestion in Oxford would make rural bus routes more reliable and attractive, potentially leading to increased commercial viability and service expansion.

The Council had explored demand-responsive transport and shuttle buses in the past, but, owing to congestion, these had not been commercial. The congestion charge would support redeploying resources to improve connectivity and encourage behavioural change towards greater bus usage. Education about available services was highlighted as important for increasing uptake.

- Whether Park and Ride sites could accommodate increased demand, and the timeline for the opening of the new Eynsham Park and Ride. The Head of Place Shaping and the Programme Lead confirmed that current sites operated at about 60% capacity on average, with sufficient space to handle expected increases, and that the new Eynsham site would not open for another two years.

There was also discussion about whether the congestion charge income would be used to make parking or bus travel free at park and ride sites. Officers clarified that the proposal was to make the bus element free, not the parking, and that users would need to show a parking ticket to access free bus travel.

Some councillors and the Member of Parliament for Oxford East had raised concerns that Oxford residents, especially those in deprived areas, might end up

subsidising free travel for non-Oxford residents without seeing direct benefits themselves. Officers responded that the main benefit for city residents would be reduced congestion and pollution, and that discounted fares for deprived areas could be considered if funding allowed.

- Concerns as to whether the congestion charge and related measures would simply shift traffic from one area to another, raising concerns about increased localised traffic and the impact on the A34 ring road, which was already heavily congested. The Programme Lead acknowledged that modelling predicted some increases in traffic on the ring road and certain routes, but argued that overall benefits, such as improved bus reliability and reduced city centre congestion, would outweigh these disbenefits. The Programme Lead explained that junction improvements had been made on the ring road to help manage increased flows, and that air quality monitoring would continue to assess impacts.

National Highways had not objected but wanted further discussions if the scheme proceeded. Officers also noted that traffic redistribution was a forecast and actual behaviour would be monitored after implementation.

- Which hospital and school staff would be entitled to exemptions from the congestion charge, expressing concerns that the scheme could worsen staff shortages and make recruitment more difficult. The Programme Lead explained that community-based NHS staff, including carers who needed to travel between sites, would be exempt from the charge, allowing them to move more efficiently around the city. However, hospital staff who worked at a single site would not receive a full exemption but could use resident permits if eligible, and most hospital sites could be accessed without passing through a congestion charge point.

For school staff, officers stated that teachers and other staff would generally not be exempt, but the impact was expected to be minimal as most schools could be reached without crossing a charge point, and some staff could use alternative routes or public transport. Officers acknowledged the concerns but believed the overall impact of the proposal on travel to schools would be limited.

- Members had concerns about the predicted increase in collision rates on the ring road due to displaced traffic, and asked about plans for active travel, specifically whether cycle routes could be moved away from major road carriageways to improve safety. Officers responded that modelling showed a modest rise in collisions on the ring road, but that overall citywide collision rates would decrease, especially for vulnerable road users in the city centre.

They explained that, in accordance with local policy, the Council prioritised pedestrians, cyclists, and buses in its hierarchy of road users. Officers also described ongoing work to develop off-road and greenway cycle routes, particularly around Oxford, and referenced plans to reassign bus lanes on major roads to segregated cycleways once traffic levels were reduced. This was to improve safety and to encourage active travel.

- Alternatives to the congestion charge been considered, such as removing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) or introducing charges only during peak congestion times. Members also questioned what actions would be taken if bus speeds did not improve as expected, including whether further fines or increased charges would be introduced. Officers replied that removing LTNs was not recommended, as they did not improve bus journey times on all key routes and city wide, and that the congestion charge timings were designed to align with the forthcoming traffic filter scheme for consistency and to avoid confusion. They stated that, if bus speeds did not increase sufficiently, raising the congestion charge or introducing further fines would require a new round of consultation and Cabinet approval. This would make it very unlikely to happen within the temporary scheme's timeframe.
- How the Council would monitor the impact of the congestion charge, specifically regarding emissions, bus speeds, congestion levels, and the uptake of active travel or other travel alternatives. The Programme Lead, and the Chief Executive, answered that a comprehensive monitoring plan had been published, which would track air quality at multiple sites, bus journey times, traffic flows, and changes in travel behaviour and active travel. They stated that data would be made publicly available, ideally monthly or – even better – as close to real-time as possible, and that new systems were being trialled to better measure footfall and spending in the city.
- Whether the back-office computer system for the congestion charge would be reliable, expressing concerns that the existing parking permit system was inadequate and difficult for users. The Programme Lead responded that improvements were being made to the system, including resolving log-in issues, and they were confident it would be fit for purpose if the scheme was approved.

Councillors also asked how the congestion charge could be suspended in emergencies declared by the emergency services. The Programme Lead explained that, as with current practice, the police and network management team would coordinate to suspend the charge when necessary, and that communications and systems would be updated accordingly, although previous incidents had sometimes taken up to 48 hours to implement.

- The sources of the expected income from the congestion charge and the total amount anticipated. The Programme Lead answered that the gross income was projected to be around £5 million over ten months, with a net surplus of approximately £3.2 million after accounting for administration and enforcement costs. The income would come from both congestion charge payments and penalty charge notices issued to those who did not pay.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommendations under the following headings:

- That the Cabinet gives specific consideration to historic peak capacity levels data at the Park and Rides and whether there are any negative implications on plans to reduce car journeys within the city by increasing park and ride usage.

- That the Council publishes and updates its monitoring data online as closely to real-time as possible, and no less than once a month from the commencement of the congestion charge.
- That the Council provides congestion charge exemptions for those Oxfordshire parents with children referred for but awaiting EHCP assessments and/or results.
- That the Council commits to dedicating a proportionate percentage of income to supporting services in deprived and rural areas.
- That the Council invests in increased education around the flexibilities in the existing bus network.
- That the Cabinet does not extend the IT system used for parking permits to the resident pass system and finds a more user-friendly alternative instead.
- That the Council improves the time it takes to enable the police to suspend congestion charges in case of emergency.
- That the Council expedites the delivery of its 'smaller schemes' with additional resource, particularly those which relate to schools.

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following observation:

- That continuing to focus on developing greater choice of destinations and promoting the facilities of non-Oxford destinations is a positive for the City and the rest of the county.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following action items:

- The Leader of the Council would to share her reply to the Member of Parliament for Oxford East, which was done during the meeting via the Scrutiny Manager.

### **38/25 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER** (Agenda No. 6)

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker.

### **39/25 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN** (Agenda No. 7)

The Committee discussed the possibility of scheduling an October meeting, reviewed agendas for September (including verge and vegetation management, City Centre strategy and action plan, part-night lighting, and local government reorganisation) and November (section 106 dashboard, Fire and Rescue improvement plan, Oxfordshire rail strategy).

Members suggested future items on bus services and rural transport. The Committee had received letters from Sutton Courtenay and Appleford on Thames Parish Councils requesting that it scrutinised the Council's work on minerals and



waste planning. The Committee agreed that it would welcome a report on this in the future, recognising that – given the level of specialist knowledge needed – it would need to be carefully scoped so that the Committee could add value.

Monitoring the congestion charge scheme in 2026 was proposed and it was agreed that this should be placed on the work programme for April 2026.

Concerns were raised about a Cabinet response to the Transport Working Group's recommendations not yet having been received.

The Committee was keen for the work programme to remain flexible, with further suggestions invited by email.

#### **40/25 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee **NOTED** the Cabinet responses to the reports on the Rail Strategy and S106 Improvement Programme.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

This page is intentionally left blank

I assumed that the Ricardo Oxford Traffic Filter Interim Scheme report, was designed to support the Congestion Charge implementation to reduce congestion, pollution and increase bus speeds by 10%. I analysed both the traffic forecasts and pollution levels on an individual road basis and as a broad strategy, as preferred by Cllr Gant however I did note that the Council told Ricardo their preferred option before their report was undertaken, which I believe is both unethical and unprofessional by both parties.

My analysis considered the data outlined in the Ricardo report and compared it with the council’s own ‘OSM ‘Do Nothing / Do Something’ spreadsheets, (obtained by a Freedom of Information request); the City Council’s 2025 Oxford Air Quality Annual Status Report’, dated June 2025 and Google’s ‘Typical day’ maps for Oxford.

Pollution

My analysis concluded that the congestion charge proposal did **not** reduce the ‘broad’ pollution levels, in fact, the City Council Air Quality report provided **measured** air pollution data in comparison to Ricardo’s rather complex **calculations** to disprove the Ricardo report data. The City’s data indicated that the broad average for the roads listed by Ricardo with congestion charging was 19.2µg/m3 that is already below the Council’s target pollution target for 2025. Only 2 roads i.e. St Clements and the Eastern bypass are above the 30µg/m3; 92% of roads are below the 2025 target (30µg/m3) and 64% are already below the 2030 target of 20µg/m3. It should be noted that the City Council’s data related to 2024, that pollution has lessened since then with the increasing use of electric vehicles across the city and will continue to do over the future years.

Traffic

There are numerous questions regarding the traffic data used by Ricardo, many of which are listed below. Whilst Ricardo stated that they would not consider the changes in congestion speeds in their report for some unknown reason, I have demonstrated that total traffic volumes are reduced by 3%, while the traffic speeds remain virtually unchanged.

Analysis of the Google Typical day data shows that the maximum congestion is approximately 6 minutes but generally there is only a problem at morning and evening rush hours and during school’s term times.

Conclusions

My conclusions are that despite the errors outlined below, the Ricardo report does not support any of the council’s claims or objectives regarding pollution, congestion and bus speeds. My analysis has led me to the conclusion that the decision to proceed with congestion charging is a very rushed attempt by the council, using very flawed data, to avoid having to pay compensation to the bus companies and / or increase income to pay for further traffic proposals.

Below are some discrepancies in the Ricardo report:-

The Ricardo report commences with a series of assumptions made and the calculations undertaken, however examination of your OSM ‘Do Nothing/ Do Minimum spreadsheets show that Ricardo have simply copied the ‘Total Vehicle’ numbers from these two spreadsheets; the two spreadsheets do not have identical ‘vehicle type’ headers, yet the data has been used without reference or qualification. I show below an example taken from my analysis. I would be interested in an explanation for the 1,331% change in Car B2/C1 categories?

The data below is a summary of the approx 1,725 roads listed in the council's Traffic Data 2025 'Do Something' / 'Do Nothing' OSM spreadsheets																	
Do Something Titles	Car A	Car B1	Car B2	Car C	Car D1	Car D2	Car E	Taxis	LGV 1	LGV 2	LGV 3	HGV 1	HGV 2	HGV 3	Buses	Total Vehicles (including bus)	Congested speed (kph)
	Car B	Car C1	Car C2														
Do Nothing Totals	295,552	183,711	179,522	2,783,472	407,072	1,297,418	493,521	296,856	111,130	683,851	226,452	13,223	144,986	55,090	148,729	7,320,586	62,470
Do Something Totals	452,118	26,374	2,568,513	141,567	386,111	1,229,994	474,007	428,805	111,977	689,057	228,177	13,375	146,651	55,722	157,749	7,110,197	62,588
%age Differences	53%	-86%	1331%	-95%	-5%	-5%	-4%	44%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	-3%	0%

When you look out of your council office windows onto New Road, you will see lots of motorbikes, cars, vans, lorries and buses passing by in both directions. The Ricardo report lists 528 vehicles/day. However, when you check the Council’s AADT data for this road, this number is for buses only; the others were not counted.

Only 34 roads were selected to represent Oxford, yet key roads were missed or wrongly selected; There are no references to St Cross Road, one of the main traffic filter sites! There are neither buses or congestion on this road!

Several roads selected have the wrong data attached to them e.g. Ashurst Way is a side road on Rose Hill (1,256 V/D) whereas Rose Hill itself, a major road into / from Oxford carries 18,806 vehicles / day.

No mention is made of Horspath Driftway (The Slade) a major route in Headington and the major hospitals, although it carries 19,266 vehicles/day, nor the Cowley Road, that will be directly affected by the St Clements ANPR cameras.

No mention is made of how cars have been calculated to be personal, or business, care or blue badge exempt.

This page is intentionally left blank

Danny Yee

The officers' report provides responses to most of the attacks on this scheme. Some opponents have pivoted from lambasting the county for not acting fast enough to complaining about it acting too quickly. Others have suddenly started pretending that Oxford has no problem with congestion or air pollution or road danger. No one has proposed any coherent alternative.

The need for measures to address congestion and move Oxford towards lower traffic has been clear for decades: the ancestry of the current plan can be traced back to the city council's 1972 Balanced Transport Policy, but the core traffic filter scheme has been in planning since 2015 and public since the Connecting Oxford launch in 2019. This congestion charge is a weakened version of that scheme, a temporary measure while the Botley Rd remains closed.

There are other schemes that might achieve similar ends -- and there will never be any kind of consensus on the best option -- but what is being proposed has been carefully thought through and the evidence is that it will be a step in the right direction. It can also be modified to address problems that may arise -- as indeed it already has been, whether in matters as broad as hours of operation or as specific as the needs of ice hockey players.

I would like you to imagine the counterfactual to introducing this scheme. Imagine you were, instead, considering a scheme to remove city-wide bus prioritisation measures, a scheme which would cripple the bus system and also result in an additional two dozen people a year being injured badly enough to make it into the police injuries database. You would be pretty skeptical about that. And indeed, no one would seriously think about removing the High St bus gate now.

You will have looked carefully at this scheme. If you can think of anything that can still be improved at this stage, that will be useful. But the time has passed for procrastination.

This page is intentionally left blank

Other Congestion charges dissuade visitors from driving into another city. Residents in Summertown, Cutteslowe and Wolvercote particularly oppose this proposed congestion charge as it will tax them for driving in their own city for over 70% of the year.

The Marston Ferry Road checkpoint will make it harder for people in Summertown to travel to other areas of their city and, particularly, to attend hospital appointments. People going to hospital are often not capable of cycling, walking far or waiting at bus stops. The effect on teachers working at Cherwell School has been well documented in the press. Why should they, other teachers, and health workers at the hospitals, be taxed for driving to work when they can't afford to live within easy cycling distance.

For the Summertown shops there will be no direct limitation on visitors arriving down the Banbury Road and no projected increase in traffic on that road. The effects will be indirect – projected increases in ring road traffic between them and their Oxfordshire client base making it a less convenient area to visit.

Traffic is, though, predicted to increase substantially on the Woodstock Road to the detriment of residents living on the road and in the adjoining streets, with an average projected increase of 1,217 vehicles a day. This is over 444,000 vehicles a year. These vehicles will be driving past two primary school playgrounds right next to the road, both of which should be safeguarded from increased traffic-related NO<sub>2</sub> and PM2.5 pollution.

The Summertown shops are mainly a convenience shopping area, not a destination one. People call in to pick things up. Anything that makes it harder for them to do so will damage the viability of businesses in Summertown, which is considered one of the most successful district centres in the country. We should be proud of this, not threatening it.

\*The wider area of Summertown is, however, also a regional draw. The 2021 Neighbourhood Forum survey of car park users found that external visitors were travelling on average 17.3 miles on a weekday, and 24 miles on a Saturday; not distances that lend themselves to cycling and walking.

An additional challenge for Summertown businesses, will be the peak time restrictions on the Marston Ferry Road, which will hinder direct access from Headington, Northway and Marston. Summertown acts as an important local hub for Northway and Marston as they have few leisure, retail or hospitality facilities. Residents there may go instead to Headington, thereby adding to congestion and pollution on Headley Way and London Road, and the schools situated there.

\*None of the projections of traffic movements show any improvement in congestion in our area, quite the reverse, with massively increased congestion on the Woodstock Road. I ask you to advise against this proposal.

This page is intentionally left blank



## **Presentation to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2025 by Graham Jones on behalf of ROX-backing oxford business**

We recognise that members of this committee have a very important role in properly assessing the proposals for a temporary congestion charge within Oxford.

You must be able to ascertain whether the huge inconvenience to residents and businesses and the likely damage to the local economy are outweighed by the hoped-for benefits.

The main benefit being targeted by the congestion charge is to improve bus times by 10% and yet, some LTNs, forcing local traffic on to major bus routes and some new 20 MPH stretches, where bus drivers normally hoped to catch up on their schedules, have already set back this aim.

Instead of trying to right this, the congestion charge locations, not all of which are on prime bus routes, seem set to add to the problems rather than solve them.

That is unless one of the other stated objectives can be achieved, that of a reduction in traffic. The Council's own data suggests that a sizeable reduction of 15% to 20% is required but admits that some areas, including the ring road, are forecast to see increased traffic levels. Perhaps on bus routes not affected by the congestion charge points.

So, these charging points are not in logical locations but will, nevertheless, divide communities. Please look at a map?

The rules around permits and exemptions are very complex and restrictive, not appreciating that many people living in the county and beyond will have limited or no free access.

Has the Council seriously considered the challenges that will be faced by visitors and customers to retail outlets and hospitality businesses, as well as staff, to the city centre and suburban shopping areas?

In spite of the new Westgate, Oxford has seen a significant decline in its shopping offer with many different types of retailers disappearing altogether.

The County Council needs to look to see how it can help to reverse this rather than squeezing the lifeblood out of the city.

Cllr Gant has said on several occasions that alternatives have not been offered. This is not true and **ROX**, in its submission to the consultation, put forward six well considered ideas.

Why have these not been looked at in more detail by traffic planning officers while they had time with the postponement of the traffic filters?

We implore you as a scrutiny committee to stop the council from bringing in these measures. To do so and before Christmas will seriously knock the stuffing out of the Oxford business community.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Richard Parnham**  
**Presentation to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**27 August 2025 10.00 am**

Today I will focus on just one of the six key justifications for the congestion change: the suggestion that it will “make bus journeys faster and more reliable”.

In annex 9 of the document pack for this meeting, you are presented with information that shows that average bus speeds in Oxford were between 11- 11.6 mph in March – June 2025. Implicit in this is that bus times have got worse recently. Well, newsflash: they haven't. The council has data, which it didn't share with you, but I will, which indicates that bus speeds in 2019 at the same time of year were – between 11.2 – 11.4mph. This means average bus speeds within Oxford's ring road have barely change over six years, and that's despite the closure of Botley Road, the LTNs (which shredded services locally) and the new 20mph limits. So when the bus companies demand a 10% improvement in bus speeds, they are not asking the council to fix a problem that (overall) has got worse recently: instead, they were asking for lockdown-style levels of traffic, mainly for their commercial benefit. When they asked to make this 10% improvement a condition of their electric bus investment, Oxfordshire County Council should have told them to get stuffed, and invest in electric buses anyway.

So will the congestion change make a difference to bus speeds? Almost certainly not. According to data in the council's possession, there's no improvement in road speeds predicted, for example, on Abingdon Road (it may get fractionally worse), the road nearest to Botley Road. But nor are road speed improvements predicted for London Road, Iffley Road and Banbury Road, to name but a few major bus routes. The best outcome, but for only around its 500m length only (two locations are modelled), a 1-3kpm improvement on St Clement's, during peak hours only. That's deeply troubling benefit/harm ratio, on a city-wide, Oxford economy-wide basis.

And there's probably an apparent reason for this lack of road speed benefits: the congestion charge sites were never selected because they were congestion hotspots, or major bus routes: they were selected because they severe connections between neighbourhoods – a legacy of the original purpose of the “Connecting Oxford” scheme, on which the congestion charge scheme is largely derived. So now you have the farcical situation where two of the congestion charge sites carry no buses at all, while two more that do don't typically suffer from any congestion. Of the two congestion charge sites that a) are bus routes and b) can be congested, Hollow Way is predicted to get slightly slower if the congestion charge is brought in, both morning and interpeak. You heard that right: slower, not quicker. We've already discussed St Clement's.

City-wide, the big “unknown” is the impact on bus services caused by displacement. We've worked out that around 70% of buses go nowhere near a congestion charge filter, but may get caught up in displacement from it. That's certainly likely to occur on Marsh Lane, but will bus routes on Garsington Road get hit as a result of the modelled increase in traffic on that road? What about Cowley Road? What does the council know, but is not telling us?

And by that I mean: the council has data in its possession data which shows a clear absence of improvements in road speeds if the congestion charge is bought it, at numerous roads across the city. So why wasn't this finding published, leaving it up to us to do the maths independently? Was this discovery missed in the mad rush to get the proposal ready for publication – or did someone actively decide not to publish this finding? If someone made an

**Richard Parnham**  
**Presentation to Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**27 August 2025 10.00 am**

active choice not to publish this finding, I'd like to know who that was, and why. I want an explanation - and a name.

Good morning,

I would like to draw the committee's attention to the catastrophic impact that the Marston Ferry Road traffic filter will have. We could be looking at a mass exodus of teachers from local schools in this area as well as the city's hospital staff and to top it off possible deaths and injuries too.

The Chief Executive of the Cherwell, Swan and New Marston Primary schools has expressed grave concerns about the impact on staff recruitment. A survey from July 2024 states that 43% of staff at the Cherwell School will likely resign when traffic filters are introduced. How will these schools survive if almost half their staff leave?!

Marsh Lane during rush hour is a road used by many hospital staff and patients alike for access to the JR. Not only will displaced traffic avoiding the Marston Ferry Road filter increase congestion on this road but NHS Trusts say the Congestion Charge risks disrupting the city's hospitals, provoking an exodus of hospital staff who depend on their vehicles for their daily commute. The County Council say some staff will be exempt but not all hospital staff will be eligible. How will an already struggling NHS cope with even more staff shortages?!

And finally, there appears to be a major discrepancy between Oxfordshire County Council congestion plans and their Vision Zero initiative.

According to OCC: "Vision Zero starts with a simple premise, that no human being should be killed or seriously injured as the result of a road collision, whatever mode of transport they are using."

The Road Safety Audit Response Report on the Oxford Traffic Filters Project states that there is a risk of increased collisions throughout the scheme.

Measures to reduce this are mentioned, however, it also repeatedly states that the traffic filters trial will review, adapt, and evaluate during the lifespan of the trial period.

So, the public will now be subject to a trial that may put the lives and safety of people at risk, going against their very own mission of Vision Zero. According to their own reports there have been no reported injury collisions by the Swan School in the period 2019-2024. So why is the council introducing a traffic measure, right by a school which has the potential to increase injuries and possible death where so far there have been none at all!





This page is intentionally left blank



## **Scrutiny speech 270825 - Emily Scaysbrook**

Despite officers' wholly inadequate suggestion to make Park & Ride free for two months, let me be clear: the business community is still overwhelmingly opposed to this scheme - as indeed are the majority of consultation respondents, and more than thirteen thousand petition signatories to date. Officers cannot credibly claim that this proposal carries public support. To introduce this scheme immediately before Christmas is reckless. To suggest that free Park & Ride travel for just two months constitutes sufficient mitigation is insulting, simplistic, and does nothing to address the concerns the business community has raised. Officers should be ashamed of recommending it.

I urge this committee to scrutinise whether it is rational or reasonable to jeopardise the survival of small and local businesses at the very point in the year when survival or closure is decided. What traffic "emergency" exists now that is so pressing, so urgent, that even a short delay until after Christmas is unthinkable? And given that officers themselves have admitted the scheme will cause disruption for three to six months, on what basis is just two months of mitigation considered sufficient? More to the point: how can free Park & Ride travel be mitigation when so many people travel by car not because of cost, but because buses do not meet their needs - shift work, rural journeys, mobility issues, or carrying shopping and children. Free tickets do nothing to remove those barriers.

Please also scrutinise whether a six-week consultation held over the summer holidays, with analysis squeezed into just three weeks while key officers are on holiday, meets any credible democratic standard. Scrutinise why infrastructure is already being installed before councillors have even taken their formal decision. Does that inspire confidence in this council or in local democracy? Public faith in this authority is dwindling precisely because of behaviour like this - the clear impression that decisions are predetermined and voices are ignored. Please do not reinforce that belief by waving this scheme through.

And scrutinise, too, the honesty of what is before you. This scheme is called a "congestion charge" not because it accurately reflects its nature, but because officers admit that signage with that wording was most easily available. Is that acceptable?

This committee must subject this scheme to real scrutiny. The timing is indefensible. The process is flawed. The justifications do not withstand serious examination.

Thank you.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Recommendation Tracker Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, [richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

<b>KEY</b>	<b>Due to Cabinet</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Complete</b>
------------	-----------------------	--------------------	-----------------

### Recommendations:

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
23-Apr-25	Transport Working Group	1. That the Council should invest in resources to audit and map existing cycling and walking infrastructure to understand the current status, condition, and quality (including LTN 1/20 compliance) and identify gaps, including processes to crowdsource.	Paul Fermer; Robin Rogers; Hannah Battye	<b>Partially Accepted</b>  See agenda item 6
		2. That the Council should use open data tools to create publicly accessible, interactive maps that show the status of LCWIP delivery and future projects.		<b>Accepted</b>  See agenda item 6
		3. That the Council should ensure all relevant teams are trained in LTN 1/20 guidance, and that active travel is		<b>Accepted</b>  See agenda item 6

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	--------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
Page 26		integrated into their day-to-day responsibilities.		
		4. That the Council should develop a clear governance structure that outlines the roles and responsibilities of different teams in delivering the LCWIP.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		5. That the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to design and develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.		<b>Partially Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		6. That the Council should actively develop a strategic approach to funding that includes identifying potential sources of funding and engaging with external organisations to secure financial support, including a revised approach to active travel whereby strategic funding becomes business as usual.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		7. That the Council should adopt an agreed methodology to calculate how much is currently spent on active travel per person per year, in line with Department for Transport metrics.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		8. That the Council should match Scottish levels of funding for active travel, currently at £50 per resident per year.		<b>Rejected</b> See agenda item 6
		9. That the Council should create a prioritisation matrix to systematically		<b>Accepted</b>

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	--------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
Page 27		allocate funding to projects based on their impact and feasibility.		See agenda item 6
		10. That the Council should strengthen partnerships with local organisations, such as universities, colleges, and health institutions, to leverage their resources and support for active travel projects.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		11. That the Council should encourage these organisations to invest in specific projects by providing clear information on the benefits and costs, using the open data tools to support this.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		12. That the Council should develop a Coproduction Handbook to guide the involvement of local stakeholders and the public in the design and delivery of active travel projects.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		13. That the Council should use interactive online maps and other tools to keep the public informed about the progress of projects and to gather their input.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		14. That the Council should work transparently with local communities to complete the open data mapping and to adopt the Active Travel England Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement.		<b>Partially Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		15. That the Council should use the Futures Toolkit, adopting tools such as		<b>Accepted</b>

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	--------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
Page 28		strategic forecasting, backcasting, and forecasting, so as to become more comfortable with uncertainty in implementing its vision-led approach.		See agenda item 6
		16. That the Council should ensure, in its development and implementation of Movement and Place Strategies, that data is used as a key strategic tool with mode share targets being widely used.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		17. That the Council ensures vision-led planning is data-led with projects at all levels being assessed against modal share targets.		<b>Partially Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		18. That the Council should work to ensure that strategic funding for active travel is a priority for Enterprise Oxfordshire.		<b>Partially Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		19. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.		<b>Accepted</b> See agenda item 6
		20. That the Council should ensure further resource is provided to the active travel teams to enable it to participate in developer fora in order to engage developers at an early stage and to highlight the importance of mode share targets in their considerations.		<b>Partially Accepted</b> See agenda item 6

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	--------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
27-Aug-25 Page 29	Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge Points	1. That the Cabinet gives specific consideration to historic peak capacity levels data at the Park and Rides and whether there are any negative implications on plans to reduce car journeys within the city by increasing park and ride usage	Paul Fermer; Hannah Battye	Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		2. That the Council publishes and updates its monitoring data online as closely to real time as possible, and no less than once a month from the commencement of the congestion charge.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		3. That the Council provides congestion charge exemptions for those Oxfordshire parents with children referred for but awaiting EHCP assessments and/or results.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		4. That the Council commits to dedicating a proportionate percentage of income to supporting services in deprived and rural areas.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		5. That the Council invests in increased education around the flexibilities in the existing bus network.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		6. That the Council does not extend the IT system used for parking permits to the resident pass system and finds a more user-friendly alternative instead.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25
		7. That the Council improves the time it takes to enable the police to suspend		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	--------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		congestion charges in case of emergency.		
		8. That the Council expedites the delivery of its 'smaller schemes' with additional resource, particularly those which relate to schools.		Presented to Cabinet on 10-Sept-25



**Action Tracker**  
**Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, [richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

<b>KEY</b>	<b>Delayed</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Complete</b>
------------	----------------	--------------------	-----------------

Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead	Update/response
There are no outstanding action items				

## Recommendation Update Tracker Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, [richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

The recommendation update tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress accepted recommendations. The tracker is updated with recommendations accepted by Cabinet. Once a recommendation has been updated, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker. If the recommendation will be update in the form of a separate item, it will be shaded yellow.

**KEY**
**Update Pending**
**Update in Item**
**Updated**

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
19-Nov-24	Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan	1. That the Council should arrange for improved communications, particularly about reuse, at Household Waste and Recycling Centres and in publicity about the same.	Rachel Burns	Progress update to be provided
		2. That the Council should ensure that the outworking of the Circular Economy Strategy results in reduced costs and can demonstrate the scale of savings achieved.		Progress update to be provided
		3. That the Council should work to introduce cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities so that Oxfordshire residents can use Household Waste and Recycling Centres outside the county.		Progress update to be provided
		4. That the Council should make explicit its role in the Circular Economy Strategy as a lead partner and set out how it will build partnerships both within the county and across county borders.		Progress update to be provided

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
-----	----------------	----------------	---------

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
25-Feb-25  Page 33	Flood Event Response	1. That the Council should investigate how best to retrofit sustainable drainage systems, as well as other flood prevention measures, to Council maintained properties and streets.	Paul Fermer; Teresa Kirkham; Kerry Middleton	Progress update to be provided
		2. That the Council should improve communications to Members, raising awareness of the up-to-date Flood Toolkit generally as well as active flood measures in the event of emergencies.		Progress update to be provided
		3. That the Council should improve social media communication for residents during flooding and other emergencies.		Progress update to be provided
		4. That the Council should promote the benefits of creating of community emergency plans by parish councils and support the Resilience team to do that.		Progress update to be provided
		5. That the Council should commit to working closely with partners to ensure that s.19 reports are completed swiftly, and recommendations can be acted upon.		Progress update to be provided
		6. That the Council should investigate the role and responsibilities of OFWAT and the potential for invoking s.94 measures.		Progress update to be provided
25-Mar-25	City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall	1. That the Council should work to ensure that public access to New and Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.	Vic Kurzeja	Update in Agenda item 11
		2. That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.		Update in Agenda item 11
25-Mar-25	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	1. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with climate finance and natural capital work happening locally and nationally.	Chloe Edwards;	Progress update to be provided

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
-----	----------------	----------------	---------

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 34		2. That the Council should ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Government's five missions and their outputs.	Beccy Micklem	Progress update to be provided
		3. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on the nature costs of roads and rails.		Progress update to be provided
		4. That the Council should develop a delivery plan to ensure that teams within the County Council have integrated and adopted the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.		Progress update to be provided
		5. That the Council should make explicit in an annex to the documentation the implications of the strategy for district councils, town and parish councils, neighbourhood groups, and other key partners as well as the actions expected of them.		Progress update to be provided
		6. That the Council should strengthen the explanations within the strategy of the benefits to health and wellbeing of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.		Progress update to be provided
		7. That the Council should consider how best it can publicise positive elements of nature recovery that are already happening.		Progress update to be provided
		8. That the Council should ensure it sets an example maintaining its own land for nature recovery and biodiversity gain, as the Responsible Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.		Progress update to be provided
		9. That the Council should work with schools to support them to promote biodiversity and nature recovery in their grounds.		Progress update to be provided
		10. That the Council should investigate the costs of collecting and/or piling mown grass to enhance wildflower growth and other biodiversity benefits.		Progress update to be provided

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
-----	----------------	----------------	---------

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
		11. That the Council should explore the possibilities of supporting flood defences through biodiversity means, including swales, sustainable drainage systems, and rain gardens.		Progress update to be provided
17-Jun-25	Network Coordination of Road and Street Works and Lane Rental for Oxfordshire	That the Council should explore different models for compliance and enforcement with regard to highways works, including the use of technology and crowdsourcing to report issues.	Paul Farmer; Keith Stenning	Progress update to be provided
		That the Council should increase enforcement on 'street scars' and ensure proper reinstatement of road surfaces after works.		Progress update to be provided
Page 35  15-Jul-25	S.106 Improvement Programme	1. That the Council should include more detail of contractual agreements, including trigger points for funding release, within the s.106 dashboard.	Robin Rogers	Progress update to be provided
		2. That the Council should include information within the dashboard linking projects to LTCP targets, including modal share.		Progress update to be provided
		3. That the Council should prioritise dataset integration to enhance the dashboard's capabilities.		Progress update to be provided
		4. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient officer resource to be represented at developer fora.		Progress update to be provided
		5. That the Council should publish milestones and targets for its Key Performance Indicators related to the s.106 Improvement Project.		Progress update to be provided
		6. That the Council should continue to explore the benefits of Local Development Orders and whether they should be used more widely.		Progress update to be provided
		7. That the Council should celebrate the learning that has arisen from the s.106 Improvement Project and disseminate it across the organisation.		Progress update to be provided

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
-----	----------------	----------------	---------

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
15-Jul-25	Rail Strategy	1. That the Council should integrate the Futures-led Foresight approach into the Rail Strategy modelling, to ensure it aligns with the approach of the LTCP and to ensure and enable long-term strategic planning.	Paul Fermer; Bryan Evans; Pete Brunskill	Progress update to be provided
		2. That the Council should support private-public finance upskilling and apply lessons from the funding of the Elizabeth Line.		Progress update to be provided

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue:** **Transport Working Group (Report of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment, and Climate Action  
and Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **17 June 2025**

**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)
1. That the Council should invest in resources to audit and map existing cycling and walking infrastructure to understand the current status, condition,	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	The auditing of active travel <i>infrastructure</i> is a key step that is undertaken in the creation of every LCWIP, and auditing results can be found in each LCWIP report. Earlier LCWIPs may not have followed the same audit procedures as more recent

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>and quality (including LTN 1/20 compliance) and identify gaps, including processes to crowdsource.</p>		<p>LCWIPs and will be updated according to OCC's new standardised procedures as soon as is practicable and necessary to do so.</p> <p>As for auditing active travel infrastructure that does not fall within the boundaries of LCWIPs. There are ongoing projects to audit active travel infrastructure on routes identified in the Strategic Active Travel Network to identify the best routes between key trip generators county-wide.</p> <p>Regarding mapping active travel infrastructure, the LCWIP process also involves collecting crowdsourced data on problems with active travel infrastructure in each LCWIP town. This data is used to identify the final list of LCWIP improvements. The Active Travel Team has engaged in a project to map all these proposed LCWIP infrastructure improvements county-wide (See response to recommendation 2).</p> <p>The team has investigated the level of effort that would be required to complete a full map of crowdsourced infrastructure data for Oxfordshire, and the effort is high. Given OCC's ongoing efforts to audit and map LCWIP infrastructure improvements, the additional mapping will need to be phased so that OCC's resources will be best utilised on continuing to develop LCWIPs and identify improvements.</p>
<p>2. That the Council should use open data tools to create publicly accessible, interactive maps that show the status of LCWIP delivery and future projects.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED</p>	<p>The Active Travel Team initiated a project in early 2025 to map all LCWIP improvements county-wide. This mapping project is now underway, and the resulting map will pinpoint the locations and types of all proposed improvements and indicate the delivery status of each improvement. This map will be publicly available and contain interactive and open data features.</p>



## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		In parallel, the Active Travel Team is planning to redesign Oxfordshire County Council's active travel webpage to include a list of all proposed LCWIP improvements, along with live updates on their delivery status.
3. That the Council should ensure all relevant teams are trained in LTN 1/20 guidance, and that active travel is integrated into their day-to-day responsibilities.	ACCEPTED	<p>Action has already been taken concrete steps to train officers and embed LTN 1/20 guidance and active travel principles across its operations.</p> <p>Targeted "lunch and learn" sessions have been delivered across teams for training and awareness of LTN 1/20 standards and their implications. Managers have been briefed to reinforce these principles in team meetings, and key staff involved in scheme design are required to engage with training materials and attend relevant courses. The Active Travel Team is also exploring the option of inviting an officer from Active Travel England (ATE) to deliver internal training sessions.</p> <p>In parallel, work is underway to produce the OCC Street Design Code, a comprehensive document that consolidates all existing design guidance—including the Cycling Design Standards, Walking Design Standards, Kerbside Strategy, Bus Stop Design Guidance, and Street Design Guidance—into a single, LTN 1/20-compliant resource. This will ensure that all future design work automatically aligns with national standards and supports funding applications.</p> <p>Finally, the matrix working approach, which is currently being implemented, will ensure that active travel is embedded into the day-to-day responsibilities of relevant teams.</p>
4. That the Council should develop a clear governance structure that outlines the	ACCEPTED	The Active Travel Team recently launched the LCWIP Standardisation Project to address challenges and inconsistencies with the procedures involved in <i>developing</i>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>roles and responsibilities of different teams in delivering the LCWIP.</p>		<p>LCWIPs. This initiative involves creating a standard template OCC LCWIP along with procedural guidelines. Place planning teams are responsible for the development of LCWIPs, and the Active Travel Team is responsible for guidance and oversight. This work has been carried out in collaboration with Place-Shaping teams and the Active Travel Delivery Team.</p> <p>The LCWIP template and standardisation procedures have now been circulated internally, and place planning teams are in the process of integrating them into their operations.</p> <p>Regarding the <i>delivery</i> of LCWIPs, the standardisation process also introduced a countywide active travel improvements prioritisation procedure. This ensures all identified improvements are prioritised using a consistent framework and allows funding to be allocated to the highest priority improvement based on scoring.</p> <p>These steps lay a firm foundation for delivering LCWIP improvements in a strategic and well-balanced way. We will work on establishing a common process once an improvement has been selected for delivery. We acknowledge that a detailed governance structure regarding the delivery of LCWIPs could further improve the new systems and will incorporate the task of designing a new delivery governance structure into the LCWIP standardisation procedures.</p>
<p>5. That the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to design and develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACCEPTED</p>	<p>In house capacity and capability is preferable to outsourcing and there is a commitment to build this, however, a level external support will still be required both in relation to skill sets and certain activity within the design and delivery process, along with not over resourcing internally when work levels fluctuate.</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>6. That the Council should actively develop a strategic approach to funding that includes identifying potential sources of funding and engaging with external organisations to secure financial support, including a revised approach to active travel whereby strategic funding becomes business as usual.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED</p>	<p>As described in responses to recommendations 4 and 9, the Active Travel Team has recently implemented improved funding allocation procedures for prioritised LCWIP improvements county-wide. After improvements are prioritised around the end of this calendar year, these procedures will enable officers to efficiently allocate funding from existing stable streams including annual Council capital funding for active travel, ATE funding, DfT funding, Sustrans funding, and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding making strategic funding business as usual.</p> <p>The council is actively working to streamline the s106 funding process, with the aim to secure future developer contributions to help deliver identified LCWIP interventions.</p> <p>OCC officers actively engage with external funders to identify additional funding for projects where needed, and we will continue to do so for active travel projects. See responses to Recommendations a. and 10 for more details.</p>
<p>7. That the Council should adopt an agreed methodology to calculate how much is currently spent on active travel per person per year, in line with Department for Transport metrics.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED</p>	<p>It is currently difficult to calculate exactly how much is currently spent on active travel per person per year because there is no centralised record that consolidates all OCC active travel funding streams.</p> <p>In 2024, the Active Travel Team developed a centralised tracking system to consolidate funding streams from ATE and OCC capital funding.</p> <p>In parallel, OCC's Pipeline Programme Coordinator is leading the development of a broader platform to centralise all infrastructure schemes across the Council, regardless of delivery stage. This "Pre-Delivery Portal" (PDP) is designed to integrate data from multiple services—such as Education, Waste, and</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>Transport—and will eventually include active travel schemes funding.</p> <p>Officers will investigate the feasibility of producing this methodology and calculating this number with assistance from other OCC teams.</p>
8. That the Council should match Scottish levels of funding for active travel, currently at £50 per resident per year.	REJECTED	<p>The Office for National Statistics (mid-2023), the population of Oxfordshire is approximately 750,200 residents (2023) therefore this recommendation is saying that council should spend £37.5m a year on active travel.</p> <p>In fiscal year 2024/25 through S106, Active Travel Grant Funding, and maintenance funding The Council has spent £24.8m (that is two-thirds of £35.5m) on active travel. Further funding is needed to deliver the LCWIPs across the county. This is not just capital but revenue to develop the schemes.</p> <p>This level of funding allocated to active travel will be subject to the Council budget setting process and decisions and is not therefore something that can be committed to in isolation.</p>
9. That the Council should create a prioritisation matrix to systematically allocate funding to projects based on their impact and feasibility.	ACCEPTED	<p>As introduced in response to Recommendation 4 above, a key component of the LCWIP Standardisation Project has been the revision of how active travel schemes are selected and prioritised for funding.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Active Travel Infrastructure Delivery Team and Place-Shaping teams, the Active Travel Team has developed a robust Prioritisation procedure for prioritising LCWIP improvements, which is currently being applied to all existing Oxfordshire LCWIPs. The development of this matrix</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>kicked off in January 2025 and is currently in use for all active LCWIPs. LCWIPs that were developed before this procedure was implemented are being retroactively reviewed and prioritised.</p> <p>How prioritisation works: Place Planning Teams across the county apply a set of 14 prioritisation criteria developed by the Active Travel Team. These criteria are grouped into three categories, each assessing a different dimension of a scheme's value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness: evaluates the potential impact of a scheme on increasing walking, wheeling, and cycling uptake.</li> <li>• Policy Alignment: assesses how well the scheme supports OCC's strategic objectives and broader policy goals.</li> <li>• Deliverability: measures the practical feasibility of delivering the scheme, including cost, technical complexity, and readiness.</li> </ul> <p>Each criterion includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A data source (e.g., Propensity to Cycle Tool, SATN mapping, school access data)</li> <li>• A set of evaluators (e.g., thresholds or conditions)</li> <li>• A scoring scale (0, 1, or 2)</li> </ul> <p>Each scheme is scored across all criteria, and an average score is calculated. This score is then compared against other schemes countywide to establish a prioritised list.</p>
--	--	---

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>Funding Allocation</p> <p>When funding becomes available, schemes with the highest scores will be subject to scheme development, engagement, consultation, and council approval. This removes the need for ad hoc petitions and ensures that funding decisions reflect strategic priorities rather than reactive requests.</p> <p>Because the criteria include strategic indicators—such as SATN connectivity, LCWIP inclusion, and school access—the resulting prioritised list inherently reflects OCC’s active travel and wider place shaping strategic priorities.</p>
a. That the Council should strengthen partnerships with local organisations, such as universities, colleges, and health institutions, to leverage their resources and support for active travel projects.	ACCEPTED	<p>Council officers will continue to foster partnerships with local organisations and seek funding or match funding for specific projects as they arise. As active travel projects come forward for delivery through prioritised pipeline, project teams will engage with potentially interested parties to seek all potential funding sources.</p>
10. That the Council should encourage these organisations to invest in specific projects by providing clear information on the benefits and costs, using the open data tools to support this.	ACCEPTED	<p>Both our prioritised list of LCWIP schemes and the Pre Delivery Portal (PDP) support the opportunity to seek external investment and funding for Active Travel schemes.</p> <p>Both databases will give us the ability to store clear information for each scheme (for example the benefits and costs), so that officers are able to map the projects to the most appropriate funding opportunities.</p> <p>Where possible and relevant, officers will use this detail to seek external investment for projects.</p>
11. That the Council should develop a Co-production Handbook to guide the involvement of local stakeholders and	ACCEPTED	<p>The County Council already has a Co-Production Handbook developed by the Co-Production Team with a revised edition scheduled for publication in Autumn 2025.</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

the public in the design and delivery of active travel projects.		<p>Beyond the development of co-production guidance and applying its directives in the active travel area, the Active Travel Team, with input from the Co-Production Team has established the Active Travel Co-Production Group (ATCPG). This group brings together 16 representatives from Oxfordshire's leading active travel and disability stakeholder organisations, ensuring a broad and inclusive range of perspectives.</p> <p>The ATCPG serves two key bidirectional functions: assessment and assistance.</p> <p>The ATCPG meets quarterly and operates under a transparent governance framework chaired by the Active Travel Champion. ATCPG Members are encouraged to submit items for discussion via a structured form, which feeds into a Microsoft Lists platform to track progress and potential policy integration.</p> <p>The Active Travel Team is currently designing all policies in collaboration with stakeholders, in full application of the Council's commitment to policy co-production.</p>
12. That the Council should use interactive online maps and other tools to keep the public informed about the progress of projects and to gather their input.	ACCEPTED	See response to recommendations 1 and 2 for details about ongoing efforts to map LCWIP projects for public view. Officers are also currently investigating the level of effort required to create a public map of ongoing schemes outside of LCWIP schemes. OCC will continue to engage in robust public engagement procedures and coproduction to gather public feedback during scheme development and while developing policy and plans.
13. That the Council should work transparently with local communities to complete the open data mapping and to adopt the Active Travel England	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	Regarding open data mapping, as per our response to recommendation two, it is currently not feasible to engage in the open data mapping project at this time.

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement.		Regarding adopting Active Travel England's Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement, the Council is aware of this guidance and broadly in line with our current approach. The Council is due to refresh its Consultation, Engagement and Co-production Strategy this fiscal year and will specifically review this guidance as part of this strategy refresh.
14. That the Council should use the Futures Toolkit, adopting tools such as strategic forecasting, back casting, and forecasting, so as to become more comfortable with uncertainty in implementing its vision-led approach.	ACCEPTED	"Implementing 'Decide & Provide': Requirements for Transport Assessments" is adopted by the county council. Consideration of how a 'vision-led approach' might be applied to plan making is being explored and will take into account national guidance on this once published.
15. That the Council should ensure, in its development and implementation of Movement and Place Strategies, that data is used as a key strategic tool with mode share targets being widely used.	ACCEPTED	This is being progressed. The content, approach, style, and engagement approach, along with the programme, was agreed at Informal cabinet in July. The Science Vale and Bicester Plans are two plans officers are due to consult on this in November.
16. That the Council ensures vision-led planning is data-led with projects at all levels being assessed against modal share targets.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	Consideration of how a vision-led approach might be applied to plan making is being explored and will take into account national guidance on this once published. We will be developing an Integrated Transport vision for the county and are exploring how transport monitoring and evaluation can be improved and be better managed.
17. That the Council should work to ensure that strategic funding for active travel is a priority for Enterprise Oxfordshire.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	Enterprise Oxfordshire is currently preparing its business plan for 2026/27. Active travel will be considered as part of that process, alongside the forthcoming review of economic development priorities and functions being led by the county council's Head of Future Economy



## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

18. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.	ACCEPTED	OxIS is currently under development. The LTCP Annual Monitoring Report updates on LTCP headline targets and KPIs.
19. That the Council should ensure further resource is provided to the active travel teams to enable it to participate in developer fora in order to engage developers at an early stage and to highlight the importance of mode share targets in their considerations.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	The Transport Development Management teams already engage with developers seeking active travel measures as part of the preapplication service we offer, or by the LPAs service. For larger strategic sites OCC may enter in PPA agreements with the LPAs and developers (for all local authority service requirements). All sites are required to accord with local and national policies for any planning proposal. But officers must be mindful of a site's location, what is physically achievable and meets the 3 CIL tests for S106 obligations. We of course cannot guarantee all developer will approach us.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Work Programme Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, [richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Lead presenters
<b>24 September 2025</b>				
<b>Future Bus Regulation Options</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network	To note the findings of the Future Bus Regulation Options Report and consider officer recommendations before they are submitted to Cabinet for determination.	Overview and scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Katharine Bloomfield
<b>Verge and Vegetation Management</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To consider the Council's approach and compliance with its new policy.	Overview and scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Sean Rooney; Paul Wilson
<b>City Centre Strategy and Action Plan</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To scrutinise the Council's proposed strategy and action plan which will focus on key areas of redevelopment and	Overview and scrutiny	Lorna Baxter; Vic Kurzeja



		regeneration where the Council has influence.		
<b>Part Night Lighting Consultation</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To consider the results of the Council's consultation before they are referred to Cabinet for determination.	Overview and scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Caroline Coyne
<b>Local Government Reorganisation</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential; play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	To scrutinise the Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation	Overview and scrutiny	Martin Reeves, Lorna Baxter, Helen Mitchell
<b>12 November 2025</b>				
<b>Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Improvement</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	To receive the Chief Fire Officer's report on progress on fire improvement work, in the light of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and	Overview and scrutiny	Rob McDougall



		Fire and Rescue Services report.		
<b>s.106 Improvement Project and Infrastructure Funding Statement</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To review the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2024/25 and to receive an update on phase 3 of the s.106 Improvement Project	Overview and scrutiny	Robin Rogers; Paul Fermer
<b>Oxfordshire Rail Strategy</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To consider the draft Strategy after the public consultation period and before it is submitted to Cabinet for determination.	Overview and Scrutiny	Robin Rogers, Pete Brunskill, Bryan Evans
<b>LTCP Monitoring Report and Movement &amp; Place Strategy</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network	To consider the Local Transport Connectivity Plan monitoring report before it is reported to Cabinet in December and the Movement and Place Strategy before it is submitted to Cabinet in January.	Overview and Scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Ashley Hayden
<b>Local Government Reorganisation</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; create opportunities for children and	To scrutinise the Council's business case for Local Government Reorganisation ahead of its approval by Cabinet.	Overview and Scrutiny	Martin Reeves, Lorna Baxter, Helen Mitchell

	young people to reach their full potential; play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.			
<b>4 February 2026</b>				
<b>Road Safety</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	<i>Scope to be confirmed</i>	Overview and Scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services
<b>Mobility Hubs</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	<i>Scope to be confirmed</i>	Overview and Scrutiny	Paul Fermer
<b>tbc</b>				
<b>22 April 2026</b>				
<b>Congestion Charge scheme monitoring report</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve	To receive a report monitoring the impact of the temporary congestion charge scheme.	Overview and Scrutiny	Paul Fermer, Hannah Battye, Aron Wisdom

	and improve access to nature and green spaces			
<b>Minerals and Waste Planning</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	<i>Scope to be confirmed</i>	Overview and Scrutiny	Robin Rogers, Jason Sherwood
<b>Bus Services and Rural Transport</b>	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; support careers and the social care system; invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	To consider the sufficiency, adequacy, and attractiveness of rural public transport and what might be done to improve it.	Overview and Scrutiny	Paul Ferner, Robin Rogers

Sub-groups/Working Groups				
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members
<b>Working Group</b>	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for			



	environmental, economic and social benefit			
--	---	--	--	--



## **Divisions Affected – ALL**

### **PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**– 24 September 2025**

#### **Verge and Vegetation Management**

#### **Report by the Director of Environment and Highways**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**

Review the information from the officers' report and use as a basis for further discussion within the Scrutiny session planned for 24 September 2025.

### **Executive Summary**

2. The purpose of this report is to outline how verges and vegetation are managed across the county, considering the maintenance and management of both highway verges and other roadside vegetation. The report will consider the council's commitments to biodiversity and the enhanced management of selected Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNRs) in line with the council's priorities, including access to green spaces and prioritising the health and well being of residents.

### **Background**

3. The council's highway verge asset consists of approximately 4.8 million square metres of Urban Grass and approximately 3.25 million linear metres across the highway network. This falls into several categories,
- (a) That is managed by OCC
  - (b) That managed by District, Town and Parish Councils under agency agreement
  - (c) That which is designate Roadside Verge Nature Reserve (currently numbering 52 equating to 192000m<sup>2</sup>) and
  - (d) That under local community management

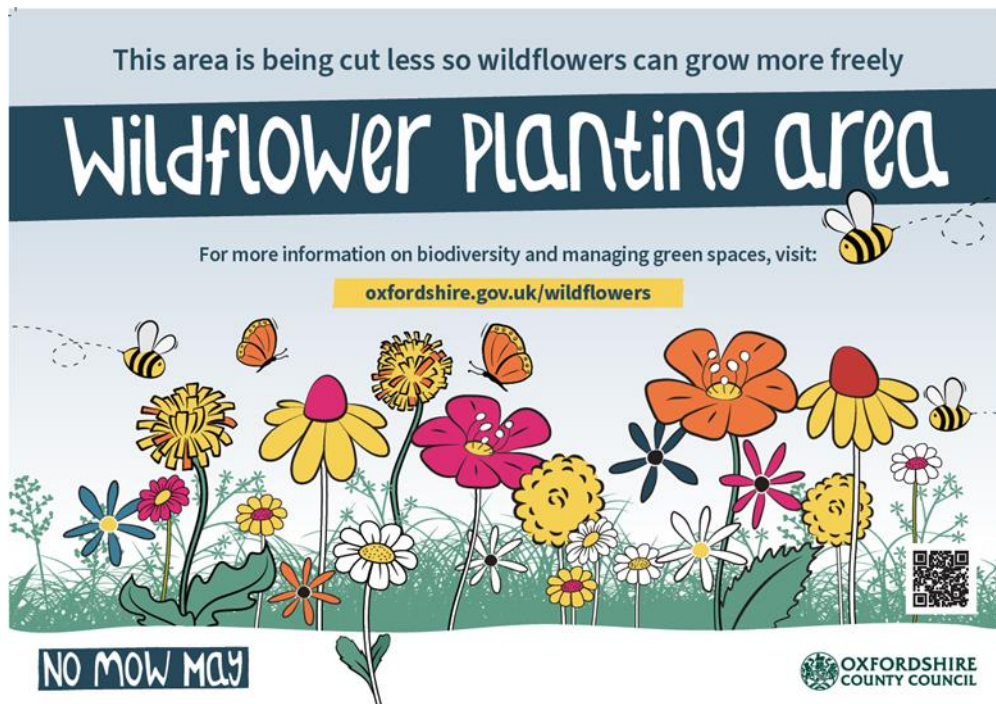
To expand on point b above, currently there are one hundred and thirty-seven S101 agency agreements in place under which the District, Town and Parish Council have devolved responsibility for cutting the highway verges, this equates to approximately 1.4 million sq m of urban highway verge.

## Current Maintenance Strategy for Highway Verges

4. In February 2023, Oxfordshire County Council updated its highway verge and vegetation maintenance plan. It now includes improved references to managing roadside nature reserves and support for areas of biodiversity maintained by local communities.
5. Management of roadside verges prioritises the promotion of biodiversity where possible, and uses guidance from Plantlife ( [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk) ) and Oxford University ( <https://www.biodiversity.ox.ac.uk/project/hero/> ) to ensure best practice is followed.
6. All roadside verges in both rural and urban areas are managed on a cyclical basis, this means in practice:
  - One cut per year on visibility splays – adopted grass verges at locations where roads connect – dependant on growth. It should be noted that the level of growth and the commencement of the annual growing season may be earlier than in previous years which means that some of the cutting timings may need to be adjusted on an annual basis. It may also be necessary for safety reasons to undertake a second cut depending on growth.
  - One cut per year, utilising a 1-metre-wide strip to the rear of the footway/cycleway/shared use facility and a full width cut between the footway/cycleway/shared use facility and the carriageway. In addition, this year funding has been increased to include further cuts to ensure the promoted routes are accessible. (This tends to be required mainly on the cycleway/footway network).
  - One cut per year for fully adopted highway urban verge areas
  - One cut per year, utilising a 1-metre-wide swathe cut along the roadside edge in rural verge areas
  - One cut per year on roads with a speed limit of 50mph or more (including all dual carriageways). Minimum standard is a 1-metre swathe cut.
  - One cut per year, at the end of the growing season or such time to maintain their habitat value, on Road Verge Nature Reserves – there has been an increase the number of RVNRs that are receiving a formal maintenance regime, i.e. ‘Cut and Collect’ or ‘Cut and Pile’ with a commitment to increase this number each year, (it should be noted that this approach cannot be taken for the whole of the network due to the cost and resource required to undertake this activity at a network level).
  - Full width cutbacks on a cyclical basis of half of the adopted verges in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) every year at the end of the growing season.

- Wildlife refuges 1-metre wide at the rear of verges 3 metres or more, to be cleared in rotation every five years.

7. In addition to the maintenance and management of highway verges by the council, there has been also further interest from some Town and Parish Councils and Parish Community groups in respect of the management of areas of highway verge to promote areas of wildflower planting. With this in mind we are working with our colleagues in the Landscape and Nature Recovery (biodiversity) team to deal with the requests as they are submitted. Currently there are 15 such locations across the county, these are all identified using the following signage.



8. Although the council tries to adhere to the 'No Mow May' guidance, dependant of growth rate the maintenance cutting schedule will generally commence with the junctions and visibility splays during May on the grounds of road safety. Early June will be the first cut of the more frequently used cycleways. Then over the summer months the main single cuts of the urban grass not under Agency agreement will be programmed. Cuts to the RVNRS will be undertaken at the appropriate time as outline in the RVNR report.
9. Currently there are 52 RVNRs countywide with the majority being cut as referred to in paragraph 6, however, there are currently 6 sites of the 52 that are under a positive management regime, 3 of these being managed as 'cut and collect' and 3 being managed as 'cut and pile'. It is intended that a further 6 be treated in a similar manner for 2025/26, however this will add further budgetary pressures to the verge management budget, (in addition to this there are 4 which are privately maintained by community groups)
10. The 6 sites currently under positive management are

Cut and Collect  
A4074 Ipsden,  
Lewknor Hill Road  
A420 Cumnor

Cut and Pile  
Ascott Under Wychwood – Coldwell Bridge  
Burford – Whitehill Farm  
Aston Rowant – A40/B4009 Junction

## **Roadside Vegetation**

11. Trees and hedges are important parts of our rural landscape. They are also vital habitats for wildlife, provide valuable windbreaks in open countryside, and, in the case of ditches, help prevent flooding.
12. As a rule, trees, hedges (including trees growing in the hedgerow), are owned by the adjoining (riparian) landowner. They are seldom the County Council's responsibility.
13. Trees growing in the highway verge that don't represent or have been the actual boundary to private land, as well as undergrowth on the verge, are under the council's management and care.
14. We do not automatically clear undergrowth on verges, except where public highway use is affected. Undergrowth provides cover for wildlife and offers a varied and natural landscape.
15. The council does have a responsibility to ensure that the use of the public highway by all users is not compromised, and this can include by vegetation overgrowth. Where it is confirmed that the offending vegetation is the responsibility of the council, arrangements will be put in place to have the vegetation to be cut back.
16. Where the vegetation is privately owned, the council needs to follow the guidance taken from S154 of Highways Act 1980 which relates to obstructions on the highway. This process gives notice to the adjacent landowner of the concern and a request that work is undertaken to rectify the situation within a certain timescale. Two follow up notifications, if necessary, can be given if no action has taken place. The council then has a legitimacy to undertake the work utilising its own contractors.
17. Trimming hedges during the bird nesting season should be avoided unless hedges prevent passage or affect the safety of highway users, including cyclists and pedestrians. The most active period of bird nesting season is from 1 March to 31 July but can extend from February to August, so it is important to check

that there are no active nests before trimming. Birds and their nests are protected by law. More information on this can be obtained from Natural England

- [The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(2006\) \(The NERC Act\)](#) Strengthened by [The Environment Act 2021](#) places a duty on all public authorities to consider biodiversity in their work. Requires government departments to have regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to produce a list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England and to take or promote steps to further their conservation. The following legislation has also been considered in the development of the policy; The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
  - (The Habitat Regulations), Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Hedgerow Regulations 1997
  - [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) provides protection for sites of at least national importance and varying levels of protection for species in need of conservation action, or other protection, in the UK. Protection may include prohibition of some or all killing, injuring, disturbing, taking, sale/barter or possession of species and protection of breeding and sheltering places.
18. With the above in mind the council has placed more emphasis on habitats and compliance with the various legislation particularly when working in or around water and have had good engagement between highways staff and ecologists. Further protocols and procedure references along with relevant training are currently being produced to assist with this.
19. From April 2023 through to March 2025 the council undertook work to enhance the usability of the more popular cycleway and footway networks, these works have included siding out – (a process to recover the full available width of the surface) and cutting back of the vertical vegetation to assist with the issue of overgrowth. This was funded from the Transport @Infrastructure (New Investments Reserve) 2023/24 - £1.0m and 2024/25 - £0.5 m respectively. This funding was not funded beyond these periods.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

20. For further details readers of this report should refer to the refer to the [Verge and Vegetation Management Policy](#) attached to this report (Annex1) and to the [RVNR report](#) (Annex 2)

## **Financial Implications**

21. Budgets are managed from those which have been identified and agreed through the annual budget setting process.
22. The cost of maintenance is dependant upon the annual variances in weather, as with wet and warm weather there is a greater need to cut back additional locations due to maintaining safety and accessibility to the networks
23. Verge and vegetation management is funded from the Highway Operations revenue budget. The available budget for 2025/26 is £1.062m, this includes for verge cutting, Payments for Agency agreements and general vegetation management.

Filipp Skiffins , Assistant Finance Business Partner  
[filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Legal Implications**

24. Verge and vegetation maintenance is undertaken in compliance with the council's duty to maintain the highway set out in section 41 of the Highways Act 1980
25. There is no change to the policy and as this paper is brought to Scrutiny for awareness, and there are no new proposals other than those that were dealt with in the 2023 policy update.

Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law (Environmental)  
[jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Legal)

## **Staff Implications**

26. This work has been managed within existing staffing resources from both the Highway Operations Team and the wider Countryside and Waste Team.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

27. The content of this report is not considered to discriminate or disadvantage any individuals or groups within the community.

## **Sustainability Implications**

28. The methods of verge and vegetation maintenance have a positive impact on biodiversity and climate action. This is achieved as the verge and vegetation management regime helps promote improved habitats for wildlife, supporting many species of wildlife and species of plant life.

Paul Fermer  
Director of Environment and Highways

Annex: [Verge and Vegetation Policy 2023](#)  
[Roadside Verge Nature Reserve Report](#)

Contact Officer: Paul Wilson – Operations Manager – Highway Operations

September 2025

This page is intentionally left blank



## Highway Verge and Vegetation Management policy

1. Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of grass verges alongside the carriageway network throughout Oxfordshire excluding motorways and trunk roads.
2. This policy encompasses Oxfordshire County Council's corporate vision, objectives and embraces the nine priority themes of the Council. The policy is also informed by the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan, the Energy Strategy, and the Carbon Management Plan. The priority themes include
  - i. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
  - ii. Improve access to nature and green spaces
3. This document relates to Oxfordshire County Council's Policy of verge and vegetation management only.

**Policy: RVP1**

The Council will conserve and enhance the natural environment.

**Policy: RVP2**

The Council will maintain footways and cycleways free and clear from intrusive vegetation. Where resources are limited, priority will be given to those areas.

**Policy: RVP3**

The Council will undertake verge management on all roadside verges in both rural and urban areas on a cyclical basis in line with our statutory requirements

**Policy: RVP4**

The Council will maintain visibility at junctions and other high-risk areas, (excluding visibility splays at entrances to residential or commercial premises) and ensure cycle and footpaths are effectively managed.

*(Visibility splays are areas of adopted grass verges at locations where roads connect)*

**Policy: RVP5**

Where cutting activities are considered appropriate, liaison with other organisations (such as District Councils) will be undertaken to ensure a co-ordinated approach in maintenance activities (such as litter picking).

**Policy: RVP6**

Where vegetation from adjoining land/properties encroaches and significantly hinders safe passage of highway network users, enforcement notices to remove and make safe will be issued to the riparian owner. Where they do not undertake action within the given timeframe, works will be carried out under instruction of council officers and costs recovered through legal process.

**Policy: RVP7**

Management of roadside verges (including those areas the county council has identified as Roadside Verge Nature Reserves) will prioritise the promotion of biodiversity where possible with reference to existing management specifications and to publications from Plantlife ( [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk) ) and Oxford University Biodiversity leaflet (<https://www.biodiversity.ox.ac.uk/project/hero/>) as best practice guidelines, taking into account resources and location.

**Policy: RVP8**

The Council will manage grass verges within of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to further the aims of the AONB management plans.

**Policy: RVP9**

The Council will target additional resources where available to those areas which will have the best biodiversity outcomes, including identifying and managing new RVNRs

**Policy: RVP10**

The Council will support communities and initiatives to manage verges for biodiversity wherever feasible and subject to agreement with OCC, including ensuring the right species are in the right locations

### **Service Aims:**

1. Ensure cost-effective maintenance of new verges to maximise biodiversity impact, is affordable and budgeted for future years
2. To undertake a nature led and risk-based approach to verge maintenance with the following minimum levels of service
  - 1 cut per year on visibility splays dependant on growth
  - 1 cut per year for fully adopted highway urban verge areas
  - 1 cut per year, utilising a 1m wide swathe cut along the roadside edge in rural verge areas
  - 1 cut per year, utilising a 1m wide strip to the rear of the footway /cycleway/shared use facility and a full width cut between the footway/cycleway/shared use facility and the carriageway
  - 1 cut per year on roads with a speed limit of 50mph or more (including all dual carriageways). Minimum standard is a 1m swathe cut.
  - 1 cut per year, at the end of the growing season or such time to maintain their habitat value, on Road Verge Nature Reserves
  - Full width cut-backs on a cyclical basis of ½ of the adopted verges in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty every year at the end of the growing season.
  - Wildlife refuges 1m wide at the rear of verges 3m or more, to be cleared in rotation every 5 years.
3. Full width cut-backs on a cyclical basis of ¼ of the adopted verges outside of AONB every year
4. Where District, Town and Parish Councils wish to cut their highway grass, cutting regimes should seek to enhance biodiversity
5. Over time build up a digital map and database of our biodiversity assets relating to verges and vegetation.

### **Reference & Supporting Documents**

- Grass and Cutting procedure
- Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement (emerging)
- Tree Policy
- Highways Safety Inspection Policy
- Highways Asset Management Plan
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 9)
- CROW Act 2000
- Plantlife documentation (Managing\_grassland\_road\_verges\_Singles.pdf (www.plantlife.org.uk)
- Plantlife : Road Verges: last refuge for some of our rarest wild plants
- Plantlife : Good Verge Guide: your go-to guide for transforming local verges into wildlife havens  
[https://roadverges.plantlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Managing-grassland-road-verges\\_2020.pdf](https://roadverges.plantlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Managing-grassland-road-verges_2020.pdf)
- AONB Management Plans
- Environment Act 2021
- Nature recovery strategy
- SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) Strategy / policy
- General biodiversity –
- Climate and Nature Strategy
- Design guide
- Urban meadow and verge guidelines
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study and District Landscape Character Assessment

This page is intentionally left blank

# Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire

## Survey Report and Management Requirements



October 2024

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>V.1 Prepared by</b>	Sue Lawley	Ecologist Planner	2016
<b>V.2 Prepared by</b>	Louise Fox	Ecologist Planner	06/2020
<b>V.3 Prepared by</b>	Jack Wheeler	Biodiversity Officer	06/2023
<b>V.4 Prepared by</b>	Jack Wheeler	Senior Biodiversity Officer	10/2024
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Rebecca Micklem	Team Leader Landscape and Nature Recovery	10/2024

## Contents

Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire .....	4
What are Road Verge Nature Reserves? .....	1
Why do they matter?.....	1
Background to Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire.....	2
Map of OCC's RVNRs.....	3
Designation of OCC's RVNRs.....	4
RVNR Management.....	6
Core Verge Management Summary (as of June 2023) .....	7
Verge 1: Heythrop (1) .....	14
Verge 2: Rangers Lawn.....	17
Verge 3: Shipton-under-Wychwood .....	19
Verge 4: Whitehall .....	21
Verge 5: Signet .....	23
Verge 6: Worsham .....	25
Verge 7: Ashford Mill Farm .....	27
Verge 8: Freeland.....	29
Verge 9: Dry Sandford.....	31
Verge 10: Tubney.....	33
Verge 11: Pusey.....	35
Verge 12: Hatford .....	37
Verge 13: Taynton Down .....	39
Verge 14: Spelsbury 1 .....	41
Verge 15: Spelsbury 2 .....	43
Verge 16: Shillingford.....	45
Verge 17: Stratford Lane.....	47
Verge 18: Burford.....	49
Verge 19: Hailey .....	51
Verge 20: Middleton Stoney 1 .....	53
Verge 21: Heythrop 2.....	56
Verge 22: Ipsden .....	58
Verge 23: Ashford Mill .....	60
Verge 24: Watlington .....	62
Verge 25: Middleton Stoney 2 .....	64

Verge 26: Dry Lane, Crawley .....	66
Verge 27: Leaffield Lane, Crawley .....	68
Verge 28: Ridings Lane, Crawley .....	70
Verge 29: Britwell Hill .....	72
Verge 30: Cowleaze Wood .....	74
Verge 31: Aston Rowant .....	76
Verge 32: Ipsden Heath .....	78
Verge 33: Hinksey Hill .....	80
Verge 34: Fullbrook (1) .....	82
Verge 35: Fullbrook (2) .....	84
Verge 36: Caps Lane, Cholsey .....	86
Verge 37: Tittenford Bridge .....	88
Verge 38: Bridewell.....	90
Verge 39: A44, Bladon.....	92
Verge 40: Cumnor.....	94
Verge 41: Linch Hill .....	96
Verge 42: Peartree.....	98
Verge 43: A4260 Thrupp .....	100
Verge 44: Straight Mile .....	102
Verge 45: Adjacent Black Ley .....	104
Verge 46: Upper Campsfield Road .....	106
Verge 47: Rockley Copse.....	108
Verge 48: Stonesfield .....	110
Verge 49: A40 Sandhills .....	112
Verge 50: Marcham Interchange.....	114
Verge 51: Milton Hill .....	116
Verge 52: Lewknor .....	118



## What are Road Verge Nature Reserves?

Road Verge Nature Reserves (RVNRs) are verges rich in biodiversity, including a number of scarce and threatened plants and habitats. RVNRs provide connectivity between wildlife areas, helping maintain and restore a green network through which wildlife can move and survive. Green verges provide a vital link between otherwise inhospitable landscapes, providing benefits for wildlife and people.

There are currently 52 designated RVNRs in Oxfordshire, holding populations of locally or nationally rare plant species, such as Autumn Crocus and Meadow Clary. The verges are protecting valuable remnants of chalk and limestone grassland in the Cotswolds and Chilterns National Landscapes.

## Why do they matter?

Road verges can be rich in biodiversity and have many benefits for people and wildlife. Verges can be very attractive and show OCC's commitment to caring for the local environments of our residents and our responsibilities for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

RVNRs are part of Oxfordshire County Councils legal commitment to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states: *'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'*. This duty has been strengthened through the Environment Act 2021.

RVNRs are often given a high value by local communities, with residents wanting to volunteer to carry out ecological monitoring and some management activities. There has been increased national interest in the value of wildflowers for pollinators and road verges as refuges for rare plant species. For example, the charity Plantlife is running a national Road Verge Campaign.

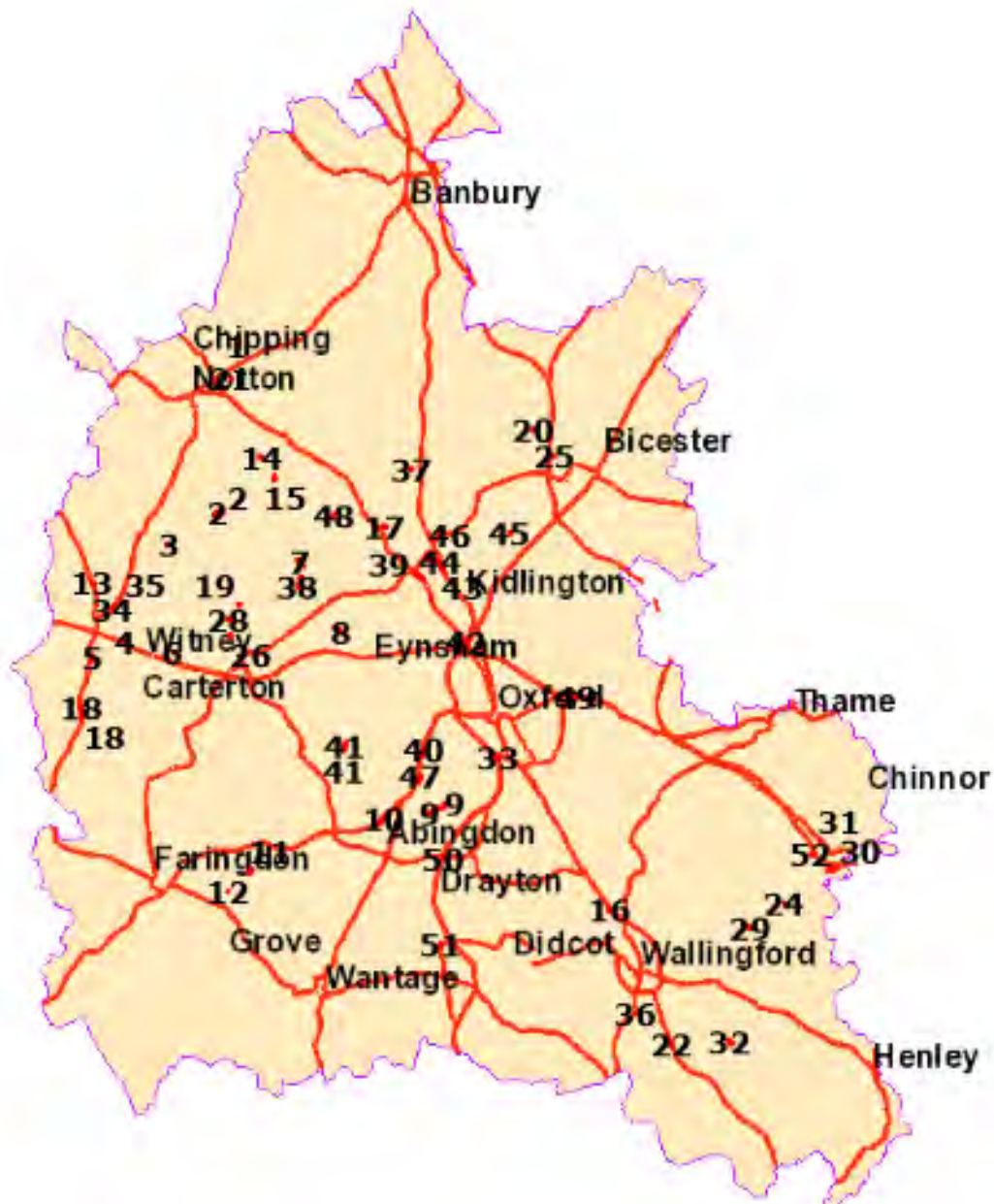
## Background to Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire

In acknowledgement of the importance of roadside verges for wildlife, Oxfordshire RVNRs were set up in 1991 following a survey of 55 verges to identify those of particular botanical interest. 24 verges were initially identified, and a report published in a manual which gave brief details of verges and management required.

Subsequently other verges have been added and information has been received from local naturalists about potential further sites. Please see a map overleaf of the current RVNRs.



## Map of OCC's RVNRs



© Crown copyright 2024 OS AC0000851087. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

There are currently 52 RVNRs located across the county. West Oxfordshire has the highest number of RVNRs with 26 present – South Oxfordshire has nine, Vale of White Horse has eight, Cherwell has eight and Oxford City has one. There are several different general grassland types that are present on the verges:

- Limestone grassland – the most abundant and located primarily in West Oxfordshire, these comprise of limestone flora including yellow rattle, cowslip, early purple orchid, salad burnet, agrimony, autumn crocus, milkwort, bee orchid, pyramidal orchid, rock rose, clustered bellflower, green hellebore, hairy rockcress
- Acid grassland – located in Vale of White Horse, these comprise of sandland flora such as common storksbill, purple toadflax, musk mallow, viper's bugloss, haresfoot clover, blue fleabane, sheep sorrel
- Neutral grassland - located predominantly in South Oxfordshire, this verge comprises of dry grassland flora such as clary
- Chalk grassland – located predominantly in South Oxfordshire, these comprise of chalk flora such as field scabious, bee orchid, greater knapweed, marjoram, dark mullein

## Designation of OCC's RVNRs

RVNRs are designated following an ecological survey and consideration of other factors, such as road safety. A RVNR should meet one or more of the following selection criteria:

- Supports a species which is classified as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, near threatened or Nationally scarce in the National or County Red Data Book or very rare, rare, very scarce or scarce (as defined by Day 2001).
- It supports a good example of a plant community that represents a habitat characteristic of Oxfordshire or is a Habitat of Principal Importance (listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006)
- It supports any animal species protected under legislation or supports a rare animal species or rich community of animals in the context of the county's fauna.

In 2016 it was decided that the available information on RVNRs should be updated. Verges were surveyed between 2016 and 2019. The surveys were undertaken by the County Ecology Officers. The results of the most recent surveys are listed in the detailed verge information section below.

After designation RVNRs were marked by posts with 'NR' inscribed at the top, indicating their Nature Reserve status. In 2022 marker posts were installed at RVNRs 1-32, with marker posts to be installed at RVNRs 33-52 following their designation in 2024 following a review of survey data. All marker posts are due to be updated in 2024 with the sign illustrated below.



Each verge has its own specific proposed management regime developed to benefit the special wildlife of that verge. Due to logistical and financial limitations a total of 10 RVNRs are currently under full active management with the remaining to verges to be added incrementally.

Verges are monitored regularly through a survey visit every 5 years to ensure that their wildlife value is being maintained or enhanced and to inform the proposed management plan as necessary. The option to remove designation is reserved for sites that no longer meet the designation criteria after 10 years of active management.

New RVNRs can be proposed at any time by visiting [Taking action for the environment | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/taking-action-for-the-environment) and completing the online form. Each proposal will be assessed against the designation criteria and assigned appropriate site-specific management as practical and required. Details including a map of the proposed area and photos should be provided where possible.

## RVNR Management

RVNRs in Oxfordshire are predominantly managed by the Highways and Transport Team, with ecological support provided by the Biodiversity Team. RVNR 14 is managed by Oxfordshire County Council's countryside access team. The Crawley Conservation Group provides support in managing the three RVNRs present within their village. RVNR 49 is managed by the Sandhills Naturehood community group.

The majority of RVNRs should be managed by a single annual cut at the end of the summer / early autumn, so that the flowers have had chance to seed. This also provides benefits for invertebrates, such as bees and butterflies, with the longer grass and flowers providing breeding habitat and a food resource.

Ideally, the cuttings are to be removed from the site to maintain the low-nutrient levels of the soil. In some cases, it may be necessary to take a second cut in late winter to break down surface vegetation. Where possible, an uncut area may be left to provide over-wintering habitat for invertebrates.

Certain verges have differing individual management prescriptions to encourage the growth of particular flora that are present. Any encroaching woody vegetation should be well cut back, so the grassland habitat is not choked and shaded. The marker posts should be kept in place and replaced where necessary.

## Core Verge Management Summary (as of October 2024)

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
1	Heythrop 1	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in late Spring. Do not cut between August and October. Second cut and collect/pile in November. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in July to confirm presence of Autumn Crocus
2	Rangers Lawn	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
3	Shipton-under-Wychwood	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
4	Whitehall	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
5	Signet	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Set blades high where anthills are present. Restoration by scrub removal. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of broomrape
6	Worsham	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile. Scrub control required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
7	Ashford Mill Farm	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Removal of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
8	Freeland	WODC	Cut and collect/pile twice per year in late Spring and Autumn. Control Bracken. Replacement of marker posts. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and bracken control	Survey between June and July



Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
9	Dry Sandford	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
10	Tubney	VoWH	Verge requires extensive restoration by removal of topsoil to allow re-establishment from seed-bank. Installation of marker posts.	Pending removal of topsoil	Survey between June and July
11	Pusey	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Restoration may required to improve species diversity. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in July to confirm presence of Creeping Bellflower
12	Hatford	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Removal of scrub species. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Wild Clary
13	Taynton Down	WODC	Cut and collect/pile whole width of verge annually in October. Scrub control in quarry area. Scrub clearance around northern post. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Purple Milk Vetch
14	Spelsbury	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
15	Spelsbury II	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September and remedial cutting in Spring may be required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
16	Shillingford	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September, including southern verge. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary



Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
17	Stratford Lane	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Some scrub control required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in July to confirm presence of Wild Liquorice and Sainfoin
18	Burford	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September of whole width. Scrub control required and management of the former carriageway. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
19	Hailey	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending verge restoration	Survey between June and July
20	Middleton Stoney	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September/October. Some scrub control and restoration works to see if Meadow Clary re-establishes. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings, scrub removal and restoration	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
21	Heythrop 2	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub control, particularly on former carriageway. Possible remedial work to encourage clary. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
22	Ipsden	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub control to remove Bramble. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July. Survey verge on eastern aspect of road
23	Ashford Mill	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
24	Watlington	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September/October. Scrub control. Blades set high to protect anthills. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
25	Middleton Stoney II	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub removal. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in May for woodland species close to hedgerow. Further survey required in July to confirm presence of Blue Fleabane and Ploughman's Spikenard
26	Dry Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Consider deepening channel to re-direct road run-off. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
27	Leaffield Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
28	Ridings Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
29	Britwell Hill	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of Dogwood. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
30	Cowleaze Wood	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Ploughman's Spikenard

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
31	Aston Rowant	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July. Survey verges adjacent to motorway bridge
32	Ipsden Heath	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Restoration by scrub/tree control and removal of arisings. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Violet Helleborine
33	Hinksey Hill	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
34	Fullbrook 1	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
35	Fullbrook 2	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
36	Caps Lane, Cholsey	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in July
37	Tittenford Bridge	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
38	Bridewell	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of broomrape

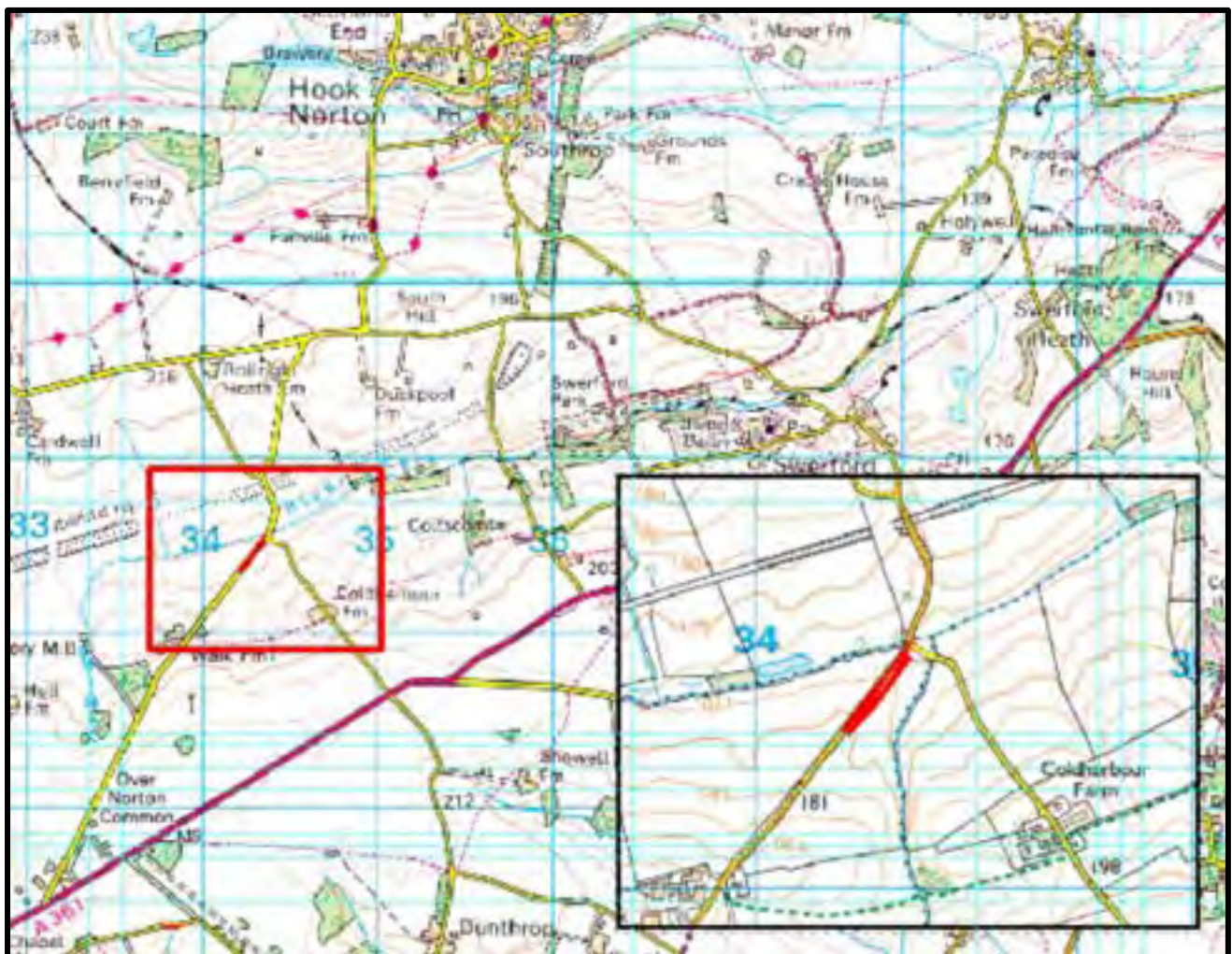
Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
39	A44, Bladon	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
40	Cumnor	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
41	Linch Hill	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in May to confirm presence of Cotswold penny-cress. Further survey required in July to confirm presence of Blue Fleabane and Dwarf Thistle
42	Peartree	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment on northern section of verge. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
43	A4260 Thrupp	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
44	Straight Mile	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
45	Adjacent Black Ley	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in June
46	Upper Campsfield Road	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
47	Rocksley Copse	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
48	Stonesfield	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
49	A40 Sandhills	OC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
50	Marcham Interchange	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
51	Milton Hill	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
52	Lewknor	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July

The maps used for the section below containing details of the current RVNRs are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution of civil proceedings. Oxfordshire County Council Licence No 100023343 2018

## Verge 1: Heythrop (1)

<b>Verge Name</b>	Heythrop 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 343 304
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Swerford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	300m (on each side)
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry Ditch



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide and flat verge on both sides of a minor road, with tall, mature and species-diverse hedgerows. A range of species have been identified within the verge, including yellow rattle, cowslip, early purple orchid, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, salad burnet, field scabious and agrimony.

A colony of autumn crocus was present, however this species has not been recorded since 2020.



The verge is generally in moderate condition, with the southern section less consistent terms of quality compared to the northern section. Which is the opposite of the assessment undertaken in 2017. Part of the southern section had been recently mown which may be reducing the condition of this section over time.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Swere Valley and Upper Stour Conservation Target Area

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late Spring.

Do not cut between July and October due to presence of Autumn Crocus. Second cut and collect/pile later cut in November.

Installation of marker posts.



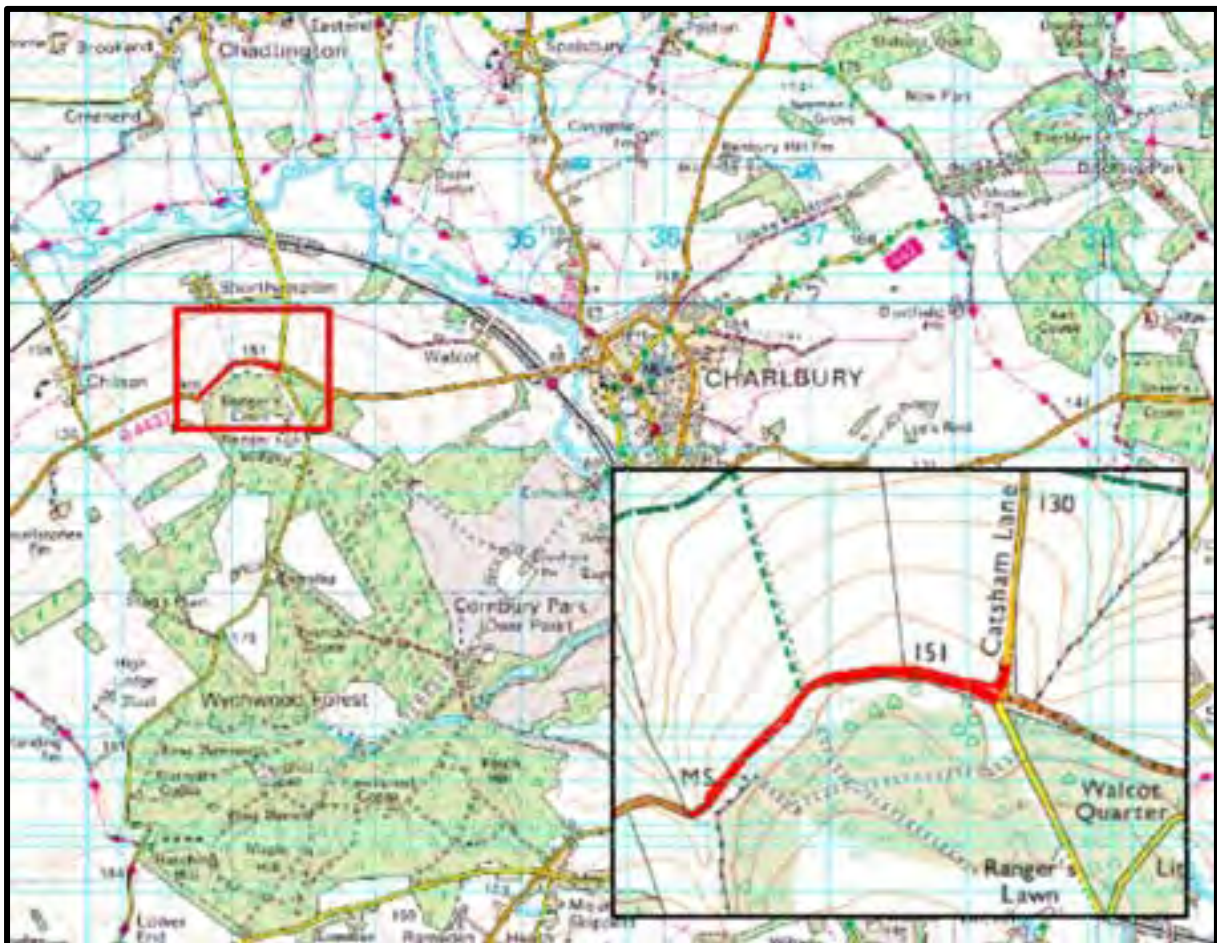
**Northern verge (2024) left and southern verge (2024) right**



**North-western verge in flower (23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020)**

## Verge 2: Rangers Lawn

<b>Verge Name</b>	Rangers Lawn
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 327 194 – SP 333 196
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Chilson / Short Hampton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	600m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wall and hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

The verge is along a curved section of the B4437 to the east of Chilson, with open countryside to the north and an enclosed park to the south. Verges are present on both sides of the road, with species-rich grassland on the southern side, extending to the north of the road junction.

Overall the verge is in moderate condition and becomes more rank towards the west and is most diverse at the east. The northern verge is more rank in character, with lower species



diversity and overall reduced condition with the exception of the eastern end which is high in species diversity.

Species present include frequent burnet saxifrage, salad burnet, rock rose, sainfoin, yellow rattle, woolly thistle, agrimony, restharrow, cowslip, primrose and pyramidal orchid. Areas of poorer quality include nettles and Traveller's Joy. A number of common lizards were also observed during the 2024 survey visit.

A large section of verge had been recently mown in June 2024 on both the northern and southern sides, reducing the ecological condition.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area and 600m from Wychwood SSSI.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

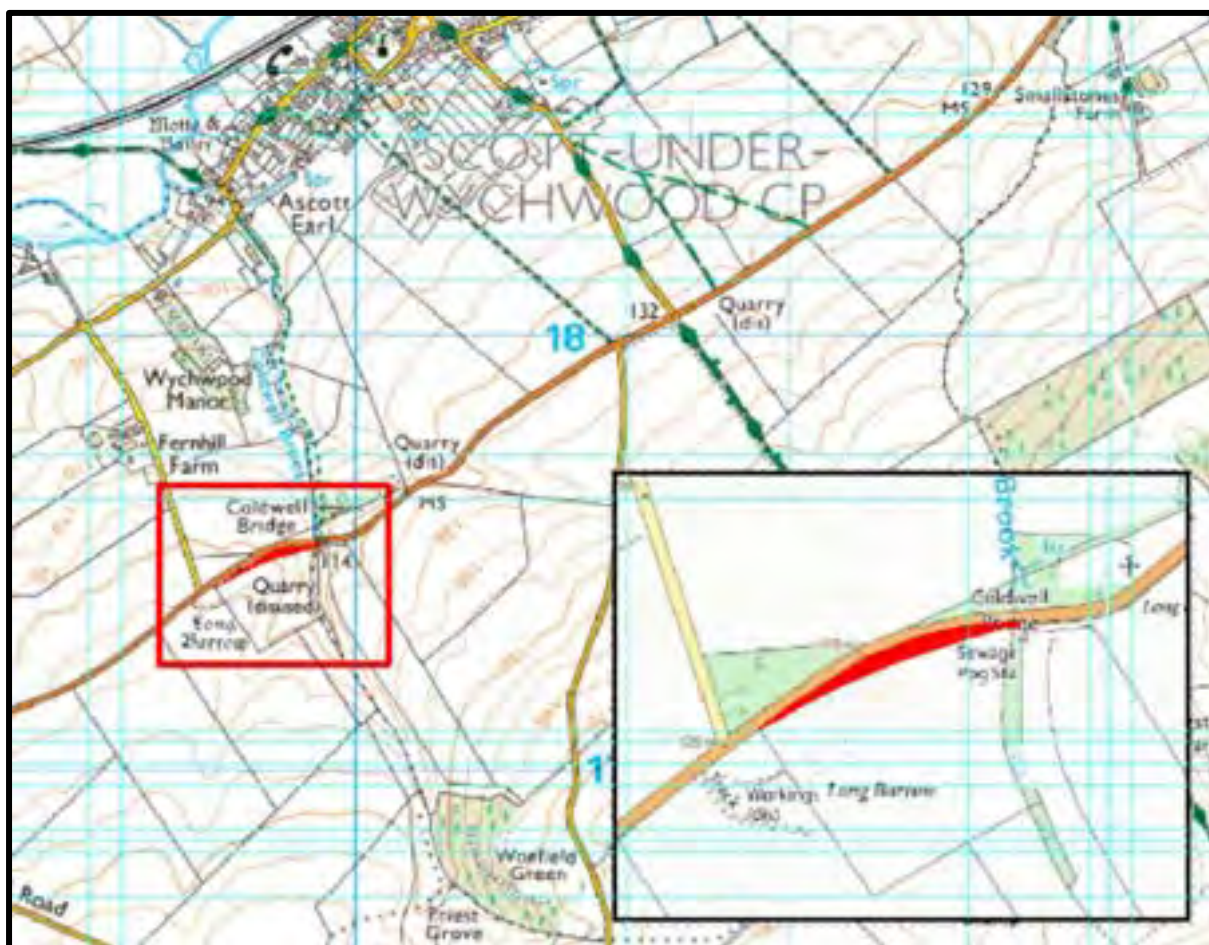
Installation of marker posts.



**Northern verge (2024) right and southern verge (2024) left**

## Verge 3: Shipton-under-Wychwood

<b>Verge Name</b>	Shipton-under-Wychwood
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 297 174
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shipton-under-Wychwood
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wall and trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide and short section of grassy verge with a good species diversity, which slopes down from a wall at the top. Most notable is the presence of clustered bellflower within the central section (although this species was not recorded in 2024), along with other limestone indicator species such as wild basil, restharrow, salad burnet, fairy flax and pyramidal orchid.

Overall the verge is in poor condition, with limestone grassland largely confined to the central section of the verge, with more neutral species such as false oat-grass to either side.

The areas under the trees and at the edges of the verge are more rank in nature, with reducing diversity towards the west. Regular mowing in the eastern end, fertiliser drift at the western end and resultant nitrification may be a reason for reduced diversity.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge adjoins the boundary of the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area (CTA).

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Addition of marker posts.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

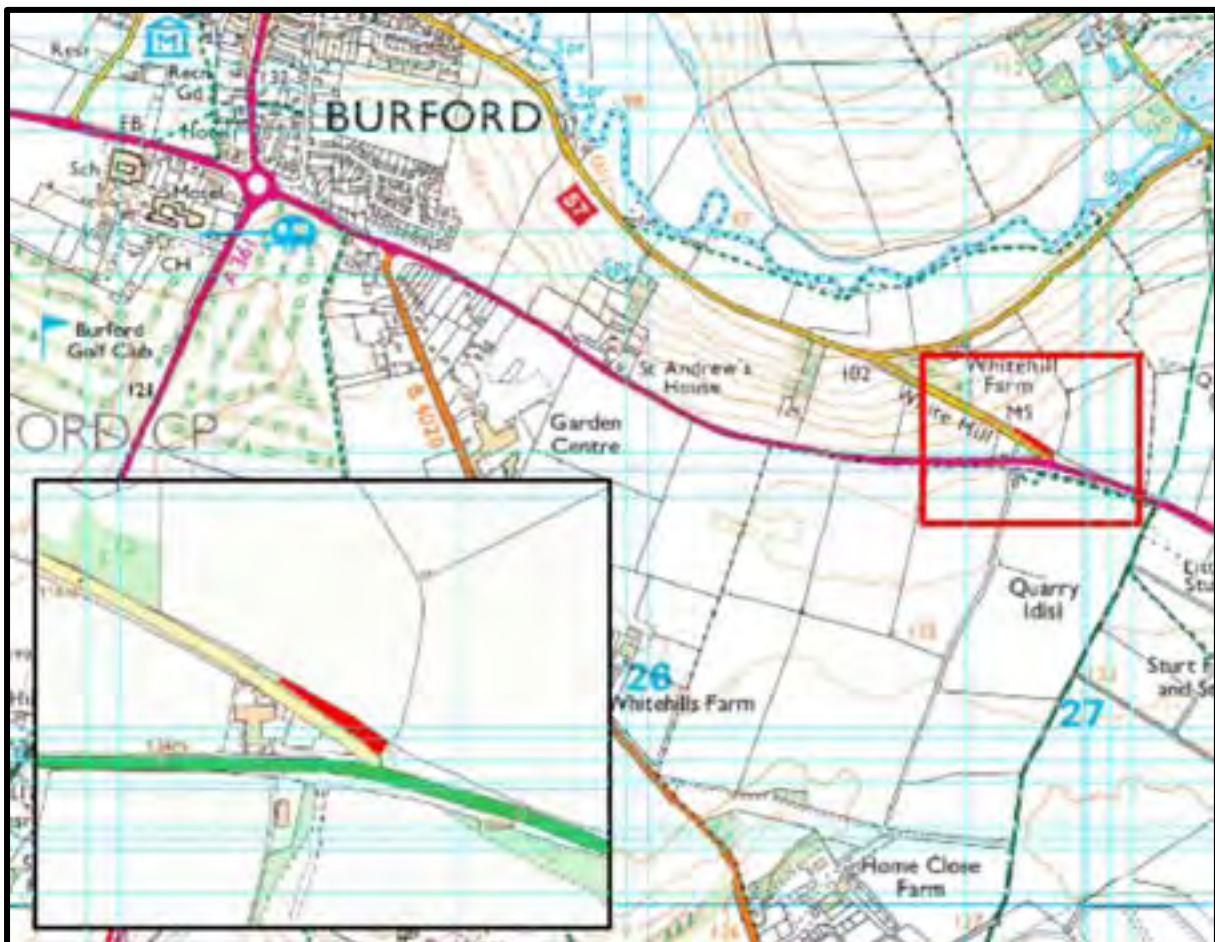


**Clustered Bellflower in 2016**



## Verge 4: Whitehall

<b>Verge Name</b>	Whitehall
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 269 111
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Widford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A banked verge on a minor road (White Hill), which has become shaded and nutrient enriched.

Previous surveys have recorded meadow crane's-bill, field scabious, restharrow, hedge bedstraw, salad burnet, greater knapweed and lady's bedstraw. Common lizard and common blood-vein moth have also been recorded. However, in 2024 few key indicator species remain present and the verge is in poor condition.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 280m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September for both northern and southern verges.

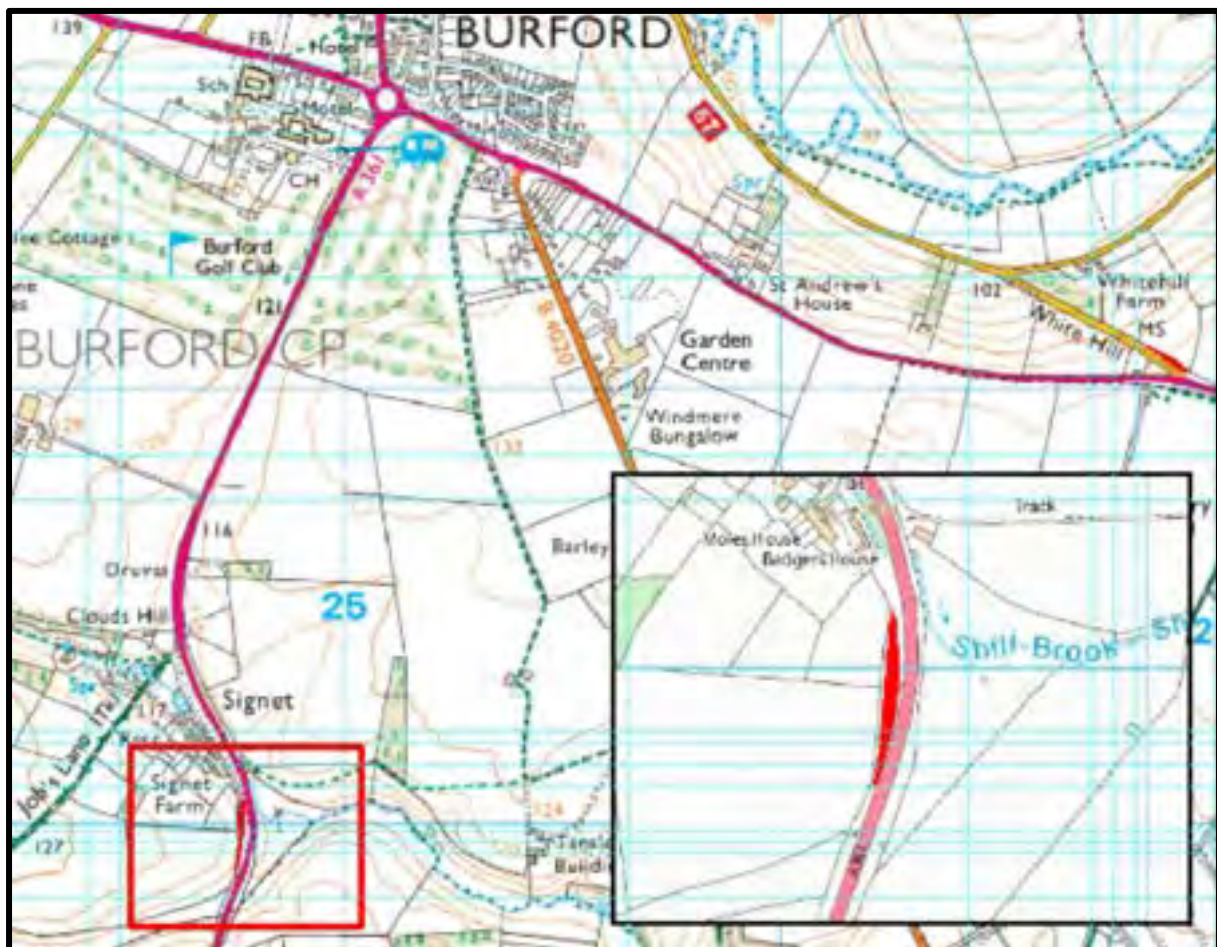
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 5: Signet

Verge Name	Signet
Grid Reference	SP 247 100
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Signet
Date of last survey	June 2020
Approximate Length	150m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Steep bank and hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide and flat verge with a steep bank and hedgerow, located adjacent to arable land. Overall the verge was found to be in good condition during the 2017 survey, with tussocky vegetation and a significant population of Yellow Ant *Lasius flavus*, which is an anthill-forming species typical of old grasslands.



Felling works had been undertaken prior to the survey in 2017, with piles of chippings present. Removal of such piles is required to prevent nitrogen enrichment. During the 2020 survey it was unclear whether this work was undertaken.

Overall the verge remained in good condition in June 2020, however the recent hot weather had left the vegetation very dry. Key species including Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus croniculatus* were present in good numbers. A small and very desiccated specimen of Broomrape *Orobanche minor* was present at the base of the bank. The plant was in poor condition, likely due to the weather conditions. Abundant Comfrey was present immediately to the north of the verge section, providing a useful resource for invertebrates, as clear at the time of survey.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the South Cotswolds Valleys CTA and the Shill Brook Local Geological Site.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, preferably with blade set high where tussocks and anthills are most frequent.

Restoration required, including scrub control and removal of arisings.

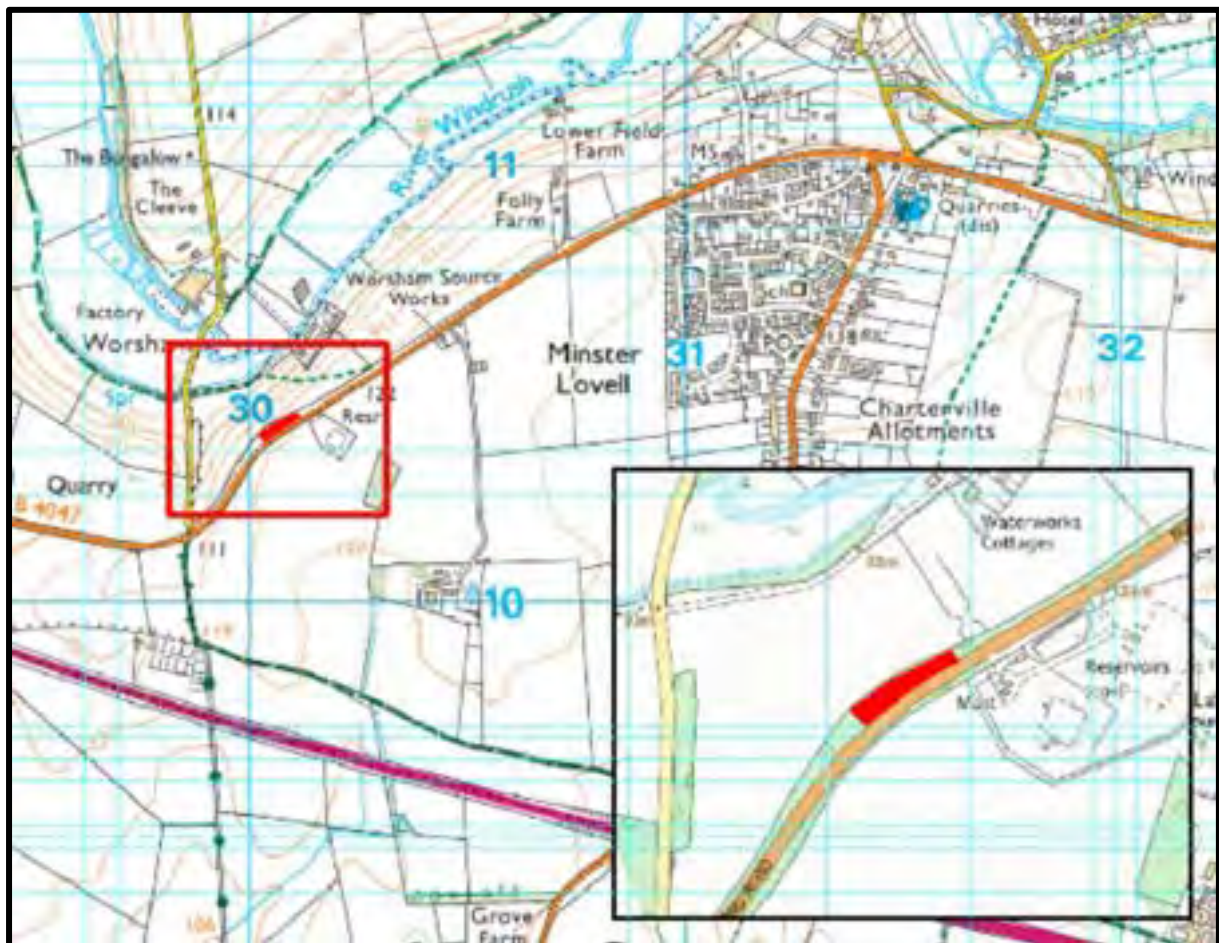
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2017**

## Verge 6: Worsham

Verge Name	Worsham
Grid Reference	SP 300 104
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Minster Lovell
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	100m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide, grassy verge with some scrub encroachment and generally in poor condition. However, a number of key indicator species remain including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, meadow cranesbill, woolly thistle. Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyza* has been recorded at the site previously but was not recorded in 2024.



## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and adjacent to the Pumping Station Local Wildlife Site. The verge is approximately 1.2km from the Worsham Lane SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Removal of scrub.

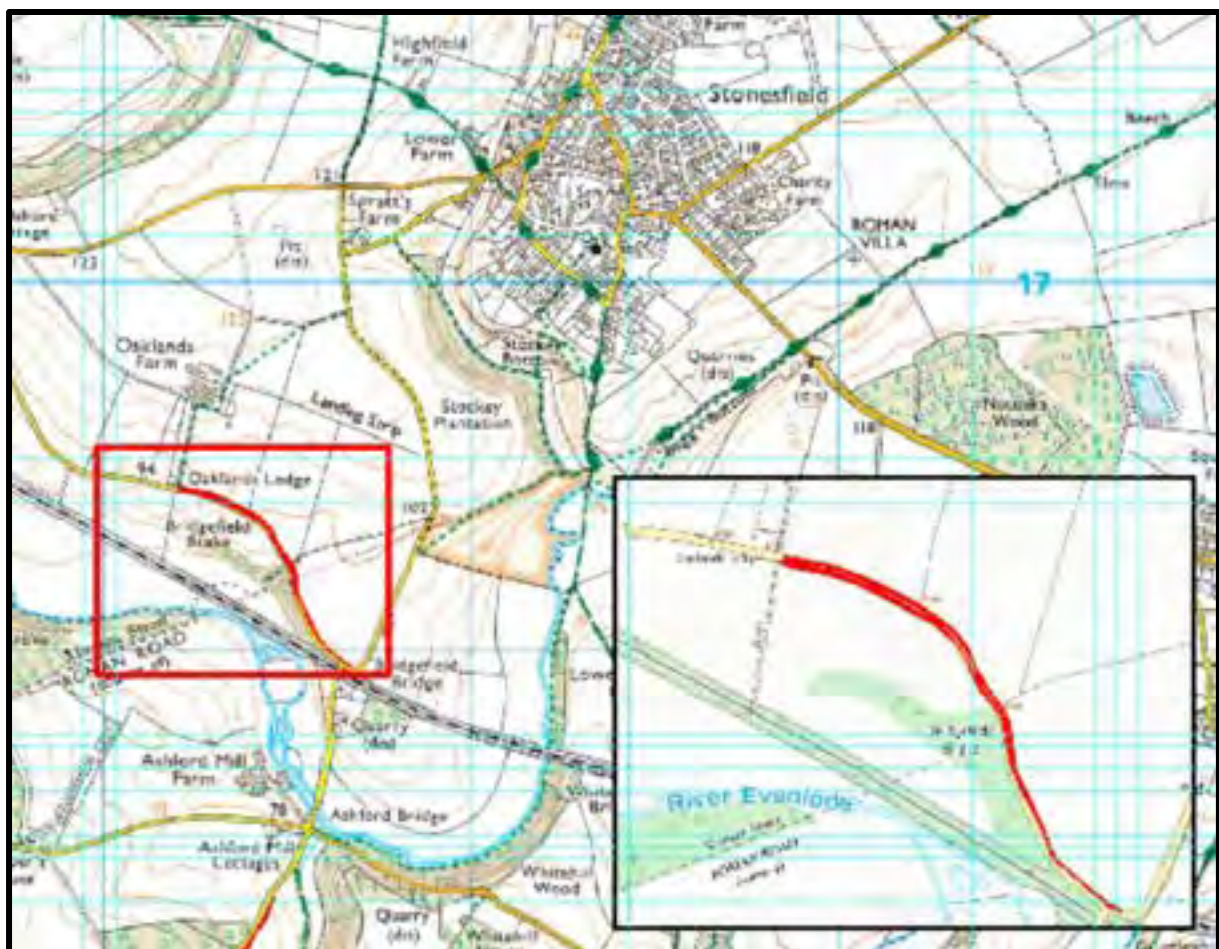
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 7: Ashford Mill Farm

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ashford Mill Farm
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 386 160 – SP 382 165
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	East End
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100 – 700m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry-stone wall to part of northern verge, bare ground



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Both sides of the lane are listed as RVNRs. The southern verge is more shaded and overgrown in places. The northern section is rank and overgrown, however it retains good species diversity in places. Overall the verge is in poor condition.

Of particular note is the presence of wild liquorice (although not recorded in 2024). Other species present include burnet saxifrage, restharrow, wild garlic, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, marjoram and fairy flax.

A public footpath is located at the eastern end.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the North Evenlode Valleys Conservation Target Area, adjacent to the Bridgefield Bank and Brake Local Wildlife Site and the Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 400m to the east.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Removal of scrub.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overviews of the verge in 2024**



## Verge 8: Freeland

Verge Name	Freeland
Grid Reference	SP 407 121 – SP 413 117
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Freeland
Date of last survey	June 2020
Approximate Length	800m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Dry Ditch



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A long verge located along the southern side of Cuckoo Lane. In 2016 the verge was dominated by Bracken in places, with shaded sections becoming more grassy. The hedgerow comprised a number of mature trees.

Overall, the verge is now in rank and declining condition, with fewer key species present than identified in 1991 such as Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Twayblade

*Listera ovata*. Fertiliser drift from adjacent fields likely to be problematic. The 2020 survey found the verge to be completely overgrown, without safe places to stop and park.

A public footpath is located at the eastern end.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 300m from the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area.

### **Management Requirements**

Restorative work is required to improve verge condition and reduce dominant Bracken, nettles and grasses. Bracken removal is required using an appropriate herbicide.

Cut and collect/pile twice a year, in late Spring and Autumn.



**Verge overview in 2016**



## Verge 9: Dry Sandford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Dry Sandford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 467 997 – SP 482 005
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Cothill
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	1000 – 1300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Acid Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry ditch along western section of southern verge, hedgerow.



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Verges on either side of Honey Bottom Lane. The verges are flat, with the majority of species interest at the ends, with each narrowing towards the centre. Overall, the verges are in poor condition, with some species rich patches.

Species recorded include greater knapweed, wild parsnip, common knapweed, agrimony, marjoram, wild garlic, restharrow, vipers bugloss and pyramidal orchid. Ranker areas are dominated by species including false oat grass and cleavers.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The western end of the verges adjoin the Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area and are approximately 100m from the Dry Sandford Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub removal required.

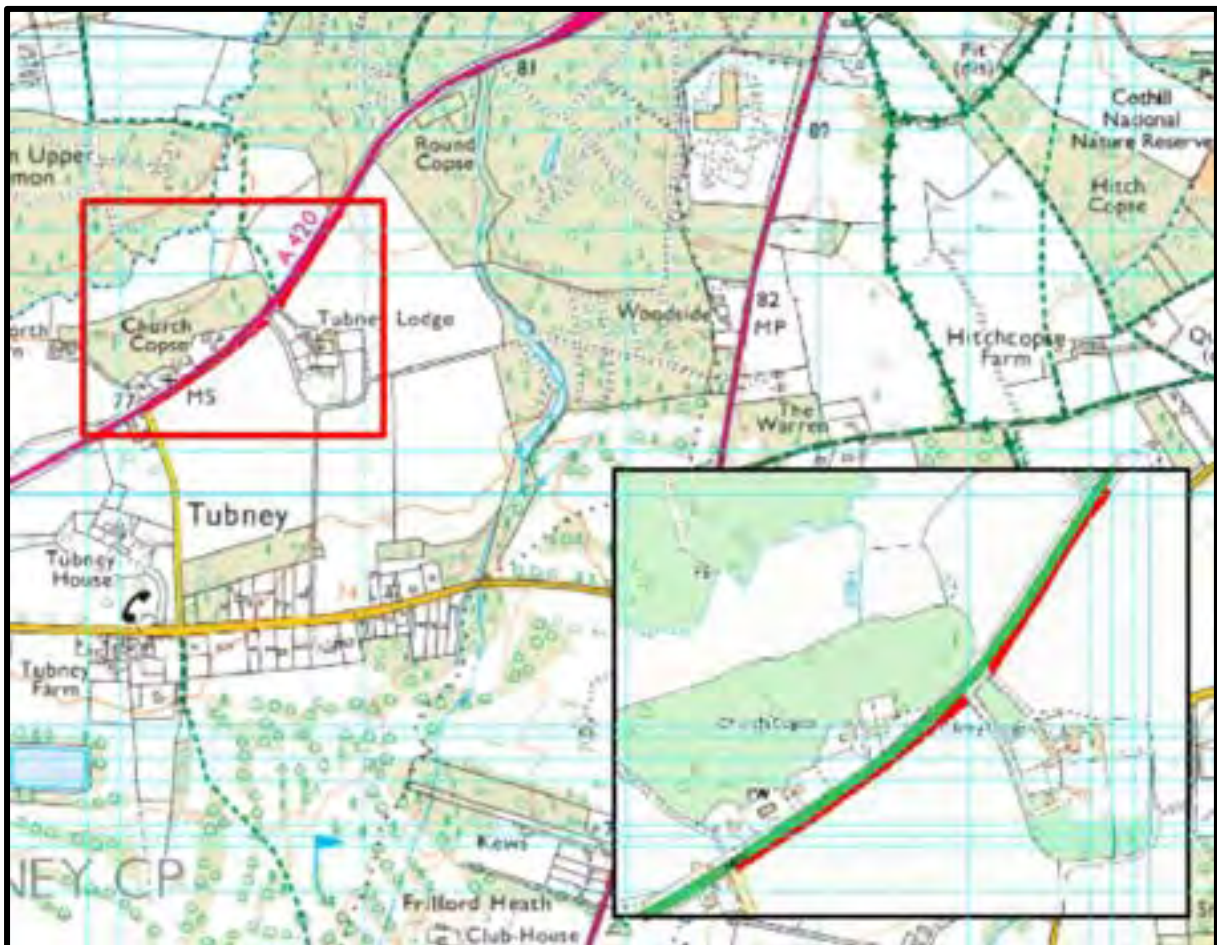
Installation of marker posts.



**Overviews of verge in 2024**

## Verge 10: Tubney

<b>Verge Name</b>	Tubney
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 435 993 – SP 439 996
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Tubney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Acid Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry-stone wall



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A narrow verge along the A420, currently in poor rank condition. Overall species diversity has fallen since the verge was designated and restoration is required to improve it. No previously found key sandland species were identified during the survey, such as blue fleabane or sheep's sorrel were recorded.



## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the Oxford Heights Conservation Target Area and the Tubney Wood and Appleton Upper Common Local Wildlife Sites are within 300m. Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI is approximately 500m to the east and south-east.

## Management Requirements

Restoration of the verge is required in order to remain a RVNR. Topsoil should be removed to allow re-establishment from the seed bank.

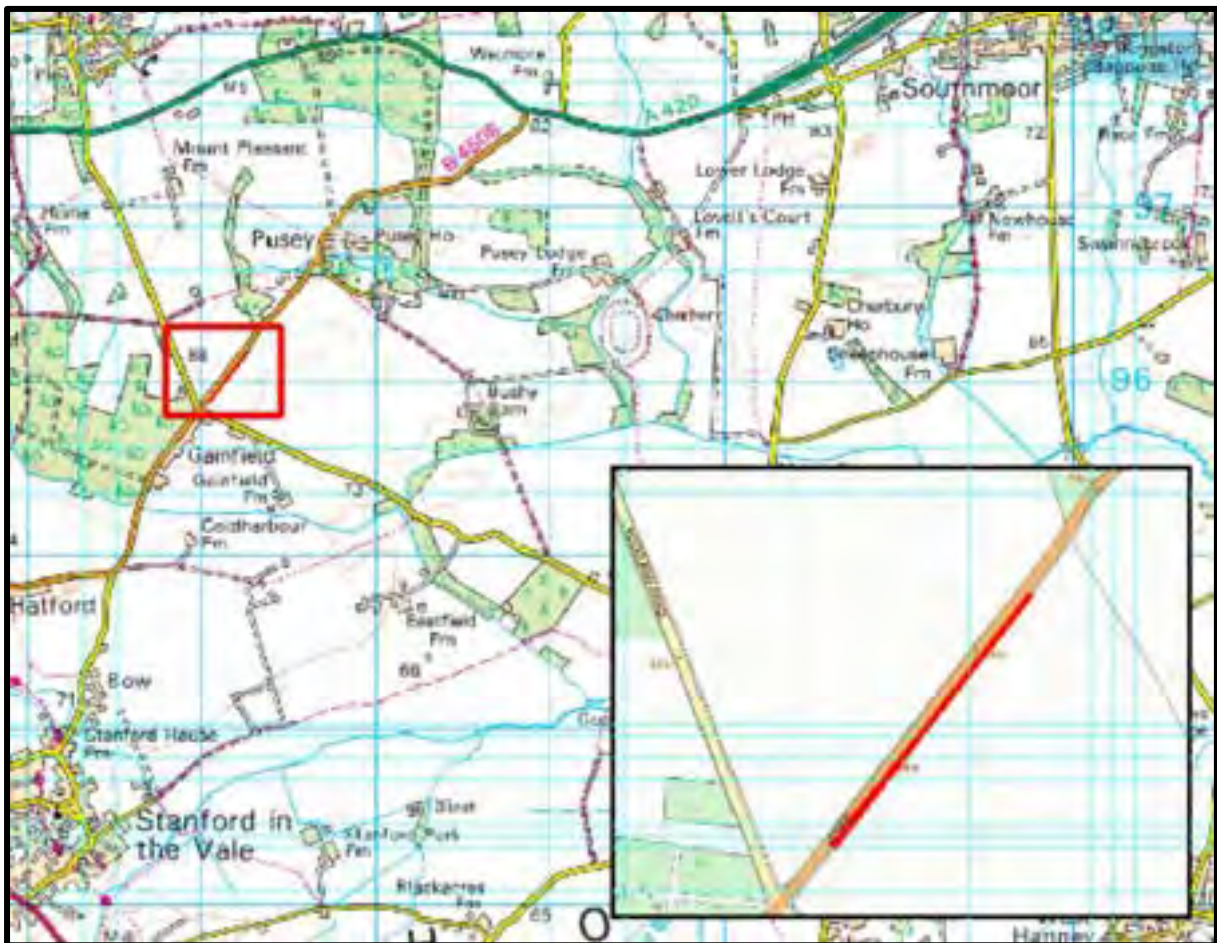
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 11: Pusey

<b>Verge Name</b>	Pusey
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 351 959 – SP 353 962
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Pusey
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Ditch, bare ground



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A narrow verge on the southern side of the road. Overall, the verge is in poor condition and dominated by coarse grasses with very few indicators remaining, with abundant false oat-grass and cock's-foot. Species present include field scabious, lady's bedstraw and greater knapweed. Creeping bellflower, which was abundant during the original survey, was not recorded.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is in close proximity to the Buckland Warren Woods Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Restoration of verge required to improve species diversity.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 12: Hatford

Verge Name	Hatford
Grid Reference	SP 336 947
Local Authority	Vale of White Horse
Parish	Hatford
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	50m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A steeply banked verge along the B4508, adjacent to arable fields and in moderate condition. The southerly facing embankment has frequent wild clary. Other species identified included field scabious, burnet saxifrage and lady's bedstraw.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the Oxon Heights West Conservation Target Area.



## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Removal of scrub required.

Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2024

## Verge 13: Taynton Down

<b>Verge Name</b>	Taynton Down
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 248 150 – SP 248 148
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Taynton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	August 2018
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide verge along the A424 with tall grassland and a small quarry area to the north. Overall the verge is in moderate condition, with lots of indicator species remaining but likely to be overtaken by scrub and tall grasses without intervention. No purple mil-vetch was recorded in 2024 as identified previously.

Within the grassland, several lime-loving species were recorded, including common restharrow, greater knapweed, yellow rattle, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, woolly thistle, burnet saxifrage, meadow crane's-bill and agrimony.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Taynton Down Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in October.

The verge would benefit from some scrub control.

Installation of marker posts.

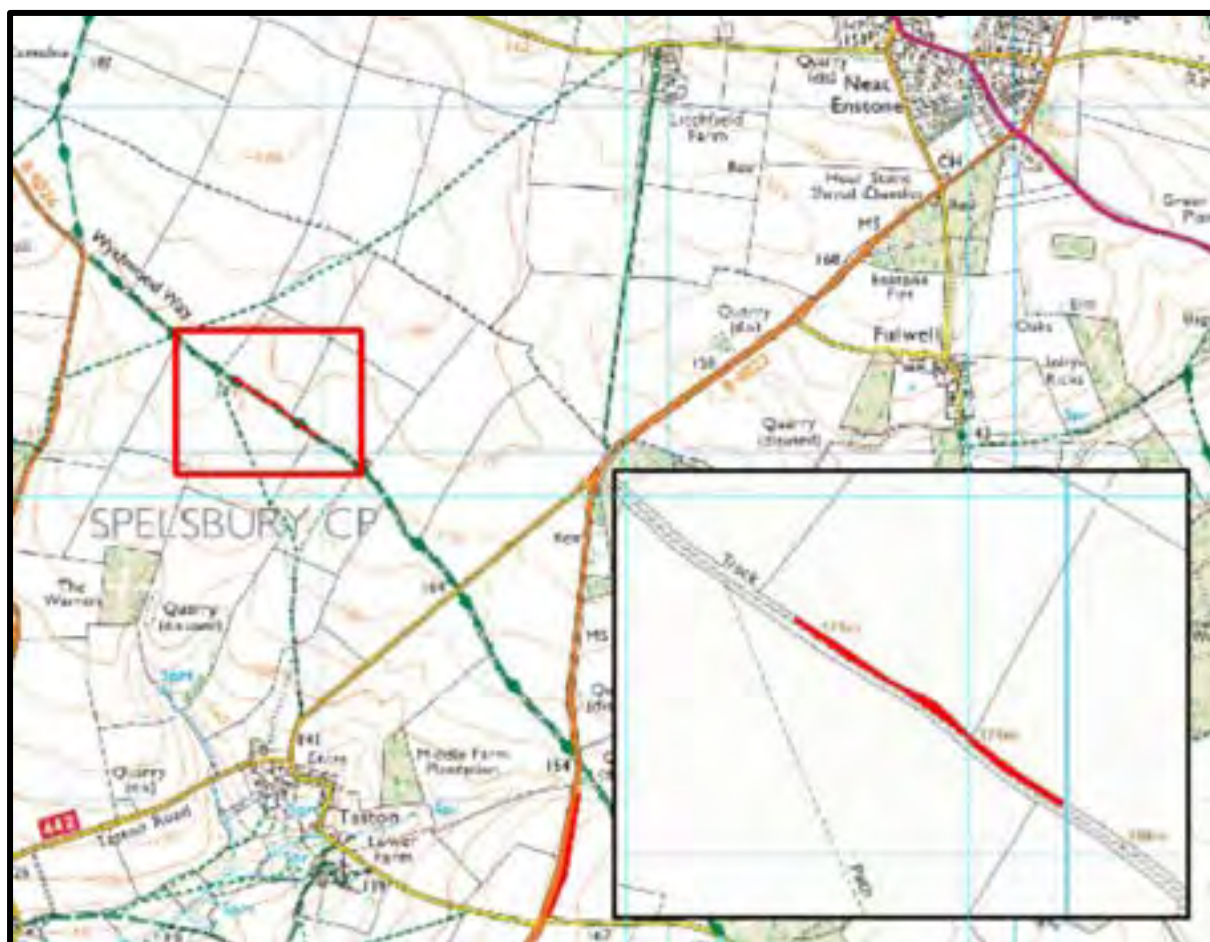


**Overview of verge in 2024**



## Verge 14: Spelsbury 1

Verge Name	Spelsbury 1
Grid Reference	SP 358 232 -SP 360 231
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Spelsbury
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	1.4km
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Dry-stone walls, ditch, scrub



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A green lane with hedgerows on either side, with stone walls between the hedgerows and adjacent arable land. A wide range of species have been recorded, with the key interest species meadow clary *Salvia pratensis* located within the centre of the lane.

A number of species of limestone grassland were identified, including meadow crane's-bill, field scabious, yellow rattle, broomrape, common knapweed and greater knapweed. Sections



of the verge are more wooded and scrubby in character. Overall, the verge was found to be in moderate condition, however it would benefit from improved management.

The verge is part of the Wychwood Way public right of way.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the North Evenlode Valleys Conservation Target Area.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late Summer.

Restoration by removal of scrub.

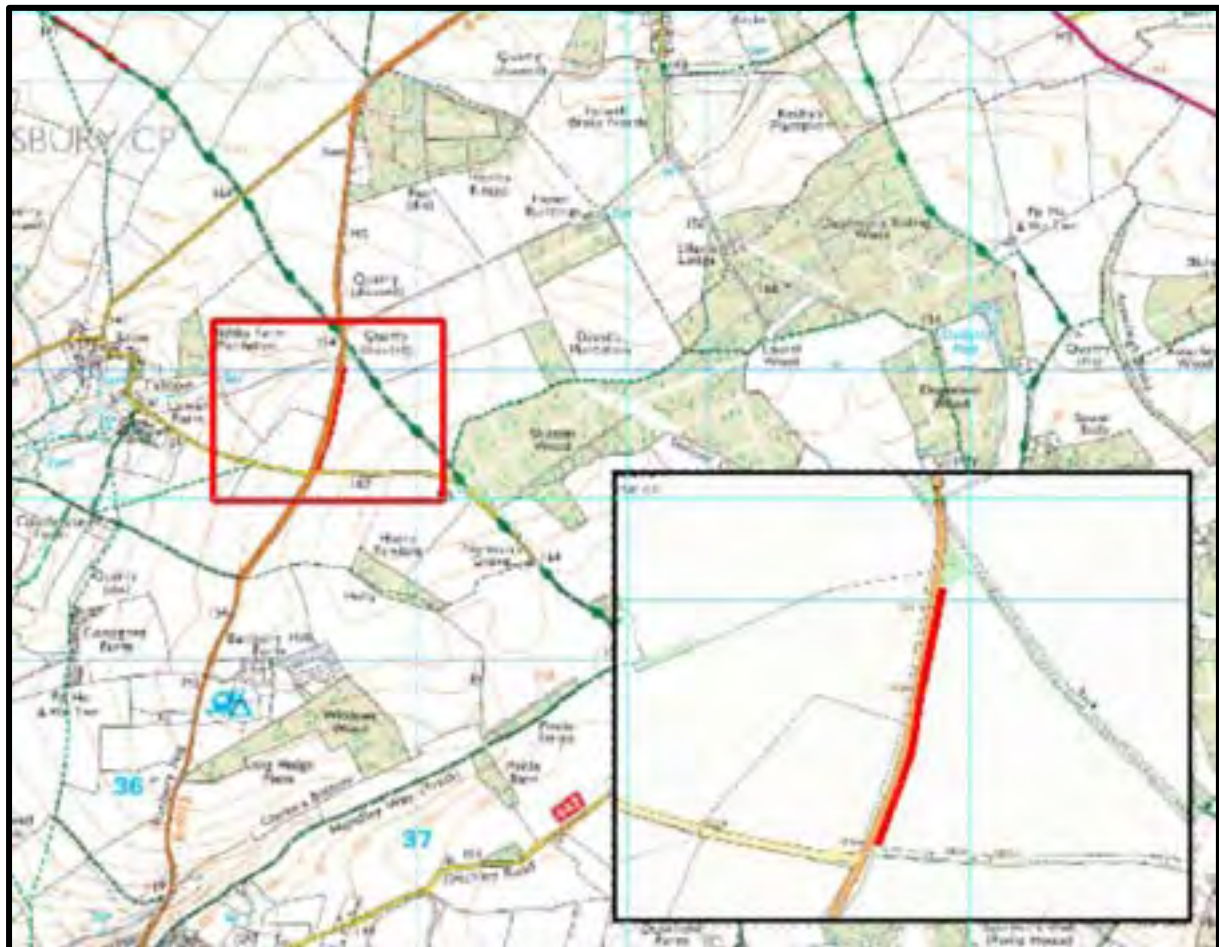
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 15: Spelsbury 2

Verge Name	Spelsbury 2
Grid Reference	SP 367 220 – SP 366 216
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Spelsbury
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	300m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A verge along the eastern side of a straight section of the B4022. A range of limestone grassland species, including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, lady's bedstraw, meadow crane's-bill, greater knapweed and most notably meadow clary *Salvia Herminoides*, although this species was not recorded in 2024.

The majority of the verge is in poor condition, however retains key interest species particularly at the northern end.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Blenheim and Ditchley Parks Conservation Target Area and approximately 480m from the Lower Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Restoration work to improve diversity and allow greater re-establishment of Meadow Clary.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**



## Verge 16: Shillingford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Shillingford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 586 935 – SP 587 934
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shillingford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Neutral Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

On the northern side of the road the verge is grassy and banked. Species present include greater knapweed, field scabious, wild onion and wild basil. Multiple patches of wild clary are present.

Overall the verge is in good condition.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the Thames Clifton to Shillingford Conservation Target Area.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, including southern verge.

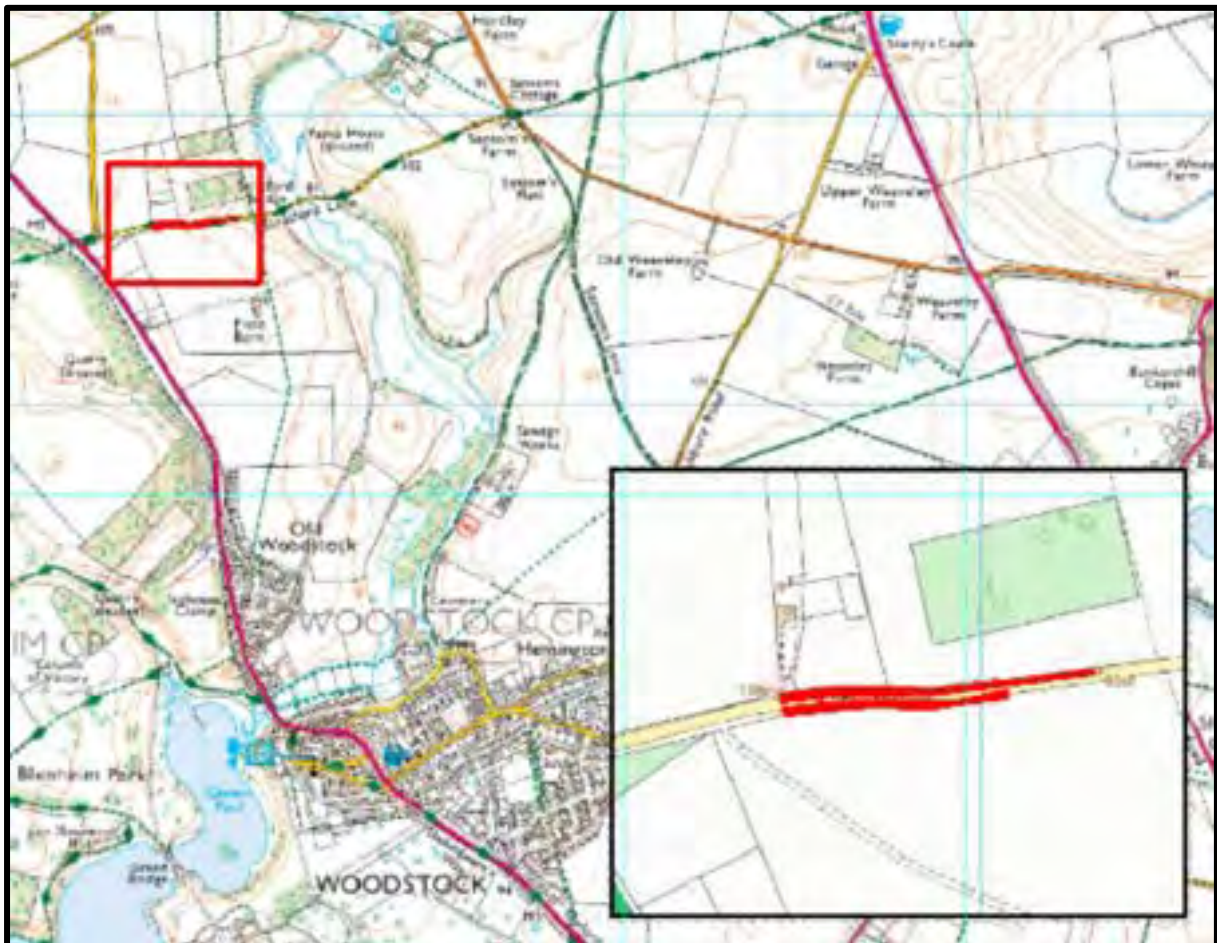
Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 17: Stratford Lane

<b>Verge Name</b>	Stratford Lane
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 438 187 – SP 440 187
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Wootton and Woodstock
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A straight section of road with interesting verges on both sides. Limestone grassland characteristic species are present including agrimony, sainfoin, greater knapweed, common knapweed, wild basil, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, field scabious and marjoram. Previously recorded species wild liquorice was not recorded during the latest survey.

Overall, the northern verge is in poor condition but some key indicator species are still present. The southern verge is in moderate condition but is starting to become rank in places. Both verges are subject to scrub encroachment.

A footpath is located along the eastern end.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Some scrub control required.

Installation of marker posts.

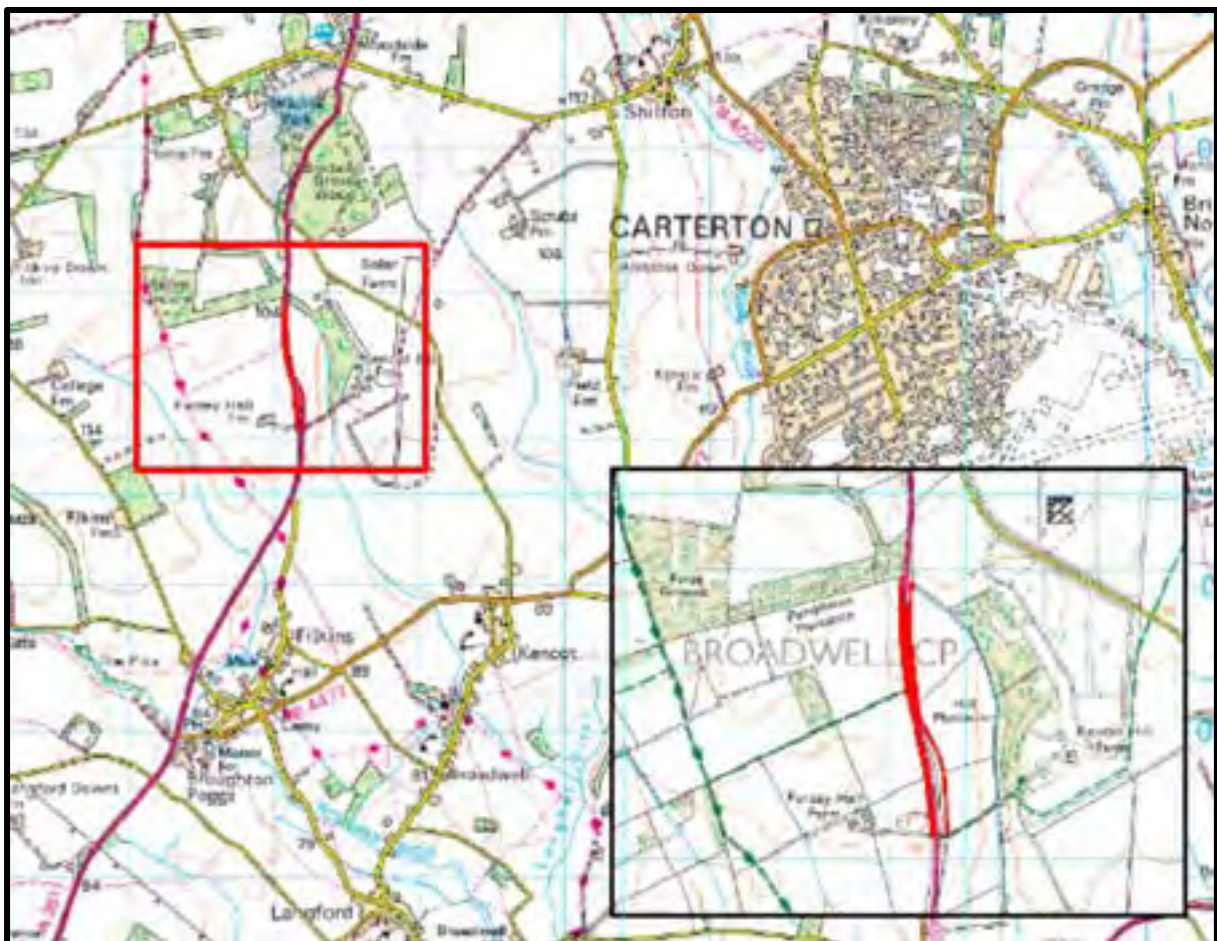


**Overview of the verges in 2024**



## Verge 18: Burford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Burford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 243 061 – SP 241 069
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Filkins and Broadwell
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wooded section of old road (east) and Bank (west)



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Narrow verges on either side of the A361. On the west side there is a bank and on the eastern side there is an overgrown hedgerow with the old road behind. The verge supports a range of limestone grassland species, including field scabious, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, woolly thistle, lady's bedstraw, wild parsnip, common knapweed, field scabious, greater knapweed, marjoram, common spotted orchid and restharrow. Yellow ant has been observed on previous survey visits.



The verge on both sides is in moderate condition that has some species diverse patches and other areas that have not been overtaken by rank grasses or scrub.

more rank in character with overgrown hedgerow and scrub developing.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

Approximately 250m from the RAF Broadwell Local Wildlife Site.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, preferably with a high blade where anthills are present.

Some scrub control required and management of the former carriageway.

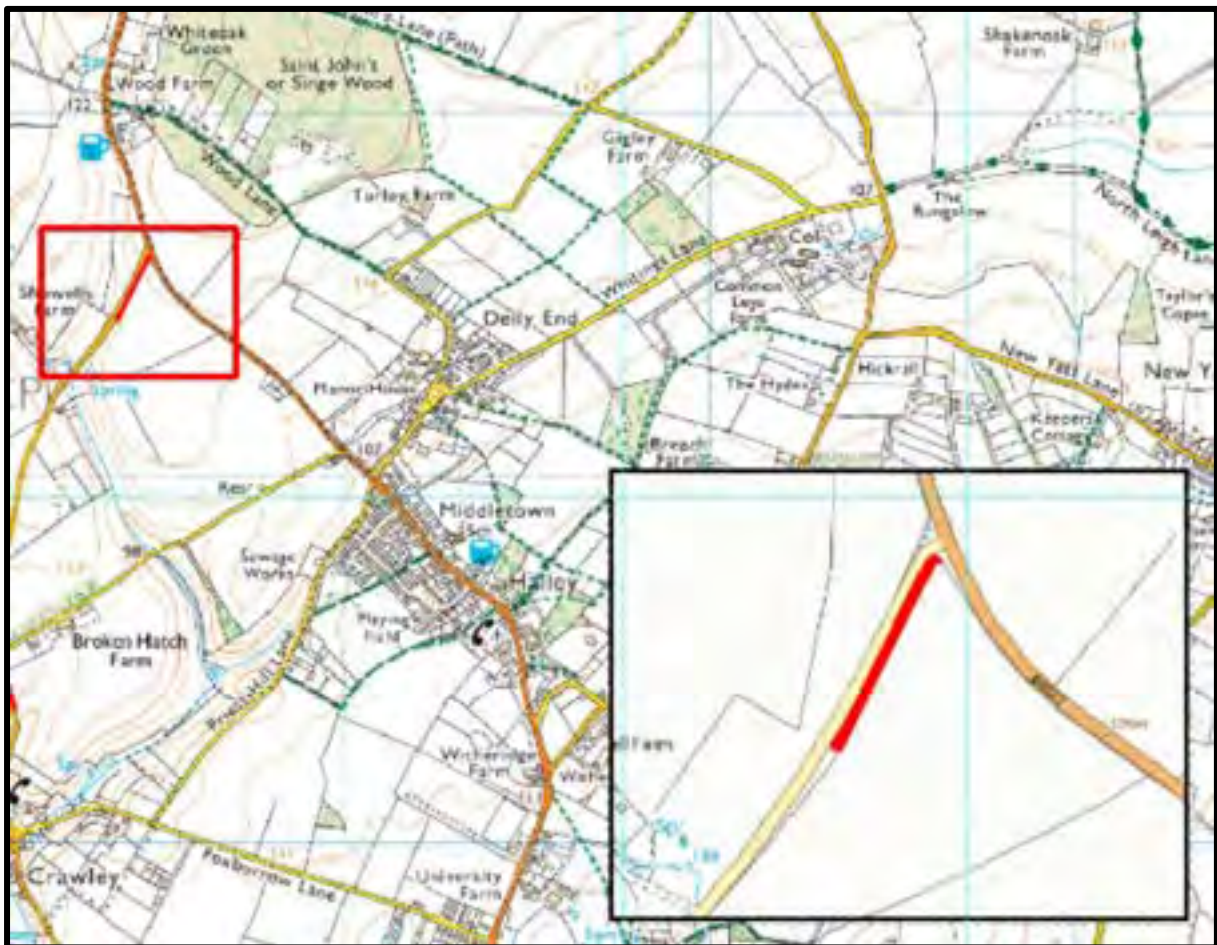
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verges in 2024**

## Verge 19: Hailey

<b>Verge Name</b>	Hailey
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 334 134 – SP 345 136
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Crawley
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2019
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A north-west facing embankment in good condition which supports a range of characteristic limestone grassland species.

A number of species have been identified including pyramidal orchid, common knapweed, wild parsnip, yellow rattle, woolly thistle, restharrow, agrimony and salad burnet. Hoary plantain, fairy flax and quaking grass were also recorded in previous surveys but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 20: Middleton Stoney 1

<b>Verge Name</b>	Middleton Stoney 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 537 251
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Middleton Stoney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	May 2020
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

## Site Description

A banked verge along the B430, located adjacent to arable fields. No evidence of the original key species meadow clary was found during the survey in 2017. The verge was in largely poor and rank condition, with some evidence of dumped vegetation and woodchip.

During the 2020 survey, the verges condition appeared improved, with a large stand of Meadow Clary located at the northern end. This stand appears to be further north than the original survey records suggest.



The old road is more overgrown, with scrub encroachment. This habitat was however clearly of value to nesting birds, with species including Long-tailed Tits nesting at the time of survey.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Ardley Trackways Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ardley Fields Local Geological Site.

The verge is within the Ardley and Upper Heyford Conservation Target Area and approximately 430m from the Ardley Fields Ponds West Local Wildlife Site.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September / October.

Scrub control required.

Installation of marker posts.



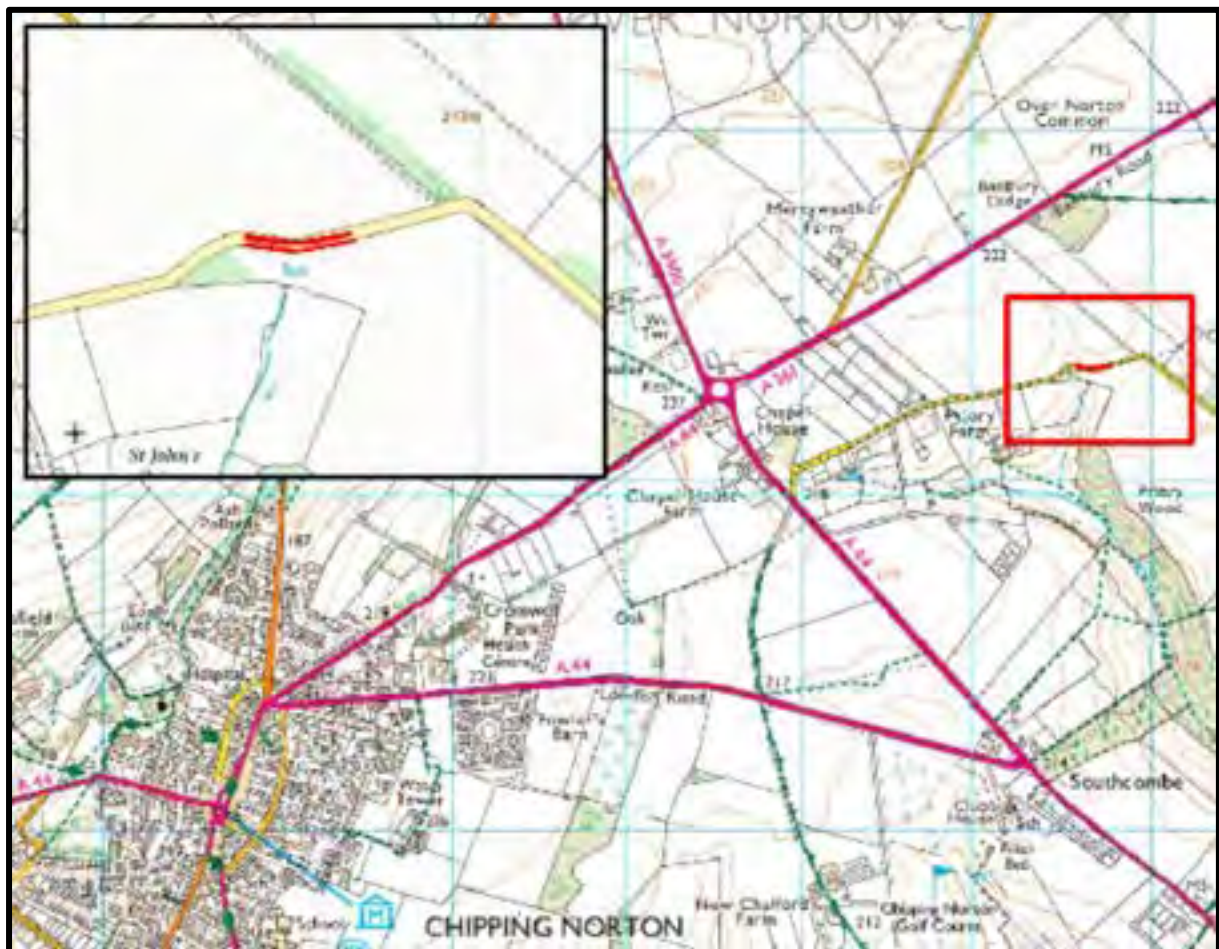
**Verge looking south and scrub encroachment in 2017**



**Meadow Clary – May 2020**

## Verge 21: Heythrop 2

<b>Verge Name</b>	Heythrop 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 337 248 – SP 338 248
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Heythrop
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A narrow verge adjacent to a minor road to Heythrop from Chipping Norton. A steep bank is present on the northern side and both sides are adjacent to arable fields.

The verge was becoming rank in character and is in poor condition, with some likelihood of fertiliser drift from the adjacent fields. Some indicator species remain including field scabious, lady's bedstraw, greater knapweed and common knapweed still present.



## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late September.

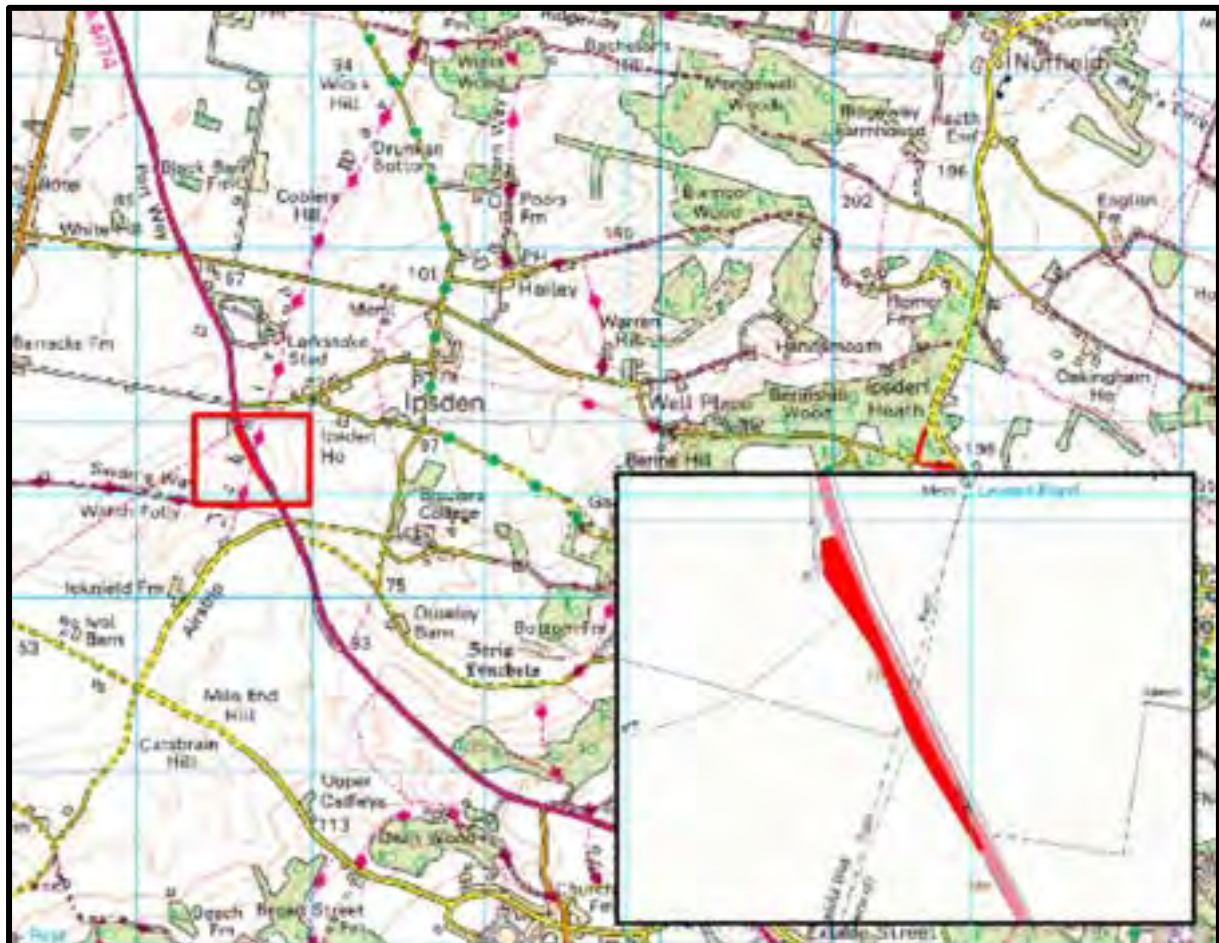
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 22: Ipsden

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ipsden
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 626 848 – SP 627 846
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Ipsden
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	500m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Chalk Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide verge and embankment along the western side of the A4074. The verge supports a good range of chalk grassland species including pyramidal orchid, wild parsnip, cowslip, broomrape, restharrow, lady's bedstraw, dark mullein, agrimony, fairy flax, field scabious, greater knapweed, bee orchid and marjoram.

The northern part of the verge maintains key species; however it is becoming more overgrown with hemlock and bramble scrub.

Overall, the grassland is in very good condition, with scrub largely confined to an area in the northern end where trees have been planted.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

None.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late September.

Scrub control to remove Bramble at northern end of verge.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 23: Ashford Mill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ashford Mill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 384 152
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	North Leigh
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	250m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A grassy verge on a narrow lane along a minor road. The verge has shaded sections on a wider area towards the top of the hill. The verge has patches of high species diversity including meadow cranesbill, agrimony, marjoram, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, lady's bedstraw, yellow rattle, wild parsnip and common knapweed. Red bartsia, cowslip and hairy St John's wort have been recorded during previous surveys but not during the 2024 survey.



Overall, the verge is in poor condition and becoming increasingly shaded due to the copse on the opposite side with reduced species diversity within the copse and species diversity increasing in patches further north.

A bridleway is present at the northern end of the verge.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area and approximately 130m from the Holly Court Bank SSSI.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Control of scrub development and cutting back trees to reduce shading if possible.

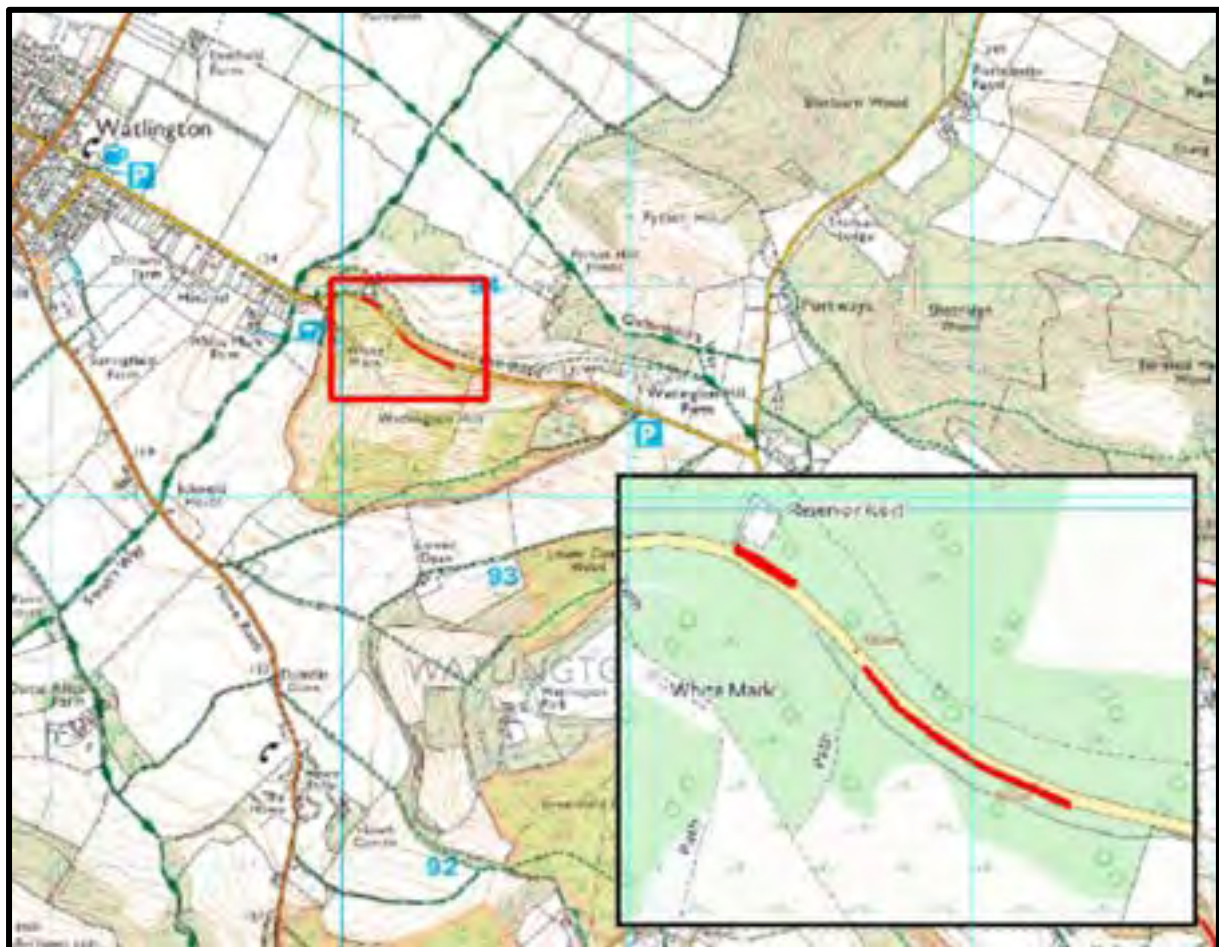
Installation of marker posts.



**Overviews of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 24: Watlington

<b>Verge Name</b>	Watlington
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 700 940 – SP 705 938
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Watlington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Chalk Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A steeply banked verge along a minor C road, with a wide flat top that adjoins the Watlington Hill National Trust Nature Reserve. The boundary between the verge and reserve is poorly defined.

The verge comprises a very diverse range of characteristic chalk grassland species including wild parsnip, agrimony, marjoram, lady's bedstraw, dark mullein, red bartsia, yellow rattle and restharrow.

Both verges are in good condition, however the northern verge is subject to scrub encroachment. Numerous anthills were recorded scattered throughout the flat top of the bank along the southern section.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Chilterns Escarpment North Conservation Target Area, within the Watlington and Pyrton Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest and adjacent to the Watlington Hay Meadow Local Wildlife Site.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September / October.

Scrub control.

Installation of marker posts.

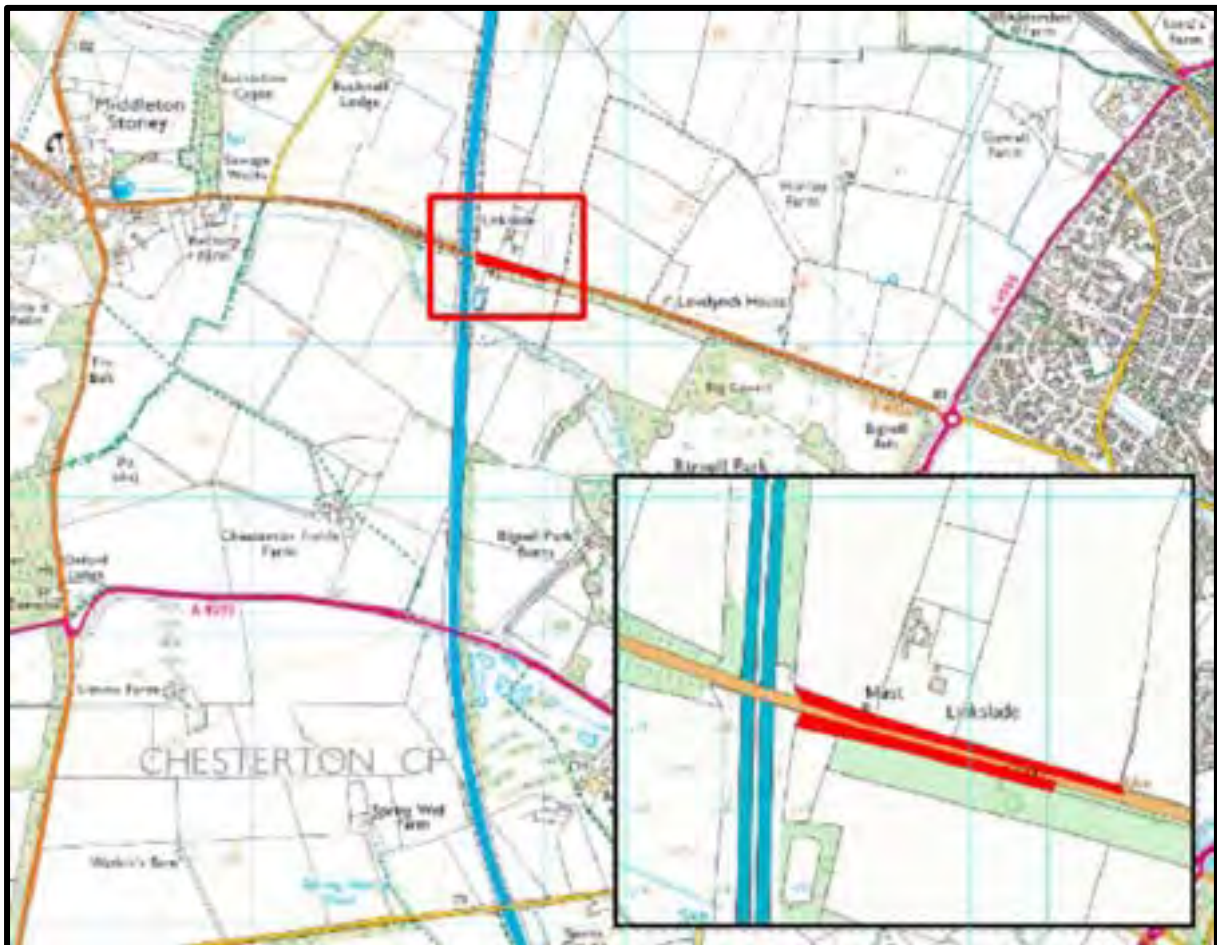


**Verge overviews in 2024**



## Verge 25: Middleton Stoney 2

<b>Verge Name</b>	Middleton Stoney 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 549 232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Middleton Stoney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Bank and adjoining woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A narrow flat verge in poor condition with the northern section mown short in front of the adjacent private properties and major scrub encroachment along the majority of the southern section.

A number of indicator species still remain including field scabious, common knapweed, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, yellow rattle, greater knapweed, woolly thistle, lady's bedstraw,

wild parsnip, common spotted orchid and salad burnet. Ploughman's spikenard and blue fleabane were recorded previously but not during the 2024 survey.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

None.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub removal.

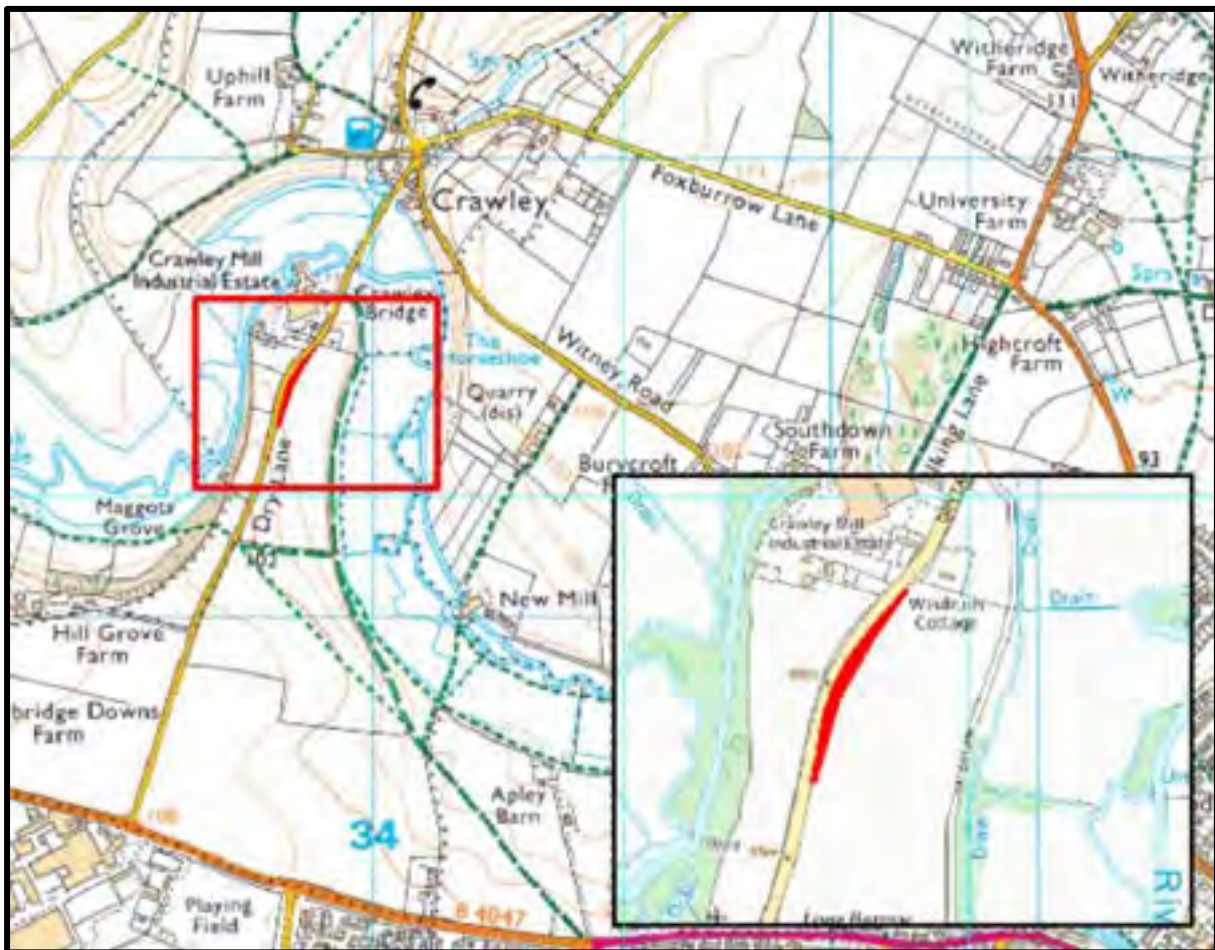
Installation of marker posts.



**Verges overview in 2024**

## Verge 26: Dry Lane, Crawley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Dry Lane, Crawley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 338 115
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Crawley
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	170m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Ditch



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A flat, wide verge along Dry Lane in poor condition but with some indicator species still present including woolly thistle, common knapweed, pyramidal orchid and yellow rattle.

The ditch was dry at the time of the survey with no wetland species present, however marsh thistle has been recorded on the verge in previous surveys but not in 2024. A drainage channel from the road crosses the verge, suggesting that run-off may be affecting the grassland.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is approximately 50m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and approximately 160m from the Maggots Grove Wood Local Wildlife Site, 100m from the Minster Lovell Meadows Local Wildlife Site and 145m from the Crawley Marsh Local Wildlife Site.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Deepening of the channel to ensure run-off reaches the ditch rather than over-spilling onto the verge.

Installation of marker posts.

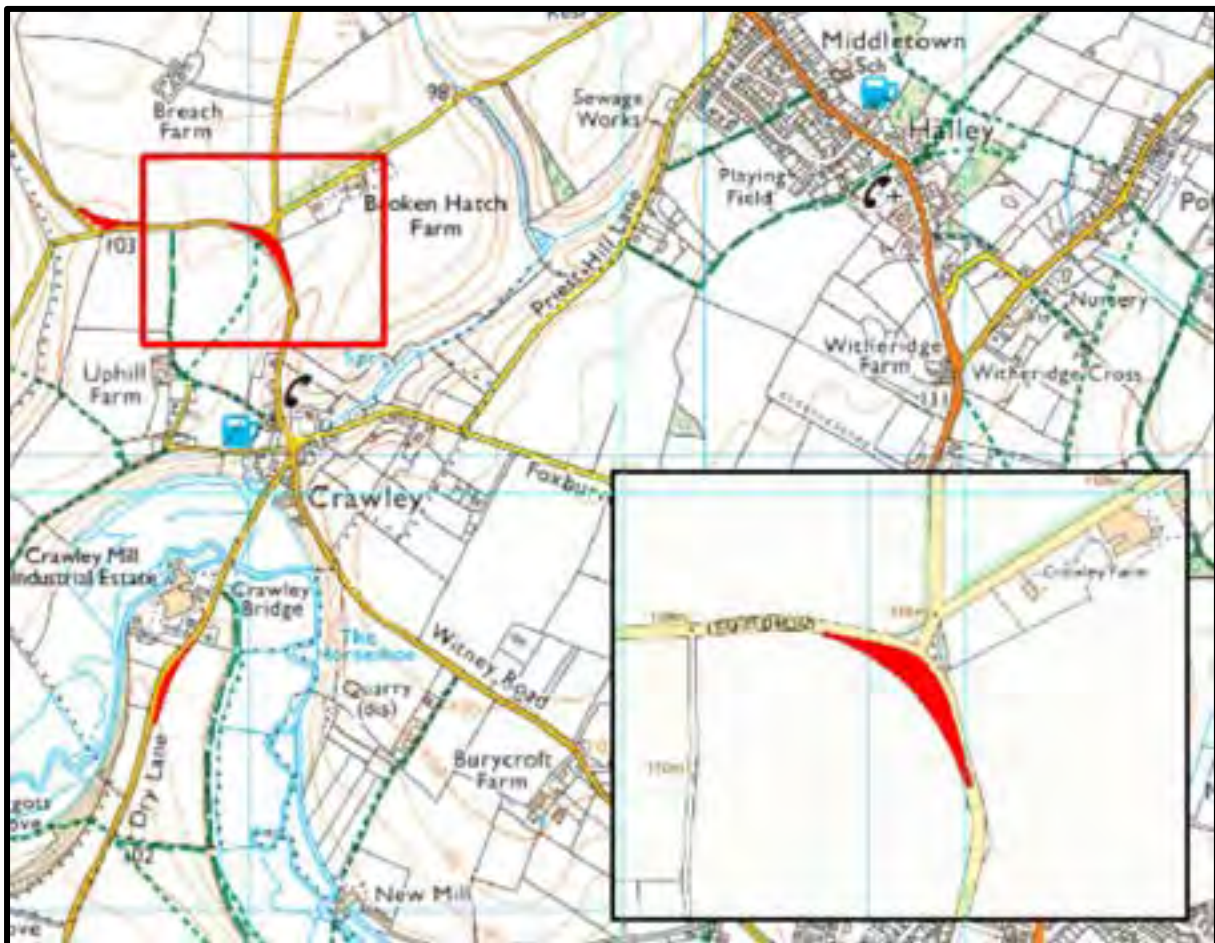


Overview of verge in 2024



## Verge 27: Leaffield Lane, Crawley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Leaffield Lane, Crawley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 340 125
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Crawley
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Bare ground



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

This verge is located around the junction to north of Crawley and is in good condition. The widest and most species-rich part of the verge is to the west of the junction, with species including records of meadow clary, greater knapweed and meadow crane's-bill. The meadow clary was located within areas of thinner soil, whereas the rest of the verge is more grassy, with abundant false oat-grass and a good distribution of forbs such as marjoram, pyramidal orchid, bee orchid, common knapweed, woolly thistle and fairy flax. Run-off from the road and uneven ground is likely causing nutrient enrichment. A footpath crosses the western verge.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verges are approximately 35m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and the Manor Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site is approximately 400m to the south-west.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.

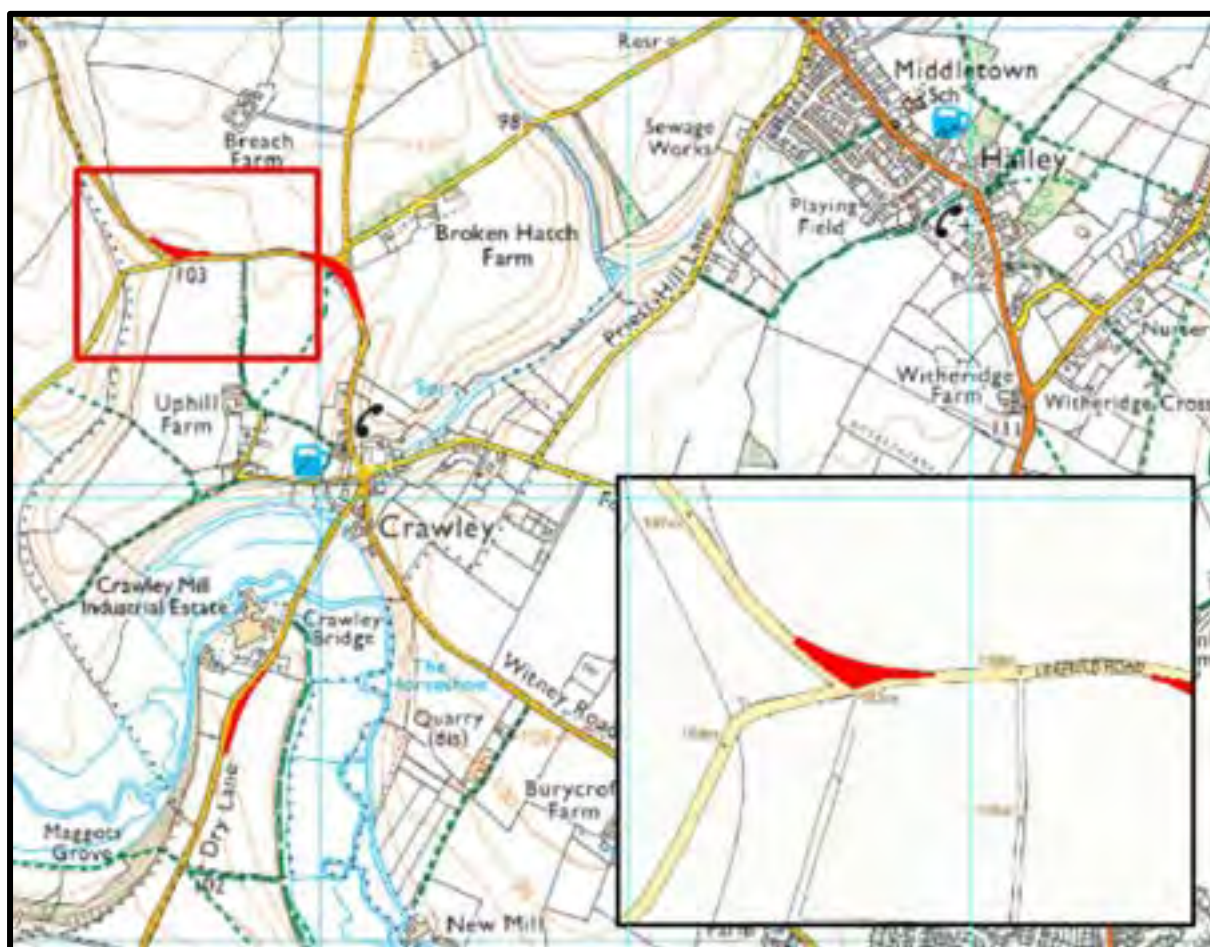


**Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and meadow clary in 2024 (right)**



## Verge 28: Ridings Lane, Crawley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ridings Lane, Crawley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 336 125
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Crawley
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide section of verge with a good diversity of lime-loving species including common restharrow, yellow rattle, pyramidal orchid, marjoram, bee orchid, common knapweed and fairy flax.

Generally, the verge is in good condition, with occasional scrub. Some fertiliser drift onto the verge from the adjacent field appears to be being reduced by the scrub, hedgerow and wall, where common nettle and common hogweed become more apparent.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located between the Upper Windrush and Wychwood and Lower Evenlode (500m to each) Conservation Target Areas.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub control required.

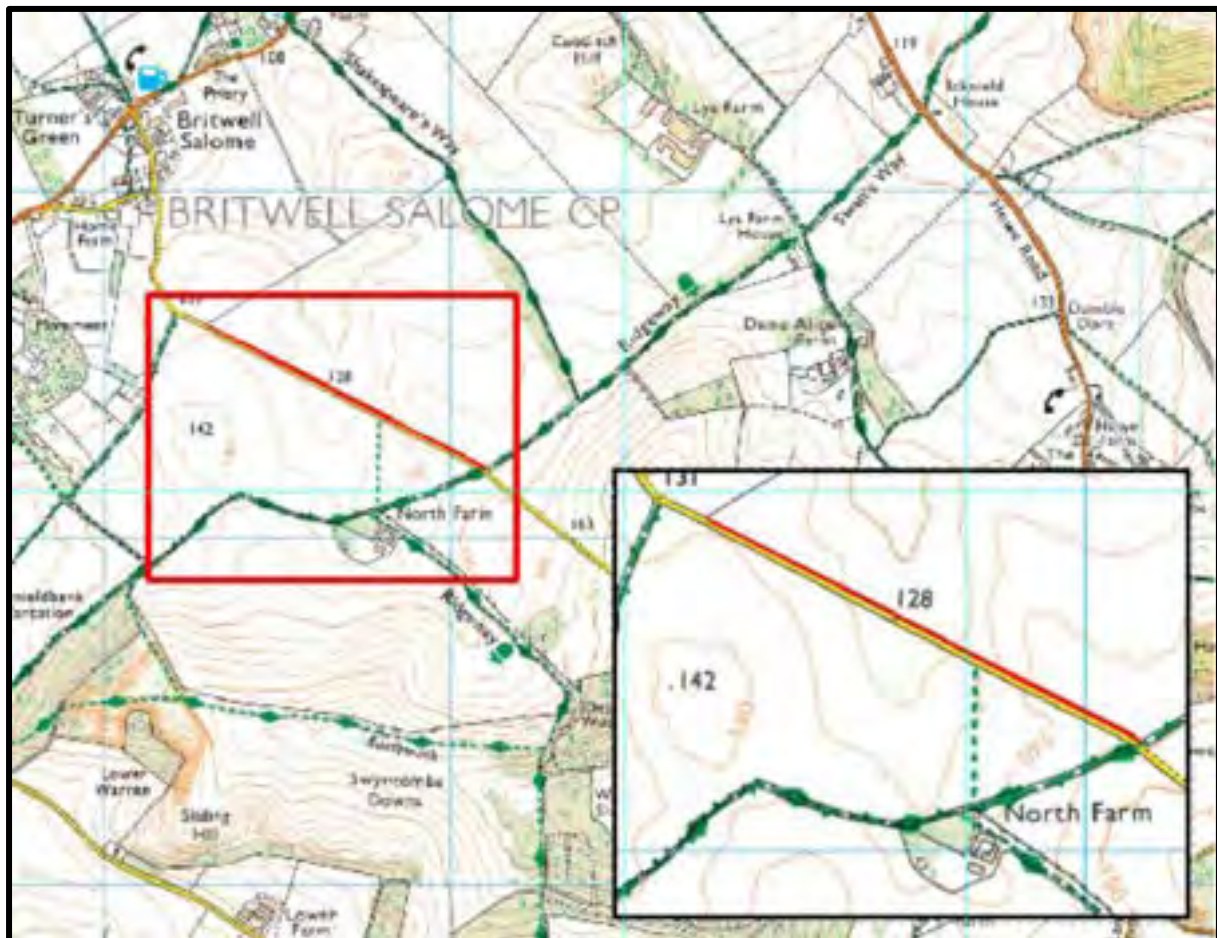
Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 29: Britwell Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Britwell Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 676 924
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Britwell Salome
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Ditch



© Crown copyright

## Site Description

A long straight road with verges on either side in generally poor ecological condition, however a number of indicator species remain including field scabious, agrimony, greater and common knapweed. Greater broomrape, wild basil and burnet saxifrage have been recorded during previous surveys but were not recorded in 2024.



## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is approximately 230m from the Chilterns Escarpment North Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Control of scrub.

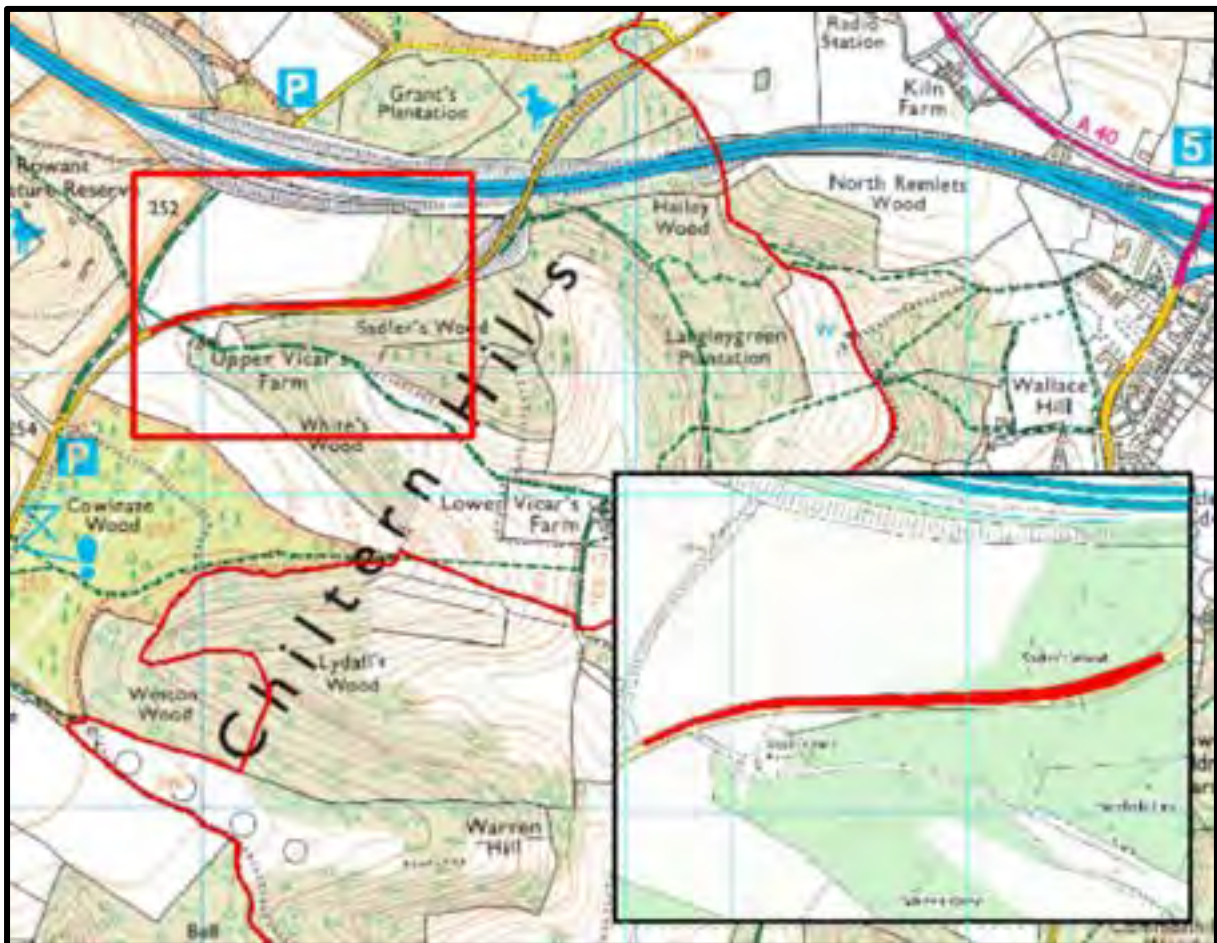
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and greater broomrape recorded in 2017 (right)

## Verge 30: Cowleaze Wood

Verge Name	Cowleaze Wood
Grid Reference	SU 732 960
Local Authority	South Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Aston Rowant
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	500m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A south facing verge adjacent to a hedgerow in good condition. Species recorded in 2024 include agrimony, yellow rattle, common knapweed, marjoram, common broomrape and pyramidal orchid. Wild basil, wild carrot, field scabious and ploughman's-spikenard were recorded previously but not in 2024.

The verge shows signs of scrub encroachment. A footpath is located at the western end.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is adjacent to the Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau Conservation Target Area and approximately 60m from the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September to hedgerow.

Scrub control required.

Installation of marker posts.

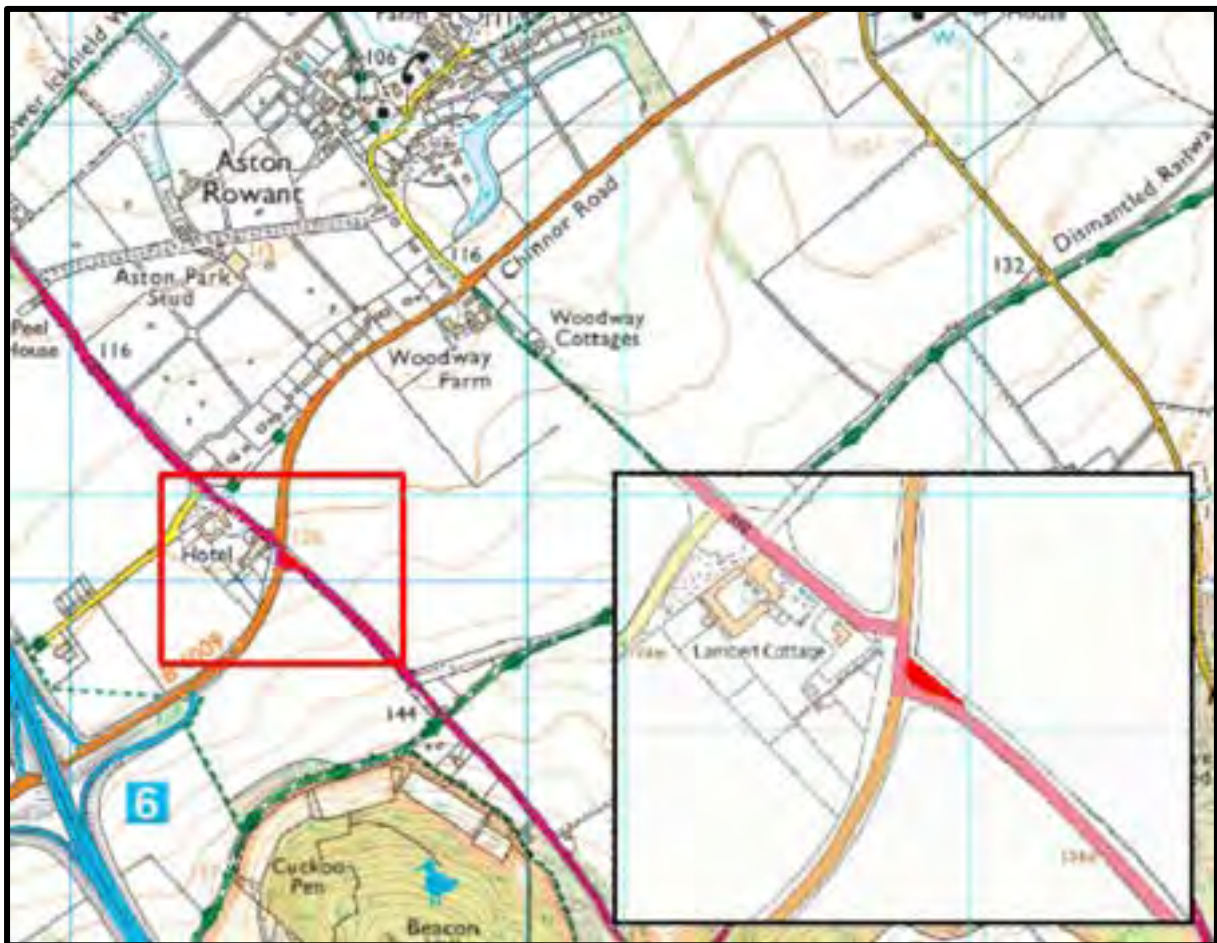


Overview of verge in 2024 (left) and ploughman's-spikenard in 2016 (right)



## Verge 31: Aston Rowant

<b>Verge Name</b>	Aston Rowant
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 724 980
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Aston Rowant
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Planted trees and scrub



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

This verge is located where the B4009 meets the A40. Species key indicator species recorded in 2024 include pyramidal orchid and marjoram. Wild basil and wild carrot were recorded during previous surveys but not in 2024. The north-eastern side drops sharply through a hedgerow into a field.

Overall, the verge is in moderate condition, becoming more rank up the hill and towards the eastern boundary.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 410m from the Aston Rowant SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 32: Ipsden Heath

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ipsden Heath
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 665 848
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Minster Lovell
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Two woodland lanes with verges on both sides. Sections to the east and west are relatively more shaded, while the northern and southern sides are more rank and overgrown. The key indicator species recorded in 2024 include both predominantly woodland indicator species such as common knapweed, herb robert, wood avens, wood melick, sweet woodruff, bluebells, greater stitchwort, enchanter's nightshade, wild strawberry, woodland sedge, wood speedwell, wood anemone, yellow archangel and woodland figwort. Violet helleborine has been recorded on previous surveys but not in 2024.



Overall, the verges are in moderate condition becoming increasingly overshadowed along most of the length resulting in a change of species composition to reflect the surrounding woodland ground flora.

A footpath is located at the eastern end.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Ipsden Heath Local Wildlife Site and 130m south of the Chilterns Escarpment Conservation Target Area.

The verge is located within an area of priority lowland deciduous woodland and adjacent to patches of ancient woodland.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Tree work required to increase light in the most shaded areas, and cutting of Bramble.

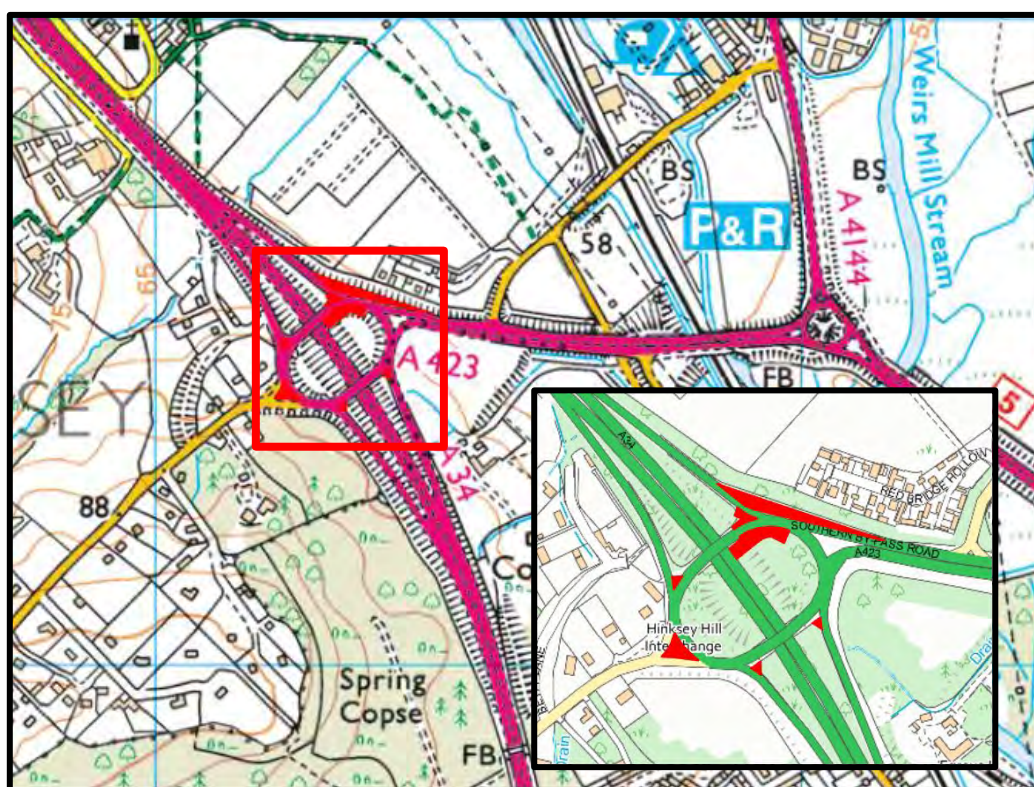
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and violote helleborine recorded in 2016 (right)**

## Verge 33: Hinksey Hill

Verge Name	Hinksey Hill
Grid Reference	SP 512 034
Local Authority	Vale of White Horse
Parish	South Hinksey
Date of last survey	July 2024
Approximate Length	200m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Adjoining woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Seven sections of verge are present at this location in varying condition, with the verge overall in moderate condition. The larger triangle section and strip along the north western edge are considered to be in moderate condition with key indicator species still present but starting to be overtaken by scrub and tall grasses. The four smaller triangular sections located adjacent to each slip road are in poor condition and have been largely overtaken by scrub and rank vegetation, however some indicator species still remain. The section located on the interior island of the junction is in good ecological condition with finer grasses present and a good diversity of indicator species.

The key indicator species recorded across the seven verge sections include pyramidal orchid, wild parsnip, agrimony, field scabious, woolly thistle and common knapweed.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Oxfordshire Heights West Conservation Target Area

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.

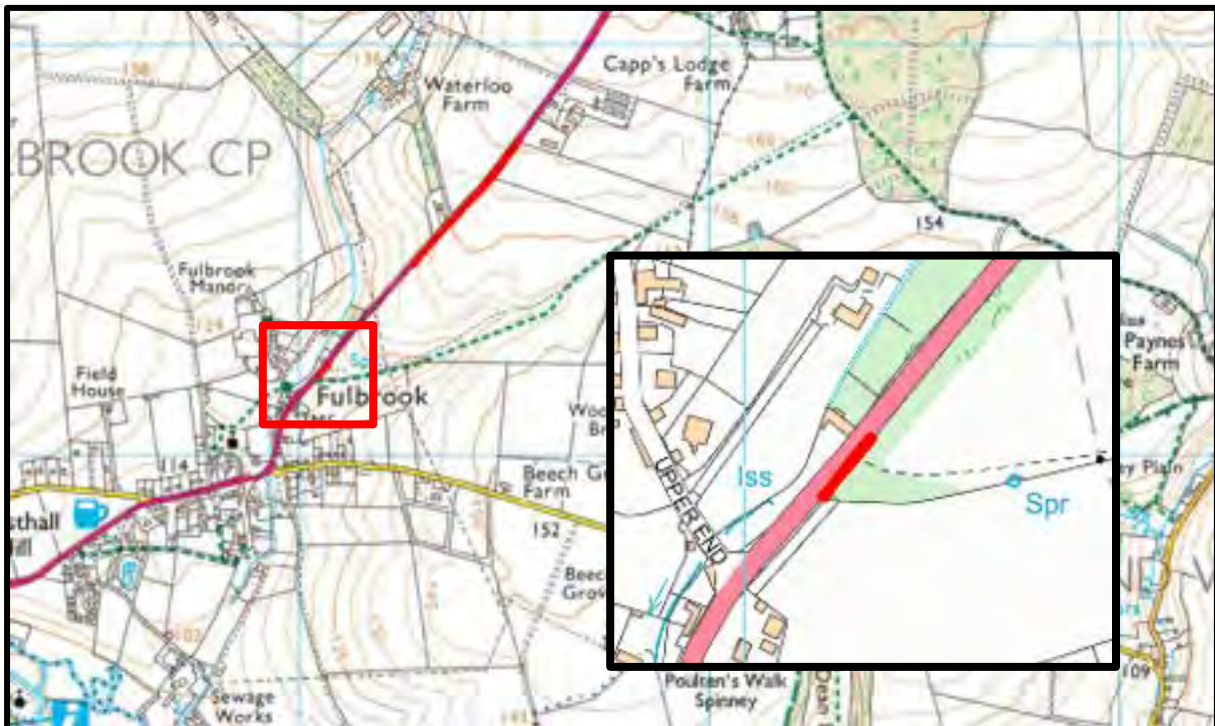


**Overview of verge sections in 2024**



## Verge 34: Fullbrook (1)

<b>Verge Name</b>	Fullbrook 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 263 135
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Fullbrook
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	400m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A flat, fairly wide verge alongside an A-road and adjacent to arable land. The grassland is generally in poor condition due to nutrient enrichment, however some key indicator species remain including meadow cranesbill and common knapweed. Field scabious, greater knapweed, lady's bedstraw, musk mallow, hairy St John's-wort, marjoram, viper's bugloss and sainfoin have been recorded previously but were not identified in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located 100m east of Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

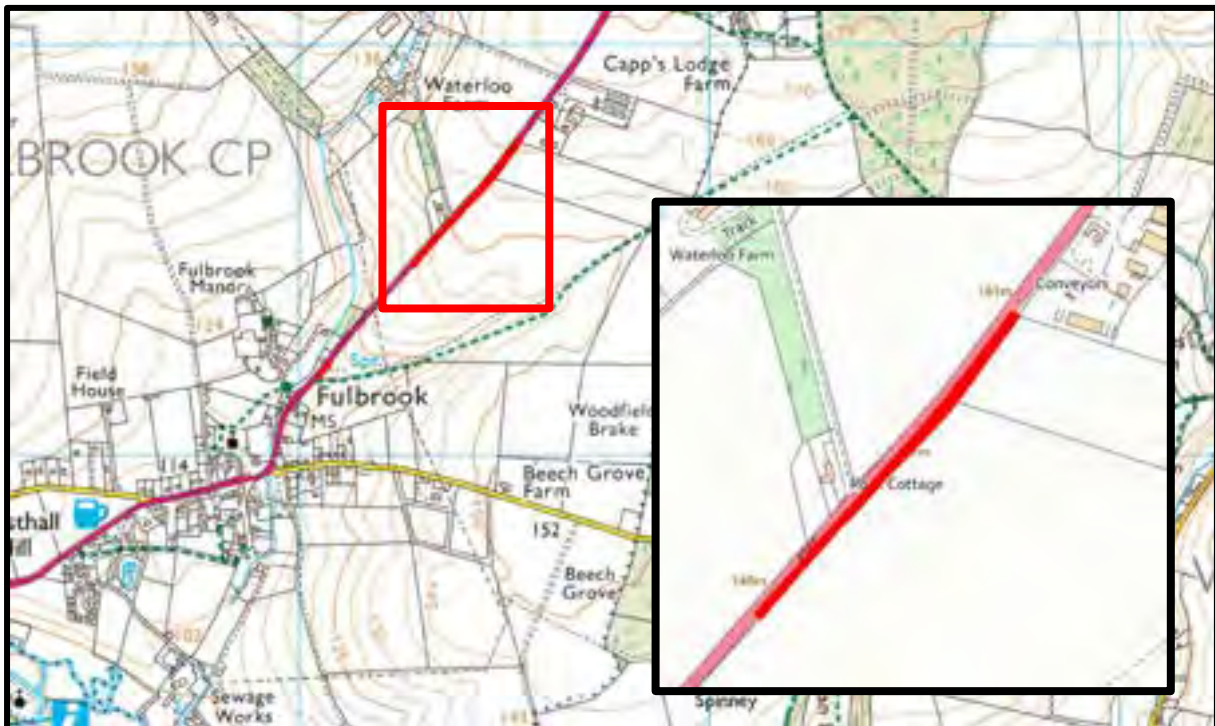
Installation of marker posts, the current marker posts are not in the correct location.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 35: Fullbrook (2)

<b>Verge Name</b>	Fullbrook 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 264 136
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Fullbrook
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A flat, fairly wide verge alongside an A road and adjacent to arable land. The grassland is generally in good condition with frequent indicator species such as common knapweed, yellow rattle, field scabious, meadow cranesbill, lady's bedstraw and marjoram. Viper's bugloss, greater knapweed, musk mallow, hairy St John's-wort and sainfoin have been recorded previously but not in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located 100m east of Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.

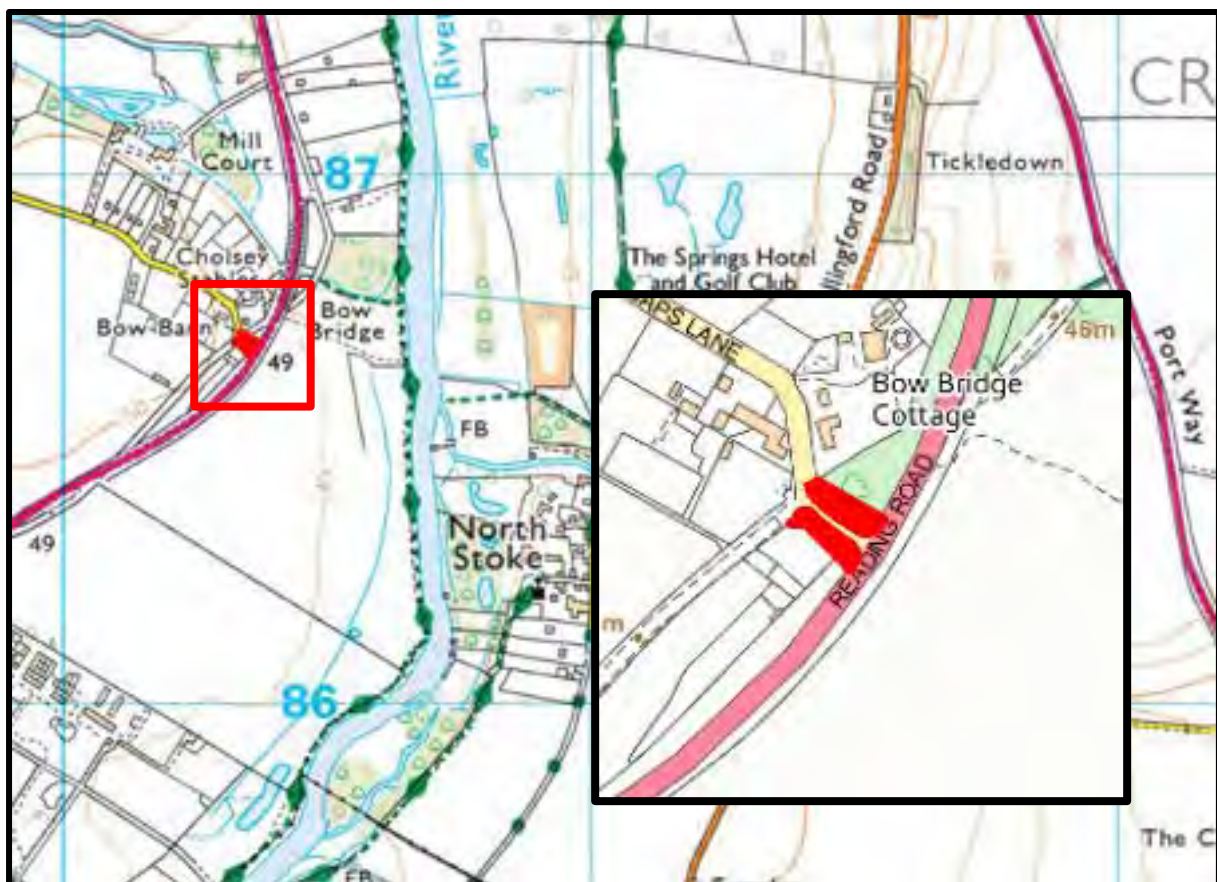


**Overview of verge in 2024**



## Verge 36: Caps Lane, Cholsey

<b>Verge Name</b>	Caps Lane, Cholsey
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 603 866
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Cholsey
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Chalk Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A flat verge on road junction, which extends into a triangular shaped patch of scrub on the northeast side, along the A road. The verge is in moderate condition, with encroachment by now mature scrub. Marjoram was the dominant species recorded with other species recorded including common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, agrimony and common centaury. Blue fleabane, ploughman's-spikenard, wild basil, wild carrot and large garden thyme were recorded during previous surveys but in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.

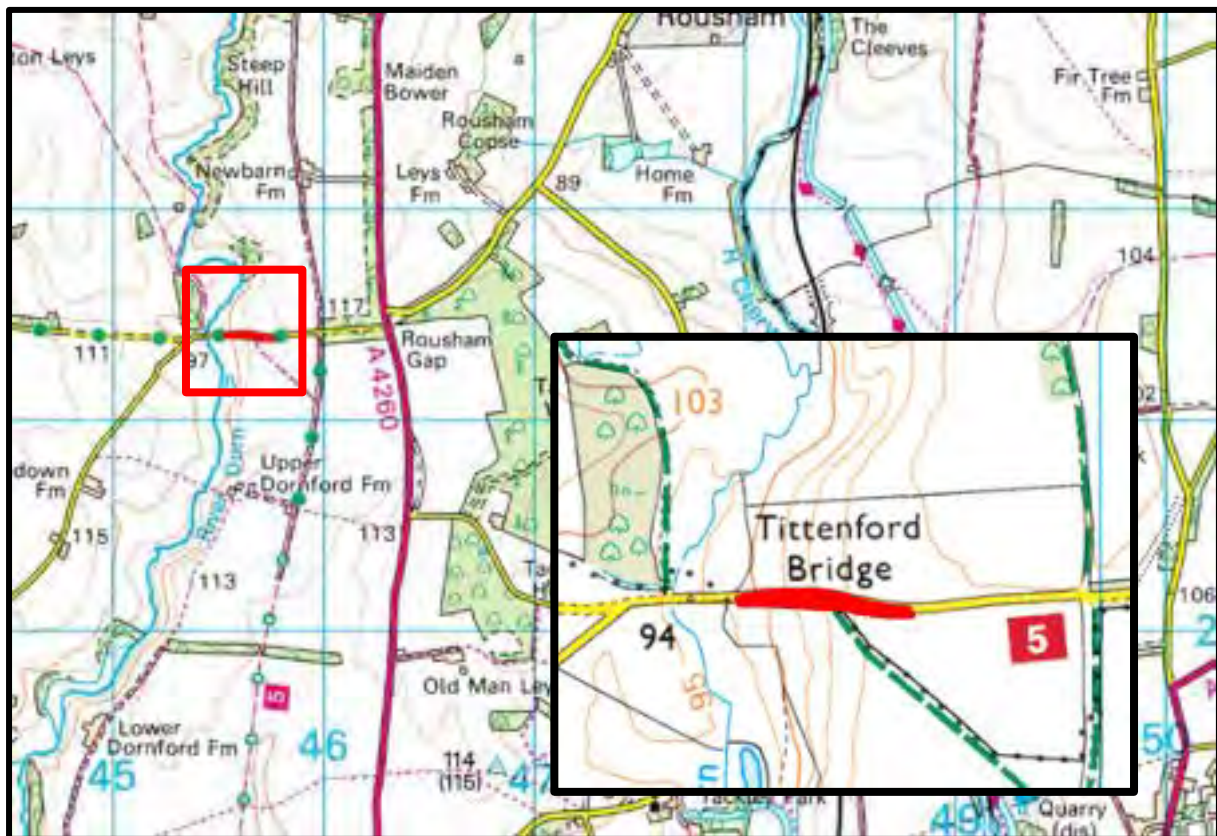


**Overview of verges in 2024**



## Verge 37: Tittenford Bridge

<b>Verge Name</b>	Tittenford Bridge
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 456 224
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Steeple Barton and Wootton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow and woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A short section of minor lane off A4260 at Glympton, with small bank to north side and mainly flat verge to south, which is raised above road level. Nearby to west is a stream valley and woodland.

The southern verge is in good ecological condition whereas the northern verge is in poor condition. Species recorded include common knapweed, woolly thistle, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, field scabious, hairy sedge, salad burnet and lady's bedstraw. Common rock-rose was recorded on the northern verge during previous surveys but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located on the edge of Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area. Priory Wood LWS is located 200m south of the verge.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verges in 2024**

## Verge 38: Bridewell

<b>Verge Name</b>	Bridewell
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 381 147
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	North Leigh
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow and woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A west-facing verge and bank in generally good condition with characteristic limestone species recorded including common knapweed, field scabious, cowslip, marjoram, salad burnet, pyramidal orchid, agrimony and common broomrape. Stemless thistle, burnet saxifrage, wild carrot and common restharrow were recorded during previous survey visits but not in 2024.

The island at the northern end had been recently mown during the survey visit in 2024 and was in poor condition, however some key indicator species were still observed.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.

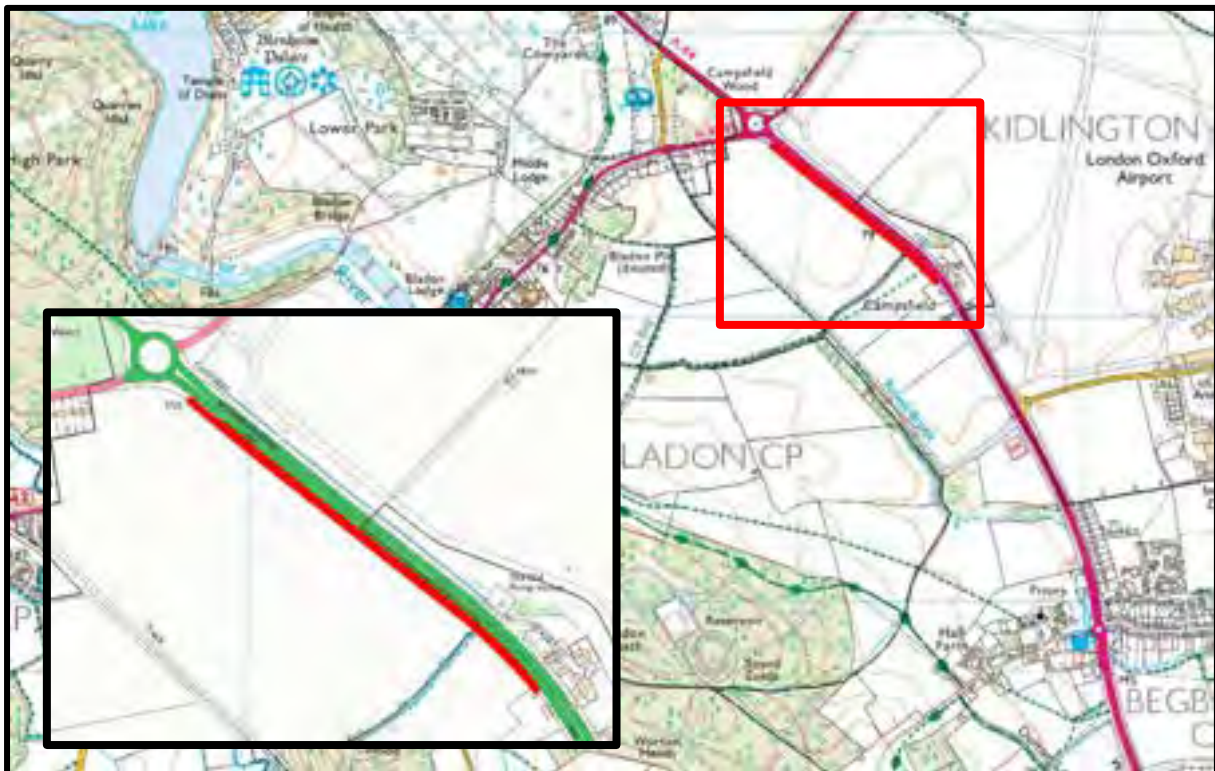


**Overview of verge in 2024**



## Verge 39: A44, Bladon

<b>Verge Name</b>	A44, Bladon
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 460 155
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Kidlington and Begbroke
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch and wall



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide, flat verge separated from A44 by a cycle path and narrow verge and bounded by a ditch bank and wall to the west side. During the survey visit in 2024 over half of the verge had been recently mown for the whole length with the remainder in poor condition. However, some key indicator species remain including common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, agrimony, field scabious and greater knapweed. Violet helleborine and common restharrow recorded previously were not identified during the survey undertaken in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.

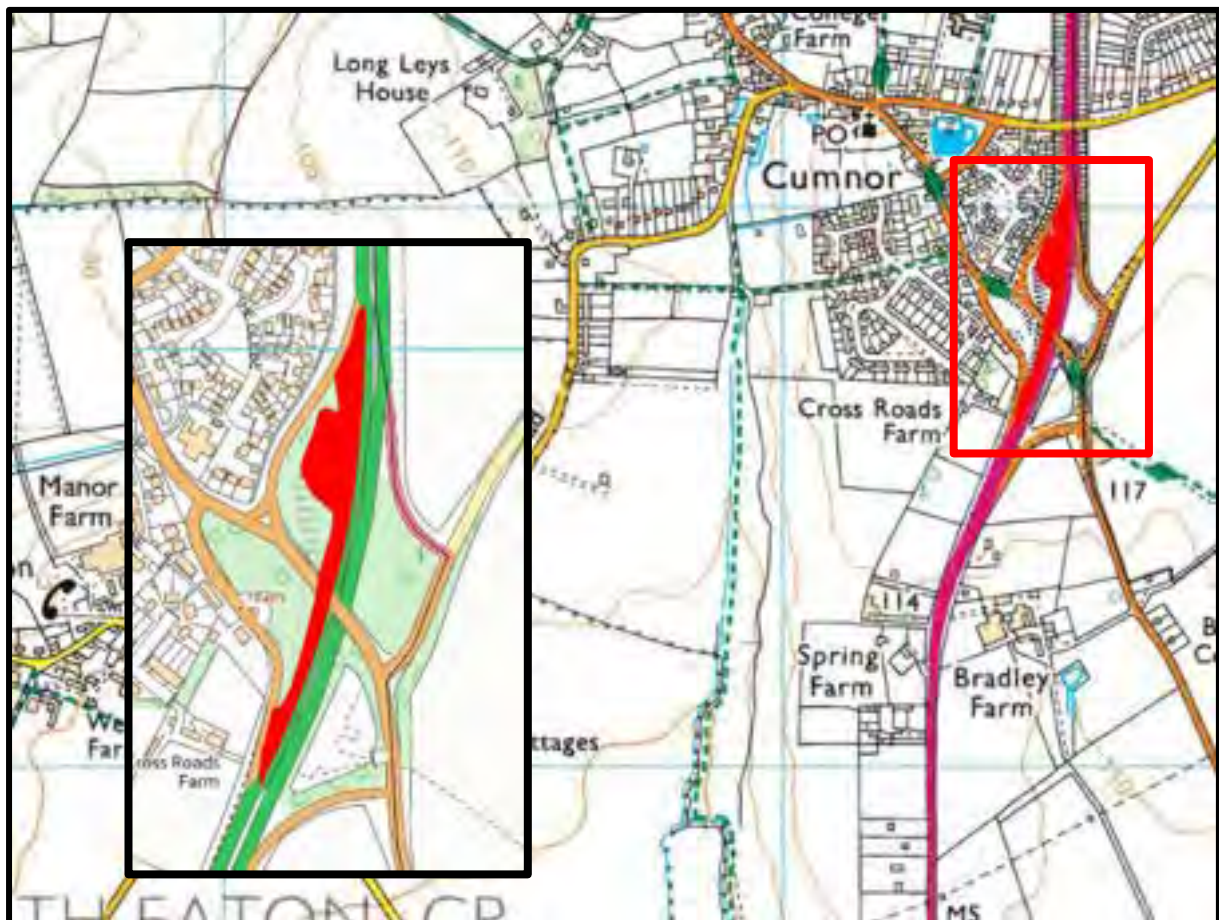


Overview of verge in 2024



## Verge 40: Cumnor

<b>Verge Name</b>	Cumnor
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 464 038
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Cumnor
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	50m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub and woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide verge adjacent to main A420 and in good condition. Species recorded include common knapweed, yellow rattle, cowslip and pyramidal orchid. Fairy flax, wild carrot, wild basil and wild parsnip were recorded during previous survey visits but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

Within Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area, Long Copse and Pasture Near Chawley Local Wildlife Sites are ~900m to north-east. Cumnor Site of Special Scientific Interest is ~400m to the south; Hurst Hill SSSI is ~900m to the east.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

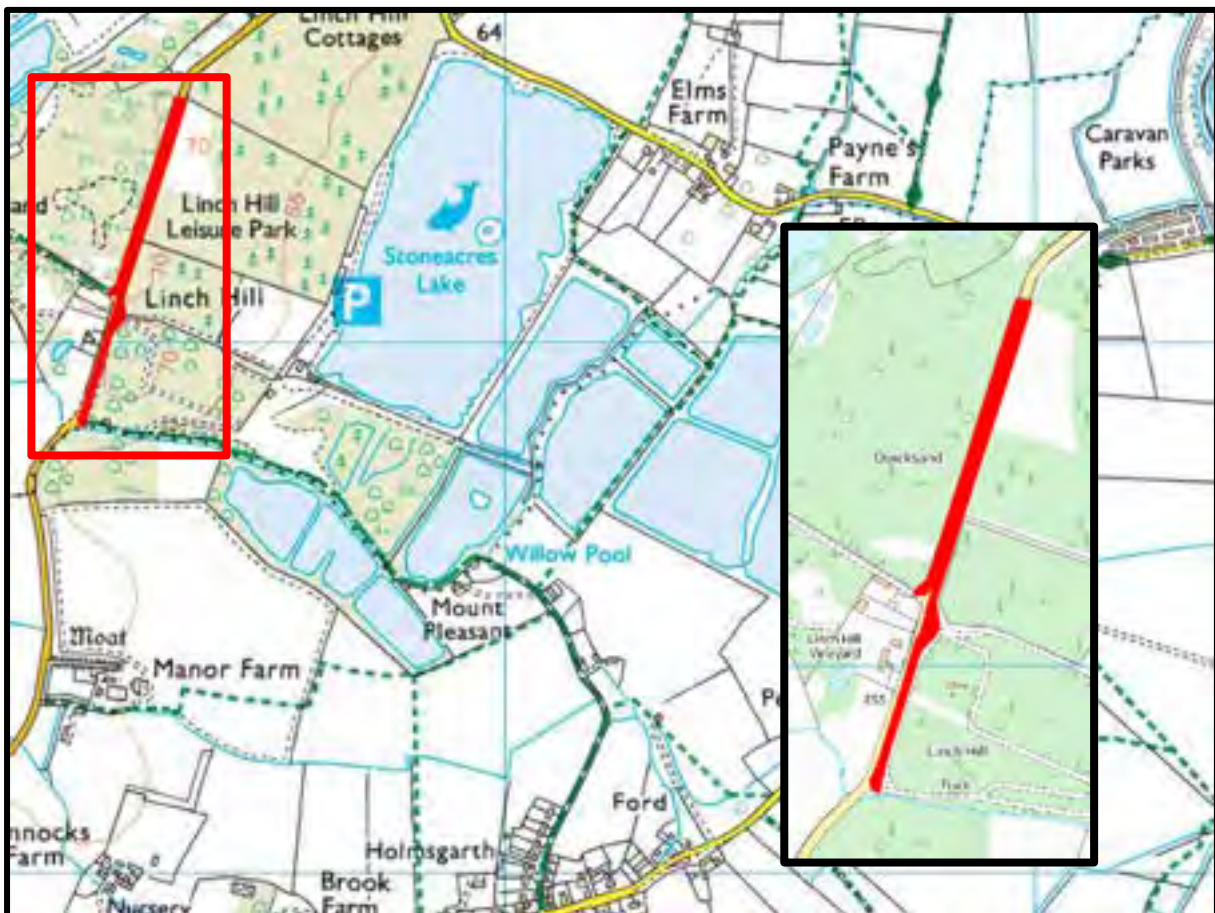
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 41: Linch Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Linch Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 413 041
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Stanton Harcourt
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	400m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A relatively flat verge adjacent to former sand quarries, on dry, calcareous soils. The eastern verge is good condition however the western verge is in poor condition. Species recorded in 2024 include lady's bedstraw, pyramidal orchid, common restharrow, common knapweed, woolly thistle, greater knapweed, agrimony, yellow rattle and wild parsnip.

The verge is listed for the presence of the very rare Cotswold penny-cress, however this species was not recorded in the survey undertaken in 2024. Dwarf thistle and blue fleabane were also not recorded in 2024 but were recorded during previous visits.



## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The site is within the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area, Dix Pit Local Wildlife Site is the nearest and is ~450m to the north-west.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

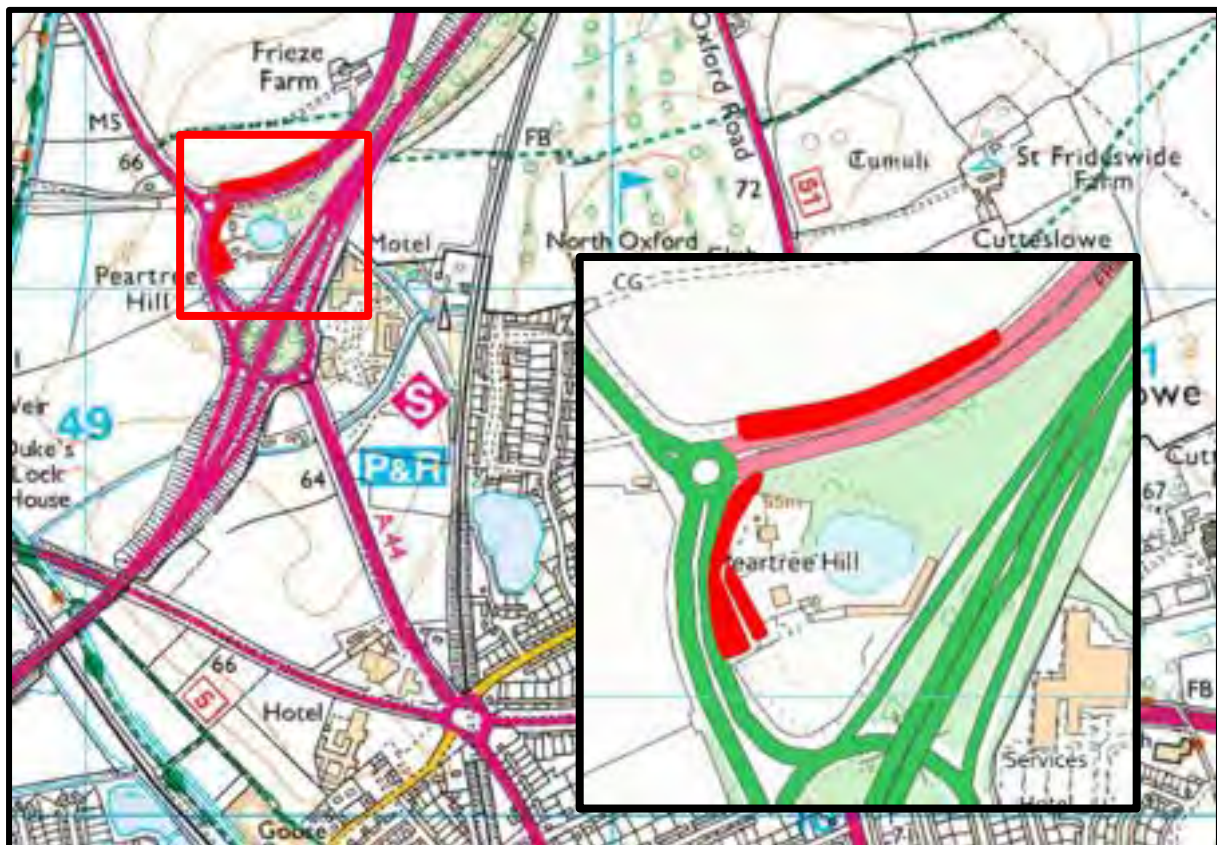
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verges in 2024**

## Verge 42: Peartree

<b>Verge Name</b>	Peartree
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 492 111
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Gosford and Water Eaton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland and scrub



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Two sections of verge supporting limestone grassland in poor condition. However, some indicator species remain including common knapweed, wild parsnip, hairy tare, common broomrape, narrow-leaved bird's-foot trefoil, agrimony, salad burnet and pyramidal orchid. Bee orchid recorded previously was not recorded in 2024.

The northern section of this verge has largely scrubbed over and requires extensive scrub clearance. The southern section of the verge has been impacted by road works in 2023, but should recover over time.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

Part of the Nature Recovery Network core zone.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.

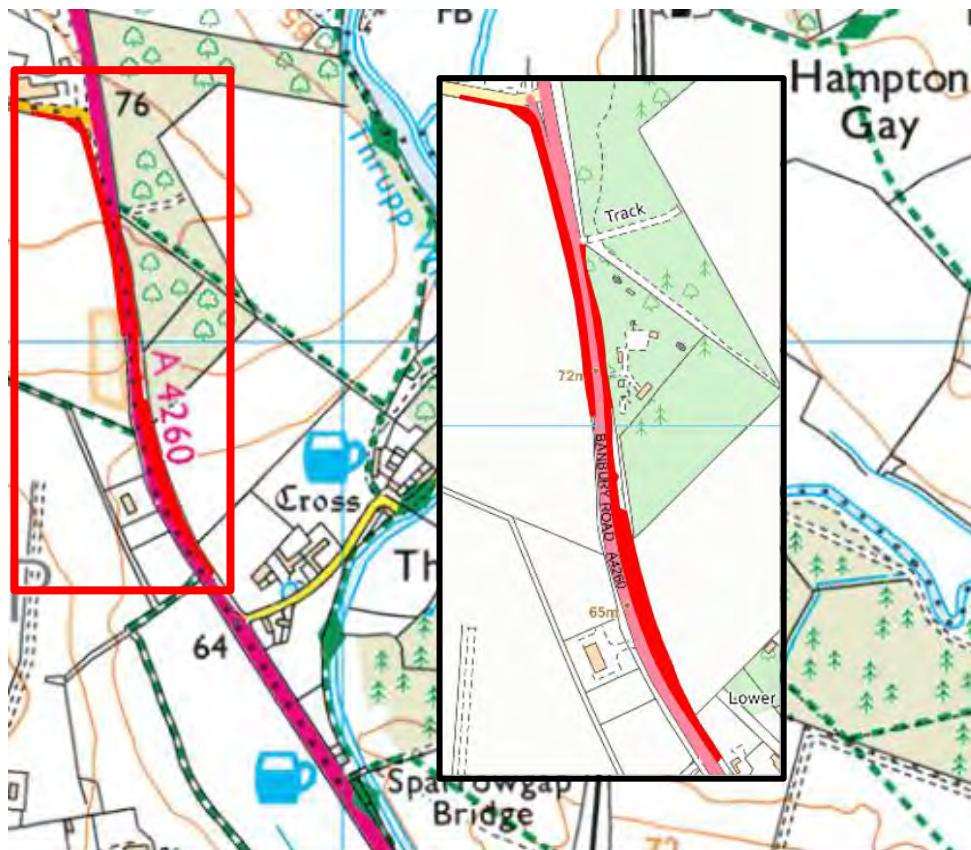


North (above) and south (below) sides of verge in 2024



## Verge 43: A4260 Thrupp

<b>Verge Name</b>	A4260 Thrupp
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 477 160
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Kiddlington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Two sections of verge generally in poor condition. The verge supports a number of limestone grassland species including field scabious, agrimony, common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, lady's bedstraw, cowslip, greater knapweed, wild parsnip, common restharrow, burnet saxifrage and notably lizard orchid. Common broomrape has been recorded at this site previously but this species was not recorded in 2024.

During the 2024 survey visit it was noted that the majority of the western section had been recently mown.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located ~500m west of Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area and ~30m south-west of Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

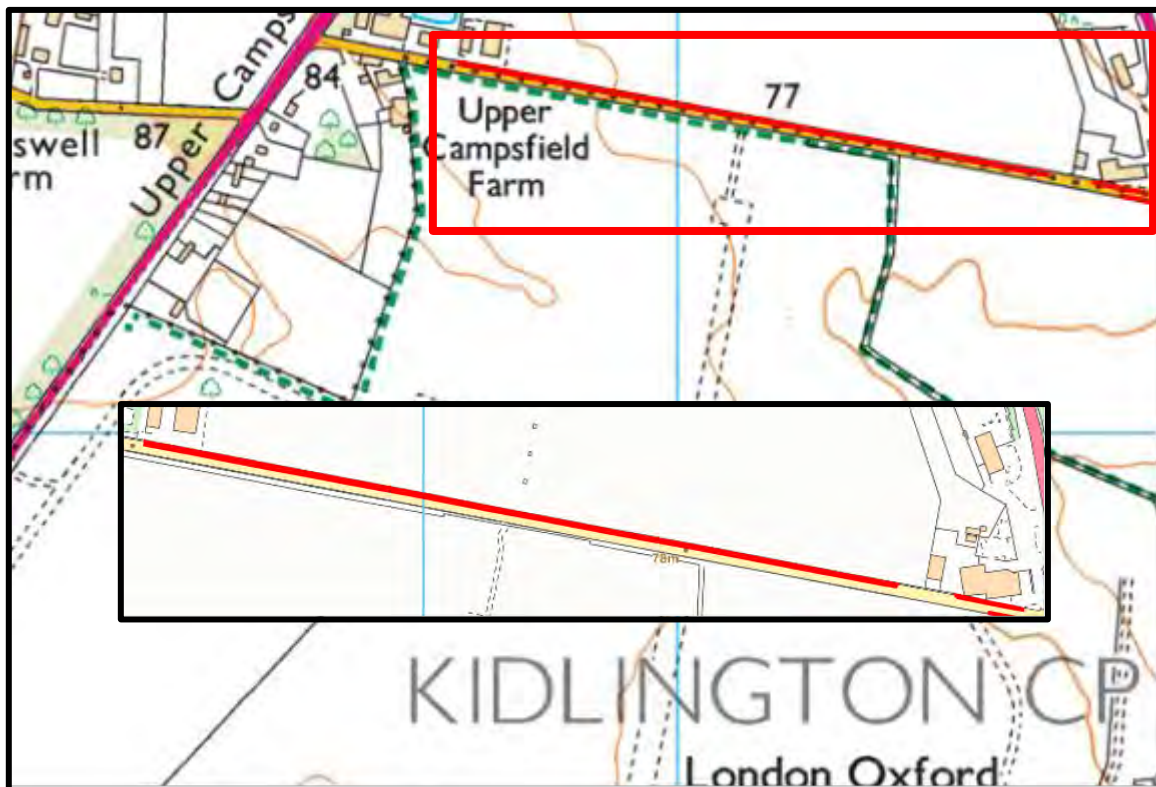
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 44: Straight Mile

Verge Name	Straight Mile
Grid Reference	SP 470 164
Local Authority	Cherwell District Council
Parish	Kiddlington
Date of last survey	June 2017
Approximate Length	800m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Adjacent hedgerow with trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A flat narrow verge supporting limestone grassland located between arable land and an airport. Species recorded include common restharrow, field scabious, common broomrape and lizard orchid.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located ~560m west of Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area with Bunkers Hill Quarry Local Wildlife Site to north-east and Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site to the south.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2017**



## Verge 45: Adjacent Black Ley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Adjacent Black Ley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 521 181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Bletchington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	April 2017
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch, bank and hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide, flat verge supporting limestone grassland with a deep ditch, bank and hedgerow including several mature oak standards. Adjoining land to north is arable, with woodland located opposite the verge. Species recorded include early-purple orchid, tormentil, cowslip, meadow cranesbill, meadowsweet and wild angelica.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

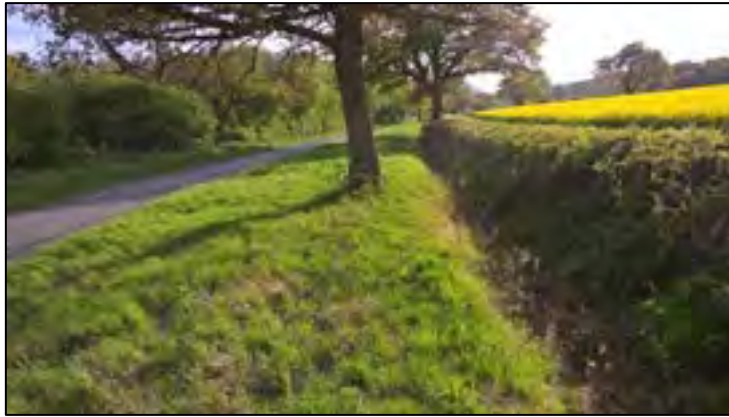
The verge is located within Kirtlington and Bletchington Parks and Woods Conservation Target Area and is adjacent Black Ley woodland Local Wildlife Site



## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2017**

## Verge 46: Upper Campsfield Road

<b>Verge Name</b>	Upper Campsfield Road
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 467 167
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch, hedgerow and scattered trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

A wide verge adjacent to arable land and generally in poor ecological condition due to dominant rank grasses present. However, some species characteristic of limestone grassland remain including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, common knapweed, hairy tare, lady's bedstraw and burnet saxifrage. Field scabious and greater knapweed were not recorded in 2024 but have been recorded during previous visits.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

### Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

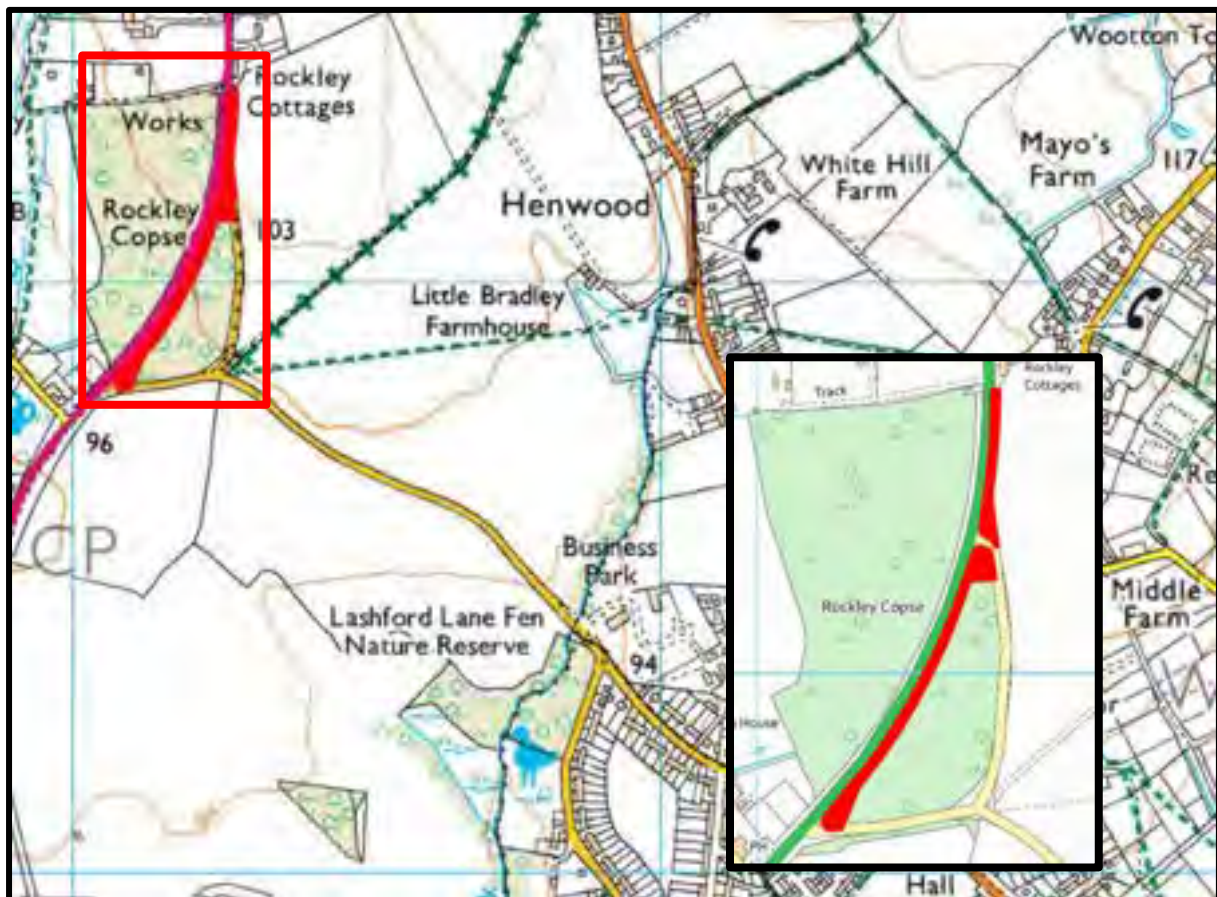
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 47: Rockley Copse

Verge Name	Rockley Copse
Grid Reference	SP 462 022
Local Authority	Vale of the White Horse District Council
Parish	Besselsleigh
Date of last survey	June 2022
Approximate Length	250m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Adjacent treeline and dry stone wall



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Rich flora dominated by dry, limestone grassland species including large populations of field scabious, common broomrape, pyramidal orchid and common calamint. Also present is greater knapweed, lady's bedstraw, hedge bedstraw, blue fleabane, hairy violet. Of note is the large population field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) and dependant invertebrates, the large scabious mining bee (*Andrena hattorfiana*), brassy longhorn moth (*Nemophora metallica*) and its parasitoid Ichneumon wasp *Stilbops ruficornis*. The verge is backed by a dry-stone wall (collapsing in parts) which will provide refuge habitat for invertebrates using the verge flora.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within Oxford Heights West CTA.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.

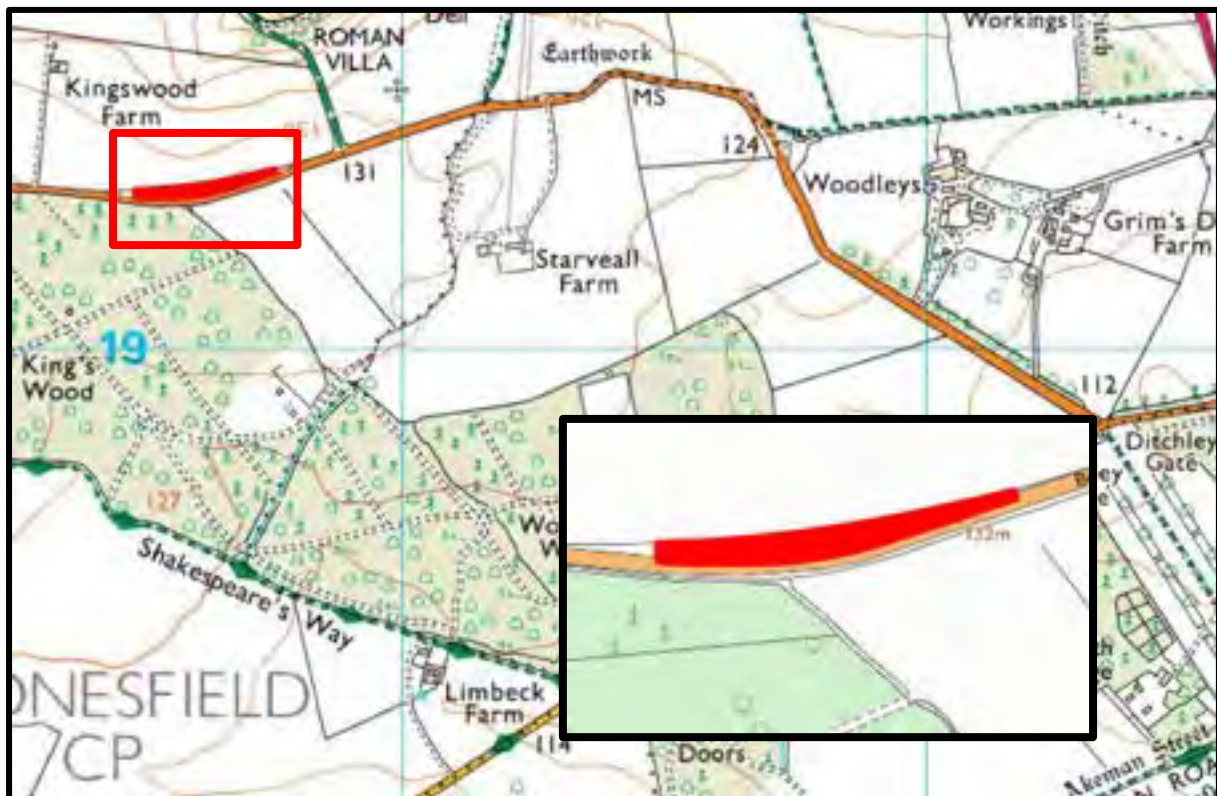


**Overview of verge in 2022**



## Verge 48: Stonesfield

Verge Name	Stonesfield
Grid Reference	SP 406 193
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Stonesfield
Date of last survey	June 2023
Approximate Length	250m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Adjacent hedgerow with trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Rich flora dominated by dry, limestone grassland species including populations of agrimony, bluebells, pyramidal orchid and field scabious. Also present is greater knapweed, yellow rattle and dog's mercury. Of note is the large population of wild marjoram and hedge bedstraw.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located within Blenheim and Ditchley Parks CTA and opposite King's Wood replanted ancient woodland.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

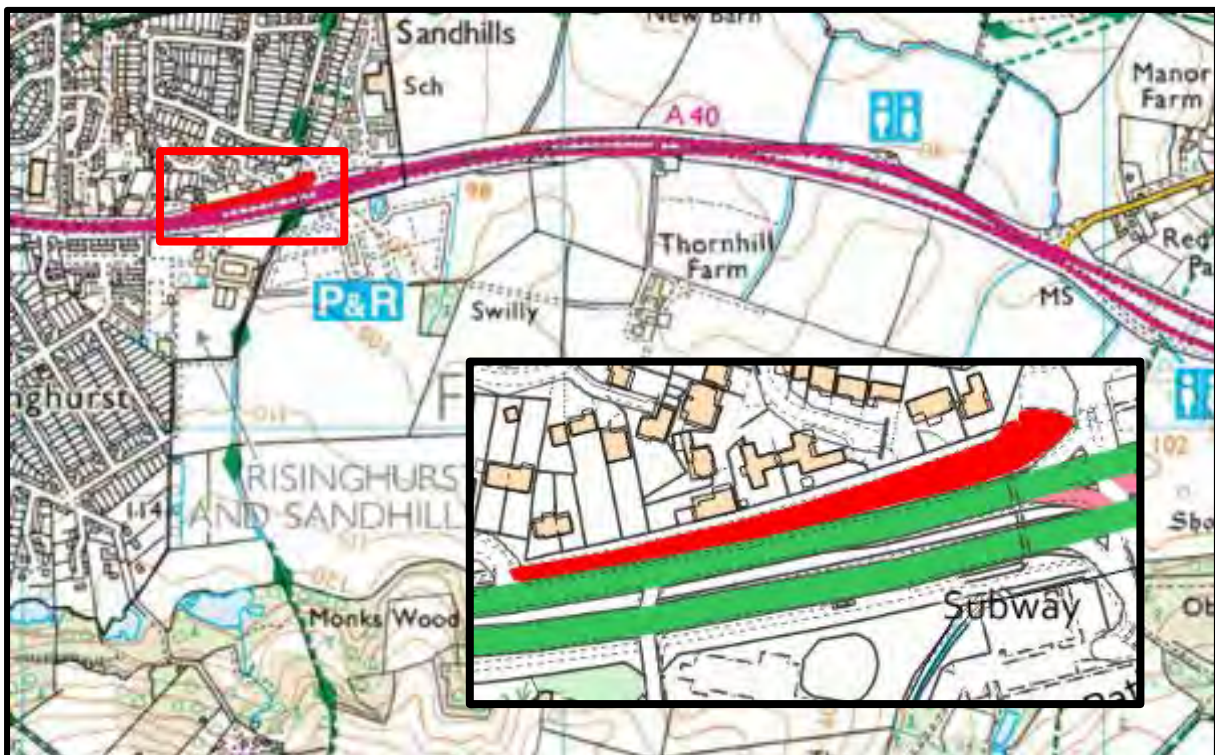
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2023**

## Verge 49: A40 Sandhills

Verge Name	A40 Sandhills
Grid Reference	SP 565 074
Local Authority	Oxford City District Council
Parish	Risinghurst and Sandhills
Date of last survey	June 2021
Approximate Length	200m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Adjacent scrub and hedgerow with trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland including populations of quaking grass, pyramidal orchid, wild carrot, lady's bedstraw, field scabious, wild marjoram, common broomrape and lesser bird's-foot trefoil.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None

### Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub control and installation of marker posts.

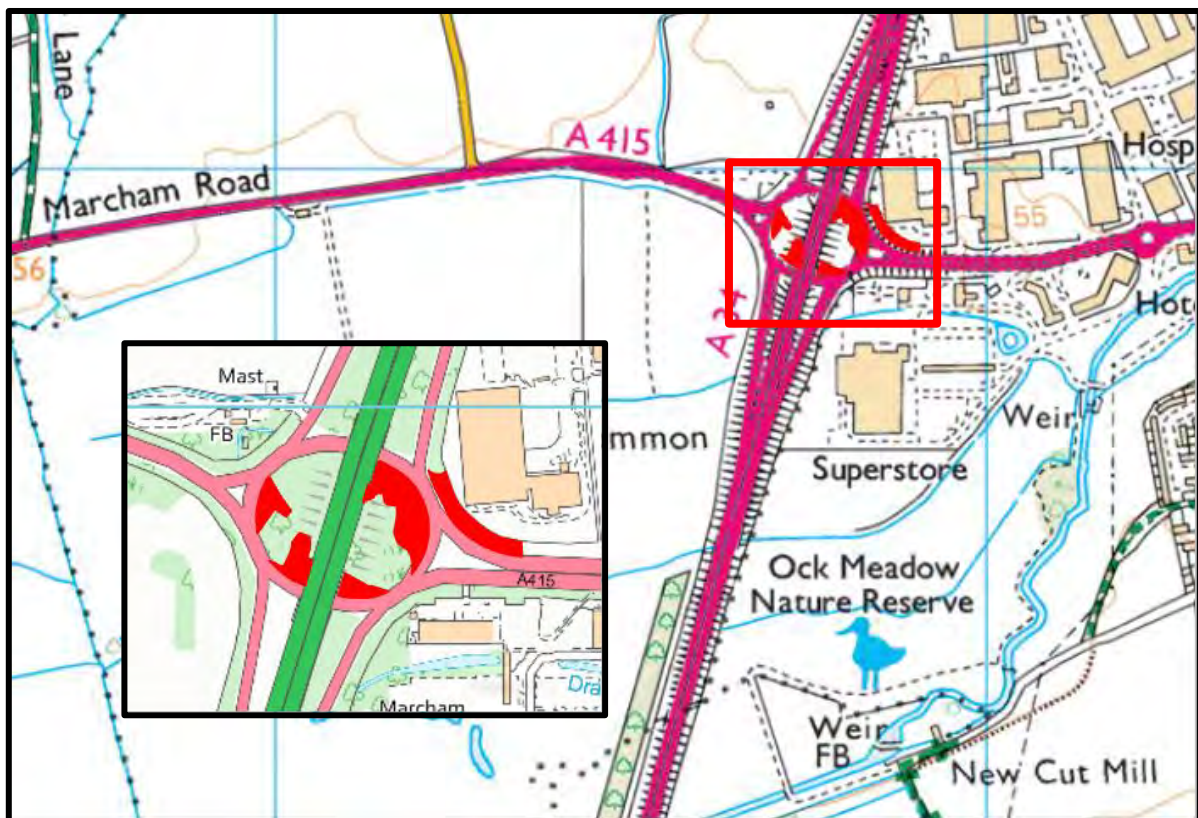


**Overview of verge in 2022**



## Verge 50: Marcham Interchange

<b>Verge Name</b>	Marcham Interchange
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 477 969
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	St Helens Without and Abingdon on Thames
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2023
<b>Approximate Length</b>	450m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub, deciduous woodland and lines of trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Consisting of five verge sections, the habitat consists of species rich limestone grassland including populations of fleabane, mullein, common broomrape, burnet saxifrage, common knapweed, glaucous sedge and meadowsweet. Of particular note is the large population of pyramidal orchids.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.



## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2023**

## Verge 51: Milton Hill

Verge Name	Milton Hill
Grid Reference	SU 476 912
Local Authority	Vale of White Horse District Council
Parish	Milton
Date of last survey	June 2023
Approximate Length	200m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Dry ditch with adjacent scrub and line of trees



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland including populations of sweet vernal grass, wild basil, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, common restharrow and common toadflax.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

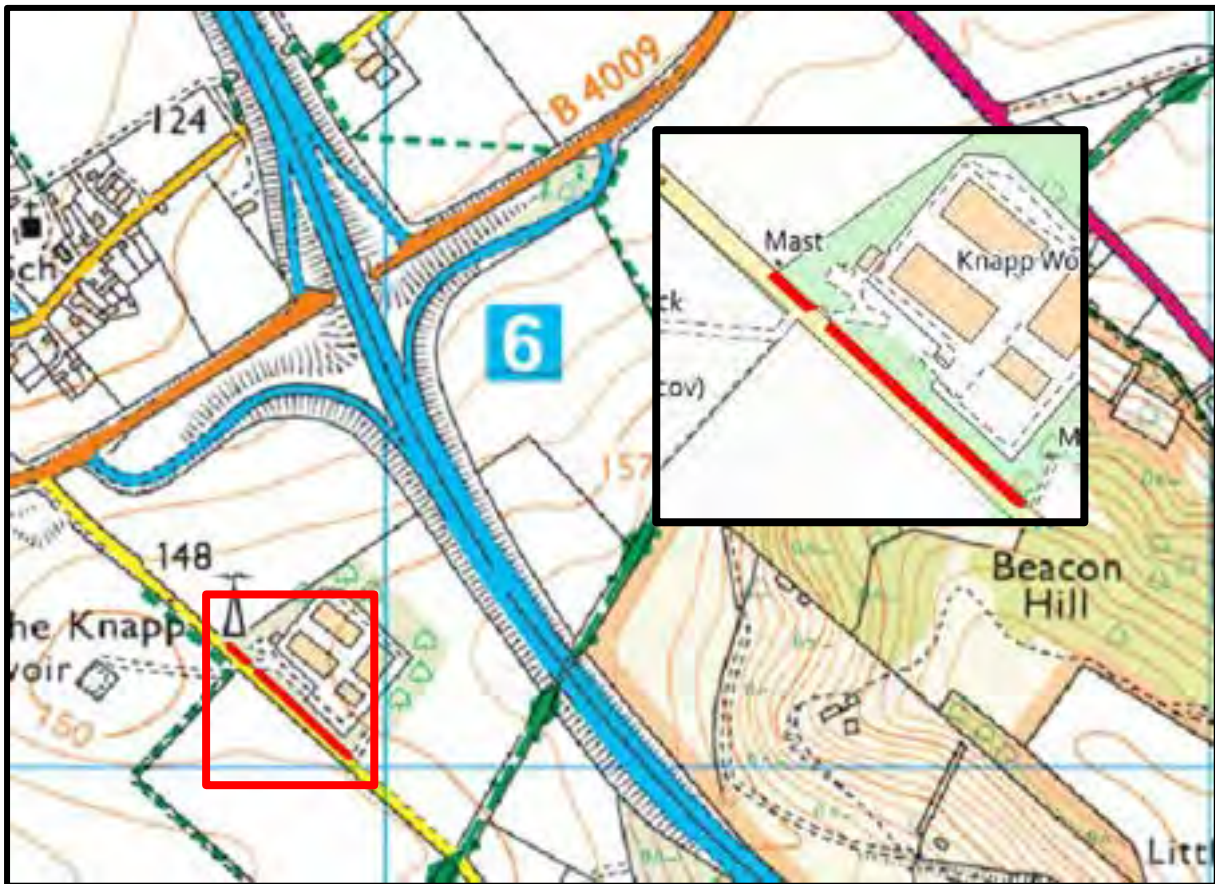
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2023**

## Verge 52: Lewknor

<b>Verge Name</b>	Lewknor
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 718 970
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Lewknor
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub and hedgerow



© Crown copyright

### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland in moderate condition including populations of common knapweed, marjoram, bird's-foot trefoil, pyramidal orchid, agrimony, lady's bedstraw and broomrape.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located approximately 500m north-west of Aston Rowant SPA and Aston Rowant SSSI as well as approximately 400m north-west of Aston Rowant NNR and Chilterns Escarpment North CTA.



## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**



## PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 24 September 2025

### Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with respect to Part Night Lighting

#### Report by Director for Environment and Highways

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to
  - I. NOTE the Cabinet Report
  - II. Agree any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet

#### Executive Summary

2. Following the Cabinet Member decision in November 2024<sup>1</sup> to defer the previous part-night lighting proposals, and a subsequent report to the Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee in February 2025<sup>2</sup> outlining the part-night lighting revised framework approach, this report presents the proposed new policy and approach to part-night lighting following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback. The report outlines the concerns raised regarding part-night lighting, as well as its levels of support.
3. Following the stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback, the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy, and its supporting Electrical Procedure, equalities impact assessment (EIA) and climate impact assessment (CIA) have also been updated. The previous Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy was agreed by Cabinet on 18 October 2022 and was due for review.
4. It was previously estimated that part-night lighting could save up to approx. £400k and 400Tc02e of carbon annually if it was delivered Oxfordshire wide. To provide a more granular understanding of benefits with the scheme by scheme basis approach now promoted, three part-night lighting scheme desktop case studies have been carried out using the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework ('the Framework'), to show what the potential cost and carbon savings of part-night lighting could be scheme by scheme (Annex G).
5. The policy update is to act as an enabler for those communities who wish to apply for part night lighting in their locality. There is no council funded

---

<sup>1</sup> [Decision - Dark Skies - Street Lighting Illumination Proposals | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Agenda for Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 5 February 2025, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

programme to cover the costs of implementing part night lighting. As such, any associated costs for implementation will need to be sourced by those parties applying for the initiative in their locality.

## Financial Implications

6. The development of this part-night lighting implementation framework and its associated engagement has been funded through existing service budgets.
7. The previous countywide framework, is now, through this policy proposed to be replaced by a community based framework and as such the previously estimated energy saving of £400k is now not realisable. The cost of implementing changes to the streetlights to a part-night lighting regime, estimated at £50 per light, will be funded by the scheme applicants. As such there are no planned costs to be incurred by the Council.
8. The new framework, if implemented, would mean that savings would be incremental and realised on a scheme by scheme basis. Electricity cost savings. At this time it is difficult to estimate the predicted annual benefit, as there is no firm understanding of the volume and/or the timeframe of individual scheme applications.

9. The table below summaries the information from the case studies in the attached annexes:

Catchment	Nos of lights changed	Cost of change £50/light	Potential Annual Saving	kWh saving	CO2e saving
Rural	46	£2,300	-£341	1,420	0.28
Urban	102	£5,100	-£3,340	13,952	2.73
Residential	165	£8,250	-£1,515	6,313	1.23

10. Any future commitment to provide funding by the council into a programme for part night lighting will be considered as part of the normal budget setting process.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Strategic Finance Business Partner,  
[rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Legal Implications

11. There is no general requirement or obligation for the council to light the highway. Oxfordshire has set its own policy based on the council's priorities and general guidance and good practice.
12. The legislation and guidance to which the council must have regard when exercising its power to light the highway includes:

- a. Section 97 of the *Highways Act 1980* gives the council the power to provide street lighting.
  - b. Regulation 5 of *The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999* requires that road humps are illuminated.
  - c. Section 17 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* places on the council the duty to consider crime and disorder implications of exercising its various functions.
  - d. Section 39 of the *Road Traffic Act 1988* imposes upon the council a responsibility for taking measures to prevent road traffic accidents.
  - e. The *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016* require some traffic signs to be directly illuminated when within a system of street lighting. Traffic sign illumination will not be affected by this initiative.
  - f. The design requirements in BS 5489 allow road lighting levels to be lowered during periods of low traffic volumes
13. The proposed policy and Framework, which enable parish and town councils or local governance authorities to request changes to the operational provision of street lighting, are within the powers of the council.

Comments checked by:

[Jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk), Head of Law (Environmental)  
[jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Legal)

Paul Farmer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex:

Annex 1-Report to Cabinet

Annex A– Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy & Electrical Procedure  
Annex B – Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework  
Annex C– Part Night Lighting EIA  
Annex D – Part Night Lighting CIA  
Annex E– Stakeholder Engagement Report  
Annex F– Part-Night Lighting and Street Lighting Consultation report.  
Annex G – Part Night Lighting Case Studies

Background papers: None

Other Documents: [Decision - Dark Skies - Street Lighting Illumination Proposals | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

[Agenda for Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 5 February 2025, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Contact Officer:

Sean Rooney, Head of Highways & Road Safety  
sean.rooney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2025

**CABINET**  
**21 October 2025**

**Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with  
respect to Part Night Lighting**

**Report by Director of Environment & Highways**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - A) APPROVE the updated Streetlighting and Illuminated Assets Policy and supporting Electrical Procedure (Annex A).
  - B) APPROVE the adoption of the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework (Annex B), following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback (Annexes E&F).

**Executive Summary**

2. Following the Cabinet Member decision in November 2024<sup>1</sup> to defer the previous part-night lighting proposals, and a subsequent report to the Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee in February 2025<sup>2</sup> outlining the part-night lighting revised framework approach, this report presents the proposed new policy and approach to part-night lighting following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback. The report outlines the concerns raised regarding part-night lighting, as well as its levels of support.
3. Following the stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback, the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy, and its supporting Electrical Procedure, equalities impact assessment (EIA) and climate impact assessment (CIA) have also been updated. The previous Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy was agreed by Cabinet on 18 October 2022 and was due for review.
4. It was previously estimated that part-night lighting could save up to approx. £400k and 400Tc02e of carbon annually if it was delivered Oxfordshire wide. To provide a more granular understanding of benefits with the scheme by scheme basis approach now promoted, three part-night lighting scheme desktop case studies have been carried out using the proposed Part-Night Lighting

---

<sup>1</sup> [Decision - Dark Skies - Street Lighting Illumination Proposals | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Agenda for Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 5 February 2025, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council](#)



Implementation Framework ('the Framework'), to show what the potential cost and carbon savings of part-night lighting could be scheme by scheme (Annex G).

5. The policy update is to act as an enabler for those communities who wish to apply for part night lighting in their locality. There is no council funded programme to cover the costs of implementing part night lighting. As such, any associated costs for implementation will need to be sourced by those parties applying for the initiative in their locality.

## **Background and Context**

6. Oxfordshire County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of streetlights in Oxfordshire. Under the Highway Act 1980 the council has the power, but not the duty, to provide street lighting.
7. Part-night lighting is the practice of switching off streetlights during quieter night-time hours. Over half of UK councils have introduced part-night lighting in their areas. This measure is primary aimed at saving energy, reducing carbon emissions and reducing costs, but there are clear environmental benefits which support nighttime pollinators and bio-diversity gains.
8. In November 2024 a part-night lighting proposal "Proposed highway street lighting profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels (part-night lighting)" and its supporting EIA, was presented for decision at Cabinet Member Decision (CMD). A high volume of concerns were received about the proposal from Councillors, community groups and stakeholders, so the decision on the proposal was deferred with a request that a revised approach for part-night lighting be developed which involved much greater input from stakeholders and the public.
9. Following the CMD feedback, the revised approach was presented to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 February 2025. The proposal outlined using key elements: data and insights, a two-phase engagement and consultation process, understanding impacts and risks, and using updated implementation processes to review how part-night lighting could be delivered in Oxfordshire.
10. This report details the work carried out to complete the review, and how the review outputs are feeding into, and support, an updated Framework proposal which includes the updated streetlighting policy, and its supporting EIA, and CIA's, with example case studies to provide context for potential cost and carbon savings.

## **Proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework**

11. After drawing on best practice principles developed for the 20mph programme and engaging with stakeholders and holding a public consultation, a revised proposal for the Framework has been developed. It proposes that part night lighting schemes in Oxfordshire would only be promoted where:
- Schemes are individually requested by local town or parish councils, or local governance authorities, with support from OCC councillor.
  - The part night lighting exemption criteria does not apply.
  - Crime and road safety data have been reviewed to assess levels of risk.
  - Local residents and key stakeholders within the proposed scheme areas have been consulted on individual schemes via a public consultation.
  - Any and all risk feedback from key stakeholders, police, community safety groups, transport providers, and the nighttime economy, have been evaluated, in terms of probability and mitigated, where appropriate

If the above are met, then officers would prepare a report with recommendations for consideration, on whether or not to proceed, to be determined at Oxfordshire County Councils delegated decision by Cabinet Member for Transport Management.

12. The Framework is detailed in Annex B. It follows a six-step engagement process. The relevant Parish and Town Council considers the urban or rural geographical positioning of the part-night lighting scheme within their area first, with engagement with their residents and stakeholders. Each scheme would also be considered with Thames Valley Police input and analysed using the police crime and road safety data, also using Street Safe ([StreetSafe | Police.uk](https://www.street-safe.co.uk/)) data to flag up any local crime or safety concerns. Only after going through each of the process steps would a scheme be considered for Delegated Decision.

## Stakeholder Engagement

13. During the spring of 2025, engagement activities was conducted through workshops with various stakeholder groups. These workshops included a diverse range of key stakeholders to ensure equitable representation across Oxfordshire:
- Representatives of community groups
  - District, town and parish councillors
  - Emergency services and community safety teams
  - Representatives of women and girls groups
  - Employers, including of shift and nighttime economy workers.
14. The objectives of the workshops were to gather stakeholder views and concerns regarding part-night lighting and share the proposed Framework. It was important to hear stakeholders feedback on the potential impacts of part-night lighting, especially from stakeholders who represent those with protected characteristics, or those who are 'at higher risk' from crime or harm in our communities.

15. The same five key questions were asked at each of the stakeholder workshops to generate and focus discussion, and the feedback from the workshops highlighted several key themes:
- **Safety Concerns:** Stakeholders, particularly representatives of women and girls groups, and community emergency services highlighted the potential negative impact of part night lighting on safety. Concerns were raised about increased crime rates, fear of walking in unlit areas, and the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, disabled or elderly individuals, and nighttime shift workers.
  - **Psychological Impact:** The psychological safety provided by street lighting was a recurring theme. Participants emphasised that well-lit areas contribute to a sense of security and reduce the need for extra planning and behaviour change precautions when going out at night.
  - **Environmental and Biodiversity Benefits:** Some stakeholders, particularly district, town, and parish councillors, valued the environmental benefits of reduced light pollution and the positive impact on biodiversity.
  - **Tailored Solutions:** There was a strong call for locally tailored solutions that consider the specific needs of different local community areas, including public transport routes, and areas with high footfall, or nighttime economy locations.
  - **Community Engagement:** Effective communication and engagement with residents is considered crucial. Stakeholders stressed the importance of engaging local communities and ensuring their feedback and local knowledge is used to inform part-night lighting decision-making and implementation.
16. In conclusion, the stakeholder groups acknowledged that while part-night street lighting has the potential to support the council's net zero ambitions and improve the night-time environment for bio-diversity gains, community safety is paramount, and it is essential to carefully consider the safety and well-being of all residents, especially those who are more vulnerable, before implementing a part-night lighting scheme.
17. The stakeholder feedback has clearly indicated that locally tailored schemes that consider safety first, with high levels of community engagement are key to the successful implementation of part-night lighting. The full stakeholder engagement report is available in Annex E

## Public Consultation

18. The public consultation was held via 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' from Monday 9 June to Sunday 6 July 2025. The consultation asked for views on the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework, and for views on part-night lighting in general.

19. The consultation received a high level of engagement, with 1,284 responses. The full consultation report is available as Annex F, with summaries provided below.

## Consultation findings

### Main areas of support

20. There is a clear understanding of part-night lighting's environmental benefits, with a high level of support for part-night lighting in Oxfordshire. This is evidenced through the responses to several of the consultation questions as detailed below.
21. There was a higher percentage of completely 'positive' and 'mostly positive' responses (646 / 50.4%) compared to those who answered, 'mostly negative' or 'completely negative' (562 / 43.9%) to the question; *"After reading the draft framework and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part-night lighting in Oxfordshire?"*
22. A higher proportion of respondent's feedback was that they did not think we need to change the proposed Framework exemptions, with 615 / 48.1% answering 'No', compared to the 347 / 27.9% who answered 'yes', to the question; *"Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?"*
23. 566 respondents (44.5%) thought that parish and town councils and local governance authorities are the right people to request part-night lighting in their areas, compared to the 377 / 29.7% who responded 'no' to the question: *"The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced."*
24. The majority of respondents 628 / 50.5% also think that nothing needs to be changed within the proposed implementation framework process when asked the question: *"This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process?"* This compares to the 347 / 27.9% who responded yes.
25. Overall, there is clear support for the environmental, sustainability and cost savings that part-night lighting can achieve in Oxfordshire.

## **Main areas of opposition**

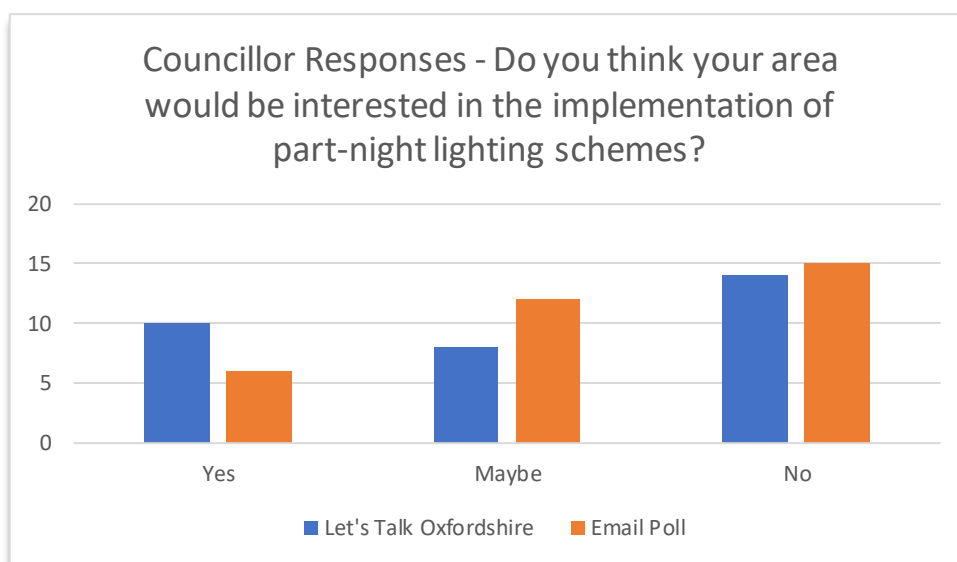
26. The main concern of respondents to the consultation was safety. Those who oppose part-night lighting feel that part-night lighting will make streets less safe, and that well-lit streets are essential for preventing crime and ensuring public safety. The perception is that there will be an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour if part-night lighting is implemented, with darkness encouraging criminal activities. Legal and accountability issues were raised, with one respondent asking who would be held accountable if a crime or accident occurs due to a lack of streetlighting and requesting accountability mechanisms be put in place.
27. There are concerns about potential impact on vulnerable groups, with strong sentiment that part-night lighting will disproportionately affect younger people, the elderly and disabled individuals, but especially women and those who work late shifts or rely on public transport. There are concerns that reduced lighting will affect the night-time economy, as people stated they may avoid going out at night due to safety concerns.
28. Respondents also raised environmental versus safety considerations. While respondents acknowledge the environmental benefits of part-night lighting, they argue that these should not come at the expense of public safety. There were suggestions for alternative solutions, such as motion-activated lighting, that could also balance safety and environmental concerns.
29. Respondents also raised concerns that part-night lighting would disproportionately affect urban areas, especially areas of high footfall, or where there is a density of street infrastructure. This is reflected within the consultation feedback, where the post codes provided by Oxfordshire residents were analysed and this shows that a higher proportion of residents in urban areas expressed opposition to part-night lighting. It is worth noting that the urban case study (Annex G) indicates that urban areas would most likely not pass the implementation framework's exemption list.
30. There was also feedback indicating a distrust of local government, and lack of trust in the council's consultation decision-making processes, with commentary challenging the council's financial intent. There is a belief that the council is considering cost-cutting over public safety and that the consultation process is not genuinely considering residents' opinions. However, it should be noted that the original proposal of November 2024 has been completely reviewed following the consultation on that proposal, demonstrating that the council does genuinely consider residents' opinions.
31. Within the consultation responses from those who oppose part-night lighting, there are some who oppose it as a concept completely, even with the proposed implementation framework mitigations and checking processes taken into consideration.
32. The Framework itself does answer and mitigate concerns raised via the consultation; each scheme would be reviewed with the police using crime data to understand areas of crime risk, and public consultations would be carried out



to ensure residents views are considered. All schemes would also be reviewed against the exemption list, and where an exemption applies, the scheme would not be implemented. Also, if any concerns were raised with a scheme post implementation, schemes would be reviewed and stood down if required.

## Public Consultation Parish and Town Council Response

33. The consultation also provided an opportunity to gather feedback from Parish and Town councillors regarding their potential level of interest for implementing part-night lighting schemes within their areas. For those that identified themselves as councillors, an additional question was asked; '*Do you think your area would be interested in the implementation of part-night lighting schemes?*' 65 responded, with their level of interested indicated below:



34. Alongside the responses received above, there were also 10 feedback emails received from councils, expressing a range of levels of support for part-night lighting within their areas. It is important to note that the consultation was not a formal invitation for parish or town councils to apply for part-night lighting within their areas, but a means of assessing the appetite for part-night lighting within Oxfordshire.

## Updated Part Night Lighting EIA

35. The concerns received through the stakeholder engagement workshops, and public consultation feedback have been reviewed to understand the potential impacts part-night lighting proposals may have on Oxfordshire's residents especially marginalised and vulnerable residents. The concerns raised come from a range of diverse perspectives, but the concerns are clear, especially for women, people from a younger or older age range, people with disabilities, those who undergone gender reassignment, or people from areas of

deprivation, as well as carers. An assessment of these concerns, and their impacts on those with protected characteristics is contained in the EIA, attached at Annex C.

36. Evidence found during the production of this report suggests that reduced street lighting has had no statistically significant effects on road safety at night or that reduced street lighting was associated with crime<sup>3</sup>. However, the genuine concerns of residents and stakeholder community groups are acknowledged, and these are outlined in the updated part-night lighting equalities impact assessment (Annex C).
37. By acknowledging the concerns raised via the consultation, the Framework has been developed in such a way that it allows for the steps that operate as 'check points', introducing mitigating actions and measures into the implementation process:
  - **Using a targeted exemption list:** The exemption list addresses specific concerns, and part-night lighting will not be introduced in any of the following areas:
    - Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings
    - Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions
    - Controlled crossing points
    - Areas supporting a night-time economy
    - Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles
    - Waterside paths
    - Remote alleyways
    - Subways and underpasses
    - Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR
    - Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions
  - **Public consultations and key stakeholder engagement on each proposed part-night lighting scheme:** For each proposed scheme, parish and town councils will need to demonstrate that they have engaged with their various local stakeholder groups, and each individual scheme will have its own public consultation carried out via 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' to ensure all views are heard. to ensure all views are heard.
  - **Crime and road safety data analysis:** There will also be a parallel process of engagement with Thames Valley Police to review crime and road safety data for each scheme to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risks or concerns. There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes may be removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and agreed with the council).

---

<sup>3</sup> [What is the effect of reduced street lighting on crime and road traffic injuries at night? A mixed-methods study | NIHR Journals Library](#)

38. The equalities impact assessment (Annex C) is considered a live document and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

## **Updated Part Night Lighting CIA**

39. Part-night lighting can offer several environment benefits including reducing light pollution, supporting nocturnal wildlife such as moths and pollinators, and increasing biodiversity. Switching off lights also reduces energy consumption and its associated carbon use. A climate impact assessment has been carried out to detail these benefits for part-night lighting implementation in Oxfordshire (Annex D).
40. The assessment scores how part-night lighting can increase energy efficiency, enhance biodiversity, and drive behaviour change, underlining that these are main aims of the proposal. It is a clear behaviour change to address the climate and ecological emergency and will promote energy reduction and carbon saving to Oxfordshire's residents through example.
41. The consultation feedback did underline that the environmental benefits of part-night lighting cannot outweigh the perception of safety afforded by street lighting, and the climate impact assessment mitigations to reduce negative impacts does reference how concerns about crime will be factored into scheme considerations.
42. The climate impact assessment is considered a live document and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

43. The previous Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy and procedure allowed for Part-night lighting; however, it not specify how, or under what circumstances, part-night lighting may be implemented in a local area.
44. The Street Lighting and Electrical Assets Policy and procedure have been updated with regards to part-night lighting, to provide clarity, and outline the technical aspects (Annex A). Policy numbers SLP2 and SLP3 have been updated to include part-night lighting and policy SLP11 is a new additional policy specifically referencing the part-night implementation framework
45. The Policy's supporting procedure 'Procedure for Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets, has also been updated to include part-night lighting, with wording updated throughout, and is within its Annex C which has added in detailing part-night lighting schemes.
46. Both documents are intended to be used together to support operational delivery and are considered working documents. They have been submitted for cabinet approval as updated policy documents.

## Financial Implications

47. The development of this part-night lighting implementation framework and its associated engagement has been funded through existing service budgets.
48. The previous countywide framework, is now, through this policy proposed to be replaced by a community based framework and as such the previously estimated energy saving of £400k is now not realisable. The cost of implementing changes to the streetlights to a part-night lighting regime, estimated at £50 per light, will be funded by the scheme applicants. As such there are no planned costs to be incurred by the Council.
49. The new framework, if implemented, would mean that savings would be incremental and realised on a scheme by scheme basis. Electricity cost savings. At this time it is difficult to estimate the predicted annual benefit, as there is no firm understanding of the volume and/or the timeframe of individual scheme applications.
50. The table below summaries the information from the case studies in the attached annexes:

Catchment	Nos of lights changed	Cost of change £50/light	Potential Annual Saving	kWh saving	CO2e saving
Rural	46	£2,300	-£341	1,420	0.28
Urban	102	£5,100	-£3,340	13,952	2.73
Residential	165	£8,250	-£1,515	6,313	1.23

51. Any future commitment to provide funding by the council into a programme for part night lighting will be considered as part of the normal budget setting process.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Strategic Finance Business Partner,  
rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

## Legal Implications

52. There is no general requirement or obligation for the council to light the highway. Oxfordshire has set its own policy based on the council's priorities and general guidance and good practice.
53. The legislation and guidance to which the council must have regard when exercising its power to light the highway includes:
- Section 97 of the *Highways Act 1980* gives the council the power to provide street lighting.
  - Regulation 5 of *The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999* requires that road humps are illuminated.

- c. Section 17 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* places on the council the duty to consider crime and disorder implications of exercising its various functions.
  - d. Section 39 of the *Road Traffic Act 1988* imposes upon the council a responsibility for taking measures to prevent road traffic accidents.
  - e. The *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016* require some traffic signs to be directly illuminated when within a system of street lighting. Traffic sign illumination will not be affected by this initiative.
  - f. The design requirements in BS 5489 allow road lighting levels to be lowered during periods of low traffic volumes
54. The proposed policy and Framework, which enable parish and town councils or local governance authorities to request changes to the operational provision of street lighting, are within the powers of the council.

Comments checked by:

[Jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk), Head of Law (Environmental)  
jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

## **Staff Implications**

55. There are no new staffing implications arising from specifically from this report. The development of part-night lighting proposals is being funded through existing service budgets.

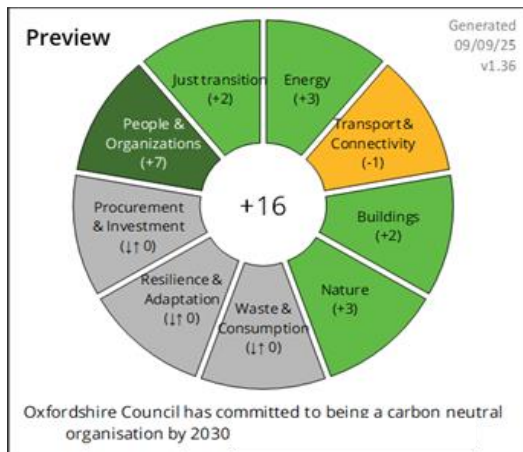
## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

56. The council recognises the implications that these proposals may have on the physical and psychological safety of marginalised and vulnerable residents.
57. The council accept that the previous part-night lighting equalities impact assessment did not capture the needs or potential impacts of part-night lighting on marginalised and vulnerable residents sufficiently enough. But following the engagement with stakeholders and the comprehensive feedback from residents via the public consultation, the equalities impact assessment has been updated, and is presented in Annex C.
58. The updated assessment outlines where the negative impacts on protected characteristics could potentially occur and includes the proportional mitigations and interventions that have been put in place to reduce the negative impacts. The council acknowledges the concerns raised about the proposals outlined within this report and there will be ongoing monitoring to understand the potential impacts part-night lighting may have on Oxfordshire's communities.
59. The equalities impact assessment is a living document, and the council will continue to engage with stakeholders and our communities to ensure that it is truly reflective of the diversity within Oxfordshire.



## Sustainability Implications

60. The initiative makes a significant net positive impact to Carbon Reduction and Sustainability as demonstrated in the attached Annex D Climate Impact Assessment (CIA), and summarised extract below from the CIA.



61. The proposal impacts positively impacts the following categories within the Climate Impact Assessment, People & Organisation, Energy, Nature and Buildings. The assessment of the proposal on the climate impact on Transport and Connectivity, produced a negative score, which was based upon the feedback from stakeholder engagement, linked to the perception and fear of increased crime and potential negative impacts on road safety, which may cause some highly impacted groups to rely more on private car and taxi use during the hours of scheme operation. However, based upon the results of the consultation, and considering where and when schemes will be employed taking into account the exemption criteria, this is likely to impact a very small number of residents. Where a PNL scheme may be allowed (not exempt), consultation and engagement with local communities, stakeholders and highly impacted and vulnerable groups, alongside analysis of; crime, fear of crime and accident data, will be the determining factor in officers recommending a scheme for approval. Officers believe these mitigation measures would be reduce the negative potential impacts to an acceptable level.
62. As exact carbon savings will depend on uptake and each scheme will produce different savings figures, officers have provided case study examples in Annex G of this report.
63. There are beneficial sustainability implications as a result of implementing part-night lighting in terms of electricity, costs, and carbon savings. The three case studies discussed above provide a more granular and detailed understanding of this, but this in turn will be dependant on the volume and number of schemes implemented. Longer term monitoring will indicate the scale of the electrical, costs, and carbon savings.

## Risk Management

64. The council recognises the crime and safety risks associated with implementing part-night lighting and acknowledge the concerns raised through the engagement processes. The Framework has been designed to be managed on a risk basis. Each of the six-step stages provide an opportunity to re-assess risks, and apply mitigations as required for that specific scheme. Each scheme will be different and will be reviewed on its own merits.
65. Officers will continue to work with the police and community safety stakeholders and other council services to analyse available crime and safety data when reviewing proposed and any existing part-night lighting schemes.
66. The council also recognise the risks of working with vulnerable stakeholders and community groups. Through stakeholder mapping, seeking professional advice, adhering to data governance and accessibility legislation and completing risk assessments, as appropriate, the council will aim to protect the interests and wellbeing of all residents.

Paul Farmer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex:

- Annex A – Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy & Electrical Procedure
- Annex B – Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework
- Annex C – Part Night Lighting EIA
- Annex D – Part Night Lighting CIA
- Annex E – Stakeholder Engagement Report
- Annex F – Part-Night Lighting and Street Lighting Consultation report.
- Annex G – Part Night Lighting Case Studies

Background papers:           None

Other Documents:           None

Contact Officer: Sean Rooney, Head of Highways & Road Safety

September 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

# Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy

October 2022

<b>Document Version</b>	1.3
<b>Owner Job Title</b>	Team Leader: Electrical
<b>Approval Date</b>	To be updated following Cabinet Approval
<b>Last Review</b>	19.08.2025
<b>Next Review</b>	April 2026

## Document Control and Information

Status	Approval Date	Review Date
Final	18.10.2022	24.04.2024

Document Owner's Name	Job Title
Anthony Palman-Brown	Team Leader: Electrical

**Do not alter, copy, publish or distribute without the approval of the Document Owner**

### **This instruction applies to:**

**This policy applies to the maintenance of Oxfordshire County Council's highways streetlighting and illuminated assets.**

### **For action by:**

**As above.**

### **For information:**

**As above.**

## Revision History

Version	Date	Author / Reviewer	Notes
1.0	18.10.2022	Anthony Palman-Brown	Draft approved by cabinet
1.1	31.08.2023	Anthony Palman-Brown	Final version published
1.2	24.10.2022	Anthony Palman-Brown	Policy reviewed, minor typos amended and cover sheet added
1.3	19.08.25	Anthony Palmer-Brown	To be approved by Cabinet

## Distribution and/or Publication

For	Location	Date
All Staff	OCC Intranet	TBC



## Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy

1. Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, is responsible for the provision and maintenance of Street Lighting and Illuminated assets on the road network throughout Oxfordshire excluding motorways and trunk roads.
2. Under the Highway Act 1980, the Council has the power but not the duty to provide street lighting.
3. The term “street lighting” encompasses all mains powered illuminated assets on the adopted highway including streetlights, illuminated signs, bollards, and other street furniture that requires an electrical supply. Where it is difficult to access an electricity mains service or alternative sustainable power sources, should be considered as an alternative based on whole life costings.
4. This policy encompasses Oxfordshire County Council's corporate vision, objectives and embraces the 9 priority themes of the Council. The policy is also informed by the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan, the Energy Strategy, and the Carbon Management Plan.

### **Policy: SLP1**

Oxfordshire County Council will reduce the council's impact on climate change and the environment, as our Procedure for Electrical Highway Assets and Oxfordshire County Council's Energy Strategy and Carbon Management Plan through the use of optimised lighting systems.

[Climate action | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

### **Policy: SLP2**

Oxfordshire County Council will consider and assess the provision of adequate and appropriate levels of lighting to ensure safe passage to all users of the highway network. This will include dimming of equipment during low traffic periods **or implementing part-night lighting schemes** and enable the reduction in running hours due to the instant switch on of LED equipment. Dynamic (real-time demand/usage) control of the lighting can also be implemented and retrofitted if required. We will review and, where appropriate, de-illuminate or provide off-grid solutions for signage where possible and practical.

**Policy: SLP3**

The policy considers the impact of light pollution on nature in assessing where lighting should be added or reduced across the transport network **or where part-night lighting scheme are being considered**. When new lighting is deemed to be necessary on grounds of public safety, dimming and reduction in burning hours should be used to preserve the night sky and mitigate environmental impacts.

[Biodiversity and planning | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

**Policy: SLP4**

Oxfordshire County Council will engage with local environmental groups, local members stakeholders, and other organisations when appropriate when considering any changes to the deployment of street lighting to ensure that any impact is understood and mitigated plus incorporated/considered within the design and specification of the equipment.

**Policy: SLP5**

Oxfordshire County Council will ensure the safety of **all** highway users is maintained by taking a risk-based approach to the provision of street lighting and electrical assets, as per our Procedure for Illuminated Assets and the Highway Safety Inspection Policy. The County Council will regularly review and enhance these documents.

[2022-2027 Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Approach | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

5. Oxfordshire County Council have embraced the need to reduce the energy consumption of the street lighting assets located within the County and has undertaken a programme to update all streetlights to LED (Light Emitting Diode) light sources. We will continue to look for opportunities to reduce the energy consumption and carbon emissions from street lighting. This also includes the de-illumination of bollards and signs The County Council will constantly review new and emerging technologies to ensure that the most technically and economically advantageous systems of lighting are used.

**Policy: SLP6**

Oxfordshire County Council will use a risk based and evidence approach, based upon data projections and environmental consideration, supported by national guidance (links below) when advising on the provision of streetlights for major developments. The council only consider adopting lighting when a clear safety need has been identified for which, lighting will be a part of the mitigation.

[https://www.securedbydesign.com/images/PCPI\\_LIGHTING\\_GUIDE\\_web.pdf](https://www.securedbydesign.com/images/PCPI_LIGHTING_GUIDE_web.pdf)

[Lighting Against Crime | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://theilp.org.uk/)

6. For new developments it is only when a clear safety need has been identified that lighting will be a part of the mitigation measures. Any installations going in not meeting the expectations of the council will not be adopted for public maintenance.
7. Oxfordshire County Council provides and/or maintains electrical assets only where necessary and where a need has been clearly identified which demonstrates that lighting is required. Examples of such locations and needs may include, but are not limited to:
  - on major road junctions and at roundabouts as part of a suite of potential road safety measures to reduce the risk of night-time road safety incidents.
  - in partnership schemes with town, parish, district councils and the Police in areas where there is a perception of crime such that it is deemed necessary and where funding for the installation and ongoing maintenance is available.
  - In residential areas where roads and footpaths are adopted by the county council and only where a key safety need has been identified by the Police and OCC's road safety teams that the provision of lighting will address that requirement.
  - New lighting will only be provided in unlit highway areas only if it is deemed necessary for road safety and has been the subject of an appropriate consultation or a road safety audit evaluation.
  - Locations referred to within the part-night lighting exemptions list for part-night lighting schemes.
8. Oxfordshire County Council does **not** provide and/or maintain street lighting electrical assets:
  - In private areas such as residents' garages, public car parks, or roads that have not yet been, or are not going to be, adopted as highway maintainable at the public expense.
  - If a parish council has decided to continue maintaining their own lights or has a policy of no street lighting (unless required on safety grounds).
  - Associated with new lighting on definitive footpaths, footpaths with permitted rights, bridleways, and towpaths.

#### **Policy: SLP7**

The County Council will seek to explore an integrated dynamic lighting solution to encourage and enable active travel across the County.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/active-travel>

9. The County Council will review the LED equipment including dynamic/adaptive lighting systems to ensure that it is the most suitable for each of the different environment types found within the County.

10. Where requested by Parish Councils, and following local consultation, lighting can be converted to operate for part of the night as an alternative to dimming for residential areas, following the part-night lighting implementation framework.
11. Where street lighting is no longer providing a benefit to users and following a risk assessment of the location, based upon road safety and crime, consultation for the removal of redundant assets will be undertaken with stakeholders. In relation with the Neighbourhood planning Guide. These stakeholders will include but are not limited to, Local Members, City, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and the Police.
12. Landscape and trees are designed at the pre-application stage of a planning application. Every effort will be made to avoid the street lighting columns. This is where the trees be placed in a location to reduce the blocking effect of the tree canopy and reduce future tree pruning and landscaping costs. Therefore, ensuring the maintenance budgets are sustainable.

**Policy: SLP8**

Oxfordshire County Council will respect the wishes of a parish council not to provide street lighting in its village locations unless lighting is warranted on safety grounds, and there are no cost-effective alternatives. However, it should be noted there are a few District/Parish Councils which are their own lighting authorities who have specific requirement in their local areas/neighbourhood.

13. Illuminated signs will be removed or de-illuminated, where permitted by the Department for Transport's Traffic Sign Regulations.
14. Where appropriate, signage that cannot be removed or de-illuminated will be considered, following risk assessment for alternative solutions, such as solar power or other off-grid options.

**Policy: SLP9**

Low-level lighting for the purpose of way finding will be considered for promoted active travel routes in rural areas, in line with OCC active travel scheme requirements and active travel funding availability for ongoing maintenance.

**Policy: SLP10**

Oxfordshire County Council will reduce street clutter wherever possible by the removal of unnecessary and redundant street lighting electrical assets and lighting support structures. In accordance with the traffic signs policy.

**Policy: SLP11**

Oxfordshire County Council will work with parishes and town council who apply for Part-Night Lighting schemes within their areas, using the Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework as detailed within the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Procedure Annex C. Each scheme will be reviewed alongside the exemption criteria and consulted with local residents and high impact stakeholder groups on prior to submission for Cabinet Member Decision.

15. Part-Night Lighting schemes will only be considered if the application meets the part-night lighting suitability and exemption requirements, and there is support for the scheme from the Parish area's OCC Councillor.
16. If there are concerns raised by Thames Valley Police following a Part-Night Lighting scheme implementation, the scheme will be reviewed and if required, will return to night lighting.
17. This policy will not affect or change existing part-night lighting schemes, or be used to justify the provision of new lighting schemes where there is currently no street lighting in place.

#### **Service Aims:**

1. Reduce Oxfordshire County Council's energy costs and carbon footprint.
2. Reduce light pollution and the impact on the environment.
3. Reduce the number of electrical assets to reduce street clutter.
4. Reuse and recycle redundant equipment where feasible.
5. Increase the service life of the assets.
6. Adhere to the service standards detailed within the Highway Safety Inspection Policy and the Procedure for Highway Electrical Asset with regards to Inspection and maintenance.
7. Development of maintenance regimes to support alternatives to street lighting illumination.
8. Engage with stakeholder groups as part of the wider conversations in street lighting policy development.
9. Embrace the County Council's 9 Priority Themes.

#### **Reference & Supporting Documents**

- Procedure for Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets
- [2022-2027 Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Approach | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Highway Safety Inspection Policy](#)
- [HighwaysAssetManagementPolicy.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- **BS 5489-1:2020** Code of practice for the design of road lighting. Lighting of roads and public amenity areas.
- **BS EN 13201:2015** Road lighting. Calculation of performance.
- **BS 7671:2018** Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations.
- **CEN/TR 13201-1:2014** Road lighting. Guidelines on selection of lighting classes.
- **County Current Trees Policy** - [Tree policy for Oxfordshire | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- **Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance PLG02 – Application of conflict areas on the highway.**
- **Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance PLG23 – Lighting for cycling infrastructure.**
- **Oxfordshire County Council Highways Maintenance Policies** - [2022-2027 Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Approach | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- **Oxfordshire County Council Electric Vehicles policy** - Electric vehicles | Oxfordshire County Council

16. This policy will ensure that the other overarching policies, such as but not limited to, the developing EV charging strategy and the recently adopted Tree policy are considered in the adoption of statements within this policy.





## OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Procedure for Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Objectives .....	3
Outcomes .....	4
Scope .....	4
Procedure Detail.....	6
Service Standards .....	8
Key Stakeholder list:.....	8
Reference:.....	8
Implementation Schedule .....	9
Review Date .....	9
Annex A - Oxfordshire Lighting Standards.....	11
Annex B - Environmental Zones.....	12
Annex C - Part-Night Lighting.....	15

## Introduction

This Procedure links directly to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy. It has been developed in accordance with the principles relating to road Street lighting and electrical installations set out within the [UK Roads Liaison Group Documents Well Managed Highway Infrastructure - A Code of Practice](#)

It serves as a guide to Oxfordshire's approach to maintaining its street lighting and illuminated assets to deliver the aims and objectives set forth in the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy. Additionally, it aligns with the overarching Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy, Strategy, and Plan, as per [2022-2027 Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Approach | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

This document supports the delivery of Oxfordshire's the following priorities contained within [Our strategic plan 2023 - 2025 | Oxfordshire County Council](#):

1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

These priorities are integral to enhancing the county's transport infrastructure, ensuring safety, sustainability, and connectivity for all residents.

## Objectives

The procedure encompasses the Oxfordshire County Council corporate vision and objectives and is also informed by the Local Transport Plan, the Highway Asset Management Plan and the Carbon Reduction Plan.

Its principal objectives are to:

- provide direction for an integrated approach to the development and maintenance of the County Council's Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets
- ensure the safety of highway users is maintained by taking a risk-based approach to the provision of street lighting and electrical assets
- protect and enhance the night-time environment;
- consider the whole life cost of new Street Lighting and Illuminated assets
- reuse and recycle redundant equipment where feasible
- reduce the council's overall energy consumption and carbon footprint
- reduce the council's impact on climate change, whilst delivering the benefits of appropriate street lighting
- reduce the use of illuminated signs/bollards where legislation allows and where safe to do so and reduce street clutter wherever possible by sharing of support structures
- provide flexibility to encourage and facilitate innovation and the introduction of new technologies.
- consider part-night street lighting schemes if requested by local parish and town councils, following the part-night lighting Implementation framework as detailed within Annex C.

## Outcomes

An effective street lighting service can contribute significantly to the following outcomes:

- reducing night time traffic road safety incidents
- improved energy and carbon management
- contributing to biodiversity net gain and improved public health
- reducing street crime and perception of crime
- promoting sustainable transport (public transport, cycling and walking)
- facilitating social inclusion by providing freedom to use streets after dark
- supporting the 24-hour leisure economy, promoting economic development
- providing safe access to educational facilities, supporting life-long learning
- assisting emergency services to identify locations and shorten response times

## Scope

This Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Procedure has been developed to provide a framework for the effective and efficient management of street lighting in line with Oxfordshire County Council's corporate vision. The procedure covers electrical assets and street lighting throughout the county of Oxfordshire. It outlines the requirements for the installation and maintenance of all types of Street Lighting and Illuminated assets that are in the ownership or are maintained by Oxfordshire County Council.

There is no statutory requirement on local authorities in the United Kingdom to provide public lighting, however where it is already provided we have a duty to maintain it.

The county council provides and/or maintains street lighting and illuminated assets:

- on major roads and at roundabouts\* as a safety measure to prevent night-time road safety incidents
- in partnership schemes with town, parish, district councils and the Police in areas where there is a perception of crime such that it is deemed necessary and where funding for the installation and ongoing maintenance is available
- in residential areas where roads and footpaths are adopted by the county council (except in villages where the parish council has a "no lighting policy\*\*")
- New lighting will only be provided in unlit highway areas if it is deemed necessary, affordable and sustainable and has been the subject of an appropriate consultation

The County Council does **not** provide and/or maintain street lighting and illuminated assets:

- in private areas such as residents' garages, public car parks, or roads that have not yet been, or are not going to be, adopted as highway maintainable at the public expense
- if a parish council has decided to continue maintaining their own lights or has a policy of no street lighting\*\*
- associated with new lighting on definitive footpaths, footpaths with permitted rights, bridleways, and towpaths, or on lengths of highway between town or village settlements.

*\* Lighting of rural roundabouts will be kept to a minimum and if possible, other traffic management measures should be considered as a possible alternative to the use of street lighting.*

*\*\* The county council will respect the wishes of a parish council not to provide street lighting in its village locations unless lighting is warranted on safety grounds, and there are no cost-effective alternatives.*

## Procedure Detail

This document is structured to firstly look at the policy context for street lighting in the county. It then considers the overall approach to street lighting depending upon the character of different parts of the county. Where street lighting is appropriate, the document then considers the standards to be applied.

This procedure sets out the guidance and standards for all new lighting installations, conversions, upgrades, refurbishments and asset management. All street lighting and illuminated installations should ensure that energy consumption is kept to a minimum to meet the relevant lighting classification and electrical safety in accordance with the Electrical Safety at Work Act.

The design for new street lighting and illuminated installations must be checked and approved by Oxfordshire County Council for the Authority to adopt the maintenance liability.

The overall lighting requirements for a specific area will be refined to take account of an area's unique character and needs in terms of vehicular/ pedestrian activity, location of local amenities, etc. within the lighting design brief.

Specifically, lighting will be designed in accordance with the following lighting design standards:

- BS 5489-1:2020
- BS EN 13201:2015
- BS7671 - 2018
- CEN/TR 13201-1:2014
- PGL23
- PGL02

The standard of lighting in the British Standard categorises the roads based on usage and environmental ecological factors.

The use of adaptive street lighting or part-night lighting shall be encouraged on new developments and new installations in rural areas where it is considered acceptable and safe to do so.

Non-standard street lighting equipment will only be permitted in certain designated conservation areas and in special zones where the lighting forms part of a co-ordinated streetscape project.

Illumination of signs and bollards will be kept to the minimum in accordance with statutory requirements. The use of reflective diamond grade bollards and sign plates is preferred.

Wherever safe and appropriate to do so and subject to consultation with the county council's Street Lighting team, sign plates that are a maximum of 600mm<sup>2</sup> shall be mounted on existing highway street furniture to minimise street clutter.

The general requirements of the relevant British and European standards will be expected to be met in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council Lighting Standards (Annex A), based upon the road hierarchy.

The LED lanterns will be considered on a case by case basis by exception, as a rule; new or replacement LED units shall be a white light source of neutral or warm white colour

temperature, although consideration of alternative light sources (particularly for the purposes of floodlighting) will be given where required.

There may be situations in popular locations used heavily at night where tourist/visitor needs would suggest a higher level of illumination is needed. These locations are expected to be relatively few and will require special consideration and consultation on a case by case basis.

For particularly sensitive locations it may be advisable to arrange for trial installations to demonstrate the effectiveness of the lighting and its impact on surrounding areas.

In determining levels of illumination, lighting positions and styles, the design brief will consider pedestrian and vehicular uses/needs in relation to the following:

- areas of activity - theatres, shops, school entrances, bus stops, libraries, highways, paths, etc. and areas of highway safety conflict (junctions, etc.)
- listed buildings and the historic qualities of the area
- building heights
- street features - crossing points, sitting areas, tree planting, pinch-points, materials/colours etc.
- existing lighting - positions, styles, heights, lux levels, lighting type, lighting from shops, floodlights, etc. In assessing appropriate levels of illumination, the existing and ambient lighting (e.g. from shops, floodlighting schemes, etc.) may only be considered in special instances. This is because the continued operation of ambient or privately-owned lighting sources cannot be guaranteed for the life of the scheme.
- ground form levels (important to people with disabilities), hazards and so on
- local knowledge, incidence of vandalism, road safety incident black spots etc.
- **any part-night lighting schemes requested by parishes or town councils**

The floodlighting of landmarks and historic buildings shall be discouraged unless designed as part of an area strategy or masterplan but as a minimum, should seek to minimise pollution of the night sky.

The design and installation of special or temporary lighting shall comply with the BS 5489-1:2020 and BS EN 13032. The standard of temporary Lighting Units shall conform to the Lighting Standards within this series.

Any developer or other provider shall ensure that any temporary lighting provided does not cause glare to traffic using the highway or give annoyance to any occupants in surrounding properties.

## **Lighting Provision**

It should not be assumed that street lighting will automatically be provided at every location. The provision of lighting will only be supported where there is a justified need, considering factors in accordance with the relevant standards outlined in this procedure and the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy.

Furthermore, the requirement for street lighting will vary at different times of the night and in some cases, it is appropriate to adapt lighting levels to the need at different times. In rural areas it is sometimes appropriate or customary to switch lighting off after a certain time. There is no benefit in lighting an area where it is not needed as it adds to the county's carbon footprint and costs money. **Part-night lighting schemes will be considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis when requested by a parish or town council and implemented following the part-night implementation framework detailed in Annex C.**



The provision of lighting should:

- increase the safety of all users of the highway, especially vulnerable road user groups such as pedestrians, cyclists, children, elderly or disabled people
- assist in the strategic aim of reducing night-time road safety incidents
- enhance the night-time environment
- consider the requirements of conservation areas or areas of outstanding natural beauty
- reduce perception of crime and increase personal security as part of a crime reduction strategy
- deter anti-social behaviour and criminal activity and support for CCTV/ANPR cameras
- be unobtrusive by day and night
- consider the need to minimise energy consumption and carbon footprints
- be designed using appropriate lighting levels and lighting equipment, that has been approved by the County Council for adoption
- follow the part-night lighting implementation framework if required

## Where Should Lighting be Provided

The requirement for lighting varies depending on a number of factors, including whether the lighting is located in an urban or a rural area.

The ILP Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting: 2021 provides a system of zoning as follows:

Table 1 – Environmental Zones			
Zone	Surrounding	Lighting Environment	Examples
E0	Protected	Dark	UNESCO Starlight Reserves, IDA Dark Sky Parks
E1	Natural	Intrinsically dark	National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc
E2	Rural	Low brightness district	Village or relatively dark outer suburban locations
E3	Suburban	Medium brightness district	Small town centres or suburban locations
E4	Urban	High brightness district	Town/city centres with high levels of night-time activity

Oxfordshire does not have any Zone E0's within its borders, for a detailed descriptor of the zones which apply to the county refer to Annex B.

## Service Standards

Oxfordshire County Council has produced this procedure for street lighting and associated street lighting apparatus under the responsibility of the council to produce standards of service to which the council is fully committed to adhere to. The standards set in this document are set to a level in which it is expected that developers and other third parties should meet.

This section of the procedure sets out standards for inspections and maintenance of street lighting equipment.

Finally, this section of the procedure sets out how the council expects its contractors to implement this procedure in providing street lighting assets in the county.

## Response times for electrical assets

Respond to dangerous faults (Emergencies)	Within <b>Three hours</b> of notification i.e. column or sign post hit, service cable or wires exposed, door off/missing, lantern, bowl or canopy hanging, missing face plates etc.
To repair key street lights, traffic signs & bollards	Within <b>three hours</b> or <b>twenty-four hours</b> at busy junctions, or where groups of street lights or belisha beacons are not operational (subject to availability of supply).
Repairs to faulty highway electrical equipment following identification.	Being repaired within <b>7 working days</b> subject to availability of supply
Detection of faults that are not working during the night, picked up from a night time patrol or a Central Management System	Being repaired within <b>7 working days</b>
Routine maintenance (i.e. service to apparatus with replacement of <b>all</b> lamps through cyclical maintenance)	This will be carried out every <b>3 years</b> until the luminaires have been replaced with a LED solution or something similar. These LED lanterns will then be cleaned every 6 years in line with the electrical testing regime, therefore reducing the number of visits to site.
Statutory requirements electrical testing (Electricity at Work Regulations, Act 1989)	Every <b>6 years</b>
Visual Checking of Assets (Non-Routine)	Undertake visual structural inspections every time the asset is visited during a fault. i.e. checking for corrosion. (In accordance with Technical Report 22 Managing a Vital Asset: Lighting supports)
Structural testing (Routine)	Undertake structural testing every year to the assets that have been identified as at risk from corrosion, through age profiling, reports from the public and the routine maintenance operation.

## Key Stakeholder list:

- Local residents / businesses
- OCC Councillors
- Parish, Town & District Councils and Councillors
- Thames Valley Police and Community Safety Teams
- Vulnerable and highly impacted stakeholder groups
- The Council's Street Lighting Contractor
- Other Stakeholder Groups as required.

## Reference:

- Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy (TBC)
- [2022-2027 Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Approach | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

- [Highway Safety Inspection Policy](#)
- Highways Safety Inspection Procedure
- [Tree policy for Oxfordshire | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy](#)
- [Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan](#)
- [UK Roads Liaison Group Documents \*Well Managed Highway Infrastructure - A Code of Practice\*](#)

Related standards:

- ***BS 5489-1:2020 Code of practice for the design of road lighting. Lighting of roads and public amenity areas***
- ***BS EN 13201:2015 Road lighting. Calculation of performance***
- ***BS 7671:2018 Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations***
- ***CEN/TR 13201-1:2014 Road lighting. Guidelines on selection of lighting classes***

Implementation Schedule: October 2025

Review Date: October 2027

## Annex A - Oxfordshire Lighting Standards

Road Hierarchy	BS 5489 & EN13201 Category	Column Height	Type of Lamp	Colour Temp	Dimming Regime
Distributor (Type 1) Road (Width 7.3)	M3/M4/M5	10/12	LED	3000K	75% light output 00:00am to 06:00am
Distributor (Type 2) Road (Width 6.75)	M3/M4/M5	8/10	LED	3000K	75% light output 00:00am to 06:00am
Major Access (Type 3) Road (Width 6.0m)	P2 & P3	6/8	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Major Access (Type 3) Road (Width 5.5)	P4	6	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Minor Access (Types 4) road (Width 4.8)	P4 & C5	5/6	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Minor Access (Types 4) road (Width 4.6)	P5 & C5	5/6	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Access Way (Type 6) (Width 4.1m)	P5	5	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Cycle Ways (Width 3.0)	P4/P5	5/6	LED	3000K	50% light output 10:00pm to 06:00am
Roundabouts	C3 – C4	6/8/10	LED	3000K	75% light output 00:00am to 06:00am
Conflict Areas Lighting Class	C3 – C5	6/8/10	LED	3000K	75% light output 00:00am to 06:00am

## **Annex B – Environmental Zones**

### **Zone E1 - National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Importance and Other Dark Areas**

Roads in “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONB), are defined as all roads within designated AONB boundaries, but excludes those roads within designated urban areas.

There are special areas in the countryside where environmental considerations will carry greater weight. These are defined by local planning authorities under the following general headings:

- Special Protection Areas
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Including areas for protected species

Oxfordshire has three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty:

- North Wessex Downs AONB to the south of the county
- The Cotswolds AONB to the west of the county
- Chiltern Hills AONB to the south and east of the county

The general presumption is that street lighting should not be provided in Zone E1 areas unless the county council, or the local lighting authority, can demonstrate an overriding road safety issue which cannot be overcome by other means.

Road safety benefits arising from the installation of lighting may be assessed by the ratio of daytime accidents to the anticipated reduction in night time road safety incidents.

Although roundabouts and other major junctions within Zone E1 are sites that often identify a need for lighting, assessments should still be made to confirm the justification, having regard to the above.

Where existing street lighting has been installed in Zone E1 a safety audit shall be completed, followed by consultation with key local stakeholders. Where possible, such equipment will either be de-illuminated or removed.

### **Zone E2 - Areas of Low District Brightness (Rural Areas Outside Zone E1)**

Roads in rural areas are defined as those outside major towns but include villages and small towns within the county. In assessing lighting requirements in small rural communities, the county council will consider the requirements and suggestions of the local lighting authority as to the need and standard of lighting. The county council, as the Highway Lighting Authority, will need to agree any proposals put forward. The general presumption is that street lighting should not be provided in Zone E2 areas unless the county council, or the local lighting authority, deem it to be in the best interest of the local community from either a road safety or a personal security point of view.

Where proposals are promoted on the grounds of personal security of highway users, particularly pedestrians, the main factors to be assessed when considering provision of lighting are:

- the volume of pedestrian traffic during lighting-up times

- the proportion of such traffic that falls into the categories considered as vulnerable groups, children, the elderly and people with disabilities
- the potential risks of the site, such as high personal crime areas, particularly in secluded locations, and potentially dangerous locations due to the terrain, (i.e. falls) or other hazards
- areas where antisocial behaviour or repeated acts of vandalism occur.

In applying the above, it should be noted that the powers of the county council as the Highway Authority, do not extend to the provision of lighting solely for the reasons of personal security against crime, although it is reasonable to take this into account when lighting is justified on other grounds or is to be provided by other bodies.

Where lighting is considered necessary, either for road safety or personal security grounds, then full consideration must be given to the environmental impact when designing any proposals.

Outside of Zone E1 areas, such as AONBs, there are other sensitive rural areas where environmental considerations will carry greater weight; e.g. large strategic gaps and parts of the urban fringe. Where a justification to light is identified within such environmentally sensitive areas, installations designed to minimise day time and night time impact, with full horizontal cut-off and minimum lighting levels should be required.

In rural areas alternatives to lighting, such as improved carriageway delineation, use of reflective studs, reflective carriageway surfacing, signing and lining, should all be considered and a holistic approach should be used to develop proposals which best balance safety and environmental considerations. Where illumination, especially of signs and bollards is a requirement, then consideration should be given to the use of solar powered or non-illuminated equipment.

### **Zone E3 - Areas of Medium District Brightness (Low Crime Urban Locations)**

Roads falling into this category include all urban residential local access roads and footpaths (as defined by "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure - A Code of Practice") where reported crimes per 1000 households, are less than, or equal to, the county average.

As a general rule roads in Zone E3 areas shall be lit to the levels originally provided at the time of adoption. For the sake of clarity, replacement columns shall be installed on a 1:4:1 basis, with new columns being positioned at the rear of the footway and on property boundary lines wherever possible.

### **Zone E4 - Areas of High District Brightness (Major Traffic Routes, High Crime Urban Areas and Town Centres)**

Major traffic routes are defined as all A, B and C class roads and contain all strategic routes, main/ secondary distributor and link roads as defined in Well-managed Highway Infrastructure, referred to above.

Generally, all Zone E4 areas will be lit to the British Standard relevant at the time.

Urban Areas falling into this category include all urban residential local access roads and footpaths where reported crimes per 1000 households are greater than the county average.

### **Sensitive Areas**

For the purposes of this "policy Sensitive Areas" are defined as:

- statutorily designated Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and their settings
- non-statutory historic or heritage areas and older urban regeneration areas identified by local planning authorities in the area.



There may be other county council sponsored initiatives which will be the subject of special treatment and funding. These will generally operate within the categories described above but some will have their own requirements.

Always provided that the assessed level of highway safety is achieved, the retention and enhancement of the architecture, historic or landscape character of the area will be taken into consideration when determining lighting requirements.

All areas have a unique character and it is important that, rather than being “standardised” in respect of any works carried out, lighting arrangements are tailored accordingly towards the enhancement of the area.

All proposals and improvements will be the subject of a lighting design brief and, where these comply with the agreed brief, they will be adopted by the county council as Highway Authority, once signed off as the works satisfactory. Where the lighting design falls outside the design brief then the local lighting authority will not take on the maintenance liability of a scheme that has failed in its design or construction, therefore the development would not be adopted.

Lighting improvements should form an integral part of all environmental enhancement schemes.

To identify opportunities and constraints specific to the site under consideration, a master plan or design brief shall be prepared jointly in conjunction with the appropriate officers of the local planning authority. This should consider the views of interested outside bodies (e.g. historic societies) to ensure that the appropriate environmental and lighting design solutions are achieved. This should also be covered under Construction, Design and Management Regulations (CDM) 2015.

In view of the pressures upon financial resources, the costs of environmentally designed lighting schemes and future maintenance liabilities should be borne in mind. Factors that need to be considered include whole life costings, sustainability issues and serviceability.

The county council will consider the adoption of lighting arrangements/schemes which represent an incremental step or improvement towards the desired standard, provided the full scheme is installed within two years of the first part of commissioning. However, where the lighting provision is too far below the required level established in the design brief then the local lighting authority will **NOT** accept the maintenance responsibilities.

## Annex C – Part-Night Lighting Schemes

Part-night lighting is an approach to switching off streetlighting in an area for part of the night. Over half of local authorities have introduced part-night lighting, with the first schemes being introduced in the 1970s. It is intended to be used at night during the hours when the fewest people are using the streets.

Part-night lighting is not the same as ‘Dark Skies’. Dark Skies is a national initiative which aims to conserve night skies, reduce light pollution and increase awareness of the impacts of night light. It encourages responsible outdoor lighting practices and advocates for policies to protect natural night environments.

Part-night lighting is also not for dimming lights, Many of Oxfordshire’s streetlights already use energy efficient lights and dimming technology. As lights have come to the end of their structural life they have been replaced with the newest technology, including LED lights. These new streetlights are already operating more efficiently, saving energy and requiring less maintenance.

Part-night lighting schemes will only be implemented in areas in Oxfordshire where it has been:

- requested by a town and parish council/meeting, or local governance authority
- supported by the area's County Councillor
- is suitable for part-night lighting and not subject to any of the exemptions outlined in the part-night lighting implementation framework
- subject to a public consultation to hear residents' and stakeholders' views
- approved at the council's Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management meeting.

The part-night lighting six stage implementation framework has been developed to ensure each proposed part-night lighting schemes goes through a review and consultation process:

<b>Step 1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town or parish councils, or local governance authorities, along with Oxfordshire County Council councillor support, agrees they want to implement a part-night lighting scheme(s) and submits an application to Oxfordshire County Council</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire County Council reviews the scheme(s) application.</li> <li>• If the application meets suitability and exemption requirements (listed below), then it proceeds to consultation.</li> <li>• <u>Part-night lighting exemptions are:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings</li> <li>- Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions</li> <li>- Controlled crossing points</li> <li>- Areas supporting a night-time economy</li> <li>- Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles</li> <li>- Waterside paths</li> <li>- Remote alleyways</li> <li>- Subways and underpasses</li> <li>- Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR</li> <li>- Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Public and Stakeholder consultation is carried out on the scheme(s) application via "Let's Talk Oxfordshire" <a href="#">Let's Talk Oxfordshire</a></li> </ul>
<b>Step 4</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation report on the scheme(s) application is submitted to Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cabinet member for Transport Management reviews all evidence, including resident feedback, and either approves or rejects the application</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the scheme(s) application is approved, the scheme is implemented in the requested area</li> </ul>

Part-night lighting is not a one size fits all approach. It is implemented in different ways to meet the needs of different urban and rural communities, and there are two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting:

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations

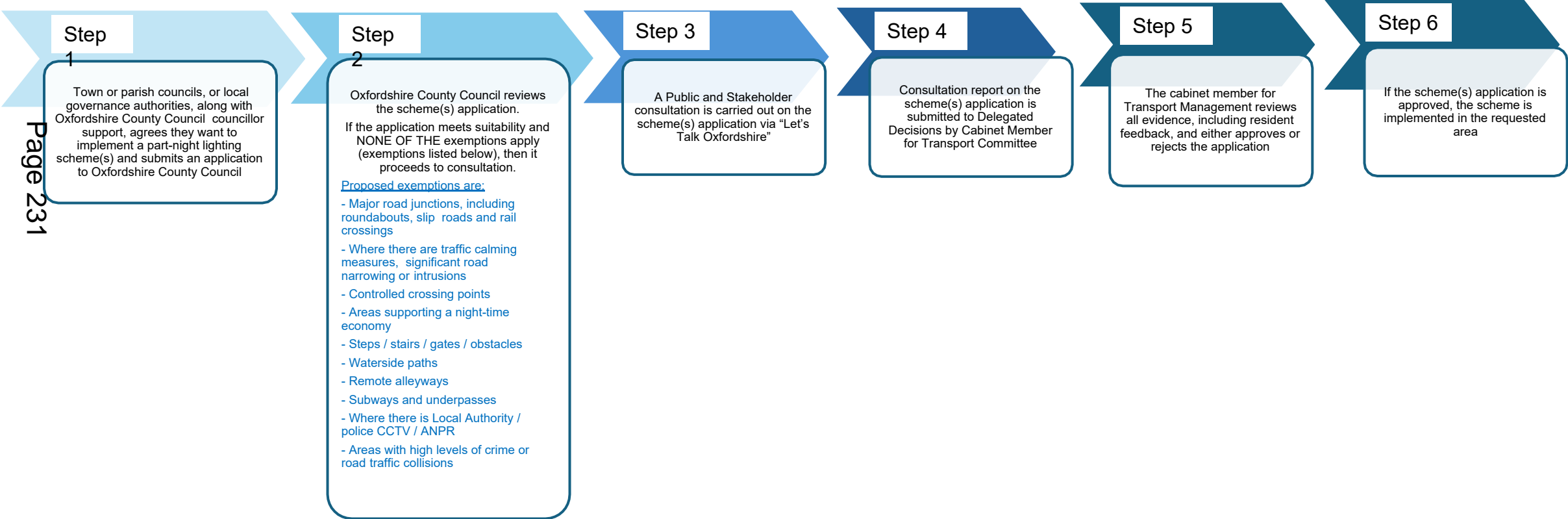
Some places in Oxfordshire already have part-night lighting and the part-night lighting implementation framework is not about removing part-night lighting where it already exists.

While research has found that there is no significant evidence indicating part-night lighting increases crime rates, or road traffic incidents, we are proposing that locations at high risk of road traffic incidents, or with high levels of crime, be exempt and are not be eligible for part-night lighting schemes. Road traffic incidents and crime levels will also be monitored after a part-night lighting scheme is introduced and changes, including reversal, could be made to the scheme if needed.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank

# Proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework



This page is intentionally left blank





## **Oxfordshire County Council**

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Street Lighting Policy Update - Part-night lighting

Version 2

## Contents

Section 1: Summary details.....	3
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	5
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....	12
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts .....	22
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts .....	27
Section 4: Review .....	29

## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment & Highways - Highway Maintenance
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy & Procedure with respect to Part Night Lighting
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	<p>An update to the Street Lighting &amp; Illuminated Assets policy and procedure has been carried out to enable the implementation of an existing part-night lighting provision within these documents.</p> <p>A new Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework has been developed to support a managed approach to delivering part-night lighting in Oxfordshire.</p>
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>Part-night lighting is typically the switching off of streetlights at night during the quieter nighttime period, supporting a reduction of operational hours for local streetlighting networks. When adopted, part-night lighting has environmental benefits, including improving biodiversity, along with reducing energy use which enables carbon savings.</p> <p>In November 2025, a previous part-night lighting proposal was taken to CMD, but it raised several concerns from councillors and stakeholders. An outline of the newly proposed part-night lighting implementation framework approach was then developed and submitted to Scrutiny Committee in Feb'25. The updated proposal detailed a two-stage engagement process to gather wider stakeholder and the public's views on part-night lighting and the new approach.</p> <p>The new part-night lighting Implementation framework has been developed to ensure that local communities are involved in the decision-making processes for implementing part-night lighting schemes in Oxfordshire. The implementation framework follows a six-step approach; covering the part-night lighting scheme application, governance, local assessment, consultation and implementation processes which allows Parish and Town Councils to apply for part-night lighting schemes within their areas.</p>

	<p>The wider stakeholder and public consultation on the updated part-night lighting proposal and part-night lighting implementation framework was carried out via two phases of stakeholder and public engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Key Stakeholder Engagement workshops (Spring 2025)</li> <li>• Public consultation held 9 June to 6 July 2025</li> </ul> <p>The stakeholder and public consultation feedback has flagged that up that whilst there is support for the benefits of part-night lighting, there are concerns that part-night lighting may increase the perception of crime and road safety incidents, which may disadvantage or adversely affect more vulnerable groups; especially women, those of a younger or older age demographic, or people with disabilities and mobility issues.</p> <p>Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do however acknowledge the genuine concerns of residents and community groups, and have introduced mitigation measures, which includes a targeted part-night lighting exemption list as part of the part-night lighting implementation framework. The exemption list addresses the specific concerns raised, and a public consultations will be held on each proposed part-night lighting scheme for greater community review and input. For each proposed scheme, we will also encourage parish and town councils to engage with their specific local stakeholder groups for their input and feedback.</p> <p>As part of the Implementation Framework processes there will be a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting schemes are not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will also be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Caroline Coyne
<b>Authorised By</b>	Jamie Kavanagh
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	03.09.2025

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Oxfordshire County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of streetlights in Oxfordshire. Under the Highway Act 1980 the council has the power, but not the duty, to provide street lighting.</p> <p>Part-night lighting is the practice of switching off streetlights during quieter nighttime hours. Over half of UK councils have introduced part-night lighting in their areas. This measure is aimed at saving energy, reducing carbon emissions and reducing costs, but there are clear environmental benefits which support nighttime pollinators and bio-diversity gains.</p> <p>In November 2024 a part-night lighting proposal “Proposed highway street lighting profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels (part-night lighting)” and its supporting Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), was presented for decision at Cabinet member Decision (CMD). A high volume of concerns were received about the proposal from Councillors, community groups and stakeholders, so the decision on the proposal was deferred with a request that a revised approach for part-night lighting be developed which involved much greater input from stakeholders and the public.</p> <p>Following the CMD feedback, the revised approach was presented to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 February 2025. The proposal outlined how the updated policy, part-night implementation framework and EIA would be re-developed, using four key elements: data and insights, engagement and consultation, understanding impacts and risks, and using updated implementation processes based on the 20mph programme and following best practice.</p> <p>The revised approach presented to Scrutiny outlined the work and next steps required. This EIA report outlines the work carried out to complete these steps, and how their outputs are feeding to, the updated part-night lighting implementation framework proposal and this supporting EIA.</p>
<p><b>Proposals</b></p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The council aims to establish a part-night lighting implementation framework which incorporates best practice, ensuring stakeholders and residents feedback is carefully considered. After drawing on the engagement principles developed for the 20mph programme, and engaging with stakeholders and holding a public consultation, a revised proposal for the part-night lighting implementation framework has been developed, which only introduces part night lighting in Oxfordshire locations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme is requested by the local town or parish council/meeting, or local governance authorities.</li> <li>• The part night lighting exemption criteria does not apply.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local residents have been consulted on individual schemes via a public consultation, as well as feedback received from key stakeholders such the police, community safety groups, transport providers, and nighttime economy is considered.</li> <li>The part night lighting scheme is submitted for consideration and decision at Oxfordshire Council Council's Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Transport Management</li> </ul>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>This EIA report presents the findings from the stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities conducted during spring and summer 2025:</p> <p>The stakeholder engagement key objectives was sharing the emerging part-night lighting implementation plans, understand stakeholders concerns and impacts surrounding part-night lighting and how these might be mitigated, and develop the formal consultation process. The engagement activity consisted of five targeted online workshops key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of community groups</li> <li>District, town and parish councillors</li> <li>Emergency services and community safety teams</li> <li>Representatives of women and girl's groups</li> <li>Employers, including of shift and night time economy workers.</li> </ul> <p>Five key questions were asked of all groups to focus discussion and ensure equity across the engagement workshops. The responses from the different groups highlighted several key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Safety Concerns:</b> Many participants, particularly representatives of community groups, women and girl's groups, and emergency services highlighted the potential negative impact on safety. Concerns were raised about increased crime rates, fear of walking in unlit areas, and the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, visually impaired individuals, and shift workers.</li> <li><b>Psychological Impact:</b> The psychological safety provided by street lighting was a recurring theme. Participants emphasised that well-lit areas contribute to a sense of security and reduce the need for extra planning and precautions when going out.</li> <li><b>Environmental and Biodiversity Benefits:</b> Some stakeholders, particularly district, town, and parish councillors, valued the environmental benefits of reduced light pollution and the positive impact on biodiversity.</li> </ul>



- Tailored Solutions: There was a strong call for tailored solutions that consider the specific needs of different areas, including urban and rural contexts, public transport areas, and high footfall locations.
- Community Engagement: Effective communication and engagement with residents were deemed crucial. Participants stressed the importance of local community feedback and insights in informing decision-making and implementation.

The stakeholder engagement provided valuable insights into the perspectives and concerns of various community groups, and this helped develop the public consultation survey:

The public consultation was held 9 June to 6 July 2025 and asked 34 quantitative and qualitative questions to gather a holistic understanding of people views on part-night lighting and the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework. The consultation generated a very high level of interest, with approx. 4.7k total page views and 1,284 people completing the survey in total. Respondents represented a wide range of diversity, providing a valuable range of differing views and feedback. There was a higher proportion of female to male respondents, which has allowed the council a greater level of insight into how women and girls view part-night lighting, as well respondents within both younger and older age brackets.

There was also a good level of engagement from those in the working age brackets, whom part-night lighting may affect more when it comes to commuting or shift work. There was also several respondents who identified as having a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months. This provides valuable insight into how part-night may affect more vulnerable residents. The high-level diversity figures of who responded to the consultation are provided below:

- 94.9% - Oxfordshire Residents
- 49% - Female / 41.3% - Male
- 3.2% - under 25yrs / 62.9% - Working age / 28% - 65yrs and over
- 78.1% - White British / 17.5 % - Prefer not to say / 1.8% Asian or Asian British
- 4.5% stated 'Yes, a lot' / 11.5% stated Yes, a little' to health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

**Main areas of support for part-night lighting and the proposed implementation framework**

	<p>There was a higher percentage of completely positive and mostly positive responses (646 / 50.4%) compared to those who that answered mostly or completely negative (562 / 43.9%) to the question; After reading the draft framework and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part-night lighting in Oxfordshire?</p> <p>A higher proportion of respondent's feedback that they did not think we need to change the proposed exemptions, with 615 / 48.1% answering 'No', compared to the 347 / 27.9% who answered yes, to the question; Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?</p> <p>The majority of respondents (566 / 44.5%) feedback they think that parish and town councils and local governance authorities are the right people to request part-night lighting in their areas, compared to the 377 / 29.7% who responded 'no' to the question: The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced.</p> <p>The majority of respondents 628 / 50.5% also think that nothing needs to be changed within the proposed implementation framework process when asked the question: This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process? compared to the 347 / 27.9% who responded yes.</p> <p>On the whole, there were less qualitative responses from respondents who answered positively in response to the quantitative questions, but there is clear support for the environmental, sustainability and cost savings part-night lighting can achieve.</p> <p>The proposed timings may need to be reviewed for each individual scheme. The majority of responses to the question: Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations? feedback they are not the right timings for rural and urban locations with 552 / 43.2%, responding that they are the wrong timings for both urban and rural areas, compared to the 472 / 36.9% who responded that they are the right timings.</p>
--	---

	<p>It is interesting to note that approximately a third of respondents (472 / 37%) feedback that they do travel either daily, multiple times a week or weekly during 11.30 PM and 5.30 AM, but then conversely 739 / 57.7% of respondents feedback that the introduction of part-night lighting during the proposed timings would not affect how they travel, compared to the 458 / 35.8% respondents saying the timings would affect how they travel.</p> <p>This is where proposed individual schemes would need to be initially reviewed to understand where the public transport links are, and what the impact is on the 'last train/bus' timings. Scheme timings could then be tailored if required.</p> <p><b>Main areas of opposition and concern</b></p> <p>The main areas of opposition and concern have come through via the qualitative responses to the consultation survey questions, where respondents have been able to write narratively what their concerns are.</p> <p>Safety concerns are the main concern respondents feedback on throughout the consultation. Many feel that part-night lighting and reducing street lighting will make streets and less safe, particularly for women. They feel well-lit streets are essential for preventing crime and ensuring public safety. The perception is that there will be an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour if part-night lighting is implemented, with darkness providing cover for criminal activities. Legal and accountability issues were raised, who would be held accountable if a crime or accident occurs due to a lack of streetlighting. Respondents have requested accountability mechanisms be put in place.</p> <p>There are concerns about potential impact on vulnerable groups, with strong sentiment that part-night lighting will disproportionately affect women, vulnerable younger people, the elderly and disabled individuals, especially those who work late shifts or rely on public transport. There are concerns that reduced lighting will affect the night-time economy, as people may avoid going out at night due to safety concerns.</p> <p>Respondents also raised environmental versus safety considerations. While respondents acknowledge the environmental benefits of part-night lighting, they argue that these should not come at the expense of public safety. There are suggestions for alternative solutions, such as motion-activated lighting, that could also balance safety and environmental concerns.</p>
--	--

	<p>There is also feedback indicating a distrust of local government, and lack of trust in the council's consultation and decision-making processes. There is a belief that the council is considering cost-cutting over public safety and that the consultation process is not genuinely considering residents' opinions.</p> <p>Within the consultation qualitative responses there was clear messaging that those that oppose part-night lighting, oppose it as a concept completely, even with the proposed implementation frameworks mitigations and checking processes taken into consideration.</p> <p><b>Levels of Communication and engagement with stakeholders</b></p> <p>There are also requests throughout the consultation feedback that communication about part-night lighting be enhanced on several levels. Generally, information about part-night lighting needs to be more widely shared, so people can understand what it is and how it may affect them.</p> <p>There were also requests that local residents and local stakeholders get a greater level of input in the consultation process and on deciding on whether a part-night lighting is implemented in their area, and that they are also provided the ability to feedback on a scheme once it has been implemented to raise any issues or concerns.</p>
<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>In November 2024 a part-night lighting proposal "Proposed highway street lighting profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels (part-night lighting)" and its supporting Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), was presented for decision at Cabinet member Decision (CMD). A high volume of concerns were received about the proposal from Councillors, community groups and stakeholders, so the decision on the proposal was deferred with a request that a revised approach for part-night lighting be developed which involved much greater input from stakeholders and the public.</p> <p>Following the CMD feedback, the revised approach was presented to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 February 2025. The proposal outlined how the updated policy, part-night implementation framework and EIA would be re-developed, using four key elements: data and insights, engagement and consultation, understanding impacts and risks, and using updated implementation processes based on the 20mph programme and following best practice.</p>

	<p>The revised approach presented to Scrutiny outlined the work and next steps required. This EIA report outlines the work carried out to complete these steps, and how their outputs are feeding to, and support, the updated part-night lighting implementation framework proposal and this its supporting EIA.</p>
--	---

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents, which could affect either younger or older generations more acutely.	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures, which includes a targeted exemption list. The exemption list addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme. For each proposed scheme, we will encourage parish and town councils to engage with their	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.  There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.



					<p>specific local age related and youth stakeholder groups</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents, which could	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on

				<p>affect those with disabilities and/or long-term health issues more acutely.</p>	<p>significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme. For each proposed scheme, we will encourage parish and town councils to engage with their specific local disability stakeholder groups</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and</p>		<p>increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	---

					review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents, which could affect those who have undergone gender reassignment more acutely.	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme, which we will encourage parish and town councils to engage on with their specific gender	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	<p>Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety</p>

					<p>reassignment stakeholder groups.</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		incident data post implementation.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards marriage & civil partnership			

<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards Pregnancy & Maternity			
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Although the consultation indicated a lower level of engagement with respondents identifying as other than White British, there is an understanding that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents for those who are from ethnic groups.	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme, which we will encourage parish and town councils to engage on with	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	<p>Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety</p>

					<p>their race and ethnic stakeholder groups.</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		incident data post implementation.
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents, which could	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime



				<p>affect women and girls more acutely.</p>	<p>acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme, which we will encourage parish and town councils to engage on with their specific women stakeholder groups.</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas of already heightened risk, and there will be an ongoing annual evidence led monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it,</p>		<p>levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.</p>
--	--	--	--	---	---	--	---

					schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards Sexual Orientation			
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Although the consultation indicated a lower level of engagement with respondents identifying as other than Christian, there is an understanding that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents for those who identify with a different religion or belief.	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.  There will be an annual monitoring process set up

					<p>proposed part-night lighting scheme, which we will encourage parish and town councils to engage on with their specific women stakeholder groups.</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas of already heightened risk, and there will be an ongoing annual evidence led monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	---

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception part-night lighting will improve the environment through encouraging biodiversity, especially for nocturnal animals and pollinators, as well as reduce light pollution. The biodiversity nets gains may be more immediately noticeable in rural communities.</p> <p>It has also been raised that rural areas may also be 'darker' if part-night lighting is implemented and conversely people may feel more vulnerable as a result.</p>	<p>Bio-diversity assessments could be carried out as part of post-implementation monitoring, to understand the level of part-night benefits / improvements.</p> <p>Each part night lighting scheme will be assessed so if there are areas where lighting is required due to last buses / local pubs etc, then those lights can remain on for those particular instances.</p>	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	<p>Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.</p>

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Armed Forces</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards Armed Forces			
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime and road safety incidents, which could affect either younger or older generations more acutely, and affect those with disabilities and/or long-term health issues more acutely. As a result it may also affect those who are caring for those with these Protected Characteristics.	Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme. For each proposed	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.  There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
					<p>scheme, we will encourage parish and town councils to engage with their specific local carer stakeholder groups</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.



Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The consultation feedback has indicated that there is a perception that reduced streetlighting could increase the risk of crime which could affect areas of deprivation more acutely	<p>Although there is no evidence to suggest from the majority of authorities that have implemented part-night lighting that reduced street lighting has had statistically significant effects, we do acknowledge however the genuine concerns of residents and community groups and have introduced mitigation measures which include a targeted exemption list which addresses specific concerns raised by these groups. We will be holding public consultations on each proposed part-night lighting scheme. For each proposed scheme, we will encourage parish and town councils to engage with their specific Areas of deprivation.</p> <p>There is also a parallel process of engagement and crime and road safety data</p>	Sean Rooney, Head of Maintenance & Road Safety	<p>Schemes will be monitored on an ongoing basis in terms of if there is feedback from TVP on increased crime levels, or concerns raised, a scheme can be reviewed.</p> <p>There will be an annual monitoring process set up with TVP to review schemes and assess any issues or safety incident data post implementation.</p>

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
					<p>analysis with Thames Valley Police to ensure that part-night lighting is not introduced in areas where is already heightened risk.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing annual evidence led part-night lighting monitoring and review meeting with Thames Valley Police, and where and if evidence supports it, schemes maybe removed from the part-night lighting programme (if requested by Thames Valley Police and the Parish / Town Council).</p>		

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards OCC Staff			
Other Council Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards Other council services			
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any bias or discriminate towards OCC's Providers			

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The part-night lighting programme approach does not have any impact on Social Value			

---

<sup>1</sup> If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

## Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	To be agreed if part-night lighting is approved by Cabinet on 21.10.2025
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	
<b>Authorised By</b>	

This page is intentionally left blank



# Climate Impact Assessment

## Details of proposal - *fill in all the areas shaded in blue*

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment & Highways - Highway Maintenance
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy & Procedure with respect to Part- Night Lighting
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	The update to the Street Lighting & Illuminated Assets policy and procedure will enable the implementation of an existing part-night lighting provision within these documents, to enable part-night lighting.
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. <b>(following completion of the assessment).</b>	The previous Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy and procedure allowed for Part-night lighting, however it not specify how, or under what circumstances, part-night lighting may be implemented in a local area. The Street Lighting and Electrical Assets Policy and Procedure have been updated with regards to part-night lighting, to provide clarity, and new part-night lighting Implementation Framework has been developed that allows Parish and Town Councils to apply for part-night lighting schemes within their areas. The new Part-Night lighting Implementation Framework follows a six-step approach, that explains the part-night lighting scheme application, governance, local assessment, consultation and implementation processes which allows Parish and Town Councils to apply for part-night lighting schemes within their areas. If adopted Part-night lighting will reduce the operational hours for local streetlighting networks in Oxfordshire, and will result in a reduction in energy use and its associated carbon.
<b>Context / Background</b> Briefly summarise the background to the proposal, including reasons for any changes from previous versions	Oxfordshire County Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, operates approximately 60,000 streetlights across the county and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of streetlights in Oxfordshire. Under the Highway Act 1980 the council has the power, but not the duty, to provide street lighting. Part-night lighting is the practice of switching off streetlights during quieter nighttime hours. Over half of UK councils have introduced part-night lighting in their areas. This measure is primary aimed at saving energy, reducing carbon emissions and reducing costs, but there are clear environmental benefits which support nighttime pollinators and bio-diversity gains. The proposed part-night lighting initiative seeks to accommodate the positive aspects of street lighting whilst reducing its detrimental impact on the environment and its burden on council resources by better tailoring its duration and intensity, and switching it off during nighttime hours. Light pollution would be significantly reduced during the affected hours which could reduce the negative impact of artificial light on some wildlife. Each light that is switched off overnight would be illuminated for at least 1,500 fewer hours each year. It was previously estimated that if part-night lighting were implemented at every possible OCC street lighting location across the county it could potentially reduce energy consumption by over 5,000 kWh per day, and realise an approximated annual reduction in carbon emissions of over 400tCO2e. Additionally, it was previously estimated that part-night lighting could potentially reduce annual cost revenue expenditure on energy by over 100,000.
<b>Proposal</b> Explain the detail of the proposal, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The council's aim is to set a new implementation framework for part-night lighting for Oxfordshire that supports the council's net zero ambitions and reduces the negative impacts of light pollution on the natural environment from a carbon and biodiversity perspective. Central to the development of the council's part-night lighting proposals is giving communities the choice to introduce part-night lighting in their local area only if Parish or Ton Council's request it, and recognising that one size does not fit all. The proposed part-night lighting implementation framework allows for different operating hours, levels of light intensity and exemptions which will all support the diversity of the county's geography and communities. Importantly, the council are proposing that part night-lighting will be a community choice requested through the parish/town council and the county councillor/s for that area (for areas of Oxford that are not parished, this would only be through the county councillors). Following such a request, the part-night lighting scheme for that community will be consulted upon, with a final decision being made at the relevant Cabinet Member Decision meeting (similar to the principle and approach to 20mph schemes).
<b>Evidence / Intelligence</b> List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposal and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	The council carried out a two-phase approach for stakeholder engagement, and public consultation on the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework. Phase one involved engaging stakeholders and communities to review and develop Oxfordshire's proposals for a part-night lighting framework. This included sharing the council's plans, hearing concerns, and gathering feedback on the potential impacts of part-night lighting, especially on at-risk groups. Phase two was a formal public consultation on the proposed framework developed in collaboration with communities and stakeholders. The consultation results indicated no substantial changes were needed to the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework, but the consultation helped refine the part-night lighting framework and inform the proposals to the cabinet. As the new implementation framework proposal for part-night lighting follows the same application principles as the 20mph programme, where parish and town councils apply for schemes within their areas, the future carbon and cost savings will depend on the volume of part-night lighting scheme uptake, and each scheme will produce different savings figures. Officers have calculated potential cost and carbon savings using three case studies, based upon real world urban, rural and residential location examples to provide more granular details on the potential cost and carbon savings.
<b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b> Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the proposal, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	On 14 November 2024, "Proposed highway street lighting profiles, specifically with regard to operational hours and illumination levels (part-night lighting)", were presented for decision at Cabinet Member Decisions (CMD). These were standalone proposals, outside of a wider review of the council's Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy. Specifically, these proposals were designed to enact the provisions made in the existing policy for part-night lighting, to support the council's net zero ambitions and reduce the negative impacts of light pollution on the natural environment from a carbon and biodiversity perspective. Prior to the CMD meeting it became clear from the many written representations from councillors, community groups, stakeholders that the council should pause implementation of their proposals to reconsider the part-night lighting approach. Specifically, it was identified that a revised approach working closely with a wider range of stakeholders needed to be undertaken. It was also accepted by officers that the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) accompanying the proposal did not truly represent the views and concerns of the wider community and diverse groups within Oxfordshire, nor did it reflect the existing EIA already associated with the council's Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy. Whilst the 14 November 2024 CMD meeting went ahead, the decision on part-night lighting was deferred. The updated streetlight in proposals and accompany EIA have been shaped by stakeholder engagement and the formal consultation, it also allows for members to reject the provision of Part-night lighting within Oxfordshire. The updated Street Lighting & Illuminated Assets policy and procedure, and part-night lighting implementation framework will support an updated approach to part-night schemes, and also whereby street lighting infrastructure is only provided when justified, with aims to reduce the council's energy costs, reduce light pollution and the reduce our impact on the environment and biodiversity.
<b>Completed by</b>	James Dance, Team Leader (Highway Policy and Performance) / Caroline Coyne, Project Manager
<b>Climate action sign off by</b>	Franco Gonzalez, Carbon Analyst
<b>Director sign off by</b>	
<b>Assessment date</b>	09/09/2025

This page is intentionally left blank

# **Part-night street lighting**

# **Stakeholder engagement**

# **report**

## **April 2025**

## Contents

## Page Numbers

- 1 Executive summary
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Methodology
- 5 Findings
- 6 Conclusion
- 7 Annex

3  
4  
4  
5  
12  
14

# 1. Executive summary

1.1 The council aims to set a new framework for part-night lighting that supports its net zero ambitions and reduces the negative impacts of light pollution on the natural environment from a carbon and biodiversity perspective. This report presents the findings from the stakeholder engagement activities conducted for the part-night street lighting initiative in Oxfordshire.

The key objectives of this phase one engagement activity were to share the council's emerging plans, understand concerns and impacts surrounding part-night lighting and how these might be mitigated, and develop the formal consultation process.

The engagement activity consisted of five targeted online workshops key stakeholders:

- Representatives of community groups
- District, town and parish councillors
- Emergency services and community safety teams
- Representatives of women and girl's groups
- Employers, including of shift and night time economy workers.

A session was held with Colleague Inclusion Network leads prior to the workshops to seek views, inform approach, and widen stakeholder contact lists.

Five key questions were asked of all groups to focus discussion and ensure equity across the engagement workshops. The responses and feedback from the different groups highlighted several key themes:

1. **Safety Concerns:** Many participants, particularly representatives of community groups, women and girl's groups, and emergency services highlighted the potential negative impact on safety. Concerns were raised about increased crime rates, fear of walking in unlit areas, and the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, visually impaired individuals, and shift workers.
2. **Psychological Impact:** The psychological safety provided by street lighting was a recurring theme. Participants emphasised that well-lit areas contribute to a sense of security and reduce the need for extra planning and precautions when going out.
3. **Environmental and Biodiversity Benefits:** Some stakeholders, particularly district, town, and parish councillors, valued the environmental benefits of reduced light pollution and the positive impact on biodiversity.
4. **Tailored Solutions:** There was a strong call for tailored solutions that consider the specific needs of different areas, including urban and rural contexts, public transport areas, and high footfall locations.
5. **Community Engagement:** Effective communication and engagement with residents were deemed crucial. Participants stressed the importance of local community feedback and insights in informing decision-making and implementation.

The stakeholder engagement has provided valuable insights into the perspectives and concerns of various community groups. While the part-night street lighting initiative has the potential to support the council's net zero ambitions and improve the night time environment, it is essential to carefully consider the safety and well-being of all community

members. Tailored solutions and ongoing community engagement will be key to the successful implementation of this initiative.

## **2. Introduction**

2.1 The council's aim is to set a new framework for part-night lighting for Oxfordshire that supports the council's net zero ambitions and reduces the negative impacts of light pollution on the natural environment from a carbon and biodiversity perspective.

Central to the development of the council's proposals is giving communities the choice to introduce part-night lighting in their local area and recognising that one size does not fit all. This pre-consultation engagement activity focussed on understanding concerns and impacts surrounding part-night lighting, and how these might be mitigated.

Key objectives of this phase one engagement activity were to:

- share the council's emerging plans for a part-night lighting framework for Oxfordshire based on community choice, including operating hours, levels of light intensity and exemptions and how these might apply to different areas
- hear people's views and concerns on introducing part-night lighting in different circumstances, with a specific emphasis of understanding potential impacts on different groups of people who are perceived as being 'at risk' from crime or harm
- share the council's early thoughts on the process for consideration of part-night lighting to ensure the choice to opt-in is community led
- share the council's initial findings from the data analysis phase and exploring any gaps
- listen to ideas and feedback on the council's plans
- explore the potential benefits and impacts on carbon and biodiversity of not introducing part-night lighting; and
- develop the formal consultation process for specific locations which will be taken through the CMD approval process for decision.

## **3. Methodology**

3.1 The engagement activity consisted of five targeted online workshops for:

- Representatives of community groups (9 attendees)
- District, town and parish councillors (13 attendees)
- Emergency services and community safety teams (11 attendees)
- Representatives of women and girl's groups (3 attendees)
- Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers (8 attendees)

A full list of groups, organisations and areas represented by attendees can be found in Annex 1.

Participants were welcomed by Sean Rooney (Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety) and prior to group discussion, given an overview of part-night lighting and common myths surrounding the issue. It was emphasised that these sessions were



taking place at an early stage of the project and would inform the development of the part-night lighting framework, which would be consulted on separately.

- 3.2 Participants were recruited by email to existing stakeholder contact lists (supplemented with contacts supplied by inclusion network colleagues) and invited to register for their workshop on the council's engagement platform Let's talk Oxfordshire. Reminders were sent to representatives/organisations who had not registered a week prior to the events.
- 3.3 A session was held with Colleague Inclusion Network leads prior to the workshops taking place, to seek views, inform approach and widen stakeholder contact lists.

## **4. Findings**

- 4.1 Five key questions were asked of all groups, to focus discussion and ensure equity across the engagement workshops. It was emphasised that these sessions were taking place at an early stage of the project and would inform the development of the part-night lighting framework, which would be consulted on separately.

Each of these key questions is outlined below, with the responses and feedback from the different groups.

- 4.2 How do you think part-night lighting could affect the safety and well-being of your communities?

### **Representatives of community groups:**

Issues discussed included the potential effect on crime rates, safety for shift workers travelling during unsociable hours, and the impact on vulnerable groups such as women and visually impaired individuals.

Concerns were raised for the safety of students, especially those traveling late at night, living in residential areas or traveling to placements. Examples were given of areas where students have been victims of crime and it was highlighted that are existing student campaigns for an increase in street lighting.

The safety of people (especially those with a disability) using paths and pavements was discussed in relation to potential injury. There were concerns that people would be unable to see obstacles or damaged/uneven surfaces. It was felt that many people with a visual impairment would feel less confident in going out because of this, which could lead to isolation.

High crime rates were highlighted in other areas, with some participants feeling that street lighting is necessary to ensure the safety of shift workers and late-night commuters.

It was felt that part-night lighting would cause more people to choose to travel by car than foot if they had to go out, reducing the health benefits of walking and increasing their environmental impact.

Participants sought reassurance that the police were also being engaged as part of this process, and it was confirmed that they are.

### **District, town and parish councillors:**

Participants shared their concerns and views on how part-night lighting could affect their communities. Issues raised included safety, fear, light pollution, and the need for tailored solutions for different areas.

Concerns were raised about safety, including psychological safety and the fear associated with walking in unlit areas at night. Some participants felt they would feel unsafe walking home if the streetlights were turned off, which could lead to more people using cars instead of walking.

Some participants questioned the potential impact of part-night lighting on public transport users. It was suggested that bus stops and other public transport areas should be considered for exemptions to ensure the safety of people using these services at night.

Others raised the issue of light pollution, its impact on residents and wildlife, and the importance of maintaining dark skies. A representative highlighted that her rural community values dark skies for biodiversity and the ability to observe the night sky without light pollution.

Differences in opinion between representatives from urban and rural areas were noted. Overall, rural representatives showed more positive attitudes towards part-night lighting, whereas urban representatives demonstrated greater concern regarding its implementation.

### **Emergency services and community safety teams:**

Participants flagged up the different lighting requirements between urban and rural areas and noted the importance of considering local contexts and ensuring community input, particularly in high footfall locals and rural areas. Urban areas have higher footfall and therefore generate higher crime rates and need lighting. Participants feedback the crime survey work that has been carried in Oxford City with Universities and the concerns raised by students regarding violence towards women; streetlighting is always flagged up as deterrent. There is also a focus on having well-lit spaces for the route home. Advice is given to women not to walk alone and to use well-lit routes.

How well an area is lit, does affect fear of crime and safety perceptions. For example, crimes such as drug dealing gravitates towards unlit spaces; but doesn't always show up in crime figures. Residents may be aware of it, and it generates fears, but is not always reported. Unlit spaces in neighbourhoods do affect safety perception issues.

The public perception of crime can be reported via national online platforms such as 'Street Safe 'and Common Spaces'. There was a request for OCC to use these platforms when designing PNL schemes and a request was made for OCC to promote them to residents.

### **Representatives of women and girl's groups:**

Participants feedback a key aspect of street lighting is the psychological safety it provides for woman and girls and how it unlit spaces affects behaviour change in women. Street lighting is crucial for their sense of security. The presence of lighting provides a sense of security and reduces the need for extra planning and precautions when going out. Woman and girls already change their behaviours and route choices depending on street lighting levels, and extra planning and forethought are required in advance. Street lighting also provides assurance, when incidents do occur, you can see better.

Lower levels of light and unlit spaces also discourage women and girls from accessing outside areas, for instance engaging with leisure and sports activities such as group sport activities in parks, or jogging residential roads. Reports indicate women are much less likely to engage with sport activities in the winter months due to darker mornings / evenings for instance.

Concerns raised for night economy workers, and shift workers, who finish their shifts at various times during the night, also rely on street lighting for their safety. The absence of lighting can increase the risk and inconvenience for these workers, and the effects it could potentially have on social night life. Consideration is already required for later journey times home in the dark, and part night lighting may restrict this further.

The focus of the PNL programme was also queried; if the focus on public street lighting is for environmental impact, it suggesting that large employers and businesses should also be targeted for keeping large warehouse and office lights on.

### **Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers:**

Concerns were raised about the safety of shift workers who travel during early morning or late-night hours. Participants felt that it was important that surrounding areas be well-lit to ensure their safety while commuting.

Participants discussed the large involvement of students in the night time economy, both as employees and customers. They emphasised that students often travel late at night on residential roads to return home.

The impact on more vulnerable groups was highlighted, in particular women and people with disabilities. They stressed the importance of maintaining adequate lighting to ensure these groups feel safe and secure in their communities, and that for people with a visual impairment low lighting can make the difference between some and no sight of the road.

Concerns were also raised for cyclists and a potential for more accidents, with low lighting making it more difficult to see (and avoid) pot holes.

#### **4.3 What steps would you like to see to minimise the risks to, and the concerns of, your communities in relation to part-night lighting?**

**Representatives of community groups:**

Concerns were raised about the previous Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) and the need for inclusive consultation, so that the impacts on all communities to be understood, was emphasised.

**District, town and parish councillors:**

Participants emphasised the need for tailored solutions for different areas and for the needs of each area should be considered individually. In particular, the differing want and needs of urban and rural areas were highlighted.

It was suggested that bus stops and other public transport areas should be considered for exemptions to ensure the safety of people using these services at night.

The possibility of providing regular, transparent reports on local crime and road traffic incident data to parishes for publication was discussed, as it was felt this could reduce the fear of crime and road incidents in unlit areas.

**Emergency services and community safety teams:**

The dynamic capability of lighting systems is needed to allow for quick adjustments in response to crime or significant events. It was noted that having the ability to 'reserve' or stand down a scheme, if it was found to increase crime or affect residents' perception of safety would provide assurance.

It was raised that engagement with Emergency and community safety services and their communities is vital. There will be different requirements depending in the different communities. It was underlined that considering community safety in high footfall locations, such as city centres, lightning is crucial for preventing crime and ensuring public safety.

Reliable transport home routes must be considered. There are unique challenges faced by rural communities, where lighting is essential for safety, particularly at bus stops and along major routes. The late-night journey home routes from well-lit urban areas, out to rural areas that don't have lighting needs to be planned carefully. Many rural areas do not have lighting near bus stops, and close engagement and discussions with bus companies should be considered.

**Representatives of women and girl's groups:**

Concerns were raised, about the potential impact on women and girls' safety and freedom. It was emphasized that reducing street lighting could restrict their ability to engage in activities and feel safe in public space, and participants feedback that it will be very useful to know in advance which areas are being considered for part night lighting, and which areas have part night lighting so woman can plan ahead accordingly.

It was noted that good communication and good engagement with residents in the consultation processes is key. Assurance would be provided by the fact that the parish application process would be an 'opt in' option for Parish's, and not an 'opt out' option.

The consideration of a broader view, across all areas; not just public or main spaces, was highlighted. Evidencing a joined-up approach to environmental and cost-saving measures, considering the broader impact on communities and ensuring that actions taken do not disproportionately affect women and girls.

### **Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers:**

Participants felt that lighting should be maintained around public transport, both at defined sites (e.g. bus stops) and the key walking routes to them.

The group discussed increased risk to cyclists and felt that it was important that the council be measured in their response, as they felt responsibility for lighting lies with cyclists and that the council should not "nanny" them. It was suggested that an awareness campaign about appropriate lighting (to be seen vs. to see) could be helpful.

It was felt that lighting in areas of night time economy and on key residential routes where people will be returning home should not be turned off.

4.4 Part night lighting isn't one size fits all, and some things will make an area unsuitable for it. This is a list of our proposed exemptions:

- a. Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings
- b. Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions
- c. Controlled crossing points
- d. Areas supporting a night-time economy
- e. Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles
- f. Waterside paths
- g. Remote alleyways
- h. Subways and underpasses
- i. Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR
- j. Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions

Are these the right criteria to make an area exempt? Have we missed something?

### **Representatives of community groups:**

Participants felt that all the proposed exemptions were appropriate but requested clarity on controlled crossing points and whether this would include areas such as zebra crossings where there is no control by the pedestrian.

Two additional exemptions were suggested:

- Arterial roads into/between areas of night-time economy
- Pathways shared by pedestrians and cyclists

### **District, town and parish councillors:**

Participants agreed with the proposed exemptions and suggested two additional areas for consideration:

- Bus stops and public transport areas
- Areas with defibrillators and other emergency resources (e.g. for flooding)

### **Emergency services and community safety teams:**

Overall, the list was considered comprehensive, but participants feedback that the perception of safety / fear of crime needs to add as an exemption to the list, ensuring that areas where people unsafe are adequately lit. The fear of crime, and perceptions of safety and of not being able to get 'out and about' can affect people, even when the crime data doesn't reflect a high level of crime.

The importance of connectivity to night time economy areas, such as local shopping areas need to be considered as an exemption, as well as the routes for journeys home at night.

### **Representatives of women and girl's groups:**

Participants feedback that the schemes need to be considered on a street by street basis, and that the exemption list does not feel very nuanced. Also queried how crime data will be used to analyse the schemes. Need to have consideration of crime level data pre and post implementation and have the ability to stand down a scheme quickly if crime or fear of crime increases. Decisions on implementing a scheme need to be made on the basis of safety.

The late-night journey home from train stations or bus stops to residential areas needs to be considered. Younger people who are more likely to be going out later, may not be able to afford a taxi home for instance.

Gave an example of how domestic abuse happens in homes in residential areas, and woman may feel less inclined to leave the home if residential areas are unlit, but roundabouts remain lit, and that feels like bias towards car drivers. Flagged up the Government 'Safer Streets' initiative following the murder of Sarah Everad which recommends better street lighting, noting that there could be negative reputational impacts for OCC by introducing part night lighting. Noted that residents need to be assured that their concerns are listened to and schemes are not 'pushed through'.

### **Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers:**

Participants agreed with the proposed exemptions and suggested four additions:

- Bus stops and the key routes leading to them
- Residential areas supporting the night time economy (i.e. where large numbers of people are likely to be coming from and returning to)
- Public areas covered by private CCTV. It was also noted that some companies and institutions will have designed their CCTV coverage to take advantage of existing lighting.



- Outside sites which employ large numbers of shift workers, such as hospitals, warehouses and transport hubs.

4.5 We are considering two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting. Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations, and between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations. This is based on when the least amount of people are using roads and paths, and when the last trains and buses run. These times could be tailored for an area's individual needs (e.g. if the last trains arrive after midnight). What do you think about these timings?

### **Representatives of community groups:**

Participants emphasised the need for flexibility in timings to accommodate local needs. They suggested considering variations based on factors such as shift workers, night-time economy, and public transport schedules.

It was queried whether timings should vary between summer and winter, as daylight hours change.

### **District, town and parish councillors:**

Overall participants were happy with the two 'standard' timings but emphasised the need for tailored solutions for different areas. Concerns were raised about night shift workers who travel at unusual hours and it was suggested that their needs in the timing decisions.

It was queried whether small market town would be categorised as rural or urban.

### **Emergency services and community safety teams:**

Overall participants agreed the timings suitable but suggested the ability to adjust the time frames based on local needs, such as late-night public transport schedules, or the presence of the night time economy, to ensure safety and convenience for residents. It was noted that specific timings requirements should be considered for areas where there is a high number of people that may access accommodation later at night, such as student or nurse accommodation blocks in Oxford City. An example of the area around Brookes University was also given as an area of high footfall later at night.

It was also raised that high flood risk areas may need to be considered as a high risk areas that require lighting.

### **Representatives of women and girl's groups:**

Concerns were expressed about the long duration of the proposed timings and the potential impact on safety, suggesting that lighting should not be turned off at all. Participants flagged up that these unsocial hours are times of high risk for women, when there are less people around and it is dark. Underlined the issue with late night journeys home, and poorly lit spaces. There might not be a change in crime rates, but there will be a change in women's behaviour, it will increase 'no go zones' for women.

Flagged up potential concerns of first responders and those working in the community. They might feel safe having to work in unlit spaces.

### **Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers:**

Participants suggested that the timings should be adjusted seasonally to account for variations in daylight hours and ensure that lighting is adequate during darker winter months.

It was queried whether the system could be flexible enough to be adapted for events and festivals, such as May morning and religious festivals like Eid and Diwali. Instances such as the public unrest in the summer of 2024 were also highlighted. It was felt that lighting should be maintained to ensure public safety during increased nighttime activity.

4.6 Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is fully oppose and 5 is fully approve), to what degree do you support the introduction of part-night lighting?

Stakeholder group	Number of responses from each group					Total respondents
	1 Fully oppose	2	3	4	5 Fully approve	
Representatives of community groups	1	1	1	1	2	<b>6</b>
District, town and parish councillors	2	0	2	7	2	<b>13</b>
Emergency services and community safety teams	0	2	3	1	4	<b>10</b>
Representatives of women and girl's groups	3	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers	0	3	3	0	0	<b>6</b>

## **5. Conclusion**

5.1 The stakeholder engagement activities for the part-night street lighting initiative have provided valuable insights into the perspectives and concerns of various community groups. Overall, the feedback indicates a mixed response, with some stakeholders expressing support for the environmental benefits and cost savings, while others have raised significant concerns about safety and well-being.

5.2 Key themes that have emerged from the comments include:

1. **Safety Concerns:** Many participants, particularly representatives of community groups, women and girl's groups, and emergency services, highlighted the potential negative impact on safety. Concerns were raised about increased crime rates, fear of walking in unlit areas, and the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, visually impaired individuals, and shift workers.
2. **Psychological Impact:** The psychological safety provided by street lighting was a recurring theme. Participants emphasised that well-lit areas contribute to a sense of security and reduce the need for extra planning and precautions when going out.
3. **Environmental and Biodiversity Benefits:** Some stakeholders, particularly district, town, and parish councillors, valued the environmental benefits of reduced light pollution and the positive impact on biodiversity.
4. **Tailored Solutions:** There was a strong call for tailored solutions that consider the specific needs of different areas, including urban and rural contexts, public transport areas, and high footfall locations.
5. **Community Engagement:** Effective communication and engagement with residents were deemed crucial. Participants stressed the importance of local community feedback and insights in informing decision-making and implementation.

In conclusion, while it is accepted that the part-night street lighting initiative has the potential to support the council's net zero ambitions and improve the night time environment, it is essential to carefully consider the safety and well-being of all community members and stakeholder feedback indicated that tailored solutions and ongoing community engagement will be key to the successful implementation of this initiative.

## **Annex 1: Groups, organisations and areas represented by attendees**

### **Representatives of community groups:**

- Adult Social Care Visual Impairment Team
- Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel
- Harcourt Hill Residents Association
- Langford Village Community Association
- LGBT Oxon
- Oxford City Angels
- Oxford Pedestrians Association
- Oxford Students' Union
- Oxfordshire Liveable Streets

### **District, town and parish councillors:**

- Abingdon Town Council
- Appleton with Eaton parish council
- Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council
- Bampton Parish Council
- Beckley and Stowood Parish Council
- Berinsfield Parish Council
- Bicester Town Council
- Chinnor Parish Council
- Clerk, Appleton with Eaton Parish Council
- Dorchester Parish Council
- Goring Parish Council
- Weston on the Green Parish Council
- Witney Town Council

### **Emergency services and community safety teams:**

- Oxford City Council – Community safety
- Oxfordshire County Council – Fire and rescue and community safety
- Oxfordshire County Council – Vizion Zero project
- South and Vale District Councils – Community safety
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Thames Valley Police
- West Oxfordshire District Council – Community safety

### **Representatives of women and girl's groups:**

- Oxfordshire Youth - Young Women and Girls Project
- Survivor Space Oxfordshire
- Violence against Women and Girls consultant

**Large employers, including of shift and night-time economy workers:**

- Oxford Brookes University
- Oxford Bus Company
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Oxford University
- Oxford University Hospitals

This page is intentionally left blank





# **Part-night lighting Consultation report August 2025**

# Contents

		Page Numbers
1	Executive summary	3
2	Introduction	3
3	Methodology	4
4	Findings	5
4.1	Respondent demographics	5
4.2	Level of support	6
4.3	Proposed exemptions	9
4.4	Proposed timings	11
4.5	How often do people travel between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM	15
4.6	Who requests part-night lighting	17
4.7	Proposed implementation process	19
4.8	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposal?	21
4.9	Impacts for those with a long-term illness, health problem or disability	25
4.10	<b>Parish and Town Councils and Councillor feedback</b>	
5	Conclusion	27
	Annex A - Consultation Survey Questions	30
	Annex B - Survey Data	33
	Annex C Consultation Responses by Postcode district	42
	Annex D - Direct consultation feedback	43

## 1. Executive summary

The council aims to set a new framework for part-night lighting that supports its net zero ambitions and reduces the negative impacts of light pollution on the natural environment from a carbon and biodiversity perspective. This report presents the findings from the public consultation was held via 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire', 9 June to 6 July 2025 on the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework for Oxfordshire.

Prior to consultation, extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken to inform the development of the part-night lighting proposal. This consisted of workshops and meetings with key stakeholders, including:

- Town, Parish and District Councillors
- Community group representatives
- Women and girls' groups
- Transport providers
- Employers of shift and nighttime economy workers
- Universities and student representatives
- Emergency services and community safety representatives
- Colleague inclusion networks

The consultation's 1,284 responses indicate a view mixed view of part-night lighting but show overall that there is very strong and positive support for the environmental and cost saving benefits that part-night lighting can provide, as indicated by the higher percentage of completely positive and mostly positive responses (646 / 50.4%) to those who that answered mostly or completely negative (562 / 43.9%), to the question; After reading the draft framework, and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part night lighting in Oxfordshire?

For those who are not supportive of part-night lighting, the consultation feedback indicated that it is perceived to potentially increase crime levels which in turn raise safety concerns. The perception of safety that lighting provides is one of the main themes of concern raised throughout the consultation's qualitative feedback, especially for women and vulnerable residents. It is noted that for respondents who are not supportive of the part-night lighting concept at all, many expressed that no mitigations or adjustments would garner their support, only abandonment of part-night lighting as a whole.

The consultation findings, detailed in section 4, do provide evidence that the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework is supported by residents, with the majority of respondents (48.1%) agreeing that nothing needs to be changed in the proposed framework process, and 44.5% agreeing that town and parish councils, or local governance authorities are right people to be able to request part-night lighting.

## 2. Introduction

Prior to consultation, extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken to inform the development of the part-night lighting proposal, following the initial Dark Skies proposal in November 2024.

Internal engagement included information and feedback session with Colleague Inclusion Networks, including regular requested updates to the Women's Network.

External engagement activity consisted of engagement workshops with the following stakeholder groups:

- Town, Parish and District Councillors
- Community group representatives
- Women and girls' groups
- Transport providers
- Employers of shift and nighttime economy workers
- Universities and student representatives
- Emergency services and community safety representatives

These stakeholder engagement sessions provided valuable insight which informed the development of the draft part-night lighting implementation framework. The insight was further used to inform the design of the public consultation (Annex A).

The public consultation aimed to gather views and feedback from Oxfordshire's residents, councillors and local businesses on the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework. In particular we sought to understand:

- overall views of part-night lighting as a concept
- overall views of the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework
- views on the draft framework's proposed exemptions list, scheme timings, and who can request a part-night lighting scheme.
- How part-night lighting may impact affect residents

potential impact of part-night lighting on those with protected characteristics

Parish and Town councillors were also asked the areas they represent may be interested in implementing a part-night lighting scheme. The responses to this are discussed in further detail in Annex C

The consultation has provided valuable feedback and insights on resident's views about part-night lighting. It has evidenced a diverse range of perspectives on the proposed framework, which have helped develop and improve the updates to the streetlighting policy, the part-night lighting Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) and the updates to the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA).

## 3. Methodology

The consultation was live on 'Let's talk Oxfordshire' from 9 June to 6 July 2025. Paper copies were also on request via the project team and at libraries. Emails informing

people about the consultation with links to the consultation webpage were sent out to key statutory and part-night lighting stakeholders, as well as to local parish and town councils and anyone who had registered to attend a stakeholder engagement workshop.

The consultation webpage included a short video called 'What is Part Night Lighting?'<sup>1</sup> explaining part-night lighting and the aim of the consultation, as well as downloadable documentation to ensure all respondents had access to clear information to inform their feedback. It was requested that respondents read the following documents before responding to the consultation survey questions:

- A 'Frequently asked Questions' explainer on Part-Night Lighting [Part Night Lighting Consultation FAQ.docx](#) (735 downloads)
- The Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework both in a table format [Proposed Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework](#) (1,526 downloads) and as a 6-step visualisation [Proposed Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework\\_image.pdf](#) (856 downloads)

The survey questions are listed in Annex A for reference, and the consultation's quantitative data results are provided in Annex B. It is important to note that not all respondents answered every question.

Several Parish and Town councils and councillors have responded through the consultation, and their responses are shown in 4.10.

Following the consultation, all survey responses were reviewed by council officers. Quantitative data was cross referenced with the qualitative responses to further interrogate the data. Due to the volume of the qualitative responses received, they have summarised for the purposes of this report using Microsoft CoPilot.

## 4. Findings

The consultation generated a very high level of interest, with 4,997 total page views and 1,284 people completing the survey in total.

### 4.1 Respondent demographics

Respondents represent a wide range of diversity, providing a valuable range of differing views and feedback. There is a higher proportion of female to male respondents, which has allowed the council a greater level of insight into how women and girls feel about part-night lighting, as well respondents within both younger and older age brackets.

There was also a good level of engagement from those in the working age brackets, whom part-night lighting may affect more when it comes to commuting or shift work. There were also several respondents who identified as having a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months. This provides

---

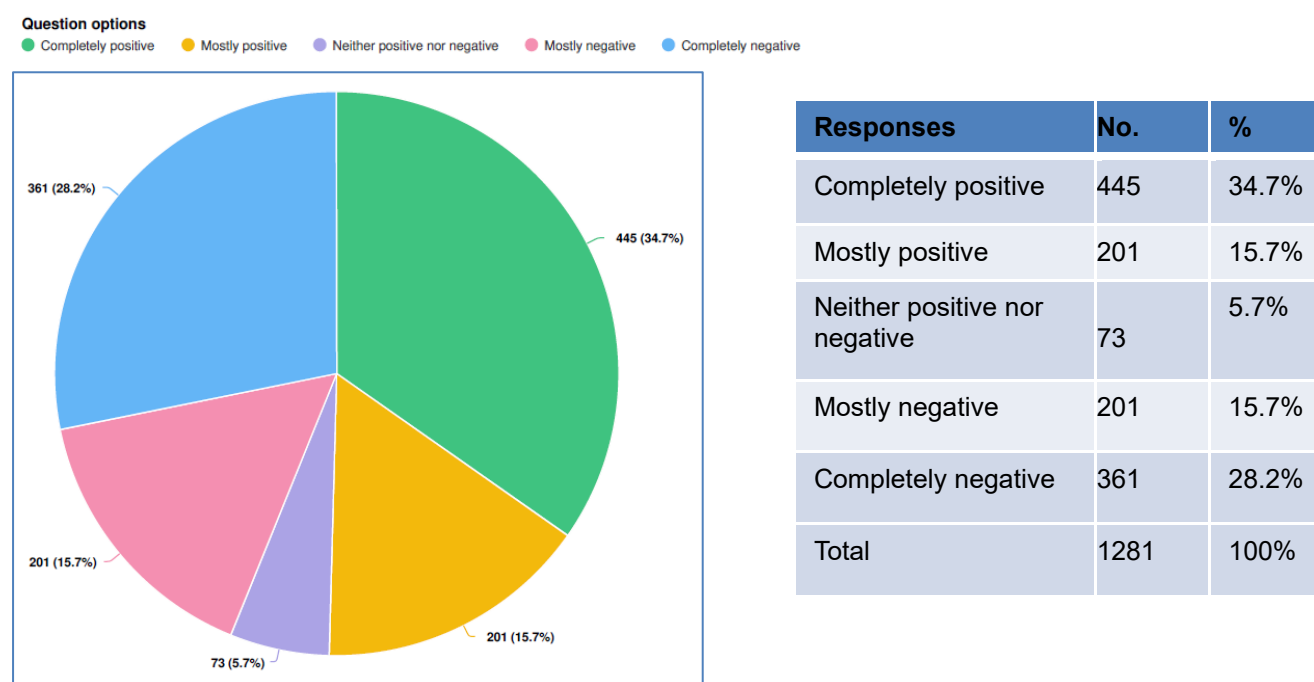
<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/SeyAPvv94oY?feature=shared>

valuable insight into how part-night may affect more vulnerable residents. The high-level diversity figures of who responded to the consultation are provided below:

- **94.9%** - Oxfordshire Residents
- **49%** - Female / **41.3%** - Male
- **3.2%** - under 25yrs / **62.9%** - Working age / **28%** - 65yrs and over
- **78.1%** - White British / **17.5 %** - Prefer not to say / **1.8%** Asian or Asian British
- **4.5%** stated 'Yes, a lot' / **11.5%** **stated** Yes, a little' to health *problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.*

## 4.2 Level of support

### 4.2.1.Q7. After reading the draft framework, and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part night lighting in Oxfordshire?



There is a higher percentage of completely positive and mostly positive responses (646 / 50.4%) to those who that answered mostly or completely negative (562 / 43.9%), with 73 / 5.7% choosing neither positive nor negative.

These quantitative responses were cross referenced with the qualitative responses given in question 23; Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire? This provided greater insights into respondent's reasons for their level of support. Please note, not all of the 1281 respondents who answered question 7, provided qualitative response for question 23, but those that did, please see summaries below:



#### **4.2.1. Completely positive responses**

The completely positive responses expressed their understanding of the benefits, citing that it will lead to better sleep, energy savings, and cost reductions for taxpayers, with beneficial for the environment, wildlife, and ecosystems:

- Environmentally friendly with positive impact on wildlife: There is an understanding that less artificial light will benefit local ecosystems and support wildlife and biodiversity.
- Reduction in Light Pollution: Respondents appreciate the potential to see stars and enjoy darker skies.
- Support for sustainability and carbon reduction: It is viewed as a positive move towards sustainability, enabling energy conservation and carbon savings.
- Better sleep and public health: Many people believe that reduced lighting at night will help them sleep better. Reduced lighting is seen as beneficial for human health, allowing for better quality sleep and a more balanced body chemistry.
- Cost Savings: Reduced lighting is seen as a way to save money for taxpayers and reduce council spending. People appreciate the potential financial benefits that come with part-night lighting.
- Modern Security Measures: With the prevalence of modern phones having flashlights, residential private security systems and ring cameras, some feel that constant street lighting is no longer necessary.
- Successful implementation elsewhere: Some respondents point out that part-night lighting has been successfully implemented in other UK regions and other countries.
- Crime Reduction: Some believe that part-night lighting could reduce crime in certain areas.
- Community Support: it is viewed as a sensible step forward that balances safety and environmental concerns. There is a general consensus from these respondents that part-night lighting is a good idea and should be implemented as soon as possible.

Overall, respondents support reducing street lighting during certain hours, with some suggesting that businesses should also consider turning off window lighting to further reduce light pollution.

#### **4.2.2. Mostly positive responses**

As with the completely supportive responses, mostly positive respondents support the idea of part-night lighting due to its environmental benefits, its potential for cost savings and a reduction of the council's carbon footprint, but they flagged up that community needs must be considered, including high levels of communication;

- Respondents believe that part-night lighting can be implemented without increasing crime or road traffic incidents, and they suggest that areas with high crime rates should be considered for exemptions.
- Flexibility and Community Needs: flexibility must be built into the schemes, allowing communities to adjust timings according to their needs. Some suggest starting the part-night lighting later to align with the last trains/buses.
- Movement-Sensitive Lighting: There is support for movement-sensitive lighting in certain areas to further reduce costs and carbon emissions

- **Historical Precedent:** Some respondents mention that part-night lighting was and has been previously implemented in certain areas without significant issues, suggesting that it can be done again successfully in Oxfordshire.
- **Public Safety Monitoring:** Some respondents suggest implementing a pilot scheme initially as a test, with public safety monitoring carried out to reassure residents and address any safety concerns
- **Cycling Safety:** There is a suggestion to combine part-night lighting with increased measures to support the use of cycling bike lights, ensuring both the safety of cyclists and drivers
- **Communication and Awareness:** Clear communication with residents about the changes is seen as very important, so they can take additional precautions if required to mitigate the changes.

#### **4.2.3. Neither positive nor negative responses**

These responses reflect a mix of support and concern, with a strong emphasis on safety concerns and the need for clearer proposals and consideration of the impact on local businesses. Respondents feedback on the following:

- **Vagueness of the Proposal:** Some respondents feel that the proposal is too vague to make a clear decision unless one is immediately against it.
- **Safety Concerns:** There are concerns about safety and opportunistic crime, with some respondents feeling that they won't feel safe in their village without adequate lighting.
- **Retailers' Concerns:** Retailers are likely to be displeased with reduced street lighting as they often leave their lights on as a crime deterrent.

#### **4.2.4. Mostly negative responses**

Overall, the feedback indicates a strong preference for maintaining current lighting levels to ensure public safety and confidence:

- Many respondents express significant concerns about safety, particularly for women, young people, and other vulnerable groups. They fear that reduced lighting will lead to an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour, making them feel unsafe walking at night.
- Some respondents also highlight the potential for increased road safety incidents due to poor visibility on footpaths and roads.
- There are concerns about the environmental and financial justifications for the proposal. Some respondents feel that the safety risks outweigh the potential environmental benefits, and they question the overall impact on carbon emissions and cost savings, with suggested alternatives like motion sensor lights or dimmer bulbs to balance safety and environmental concerns.
- **Safety Concerns:** Many respondents are worried that reduced lighting will lead to an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour, making them feel unsafe walking at night. This concern is particularly strong among women and other vulnerable groups.
- **Accidents and Visibility:** There are fears that poor visibility on footpaths and roads will lead to more accidents, such as trips and falls. People are also concerned about the safety of emergency services operating in the dark.
- **Current Management Issues:** Several people suggest that the council should focus on improving the current management of street lighting before implementing new measures. They mention issues such as lights being on all

day and night despite being reported, which undermines confidence in the council's ability to manage part-night lighting effectively.

#### **4.2.5. Completely negative responses**

Overall, the responses reflect a strong opposition to part-night lighting, with safety and security being the primary concerns. Respondents urge the council to reconsider the proposal and prioritise the well-being of residents.

- **Safety Concerns:** Many respondents are worried that reducing street lighting will make the streets less safe, particularly for women. There is a strong belief that well-lit streets are essential for preventing crime and ensuring public safety.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** The responses highlight that part-night lighting could disproportionately affect women, disabled individuals, and those who work late shifts or rely on public transport. There is a fear that these groups will feel more vulnerable and unsafe without streetlighting.
- **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:** There is a significant concern that reduced streetlighting will lead to an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour. Respondents believe that darkness provides cover for criminal activities and makes it harder for law enforcement to monitor and respond to incidents.
- **Quality of Life:** Many respondents feel that part-night lighting will negatively impact their quality of life. They argue that the ability to walk safely at night is a basic expectation in a modern society, and reducing lighting would be a step backward.
- **Economic Impact:** There are concerns that reduced lighting will affect the night-time economy, as people may avoid going out at night due to safety concerns. This could potentially impact businesses that operate during late hours.
- **Distrust in local government processes:** Several responses express a lack of trust in the council's decision-making process. There is a view that the council is prioritising cost-cutting over public safety and that the consultation process is not genuinely considering residents' opinions.
- **Environmental versus Safety considerations:** While some respondents acknowledge the environmental benefits of reducing light pollution, they argue that these should not come at the expense of public safety. There are also suggestions for alternative solutions, such as motion-activated lighting be considered, that could balance safety and environmental concerns.
- **Historical and Personal Experiences:** Some respondents share personal experiences or historical events where reduced lighting led to negative outcomes, such as increased crime or accidents.
- **Legal and Accountability Issues:** There are concerns about who would be held accountable if a crime or accident occurs due to lack of lighting. Respondents want clear accountability mechanisms in place.
- **Impact on Specific Areas:** Certain areas, such as residential zones with vulnerable populations, routes to hospitals, school zones, and public transport hubs, are highlighted as particularly problematic if streetlighting is reduced.

#### **4.3 Proposed Exemptions**

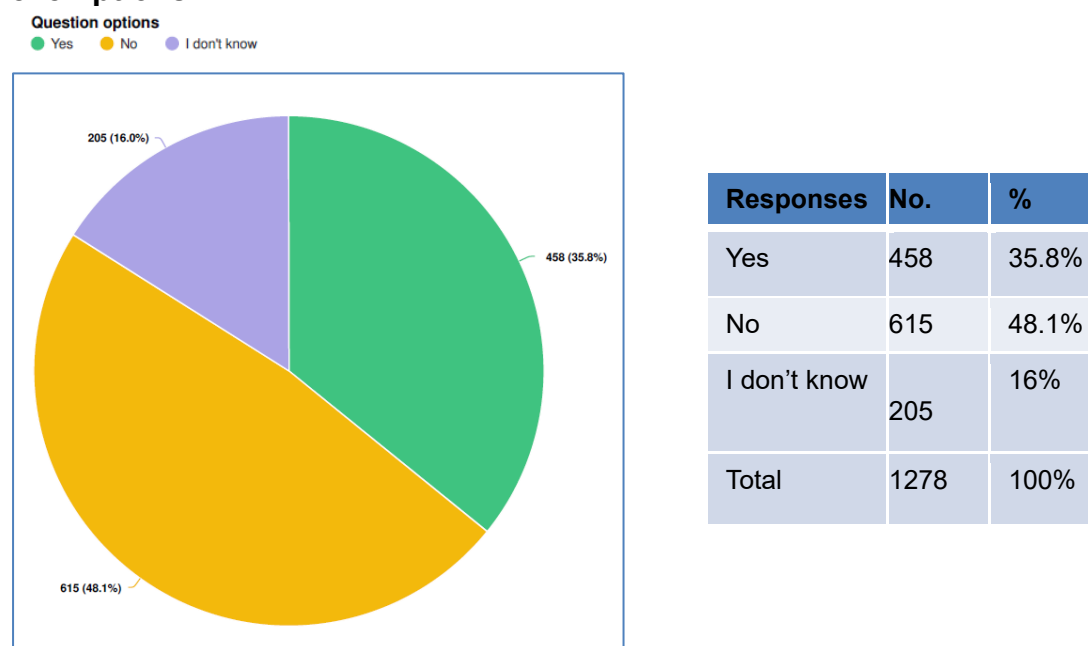
Part-night lighting is not a one size fits all and some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting due to the need for either safety considerations, or the level of high footfall in a particular area for instance. These criteria are being referred

to as 'Exemptions'. They would be considered at the initial review stage of a proposed part-night lighting scheme:

- a. Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings
- b. Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions
- c. Controlled crossing points
- d. Areas supporting a night-time economy
- e. Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles
- f. Waterside paths
- g. Remote alleyways
- h. Subways and underpasses
- i. Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR
- j. Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions

It was key to capture views on the proposed exemptions, to understand if the proposed exemptions are seen as suitable, or if there are other any exemptions that should be considered. Are these the right criteria to make an area exempt? Have we missed something?

**4.3.1.Q8. Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?**



The quantitative responses were reviewed with the qualitative responses given in question 9; Please tell us why you chose that answer. There were no qualitative responses provided by respondents who answered 'No', so it is not possible to capture the positive support for the exemptions.

#### 4.3.1. Yes Responses

Overall, the respondents who answered 'Yes, to question 8, express a strong opposition to the idea of part-night lighting generally. Many respondents emphasise the importance of streetlighting for women, children, the elderly, and shift workers. They feel that reducing streetlighting could potentially lead to increased crime level and increase feelings of insecurity.

Several responses highlight specific areas that should remain lit, including residential streets, paths to and from public transport, areas near schools and hospitals, and routes commonly used by night-time economy workers. There is also concern about impact on rural areas, where street lighting maybe limited, and the potential for increased crime in these locations. Respondents suggested the following additions, removals, and changes to the list of exemptions:

**Additions:**

- **Schools and Hospitals:** These should be exempt as they are places where very vulnerable people may be walking or crossing roads in the dark.
- **Transport Areas:** Areas such as bus stops, train stations, and taxi ranks should be included to ensure safety for those using public transport.
- **Residential Streets:** Many respondents emphasized that all residential streets should continue to have lighting for safety reasons.
- **Paths and Footpaths:** Paths, especially those leading to residential areas, should be lit to ensure safety for pedestrians.
- **Areas with Vulnerable Populations:** Places where elderly, disabled, or other vulnerable groups live or frequent should be exempt.
- **Night-time Economy Areas:** Routes to and from areas supporting the night-time economy should be well-lit to support those returning home late.
- **Rural Areas:** Specific mention of rural areas where lighting maybe limited and where it is felt that reduced street lighting could increase crime.

**Removals:**

- **Waterside Paths:** Some respondents suggested removing waterside paths from the exemption list to protect waterfowl and river wildlife.
- **Remote Alleyways:** There is a suggestion to reconsider the definition and the necessity of lighting in remote alleyways.

**Suggested Changes:**

- **Flexibility in Exemptions:** There should be a process where specific areas can raise concerns about their exemptions, triggering a consultation for the area to be included or excluded based on local conditions and needs.
- **Consideration of Local Conditions:** The list of exemptions should be more flexible and consider local conditions, such as areas with high crime rates or those with significant pedestrian traffic.

#### **4.4 The proposed timings**

Alongside the proposed list of exemptions, the implementation framework is considering two 'standard' timeframes for part night lighting:

- Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations,
- Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations.

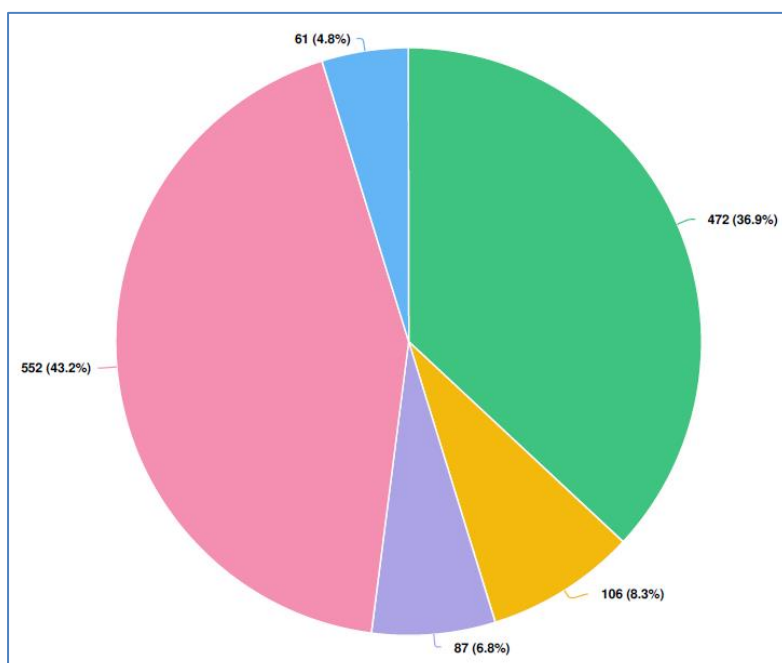
This is based on when the least amount of people are using roads and paths, and when the last trains and buses could potentially run. Noting that that these timings are the “standard” or base-level of operation and may be altered to suit the needs of individual communities.

The consultation asked for views and feedback on the proposed timings, with quantitative responses for question 10 asking. ‘Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations?’ cross referenced against the qualitative responses for questions 11 to 15. Please tell us why you gave that answer.

#### 4.4.1. Q10. ‘Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations?’

##### Question options

- Right timings for both rural and urban areas
- Right timings for rural areas, but wrong timings for urban areas
- Wrong timings for rural areas, but right timings for urban areas
- Wrong timings for both rural and urban areas
- I don't know



Responses	No.	%
Right timings for both rural and urban areas	472	36.9%
Right timings for rural areas, but wrong timings for urban areas	106	8.3%
Wrong timings for rural areas, but right timings for urban areas	87	6.8%
Wrong timings for both rural and urban areas	552	43.2%
I don't know	61	4.8%
Total		100%

#### 4.4.2 Q11. Responses for ‘Right timings for both rural and urban areas’

The respondents collectively support the idea that the proposed timings are practical and beneficial for both urban and rural settings, for the following reasons:

- Consistency with human activity and low activity levels: The timings align with periods when streets are generally empty and there is little use for lighting. There is very little activity during the proposed hours, making it reasonable to turn off the lights.
- Environmental benefits and dark sky preference: Reduced lighting is believed to have a positive impact on local wildlife, especially bats and birds, with lower levels of light pollution benefiting the natural environment and wildlife, with some respondents preferring a dark sky at night, stating street lighting disrupts their sleep and local wildlife.

- Energy conservation and cost savings: Keeping lights on when few people are around is seen as a waste of energy. Turning off lights during these hours saves money and reduces unnecessary energy consumption.
- Support for Nighttime Economy: Later timings in urban areas account for the night-time economy and ensure that people have time to get home.
- Safety Considerations: The proposed timings allow for people returning from work or going out early to be protected.
- Flexibility for Exemptions: Areas can request exemptions if the timings are not suitable for their specific needs.

**4.4.2 Right timings for rural areas, but wrong timings for urban areas. Q12. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for urban areas**

These responses highlight the different needs and priorities that respondents think rural and urban areas have in relation to part night lighting.

The reasons respondents think these are the right timings for rural areas:

- Less Foot Traffic: Rural areas generally have fewer people walking around late at night, so turning off streetlights earlier might not significantly impact safety. Turning off lights earlier in rural areas can save energy and reduce costs without compromising safety.
- Lower Crime Rates: Crime rates tend to be lower in rural areas, reducing the need for constant lighting.
- Light Pollution: Reducing light pollution is often a priority in rural areas to preserve the natural environment and night sky.

The reasons respondents think these are the wrong timings for urban areas:

- Higher Foot Traffic: Urban areas have more people out and about late at night, including those returning from work, social events, or using public transport.
- Night-Time Economy: Cities often have a vibrant night-time economy with bars, restaurants, and clubs operating well past midnight, necessitating adequate lighting for safety.
- Public Transport and Shift Workers: Public transport services in urban areas often run late into the night, and people need well-lit paths to get home safely as urban residents who work late shifts and need safe, well-lit routes to travel home.
- Safety Concerns: Higher population density and potential for crime in urban areas make continuous lighting crucial for public safety.
- Student Population: Universities have students who may be out late studying or socialising, requiring consistent lighting for their safety.
- 12:30 AM to 5:00 AM, 1.00AM to 5.30 AM, and 2.00 AM to 5.20 AM were some of suggested time changes especially considering the night-time economy and people returning home from late-night activities.

**4.4.3 Wrong timings for rural areas, but right timings for urban areas. Q13. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural areas:**

There were varied opinions on the appropriate timings for street lighting in rural areas, with the following suggestions:



- **Earlier Turn-Off Times:** Many respondents believe that streetlights in rural areas should be turned off earlier, with suggestions ranging from 10:00 PM to 11:00 PM. This is because rural areas are considered to have less foot traffic and activity late at night.
- **Later Turn-Off Times:** Some respondents feel that midnight or even 12:30 AM would be more appropriate, especially to accommodate people returning home from places like pubs or late-night work shifts.
- **Uniform Timings:** A number of respondents think that the timings should be the same for both rural and urban areas to ensure consistency and safety for all residents.
- **Extended Lighting Periods:** There are also suggestions to extend the lighting periods in rural areas to help with safety and security, with some proposing timings like 10:30 PM to 6:00 AM.

Overall, the responses indicate a preference for earlier turn-off times in rural areas, but there is also a significant number of people who believe that the timings should be uniform across both rural and urban areas to ensure safety and consistency.

#### **4.4.4 Wrong timings for both rural and urban areas. Q14. Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural and urban areas:**

There were several reasons given as to why the proposed timings for part-night lighting are considered inappropriate for both rural and urban areas:

Rural Areas:

- Some responses suggest that lights should not turn off before 1:00 AM to accommodate evening commuters and people returning from late-night activities.
- Other respondents proposed that lights should be left on during all hours of darkness for safety reasons.

Urban Areas:

- Many responses indicate that lights should remain on until at least 1:00 AM or later, especially on weekends, to ensure the safety of people returning from pubs, clubs, and other late-night venues.
- Some suggest that lights should be on all night to ensure the safety of shift workers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

#### **4.4.5 I don't know. Q15. Please tell us why you gave that answer:**

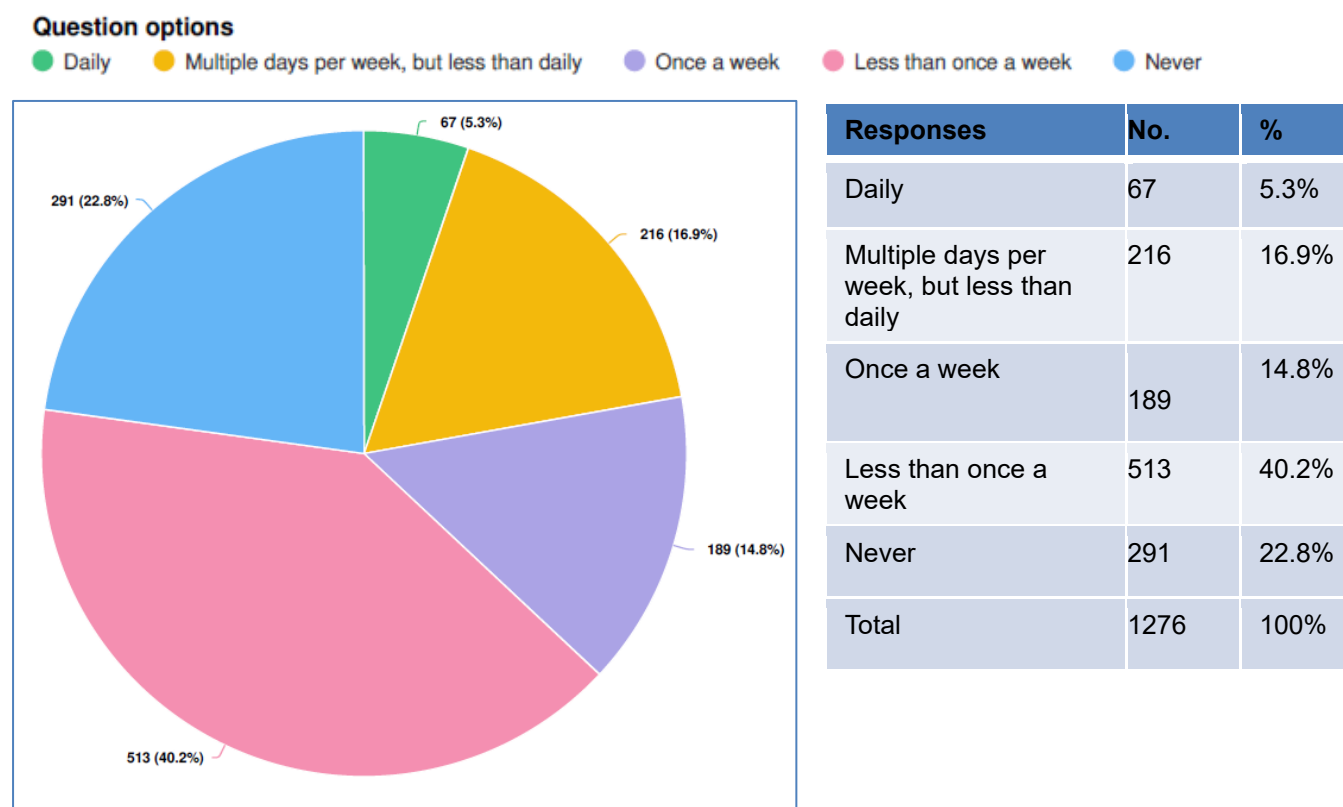
Overall, these responses indicate a need for a balanced approach that considers security, flexibility, and local needs:

- **Residential Security Concerns:** Many respondents are worried about the impact of turning off streetlights on residential security, especially in urban areas with high foot traffic and student populations.
- **Local Needs and Consultation:** Many believe that lighting schedules should be tailored to the specific needs of local residents and that there should be consultations in each area to determine the best times.
- **Public Vote:** A few respondents suggest that the decision should be put to a public vote, allowing those affected to have a say.

#### 4.5 How often do people travel between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM

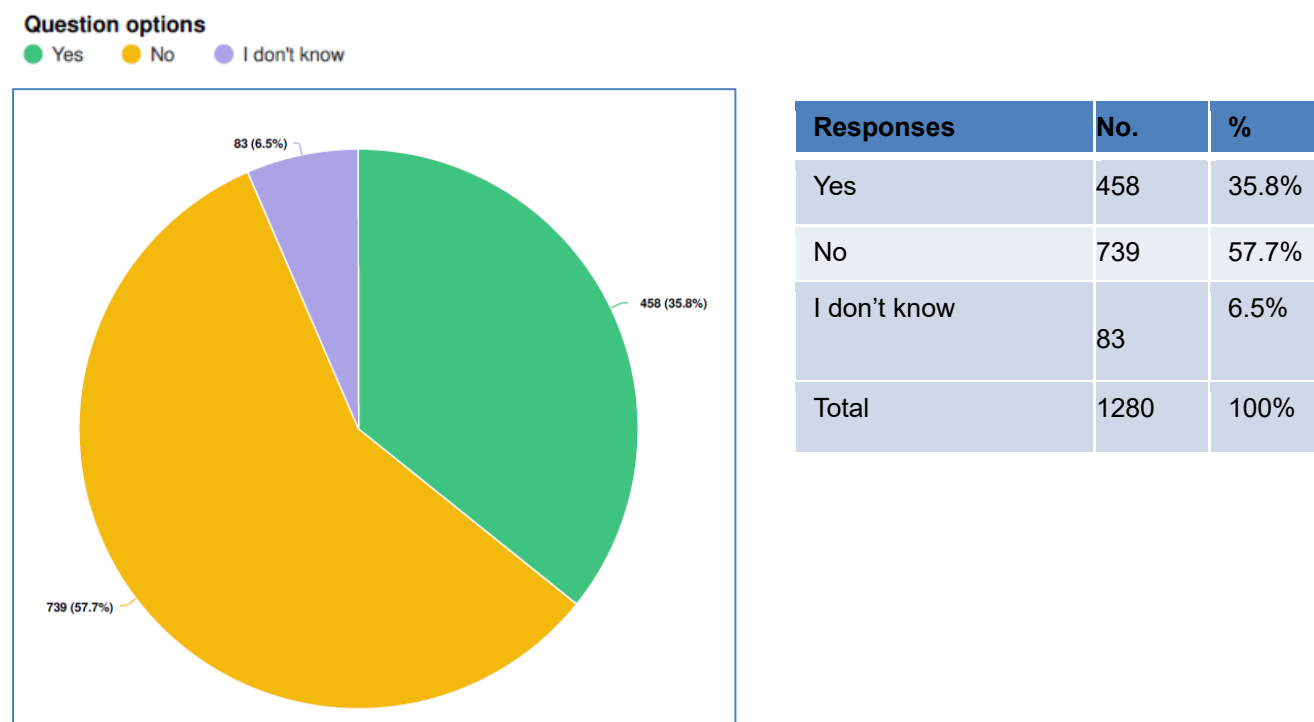
It is important to understand how part-night lighting could potentially affect residents, so three consultation questions were asked to find out if residents travel during the proposed timings, find out how often they travel during the proposed timings, and ask for qualitative responses on how and why part night lighting would affect them during these times. These three question responses were then cross referenced to understand the potential impacts of part night lighting on those who do travel during the proposed timings.

##### 4.5.1. Q16. How often do you currently travel (including walking, wheeling or cycling) between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM?



Most respondents (513 / 40.2%) feedback that they currently travel less than once a week during the proposed timings, with 291 / 22.8% stating they never travel during the timings, but 67 respondents stated that they do travel daily during the proposed times.

**4.5.2. Q17. Would the introduction of part night lighting at the proposed 'standard' times affect how you travel? As a reminder, the proposed 'standard' times are: Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban location'.**



**4.5.3. Q18. 'Please tell us how and why part-night lighting would affect how you travel'** was a qualitative question, and it then cross referenced with question 16, for those who responded 'Daily', 'Multiple times a week' and 'once a week', and those who responded 'yes to question 17. to gather insights into the ways part-night lighting could affect residents.

**4.5.2. For those who responded yes to question 17, and responded 'Daily' to question 16:**

The responses indicated that part-night lighting will significantly impact people's sense of safety and daily routines. The overall feedback is that part-night lighting would compromise personal safety and increase stress and anxiety:

- Many individuals express concerns about feeling unsafe while walking or cycling in the dark, especially during late-night or early-morning hours. This is particularly true for those who work shifts, travel by foot, or have to already navigate poorly lit areas.
- The lack of lighting is seen as a potential risk for accidents, falls, and increasing the risk of encounters with dangerous individuals.
- Some respondents stated that if part-night lighting was implemented in their area, that they would have to change their jobs, use cars instead of walking or cycling, or would avoid going out altogether after dark.

**4.5.3. For those who responded yes question 17, and responded 'Multiple days per week, but less than daily' to question 16:**

The responses indicate that part night lighting would impact travel habits. Overall, the primary concern is the perception of safety, leading to an increased reliance on cars and taxis, which could have broader implications for traffic and pollution:

- Many respondents' express concerns about feeling unsafe while walking, cycling, or using public transport during the hours if the streetlights were turned

off. The lack of streetlighting is seen as a potential increase in the risk of accidents, crime, and antisocial behaviour, especially in areas where there have been reports of criminal activities.

- Respondents mention that they would stop cycling and switch to cars due to the fear of not being visible on dark roads. The absence of street lighting is considered as a deterrent to walking or running during early morning or late-night hours, with some individuals stating they would have to drive instead, which contradicts efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

#### **4.5.4. For those who responded yes question 17, and responded 'Once a week' to question 16:**

The responses indicate that part-night lighting would impact the safety and the weekly routines of individuals in very similar ways to the reasons given above:

- **Changes in Behaviour:** Due to safety concerns, people would alter their routines, driving instead of walking or cycling, avoiding going out at night, and relying more on taxis.
- **Impact on Social Life and Mental Health:** The perception of safety at night would limit social interactions and activities. Some respondents mentioned that walking / exercising at night is essential for their mental health, and the lack of streetlighting would negatively affect their well-being.
- **Economic and Lifestyle Changes:** Some individuals mentioned that they would need to spend more on transportation, such as taxis, and might even reconsider their job situations if they feel they cannot travel safely at night.
- Overall, the responses indicate that part-night lighting could lead to lifestyle changes, increased safety concerns, and potential negative impacts on mental health.

## **4.6 Who requests part-night lighting**

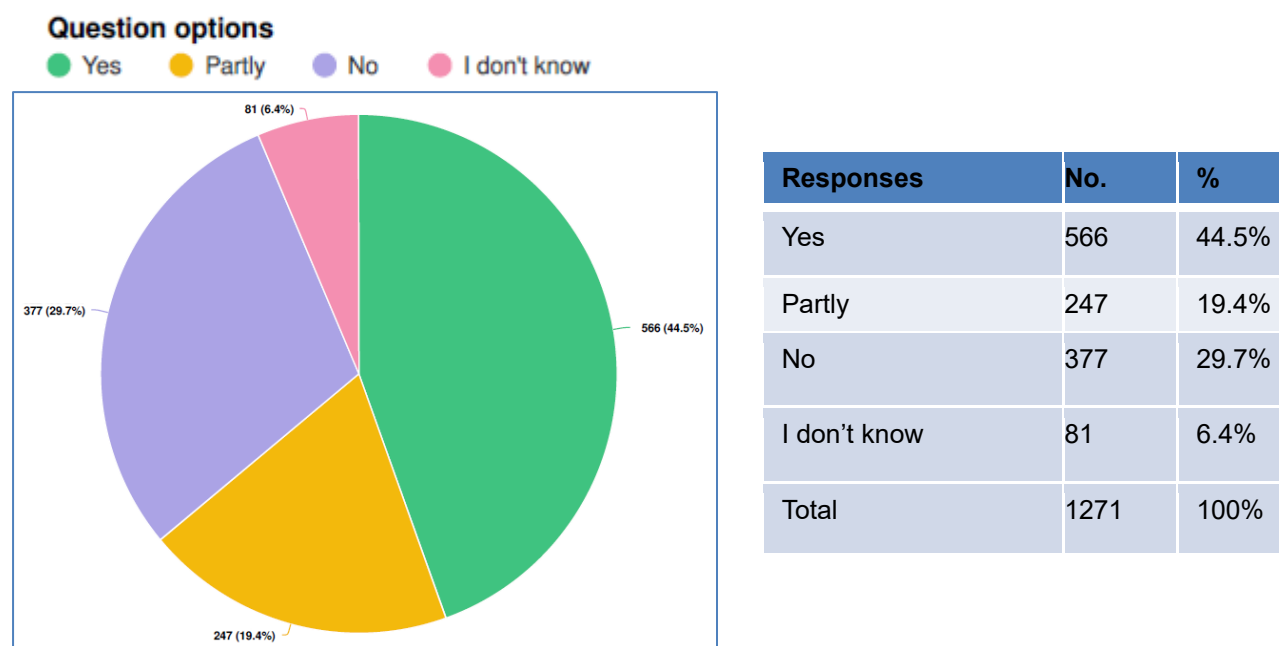
The part-night lighting implementation framework is following the 20mph programme approach<sup>2</sup> where a part-night lighting scheme must be requested and supported by a town or parish councillor, with support from the local county councillor also. This ensures that the part-night lighting scheme has local support for the scheme before it is considered.

The consultation asked for views on whether the proposed part-night lighting implementation framework should follow this approach, and if parish and council councils or local governance authorities are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting.

**4.6.1 Q19. The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced.**

---

<sup>2</sup> [The 20mph transformation programme | Oxfordshire County Council](#)



The majority of the responses (566 / 44.5%) stated yes, these are the right people to be able to request a part night lighting scheme. For those that responded partly, or no, we then asked for their qualitative responses via question 20.

#### 4.6.2 Q20. Please tell us who you think should be able to request part-night lighting in an area

For those that responded 'partly', several reason given. Overall, they reflect a desire for a more democratic and inclusive decision-making process, with a focus on ensuring that the views of local residents and those directly affected by part-night lighting are prioritised:

- Local Authorities and Councils: Some responses express a lack of trust in local authorities and councils, stating they feel councils often ignore public consultations and councillors proceed with their own projects. There is also concern that councils may not represent the majority view or understand the local needs adequately.
- Parish and Town Councils: There is scepticism about the effectiveness of parish and town councils, with some respondents feeling that these councils do not always represent the local area or the majority view. Additionally, some believe that parish councils are dominated by certain demographics and may not be representative of the entire community.
- County Councillors: Some responses question the involvement of county councillors, suggesting that their involvement might overlay the decision-making process. There is also concern that county councillors may impose decisions against the wishes of the public.
- Political Groups: There is a general distrust of political groups, with some respondents feeling that these groups may have their own agendas and may not act in the best interest of the community.

Overall, for those that responded 'No', the responses reflect a strong desire for a democratic and resident-led decision-making process. The responses contain a strong

sentiment that decisions regarding part-night lighting should be made by the residents who are directly affected by such changes, echoing the responses given above:

- **Distrust in Local Authorities:** These responses highlighted lack of trust in local councils and authorities, with many respondents feeling that these bodies do not adequately consider the safety and preferences of the residents.
- **Consultation Process:** There was a call for a more transparent and inclusive consultation process, with some respondents suggesting that past consultations have been biased or manipulated. Many respondents emphasised the importance of public consultation and referendums, arguing that local councils and authorities often do not represent the true interests of the community with several respondents citing past instances where public opinion was perceived to be ignored.
- **Public Referendum:** Many believe that decisions should be made through public referendums to ensure that the voices of the residents are heard and respected.
- **Local Residents' Input:** The majority of respondents who feedback no, feel that the residents who live in the affected areas should have the primary say in whether part-night lighting is implemented.
- **Safety Concerns:** Again, safety was raised as a major concern, with many respondents arguing that part-night lighting could compromise the safety of residents, particularly women and those who work night shifts.

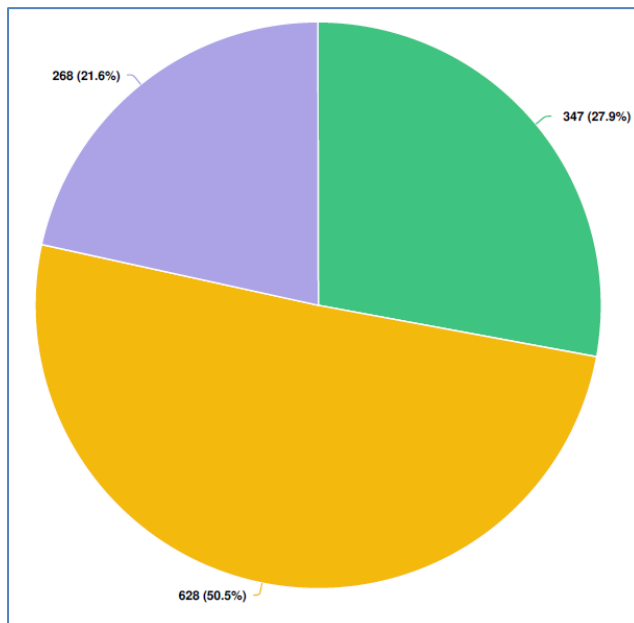
#### **4.7. The proposed implementation process**

The proposed part night lighting implementation process has outlined a six-step approach to implementing part-night lighting schemes. It was important to ask for views on this six-step implementation process and ask if there is anything that should be add, removed or changed in the process.

**4.7.1. Q21. This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process?**

#### Question options

● Yes ● No ● I don't know



Responses	No.	%
Yes	347	27.9%
No	628	50.5%
I don't know	268	21.6%
Total	1243	100%

Most responses (628 / 50.5%) feedback No, that they did not think anything should be added removed or changed in the draft implementation process. For those that stated 'yes' or 'I don't know' the follow up question 22, then asked them to provide a qualitative response':

#### 4.7.2. 'Yes', and 'I don't know' responses suggested several additions to the implementation process:

- Police Crime Figures: Provide police crime figures to parish councils for distribution to residents, showing crime levels before and after the implementation of part-night schemes.
- Environmental Risk Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments: Conduct risk assessments for women and girls, especially if they have to walk home after the last bus/train, develop environmental and equality impact assessments for each scheme.
- Resident Views and consultation with specific groups: Include consultations with women's groups, youth groups, schools, local employers, and the police. Include resident views as the primary driver in the decision-making process and add an exemption clause where residents can reject the proposal if they do not support it.
- Clearer timeframes and add in a review period: Add clear timeframes for each stage of the process to manage expectations. Include a review period after implementation to assess the impact and make necessary adjustments.
- Public Sector Equality Duty: Consider the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 14 of the Equalities Act, especially for disabled people.
- Transparency: Communicate the results of the public consultation for complete transparency.
- Alternative Lighting Solutions: Consider sensor lighting, dimming lights, and using different levels of bulb brightness.



#### **4.7.3 'Yes', and 'I don't responses' suggest several removals to the implementation process:**

- **Part-Night Lighting:** Many respondents believe that part-night lighting should not be implemented at all. Gradually dimming lighting in an area could be more effective than switching off lights completely.
- **Decision by a Single Person and Decision-Making Mechanisms:** Ensure checks and balances are in place to prevent undue influence from minority opposition. Remove the power of a single cabinet member to approve or reject the application.
- **Unnecessary Bureaucratic Steps:** Simplify the process by removing overly cautious steps and reducing bureaucracy by replace the current consultation mechanism with a more widely publicised method. Remove any unnecessary bureaucratic steps to make the process more straightforward.

#### **4.7.4. 'Yes', and 'I don't know 'responses suggest other changes:**

- **Residents and Local Industry/Supermarkets Consultation:** Consult with local industry and supermarkets and retailers and includes direct contact with all affected residents. The framework should clarify how residents' views will be considered.
- **Decision-Making Process:** Make the decision-making process more democratic and accountable, involving more stakeholders.
- **Implementation Framework:** Adjust the implementation framework to be reversible and include a feedback loop after implementation.
- **Lighting Times Alternatives to Timed Switch Off:** Modify the proposed times for turning off lights, considering seasonal variations and specific events, and consider lighting alternatives to the 'timed switch off' method.
- **Clearer Statements:** Clearer statements on exemptions and how they will be defined at the local level.
- **Public Safety Considerations:** Consider the impact on public safety, especially for vulnerable groups and women.
- **Biodiversity Considerations:** Effects on biodiversity need to be considered alongside cost savings and human convenience factors.

#### **4.8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposal?**

Question 23 was a purely qualitative response question: **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire?**

It provided the opportunity for respondents to feedback any other further feedback or thoughts that they had not already had a chance to share previously. Question 23 also provided an opportunity to analyse and cross reference responses via protected characteristics. The responses summarised below where firstly summarised to capture all responses but then cross referenced across a range of protected characteristics.

##### **4.8.1. Summary of all responses to Q.23:**

The combined responses reflect a wide range of mixed opinions and reactions on the proposal for part-night lighting in Oxfordshire. Overall, the responses highlight a need

for a balanced approach that addresses both safety concerns and environmental benefits. Any decision on part-night lighting needs to consider that are the very diverse opinions which reflect the many different needs of our communities:

- **Safety Concerns:** Many respondents are worried about the potential increase in crime and the safety of vulnerable groups, such as women, the elderly, and those with disabilities.
- **Environmental and Financial Benefits:** Some respondents support the proposal due to its potential to reduce energy consumption, lower carbon emissions, and save money. They believe that less lighting will benefit wildlife and reduce light pollution.
- **Mixed Reactions:** There are mixed feelings about the proposal. While some people welcome the idea for its environmental benefits, others are strongly opposed due to safety concerns. Some suggest a compromise, such as dimming lights instead of turning them off completely or using motion sensors.
- **Impact on Quality of Life:** Several respondents mention that reduced lighting could negatively impact their quality of life, making them feel less safe and potentially limiting their activities at night. This is particularly concerning for those who work late shifts or rely on public transport.
- **Consultation and Implementation:** Many respondents emphasise the importance of thorough consultation with local communities before implementing the proposal. They want to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent and considers the views of all residents.
- **Specific Suggestions:** Some respondents offer specific suggestions, such as turning off every other streetlight, using motion-activated lights, or implementing the proposal in phases to monitor its impact.

#### **4.8.2. A summary of responses from female respondents:**

There are very varied responses from female respondents, but the in the main, feedback is very much centred on safety concerns. The responses highlight the need for a balanced approach that addresses safety but also balances environmental considerations.

- **Safety Concerns:** Many female respondents are worried that part-night lighting will make the streets less safe for women. They fear an increase in crime due to their lack of visibility at night, which puts them at risk. Some suggest that increased police presence or other safety measures should be considered if street lighting is reduced.
- **Impact on Quality of Life:** There is a significant concern that part-night lighting will negatively affect the quality of life for female residents, potentially leading to behaviour change situations where women completely avoid going out at night, impacting social activities and the night-time economy.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Many respondents appreciate the positive impact on wildlife and the reduction of light pollution. They believe that less lighting will help local wildlife thrive and allow people to enjoy darker skies and see the stars more clearly. Some female respondents mention that while reduced lighting could benefit wildlife and reduce light pollution, there is also a concern that the proposed changes are more focused on saving money rather than genuinely considering the environmental benefits.
- **Energy and Cost Savings:** Several responses highlight the financial benefits of reducing street lighting. They mention that it will save taxpayers money, reduce

energy consumption, and lower the carbon footprint, which is seen as a responsible and necessary step.

- Improved Sleep Quality: Some respondents support part-night lighting because they believe it will improve sleep quality. They mention that less artificial light at night will create a better environment for sleeping, which can have positive effects on health and well-being.

#### **4.8.3. A summary of responses from male respondents:**

Overall, the male responses reflect a mix of safety concerns, scepticism about the environmental and cost benefits, and dissatisfaction with the consultation process, with suggestions for alternative solutions.

- Safety Concerns: Many male respondents are worried that part night lighting will increase crime and make the environment more dangerous, especially for those who need to use public transport late at night or early in the morning. Male respondents state streetlights are essential for public safety and that part-night lighting could lead to more antisocial behaviour and/ or accidents.
- Environmental and Cost Considerations: While some male respondents acknowledge the environmental benefits of reducing light pollution and saving energy, they are sceptical about the actual impact. They argue that the savings in emissions and costs are minimal compared to the potential risks to public safety. There is also a concern that part-night lighting is driven more by cost-cutting measures than genuine environmental concerns.
- Public Consultation and Implementation: There is a strong sentiment that the local council is not adequately considering the views and needs of residents. Respondents feel that decisions are being made without proper consultation and that the council is not transparent about the reasons behind the part-night lighting initiative. They emphasize the need for a more flexible and locally tailored approach, rather than implementing a one-size-fits-all policy.
- Alternative Solutions: Some respondents suggest alternative solutions such as motion-sensor lights or dimming options that can offer energy savings while maintaining necessary visibility for safety. They believe that these smart alternatives could balance the need for safety with environmental and cost considerations.

#### **4.8.4. A summary of responses from respondents aged under 16 / 16 - 24:**

- Safety Concerns: Many 16 - 24-year-old respondents are worried about the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, students, and young people if street lighting is reduced at night. They emphasize that streetlights help prevent crime, accidents, and emergencies, and that their absence would make people feel unsafe, especially in areas like parks and campuses.
- Impact on Daily Activities: There is a concern that reducing street lighting would negatively impact daily activities. For example, students may feel unsafe walking through dark areas, which could prevent them from engaging in simple activities, especially during the winter when it gets dark early.
- Environmental and Wildlife Impacts and Energy Conservation: Some respondents are aware of the impacts of artificial light at night (ALAN) on local wildlife and support motions to reduce these impacts. However, they suggest that a more balanced approach, such as using streetlights with covers to prevent light from traveling upwards, would be safer while still addressing environmental concerns. They support for need for reducing energy

consumption. This is reflected in the suggestion to implement streetlights with covers/funnels over the top to prevent light traveling upwards, which would still provide necessary street-level light while conserving energy.

- Consultation and Public Opinion: Some respondents believe that the final decision on part-night lighting should be based on public consultation. They emphasize that if the consultation shows that most people do not want it, that it should be the final say in the matter. This indicates support for a democratic approach to decision-making regarding street lighting policies.

#### **4.8.5. A summary of responses from working age respondents; 25 - 34 / 35 - 44 / 45 - 54 / 55 – 64:**

- Safety and Security: Many 25 - 64-year-old (Working Age) respondents are worried that reducing or turning off street lighting will increase crime rates and make people feel unsafe, especially women. They believe that adequate lighting is essential for public safety and crime prevention.
- Impact on Vulnerable Groups: There is a significant concern about the negative impact on vulnerable populations, such the elderly, and people with disabilities. Respondents fear that these groups will feel more insecure and be at greater risk when walking or travelling at night.
- Environmental and Wildlife Considerations: Some respondents support the idea of reducing street lighting due to the positive environmental impact, such as reducing energy consumption and light pollution, which benefits wildlife and the natural environment. However, they also emphasize the need to balance these benefits with safety concerns.
- Public Opinion and Trust: There is a general distrust towards the council's decision-making process, with many feeling that their opinions are not being considered. Some believe that the proposal is primarily a cost-cutting measure rather than an environmental initiative.
- Alternative Solutions: such as using motion-sensor lighting, dimming lights or implementing a pilot scheme to assess the impact before making permanent changes.

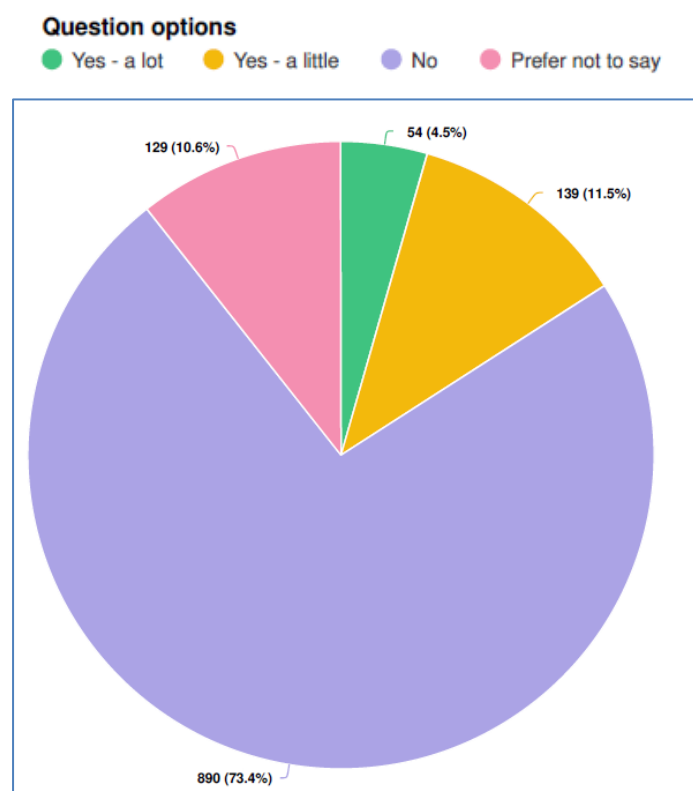
#### **4.8.6. A summary of responses from respondents aged; 65 - 74 / 75 - 84 / 85 or over:**

- Safety Concerns: Many 65 - 85 (Older) respondents are worried that reducing or turning off street lighting will compromise public safety. They fear an increase in crime particularly affecting more vulnerable groups and those with mobility or eyesight issues. There are also concerns about the safety of children and grandchildren travelling at night.
- Environmental and Financial Considerations: While some respondents acknowledge the financial and environmental benefits of reducing street lighting, they feel these are outweighed by safety concerns. Others support the initiative for its potential to reduce light pollution and benefit wildlife.
- Implementation and Communication: There is a call for better communication and education about part-night lighting. Respondents suggest that the public should be well-informed about the changes and their potential impact. They also recommend that any implementation should be flexible and consider local circumstances, such as areas with high night-time activity or poor road conditions.

#### 4.9 Impacts for those with a long-term illness, health problem or disability.

The consultation provided an opportunity to find out how part-night lighting could potentially affect any residents whose day-to-day activities are impacted by a long-term illness, health problem or disability. When the quantitative responses from Question 31, Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? were cross referenced with the qualitative responses from question 23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire? it is possible to analyse and understand how part-lighting could impact those with a long-term illness, health problem or disability.

##### 4.9.1. Q31. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?



Responses	No.	%
Yes – a lot	54	4.5%
Yes – a little	139	11.5%
No	890	73.4%
Prefer not to say	129	10.6%
Total	1212	100%

##### 4.9.2. A summary of 'Yes - A lot' responses, was cross referenced with responses to question 23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire?

Overall, the 'Yes - A lot' responses highlight a mix of safety concerns, distrust in the council's decision-making process, and the need to consider human impacts.

- **Safety Concerns:** Many respondents are worried about the potential increase in crime and the safety of pedestrians, especially women and children. They would feel vulnerable walking at night without streetlighting and believe that the lack of lighting will create unsafe conditions, leading to more accidents.

- Public disapproval and distrust: There is a strong sentiment that the part-night lighting proposal will be being pushed through, despite public disapproval. Respondents feel that their opinions will be ignored and that the council is not taking their safety seriously. Some believe that the consultation process is being introduced because the council wants to press ahead with an already rejected policy.
- Impact on Daily Life versus environmental concerns: Some respondents are concerned about the potential negative impact on their daily lives, such as difficulty in navigating poorly lit areas and the potential for more road traffic accidents. Others mention the importance of street lighting for their personal safety and freedom, especially those who cannot drive for medical reasons. There are also concerns about the balance with environmental requirements, with some suggesting alternatives like motion sensor lights to balance safety and energy savings.

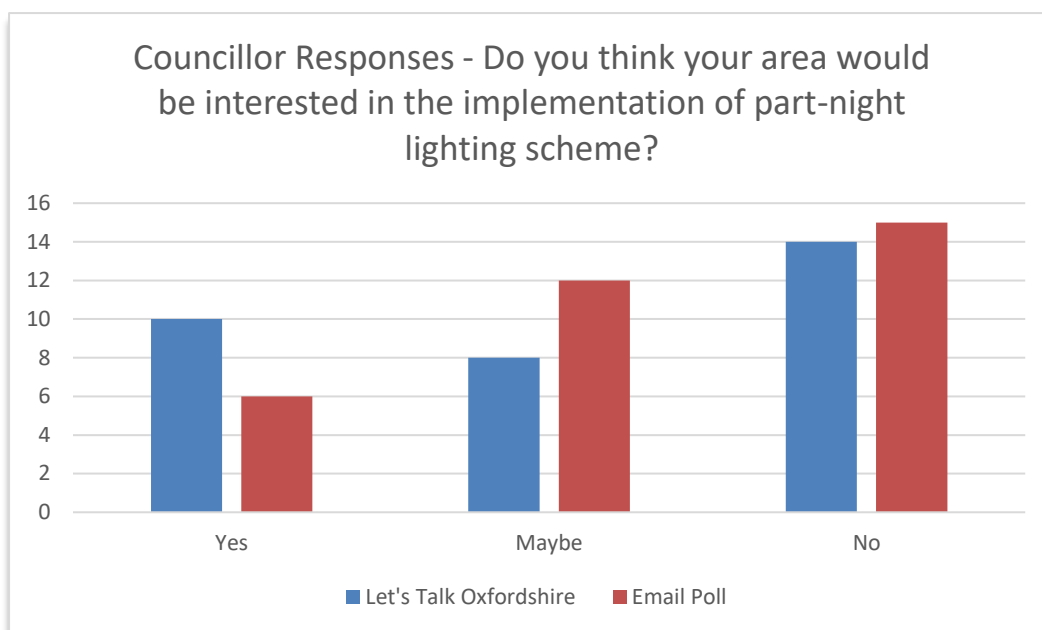
#### **4.9.3. A summary of 'Yes - A little' responses, cross referenced with responses to question 23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire?**

Overall, the responses reflect the strong opposition noted in the responses above, with a focus on safety, quality of life, and the need for a more inclusive and transparent decision-making processes.

- The concerns raised highlight the need for a balanced approach that considers both safety and environmental benefits while ensuring that the voices of all community members are heard.
- Safety and Security: Many respondents believe that reduced street lighting could lead to more accidents, falls, and make areas unsafe at night. They are worried about the potential increase in crime and the overall safety of vulnerable groups.
- Impact on Quality of Life: Respondents feel that turning off or reducing street lighting will negatively affect their daily lives, making it difficult to walk or travel at night, leading to a sense of fear and insecurity.
- Consultation and Decision-Making Process: Several respondents are critical of the consultation process, feeling that their concerns are not being adequately considered. They believe that the decision to reduce street lighting is driven by cost-cutting measures rather than genuine environmental or safety concerns, and they want more transparent and inclusive decision-making.

#### **4.10. Parish and Town Councils and Councillor feedback**

The consultation provided an opportunity to gather feedback from Parish and Town councillors regarding their potential level of interest for implementing part-night lighting schemes within their areas. 65 responded, with their level of interested indicated below:



Alongside the responses received above, there 10 feedback emails received from councils, with a range of different support levels for part-night lighting within their areas.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Main areas of support

There is a higher percentage of completely positive and mostly positive responses (646 / 50.4%) compared to those who that answered mostly or completely negative (562 / 43.9%) to the question; After reading the draft framework and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part-night lighting in Oxfordshire?

A higher proportion of respondent's feedback that they did not think we need to change the proposed exemptions, with 615 / 48.1% answering 'No', compared to the 347 / 27.9% who answered yes, to the question; Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?

The majority of respondents (566 / 44.5%) feedback they think that parish and town councils and local governance authorities are the right people to request part-night lighting in their areas, compared to the 377 / 29.7% who responded 'no' to the question: The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced.



The majority of respondents 628 / 50.5% also think that nothing needs to be changed within the proposed implementation framework process when asked the question: This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process?, compared to the 347 / 27.9% who responded yes.

On the whole, there were less qualitative responses from respondents who answered positively in response to the quantitative questions, but there is clear support for the environmental, sustainability and cost savings part-night lighting can achieve.

It is interesting to note that approximately a third of respondents (472 / 37%) feedback that they do travel either daily, multiple times a week or weekly during 11.30 PM and 5.30 AM, but then conversely 739 / 57.7% of respondents feedback that the introduction of part-night lighting during the proposed timings would not affect how they travel, compared to the 458 / 35.8% respondents saying the timings would affect how they travel.

This is where proposed individual schemes would need to be initially reviewed to understand where the public transport links are, and what the impact is on the 'last train/bus' timings. Scheme timings could then be tailored if required.

## **5.2. Main areas of opposition and concern**

The main areas of opposition and concern have come through via the qualitative responses to questions, where respondents have been able to write narratively what their concerns are.

Safety concerns are the main concern respondents feedback on throughout the consultation. Many feel that part-night lighting and reducing street lighting will make streets and less safe, particularly for women. They feel well-lit streets are essential for preventing crime and ensuring public safety. The perception is that there will be an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour if part-night lighting is implemented, with darkness providing cover for criminal activities. Legal and accountability issues were raised, who would be held accountable if a crime or accident occurs due to a lack of streetlighting. One respondent requested accountability mechanisms be put in place.

There are concerns about potential impact on vulnerable groups, with strong sentiment that part-night lighting will disproportionately affect women, vulnerable younger people, the elderly and disabled individuals, especially those who work late shifts or rely on public transport. There are concerns that reduced lighting will affect the night-time economy, as people may avoid going out at night due to safety concerns.

Respondents also raised environmental versus safety considerations. While respondents acknowledge the environmental benefits of part-night lighting, they argue that these should not come at the expense of public safety. There are suggestions for alternative solutions, such as motion-activated lighting, that could also balance safety and environmental concerns.

There is also feedback indicating a distrust of local government, and lack of trust in the council's consultation and decision-making processes. There is a belief that the council is considering cost-cutting over public safety and that the consultation process is not genuinely considering residents' opinions.

Within the consultation qualitative responses there was clear messaging that those that oppose part-night lighting, oppose it as a concept completely, even with the proposed implementation frameworks mitigations and checking processes taken into consideration.

The proposed timings may also need to be reviewed for each scheme. The majority of responses to the question: Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations? feedback they are not the right timings for rural and urban locations with 552 / 43.2% , responding that they are the wrong timings for both urban and rural areas, compared to the 472 / 36.9% who responded that they are the right timings.

### **5.3 Levels of Communication and engagement with stakeholders**

There are also requests throughout the consultation feedback that communication about part-night lighting be enhanced on several levels. Generally, information about part-night lighting needs to be more widely shared, so people can understand what it is and how it may affect them.

There were also requests that local residents and local stakeholders get a greater level of input in the consultation process and on deciding on whether a part-night lighting is implemented in their area, and that they are also provided the ability to feedback on a scheme once it has been implemented to raise any issues or concerns.

### **5.4 Next Steps**

The areas where there have been requests to review, amend or update the proposed implementation framework will be investigated and changes made as required.

The feedback received from the consultation will be used to inform and update part-night lighting's Climate Impact Assessment (CIA), and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as well as updating the streeting lighting policy as required.

This consultation report will be submitted to Cabinet as part of the Part-night Lighting discussions and decision-making process.

## ANNEX A - Consultation Survey Questions

<b>1) I am responding to this survey as (quantitative)</b>	
An Oxfordshire resident	
A member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire	
A business	
A representative of a group or organisation	
A parish, town, district, or county Councillor	
Other (please specify)	
<b>2) Please give the name of the business you represent (qualitative)</b>	
<b>3) Please give the name of the group/organisation you represent (qualitative)</b>	
<b>4) Please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent (qualitative)</b>	
<b>5) Do you think that your area would be interested in the implementation of part-night lighting schemes?</b>	
Yes	Councillor Only Questions
Maybe	
No	
I don't know	
<b>6) Please tell us why you chose that answer (qualitative)</b>	
<b>7) After reading the draft framework and frequently asked questions, what is your overall view of part-night lighting in Oxfordshire? (quantitative)</b>	
Completely positive	
Mostly positive	
Neither positive nor negative	
Mostly negative	
Completely negative	
<b>8) Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions? (quantitative)</b>	
Yes	
No	
I don't know	
<b>9) Please tell us why you chose that answer (qualitative)</b>	
<b>10) Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations? (quantitative)</b>	
Right timings for both rural and urban areas	
Right timings for rural areas, but wrong timings for urban areas	
Wrong timings for rural areas, but right timings for urban areas	
Wrong timings for both rural and urban areas	
I don't know	
<b>11) Please tell us why you gave that answer (qualitative)</b>	
<b>12) Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for urban areas (qualitative)</b>	
<b>13) Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural areas (qualitative)</b>	
<b>14) Please tell us why you gave that answer, including what timings you think would be right for rural and urban areas (qualitative)</b>	
<b>15) Please tell us why you gave that answer</b>	
<b>16) How often do you currently travel (including walking, wheeling or cycling) between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM? (quantitative)</b>	

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

Daily
Multiple days per week, but less than daily
Once a week
Less than once a week
Never
<b>17) Would the introduction of part night lighting at the proposed 'standard' times affect how you travel? As a reminder, the proposed 'standard' times are: Between 11:30 pm and 05:30 am in rural locations Between midnight and 05:30 am in urban locations (quantitative)</b>
Yes
No
I don't know
<b>18) Please tell us how and why part-night lighting would affect how you travel (qualitative)</b>
<b>19) The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced. (quantitative)</b>
Yes
Partly
No
I don't know
<b>20) Please tell us who you think should be able to request part-night lighting in an area? (qualitative)</b>
<b>21) This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process? (quantitative)</b>
Yes
No
I don't know
<b>22) Please tell us more (qualitative)</b>
<b>23) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the proposed draft implementation framework for introducing part-night lighting in areas in Oxfordshire?</b>
<b>24) What is your postcode? Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5.</b>
<b>25) What is your age? (quantitative)</b>
Under 16
16 - 24
25 - 34
35 - 44
45 - 54
55 - 64
65 - 74
75 - 84
85 or over
Prefer not to say
<b>26) What is your sex? (quantitative)</b>
Female
Male
Prefer not to say
I use another term (please state here)

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

<b>27) Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (quantitative)</b>
Yes
No
Prefer not to say
<b>28) What is your sexual orientation? (quantitative)</b>
Straight/Heterosexual
Bisexual
Gay or Lesbian
Prefer not to say
Other sexual orientation (please state here)
<b>29) What is your ethnic group or background? (quantitative)</b>
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
Chinese
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
Prefer not to say
Other ethnic group or background (please state here)
<b>30) What is your current religion, if any? (quantitative)</b>
Buddhist
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
Hindu
Jewish
Muslim
Sikh
No religion
Prefer not to say
Any other religion (please state here)
<b>31) Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (quantitative)</b>
Yes - a lot
Yes - a little
No
Prefer not to say

ANNEX B – Survey Data



Image 1. Volume of page views and consultation visitors Monday 9 June to Sunday 6 July

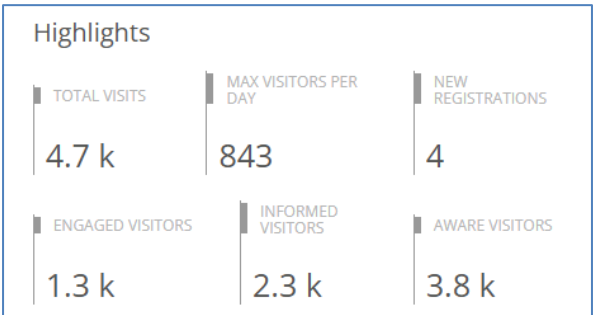
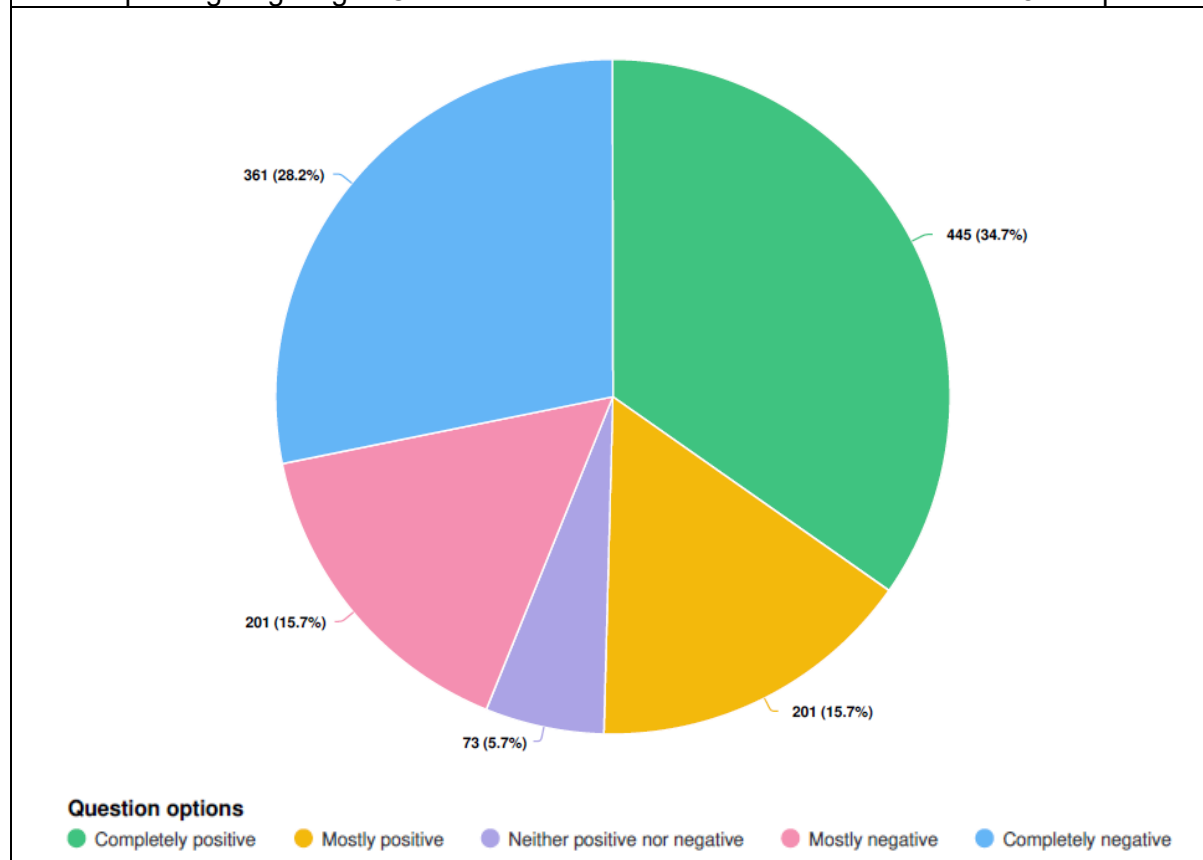
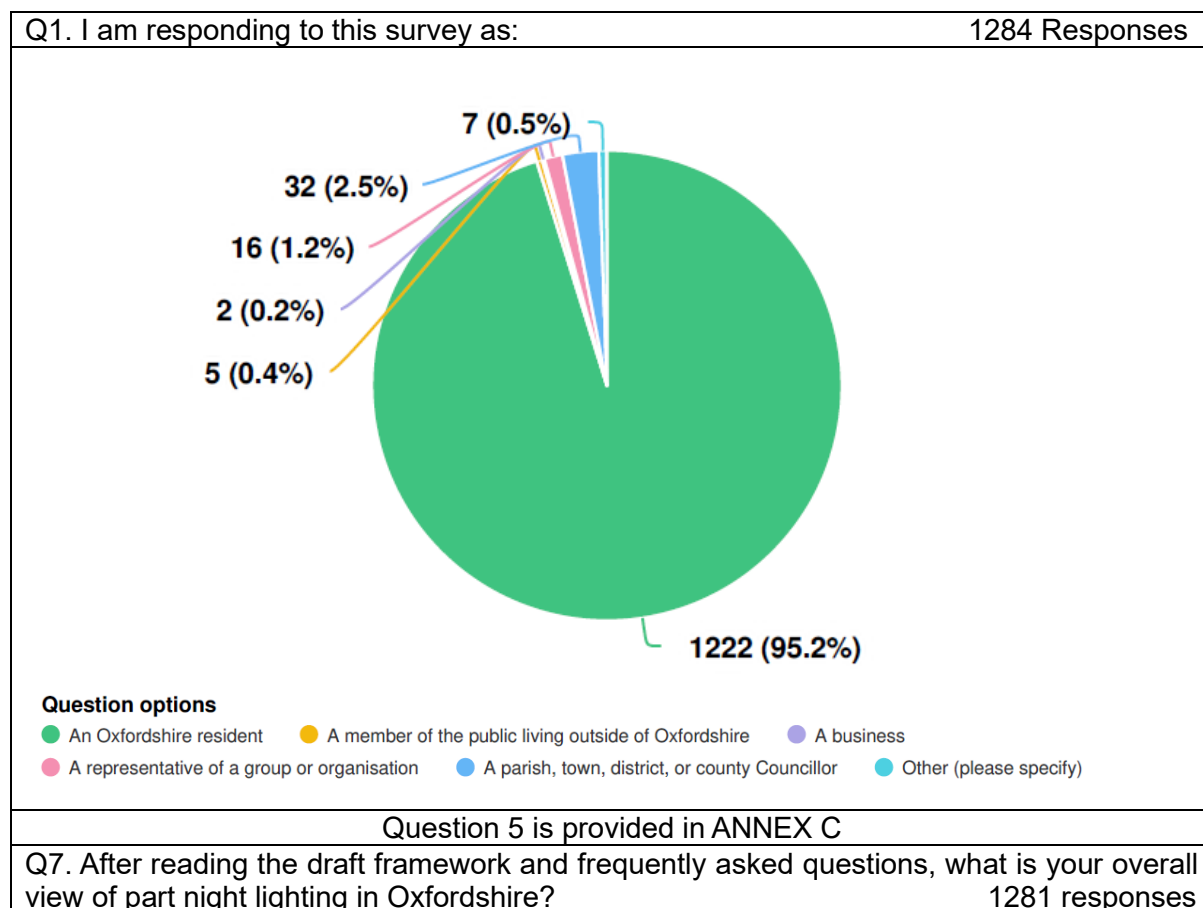


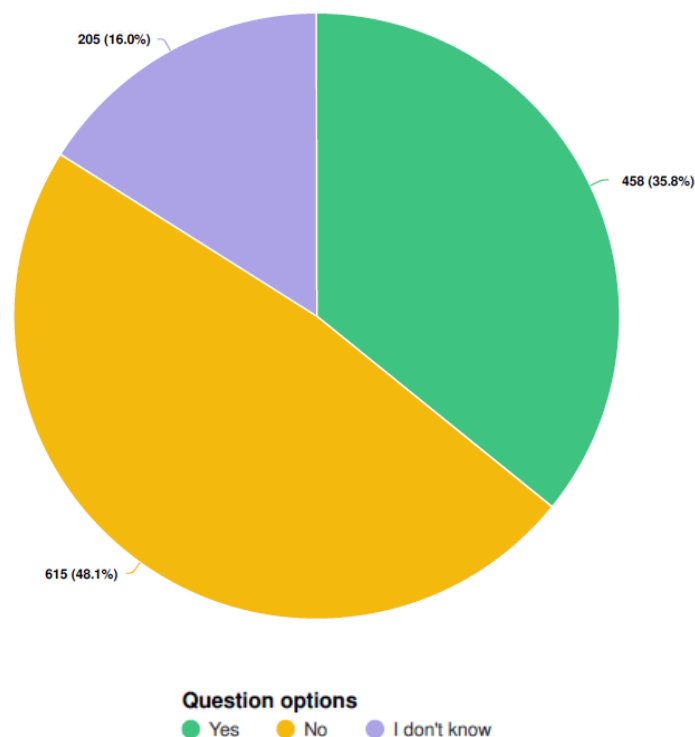
Image 2. Total page views and Engaged visitors Monday 9 June to Sunday 6 July





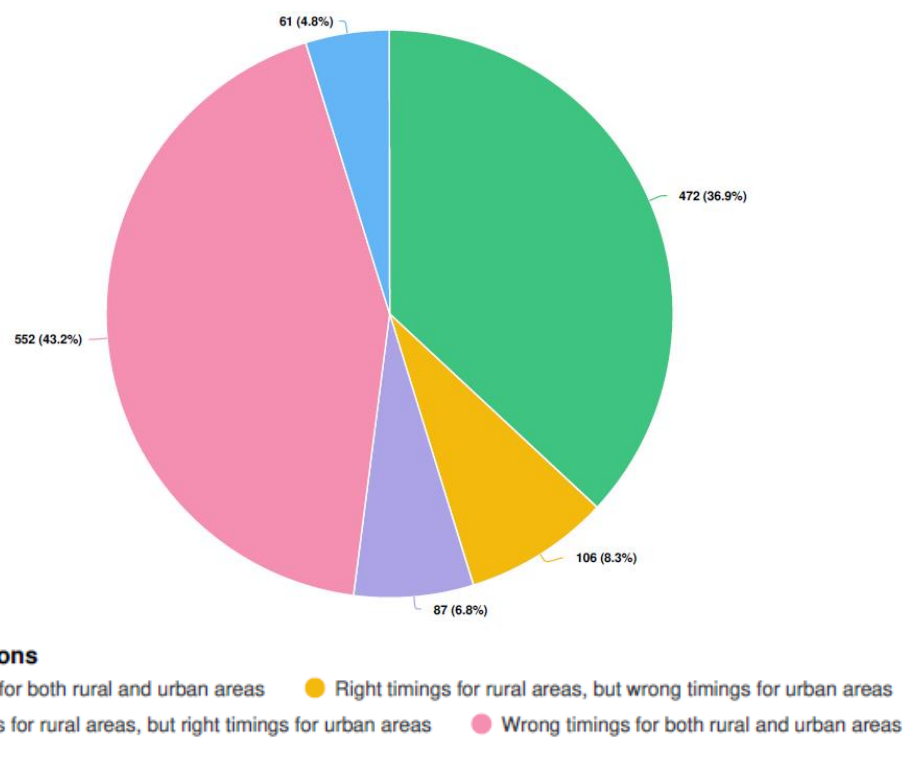
Q8. Some factors would make an area unsuitable for part-night lighting, we are calling these 'Exemptions'. The exemptions are listed in the draft framework. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in the list of exemptions?

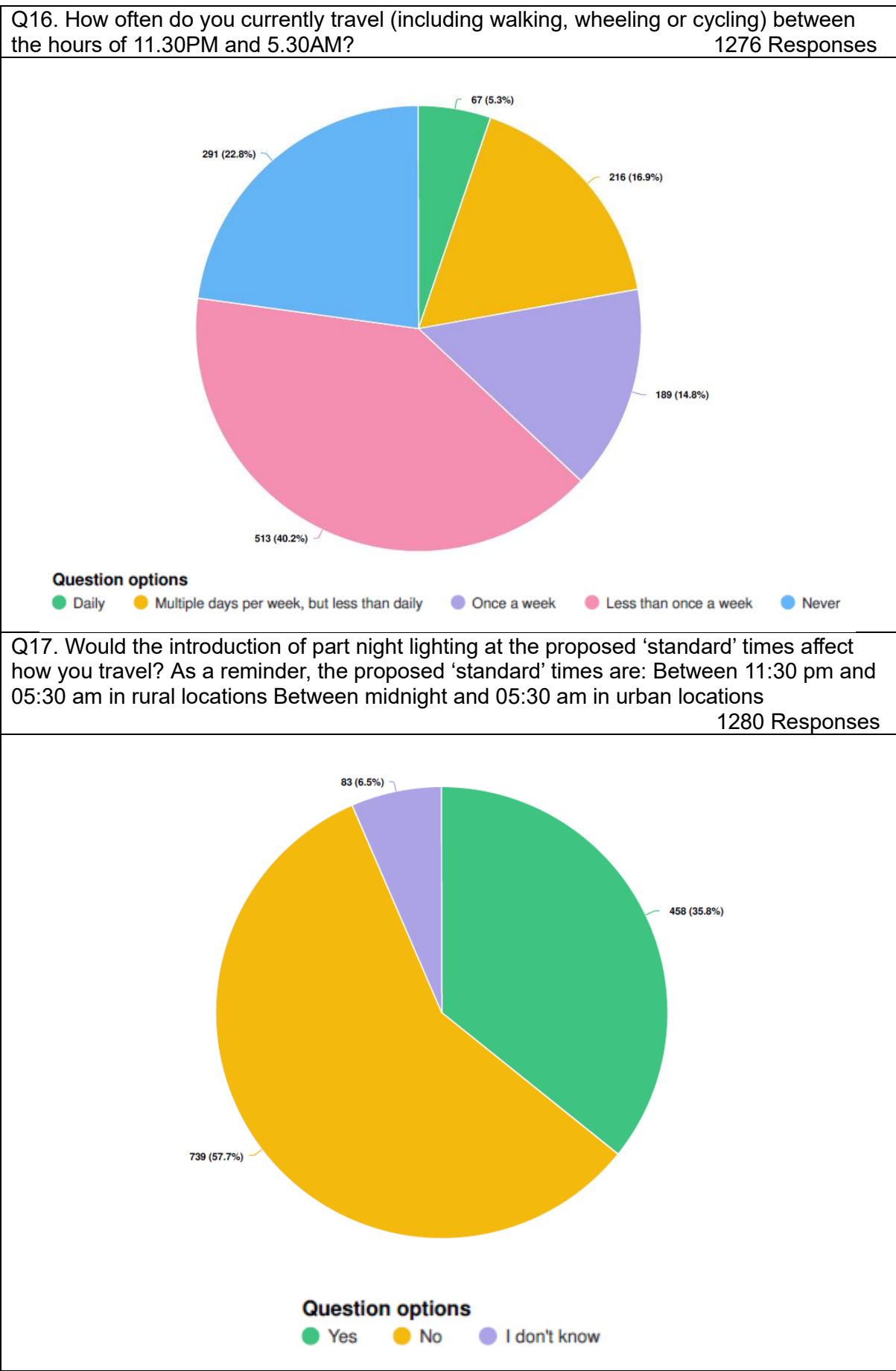
1278 responses



Q10. Do you think that these are the right timings for rural and urban locations?

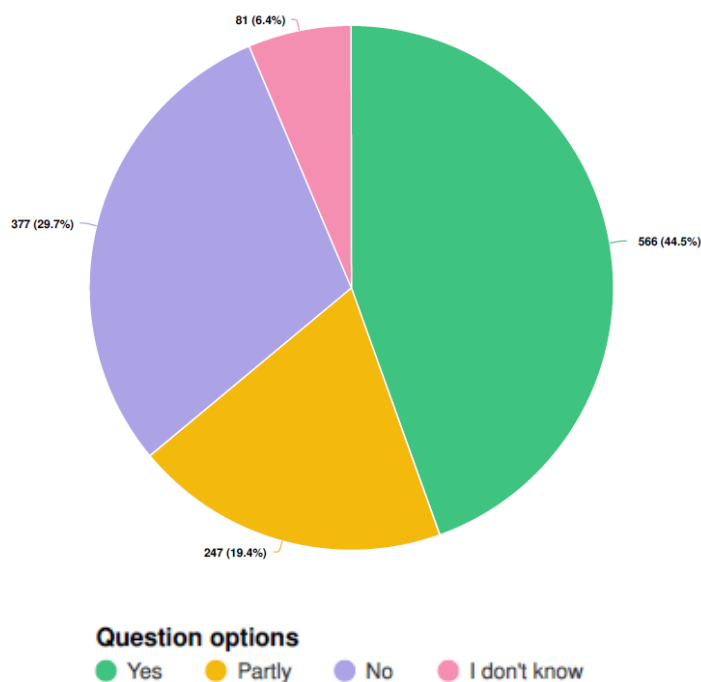
1278 Responses



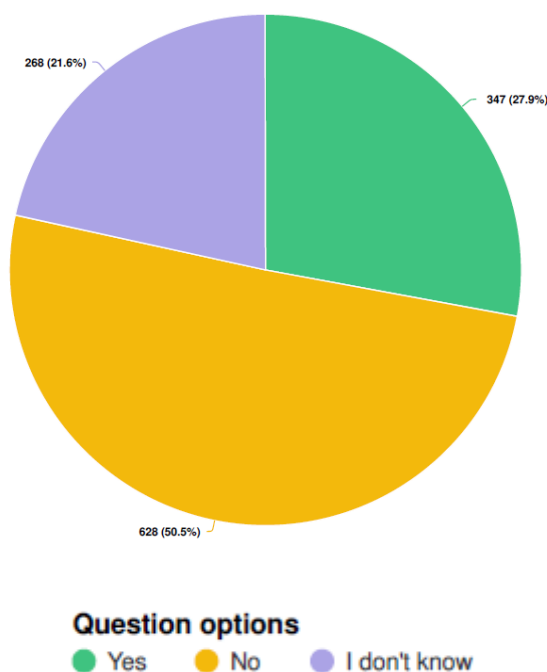


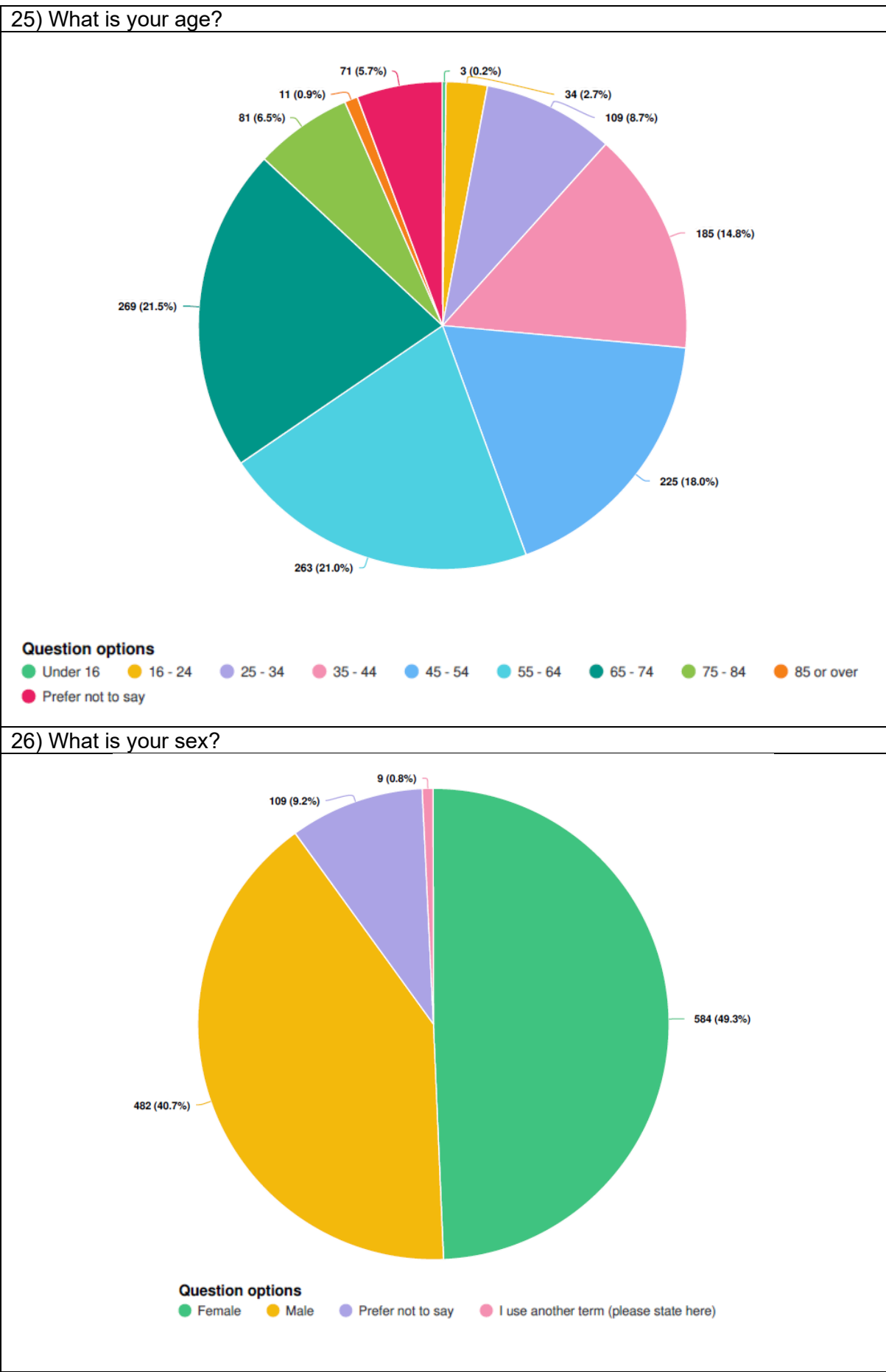
Q19. The draft framework says that part-night lighting would only be considered in areas where it is requested by the town and parish councils, or local governance authorities, and supported by the area's Oxfordshire County Councillor. Do you think that these are the right people to be able to request part-night lighting? Please remember that a local public consultation would also take place before any part-night lighting scheme was introduced.

1271 Responses



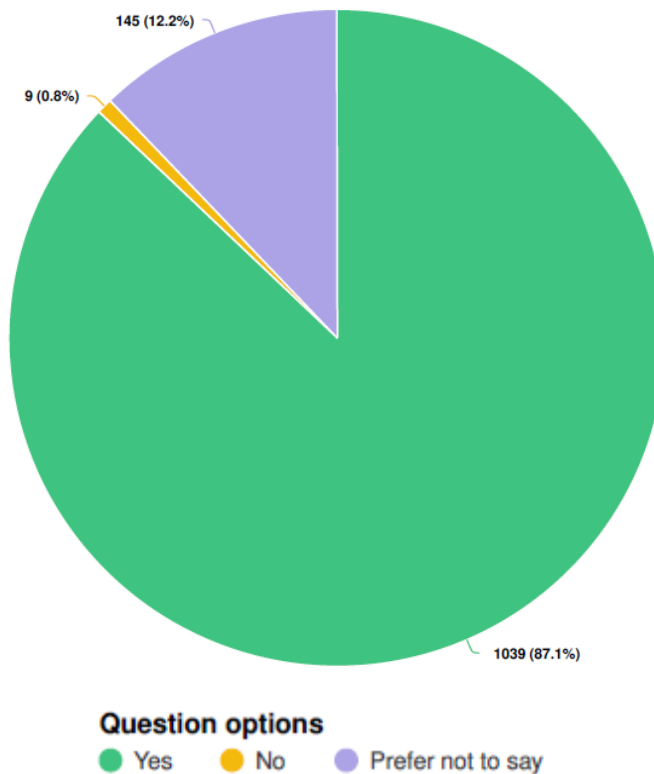
Q21. This image shows the draft implementation process by which a part-night lighting scheme could be introduced. You can also read through the process here. Do you think that anything should be added, removed or changed in this draft implementation process?





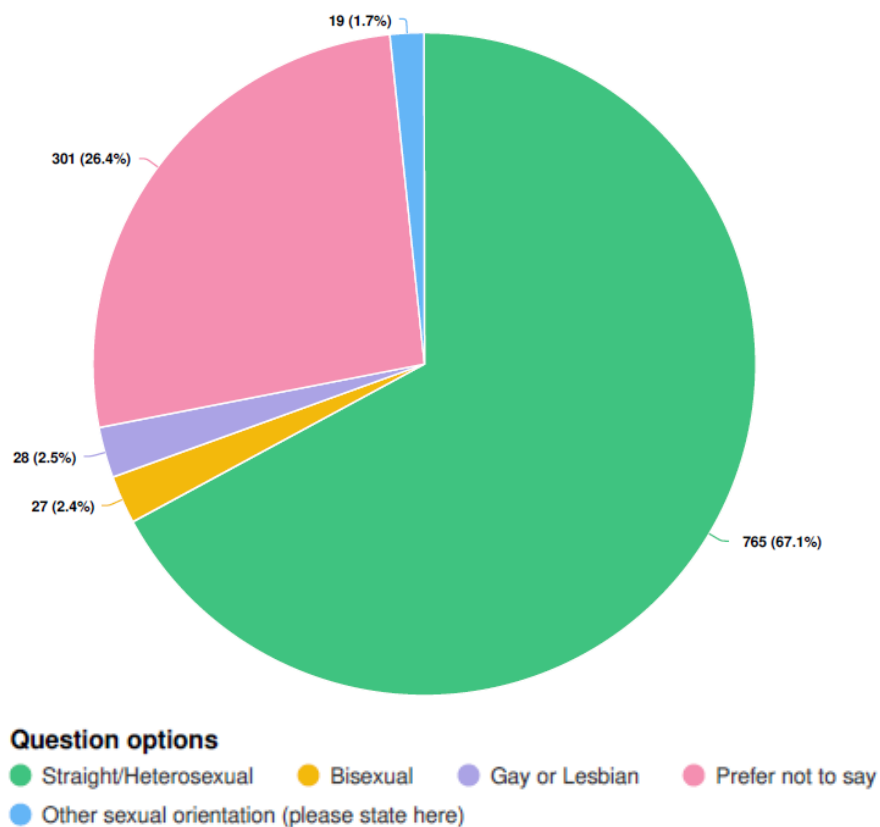
27) Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

1193 Responses

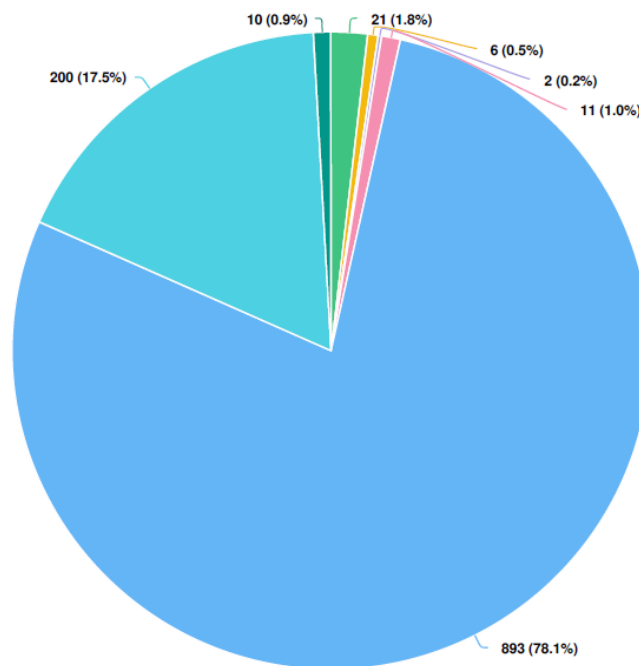


28) What is your sexual orientation?

1140 Responses



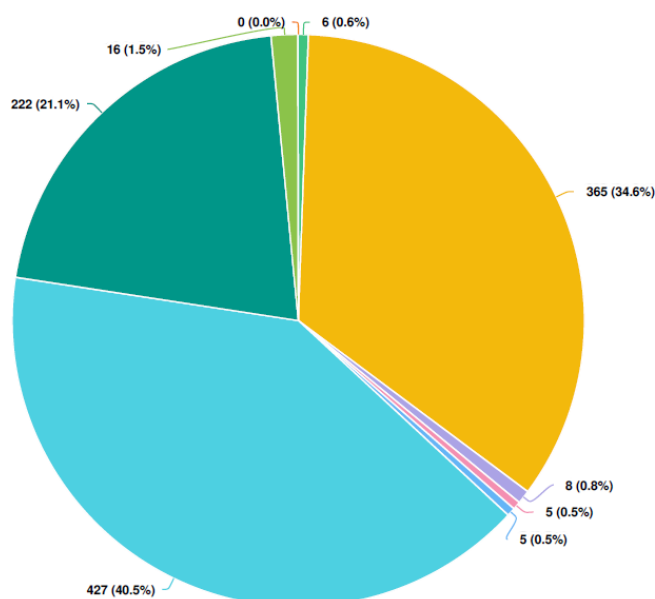
29) What is your ethnic group or background?



**Question options**

- Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
- Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
- Chinese
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
- White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group or background (please state here)

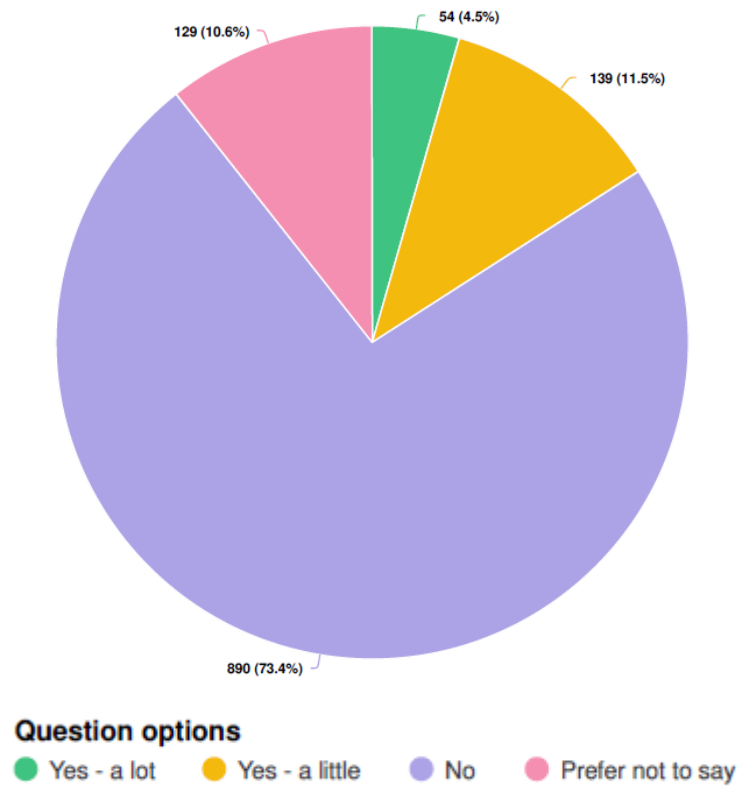
30) What is your current religion, if any?



**Question options**

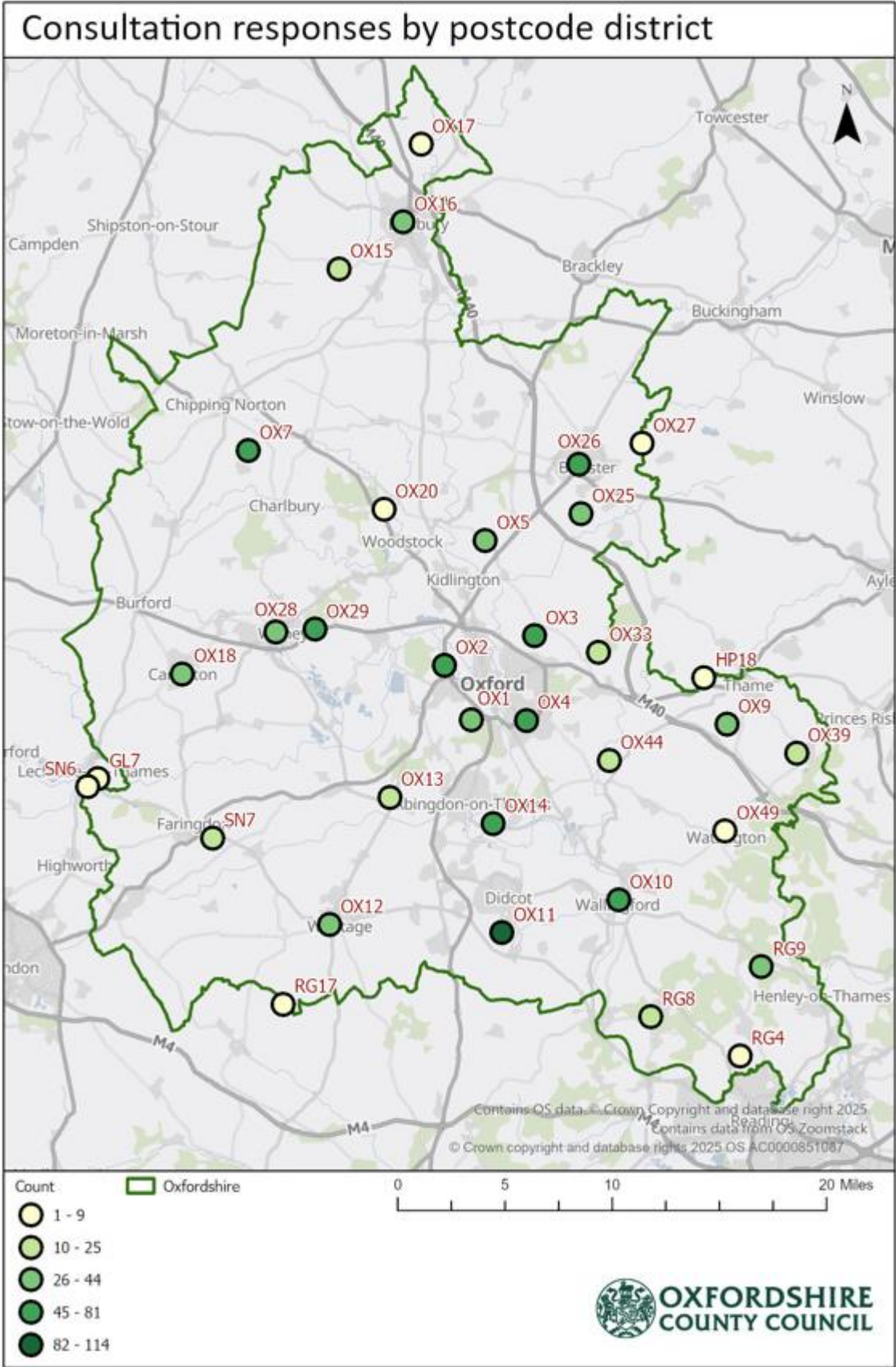
- Buddhist
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- No religion
- Prefer not to say
- Any other religion (please state here)
- Sikh

Q31. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?





ANNEX C – Consultation responses by postcode district



## ANNEX D – Direct consultation feedback

The following annex contains directly worded feedback from external parties received as part of the Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework consultation, and as such has not been edited for typographical errors. Personally identifiable data has been redacted where this appears in feedback (indicated by 'Redacted').

The correspondence listed below is a representative sample of feedback received during the consultation period, not an exhaustive list.

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS	OOC / PROJECT TEAM RESPONSES
University of Oxford	Most clubs close at 3.30am some stay open until 4am , no lighting when getting home either Urban or Rural, no lighting for shift workers that set off at 3.30am or 4am or people walking home after finishing nights	Due to the exemptions contained within the part-night lighting framework, Oxford City would not be suitable for part-night lighting
Oxford Student Union	<p>Oxford SU x Brookes Union Statement</p> <p>Oxford Students' Union and Brookes Union are deeply concerned about current media reports that Oxfordshire County Council is planning to reduce street lighting across the county. It is reported that the Council is looking to reduce or switch off areas of street lighting between the hours of 11pm and 6:30am.</p> <p>We know that many students are already concerned about travelling around areas of the city late at night, and this action is likely to increase those concerns. We also recognise that many students live in typically residential areas which are likely to be impacted more. Many of our students also travel to placements at the hospitals, in schools and in the community, and so are travelling either late at night or early in the morning.</p> <p>Students have campaigned for over a decade for increased lighting in South Park, citing safety issues - students already don't feel safe in this city. This decision will have a further detrimental and dangerous impact on the night-time economy across the city if students are even more concerned about travelling late at night.</p> <p>The equality impact assessment cites that this decision is deemed to have 'no impact' on people with protected characteristics, with no detail given as to how they arrived at this conclusion. Despite all of this, the original proposal doesn't include any plans for consultation with students.</p> <p>We welcome the Council's recent announcement that they are deferring the decision until further work has been undertaken. We would welcome consultation from the Council and will be jointly reaching out to understand more about these proposals.</p> <p>If you are concerned about these proposals, you can: Find out who your local councillor is and write to them Attend the cabinet meeting: the deadline to register to speak, either online or in person at County Hall, has been extended until 12.30pm 14th November 2024. To register, email <a href="mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk">committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>- Oxford Students' Union Officer Team - Brookes Union Officer Team</p> <p>Campaign Responses</p> <p>The Oxford SU Environmental Affairs Campaign commented: The Environmental Affairs Campaign, being concerned with the escalating impacts of climate change and damage to fragile ecosystems, notes the importance of reducing unnecessary light pollution as mentioned in the report, which has harmful impacts on pollinators and other local wildlife. However, we are also very concerned that introducing this Street Lighting Illumination Proposal without proper consultation of the safety needs and concerns of the student body could lead to considerable anxiety at the prospect of streetlights</p>	<p>Due to the exemptions contained within the part-night lighting framework, Oxford City would not be suitable for part-night lighting</p>

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

	<p>being unlit during hours of the night, and that the safety of citizens is of the highest priority. The Campaign recommends the County Council considers measures such as the use of motion sensors or other tools that incorporate safety concerns while limiting unnecessary lighting where possible. Furthermore, we request more clarity on the potential impact of this proposal on different areas of Oxford to gauge what the impact would be on areas that students rely on at night. We encourage the Council to consider these concerns while recognising the importance of environmental and wildlife concerns mentioned.</p> <p>The Oxford SU Disabled students campaign commented: There is a general consideration for student safety, as a lot of people walk home at night myself included and it's generally a tip to walk in streets that are well lit: this project would stop that and has been proven to impact safety in other locations which have followed this protocol (cf Hampshire). It limits the routes people can take through Oxford when walking at night if they want to remain to well-lit areas and is especially restrictive now that it's winter and many people will be leaving work/evening classes when it's already dark outside.</p> <p>From an access POV, lights and having well-lit areas helps a lot for people with disabilities being able to manage their balance and helps with vision impairment in some cases. Many visually impaired people rely on good lighting and high contrast street markings to identify edges to curbs and crossings. Dimming streetlights may mean this is not possible, potentially making it unsafe or very difficult for visually impaired students to walk independently in Oxford at night, which could be a potential violation of the equality act. A student on committee has shared that they themselves have a very minor vision problem but it's exasperated by the dark.</p> <p>From another access POV, road users, including drivers, cyclists and motorists, are required by law in the highway code to recognise vulnerable road users such as people with mobility issues, wheelchair users and service dog/cane users. In Oxford, many disabled students report being unnoticed by road users when crossing roads and put into vulnerable positions. Therefore, if street lighting was reduced, this problem would be much more likely to get worse, including potential road accidents involving vulnerable disabled pedestrians. As a wheelchair user myself, I have witnessed the dangers which cars and cycles pose in daylight, and due to poor paving having to often drive in the road. This in further darkness is even more dangerous.</p> <p>The Oxford SU Class Act campaign has also expressed concerns over the proposal, stating that "it is concerning for the safety of female* students and the lack of consideration for them when proposing this plan.</p>	
Oxford City Angels	<p>Areas where students are situated should be considered as vulnerable spots as the feedback has been that with some limited transport options, walking home to accommodation is the only option and without adequate lighting this is a risk</p> <p>Urban areas will have populations bigger and hence there may be a need to offer lighting to ensure safety during activities</p>	Due to the exemptions contained within the part-night lighting framework, Oxford City would not be suitable for part-night lighting
Oxford Health NHS	Should not be left to Andrew Gant to decide on his own	Due to the exemptions contained within the part-night lighting framework, Oxford City would not be suitable for part-night lighting
North Parade Residents & Traders Association	Do you have any statistics for darkness-related injuries, to gauge the scale of the negative impact of part-time lighting?	Police crime data, and Safer Streets data would be reviewed in advance of any scheme being implemented to understand what the safety risks are.
Thame Green Living	I think it should be enough for a county-wide consultation if this shows clear support, and then town or parish support. After that, the fewer impediments to implementation the better!	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

	From an environmental and financial viewpoint we should be doing all we reasonably can to cut down light pollution as much and as soon as practicable.	
Langford village community association	<p>Routes near train stations, bus stops, taxi ranks? Road crossings , remote footpaths. Paths across parks and edged by trees Should all be exempt.</p> <p>Because you don't listen to public view and will probably just implement this anyway despite the majority not wanting change. Oxfordshire councillors do not listen to public feedback.</p> <p>Drop the whole idea</p> <p>We do not want this in Bicester or Langford village.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
CPRE Oxfordshire	<p>The proposed 'Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework' suggests a range of exemptions. We believe these are too wide ranging and would restrict considerably the areas where streetlights could be turned off. We would urge that these exemptions be reduced or made only advisory.</p> <p>CPRE would like these times to see these times as a minimum, but with flexibility for them to be extended where appropriate and with local support.</p> <p>The proposed 'Part Night Lighting Implementation Framework' suggests a range of exemptions. We believe these are too wide ranging and would restrict considerably the areas where streetlights could be turned off. We would urge that these exemptions be reduced or made only advisory.</p> <p>CPRE Oxfordshire are largely supportive of this proposal but would like to see the exemptions removed, or advisory only in order to give more local flexibility. CPRE have has long campaigned for dark skies and the reduction of nighttime light pollution. Light pollution is very damaging to wildlife - disrupting and killing insects, bats and migrating birds. It can also disrupt your sleep – leading to long-term health problems. Many studies have shown that switching off streetlights late at night does not increase street crime and traffic accidents and, indeed, in some studies these are reduced.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Schools and hospitals should also be exempt as places where very vulnerable people may be trying to walk or cross the road in the dark	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	It is important to consider the work that has gone on around Violence against Women and Girls, such as the Safer Streets project around night time journey and from Oxford City from more rural areas. Community Safety Partnerships should be sought for their views as well.	Community Safety Partnership are a key part-night lighting stakeholder and are being involved in the part-night lighting discussions. Safer Streets data would be used to analyse the suitability of a scheme.
Member of the Public	Safety at night should be a high priority. Anywhere that someone could be walking at night needs good lighting.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Areas where students are situated should be considered as vulnerable spots as the feedback has been that with some limited transport options, walking home to accommodation is the only option and without adequate lighting this is a risk	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	The whole idea should be scrapped. This will encourage criminal activity in a time where police presence is limited. CCTV cameras are unreliable. Many of the Oxfordshire towns have growing populations particularly issues with county lines. During the winter months it doesn't feel particularly safe to pop to the local shops after dark with the led lights as it is. It implies you want to impose a curfew without saying so.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Have you considered the night time economy during this project? Many people may not feel safe coming out to pubs and bars that have a license past 11:30/12	Yes, the night time economy implications

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

	if they have no street lights to walk home with as they may feel unsafe in doing so. Which will completely tank the night time economy in the towns and villages.	will be considered for each scheme.
Member of the Public	You haven't considered older people and it's a fallacy to turn off lights at 11.30 'after the last bus' when buses return from Oxford into Wantage AFTER this time. So people getting off buses will be in the dark and accidents happen. The pavements for walkers are not always well maintained so are inviting people to be picked up by car or taxi and increase that pollution or alternatively make areas prime crime zones. The turning off time should be later and should be commensurate with the length of time it is actually dark and not be a randomly selected time. Also cannot see actual researched evidence of impact to wildlife. If turning off time was truly in line with 40 mins after last bus arrival on weekdays this would be more acceptable.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Areas leading towards university residences should be on there, the entire city centre should be on there, and anywhere that is a typically used road after the nighttime economy finishes up should be on there	Due to the exemptions contained within the part-night lighting framework, Oxford City would not be suitable for part-night lighting
Member of the Public	I do not think lights should be turned off at night. It already feels very unsafe as a lone female walking at night with the new lower lighting. This would make it a no go area for many if streets were not adequately lit regardless of the time of night. Some have no option due to late night working, and it would make it very unsafe. There are also many incidents of car theft at night in Cowley/Littlemore. This just makes it easier for those who operate on the wrong side of the law.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	I think that all emergency services car parks should continue to have street lighting. I for one do not want to be parking at the Horton with a sick child at 2am in complete darkness or making my way back to the car at 5am after spending the night in a and over tired and hyper vigilant. I think that places where vulnerable people are going to spend time over night; hospitals, police stations and fire services car parks should have lighting	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traffic calming measures - that would include 20 mph zones. Not needed. Also intrusions would have a keep left or right sign which would be picked up by car headlights so there is no need for these to be included.</li> <li>2. Steps stairs, no street lights needed but low level low down step lights only.</li> <li>3. Waterside - should be urban only</li> <li>4. High levels of crime and road traffic collisions. These should be separated out. They are two different things. Also the latter. Road traffic Collisions, should be defined as collision areas caused by poor visibility, rather than collisions caused by mobile phone use or drunk driving. This needs to be defined as collisions caused by poor visibility only.</li> <li>5. Final point, please engage with the railways as there is no point having lights after the last train has been. Particularly at rural stations on the Great Western Line which goes into the AONB.</li> </ol> <p>Thank you for taking action on Dark Skies, it is a really important factor in human health and sleep patterns, as well as better for nocturnal animals and landscape.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Everywhere should be exempt apart from roads in the middle of nowhere. This scheme should not be given the green light. The council needs to listen to the people - we do not want our lights turned off!	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	I believe there is a significant increased risk to the public, especially women with lights being switch off/dimmed. I would not feel comfortable having to leave my house at this time if required. I work with victims of abuse including sexual violence and I have significant concerns with these new plans.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Areas with higher numbers of shift workers. Also, lights should stay on on weekends, when young people are out and about late.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	Because this scheme fundamentally makes life more dangerous for women. There are already far too many night time assaults on women in Oxfordshire, this is simply a measure that will increase vulnerability.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	No apparent allowance for the elderly/disabled citizens, or is the assumption they won't be out and about after the chosen time?;	Each scheme would be reviewed initially

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

	No allowance for those doing the right thing and cycling;	to understand its impacts on vulnerable groups before public consultation is carried out on it.
Member of the Public	<p>Wheelchair users and the partially sighted rely upon lighting. Wheelchair users get no tactile feedback on road or pavement surfaces or edges, and the partially sighted can rely upon adequate lighting to make out any detail such as kerb edges and street furniture obstacles including pavement-parked cycles (Oxford!!!). To partially light is to punish the disabled.</p> <p>A partial solution might be:          Luminous kerb edges          Either lighted or luminous street furniture          All corners lighted when the luminous markers          All drop kerbs lighted          Cycle parking and A-boards on pavements prohibited during the hours of darkness of no street lighting          In the winter with short days the daylight may be insufficient to 'charge' luminous markers. In such cases the lights should be 'on'.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	<p>It doesn't really account for quieter roads which are used by pedestrians to traverse parts of a town at night/in the dark - eg they do not directly relate to night-time economy but workers coming home in the dark may use those routes. To explain, an example is Park Road in Abingdon - it is already very badly lit at night but it is an important route for a lot of people getting off at the main bus stops then heading to homes, developments, etc. west of the town. As a woman, I already find this route precarious during the dark winter afternoons/evenings. Switching the lights off (especially next to a park which already has anti-social issues) would make this journey incredible difficult</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	<p>Every alleyway should be lit for safety (not just remote ones)          All areas currently lit should continue to be lit.          If that must change the timings listed are concerning - the stop time is far too early.          When less people are around is exactly when the need for lighting is more crucial for safety - if something happens (fall/injury or crime) there is no-one around to help. People need to be able to see surroundings in the distance in order to weigh up and make decisions about their safety ahead of reaching potential hazard/s in order to decide which routes they will take.          People working in and using the night-time economy will live outside the area classed as exempt, therefore when they are travelling home their safety will be compromised.          People will feel trapped inside their homes during the hours of darkness when there is no lighting.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the Public	<p>It may be important to consider days of the week and usage of areas - for example, young people particularly young females walking home from the city on a Friday or Saturday night.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	<p>Just do it. Not everything has to be consulted on and this is a time and money consuming activity to do something which should save money, improve safety and be beneficial to nature.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	<p>Concerned that indifference would lead to non implementation, clearly from an environmental standpoint this is absolutely necessary</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	<p>A lot of people have private security now and ring cameras so I don't feel lighting is as needed as before. Save the environment and make skies darker.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	<p>Excellent idea and looking forward for it to be implemented.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.

## Part-Night Lighting Consultation Report -v3

Member of the public	<p>Much better education should be provided regarding the benefits of part-night lighting. Having lived in Dorsey where a dark-skies approach was taken in our village, it shouldn't just be the environmental arguments that are put forward. Dark streets will lower crime - especially burglaries and car theft - as criminal activity will be much more obvious. With most security cameras having night vision, the lack of street lighting simply isn't an issue. The inconsistent nature of most village lighting in Oxfordshire's villages is unsafe as, when walking, you move from areas of strong lighting into complete darkness. The part-night lighting could prevent accidents in the form of slips and trips.</p> <p>The part-night policy should be seen as a three-year transition to dark-skies.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	This should have already been policy years ago.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	It would be welcomed by my family. We find some new lights around Abingdon are too bright. Also down the Dunmore Road there appear to be too many. During power cuts we do not miss the lights. We also notice the effect on wildlife, such as birds being active at night. We have been saying that lights should be reduced.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	We need to be able to see stars, priorities wildlife and virtually everyone carries a phone with a touch on it. Most rural areas feel very safe at night to walk around in and the street lights isn't consistent so we are used to saying torches to supplement. Let us enjoy dark. I hate a street light that shines into my bedroom window on a pavement that serves very few houses and has virtually no nighttime footfall. Most houses also have their own security lighting these days.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	Very happy to see this. Insect life is collapsing all around us. Very important measure I whole heartedly support. One specific local issue in Bury Knowle park: extremely severe intense lighting at night around the tennis courts. Can be seen from London road. Devastating for all wildlife. Is this why the swallows nesting under the eaves of the library have not (yet) returned this year? These lights seem to have the human/nature balance severely wrong. An egregious example of unnecessary night light with strong adverse impacts	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	My kids have probably never seen the milky way there's too much light pollution.	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Member of the public	<p>I think this is excellent. It would save money on electricity, reduce the carbon footprint, and is better for both people and wildlife (dark skies).</p> <p>From a safety perspective - I am a woman and feel very safe generally in Oxfordshire. I personally feel safer in unlit areas where I can avoid drawing attention to myself, and pass unnoticed in the dark past anyone who may present an opportunistic threat.</p>	The comments are noted and will be taken into consideration.





This page is intentionally left blank

## Annex G – Part Night Lighting case studies

1. The council operates approximately 60,000 streetlights in Oxfordshire and it was previously estimated that if part-night lighting were implemented at every possible street lighting location across the county it could potentially reduce energy consumption by over 5,000 kWh per day, and realise an approximated annual reduction in carbon emissions of up to 400tCO<sub>2</sub>e. It was also previously estimated to potentially reduce annual cost revenue expenditure on energy of up to £400k if adopted across all of the lighting stock.
2. The council's approach to delivery of part night lighting has shifted to be more of a community led programme and therefore removed the potential for savings at a county level.
3. The new Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework is proposing to invite parish and town councils and local governance bodies to apply for part-night lighting schemes within their areas. It is appreciated that this new approach means the adoption of part-night lighting will be incremental and so the estimated Oxfordshire wide carbon and cost savings will not be as originally anticipated.
4. Three example case studies have been undertaken to indicate the potential cost and carbon savings that could be achieved using the Framework. Each case study location was mapped against the council's Highways and Asset Management system to identify the streetlights. This provided the individual streetlight fitting and its associated Watts. The number of operational hours reduced for part-night lighting was then calculated. providing the potential annual cost saving and the annual carbon saving on electricity (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)
5. These costs are indicative and would most likely vary on specific case by case:
  - **Rural location: 46 lights – saving £341.00 / 0.28 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**
  - **Urban Location: 102 lights – saving £3,348.00 / 2.73 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**
  - **Residential location: 165 lights - saving £1,515.00 / 1.23 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**
6. The case studies show that when the Framework is applied in an urban area, there is a high probability that the urban area would not pass the exemptions list.
  - Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings
  - Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions
  - Controlled crossing points
  - Areas supporting a night-time economy
  - Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles
  - Waterside paths
  - Remote alleyways
  - Subways and underpasses
  - Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR

- Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions
- 7. The case studies also provide an example of how the cost and carbon savings could be achieved incrementally, depending on the number of schemes proposed and their speed of implementation, as well showing what the estimated costs are for changing a streetlight into a part-night lighting scheme streetlight. The cost of changing to a part-night lighting scheme has been estimated to be approx. £50.00 per streetlight.

## Part Night Lighting – 3 Case Studies Calculations

	No. of SL	Wattagge	Pre Burn Hours	Post Burn Hours	current kWh/Yr	Current Annual Cost	Post PNL kWh/Yr	Post PNL Annual Cost	Annual kWh Saving (Post PNL)	Annual Cost Saving PNL	tCO2e Saved	Cost of changing the street light regime to PNL (estimated to be £50 per street light). It would be same costs again for switching back	Y1 cost saving	Y2 cost saving	Y3 cost saving
<b>Residential</b>	20	15	4107	2316	1,232	£296	695	£167	537	£129	0.11				
	87	18	4107	2316	6,432	£1,544	3,627	£870	2,805	£673	0.55				
	14	23	4107	2316	1,322	£317	746	£179	577	£138	0.11				
	3	24	4107	2316	296	£71	167	£40	129	£31	0.03				
	26	25	4107	2316	2,670	£641	1,505	£361	1,164	£279	0.23				
	15	41	4107	2316	2,526	£606	1,424	£342	1,101	£264	0.22				
	165				14,477	£3,475	8,164	£1,959	6,313	£1,515	1.23	£8,250	£1,515	£3,030	£4,546
	No. of SL	Wattagge	Pre Burn Hours	Post Burn Hours	current kWh/Yr	Current Annual Cost	Post PNL kWh/Yr	Post PNL Annual Cost	Annual kWh Saving (Post PNL)	Annual Cost Saving PNL	tCO2e Saved		Y1 cost saving	Y2 cost saving	Y3 cost saving
<b>Rural</b>	35	15	4107	2316	2,156	£517	1,216	£292	940	£226	0.18				
	2	17	4107	2316	140	£34	79	£19	61	£15	0.01				
	4	18	4107	2316	296	£71	167	£40	129	£31	0.03				
	4	25	4107	2316	411	£99	232	£56	179	£43	0.04				
	1	62	4107	2316	255	£61	144	£34	111	£27	0.02				
	46				3,257	£782	1,837	£441	1,420	£341	0.28	£2,300	£341	£682	£1,023
	No. of SL	Wattagge	Pre Burn Hours	Post Burn Hours	current kWh/Yr	Current Annual Cost	Post PNL kWh/Yr	Post PNL Annual Cost	Annual kWh Saving (Post PNL)	Annual Cost Saving PNL	tCO2e Saved		Y1 cost saving	Y2 cost saving	Y3 cost saving
<b>Urban</b>	6	15	4107	2316	370	£89	208	£50	161	£39	0.03				
	12	17	4107	2316	838	£201	472	£113	365	£88	0.07				
	1	23	4107	2316	94	£23	53	£13	41	£10	0.01				
	11	38	4107	2316	1,717	£412	968	£232	749	£180	0.15				
	11	41	4107	2316	1,852	£445	1,045	£251	808	£194	0.16				
	2	45	4107	2316	370	£89	208	£50	161	£39	0.03				
	1	56	4107	2316	230	£55	130	£31	100	£24	0.02				
	22	60	4107	2316	5,421	£1,301	3,057	£734	2,364	£567	0.46				
	6	84	4107	2316	2,070	£497	1,167	£280	903	£217	0.18				
	1	86	4107	2316	353	£85	199	£48	154	£37	0.03				
	13	90	4107	2316	4,805	£1,153	2,710	£650	2,095	£503	0.41				
	2	93	4107	2316	813	£195	459	£110	355	£85	0.07				
	1	114	4107	2316	468	£112	264	£63	204	£49	0.04				
	7	180	4107	2316	5,175	£1,242	2,918	£700	2,257	£542	0.44				
	6	301	4107	2316	7,417	£1,780	4,183	£1,004	3,235	£776	0.63				
	102				31,994	£7,678	18,042	£4,330	13,952	£3,348	2.73	£5,100	£3,348	£6,697	£10,045

## Rural Location case study:

Proposed exemptions:	Rural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rural area encompasses 3 villages; typical of 'parished areas' within Oxfordshire.</li> <li>Each village is mainly residential properties with 20 or 30 mph road speeds. There are access paths from the roads going through the villages into and out of residential properties, farms and fields etc. There are paths and walkways to other properties, such as schools, churches, shops and local shops.</li> <li>Each village has a Pub and a Church. To support the nighttime economies it is recommended that the streetlights outside the pubs would stay on (3 lights in total)</li> <li>There also being private residential lighting systems visible in some locations; driveways, outside houses etc.</li> <li>There is one bus route through one of the villages, but no other public transport links. Having checked the bus route and timetable, the bus only stops during the day with the first bus in the morning / last bus in the afternoon. There are no buses that would stop at this bus stop during the proposed PNL timings.</li> <li>There are no bridges or underpasses, or traffic light crossings. There are no segregated cycle paths indicated through the villages.</li> <li>There are roads that go up or down into hilly areas or higher ground areas within the villages, but there are no wider road access issues.</li> <li>There are alternative 'routes' around the villages; and you do not to specifically drive 'through' any of the villages to get somewhere else.</li> </ul>	
Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings	No major road junctions
Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions	Road narrowing in places
Controlled crossing points	None
Areas supporting a night-time economy	3 x Local village pubs - would recommend the 3 street lights outside
Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles	None that are obvious
Waterside paths	None
Remote alleyways	None that are obvious
Subways and underpasses	None
Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR	None
Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic collisions	1 slight in 5 year period (2019 to 2023)
Would this scheme pass the Exemptions?	Yes, but recommending streetlights near pubs remain on
No streetlights	46
Total annual kWh of saved electricity	1,420
Total annual cost of saved electricity	£341.00
Total annual Carbon saved tCO <sub>2</sub> e	0.28

## Urban Location case study:

Proposed exemptions:	Urban
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The urban location is a typical Oxfordshire district 'town centre' with a pedestrianised 'Market' square</li> <li>There are various streets throughout the area allowing access to local businesses, pedestrian shopping areas, Pubs, Restaurants, and businesses which support the night-time economy .</li> <li>Main roads and access routes are joined via major junctions with 9 sets of traffic lights, with pedestrian crossings; pelican and belisha crossings etc.</li> <li>There is a pedestrian underpass under one of the main roads.</li> <li>The area has several dedicated parking areas, as well as taxi ranks and loading bays throughout the town centre area.</li> <li>This area review is focusing on the main 'town centre' area, but there are residential properties throughout the main centre areas. This provides an examples of how urban areas a very much 'mixed use' areas, with residential properties directly on main roads, or near junctions, as well as main roads leading into more residential areas but within a urban environment.</li> <li>There are also several bus routes through the area, with 6 Bus stops and various Bus parking areas.</li> <li>There are several traffic signs with lights, as well as a range of road markings, including a yellow box junction .</li> </ul>	
Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings	Several different main road junctions through the area; 9 sets of traffic lights, yellow box junctions
Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions	Road narrowing in several locations with parking places causing the road to be one lane wide. Other
Controlled crossing points	9 sets of traffic lights with Pedestrian crossings
Areas supporting a night-time economy	Town Centre - There are several Pubs and Restaurants
Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles	Yes, there are several throughout the area and within
Waterside paths	Yes, one residential road alongside / by river
Remote alleyways	Yes, throughout the town centre pedestrian areas
Subways and underpasses	1 x underpass
Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR	Yes, both CCTV and ANPR cameras
Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic	1 slight in 5 year period
Would this scheme pass the Exemptions?	Would not pass exemptions
No streetlights	102
Total annual kWh of saved electricity	13,952
Total annual cost of saved electricity	£3,348.00
Total annual Carbon saved tCO <sub>2</sub> e	2.73

## Residential Location case study:

Proposed exemptions:	Residential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Residential location a typical residential area on the outskirts of a typical Oxfordshire district town.</li> <li>• There are main roads with junctions leading into the residential areas; to support access, the street lights along the main roads have not been included with the PNL scheme.</li> <li>• The residential areas are laid out in a range of 'Cul de sac' configurations, including a number of roads leading to 'dead ends' or someone's driveway.</li> <li>• There is a designated 'play area' and a small park within the area.</li> <li>• There are no main 'cut through' roads for traffic, if you wanted to circumnate the residential area, you would just continue along the 'main roads' either side of the residential area.</li> <li>• There is one bus stop for only one local community bus route throughout the residential area. Having checked the bus route and timetable, the bus only stops twice a day in the morning time and would not be impacted by PNL.</li> <li>• There are no main retail shops or areas within the residential area.</li> <li>• There are small sections of the area that have cycle route designation, but do not have cycle lane markings</li> </ul>	
Major road junctions, including roundabouts, slip roads and rail crossings	4 junctions from main roads into residential streets, but no major road junctions or roundabouts.
Where there are traffic calming measures, significant road narrowing or intrusions	Road narrowing in places due to parked cars and parking spaces
Controlled crossing points	1 non_controlled Pedestrian crossing
Areas supporting a night-time economy	No night time economy locations
Steps / stairs / gates / obstacles	None that are obvious
Waterside paths	None
Remote alleyways	There are pedestrian 'cut throughs'
Subways and underpasses	None
Where there is Local Authority / police CCTV / ANPR	None
Areas with high levels of crime or road traffic	1 slight in 5 year period
Would this scheme pass the Exemptions?	Yes, Recommending the street lights along the main road with
No streetlights	165
Total annual kWh of saved electricity	6,313
Total annual cost of saved electricity	£1,515.00
Total annual Carbon saved tCO2e	1.23



This page is intentionally left blank

**Divisions Affected – ALL**

## **PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**– 24 SEPTEMBER 2025**

### **Future Bus Regulation Models**

#### **Report by the Director for Environment & Highways**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
  - i) **NOTE** the draft Cabinet report, and
  - ii) **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet

### **Executive Summary**

2. The Council passed a motion in September 2023 to fund a study into the potential benefits for bus franchising in Oxfordshire, as well as the possible creation of a new municipal bus company.
3. In November 2024, a consultant was appointed to undertake a preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities, as relevant to Oxfordshire. They were also asked to consider the effectiveness of the existing Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership (EP). The consultant's report – herein known as the 'Bus Report' and attached as Annex 1 – was completed in April 2025, and sets out the options and their implications.
4. The Cabinet is now at the point where it may determine which, if any, option it wishes to pursue and is expected to do so at its meeting on 21 October 2025. At Annex A, the Committee is provided with the draft of the report being sent to Cabinet, including Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4. This means that members of the Committee are being provided with the same information as is expected to be provided to Cabinet when it is asked to make its decision.
5. The draft Cabinet report recommends development of an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) approach, and for a proposal to be presented for Cabinet Member Decision at a later date.
6. An EP+ could leverage most of the benefits associated with franchising, for example consistent branding, without the significant additional financial and resource risks and responsibilities that are associated with franchising.

## Financial Implications

7. All financial implications are included within Annex A (the Cabinet report).

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,  
[filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (Finance)

## Legal Implications

8. All legal implications are included within Annex A (the Cabinet report).

Comments checked by:

Jayne Pringle, Head of Law & LBP (Contracts & Conveyancing)  
[Jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex A	Report to Cabinet
Annex 1:	Oxfordshire Bus Delivery Options (Bus Report)
Annex 2:	Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)
Annex 3:	Climate Impact Assessment (CIA)
Annex 4:	Leicester Buses EP+ proposal

Other Documents: [West Yorkshire EP+ proposal](#)

Contact Officer: Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement, 07523800079,  
[Katharine.broomfield@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Katharine.broomfield@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

September 2025

**Divisions Affected – ALL**

**CABINET – 21 OCTOBER 2025**

**Future Bus Regulation Models**

**Report by Director for Environment & Highways**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - (a) **approve the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) approach.**
  - (b) **delegate the development of the EP+ to the Director of Environment & Highways, including defining the desired and achievable outputs of the EP+, informed by passenger and resident feedback.**
  - (c) **delegate formal adoption of the EP+ agreement to the Cabinet Member for Transport through the Cabinet Member Decision process.**
  - (d) **elect not to undertake any further work on bus franchising or municipal operation at the current time.**

**Executive Summary**

2. The Council passed a motion in September 2023 to fund a study into the potential benefits for bus franchising in Oxfordshire, as well as the possible creation of a new municipal bus company.
3. In November 2024, a consultant was appointed to undertake a preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities, as relevant to Oxfordshire. They were also asked to consider the effectiveness of the existing Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership (EP). The consultant's report – herein known as the 'Bus Report' and attached as Annex 1 – was completed in April 2025 and sets out the options and their implications.
4. In considering the findings of the Bus Report, officers conclude that the most appropriate bus model to pursue at this time is an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+). However, further work is required to explore and negotiate the scope of the EP+, to ensure this delivers improvements and benefits in line with corporate priorities and available budgets. Once this has been scoped, a firm

EP+ proposal would then be brought for Cabinet Member Decision at a later date for approval.

5. Currently, provisions in the Bus Services Act 2017 prohibit the creation of a new municipal bus company and place restrictions on Local Transport Authorities wishing to pursue franchising. This is expected to be lifted in the emerging Buses Bill which is currently progressing through parliament.

## **Bus Regulation Options - summarised findings from the Bus Report**

6. Four different regulatory models were considered in the Bus Report which are summarised below:

### **Enhanced Partnership (EP) – the existing model (do nothing)**

7. The EP is a statutory agreement between the Council and bus operators that facilitates collaborative improvements to the bus network while retaining a deregulated market structure. It has enabled significant progress through joint working and funding, but its effectiveness is limited by the need for operator agreement and the lack of direct control over commercial services, which form the majority of the County's bus network.

### **Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+)**

8. EP+ builds on the existing EP by introducing more ambitious commitments, for example, joint network planning, (greater) interoperable ticketing, and unified branding. While it offers a pathway to greater integration without full regulation, its success depends on negotiation and voluntary cooperation, and it still operates within a deregulated framework.
9. Two examples of EP+ proposals in other areas have been provided in the Annex and 'other documents' for this report.

### **Bus Franchising**

10. Franchising would give the Council full control over routes, timetables, fares, and service standards, allowing for a more cohesive and strategically aligned network. However, it involves significant upfront and ongoing costs, increased staffing, and operational risk, requiring a robust case for change and long-term commitment.

### **Municipal Bus Operation**

11. This model involves the Council owning and operating its own bus services, potentially reinvesting profits into the network and enhancing social value. It carries high setup and operational costs, exposure to market competition, and financial risk, making it a complex and resource-intensive option, regardless of whether this is used in the context of a deregulated or franchised environment.

## **Rationale to pursue an EP+ as the preferred option**

### ***An EP+ can leverage bus improvements with comparably low risk***

12. The Bus Report indicates that the top resident and passenger priorities, for example faster and more reliable buses, are feasible to achieve under all operational regulatory models.
13. An EP+ could leverage most of the benefits associated with franchising, for example consistent branding, without the significant additional financial and resource risks and responsibilities that are associated with franchising.
14. Bus operators believe that the EP+ is the best option for Oxfordshire residents and are keen for a commitment to pursue an EP+, and for franchising not to be progressed. In other areas, private sector investment has been put on hold in the absence of such a decision and as such, delaying this work may have negative implications for the Oxfordshire bus network and commitments made within the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme.

### ***A change of model alone does not remove key challenges for bus***

15. Some of the current barriers to bus service improvements lie beyond the remit of the Enhanced Partnership. Increasing bus journey times and poor reliability and punctuality are largely a result of growing traffic congestion, roadworks and road closures. A change of model alone would not address these challenges, nor alleviate revenue funding pressures for the future provision of bus services.

### ***Franchising is a lengthy and expensive process***

16. The Bus Report is a preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities, as relevant to Oxfordshire. It draws on insights from other regions—which may not be directly comparable—and incorporates a range of assumptions to generate indicative, high-level estimates. To fully understand the costs and implications of franchising requires a full franchising assessment at an estimated timescale of 2 years and at an estimated cost of £530k.
17. If the authority then decided to franchise, there could be additional procurement and mobilisation costs estimated at £350k dependant on the nature of the scheme. Further costs could then be incurred in largely capital expenditure related to depot and vehicle purchases.
18. Once established, it is estimated that there would be additional staffing costs of £420k per annum.
19. Although the Bus Report estimates that network efficiencies from franchising could release up to £2.25 million per annum (£1.83 million after accounting for staff costs), this is based on a highly simplified scenario—namely, a network identical in patronage and fares to the current one. In practice, this is an unrealistic assumption. Under a franchising model, passengers are likely to expect tangible improvements such as lower fares and expanded services,

both of which would require additional investment beyond the £1.83 million. Moreover, when factoring in the time needed to recoup the initial setup costs, it becomes clear that any financial return would take several years to realise—if at all.

20. Network efficiencies may be achieved if the structuring of contract packages, or the specification of services, eliminates any route duplication which may exist and encourages strong competition for contracts. Conversely, if the contract arrangements introduce operational inefficiencies compared to the current system, costs could increase.
21. Whilst the Council provides approximately £9m of funding for bus services annually, it must be recognised that the majority of this is ringfenced for specific purposes and locations. Therefore, even if savings were theoretically achieved, these funds could not automatically be redirected to other areas of expenditure.
22. Bus franchising would lead to greater financial risk on the Council in the case of changes to variables such as levels of patronage, revenue, and competitiveness for contracts. All the authorities engaged with via the study emphasised the need to generate competition in the market through franchising to keep pricing keen.
23. Given the estimated timeline of 45 months between commencement of a franchising assessment and delivery of any scheme, it is anticipated that this will become a Combined Authority function within the delivery period - therefore, initial costs would be borne by the Council but savings could potentially accrue to the Combined Authority.

***National multi-operator ticketing is already in development***

24. The Government is currently developing a national multi-operator ticketing solution (Project Coral) using contactless pay-as-you-go. Local transport authorities will be expected to adopt this national system rather than implementing local solutions. This negates the need for using franchising as a way of achieving integrated ticketing.
25. In the meantime, the Council has already instigated a 'light-touch' multi-operator ticketing scheme known as MyBus Oxfordshire, which is proving popular amongst passengers, and the SmartZone scheme, which has provided multi-operator ticketing benefits in the Oxford area since 2011. This could be further strengthened through the proposed EP+.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

26. Investing in an EP+ model, when compared with the do-nothing option, will mean further improvements to bus for passengers and residents, this therefore directly supports the Council's priorities for fostering an inclusive,



integrated, and sustainable transportation network, contributing to making Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county.

27. The impact on corporate policies and priorities of adopting the EP+ model versus franchising are not considered to be significantly different.

## **Financial Implications**

28. The direct cost for approving the recommendation as set out in the report is minimal. It is likely that external consultancy support will be required to carry out the development of a proposal for an EP+ model, and funding for this of c.£30k will be made available from an expected underspend in the 2025/26 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) revenue programme subject to approval by the DfT.
29. The Bus Report suggested that the financial implications for implementation of an EP+ could be up to £240k for additional staffing, however this is dependent on what additional commitments could be imposed and at what scale. Should the recommendation be agreed, provision will be made for this in the BSIP programme from 2026/27 onwards.
30. The financial implications of alternative delivery models, in particular franchising, could be potentially significant. Moreover, the financial contribution currently provided by the Council serves as a critical lever in securing additional funding from external sources, including the private sector. A transition to an alternative delivery model could place this supplementary investment at risk, as such funding is often contingent upon the stability and continuity of the existing arrangements.
31. Franchising and municipal bus operating models would require significant upfront and ongoing investment, including staffing, infrastructure, and procurement costs – estimated at £880k for franchising assessment and setup alone as well as an indicative £420k annually for additional staff. Further costs could then be incurred in largely capital expenditure related to depot and vehicle purchases. There is currently no finance budget allocation for this.
32. While franchising offers greater control, it also transfers more financial risk and responsibility to the authority, requiring substantial resources to manage effectively. A franchising assessment would identify these in more detail, but due to complexity and additional financial cost it is proposed not to allocate resource to further explore franchising options at this time.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,  
filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

## Legal Implications

33. The Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement under the Bus Services Act 2017 (the Act) and sets out legally binding commitments between the Council as the Local Transport Authority and the Bus Operators.
34. An alternative operating model introduced by the Act was franchising. Authorities, other than Mayoral Combined Authorities, can only obtain franchising powers by applying to the Secretary of State and must be able to demonstrate a good track record in delivering transport improvements and that they can deliver a bus franchise. Authorities are not allowed to provide the bus services themselves (for example by setting up a new municipal bus company to “win” the bus franchise). Once franchising powers are obtained, a business case must be prepared, consultation must be undertaken, and a transition period (6 months minimum) is required.
35. Local Transport Authorities are currently banned from establishing and running their own municipal bus companies, but the Bus Services (No. 2) Bill (the Bill) aims to repeal this ban. The Bill also aims to remove the requirement for LTAs to obtain franchising powers by application to the Secretary of State.
36. The adoption of an EP+ model, being an extension of the pre-existing EP scheme, will place additional legal responsibilities on the Council when compared with the do-nothing option, but significantly less than franchising or municipal bus operation, although the detailed legal implications in respect of franchising and the establishment of a municipal bus company have not been explored at this stage.
37. The nature of any legal implications arising from an EP+ model will be dependent on the outcomes sought through the EP+ and will therefore be examined in more detail during the proposed work to scope out the EP+ option.
38. The procurement of any external consultancy support will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Comments checked by:

Jayne Pringle, Head of Law & LBP (Contracts & Conveyancing)  
[Jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Staff Implications

39. It is likely that consultancy support will be required to develop an EP+ model proposal, which will be overseen by existing staff.
40. The Bus Report estimated that the on-going requirement for staffing an EP+ model could be up to £240k per annum, however this will be dependent on the outcomes sought through the EP+ and will therefore be examined in more detail during the proposed work to scope out the EP+ option.

41. There would be significant staffing implications for the potential adoption of franchising or municipal bus operation, including consideration of TUPE. TUPE would not apply under an EP+ model.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

42. The choice of bus operating model can influence the Council's ability to set and enforce standards that support equality and inclusion—for example, in areas such as vehicle accessibility, driver recruitment, retention and training as well as service coverage. However, the actual impact on different user groups will depend less on the model itself and more on the specific decisions, priorities, and investments made under each model's governance and delivery framework.
43. An EP+ may enable greater leverage in this area when compared with the do-nothing option, but less than franchising or municipal bus operation.
44. Oxfordshire's community transport services - designed to meet the needs of people who cannot easily access conventional public transport - do not form part of the Enhanced Partnership and are therefore unaffected by the options and recommendations in this report.
45. An EQIA assessing the potential impacts of implementing an EP+ is contained at Annex 2.

## **Sustainability Implications**

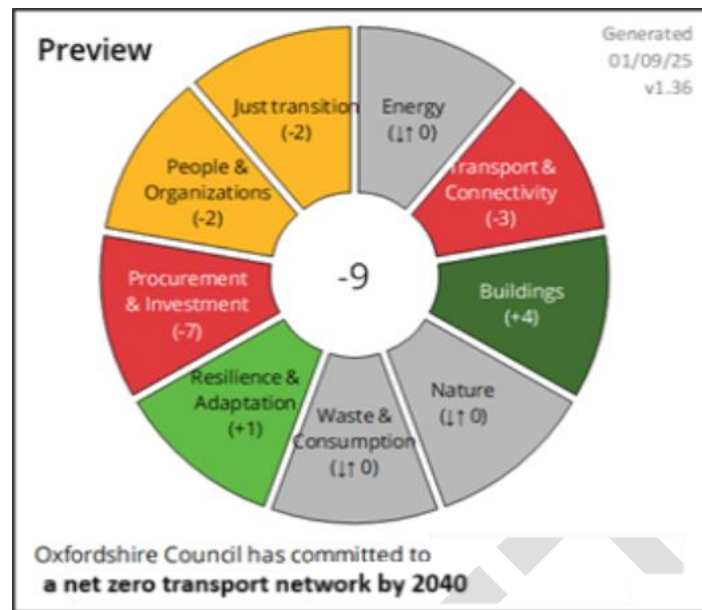
46. The commissioned Bus Report and the Cabinet Recommendation resulting from it, do not focus on assessing how the proposed EP+ delivery model would contribute to achieve the climate and broader sustainability targets established in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).
47. The Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) at Annex 3 outlines the case for change, highlighting that current transport carbon emissions trends are deviating from LTCP targets. Rather than prescribing a particular bus delivery model, it focuses on areas of improvement in the existing EP bus delivery model. In doing so, the CIA highlights uneven distribution of risks and rewards in the existing EP model, that are hindering the achievement of LTCP climate targets. The EP+ proposed model seems to be an incremental change from the existing arrangements. Whether the EP+ can address the areas of improvement and better distribution of risks and rewards highlighted in the CIA, depends on the feasibility of reaching the required agreements with bus operators within such a framework. Given the existing good relation between the Council and bus operators, it is worth testing the limits of an EP+ proposal in the interim period before the bus delivery model may be revisited again as a result of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.

48. As part of supporting Local Transport Authority decisions to engage in alternative bus delivery models, best practices on EP+ models will be published by government later in the year and should be considered in the negotiation process for an EP+ delivery model.
49. Any future negotiations with bus operators for an EP+ bus delivery model should focus on the challenges highlighted in the CIA:
- Reverse the existing trend in local transport greenhouse gas reductions deviating from LTCP target of achieving a net zero transport network by 2040.
  - Tackle the affordability challenge that remains an obstacle for further adoption of bus transport. Part of addressing this challenge depends on a revision of distribution of risks and rewards (para 50 below), focusing on translating value created in the partnership towards making fares more affordable.
  - Better integration of Council transport planning and infrastructure delivery with bus operation planning, particularly focusing on integrated transport systems, in preparation for the future publication of UK's Integrated National Transport Strategy.
50. The EP+ model will enhance the Council's capabilities for improved ways of working in the future. Officers should aim to negotiate and test how an EP+ model can address the uneven distribution of risks and rewards in the existing EP partnership which are highlighted in the CIA namely:
- innovation risk mitigated by central government,
  - de facto monopolies in dedicated routes,
  - value of public funded efficiencies not directed towards affordable fares.

**This uneven distribution of risks and rewards may prevent the existing partnership from addressing the social and climate challenges detailed in the CIA.**

51. A summary of CIA scoring is presented below (full detailed scoring can be found in Annex 3). This scoring is based on:
- The recommendation to Cabinet to develop a proposal for an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) model, which is based on the existing EP model.
  - uncertainties of EP+ outcomes which depend on bus operator negotiations which have not taken place yet, and
  - whether or not these may be sufficient to achieve LTCP climate targets.

**It is recommended that this CIA is revisited and reviewed once EP+ conditions have been negotiated with bus operators and final agreements achieved.**



## Risk Management

52. The risks in conducting further scoping work as recommended in this report are minimal.
53. An EP+ represents a medium level of risk when compared with the do nothing option (low risk) and franchising or municipal bus operation (high risk).
54. The potential risks arising from the additional commitments placed on the Council are thought to be manageable and reasonable for the additional benefits gained. Such risks will be dependent on the outcomes sought through the EP+ and will therefore be examined in more detail during the proposed work to scope out the EP+ option, including mitigations.
55. Bus operators believe that the EP+ is the best option for Oxfordshire residents and are keen for a commitment to pursue an EP+, and for franchising not to be progressed. In other areas, private sector investment has been put on hold in the absence of such a decision and as such, delaying this work may have negative implications for the Oxfordshire bus network and commitments made within the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme.

## Consultations

56. Consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken during March and April 2024 in developing the latest version of the Oxfordshire BSIP to determine bus improvement priorities. Similar priorities for bus-related improvements were received from stakeholders and the public, which supports the data from existing surveys. The top 5 priorities for improvements were identified as follows: 1) Faster or more direct buses, 2) more reliable buses, 3) more buses/

services in general, 4) better value fares and 5) better information before you travel.

57. The Citizens' Assembly convened by the Council aimed to gather public perspectives on improving the county's transport system. Participants expressed a desire for a transport network that is affordable, reliable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible. Key outcomes they hoped for included better integration of services, improved access for underserved communities, safer travel especially at night and more consistent and transparent communication about available services. These are all things that could be pursued through strengthened collaboration with operators, strategic investment and policy alignment - without needing to franchise the network.
58. The choice of bus operating model can influence the Council's ability to set and enforce standards to make improvements such as identified above—for example, in setting timetables and fares. However, the actual impact on these items will depend less on the model itself and more on the specific decisions, priorities, and investments made under each model's governance and delivery framework.
59. An EP+ may enable greater leverage in this area when compared with the do-nothing option, but less than franchising or municipal bus operation.

Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex 1:	Oxfordshire Bus Delivery Options (Bus Report)
Annex 2:	Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)
Annex 3:	Climate Impact Assessment (CIA)
Annex 4:	Example: Leicester Buses EP+ proposal

Other Documents: [West Yorkshire EP+ proposal](#)

Contact Officer: Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement, 07523 800079  
katharine.broomfield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

October 2025

## REPORT

### **Oxfordshire bus network: Alternative delivery options**

Client: Oxfordshire County Council

Reference: PC-6804-RP-0002

Status: Final/03

Date: 11 April 2025





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

**HASKONINGDHV UK LTD.**

6th floor Cornerblock  
2 Cornwall St  
Birmingham  
B3 2DX  
Mobility & Infrastructure  
VAT registration number: 792428892

Phone: +44 (0) 121 709 6520  
Email: [info@uk.rhdhv.com](mailto:info@uk.rhdhv.com)  
Website: [itpworld.net](http://itpworld.net)

Document title:	Oxfordshire bus network: Alternative delivery options
Subtitle:	
Reference:	PC-6804-RP-0002
Your reference	-
Status:	Final/03
Date:	11 April 2025
Project name:	Oxfordshire alternative bus delivery options
Project number:	PC-6804
Author(s):	Peter Hardy
Drafted by:	Peter Hardy
Checked by:	Emma Taylor
Date:	10 April 2025
Approved by:	Denise Faber
Date:	10 April 2025
Classification:	Project related

*Unless otherwise agreed with the Client, no part of this document may be reproduced or made public or used for any purpose other than that for which the document was produced. HaskoningDHV UK Ltd. accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever for this document other than towards the Client.*

*Please note: this document contains personal data of employees of HaskoningDHV UK Ltd.. Before publication or any other way of disclosing, this report needs to be anonymized, unless anonymisation of this document is prohibited by legislation.*





## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Study purpose and objectives	5
1.2	Approach	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Legislation	7
2.2	Enhanced Partnership	7
2.3	Franchising	8
2.4	Municipal operation	11
<b>3</b>	<b>Current position</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Oxfordshire bus market	12
3.2	Bus Service Improvement Plan	13
3.3	Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership	13
3.4	Discussions with interested parties	15
3.4.1	Bus operators	15
3.4.2	County Council officers	16
3.4.3	Oxon4Buses	16
3.4.4	Working groups	17
3.4.5	EP Board	17
3.5	Barriers to bus service improvements	17
<b>4</b>	<b>Experience elsewhere</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1	Franchising considerations	19
4.2	Municipal or in-house fleet operation	24
<b>5</b>	<b>Considerations for Oxfordshire</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1	Options	27
5.2	England's Economic Heartland	29
5.3	Is there a case for change?	30
5.4	Implications for Oxfordshire	30
5.4.1	EP+	30
5.4.2	Franchising	31
5.4.3	Municipal bus operation	34
5.4.4	Local government review and devolution	34
5.4.5	Meeting customers' priorities	35

## 6 Conclusion

37

### Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Experience elsewhere

Franchising

Transport for London

Greater Manchester

Liverpool City Region

West Yorkshire

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

South Yorkshire

West Midlands

North East

Jersey

Decisions not to pursue franchising



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

## Executive summary

A key element of the Government's Bus Services Bill, currently going through Parliament, is for local authorities to take greater control of their bus networks, either through municipal bus operation or bus franchising. As a prelude to this, Government has already amended guidance to lower the bar for consent to undertake a franchising assessment and to streamline the assessment process. The Department for Transport (DfT) is also exploring how Enhanced Partnerships (the current delivery model in most areas) can be strengthened, based on the experience of the last three years.

This study has sought to better understand different options for delivering local bus services and what they might mean if implemented in Oxfordshire. The options are:

- Enhanced Partnership (EP) - current situation
- Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+)
- Municipal bus operation
- Franchising of the bus network

An Enhanced Partnership (EP) is a legal model under which private bus operators and local authorities make a legally binding (statutory) plan and schemes which set out a shared vision and targets. They make specific commitments about how they will jointly improve local buses to achieve these. Under an EP, local bus services remain privately owned and operated ('deregulated') and bus operators continue to take revenue from fares and make independent decisions about how bus services are run.

EP+ represents a position of a partnership with greater levels of commitment and requirements than an EP. It might include arrangements for joint planning of services, full multi-operator and interoperable ticketing, and a partnership approach to marketing and information provision. However, the more significant requirements may take longer to negotiate and agree. Again, buses continue to operate in a deregulated environment, where operators can decide on routes, tickets and fares and change services as they wish.

Municipal bus operation is where a local authority operates its own bus services. Municipal bus companies generally exist as separate entities, at arm's length from the local authority but wholly owned by the authority. They operate in the same way as any private bus company (under a Public Service Vehicle Operator 'O' Licence and within the commercial operating environment), deciding on what services to provide, timetables and fares, to ensure that revenues cover their costs. However, they do not need to make profits to satisfy shareholders, so are able to invest more in social aspects of their networks. That said, they operate within an environment where other operators could choose to compete against them. Likewise, they must compete with other operators for contracts to provide those bus services supported by the local authority.

Franchising is where a local authority controls, plans and funds all aspects of the bus network. It is responsible for setting routes, timetables and fares in accordance with its own priorities, rather than those of operators within the deregulated system. The authority specifies services and procures provision from commercial operators in the external market.

Those partners involved in the current Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership are positive about the way that it has brought interested parties together to work collaboratively. Indeed, during the period of its existence, much has been achieved:



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Strong network of commercial city services and inter-urban network
- New and enhanced services, with greater geographical coverage (all communities with 500+ population now have a bus service).
- Coordinated corridors in Oxford, removing competition and duplication between operators
- Third party funding for additional services
- Well-established Park & Ride provision
- Introduction of 159 electric buses
- Improved information through dedicated EP website, comprehensive bus maps and additional real time information displays.
- MyBus multi-operator ticketing

Whilst this is impressive, it is difficult to determine how much difference the EP has made to the delivery of improvements. The availability of significant funding has certainly been an instrumental factor, along with the willingness of interested parties to work together regardless of any formal organisational or governance structures.

With the Government enabling authorities to consider alternative bus network delivery models, it is worth looking at the implications of introducing these.

To move to franchising, an authority needs to be convinced that there is a case for change. Indicators of this might be one or more of the following:

- The commercial market is failing, with operators unable to maintain services or invest in them, or there is ongoing instability or poor quality.
- There is already a high level of intervention by the authority, where operators are reliant on financial support.
- Poor market conditions result in a lack of innovation.
- Services are considered deficient and not meeting community aspirations.
- An authority's ambitions are not being met by operators.
- Operators are uncooperative and unwilling to work in partnership.
- There is political desire for change.

Similarly, any moves towards municipal operation would need to have similar triggers, with an additional one of poor value due to an existing monopoly provider.

A move away from the current situation would require careful consideration as follows:

1. Identify any **problems** that exist and why things need to change.
2. Identify the **aims and objectives** of the bus network and consider which options might help achieve these.
3. Consider carefully what the **implications of introducing an alternative delivery model**, including the costs and benefits and the extent to which each would help meet strategic objectives.
4. Ensure stakeholders and interested parties are **involved** throughout and the process is transparent.
5. Set out the **outcomes** sought and define the structure and system to achieve these.
6. Undertake a **detailed assessment to compare the performance** of different delivery models in achieving the desired outcomes.



The experience of franchising from elsewhere provides useful insights for other authorities considering whether franchising might be an option for their areas. Key points are summarised below:

Franchising	
What can it provide?	What are the implications?
Control and influence over all aspects of the bus network, including routes, timetables, service standards, fares and ticketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better able to align public funding with the achievement of the authority's vision, objectives and desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Points towards franchising across the whole area on the grounds of consistency, equity and economies of scale, with the ability to cross-subsidise unprofitable services from profitable ones.</li> <li>• Greater responsibility and accountability on the authority, as well as additional risk, depending on the approach taken.</li> <li>• Ability to remove duplication of services or over-bussing and plan greater coordination between bus services and integration with other modes.</li> <li>• The need for additional staff and resources within the authority to deliver and manage the network.</li> </ul>
Strong brand and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates sense of local pride and raises the profile of the network.</li> <li>• Reinforces the single network approach.</li> </ul>
Improved standards of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the authority chooses to take revenue risk, operators are free of concerns about commercial viability and can focus on providing high quality of services that meet required targets.</li> </ul>
Ownership of the relationship with customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier for users to understand the network, get information and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Authority able to gain clearer and fuller understanding and feedback about the performance of the network and customer service.</li> </ul>
Competition in the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential new entrants into the local market.</li> <li>• Authority needs to provide or facilitate depots in order to encourage interest from external operators.</li> <li>• Authority may need to assist in the provision of vehicles to reduce capital pressure on operators.</li> <li>• Lower margins for operators, reflecting less risk on them.</li> </ul>
Opportunity to step in and address market decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to intervene and stabilise the network, avoiding continual tweaking of services and gradual service erosion that ultimately deters usage.</li> </ul>
A solution tailored to the needs of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to develop the most appropriate solution for the area that meets the particular challenges identified.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst more local control could be achieved through franchising or municipal operation, the two may not be compatible, unless there is a way of safeguarding a municipal operation through direct award or by being excluded from the franchised area.</li> </ul>
--	--

Different delivery models will be appropriate to different local circumstances and the needs and ambitions of local authorities. Each may help deliver improved bus services. However, ultimately, the availability of funding and the ability to provide buses with competitive advantage over the car will be crucial in contributing to the success of a bus network. The following summarises how alternative bus delivery models might help meet the public and stakeholder priorities in Oxfordshire.

Priority	EP	EP+	Franchising
Faster and more direct buses	Necessary to negotiate and gain agreement with commercial bus operators. Unable to subsidise parallel service that might undermine commercial services.	Joint service planning arrangements may exert more influence over network development.	Control over network enables new or direct services to be provided, but this may come at additional cost.
More reliable bus	Level of bus service may be reduced to extend journey time to improve punctuality.	Incentive on authority to introduce measures to improve reliability and punctuality. Equally, services may be reduced to extend journey times.	Incentive on authority to introduce measures to improve reliability and punctuality; otherwise, may increase costs to authority, with the provision of more vehicle resources.
More buses generally	New services can be introduced with additional funding. Reinvest in services from efficiencies achieved.		Cross-subsidy might enable more buses to be provided (depending on outcome of contract procurement); otherwise, additional funding may be required. Easier to enhance frequencies with control offered by franchising.
Better value fares	Multi-operator ticketing alongside individual operators' tickets.	Ability to achieve consistent product range and interoperability.	One consistent product range of fares/tickets across the network. Ability to subsidise or discount fares.
Better information about bus travel	Achievable under all models with agreement on individual or joint responsibility and appropriate funding.		



## 1 Introduction

Commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, this study considers different models for delivering bus networks.

A key element of the Government's Bus Services Bill, currently going through Parliament, is for local authorities to take greater control of their bus networks, either through municipal bus operation or bus franchising. As a prelude to this, Government has already amended guidance to lower the bar for consent to undertake a franchising assessment and to streamline the assessment process. DfT is also exploring how Enhanced Partnerships (the current delivery model in most areas) can be strengthened, based on the experience of the last three years.

The County Council wishes to better understand different options for delivering local bus services and what they might mean if implemented in Oxfordshire. The options are:

- Enhanced Partnership (EP) - current situation
- Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+)
- Municipal bus operation
- Franchising of the bus network

This report sets out the evidence for each option and does not make any recommendations for the model to be taken forward. It is intended to inform discussions around the most appropriate way of providing bus services in the future to meet the needs of the county.

### 1.1 Study purpose and objectives

The study aims to undertake a preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities for Oxfordshire by addressing several objectives:

- Identifying potential options for future bus delivery (EP; EP+; Franchising; municipal operation).
- Assessing the implications of each option, including costs, benefits, implementation timescales, as they would apply to Oxfordshire, and compare those with the current position.
- Considering practice elsewhere.
- Considering the effectiveness of the current Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership.
- Considering the relative advantages and disadvantages of potential options against the existing position.

In summary, the study has two main elements:

- A review of the current Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership
- Consideration of alternative models of bus network delivery

### 1.2 Approach

The study used a number of lines of enquiry to address the objectives.

Consideration of the EP involved:

- Talking with OCC officers and other interested parties involved in the EP, including bus operators.
- Reviewing BSIP and EP documents and monitoring reports.
- Observing EP meetings and associated groups



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

Consideration of alternative delivery models involved:

- Undertaking background research into bus franchising, including legislation and guidance.
- Reviewing documents relating to the franchising journeys being followed by other authorities.
- Discussions with local stakeholders, including bus operators.
- Meetings with authorities that are pursuing or implementing bus franchising.

Using the evidence collected, a view was taken of the effectiveness of the current Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership. Consideration was then given to what the implications for Oxfordshire might be if any decision was made to pursue franchising or municipal operation in the area.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Legislation

The Transport Act 1985 introduced deregulation of bus service provision across England (outside of London), Scotland and Wales in October 1986, removing the system of regulated road service licensing and requiring the break-up of nationalised bus operators and their transfer to the private sector.

In the deregulated environment, bus operators decide what services they will provide on a commercial basis (i.e. profitably). They determine the routes, timetables and fares. Local transport authorities may then look to fill gaps in service by subsidising additional services, procured from the external market. These are typically evening and Sunday services and whole routes in rural areas, together with infill services in urban areas. As such, local authorities influence only a proportion of the overall bus network, although usually a higher proportion in more rural areas, where commercial provision is less viable. With the mix of commercial and supported services and different operators, there may be a lack of network co-ordination and disjointed ticketing arrangements.

The Transport Act 1985 also prohibited local authorities from setting up their own bus companies, although those that existed at the time were able to continue. Since then, most municipal bus companies either ceased trading or have been sold by their authorities to private sector operators. However, a small number remain, including Reading Buses, Nottingham City Transport and Warrington's Own Buses.

In March 2021, Government launched its National Bus Strategy (Bus Back Better)<sup>1</sup>, which set out an ambition to improve bus services across England. Funding of £3bn was announced to help fund improvements (although ultimately only £1.15bn was provided to local authorities, the remainder having been spent on general support of the bus industry during Covid-19 recovery). Local authorities were asked to form partnerships with their local bus operators to develop Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) by October 2021, and then to formulate Enhanced Partnerships to facilitate the delivery of their ambitions.

The Bus Services Act 2017 introduced Enhanced Partnerships (EP) as a means of achieving more coordination and joined up service provision within a deregulated environment. These are legally binding agreements where authorities commit to providing facilities and measures to improve bus services and, in return, operators commit to enhanced service standards and coordinated fares and ticketing arrangements.

### 2.2 Enhanced Partnership

An Enhanced Partnership (EP) is a legal model under which private bus operators and local authorities make a legally binding (statutory) plan and schemes which set out a shared vision and targets. They make specific commitments about how they will jointly improve local buses to achieve these. Under an EP, local bus services remain privately owned and operated ('deregulated') and bus operators continue to take revenue from fares and make independent decisions about how bus services are run.

The Act and related legislation specify the proportion of bus operators that have to agree to an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme – and any associated obligations or commitments – before they can be made legally binding. However, once an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme have been 'made', all local bus operators must comply. If they fail to meet the requirements set out, enforcement action can be taken against them, including the cancellation of the registration of a bus operator's services, which would

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better>



then no longer be able to run. Under an EP, the Traffic Commissioner has the power to take enforcement action.

## 2.3 Franchising

Franchising is where a local authority controls, plans and funds all aspects of the bus network. It is responsible for setting routes, timetables and fares in accordance with its own priorities, rather than those of operators within the deregulated system. The authority specifies services and procures provision from commercial operators in the external market.

Prior to 2017, bus franchising was only in place in London and Jersey. It was not possible for any other area to introduce it. However, the Bus Services Act 2017 provided Mayoral Combined Authorities with the power to implement bus franchising in their areas. Other local transport authorities could apply to Government for access to the same powers and each would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, unitary authority Cornwall Council was offered the powers to implement franchising as part of its devolution deal. However, having considered this option, it decided to pursue its objectives for improved services through a partnership approach, in line with its One Public Transport System for Cornwall (OPTSfC) initiative.

In recent years, most of the Mayoral Combined Authorities have decided to consider Franchising and are at varying points of the process. In January 2025, Greater Manchester saw the completion of the process, with a fully franchised bus network (Bee Network) in place. Liverpool City Region (LCRCA) and West Yorkshire (WYCA) are in the implementation phase, preparing to commence procurement of franchise contracts. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (CPCA) Mayor has recently made the decision to introduce franchising. South Yorkshire (SYMCA) and the West Midlands (WMCA) are currently at the consultation phase. The North East Combined Authority (NECA) is embarking on the Franchising Assessment. Meanwhile, the Welsh Government is finalising legislation to facilitate the franchising of bus services across Wales (apart from Cardiff and Newport, where there are municipal bus operations). Similar provisions are also being considered in Scotland.

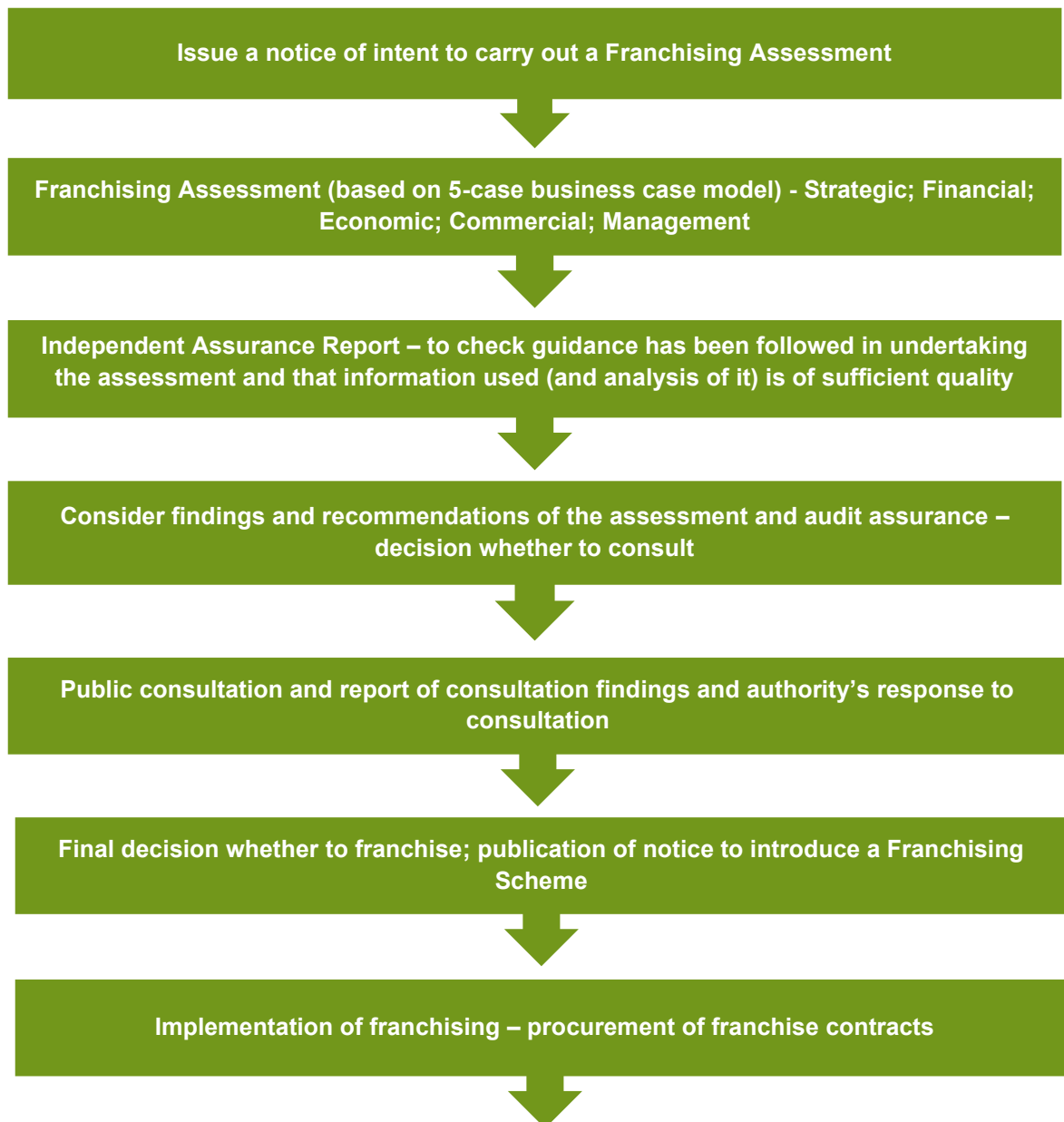
Non-Mayoral Combined Authorities are required to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State to undertake a Franchising Assessment. The authority should demonstrate:

- A clear vision for improving bus services
- The type of franchising it envisages
- Its plan for undertaking a franchising assessment
- Which office holder will be responsible for developing the franchise scheme

As part of seeking consent, the authority should engage in parallel with DfT officials.

It should be noted that franchising does not necessarily have to cover the whole bus network across an authority's area. There may be circumstances where it is appropriate to franchise parts of the network, or certain areas, and leave other areas as current (under an Enhanced Partnership). However, those combined authorities introducing franchising are all doing so on the basis of including their entire area.

Having been granted the powers for franchising, an authority must follow a specified sequential process to assess whether that option is appropriate. This should compare different options (Enhanced Partnership and Franchising) and provide suitable justification for the authority to take a decision on whether to pursue franchising:



In undertaking the assessment, it is necessary to develop a draft franchising scheme and the process for delivering it. This will cover the size and phasing of franchises; plans for cross-boundary services; transition arrangements; as well as consideration of depots, vehicles and TUPE/pensions implications for staff. Based on the assessment, conclusions will be drawn and a preferred option identified, along with the rationale for that decision.

Given its nature and the significant organisational implications and impact on operators' businesses, franchising must clearly be seen as a long-term model. It can be varied, but revoked only under certain conditions being satisfied:

- Local services are likely to be better if the scheme did not apply.
- Continued operation of the scheme is likely to cause financial difficulties for the authority or the burdens of continuing are likely to outweigh the benefits.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

The National Bus Strategy suggests that franchising can be an effective way of correcting market failure and that DfT will support its use where it is in the interests of passengers. It considers that when used well, franchising can capitalise on the strengths of private sector route planning, marketing and investment as part of the tendering process, whilst ensuring stronger local level accountability and financial incentives to prioritise bus services for the local authority.

Franchising means that the authority becomes responsible and accountable for the planning and provision of bus services within a defined area (either all or part of a local authority's area). This brings with it benefits and risks. The Centre for Cities summarised these when comparing Franchising and Enhanced Partnership options.<sup>2</sup>

Benefits of franchising	Risks of franchising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control over route frequencies and running hours, to provide a more equitable and efficient network.</li> <li>• Set standards for services/vehicles.</li> <li>• Integration with other modes; services coordinated to avoid duplication.</li> <li>• Introduce common livery/branding.</li> <li>• Set fares and subsidise them.</li> <li>• Specify tickets and common ticketing systems.</li> <li>• Control of fare box revenue incentivises efficient network.</li> <li>• Profitable services can cross-subsidise others.</li> <li>• Authority directly benefits from bus priority (more efficient operations).</li> <li>• Hold operators to account.</li> <li>• Engage with other operators, not just incumbents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal challenge from operators.</li> <li>• Disruption and change during period of transition.</li> <li>• Accountability totally on the authority.</li> <li>• Cost/resourcing of implementation, management and monitoring.</li> <li>• Funding gap if costs rise and/or fares revenue falls.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Cities (2019): [How franchising enables mayors to deliver a high quality bus service](#) | Centre for Cities





## 2.4 Municipal operation

Municipal bus operation is where a local authority operates its own bus services. Whilst this was common in the regulated environment prior to deregulation in 1986, the number of such operations has diminished (either being sold to private bus companies or closed down) with just a handful remaining, including Nottingham City Transport, Reading Buses and Warrington's Own Buses. The Transport Act 1985 prevented local authorities establishing new municipal bus companies.

Municipal bus companies generally exist as separate entities, at arm's length from the local authority but wholly owned by the authority. They operate in the same way as any private bus company (under a Public Service Vehicle Operator 'O' Licence and within the commercial operating environment), deciding on what services to provide, timetables and fares, to ensure that revenues cover their costs. However, they do not need to make profits to satisfy shareholders, so are able to invest more in social aspects of their networks. That said, they operate within an environment where other operators could choose to compete against them. Likewise, they must compete with other operators for contracts to provide those bus services supported by the local authority.

In Wales (Pembrokeshire) and Scotland (Highland Council) there are examples of local authorities buying existing private bus operators.

Some local authorities have in-house fleets of vehicles (usually minibuses) to provide home to school or adult social care transport. These usually operate under section 19 or 22 permits, which restrict the way they can be operated. However, they may be deployed on publicly available bus services, such as is the case for some rural services in Oxfordshire. Some authorities use minibuses under s22 permits (operating not for profit) to provide more extensive services, such as Shropshire Council operating its own demand responsive transport service. A few years ago, Lincolnshire County Council developed its in-house model further, establishing an arm's length teckal company to provide all types of passenger transport services. This was in response to a lack of other operators in the market and rising prices for specialist types of transport.

The Government has indicated its desire to see greater local control of bus services. The Bus Services Bill currently going through Parliament seeks to streamline existing processes for authorities wishing to introduce bus franchising in their areas (as originally set out in the Bus Services Act 2017). It also looks to allow authorities to set up their own municipal bus operations. This is providing new impetus for authorities to explore different ways of providing local bus networks to meet the aspirations of their Bus Service Improvement Plans.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

### 3 Current position

#### 3.1 Oxfordshire bus market

Oxfordshire has a successful commercial bus network with the highest per-capita usage of local services of any shire county in England. This is largely due to significant use of the bus for journeys to, from and within Oxford. The success of the network can be partly attributed to the long-standing partnership between the County Council and local bus operators.

The county's core bus network is comprised of inter-urban routes connecting the county's towns to Oxford and frequent urban routes within Oxford itself. These routes are complemented by second-tier inter-urban routes (often connecting county towns to one another) and more locally focussed and rural routes. Most bus services are provided by two national groups: Go-Ahead and Stagecoach through their subsidiary companies. A smaller number of routes are provided by independent operators and by the community transport sector.

Features of the bus network can be summarised as follows:

- Oxford city services
  - Frequent, operating from early morning to late evening, in response to high demand within the dense urban area.
  - Operated commercially by the operators
  - Coordinated corridors, with each operator focused on different areas of the city.
- Frequent inter-urban services
  - Linking various towns to Oxford
  - Frequent, operating 7-days per week and throughout the day
- Second-tier inter-urban services
  - Links between towns and smaller settlements
  - Hourly frequency
  - Partially or fully supported services
- Local routes
  - Local routes within towns or from villages into towns
  - Varying levels of service
  - Supported services
  - Some operated by community transport operators
- Park & Ride
  - 5 sites around Oxford, with over 5,000 car parking spaces, served by frequent buses
  - 1 site on edge of Bicester

The County Council provides significant levels of financial support for the bus network - £8m in 2023/24. It has been successful in attracting other funding through the Government's ZEBRA (electric bus) and BSIP programmes.

The Oxford Smart Zone offers multi-operator ticketing with the Oxford area. This has now been supplemented by the MyBus Oxfordshire ticket – a one day or one-week multi-operator ticket (adult and young person) available across the county.

The results of Transport Focus' Your Bus Journey survey amongst bus passengers in 2024, provides a positive view of Oxfordshire. Levels of satisfaction have improved on 2023 and are generally higher than England averages.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

Aspect	Satisfaction		
	Oxfordshire 2023	Oxfordshire 2024	England 2024
Overall satisfaction	78%	84%	83%
Bus driver	87%	90%	87%
Punctuality	68%	78%	75%

### 3.2 Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), established in 2021 and updated in 2024, sets out a vision of:

‘A transformed, modern, and environmentally friendly bus network, which supports high quality economic growth across Oxfordshire, reduces congestion and emissions, and makes our county a better place to live for a growing population.’

The main BSIP goals for bus are to:

- Keep buses at the heart of decision-making
- Make buses faster and more reliable
- Upgrade and improve bus infrastructure
- Transform the image of buses
- Make buses easier to access and understand

The objectives of investing in buses are:

- To establish a virtuous cycle of passenger and revenue growth, feeding service improvement
- To improve quality of life for people who rely on buses
- To help address the climate emergency
- To enable economic growth

Public and stakeholder engagement surveys suggest that the top five priorities for bus service improvements are:

- Faster or more direct buses
- More reliable buses
- More buses in general
- Better value fares
- Better information about bus travel

The BSIP has four main headline targets for patronage, journey time, punctuality and reliability, and satisfaction. Patronage increased from 33.6m in 2023 to 37.2m in 2024. Average bus journey speeds increased from 13.2mph to 14.3mph. There was a slight drop in non-frequent bus services running on time from 80% to 79%. Satisfaction with local bus services rose from 78% to 88%.

### 3.3 Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership

The governance structure for the EP consists of a Board, with responsibility for decision-making around the EP Plan and Scheme. The Board is made up of officer representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and district councils, along with three bus operators (Stagecoach, Oxford Bus Company and Reading Buses – the latter being the nominated representative of smaller operators). Voting rights are distributed



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

equally between public and private sectors (5 each), such that neither sector has an absolute veto (although the County Council has the power to decide whether or not to make the EP Scheme or variation):

- Oxfordshire County Council officers (3 votes)
- City and District Council officers (2 votes)
- Operator with >25% market share (GoAhead Oxford) (2 votes)
- Operator with >25% market share (Stagecoach West) (2 votes)
- Other bus operators (1 vote)

The Board meets four times per year, with the chair held on a rotational basis. For a proposal to be accepted, a majority of those in attendance is required.

Beneath the Board, a separate Partnership Forum may be convened as necessary to consider strategic changes to the BSIP or other significant matters. The Forum comprises Board members plus other stakeholders with an interest in the bus network, including NHS trusts, universities, business parks, Bus Users UK, Transport Focus and community transport operators.

Much of the delivery of BSIP schemes is overseen by working groups, which report to the Board. The two main active working groups are:

- Making buses more attractive (pursuing fares, information and customer experience initiatives)
- Upgrading bus infrastructure (overseeing passenger infrastructure and real time information)

Wider stakeholder interests are included on these groups, such as the Oxon4Buses interest group.

Two further working groups are not currently active:

- Keeping buses at the heart of decision-making
- Making buses faster and more reliable

The Enhanced Partnership Scheme document includes the various projects and schemes being implemented, setting out the commitments and requirements on local authorities and bus operators. The document includes the facilities and measures provided by the County Council and the timescales for planned delivery of the various schemes. This includes specific bus emission requirements to be met by 1 June 2025 and 1 January 2030.

Within the significant funding available (BSIP; Electric Bus; s106 contributions), much has been achieved:

- Strong network of largely commercial city services and inter-urban network
- New and enhanced services, with greater geographical coverage (all communities with 500+ population now have a bus service).
- Coordinated corridors in Oxford, removing competition and duplication between operators.
- Third party funding for additional services (universities; business and science parks; Bicester village).
- Well-established Park & Ride provision
- Introduction of 159 electric buses
- Improved information through dedicated EP website, comprehensive bus maps and additional real time information displays.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- MyBus multi-operator ticketing (both for adults and young people 5-18 years; day and week tickets).

### 3.4 Discussions with interested parties

The performance of the EP was discussed with interested groups and those involved in the EP.

#### 3.4.1 Bus operators

Operators are positive about the partnership approach facilitated through the EP, including the sharing of knowledge, experience and ideas. The EP not only enables good joint working with the County Council, but it creates space for operators to work together. Indeed, a partnership was being developed in Oxfordshire pre-Covid and before the DfT's requirement for all areas to be covered by EPs in 2022. Whilst the EP has enabled discussions between the County Council and operators to achieve agreements on coordinated corridors and the MyBus ticketing products, operators consider that a good working relationship between them existed beforehand. The EP has provided a single place for discussions on a range of different initiatives.

Operators are positive about their commercial offering and can see opportunities for future service enhancements in response to growing markets.

Operators suggest that the EP helps with links between authorities (county and districts). Working groups are working well and delivering improvements. However, progress is constrained by capacity within the County Council's team. For instance, a backlog in bus stop improvements appears to be due to a lack of resources.

Smaller operators are not represented on the working groups, so are unable to input to these.

Given the funding available for particular projects and schemes, the EP has focused on delivering these. However, it has not spent time considering and informing wider policy and strategy (i.e. a future vision for buses). Operators consider that this needs to happen, to ensure that the bus is central to achieving wider economic, social and environmental goals. This might be aided by some political buy-in to the EP.

One key strategic consideration is around bus depot capacity, particularly the need for additional sites and how to achieve effective electrification of smaller depots (where economies of scale might not exist).

Operators consider that priorities for the EP have been largely set by the County Council, rather than the Partnership as a whole. This is likely to stem from the way that DfT allocates funding, channelling it through local authorities and making them accountable for how it is spent.

Operators feel that they have, to some extent, been treated as passive partners. They would like to be more involved in discussions. One example of this was in the upgrading infrastructure working group, where operators expressed a desire to be more involved in considerations around bus stop infrastructure and to have an input into the scoring system for prioritising bus stop improvements.

Operators consider that a coherent strategy for bus is needed, set within wider plans. A key aspect of the BSIP is the Traffic Filters Scheme, with the aim of speeding up bus journeys by 10% by December 2025. The scheme was put on hold following the closure of Botley Road by Network Rail. However, other traffic management schemes (20mph zones and low traffic neighbourhoods) were still introduced, and (in their view) with poor engagement with operators, with the impact of slowing buses down. Bus journey times have increased and journeys become more unreliable (reflected in bus users' satisfaction scores). Since



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

2023, Oxford Bus Company has increased its peak vehicle requirement (PVR) by 6 buses just to maintain services at current levels. This represents a significant increase in cost for no real enhancement of service.

The planned introduction of the Traffic Filters was the EP commitment of the County Council, complementing the significant investment (£42m) by operators in a fleet of 159 electric buses (and use of a more unified branding of vehicles) and charging infrastructure at depots. EPs were originally envisaged as legally enforceable agreements between authorities and bus operators, whereby each of the parties would hold the other to account. Such challenge has not yet been tested anywhere, so it remains unknown as to how this might work in practice. Equally, such a challenge seems rather counter to the spirit of partnership working.

Operators consider there is scope to achieve more through the EP. In organisational terms, this could mean giving the Board more oversight of the overall programme of activities and projects, monitoring the progress of the working groups and identifying milestones, delays and interdependencies. Establishment of an overarching project plan could assist in this. Rather than separate meetings, there may be scope to hold longer in-person Board and working group meetings sequentially, making best use of attendees' time. Also, there may be scope for operators to lead in the delivery of some elements.

In particular, operators suggest there should be greater involvement and buy-in from the County Council's Highways Team, given the important issues of bus priority measures, traffic management, tree trimming, roadworks and road closures that impact on bus operation.

As well as overseeing the delivery of BSIP projects, operators consider that the EP should promote more strategic thinking around the future role of the bus.

Whilst smaller operators are represented on the EP Board by Reading Buses (and other Stagecoach subsidiaries by Stagecoach Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire), they do not get to see what is happening first hand and are reliant on any views they have being raised through a third party. Reading Buses has successfully canvassed views from other operators on key issues, such as requirements for engine emission standards.

### 3.4.2 County Council officers

County Council officers recognise the importance of the good collaborative working they have with operators; the EP provides a formal way of facilitating the partnership and bringing interests together. From their perspective, governance structures and the Board are effective. Meetings are productive and help to hold people to account. The working groups provide a focus for delivering improvements and the EP Forum has helped to draw in a wider group of interested parties.

Much has been achieved through the Partnership. However, enablers for this have been the significant BSIP funding, along with the political support for buses, rather than the existence of the EP itself. A significant barrier to progress has been the closure of Botley Road in Oxford city centre by Network Rail, which has both disrupted bus routes and led to increased congestion on other routes into the city. Clearly, this type of challenge would have the same impact under any model of bus service delivery.

### 3.4.3 Oxon4Buses

Oxon4Buses (O4B) is pleased to be represented on the two active working groups. However, not being represented on the Board (just as smaller operators are not), means there is a lack of transparency and understanding about the operation of the EP and the remit of the Board.



The EP is viewed as successful in bringing different interested parties together, encouraging cooperation and delivering improvements. The availability of funding has helped in this.

O4B suggests that progress is hampered by inadequate resource and staff within the County Council. It also considers that there should be more focus on targets and ownership of these to help drive forward the various actions.

### 3.4.4 Working groups

Observations of the two working groups highlighted how they are delivering projects. The making buses more attractive group is successfully pursuing various initiatives and has delivered others:

- £1 travel on Sundays (during December 2024)
- MyBus Oxfordshire multi-operator tickets
- Development of website and smart zone map
- Bus Passenger Charter being taken forward by separate sub-group

The upgrading bus infrastructure working group members were also positive about the way that the EP has brought different interests together. The group considered that there had been useful information sharing between the different parties represented. Whilst recognising progress made with passenger infrastructure and real time information, there were concerns about how resource constraints were creating a backlog in delivering bus stop upgrades.

### 3.4.5 EP Board

At the January 2025 Board meeting, consideration was given to the performance of the EP.

The active working groups were seen as working well in delivering improvements. However, there is a lack of overview across all activities and interdependencies, with no clear purpose and vision.

The Board made a number of suggestions for changes in the way the EP operates:

- Define clear vision and purpose, supporting a strategic approach and future plan, along with better communication of wider issues.
- Establish clarity around membership and potentially include an elected member and passenger representative(s).
- Establish clear reporting and decision-making requirements for Board meetings, with more transparency around the EP and its activities.
- Ensure adequate resourcing of EP activities.
- Reinvigorate the activities of the two working groups that are not meeting currently.

## 3.5 Barriers to bus service improvements

The current barriers to bus service improvements lie beyond the remit of the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership. Increasing bus journey times and poor reliability and punctuality are down to growing traffic congestion, roadworks and road closures. Congestion in Oxford has been exacerbated by the closure of Botley Road. Introduction of the Traffic Filters scheme will help reduce other traffic entering the city. However, ultimately, other strategies will be needed to encourage mode shift from car to bus. Some of these measures might also help provide funds to continue enhancing the bus network. These might





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

include more stringent parking policies and higher parking charges, workplace parking levy and road pricing. Further bus priority measures may also help.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

## 4 Experience elsewhere

### 4.1 Franchising considerations

The experience of franchising from elsewhere provides useful insights for other authorities considering whether franchising might be an option for their areas. Key points to note are summarised in the following tables:

Franchising	
What can it provide?	What are the implications?
Control and influence over all aspects of the bus network, including routes, timetables, service standards, fares and ticketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better able to align public funding with the achievement of the authority's vision, objectives and desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Points towards franchising across the whole area on the grounds of consistency, equity and economies of scale, with the ability to cross-subsidise unprofitable services from profitable ones.</li> <li>• Greater responsibility and accountability on the authority, as well as additional risk, depending on the approach taken.</li> <li>• Ability to remove duplication of services or over-bussing and plan greater coordination between bus services and integration with other modes.</li> <li>• The need for additional staff and resources within the authority to deliver and manage the network.</li> </ul>
Strong brand and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates sense of local pride and raises the profile of the network.</li> <li>• Reinforces the single network approach.</li> </ul>
Improved standards of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the authority chooses to take revenue risk, operators are free of concerns about commercial viability and can focus on providing high quality of services that meet required targets.</li> </ul>
Ownership of the relationship with customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier for users to understand the network, get information and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Authority able to gain clearer and fuller understanding and feedback about the performance of the network and customer service.</li> </ul>
Competition in the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential new entrants into the local market.</li> <li>• Authority needs to provide or facilitate depots in order to encourage interest from external operators.</li> <li>• Authority may need to assist in the provision of vehicles to reduce capital pressure on operators.</li> <li>• Lower margins for operators, reflecting less risk on them.</li> </ul>



Opportunity to step in and address market decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to intervene and stabilise the network, avoiding continual tweaking of services and gradual service erosion that ultimately deters usage.</li> </ul>
A solution tailored to the needs of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to develop the most appropriate solution for the area that meets the particular challenges identified.</li> <li>Whilst more local control could be achieved through franchising or municipal operation, the two may not be compatible, unless there is a way of safeguarding a municipal operation through direct award or by being excluded from the franchised area.</li> </ul>

A key message to emerge from discussions with those authorities pursuing franchising is the importance of generating a competitive environment for the franchise contracts. This is also supported by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in its guidance for franchising.<sup>3</sup> It sets out the importance of competition to achieving the objectives of franchising – driving lower prices; driving higher quality; innovation and efficiency improvements. Therefore, it suggests that any franchising scheme should be designed in a way that facilitates competition. Key areas for consideration include:

- **Access to fleet and depots** – removing barriers to entry and expansion for new or growing operators.
- **Design of individual franchises** – number and size of available franchises will impact on an operator's ability to bid.
- **Transition to franchised network** – the period of transition can cause operational, network and ticketing challenges, particularly where franchising is phased in through a number of tranches over a period of time.
- **Longer term considerations** – factors that will help ensure the long-term success of franchising, such as the shape of future franchise awards and an evolving asset strategy.

Franchising Assessment	
Important factors	What are the implications?
A strong vision and ambition for the bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authority has a good understanding of the issues it wishes to address (the case for change) and a well-defined vision for moving forward.</li> <li>Strong leadership and political support.</li> <li>Track record in making improvements to, and investments in, the bus network.</li> <li>Availability of funding to achieve improvements and resources to facilitate change and demonstrate the affordability of the proposals being considered in the Assessment.</li> <li>Consider some of the potential implications of franchising upfront to help frame the Assessment.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> *Bus Franchising: Guidance for Local Transport Authorities, CMA, 2024 [Bus franchising - CMA advice for Local Transport Authorities](#)*



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear identification of the specific elements of franchising, in terms of risk and responsibilities and likely approach to fares, revenue risk, depots and vehicles.</li> <li>• Forms the basis of the strategic case.</li> </ul>
Robust programme management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated staff to carry out the assessment.</li> <li>• Project management capabilities to keep the assessment to time and identify inter-dependencies between workstreams, ensuring activities are taken forward in parallel to avoid delays.</li> <li>• Establish thematic workstreams to cover all necessary elements of the chosen delivery model.</li> <li>• Significant time, effort and resources needed (with involvement of legal, IT, procurement, communications, finance).</li> <li>• In parallel to undertaking the Assessment consider the practical implementation and delivery of franchising – this will in turn inform the Assessment.</li> <li>• Dilemma of how much upfront work on different aspects of franchising to do without pre-empting the final decision to franchise.</li> </ul>
Comprehensive data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity on what data is required and working with operators to secure this.</li> <li>• Time and effort in collating the data from operators and getting it into a suitable form for the Assessment.</li> <li>• Data is unlikely to be sufficiently detailed for remodelling of services.</li> <li>• Good quality data over a long period will be needed if the intention is to procure contracts in which operators are expected to take revenue risk.</li> </ul>
Commercial case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important part of the Assessment, requiring detailed consideration of the approach to the market, including packaging of contracts and lotting strategies.</li> <li>• Fleet and depot strategies need to be established; depots will help drive external interest and competition in the market.</li> <li>• Involve procurement team early on.</li> </ul>
Communication and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to manage expectations throughout the process, particularly around timescales and levels of change.</li> <li>• Engage with all interested parties throughout – elected members; bus operators; public.</li> <li>• Careful consideration needed regarding consultation, given the complexity of the subject matter; different parties will have different interest in the consultation and what they want to respond to.</li> </ul>



Franchising implementation	
Important factors	What are the implications?
Transition involves managing two delivery models in parallel. It is important to maintain standards of provision in the deregulated network right up to the transfer to franchising, to maintain customer confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish sufficient resourcing to pursue franchising implementation alongside business as usual in the deregulated environment.</li> <li>Maintain separate teams focusing on business as usual and franchising.</li> </ul>
Robust programme management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated staff to manage the implementation programme.</li> <li>Project management capabilities to keep to time and ensure progress across all workstreams in parallel, recognising the many inter-dependencies.</li> <li>Establish workstreams to focus on individual aspects of implementation, including potential new aspects of activity, such as trade union discussions, incident management and procedures for dealing with lost property.</li> <li>Consider carefully what aspects of operation are most appropriate for the authority to take over and which are best left with operators (e.g. CCTV). Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and set out within service specifications before procurement commences.</li> <li>Significant time, effort and resources needed (with involvement of legal, IT, procurement, communications, finance).</li> <li>Establish strong governance structures and decision-making processes to enable smooth progression of activities.</li> </ul>
Procurement processes need to achieve a competitive market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design processes that will drive competition and encourage participation.</li> <li>Clear documentation and information that will help operators through reducing risk and providing confidence. Ensure requirements are not overly onerous or costly for bidders.</li> <li>Recognise the role of small and medium operators (but balance with economies of scale).</li> <li>Consider the needs of small and medium operators, including smaller lots, sub-contracting opportunities to larger operators; time and effort required to tender should be proportionate to the size and scale of the contracts.</li> <li>Procurement strategy (contract packages and lotting) designed to maximise competition and opportunities for bidders and avoid destabilising network.</li> </ul>



Contract specifications and terms and conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include performance monitoring regime to ensure services meet requirements and achieve objectives.</li> <li>• Build in change mechanisms to enable negotiation and agreement on service changes as needed through the duration of the contract, to avoid having to retender and to ensure continued value for money.</li> </ul>
Day 1 service introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity and stability are key – avoid changing the network at the same time as introducing franchise contracts.</li> </ul>

Franchising review	
Important considerations	What are the implications?
Continuous review to ensure processes meet requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn from experience and ensure processes evolve to achieve the best outcomes.</li> <li>• Network needs to respond to changing circumstances, such as new housing and commercial developments.</li> </ul>
Make effective use of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect all available data from operators to help in managing and monitoring the network, including trends over time.</li> <li>• Use available data on usage and revenue to review and amend bus services.</li> </ul>
Undertake regular service and network reviews, after franchising is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having introduced franchising, there should be access to more comprehensive and detailed data (usage/revenue) that will help in undertaking network reviews.</li> <li>• Use the data to identify issues and opportunities and show where more detailed surveying might be needed before deciding to change services.</li> </ul>

Based on the information drawn from those combined authorities with, or moving towards, franchised networks, a comparison of costs is summarised in the following table.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

Franchising cost comparisons (based on information in Appendix A)							
Combined authority	Greater Manchester	Liverpool City Region	West Yorkshire	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	South Yorkshire	West Midlands	North East
No of buses	1600	682	1800	300	745	1950	1250
Depot costs (purchase and/or refurbishment)	£85.7m	£56m	£67m	Depots retained by operators; potentially 2 additional depots provided by CPCA	£85m	£44.8m (some depots already in public control)	
Assessment costs (including audit and consultation)	Included below	£5.3m	£2.1m			£1.5m	£8.5m budget
Transition costs (one-off)	£122m (over 6 years), includes assessment, staffing and other resourcing.		£20.4m	£1.42m (over 3-4 years)		£22.5m (over 3 years)	
Implementation costs	Included above	£27.4m (of which £14m for risk)		£1.5m		£10.3m (additional staff costs only)	
Additional staff	57	81.5	68	15	18	165.8	

## 4.2 Municipal or in-house fleet operation

Before deregulation in 1986, a significant number of councils had their own municipal bus companies. Over time, many of these were sold to the private sector or wound up. A small number were retained and amongst them are some of the most highly regarded operators in the UK, including Nottingham City Transport, Lothian Buses, Reading Buses and Warrington's Own Buses. The benefit of such provision is that any profit is either reinvested into the bus network and/or retained locally in the form of dividends to the owning council.

Reading Buses suggests that £3m p.a. is reinvested (around 12-15% of turnover) because of not having to pay commercial dividends.<sup>4</sup> This means more can be spent on buying new buses or maintaining better bus services. The company has also benefitted from Reading Borough Council's pro-bus policies, such as providing bus priority measures. It is in the Council's interests to do this, as it directly benefits from its bus company being able to operate efficiently and profitably. However, with these benefits come the risks associated with any decline in fares revenue.

Establishing an in-house bus operation is a major undertaking, with significant costs, requiring a depot, vehicles and day to day management of operational staff. This creates a large call on resources and a requirement for staff with new expertise and skills.

Whilst currently not possible to establish a municipal bus operation (although this is set to change once the new Bus Services Bill has been enacted), some authorities have introduced in-house operations in various ways, sometimes because they already held a PSV Operator 'O' Licence. Pembrokeshire Council bought a local private bus operator to achieve this. A few years ago, Lincolnshire County Council set up

<sup>4</sup> [Reading bus company inspiring move to public ownership - BBC News](#)





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

an arms-length teckal company to provide school and demand responsive transport, mainly to address the lack of commercial providers in the market and to improve competition. Shropshire Council launched a DRT service in 2023, using minibuses run by its own fleet under section 22 permits.

In the past, a couple of authorities, including Dumfries and Galloway Council, operated their own buses under s46 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981. This allows vehicles provided mainly for school transport to be used on registered local bus services.

Highland Council took advantage of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which allows local authorities to provide bus services themselves. Recognising that a legal entity cannot hold an 'O' licence and permits together, it operates a fleet of 18 buses and coaches using a mix of s22 and s19 large bus permits, although ultimately it intends to work towards the operation of an arm's length 'O' licence company.<sup>5</sup>

The Council runs a mix of second hand purchased and new leased vehicles, mainly in the Inverness area, where there was a lack of competition and contract costs were rising. It provides a mix of school and local bus services, as well as offering hires for schools. Maintenance arrangements are provided by external contractors. Recruitment and retention of drivers has been good, given that local authority terms and conditions of employment are better than commercial operators.

Whilst the operation has been successful in achieving savings of £1m on total expenditure of £19m, establishing the fleet has put a significant strain on other public transport activities within the Council's team.

In February 2025, Highland Council announced that it had successfully purchased an existing family-run operator (D&E Coaches) in its area that provides local bus and school transport services. The operator has 64 vehicles and 70 staff and operates school contracts, tendered local bus services, Scottish Citylink coach contracts and the city sightseeing tour in Inverness. It is understood that the business will continue to operate without any change and will remain as a separate entity from the Council's existing in-house fleet operation.<sup>6</sup>

During the process of its Franchising Assessment, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was asked whether consideration had been given to the option of establishing a municipal bus operation. This was given some consideration and a note produced for its Board meeting in December 2024.<sup>7</sup> This suggested that a municipal operation could add some value in very particular ways:

- Help to understand the costs of bus operation in more detail, acting as a benchmark for assessing tenders from commercial operators to ensure value for money,
- Act as operator of last resort to step in if a commercial operator ceases to operate or withdraws from a contract, or if the authority fails to attract any interest for the operation of a contract.

Furthermore, having a municipal operator available may help moderate the market and help keep pricing competitive from commercial operators.

In terms of costs, a municipal operator should have an advantage, given that it has no requirement to generate profits for shareholders. However, this assumes that it is possible to maintain such an operation in the market. Under current conditions, there is no protection for municipal operations from competition. In the deregulated environment, commercial operators can choose to compete with municipal operators.

<sup>5</sup> Presentation by Highland Council to ATCO Conference, Coventry, 18 June 2024

<sup>6</sup> Highland Council to acquire D&E Coaches, Buses, March 2025

<sup>7</sup> Bus Reform and the role of Municipal Bus, Appendix 6, report on Bus Reform to WMCA, 13 December 2024 [Agenda for WMCA Board on Friday 13th December 2024, 12.00 pm :WMCA](#)



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

Furthermore, if a new municipal operator was established to enter the market, it would need to compete with commercial operators to start to build a presence either through on-the-road competition with the incumbent or by tendering to operate contracted local bus services.

Even in a Franchised environment, a municipal company would be faced with bidding for contracts against commercial bus companies. Whilst the Bus Services Bill suggests a possible route for franchising is to directly award contracts to incumbents, which could help existing municipal operators, it offers nothing for new municipals. Equally, any protection given to municipals through direct award or exemption from franchising, could stifle competition and create inefficiency within the operation, resulting in overall higher costs of providing the network.

The risks of running municipal bus operations are highlighted by recent experience of Newport Transport.<sup>8</sup> With concerns that franchising in Wales might result in lost business in its home city, the company has looked to diversify, with more coach services for Flixbus and winning local bus contracts in neighbouring Monmouthshire. At the same time, the company saw the ending of Covid-related support, as well as needing to take on agency drivers to meet its commitments. As a result, whilst the company's accounts for 2023/24 record an operating profit for that year, they include a warning that up until November 2024 the company had incurred losses of £2.3m.

---

<sup>8</sup> *Financial losses return at Newport Transport, Buses, March 2025*



## 5 Considerations for Oxfordshire

### 5.1 Options

Currently, apart from those areas with Franchising in place (London and Manchester), all areas (except Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) have EPs. DfT requires authorities to either be covered by an EP or Franchising, as a condition of receiving Government funding for bus services. All funded schemes should be set out within an EP Scheme.

Clearly, with the passage of the Bus Services Bill, the landscape may change. More authorities may choose to pursue Franchising. However, DfT acknowledges that partnerships will remain important in other areas. As such, it is reviewing how EPs are working, to develop revised guidance later in 2025. This is drawing on the experience of how EPs have operated over the last 3 years, with views invited from all interested parties.

Those authorities pursuing Franchising are required to undertake a Franchising Assessment, which compares the likely performance of Franchising against other options, including the current position under an EP. A number of authorities that have undertaken assessments also included an option of an EP+, which represents a model that seeks to deliver much of what might be sought through Franchising through an extended EP. In some cases, operators have put forward EP+ proposals as an alternative to Franchising.

The EP+ concept has now been acknowledged by DfT. Within the proposed changes for Franchising Assessments is a requirement for authorities to give operators 3 months from the date of issuing a notice of intent to carry out a Franchising Assessment to put forward a suggested EP+ scheme, setting out the extent to which they would go in partnership as an alternative to Franchising. The authority should then include this option within the Assessment to compare with Franchising.

An EP+ might include:

- More coordinated network and service planning between operators and authority
- Consistent levels of service and regulation of headways
- Frequency requirements for particular services
- Fully interoperable ticketing and a single product range, with capping across the network
- Reinvestment of efficiency savings achieved through the introduction of bus priority or other measures that speed up bus operation.
- Single point of contact for customer and ambitious passenger charter
- Partnership approach to marketing and information provision
- Coordinated route numbering
- Common branding and vehicle livery
- Common driver training standards
- Local authority takes on bus registration powers and responsibilities from the Traffic Commissioner

Whilst these might all be possible to achieve under an EP, they would have to be achieved through negotiation and agreement. This could take time and might involve compromise to secure agreement from all parties, impacting on the intended outcomes. Also, it does not alter the fact that buses continue to operate within a deregulated environment, where new competing operators might enter the local market or where operators might choose to withdraw from certain commitments, again undermining any achievements made under the EP.



In negotiating an EP+, operators are likely to want to secure some commitments from the local authority, such as additional bus priority measures; changes to car parking policies and charges; or introduction of road charging or workplace parking levies. Again, such demands may be difficult to meet, leading to compromise.

For the above reasons, it is difficult to define exactly what an EP+ might look like. Equally, there are examples where some of the elements listed above have been successfully implemented under EP Schemes, such as interoperable ticketing in Cornwall and common identity and branding in Leicester. In practice, an EP+ is probably more of a notional concept rather than a defined delivery model. Instead, it is best to consider an EP as offering a range of attributes, reflecting local circumstances and ambitions. The success of any partnership is largely influenced by the quality of the relationships between the representatives of the organisations involved, including levels of willingness, trust, respect and what each is able to contribute.

Franchising offers authorities more certainty, with the ability to control and direct all aspects of bus provision, including the ability to plan and design bus services, set fares and define ticketing products, and manage information and marketing. This enables an authority to influence the network to help deliver wider policy objectives. However, taking on more responsibility means taking on more risk and requires more resources (particularly staff) to be available to carry out the additional functions. Therefore, franchising involves more cost, as highlighted in the cost comparisons summarised in the previous section.

Whilst the large Combined Authorities are mainly looking to take full control of all aspects of the bus network in their areas, franchising can involve different approaches:

- Covering part of an authority's area or particular corridors or types of service (such as DRT)
- Including only currently supported services.
- Shared responsibility, such as depots, vehicles, service planning and review
- Revenue risk could sit with the authority or operators

Clearly, these options provide opportunities to reduce the level of risk and responsibility assumed by the authority. Decisions on what type of Franchising to introduce need to consider local circumstances and consideration of what an authority is seeking to achieve. If there is currently one dominant operator in the area, the intention might be to attract wider competitive interest to keep costs of provision in check. If there are frustrations about current service patterns and duplication, the desire might be to take control to overhaul the bus network.

When discussing the performance of the current EP with operators, the opportunity was taken to ask operators about potential franchising in Oxfordshire. The following issues were raised:

Issue	Points of consideration and implications
Purpose of franchising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to be a reason to consider it. What problems need to be solved? Is there a desire for a more strategic overview and planning of the network, greater service coverage, higher quality, better information and marketing, single product range of tickets?</li> <li>• Desire for taking greater control could result in the loss of third-party funding for buses (NHS, universities, business/science parks), either through direct payment for services or ticketing schemes.</li> </ul>



Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to include a mix of urban and rural services together, to facilitate cross subsidy; there is insufficient money in rural services alone.</li> <li>• Careful consideration needed on cross-boundary services to avoid wider consequences outside of the franchised area.</li> </ul>
Depots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current depots are used for more than the operation of local bus services.</li> <li>• More capacity would be needed.</li> <li>• Significant costs in securing depots.</li> </ul>
Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector tends to be better at buying things (such as buses) and has more flexibility.</li> <li>• Operators may gain economies of scale, in being part of larger groups.</li> </ul>
Revenue risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More incentive for operators if they have revenue risk.</li> </ul>
Reliability/punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These become the authority's problems, so could give an incentive to sort issues of congestion and delays from roadworks.</li> <li>• Authority gains direct benefit from service efficiencies achieved through bus priority and speeding services up.</li> </ul>
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts can't cover all eventualities, so need flexibility to amend services in response to changing needs.</li> </ul>
Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Period of uncertainty during the Franchising Assessment may discourage investment by bus operators.</li> </ul>

Municipal bus operation is a further option for consideration. This would involve significant cost in setting up a company, establishing a depot, buying or leasing vehicles and recruiting staff. Within the current deregulated market, it would be difficult to become established and to develop a network alongside incumbent operators. Taking over an existing company and its operation would provide an easier route to becoming established but would still involve significant cost. Once established, the operation could still see competition from other operators. Similarly, under Franchising, there could be risks of losing all or part of the network to a competitor. The only safeguard might come from the ability to directly award a franchise to the municipal operator; however, this removes the ability to ensure value for money in the long term.

## 5.2 England's Economic Heartland

Oxfordshire is one of the authorities within the area of England's Economic Heartland (EEH). In 2024, EEH hosted a Bus Symposium, where authorities and other interested parties came together to consider ways of developing bus networks in the future.<sup>9</sup> The report that accompanied the symposium made a number of suggestions for the future provision of bus networks:

- Develop a regional network model based on urban hub and spoke services, with inter-urban bus lines between urban areas.
- Strengthening of EPs through local authorities taking on bus registration powers.
- Shadow franchising, with the initial conversion of commercial services to franchised services by direct award of franchises to current operators, streamlining the process of franchising.

<sup>9</sup> EEH Bus Symposium 2024 – Delivering Better Buses [England's Economic Heartland Bus Symposium 2024](#)



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Provision of asset-free demand responsive transport using apps to book transport that is already available.
- Improved integration through mobility hubs and multi-modal ticketing.
- East West Rail 'Door to Door Plus', with last mile connectivity to/from railway stations

### 5.3 Is there a case for change?

To move to franchising, an authority needs to be convinced that there is a case for change. Indicators of this might be one or more of the following:

- The commercial market is failing, with operators unable to maintain services or invest in them, or there is ongoing instability or poor quality.
- There is already a high level of intervention by the authority, where operators are reliant on financial support.
- Poor market conditions result in a lack of innovation.
- Services are considered deficient and not meeting community aspirations.
- An authority's ambitions are not being met by operators.
- Operators are uncooperative and unwilling to work in partnership.
- There is political desire for change.

Similarly, any moves towards municipal operation would need to have similar triggers, with an additional one of poor value due to an existing monopoly provider.

### 5.4 Implications for Oxfordshire

#### 5.4.1 EP+

This option is not necessarily a new option, but merely a development of the existing EP to be more ambitious. It might seek to include the following:

- Joint approach (authority and operators) to network planning and service development.
- Ability for local authority to directly view operators' patronage data, to help in monitoring and service development.
- Simplified range of interoperable ticket products, with multi-operator tap-on/tap-off capping.
- Authority taking on bus registration powers
- Common network identity and branding
- Single source of customer information
- One point of contact for customers and excellent customer service backed by charter commitments.
- Stronger involvement of Highways Team within the EP

It would be straightforward to develop the EP, building on the current governance structures, and could be achieved relatively quickly. However, some of the ambitions could take time to agree and deliver. Given that there are existing concerns around resourcing to deliver and maintain current activities, any heightening of activity would require additional staff resources, estimated at 4 FTEs (with approximate cost of £240k p.a., including on-costs).

Whilst all parties might sign-up to the ambitions of the EP+, there is no certainty that these will be delivered, as they rely on negotiation and agreement, which might not be achievable.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

### 5.4.2 Franchising

Once granted the powers to undertake a Franchising Assessment by the Secretary of State, the following process would be taken.

Process	Action required	Timescale
Overall vision, objectives and strategy	Translate BSIP ambitions into detailed plan/strategy, demonstrating that Franchising would be an appropriate means of delivering these, due to the deficiencies of the current market/model. Would help formulate the strategic case for the Assessment.	5 months
Detailed proposals for achieving the ambitions, including Franchising Scheme details	Market engagement with existing operators and potential new operators. Collation and analysis of patronage/revenue data from operators. Consideration of internal management and resourcing; details of Franchising Scheme and its operation (service packaging and lotting strategy; depots; vehicles; cross-boundary services; risk; roles, responsibilities and accountability; duration and scale of contracts; transition plan; TUPE implications; financing).	6 months
Outline business case assessment of Franchising compared with EP/EP+	5-case business case assessment based on proposals, comparing delivery via Franchising Scheme or alternative EP or EP+.	5 months
Independent assurance report on assessment	Appointment of independent auditor to provide assurance that guidance adhered to and OBC assessment has used appropriate evidence. Audit report.	3 months
Public consultation	Consultation exercise (public; stakeholders; operators; all documents relating to Franchising assessment put in public domain. Collation, assessment and reporting of responses.	5 months
Decision whether to introduce Franchising Scheme	Consideration of all evidence to inform decision whether to introduce Franchising Scheme.	3 months
<b>Total:</b>		<b>27 months</b>

Having reached this point, and assuming no legal challenges, notice would be given to introduce a Franchising Scheme. There would then be a procurement process for the first tranche of contracts (9 months) and mobilisation period (9 months depending on the level of change being introduced). The entire process from commencement to introduction of first tranche services could be 45 months. Further tranches of contracts would be introduced in a further period.

Whilst DfT is looking at ways of streamlining the process, moving to a franchised network is a major undertaking and it is right to carry it out in a careful and considered manner. If new legislation and guidance allows direct award of franchise contracts to incumbent operators, this could speed up the procurement process. However, if this means totally like-for-like service provision, it may not be acceptable, as the purpose of franchising might be to achieve some service enhancements.





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

Timeline for franchising - inception to service introduction (months)																																														
Process element	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	
Case to Secretary of State																																														
Vision/objectives/strategy																																														
Develop franchise proposal																																														
OBC assessment																																														
Independent audit																																														
Public consultation																																														
Decision to franchise																																														
Depot/service procurement																																														
Mobilisation																																														
Franchised network introduced																																														

Making the case for franchising would incur additional costs on the authority. Initially, exploring options, gaining consent from the Secretary of State and developing a detailed plan and strategy could cost £60k. Moving forward in developing detailed proposals for achieving the Council's ambitions through Franchising might cost a further £50k. The most significant costs would come in carrying out the Franchising Assessment, commissioning the assurance report and undertaking a major public consultation exercise and production of consultation response report (estimated at around £420k). If the authority decided to franchise, there could be additional procurement and mobilisation costs (perhaps £350k), dependant on the nature of the Franchising Scheme.

There would also be additional on-going costs associated with additional staff (estimated at 7 full time equivalent posts, although this would be dependent on the type of franchising and the level of additional responsibilities and risk taken on) to continually plan, manage and monitor the network. This represents a cost of £420k p.a., including on-costs. Furthermore, there may be a need to purchase a depot site and provide a depot. Such a facility would offer additional capacity and help to level the playing field for bidders and allow companies from outside the area to tender for contracts. Provision of a depot could cost £20m.

Estimated costs if franchising was pursued in Oxfordshire			
Type of cost	Element	Description	£
One-off	Case for change	Development of detailed franchising plan and case for change (to feed into Strategic Case)	60,000
	Franchising Scheme proposal	Detailed proposals for franchising, including depot and fleet strategies, split of roles and responsibilities, and allocation of risk	50,000
	Franchising assessment	Undertaking 5-case franchising assessment, independent assurance and consultation exercise to inform final decision	420,000
	Implementation	Franchise procurement and mobilisation costs	350,000
		<b>Total one-off costs</b> (excluding any requirement for the purchase of assets such as depots)	<b>880,000</b>
On-going	Additional staff	Staff to manage and plan whole bus network, including monitoring of network	420,000 p.a.

One of the aims of franchising would be to achieve network efficiencies and create some cross-subsidy. If it is assumed that the total vehicle fleet for the Oxfordshire network is 300 buses and that the cost of provision averages £250k p.a. per bus, then the overall value of the network might be £75m p.a. Assuming that half the fleet is deployed on fully commercial services (valued at £37.5m p.a.), then with a profit level of 12%, there would be total profit of £4.5m. Under franchising, profit might be limited to 6%,



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

which would leave £2.25m p.a. for cross-subsidy of existing supported services or to fund further service enhancements.

The cost of the franchised network would be determined by the prices submitted by operators in the procurement process. These would be influenced by many factors, including:

- Level of market interest and potential competition
- Ability of new operators to enter the Oxfordshire market (influenced by factors such as availability of depot facilities and scale and scope of franchise contracts)
- Attractiveness of the proposition
- Quality of data made available to operators to help formulate their bids
- Levels of perceived risk for operators, which would influence operators bidding strategies and pricing
- Ability of operators to meet the authority's specifications and requirements
- Resource and cost implications for operators in participating in the procurement exercise

With these uncertainties, there would be no guarantee that any efficiencies would be achieved in the provision of a franchised network. Whilst early indications from Greater Manchester suggest that costs have been lower than budgeted for, time will tell whether this remains the case over the duration of the contracts. Equally, there is no evidence that similar cost efficiencies could be achieved in a shire authority, where the nature of the bus network is quite different from a large conurbation.

Prior to making the case to the Secretary of State, it would be important to identify a source of revenue to provide the necessary funding to both finance the franchising assessment process and support improvements to the bus network. Equally, consideration will be needed to how any capital costs for depots and vehicles might be met (if these are to be provided). The affordability of the franchising option is a key consideration for the auditor. This work itself could take several months, as it might include consideration of revenue generation through increased car parking charges, workplace parking levy, road user charging or increased Council Tax.

Careful consideration would need to be given to various aspects of franchising and how they would be applied in Oxfordshire:

- **Contract packaging** – balance between large contracts, offering economies of scale, that may attract outside interest, and offering smaller packages suitable to maintain the interest of existing local operators.
- **Nature of contract** – suitable duration to be attractive, provide stability and encourage investment; partnership approach (authority/operator) to co-design and manage the network and share risk (as in Jersey and the Netherlands), versus total control and risk approach (like London and Greater Manchester).
- **Depot** – important consideration in attracting new operators.
- **Fares revenue** – if the authority wishes to set fares and define ticketing products, it may need to accept responsibility for fares revenue. However, if good data on patronage and revenue is available for a reasonable time period and can be shared with bidders, it would be possible to have franchising where operators take responsibility for fares revenue. If data is not sufficiently detailed and comprehensive, operators will have less confidence when bidding and build greater margins into their costings to cover risk.

It is important to note that franchising alone would not address all the issues facing the bus industry, such as problems of wider traffic congestion, delays due to roadworks, or revenue funding pressures for the provision of bus services. Equally, the same would be true for municipal bus operation.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

### 5.4.3 Municipal bus operation

It would be operationally impractical to establish a municipal operation to provide the entire Oxfordshire bus network. It would be more feasible to develop an operation to focus on operating services in a particular area based on one depot location.

A fleet of 75 buses might be sufficient to secure suitable economies of scale, in terms of spreading the overheads. The cost of buying and fitting out a suitable depot site might cost £20-25m. Purchase of vehicles might require a further £23m. Management, engineering and driving staff would need to be employed. There would also be legal and administrative costs in setting up a new company.

Assuming turnover of £250k p.a. per vehicle (total of £18.75m for the fleet), then (based on Reading Transport's quoted figures) £2.25m of additional benefit might be available to invest back into the network.

There are pros and cons of municipal operation, as set out in the table below.

The positives and negatives of establishing a municipal bus operation	
Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any profits retained for reinvestment.</li> <li>Potential for greater influence over the nature of the operation and services provided.</li> <li>May moderate the market and increase competition for contracted bus services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional responsibilities on Council, including need for licence holder and Transport Manager.</li> <li>Significant set-up and operating costs.</li> <li>Requirement for the provision of depot(s), vehicle cleaning and maintenance facilities.</li> <li>Financial risks of uncertain fares revenue.</li> <li>Risk of commercial competition undermining services and revenue.</li> <li>Scale of operation may fail to attract economies of scale, making it less viable and competitive in the market.</li> </ul>

Once established it would be expected that operating costs would be met by a combination of fares revenue, concessionary travel reimbursement, Bus Service Operator Grant and contract payments. However, there would be a risk to the operation remaining viable if any of these revenue sources reduced.

### 5.4.4 Local government review and devolution

Recent years have seen the establishment of Combined Authorities in various parts of the country, which have then become Mayoral Combined Authorities. Each of these has involved a bespoke negotiated devolution deal with Government, agreeing the powers and responsibilities to be assumed by the authority. A key element of the deals has been the taking on of powers to improve and integrate local transport, along with the ability to introduce bus franchising. This has meant that combined authorities have become responsible for transport strategy (i.e. development of Local Transport Plan) and for the support and development of bus services (with powers to subsidise services and manage concessionary travel schemes). In combined authority areas where there also remains two-tier local government, there may be concurrent powers to carry out transport functions between the combined authority and county authorities. In these instances, it has generally been agreed that public transport responsibilities will be taken on by the combined authority as a whole, making more sense than being split between the two. However, one concern in such cases has been the potential loss of coordinated planning of public and



home to school transport (with the possible loss of joint planning economies), as the latter continues to be the responsibility of the constituent authority.

Government is now looking for all areas to be covered by strategic (combined) authorities. Furthermore, those areas with two-tier local government are being asked to look to move to unitary authorities. Clearly, these will have implications for Oxfordshire, currently having two-tier authorities and with discussions about the potential formation of a combined authority whose area would include Oxfordshire and other neighbouring authorities. Following the pattern of other established combined authorities, it is likely that a new combined authority including Oxfordshire would assume powers for transport policy and public transport provision, including bus franchising. However, these powers might be wholly with the combined authority or held concurrently with constituent authorities, depending on the agreed arrangement. Any moves towards the formation of a combined authority would then widen the consideration of what the most appropriate delivery model (or models) would be for that wider area, either in its entirety or for certain parts.

A further consideration during such reform is how to maintain integration between different types of transport, where local bus responsibilities transfer to a combined authority but the planning and provision of home to school transport remains with the constituent authorities. Similarly, there could be a greater distancing of joint working on highways matters, with those responsibilities remaining with constituent authorities.

#### 5.4.5 Meeting customers' priorities

During the formulation of the BSIP for Oxfordshire, public and stakeholder engagement was carried out to identify what people's priorities were for bus services. These were:

- Faster and more direct buses
- More reliable buses
- More buses generally
- Better value fares
- Better information about bus travel



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

These are quite general areas of service improvement. The following summarises how alternative bus delivery models might help meet these ambitions.

Priority	EP	EP+	Franchising
Faster and more direct buses	Necessary to negotiate and gain agreement with commercial bus operators. Unable to subsidise parallel service that might undermine commercial services.	Joint service planning arrangements may exert more influence over network development.	Control over network enables new or direct services to be provided, but this may come at additional cost.
More reliable bus	Level of bus service may be reduced to extend journey time to improve punctuality.	Incentive on authority to introduce measures to improve reliability and punctuality. Equally, services may be reduced to extend journey times.	Incentive on authority to introduce measures to improve reliability and punctuality; otherwise, may increase costs to authority, with the provision of more vehicle resources.
More buses generally	New services can be introduced with additional funding. Reinvest in services from efficiencies achieved.		Cross-subsidy might enable more buses to be provided. Easier to enhance frequencies with control offered by franchising.
Better value fares	Multi-operator ticketing alongside individual operators' tickets.	Ability to achieve consistent product range and interoperability.	One consistent product range of fares/tickets across the network. Ability to subsidise or discount fares.
Better information about bus travel	Achievable under all models with agreement on individual or joint responsibility and appropriate funding.		



## 6 Conclusion

This study has considered alternative models for delivering bus networks and what the implications of each might mean for a shire authority like Oxfordshire.

Much attention is currently being given to how bus services might be provided in the future. Government is promoting the ability for local authorities to have more control over buses, either through municipal operation or franchising. However, recognising that different models will be appropriate in different areas, DfT is reviewing and updating guidance for EPs, based on experience over the last 3 years.

It will be for each authority (or authorities working together) to determine the best way forward in their area. In summary, key considerations will be as follows:

- EP represents the current position and provides some structure around partnership working between an authority and operators. Much can be achieved where parties are willing and when funding is available. However, improvements are achieved through negotiation and agreement, so can take time and may need some compromise. Buses still operate in a deregulated environment, where operators can decide on route, timetable and fares, and can change services as they wish. The authority is responsible for those services that need financial support and operate where there are gaps in commercial provision. The authority has limited influence over the commercial network.
- EP+ represents a position of a partnership with greater levels of commitment and requirements than an EP. It might include arrangements for joint planning of services, full multi-operator and interoperable ticketing. However, the more significant requirements may take longer to negotiate and agree. Ultimately, ambitions may be compromised, such that an EP+ offers little more than a good EP. Again, buses continue to operate in a deregulated environment, where operators can decide on routes, tickets and fares and change services as they wish. **EP+ might require 4 additional staff at a cost of £240k p.a.**
- Franchising is where the authority has control over the bus network, defining routes, timetables and fares. It procures services through contracts with operators. Clearly, this involves the authority assuming more risk and responsibility and requiring more resource to manage and monitor the network. **Franchising may require 7 additional members of staff at a cost of £420k p.a. There would be estimated one-off costs of £880k in making the case, undertaking the assessment and consultation. The authority may need to provide a depot to encourage operators to bid for contracts.**
- Municipalisation is where a local authority runs its own bus company or in-house fleet to provide local bus services. Whilst it has more influence over the service provided and can run services to achieve greater social value, in a deregulated environment the operator could be subject to competition from commercial operators and be undermined. It may also need to review and reduce services where income is not covering costs. Also, in a franchised environment, the municipal company may not be guaranteed success in winning contracts. **Establishment of a municipal operation would incur significant capital costs for a depot and buses, as well as costs of setting up a company. On-going running costs would be met by fares and other income.**

Any move away from the current situation requires careful consideration as follows:

1. Identify any **problems** that exist and why things need to change.
2. Identify the **aims and objectives** of the bus network and consider which options might help achieve these.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

3. Consider carefully what the **implications of introducing an alternative delivery model**, including the costs and benefits and the extent to which each would help meet strategic objectives.
4. Ensure **stakeholders and interested parties are involved** throughout and the process is transparent.
5. Set out the **outcomes** sought and define the structure and system to achieve these.
6. Undertake a **detailed assessment to compare the performance of different delivery models** in achieving the desired outcomes.

The Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership has facilitated good collaborative working and successfully delivered improvements across the network. It is difficult to assess how much of this success can actually be attributed to the EP itself. Indeed, it is likely that much would have been achieved through a simple voluntary partnership, because the partners recognise the importance of joint working, have a good working relationship and all want to achieve improvements. Equally, success has been underpinned by the award of funding to introduce many improvements. As with any organisational structures, it is recognised that there is room for improvement and the EP Board is looking to evolve how it works.







## Appendices

### Appendix A: Experience elsewhere

#### Franchising

Very useful insights were received through the various meetings with those organisations already with areas that have franchised bus networks or are pursuing that model. The findings are set out in this section.

#### Transport for London

Whilst the bus market across Britain was deregulated in 1986, London was excluded and its bus services remained under public control. This led to a system of franchising, whereby Transport for London (TfL) specifies routes, service levels and fares, in line with the Mayor's Transport Strategy and fares setting. It is also responsible for passenger infrastructure (bus stops and bus stations) and information provision. Contracts are awarded to commercial operators to provide the services as specified. There is a strong, well recognised brand and identity – red buses and the TfL roundel.

In summary, TfL plans, specifies, procures, incentivises, enforces, monitors and collaborates. Meanwhile, operators devise rotas, operate and maintain buses, recruit and train staff, and supervise operations.

London Boroughs are generally responsible for highways, traffic management measures and bus priority.

Scale of the bus network:

- 9,000 buses (of which 1,000 zero emission) – average age 6 years
- 77 bus depots (majority owned or leased by bus operators)
- 7 bus operators currently hold contracts
- 19,000 bus stops
- Buses operate 486m km per year
- 6.2m passengers travel per day

Contracts and procurement:

- Specified and let on a route-by-route basis
- TfL assumes revenue risk, leaving operators to focus on the provision of good quality services that meet TfL's requirements
- 7-year duration, with 3.5-year break clause (either party) and 10 months' notice
- Review and procurement of contracts takes 18 months
- Quality Incentive Contracts (QIC) involve incentive payments for good performance and penalties for poor performance.
- Different performance management measures for high and low frequency services
  - High (>5 buses/hr) – excess wait time
  - Low (<5 buses/hr) - % on time



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

#### Learning points:

- Having a strong Bus Action Plan (2022)<sup>10</sup> in place, which relates to the Mayor's Transport Strategy, provides a clear vision for bus; it helps to promote the way forward and encourage sign-up.
- Contracts were previously 5 years + 2 years extension for good performance; however, moved to 7 years to provide certainty for operators when investing in zero emission buses.
- Whilst contracts are awarded on a route-by-route basis, the network is looked at as a whole.
- Single route contracts help provide opportunities for small and medium operators; they also promote competition from operators who have depot capacity and want to maintain a critical mass of activity.
- Risk management is important to the successful maintenance of the network. Therefore, the QIC is always under review to get the right balance between incentivising and penalising operators; TfL wants operators to do well for passengers and not to fail and cease operations.
- Considering ways of streamlining data collation and analysis to create realistic performance targets for services.
- Currently looking at depots – partly to increase capacity for electric buses (either because charging infrastructure may require more space, or because current depots do not have access to suitable grid connections) and partly, in certain areas, to encourage more competition from other operators for contracts.

Separate to the discussion with TfL officers, an operator provided some insights into operating services on behalf of TfL:

- With TfL taking fares risk, the operator can focus on providing the best possible service.
- Whilst the market is competitive, bids are realistic to ensure that services can be run in a way that meets TfL's requirements fully, including the target performance standards and will avoid penalties being incurred. Given the value of the contracts, it's important that operators get their bids right, taking account of possible increasing costs due to congestion or maintaining reliability.
- Procurement process is thorough; TfL staff will question bidders on aspects of their bids through the shortlisting process. Previous performance is also taken into account.
- QICs include tight targets – operators have to work hard to meet them, and it is increasingly difficult to achieve incentive bonuses.
- Every 4-week period involves a meeting with TfL to discuss performance and other issues.
- TfL publishes league tables regarding the performance of different operators.

## Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Combined Authority is the first authority to have fully introduced bus franchising under the provisions of the Bus Services Act 2017. Since January 2025, all services have been franchised, operating under the Bee Network brand with buses in a standard yellow livery. The journey to franchising was lengthy, reflecting that Greater Manchester was the first area to undertake the process and wanted to avoid any pitfalls.

There had been a long-standing ambition for better buses in Manchester, with a desire to overcome network fragmentation, particularly in north Manchester, and to be able to improve integration between buses and Metrolink. Devolution in 2014 offered the chance to introduce bus franchising.

#### Case for change:

- Declining bus market that needed invigorating

---

<sup>10</sup> [Bus action plan](#)



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- To improve the offer to bus users, including bus/Metrolink integration
- Increasing congestion
- A desire for more influence and control over the network, reflecting the significant public funding
- Political desire for change

#### Franchising assessment:

- Based on the authority (Transport for Greater Manchester – TfGM) controlling all aspects of network provision and to own the relationship with customers. This included taking revenue risk, given the desire to be responsible for setting fares.
- The control of depots was seen as important to attracting new operators to the area.
- Buses remain the responsibility of operators, with TfGM having a residual fleet mechanism in place to help maintain buses in the area and facilitate transfers between operators with surplus buses and those operators needing more buses.
- Forecast transition costs of £122m over a 6-year period, including £20m for resource costs (staff/contractors).
- Estimated that 57 additional staff would be required (cost £2.1m p.a.).
- Estimated depot costs £85.7m.
- Benefit Cost Ratio – 3.1 (Franchising); 3.7 (Ambitious Partnership).

#### Consultation:

- Two consultations undertaken (due to amendments to the Assessment post-Covid) - 12,500 responses. The initial consultation showed 83% supporting franchising.

#### Franchising implementation:

- Not looked to try and change the network at the same time as introducing franchised services, as there was already significant change in terms of operators, services and depots. However, now the franchised network is in place, TfGM is starting to undertake area reviews.
- 25 main contracts plus school services, procured through three tranches. Larger franchises have been let for 5 years and may be extended by 2 years for good performance. Smaller contracts are for fixed periods of 3-5 years, with no opportunity for extension.
- During Tranche 3 there was significant capital investment pressure on operators and TfGM did step in and purchase some vehicles for operators.
- Bee Network Committee (consisting of the Mayor and representatives of the 10 districts) is the public body responsible for strategic decision-making. A Bus Steering Group (chaired by TfGM's Managing Director) meets every 2 weeks and works closely with the Combined Authority. A number of sub-groups report to the Steering Group; these deal with specific aspects of network provision and meet frequently (some weekly) to make decisions.
- Cross-boundary services – some are included within franchise contracts, because they operate from Manchester depots; others covered by Service Permits, which set out requirements on vehicle standards (Euro VI emissions) and fares and ticketing.
- Bee Network has seen patronage growth; patronage and revenue are both higher than originally forecast.
- Requires significant additional staff resource – the Bus Team has doubled in size to 70 people. However, bus operators no longer require commercial and marketing teams.
- The move to franchising was led by a separate programme team, ensuring that good progress was made and that it didn't distract those staff dealing with the deregulated network right up the end of the transition.

#### Next steps:



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Having completed the introduction of the franchised bus network, the desire is to achieve greater integration with Metrolink tram network and trains. First step is the inclusion of Metrolink into the capped, contactless payment system with daily and weekly charges automatically calculated and capped with two scales covering bus only or bus and tram use.

#### Learning points:

- In doing the Franchising Assessment, the strategic case (and case for change) is what people really get behind. The commercial case is crucial in understanding how best to intervene in the market and achieve best value through increased competition.
- Recognised that there are some things that it is best to leave with operators, such as on-bus CCTV systems.
- Important to have a reasonable mobilisation period (9 months) to ensure a smooth transfer.
- In being accountable for the whole network and owning the customer interface, there is significant reputational risk. However, TfGM now has a much closer relationship with customers and there is a single place for customers to provide feedback.
- Authority becomes far more involved in all operational aspects, from dealing with lost property through to investigations following accidents involving buses. It is starting to have more regular contact with the trade unions. It is considering what its future role might be in improving driving standards.
- Providing capital investment can play a part in reducing ongoing revenue requirements.
- The Bee Network brand has created public interest and does raise the bar in terms of the delivery of good service. There is equity across the network.
- The importance of getting the right balance between incentives and penalties on contract performance – this is constantly being reviewed. Operators need to feel that continuing operation is worthwhile.
- Things take longer than originally envisaged.
- Summary points of learning:<sup>11</sup>
  - Undertake franchising in stages
  - Set out a clear path with firm timescales and milestones
  - Acknowledge the complexity of moving to franchising

## Liverpool City Region

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is currently implementing franchising, with the first procurement round commencing March 2025. The aims of franchising are to deliver a better service for customers, including greater integration of services across the transport system (bus and rail; first and last mile), and to achieve modal shift away from the car. The Mayor wants to see a 'London-style' service offer.

#### Franchising Assessment (completed April 2023):

- Started process 2018 with notice of intent and request to operators for data.
- Based on delivering the Vision for Bus (2019) and desire to address bus patronage decline (passenger journeys per head of population 79 in 2009/10 and 68 in 2018/19).
- Total bus fleet (2021) of 1100. Market share (2022/23 passengers) – Arriva 66%; Stagecoach 22%). 400 different services provided by 17 operators.
- Average cost per bus (2018/19) £139k p.a. [note: this is now significantly higher]

<sup>11</sup> *Completing the Hive: Manchester's Bee Network, Buses, March 2025*



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Assumed CA would take control of service design, depots, fleet, customer service, and would take revenue risk (£100 revenue p.a.). Depot strategy for acquisition and building £56m (assumed 8 depots acquired)
- Buses and depots owned by CA and provided to operators, to reduce revenue costs
- Assumed would be 7.5% profit margin on franchised services.
- Five contract rounds over 3 years, with different sized lots including smaller ones aimed at small and medium operators.
- Estimated implementation costs £27.4m (of which £14m provision for risk)
- Additional headcount required of 81.5 FTE (26 of which would transfer from operators). Total staff – core team of 210 (cost £4.092m); support teams 11.5 (cost £0.345m).
- Appraisal period of 40 years.
- Assessment conclusion:
  - Strategic – full control of bus network provides the ability to achieve strategic objectives.
  - Economic – both Franchising and an Enhanced Partnership offer benefits (benefit cost ratios ranged from 1.7 – 3.3 for franchising and 1.4 – 2.6 for EP, depending on rate of patronage recovery post-Covid and different funding scenarios).
  - Commercial – authority able to influence the market; control and/or ownership of depots and vehicles needed to attract competition and create a level playing field.
  - Financial – Franchising could deliver better value for money for the authority. Development of a financial model important to demonstrating affordability.

#### Consultation:

- 6,200 responses received.
- Franchising supported by 69% public responses and 89% stakeholder responses.

#### Franchising implementation:

- Originally envisaged to be 2025 – 2028 but now planning to have a fully franchised network in place by the end of 2027.
- 12 workstreams covering all aspects of operations (network; fleet; depots), customer experience (fares and ticketing; engagement; communications) and commercial considerations (finance; procurement).
- Programme Delivery Group – meets weekly to check progress of workstreams. The Group reports to the Bus Franchising Steering Group (officers), which in turn reports to the Bus Franchising Executive Programme Board (which is delegated to make some decisions on behalf of Merseytravel and the Combined Authority).

#### Contracts and procurement:

- Since undertaking the assessment, changes have been made to the procurement plans, partly to accelerate the process and partly in response to feedback through market engagement sessions. The number of individual franchise contracts has been rationalised (smaller number of larger contracts) and the number of procurement tranches reduced from 3 to 2.
- Each tranche will see the invitation of Expressions of Interest (6 weeks), then an invitation to negotiate. Following contract award there will be a 9-month mobilisation period.
- Tranche 1 will have two Category 1 (large) contracts. Tranche 2 will have three Category 1 contracts. Contracts will be geographically based with fleets of 86 to 208 vehicles. Operators will be limited to being awarded one contract per tranche, in order to ensure a spread of at least 3 and no more than 5 operators overall.
- Smaller contracts (Category 2) will include 6 lots, with each contract based on services to/from particular schools with fleets of 6 to 22 vehicles. There will be two separate bidding opportunities, with feedback provided to operators after the first to improve their bids in the second.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Contracts will be awarded for 5 years with potential 2-year extensions.
- Operators required to pay staff Real Living Wage, commit to Fair Employment Charter, appoint a dedicated safeguarding lead and agree to additional social value commitments.

#### Fleet and depot strategies:

- These are crucial elements and have significant capital funding implications, therefore important to give them careful consideration.
- Guiding principles for fleet – emission standards; fleet replacement plans; ownership model. Need to determine what vehicles are required, how these will be funded and how they will be acquired (purchase; lease; special purpose vehicle – SPV – mix capital/revenue; supplied by operators).
- Requirement for a total of 682 buses.
- Vehicles and the availability of vehicles can influence the outcome of the procurement process (bidders may withdraw if uncertainty around getting suitable vehicles).
- Depots are important to creating a level playing field for operators wanting to bid for contracts.
- Combined Authority looking to buy 7 or 8 depots from operators and to establish one further depot. PVR at each depot ranges from 34 to 123 buses.
- The aim is to purchase the depots through negotiation and voluntary agreement (but contingency of compulsory purchase if necessary). The authority will own all depots serving large franchise contracts.<sup>12</sup>
- Operators will lease depots at a peppercorn rent and take responsibility for day-to-day maintenance of buildings, fixtures and fittings, insurance, security and utilities.
- Those operators successful in Tranche 1 contracts, will not be able to use those depots as a base for gaining Tranche 2 contracts, because of the competitive advantage it would provide. Neither will operators be permitted to use the depots for the provision of other activities (e.g. coaches and private hire).

#### Network strategy:

- Lack of comprehensive data makes it difficult to make significant service changes at the same time as introducing franchising. However, there are significant expectations of what franchising might provide, so there will be some enhancements included in franchise contracts, including consistency in the span of when services operate.
- Day 1 of franchising – continuity and stability of service are most important.
- Service reviews will be undertaken once franchised services are up and running (12 months post-implementation).
- Network principles:
  - Population within 400m of a service
  - Consistent network
  - Comprehensive service from early morning to late evening
  - Facilitates interchange (bus/bus and bus/rail)
  - Provides access to key locations
  - Takes account of new development
  - Coordination with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary services.
- Will be 4 agreed service change dates per year, which is the same as current arrangements.

#### Expected benefits of franchising:

- Authority will have ownership of data about the network and its performance, which will help in future planning and management.
- Will generate competition in the market.

<sup>12</sup> *Passenger Transport, issue 332, 7 March 2025*





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

#### Learning points:

- Important to be clear on what the authority wants from franchising.
- Significant time and resources are necessary – the assessment, independent audit and consultation cost £5.3m).
- Useful to learn from the experience of others.
- Needs to be robust programme management throughout to ensure decisions taken at the right time and inter-dependencies are identified. It is important to remember that all the different aspects of franchising (procurement/lotting; network design; vehicles; depots) impact on one another, so all need to be considered in parallel.
- Strategic and commercial cases of the assessment are important to making the final decision.
- Importance of taking all interested parties along with you on the journey towards franchising. For example, there has been on-going market engagement with operators, firstly to inform assessment proposals (2021); secondly, on procurement process, fleet and depot strategies and performance regime (April 2024); thirdly, to inform about the changes to the timing and sequencing of the procurement (November 2024).
- Importance of regular updates and engagement with the Mayor and other elected members, including briefings prior to meetings.
- Realisation that some operational aspects are better to remain with operators, such as CCTV on vehicles.
- Important to consider depots and vehicles early on, as they impact on many other considerations.

## West Yorkshire

West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) went through the Franchising Assessment process relatively quickly, having learned from the experience of Manchester and Liverpool. It published a notice of intent to assess franchising in 2021, carried out the Franchising Assessment (2022-23), passed the assurance in summer 2023, and undertook consultation in late 2023. The Mayor took the decision to go ahead with franchising in March 2024.

#### Franchising Assessment:

- Overall bus network operated by 1,800 buses.
- Declining bus market and network; patronage 167.7m (2011/12) to 92.3m (2021/22); miles operated 60.9m (2011) to 46.3m (2021/22)
- Objectives of bus reform – to consider the whole journey and to focus on improving customer experience.
- Challenges for the network (in doing nothing):
  - Service reductions
  - Declining passenger satisfaction
  - Lack of bus priority
  - No single point of customer information
  - Confusing fares and ticketing
- Options considered:
  - Enhanced Partnership (reference case)
  - EP+
  - Proposed Franchising Scheme
- Franchising based on the authority taking control of all aspects of the planning and delivery of the bus network, fares and ticketing and customer interface.
- 10 strategic depots, which the CA would look to take over. Vehicles will also be owned by the authority.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Small and medium operators are important in West Yorkshire, particularly in the provision of contracted services. Therefore, engaged with them throughout the process. It is intended that franchise contracts will resemble current contract documents that those operators will be familiar with.
- Contracts will be 7 years duration.
- Considered options of EP+ and Franchising against the existing EP.
- EP+ included:
  - Qualifying Agreements with operators specifying route requirements, such as frequency.
  - Bus registration powers transferred to CA.
  - Partnership network planning (through Network Planning Group)
  - Further fare capping and standardisation of ticketing products.
  - Joint operator/CA marketing and branding.
  - Single point of customer contact.
  - Alignment of bus priority with EP+ schemes, with partnership working through a Bus Priority Oversight Group.
  - Agreement on shared new vehicle specification.
- Resourcing requirements would increase from current 194 staff (FTE) to 219 for EP+ and 262 for Franchising.
- Benefit Cost Ratios – EP+ 5.4; Franchising 4.3
- One-off transition costs to franchising estimated at £15.1m over four years (covering consultancy, mobilisation and IT). There would be an additional £5.3m transition management costs.
- Assessment carried out by internal reform team of 9 staff, with external support on the economic case and legal advice, along with the public consultation.
- Cost of undertaking the assessment £2.1m (including audit and consultation).
- Decision focused mainly on the strategic and commercial cases. However, the economic and financial cases are necessary (and linked), the latter being important in demonstrating affordability.

#### Consultation:

- 1,245 responses received.
- 82% of respondents supported franchising.

#### Franchising implementation:

- Core workstreams taking the work forward:
  - Customer
  - Assets
  - Contracting
  - Data
  - Network planning and management
- Three tender rounds are envisaged, the first procurement getting underway later in 2025, with the first franchised services introduced in 2027. All services will be franchised by the end of 2028.
- Franchising will be put in place without changing services – too much to do all at once and insufficient data to undertake detailed network planning. Branding and network ticketing will be in place from day 1.
- A report to the Combined Authority Board in January 2025 confirmed that 10 depots would be acquired and refurbished, with a likely cost of £67m. It also confirmed that a new overall network brand and identity would be devised.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

#### Learning points:

- Given the complexity of what has to be done and the importance of the decision regarding franchising, it is unlikely that the process could have been done any quicker, without compromising the quality or integrity of the work.
- Franchising guidance doesn't indicate what the balance should be in terms of doing upfront work to develop the assessment and doing work that looks as if it pre-empt the final decision (for example, amount of engagement with operators that might wish to enter the local market).

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) issued a notice of intent to consider bus franchising in mid-2019. The Assessment was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and recommenced in 2021, with the collection of new data and a revised business case, following the publication of a new Bus Strategy, which reflected the ambitions for bus as set out in a new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The Assessment was completed in early 2024 then audited. In summer 2024, the decision was taken to undertake a public consultation. The Mayor made the decision to introduce franchising in February 2025. It is intended to introduce the first franchised bus services in September 2027.

CPCA is quite different in geography and character to the metropolitan Combined Authorities. It has two medium sized cities and a large rural hinterland. This also dictates a different pattern of bus network, with different challenges, particularly in respect of a desire to improve connectivity across the rural parts of the area. With this in mind, the franchising proposal for the area differs from that in the larger, more urban combined authorities.

#### Franchising Assessment:<sup>13</sup>

- Overall goals of looking at change:
  - Enhance and integrate the bus network
  - Coordinate services, integrate ticketing, stabilise services and provide better information
  - Bus services that contribute to wider economic, social and environmental goals
  - Maximise value for money and the benefits from investing in the bus network
- Change is viewed as necessary to help achieve the key objectives of the Bus Strategy – doubling of bus passengers and 15% reduction in miles driven on the roads.
- CPCA only area of the country with no EP in place; assessment compares two options – an EP and Franchising.
- Highlights that certain attributes could be more easily or more fully achieved through Franchising, rather than an EP, such as:
  - Network planning and coordination, regulation of headways on parallel services and increasing frequencies on existing services.
  - Network stability – route and service levels.
  - Coordinated management of fares, products and pricing.
  - Introduction of single livery and brand.
  - Consistent driver training and standard driver uniforms.
  - Passenger charter and compensation.
  - Reinvestment of efficiency savings into the network.
- Based on franchising the whole area. However, looking for some sharing of responsibilities/risks between authority and operators. Operators to retain depots, with CA looking to facilitate two new depots in Peterborough and Cambridge) – viewed as important by operators not currently operating in the area.

<sup>13</sup> Bus Centre of Excellence Webinar: The road to better buses in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, 24 February 2025



- Operators to be responsible for vehicles; the authority does not envisage managing a residual vehicle scheme, given the additional risk and financial burden involved.
- Initially, the CA will take revenue risk (given that there is insufficient data to support minimum subsidy contracts); however, it could be possible to move to operators assuming revenue risk at a later stage, giving an incentive to grow use and revenue.
- Contract lots of 1 to 60 vehicles are envisaged, with the aim of providing opportunities for operators of all sizes. In the consultation, there were some comments as to whether 60 vehicles was too small a number to encourage larger external operators to enter the market.
- Contracts of 7 or 8 years' duration envisaged, to provide stability in service provision and certainty for operators in making investment decisions. Intend to have a strong performance management approach, along with flexibility to amend and review services during the contract period.
- The CA acknowledges the importance of small and medium operators and has indicated that it wants to support and encourage their involvement in the future franchised network, by having some smaller lots, by allowing subcontracting to larger operators (or specifying that large operators should subcontract a proportion of activity to smaller operators) and in ensuring the procurement process is not overly onerous, but proportionate to the relative contract size.
- Introduction of an EP will require 8-10 additional staff. Franchising will require 15 additional posts; additional staff costs are estimated at £1m p.a. and IT costs £0.5m p.a. In addition, the estimated one-off investment needed to meet the cost of transition over a 3-4 year period is £1.42m.
- Summary conclusion of the 5 cases:
  - Strategic – franchising would provide the ability to plan and deliver the bus network in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
  - Economic – both franchising and EP offer value for money - Benefit Cost Ratios of 2.38 (EP) and 2.54 (Franchising); franchising costs more but offers higher value in terms of Net Present Value and Benefit Cost Ratio.
  - Commercial – franchising offers greater control and flexibility to manage resources deployed, backed by a performance management regime; however, it comes with more risk.
  - Financial – franchising is affordable, relying on stable sources of funding available to the authority (such as Mayoral Precept)
  - Management – more resources needed for both EP and Franchising; however, franchising offers the ability to achieve more coordination and a seamless network.
- Consultation included qualitative research amongst targeted under-represented groups. The consultation received 1,653 responses – 63% supported franchising and 12% were opposed; amongst organisations responding, support rose to 75%.

#### Franchising implementation:

- Being taken forward through 8 workstreams:
  - Customer relations and customer research
  - High quality data management
  - Infrastructure
  - Network development and performance
  - Commercial and procurement
  - Safety
  - Finance and resources
  - Policy and governance
- Workstreams will be overseen by a Project Board, which will in turn report to Transport and Infrastructure Committee and then to the CA Board.
- Intention is to have a separate team delivering franchising, leaving the existing team to manage and maintain the existing network.



## Learning points:

- Plan and define the Franchising Assessment carefully to avoid uncertainty and smooth the process through the independent assurance. Make clear that the Assessment represents a moment in time.
- Quality of data is important to carrying out effective economic modelling.
- Important to keep all interested parties informed throughout the process, in order to manage expectations.
- Consultation is very technical to meet the requirements of the guidance. Significant effort needed to ensure it meets the needs of different audiences (public and stakeholders).
- Allow plenty of time to analyse the consultation responses and report on them, showing how they have been taken into account.

## South Yorkshire

The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) started its journey towards franchising in 2022 and completed its bus reform consultation in January 2025. This generated 6,600 responses. The Mayor is due to take the decision on franchising in mid-March 2025.

## Franchising Assessment:

- Market share 2022/23 (mileage) – First 43%; Stagecoach (40%); TM Travel (7%).
- Network includes 300 supported services, including 80 dedicated school services.
- Franchised network assumes a fleet of 745 buses (653 excluding spares) operating 26.7m miles.
- Considered various scenarios (EP, EP+ and Franchising) with or without depot and vehicle ownership by SYMCA. All options included the authority taking revenue risk. Ultimately, the preferred option was for full control with depots and vehicles owned by the authority.
- Depot investment estimated at £85m. Fleet investment over years 2027/28 – 2031/32 estimated at £257m.
- Current bus and travel concessions teams have 16 FTE staff. Franchising would require 34 FTEs, of which 6 would be involved in performance management, 2 looking after depots and 2 on network planning.
- Strategic case – the case for change is based around the need to stop the spiral of decline in bus use and provision, integrate more with the tram, invest in the fleet and achieve more value for money from the public monies going into bus provision.
- Economic case – gave a benefit cost ratio of 1.88 for EP+ and 2.25 for Franchising.
- Commercial case – considered that if operators retained depots, they would have great advantage over new entrants. This would reduce competition and offer poor value for money to the CA. Concluded that risk is best sitting with the party who is best able to influence or manage it (i.e. SYMCA).
- Want to encourage small and medium operators to participate in tendering. Looking at whether large operators could be awarded social value points in the procurement process for subcontracting to smaller operators.
- South Yorkshire has some rural areas, where there will be less opportunity for any cross-subsidy between services.
- Financial case suggests that franchising is affordable, based on the availability of CRSTS funding until 2031/32.
- 3 tranches of contracts envisaged, with contracts based on all services from a depot.
- Whilst services will largely stay the same under franchising in the first instance (because of the lack of information on which to base change), the opportunity may be taken to reduce some duplication of services and to improve links with the tram.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

#### Learning points:

- Franchising Assessment is useful for comparing EP and Franchising, but not necessarily at setting out the detail of how change will be delivered.
- Important to recognise the need to keep constituent authorities happy. As they provide a levy to the CA to fund its activities, they see themselves exposed to greater risk.

## West Midlands

The West Midlands has a successful partnership approach and was one of the pioneers of an Enhanced Partnership. However, there has still been patronage decline and significant amounts of public funding have been supporting the network (only about a half of income is from fares). The Franchising Assessment was undertaken to assess alternative approaches. It commenced early 2020 and was completed January 2022, with a full business case following that using updated data from the operators. The current Mayor, elected May 2024, wanted to see franchising, so the completed Assessment provided the opportunity for him to push forward with the audit and then to consultation in early 2025. The Mayoral decision is due in May 2025.

Franchising is seen as providing the opportunity for the public sector to align the benefits from its funding, such that it can achieve its outcomes, particularly with the significant amounts of public funding going in to support the network. Equally, to achieve more accountability, with a direct relationship between users and the authority.

#### Franchising assessment (2024):

- Bus worth £4.4bn to the local economy.
- 232m passenger boardings in 2023/24
- Total fleet of 1,389 buses (increasing to 1,556 with spares). A further 400 buses operate into the West Midlands from outside (cross-boundary services).
- 14 bus operators, but National Express is very dominant (74% of fleet, 85% of bus km and 93% of passengers).
- Based on franchising the entire area, taking full control of services including depots. Investment in depots £44.8m. This element seen as vital in creating competition in the market and attracting new entrants.
- Assessment based on meeting the 9 main objectives of the Vision for Bus (2019). It considered what could be achieved (or how much network would be provided) through either an EP or Franchising. For the same funding, franchising achieved 10% more network, mainly through reduced margins for operators.
- Franchising alone will not stem decline; however, it provides the opportunity to control and influence things and better achieve the CA's objectives. There is still a need for long-term, sustained investment.
- Whilst franchising brings new risks for the authority, there are risks of doing nothing, with further decline of services and usage.
- Much can be achieved through an Enhanced Partnership – success is down to capacity, capability and the motivation of organisations and individuals. There is still a lack of accountability in a partnership and a lack of trust in the system.
- Commercial case – relies on the ability to generate strong competition for contracts. 3 tranches of contracts envisaged.
- Management case – highlighted the significant uplift in resources and staffing to implement franchising. 165.8 FTE additional staff required at cost of £10.3m p.a., of which 108 roles would transfer from operators.





a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

- Service Permits for cross-boundary services – these will include conditions on ticketing, discounted travel, vehicle standards, customer service and operational standards.
- Assessment cost £1.5m to carry out. Transition costs estimated at £22.5m over a 3-year period.

#### Learning points:

- It is important to keep other interested parties (e.g. constituent authorities and elected members) engaged and informed throughout the process.
- The Assessment itself demands a lot of attention, however there are many different aspects to consider either outside of this or to inform it. However, there is a balance on how much work can be done without being seen to be pre-empting the outcome of the Assessment.
- Significant work is undertaken to inform the decision, but little work on implementation until the decision to franchise has been made.
- Robust governance structures will be needed, particularly with the authority taking the revenue risk (£500m p.a.)
- The DfT might be able to streamline the Franchising Assessment process by requiring only an outline assessment to establish the case for franchising. Having established that franchising is the preferred option, more detailed business cases could be required for specific elements, such as depot strategy.

## North East

The new Mayoral North East Combined Authority (NECA) was established in May 2024, replacing two previous combined authorities. The Authority undertook a detailed options report which recommended undertaking a Franchising Assessment, recognising the enormity of what would be involved in carrying this out. This is just getting underway, and a 12-month timescale is envisaged. This will be followed by audit (5 months) and consultation (6 months). A Mayoral decision might be made in February 2027, with the first franchised services introduced autumn 2029.

#### Options report<sup>14</sup>

- Backdrop of decline; 2022/23 106m passenger journeys, down 36% since 2010.
  - Significant public sector funding for buses (£103.8m) – 43% of all bus operator income.
  - Included consideration of an EP+, which pushed the boundaries of what could be achieved through a partnership approach, but recognising that the legal context (deregulated market) remains as with an EP.
  - An EP+ likely to see a push for more bus priority measures. Also, more staff resource would be needed to negotiate and implement, although not as great as additional resources for Franchising.
- Risks associated with EP+:
- Uncertainty of securing operators' cooperation and agreement, which could result with compromise.
  - Authority still responsible for funding non-commercial services, with potential rising costs over time. Network still not cohesive.
  - Operators' own tickets may continue alongside integrated ticketing, creating confusion.
  - Operators fail to comply with commitments, but authority has only blunt enforcement measures, such as asking Office of the Traffic Commissioner to cancel bus service registration.
  - Considered public ownership of bus operation (new municipal operation or taking a private bus operator into public ownership – either in-house or arm's length company), which could run within a deregulated or franchised environment. Authority may need to meet significant capital costs

<sup>14</sup> North East Combined Authority Cabinet Report 30 July 2024 – Improving and reforming buses





(vehicles and depots); critical mass of operation needed to achieve economies of scale. However, opportunity to reinvest any profits. Risks include:

- Revenue decline
- Reputational damage to the organisation
- Operation could be subject to competition from private operators (on-road in deregulated environment and for contracts in a Franchised market)
- Franchising regulates the bus market and removes on-road competition (there is competition for the market). However, risks associated with Franchising:
  - Authority assumes more responsibility and risk, including revenue and reputational risk
  - Legal challenge
  - Network instability and lack of investment during Franchising Assessment and transition
  - Lack of interest from external operators
  - Difficulties in getting adequate staff resources and capabilities
  - Lose small and medium operators from the area
- Deregulation – bus operators bound by competition law and can limit cooperation on ticketing and network planning, resulting in fragmentation of network, inconsistencies and possible duplication of services (separate commercial and supported bus networks). As such, the deregulated model fails to support wider strategic objectives (such as growth, environment, development, employment, housing, leisure, health and well-being).
- Challenge for EP is the need to secure agreement of operators, which can:
  - Limit the level of ambition and commitment
  - Result in the need for public funding to cover operator risk
  - Limit cohesion
  - Be limited by the quality of individual relationships within the Partnership
- Emerging consensus that there needs to be more integration of bus with other modes; more service reliability and services that are more responsive to the needs of communities.
- Key drivers for change:
  - Current bus services not meeting aspirations
  - Need for modal transfer and reduced congestion
  - Decarbonisation and air quality
  - Risk of not changing, with continued patronage and revenue decline

#### Franchising Assessment:

- Bus network operated by fleet of 1,250 vehicles.
- Still to determine the details of the potential Franchising Scheme, but it will cover the whole CA area.
- Case for franchising mainly based around the current fractured market and other market failings.
- Assessment will be written by the Bus Reform Team (9 staff), with external support on the economic case. Also engaged specialist external legal support.
- Commenced the data collection from operators.
- Budget of £8.5m set aside for the Assessment, audit and consultation (covering three financial years 2024/25 – 2026/27).

## Jersey

Jersey has had a franchised bus network for many years, which has provided it with significant learning and the ability to amend its model of provision over time. Over the last 2 years, the Government has re-procured the contract which covers the entire island's network of public and school bus services for 10 years plus 3 single year extensions (depending on assessed performance after years 3, 5 and 7. This will come into effect from April 2025. Management of the contract is overseen by 1.5 FTE staff.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

The contract coming to an end in March 2025, was based on a model of provision that was quite different to what had been in place before. Risk moved from the Government to the operator, which became responsible for fares revenue and provision of vehicles. The desire was to allow the operator to act commercially, by being incentivised to grow patronage and revenue, and at the same time achieve best value for the Government. Therefore, a long contract duration was given to provide stability for operators to be able to invest. This model has then been developed further for the new contract.

Responsibilities	
Government	Operator
Provides bus depot (and electrification)	Operates and maintains depot
Provides bus interchange	Manages of bus interchange
Defines network and levels of services, and makes suggestions for service changes and improvements	Operates the specified network and makes suggestions for service changes and improvements
Sets out vehicle specifications and age profile	Provides vehicles to meet requirements at various points through the contract period
Specifies fares and tickets	Applies specified fares and tickets; retains revenue and shares with Government if grows above set targets
Specifies concessions and discounts	Accepts passes for travel without any reimbursement
Specifies information and marketing requirements	Produces annual marketing plan; provides network map and timetable information, including bus stop information
Sets key performance targets and performance monitoring, including data reporting requirements; applies penalties where service standards not met	Reports on performance and provides data to Government
Meets monthly with operator to discuss all aspects of operation	Meets monthly with Government to discuss all aspects of operation

#### Procurement process:

- Important to take time in developing the specification (about 6 months), to ensure it is comprehensive, includes everything that is required and that won't result in any unintended consequences. If something isn't in the specification at the start, it may be difficult to add it in during the procurement process.
- Important to be able to provide bidders with comprehensive and detailed information on which they have confidence in developing their bids and better pricing for the Government.
- Various stages to the procurement:
  - Invitation to tender – prequalification stage
  - Stage 1 – specification provided to those bidders who passed the prequalification stage; word count and weightings for responses set out; clarification questions submitted by bidders; Teams call and face-to-face meeting offered to bidders to help their



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

understanding of requirements and to develop their bids. Stage 1 bids received and scored for cost (40%) and quality (60%).

- Stage 2 – best scoring bidders from Stage 1 invited to bid based on updated specifications, data, property leases and KPIs. Opportunity for bidders come to Jersey for a tour of properties and to ask questions. As part of bids, operators required to make a presentation. Evaluation leads to decision on preferred bidder.

Feedback from bidders about the procurement process was that it had been a positive experience and represented good practice. The opportunities for engagement had been beneficial in bringing the aspirations of the contract to life.

#### Learning points:

- It is important for the procurement process and contracting to evolve over time. In the recent re-procurement, about half of the specification was similar to the last contract. However, the contract itself was new.
- Having an independent party do a shadow bid in parallel is useful in testing the adequacy of the tender specification and supporting information, as well as giving an indication of the tender prices that might be expected. This allows questioning of any operator bids that are very different to this, potentially highlighting errors or misunderstandings.
- A longer-term contract with the right incentives encourages investment and innovation.
- Specification requires an experienced and pre-vetted transport manager. Also transparent data sharing and accounting, with the ability for the Government staff to directly access and view all patronage and revenue data.
- Important to ensure a smooth transfer from one operator to the next, and then look to implement any service changes at a later stage rather than at the same time. As such, it is important to manage expectations throughout.

## Decisions not to pursue franchising

### Cornwall

Cornwall Council considered whether franchising provided an option for its network, but decided that it would seek to achieve its objectives of improved services through a partnership approach, in line with its One Public Transport System for Cornwall (OPTSfC) initiative.

It should be noted that the authority had maintained significant levels of financial support for bus services, with responsibility for about half of network mileage, providing it with reasonable influence. Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, bus patronage grew by 1.4m journeys (13.5%). The proportion of concessionary travel journeys reduced from 42% to 32%, indicating strong growth in fare-paying journeys. Furthermore, over the same period, the number of passenger journeys per head of population rose from 19.7 to 20.8. Pre-Covid, Cornwall was unusual in being a mainly rural authority that achieved both general patronage growth and an increase in the average number of passenger journeys per head of population. Other areas that have had similar success are cities, which have generally pursued supportive measures for public transport over a long time, such as Nottingham and Brighton and Hove.

Cornwall Council pursued an approach to redefine and redesign the supported service network and to re-procure it through a large retendering process, with the award of a single contract for 8 years to GoAhead. This represented a commitment of £192m of funding over that period. Introduction of the contract in 2020 saw increased levels of service and over 100 new buses, together with a roll out of Transport for Cornwall (TfC) branding and marketing.



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

As well as benefitting from a Government Devolution Deal, Cornwall Council also received £23.5m in grant from DfT for a Bus Fares Pilot (commencing Spring 2022) whereby fares were subsidised to assess the impact on encouraging bus use.<sup>15</sup>

## Tees Valley

The Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) considered franchising, following an announcement in 2018 by its Mayor that a different approach would be considered to look at whether a regulated system would work better for the area. A report to the TVCA Cabinet in July 2019 highlighted that:

- Franchising would be a complex process, taking up to 3 years from inception to delivery of franchised operations.
- Total estimated cost of implementing franchising would be £4m.
- There would be benefits in terms of integrated fares and ticketing (but the value for money case for this was easier to make in large urban areas, rather than rural areas where bus provision is poor and usage low).

Therefore, it proposed continued dialogue with operators around a new partnership agreement and to pursue significant provision of new demand responsive transport (DRT) services (introduced as Tees Flex).

---

<sup>15</sup> [Bus Improvement Plan 2021 \(cornwall.gov.uk\)](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/business-and-economy/transport-and-infrastructure/buses-and-travel/Bus-Improvement-Plan-2021)

This page is intentionally left blank



# **Oxfordshire County Council**

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Future Bus Regulation Models

03/06/2025

## Contents

Section 1: Summary details.....	3
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	4
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....	6
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts .....	10
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts .....	12
Section 4: Review .....	13



## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment and Place, Transport Policy.
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Future Bus Regulation Models -  A) The recommendation to Cabinet to <i>develop a proposal</i> for an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) model B) The potential end impact if an EP+ is implemented
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Enhancement to existing
<b>Summary of assessment</b>  Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>This assessment considers the potential impacts of a) pursuing and b) implementing an EP+ with local bus operators.</p> <p>The precise impacts on different user groups will be dependent on the outcomes sought through the EP+. These are as yet undefined and will be examined in more detail during the proposed work to scope out the EP+ option.</p> <p>This EIA therefore has been assessed on the assumption that there will be tangible improvements for bus passengers in general which will lead to either neutral or positive equalities impacts.</p> <p>There are considered to be no negative impacts from an EIA standpoint.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Katharine Broomfield
<b>Authorised By</b>	Paul Fermer

<b>Date of Assessment</b>	03/06/2025
---------------------------	------------

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<b>Context / Background</b>  Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	<p>A preliminary examination of bus regulation and ownership possibilities, as relevant to Oxfordshire has been conducted by an external consultant.</p> <p>In considering the findings of the Bus Report, officers conclude that the most appropriate bus model to pursue at this time is an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+).</p>
<b>Proposals</b>  Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	<p>An EP+ builds on the existing EP by introducing more ambitious commitments on both bus operators and the County Council. This could include for example, joint network planning, (greater) interoperable ticketing, and unified branding.</p> <p>The primary rational for pursuing an EP+, compared with pursuing other models, is that it can leverage bus improvements with comparably low risk and is significantly cheaper and quicker to implement.</p>
<b>Evidence / Intelligence</b>  List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can	<p>Consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken during March and April 2024 in developing the latest version of the Oxfordshire BSIP to determine bus improvement priorities. Similar priorities for bus-related improvements were received from stakeholders and the public, which supports the data from existing surveys. The top 5 priorities for improvements were identified as follows: 1) Faster or more direct buses, 2) more reliable buses, 3) more buses/ services in general, 4) better value fares and 5) better information before you travel.</p>

<p>help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>There is research that indicates certain groups are statistically more reliant on bus and are therefore more frequent bus users. These include younger and older people, women, those with protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, people in rural locations, and those on lower incomes. All these groups will therefore benefit from improvements gained through an EP+.</p> <p>Buses can help reduce congestion, improve air quality, and enhance road safety, which are all factors that affect the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors.</p> <p>As evidenced in numerous texts, reducing car journeys is fundamental in enabling us to achieve global climate targets of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. A fully loaded double decker bus can take 75 cars off the road. In this sense all buses can be viewed as 'green' regardless of how they are fuelled or emissions levels.</p>
<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Other models that were considered and rejected:</p> <p>Enhanced Partnership (EP) – the existing model (do nothing), this will not lead to any additional improvements and will therefore have no EQIA impacts.</p> <p>Bus Franchising - where the Council would have full control over routes, timetables, fares, and service standards. It involves significant upfront and ongoing costs, increased staffing, and operational risks.</p> <p>Municipal Bus Operation - where the Council would own and operating its own bus services. It carries high setup and operational costs, exposure to market competition, and financial risk, making it a complex and resource-intensive option.</p>

**Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics**

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Younger and older people are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with disabilities are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) households tend to have the highest rates of poverty and are therefore statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are statistically more likely to rely on buses. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could be impacted positively through improved services supporting access to religious events or places of worship.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
---------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--	---	--	---



### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Rural communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The impacts of transport poverty are worst for poor people in rural areas. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Armed Forces</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers are likely to be unpaid or on low income and therefore would benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Those on lower incomes are statistically more likely to rely on buses. In addition, access to work is greatly improved by more accessible and	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

<b>Additional community impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner</b> (* Job Title, Organisation)	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
				affordable public transport opportunities. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.			

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Staff</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to work is greatly improved by more accessible and affordable public transport opportunities. Therefore this group will benefit from improvements to bus services and access.	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
<b>Providers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a neutral impact on this group	To consider this group when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buses provide affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation, especially for those who may not have other options. They connect people to jobs and customers to businesses, facilitate access to education and essential services, promote social inclusion, and contribute to environmental improvements by encouraging a shift from private to public transport.	None	Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement (OCC)	N/A

## Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and

<sup>1</sup> If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Person Responsible for Review	Technical Lead Bus Service Improvement
Authorised By	Paul Fermer

## **Annex 3 Climate Impact Assessment**

### **Future Bus Regulation Models**

#### **Summary of Assessment**

1. The commissioned Bus Report and the Cabinet Recommendation resulting from it, do not focus on assessing how the proposed EP+ delivery model would contribute to achieve the climate and broader sustainability targets established in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).
2. This CIA outlines the case for change, highlighting that current transport carbon emissions trends are deviating from LTCP targets. Rather than prescribing a particular bus delivery model, this CIA focuses on areas of improvement in the existing EP bus delivery model, that should be addressed in any future bus delivery model. In doing so this CIA highlights uneven distribution of risks and rewards in the existing EP model, that are hindering the achievement of LTCP climate targets. The EP+ proposed model seems to be an incremental change from the existing EP bus delivery model. Whether the EP+ proposal can address the areas of improvement and better distribution of risks and rewards highlighted in this CIA, depends on the feasibility of reaching the required agreements with bus operators within such framework. Given the existing good relation between Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and bus operators, it is worth testing the limits of such EP+ proposal in the interim period before the bus delivery model may be revisited again as a result of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.
3. As part of supporting LAs decision to engage in alternative bus delivery models, best practices on EP+ models will be published by government later in the year and should be considered in the negotiation process for the OCC EP+ delivery model.
4. Any future negotiations with bus operators for an EP+ bus delivery model should focus on the challenges highlighted in this CIA :
  - 1) Reverse the existing trend in local transport greenhouse gas reductions deviating from LTCP target of achieving a net zero transport network by 2040 and
  - 2) Tackle the affordability challenge that remains an obstacle for further adoption of bus transport. Part of addressing this challenge depends on a revision of distribution of risks and rewards (point 5 below), focusing on translating value created in the partnership towards making fares more affordable.
  - 3) Better integration of OCC transport planning and infrastructure delivery with bus operation planning, particularly focusing on integrated transport systems, in preparation for the future publication of UK's Integrated National Transport Strategy.
5. The EP+ model will enhance OCC capabilities for improved ways of working in the future (e.g. access to detailed route patronage data and stronger involvement of Highways Team within EP). Officers should aim to negotiate and

test how an EP+ model can address the uneven distribution of risks and rewards in the existing EP partnership which are highlighted in this CIA namely:

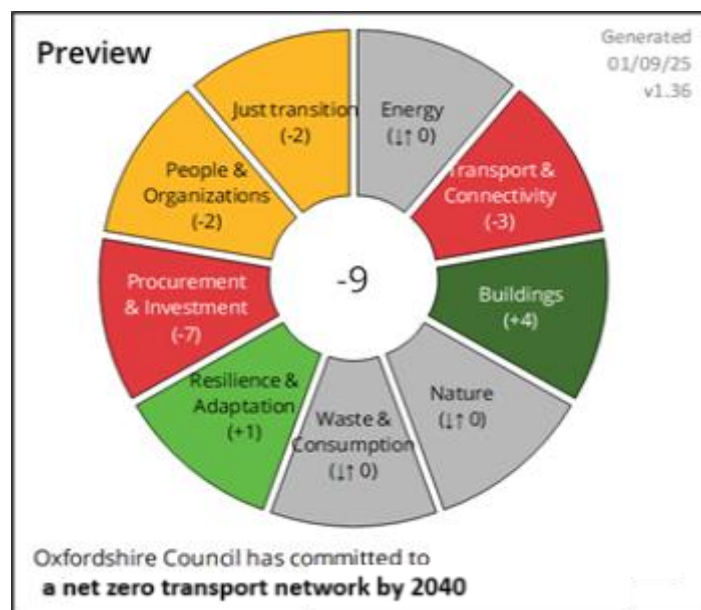
- a) innovation risk mitigated by central government,
- b) de facto monopolies in dedicated routes,
- c) value of public funded efficiencies not directed towards affordable fares.

**This uneven distribution of risks and rewards may prevent the existing partnership from addressing the social and climate challenges detailed in this CIA.**

6. A summary of CIA scoring is presented below (full detailed scoring can be found at the end of this Annex). This scoring is based on:

- 1) The recommendation to Cabinet to develop a proposal for an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) model, which is based on the existing EP model.
- 2) uncertainties of EP+ outcomes which depend on bus operator negotiations which have not taken place yet, and
- 3) whether or not these may be sufficient to achieve LTCP climate targets.

**It is recommended that this CIA is revisited and reviewed once EP+ conditions have been negotiated with bus operators and final agreements achieved.**





## Introduction

The purpose of the CIA is to understand how council's decisions may affect OCC capacity to achieve our climate targets. Climate change mitigation targets are within the multiple policies included in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which highlights the strategic role of active travel and public transport in relation to their contribution to social, economic, environmental and climate action goals. In the case of climate action, OCC's targets are outlined in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, particularly the target to achieve a net zero transport network by 2040. Based on the Bus Report Analysis and further evidence collected (not included in the Bus report) in this Annex we aim to provide insights for supporting this decision process.

Public-private partnerships such as the existing bus partnership between OCC and bus operators are meant to deliver access to private sector capital, enhanced efficiency, innovation, risk sharing, improved service quality and long-term value for money.

According to the Bus Report, the partnership has achieved a strong network of commercial city services and inter-urban network; new and enhanced services, with greater geographical coverage (all communities with 500+ population now have a bus service); improved service quality through improved and real time information; and to some extent access to private sector capital. Nevertheless, the Bus Report itself highlights that it is difficult to determine the role of the EP model in these achievements and instead states that the availability of significant funding (particularly central government funding) has certainly been an instrumental factor along with the willingness of interested parties to work together regardless of any formal organisation. The Bus Report highlights that a partnership is meant to allow partners to keep each other to account via a legally binding EP Scheme. However, there appear to be no known instances where this mechanism has been used, and in practice, it may not serve the partnership's best interests to do so. Guidance on best practices on EP bus delivery models will be published later this year. That said, the Bus Report testimonies seem to indicate that OCC holding control of funding has given it the upper hand in terms of decision making and overall governance, however as this CIA argues, improvements need to be done in the distribution of risks and rewards.

The Bus Report highlights that deciding to embark on a new delivery model should have as a departure point a clear case for change. From a climate change and broader sustainability perspective there is a case for change. As it will be discussed the changes required for addressing these problems based on the insights from the Bus Report will more likely be resolved through a franchising model, however given the good working relation between OCC and its operators and OCC's upper hand in controlling funds these changes may be accommodated in a EP+. Regardless of the decision of the delivery model, as this Annex will discuss, OCC should pursue a better distribution of risks and rewards, which are required for achieving the climate and broader sustainability targets highlighted in this document. Whilst now it is legally possible to change to alternative delivery models, given the existing good relation between OCC and bus operators, it is worth exploring what are the limitations of an EP+ model for achieving LTCP climate and broader sustainability targets, before bus

delivery models may be revisited as a result of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.

### The case for change.

The Bus Report encourages for OCC officials to establish the case for change as the basis of deciding to what extent the existing delivery model is adequate for achieving OCC goals. In what follows we outline the case for change from a climate change and broader sustainability perspective.

### Overarching issues:

#### 1) Transport emissions annual reduction rates need to significantly step up.

Oxfordshire's transport emissions are not declining at the rate required to achieve the LTCP target of achieving a net zero transport network by 2040 (see chart below). Oxfordshire transport emissions are the largest source of emissions in the county in 2023, with 90% being road transport (DESNZ, 2025). The LTCP estimated that in the UK in 2021, 55% of road transport corresponds to private car use and taxis.

**At current reduction rates, Oxfordshire transport emissions would get closer to net zero in 85 years** (year 2110). Rather than current 1% annual reductions, Oxfordshire would require 14% annual reductions in transport emissions between now and 2040 to achieve its target. In this simple linear projection, it is not modelled yet how motorists may start reacting to the petrol car ban to take effect in 2035, yet analysts in academia have signalled that assumptions of electric vehicle uptake need to be balanced with the required contribution of car trip reductions (see argument below).

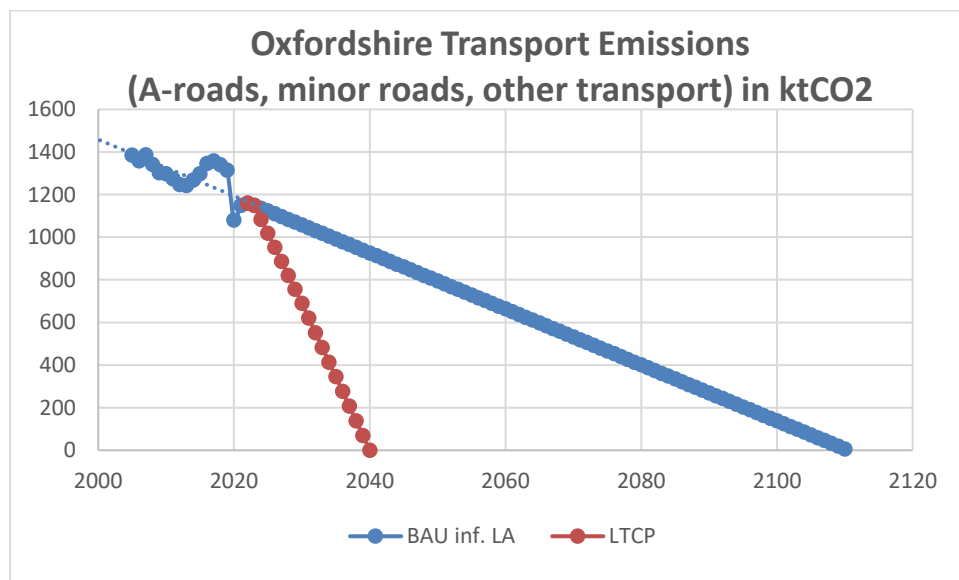


Figure 1. Oxfordshire Historical Transport Emissions with Local Authority influence and future projection scenarios. Source: Climate Action Team with DESNZ data<sup>12</sup>. DESNZ definition of “within influence of Local Authorities” includes A roads, minor roads and “other transport”, excluding motorways and railways emissions.

The responsibility for decarbonisation of road transport is shared by both central government and local authorities (LAs). Whilst central government has control of policies for transport decarbonisation such as ban on sales of fossil fuel vehicles and deployment of low carbon vehicle adoption incentives, LAs have influence in the adoption of public transport and the promotion of active travelling but are partially dependent on central government funding.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), the central government climate change advisory body, has established a decarbonisation path in its Seventh Carbon Budget (2038-2042) for surface transport. This decarbonisation path relies on both the electrification of transport (under the control of central government) and modal shift away from private car use (under the influence of LAs). According to the Balanced Pathway, by the 7th carbon budget period (2038-2042), surface transport emissions will have to reduce by 86% relative to 2023. However, the distribution of contributions for the CCC decarbonisation path is heavily balanced towards transition to low carbon vehicles and less on modal shift. EVs are the main source of decarbonisation in passenger transport and abate 73% of all surface transport emissions by 2050, whereas 8% of decarbonisation achieved is related to modal shifts. The CCC transport decarbonisation path has been criticised in academia<sup>3</sup> as overtly reliant on electric vehicle deployment, since it would require achieving a 1.5 faster adoption than Norway, the world-leading country in EV rollout (Garvey et al. 2025<sup>4</sup>). Therefore, more needs to be done by LA's to mitigate the potential failure of an expected unprecedented speed of electric vehicle adoption.

Oxfordshire County Council in its LTCP adopted a decarbonisation path called “Oxfordshire Leading the Way” that placed modal shift at the centre of its decarbonisation strategy. In the LTCP, OCC committed itself to reduce one in four car trips by 2040. The “one in four car trips” reduction target can be translated into a reduction of 25% in car vehicle mileage by 2030 in relation to 2022 (year of LTCP publication). Similarly, the second target of achieving “an additional 1 out 3 car trips in Oxfordshire” by 2040 can be translated into a 33% reduction in car mileage by 2040 in relation to 2030.

Using ONS national statistics of car and taxi mileage by local authority<sup>5</sup> we can apply the historical percentage that corresponds to what DESNZ regards as “within the influence of LA” (73%) and extrapolate the current trends on vehicle mileage (excluding the Covid lockdown years). Then we can estimate what is the level of mileage reduction required to achieve the LTCP car removal/replacement targets. The result is shown in the figure below.

---

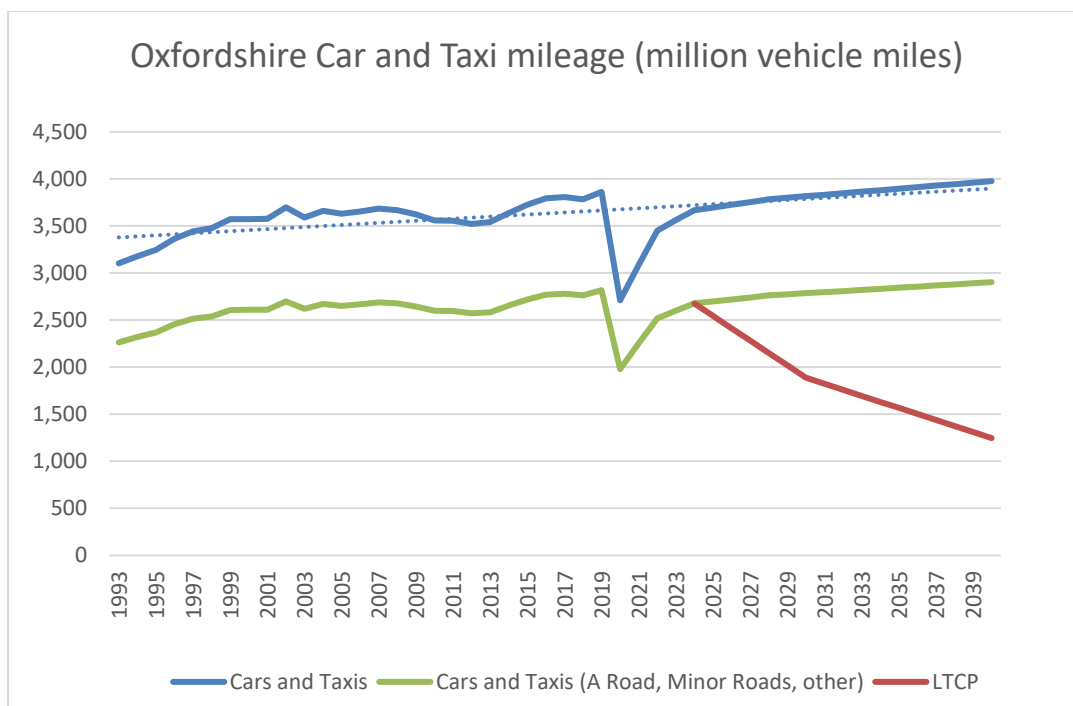
<sup>1</sup> [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Decarbonising surface transport - POST](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Review of the CCC's 7th Carbon Budget - Priestley Centre for Climate Futures](#)

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in [Review of the CCC's 7th Carbon Budget - Priestley Centre for Climate Futures](#)

<sup>5</sup> [tra8902-miles-by-local-authority-and-selected-vehicle-type.ods](#)



**Figure 2.** Extrapolation of Oxfordshire car mileage trends (blue line all transport, green line transport within influence of LA according to DESNZ) and required reductions in car trips (red line) to achieve Local Transport and Connectivity Plan targets in 2030 and 2040. Source: Climate Action with ONS and DESNZ

Whilst 2024 car & taxi mileage in Oxfordshire remains below pre-Covid levels, the current trend is potentially resuming the existing growth rate before the pandemic. **If this trend materialises it would represent a substantial deviation of the 5% average annual reduction rate in mileage required to achieve LTCP modal shift targets in 2040 (red line in figure above).**

Whilst bus transport is just one of multiple forms of removing/reducing car trips, its importance for OCC's social, environmental and climate targets has been highlighted in OCC's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (policy 18). Bus travelling is a key component in Mobility Hubs which will facilitate the broader adoption of public transport facilitating car trip reduction and therefore carbon reductions. An analysis of how bus delivery models better integrate new transport infrastructure planning and bus planning is absent in the Bus report. Similarly important barriers for public transport adoption, particularly affordability have not been addressed in the Bus Report. These challenges are discussed in the following points.

## 2) Bus affordability in Oxfordshire for young people 6.

In the UK, young individuals without access to a car are more than twice as likely to have low mobility levels compared to their peers who are licensed drivers with cars (Chatterjee et al., 2019a). Additionally, young people from the lowest income households are more likely to experience low mobility (Collings et al., 2023). These

<sup>6</sup> This section and quotes are based on [Research & Reports | Oxfordshire CRP](#) and the report here: [088bb9\\_a7953c9f58794e8d8740a93aee65cd18.pdf](#)

transport challenges contribute to broader issues of social and economic exclusion derived from limited access to education, employment, and social participation.

A recent survey (GOCRP, 2025) of accessibility and affordability of mobility conducted in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, highlighted that young people, particularly those in rural and semi-urban areas face significant and persistent barriers to accessing reliable, affordable and inclusive transport. **Affordability was the most frequently cited barrier.** This is not surprising as evidence suggests that in the UK the rising cost of public transport fares has outpaced wage growth, making travel increasingly unaffordable for young people. Since 2015, bus and coach fares have risen by 69%, while average wages increased by only 46% (Donkin et al., 2024)

Young people who co-created the GOCRP report developed proposals which aimed to shift responsibility from individual budgets to broader systemic pricing solutions:

- Group based discounts and multi-use passes
- Business Group ticket schemes (where employers bulk-buy rail passes via salary sacrifice)
- Flat-fee, multi-use travel pass valid across all regional forms of transport, designed to streamline access and reduce transport poverty.

One of the achievements of the existing Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership, is MyBus Oxfordshire, a ticket that allows one day or one-week unlimited travel on nearly all bus services across Oxfordshire, which offers a 46% discount to young people. Whilst bus operators have contributed in marketing the My Bus Scheme and set up the technical coordination to enable it, the MyBus ticket is not funded as a result of leveraging on private sector efficiencies, as would be expected of a public-private partnership, but through Department for Transport funding. Furthermore, many of the traffic efficiencies produced by OCC interventions such as those included in the Bus Service Improvement Delivery Plan are funded by central government. The value of these efficiencies is then retained by bus operators (e.g. fuel savings and others), without local authorities being capable of redirecting such value funded by central government in favour of poorer residents in the form of subsidised fares. The existing EP model only states that where operational savings are made because of public sector investment operators are expected to “use their best efforts” to ensure that these are reinvested in improvements to local bus services in Oxfordshire, rather than making bus fares more affordable. Furthermore, the expectation of reinvesting efficiencies in improvements is conditioned on “technical and commercial” feasibility.

The MyBus ticket almost complies with the recommendation of a young person flat-fee, multi-use travel pass valid across all regions, however it is limited to buses rather than all forms of transport. It is likely that a pass across all forms of transport will be more challenging to achieve on an enhanced partnership model given the need to establish routes and frequencies, synchronise timetables across modes and unified payment systems whilst avoiding different forms of transport to compete for passengers on same routes. As stated by the recent white paper on Mobility Hubs by England’s Economic Heartland<sup>7</sup>, bus franchising offers a valuable opportunity for

---

<sup>7</sup> [\\*Mobility Hubs: White Paper](#)

whole systems planning (p.7). Integrated multi-modal transport also is crucial in the context of developing new roads, which is part of OCC's responsibility as highways authority. As discussed in the following point, in the pursuit of integrated transport networks there is a need for coordinated bus routes on both existing and new road developments.

### **Better coordinated planning between Bus Partnership and OCC Transport Infrastructure Planning.**

The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan commits to “seek to make the bus a natural first choice through development of infrastructure” (policy 18c) and the BSIP has a goal to “keep buses at the heart of decision making”. Similarly, the LTCP policy 18e establishes that OCC will ensure that all new strategic development is designed for bus access and provides suitable funding for high quality services and infrastructure.

Policy 18 of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan which commits to “seek to make the bus a natural first choice through development of infrastructure”. As a highways authority, OCC is responsible for the development of new roads and the integration of public transport and active travel modes. In the absence of public transport, every new road runs the risk of increasing traffic. Therefore, the lack of a close integration of new road and bus planning can potentially entrench the dependency on cars and therefore result in increased emissions. Under the existing EP bus delivery model, it is the bus operator that decides where a new bus route should run based on commercial feasibility rather than social need. New routes in new roads probably represent a risk for new operators since there is no previous commuter data that can be used to build a business case for a new bus route. It is often the case that new roads are in rural areas where commercial feasibility is often lower. In a franchising delivery model the LA that decides where a bus route needs to run, rather than decided by operators based on route profitability. Since a franchising delivery model can cross subsidise routes, a LA has the capacity to make integrated planning of new roads including bus routes in routes that may not be commercially viable in isolation. It is not clear at this point to what extent the proposed EP+ model can support integrated transport planning of new roads and bus routes, since the decision of opening a bus route in a deregulated market is decided by a bus operator based on commercial viability, rather than social and/or environmental needs. In the negotiations for an EP+, OCC officers should aim to test the limits of the delivery model to pursue an integrated transport planning, which may entail a different distribution of risks between LA and bus operators, but not at the level of risk distribution as in the case of a franchising model. Bus operators have expressed openness for LA's to be exposed to further revenue risks (and should therefore include the associated reward), such is the case of a better coordination of infrastructure works and traffic filters.

An area of opportunity in an EP+ delivery model is sharing of detailed patronage data between OCC and bus operators. At the moment patronage data sharing is limited. An EP+ delivery model should aim to share patronage data for a better integrated transport planning, which at the end will benefit both parties.

The Bus Report states highlights the lack of planning integration in the Traffic Filter Scheme with bus operations. The scheme was put on hold following the closure of Botley Road by Network Rail. However other traffic management schemes (20 mph

zones and low traffic neighbourhoods) were still introduced with poor engagement with operators (according to them) resulting in the slower bus traffic, journey time increasing and journeys becoming more unreliable (Bus Report, p. 15). According to bus operators this a result of an inadequate distribution of risks across the public and private actors that integrate the bus partnership as will be discussed below.

### **Inadequate distribution of risk and rewards in enhanced partnership.**

As discussed at the beginning, resourcing to the private sector is based on the preconception that it is willing to accept risks in bus operations in exchange of retaining the rewards. Public-private partnerships such as the existing bus partnership between OCC and bus operators are meant to deliver access to private sector capital, enhanced efficiency, innovation, risk sharing, improved service quality and long-term value for money.

Nevertheless, under the existing EP model, it is the public sector that is mitigating the risks in the bus operation and allowing the private sector to retain most of the rewards. Some relevant cases of this misaligned distribution of risk-reward are discussed below.

- a) **Innovation risk substantially mitigated by central government:** the risk of electrifying bus fleets was substantially mitigated by central government funding through the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme (ZEBRA) program. The funding was focused on supporting closing the gap in the cost between electric and diesel buses, where bus operators could claim up to 75% of the cost difference. Therefore, whilst operators have invested in vehicles and charging infrastructure, the bus operators' level of investment (and associated financial risk) was substantially mitigated through the ZEBRA funding. Whilst government support is not a negative intervention per se, it contradicts the traditional conception of private sector actors as risk taking and innovative. More innovation funded by the private sector should be expected in an EP+ partnership.
- b) **De facto monopolies in dedicated routes:** the partnership achieved the avoidance of duplication of bus operators in the same route, in this way rationalising the vehicle use, making more efficient use of each vehicle in the fleet, improving traffic and potentially increasing patronage. This is highly desirable from an efficiency perspective, however, by doing this competition is prevented between operators on the same route that would, according to neoclassical economic theory, have likely produce price reductions. Local authorities like OCC were motivated to do this aiming to address some negative features of the market, highlighted in the National Bus Strategy, such as rival networks that do not acknowledge each other's existence, and which use the same route numbers for wholly different services, using different tickets and without timetable coordination. However, whilst aiming to address these issues,, the result was providing a de facto monopoly to bus operators in specific routes. A franchising model would also allocate de facto monopolies to each bus operator in dedicated routes, but the crucial difference is that it would allocate such route after the successful bid of a competitive tender process which would potentially drive fares down among other benefits for residents. Such competitive tender process would produce the market competition that



could deliver better value for money for Oxfordshire residents. Furthermore, the profits levels of such dedicated route would be controlled by the local authority in a franchising model rather than automatically retained by the bus operator through direct contract uncompetitive allocation as it seems to be happening in the existing model. See section *the role of competition in franchising* in CMA(2024)<sup>8</sup>.

It seems that Oxfordshire is funding rural alternative bus services outside of the partnership. In deciding on a different delivery model it should be considered that Oxfordshire is already subsidising non-commercially attractive bus routes.

- c) Value of public funded efficiencies not directed to tackling affordability challenge:** The de facto monopoly routes granted to bus operators without competition become more valuable when public funds are used to improve traffic and give preference to buses. An example of this are traffic filters which would in turn benefit the bus operator. Whilst bus operators have agreed to implement several service enhancements and new services once the traffic filters are implemented, there does not seem to be any proposal in the table to reduce fare prices as a form of value shared with residents. This environment then becomes a mostly risk-free situation for the bus operator where efficiencies are mainly funded by government funds without any sharing of resulting efficiencies which could be translated into tackling the affordability challenge that may increase bus adoption across Oxfordshire.
- d) Revenue risk shared with Local Authorities not balanced with rewards.** Local bus operators have complained about the delay in implementing traffic filters, arguing that if the Local Authority would be exposed to revenue risk they would have accelerated their implementation. They argue the existing partnership does not provide incentive, in the form of revenue risk, upon the Local Authority to plan transport works in a way to minimise any obstruction of the efficient operation of buses. Whilst there is no current revenue risk agreement, despite delays such as Botley Road being out of the control of LAs (under Network Rail control), authorities like OCC are compelled to compensate bus operators using BSIP funding, which is meant to be used to improve efficiency. Such arrangements make LA's like OCC part of de facto revenue risk sharing, as those existing in franchising delivery models, without having corresponding rewards once transit efficiencies are achieved.

The Bus Report rightly states that “The current barriers to bus service improvements lie beyond the remit of the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership. Increasing bus journey times and poor reliability and punctuality are down to growing traffic congestion, roadworks and road closure”. In relation to this, bus operators suggest there should be a greater involvement and buy-in from OCC's Highways Team, given the important issues of bus priority measures, traffic management, tree trimming, roadworks and road closures that impact bus operation. This CIA agrees with greater involvement of bus

---

<sup>8</sup> [Bus franchising - CMA advice for Local Transport Authorities](#)

operation with OCC's teams, including not only maintenance but broader transport planning and transport infrastructure delivery teams with the aim of integrated transport planning. However rather than arguing for a fairer redistribution of risks and rewards in the partnership in favour of lower prices for residents, the Bus Report states that the solution is in continuing to extract resources to fix them from public funds and residents: "ultimately, other strategies will be needed to encourage mode shift from car to bus. Some of these measures might also help provide funds to continue enhancing the bus network...include more stringent parking policies and higher parking charges, workplace parking levy and road pricing. Further bus priority measures may also help."

### **Conclusions: Daring to do it differently?**

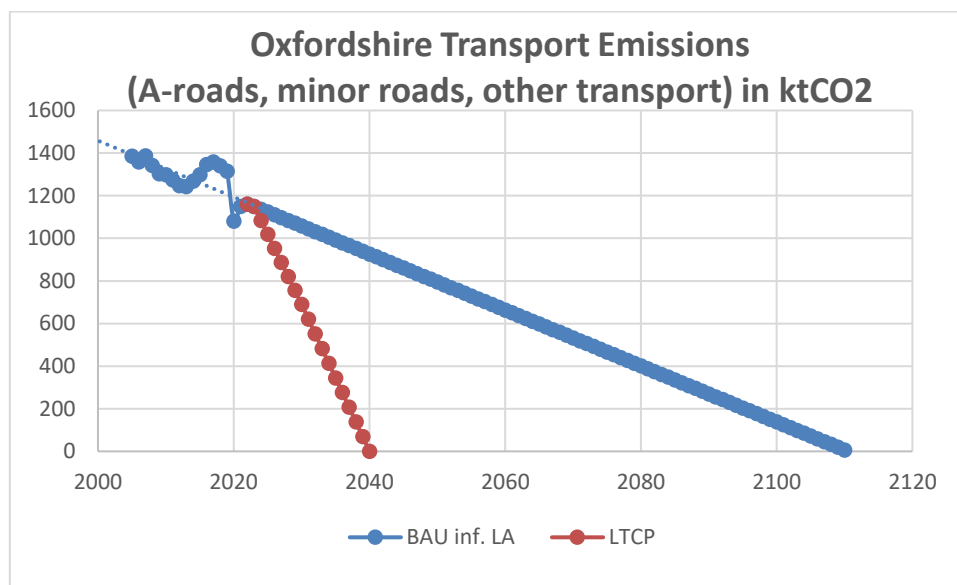
7. The commissioned Bus Report and the Cabinet Recommendation resulting from it, do not focus on assessing how the proposed EP+ delivery model would contribute to achieve the climate and broader sustainability targets established in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). This CIA has outlined the case for change, highlighting that current transport carbon emissions trends are deviating from LTCP targets. Rather than prescribing a particular bus delivery model, this CIA focuses on areas of improvement in the existing EP bus delivery model, that should be addressed in any future bus delivery models. In doing so this CIA highlights uneven distribution of risk and rewards in the existing EP model, that are likely hindering the achievement of LTCP climate targets. The EP+ proposed model seems to be an incremental change from the existing EP bus delivery model. Whether the EP+ proposal can address the areas of improvement and better distribution of risks and rewards highlighted in this CIA, depends on the feasibility of reaching the required agreements with bus operators within such framework.

As the Bus Reports makes it clear, the success of the existing enhanced partnership has largely **relied on the availability of public funding to derisk bus operations** in areas of low carbon innovation, efficiency and subsidising for affordability.

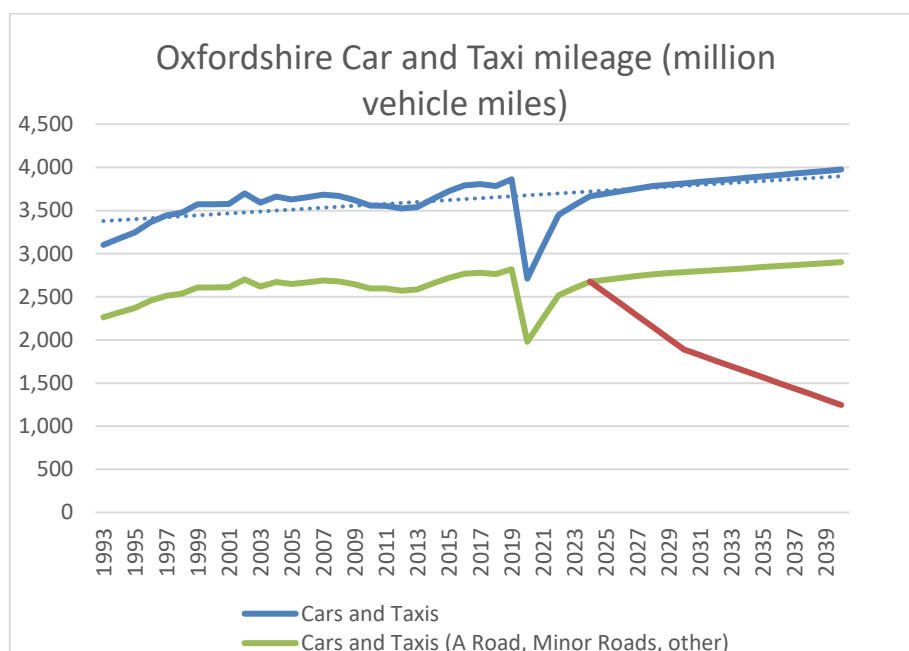
As this climate and broader sustainability assessment has analysed these **benefits are not set to arise from the efficiencies that should result from market competition in a deregulated environment**, but from the continuous flow of public funding. Publicly funded efficiencies have not yet materialised due to congestion issues derived from issues out of the control of OCC (Botley Road railway works) and yet OCC has had to compensate bus operators as if a revenue risk agreement (such as those characteristic of franchising arrangements) was in place.

Following **the existing model will very likely result in a severe delay in the target of achieving a net zero transport network in Oxfordshire by 2040 and enabling targets in LTCP such as replacing ¼ of car trips by 2030 and**

a further 1/3 of car trips in 2040. See extrapolation of business as usual below.



**Figure 1.** Oxfordshire Local Transport Emissions with extrapolations to net zero under two scenarios business as Usual (blue) and the required path for achieving Net Zero by 2040 as targeted in Oxfordshire’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Source: OCC Climate Action team with DESNZ data.



**Figure 2.** Extrapolation of Oxfordshire car mileage trends (blue line all transport, red line transport within influence of LA according to DESNZ) and required reductions in car trips (red line) to achieve Local Transport and Connectivity Plan targets in 2030 and 2040. Source: Climate Action with ONS and DESNZ

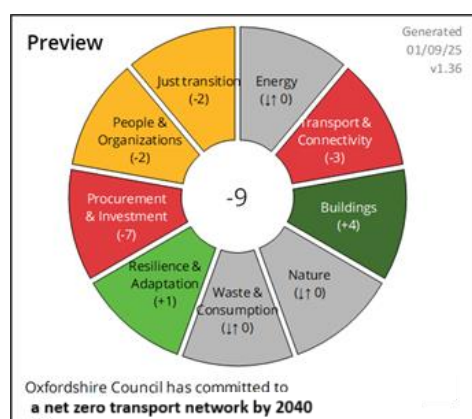
In the pursuit of bus route efficiencies and simplification of bus operations for residents, the existing partnership has achieved avoiding the duplication of bus

operators in routes, however in doing so it has **produced de facto monopolies in every route which are not allocated through competitive tender processes, as would be the case in a franchise model**. Furthermore, the **value of efficiencies that will be achieved through public funding, under the current arrangements are to be retained by bus operators**. Whilst operators have committed to reinvest part of the value retained in further improvements, **there is no plan to direct that value to tackle the affordability challenge in the form of lower fares to residents**. Lower fares may increase bus uptake and therefore bus operators revenue, therefore testing such affordability options should be also in favour of bus operators. It is the younger residents that are mostly impacted by lack of affordability in public transport as detailed by the GOCRIP report quoted in this assessment.

The EP+ model will enhance OCC capabilities for engaging in alternative models in the future (access to detailed route patronage data and stronger involvement of Highways Team within EP), however it is not clear how the EP+ model will address the unfair distribution of risks and rewards in the partnership which are highlighted in Annex 3 CIA namely: innovation risk substantially mitigated by central government, de facto monopolies in dedicated routes, Value of public funded efficiencies not directed to tackling affordability challenge, revenue risk shared with Local Authorities not balanced with rewards.

Given the existing good relation between OCC and bus operators, it is worth testing the limits of such EP+ proposal to address the issues highlighted in this CIA, in the interim period before the bus delivery model may be revisited again as a result of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. As part of supporting LAs decision to engage in alternative bus delivery models, best practices on EP+ models will be published by government later in the year and should be considered in the negotiation process.

## Detailed CIA Scoring



Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	N/A	Potential for positive impacts but this is not assumed.			
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	N/A	Potential for positive impacts but this is not assumed.			
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A	Potential for positive impacts but this is not assumed.			
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	-1	Not clear yet how EP+ will address existing car mileage trends in Oxfordshire (see Annex 3).	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel	1	Research shows that individuals who use public transport benefit from increased physical activity over those who don't, by walking to stops and final destinations.	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	-2	Not clear how the EP+ will address affordability which remains one of the main barriers for adoption of public transport (see Annex 3). Not clear how the EP+ will address the high dependence of public funding for low carbon innovation, rather than innovation resulting from market competition (see Annex 3). The electrification of bus fleets remains	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	-2	low carbon innovation, rather than innovation resulting from market competition (see Annex 3). The electrification of bus fleets remains			
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	N/A	No or very limited impact			
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings	3	Partnership has achieved so far bus operators to invest in charging infrastructure in depots.			
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	-1	New bus lanes for example could have the potential to encroach on grass verges and hedgerows but this would be considered in working up the details of such a scheme and is thought to be fairly minimal.	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	N/A	Potential for positive impacts but this is not assumed.			
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	1	Improves routes and access to green spaces in a sustainable and more equitable way	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	N/A	No or very limited impact			
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	N/A	No or very limited impact			
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	N/A	No or very limited impact			
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	N/A	No or very limited impact			
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	1	Increased bus route provision and frequency of service could result in providing greater resilience of council services	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability	-3	EP lack of competitive bidding processes for allocating de facto route monopolies (see Annex 3). Not clear how EP+ will address this.			
Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	-2	In EP, central government has provided 75% of cost gap of electric buses in relation to diesel bus fleet. Whilst operators have invested in charging infrastructure, the largest capital investment is in electric bus fleets, as a result the bus operators'			
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	1	The central aims of the proposals are to grow bus patronage and the bus network and in doing so supports and encourages behaviour change. But the potential is limited if affordability is not addressed.	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	-2	The EP+ proposal is an incremental change to the existing EP model. There is a risk that EP+ limitations may not cater for the required systemic change required to achieve LTCP target of 2040 net zero transport and Devolution.	The limitations of the EP+ model after negotiations with bus operators may be analysed again as part of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	N/A	Potential for positive impacts but this is not assumed.			
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	2	There are numerous health benefits for bus users and residents for example, increased physical activity, reduced congestion and improved air quality.	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality	-2	Not clear how EP+ will address affordability issues.	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.
Just transition	Promotes inclusion and participation	-2	Residents, local groups and stakeholders engaged in proposal development. However the views of younger residents need to be addressed (see Annex 3).	This will be considered when developing the details of the EP+ proposal.	Katharine Broomfield	As and when EP+ proposal details are developed.

# Annex 4 Example Leicester Buses EP+ proposal



## Enhanced Partnership Plus

### – delivering franchise standards under deregulation

April 2025

#### Introduction

1. Leicester has nearly completed all 100 stretched commitments of its first Enhanced Partnership Scheme 2022-25.
2. Patronage is now above pre-covid levels. Fare paying levels are 16% above pre-covid but concessionary travel remains at around 70% below. Punctuality and reliability is still rising, satisfaction levels for all key measures are well above national averages and multi-operating ticketing now accounts for a third of the overall market (over £8m pa)
3. However, bus passenger levels per head of population are still around half of Nottingham, Reading and Brighton – similar sized unitaries with many of the same socio-economic characteristics.
4. A key difference is that these areas have a core urban bus network provided by a *single* local operator – giving greater cohesion, local clarity and local ownership. There is no premium for interchange between routes, a single common ticketing platform, single brand and information offer. They also have one common accelerated standard for bus investment.
5. This is also resulting in greater cross-city trip making and better use of spare contra-flow seat capacity, crucial when over 80% of travel generators lie outside the City Centre.
6. These areas are, in effect, getting most if not all the benefits that a bus franchise can deliver, but within a deregulated system.
7. It should be noted, in passing, that most of the other positive publicised features of the London and Manchester franchises are a direct result of significant additional

local government capital and revenue spend – something that could equally be delivered under the Enhanced Partnership model.

## **Franchise-like Network Integration with Enhanced Partnerships**

8. Delivering a common integrated network standard in areas with several operators is challenging since it inevitably involves some restrictions in individual commercial freedoms in return for long term passenger growth.
9. Our agreed BSIP24 sets this situation out in more detail and proposes action in the following key areas.

### **Common Network plan**

#### **Aim**

- A network of 24 commercial ‘mainlines’ with proposed daytime (every 15 mins), evening and Sunday (every 30mins) frequency standards
- Timetable integration or exclusivity for ‘mainlines’ served by more than one operator
- Standardised mainline operational standards – a single operational charter
- A subsidised network of 6 Greenlines to the same common frequency standards, providing wider orbital and park and ride movement.

#### **Progress to date:**

- Good progress with qualifying agreements on 9 shared corridors, but little consistent marketing/branding and harmed by Flexi (MTC) fare premia.
- Development of Greenlines with funding available to date – electric buses, Hop, Hospital Hopper frequency enhancements, improvements to Orbital.

#### **To Progress:**

- Better co-ordinated discussion with operators on commercial development of the Mainlines network
- Development of common customer charter used exclusively by each operator
- Agreed common operational standards
- Integration of park and ride services into overall network
- Further frequency improvements in 3 highlighted mainlines and 2 greenlines

### **Common Single Fare and Ticketing structure**

#### **Aim**

- All operators exclusively use the Flexi ticketing structure



- No premium for interchange between routes
- Single common retail network

Progress to date :

- Standardisation of ticket conditions across operators
- Widening of Flexi range
- Introduction of TOTO day/week MTC capping and Mobile MTC ticketing.
- Reduced fare premium and significant increase in Flexi revenue.

To progress :

- Further reduction in fare premium
- Move to single fare structure
- Move to single ticketing structure and retail offer.

### **Common Single Brand, Information, Promotional Plan**

Aim

- Single common brand, information and communication platforms to Leicester Buses brand guidelines
- Agreed and funded continuous marketing plan

Progress to date

- All buses use the same livery – green buses with Leicester Buses promotion throughout – inside and out
- All infrastructure exclusively uses same Leicester Buses branding . No council branding.
- Reference to partnership on own website.
- Establishment of Leicester Buses website as one-stop shop for information and ticketing
- Coordinated joint printed information to LB brand in the City centre
- Coordinated joint electronic information at bus stations and bus stops

To Progress:

- All printed, web and real time information to use one single common brand to the exclusion of others
- No corporate single operator or Council branded information provision
- All parties exclusively use one common promotion and comms plan
- Stronger Leicester buses branding to bus, bus station and park and ride sites - exterior and internally

### **Common electric bus network**

## Aim

- All buses on the mainline urban network to be electric by end 2025/26
- All buses on whole mainline and greenlines network electric by end 2030.

## Progressed to date

- Well over half the Leicester network is now electric – 159 electric buses operating from four new charging depots.
- A further 18 Stagecoach electric buses are being introduced in early 2025, bringing the total to 177 – over three quarters of the urban network.
- Unsuccessful Zebra 2 bid

## To Progress

- Remainder of Arriva double deckers - urban network (35 buses)
- Arriva single decker suburban network (29 buses)
- Centrebus 22 (4 buses)
- Vectare Novus Direct (4-5 buses)

However, a firm commitment from all three operators for investment to upgrade all these buses within the next 12 months should match external funding become available

10. It is hoped that over the next 18 months the Leicester Buses Partnership can further progress these integration areas under Enhanced Partnership Plus which mimics most of the integration strengths of a franchise without the turbulence, time and expense of establishing and continually managing a large bus franchise.

11. To assist operators to flex further along this integration path, it is proposed that the £9m BSIP 2025/26 funds are targeted in areas that focus mainly on the commercial mainlines, with swift further delivery in areas where there is already good momentum – electric bus investment, printed information, subsidised Flexi tickets, real time information, mainline frequencies and marketing.

12. Of course, this process inevitably forms part of a continuous assessment of the best governance model to use in future years. If we can get very close to the integration standards of a franchise under an EP Plus regime but usage per head remains significantly lower than other similar areas, then this would perhaps indicate that fault does not lie in the governance model but elsewhere eg funding levels, external land-use policies, local government boundaries etc.

## Divisions Affected – All

### PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 SEPTEMBER 2025

#### City Centre Development: Strategic Context

#### Report by Director of Property and Assets

### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to
  - (a) The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note and comment on the presentation provided at Annex 1.

### Executive Summary

2. On 25 February 2025, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the item: *City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall* and requested further information on the Council's strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.
3. In response to Scrutiny Committee's request for further details and information, a presentation has been developed which outlines the opportunities for regeneration within the city centre, linked to both the sale of County Hall and the redevelopment of Speedwell House.
4. This presentation serves as a high-level vision document only and is presented at Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion. This is not a strategy, but a discussion document only.

### Further Information

5. The sale of County Hall and redevelopment of Speedwell House provides opportunities for the regeneration of Oxford's West End and Southern Quarter.
6. It should be noted that the County Council are not the Local Planning Authority, this function sits with Oxfordshire City Council. This presentation is therefore delivered in respect of the Council's interest as key landowners within the city centre, and key influencers in facilitating growth and regeneration.

7. This presentation (as provided at Annex 1) will outline the key areas of change within the city, the planning framework that the Council is working within, along with other facilitating infrastructure that is expected to come forward.
8. Further work on the development of masterplans and the strategy for the city will be undertaken when more is known as to the availability of sites and proposed plans.
9. The Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and note the presentation and the Council's ongoing strategic oversight of the city centre.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

10. Any city masterplan must be in compliance with the Oxford City Local Plan (and their emerging Local Plan).
11. Any action plan coming forward must also align with the Council's corporate priorities and policies.

## **Financial Implications**

12. The presentation at Annex 1 provides an overview and is a vision document for the city, linking together different workstreams.
13. This is a visioning document only. At this stage, the document serves as a discussion point and the financial implications have not been assessed.

Drew Hodgson  
Strategic Finance Business Partner  
drew.hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Legal Implications**

14. There are no further legal implications arising from the contents of this report at this stage.

Jay Akbar  
Head of Legal and Governance Services  
jay.akbar@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Staff Implications**

15. This is a visioning document only. There are a number of staff and consultants working on the vision for the city centre, and we will continue to work with partners/stakeholders to develop the city plan. At this stage there are no staff implications.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

16. This is a visioning document only. As a part of the individual developments and projects coming forward, equalities and inclusion will be examined in detail and relevant impact assessments will be undertaken.

## **Sustainability Implications**

17. This is a visioning document only. Sustainability of the developments will be fully considered to ensure that they meet the Council's net zero priorities. In addition, proposed developments within the city centre will be required to comply with Oxford City's Local Plan and sustainability policies.

## **Risk Management**

18. This is a visioning document only, and the risk of this visioning work is minimal.
19. Working with Oxford City Council and other partners, the Council will endeavour to mitigate any known or likely risks resulting from projects.

## **Consultations**

20. Each individual proposed development will undergo a public consultation stage as part of the planning process.
21. The document at Annexe 1 outlines the different elements of development across the city.

Vic Kurzeja  
Director of Property and Assets

Annex: Annexe 1 - City Centre Development: Strategic Context

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets  
Vic.Kurzeja@Oxfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 07726 307 813

September 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

# City centre development: strategic context

## Place Overview & Scrutiny

September 2025

Page 447



Image source: Savills County Hall brochure



# Contents

- Introduction – *Slide 3*
- Location & Context – *Slide 4-5*
- Planning & Policy Context – *Slide 6-8*
- County Hall – *Slide 9*
- Speedwell House – *Slide 10*
- Key Developments – *Slide 11-12*
- Infrastructure – *Slide 13*
- Movement & Connectivity – *Slide 14*
- COMPF – *Slide 15*
- Joined-Up Working – *Slide 16*
- Oxford West End Landowners Group – *Slide 17*
- Southern Quarter – One Public Estate – *Slide 18*
- Ongoing Actions & Next Steps – *Slide 19*



Image source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework

# Introduction

- Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee have asked Property OCC ("the Council") to “*set out its strategy for the City centre’s redevelopment and regeneration*”
- This request forms part of ongoing discussions around the Council's City Centre Accommodation Strategy. Accordingly, this presentation focusses on the area of the City centre known as Oxford West End which includes assets owned by OCC, namely County Hall and Speedwell House
- The sale of County Hall, and the proposed refurbishment of Speedwell House are catalysts for regeneration and provide OCC with influence over future change in Oxford West End
- This presentation sets out the relevant planning & policy context, existing and proposed developments and infrastructure within the West End, alongside Council and related workstreams and next steps that are relevant to the area’s regeneration
- Broader work is ongoing on the development of the City centre in conjunction with the City Council and other partners as outlined in this presentation

# Location & Context

- Oxford West End is located to the west of the City centre, extending westwards from County Hall to the railway station and beyond. The area includes key development sites such as Oxpens, the Island Site and Osney Mead
- A further area which forms part of the wider West End located to the south of the City centre, comprising the southern end of St Aldate's Street, Thames Street and Speedwell Street, is referred to in this presentation as Southern Quarter
- Southern Quarter has a concentration of public sector owned administrative buildings including Speedwell House owned by OCC
- Oxford West End and Southern Quarter comprise a mix of uses including office, retail, and leisure, private, social and student housing, and educational and administrative facilities

# Oxford West End

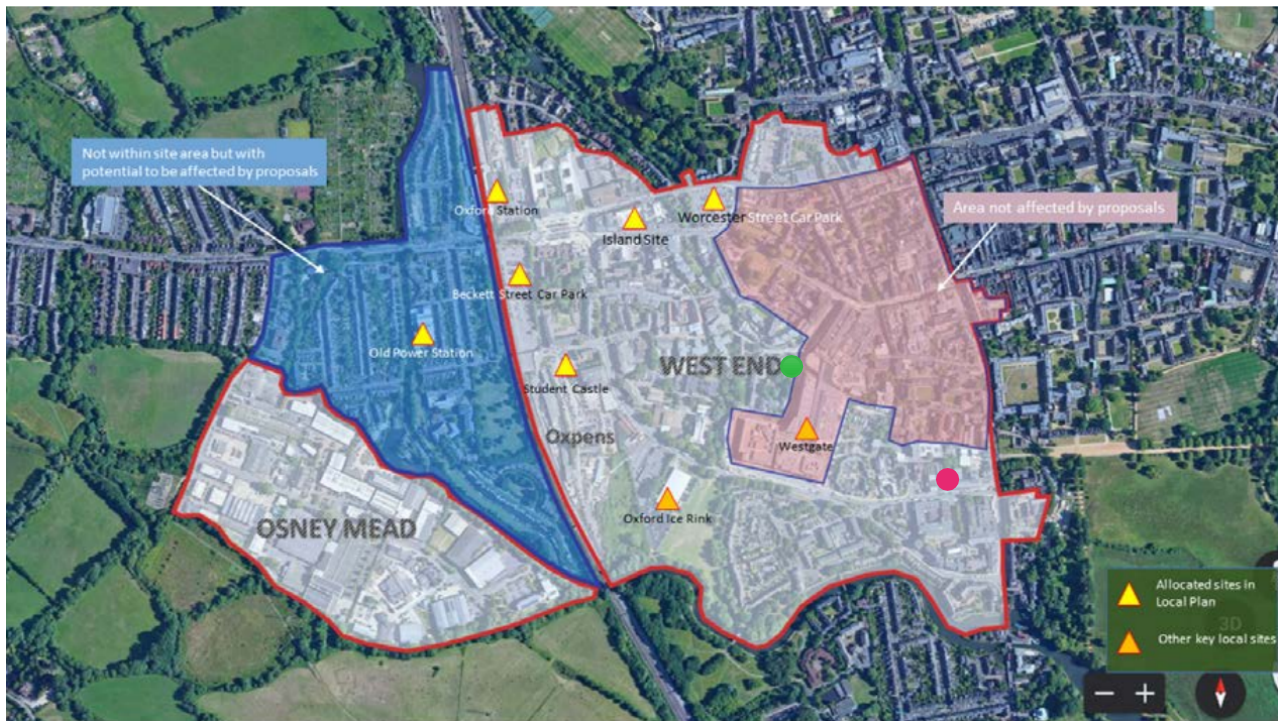


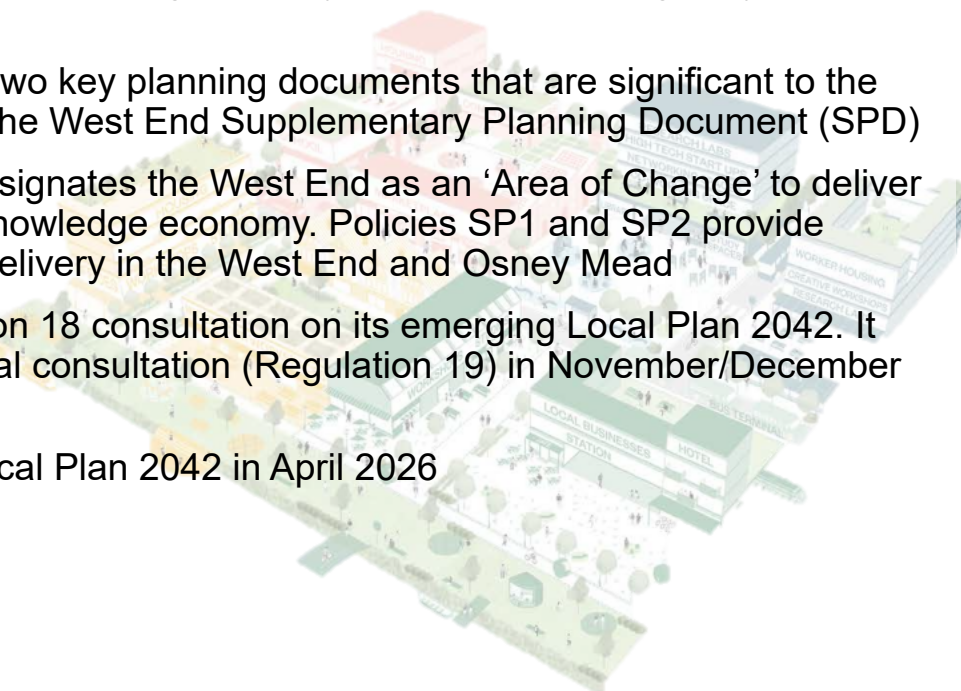
Image source: Oxford City Council West End SPD (2022)

● County Hall

● Speedwell House

# Planning & Policy Context (1)

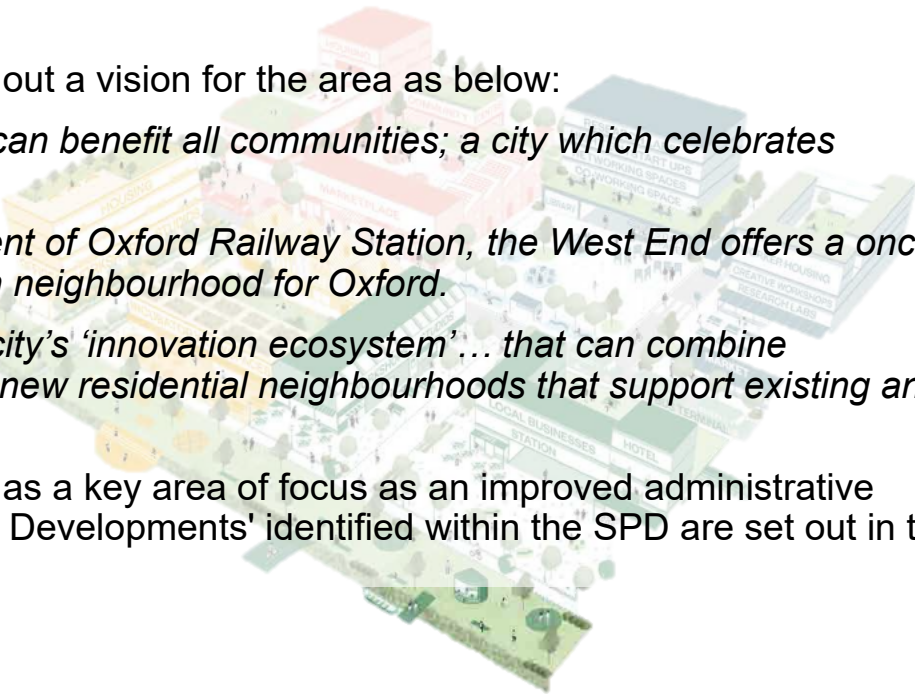
- Oxford City Council ("Oxford City") is the Local Planning Authority and OCC is the Highways and Transport Authority
- From a local planning perspective there are two key planning documents that are significant to the area. These are the Oxford Local Plan and the West End Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- The Oxford Local Plan 2036 Policy AOC1 designates the West End as an 'Area of Change' to deliver mixed land uses which contribute to Oxford's knowledge economy. Policies SP1 and SP2 provide further details on housing and employment delivery in the West End and Osney Mead
- Oxford City has recently concluded Regulation 18 consultation on its emerging Local Plan 2042. It plans to undertake the second round of formal consultation (Regulation 19) in November/December 2025
- Oxford City are aiming for adoption of the Local Plan 2042 in April 2026





## Planning & Policy Context (2)

- The West End SPD dates from 2022 and although non-statutory is considered a material consideration providing detailed advice and guidance in helping to inform planning applications and decisions
- The SPD and supporting documents sets out a vision for the area as below:
- *“Create a liveable and equitable city that can benefit all communities; a city which celebrates innovation and creativity...”*
- *Underpinned by the upcoming development of Oxford Railway Station, the West End offers a once in a lifetime chance to create a new urban neighbourhood for Oxford.*
- *The area can expand and showcase the city’s ‘innovation ecosystem’... that can combine workspaces and fantastic amenities, with new residential neighbourhoods that support existing and new communities alike.”*
- The SPD also identifies Speedwell Street as a key area of focus as an improved administrative quarter for the city centre. The 'Emerging Developments' identified within the SPD are set out in the following slide



# EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS

## Spatial Framework Strategies

With lots of sites coming up for development in the short, medium and long term - there lies a real opportunity here to enhance existing neighbourhoods, their activity hubs and create complementary new hubs and destinations that connect well within the existing setting, both spatially and in terms of the mix of opportunities they offer.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Osney Mead regeneration Site  | 12 City of Oxford College, Employment and Homes            |
| 2 Gibbs Crescent  | 13 1-17 Botley Road  |
| 3 Oxpens  | 14 Abbey Road and Cripsey Place                            |
| 4 Becket Street Car Park  | 15 Oxford Railway Station Depot                            |
| 5 Oxford Station  | 16 Rewley Road Fire Station                                |
| 6 Frideswide Square and Castle Mill Stream Quarter (Nuffield College Sites) | 17 Botley Road Retail Park                                 |
| 7 Beaver House  | 18 Oxfordshire County Hall                                 |
| 8 Osney Lane  | 19 Magistrates' Court, County Court and Telephone Exchange |
| 9 SAID Business School  | 20 Speedwell House   |
| 10 Richard Gray Court and Royal Mail Delivery Office                        | 21 Faculty of Music  |
| 11 Ice Rink   | 22 Odeon Cinema  |
|   | 23 New Theatre   |
|   | 24 Police Station  |

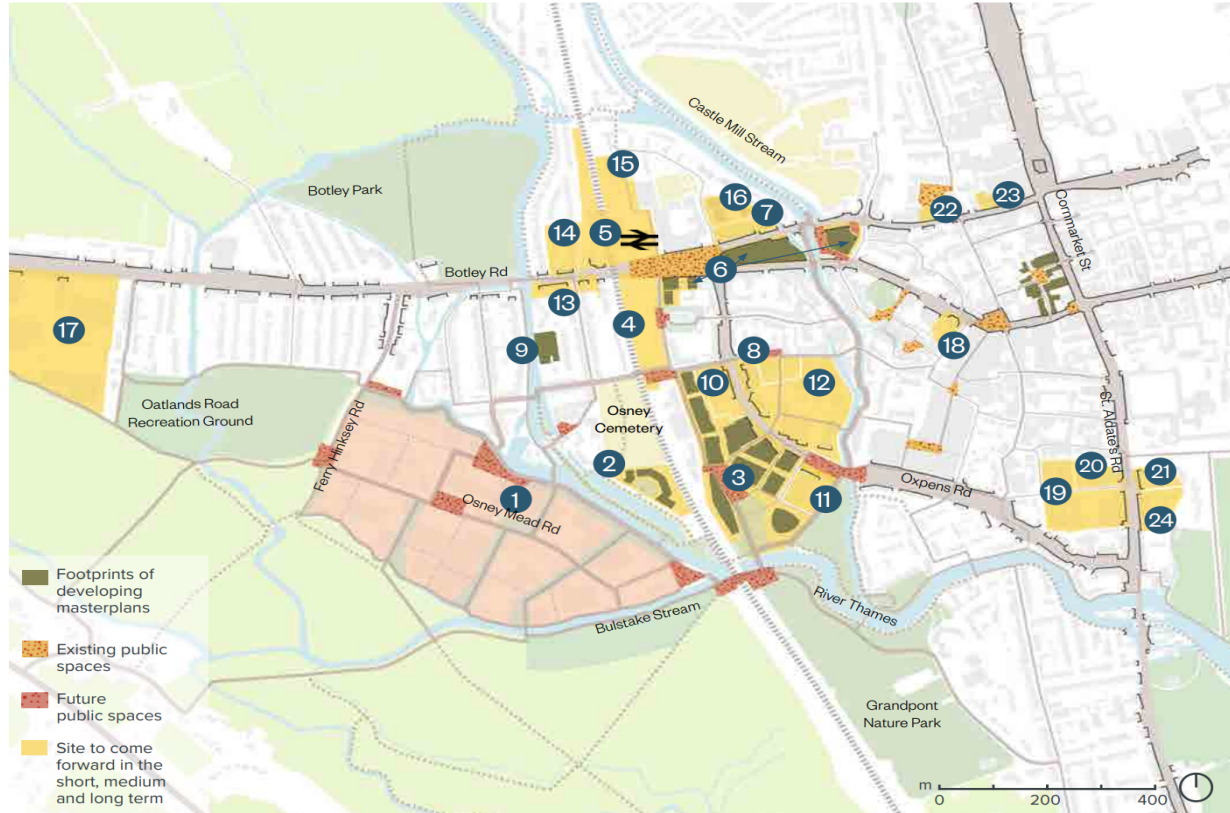


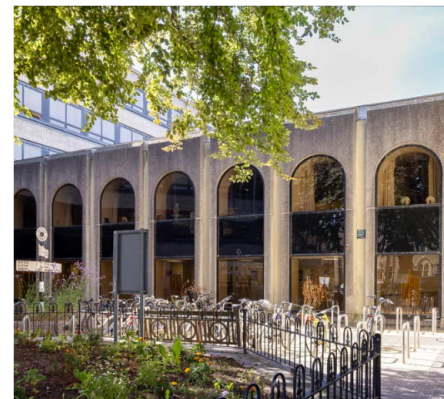
Image source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework SPD



# County Hall

- As approved by Cabinet in February 2025, contracts have been exchanged for the sale of County Hall, subject to planning, with completion in March 2027
- OCC's disposal of County Hall presents the opportunity to re-imagine the site through redevelopment and refurbishment that will assist the regeneration of the West End
- The emerging proposals will comprise an extensive retrofit and conversion of New County Hall, and refurbishment and restoration of Old County Hall as a high-quality hotel with improved public realm

Page 455



*Current images of County Hall*

Image source: Savills County Hall brochure

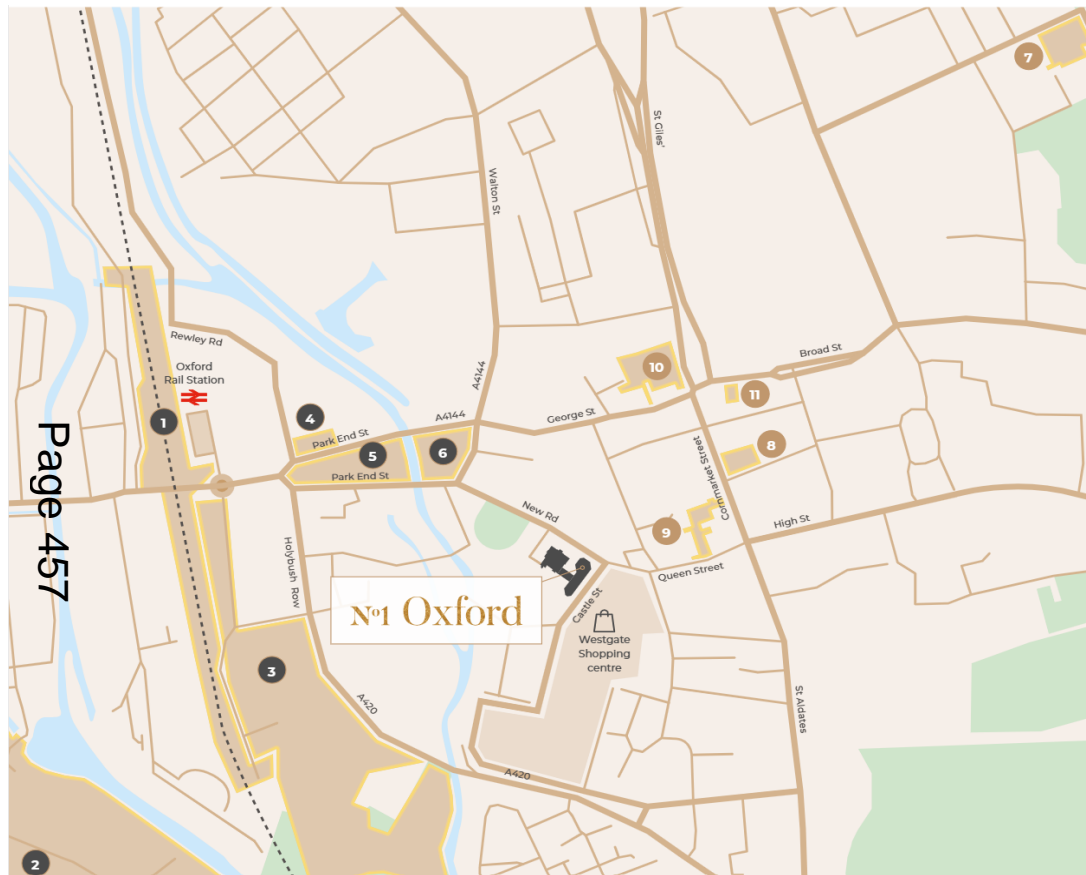
# Speedwell House

- Options for the redevelopment and regeneration of the existing footprint of Speedwell House are currently being reviewed
- Option 1 – City Centre Hub:** Full refurbishment and fit out to provide a flagship city centre hub with conference facilities, Council chambers, Coroner's Service and office accommodation
- Option 2 – Residential:** Conversion to residential use
- Option 3 – Consideration of other market opportunities:** Refurbishment to create engaging space for lease or sale and/or full fit out by others
- As part of any proposed project there will be opportunities to improve the building's setting and its relationship with Speedwell Street and the wider Southern Quarter area



*CGI of the proposed design for Speedwell House from the rear*

# Oxford West End - Key Developments (1)



Page 457

## No.1 Oxford

# Development Context

No.1 Oxford is uniquely positioned between 'Oxford West End' and the core city centre. Oxford West End is a partnership programme made up of key landowners and developers, supported by the City Council.

Oxford Rail station is undergoing **substantial regeneration** to improve the western entrance and ticket hall area to **increase capacity**.

The Budget delivered in March 2023 confirmed government funding for the East West Rail Link, providing increased services between Oxford and Cambridge and boosting the connectivity across the Ox-Cam Arc region.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEST END

- 1 Oxford Railway Station
- 2 Osney Mead
- 3 Oxpens
- 4 Beaver House
- 5 Island Site
- 6 Worcester Street Car Park

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITY CENTRE

- 7 Life & Mind Building
- 8 Northgate
- 9 Clarendon Centre
- 10 1-12 Magdalen Street
- 11 The Store

# Oxford West End - Key Developments (2)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEST END



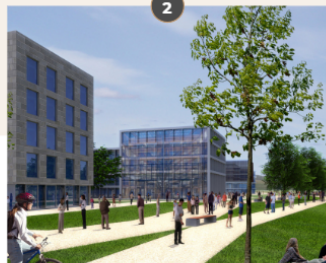
**New Western Entrance to Railway Station**

**Owner:** Network Rail.

**Status:** In progress.

**Uses/Quantum:** Improvement to the western entrance and ticket hall area to increase capacity. The wider site including Becket Street car park is being master-planned to provide circa 60,000 sq ft of commercial space.

**Delivery Partner:** Network Rail.



**Osney Mead**

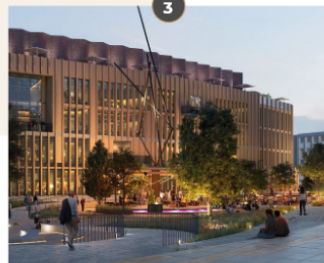
**Owner:** Oxford University Development (JV between Oxford University and Legal & General).

**Status:** Vision and masterplan undertaken.

**Uses/Quantum:** Mixed use 44 acre site including housing for University staff and students, teaching space as well as research and development.

**Delivery Partner:** OUD.

**Delivery Timescales:** 2030 plus.



**OXPENS**

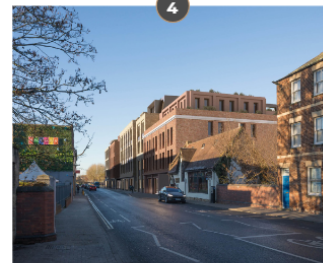
**Owner:** OXWED (JV between Nuffield College and Oxford City Council).

**Planning Status:** Planning submitted for a new mixed use development.

**Uses/Quantum:** 600,000 sq ft of mixed use including offices, laboratories, hotel and residential.

**Delivery Partner:** TBC.

**Delivery Timescales:** 2027/2028.



**Beaver House (Bridge Labs)**

**Owner/Developer:** UBS / Reef Group.

**Planning Status:** Planning permission granted.

**Uses/Quantum:** Primarily office and laboratory uses totalling c.140,000 sq ft.

**Delivery Partner:** UBS / Reef.

**Delivery Timescales:** 2027.



**Island Site/Worcester Street Car Park**

**Owner/Developer:** Nuffield College.

**Planning Status:** Identified in Local Plan as a development opportunity. Masterplanning exercise undertaken.

**Uses/Quantum:** 270,000 sq ft of mixed use including ground floor activation, office, teaching and laboratory space.

**Delivery Partner:** TBC.

**Delivery Timescales:** 2028 plus.

Source: Savills County Hall brochure



# Infrastructure - Oxford Railway Station

- Oxford Railway Station is undergoing an upgrade to increase capacity and improve services. The project includes a new platform (platform 5), and a new western entrance
- Current works at the station also include a new northern/pedestrian cycle path
- In addition, an Interim Improvement Plan has been prepared which aims to develop and deliver short-term improvements to enhance the existing infrastructure and its immediate surroundings
- This is moving forward since it is now public information, as Network Rail has initiated a tender process for master planning and design at Oxford Station



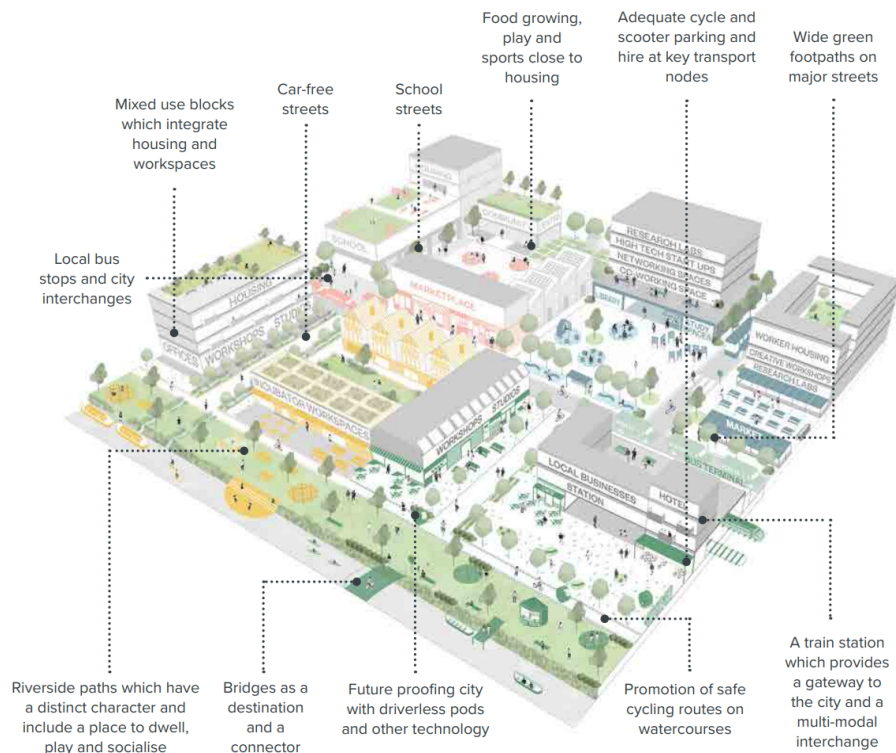
*Above: Oxford Railway Station (current)*  
Image source: UK Aerial Imagery/Google Images

*Below: CGI of proposed station*  
Image source: IDOM/Google Images



# Movement and Connectivity

- Movement and connectivity are central to the vision for the W End. The aim to create a place where walking, cycling, and public transport are prioritised, and where new and existing communities are seamlessly linked
- Key movement and connectivity strategies for the area include
- Prioritising Active and Low Carbon lifestyles, with walking and cycling at the heart of the movement strategy for the area
- New and improved connections, including east-west links / routes to overcome severance caused by the river and railway, connecting Osney Mead, Oxpens, and the City centre
- Public Transport Integration
- River and Waterway connectivity, including opening-up the riverside and developing blue and green routes
- These improvements are designed to support sustainable growth, enhance quality of life, and ensure the West End becomes a vibrant, accessible, and well-connected part of Oxford



Source: Oxford City Council/Oxford West End Spatial Framework SPD

# COMPF - A Vision for Movement & Place

## Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (COMPF)

- A project jointly developed by Oxford City and OCC to re-imagine Oxford's public realm:
- building on adopted policies and plans
- with less traffic and congestion
- targeting specific priorities

...and start conversations about

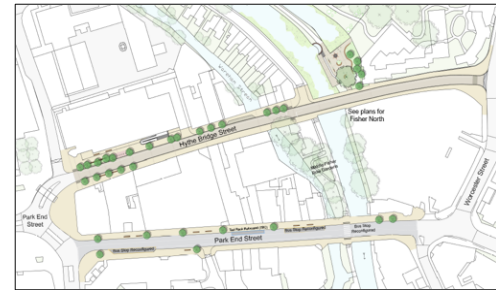
- the future of the Oxford's streets
- an ambitious, vision-led set of options and opportunities
- ideas to be taken forward through further design and engagement over coming years

- In relation to the West End, early ideas include a pedestrian priority Hythe Bridge Street and public realm improvements



Above: Artist Impression of Hythe Bridge St from Hythe Bridge (looking west)

Below: Pedestrian-priority Hythe Bridge St  
Hythe Bridge St: widened pavements and level surface;  
Park End St: widened pavements, added greenery, improved bus stops and loading bays





# Joined-up Working

OCC is collaborating with several partners to take a more coordinated and strategic approach to regenerating Oxford West End, but further engagement is still required

Page 462



# Oxford West End - Oxford West End Landowners Group

- The Oxford West End Landowners Group is a partnership programme administered by Oxford City
- The group – comprising the landowners and developers opposite, including OCC - aims to revitalise and regenerate the West End
- The group's vision for the West End is closely connected to the policies in the Oxford Local Plan and in the West End SPD



N.B. Landowners Group also includes British Land and UBS/Reef Origin

Source: Oxford West End

# Southern Quarter - One Public Estate

- The proposed options appraisal refurbishment of Speedwell House will act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of Southern Quarter
- A collaboration project between public sector owners including OCC, under One Public Estate, has been commissioned to look at the area
- The project will provide the opportunity to re-think and rationalise public sector assets to deliver benefits for residents, service users, owners, and occupiers
- The project will also provide opportunities to explore improvements to the public realm, streetscape, transport and traffic movement



*Aerial view of the Southern Quarter*

Image source: Google Maps

# Oxford West End and Southern Quarter - Next Steps

- Involvement from OCC as member of West End Landowners Group working on a joined-up vision for the area
- Ongoing role as Highways Authority in the evolution and delivery of an improved Oxford Railway Station working with Oxford City, Network Rail and DfT
- As a member of the Oxford Strategic Rail Promoters Group ensure that short and long-term improvements to Oxford Railway Station allow for and are integrated with EWR and the Cowley Branch Line
- Through COMPF, undertake further engagement with residents and stakeholders in order to progress movement and placemaking options for the West End
- As Highways Authority, ensure that traffic interventions, such as Traffic Filters, Zero Emissions Zone and Temporary Congestion Charge, support improved placemaking and regeneration of Oxford West End
- Through OCC's involvement in One Public Estate, ensure that the Southern Quarter project looks at the area's potential for regeneration and is joined up with the wider West End

This page is intentionally left blank