



County Council

10 February 2026

Agenda



To: Members of the County COUNCIL

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 10 February 2026 at 10.30 am

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Martin Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

January 2026

Committee Officer: **Democratic Services**
E-mail: CommitteesDemocraticServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 9 - 22)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 (CC1) and to receive information arising from them.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note

Members are reminded that they must declare their interests orally at the meeting and specify (a) the nature of the interest and (b) which items on the agenda are the relevant items. This applies also to items where members have interests by virtue of their membership of a district council in Oxfordshire.

4. Official Communications

5. Appointments

To make any changes to the membership of scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups and to note any changes to the Cabinet made by the Leader of the Council.

6. Petitions and Public Address

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

Requests to present a petition must be submitted no later than 9am ten working days before the meeting.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting.

Requests should be submitted to committeesdemocraticservices@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.

7. Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 (Pages 23 - 38)

Report of the Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

The pay policy statement sets out the council's approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011. It has been drafted with due regard to the associated statutory guidance, including the supplementary statutory guidance issued in February 2013, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, and the statutory guidance on special severance payments issued in May 2022 under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve and adopt the 2026/27 pay policy statement and agree to its publication on the council website and intranet, as required by The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) and the Code of Practice on Data Transparency.**

8. Budget and Business Planning 2026/27 - 2030/31 (Pages 39 - 276)

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

This report is the culmination of the Budget and Business Planning process for 2026/27 to 2030/31. It sets out the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2026/27, medium term financial plan to 2030/31 and capital programme to 2036/37, together with a number of strategies and policies that the Council is required to approve for the 2026/27 financial year.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a. have regard to the statutory report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) (at Section 3) in approving recommendations b to d below;**
- b. (in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve:**
 - (1) the council tax and precept calculations for 2026/27 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:**
 - (i) a precept of £567,372,273.74**
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £2,006.78;**
 - (2) a budget for 2026/27 as set out in Section 4.4;**
 - (3) a medium term financial strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in Section 4.2);**
 - (4) the Financial Strategy for 2026/27 at Section 4.5;**
 - (5) the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 at Section 4.6 including**
 - (i) the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)'s recommended level of General Balances for 2026/27 (Section 4.6), and**
 - (ii) the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27 to 2030/31 (Section 4.6.1)**

c. (in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2026/27 to 2036/37 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Section 5.1;
- (2) a Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2036/37 as set out in Section 5.4 which includes new capital proposals set out in Section 5.3.

d. (in respect of treasury management – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27 at Section 5.2 including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Specified Investment and Non-Specified Investment Instruments.
- (2) that any further changes required to the 2026/27 strategy be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation;

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-registerable 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.

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

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

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

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

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Agenda Item 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 December 2025 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.40 pm

Present:

Councillor Mark Lygo – in the Chair

Councillors:

Ted Fenton (Vice-Chair)	James Fry	Saj Malik
Thomas Ashby	Andrew Gant	Kieron Mallon
Brad Baines	Emma Garnett	Emma Markham
James Barlow	Sean Gaul	Gavin McLauchlan
Ron Batstone	Stefan Gawrysiak	Ian Middleton
Tim Bearder	Laura Gordon	Toyah Overton
Will Boucher-Giles	Andy Graham	Glynis Phillips
Chris Brant	Tom Greenaway	James Plumb
Liz Brighouse OBE	Kate Gregory	Susanna Pressel
Mark Cherry	Jane Hanna OBE	Leigh Rawlins
Andrew Coles	Jenny Hannaby	Judy Roberts
Dr Izzy Creed	David Henwood	James Robertshaw
Hao Du	Georgina Heritage	Geoff Saul
Imade Edosomwan	Ben Higgins	Roz Smith
Judith Edwards	David Hingley	Ian Snowdon
Gareth Epps	Johnny Hope-Smith	Peter Stevens
Lee Evans	Robin Jones	Bethia Thomas
Neil Fawcett	Emily Kerr	Liam Walker
Nick Field-Johnson	Liz Leffman	Matt Webb
Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Dan Levy	Tony Worgan
Rebekah Fletcher	Diana Lugova	

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.

97/25 MINUTES
(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

98/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cotter, Crichton, Ley, McLean, Sargent and Shiri. Councillor Sargent observed the meeting online.

99/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

100/25 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair announced that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) had confirmed that the Oxfordshire local area partnership had taken effective action to make improvements in services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. A monitoring inspection to assess progress began on 15 September and ended with onsite activity between 29 September and 1 October 2025. Ofsted and CQC found that the local area partnership had taken "effective action" in all five areas that were previously identified as priorities. Whilst the partnership recognised there was more to do to ensure all children, parents and carers feel these changes, this was an important milestone which showed a positive direction of travel.

The Chair thanked everyone who came to his Charity Christmas Quiz, held on 3 December, which raised £730 for his chosen charities. This was the third of his charity quizzes. Together, they have now raised £2,000 for OXSRAD, Abingdon RDA, and Oxford United in the Community.

The Chair was honoured to lay a wreath at the Oxford Service of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday this year and thanked councillors who likewise placed wreaths on his behalf in their divisions.

A list of the Chair's Events since the last Council meeting in November was included in Annex 1.

The Chair also announced some coming events:

10 December from 12.45 pm, the Annual City and County Council Christmas Fun Run in Christ Church Meadows.

On Monday, 15 December, the Chair's Christmas Carol Service at 6.30pm in St Nicholas Church in Marston. All councillors were invited to attend.

Council had been notified of the passing on 19 November of former county councillor Roy Darke. He was elected as a Labour Member for the Headington & Marston Division in 2009 but did not contest the election in

2013. He served as a member of the Audit Committee, which then became the Audit & Governance Committee, and sat as a member of the Standards Committee and Pension Fund Committee at periods during his term of office.

He also served on Oxford City Council from 2002 to 2004 and again from 2008 to 2016; and Sheffield City Council from 1990 to 1994. The Chair paid tribute to his years of service and Members stood for a minute's silence.

101/25 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

There were no appointments to be made.

102/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair accepted a request from Becky Howard to present a petition on 'Increase mental health care capacity in Oxfordshire'

Becky Howard stated she arranged the petition after witnessing a series of violent incidents perpetrated by a man in schizophrenic crisis. The petition requested NHS leaders to increase mental healthcare capacity in Oxfordshire by training more nurses, doctors and well-being professionals, opening more beds and recruiting more staff.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Adults, responded that the petition raised issues that sat largely within NHS responsibilities. Oxfordshire County Council works closely with the NHS with one of the biggest pooled budgets in the country. Councillor Bearder stated that he would refer the petition to the Chief Officer and ask them to liaise with our NHS partners to get a response back to the petitioner.

103/25 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 7)

Eleven questions were asked. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

104/25 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

Sixty-five questions were asked. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

105/25 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of the Cabinet covering its meetings for 13 November and 18 November 2025.

On Item 1: Local Government Reorganisation – Submission of Proposal to Government.

Councillor Pressel asked how the County Council thought it could possibly run a unitary council across the whole of Oxfordshire, when it had no proper building to work from. Councillor Leffman responded by saying that the unitary authority would decide where it was going to be based and there was no reason why Speedwell and other buildings in the Council's possession should not be part of that consideration.

Councillor Evans asked that, given the Council's revised proposal to have 99 councillors for a unitary Oxfordshire Council, it was difficult to see how any of the proposals for local government reorganisation could go ahead without a boundary review. As such, Councillor Evans asked the Leader of the Council whether the Leader was confident that elections to a new authority would go ahead in May 2027. Councillor Leffman responded by saying that the elections would go ahead in accordance with the current boundaries.

Councillor Malik asked, whether Councillor Leffman had managed to convince her Members to support the 'one unitary' bid proposal or whether the matter was still undecided. Councillor Leffman responded that it was the Government's decision as to the configuration of the new unitary and it was not for Councillor Leffman to persuade anybody.

Item 3: HR and Cultural Change - Quarterly Employee Data Report - Quarter 2 2025-26

Councillor Barlow noted that the non-disclosure of ethnicity increased from 8 to 10% and asked how that compared to other local authorities and similar sized organisations and whether any analysis of the reasons for that had been undertaken. Councillor Fawcett undertook to look into this matter further.

Councillor Kerr asked if Oxfordshire had plans, similar to South Cambridgeshire, to move to a 4-day week, which was working well, or to permit officers more flexible working arrangements, such as allowing staff to work from abroad during the Christmas break. Councillor Fawcett responded that the county council was very keen to give staff as much flexibility as possible in terms of their working arrangements. Furthermore, he said that in terms of the 4-day working week, while some of the data was positive, there were some question marks over the outcomes. However, he was open to looking into this matter further.

Councillor Pressel asked why the amount spent on expensive agency staff had gone up based on the report. Councillor Fawcett confirmed that there had been a slight increase in this quarterly report. However, he said the trend over the last few years, was going in the right direction and stronger practices were in place to monitor the situation.

Councillor Malik asked about access to technology, especially for the elderly, where staff worked from home. Councillor Malik wanted to know what could be done to make sure that people could have face to face interaction with the relevant officers. Councillor Fawcett responded that staff were employed based on having the right skills as well as the right equipment if they were working from home. Furthermore, work could also be carried out from the local offices.

Item 4: Treasury Management Mid-Term Review 2025-26

Councillor Baines asked for details about draft plans for the issuing of a further green climate bond, including the timeline for issue, the total value and what the raised capital would be spent on. Councillor Levy advised that he was unable to provide any details as nothing had been planned as yet.

Item 5. Budget and Business Planning Report 2026/27 - 2030/31

Councillor Baines asked for an outline of the instructions given to directors as part of the budget planning process. Councillor Baines raised the matter, given the anticipated financial pressures expected on the headline budget as a result of the Fair-Funding review, the additional £5.2 million annual pressure to children's services and the financial adjustment already applied to savings within children's services. Councillor Levy responded that directors were expected to keep within the budget levels already set and to make as many savings as possible, while still delivering the services required by residents.

Councillor Smith asked why the process was so different this year. Councillor Levy responded that the full details from central government were awaited. Furthermore, he said that it was likely that, in the spending review, money would be taken away from places like Oxfordshire given it had a high council tax base. Councillor Levy added that the final data from the Fair Funding review as well as final settlements were still being awaited.

Councillor Fry asked what the implications would be for the Council with regard to the packaging extended producer responsibility, which had been introduced to encourage separate recycling of paper but had resulted in extra costs being imposed on the recycling system. Councillor Levy said that he would obtain a written answer to the question and reminded Council that roadside collections were the responsibility of the districts and not of the county council.

Item 6. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Performance and Risk Quarter 2 2025/26

Councillor Middleton noted that recycling was below target and some collection authorities were also looking at changes in collection cycles that could help. He understood that for it to be viable, there needed to be a financial concession from the county council which can be offset against costs as a result of the emissions trading scheme. He asked if this was

something that was being actively considered, and if so, how long was it likely to be before a deal was struck. Councillor Levy said he would have to obtain further information to respond to the issue.

Councillor Baines asked how short the Council had fallen of its target for footway and cycle maintenance and whether the cabinet member believed that the target could be met. Councillor Levy responded that there was a commitment to make active travel as popular as possible but there was an issue with maintaining cycle ways and pavements. He said he would obtain further information on the issue and get a written answer.

Councillor Brighouse asked what the Council was doing to address the massive risk that existed in relation to the deficit in the High Needs Block. Councillor Levy responded that central government had suggested that there would be a mechanism to deal with the issue. Future costs of SEND was a real issue, and more information was needed from central government to create a work plan.

Item 7. Capital Programme Approvals - November 2025

Councillor Kerr asked what percentage of road building schemes had seen a 20 or 30% capital overrun in the last couple of years. Councillor Levy responded that he would obtain more information and provide a written response on the issue.

Councillor McLauchlan asked what was being done strategically to minimise disruption in the area surrounding Steventon and Benson Lane in Crowmarsh. Councillor Levy responded that the question was an infrastructure issue rather than a financial one but undertook to ensure a written response would be provided.

Item 8. Response to motion by Councillor Creed on Children's Centres

Councillor Creed asked what steps had been taken by Cabinet to ensure that the money spent by local government was going to help the children that were the most deprived and most in need in the county, to ensure the success of the family hubs. Councillor Gaul responded that a strategic plan had been approved which was committed to achieving a good level of development for five-year-olds at 77.8%. This was a higher target than the rest of the country which was at 75%. Furthermore, it was hoped that the Children's Trust Board would also be used to examine what can specifically be done to reduce inequality.

Councillor Baines asked what steps the Council was taking to ensure that Best Start family hubs in Oxfordshire were delivered directly by the county council, rather than being reliant on a post code lottery of suitable charities and voluntary organisations, and how services would be effectively integrated with the in-house youth service. Councillor Gaul responded that there was an investment of £245,000 to get the programme up and running and another £1,000,000 set aside by the authority to boost the work in this

area, which demonstrated a partnership approach. Furthermore, he said that the locations of the primary hubs would follow the geography of the existing district and city councils.

Councillor Brighouse asked how Cabinet would judge whether the funding going into deprived communities was equitable and enabling those children who were not doing well to succeed. Councillor Gaul responded that Cabinet had received a presentation on how the areas of need were being analysed in order to help determine the specific locations of the family hubs.

Councillor Edwards asked if Councillor Gaul would confirm that a key priority would be to support the existing excellent children's centres in the county. Councillor Gaul responded that work was currently underway to determine who would be supported. He added that the work would be carried out in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.

Item 9. Response to motion by Councillor Hanna on Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Councillor Hanna asked if the mapping of the services of Healthwatch would be completed and given consideration by the Health and Well-being Board (HWB) in time for any required submission of local plans to the NHS, early next year. Councillor Gregory responded that a working group will be established to map out the next steps to ensure that there was a good understanding of the functions that needed protection. Councillor Gregory was committed to ensuring that the good work of Healthwatch continues beyond 2027.

Item 10. Proposed changes to the Waste Acceptance Policy (WAP) for Oxfordshire's household waste recycling centres (HWRCs)

Councillor Middleton noted that there were many concerns around imposing any barriers to the access and use of the HWRC's, which could reduce the use of those facilities and increase fly tipping and asked what the Council was doing to mitigate those concerns. He also asked if the impacts of those changes were being closely monitored and whether they would be reported to Council. Councillor Roberts assured Councillor Middleton that the impacts of the changes would be closely monitored and reported to Council as well as Cabinet. Furthermore, a review would be undertaken as to the effectiveness of the changes.

Councillor Phillips asked if staff were trained to handle asbestos-containing material and whether there were concerns that charging for asbestos disposal would encourage fly-tipping. Councillor Roberts responded that most people do not have a lot of residential asbestos in their own household and highlighted that the waste system was for residential use only and not for trade use. Councillor Roberts said she was quite certain that staff were fully trained with asbestos, given they already handle such waste, but would check the position..

Councillor Creed asked what was going to be done, particularly in areas around Banbury, where there was a requirement to pre-book waste disposal, which it was felt, could increase the amount of fly tipping. Councillor Roberts responded that the impact of the introduction of a pre-booking system would be monitored.

Councillor Snowdon asked how costs would not be increased if more staff were required to deal with more people turning up or would volunteers be used. Councillor Roberts responded that it had not been said that more staff would be hired, but that more staff would be available.

106/25 THE CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2026-27

(Agenda Item 10)

It was reported that, following discussions with the Political Group Leaders, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.1, the Chair of the Council had decided to bring forward the Council meeting originally scheduled for 7 July 2026, to 30 June 2026. This change was made in order to avoid a clash with the Local Government Association Annual Conference.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Council meeting originally scheduled for 7 July 2026, be brought forward to 30 June 2026,in order to avoid a clash with the Local Government Association Annual Conference.

107/25 DEVOLUTION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda Item 11)

Council received a report requesting Cabinet to approve the decision that Oxfordshire submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Government for a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).

The report was moved by Councillor Liz Leffman and seconded by Councillor Ben Higgins.

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The recommendations were approved with 60 votes in favour, 2 abstentions and no votes against.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the draft Cabinet report be noted.**
- b) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the submission of the Expression of Interest (EOI)to Government, as set out in Annex 2 of the report.**

108/25 GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS 2024/25

(Agenda Item 12)

Council had before it two reports, the Gender Pay Gap Report which the Council is legally required to publish, and the Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which the council also publishes to be transparent about the Council's performance in this area.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Neil Fawcett and seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman. Following discussion, the recommendations were approved with 61 votes in favour, one abstention and no votes against.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Oxfordshire County Council's statutory Gender Pay Gap report of 2025 be noted and approval be given to its onward submission to the Gender Pay Gap Service by 31 March 2026.**
- b) That the Council's voluntary Ethnicity Pay Gap report of 2025, be noted.**
- c) That approval be given to the publishing of both reports on the Council's website by 31 March 2026.**

109/25 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-TERM REVIEW

(Agenda Item 13)

Council received a report on the performance for the first half of the year to September 2025, measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2025.

The report was moved by Councillor Dan Levy and seconded by Councillor Ben Higgins.

Following discussion, the recommendation was approved with 55 votes in favour, seven abstentions and no votes against.

RESOLVED:

- That the Council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2025/26, be noted**

110/25 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(Agenda Item 14)

Council considered a report of the Independent Remuneration Panel proposing a Scheme of Members' Allowances to apply from 1 April 2026 for a maximum of a four-year period. The report set out options in relation to implementation covered in recommendations 1 to 4, of the report.

The Chair noted a correction in Appendix 1 to the report, page 99 in the agenda pack, in the list of scrutiny chairs in the table, "Health" should be

replaced by “People”. The Chair also reminded Members that Annex 2 to the report, the Equality Impact Assessment, was published in an Addenda.

Councillor Liz Leffman moved recommendations 1 and 5 in the report, for approval. These were seconded by Councillor Neil Fawcett. Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. Recommendations 1 and 5 were approved with 44 votes in favour, 17 abstentions and no votes against.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel made in November 2025, and as set out in Annex 1 to the report, be adopted.;**
- 5) That the Council adopts an annual index for a four year period (whereby if no other changes occur to a Scheme, then the Members' Allowances may increase in relation to that index for a period of no more than four years), and that this should relate (as in previous years) to the annual pay award for local government staff. The increase will be in line with the percentage rise in overall employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council arising from the annual Local Government Pay Award for staff and that this should take effect from the date on which the award for staff similarly takes effect.**

111/25 REVIEW OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

(Agenda Item 15)

Council had before it a report proposing some changes to the role and function of Member Champions and clarifying the appointment process for future Member Champions.

The report was moved by Councillor Liz Leffman and seconded by Councillor Neil Fawcett. Following discussion, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Constitution be amended to replace part 8.5, Member Champion Role with the text set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

112/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN MCLAUCHLAN

(Agenda Item 16)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Gavin McLauchlan and seconded by Councillor Peter Stevens.

“Council notes that in July 2025 a judicial review upheld the Secretary Of State for the Environment's decision to approve the proposed Thames Water

Resources Management Plan which includes the South-East Strategic Reservoir Option in Abingdon.

As a result, Thames Water has to have an Emergency Discharge facility in place including the ability to empty the reservoir at a rate of 1 metre per day, possibly over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. This would put water back into the Thames at a rate of 75 m³/s just south of Abingdon c.3x greater than its normal flow.

Such a discharge could cause havoc along the Thames, endangering Life, residences, businesses, wildlife and the environment, yet there is no requirement for the reservoir operator to have an emergency plan before building the reservoir, only before filling it. Dealing with the emergency in the wider area will be the responsibility of this Council as the local emergency planning authority along with the emergency services.

This Council makes clear its deep concern that we could be made responsible by default for safely managing such an emergency, leaving us with impossible decisions about which lives, homes and businesses to save in a crisis situation.

We therefore call on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to request clarity on how such an emergency discharge would be managed and to provide a commitment that we will be provided with the resources to do so before any Development Consent Order is considered.”

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 61 votes in favour, no abstentions and none against.

113/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MAGGIE FILIPOVA-RIVERS

(Agenda Item 17)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers and seconded by Councillor Emma Markham.

“Council notes that:

- Oxfordshire residents have endured successive crises in recent years: Covid, the cost-of-living emergency, underfunding of public services by successive governments, leaving many residents in precarious situations, creating a climate of uncertainty and fear.
- Research shows that rising inequality fuels support for far-right movements, eroding trust in institutions and creating fertile ground for scapegoating and division.
- Against this backdrop, right-wing media and far-right groups have wrongly blamed migrant communities to further their agendas.
- Extensive research, including the Migration Observatory’s 2024 study, finds that migration contributes positively to the UK economy by expanding the labour force, addressing skill shortages, and supporting productivity and growth, with little evidence of wage suppression for

native workers. Migrants' net fiscal impact is generally positive, with greater contributions in taxes than cost to public services.

- Oxfordshire is proud to be the first County Council of Sanctuary, committed to ensuring that everyone who lives here, whether newly arrived or long settled, is treated fairly.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Recognise the risks to our communities if the disinformation, suspicion, and intolerance disinformation generates go unchallenged, and commit to addressing them wherever they occur.
- Work with partners to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our communities and that racism is confronted wherever it occurs, in schools, workplaces, and on our streets.
- Request that Cabinet supports the co-production of a community cohesion action plan with key stakeholders in consultation with councillors, including actions to support community-led dialogue and ensure appropriate resourcing is considered during budget setting."

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 49 votes in favour, two abstentions and 10 votes against. The motion was referred to Cabinet.

114/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE

(Agenda Item 18)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Liz Brighouse and seconded by Councillor Izzy Creed.

"This Council being deeply concerned by the impact of poor mental health on adults and children in the County asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to request the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and report back to them and to the County Council on how Mental Health services provided by Oxford Health and other organisations are tackling this issue.

Such an investigation of issues needs to include addressing accessibility to services including

- Prevention
- Assessment
- Therapeutic support
- Medication
- Emergency intervention such as "sectioning"
- Inpatient beds

How these issues impact on other public services such Community Safety, Public Health, Housing, Schools, Fire and Rescue and the Police also needs to be assessed and understood. Most of all poor mental health impacts on individuals, families, and communities around the County and this must be addressed.

Council requests that the outcome of the investigation be sent to the appropriate Secretaries of State."

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 61 votes in favour, no abstentions and none against.

The time being 3.30 pm, the following motions were not considered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

115/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES PLUMB

(Agenda Item 19)

**116/25 CROSS-PARTY MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR NATHAN LEY,
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW**

(Agenda Item 20)

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Agenda Item 7

COUNCIL 10 February 2026

Pay Policy Statement 2026-27

Report of the Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

RECOMMENDATION

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve and adopt the 2026/27 pay policy statement and agree to its publication on the council website and intranet, as required by The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) and the Code of Practice on Data Transparency.

Executive summary

1. Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council has the "power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit".
2. The pay policy statement as set out in Appendix One (the 'statement') sets out the council's approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011. It has been drafted with due regard to the associated statutory guidance, including the supplementary statutory guidance issued in February 2013, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, and the statutory guidance on special severance payments issued in May 2022 under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999.
3. The pay policy statement was considered by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting on 22 January 2026 and agreed to recommend to Council that it approve and adopt the statement and agree to its publication.
4. The council uses job evaluation as a tool to determine the size and responsibilities of a role and create an organisational hierarchy of all roles, from the smallest to the largest. This means the council can objectively justify how roles are sized and graded. The hierarchy of job roles is then translated onto the pay structure. Together they enable the development of a transparent and understandable structure and associated pay grades. In agreement with the recognised trade unions the council has adopted two job evaluation schemes:
 - a. Korn Ferry Hay – for senior leadership roles (including Executive Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and Heads of Service)
 - b. National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book) for all applicable officer roles employed under those conditions of service.

5. The lowest paid employees (Green Book terms and conditions) as of April 2025 are paid at £24,413 per annum which equates to £12.65 per hour. The National Living Wage was set at £12.21 per hour with effect from 1 April 2025. **The council pays above the National Living Wage at £12.65 per hour.** The [UK Real Living Wage](#) for 2025/2026 is £12.60 per hour. It is paid voluntarily by organisations. The [Oxford Living Wage](#) for 2025/2026 is currently £13.16 per hour. Minimum pay arrangements may vary for employees who are working under TUPE terms and conditions of employment.
6. The council is required to report on the pay multiples between its lowest and highest paid employees.
7. In 2025, the pay multiple between the lowest paid and the highest paid has decreased by 0.32 from 1:10.41 in 2024 to 1:10.09 in 2025. This ratio compares the highest paid / Chief Executive salary (£246,336 per annum) to the lowest paid employees. This means that the Chief Executive earns 10.09 times more than the lowest paid employees.
8. In 2025, the pay multiple between the median salary and the highest paid/chief executive has increased by 0.18 from 1:6.43 in 2024 to 1:6.61 in 2025. This ratio compares the median salary to the highest-paid / Chief Executive salary. This means that the highest-paid employee earns 6.61 times more than the median salary.
9. In 2025, the pay multiple between the lowest paid and the average salary of Chief Officers has decreased by 0.30 from 1:7.33 to 1:7.03. This means that the average Chief Officer earns 7.03 times more than the lowest paid.
10. In 2025, the pay multiple between the median salary and the average salary of Chief Officers has increased from by 0.08 from 1:4.52 in 2024 to 1:4.60 in 2025. This means the average Chief Officer earns 4.60 times that of the median employee salary.
11. Table one below shows the ratio between the lowest paid and the highest paid role and the ratio between the median salary of the workforce and the highest paid.
12. Table two below shows the pay multiples using the average salary of chief officers, rather than the highest paid/chief executive salary

Table 1: Pay multiples using the highest paid/Chief Executive salary

Pay Multiples	1 st April 2025
Highest Paid – Chief Executive	£246,336
Lowest Paid	£24,413
Pay Multiple between the lowest paid and the highest paid	1:10.09
Median Salary	£37,280
Pay Multiple between median and highest paid	1:6.61

Table 2: Ratios of pay between average salary of Chief Officers

Pay multiples using the average salary of Chief Officers	1st April 2025
Average salary of Chief Officers	£169,545
Lowest Paid	£24,413
Pay multiple between the lowest paid and the average salary of Chief Officers	1:6.94
Median Salary	£37,280
Pay multiple between median salary and average salary of Chief Officers	1:4.60

Financial implications

13. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)
Lorna.Baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

14. In the interests of accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of local pay, the Localism Act 2011, section 38(1) requires local authorities to prepare an annual policy pay statement. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 also require local authorities to publish the number of employees in the year paid over £50,000 in bands of £10,000 and this information must be provided by job title except for persons who earn in excess of £150,000, in which case they must be identified by name. It is a legal requirement that the statement explicitly sets out a local authority's policies on the renumeration of the lowest paid employees, and also how renumeration of chief officers relates to the renumeration of non-chief officers.

15. In submitting this report to the Remuneration Committee and on its recommendation subsequently to Full Council, the council will meet its statutory obligation to annually produce and publish its pay policy statement (by 31 March 2026).

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar, Head of Law & Governance
Jay.Akbar@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

16. The council recognises that its employees are motivated differently. It places importance on taking a holistic view to remuneration to ensure that employees

are rewarded fairly and with individuality in mind. The council monitors its total reward packages rather than focussing on a single component such as basic pay.

17. The purpose of the pay policy statement is to provide transparency regarding the council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. The statement details the methods by which salaries for all roles are determined. It will be published on the council's website and intranet and made available in other formats on request. Procedural and approval requirements set down in the council's Constitution will be applied as required.

Annexes: Annex 1 Pay Policy Statement

Cherie Cuthbertson Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

Contact Officer: Ellie Harriss, Pay and Reward Manager, October 2025



Pay Policy Statement 2026/2027

1. Introduction, Overview and Purpose

Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit”. This pay policy statement (the ‘statement’) sets out the council’s approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011. It has been drafted with due regard to the associated statutory guidance, including the supplementary statutory guidance issued in February 2013, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, and the statutory guidance on special severance payments issued in May 2022 under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999.

One of the council’s strategic priorities is to be an employer of choice. Whilst recognising the financial constraints that the council operates within, it aims to ensure that its approach to pay and reward reflects that.

The council recognises that its employees are motivated differently. It places importance upon taking a holistic view to remuneration to ensure that employees are rewarded fairly and with individuality in mind. The council monitors its total reward packages rather than focussing on a single component such as basic pay.

The purpose of this statement is to provide transparency regarding the council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees. It details the methods by which salaries for all roles are determined, and it will be published on the council’s website and intranet and also be made available in other formats on request.

Procedural and approval requirements set down in the council’s Constitution will be applied as required.

2. Pay Policy Principles

In determining the remuneration of its employees, the council places importance on balancing its strategic priority of being an employer of choice, committed to recruiting and retaining a high performing workforce, with the need to ensure value for money, and accountability in respect of public expenditure.

The council also has due regard to the need for its pay arrangements to be:

- Open and transparent
- Fair, consistent, and underpinned by equality
- In line with the council’s financial policies, affordability, and accountability requirements.

This pay policy statement is effective from 1 April 2026 superseding the 2025/26 statement and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis, or more regularly should the need arise. The statement refers to substantive roles only and excludes interim roles.

3. Definitions

To support the transparency of the pay policy statement, definitions for common words / phrases used throughout this statement are described below.

Remuneration

For the purposes of this statement remuneration includes three elements – basic salary, pension, and all other allowances arising from employment.

Chief Officers

The definition of Chief Officers is defined as the officer designated as the Head of the Authority's Paid Service; A statutory Chief Officer under section 2(6) the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) means Director of Children's Services, Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Public Health, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety, Section 151 Officer (overseeing the council's financial probity), and Monitoring Officer (overseeing the council's legal and governance arrangements and decision making).

The definition of a non-statutory Chief Officer under section 2(7) of the 1989 Act means direct reports of the Head of Paid Service (HoPS). This includes a person for whom the HoPS is directly responsible, a person who, because of the duties of their post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the HoPS; and any person who, as respects all or most of the duties of their post, is required to report directly to or is directly accountable to the local authority themselves or any committee or sub-committee of the authority also falls within the definition of a non-statutory Chief Officer.

In the case of the council Chief Officer posts are:

- Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

Statutory Chief Officers

- Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)
- Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety
- Director of Adult Social Services
- Director of Children's Services
- Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
- Director of Public Health and Communities

Non-Statutory Chief Officers

- Director of Environment and Highways
- Director of Economy and Place

Lowest paid employees

The lowest paid individuals employed under Green Book terms and conditions of employment with the council are employed on full time [37 hour] equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the council's grading structure.

In line with the pay scales, the lowest pay that Green Book employees receive is equivalent to Grade 2, spinal column point 2. This salary is currently payable to employees carrying out cleaning operative roles. As of 1 April 2025, the salary is £24,413 per annum which equates to £12.65 per hour.

Minimum pay arrangements may vary for employees who are working under TUPE terms and conditions of employment.

National Living Wage, The Real Living Wage, and Oxford Living Wage

The National Living Wage was set at £12.21 per hour with effect from 1 April 2025. The council pays above the National Living Wage at £12.65 per hour.

The UK Real Living Wage for 2025/2026 is £12.60 per hour. It is paid voluntarily by organisations.

The Oxford Living Wage is currently £13.16 per hour. The Oxford Living Wage is a voluntary higher minimum wage that organisations in Oxfordshire can adopt to reflect the real cost of living and working in Oxford.

Pay multiples

The pay multiple is the relationship between two different pay amounts, showing the number of times one value is contained within another value. The relationships will be shown between:

- the highest paid taxable earnings (including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances, and cash value of any benefits in kind) and the lowest paid taxable earnings.
- the highest paid taxable earnings (including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances, and the cash value of any benefits in kind) and the median earnings figure of the whole workforce.
- the average median salary of Chief Officers and the median earnings figure of the whole workforce.

4. Pay Strategy

The council adopts the national pay structures for all terms and conditions as part of its pay strategy, except in relation to its senior leadership roles. Section 7 provides details of the senior leadership pay arrangements.

5. Annual cost of living pay awards

The council participates in national pay bargaining. This means that it is subject to the annual cost of living pay reviews negotiated by the relevant joint negotiating body (which is made up of the national employers' representatives and national trade unions for the relevant employee group) as shown in section 6 below.

6. Pay Design

The council in agreement with trade unions has 8 pay schemes in operation. These are:

- Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities
- Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers
- NJC for Local Government Services (known as the Green Book) (this applies to the majority of council employees)
- NJC Gold Book (National Joint Council for Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers)
- NJC Grey Book (Firefighters)
- NJC Blue Book (Soulbury Committee covering Educational Psychologists)
- NJC Burgundy Book (Teachers)
- Agenda for Change (NHS)

These are all implemented in line with nationally agreed, published pay scales and terms and conditions of employment, unless modified by local arrangements.

In addition, the council have agreed to align coroners pay to the judiciary pay scales in accordance with the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) further to the Coroners' Society of England and Wales (CSEW) voting to withdraw from the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), and opting instead to negotiate Coroner pay directly with local authorities commencing in April 2025.

7. Job evaluation

The council uses job evaluation as a tool to determine the size of a role and create an organisational hierarchy of all roles, from the smallest to the largest. This means the council can objectively justify how roles are sized and graded. The hierarchy of job roles is then translated onto the pay structure. Together they enable the development of a transparent and understandable structure around pay grades. In agreement with the recognised trade unions the council has adopted two job evaluation schemes:

- Korn Ferry Hay – for senior leadership roles (including Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and Heads of Service). This scheme was adopted through a Collective Agreement with UNISON in November 2024.
- National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book) for all applicable officer roles employed under those conditions of service.

8. Statutory and non-statutory Chief Officer appointments

The Head of Paid Service has authority over the selection and appointment of any Deputy Chief Officer, subject to the procedure set out in the Constitution. The Remuneration Committee is the appointing body for substantive statutory and non-statutory Chief Officer appointments as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: statutory and non-statutory chief officer appointments

Post	Regulatory Description	Appointment under Constitution
Chief Executive	Head of Paid Service	Remuneration Committee with recommendation to Full Council
Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee with recommendation to Full Council
Director of Children's Services	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee
Director of Adult Social Care	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee
Director of Public Health and Communities	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee with recommendation to Council
Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety	Statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee
Director of Environment and Highways	Non-statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee
Director of Economy and Place	Non-statutory Chief Officer	Remuneration Committee

The Cabinet consultation procedure is used as required by regulations for appointment to Chief and Deputy Chief Officer posts. The Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out the detail relating to this in the [Council constitution](#).

Any proposed pay or grading changes for Chief Officers are reviewed by Remuneration Committee and if supported, are recommended for approval by Council.

Salary packages for proposed new posts with recommended salaries of more than £100,000 per annum are reviewed by Remuneration Committee and if supported, recommended for approval by Council.

9. Pay Structures

The council applies the nationally negotiated pay structures to its senior leadership roles. Section 6 provides the details of the pay schemes that are applicable.

10. Pay Grades and Progression

Most jobs within the mainstream pay structure have a grade with at least four incremental points. Some grades have six incremental points. Employees are typically appointed at the first increment of the grade unless they have significant experience in a similar role.

Employee progress to the next incremental point is in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions of employment, except for Tier 1 – Tier 4 senior leadership roles. This recognises their increasing experience, and that performance progression continues until they reach the top of the grade.

High levels of performance are expected from all employees. Where standards are not satisfactory prompt managerial action will be taken to improve performance. This may include disciplinary / capability action in accordance with agreed procedures.

11. Cost of Living Pay Awards

Cost of living pay awards are implemented in line with national negotiations on an annual basis as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: annual cost of living pay awards

Date	Staff group
1 April	NJC for Local Government Services / Green Book, JNC for Chief Executives, JNC for Chief Officers, Agenda for Change (NHS), Coroners
1 July	NJC (Fire and Rescue)
1 September	Soulbury, Teachers
1 January	Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers

12. Pay Supplements

From time to time, it may be necessary to pay special allowances or supplements to individual employees where specific circumstances require this and where it can be justified in accordance with council policies. The council uses the following range of different pay supplements:

Market supplements (Temporary)

These are applied to attract and retain employees with experience, skills, and capability when there are identified skills shortages locally or nationally that impact the council. Market supplements must be agreed by the Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change or their deputy, through delegation.

Market supplements are considered in line with a valid data sample of appropriate benchmarked roles from within and outside the Local Government sector.

They are temporary, non-consolidated, additions to basic pay. They are reviewed annually and may be reduced or removed in line with the pay market.

Honoraria (Temporary)

Honoraria payments are temporary, non-consolidated, additions to basic pay. They may be paid where an employee has taken on temporary additional duties and responsibilities, usually for a period of up to six months, for example, covering a vacancy or taking on a special project. These payments are agreed and approved by the relevant Director.

Welcome and loyalty payments scheme (Children's Services)

One-off, non-consolidated, welcome and loyalty payments of up to £3,500 are used to encourage experienced children's social workers into the following teams: Family Support Plus, (FSP) Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Youth Justice and Exploitation Service (YJES) and Children We Care For (CWCF) and other Statutory Social Work appointments.

On-call allowances

On-call allowances are applied to compensate employees who are required to be available with limited notice. Rates are agreed on an individual role basis. On-call allowances do not apply to Chief Officers.

Shift and night shift allowances

Certain roles also attract shift allowances for working evenings, weekends and / or bank holidays.

Night shift premiums and allowances for waking nights also apply in certain roles. These allowances are in line with the national pay schemes applicable to the role.

The council will ensure that the requirement for an additional allowance or supplement is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence supported by a business case.

Pay supplements are subject to review as appropriate. The council does not pay bonuses.

13. Other Employment Related Arrangements

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Subject to qualifying conditions, eligible employees have a right to enter the LGPS.

The employee contribution rates which are defined by statute, currently range between 5.5% and 12.5% of pensionable pay depending on actual salary levels. The employer contribution rates are set by actuaries and are reviewed every 3 years to ensure the scheme is appropriately funded. The contribution rate for the 2026/27 financial year will be 18.9% following the recent triennial valuation, reducing from 19.9% in the previous financial year.

The council will not at any time increase the pension or membership of employees nor award or fund additional pension to employees unless required to do so by the LGPS Regulations.

Fire Brigade Pension Schemes

Subject to qualifying conditions, eligible employees have a right to enter the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

The employee contribution rates currently range between 11% and 14.5% of pensionable pay.

The employer contribution is currently a fixed rate of 28.8% and is under review.

14. Benefits Schemes

As part of its total reward strategy to recruit and retain talented employees, the council provides a wide range of benefits including:

Cycle to work scheme

This is a salary sacrifice scheme which allows employees to save money when purchasing a new bicycle and spread the cost over 12, 18, or 24 months.

Childcare vouchers (Limited access)

The availability of this scheme is limited to employees in post prior to 4 October 2018 as it has since been withdrawn by the Government.

Electric vehicle scheme

The council partners with Tusker to provide an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme to support a thriving local economy and the council's contribution to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Salary Finance

The council entered a partnership with Salary Finance in 2022. Salary Finance are a leading financial wellbeing provider in the UK. A key driver for this service is to support employees to develop good financial management habits and reduce the need and likelihood to access payday loans. It also represents part of the council's wellbeing strategy.

Salary Finance are fully regulated and have been accredited as an ethical lender.

Vivup

The council also partners with Vivup to extend its range of benefits and support its employees. Vivup provides access to hundreds of discounts from big brand supermarkets to broadband and utilities.

The Vivup benefits platform was launched in 2022 as part of the council's work to support employees during the cost-of-living crisis.

Pension Added Voluntary Contributions (AVC's)

The council promotes a Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions Scheme (SSSCAVCs) for LGPS Pension Fund members.

This voluntary scheme was launched in February 2024 and is intended to support employees to enhance their pension savings for the future.

Expenses

Expenses are based on nationally agreed levels except car mileage which is based on the HM Revenue & Customs approved rates, as set out below:

HM Revenue & Customs all-car rate (includes all fuel types; petrol, diesel, and non-salary sacrifice electric) - Currently 45 pence per mile, reducing to 25 pence for miles travelled in excess of 10,000 each year.

HM Revenue & Customs EV salary sacrifice rate – 8 pence per mile (if charging from home and 14 pence per mile (if charging in a public location).

Employees can also claim 20 pence per mile when using their own bicycle for business purposes.

15. Pay Arrangements for Senior Management

Pay scales and pay awards are reviewed annually by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives, Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers, National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book), and the National Joint Council for Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers (as applicable). Changes to pay scales and pay awards usually take effect from 1 April (1 January for Chief Fire Officers).

The salary of the Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service is determined through a process of pay benchmarking conducted by externally commissioned experts. This typically takes place each time the role becomes vacant or on such occasion the council considers that it is necessary to check that the salary remains competitive within the appropriate pay market. Once the pay benchmarking has taken place it is supplemented by a nationally negotiated annual cost of living pay award. The Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service is currently paid a single point salary. As shown in Table 5 below, there is no pay range for this role.

As part of its modernisation programme, in November 2024, the council adopted a locally agreed pay structure for senior leadership roles (Executive Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistants Directors, and Heads of Service) through a collective agreement with UNISON. The senior leadership pay structure comprises 6 grades, each formed of 5 incremental point grades.

The council also reached a collective agreement with UNISON in November 2024 to replace automatic, time-served increments with increments linked to delivery of agreed objectives as part of its 12.3.2 performance management framework for its Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and Heads of Service. This is known as the Gateway Review. It was effective from 1 April 2025 for Executive Directors and Directors, and will be effective from 1 April 2026 for Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and Heads of Service.

The council does not pay bonuses to its senior leadership team.

16. Returning Officer / Election Fees

Where the Returning Officer or other officers receive election fees these are paid and shown separately to salary payments as they are separate appointments in addition to their substantive role of employment.

Election fees are set annually by the council's Audit and Governance Committee. Election fees are reviewed regularly by the same Committee in readiness for the County quadrennial elections.

17. Pay Multiples and Medians

The council is required to report on the pay multiples between its lowest and highest paid employees.

Table 3 below shows the ratio between the lowest and highest paid role and the ratio between the median salary of the workforce and the highest paid.

The median salary is the middle value of all the salaries when they are arranged in ascending or descending order. It represents the salary that separates the higher half from the lower half of the workforce. For example, the council's median salary is £37,280 per annum, which means that half of the employees earn more than £37,280 per annum and the other half earn less.

Table 3: ratios of pay between highest to lowest paid employees

Pay Multiples	1st April 2025
Highest Paid – Chief Executive	£246,336
Lowest Paid	£24,413
Pay Multiple between the lowest paid and the highest paid	1:10.09
Median Salary	£37,280
Pay Multiple between median and highest paid	1:6.61

18. Pay Multiple Between Lowest and Highest Paid

This ratio compares the highest paid / Chief Executive salary (£246,336 per annum) to the lowest paid employees. This means that the Chief Executive earns 10.09 times more than the lowest paid employees. Table 3 illustrates that the difference has reduced since the last pay policy statement.

19. Pay Multiple Between Median and Highest Paid

This ratio compares the median salary to the highest-paid / Chief Executive salary. This means that the highest-paid employee earns 6.94 times more than the median salary.

Table 3: ratios of pay between average salary of Chief Officers

Pay multiples using the average salary of Chief Officers	1st April 2025
Average salary of Chief Officers	£169,545
Lowest Paid	£24,413
Pay multiple between the lowest paid and the average salary of Chief Officers	1:6.94
Median Salary	£37,280
Pay multiple between median salary and average salary of Chief Officers	1:4.60

20. Payments on Termination of Employment

The council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment of Chief Officers prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out in its policy statement made in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006.

21. Redundancy

The council's Redundancy Scheme applies to all applicable employees and is currently one and half times statutory entitlement based on actual pay. It will apply where employment is terminated on redundancy grounds and redundancy payments are due.

All employees who receive a redundancy payment arising from the termination of their contracts of employment will be subject to the provisions of the Redundancy Modification Order and will be subject to Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations or other pensions scheme regulations where applicable.

22. Severance payments

Severance payments for all employees will comply with the council's Pensions Discretions and Retirement Policy, where the circumstances in which severance takes place falls within the terms of the policy. This sets out that early retirement may be granted for employees aged 55 years and over with at least two years membership of the LGPS.

The council has regard to the statutory guidance dated 12 May 2022 on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England, and earlier statutory guidance on severance payments published in February 2013. Special severance payments, which are payments exceeding an employee's statutory and contractual entitlements on termination of employment, are determined on a case-by-case basis e.g. settlement agreements, write-offs of any debt or loan, hardship payment consideration, and payments to employees for retraining.

Severance payments of £100,000 and above are subject to a formal decision made by Council unless there is a good reason for departing from the statutory guidance. Payments below £100,000 are subject to a formal decision of either:

- relevant elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments (currently the Remuneration Committee); or
- a suitably authorised officer.

23. Re-employment

The council takes its duty of accountability for the use of the public purse, and demonstrating value for money in everything it does seriously. This means that the council will not re-employ former employees who have left its employment with any form of severance pay for at least two years from the date of termination of

employment. The council reserves the right to extend this period in circumstances where it is in the best interest of the council.

24. Publication of Senior Salaries Statement

In accordance with publication requirements, the council publishes its (retrospective) annual statement of accounts on its website which includes:

- the number of employees earning above £50,000 per annum.
- the individual remuneration details for each senior employee, defined by regulations as the Chief Officers (as listed at page 2), whose salary is more than £50,000 per annum. All allowances and other payments are also shown.

Only those employees whose salary is above £150,000 per annum are disclosed by name, all remaining senior officers are disclosed by post title.

The current salaries for Chief Officers as of 1 April 2025 are shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Chief Officer salaries 2025 / 26

Chief Officer	Name (where applicable)	Salary range	Actual salary 2025/ 2026
Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	Martin Reeves	£246,336	£246,336
Deputy Chief Executive (s151 Officer)	Lorna Baxter	£168,190- £197,809	£190,404
Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety	Rob MacDougall	£153,295- £167,742	£167,742
Director of Children's Services	Lisa Lyons	£147,164 - £157,745	£155,100
Director of Adult Social Services	Karen Fuller	£147,164 - £157,745	£155,100
Director of Public Health and Communities	Ansaf Azhar	£147,164 - £157,745	£155,100
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer	Anita Bradley	£147,164 - £157,745	£155,100
Director of Environment and Highways	Paul Fermer	£147,164 - £157,745	£149,811
Director of Economy and Place (Secondment)	Robin Rogers	£147,164 - £157,745	£149,811

Agenda Item 8

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2026

BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2026/27 – 2030/31

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Council is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a. **have regard to the statutory report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) (at Section 3) in approving recommendations b to d below;**
 - b. **(in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve:**
 - (1) **the council tax and precept calculations for 2026/27 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:**
 - (i) **a precept of £567,372,273.74**
 - (ii) **a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £2,006.78;**
 - (2) **a budget for 2026/27 as set out in Section 4.4;**
 - (3) **a medium term financial strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in Section 4.2);**
 - (4) **the Financial Strategy for 2026/27 at Section 4.5;**
 - (5) **the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 at Section 4.6 including**
 - (i) **the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)'s recommended level of General Balances for 2026/27 (Section 4.6), and**
 - (ii) **the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27 to 2030/31 (Section 4.6.1)**
 - c. **(in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:**
 - (1) **the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2026/27 to 2036/37 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Section 5.1;**
 - (2) **a Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2036/37 as set out in Section 5.4 which includes new capital proposals set out in Section 5.3.**
 - d. **(in respect of treasury management – at Section 5) approve:**
 - (1) **the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27 at Section 5.2 including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Specified Investment and Non-Specified Investment Instruments.**

(2) that any further changes required to the 2026/27 strategy be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation;

Executive Summary

2. This report is the culmination of the Budget and Business Planning process for 2026/27 to 2030/31. It sets out the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2026/27, medium term financial plan to 2030/31 and capital programme to 2036/37, together with a number of strategies and policies that the Council is required to approve for the 2026/27 financial year.
3. The report is divided into five sections.

Section 1 – Leader of the Council's overview

4. Section 1 sets out the Leader of the Council's overview of the proposed budget.

Section 2 - Budget engagement & Scrutiny Recommendations

5. Section 2 sets out key findings from budget engagement along with recommendations from Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet's response.

Section 3 – Statutory Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

6. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made in determining the council tax requirement and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This assessment, undertaken by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) as the Chief Finance Officer, is set out in Section 3 of the report. Council is required to have regard to this report in making their decisions on the budget.

Section 4 – Revenue Budget Strategy

7. This section sets out the detailed 2026/27 revenue budget and the 2026/27 – 2030/31 medium term financial strategy, the overarching financial strategy and the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement. It includes those matters that the Council must approve as part of the budget setting process, including the council tax requirement and council tax amount for a Band D property.

8. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement is expected on 9 February 2026 and information about business rates collection funds is also outstanding. Where estimates have been made in relation to funding for 2026/27 due to final confirmation of sums not being available prior to publication of this report any variations from the estimates will be reported through the Business Management and Monitoring Reports for 2026/27.
9. Any reductions to assumed business rates income arising from the collection fund position will be managed through the Collection Fund reserve. Any other changes to funding notified following the publication of this report will be managed through General Balances.

Section 5 – Capital Budget Strategy

10. This section sets out the Capital and Investment Strategy and the ten-year Capital Programme to 2036/37, together with the strategies which underpin this including the Treasury Management strategy.
11. The overall Capital Programme is unchanged and remains at £1.6Bn and unchanged since the Budget and Business Planning Report to Cabinet in January 2026.

Risk Management

12. The statutory report of the Chief Financial Officer required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2002, which forms part of the suite of papers considered by Council in setting the budget each February, includes a section assessing the key financial risks.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

13. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that, when making decisions of a strategic nature, decision makers must exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
14. In developing budget proposals, services have considered the potential impact of change with respect to equality, diversity and inclusion, in line with the council's refreshed framework agreed by Cabinet on 19 November 2024, "Including Everyone".
15. The refresh of the framework gives the opportunity to realign the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goals with the broader strategic priorities and reconsider how the framework can be used to drive meaningful change. The council has a track record of going beyond its legal equality duty by considering groups and communities beyond the protected characteristics of the Equality Act. For example, the council considers the impact of its decisions on rural communities, armed forces communities, areas of deprivation and carers. The most recent Including Everyone framework goes further, recognising the council's commitment to considering future

generations in decision-making, as well as refugees and asylum seekers by becoming a Council of Sanctuary. The latest framework also includes reference to the socioeconomic duty and consideration of residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

16. An overarching summary impact assessment for equalities, taking into account the overall impact of the budget proposals, is included at Section 4.7. It should be noted that a number of proposals are very early in the business case development process.

Sustainability Implications

17. The Climate Action Framework sets the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency which is underpinned by the Council's priority to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
18. An overarching summary impact assessment for climate of the budget proposals is included at Section 4.8. A number of the proposals are very early in the business case development process and therefore will be subject to fuller Climate Impact Assessment as the proposals are developed.

Staff Implications

19. Staffing implications have been considered as part of the Budget and Business Planning process and the proposals are consistent with the council's People and Culture Strategy.

Financial Implications

20. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 before 1 March 2026. Alongside this, there is a requirement under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 for the Chief Finance Officer to prepare a statement on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. This report completes the process to achieve these objectives.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

21. Part 3.2 of the Council's constitution (Budget and Policy Framework) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.
22. The Council Tax scheme is locally determined by each billing authority under Section 13A and Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This report provides information which will lead to the council tax requirement being agreed for 2026/27, together with a budget for 2026/27, five-year medium term financial strategy and ten year capital programme.

23. The Council is required to set a balanced budget taking account of balances and any other available reserves before the commencement of the financial year to which it relates. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires a council to set a balanced budget. To do this the council must prepare a budget that covers not only the expenditure but also the funding to meet the proposed budget. The Local Government Act 2000 states that it is the responsibility of the council, on the recommendation of the Cabinet to approve the budget and related council tax requirement.
24. The Local Government Act 2003, section 25 requires the Council's Section 151 Officer to report to the council on the robustness of the estimates made and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves assumed in the budget calculations.
25. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council tax payers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term, the need to strike a fair balance between the interests of the Council Tax payers and ratepayers and the community's interest in adequate and efficient services and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers.
26. Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 precludes a councillor from voting on a calculation which might affect the calculation of the council's budget if they have an outstanding council tax debt of over two months. If a councillor is present at any meeting at which relevant matters are discussed, they must disclose that section 106 applies and may not vote. Failure to comply is a criminal offence.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Lorna Baxter, Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Background papers:

- 1) Budget and Business Planning Report to [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 18 November 2025, 2.00 pm | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- 2) Budget and Business Planning Report to [Agenda for Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Friday, 16 January 2026, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- 3) Budget and Business Planning Report to [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 27 January 2026, 2.00 pm | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Contact Officers: Section 2.1: Kerry Middleton, Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement

Section 3: Lorna Baxter – Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Section 4: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Section 5: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager and Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

February 2026

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Budget & Business Planning 2026/27 - Sections & Contents

1	1.1	Leader's Report Budget 2026/27: Leader's Report
2	2.1	Budget Engagement & Consultation Feedback Executive summary from the Residents' Survey 2025
	2.2	Recommendations from Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet's response.
3	3.1	Chief Finance Officer's Statutory Report Chief Finance Officer's Statutory Report 2026/27
4	4.1	Revenue Budget Strategy Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2030/31
	4.2	Previously Agreed and New Budget Changes 2026/27 – 2030/31
	4.3	Council Tax and Precepts 2026/27
	4.4	Detailed Revenue Budget by Service 2026/27
	4.5	Financial Strategy 2026/27 CIPFA Financial Resilience Index
	Annex 2	Annex 3 Financial Management Code of Practice – Summary Compliance Assessment 2025/26
	4.6	Earmarked Reserves & General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 Forecast Earmarked Reserves
	4.6.1	
	4.7	Overarching Equalities Impact Assessment
	4.8	Overarching Climate Impact Assessment
5	5.1	Capital & Investment Strategy Capital and Investment Strategy 2025/26 to 2035/36
	5.2	Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27
	5.3	Proposed changes to the Capital Programme
	5.4	Draft Capital Programme

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Budget introduction 2026/27

Background: Fair Funding, LGR and devolution

1. In June 2025, the government opened a consultation on their proposed new way of funding local authorities, which they named the Fair Funding Review. The intention behind this review was to reform council funding, providing support to those councils with a low tax base, higher levels of deprivation and high demand for services, and reinstating the three-year settlement so that councils could plan ahead. The principle of increasing funding for those with the greatest need is one that we support, and we welcome the three-year settlement. We also welcome the simplification of grant funding which will result from a large number of different grants being consolidated in the overall settlement.
2. The government announced on December 17th that Oxfordshire's income will increase by £94.9 million over the next three years. But in making that announcement it assumed that council tax, paid by Oxfordshire residents, will rise by 4.99% in each of those years. The reality is that we will see an underlying reduction in our funding from government of £27.2 million over this period, while increases in council tax at 4.99% would total £119 million should that be adopted. It is disappointing that, rather than providing those councils with the greatest need an uplift to their funding while maintaining funding for others, the government has chosen to reduce funding for councils such as ours and rely on local residents to make up for this.
3. We recognised when we presented the budget in 2025, that we might be seeing a reduction in funding from 2026 onwards. We prepared for this in our 2025/2026 budget, which is why this year we have been able to close a gap of £5.4 million in our budget for 2026/2027. However, we will need to find additional savings of at least another £15.5 million in 2027/28 rising to £22.0m from 2028/29.

4. In November, three proposals for local government reorganisation were submitted by Oxfordshire councils to government for consideration. A statutory consultation is due to start in mid-February and a decision is expected in the summer. Our budget recognises the resources that will be needed to take both devolution and local government reorganisation forward during 2026/2027 and beyond, and we are committed to ensuring that there is transparency in how that money is used. The reduction in government grants means that achieving savings through local government reorganisation will, however, be challenging.

Consultation and Engagement

5. Our usual practice is to hold a consultation on our budget with residents prior to publication, but because we were only informed by government of the grant settlement on December 17th, there has been no time this year to undertake that. However, we have an ongoing resident consultation and engagement programme. As part of this programme, we conducted 9 group discussions in July 2025, led by REMind Research. These discussions included people from a range of age groups and locations, including younger adults from both rural and urban areas. In addition, our annual resident satisfaction survey was sent to 6,000 households between July and August 2025, generating a total of 1,065 completed questionnaires, and 178 face to face interviews were conducted with people between the ages of 18 and 44. The research has helped us to identify our residents' priorities.

New Budget Pressures and Investments

6. We are pleased to present a balanced revenue budget for 2026/2027, which supports this council's priorities and ensures that we continue to serve the needs of our most vulnerable residents. However, we face a number of pressures in addition to the reduction in government funding. The Chancellor has announced a rise in National Living Wage from £12.21 per hour to £12.71 per hour, effective from April 1st 2026. We welcome the increase in national living wage, but this does put additional pressure on our budgets and on those of our

providers. We have budgeted for an overall pay increase for our staff of 3.2% in 2026/2027, and of 3% in each of the following two years.

7. We continue to see increased demand for SEND support. The Statutory Override for the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant Block is scheduled to end in 2027/2028. Information from the government about how deficits will be managed in future is expected as part of the Final Local Government Settlement. Over the past few years, we have prudently been adding funds to our Demographic Risk Reserve (now renamed the High Needs DSG Deficit Risk Reserve) to help manage the potential impact on the council. We are proposing to add £8 million to this reserve in 2026/2027. At the time of publication, Oxfordshire County Council's deficit is expected to reach £163.2 million by March 31st 2026.
8. An additional £3.2 million is likely to be needed for school transport based on the number of Education, Health and Care Plans, but this will partially be offset by savings of £1.2 million, achieved through new ways of working and improved planning of routes.
9. Our Adult Social Care services continue to face demographic changes and the rising cost of complex placements, as well as general inflationary pressures. The failure of a provider of equipment to adults with learning disabilities has required a change in contract, resulting in additional costs of £0.9 million. However, these pressures have been partially offset with savings of £1.9 million, achieved through a number of measures including contract reviews, and the increased use of assistive technology.
10. In spite of these pressures, there are many aspects of our revenue budget that are positive. As a council, we are in much better shape financially than many others and have been able to maintain high levels of service through careful management and innovative ways of working. We are pleased that children in low-income families will benefit from an increase in the Families, Children and Youth Grant, which is increasing from £4.968 million 2025/2026, to £8.204 million in 2026/2027. £3.1 million of this will fund additional expenditure relating to the Families First Partnership Programme. We are also

allocating £0.7 million to the recruitment and retention of apprentices in Children's Services.

11. For the first time in years, we have funded a full gully clearing programme in 2025/2026. £1.2 million will be allocated in this budget to maintaining the regular clearing of gullies to combat the increased risk of flooding. Based on our experience of our full gully clearing in 2025/2026 we anticipate that this will be adequate for next year's programme.
12. This ongoing budget pressure next year and into the medium-term, alongside the responsibility to optimise the benefits of local government re-organisation, means OCC will accelerate, not slow-down its plans to use more technology to improve services to residents and create more innovative partnerships with our first-class community and voluntary sector to help meet the growing needs of our communities.

Capital Expenditure Priorities

13. The limitations of our revenue budget mean that any borrowing for capital investment must be very carefully considered to ensure it is affordable both now and in future. We have a large pipeline of projects, especially those that would contribute to achieving our net zero target and modal shift in transport, but there is very little flex in the revenue budget, out of which we would need to repay any additional borrowing. We have available £24.1 million in capital to support our priorities. Among these priorities are improving our highways network, including flood prevention, promoting active travel, enhancing our towns, supporting schemes that improve energy efficiency and the environment, and unlocking S106 developer contributions. These are some of the schemes that we have included:
14. The gully clearing programme has revealed the need for significant investment in our drainage systems which have been found to need major repair following years of neglect. We have therefore allocated a new investment of £2 million to the capital programme in each of 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 to repair broken

highway drainage. That means the total spend on gullies in 2026/27 will be £3.2m.

15. We are committed to improving walking and cycling for our residents, and we have included in our highways capital budget a number of projects which will promote active travel and improve safety. These include £1.7 million to deliver the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) being developed for our communities, and £1.6 million to pilot schemes to improve freight movements and ease congestion. In rural areas we will be investing £0.250 million in Quiet Lanes, to make walking, cycling and riding safer.
16. Our library refurbishment programme will continue, with £0.550 million investment in Didcot library, and a further £0.220 million for upgrades to other libraries in the county. This follows the successful refurbishment of libraries in Chinnor, Henley and Witney, which now have attractive, energy efficient buildings with spaces for meetings and excellent facilities for children and young people. Usage of our refurbished libraries has increased by around 30 – 40%.
17. In our budget for 2025/2026, we included £4 million to unlock S106 developer contributions which has resulted in £23.5 million being released for use in projects around the county. We are including a further £2 million for this purpose in our budget this year, which we expect to unlock further schemes.
18. We are committed to ensuring that children with SEND receive the best possible education, and we are including £2.6 million in this budget for the relocation of Woodeaton Manor Special School into a modern, purpose-built facility, in a location which will improve accessibility.

In spite of the challenges that we face, I am pleased to be able to present a balanced budget, in line with our priorities and those of our residents. This budget supports our most vulnerable residents, invests in local communities, and directs resources towards managing our

highways, encouraging active travel, and tackling the effects of climate change.

Cllr Liz Leffman
February 2026

Oxfordshire residents' satisfaction survey 2025

Postal and online survey of Oxfordshire residents

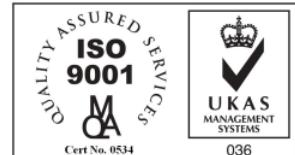
Executive summary of survey results

Version v1.0

December 2025

Prepared by: **Marketing Means (UK) Ltd**

For:



Executive Summary

Background and method

This report represents the findings of a residents' satisfaction survey which was conducted by Marketing Means on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council between 26 June and 20 August 2025. The survey was sent to a sample of households across the authority area to gauge satisfaction with the council's services and the area where they live, as well as asking about the council's priorities and budget decisions.

The survey was posted out to a random sample of 6,000 households in w/c 21 June 2025. One reminder mailing was issued to non-respondents in w/c 28 July 2025. All residents in the sample could take part in the survey online if they wished, using unique login details included in the covering letter with a link to the online questionnaire, hosted by Marketing Means. These mailings generated 1,025 responses, 243 of which were completed online.

To boost the number of responses from younger residents, the 2025 survey included a face-to-face in-street interviewing stage, conducted in various locations in Oxford, Abingdon, Banbury, Didcot, Wantage and Witney. This provided a further 178 interviews with residents aged 18 to 44 between 23 July and 10 August 2025 and brought the total number of survey responses to 1,203.

At the data analysis stage, the final respondent profile was 'weighted' by local authority area, age and gender in order to reflect Oxfordshire's population aged 18+ from the 2021 Census profile. All charts and data in this report are based on 'weighted' data.

Overall views of Oxfordshire County Council

- Just over two-fifths of those interviewed (43%) were satisfied with the way that the council runs things, with net satisfaction at +11%, both slight but not statistically significant decreases from the corresponding results of the 2024 survey.
- Just under a third of respondents (29%) agreed that the council provides value for money, a slight not significant decrease from the 2024 results, though the proportion dissatisfied has increased by a small but significant amount to 40%. These gave a significantly lower net satisfaction score of -11%, compared with -4% in 2024.
- A total of 45% were satisfied with the services provided by the council, a slight but not significant increase from the level of 43% in 2024, with the same net satisfaction score of +15%.
- The proportions of respondents who would speak negatively or positively about the council were similar to one another (30% and 27% respectively), and their views would usually only be expressed if asked.
- When asked to suggest one thing the council should improve, the leading answer theme, given by 25%, was **improving roads and paths and fixing potholes**.

Your local area

- More than two-thirds (68%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, slightly but significantly lower than the corresponding 2024 result of 72%.
- The issues most likely to be spontaneously named by respondents as the most important that residents in their local area faced were led by **road surfaces in poor repair/dangerous, too many potholes**, suggested by 16% of respondents. Several other themes related to roads and transport, including traffic congestion and public transport, but each was given by less than 10%. The most likely

other topics were **issues with new building/ development of new housing, lack of infrastructure/amenities** (by 8%) and the **rising cost of living** (by 6%).

- Most respondents felt safe when outside in their local area by day, 87%, (slightly but significantly lower than the 2024 result) and 61% felt safe after dark (the same level as in 2024).
- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as important in making somewhere a good place to live were led by **health services** (54%, a significant decrease from 2024's 60%), **road and pavement repairs** (up from 36% to 41% this year) and **level of crime** (41%, as in 2024). Several other factors, though selected by a smaller proportion of the sample, had significantly increased in importance since 2024, including **parks and open spaces, activities for teenagers, and wage levels and cost of living**. The only other factor that had significantly decreased in perceived importance since 2024 was the **level of pollution**.
- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as most in need of improvement in the local area were led by **road and pavement repairs** (by 61%, significantly higher than 2024's 56%), and **health services** (44%, not significantly different to the 2023 result). **Traffic congestion** was selected by only slightly fewer (36%), with no significant change since 2024 and the same applied to **affordable decent housing** (35%). Only two other aspects were significantly less likely to be selected in 2025 than in 2024, namely **level of pollution** (from 15% to 11%) and **education provision** (from 14% to 11%).
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (71%) felt they belonged strongly to their local area, with 21% feeling this very strongly.
- One in three respondents (33%) felt that people in their local area can influence decisions, though only 4% definitely agreed, while 36% did not agree.

Communications

- The proportion that felt fairly or very well informed on **benefits and services provided** by the council was 48%, significantly higher than the 2024 result of 43%. Only slightly fewer (44%) felt well-informed about **what the council spends its money on**, which was similar to 2024's result.
- A smaller proportion (28%) felt that the council **acts on the concerns of local residents** a great deal/ a fair amount. This was not significantly different to the 2024 results, and nor was the net satisfaction score of -31%.

Customer Services

- Residents' most popular choice as their preferred method of contacting the council was email, chosen by 71%, followed by **telephone – direct line** (41%) and **website – online form** (36%).
- Just over one in three respondents (36%) had contacted the council in the previous 12 months. The leading reason was to **report a problem** (27%), while **applying for a service, requesting a service and asking a question** were each selected by 17%-18%.
- The most likely method that residents had used to contact the council in the last 12 months was via the **website** (32%), only slightly ahead of **telephone to the customer service centre** (24%) and **email** (23%). The leading reasons given for their choice were that it was **simple/easy** (22%), **convenient/quick/easy** (12%), and **preferring to speak to a person** (13%).

Council services

- Across 20 different council services, the degree of residents' satisfaction varied widely, as did the proportion of respondents able to rate each service at all given the lack of experience of using or receiving each service. Taking out the "Don't know" responses to give the clearest view of the results for each service, ratings varied from 77% satisfied and net satisfaction of +73% for **Libraries**, to only 20% satisfied and -52% net satisfaction for **maintenance of roads** (the latter was also the lowest-rated service in 2022, 2023 and 2024). The table below summarises the key figures for each service:

2025 Satisfaction Ratings of Services (base totals shown after each service)	% dissatisfied	% satisfied	Net % Score
Libraries (838)	4%	77%	+72.8%
Fire and rescue service - emergency response (780)	5%	74%	+69.1%
Museums and history service (770)	4%	73%	+69.1%
Household waste and recycling centres (tips) (1,102)	16%	72%	+55.9%
Fire and rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (778)	8%	64%	+55.7%
Registration of births and deaths, and ceremonies including marriages and citizenship (554)	4%	62%	+58.0%
Primary education (5 -11 years) (450)	11%	60%	+49.1%
Early years education (birth to 4 years) (448)	9%	56%	+46.4%
Secondary education (over 11 years) (495)	17%	54%	+37.3%
Countryside services (e.g., rights of way) (966)	16%	54%	+37.8%
Children's social care (protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families) (475)	20%	43%	+22.5%
Trading standards (603)	16%	43%	+26.7%
Support/care for older people (aged over 65) (587)	-24%	42%	+17.5%
Support/care for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, and/or mental health problems, general frailty (558)	27%	41%	+13.1%
Public health (helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from health risk) (769)	21%	40%	+19.1%
Parking (enforcement, controlled parking zones, on-street parking) (1,010)	40%	32%	-8.6%
Managing the road network (e.g., traffic lights, speed limits, traffic and transport) (1,132)	55%	32%	-23.0%
Road and transport schemes (e.g., new or improved junctions, bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) (1,070)	49%	28%	-21.1%
Maintenance of pavements (1,154)	63%	23%	-40.5%
Maintenance of roads (1,175)	72%	20%	-51.7%

- 14 of the services showed significantly increased net satisfaction compared with 2024. The largest increases were for **Registration of births and deaths etc.** (18% increase), **Fire and rescue service - emergency response** (14% increase), **early years education** and **support/care for vulnerable groups** (13% increase for both). None showed a significant decline in net satisfaction.
- The services felt to be most important for local people in the area were **maintenance of roads** (62%, a decrease from 68% in 2024) and **fire & rescue service – emergency response** (35%, up slightly from 32% in 2024).
- When reviewing the same results but including only those with lived experience of each service, five of the services were by far the most likely to be selected, each by more than 40% of those with

experience of them; **primary education, secondary education, support/care for older people, support/care for vulnerable people**, and **early years education**.

Special statistical analysis

- We have conducted two extra stages of Key Driver Analysis on the survey results to help identify opinions of which specific council services and activities seem to have the greatest impact in driving overall satisfaction, perceptions of value for money and how well residents are kept informed.
- The Correlation Analysis undertaken showed that overall perception of quality of services and value for money are the two key items most correlated with **satisfaction with how the council runs things**, but this is also strongly correlated with the new question added in 2025 on the statement that best describes how residents feel about the council.
- Perceptions of **value for money** in turn are most strongly correlated with (i) overall satisfaction with services, (ii) how the council runs things, and (iii) statement that best describes how residents feel about the council.
- The Factor Analysis attempted to identify which specific services, or groups of services, have most impact in driving perceptions of those same four key measures: overall satisfaction with how the council runs things, value for money and the statements about keeping residents informed. The results highlighted, in particular, two groups of factors that influence most of the variation in perceptions. The first group comprised aspects related to travel/roads/transport, parking and pedestrian routes, alongside the statement that best describes how residents feel about the council. The second group comprised aspects related to satisfaction with the council and the local area, including satisfaction with the area as a place to live, satisfaction with services overall, the extent to which the council acts on residents' concerns, and satisfaction with household waste/recycling. These were the key drivers of the four target questions, but most notably overall satisfaction and value for money.
 - As in previous surveys and taken together with the results from elsewhere in this report, these findings demonstrate the key role that improvements to services related to roads, travel and transport may play, but combined with driving up satisfaction with services overall, notably waste recycling, and the local area as a place to live, and acting on residents' concerns in improving overall perceptions of the council.

Budget setting

- Respondents were given a brief explanation of the financial challenges that the council faces and asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of a list of 10 possible approaches that the council could take to make savings / generate income. The table below summarises the proportions agreeing or disagreeing with each and shows that four drew strong net support of nearly +50% or higher, similar to those rating so highly in 2023 and 2024. Highest agreement was for **Reduce costs by operating from fewer buildings and using those we keep to their full capacity**, which more than eight out of 10 respondents (84%) agreed with as a course of action for the council.
- By far the least popular ideas were generating additional income by increasing council tax and reducing spending on frontline services, with net agreement of -40% for each.

APPROACH (base totals shown after each)	% disagree	% agree	Net % agreement
Reduce costs by operating from fewer buildings and using those we keep to their full capacity (1,159)	5%	84%	+79%
Reduce costs by using digital technology where it improves how we work and helps us be more efficient (1,150)	8%	77%	+68%
Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (1,140)	8%	73%	+65%
Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (1,152)	12%	71%	+58%
Reduce costs by collaborating more with partners in voluntary & community sector so we're not main funder & provider for every service (1,147)	16%	61%	+45%
Reduce spending on services the council is not legally required to provide (1,135)	24%	47%	+23%
Use the council's financial reserves (money set aside for unexpected events), to provide one-off funding (1,143)	26%	47%	+20%
Generate additional income from sales, fees, and charges (1,096)	32%	40%	+8% ↓
Reduce spending on frontline services (1,127)	62%	21%	-40%
Generate additional income by increasing council tax (1,133)	63%	22%	-40%

- Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the council should consider increases of 3.99 or 4.99 per cent to help fund adult social care and other key services. These two levels drew general disagreement and net agreement scores of -12% and -40% respectively. Just over a third of respondents (34%) agreed with the notion of a 3.99 per cent increase, but only 19% supported an increase as high as 4.99 per cent.
- Although more than a third (37%) felt their financial situation was 'about the same' as a year ago, the proportion who felt better off (4%) was far smaller than the proportion who felt worse off (57%). Although most people (56%) had never or rarely struggled in this regard in the last year, about a quarter (26%) had done so sometimes, 10% most of the time, and 3% all of the time.

Climate change

- A third of all respondents (33%) claimed to be very concerned about climate change and 78% overall were concerned, not significantly different to the 2024 results.
- 70% felt that climate change will affect them and their family moderately or a lot.
- Well over three-quarters of respondents (80%) agreed that it is very or fairly important for Oxfordshire County Council to tackle climate change, with 39% rating it very important, both significant increases from the 2024 results.
- When asked to what extent they have a role to play in protecting themselves and belongings from extreme weather, just under a third (31%) felt that that this applies a lot, while 42% felt that it applies a moderate amount. Only 7% felt that this did not apply at all.

- When asked to what extent they had already made lifestyle changes to tackle climate change, well over half (58%) had done so to either a moderate amount or a lot, 13% giving the answer a lot.

Travel in and around Oxfordshire

- Driving a car** and **walking** were the two most likely modes of travel used in the previous 7 days, each given by close to three-quarters of respondents (77% and 73% respectively). More than half (57%) had travelled as a car passenger.
- Several active travel modes were each used by a significant proportion of respondents, **bus** by 37%, **bicycle** by 30% and **train** by 24%.
- Driving a car** was by far the most likely main mode of transport, selected by 57%. A further 8% had mainly been a **car passenger**. 14% had mainly got around by **walking**, 8% mainly by **bus** and 6% mainly by **bicycle**.

Volunteering and digital skills

- Just over a third of respondents (34%) have provided some degree of unpaid help in the past 12 months, including 13% that had done so at least once a week.
- Well over nine out of 10 respondents (95%) use the internet at work, home or elsewhere.

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in question 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: **Budget Proposals for 2026/27 to 2030/31**

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation**

Date response requested:² **27 January 2026**

Response to report:

Enter text here.

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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 writes to the Valuation Audit Office to raise the issue of 2000 homes without council bands	Rejected	Council Tax is the responsibility of the District Councils therefore it will be for them to write to the VOA.
2. That the Council collates and reviews direct feedback from children, where available, from schools, concerning the quality of current school meals	Accepted	The council regularly surveys both parents and students to ensure thorough engagement. The next survey is planned for the summer term in 2026 and will cover topics such as the children's preferences as well as the quality and variety of the school meals.
3. That greater detail of the contribution non-Public Health areas make to the Council's Marmot agenda is provided within the Council's budget report, particularly in relation to mitigating the negative health impacts of climate change	Accepted	<p>Paragraphs 123 and 124 have been added to the report to Cabinet on 27 January 2026.</p> <p>123. Public health grant needs to be spent within the terms and conditions of ring fence. Approximately 80% of the public health budget is spent on mandated statutory services, most of which are preventative in nature and will contribute towards reducing demand across system, particularly in the short term, across the health and care system.</p> <p>124. However, the real value and leadership is in embedding public health approach across the system and the council. To realise the ambition of becoming Marmot place, all directorates are investing on prevention and public health approach to improve health and</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>wellbeing outcomes, reduce inequalities and reduce health care demand. These examples include investment into early years, family hub, active transport infrastructure, food strategy, community capacity grant, mental wellbeing provision and creating libraries and other front facing settings into community hubs. Working in partnership with ICB public health has also secured significant fund for community development activities such the well together provision and physical activity programmes. All these initiatives have benefits across multiple domains from improving health and wellbeing, positive climate interventions, cost of living and managing demands across public sector. As well as delivering against the public health grant, the public health team will work with wider directorates and the wider system to build a total place offer to enhance the public health delivery across the system.</p>
4. That plans for Public Realm Improvement expenditure are brought to members at Localities meetings.	Partially Accepted	<p>The budget is limited and will be focussed on key and well used pedestrian movement corridors. Proposals to be included within these maintenance improvements will be discussed with the Local County Councillor/s and if appropriate brought to relevant Locality Meetings.</p>
5. That 2 hour parking in Oxford City in Zone 2 is included within the list of fees and charges in the Council's budget report.	Accepted	<p>The additional charge has been added to Annex A and the proposed budget. It is also noted in paragraph 160 of the Cabinet report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new 2 hour charge for Zone 2 in Oxford (including Jericho) will be implemented in 2026/27 in line with 2026L&CO23 agreed as part of the budget in February 2025. The cost will be double the 1 hour parking
6. That Council is provided with the options appraisal used when assessing to progress with the Watlington Relief Road as part of the budget report.	Partially Accepted	<p>The options appraisal and need was considered and evidenced as part of the Local Plan process and will also form part of the planning application process and consideration (specifically within the Transport Assessment).</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>Relevant documents can be accessed here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Plan 2035 Documents and Evidence Base• Planning Register Oxfordshire County Council <p>At each project stage and report into Cabinet (or Cabinet member as appropriate), the schemes value for money and benefit will continue to be considered as part of necessary council approvals.</p>
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NB There will be a number of observations made in the report. These are simply comments made by the committee, and do not require any formal response.

- Noting the importance of making use of in-house capacity over consultants in the implementation of the IT strategy
- Noting Public Health funding comes from a ringfenced grant, that this does not preclude other budgets within the Council from contributing to Public Health activities
- Recognising the limits to the Council's power when working with partners, reciprocal agreements with neighbouring councils to enable cross-border access to recycling centres should remain a clear priority
- With HIF1 and HIF2 upcoming, similar levels of overspend to the Watlington Relief Road would not be sustainable, and the Council's project management and monitoring of costs will need to improve

**Local Government Act 2003: Section 25
Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) -
Chief Finance Officer**

Background

1. Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 requires that when a local authority is agreeing its annual budget and council tax precept, the Chief Finance Officer must report to it on the following matters:
 - The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the (council tax requirement) calculations
 - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves
2. The Council is required to have due regard to this report when making decisions on the budget. The law expects councillors to consider this advice and not set it aside lightly.
3. This report represents my personal and professional judgement, made independently in my statutory capacity as Oxfordshire County Council's Chief Finance Officer.
4. In expressing my opinion, I have considered the financial management arrangements and control frameworks that are in place, the budget assumptions, the adequacy of the Budget & Business Planning process, the financial risks facing the Council and the level of total reserves.
5. This statement has been prepared with explicit reference to CIPFA's Practice Oversight Panel Advisory Note 6: The Section 25 Notice – Additional Support (10 December 2025), which provides current national expectations for such judgements in a period of elevated and systemic financial risks across local government.
6. This report concentrates primarily on the level of uncertainty within the budget year (i.e. 2026/27). However, it also considers key medium-term risks and issues faced by the Council, particularly around the:
 - delivery of savings,
 - anticipated increases in demand driven services,
 - impact of demand for services funded by High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant, and
 - impact of devolution/local government reorganisation.

These factors also inform the need for reserves and balances across the medium-term strategy period.

Financial management arrangements and control framework

7. In building the budget and considering the risks inherent within it, it is important to consider the wider control environment which will help to manage and minimise those risks. This includes:
 - the approach to financial planning and monitoring with budget holders
 - a strong accountability framework which sets out clear roles and responsibilities in terms of financial management
 - regular and accurate reporting to Members and senior officers
 - an effective internal audit function assessing controls and processes.
8. The Code of Practice for Financial Management (the FM Code) sets out principles and standards for sound financial management, ensuring transparency and accountability in local government finances. It clarifies how Chief Finance Officers should satisfy their statutory responsibility for good financial administration, as required in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which mandates that every local authority must make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Financial Strategy set out at Section 4.5 sets out a compliance assessment against the Code's standards.
9. Annually, the external auditors (EY) review the financial accounts and assess value for money effectiveness. The position of the accounts for both Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Pension Fund are up to date:
 - 2024/25 – The Statement of Accounts is expected to be signed on 3 February 2026 with a qualified audit opinion. This represents an improvement from the previously anticipated disclaimed opinion. The qualification relates to the continuing impact of the unaudited 2022/23 opening balances.
 - 2025/26 – It is currently anticipated that the accounts will again receive a qualified audit opinion, arising from the unresolved position in respect of the 2022/23 balances.
10. In respect of securing value for money, the conclusions are based on whether the organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience and for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness. There was an unqualified value for money conclusion for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
11. The Council's governance arrangements require a statement at the year-end from the 'corporate lead officer' for various key control areas. The Section 151 Officer has responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained to provide an assessment of the current position across the whole Council and identifying areas for improvement where appropriate. Areas for

improvement are included in the Annual Governance Statement and monitored in year via the Audit & Governance Committee.

Budget Assumptions

12. The formation of the 2026/27 budget and indicative budgets for the following four years to 2030/31 have allowed for best estimates of the total financial envelope over the medium term taking into account anticipated unavoidable pressures relating to inflation and demand plus other changes to expenditure plans and the savings then required to match the funding available. It is not the role of the S25 assurance statement to comment on the precise mix of these, providing the overall combination results in a balanced budget and the estimates on which the calculation is based are robust.
13. The Budget & Business Planning process is well established. All the estimates within the proposed budget are the product of a comprehensive iterative budget process with Cabinet Members, and Directors as well as regular briefings with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation resulting in agreement on the level of service delivery within the identified financial resources. The main financial risks that are taken into account in determining the estimates are set out in paragraph 15 below.
14. In forming the estimates various assumptions have been made, the main assumptions together with an assessment of their risk are set out below:

- a) Funding assumptions:

Grants – the three-year Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2026/27 to 2028/29 which reflects the outcome of the Fair Funding Review 2.0, whilst challenging due to reductions in funding over the three years, does provide certainty and gives time to plan for the reductions which will be required to achieve a balanced budget over the medium term.

Council Tax – A Council Tax increase of 4.99% is proposed for 2026/27 and for the three-year settlement period to 2028/29; the maximum allowable (without a referendum) as set out in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement and the Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement for 2026/27. The rise comprises a general precept increase of 2.99% and a 2.00% increase in the Adult Social Care precept.

The existing MTFS assumed an increase in the taxbase for Band D equivalent properties in 2026/27 of 1.75% which is consistent with growth in previous years. The actual increase for 2026/27 is only 1.33%. However, this is predominantly due to a delay in the valuation of around 2,000 properties in two district councils. If these had been included, the taxbase increase would be approximately 2.0%. The proposed MTFS continues to assume annual

increases of 1.75% to 2030/31, which is a reasonable projection based on prior years' growth.

There continue to be strong surpluses on Council Tax collection funds. The actual position notified by the districts for 2026/27 is £8.2m. Apart from 2021/22 and 2022/23 when there was an impact related to COVID-19, council tax surpluses have averaged at least £8.0m each year. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the collection fund position for 2027/28 and beyond will remain at a surplus of £8.0m. Should collection rates dip below this sum in any year, there is a Collection Fund reserve which can be utilised to mitigate any volatility.

Business rates – As a core part of the funding system in the Fair Funding review 2.0, the government will implement a full reset of the Business Rates Retention System in 2026/27. The local share (the amount of business rates that is retained by local government) will continue to be subject to redistribution across local government via 'top-ups' and 'tariffs'. Given the uncertainty about future growth in business rates beyond this reset, Oxfordshire councils agreed to revoke the North Oxfordshire business rates pool for 2026/27. This had been in place since 2014/15.

- b) Inflation – The Autumn Budget assumes Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation of 3.5% in 2025 with inflation remaining above 2% but gradually falling until 2028. Reflecting this, funding for contractual and income inflation in 2026/27 has generally been assumed at 3%. Where there are specific contractual arrangements that are higher than this, funding has been built into pressures to reflect that.

The increase of 4.1% in the National Living Wage in April 2026 also means that pressure relating to pay inflation (based on national agreements) for the Council's employees is now likely to be higher than the 2.5% increase originally assumed for 2026/27 (costing an additional £2.3m per 1%). 3.0% annual pay cost increase is included in budgets from 2027/28 onwards.

In total, the budget includes £16.4m for inflationary pressures in 2026/27 (of which £8.7m is for pay inflation assumed at 3.2% plus contingency).

- c) Demographic/Demand Growth – Oxfordshire faces significant demographic growth with an expected increase in its population of 9% from 2023 to 2032. Within that, there will be an estimated 21% increase in the number of people aged over 65. The increased population will put pressure on the demands for services and growing pressure on the health and social care system. Funding for demographic demand growth is built into the budget each year to meet forecast increases for older people, adults with learning disabilities and physical disabilities as well as growth in demand in children's social care, home to school transport and waste disposal.

The contingency budget also includes on-going funding equivalent to 1% of the budget for both Adults and Children's Services to mitigate the risk of additional demand in these services.

- d) Treasury Management – all existing debt is under fixed interest rates so is not subject to interest rate variation, and the MTFS assumes an extension of the strategy to borrow internally. Internal borrowing has the effect of reducing some of the 'cost of carry'¹. The limit of internal borrowing will be combined with the long-term debt lending limit and will not exceed £450m in 2026/27.

Prudent assumptions have been made regarding the bank rate and target in-house rates of return. The proposed MTFS assumes a return of 4.00% in 2026/27 (3.25% in 2025/26) reducing to 3.50% from April 2027 and for the remainder of the MTFS period.

As at 31 December 2025, the Council had £90m (original purchase value of £88m) invested in external funds, representing 19% of the Council's total investment portfolio. Whilst market volatility has seen the capital value of the funds fluctuate recently, they are held with a long-term view, and there is no intention to divest from any of the funds at present. An estimated return of 3.75% is assumed for 2026/27 compared with a target return on the funds of between 4.00% - 5.00%. Therefore, there is no optimism bias in the income forecasts.

Additional interest on balances contributed to an underspend of £12.8m in 2024/25. £2.0m of an additional £7.5m forecast interest on balances is being used to help manage forecast service overspends in 2025/26 and the remaining £5.5m is expected to be held in a Budget Reserve to help support the budget for 2027/28. The availability of this additional one-off funding has aided financial resilience and enabled reserves to be replenished. However, the cash impact of the High Needs DSG deficit means that future interest is likely to reduce, so this may not continue.

- e) Capital Programme – the proposed ten-year Capital Programme has a shortfall of funding/over-programmed of £10.4m. Given the programme is £1.5bn over a ten-year period, this is not considered an imprudent position. Any new capital resources which arise in 2026/27 will be prioritised to bringing the programme back into balance. The proposed ten-year programme allows for a planned approach to the management of assets, services, and needs.

The total programme of £1.5bn is funded by capital grants, developer contributions, capital receipts and prudential borrowing. Over 53% of the programme is funded by grants and contributions (£838m). 14% of the

¹ the difference between the interest payable on borrowing on debt and the interest receivable from investing surplus cash

programme is funded by borrowing (£211m), the full costs of which are built into the revenue budget.

Councils are required under the CIPFA Prudential Code to ensure that borrowing is prudent and affordable and are required to publish indicators (known as prudential indicators) to demonstrate this. The main indicator to judge affordability of debt is “the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream”. CIPFA do not offer any guidance on the level at which this ratio becomes imprudent, however using other similar authorities as a guide, a judgement can be made.

The prudential borrowing limit for the Council has been set at 5.5%, in line with the average for all County Councils. The costs of borrowing, with the additional proposed investment remain within 5% the Council’s net revenue stream throughout the MTFS period and is therefore prudent and affordable. The Capital Programme includes a programme contingency of 3% to meet any unavoidable or unforeseen costs.

The Capital and Investment Strategy (Section 5.1) outlines the Council’s approach to capital investment and complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Local Authorities. The capital programme governance arrangements are now embedded and have strengthened the processes for inclusion of schemes in the programme. The capital programme only includes schemes that have been agreed to address identified need. These schemes have an approved initial business case, articulating a clear case for change, a defined scope, an indicative budget/investment and an agreed indicative timeline including a ‘go live’ date. Pipeline capital schemes are subject to further development and an approved initial business case and have only estimated costs. These schemes may change in both scope and value before being agreed through the capital governance process and brought forward into the firm programme.

The council has recently established a Strategic Place Shaping Board (Capital Projects) to oversee the links across the whole Council and the whole place. The intention is that this will optimise the council’s capital programme, improve impact, lever external funding and reduce volatility on costs and enable improved visibility and tracking of the pipeline of future schemes to enable improved delivery over time.

Financial Risks

15. Given the growing unavoidable pressures and the need to deliver savings, the budget will inevitably contain a degree of financial risk. The key risks are set out in the following paragraphs. However, to help manage the impact of financial risk, a corporate contingency is held. The proposed level of corporate contingency for 2026/27 is £6.3m. The contingency budget is held to cover:

- the risk that demographic pressures are higher than forecast;
- any potential pay awards beyond budgeted assumptions plus other inflationary risk; and
- the risk that proposed savings, including existing savings relating to organisational redesign and other cross cutting savings, are not achieved in full, based on the performance targets set out in the Financial Strategy.

a) Achievement of planned savings – prior to 2022/23, the Council had a history of good delivery on its planned savings with an average achievement of 91% per year over the nine years up to 2021/22. However, since then, delivery of planned savings has reduced.

	Outturn (-ve underspend/ +ve overspend)	Savings Target	%
2022/23	£13.4m	£17.8m	43%
2023/24	-£12.3m	£28.2m	84%
2024/25	-£12.8m	£26.0m	77%
2025/26	-£2.0m	£28.7m	75%

The Council's Delivering the Future Together programme includes projects which will enable the delivery of savings from organisation wide themes. Savings of £7.7m are included in the MTFS for 2025/26, of which £4.5m (58%) are forecast to be undelivered in 2025/26, although they are expected to be delivered in the main by the end of 2026/27. This includes savings of £5.0m from undertaking a review of contracts and third party spend and £1.0m savings from commercial opportunities. There are also £0.7m savings from organisational redesign in addition to £1.3m savings remaining to be achieved from 2024/25.

The Budget and Business Planning report to Cabinet in January 2026 shows that 75% of new savings built into the 2025/26 budget are currently assessed as green or amber. There are further savings in the existing and proposed MTFS which are required to be delivered up to 2027/28 totalling £29.4m, of which £24.4m is planned for 2026/27. The previously agreed savings relating to the Financial Strategy for Children's Services have been mitigated by a risk adjustment of £2.1m which is proposed to be added as part of the budget proposals.

The Financial Strategy (Section 4.5) sets out the performance target of 90% for achievement of planned savings. Given that non delivery of savings impacts on the forecast outturn position and therefore the financial sustainability of the Council, there needs to be a continued focus on delivery and strategies in place where savings are off track.

b) Demand led pressures – there are some budgets where service user numbers for the provision of statutory services are notoriously difficult to control/predict. Therefore, a degree of judgement has to be applied to estimate the level of risk to the budget.

The average total number of children we care for was 785 for 2024/25 and has been maintained at approximately a similar level during 2025/26 to date at 782 (666 Oxfordshire born children, 47 children with disabilities and 68 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children). However, within this, the proportion of Oxfordshire born children we care for has increased and within that higher cost placement types are becoming increasingly required. This is giving rise to pressures in 2025/26, with ongoing impacts into 2026/27, which are being addressed through the 2026/27 budget with an investment of £11.6m, plus a further £1.8m for future demographic growth.

As set out in detail below, the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) in Oxfordshire has risen significantly in recent years. This has had a direct impact on the home to school transport budget which, prior to 2024/25 had been overspending significantly. To bring about a stable budget a transformation programme was established, implementing a set of interventions to manage demand more effectively. This is having a positive impact with a break-even position expected for 2025/26 which includes the delivery of a £0.5m saving.

Through the delivery of the Oxfordshire Way, the number of people receiving adult social care services remains broadly in line with forecasted increases. The total number of adults supported in January 2026 was 6,895, an increase of 1.4% from January 2025. However, there is a continuing risk that if the combined effect of demand and the level of assessed need starts to rise at a faster rate than assumed, this will put pressure on the adult social care budget. £5.4m is built into the budget for demographic changes in 2026/27.

c) High Needs – the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) in Oxfordshire has risen from 2,027 in 2015/16 to 7,318 in January 2025, an increase of 261%. The increase from January 2024 to January 2025 was 13.2%. The cost of providing education is met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In the same period the DSG allocation for 2014/15 for the High Needs block was £50.1m, whilst the latest projected spend for 2025/26 is £167.3m, compared to the allocation for 2025/26 which is £96.7m. The table below sets out the overspend against the grant since 2019/20 which clearly shows the acceleration of the overspend since 2024/25.



Due to exponential growth in the number of EHCPs, and their cost, in comparison to the funding allocated by Government, the forecast deficit continues to grow at a more material rate than local measures can currently mitigate the impact.

In line with the CIPFA Code of Practice, and the statutory over-ride which is in place until 31 March 2028, deficits on High Needs on Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) have been held in an unusable reserve since 2020/21. The forecast deficit of £70.7m in 2025/26 will increase the total accumulated negative balance for High Needs held in this reserve from £92.5m at 31 March 2025, to £163.2m at 31 March 2026. If expenditure continues at the same rate the deficit would be expected to exceed £250m by 31 March 2027. The current estimate of earmarked reserves (excluding school balances) by 31 March 2027 is £242m.

Currently the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which formalise the accounting treatment of the High Needs deficit into an unusable reserve, explicitly state that 'Local authorities must not charge DSG deficits to a revenue account'.

As set out in Section 4.5, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement consultation document sets out that "...once the Statutory Override ends at the end of 2027-28, funding will be managed within the overall central government DEL envelope.' Regarding the cumulative deficits, the consultation states that 'whilst we do not expect local authorities to plan on the basis of having to meet deficits in full, any future support will not be unlimited'.

These statements, for the first time, set a clear expectation that local authorities will be required to meet some of the historic deficit. Reflecting that the Council will need to manage at least some of the deficit, it is proposed to increase the contribution to the High Needs DSG Deficit Risk Reserve from £4m in 2025/26 to £8m per annum from 2026/27 onwards. This will mean that by 31 March 2028, there will be £41.0m in the reserve, an estimated 13% of the likely deficit by that date. Alternatively, this contribution could, if this was allowed, be used to support borrowing of up to around £120m or around two thirds of the forecast deficit as at 31 March 2026.

Even if the historic deficits to 2025/26 were met in full by government, at the current rate of spend, there would be a deficit of over £140m for the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28 before funding will be managed by central government. If a significant proportion of the deficit both historic and up to 2027/28 is met by government, say 75%, this would result in the local authority needing to meet the remaining £75m, based on the projected £300m deficit by 2027/28.

Therefore, whilst further information on the future arrangements for the management of High Needs DSG deficits is expected in the Final Settlement in February 2026, this remains a significant risk for the Council.

- d) Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation - following submission of LGR business cases in November 2025, a statutory consultation is expected to take place from early February 2026, giving residents, businesses and stakeholders the opportunity to share their views on the three proposals for Oxfordshire before any decisions are made. The government is expected to announce its decision in early summer 2026. Elections are likely to take place for a shadow authority (or authorities) in May 2027 – a temporary governing body established during the transition period to a new council. A new council(s) will potentially come into effect on 1 April 2028. Alongside this, an expression of interest for a Thames Valley Strategic Authority was submitted to Government in December 2025, with the ambition for its creation also on 1 April 2028.

Whilst 2027/28 will potentially be the final year this Council sets a budget, it is important that consideration is given to the long-term sustainability of a future organisation or organisations and that decisions are not made with short term interests only, or that disadvantage a new authority or authorities.

The preparatory work in relation to the creation of a new organisation or organisations is significant and will require considerable resource to deliver. At the same time, it is essential that a focus on business as usual is maintained to ensure the Council continues to deliver efficient and effective services to residents and remains financially sustainable.

The One Oxfordshire proposal set out estimated costs of transition to a new council of £21.9m. Of this, costs expected to be incurred ahead of vesting day on 1 April 2028 are estimated to be £8.8m. Whilst the expectation is that this will be met from the savings that will arise from the creation of a new unitary council, or councils, the reserve to support LGR and Devolution established in 2024/25 with a £10m contribution will be used in the interim to meet the costs incurred ahead of savings being realised.

e) Social Care/Health - the Government's proposed Fair Pay Agreement (FPA) presents a material and unquantified cost risk for adult social care services. Information provided by national bodies indicates that the initial funding provision is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the scale of workforce enhancements needed so this is a risk that may increase future costs.

Continued uncertainty and delays in the Better Care Fund (BCF) guidance and allocations contribute to volatility in budgeting and hinder effective planning. National reforms are expected to introduce significant changes to allocations from 2027/28, with some areas likely receiving no uplift and potential redistribution away from local authorities. Lastly, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) across the country are operating under significant financial pressure, and this creates a growing risk for local authorities. Oxfordshire is no different. This increases the potential of unfunded pressures emerging within the system and adult social care which creates uncertainty for medium-term financial planning.

Level of total reserves

16. The Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement at Section 4.6 sets out the Council's policies underpinning the maintenance of a level of general balances and earmarked reserves. As well as holding a contingency budget, general balances are also held to ensure that a major incident or emergency can be managed without impacting on other services. In reaching the decision on the level of balances I feel are appropriate to be held for 2026/27, I have considered the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority including the ability to deliver planned savings, as well as external risks such as the impact of flooding or contract risks. The recommended level of balances for 2026/27, based on the risk assessment, is £32.7m (£30.2m for 2025/26).
17. Earmarked reserves are also held for specific planned purposes. In assessing the appropriate level of reserves, a review is undertaken annually to determine if they are both adequate and necessary. In addition, the Financial Resilience index has been used to provide an understanding and comparison of the level of reserves with other county councils (See Financial Strategy Section 4.5). The Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement sets out the details of that review.

Assurance Statement of the Chief Finance Officer

Conclusion

18. The risks in the 2026/27 budget are predominantly in relation to costs and demand in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care. The proposed budget for 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy includes proposals to address both inflationary rises and current plus forecast demand pressures. In addition,

to help mitigate these risks, the contingency budget includes on-going funding equivalent to 1% of the budget for these services.

19. In addition, the achievement of planned savings in line with their delivery plans remains a risk and should delivery fall behind schedule, mitigations will be required to ensure that they do not give rise to financial stress in 2026/27.
20. Whilst the 2026/27 budget is balanced, there is a significant gap between estimated spend and known funding for 2027/28 and 2028/29 due to the impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0. It is therefore imperative that action is taken early to achieve a balanced budget over the medium term, to ensure continued financial sustainability. As a result of the financial challenges in the medium-term, the budget-setting process for 2027/28 has been brought forward with discussions starting in early February 2026. These early discussions will be aligned and explicitly linked to clear priorities as articulated in the Strategic Plan, as well as reflecting the needs Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution and achieved through the Delivering the Future Together programme.
21. There is significant risk to financial sustainability over the medium term relating to the accumulated High Needs DSG deficit as well as the in-year overspend, which are growing at an accelerated rate. This is impacting on the overall level of reserves held and on foregone interest. A national solution to the accumulated deficit is awaited as part of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement, which is expected to be published on 9 February 2026. However, it is not known what this looks like or when it will be implemented.
22. The system of financial control is adequate, and financial management and financial systems are monitored to ensure they remain effective and relevant. Where areas for improvement are identified, actions will need to be agreed with Directors and support provided to implement them.

Section 25 Judgement

Robustness of estimates

- The estimates for 2026/27 are robust subject to strengthened in-year management and disciplined controls, particularly in regard to delivery of savings.

Adequacy of reserves

- The level of total reserves is appropriate and sufficient to provide both general balances to manage the impact of unexpected events in line with the risk assessment; and the setting aside of earmarked reserves to meet known or anticipated liabilities. Whilst reserves are adequate for 2026/27,

there is limited headroom in future years given the heightened volatility from reduced contingencies, demand-led pressures and ability to deliver savings.

Important Note: High Needs DSG Deficit

- My assurance depends on the government providing a national solution that covers a substantial portion of both past and future High Needs DSG deficits. If this does not happen, the Council's financial sustainability will be compromised.

Lorna Baxter FCPFA
Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)
February 2026

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Summary

	INDICATIVE BUDGET																	
	2026/27				2027/28			2028/29			2029/30							
	Proposed Base Budget	Fair Funding Review 2.0 Changes	Proposed Allocation	Proposed Budget	Proposed Base Budget	Proposed Allocation	Proposed Budget	Proposed Base Budget	Proposed Allocation	Proposed Budget	Proposed Base Budget	Proposed Allocation	Proposed Budget					
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m					
	Service Budgets		2026/27		2027/28		2028/29		2029/30		2030/31							
	Adult Services		23.233		13.280		295.790		327.841		344.262							
Service Budgets	Children's Services		1.592		18.126		234.576		252.482		263.152							
	Environment & Highways		55.093		-4.202		50.891		60.700		59.996							
	Economy and Place		21.029		-2.116		18.913		19.771		20.397							
	Public Health & Communities		13.276		0.500		9.126		9.254		9.181							
	Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety		31.728		0.735		32.463		32.933		32.958							
	Resources and Law & Governance		64.973		5.211		70.183		68.103		68.519							
	New Risk Assumption - To be allocated		6.177		2.434		8.611		15.819		22.729							
	Pay inflation		-4.213		-4.213		8.611		-1.800		-6.013							
	Cross Cutting Proposals – To be Allocated to services once achieved																	
	Service Budgets	666.410	20.176	29.755	716.341	716.341	33.292	749.632	749.632	38.536	788.168	788.168	43.009	831.177	831.177	45.640	876.817	
Strategic Measures	Capital Financing		17.555		2.191		19.746		20.544		20.900		22.698		22.698		25.218	
	- Principal		13.035		13.035		13.035		13.035		13.035		13.035		13.035		13.035	
	Interest																	
	Interest on Balances		- Interest receivable		-1.070		-10.897		-7.795		-7.795		-7.795		-7.795		-7.795	
	- External Funds		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813		-3.813	
	- Interest on developer contributions		8.219		-0.794		7.425		7.799		7.799		7.799		7.799		7.799	
	- Prudential Borrowing recharges		-7.491		3.100		-4.391		-4.391		-4.391		-4.391		-4.391		-4.391	
	Unfenced Specific Grants		-59.349		59.349		-1.000		6.254		6.254		6.254		6.254		6.254	
	Contingency		7.254		1.774		1.774		6.254		6.254		6.254		6.254		6.254	
	Insurance Recharge		1.774															
Total Strategic Measures	-32.643	59.349	2.427	29.133	29.133	4.274	33.407	33.407	0.356	33.763	33.763	1.798	35.561	35.561	2.520	38.081		
Contributions to/from Balances & Reserves																		
General Balances		2.687		-2.687		8.290		8.290		8.290		8.290		8.290		8.290		
Prudential Borrowing Costs		8.290		-1.568		-1.552		-3.120		3.120		8.000		8.000		8.000		
Transformation Reserve		-2.318		2.318		4.000		-2.109		2.109		-3.649		3.649		8.000		
Budget Priorities Reserve		4.000		-2.109		-2.109		8.000		8.000		8.000		8.000		8.000		
COVID - 19 Reserve		-2.318		2.318		-3.649		-3.649		3.649		-1.400		-1.400				
Demographic Risk Reserve		4.000																

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2028/29

Financing

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Summary

Service	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m
Adult Services	13.279	16.084	15.967	16.421	16.594
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	15.153	16.393	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	-1.874	-0.309	15.967	16.421	16.594
Children's Services	18.127	8.423	9.483	10.670	11.534
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	3.382	8.418	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	14.745	0.005	9.483	10.670	11.534
<i>New expenditure funded by Children, Families and Youth Grant</i>	3.146		-0.935		
<i>Children, Families and Youth Grant Increase</i>	-3.146		0.935		
Environment & Highways	-4.203	5.456	4.352	-0.704	1.706
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	1.264	3.541	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	-5.467	1.915	4.352	-0.704	1.706
Economy & Place	-2.116	-0.597	1.455	0.626	0.378
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	-3.470	-0.242	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	1.354	-0.355	1.455	0.626	0.378
Public Health & Communities	0.500	0.128	-0.072	-0.012	-0.012
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	0.760	-0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	-0.260	0.140	-0.072	-0.012	-0.012
<i>Increase to Public Health Grant Funded Expenditure</i>	0.922	1.040	1.129	0.000	0.000
<i>Public Health Grant Increase</i>	-0.922	-1.040	-1.129	0.000	0.000
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	0.735	0.470	0.025	0.172	0.177
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	0.477	0.162	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	0.258	0.308	0.025	0.172	0.177
Resources and Law & Governance	5.212	-2.080	0.416	0.724	0.873
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	-0.628	0.671	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	5.840	-2.751	0.416	0.724	0.873
<i>New Crisis & Resilience Grant Expenditure</i>	4.826	0.003	0.979		
<i>Crisis and Resilience Fund Grant Increase</i>	-4.826	-0.003	-0.979		
Pay Inflation and Redesign Savings	-1.779	5.408	6.910	15.112	14.390
<i>Previously Proposed Pay Inflation</i>	7.134	7.208	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New Risk Assumption to be allocated</i>	0.000			8.202	7.480
<i>New Pay Inflation</i>	-4.700	0.000	6.910	6.910	6.910
<i>Previously Proposed Redesign Saving</i>	-4.213		0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New Proposed Redesign Saving</i>		-1.800			
Total Service Changes	29.755	33.292	38.536	43.009	45.640
<i>Previously Proposed</i>	19.859	36.139	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>New</i>	9.896	-2.848	38.536	43.009	45.640

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Adult Services

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
		Inflation for Care Packages						
PP Pressure	Inflation	2026ASC4 - Forecast increases to the cost of care packages due to inflation. Remove previous pressures and replace with 2026ASC02	3.847	9.964				13.811
PP Pressure	Inflation	2025ASC601 - Increases to the cost of care packages funded by the council. Remove previous pressures and replace with 2026ASC02.	5.500					5.500
New Pressure	Inflation	2027ASC02 - Forecast increases to the cost of care packages due to inflation. 2028/29 onwards are new years being added to the MTFS.	-3.755	-0.100	10.016	10.165	10.165	26.491
		Subtotal Inflation for Care Packages	5.592	9.864	10.016	10.165	10.165	45.802
		Demand Increases from Population Growth						
PP Pressure	Demand	2025ASC590 - Demand increases resulting from population growth	8.500					8.500
PP Pressure	Demand	2026ASC1 - Projected increase in demand resulting from population growth.	-2.532	6.429				3.897
New Pressure	Demand	2027ASC01 - Demand increases resulting from population growth. 2028/29 onwards are new years being added to the MTFS.	-0.596		6.429	6.429	6.429	18.691
		Subtotal Demand Increases from Population Growth	5.372	6.429	6.429	6.429	6.429	31.088
New Pressure	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC06 - High cost complex placements have continued to increase during 2025/26. The ongoing effect of these placements is expected to create a continuing pressure in 2026/27 and beyond.	3.600					3.600
PP Pressure	Other	2026L&CO1 - Revenue costs of borrowing to support the cost of additional complex needs accommodation for adults of working age (Links to 2026L&CO17).	0.120	0.120				0.240
PP Saving	Other	2026L&CO19 - Savings associated with additional in-house residential accommodation for adults with complex needs	-0.120	-0.120				-0.240
New Pressure	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC03 - Increased cost of emergency contract for telecare provision following provider failure in 2025/26	0.647					0.647
New Pressure	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC04 - Increased cost of emergency contract for community equipment following provider failure in 2025/26	0.270					0.270
New Pressure	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC05 - Increased cost of contract renewal relating to services for Adults with Learning Disabilities to match framework rates (HOWDAB2 contract)	0.474	0.237				0.711

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Saving	Use of technology	2026ASC23 - Reduction in the number of packages that include double handed care (the need to have two carers to help support the individual) thanks to the successful implementation of reablement programme and assistive technology solutions.	-0.112					-0.112
New Saving	Use of PH grant funding	2027PHC1 - Continuation of savings for ASC through reduced charges for social care assessments	-0.072					-0.072
New Saving	Use of PH grant funding	2027PHC2 - Continuation of utilisation of Public Health Grant to help fund Community Capacity Grants	-0.250					-0.250
New Saving	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC008 - Efficiencies in new supported living contract reduces contract costs	-0.541	-0.145	-0.177	-0.173		-1.036
New Saving	Other	2027ASC009 - Oxfordshire Employment will deliver the SEQF pathway of the Connect to Work Programme in Oxfordshire. This is a fully funded programme that encompasses some provision previously delivered from the service's core budget (so council funding can be released without impacting on service provision). At present this would be delivered annually over a 5 year period.	-0.100					-0.100
New Saving	Contract & Third Party spend	2027ASC011 - Contract reviews within Learning Disability Supported Living settings	-0.750					-0.750
PP Savings	Cross Cutting Savings	2026RLGEST10 - Several projects are being transitioned into the New Ways of Working with an amalgamation activities/contracts, with a review of both Children's and Adults Transport services.	-0.050					-0.050
New Saving	Other	2027ASCPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.301	-0.301	-0.301			-0.903
New Saving	Other	2027ASC012 The Council's Adult Social Care charging policy currently makes a standard allowance for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) of 35 per cent. Subject to a full consultation process the Council's proposal is to consider a reduction of the DRE to 25 per cent which would produce a potential in year saving of £0.500m (2027ASC012).	-0.500					-0.500
Total			13.279	16.084	15.967	16.421	16.594	78.345

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Children's Services

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Demand - ongoing effect of 2025/26 activity	2027CS01 - Requirement to address underlying on-going effect of the forecast overspend in 2025/26.	8.731					8.731
New Pressures	Demand - ongoing effect of 2025/26 activity	2027CS11 - Requirement to address underlying on-going effect of the forecast overspend in 2025/26 - additional cost of the full year effect of that activity in 2026/27.	2.843					2.843
								0.000
PP Pressures	Demand	2025CS787 - Financial Strategy originally built into 2024/25 budget estimated that demand would reduce by 2026/27.	-4.237					-4.237
PP Pressures	Other	2026CS11 - Financial Strategy savings risk (100% of previously proposed savings in 2026/27). Use risk adjustment to offset demand reduction assumed in Financial Strategy (2025CS787) that has not materialised.	5.000					5.000
		Children we Care For Demographic Growth						
PP Pressures	Demand	2026CS10 - Demand increases resulting from population growth	1.140	1.510				2.650
New Pressures	Demand	2027CS02 - Children's Social Care - Demographic growth	0.626	0.787	2.918	3.226	3.832	11.389
		Subtotal Children we Care For Demographic Growth	1.766	2.297	2.918	3.226	3.832	14.039
		Home to School Transport						
PP Pressures	Demand	2025CS-HN713 - Future increases in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)	2.500					2.500
PP Pressures	Demand	2026CS16 - Update to Home to School demographic growth. This figure assumes the same annual growth of 7% (Post 16 SEN) and 9% (SEN) and factors in the volume cost impact of increasing Out of County provision.	0.700	3.200				3.900
New Pressures	Demand	2027CS12 - Add new years to plan for Home to School Transport Demographic Growth			3.400	3.400	3.400	10.200
PP Savings	Cross Cutting Savings	2026RLGEST10 - Several Home to School Transport projects are being transitioned into the New Ways of Working with an amalgamation activities/contract, with a review of both Children's and Adults Transport services.	-0.925					-0.925

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Savings	Other	2027CS14 – Home to School Transport savings through route optimisation and contract negotiations	-0.250					-0.250
		Subtotal Home to School Transport	2.025	3.200	3.400	3.400	3.400	15.425
PP Pressures	Demand	2026CS33 - Educational Psychology- Demand for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) is expected to increase and there is a statutory requirement to provide information from an Education Psychologist for every EHCNA agreed.	1.027					1.027
New Pressures	Service Enhancement	2027CS30 - SEND Casework Team	0.800					0.800
PP Pressures	Contribution from Reserves	2026COVID - The modelling approach to COVID-19 within Oxfordshire across all services has been to compare expected, annual growth patterns to growth seen through the pandemic. The excess growth was deemed to be as a result of the pandemic. Using this method there were an extra 74 plans issued, and applying costs based on the normal pattern of provisions, this resulted in an additional cost to High Needs. One - off funding from the COVID-19 reserve will be removed as planned from 2026/27 as no further funding is available.	1.200					1.200
PP Pressures	Demand	COVID11 - The modelling approach to COVID-19 within Oxfordshire across all services has been to compare expected, annual growth patterns to growth seen through the pandemic. The excess growth is deemed to be as a result of the pandemic. Using this method there were an extra 74 plans issued, and applying costs based on the normal pattern of provisions, this results in an additional cost to High Needs. One - off expenditure funded from the COVID-19 reserve will be removed as planned from 2026/27 as no further funding is available.	-1.200					-1.200
PP Pressures	Inflation	Contract Inflation (RPIX - 4.2%; RPI - 4.1%; CPI - 2.5%)	0.780	0.836				1.616
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026CS12 - Inflation - funding for estimated inflationary increases to the cost of care.	2.628	2.890				5.518
New Pressures	Inflation	2027CS03 - Children's Social Care - Adjust Contract Inflation to reflect anticipated increases	-0.241	-0.280	0.587	0.614	0.645	1.325
New Pressures	Inflation	2027CS04 - Children's Social Care - Placement Inflation	0.301	0.163	3.243	3.430	3.657	10.794
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.034	-0.034				-0.068

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Demand	2027CS05 - Requirement to address 2025/26 Children We Care For saving under-delivery	1.208					1.208
New Pressures	Other	2027CS08 - Additional funding required to top up Disabled Facilities Grant funding for adaptations to homes etc	0.100					0.100
New Pressures	Other	2027CS10 - Release uncommitted funding for the Recruitment & Retention Strategy (replaced by new service investments in 2027CS20 and 2027CS30)	-1.331					-1.331
								0.000
PP Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2025CS721 - Agency Staff In Social Care - replacement with permanent Staff	-1.200					-1.200
								0.000
PP Savings	Demand	2025CS723 - Manage Demand for Children We Care For (CWCF) - Maintain CWCF at the current number	-0.700					-0.700
PP Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2025CS724 - Bring Children We Care For (CWCF) currently placed out of the county back into Oxfordshire	-0.300					-0.300
PP Savings	Demand	2025CS726 - Exits from Care - Ensuring children cease to be Children We Care For (CWCF) in line with their plan in a timely way	-2.800					-2.800
New Pressures	Demand	Contingency for Savings Risk	2.100					2.100
PP Savings	Demand	2025L&CO25 - Investment in Family Help Team (2025L&CO3) was expected to reduce future demand for and the cost of care.	-0.500					-0.500
								0.000
PP Savings	Demand	2026CS23 - Introduction of a no detriment policy for Special Guardianship Orders to increase local capacity to support children we care for	-0.202	-0.167				-0.369
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2025CS790/1/3 - New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy) - Recruitment & Retention Strategy	0.408					0.408
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	- New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy) - Recruitment & Retention Strategy (apprentices)	0.300					0.300
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026CS19 - Social Work Apprenticeships - Additional funding to align with 2025CS793 Recruitment & Retention Strategy (apprenticeships). This investment will enable us to recruit at least 25 new social work apprentices, contributing to our long-term goal of reducing reliance on temporary social work staff.	0.137	0.183				0.320

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026L&CO2 - Investment to deliver on the outcomes of the Education Commission, with a particular focus on narrowing the gap for disadvantaged children, embedding best practice within a new legislative environment and providing support to partnership work - one - off funding falls out in 2026/27.	-0.250					-0.250
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026L&CO3 - Extend 2025L&CO3 funding for SEND early-intervention support in Early Years and primary school settings to respond to SEND needs and proactively support the transition into mainstream education. This will need a disapplication to DfE to obtain Secretary of State agreement to add this funding into Early Years and Primary School settings. One - funding falls out in 2026/27.	-0.120					-0.120
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026L&CO5 - Invest in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) to support parents/carers accessing SEND services (2 further FTE) - full year effect of additional posts in 2026/27.	0.030					0.030
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026L&CO6 - Free Breakfast Club Delivery Strategy to identify barriers to county-wide roll out of Government scheme (seek match funding from Multi Academy Trusts) so that every child can benefit. The strategy should also consider the role for the potential in-house County School Meals service. One - off funding falls out in 2026/27.	-0.120					-0.120
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026L&CO7 - Scoping work for new Youth Futures Hubs in Oxfordshire. This should use co-production methods to engage with young people alongside the deprivation work done by Public Health to develop plans for Hubs across the County aimed at meeting the needs of marginalised young people.	0.120					0.120
PP Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2025L&CO24 - Invest to save returns resulting from reducing numbers of private placements for children we care for through increase in internal care provision (see 2025L&CO5)	-0.120	-0.120				-0.240
PP Investments	Support future savings	2025L&CO5 - Revenue borrowing costs associated with adding three new children's homes from 2026/27 (including one focused on older children) to the capital programme.	0.120	0.120				0.240
New Savings	Use of PH grant funding	2027PHC3 - Continuation of utilisation of Public Health Grant to support Family Solutions Plus	-0.250					-0.250
New Savings	Other	2027CSPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.665	-0.665	-0.665			-1.995

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Investments	Other	Families First Partnership Programme: New activity funded by Children, Families and Youth Grant increase in 2026/27 - respond to new requirements set out by the Government.	3.146		-0.935			2.211
New Grant Funding	Other	Families First Partnership Ringfenced Grant Funding	-3.146		0.935			-2.211
New Pressures	Other	2027CS20 - Removal of part of prior year Cross Cutting Agency and Contract Savings (pre 2024/25)	0.873					0.873
New Savings	Other	2027CS13 – The school improvement team operates in non-academy schools to support improvement in standards. The team will continue to offer support but a move to schools fully paying for the service is planned meaning additional income of £0.1m is forecast in 2026/27.	-0.100					-0.100
Total			18.127	8.423	9.483	10.670	11.534	58.237

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Environment & Highways

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
		Countryside & Waste						
		Waste Demography						
PP Pressures	Demand	2025EPDG2026E&H1 - Add new year of estimated demographic growth for Waste Management (resulting from population growth increasing waste tonnes being disposed of)	0.400					0.400
PP Pressures	Demand	2026EH102026E&H1 - Demand increases resulting from population growth increasing waste tonnes being disposed of, ranging from 2.9% to 3.2% per annum		0.400				0.400
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H2 - Increase in volume of Dry Recycling - add new years to plan			0.047	0.053	0.054	0.154
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H2 - Increase in volume of organic waste - add new years to plan			0.042	0.048	0.049	0.139
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H2 - Energy Recovery - add new years to plan	0.250	-0.150	0.206	0.221	0.226	0.753
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H2 - Increase in Landfill volumes - add new years to plan			0.020	0.021	0.021	0.062
		Subtotal Waste Demography	0.650	0.250	0.315	0.343	0.350	1.908
PP Pressures	Policy Change	2026EH12 - New carbon tax applied to fossil fuel carbon generated from waste incinerated from April 2028. Need for pre-implementation activity in the run up to the scheme starting in April 2026.	0.200	0.000				0.200
PP Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2026EH14 - The waste management contract was extended until October 2027, so costs associated with a new contract were moved to 2027/28.	0.000	0.625				0.625
PP Pressures	Other	2026EH15 - Dean Pit leachate management and Dix Landfill long term management and Landfill Tax increase	0.050	0.000				0.050
New Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2027E&H3 - Contractor passing through costs resulting from a change in law.	0.060					0.060
New Pressures	New Responsibilities	2027E&H9 - Additional costs to cover purchasing strategy of carbon allowances (hedging etc) in the run up to the beginning of the scheme in January 2028. Includes the Monitoring and external support costs.	0.160	1.000	4.000	0.000	0.000	5.160
New Pressures	New Responsibilities	2027E&H9 - Potential New Burdens grant from central government for Carbon Allowances (not yet confirmed)		-0.800	-3.328			-4.128

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Commercialisation and Optimization of Fees & Charges	2027E&H10 - Consultancy support to evaluate options for re-provision of the contract for the disposal of food and garden waste. Current contract expires 2029 and re-procurement options may include Joint Ventures and or construction of our own facilities which need to be evaluated and have a significant lead in period.	0.100	0.000	0.000	-0.100	0.000	0.000
New Pressures	Other	2027E&H11 - Funding required to carry out essential maintenance at the council's Household Waste Recycling Centres.	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
New Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2027E&H13 - 2026E&H25 - a short-term contract for running HWRCs in Oxfordshire would be relatively more expensive in the short run but would potentially increase options for savings following Local Government Reform.	0.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.000
New Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2027E&H13 - It is anticipated that through commercial negotiation the cost of the contract can partially reduce, though it is anticipated that the council will take a greater share of the risk.		-0.300				-0.300
New Pressures	Other	2027E&H14 - Current funding for CCTV at waste management sites is set to expire this year. If no funding is agreed CCTV will need to cease, at least in short term until lane rental comes online.	0.250	0.000	-0.125	-0.125	0.000	0.000
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H14 - Fund CCTV pressure from reserves	-0.250	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000
New Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2027E&H15 - Savings on food and garden waste contract. Actual spend is weather dependent and mainly driven by that so may not be achievable.	-0.100	-0.050	0.000	0.000		-0.150
New Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2027E&H16 - Improvements to contractual arrangements for bulking, haulage and disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants.	-0.100	-0.050	0.000	0.000		-0.150
		Use of Packaging Extended Producer Responsibilities funding						
New Pressures	pEPR Funding	2027E&H1 - Waste Management contract inflation funded by packaging Extended Producer Responsibilities (pEPR) funding	-0.162		-0.985	-0.942		-2.089
New Pressures	pEPR Funding	2027E&H19 - Use pEPR funding to manage Waste Management pressures.	-0.420	-1.650	-0.987	-0.243	0.000	-3.300
New Pressures	PEPR Funding	2027E&H20 - Use of pEPR funding to meet costs of managing the disposal of waste packaging means council budget can be released.	-4.807	1.650	1.972	1.185	0.000	0.000
		Subtotal use of Packaging Extended Producer Responsibilities funding	-5.389	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-5.389

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Savings	Other	2025EP693 - Various pressures associated with service areas within Environment & Circular Economy - to be managed within the existing budget allocation 2024/25 (offsets pressure EP692)	0.123					0.123
PP Pressures	Other	2025EP692 - Various pressures associated with service areas within Environment & Circular Economy (offset by saving EP693). Remaining funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27.	-0.123	0.000				-0.123
New Pressures	Other	2027E&H12 - The council currently provides funding of £6,000 per annum to contribute to the management of 200+ Local Wildlife Sites in Oxfordshire. All partners have been asked to provide additional funding as part of delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and our Biodiversity Action Framework.	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.060
		Highways Maintenance						
PP Pressures	Demand	2026EH11 - Increase in maintenance of street lighting and lit signs as a result of highways asset growth.	0.145	0.000				0.145
PP Pressures	Demand	2026EH19 - Increase in maintenance of highway assets as a result of the maintainable network growing.	0.270	0.250				0.520
PP Pressures	Demand	2026EH20 - Increase in the number of traffic signals that need to be maintained as a result of asset growth.	0.120	0.000				0.120
PP Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2026EH28 - Use commuted sums to fund increase in maintenance as a result of network and asset growth (offsets 2026EH11, 19, 20 and 28)	-0.535	-0.250				-0.785
PP Pressures	Inflation	Contract Inflation (RPI - 2.2%; CPI - 1.6%; EPI 1.7% and other fixed rates)	2.517	2.910				5.427
New Pressures	Inflation	2027E&H2 - Contract Inflation - changes to the current assumption in the MTFS and add new years to plan 2028/29 (CPI -1.9% to 2%; RPI - 3.1% to 2.9% RPIX - 2.9% to 2.8% and other fixes rates)	0.225		1.773	1.822	1.858	5.678
New Pressures	Inflation	Contract Inflation (RPI - 2.2%; CPI - 1.6%; EPI 1.7% and other fixed rates) move home to school transport inflation to Children's Services.	-0.661	-0.790				-1.451
New Pressures	Inflation	Contract Inflation (RPI - 2.2%; CPI - 1.6%; EPI 1.7% and other fixed rates) move Concessionary Fares inflation to E&P.	-0.339	-0.350				-0.689
PP Pressures	Demand	2025EP622 - Increased highway maintenance activity (additional funding for potholes)	0.050	0.000				0.050
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.394	-0.394				-0.788

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Pressures	Policy Change	2026EH23 - the Department of Transport have now approved the Lane Rental Scheme in Oxfordshire so income is expected to start to be received in 2026/27 in line with previously proposed budget assumptions.	-1.075	0.000				-1.075
PP Savings	Commercialisation and Optimization of Fees & Charges	2026L&CO21 - Full year effect of receipts from increased enforcement of streetworks achieved through investment in increased enforcement of streetworks (2 Officers and 1 Senior Officer). See 2026L&CO9	-0.114					-0.114
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026L&CO9 - Full year effect of increased enforcement of streetworks (2 Officers and 1 Senior Officer) from 2026/27	0.065					0.065
New Pressures	Service Enhancement	2027E&H7 - Ongoing / increased drainage activity to extend beyond gullies - look at carrier drain and surveys etc	0.200					0.200
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H7 - Fund additional drainage activity from Commuted Sums	-0.200					-0.200
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H5 - Increased number of network management assets across county due to sustained BSIP investment. To ensure larger asset base can be maintained and maximum operating lifespans achieved additional funding will be required.	0.320	0.017	0.018	0.019		0.374
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H5 - Funding from reserves to support increased number of network management assets	-0.320	-0.017	-0.018	-0.019		-0.374
New Saving	Other	2027E&H19 - The council will reduce the on-going £1.5m additional investment in its gully cleaning budget agreed in February 2025 by £0.3m following analysis of information collected from this year's programme to empty every highway gully in the county	-0.300					-0.300
PP Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2025EP588 - Increased Parking Service operational and maintenance costs	0.200	0.000				0.200
PP Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2025EP598 - Increased drawdown from Parking Reserve to support increased Parking Service operational and maintenance costs	-0.200	0.000				-0.200
PP Pressures	Demand	2026EH22 - Additional maintenance & management costs associated with Park and Ride car parks.	0.075	0.000				0.075
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H8 - Pressures relating to asset routine & cyclical maintenance	0.350					0.350

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H1 - Maintenance contract inflation funded by Commuted Sums.	-0.063		-0.521	-0.535	-0.525	-1.644
PP Savings	Reserves Funded Expenditure	2025EP620 - Increase the use of commuted sums held in reserves to maintain new infrastructure as a result of new developments and changes to the highway	-0.100					-0.100
		Park & Rides						
PP Investments	Other	2026EH40 - Investment of £0.4m required to support holding the price of a joint ticket (parking and bus fare) at Park & Ride car parks unchanged from 2024/25 falls out in 2026/27.	-0.400	0.000				-0.400
New Pressures	Demand	2027E&H4 - Demand for joint ticketing deal has exceeded expectations, to provide service on an ongoing basis additional funding will be required.	0.400	0.062	0.065	0.068		0.595
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H4 - Funding for P&R joint ticketing deal	-0.400	-0.062	-0.065	-0.068		-0.595
PP Savings	Commercialisation and Optimization of Fees & Charges	2026L&CO22 - Introduce long stay parking charge(s) at Thornhill Park & Ride in 2026/27 for those connecting to coach-services for Heathrow and Gatwick. Nominal amount included pending actual income generated through scheme operation.	-0.010					-0.010
		Subtotal Park & Rides	-0.410	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.410
		Ash Tree Dieback						
New Pressures	Other	2027E&H17 - Annual revenue maintenance costs associated with the council's ash tree dieback plan.	0.150					0.150
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&H17 - Fund revenue maintenance cost of ash tree dieback from Commuted Sums	-0.150					-0.150
New Pressures	Other	2027E&H18 - The cost of the planned programme to assess, inspect and remove infected ash trees across the county.	0.353	1.528	2.236	-2.234	0.023	1.906
		Subtotal Ash Tree Dieback	0.353	1.528	2.236	-2.234	0.023	1.906
New Saving	Other	2027E&HPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.123	-0.123	-0.123			-0.368
Total			-4.203	5.456	4.352	-0.704	1.706	6.607

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Economy & Place

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026EP12 - £1m one – off investment to leverage investment in rail, including supporting active travel access, improvement programmes and the development of strategic cases and masterplans to prove the environmental, economic and community case for rail falls out in 2026/27. Any funding not used in 2025/26 will be held in reserves for use in 2026/27.	-1.000					-1.000
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026EP10 - Investment in pro-active flooding measures and working with communities who have suffered flooding (one - off funding falls out - some of this will be held in reserves at the end of 2025/26 and used in 2026/27)	-2.000					-2.000
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026L&CO11 - Removal of one - off funding for the development of a Kerbside Strategy (including lobbying Government for powers to tackle pavement parking)	-0.040					-0.040
PP Pressures	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	24EP30 - Transport Hubs (revenue funding for capital expenditure of £0.5m per year for three years (2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26) in locations across Oxfordshire including e-bike hire, car club promotion etc). Funding falls out in 2026/27.	-0.500					-0.500
PP Pressures	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026EP5 - Funding for pressure in energy and retrofit staffing budget owing to gap between expenditure and grant funding falls out in 2026/27.	-0.050					-0.050
New Pressures	Inflation	Contract Inflation (RPI - 2.2%; CPI - 1.6%; EPI 1.7% and other fixed rates) move to E&P RE Concessionary Fares	0.340	0.350				0.690
New Pressures	Inflation	2027E&P1 - Contract Inflation - Add new years to plan for 2028/29 onwards (CPI - 1.9% to 2%; RPI - 3.1% to 2.9% RPIX - 2.9% to 2.8% and other fixed rates)			0.360	0.371	0.378	1.109
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.027	-0.027				-0.054
New Pressures	Other	2027E&P2 - Highway Agreements Team income profile requires adjustment to ensure alignment with income forecast. In past 3 years there has been over-lap in fee type and timing of fees drawn in, that has artificially inflated income. 'Old' fees are now running down and as such just one style of fee is being drawn in. This will result in a net reduction each year in forecast income.	0.700	0.700				1.400

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&P2 - Use of S278 Reserve to offset against Highways Agreements team income generation risk, due to the tailing off of the number of houses being developed. This is only a short term funding fix, by which time the risk of an on-going income shortfall maybe realised.	-0.700	-0.475	1.175			0.000
New Pressures	Other	2027E&P3 - One - off funding to support the delivery of a rail strategy for Oxfordshire.	0.350	-0.350				0.000
New Pressures	Reserves funded expenditure	2027E&P3 - Use Enterprise Zone retained business rates funding for the delivery of the Rail strategy (as per conditional approval by Cabinet in October 2025)	-0.350	0.350				0.000
New Pressures	Other	2027E&P4 - additional monitoring and evaluation activity needed to assess impact of place investments schemes - ensuring consistency, reducing duplicative evaluation costs in projects and improving outcomes.	0.250					0.250
		Spatial Development Plan						
New Pressures	Service Enhancement	2027E&P5 - Model renewal required to baseline the new Spatial Development Plan for Oxfordshire and/or the Thames Valley. Funded from the Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Reserve.	0.500	-0.500				0.000
New Pressures	Other	2027E&P6 - Increase strategic planning resources to start the production of the new Spatial Development Plan for Oxfordshire and/or the Thames Valley. Funded from the Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Reserve.	0.350	-0.350				0.000
		Subtotal Spatial Development Plan	0.850	-0.850	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
New Pressures	New Responsibilities	2027E&P7 - Estimated cost of purchasing Carbon credits to offset to deliver the 2030 Net Zero target				0.255		0.255
New Saving	Other	2027E&P7 - cease marketmaking activity for local carbon credits	-0.080					-0.080
PP Savings	One off funding falls out	2025EP774 - Utilisation of Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to support spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	0.400	0.000				0.400
PP Savings	One off funding falls out	2025EP745 - One - off funding to manage various pressures associated with policy development under existing budget allocation (offsets pressure EP744) falls out in 2026/27	0.568	0.000				0.568
PP Pressures	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2025EP744 - Funding for pressures associated with policy development for area travel plans, HGV studies and Multi Modal transport model (offset by saving EP745) falls out in 2026/27.	-0.568					-0.568

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Savings	One off funding falls out	2026EP7 - Temporary reduction in revenue works budget in central Oxfordshire team while activity is focussed on alternatively funded core schemes falls out in 2027/28	0.000	0.040				0.040
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2025L&CO13 - Implementation costs for Phase four of the school streets scheme falls out in 2026/27	-0.030					-0.030
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2025L&CO15 - One - off seed funding for supporting pilot Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus services, building on business case developed through 2025L&CO14 falls out in 2026/27	-0.250	0.000				-0.250
PP Investments	One off funding falls out in 2027/28	2026EP1 - Additional temporary resource to support the development of four nationally significant infrastructure projects in 2025/26 and 2026/27 falls out in 2027/28	0.000	-0.075				-0.075
PP Investments	One off funding falls out in 2027/28	2026L&CO8 - Resourcing to support the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly on transport in 2025/26 and 2026/27 falls out in 2027/28	0.000	-0.050				-0.050
PP Investments	One off funding falls out in 2027/28	2026L&CO10 - £0.1m funding for Full Business Case development for Greenways cross-country cycle routes connecting rural villages and market towns to/from Oxford will continue in 2026/27 but then falls out in 2027/28.	0.000	-0.100				-0.100
PP Investments	One off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27	2026L&CO13 - Funding for a one - off piece of work for evidence gathering and design work for developing further area based HGV enforcement falls out in 2026/27	-0.140					-0.140
PP Investments	Other	2025L&CO17 - Revenue borrowing costs for pipeline delivery of capital projects identified as part of the East Oxford Mini-Holland Project.	0.120					0.120
PP Investments	Other	2026L&CO12 - Phase five of School Streets scheme (revenue cost of implementation/maintenance)	0.047	-0.030				0.017
New Pressures	Service Enhancement	2027E&H6 - Public realm maintenance of town centres	0.075					0.075
New Saving	Other	2027E&PPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.080	-0.080	-0.080			-0.240
New Investment	Other	2027E&P8 Budgeted expenditure of £1.254m and the equivalent EZ Business Rates funding is proposed to initially be added to the budget for Economy & Place for additional economic strategy and delivery capacity and capability at Oxfordshire County Council and Enterprise Oxfordshire.	1.254					1.254

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Saving	Funding from reserves	2027E&P9 Utilise Retained Enterprise Zone Business Rates Funding	-1.254					-1.254
		Total	-2.116	-0.597	1.455	0.626	0.378	-0.254

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes: Public Health & Community Services

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.012	-0.012				-0.024
New Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)			-0.012	-0.012	-0.012	-0.036
PP Savings	One off use of Public Health grant funding falls out	2025PH1 - Utilisation of government grant to fund domestic abuse services means £0.200m of council funding can be released in 2025/26. One - off release of funding falls out in 2026/27.	0.200					0.200
New Savings	Use of PH grant funding	2027PHC4 - Utilisation of government grant to fund domestic abuse services means £0.200m of council funding can continue to be released in 2026/27.	-0.200	0.200				0.000
PP Savings	One off use of Public Health grant funding falls out	2025PH6 - Utilisation of Public Health Grant to support Family Solutions Plus (replaced in 2026/27 by 2027PHC3 in Children's Services)	0.250					0.250
PP Savings	One off use of Public Health grant funding falls out	2025PH7 - one - off utilisation of Public Health Grant to help fund Community Capacity Grants in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27 (replaced in 2026/27 by 2027PHC2 in Adult Services)	0.250					0.250
PP Savings	One off use of Public Health grant funding falls out	2025PH8 - one - off funding for savings for ASC through reduced charges for social care assessments in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27 (replaced in 2026/27 by 2027PHC1 in Adult Services)	0.072					0.072
New Saving	Other	2027PHPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.060	-0.060	-0.060			-0.180
New Pressures	Other	New expenditure budget for the increase to the Public Health Grant to address the latest requirements set out by the Government.	0.922	1.040	1.129			3.091
New Grant Funding	Other	Increase to public health grant funding notified in Provisional Finance Settlement	-0.922	-1.040	-1.129			-3.091
Total			0.500	0.128	-0.072	-0.012	-0.012	0.544

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes:
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Pressure	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.003	-0.003				-0.006
New Pressure	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)			-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.009
PP Pressure	Inflation	Contract Inflation	0.160	0.165				0.325
New Pressure	Inflation	2027CSS100 - Contract Inflation at 3% per OBR estimate - add new years to plan			0.170	0.175	0.180	0.525
PP Pressure	Other	2025CSafety670 - Vehicle Renewals, increase revenue contribution for replacement of Fire Vehicles	0.120					0.120
PP Pressure	Other	2026FRCS2 - Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (Operational Radios) There is an ongoing government led central project to replace the mobile communications platform for emergency services. It is expected to cost us an additional £200k a year once implemented.	0.200					0.200
New Pressure	Other	2027CSS101 - Grant funding shortfall for nine posts within the Fire Protection team. The Fire Protection grant for 2025/26 is £0.252m and this leaves a funding gap of £0.120m, with no remaining reserve to cover this. Whilst MHCLG have confirmed the grant for 2025/26, a risk remains that this could be reduced/removed in future years.	0.120					0.120
New Pressure	Other	2027CSS103 - Ill health and injury - ongoing pressures	0.100					0.100
New Saving	Other	2027CSS104 - Allocated staffing savings from 2023/24 that have not been achieved.	0.080					0.080
New Pressure	Other	2027CSS106 - Thames Valley Shared Fire Control System one-off set up costs		0.350	-0.350			0.000
New Pressure	Other	2027CSS107 - Thames Valley Shared Fire Control System costs (on-going increase)			0.250			0.250
New Saving	Other	2027FRCSSPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.042	-0.042	-0.042			-0.126
Total			0.735	0.470	0.025	0.172	0.177	1.579

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes:
Resources and Law and Governance

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Pressures	Inflation	2025Corp973 - Revised structure and pay scales for the council's Strategic Leadership Team (approved by Council on 7 November 2023). Full year effect in 2026/27	0.028	0.000				0.028
		IT Services						
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026RLGIT1 - IT - Contract Inflation	0.070	0.090				0.160
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - IT - Contract Inflation - add new years to plan			0.200	0.070	0.200	0.470
		IT Structure and Licences						
New Pressures	Contract & Third Party spend	2027RES101 - CoPilot licences costs - to be funded by Transformation Reserve in 2026/27 only	1.342					1.342
New Pressures	Other	2027RES112 - E5 licence costs - to be funded by Transformation Reserve in 2026/27 only	0.500					0.500
New Pressures	Other	2027RES111 - Additional costs arising from the IT Operations redesign, and investment needed to support the organisation be ready for Local Government Reorganisation is estimated to be up to £1.0m in 2026/27 increasing to £1.3m on-going from 2027/28. The part year cost in 2026/27 is proposed to be met from the Transformation Reserve. Further organisational redesign savings will be required to offset the on-going cost from 2027/28.	1.000	0.300				1.300
		HR and Cultural Change						
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026RLGHR1 / 2026RLGHR2 - Contract Inflation	0.010	0.010				0.020
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Contract inflation (add new years to plan)			0.010	0.010	0.010	0.030
		Coroner Service						
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026RLGL1 - Coroners - Contract Inflation	0.040	0.040				0.080
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Coroner Service - Contract Inflation (add new years to plan)			0.041	0.042	0.043	0.126

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Pressures	Inflation	2027L&G101 - Coroner Service - Agreed fee increase on current body removal contract as of 01/04/25 creating overall budget pressure of £0.060m (£0.040m previously agreed inflation for 2026/27 so additional £0.020m pressure). The current contract expires on 28.02.26 so a tender process will begin imminently for a new contract as of 01.03.26. Pressure is based on the current contract but any new contract may differ.	0.020					0.020
New Pressures	Policy Change	2027L&G103 - Senior Coroner and Area Coroner pay alignment to the judicial pay scale effective 1/4/2025 as approved by RemCom on 9/10/2025. Annual increase £0.064m plus on costs. Total £0.086m	0.086					0.086
New Pressures	Inflation	2027L&G100 - Coroner Service - The Coroner Mortuary Provision annual £0.264m contract expired on 31/03/25 after 30 years, an extension has been agreed by OCC & OUH with £0.291m increase effective 1/4/2025. Total annual cost £0.555m.	0.308	0.017	0.017	0.018	0.019	0.379
		Members' Allowances						
New Pressures	Policy Change	2027L&G104 - Adoption of Scheme of Members' Allowances as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Current budget £1.582m, required budget £1.713m. £0.131m increase (8.3%)	0.131					0.131
		Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships						
New Pressures	Demand	2027SST634 - Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships - 2027/28 pressure from the withdrawal of government funding for Healthwatch.						0.000
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026L&CO16 - Publicise the findings of the Citizens Assembly on the future of transport and undertake a follow-up public engagement exercise. One - off funding in 2025/26 falls out in 2026/27.	-0.050					-0.050
PP Investments	Other	2026PAPP05 - Funding for the continuation of the Councillor Priority Fund for 2025/26 and 2026/27 falls out in 2026/27. The fund enables councillors to support local projects in their communities and will continue to run through 2026/27.	-0.775					-0.775
		Registration Service						
PP Savings	Inflation	2026RLGR1 - Registration Service - Income Inflation - Fees & Charges	-0.060	-0.060				-0.120
New Savings	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Registration Service - Income Inflation - Fees & Charges - add new years to plan			-0.062	-0.064	-0.066	-0.192

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
		Property & Assets						
PP Pressures	Inflation	Multiple - Contract/Business Rates Inflation	0.388	0.403				0.791
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Contract Inflation - Facilities Management Operations (add new years to plan)			0.196	0.202	0.208	0.605
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Contract Inflation - Estates (add new years to plan)			0.219	0.226	0.233	0.678
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.020	-0.020				-0.040
PP Pressures	Other	2026RLGFM7a - Delay in the occupation of a new library facility in Banbury to 2025/26. Remainder of £150k saving from 2024/25 falls out in 2026/27.	-0.075	0.000				-0.075
PP Savings	Other	2025PI&FM691 - Delay in the occupation of a new library facility in the Banbury to 2025/26. £0.150m saving from 2024/25 falls out in 2025/26 and 2026/27.	0.075	0.000				0.075
New Pressures	Inflation	2027RES104 - Estates - New Banbury Library joint project with Cherwell District Council to be delivered in 2027/28		0.150				0.150
New Pressures	Demand	2027RES103 - Estates - Housing Team to support development of housing provision for social care, for example - funded by Transformation Reserve on one - off basis in 2026/27	0.278					0.278
New Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2027RES106 - Estates/Assets, trend of energy costs currently shows a downturn vs planned budget	-0.250					-0.250
New Savings	other	2027RES107 - FM Operations, Delivery of operational efficiency processes & contract reviews.	-0.250					-0.250
PP Investments	Other	2026RLGFM8 - Funding for discretionary rent concessions currently provided to tenants in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) falls out in March 2026.	-0.100	0.000				-0.100
New Investments	Service Enhancement	2027RES105 - The discretionary rent concessions currently provided to tenants in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are scheduled to end in March 2025. Plans are in place to extend this support for an additional year.	0.100					0.100
		Financial & Commercial Services						
New Investments	Service Enhancement	2027RES102 - The investment in Financial and Commercial Services is expected to deliver an at least equal saving across the organisation as a result of better management and identification of commercial and third party opportunities	0.770					0.770

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
New Savings	Contract & Third Party spend	2027RES102 - Financial and Commercial Services is expected to deliver an at least equal saving across the organisation as a result of better management and identification of commercial and third party opportunities	-0.770					-0.770
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026RLGFC1 - Contract Inflation	0.155	0.160				0.315
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - IBC Contract Inflation (add new years to plan)			0.165	0.170	0.175	0.510
New Pressures	Inflation	2027RES109 - IBC Contract Inflation - 2026LRGFC1 previously agreed not required	-0.155					-0.155
New Saving	Other	2027RES110 - Capitalisation of commercial staffing costs where they are incurred in support of capital projects	-0.150					-0.150
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026TDCE6 - Investment in Revised Data Team Structure	0.298	0.000				0.298
		Legal Services						
New Investments	Other	2027L&G102 - Revised Operating structure for Legal Services.	0.500					0.500
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026RLGL1 - Legal - Contract Inflation	0.035	0.040				0.075
New Pressures	Inflation - New Plan Years	2027RES100 - Legal Services - Contract Inflation (add new years to plan)			0.041	0.042	0.043	0.126
		Technology & Customer Experience						
PP Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-0.002	-0.002				-0.004
New Pressures	Inflation	Income Inflation (2.0%)			-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.006
PP Pressures	Inflation	2026TDCE3 - Contract Inflation	0.010	0.010				0.020
PP Pressures	One off funding falls out	24COVID4 - Funding for additional resource for the Social & Health Care Team in the council's Customer Service Centre from 2023/24 to 2025/26 (originally funded from the COVID-19 reserve) drops out in 2026/27	-0.175	0.000				-0.175
PP Investments	Service Enhancement	2026TDCE2 - Programme Management Office - Cohort 2 Inhouse training provision funding	0.020	0.000				0.020
New Pressures	Inflation	2027TDC100 - Customer Experience Contract inflation at 3% per OBR estimate. £10k for Blue badge and bus passes - add new years to plan			0.010	0.010	0.010	0.030

Section 4.2

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
		Other Changes						
PP Pressures	Demand	COVID18 - Local Council Tax Support Scheme: anticipation of future emergency welfare demand in 2022/23 falls out in 2026/27 (originally funded from COVID-19 Reserve)	-0.500	0.000				-0.500
New Saving	Other	2027RLGPEN - Reduction within employer pension contribution rate reduced by 1% from 19.9% to 18.9% for 2026/27 and then a further 1% in each of 2027/28 and 2028/29	-0.419	-0.419	-0.419			-1.257
New Pressures	Other	New expenditure budget for the Household Support Fund, under the Crisis & Resilience Fund, to address the latest requirements set out by the Government (Government Grant funded)	4.826	0.003	0.979			5.808
New grant Funding	Other	New grant funding: Crisis & Resilience Fund notified in Provisional Local Government Settlement	-4.826	-0.003	-0.979			-5.808
		Local Government Reform						
New Pressures	Other	Planned expenditure on activity required to support the transition towards Local Government Reform in Oxfordshire. Funded from the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution Reserve	2.799	-2.799				0.000
Total			5.212	-2.080	0.416	0.724	0.873	5.144

Previously Proposed and New Budget Changes

Other Changes within Service Budgets

	Category	Description	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
PP Pressure	Inflation	CORP110 - Impact of increases in employers National Insurance contribution on Employee and services expenditure	0.185	0.259				0.444
PP Pressure	Inflation	Pay Inflation @ 3.5% in 2026/27 then 3.0% from 2027/28. (NB. There is existing funding that will roll forward from 2025/26 to add to the 2026/27 funding).	6.949	6.949				13.898
New Pressure	Inflation	Add new years for pay inflation at 3%			6.910	6.910	6.910	20.730
New Saving	Inflation	Release excess pay inflation held in 2025/26	-2.500					-2.500
New Saving	Other	Reduce Pay Inflation Contingency(on-going)	-1.400					-1.400
New Saving	Other	Release excess funding for employers NI held in 2025/26	-0.800					-0.800
PP Saving	Other	Cross Cutting Savings - Organisational Redesign	-4.213					-4.213
New Saving	Other	Cross Cutting Savings - Organisational Redesign		-1.800				-3.142
New Pressures	Other	Risk Assumption to be allocated				8.202	7.480	15.682
Total			-1.779	5.408	6.910	15.112	14.390	40.041

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Draft Council Tax and Precepts 2026/27

Council Tax Data

1. In order to set its budget for 2026/27, the council needs to calculate its council tax requirement. This is the amount that the council needs to raise from council tax to meet its expenditure after taking account of the income it will accrue from the following
 - (a) the amount to be received from specific grants.
 - (b) the amount to be received from Revenue Support Grant and the Business Rates Top Up under the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
 - (c) the amount to be received for the County Council's share of Non-Domestic Rating Income.
 - (d) any surpluses/shortfalls on the Council Tax Collection Funds and Business Rates Collection Funds for earlier years and the estimated position for the current year.
 - (e) the amount expected to be received from fees, charges and contributions.
2. In order to set its council tax for the forthcoming year, the council needs to calculate its council tax requirement and have available the council tax base, expressed in terms of Band D equivalent properties.
3. Based on the final information on funding and assuming a council tax requirement of **£567,372,273.74** as shown in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Section 4.1) the calculation of the Band D Council Tax for 2026/27 is as follows:

Council Tax Calculation 2026/27

	£m
County Council net expenditure after specific grants, fees and charges (Net Operating Budget)	753.0
Less: Revenue Support Grant	-94.6
Local Authority Better Care Fund Grant	-13.2
Baseline Funding Level (Business Rates)	-69.5
Council Tax Collection Fund Adjustments	-8.3
Business Rates Collection Fund Adjustments	
Council Tax Requirement (R)	567.4
Council Tax Base (assuming losses on collection) (T)	282,727.69
Band D Council Tax (R/T)	£2,006.78

The calculation of the council tax for the other bands is shown below in Table 1. Table 2 analyses the tax base over each district council area and allocates the estimated County Council precept to each area relative to their tax base.

Council Tax by Property Band for Oxfordshire County Council

Assuming a Band D council tax of £2,006.78, the council tax for other bands is as follows:

Property Band	Property Values	Band D Proportion	2026/27 £ p
A	Up to £40,000	6/9	1,337.85
B	Over £40,000 and up to £52,000	7/9	1,560.83
C	Over £52,000 and up to £68,000	8/9	1,783.80
D	Over £68,000 and up to £88,000	9/9	2,006.78
E	Over £88,000 and up to £120,000	11/9	2,452.73
F	Over £120,000 and up to £160,000	13/9	2,898.68
G	Over £160,000 and up to £320,000	15/9	3,344.63
H	Over £320,000	18/9	4,013.56

Table 2

Allocation of Precept to Districts

The County Council precept (£567,372,273.74) is the sum of the council tax income required to fund the Council's budget.

District Council	Tax Base Number	Assumed Precept Due	
		£	p
Cherwell	60,654.50	121,720,237.51	
Oxford City	48,725.20	97,780,756.86	
South Oxfordshire	64,095.80	128,626,169.52	
Vale of White Horse	59,690.60	119,785,902.27	
West Oxfordshire	49,561.59	99,459,207.58	
TOTAL	282,727.69	567,372,273.74	

Formal approval is required under the council tax legislation for:

- The County Council's precept, allocated to district councils pro rata to their share of the council tax base for the County Council;
- The council tax figures for the County Council for a Band D equivalent property and a calculation of the equivalent council tax figure for all other bands.

The information must be given to district councils by 1 March 2026.

Detailed Revenue Budget 2026/27

Revenue Budget 2026/27 Summary

		Revised	Previously	Inflation	New	Function	Budget
		Budget	Agreed		Pressures	and	2026/27
		2025/26	Budget		& Savings	Funding	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adult Services	Expenditure	786,248	5,807	5,592	13,331	3,333	814,312
	Recharge Income	-244,917	0	0	-8,822	-190	-253,929
	Grant income	-23,233	0	0	0	23,233	0
	Income	-258,822	0	0	-2,628	-3,143	-264,593
		259,277	5,807	5,592	1,881	23,233	295,790
Children's Services	Expenditure	616,842	2,635	840	17,831	62	638,210
	Recharge Income	-11,216	0	0	0	1,587	-9,630
	DSG income *	-213,437	0	0	0	0	-213,437
	Grant income	-156,299	0	0	-3,146	-56	-159,501
	Income	-21,031	0	-34	0	0	-21,065
		214,858	2,635	806	14,685	1,592	234,576
Environment & Highways	Expenditure	89,489	965	1,993	447	300	93,194
	Recharge Income	-12,201	0	0	0	0	-12,201
	Grant income	-284	0	0	-5,389	0	-5,673
	Income	-21,911	-1,824	-394	0	-300	-24,429
		55,093	-859	1,599	-4,942	0	50,891
Economy & Place	Expenditure	36,989	-3,443	340	315	0	34,201
	Recharge Income	-1,971	0	0	0	0	-1,971
	Grant income	-5,525	0	0	0	0	-5,525
	Income	-8,464	0	-27	700	0	-7,791
		21,029	-3,443	312	1,015	0	18,913
Public Health & Communities	Expenditure	52,586	772	0	-60	988	54,285

	Recharge Income	-205	0	0	0	-72	-277
	Grant income	-37,709	0	12	0	-5,789	-43,486
	Income	-1,396	0	0	0	0	-1,396
		13,276	772	12	-60	-4,874	9,126
Fire & Community Safety	Expenditure	33,644	320	160	258	0	34,382
	Recharge Income	-31	0	0	0	0	-31
	Grant income	-1,306	0	0	0	0	-1,306
	Income	-579	0	-3	0	0	-582
		31,728	320	157	258	0	32,463
Resources and Law & Governance	Expenditure	134,246	-1,274	880	10,563	-485	143,930
	Recharge Income	-59,883	0	0	-150	475	-59,558
	Grant income	0	0	0	-4,826	0	-4,826
	Income	-9,391	-60	-22	100	10	-9,363
		64,973	-1,334	858	5,687	0	70,183
Pay inflation	Expenditure	6,177	185	6,950	-4,700	0	8,611
Cross Cutting Proposals – To be Allocated to services once achieved	Expenditure	0	-4,213	0	0	0	-4,213
Total Service Areas Budgets		666,410	-130	16,287	13,824	19,951	716,341
Strategic Measures and Contributions to/from Reserves	Expenditure	60,328	6,079	0	0	-10,761	55,646
	Recharge Income	-7,491	3,100	0	0	0	-4,391
	Grant income	-59,349	2,174	0	0	57,175	0
	Income	-13,640	1,930	0	0	-3,000	-14,710
		-20,152	13,283	0	0	43,414	36,545
Net Operating Budget		646,258	13,153	16,287	13,824	63,365	752,886
General Government Grants	Grant income	-64,360	0	0	0	-72,701	-137,062
Business Rates from District Councils	Other Income	-39,349	-864	0	0	0	-40,213

Council Tax Collection Fund							
Surpluses	Other Income	-9,241	0	0	0	982	-8,259
Council Tax - Funding for Care							
Leavers Discount	Other Income	21	0	0	0	0	21
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT		533,328	12,289	16,287	13,824	-8,354	567,372
	Expenditure	1,816,548	7,833	16,755	37,985	-6,563	1,872,557
	Recharge Income	-337,916	3,100	0	-8,972	1,800	-341,988
	DSG income *	-213,437	0	0	0	0	-213,437
	Grant income	-348,065	2,174	12	-13,361	1,861	-357,379
	Income	-335,233	46	-480	-1,828	-6,433	-343,929
	Other Income	-48,569	-864	0	0	982	-48,451
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT		533,328	12,289	16,287	13,824	-8,354	567,372

(*) Notes

1. DSG = Dedicated Schools Grant.

Ref. 2026/27		Service Area		2026/27									
				Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31
				£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
SCS1	ADULT SOCIAL CARE												
SCS1-1	Social Care Management & Practice	Expenditure	1,616	0	0	-15	351	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952
	Subtotal Social Care Management		1,616	0	0	-15	351	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952	1,952
SCS1-2	Safeguarding & Mental Health	Expenditure	5,457	0	0	-10	-637	4,810	4,810	4,810	4,810	4,810	4,810
	Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Income	-30	0	0	0	0	0	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30
	Subtotal Adult Protection & Mental Capacity		5,427	0	0	-10	-637	4,780	4,780	4,780	4,780	4,780	4,780
SCS1-3	Support Services	Expenditure	4,952	0	0	-33	0	4,919	4,919	4,919	4,919	4,919	4,919
	Recharge Income	-94	0	0	0	0	0	-94	-94	-94	-94	-94	-94
	Income	-1,156	0	0	0	0	0	-1,156	-1,156	-1,156	-1,156	-1,156	-1,156
	Subtotal Provider & Support Services		3,702	0	0	-33	0	3,669	3,669	3,669	3,669	3,669	3,669
SCS1-4	Community Teams	Expenditure	16,938	0	0	-119	496	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314	17,314
	Recharge Income	-144	0	0	-250	-190	-584	-584	-584	-584	-584	-584	-584
	Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Income	-168	0	0	0	0	0	-168	-168	-168	-168	-168	-168
	Subtotal Domestic Violence & Abuse Support Service		16,625	0	0	-369	306	16,562	16,562	16,562	16,562	16,562	16,562
SCS1-5	Provider Services	Expenditure	11,786	0	0	-126	0	11,660	11,660	11,660	11,660	11,660	11,660
	Recharge Income	-8,764	0	0	0	0	0	-8,764	-8,764	-8,764	-8,764	-8,764	-8,764
	Income	-1,398	0	0	0	0	0	-1,398	-1,398	-1,398	-1,398	-1,398	-1,398
	Subtotal Housing Related Support		1,624	0	0	-126	0	1,498	1,498	1,498	1,498	1,498	1,498
SCS1-7	SE ADASS	Expenditure	4	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Subtotal		4	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4
TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE			28,998	0	0	-553	20	28,465	28,465	28,465	28,465	28,465	28,465
SCS2-1	Health Ed. & Social Care Commissioning	Expenditure	11,177	0	0	-119	0	11,058	11,058	11,058	11,058	11,058	11,058
	Recharge Income	-423	0	0	0	0	0	-423	-423	-423	-423	-423	-423
	Income	-3,526	0	0	0	0	0	-3,526	-3,526	-3,526	-3,526	-3,526	-3,526
	TOTAL Health Ed. & Social Care Commissioning		7,227	0	0	-119	0	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108
SCS4-1	Business Support Service	Expenditure	1,265	0	0	-9	0	1,256	955	654	654	654	654
	TOTAL Business Support Service		1,265	0	0	-9	0	1,256	955	654	654	654	654
SCS5-1	<u>Pooled Contributions</u>												
SCS5-1A	Live Well	Expenditure	146,455	0	0	4,708	0	151,163	151,255	151,078	150,905	150,905	150,905
			146,455	0	0	4,708	0	151,163	151,255	151,078	150,905	150,905	150,905

Revenue Budget Adult Services		2026/27										
Ref.	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
SCS5-1B	Age Well Pool Contribution	Expenditure Grant income	98,565 -23,233	0 0	0 0	3,864 23,233	0 23,233	102,429 0	102,429 0	102,429 0	102,429 0	
			75,332	0	0	3,864	23,233	102,429	102,429	102,429	102,429	
SCS5-1C	Pool Finding to Allocate	Expenditure Income	0 0	5,919 0	5,592 0	-5,968 0	0 0	5,543 0	21,836 0	38,104 177	54,525 350	
			0	5,919	5,592	-5,968	0	5,543	21,836	38,281	54,875	
		Subtotal Pooled Budget Contributions		221,787	5,919	5,592	2,604	23,233	259,134	275,519	291,787	308,208
												324,802
ACSNPOOL	Adults with Care and Support Needs Pool	Expenditure Recharge Income Income	188,822 -135,012 -53,810	0 0 0	0 0 0	4,987 -4,708 -276	3,123 0 -3,143	196,933 -139,720 -57,229	196,933 -139,720 -57,229	196,933 -139,720 -57,229	196,933 -139,720 -57,229	
			0	0	0	3	-20	-17	-17	-17	-17	-17
BCFPOOL	Better Care Fund Pool	Expenditure Recharge Income Income	299,213 -100,480 -198,733	-112 0 0	0 0 0	6,171 -3,864 -2,352	0 0 0	305,272 -104,344 -201,085	305,272 -104,344 -201,085	305,272 -104,344 -201,085	305,272 -104,344 -201,085	
			0	-112	0	-45	0	-157	-157	-157	-157	-157
		TOTAL COMMISSIONING		259,277	5,919	5,592	1,923	23,253	295,963	312,047	328,015	344,436
												361,030
		Expenditure Recharge Income Grant income Income	786,248 -244,917 -23,233 -258,822	5,807 0 0 0	5,592 0 0 0	13,331 -8,822 0 -2,628	3,333 -190 23,233 -3,143	814,312 -253,929 0 -264,593	830,396 -253,929 0 -264,593	846,186 -253,929 0 -264,416	862,434 -253,929 0 -264,243	879,028 -253,929 0 -264,243
		BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY ADULT SERVICES		259,277	5,807	5,592	1,881	23,233	295,790	311,874	327,841	344,262
												360,856

Revenue Budget Children's Services		2026/27										
		Ref.	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
2026/27				£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF1	EDUCATION & LEARNING											
CEF1-1	Education Management (including administration)		Expenditure	1,869	-120	0	-5	0	1,744	1,744	1,744	1,744
			DSG Grant Income	-361	0	0	0	0	-361	-361	-361	-361
				1,508	-120	0	-5	0	1,383	1,383	1,383	1,383
CEF1-2	SEND Service		Expenditure	96,193	657	0	742	0	97,593	97,593	97,593	97,593
			Recharge Income	-444	0	0	0	0	-444	-444	-444	-444
			DSG Grant Income	-86,090	0	0	0	0	-86,090	-86,090	-86,090	-86,090
			Income	-1,706	0	0	0	0	-1,706	-1,706	-1,706	-1,706
				7,953	657	0	742	0	9,352	9,352	9,352	9,352
CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement		Expenditure	3,117	0	0	-106	1,649	4,660	4,660	4,660	4,660
			Recharge Income	-1,657	0	0	0	0	-1,657	-1,657	-1,657	-1,657
			DSG Grant Income	-19	0	0	0	0	-19	-19	-19	-19
			Grant Income	0	0	0	0	-1,649	-1,649	-1,649	-1,649	-1,649
			Income	-40	0	0	0	0	-40	-40	-40	-40
				1,402	0	0	-106	0	1,296	1,296	1,296	1,296
CEF1-4	Access to Learning (Including Home to School Transport Recharge)		Expenditure	108,517	3,230	0	-279	475	111,944	115,144	118,544	121,944
			Recharge Income	-6	0	0	0	0	-6	-6	-6	-6
			DSG Grant Income	-62,345	0	0	0	0	-62,345	-62,345	-62,345	-62,345
			Income	-58	0	0	0	0	-58	-58	-58	-58
				46,110	3,230	0	-279	475	49,536	52,736	56,136	59,536
CEF1-5	Virtual School		Expenditure	2,534	0	0	-5	0	2,529	2,529	2,529	2,529
			DSG Grant Income	-410	0	0	0	0	-410	-410	-410	-410
			Grant Income	-1,650	0	0	0	0	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650
			Income	-2	0	0	0	0	-2	-2	-2	-2
				406	0	0	-5	66	467	467	467	467
CEF1-6	Strategy & Partnership		Expenditure	15	0	0	0	0	14	14	14	14
				15	0	0	0	0	14	14	29	14
												14

Revenue Budget Children's Services		2026/27									
Ref.	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF1-7	Music Service	0									
	Expenditure	2,629	0	0	-19	0	2,610	2,610	2,610	2,610	2,610
	Recharge Income	-184	0	0	0	0	-184	-184	-184	-184	-184
	DSG Grant Income	-50	0	0	0	0	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50
	Grant Income	-844	0	0	0	0	-844	-844	-844	-844	-844
	Income	-1,550	0	0	0	0	-1,550	-1,550	-1,550	-1,550	-1,550
		1	0	0	-19	0	-19	-19	-19	-19	-19
CEF1-8	Early Years	0									
	Expenditure	1,533	0	0	-11	0	1,522	1,522	1,522	1,522	1,522
	Recharge Income	-50	0	0	0	0	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50
	DSG Grant Income	-1,383	0	0	0	0	-1,383	-1,383	-1,383	-1,383	-1,383
	Income	-100	0	0	0	0	-100	-100	-100	-100	-100
		0	0	0	-11	0	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11
CEF1-9	Attendance	0									
	Expenditure	684	0	0	-5	0	679	679	679	679	679
	DSG Grant Income	-561	0	0	0	0	-561	-561	-561	-561	-561
	Income	-19	0	0	0	0	-19	-19	-19	-19	-19
		104	0	0	-5	0	99	99	99	99	99
SUBTOTAL EDUCATION & LEARNING		57,498	3,767	0	313	541	62,119	65,319	68,733	72,119	75,518
CEF2 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE											
CEF2-1	Family Help	Expenditure	63,542	-3,739	0	3,202	0	63,005	62,838	62,838	62,838
		Recharge Income	-2,832	0	0	0	1,253	-1,579	-1,579	-1,579	-1,579
		Income	-2,996	0	0	0	0	-2,996	-2,996	-2,996	-2,996
			57,714	-3,739	0	3,202	1,253	58,430	58,263	58,263	58,263
CEF2-2	Front Door	Expenditure	20,162	0	0	3,030	-28	23,164	23,164	23,164	23,164
		Recharge Income	-138	0	0	0	0	-138	-138	-138	-138
		Grant Income	-3,986	0	0	-3,146	0	-7,132	-7,132	-7,132	-7,132
		Income	-87	0	0	0	0	-87	-87	-87	-87
			15,951	0	0	-116	-28	15,807	15,807	15,807	15,807

Revenue Budget Children's Services		2026/27										
		Ref.	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
2026/27				£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF4-2	Nursery Education Funding (EY)		Expenditure	49,798	0	0	0	0	49,798	49,798	49,798	49,798
			DSG Grant Income	-49,798	0	0	0	0	-49,798	-49,798	-49,798	-49,798
				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-3	Non-Delegated Schools Costs		Expenditure	1,029	0	0	0	0	1,029	1,029	1,029	1,029
			DSG Grant Income	-814	0	0	0	0	-814	-814	-814	-814
				216	0	0	0	0	216	216	216	216
CEF4-4	Schools Support Service Recharges		Expenditure	2,142	0	0	0	0	2,142	2,142	2,142	2,142
			DSG Grant Income	-2,142	0	0	0	0	-2,142	-2,142	-2,142	-2,142
				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-5	Capitalised Repairs & Maintenance		Expenditure	1,567	0	0	0	0	1,567	1,567	1,567	1,567
			DSG Grant Income	-1,567	0	0	0	0	-1,567	-1,567	-1,567	-1,567
				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 SUBTOTAL SCHOOLS				216	0	0	0	0	216	216	216	216
CEF5 CHILDREN'S SERVICES' CENTRAL COSTS												
CEF5-1	Management, Admin & Central Support		Expenditure	11,603	334	0	554	-2,039	10,452	11,297	10,632	10,632
			Recharge Income	-57	0	0	0	0	-57	-57	-57	-57
			DSG Grant Income	-1,179	0	0	0	0	-1,179	-1,179	-1,179	-1,179
			Grant Income	-1,592	0	0	0	1,592	0	0	0	0
				8,775	334	0	554	-447	9,216	10,061	9,396	9,396
CEF5-2	Premature Retirement Compensation		Expenditure	3,456	0	0	0	0	3,456	3,456	3,456	3,456
				3,456	0	0	0	0	3,456	3,456	3,456	3,456
12,231				334	0	554	-447	12,672	13,517	12,852	12,852	12,852
ATV1	Adoption Service		Expenditure	4,444	0	0	-22	0	4,422	4,422	4,422	4,422
			Recharge Income	-1,272	0	0	0	0	-1,272	-1,272	-1,272	-1,272
			Income	-3,173	0	0	0	0	-3,173	-3,173	-3,173	-3,173
				0	0	0	-22	0	-22	-22	-22	-22
ATV2	Permanency Support Team		Expenditure	3,798	0	0	-13	6	3,792	3,792	3,792	3,792
			Recharge Income	-1,187	0	0	0	-6	-1,192	-1,192	-1,192	-1,192

Revenue Budget Children's Services		2026/27									
Ref.	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31
2026/27		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Grant Income	-1,506	0	0	0	0	-1,506	-1,506	-1,506	-1,506	-1,506
	Income	-1,075	0	0	0	0	-1,075	-1,075	-1,075	-1,075	-1,075
		32	0	0	-13	0	19	19	19	19	19
		0									
SUBTOTAL ATV		32	0	0	-35	0	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
	Expenditure	616,842	2,635	840	17,831	62	638,210	646,667	656,150	666,820	678,354
	Recharge Income	-11,216	0	0	0	1,587	-9,630	-9,630	-9,630	-9,630	-9,630
	DSG Grant Income	-213,437	0	0	0	0	-213,437	-213,437	-213,437	-213,437	-213,437
	Grant Income	-156,299	0	0	-3,146	-56	-159,501	-159,501	-159,501	-159,501	-159,501
	Income	-21,031	0	-34	0	0	-21,065	-21,099	-21,099	-21,099	-21,099
BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY CHILDREN'S SERVICES		214,858	2,635	806	14,685	1,592	234,576	242,999	252,482	263,152	274,686

Revenue Budget Environment & Highways		2026/27										
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
EH1	Transport Property Infrastructure Deliv.	Expenditure	11,457	0	0	-10	0	11,447	11,447	11,447	11,447	
		Recharge Income	-9,607	0	0	0	0	-9,607	-9,607	-9,607	-9,607	
		Grant Income	-58	0	0	0	0	-58	-58	-58	-58	
			1,792	0	0	-10	0	1,782	1,782	1,782	1,782	
EH2	Countryside & Waste	Expenditure	39,667	650	1,385	549	0	42,251	48,101	51,468	49,822	
		Recharge Income	-784	0	0	0	0	-784	-784	-784	-784	
		Grant Income	-227	0	0	-5,389	0	-5,616	-5,616	-4,631	-3,689	
		Income	-1,263	0	0	0	0	-1,263	-1,700	-1,700	-1,700	
EH4	Highways & Maintenance	Expenditure	24,845	465	538	-58	0	25,790	26,040	26,040	26,040	
		Recharge Income	-1,810	0	0	0	0	-1,810	-1,810	-1,810	-1,810	
		Income	-2,872	-635	-8	0	0	-3,515	-3,765	-3,765	-3,765	
			20,163	-170	531	-58	0	20,466	20,466	20,466	20,466	
EH5	Network Management	Expenditure	12,547	-150	70	-28	300	12,739	12,739	12,739	12,739	
		Income	-17,776	-1,189	-387	0	-300	-19,651	-19,651	-19,651	-19,651	
			-5,229	-1,339	-316	-28	0	-6,912	-6,912	-6,912	-6,912	
EH6	Senior Management Team	Expenditure	973	0	0	-6	0	967	967	967	967	
			973	0	0	-6	0	967	967	967	967	
		Expenditure	89,489	965	1,993	447	300	93,194	99,295	102,662	101,016	
		Recharge Income	-12,201	0	0	0	0	-12,201	-12,201	-12,201	-12,201	
		Grant Income	-284	0	0	-5,389	0	-5,673	-5,673	-4,688	-3,746	
		Income	-21,911	-1,824	-394	0	-300	-24,429	-25,116	-25,116	-25,116	
BUDGET	CONTROLLABLE	BY ENVIRONMENT AND	55,093	-859	1,599	-4,942	0	50,891	56,304	60,657	59,953	
											61,658	

Revenue Budget Economy & Place		2026/27										
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
EP1	Place Shaping	Expenditure	24,106	-1,393	340	1,151	0	24,203	23,408	23,688	24,059	24,437
		Recharge Income	-1,308	0	0	0	0	-1,308	-1,308	-1,308	-1,308	-1,308
		Grant Income	-4,705	0	0	0	0	-4,705	-4,705	-4,705	-4,705	-4,705
		Income	-307	0	-1	0	0	-308	-308	-308	-308	-308
			17,786	-1,393	339	1,151	0	17,883	17,088	17,368	17,739	18,117
EP2	Future Economy	Expenditure	105	0	0	0	0	105	105	105	105	105
			105	0	0	0	0	105	105	105	105	105
EP3	Regulatory Planning & Enforcement	Expenditure	8,230	-2,000	0	-736	0	5,494	5,019	6,194	6,194	6,194
		Recharge Income	-36	0	0	0	0	-36	-36	-36	-36	-36
		Income	-7,963	0	-26	700	0	-7,289	-6,593	-6,593	-6,593	-6,593
			232	-2,000	-26	-36	0	-1,831	-1,610	-435	-435	-435
EP4	Climate Action	Expenditure	1,299	-50	0	-81	0	1,168	1,168	1,168	1,423	1,423
			1,299	-50	0	-81	0	1,168	1,168	1,168	1,423	1,423
EP5	OxLEP	Expenditure	1,043	0	0	-2	0	1,042	1,042	1,042	1,042	1,042
		Recharge Income	-146	0	0	0	0	-146	-146	-146	-146	-146
		Grant Income	-820	0	0	0	0	-820	-820	-820	-820	-820
		Income	-74	0	0	0	0	-74	-74	-74	-74	-74
			3	0	0	-2	0	2	2	2	2	2
EP6	Innovation	Expenditure	453	0	0	-2	0	451	451	451	451	451
		Recharge Income	-296	0	0	0	0	-296	-296	-296	-296	-296
		Income	-120	0	0	0	0	-120	-120	-120	-120	-120
			37	0	0	-2	0	35	35	35	35	35
EP7	Senior Management Team	Expenditure	715	0	0	-7	0	708	708	708	708	708
		Recharge Income	-86	0	0	0	0	-86	-86	-86	-86	-86
			629	0	0	-7	0	622	622	622	622	622

Revenue Budget Economy & Place		2026/27									
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
EP8	Service Improvement	Expenditure	1,038	0	0	-8	0	1,029	1,029	1,029	1,029
		Recharge Income	-100	0	0	0	0	-100	-100	-100	-100
			938	0	0	-8	0	929	929	929	929
		Expenditure	36,989	-3,443	340	315	0	34,201	32,931	34,386	35,012
		Recharge Income	-1,971	0	0	0	0	-1,971	-1,971	-1,971	-1,971
		Grant Income	-5,525	0	0	0	0	-5,525	-5,525	-5,525	-5,525
		Income	-8,464	0	-27	700	0	-7,791	-7,095	-7,095	-7,095
	BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY ECONOMY AND PLACE		21,029	-3,443	312	1,015	0	18,913	18,339	19,794	20,420
											20,798

Revenue Budget Public Health & Communities		2026/27											
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Permanent Virements	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
PH1 & 2	Public Health Functions												
PH1	PH - Mandatory Functions	Expenditure	19,500	0	19,500	0	0	649	20,149	20,149	20,149	20,149	20,149
			19,500	0	19,500	0	0	649	20,149	20,149	20,149	20,149	20,149
PH2	PH - Non-Mandatory Functions	Expenditure	22,717	-18	22,698	772	0	-2	238	23,707	23,846	23,786	23,786
		Recharge Income	-145	0	-145	0	0	-72	-217	-217	-217	-217	-217
		Grant Income	-795	0	-795	0	0	795	0	0	0	0	0
		Income	-394	0	-394	0	0	0	-394	-394	-394	-394	-394
			21,382	-18	21,364	772	0	-2	961	23,095	23,235	23,175	23,175
PH3	Public Health Recharges	Expenditure	577	0	577	0	0	100	677	677	677	677	677
			577	0	577	0	0	100	677	677	677	677	677
PH4	Grant Income	Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Grant Income	-36,914	0	-36,914	0	12	0	-6,584	-43,486	-43,498	-43,498	-43,498
			-36,914	0	-36,914	0	12	0	-6,584	-43,486	-43,498	-43,510	-43,522
	SUBTOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH		4,546	0	4,546	0	12	0	-6,584	-2,027	-113	-186	-198
COD1-2	Communities Functions	Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COD5-3	Libraries and Heritage	Expenditure	9,459	351	9,811	0	0	-59	0	9,752	9,752	9,752	9,752
		Recharge Income	-7	-53	-60	0	0	0	0	-60	-60	-60	-60
		Income	-1,038	36	-1,002	0	0	0	0	-1,002	-1,002	-1,002	-1,002
			8,415	334	8,749	0	0	-59	0	8,690	8,690	8,690	8,690
	TOTAL COMMUNITIES		8,415	334	8,749	0	0	-59	0	8,690	8,690	8,690	8,690
		Expenditure	52,253	333	52,586	772	0	-60	988	54,285	54,425	54,364	54,364
		Recharge Income	-152	-53	-205	0	0	0	-72	-277	-277	-277	-277
		Grant Income	-37,709	0	-37,709	0	12	0	-5,789	-43,486	-43,498	-43,498	-43,498
		Income	-1,432	36	-1,396	0	0	0	0	-1,396	-1,396	-1,408	-1,420
	BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES		12,960	316	13,276	772	12	-60	-4,874	9,126	9,254	9,181	9,169

Revenue Budget Fire & Community Safety		2026/27										
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
FRCS1	Fire & Rescue	Expenditure	31,363	320	160	273	0	32,117	32,590	32,617	32,792	32,973
		Grant Income	-1,306	0	0	0	0	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306
		Income	-196	0	-3	0	0	-199	-202	-205	-208	-211
			29,862	320	157	273	0	30,612	31,082	31,107	31,279	31,456
FRCS2	Emergency Planning	Expenditure	366	0	0	-3	0	363	363	363	363	363
		Income	-28	0	0	0	0	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28
			338	0	0	-3	0	336	336	336	336	336
FRCS3	Trading Standards	Expenditure	1,915	0	0	-13	0	1,902	1,902	1,902	1,902	1,902
		Recharge Income	-31	0	0	0	0	-31	-31	-31	-31	-31
		Income	-355	0	0	0	0	-355	-355	-355	-355	-355
			1,529	0	0	-13	0	1,516	1,516	1,516	1,516	1,516
		Expenditure	33,644	320	160	258	0	34,382	34,855	34,883	35,058	35,238
		Recharge Income	-31	0	0	0	0	-31	-31	-31	-31	-31
		Grant Income	-1,306	0	0	0	0	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306	-1,306
		Income	-579	0	-3	0	0	-582	-585	-588	-591	-594
BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES		31,728	320	157	258	0	32,463	32,933	32,958	33,130	33,307	

Revenue Budget Resources		2026/27												
Ref. 2026/27	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Permanent Virements	Revised Budget 2025/26	Previously Agreed Budget Changes	Inflation	New Pressures & Savings	Function and Funding Changes	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30	Budget 2030/31	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	Expenditure	5,612	996	6,608	0	0	-40	0	6,568	6,578	6,588	6,598	6,608
		Recharge Income	-540	-402	-942	0	0	0	0	-942	-942	-942	-942	-942
		Income	-41	-59	-100	0	0	0	0	-100	-100	-100	-100	-100
FCSDIR	Finance & Commercial Services		5,031	535	5,566	0	0	-40	0	5,526	5,536	5,546	5,556	5,566
		Expenditure	14,995	1,869	16,864	298	1	-69	0	17,095	17,255	17,420	17,590	17,765
		Recharge Income	-1,024	-896	-1,920	0	0	-150	0	-2,070	-2,070	-2,070	-2,070	-2,070
PADIR	Property & Assets	Income	-1,486	-992	-2,479	0	0	0	0	-2,479	-2,479	-2,479	-2,479	-2,479
			12,485	-19	12,465	298	1	-219	0	12,546	12,706	12,871	13,041	13,216
		Expenditure	76,474	3,761	80,235	-100	396	-341	-485	79,705	79,855	80,270	80,698	81,139
PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	Recharge Income	-52,099	-3,079	-55,177	0	0	0	475	-54,702	-54,702	-54,702	-54,702	-54,702
		Income	-3,214	-173	-3,387	0	-20	100	10	-3,297	-3,297	-3,297	-3,297	-3,297
			21,162	509	21,670	-100	376	-241	0	21,706	21,856	22,271	22,699	23,140
CORPDIR	Corporate Services	Expenditure	7,421	-466	6,955	-1,325	0	5,151	0	10,781	10,781	10,781	10,781	10,781
		Recharge Income	-968	697	-271	0	0	0	0	-271	-271	-271	-271	-271
		Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	-4,826	0	-4,826	-4,826	-4,826	-4,826	-4,826
LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	Income	-137	117	-20	0	0	0	0	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
			6,317	348	6,664	-1,325	0	325	0	5,664	5,664	5,664	5,664	5,664
		Expenditure	203	-5,838	-5,635	28	0	2,458	0	-3,149	-5,964	-5,404	-5,404	-5,404
TDCEDIR	Technology & Customer Experience	Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-979	-979	-979
			203	-5,838	-5,635	28	0	2,458	0	-3,149	-5,964	-6,383	-6,383	-6,383
		Expenditure	13,245	778	14,022	0	403	651	0	15,076	15,173	15,272	15,374	15,479
		Recharge Income	-729	0	-729	0	0	0	0	-729	-729	-729	-729	-729
		Income	-3,085	-13	-3,097	-60	0	0	0	-3,157	-3,217	-3,279	-3,343	-3,409
			9,431	765	10,196	-60	403	651	0	11,190	11,227	11,264	11,302	11,341
		Expenditure	13,922	1,275	15,197	-175	80	2,752	0	17,854	18,254	18,464	18,544	18,754
		Recharge Income	-670	-174	-843	0	0	0	0	-843	-843	-843	-843	-843
		Income	-293	-15	-308	0	-2	0	0	-310	-312	-314	-316	-318
			12,960	1,087	14,046	-175	78	2,752	0	16,701	17,099	17,307	17,385	17,593
		Expenditure	131,872	2,374	134,246	-1,274	880	10,563	-485	143,930	141,932	143,391	144,181	145,122
		Recharge Income	-56,030	-3,853	-59,883	0	0	-150	475	-59,558	-59,558	-59,558	-59,558	-59,558
		Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0	-4,826	0	-4,826	-4,826	-5,805	-5,805	-5,805
		Income	-8,255	-1,136	-9,391	-60	-22	100	10	-9,363	-9,425	-9,489	-9,555	-9,623
		BUDGET CONTROLLABLE BY RESOURCES	67,587	-2,615	64,973	-1,334	858	5,687	0	70,183	68,123	68,539	69,263	70,136

Revenue Budget 2026/27 Strategic Measures													
	Budget	Permanent	Revised	Previously	Inflation	New	Function	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
	2025/26	Virements	Budget	Agreed	Pressures	and	Funding	Revenue	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Held on behalf of Service Areas													
Pay inflation	Expenditure	17,901	-11,725	6,177	185	6,950	-4,700	0	8,611	15,819	22,729	29,639	36,549
Cross Cutting Proposals – To be Allocated to services on	Expenditure	0	0	0	-4,213	0	0	0	-4,213	-6,013	-6,013	-6,013	-6,013
New Risk Assumption - To be allocated	Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,202	15,682
Held on behalf of Service Areas		17,901	-11,725	6,177	-4,028	6,950	-4,700	0	4,398	9,806	16,716	31,828	46,218
CAPITAL FINANCING													
Principal	Expenditure	16,835	720	17,555	2,191	0	0	0	19,746	20,544	20,900	22,698	25,218
Interest	Expenditure	13,035	0	13,035	0	0	0	0	13,035	13,035	13,035	13,035	13,035
Interest on Balances													
Interest receivable	Income	-9,827	0	-9,827	1,930	0	0	-3,000	-10,897	-7,795	-7,795	-7,795	-7,795
External funds	Income	-3,813	0	-3,813	0	0	0	0	-3,813	-3,813	-3,813	-3,813	-3,813
Interest on developer contributions	Expenditure	8,219	0	8,219	-794	0	0	0	7,425	7,799	7,799	7,799	7,799
Potential borrowing recharges	Recharge Income	-7,491	0	-7,491	3,100	0	0	0	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391
SUBTOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING		16,958	720	17,678	6,427	0	0	-3,000	21,105	25,379	25,735	27,533	30,053
UNFENCED SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME													
Contingency and inflation	Grant income	-62,719	3,370	-59,349	2,174	0	0	57,175	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	Expenditure	7,254	0	7,254	4,886	0	0	-5,886	6,254	6,254	6,254	6,254	6,254
	Expenditure	1,774	0	1,774	0	0	0	0	1,774	1,774	1,774	1,774	1,774
	Expenditure	65,018	-11,005	54,013	2,255	6,950	-4,700	-5,886	52,632	59,212	66,478	83,388	100,298
	Recharge Income	-7,491	0	-7,491	3,100	0	0	0	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391	-4,391
	Grant Income	-62,719	3,370	-59,349	2,174	0	0	57,175	0	0	0	0	0
	Income	-13,640	0	-13,640	1,930	0	0	-3,000	-14,710	-11,608	-11,608	-11,608	-11,608
STRATEGIC MEASURES TOTAL		-18,832	-7,635	-26,467	9,459	6,950	-4,700	48,289	33,532	43,214	50,480	67,390	84,300
Contributions to / (-) from Balances and Reserves													
General Balances	Expenditure	2,687	0	2,687	0	0	0	-2,687	0	0	0	0	0
Reserves	Expenditure	7,765	2,039	9,804	-204	0	0	-2,188	7,412	7,412	7,412	7,412	7,412

Revenue Budget 2026/27 Strategic Measures												
	Budget 2025/26 £000	Permanent Virements Agreed in 2025/26 £000	Revised Budget 2025/26 £000	Previously Agreed Budget Changes £000	Inflation Pressures & Savings £000	New Function and Funding Changes £000	Budget Revenue Budget 2026/27 £000	Budget 2027/28 £000	Budget 2028/29 £000	Budget 2029/30 £000	Budget 2030/31 £000	
	GENERAL GOVERNMENT GRANT INCOME	Revenue Support Grant	Grant income	-2,489	0	-2,489	0	0	-92,071	-94,561	-96,110	-85,503
Section 31 Business Rates Reliefs Grants	Grant income	-17,397	-1,503	-18,900	0	0	0	4,445	-14,455	-16,061	-17,494	-17,494
Business Rates Top-Up	Grant income	-43,282	311	-42,971	0	0	0	28,132	-14,839	-14,839	-14,839	-14,839
Better Care Fund	Grant income		0					-13,207	-13,207	0	0	0
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT GRANT INCOME		-63,168	-1,192	-64,360	0	0	0	-72,701	-137,062	-127,010	-117,836	-117,836
BUSINESS RATES FROM DISTRICT COUNCILS	Income	-40,054	705	-39,349	-864	0	0	0	-40,213	-40,213	-40,213	-40,213
BUSINESS RATES COLLECTION FUND SURPLUSES (-) DEFICITS	Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL BUSINESS RATES FROM DISTRICT COUNCILS		-40,054	705	-39,349	-864	0	0	0	-40,213	-40,213	-40,213	-40,213
COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION FUND (-) SURPLUSES / (+) DEFICITS	Other income	- 9,241	0	-9,241	0	0	0	982	-8,259	-8,000	-8,000	-8,000
CARE LEAVERS DISCOUNT	Income	21	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	21	21	21

Revenue Government Grants 2026/27										
Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued by	Budget	Transfers	In year	Latest	Updated	Transfers	Estimate	Estimate
			Book 2025/26	(unring to ring)	/ Updated allocations	Allocation 2025/26	allocations	(unring to ring)	2026/27	2027/28
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Adult Services									
R	Impovered Better Care Fund	DHSC	13,207	0	0	13,207		-13,207	0	0
R	Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	10,026	0	0	10,026		-10,026	0	0
R	International Recruitment Funding	DHSC		0	2,107	2,107	-2,107		0	0
	TOTAL ADULT SERVICES		23,233	0	2,107	25,340	-2,107	-23,233	0	0
	Children's Services									
	Dedicated School Grants									
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	128,827	0	0	128,827			128,827	128,827
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	5,779	0	0	5,779			5,779	5,779
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	111,190	0	0	111,190			111,190	111,190
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	96,469	0	0	96,469			96,469	96,469
	Subtotal DSG Grants		342,265	0	0	342,265	0	0	342,265	342,265
	School Grants									
R	Pupil Premium	DfE	8,194	0		8,194	-148		8,046	8,046
R	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	371	0	0	371			371	371
R	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,217	0	0	2,217			2,217	2,217
R	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	4,047	0	0	4,047			4,047	4,047
R	Holiday Activity Food Programme	DfE				0	1,649	-1,649	0	0
R	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	10	0	0	10			10	10
	Subtotal School Grants		14,839	0	0	14,839	1,501	-1,649	14,691	14,691
	Other Children's Services Grants									
R	Music Service	AC	844	0	0	844			844	844
R	Youth Justice Grant	YJB	4,636	0		4,636			4,636	4,636
R	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	HO	713	0	12	725			725	725
R	Remand Framework	YJB	71	0	-3	68			68	68
R	Adoption Support Fund	DfE	1,506	0		1,506			1,506	1,506
R	Family Group Conferences	DfE	0			0			0	0
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	0			0			0	0
R	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	HO	0			0			0	0
R	Families First Partnership	MHCLG	0			0	6,407		6,407	6,407
R	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	MHCLG	0		1,530	1,530	-1,530		0	0
R	Children & Families Grant	MHCLG	0		1,592	1,592	-1,592	1,797	1,797	1,797
R	Children & Families Grant - family help	MHCLG	0		1,732	1,732	-1,732	0	0	0
	Subtotal Other children's Services Grants		7,770	0	4,863	12,633	1,553	1,797	15,983	15,983
	TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES		364,873	0	4,863	369,736	3,054	148	372,938	372,938

Revenue Government Grants 2026/27											
Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued by	Budget	Transfers	In year	Latest	Updated	Transfers	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
			Book 2025/26	(unring to adjustments ring) / Updated allocations	Allocation 2025/26	allocations	(unring to ring)	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Environment & Highways										
R	LNRS Natural Environment	DEFRA	227	0	0	227		227	227	227	
R	Active travel	H&GD	58	0	0	58		58	58	58	
R	Extended Producer Responsibility	NE	0	0	0	0	5,389	5,389	5,389	6,374	
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS		284	0	0	284	5,389	0	5,673	5,673	6,658
R	Economy & Place										
R	LEP		615	0	615			615	615	615	
R	OBS		205	0	205			205	205	205	
R	Capability & Ambition Fund		125	0	125			125	125	125	
R	Bus Service Improvement Grant		3,785	0	3,785			795	795	795	
R	Bus Service Improvement Plan		795	0	795			3,785	3,785	3,785	
	TOTAL ECONOMY & PLACE		5,525	0	0	5,525		5,525	5,525	5,525	
R	Public Health & Communities										
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	36,914	0	184	37,098	4,123	41,221	41,233	41,233	
R	Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	MHCLG	0		0			1,482	1,482	1,482	1,482
R	Local Stop Smoking Grant	DHSC	795	0	795			795	795	795	
R	Homes for Ukraine	MHCLG	0	0	0			0	0	0	0
	TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES		37,709	0	184	37,893		43,498	43,510	43,510	
R	Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety										
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	MHCLG	1,061	0	-47	1,014		1,014	1,014	1,014	
R	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	MHCLG	252	0	252			252	252	252	
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	MHCLG	39	0	39			39	39	39	
	TOTAL FIRE & RESCUE and COMMUNITY SAFETY		1,427	0	-122	1,305		1,305	1,305	1,305	
R	Resources and Law & Governance										
R	LGF Data Review		0	0	95	95	-95	0	0	0	
R	Crisis & Relience Fund		0		0	4,826		4,826	4,826	5,805	
	TOTAL RESOURCES and LAW & GOVERNANCE		0	0	95	95	4,731	0	4,826	4,826	5,805

Revenue Government Grants 2026/27										
Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued by	Budget	Transfers	In year	Latest	Updated	Transfers	Estimate	Estimate
			Book 2025/26	(unring to ring)	/ Updated allocations	Allocation 2025/26	allocations	(unring to ring)	2026/27	2027/28
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Strategic Measures					0			0	0
U	Local Authority Better Care Fund					0			0	0
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	MHCLG	48,596	52	48,648		-48,648	0	0	0
U	Employers National Insurance compensation	MHCLG	3,721	707	4,428	-1,328	-3,100	0	0	0
U	Drug & Alcohol Treatment, Recovery & Improvement Grant	OHID	2,978	-61	2,917		-2,917	0	0	0
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	MHCLG	1,482		1,482		-1,482	0	0	0
U	New Homes Bonus	MHCLG	1,127		1,127	-1,127	0	0	0	0
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	328		328		-328	0	0	0
U	Individual Placement and Support in community drug and alcohol treatment	OHID	228	11	239		-239	0	0	0
U	Social Care in Prisons Grant	DfE	183		183		-183	0	0	0
U	War Pensions Disregard Grant	DfE	4	108	112		-112	0	0	0
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	OHID	0	95	95		-95	0	0	0
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DfE	1,141	-1,119	22		-22	0	0	0
	Grants no longer awarded (Firelink, Implement of Supported Accommodation, Extended travel)		327	707	-1,034	0	-118	118	0	0
	Grants transferred across to other areas (Children Social Care Prevention grant)		1530		-1,530	0		0	0	0
	Subtotal Strategic Measures		61,645	707	-2,771	59,581	-2,573	-57,008	0	0

Financial Strategy 2026/27

Overview

1. The Financial Strategy sets out the approach the council will take to ensure it is financially sustainable over the medium and long term. It supports the delivery of other corporate strategies, such as the Strategic Plan and the Capital & Investment Strategy as well as the more detailed objectives of service strategies and plans. Integrated and aligned strategies and plans are imperative to financial resilience and stability as the impact of actions or decisions on one or more of these strategies will have an impact on the others.
2. Financial resilience is the ability, from a financial perspective, to respond to changes in delivery or demand without placing the organisation at risk of financial failure. The budget is underpinned by a financial strategy to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council, deliver essential services to residents and achieve our vision of making Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county, within a limited amount of resource.
3. Financial sustainability and resilience require successful and sustained focus on the delivery of the following critical elements and financial planning principles:
 - Managing the impact of rising need through demand management.
 - Delivering agreed savings as well as planned outcomes from investments.
 - Ensuring the level of earmarked reserves and general balances is adequate based on the level of risk and financial uncertainty and only using one-off resources for temporary purposes.
 - Effective financial management across the council in line with the requirements of the CIPFA Financial Management Code.
4. These principles are achieved through the delivery of the Council's Delivering the Future Together programme.

Medium Term Funding Context (2026/27 to 2028/29)

5. Core Spending Power is the government's measure of the core revenue funding available for local authority services through the local government finance settlement. It consists of revenue grant funding made available through the settlement, locally retained business rates and council tax.
6. Core Spending Power information for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 was published in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 17 December 2025. The government's assessment of Core Spending Power for Oxfordshire County Council is shown in the table below.

CORE SPENDING POWER					
Oxfordshire					
Illustrative Core Spending Power of Local Government:	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	£ millions				
Fair Funding Allocation¹	0.0	0.0	177.3	167.2	158.1
<i>of which: Baseline Funding Level</i>	0.0	0.0	69.5	71.1	72.5
<i>of which: Revenue Support Grant²</i>	0.0	0.0	94.6	96.1	85.5
<i> of which: Local Authority Better Care Grant³</i>	0.0	0.0	13.2	-	-
Legacy Funding Assessment	172.1	182.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>of which: Legacy Business Rates⁴</i>	100.6	102.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>of which: Legacy Grant Funding⁵</i>	60.8	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i> of which: Local Authority Better Care Grant</i>	10.7	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Council tax requirement^{6,7}	498.6	533.3	570.4	610.0	652.3
Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse^{8,9}	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Families First Partnership¹⁰	1.7	3.3	6.4	6.4	5.5
Total Transitional Protections¹¹	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>of which: 95% income protection</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>of which: 100% income protection</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i> of which: Fire and Rescue Real-terms floor</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants rolled in to Revenue Support Grant¹²	2.1	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recovery Grant	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recovery Grant Guarantee¹³	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mayoral Capacity Fund	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Core Spending Power	675.8	722.5	755.5	785.1	817.4
Core Spending Power year-on-year change (£ millions)		46.7	33.1	29.6	32.3
Core Spending Power year-on-year change (%)		6.9%	4.6%	3.9%	4.1%
Core Spending Power change since 2024 (£ millions)		46.7	79.7	109.3	141.6
Core Spending Power change since 2024 (%)		6.9%	11.8%	16.2%	20.9%
Core Spending Power change since 2025 (%)		4.6%	8.7%	13.1%	

- The table includes 2024/25 and makes comparisons back to that year. It is not clear why this is relevant to the 2026/27 settlement and means that a larger increase in 2025/26 is included in the comparative change and obscuring the underlying reductions in grant funding from 2026/27 onwards.
- By 2028/29 the council's Core Spending Power will increase by £94.9m compared to 2025/26. However, council tax projections for 2026/27 to 2028/29 assume that local authorities will increase their Band D council tax in line with the maximum allowable level set out by the council tax referendum principles published alongside the settlement. Core Spending Power therefore assumes that there will be further

Council tax increases of 4.99% in each of the next three years paid by Oxfordshire residents which will raise £119m. The difference is a net reduction of £24.1m in grant and business rates funding from central government. This includes an increase of £3.1m in funding for the Families First Partnership that will need to be used to fund new investment and activity in preventative services for children's social care in line with guidance published by the government. The underlying reduction in grant funding over the three years is £27.2m.

9. The funding available to the council is impacted by the introduction of resource equalisation as part of the Fair Funding Review 2.0. This directs funding towards places that have a weaker council tax base and are less able to meet their needs through locally raised council tax income. Councils with stronger council tax bases, in relative terms, are assumed to need less grant funding compared to those with weaker bases.
10. The Core Spending Power table assumes that the tax base will increase by 1.86% each year. This is higher than the 1.75% assumption in the February 2025 MTFS; by 2028/29 the additional 0.1% growth each year would generate £2.1m more council tax funding. If this doesn't materialise and the increase was 1.75% the funding reduction would be £29.3m.
11. An increase of 4.99% in Band D council tax is assumed in each of 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 based on a general increase of 2.99% and an Adult Social Care Precept of 2.0%. If the council chose not to increase council tax by 4.99% each year the reduction in funding would increase further.
12. Further information explaining how Core Spending Power is built up is included in the main body of the report.

Council Taxbase in Oxfordshire

13. The Core Spending Power table assumes growth in the taxbase of 1.85% based on the average growth over the last five years.
14. Underlying taxbase growth remains strong but is impacted by delays in the Valuation Office Agency providing over 2,000 new homes in the South and Vale District Council areas with a council tax band. This means the taxbase will only grow by 1.33% in 2026/27 compared to the 1.75% assumed in the MTFS. The growth in 2027/28 has been adjusted upwards to reflect these homes being brought into the tax base. Future growth is assumed in the proposed MTFS at 1.75% per year which provides additional annual increases in funding of c£10-£11m.

Contingency Budget and General Balances

15. To help mitigate pressures in demand led services and other risks the council will continue to hold an on-going contingency budget of £6.3m in 2026/27. The use of the existing £7.3m contingency budget to help manage service pressures in 2025/26 illustrates the importance of this approach in protecting general balances and the council's financial resilience. The Earmarked Reserves & General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 (Section 4.6) sets out the risk assessment for the level of General Balances. These will be set at £32.6m in 2026/27, increased from £30.2m in 2025/26 to maintain balances at 5% of the net operating budget.

Medium Term Funding Context

16. The medium-term funding context is challenging due to:

- The impact of the **Fair Funding Review 2.0** from 2026/27 onwards which will reduce funding for the council's services by close to £30m by 2028/29. The MTFS sets out that there is a deficit of £15.5m in 2027/28 and then £22.0m in 2028/29. Plans to manage the on-going deficit from 2027/28 onwards will need to be developed from early 2026 onwards. The council will need to assess where it is providing services above the statutory minimum or at a level above statistical neighbours and will undertake benchmarking to inform that. Action to reduce spend or increase income, to help meet the legal requirement to balance the budget overall, will have to be taken where that is the case.
- **Local government reorganisation and devolution with new councils expected to be operating from 1 April 2028:** the council needs to continue to plan on a 'going concern basis.' In other words, the council should not take short terms decisions which will impact on the financial sustainability go a new unitary council/s. However, it is recognised that planning for risks/issues beyond 1 April 2028 is challenging in an environment of reduced funding.
- **Continued pressures on demand for social care and the sufficiency of market provision, particularly for Children's Social Care.** Demand for children's social care continues to rise along with the cost of placements, driven by a lack of capacity in the market. While the government have indicated that they will take action to manage excessive profits by children's social care providers it is unclear how this will be implemented and what effect it will have locally.
- **Potential changes to the Better Care Fund from 2027/28:** The 10 Year Health Plan for England announced reform to the Better Care Fund to focus on integrated services. DHSC and MHCLG will shortly set out further detail on the approach to reform. Where this involves any change to the NHS and local authority minimum contributions to pooled funding these will not be introduced before 2027/28. The council's share of the Better Care Fund within the Pooled Budgets is £33m in 2026/27 so any change to the level of funding or the required use within that total in future years could have a significant impact on financial sustainability.
- **On-going uncertainty about the future arrangements for the management of past and future overspends relating to High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant,** where the accumulated deficit is expected to be £163m by the end of 2025/26 and is likely to reach over £300m by the time the statutory override ends on 31 March 2028.

Delivering the Future Together Programme

17. The council's Delivering the Future Together programme is accelerating the delivery of financial and non - financial benefits and supporting the council's financial sustainability in the context of those challenges and uncertainties through:
 - Becoming smaller and leaner in terms of the number of people who are directly employed by OCC
 - Operating from fewer buildings, making sure those we keep are used to their full capacity
 - Embracing technology where it improves productivity and connectivity to the people we serve, helping us become more efficient
 - Collaborating more closely with partners in the voluntary and community sector so we're no longer the main provider for every service; and
 - Harnessing commercial opportunities where they deliver value for our residents.
18. Organisational redesign is on-going across the council and is planned to continue until 2027/28. A Delivery Director will join the council for a six-month period to provide strategic leadership of all organisational change across the council. Their role is to optimise the strategic change portfolio, bringing in LGR and outputs of budget planning and aligning with the strategic priorities. This will also require decisions on what to stop/start/continue, and commitment to the optimised portfolio.
19. The council's Commercial Strategy and improvements to contract management are being enabled through the redesigned Financial and Commercial Services function which went live in late 2025. More systematic business intelligence information and insight needed to underpin the Commercial Strategy and enable the council to demonstrate that all revenue and capital expenditure provides value for money is being developed.
20. A new Financial Management Strategy and Operating Model will be implemented in 2026. This will include training and improvements to processes to help improve the effectiveness of financial management. The development of dashboards will improve the visibility of service data underpinning forecasts. There will also need to be renewed and sustained focus on managing demand and other pressures throughout the financial year overseen by the Strategic Leadership Board.

21. As part of the Property Strategy the council is rationalising its property assets and will move out of County Hall in late 2026, ensuring fuller utilisation of other office accommodation sites across Oxfordshire.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve

22. Oxfordshire participated in Phase 1 of the DfE's Delivering Better Value scheme and implemented a Deficit Reduction Plan in 2024/25 to manage expenditure on High Needs funded by Dedicated Schools Grant. Despite the action being taken, there are continuing significant annual deficits against the grant funding.

23. As set out in the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement (Section 4.6) it is expected that the deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve will increase over the medium term and after taking account of planned mitigations could reach a deficit balance of more than £300m by the time the statutory over-ride comes to an end on 31 March 2028.
24. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020 stipulate that a deficit on the DSG must be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general resources. Regulations require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve. The DSG 'statutory override' was extended for a one-off period of three years (up to March 2028). Demand for High Needs continues to outstrip the growth in the grant funding and as set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in January 2026 the forecast deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £70.7m in 2025/26. This would increase the cumulative deficit to £163m by 31 March 2026.
25. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 set out that the Government would set out plans for reforming the SEND system. This would include plans to help Local Authorities "deal with their historic and accruing deficits" as well as considering any transitional period between the current and reformed system.
26. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement consultation document for 2026/27 includes the following statement:

*“...once the Statutory Override ends at the end of 2027-28, funding will be managed within the overall central government DEL envelope... **local authorities will of course be expected to manage the system effectively and where this is the case we would not expect local authorities to need to fund future special educational needs costs from general funds”.***
27. Regarding the cumulative deficits which exist now and will be larger by 2028, the consultation states:

*“Whilst we do not expect local authorities to plan on the basis of having to meet deficits in full, any future support will **not be unlimited**. Councils must continue to work to keep deficits as low as possible”.*

“To support local authorities to do this, we are disseminating best practice and case studies from previous programmes focussed on efficient spending, such as Safety Valve and Delivering Better Value, and providing all local authorities with advisers to help consider how these learnings can be applied.... We will provide further detail on our plans to support local authorities with historic and accruing deficits and conditions for accessing such support later in the Settlement process.”
28. The National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools 2026-27 document includes the following (paragraph 39)

*“It is clear that the extent of the **divergence between high needs NFF allocations and spending** in different local authorities raises questions about aspects of this allocation methodology. **The Department will therefore review the high needs funding system for future years, to ensure that it will properly support the reformed SEND system.**”*

29. These statements set an expectation that local authorities will be required to meet some of the historic deficit, and potentially some on-going costs beyond 2027/28. Reflecting the change in where some of the responsibility for the accumulated deficit lies (from the Department for Education to local authorities), it is proposed to increase the contribution to the Demographic Risk Reserve from £4m in 2025/26 to £8m per annum from 2026/27 onwards. Alternatively, this contribution could, if this was allowed, be used to support borrowing of up to around £120m which is around two thirds of the forecast deficit at 31 March 2026. Further information on the future arrangements for the management of High Needs DSG deficits is expected in the Final Settlement in February 2026.
30. This is a considerable financial risk, and if a resolution to this is not forthcoming then the financial viability of the council would need to be reconsidered.

Measuring Financial Performance

31. Measuring the Council’s financial health through a set of targeted measures is a key way of measuring our financial health and resilience in supporting the Council’s plans and priorities. The key indicators upon which we will measure ourselves are set out in Annex 1 below.
32. The CIPFA’s Financial Resilience Index¹ shows a council’s performance against a range of measures associated with financial risk, including the level of earmarked reserves and general balances. The data sets are a comparative tool to be used to support good financial management and generate a common understanding of the financial position within authorities.
33. The information for Oxfordshire compared to similar authorities is set out in Annex 2. Whilst there are a range of indicators, the themes generally relate to the three areas below.
 - Levels of Debt – the gross external debt indicator remains comparatively low risk and remains well below the median. Interest payable is also relatively low risk compared to net revenue expenditure.
 - Levels of Reserves – overall Oxfordshire is lower risk compared to comparators and the position has improved compared to 2023/24. The council is well above the median when comparing the level of reserves to income.
 - Social Care ratio – social care spend has increased from 76% to 82% of spend compared to net revenue expenditure. This remains relatively lower

¹ The December 2025 Index uses figures from the 2024/25 DLUHC revenue and expenditure Outturn data return (RO)

risk than the majority of comparators but means that relatively more of the budget is being spent on demand led services that are more difficult to change except through demand management.

34. The one indicator where Oxfordshire scores comparatively higher risk than other County Councils is in relation to Business Rates - growth above baseline. This indicator is calculated as the difference between the baseline funding level and retained rates income, over the baseline funding level. This growth has been removed as part of the Business Rates reset from 2026/27 and is contributing to the reduction in funding set out in the Core Spending Power table published by the Government.

Financial Management

35. Financial indicators alone do not give a complete picture of financial health and sustainability; strengths of financial management and governance are also an essential foundation of any successful organisation.
36. The Code of Practice for Financial Management (the FM Code) was introduced by CIPFA in November 2019. on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in the context of increasing concerns about the financial resilience and sustainability of local authorities. The FM code is not statutory but compliance with the code is obligatory. It brings together elements that are already part of existing statutory guidance:
 - Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (S151 Officer)
 - Prudential Code for Capital Finance
 - Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom
37. The FM Code, which includes 19 standards, clarifies how Chief Finance Officers should satisfy their statutory responsibility for good financial administration as required in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Importantly it emphasises the collective financial responsibility of the leadership team, including the relevant elected members, of which the Chief Finance Officer is one member.
38. An assessment has been made of the Council's current compliance with the FM Code. The assessment has identified that the Council is well placed to evidence compliance from 1 April 2026. 17 standards have been assessed as green, and 2 standards continue to be rated as amber, demonstrating that that sound financial management and robust governance arrangements are in place. Where relevant, proposed further actions that can be taken to enhance compliance have been included in the assessment. The Summary Assessment is included at Annex 3.
39. The principal areas of attention for development and improvement during 2026/27 will be the continued embedding of the Financial & Commercial Services Redesign following go – live in December 2025, and improvements to data structures and reporting that will be enabled by the new structure. These need to underpin the development of a more commercial approach as well as improvements to financial management competency and budget management across the council that will be driven by the agreement and implementation of the Financial Management Strategy across the council.

Key Performance Indicators

The Financial Strategy enables the Authority to undertake Budget Planning for the short, medium and longer term, and to make sound decisions on the commitment of financial resources whilst ensuring strong financial resilience. As such the Financial Strategy supports the Strategic Plan, and a budget planning process that can ensure finances are allocated to support the delivery of all the council's key priorities.

The Financial Strategy directly supports the council's priorities. There are two key strategic indicators (SI) that demonstrate the effectiveness of the Financial Strategy:

1. The Council is financially resilient
2. The Council has good financial management and governance

The following set out the performance activity and measures for monitoring these indicators, the frequency of monitoring and where they are reported to. The key measures are reported publicly through Cabinet and Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the monthly Business Management & Monitoring Report (BMMR), others are monitored within the Finance Service and reported by exception or are routinely reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.

SI	Measure	2026/27 Target	Reporting	Reported to:
Delivering to budget and achieving savings:				
1	Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	Break even or underspend	Quarterly Management & Monitoring Report (BMMR) and Provisional Outturn Report (POR) for 2026/27 at the end of the financial year.	Cabinet
1	Achievement of Planned savings in 2026/27	90%	BMMR & POR	Cabinet

2	Services deliver services and achieve planned performance within budget	=< 1% revenue budget variation (with service outcomes achieved)	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
Ability to manage unplanned/unforeseen events:				
1	General Balances are forecast to remain within 85% of the risk assessed level for 2026/27.	>85% of the risk assessed level of £32.6m.	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
Use of Grants				
2	Total Outturn variation for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded services (schools and early years)	Break even or underspend	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
2	Total Outturn variation for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded services (high needs)	Overspend no higher than the estimated deficit agreed by Cabinet in March 2026.	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
2	Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	=>95% of grant funding is spent in year	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
Systems and processes operate effectively and are well controlled to reduce and detect error and fraud:				
2	Positive assurance from External Audit	Zero material issues identified by External Audit	Quarterly and Annual Report (September)	Audit & Governance Committee
2	Annual report of the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA)	Positive assurance by the CIA	Annually (May)	Audit & Governance Committee
2	Positive assurance following Internal Audits of Financial Systems and processes	90% audits of financial systems are rated Green or Amber	Quarterly	Audit & Governance Committee
2	Internal Audit actions for financial systems implemented within agreed timescales	90% of priority 1 and 2 audit actions implemented within the originally agreed timescale	Quarterly	Audit & Governance Committee
2	% of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	>95%	Bi-Monthly BMMR	Cabinet
Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice				
2	Annual self-assessment of compliance to the CIPFA FM standards	100% compliance (green and amber RAG ratings)	Annually (January)	Cabinet / Audit & Governance Committee
Debt Management				

Section 4.5

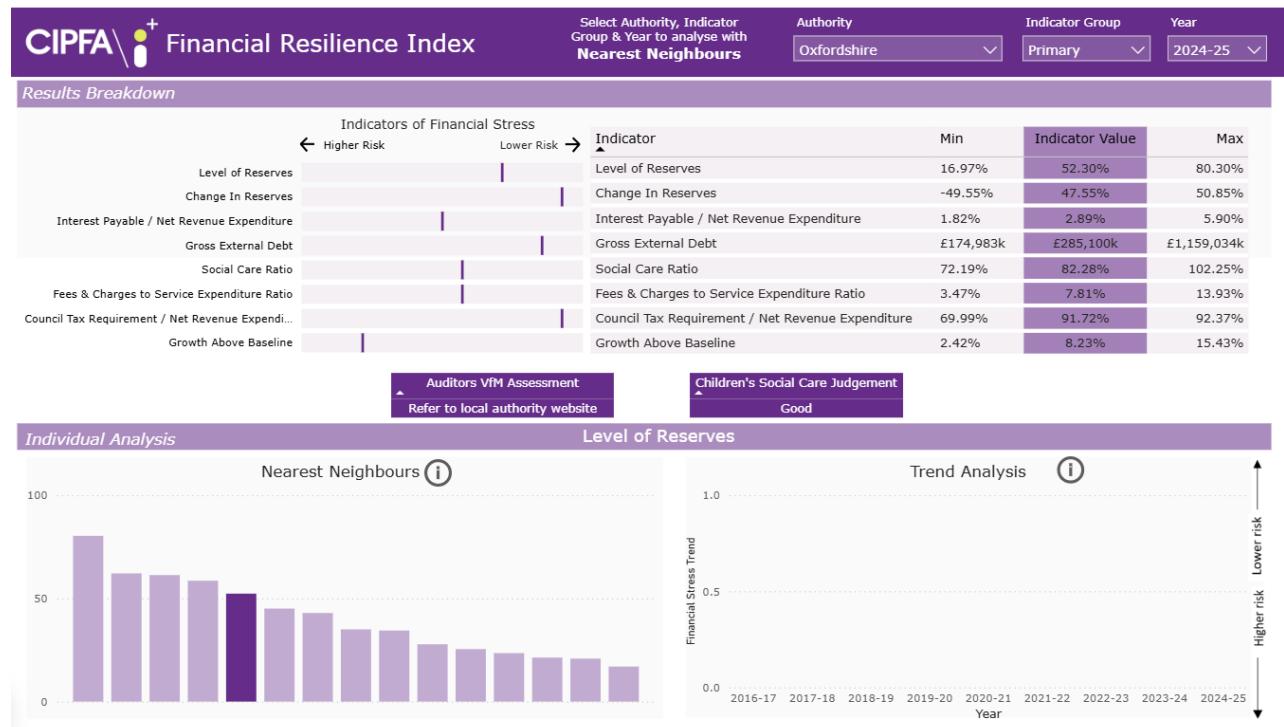
2	Invoice Collection Rate – Corporate Debtors	97%	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
2	Invoice Collection Rate – ASC contribution debtors	94%	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
2	Debt Requiring Impairment – Corporate Debtors	<£0.500M	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
2	Debt Requiring Impairment – ASC contribution debtors	<£4.3M	BMMR & POR	Cabinet
Treasury Management				
2	Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	=<0% or +15% variation to £325m	Quarterly (Quarterly Treasury Management Report)	Cabinet / Audit & Governance Committee
2	Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	>=4.00%	Quarterly (Quarterly Treasury Management Report)	Cabinet / Audit & Governance Committee
2	Average Annualised Return achieved for externally managed funds	>=3.75%	Quarterly (Quarterly Treasury Management Report)	Cabinet / Audit & Governance Committee

Capital Programme indicators are included in the Capital & Investment Strategy at Section 5.1

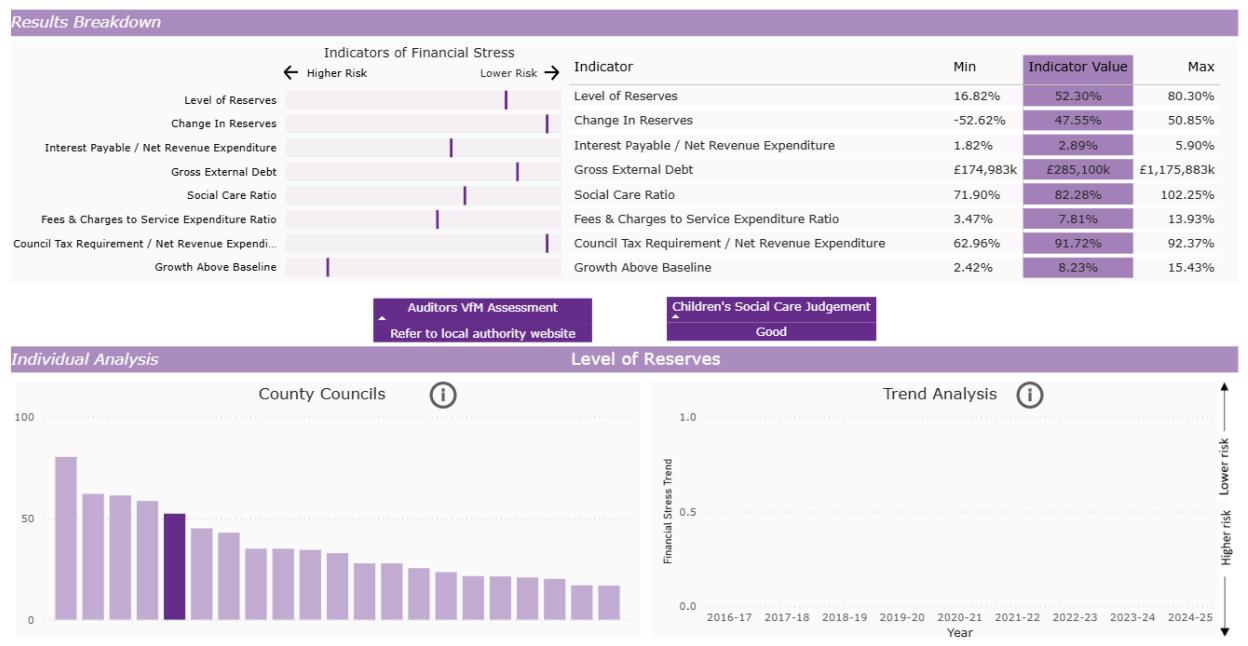
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CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2024/25

Comparison to Nearest Neighbours



Comparison to County Councils:



Debt & Reserves

Debt and Reserves Relative to Income



Income is calculated as council tax requirement and business rates plus sales, fees and charges and other service income from the Revenue Outturn Summary (RS).

Debt is gross external debt at 31st March, taken from the COR form (Capital Outturn Return).

Reserves are calculated as the sum of earmarked and unallocated reserves at 31st March, from the Revenue Summary.

Financial Management Code of Practice – Summary Compliance Assessment 2025/26

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
1. Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Leadership Team				
A	<p>The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money (VfM)</p>	<p>Working as part of the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), the Director for Financial & Commercial Services is responsible for the leading on the delivery of the council's Commercial Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2024. This seeks to promote a wide and more integrated approach to commercial management combining strategic and operational tasks distributed across the Council. The Strategic Capital and Commercial Board considers commercial opportunities as part of its remit.</p> <p>The Commercial Transformation Programme has been in place during 2025, reviewing systems, processes, data, management information, roles and responsibilities. This resulted in a full redesign of a new Commercial and Procurement Service that went live in December 2025 with an implementation plan that will continue in 2026.</p> <p>The Strategic Leadership Board considered benchmarking and performance information by way of the IMPOWER index in November 2025. This provided an opportunity to consider areas where improvements could be made to outcomes which cost less. Further work is planned in early 2026 to consider ambitions and</p>	<p>More systematic business intelligence information and insight needed to underpin the Commercial Strategy and enable the council to demonstrate that all revenue and capital expenditure provides VfM is being developed.</p> <p>The redesign of Financial & Commercial Services went live in December 2025 with an implementation plan into 2026. This will improve capacity and capability to track and report VfM data and introduce a more commercial approach in line with the council's Commercial Strategy.</p> <p>The Commercial Strategy will be updated in 2026.</p> <p>A new Financial Management Strategy has been drafted and the Financial Management Operating Model is being</p>	AMBER

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
		<p>opportunities which will help in ensuring a balanced budget can be achieved for 2027/28 and 2028/29.</p> <p>Procurement decisions consider VfM by considering the quality of service and not just price.</p>	updated. These will be reviewed by SLB during Q4 ready for roll out and implementation, including training in 2026.	YELLOW
B Page 146	The authority complies with the CIPFA "Statement of the Role of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) in Local Government"	<p>The CFO is qualified accountant with significant experience working as an active member of the council's leadership team.</p> <p>In carrying out their role as Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, the CFO is a member of SLB (Strategic Leadership Board) and reports directly to the Chief Executive. The CFO has an influential role with members of the Cabinet, Audit & Governance Committee and lead opposition members.</p> <p>The redesign of Financial & Commercial Services in 2025 has considered the resource required to support financial management and the commercialisation of the council's activities with additional funding for the Commercial Team expected to be met from savings generated through a more commercial approach.</p> <p>Reflecting the need to ensure financial literacy across the council new job roles agreed as part the organisational redesign of the council's senior leadership structure in 2024 clearly set out the financial management responsibilities of each of the council's directors and their direct reports. These responsibilities</p>		GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
		are being followed up through on-going performance management in 2025/26.		
2. Governance and Financial Management Style				
C	The Leadership Team demonstrates in its actions and behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control	<p>The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) understands its responsibilities in relation to Financial Management and considers the assessment against the Code and actions or further work required in order to continuously improve.</p> <p>The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) receive and review on a quarterly basis a report from the Chief Internal Auditor on progress against the Internal Audit Plan, implementation of agreed management actions and delivery of the Counter Fraud Plan. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Action Plan are also considered.</p> <p>In addition, the Audit & Governance Committee have a key role in providing independent assurance over governance, risk and internal control arrangements.</p> <p>While there are some forecast overspends in 2025/26 ongoing focus on managing pressures over the short and medium term to maintain financial resilience is evidenced in the forecast reported through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet.</p> <p>Work to establish a meaningful and effective approach to updating and maintaining schemes of financial</p>	<p>Following the Fair Funding Review 2.0 the Provisional Finance Settlement for 2026/27 and the following two years indicates that significant budget reductions will be required to balance the council's budget over the medium term.</p> <p>From early 2026 onwards the new Financial Management Strategy and Financial Management Operating Model will be implemented to manage this. There will also need to be renewed and sustained focus on managing demand and other pressures throughout the financial year.</p>	GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
		delegation across services has been completed in 2025/26.		GREEN
D	The authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)”	The Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out how the Council complies with the requirements of the Framework and identifies key documents, which provide detailed information as to how the Council ensures the Corporate Governance principles are adhered to. The annual update of the Oxfordshire Code of Corporate Governance was last approved by Audit & Governance Committee in March 2025 . Appendix B of the report identifies evidence that demonstrates that the Council is delivering good governance.		GREEN
Page 148	The Financial Management style of the authority supports financial sustainability	<p>Control over expenditure and prudent use of contingency and other funding was demonstrated in the year end underspend of £12.8m in 2024/25 and the forecast use of contingency (£7.3m) to manage service pressures in 2025/26.</p> <p>Directors are expected to manage within the budget available to them and take action where necessary to do that. However, the use of data and improved reporting to inform service management and needs further development. For example, implementation of a new dashboard to predict expenditure for Children's Services.</p> <p>The cumulative High Needs DSG deficit has grown significantly from £92.3m at 31 March 2025 to a forecast of around £160m in 2025/26 despite on-going</p>	<p>A draft Financial Management Strategy has been developed alongside the redesign of Financial & Commercial Services. The strategy will be finalised and agreed by SLB and following that an implementation plan will be developed and implemented from early 2026.</p> <p>A new data has been established through the redesign of Financial & Commercial Services which went live in December 2025. This has created capacity to</p>	AMBER

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
Page 140		<p>action taken through the Deficit Management Plan. Continued increases in demand and inflationary pressures are proving to be considerably more significant than reductions in expenditure that can be achieved through efficiencies and demand management. There is therefore a significant risk that deficits will continue to increase. Based on national guidance funding responsibility for High Needs SEND was expected to transfer to Central Government from 1 April 2028 when the statutory over-ride ends. An update from the government on the future management of both cumulative and future deficits is expected in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement.</p>	<p>focus on improving data and reporting.</p> <p>The Financial & Commercial Services redesign has created the role of Commercial Partners from December 2025 onwards. People Partners are in place following the redesign of HR and Cultural Change. The intention is to work more closely together as a group of business partners to provide more strategic and aligned advice and support to services.</p>	
3. Long to Medium-Term Financial Management				
F	The authority has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment	<p>A review of the 2025/26 CIPFA Financial Resilience index has been undertaken and the assessment will be included in the Financial Strategy (section 4.5 of the Budget & Business Planning Report to Cabinet in January 2026).</p> <p>The Financial Strategy also includes a suite of performance indicators against which financial performance is measured during the year and reported</p>	<p>While further updates from the Government are awaited sustained action will need to be taken to manage and mitigate the impact of High Needs DSG deficits on the council's financial resilience.</p> <p>The leadership team will need to identify options to manage a</p>	GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
Page 150		<p>through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet. These measures include the forecast level of General Balances against the minimum risk assessed level for balances taking into account the latest monitoring position in the current year and the forecast achievement of savings built into the budget.</p> <p>The Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2026/27 indicates that funding reductions of over £30m will be required by 2028/29.</p> <p>The forecast cumulative deficit for High Needs DSG will be around £160m by the end of 2025/26 and continues to increase. There is a deficit management plan in place to manage the increase. Measures include new special school places, implementation of a new banding system, savings through contract management and a review of internal services and the use of agency staff. Further guidance from the government on the treatment of cumulative and future deficits is expected as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27.</p>	significant reduction in funding over the next three years and focus on managing demand and expenditure and achieving savings.	
G	The authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to members	The Financial Strategy and MTFS outline the financial challenges and opportunities facing the Council over the medium term and set out how action is being taken to manage expenditure within the available funding. They also explain where further action is required.	Options to manage the impact of funding reductions over the medium term will be developed and discussed with members from early 2026 onwards so that decisions and actions can be	GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
Page 151		<p>The Capital & Investment Strategy and the Capital Programme both cover a 10-year period. The Capital & Investment Strategy sets out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and articulates how the Council's capital investment will help achieve the Council's vision and priorities as well as respond to demographic change.</p> <p>While different budget scenarios have been discussed with SLB and Cabinet uncertainty about the impact of Funding Reform / High Needs DSG deficits and Local Government Reform has made future modelling challenging leading up to the publication of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 in late December 2025.</p> <p>Updates on High Needs DSG are reported through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports and as part of the Financial Strategy. Based on national guidance funding responsibility for High Needs SEND was expected to transfer to Central Government from 1 April 2028 when the statutory over-ride ends. An update from the government on the future management of both cumulative and future deficits is expected in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement. Updates on this have been shared as part of the 2026/27 budget process.</p> <p>All councillor briefings on funding reform and the implications for the council are provided as part of the</p>	<p>taken in advance of setting the budget for 2027/28</p> <p>MHCLG will set out the plans for managing the historic High Needs deficits as part of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement in February 2026. Further action to manage the deficit may be required once this position becomes clear.</p>	

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
		budget process providing opportunity for questions and other feedback.		
H	The authority complies with the CIPFA “Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities”	<p>The Capital & Investment Strategy is updated annually and agreed by Council alongside the Capital Programme, Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.</p> <p>The Capital Programme is monitored monthly with reports produced quarterly for the Strategic Capital Board and Cabinet. Quarterly Treasury Management reports are taken to Audit & Governance Committee, Cabinet and Council, including monitoring of Prudential Indicators.</p> <p>The ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream is forecast to remain within at around 5% over the medium term with a recommended limit of 5.5%. The future affordability of any proposed new borrowing is a key consideration within the Budget & Business Planning process.</p>		GREEN
I	The authority has a rolling multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans	The Council has an integrated Business and Budget Planning Process with a multi-year Medium Term Financial Strategy linked to service plans. This is reviewed and updated each year with new future years added to ensure that the strategy covers at least three years. The MTFS for 2026/27 will cover the period 2026/27 – 2030/31 to enable a high level view of budgets that will be available following local	Service plans are being reviewed in 2026 to align with the new Strategic Plan, and to with the reduced level of funding available to the council from 2027/28 onwards.	GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
		<p>government reform expected to be implemented from April 2028.</p> <p>Following the county council elections in May 2025 service plans have been reviewed to align with the priorities in the Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2028.</p>		
4. The Annual Budget				
J	The authority complies with its statutory obligations in respect of the budget setting process	The Council produces an annual balanced budget and supporting documentation within the necessary timeframe.		GREEN
K	The budget report includes a statement by the CFO on the robustness of the estimates and a statement on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves	The CFO's comprehensive Section 25 report accompanies the suite of Budget documents and includes a commentary on the adequacy of proposed financial reserves with reference to CIPFA's Resilience Index as well as assessed compliance with the FM Code.		GREEN
5. Stakeholder Engagement and Business Plans				
L	The authority has engaged where appropriate with key stakeholders in developing its long-term financial strategy, medium-term financial plan and annual budget	Following the county council election in May 2025, the county council engaged on a new Strategic Plan . This was part of a number of engagement activities that ran over the summer with residents, focused on their priorities and seeking their views on local government reorganisation. Activities	Future proposals to manage expenditure in line with the available funding are likely to require formal consultation. This will either be undertaking during 2026/27 or as part of the budget process for 2027/28.	GREEN

Ref	CIPFA Financial Management Standards	Current Status	Further Work	RAG Status
Page 154		<p>included nine focus groups, four schools' sounding boards and a representative residents' survey.</p> <p>The strategic plan was agreed by Cabinet in October 2025 following consideration of this feedback. This feedback is also being used to inform the budget and business planning process. The strategic plan was approved by Council in November 2025.</p> <p>Additional engagement outputs from the 2025 annual representative residents' survey will also be considered by Cabinet as part of the budget process.</p>		

M	<p>The authority uses an appropriate documented options appraisal methodology to demonstrate the value for money of its decisions</p>	<p>Key decisions requiring investment to deliver service improvements, deliver savings or invest or save opportunities require business case to aid decision making via the appropriate governance process (e.g., Strategic Capital & Commercial Board).</p> <p>More systematic business intelligence information and insight needed to underpin the Commercial Strategy and enable the council to demonstrate that all revenue and capital expenditure provides VfM is being developed.</p> <p>The requirements, system, standards and guidance for the development and approval of business cases is being considered as part of the implementation of the Commercial Strategy.</p> <p>The Commercial Transformation Programme includes a workstream which is developing a digitised business case process</p>	<p>The redesign of Financial & Commercial Services which went live in December 2025 will improve capacity and capability to track and report VfM data and introduce a more commercial approach in line with the council's Commercial Strategy.</p> <p>New tools are in development to support the standardised and structured assessment of service delivery models. This will be coupled with the digitised business case process (due early 2026) and an enhanced decision-support tool to improve consistency and depth of climate and equalities impact assessments (due early 2026).</p>	GREEN
Page 155				

6. Monitoring Financial Performance

N	<p>The Leadership Team takes action using reports enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability</p> <p>Page 156</p>	<p>The regular Business Management and Monitoring Reports to Cabinet include performance, finance and risk so enable the council's leadership team and Cabinet to respond to emerging issues and to take action to manage those. The report format has been updated to focus on key issues and exceptions to ensure that challenge and action is focussed on the more significant issues</p> <p>The regular Capital Programme monitoring report includes updates on scheme activity, performance and risks.</p> <p>A data warehouse covering finance, purchasing and HR. has been developed and the majority of the data extraction from our hosted SAP System has been completed. With the new team in Finance formally established in December 2025 this is continuing to improve reporting and supporting data driven intelligence and decision-making.</p> <p>Stages 1-4 have been completed in 2025 and stage 5 is scheduled for delivery by end of the year and will continue into 2025/26.</p> <p>A Purchasing Improvement Workstream is automating purchasing tasks across feeder systems and streamlining the options available to buyers so that the correct shopping channel is clear and directs buyers to the right approach. This will reduce invoice and payment disputes and errors and maximise commercial</p>		GREEN
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Page 157	<p>opportunities with new purchasing routes. Phase 1 will be delivered by April 2026.</p> <p>Key enhancements to strengthen capital programme delivery include the introduction of a Pre-Delivery Portal, providing a centralised view of all capital projects prior to delivery and enabling early identification and resolution of barriers. A Strategic Pipeline Board will scrutinise new and developing projects, ensuring cross-service input and better alignment with organisational priorities. In addition, early funding for project development will allow small-scale allocations to make schemes "shovel-ready", ensuring timely progression when full resources become available. The recent development of a prototype prioritisation tool, a data-driven system designed to rank projects against strategic criteria, will be embedded within our governance framework and will ensure funding is directed towards the highest priorities. This is still in the early stages of development, but teams are working to ensure new ways of working are in place by April 2026</p> <p>Capital Monitoring will be developed further using outputs from the Project Portfolio Management (PPM) system</p> <p>A Strategic Risk Manager has been added to the structure as part of the Financial & Commercial Services redesign and is expected to be in post from early 2026.</p>	
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O	The Leadership Team monitors the elements of its balance sheet that pose a significant risk to financial sustainability	The Business Management and Monitoring Reports to Cabinet include monitoring of key balance sheet items including balances, reserves, debtors, and cash (including the performance of Treasury Management).		GREEN
7. External Financial Reporting				
P	The CFO has personal and statutory responsibility for ensuring that the statement of accounts produced by the local authority complies with the reporting requirements of the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom" (The Code)	<p>The annual accounts are produced in compliance with The Code and always received an unqualified audit opinion up to 2020/21.</p> <p>The statement of accounts for 2022/23 was published on 23 January 2024 following the resolution of the issues with the valuation of infrastructure assets. As a result of the delay, together with the wider requirements of the local audit reset the council's external auditors were not able to complete the detailed audit procedures that would be needed to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to issue an unmodified audit report. Therefore, the council has received a disclaimed opinion on the 2022/23 financial statements.</p> <p>The 2023/24 accounts were published on 28 June 2024 and the audit opinion was received in February 2025. Since it was not possible to have assurance over the brought forward balances from 2022/23 these accounts were also disclaimed.</p> <p>The 2024/25 accounts were published on 30 June 2025. Feedback on the accounts from external audit has been positive and they are expected to be signed off in early 2026.</p>		GREEN

Q	The presentation of the final outturn figures and variations from budget allows the leadership team to make strategic financial decisions	The Strategic Leadership Board and Cabinet consider the outturn and year end variances in a Provisional Outturn Report to Cabinet each June. Where relevant this enables strategic financial decisions to be made early in the following financial year.		GREEN
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Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27

Introduction

1. This paper sets out the Council's policies underpinning the maintenance of a level of general balances and earmarked reserves within the council's accounts.

Statutory Position

2. A local authority is not permitted to allow its spending to exceed its available resources so that overall it would be in deficit. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require authorities to have regard to the level of balances and reserves needed for meeting future estimated future expenditure when calculating the council tax requirement.
3. Balances and reserves can be held for three main purposes:
 - A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing, this forms part of general reserves
 - A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies, this forms part of general balances;
 - A means of building up funds often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted liabilities

Purpose of balances and reserves

4. The Council maintains general balances in order to provide a contingency against unplanned or unexpected events.
5. Although there is no recognised official guidance on the level of general balances to be maintained, the key factor is that the level should be justifiable in the context of local circumstances. The council's external auditor comments on the level of balances and reserves as part of the annual audit of the Council's financial position. Financial regulations require Council to decide on the level of general balances it wishes to maintain before it can decide the level of council tax. This will be done as part of the annual budget setting process.
6. Whilst general balances are unallocated, earmarked reserves are held for a specific purpose and to mitigate against potential future known or predicted liabilities.

Planned use of balances and reserves

7. Any planned use of, or contribution to, earmarked reserves or balances must be included as part of the budget setting process each year.

8. In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, any new reserves or a change in the purpose of earmarked reserves requires Cabinet approval. Contributions to or use of earmarked reserves is reported to Cabinet as part of the monthly Business Management & Monitoring Report. Those greater than £1m require endorsement by Cabinet.

National Comparison of Level of Earmarked Reserves and Unallocated Reserves (General Balances)

9. Information is included in the Financial Strategy (see paragraphs 32 – 34 and Annex 2 of Section 4.5), noting that the CIPFA Resilience Index indicates that Oxfordshire County Council is lower risk compared to other county councils. The risk in respect of levels of reserves has also improved relative to other counties and the level of risk is moving further towards the lower end of the spectrum.

Level of General Balances

10. It is considered prudent to maintain a level of balances commensurate with risk, and a risk assessment is undertaken annually by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer), as part of the budget setting process.
11. The risk assessment for 2026/27 has determined that balances should be held at £32.7m, increased from £30.2m in 2025/26, reflecting an updated assessment of risks. When added to contingency of £6.3m this is equivalent to 5.2% of the proposed net operating budget of £752.6m for 2026/27 and equates to just over two weeks of net expenditure.
12. The Business Management and Monitoring Report to Cabinet in January 2026 sets out a forecast underspend of £2.0m for 2025/26. This includes the use of £2.2m balances to fund the deficit held by Woodeaton Manor Special School when it converted to academy status in October 2025. There is also a further anticipated call on balances relating to the Bicester Motion incident, estimated at £0.5m. £1.9m held in general balances will be used to support the cost of the Cowley Branch Line should it not be possible to identify other funding for this purpose.
13. The anticipated level of general balances on 1 April 2026 is currently forecast to be £34.7m after taking account of the anticipated use set out in paragraph 12. This is £2.0m higher than the 2026/27 risk assessed level of £32.7m; the additional funding will be held to support future priorities.
14. It is recognised that the outturn position for 2025/26 is likely to differ from the forecast so the actual level of balances available to allocate may vary. It is proposed that any variation to the forecast outturn position will be reflected in the level of general balances and any impact considered through the Provisional Outturn Report for 2025/26.
15. The risk assessment for 2026/27 is set out as Annex 1 to this policy statement.

Earmarked Reserves

16. Earmarked Reserves are grouped into the following six categories:

- a. Revenue Grants Unapplied – these are specific grants received by Government Departments which remain unused at the end of the financial year and are carried forward to be utilised in future years. Examples include the Public Health Grant and the remaining grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Oxfordshire.
- b. Capital & Equipment – funding for the council's capital programme and the replacement of equipment and vehicles.
- c. Funding for Risk – funding held to mitigate future financial and service risks. Examples include the Insurance and Collection Fund reserves.
- d. Corporate Priorities – one – off funding to support and deliver the council's priorities. Examples include the Budget Priorities and Transformation reserves.
- e. Other Reserves – funding held for other specific purposes including the On – Street Parking Reserve.
- f. Unusable Reserves – surpluses and deficits held on behalf of Local Education Authority maintained schools.

17. Annex 2 sets out the actual level of earmarked reserves at 31 March 2026 and expected level at 31 March each year to 2031 as well as a description of each reserve.

18. Section 4.6.1 sets out forecast reserves over the medium term. A significant element of the balance forecast to be held relates to future funding for the capital programme.

19. This position does not take into account an estimated deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve in relation to High Needs. This is currently forecast to be £163.2m as at 31 March 2026. If the current level of spend continues with no solution put in place this would increase to at least £300m by 31 March 2028 when the statutory over-ride ends. Further detail on this is set out in paragraphs 51-55 below.

Demographic Risk Reserve/ High Needs DSG Deficit Risk Reserve

20. Because of the significant pressures relating to High Needs and other budgets with demographic volatility a demographic risk reserve was created in 2019/20. The existing MTFS includes an on-going annual contribution to the reserve of £4.0m. The forecast reserve will total £35.0m by the end of 2025/26, £29.0m by the end of 2026/27 and £33.0m by the end of 2027/28 when the statutory over-ride ends. This reserve will in part offset the impact of carrying the negative DSG reserve on the council's cashflow and improve the financial resilience position.

21. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 sets an expectation that local authorities will be required to meet some of the historic deficit on High Needs DSG. Reflecting this change, and the expectation that

Section 4.6

the council will need to manage at least some of the deficit, it is proposed to increase the contribution to the Demographic Risk Reserve from £4m in 2025/26 to £8m per annum from 2026/27 onwards. This will increase the balance held in the reserve to £41.0m at 31 March 2028, when the statutory override ends.

22. It is also proposed to change the name of this reserve to the “High Needs DSG Deficit Risk Reserve”.

Budget Priorities Reserve

23. This reserve has been used to hold one – off funding for the council’s priorities.

24. The remaining balance from a one – off investment of £2.0m in 2025/26 for pro-active flooding measures and working with communities who have suffered flooding that will be used in 2026/27 will be held in this reserve.

25. £1.9m potential funding for the Cowley Branch Line is likely to be moved to the reserve from general balances before the end of 2025/26. If other funding is subsequently identified this will be released for other priorities.

26. £1.5m funding is available to support future priorities.

Budget Reserve

27. As set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in January 2026, and the Treasury Management quarterly updates, there is forecast additional interest on cash balances totalling £7.5m over the budgeted level in 2025/26. £2.0m of this is forecast to be used to support the revenue budget in 2025/26.

28. The remaining balance is proposed to be held in a Budget Reserve, that will be created in 2025/26 subject to approval through the Business Management & Monitoring Report elsewhere on the agenda. This funding will be held to help manage any difference in the timing of the delivery of savings and the funding reductions arising from the Local Government Finance Settlement over the three-year settlement period to 2028/29.

Collection Fund Risk Reserve

29. This reserve is held to manage fluctuations in Business Rate and Council Tax income that the Council receives, with a recommended level of at least £4.0m held. The actual balance held in the reserve is expected to be £6.7m at 31 March 2026 after taking account of additional Business Rates funding received in 2025/26 including the council’s share of the pooling gain from the North Oxfordshire Business Rates pool.

30. It is proposed that £2.4m is used in 2026/27 to manage the impact of a reduced taxbase and therefore council tax income due to a delay in council tax

Section 4.6

valuations of houses in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council areas. The remaining balance is therefore expected to be £4.3m and considered sufficient to meet any shortfall on the business rates collection funds notified by the district councils after 31 January 2026, should it be needed.

31. Council tax collection fund surpluses are expected to be £8.3m in 2026/27. The additional £0.3m above the £8.0m budgeted level is proposed to be held in the reserve and will be available to manage any variation on the Business Rates Collection Fund position that is yet to be notified by the district councils.

Transformation Reserve

32. Funding held in the Transformation Reserve is being used to support the Delivering the Future Together programme.

33. The forecast balance at 31 March 2026 is £9.4m with further commitments in 2026/27 and 2027/28 expected to utilise a further £5.5m and £0.9m respectively. This includes funding for Copilot and E5 licences totalling £1.8m and estimated one – off funding of up to £1.0m to support investment associated with the redesign of IT services ahead of savings being achieved by an increase in the organisation redesign savings from 2027/28. £3.0m remains uncommitted.

34. Because of the need for the council's services are as efficient and streamlined as possible ahead of a new organisation, £2.0m is proposed to be added to the Transformation Reserve (from the Redundancy Reserve) to support further delivery.

Redundancy Reserve

35. The balance held in the Redundancy Reserve at 31 March 2025 was £4.1m. After taking account of a budgeted contribution of £6.5m in 2025/26 and the cost of redundancies relating to the on-going organisation redesign the remaining balance as at 31 March 2026 is expected to be around £9m. The remaining balance is expected to be used to support redundancy costs in 2026/27. £2.0m of the balance held is proposed to be transferred to the Transformation Reserve. Any redundancies relating to Local Government Reorganisation in March 2028 will be met, either from the Local Government Reorganisation reserve or from future savings arising from the transition to a new authority/authorities.

Impact of IFRS9

36. The IFRS9 Statutory Override, which mandates that fluctuations in the value of pooled fund investments are taken to the balance sheet, is ending on 31 March 2029 for investments made before 1 April 2024. From 1 April 2029 fluctuations in the fund value are therefore reflected in the revenue account.

37. To mitigate against any reduction in value, a ringfenced IFRS9 reserve was created in 2024/25. If the value of the funds is below the purchase price at the

Section 4.6

balance sheet date, funds will be released from the reserve to ensure that there is no net impact to the revenue account. Similarly, if the fund value is above the purchase price at the balance sheet date, any unrealised gain will be transferred to the IFRS9 reserve. It would only be appropriate to release such gains to the revenue account when the funds are divested from and gains are crystallised.

38. The reserve, which was created during 2024/25, currently has a balance of £4.0m. Whilst the average loss of value (compared to the original purchase price) during times of recent financial stress was £8.3m, it is deemed that £4.0m is a reasonable level to hold at this stage. This will continue to be held ahead of Local Government Reorganisation pending future decisions about pooled funds.

Commercial Reserve

39. This reserve was created during 2024/25 to support the council's Commercial Strategy with a contribution of £2.0m agreed as part of the Outturn Report for 2023/24 approved by Cabinet in June 2024. No further contributions are proposed at this stage, and the use is being managed by the Director of Financial and Commercial Services through the Strategic Capital and Commercial Board and reported to Cabinet as part of the Business Management and Monitoring reports.

Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) & Devolution Reserve

40. In December 2024, the government published its English Devolution White Paper and the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution set out a summary of plans in a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament.
41. In January 2025 Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold one-off funding to support the development of reorganisation and devolution proposals for Oxfordshire and a contribution of £5.0m. A further contribution of £5.0m in March 2025 increased the total to £10.0m.
42. Based on the submission for the One – Oxfordshire £8.8m of this funding is expected to be used to meet the transition costs to a new authority or authorities and the associated change related activities leading up to vesting day on 1 April 2028. The remaining £1.2m would be used to support costs associated with devolution.
43. Costs that will be funded from the reserve in 2025/26 include business case development and activities related to the pre-transition stage. Current costs for 2025/26 for both Devolution and LGR are forecast to be £1.3m. After taking into account a grant from MHCLG for LGR business case development of £0.1m, the forecast drawdown on the reserve in 2025/26 is £1.2m.
44. A further £3.6m is currently forecast to be used in 2026/27. This comprises £1.2m for devolution including £0.850m to support costs associated with a new

Section 4.6

spatial development strategy for Oxfordshire and/or the Thames Valley, and £2.4m for re-organisation.

Extended Producer Responsibility Reserve

45. The council will receive £5.2m funding from the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme in 2025/26. This is being used to meet additional costs and projects needed to drive up reuse and recycling of packaging waste. This will result in less residual waste and a reduction in the impact of rising costs in future years including the implementation of the Carbon Emission Trading Scheme in April 2028.
46. A new reserve was created as part of the 2025/26 budget to hold this funding to meet associated costs and projects from 1 April 2025. There is planned use of £5.1m including a £1.8m contribution towards a new site replacing the Ardley Household Waste Recycling Centre. £0.2m currently remains unallocated and is available to meet costs associated with packaging disposal.
47. A further £5.4m pEPR funding will be received in 2026/27 and will be used to fund the revenue cost of disposing of packaging waste. No further contributions to the reserve are planned. It is anticipated that the funding will continue over the medium term but gradually reduce as producers change packaging.

Lane Rental Surplus Fund Reserve (New Reserve)

48. The Lane Rental Scheme is designed to reduce congestion and improve network efficiency by charging works promoters for occupying the busiest roads at peak times. The income must be reinvested in initiatives that reduce disruption and improve network performance.
49. A new reserve is proposed to be created to hold the Lane Rental Surplus Fund ahead of the use agreed by the Lane Rental Board, an independent governance body that reviews and approves bids for surplus lane rental income.
50. 50% of the funding will be used to support Highways Maintenance in line with budget assumptions.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve

51. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020 stipulate that a deficit on the DSG must be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general resources.
52. The accounting treatment for deficit DSG balances was provided by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These stipulated that where a local authority has a deficit in respect of its school budget for a financial year beginning on 1st April 2020, 2021 or 2022, the authority—

Section 4.6

- (a) must not charge to a revenue account an amount in respect of that deficit; and
- (b) must charge the amount of the deficit to an account established, charged and used solely for the purpose of recognising deficits in respect of its school budget.

53. As a result of this, an unusable reserve was created on the balance sheet to hold the negative balance. Unusable reserves are usually created to hold accounting adjustments that cannot be charged to the general fund and have no cash value. The DSG unusable reserve is unique in that it the deficit balance has a real impact on the council's cash balances.

54. As at 31 March 2026, the DSG Unusable Reserve is expected to have an overall negative balance of around £150m of which a negative balance of £163.2m will relate to High Needs DSG.

55. The accumulated and on-going deficit not only has an impact on the level of risk over the medium term (as referred to in the Financial Strategy at Section 4.5), but also has an immediate impact on reducing the cash balances and interested earned (as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy at Section 5.2).

Summary of proposed movement in General Balances and Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27

56. The table below sets out the proposed movement in General Balances and Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27 as detailed in this policy statement.

Section 4.6

Area of risk	2026/27 £m	Explanation of risk/justification of balances	2025/26 £m
Emergencies	7.5	An allowance of 1.0% of annual net operating budget for the cost of responding to emergencies that falls outside of eligibility for the Bellwin Scheme	6.4
Service overspends	8.9	Risk that services will overspend due to unforeseen pressures, demography or demand and no mitigations are available - assumes 1.25% overspend in 2026/27.	8.2
Contingent liabilities & insurance risk	3.8	Possible liabilities for which no provision has been made or funding set aside in an earmarked reserve (0.5% of net expenditure or minimum to meet quantified contingent liabilities)	3.2
Major contracts & 3rd party spend	7.5	Risk of contractors failing, mis-specification, or non-delivery plus contract costs increase by more than allowed for in the budget - calculated as 1.0% of estimated spend with suppliers.	7.4
Capital Programme risk	5.0	Risk related to capital grant funding ceasing before schemes are completed or increases in costs compared to the level of grant funding.	5.0
Total (one - off funding)	32.7		30.2
Contingency (on-going funding)	6.3		7.3
Total Balances and Contingency	39.0		37.5
Risk assessed level of balances as % of net operating budget of £753.0m	4.3%		
Risk assessed level of balances and contingency as % of net operating budget of £753.0m	5.2%		
Net operating budget - spend per week	14.5		
Weeks of spend	2.3		

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Reserves	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance	Balance
	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31	at 31
	March	March	March	March	March	March	March	March	March	March	March	March
Revenue Grants Unapplied												
Grants and Contributions reserve	£30.3m	-£9.3m	£21.0m	£0.0m	£21.0m	£0.0m	£21.0m	£0.0m	£21.0m	£0.0m	£21.0m	£0.0m
COVID-19 reserve	£3.8m	-£3.8m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Government Initiatives reserve	£6.6m	-£2.4m	£4.1m	£0.0m	£4.1m	£0.0m	£4.1m	£0.0m	£4.1m	£0.0m	£4.1m	£0.0m
Subtotal	£40.7m	-£15.5m	£25.1m	£0.0m	£25.1m	£0.0m	£25.1m	£0.0m	£25.1m	£0.0m	£25.1m	£0.0m
Corporate Priorities												
Budget Priorities reserve	£12.5m	-£6.3m	£6.2m	£1.0m	£7.1m	£0.0m	£7.1m	£0.0m	£7.1m	£0.0m	£7.1m	£0.0m
Local Government Reorganisation reserve	£10.0m	-£1.2m	£8.8m	-£3.6m	£5.2m	£0.0m	£5.2m	£0.0m	£5.2m	£0.0m	£5.2m	£0.0m
Transformation reserve	£7.5m	£1.9m	£9.4m	-£3.5m	£5.8m	-£0.9m	£4.9m	£0.0m	£4.9m	£0.0m	£4.9m	£0.0m
Commercial Pump Priming reserve	£2.0m	-£0.2m	£1.8m	£0.0m	£1.8m	£0.0m	£1.8m	£0.0m	£1.8m	£0.0m	£1.8m	£0.0m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.4m	£0.1m	£1.5m	-£1.6m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
Extended Producer Responsibility reserve	£0.0m	£3.4m	£3.4m	£5.4m	£8.8m	£0.0m	£8.8m	£0.0m	£8.8m	£0.0m	£8.8m	£0.0m
Budget Reserve		£5.5m	£5.5m	£0.0m	£5.5m	£0.0m	£5.5m	£0.0m	£5.5m	£0.0m	£5.5m	£0.0m
Green Financing reserve	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m
Subtotal	£34.2m	£3.3m	£37.5m	-£2.4m	£35.1m	-£0.9m	£34.2m	£0.0m	£34.2m	£0.0m	£34.2m	£0.0m
Funding for Risk												
Demographic Risk reserve	£21.0m	£4.0m	£25.0m	£8.0m	£33.0m	£8.0m	£41.0m	£8.0m	£49.0m	£8.0m	£57.0m	£8.0m
Insurance reserve	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m	£0.0m
Collection Fund Risk reserve	£8.1m	-£1.4m	£6.7m	-£2.1m	£4.6m	£0.0m	£4.6m	£0.0m	£4.6m	£0.0m	£4.6m	£0.0m
IFRS 9 (Changes in the Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m	£0.0m
Redundancy reserve	£4.1m	£1.2m	£5.3m	-£2.0m	£3.3m	£0.0m	£3.3m	£0.0m	£3.3m	£0.0m	£3.3m	£0.0m
Council Elections	£0.7m	-£0.7m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Trading Accounts	£0.2m	-£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m
Subtotal	£48.6m	£3.0m	£51.6m	£3.9m	£55.5m	£8.0m	£63.5m	£8.0m	£71.5m	£8.0m	£79.5m	£8.0m

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2027	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2028	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2029	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2030	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2031
Capital & Equipment													
Capital & Prudential Borrowing reserves	£109.6m	-£0.3m	£109.3m	£8.3m	£117.6m	£8.3m	£125.9m	£8.3m	£134.1m	£8.3m	£142.4m	£8.3m	£150.7m
Vehicle and Equipment reserve	£3.2m	-£0.3m	£2.9m	£0.0m	£2.9m								
Investment Pump Priming reserve	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Subtotal	£113.0m	-£0.6m	£112.3m	£8.3m	£120.6m	£8.3m	£128.9m	£8.3m	£137.2m	£8.3m	£145.5m	£8.3m	£153.8m
Other reserves													
Partnership reserves	£1.7m	-£0.6m	£1.2m	£0.0m	£1.2m								
Lane Rental Surplus fund reserve			£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m								
On Street Car Parking reserve	£5.3m	-£2.0m	£3.4m	-£0.6m	£2.8m	£0.0m	£2.8m	£0.0m	£2.8m	£0.0m	£2.8m	£0.0m	£2.8m
Subtotal	£7.1m	-£2.5m	£4.5m	-£0.6m	£3.9m	£0.0m	£3.9m	£0.0m	£3.9m	£0.0m	£3.9m	£0.0m	£3.9m
Unusable													
Schools' reserves	£10.7m	-£0.9m	£9.8m	£0.0m	£9.8m								
Total Earmarked reserves	£254.3m	-£14.1m	£240.2m	£9.2m	£250.1m	£15.4m	£265.5m	£16.3m	£281.8m	£16.3m	£298.1m	£16.3m	£314.4m

172

Section 4.7

Overarching Equalities Impact Assessment

1: Summary and Context

What is Being Assessed:

Oxfordshire County Council's Budget and Business Plan proposals for 2026/27, covering both capital and revenue, are being assessed for their overall impact on various community groups, particularly those protected by the Equality Act 2010, as well as on broader community and societal outcomes. This Equalities Impact Assessment provides a public summary of how the proposed budget may influence equality in Oxfordshire and outlines steps to address any concerns. The assessment systematically reviews how budget decisions could affect people with protected characteristics or other vulnerable groups, ensuring the Council fulfills its legal duty to prevent discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and encourage positive community relations when setting the budget.

Current Budget Setting Context:

Like many councils, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) faces a challenging financial landscape. Demand for key services (especially in adult and children's social care) is rising while resources are constrained. The Council must find substantial savings and efficiencies to deliver a balanced budget. At the same time, central government is undertaking a 'Fair Funding Review' of local government finance from 2026/27 which creates uncertainty about future funding levels. In essence, the Council must plan prudently amid budget pressures and an evolving funding formula, ensuring vital services continue for those who need them most. This tight fiscal context makes it even more critical to assess equality impacts: we need to save money in ways that do not unfairly burden any community or protected group. The Council's financial strategy is to protect frontline services and vulnerable people as far as possible despite the constraints on reserves and spending.

Summary of Assessment: Neutral/ Positive

After reviewing all 2026/27 proposals, no changes are intended to negatively or disproportionately affect any protected group. Most adjustments are internal or technical with neutral equality impacts, while some investments – such as in community services and infrastructure – will benefit protected groups. Many proposals are still in early stages; proposal-specific Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be updated as plans develop and further information is gathered, with public consultation ensuring any unforeseen impacts are addressed. At this strategic level, the 2026/27 budget is assessed as having a neutral or positive effect on equalities, with no evidence of intentional disadvantage. Some proposals, like

improvements to rural transport and maintaining community hubs, may improve opportunities for those in remote or less-mobile populations. The EIA is an ongoing process; each proposal will receive further analysis as it progresses. The Council will engage with communities, monitor impacts, and adjust plans as needed to avoid unintended harm. In conclusion, the 2026/27 budget proposals are not expected to Negatively impact any protected group and will be continually reviewed to ensure fairness and inclusion throughout Oxfordshire.

Completed by: Jamie Kavanagh (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead)

Date: 08/12/2025

Authorised by: Lorna Baxter (Deputy Chief Executive Officer & S151 Officer, Executive Director – Resources), Susannah Wintersgill (Director Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships)

2: Detailed Context and Background

Financial Challenges and Fair Funding Reform:

Oxfordshire County Council enters 2026/27 facing significant financial challenges. There are severe budget pressures driven by rising demand in services like Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs (SEN), inflation in contract costs, and legacy budget shortfalls. Compounding this is the Fair Funding Review 2.0 by central government, which will overhaul how councils are funded from 2026/27. This reform aims to redistribute council funding based on updated needs formulas; together with a business rates reset, it will deliver the most significant change in the distribution of funding to local government in over a decade. The Council is therefore being cautious in its 2026/27 budget and avoiding new long-term commitments. It also underscores the need to build resilience and fairness into our budget; we must ensure vital services (especially vulnerable groups) are sustainable even if resources shift.

Oxfordshire's Community Profile:

Understanding Oxfordshire's population helps in assessing potential equality impacts. Key points:

- Our county has an ageing population (the proportion of residents over 65 is growing, especially in rural districts where around 20% are 65+ vs roughly 12% in Oxford City). There is also a significant youth population in urban areas (Oxford's median age is just 31, partly due to our high student population).
- Census 2021 indicates 14.5% of residents are disabled under the Equality Act; a further 7.9% have a long-term condition not limiting daily activities; combined, 22–23% report a condition or disability.
- We have an increasingly diverse ethnic makeup: overall about 23% of residents are from non White-British backgrounds, with Oxford City having an almost 50% non-White British population.
- Smaller but important communities include a growing number of LGBTQ+ residents, a thriving network of faith communities, and a notable population of Armed Forces personnel and veterans linked to local bases and reserve units.
- There are also significant rural communities (about one-third of our population lives in smaller towns/villages and rural areas) and pockets of deprivation – for example, parts of Oxford (Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill), Banbury (Ruscote) and Didcot have higher unemployment and poverty rates despite the county's overall affluence. According to the Indices of Deprivation 2025, 2 small areas in Oxfordshire fall in the most deprived 10% nationally, and 9 in the most deprived 20%.

This varied profile means the impacts of budget changes can differ across Oxfordshire: e.g. a proposal affecting public transport could particularly matter for rural elderly residents, while changes in library or youth services might impact

families in poorer urban areas. Ensuring an intersectional balance of equalities implications is paramount to the council's ambitions for a fair and equitable county.

Our Equality Objectives and Approach:

The Council's Strategic Plan emphasises making Oxfordshire "*a fairer, greener, and healthier*" county. Internally, the Council has a four-year inclusion strategy, the "*Including Everyone*" framework (2024), which commits to tackling discrimination and advancing equality in all we do. The 2026/27 budget has been developed in line with these values. Throughout the budgeting process, officers were instructed to consider how to minimise negative impacts on vulnerable groups. For example, in identifying savings, priority has been given to back-office efficiencies and income generation over frontline service reductions wherever possible. Some proposals explicitly aim to improve equity – for instance, investing in community transport to serve isolated rural communities, or funding digital tools that improve access to services for people with disabilities.

(Note: This EIA recognises that many proposals are still at an early design phase as of budget-setting in late 2025. This is common – ideas are put forward to meet financial targets, but detailed designs will follow. The purpose of this overarching EIA is to ensure there are no major unforeseen equalities implications at the point of budget decisions. Detailed, proposal-specific EIAs will be developed as plans progress.)

In the detailed impact assessment below, we group findings by:

- **Protected Characteristics,**
- **Additional Community Impacts,**
- **Wider Impacts.**

Each section outlines current context for the group in question, the overall impact rating we assign (Positive, Neutral, Negative, or Mixed) and why, the specific budget proposals that contribute to those impacts, and any mitigation actions identified (with who will lead on those actions and relevant timelines for review).

3: Impact Assessment by Protected Characteristic

Protected Characteristic: Age

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Context: Oxfordshire has a total population of around 725,300, with about 18% aged 0–15, 64% aged 16–64 (working age), and 18% aged 65+. The county's older population (65+) has grown in recent years – now, numbering about 129,800 people – and is projected to increase further as life expectancy is high. Many rural areas have an even higher proportion of elderly residents, leading to concerns about isolation and access to services. Meanwhile, the presence of two universities means Oxford City has a younger skew (median age 31), and countywide there are about 132,500 children under 16. Key age-related issues include providing for the rising care needs of the elderly, ensuring services for children and youth are maintained (education, youth clubs, etc.), and enabling working-age adults to access employment and transport.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Age:

- **Emergency Oxfordshire Telecare Provision (Adult Social Care):**

Description: Funding an urgent new telecare service after the previous provider failed, to ensure lifeline alarm support continues for elderly and disabled residents living at home.

Impact: **Positive** for older people. Telecare allows older, vulnerable residents to live independently at home with 24/7 emergency support (e.g. fall detectors, personal alarms). The new contract prevents a gap in service that would have disproportionately affected older individuals.

Mitigations: This is an enhancement, not a cut. The Council's commissioning team is closely monitoring the new provider to ensure stable staffing and a smooth transition. No negative impacts identified.

- **Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Traffic Restrictions Pilot (Highways – Capital Project):**

Description: A pilot scheme to impose weight restrictions and re-route HGVs away from certain towns/villages (e.g. Henley, Windrush Valley) to reduce heavy traffic in rural communities.

Impact: **Positive** for older people and children. Reducing HGV volume will make village streets safer and quieter, which especially benefits older pedestrians (who may feel intimidated by large lorries) and young families walking or cycling. It should also improve air quality – beneficial to older residents with respiratory conditions and to young children. No direct negative impact on youth beyond general safety improvements (e.g. children walking to school will have safer roads).

Mitigations: This scheme is being monitored during the pilot. If new issues arise, the traffic plan will be adjusted. Community feedback (across all ages) is part of the pilot evaluation.

- **School Expansions (Children's Services – Capital, via CIL funding):**

Description: Using developer contributions (Community Infrastructure Levy) to expand Tetsworth Primary School and to fund the relocation and expansion of St Nicholas' CE Infant School into a full primary school, to meet growing demand from new housing developments.

Impact: **Positive** for young people (children) and their families, particularly in rural or growing communities. Providing additional school capacity in the right areas ensures that children can get a school place locally, avoiding overcrowding and long travel distances. Improved access and modern facilities facilitate better learning outcomes and educational experience.

Mitigations: As with any change in education provision, families will be kept informed about changes to school capacity or catchment areas. Engagement and consultation with parents and the local community are integral in the school expansion planning process. By involving stakeholders early, the expansion can proceed smoothly without disadvantaging any pupils during transitions.

- **Adult Social Care Funding Pressures (Adult Social Care):**

Description: The budget includes additional funding to meet growing needs in adult social care (e.g. more home care hours, residential placements) and covers a shortfall that arose after an external care provider's sudden liquidation.

Impact: **Positive/Neutral** for older adults. By allocating extra funds, the Council ensures no older person loses care support due to budget cuts. For instance, more older people needing help with daily living will receive services, preventing unmet need or waiting lists. This avoids a potential negative scenario of rationing care due to lack of funds. This proposal itself is a mitigation against what would have been a negative impact on the elderly if funding were insufficient.

Mitigations: This is a proactive measure. The Council will continually monitor demand. In summary, this funding top-up is designed to maintain service levels for older people, ensuring they are not adversely affected by rising demand.

- **Children & Youth Services – Maintained Provision:**

Description: Notably, **no cuts** were proposed to children's services, youth clubs, or early help programmes in 2026/27. In fact, one budget line adds funding for children's social care placements to cover cost increases.

Impact: **Neutral/Positive** for children and young people. Maintaining current service levels means there is no loss of support for families or youth. Key services like children's centres and family support, continue unchanged, preserving vital developmental and social opportunities. The additional funding for care placements ensures that vulnerable children (e.g. looked-after children) continue to be placed appropriately even as costs rise, thereby safeguarding their welfare.

Mitigations: Since there are no reductions, specific mitigation is not required. The Council will continue to engage with young people to identify any emerging needs and ensure services remain responsive.

- **Library and Education Infrastructure (Resources/Cultural Services – Capital):**

Description: Capital plans include projects like a new **Banbury Library** (planned for 2027 in partnership with the district council) and improvements to other libraries. While these facilities will not be delivered in 2026/27, the budget confirms ongoing commitment to these community assets. For instance, the capital programme includes refurbishments at Wantage Library (£360k) and Goring Library (£750k over two years), which will create more flexible, accessible spaces for community use. There is also funding to expand Didcot Library (£550k) to serve a growing young family population there. These library investments benefit children (providing better study spaces, literacy activities) and older residents (offering social, educational opportunities and internet access)

Impact: **Positive** in the medium term for both young people and older residents. Libraries provide study space and educational resources for children, and social hubs or lifelong learning opportunities for older adults. An improved library in Banbury (which serves areas with higher deprivation and many young families) will particularly benefit children's literacy and after-school activities and also offers older adults a welcoming place and social connection. Many of these libraries will also include spaces for confidential conversations, opening the possibility for confidential service provision on site also. In the short term, the 2026/27 budget keeps funding on track for these projects, so there is no negative effect on current users. *Mitigations:* Ensure new facilities are age-friendly in design – e.g. children's sections and activities for various age groups, quiet areas and accessible features for seniors, and dementia-friendly layouts for those with cognitive impairments. Although the major benefits of the capital investments will be realised in coming years, preserving the funding now mitigates any risk of delay. Meanwhile, existing libraries will remain free to use and accessible; if any refurbishment causes temporary disruption, alternative provisions (such as mobile libraries or outreach services) will be arranged to avoid leaving any age group without access.

Overall Mitigation Measures for Age: Across proposals, the overarching approach is to safeguard and enhance services that support both ends of the age spectrum. For older people, additional measures include integrating services like health and social care (so an elderly person can have a "one-stop" experience), providing information in accessible formats (large-print, telephone support for those who are not online). In summary, the budget is designed to protect both older and younger residents, and where new initiatives are introduced (transport, safety, education infrastructure), to specifically improve their quality of life.

Protected Characteristic: Disability

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Context (Disability in Oxfordshire): According to the 2021 Census, around 165,500 Oxfordshire residents (23% of the population) have a disability or long-term health condition that limits their daily activities to some degree. This includes people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, and mental health conditions. National surveys estimate about 20–21% of people in South East England have a disability (broadly defined), so Oxfordshire is in line with national prevalence. Within this group, a subset has significant needs: for example, roughly 11,960 older residents receive Attendance Allowance for severe disabilities in old age, and about 1,430 adults with learning disabilities are supported by the Council's Adult Social Care services. Ensuring accessibility of services, adequate social care, and equal opportunities (employment, education) for disabled people is a key equality objective. There are also around 2,600 children with autism in local schools and thousands with special educational needs (SEN), highlighting the importance of inclusive education and smooth transitions to adulthood. The Council has committed to being a "Disability Confident" employer and to making Oxfordshire inclusive – for instance, through the "Including Everyone" strategy which emphasises accessible infrastructure and information, and by providing reasonable adjustments across our services.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Disability:

- **Emergency Telecare Service (Adult Social Care):** *[This is the same proposal noted under Age.]*
Impact: Positive for people with disabilities as well. The new telecare contract supports not only the elderly but also younger disabled adults who rely on pendant alarms or sensors (for example, individuals with epilepsy, mobility impairments, or learning disabilities living independently). Continuity of this critical assistive technology service is ensured. Telecare can be lifesaving – providing confidence that help is one button-press away for someone with a disability living alone. As noted above, the new service consolidates previous contracts and improves resilience (preventing a sudden loss of service).
Mitigations: Same as for Age – close contract management to guarantee service quality.
- **Supported Living Contracts – New Framework Rates (Adult Social Care):**
Description: A proposal to save money (approx. £750k) by moving some Learning Disability supported living services onto a new framework contract with standardised rates, including modest annual reductions in paid support hours (around 2% per year over five years through service efficiency measures). This affects supported living homes for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism across the county (in areas referred to by the

acronym “HOWDAB” – encompassing Henley, Oxford, Witney, Didcot, Abingdon, Banbury). The intent is to provide the same support outcomes more efficiently.

Impact: **Mixed** for adults with disabilities (specifically learning disabilities or mental health needs in supported living). The intended outcome is neutral or even slightly positive if reinvested – the service will continue, potentially with more consistency under one framework, and a focus on outcomes. However, there is a risk of negative impact if the reduction in support hours results in individuals not getting all the help they require for independent living. Any diminution of support must be carefully managed to avoid reducing disabled tenants’ community participation or personal care. Recognising this risk, this proposal is flagged for further detailed assessment.

Mitigations: The saving profile allows flexibility – it can be realised through back-office efficiencies or different commissioning methods rather than front-line cuts if needed. Close monitoring is planned: responsible officers will review outcomes regularly (monthly) through the rollout, to ensure residents’ wellbeing is not compromised. **This proposal remains under review** – any sign of detrimental impact on this disabled group will trigger corrective action or a pause. In short, the change will be implemented gradually and consultatively, with the paramount principle that all tenants continue to have their assessed needs fully met.

- **“Connect to Work” – Employment Support Reconfiguration (Adult Social Care):**

Description: A budget saving of £100k by integrating the Oxfordshire Employment Service (which helps adults with learning disabilities, autism, or mental health conditions to find and sustain work) into a new fully-funded “Connect to Work” programme run in partnership with Department for Work & Pensions. A new central government-funded scheme is replacing parts of the Council-run service, enabling the Council to reduce its own expenditure without withdrawing support. The new programme is intended to have wider eligibility and reach more people, funded externally.

Impact: Intended **Neutral** (no reduction in service to disabled people seeking jobs, and potentially a broader service). The proposal explicitly states that the new Connect to Work offers “far wider eligibility” and covers functions that were previously council-funded. If executed properly, people with disabilities should continue receiving employment support uninterrupted – and possibly more individuals will qualify under the new scheme than they did under the previous model. This could even be a Positive if the external funding increases capacity or introduces new support offers (like more job coaching or employer engagement).

However, there is a potential negative risk if the transition is not smooth – for example, if some current service users experience a gap during handover to the new programme, or if the new criteria exclude someone who was

previously supported. Recognising this, the change is carefully planned.

Mitigations: The Council is working closely with the DWP and other partners to ensure no current service user “falls through the cracks.” All individuals who were receiving Oxfordshire Employment Service support will be seamlessly transferred to Connect to Work or an equivalent provision. The Council’s disability employment advisers will remain involved to advocate for those with the highest needs. As with the supported living contracts, this change will be accompanied by a detailed EIA and stakeholder engagement (including users of the current service and advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities or mental health needs). This will help identify any early issues (e.g. if the new programme leaves out a certain group, the Council can plan a local solution). We will keep this under close review during 2026 – any sign of detriment (like a person losing access to help finding work) will be addressed by bridging support. The aim is that this budget saving is achieved entirely through use of external funding, with no drop in support – and that will be treated as a condition of its success, monitored by Adult Social Care commissioners.

- **Accessibility in Infrastructure Projects (Highways, ICT, Property):**

Description: Various capital and operational projects (e.g. roads and pavement improvements, new digital systems) are included in the budget. Though these are not framed as “disability” projects, they incorporate aspects that affect people with disabilities. For example, the Highways capital programme includes footpath and cycle path improvements which will incorporate accessibility features like tactile paving for visually impaired pedestrians and step-free crossings for wheelchair users and prams. Similarly, new IT investments (such as improved public-facing online systems or AI assistants for customer service) will be designed to meet modern accessibility standards (WCAG for web content), so that residents with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments can use Council services online without barriers. These considerations are embedded in project planning as standard practice.

Impact: **Positive** for disability inclusion. By proactively embedding accessibility into these projects, the Council continues its commitment to removing barriers and promoting independent living. For instance, upgrades in town centres or along rights of way typically include features like disabled parking bays and hearing loop systems in public facilities. While these may seem like small design details, cumulatively they make Oxfordshire’s infrastructure more navigable for people with disabilities. These are incremental improvements rather than standalone budget lines, but they are important to note as part of the wider equalities impact – the Council is not deferring or cutting any planned accessibility measures due to budget, and in fact continues to invest in them.

Mitigations: The Council’s corporate accessibility policy ensures that all new

builds and digital platforms meet or exceed statutory requirements. In short, inclusion is built into project delivery. Any capital proposal that might temporarily affect disabled people (say, roadworks affecting disabled access) will have its own EIA and mitigation (like alternative routes or signage) as part of that project's management. This overarching budget does not curtail any disability accommodations; on the contrary, it preserves funding to continue such efforts.

- **Disability Related Expenditure (Adult Social Care):**

Description: The Council's Adult Social Care charging policy currently makes a standard allowance for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) of 35 per cent. Subject to a full consultation process the Council's proposal is to consider a reduction of the DRE to 25 per cent which would produce a potential in year saving of £500,000. Following consultation, the Council will consider next steps and in the event that the Council decides not to proceed with this proposal, alternative savings will need to be found.

Impact: **Negative** for disability inclusion. Reductions in Disability related expenditure would have a detrimental effect on those with disabilities, as they will experience a cut to their allocation, and so will be required to further fund their care. This proposal, however, would move DRE back to 25%, which is an approach taken by many local authorities, and in reality, is a fairer offering to residents than is provided by other local authorities.

Mitigations: The Council will undertake a full consultation and EIA process in line with our statutory obligations. This will give residents the opportunity to share their views with the council before proceeding with the changes. A full EIA will also be required to ensure that the Council is able to understand and mitigate negative impacts where possible to deliver the best possible standard of service to communities

Overall Mitigations for Disability: In summary, the budget largely protects and even enhances support for people with disabilities. Key mitigation measures:

- **Engagement and Co-production:** Disabled residents and advocacy groups (for example, the Oxfordshire Community Voluntary Action disability forum) will be engaged in any significant changes. Formal EIAs will highlight potential issues before decisions are finalised, and co-production will be used wherever possible to design solutions (as was done successfully in previous service redesigns).
- **Monitoring Outcomes:** The Council will enhance monitoring of outcomes for disabled service users during these changes. We will also keep an eye on indirect indicators; statutory support remains unchanged (all eligible disabled individuals will continue to receive social care based on assessed needs, as required by law), but we will watch for any early warning signs like increased carer stress or complaints.

- **Accessible Communications:** Information about service updates or changes will be made available in accessible formats – easy-read versions for those with learning disabilities, etc., as needed.

With these mitigations, the Council aims to avoid any disproportionate harm and continue advancing equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. While a few disability-related proposals carry some uncertainty and are flagged for careful oversight (as discussed), the overall thrust of the budget is to maintain or improve services that help disabled residents live independently and participate fully in community life.

Protected Characteristic: Gender Reassignment

Impact: Neutral

Context (Trans and Non-Binary Residents): The 2021 Census included, for the first time, a question on gender identity. In Oxfordshire, 3,477 residents (0.6% of people aged 16+) answered that their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth – slightly higher than the national average (0.5%). This count includes roughly 600 trans men (0.10%), 550 trans women (0.09%), and 600 non-binary or other gender-diverse people (0.10%), with the remainder of the 0.6% not specifying. Additionally, 7% of the population did not answer the gender identity question, so the true number might be a bit higher. Trans and non-binary individuals often face discrimination and higher rates of mental health challenges. The Council has policies to support trans staff and residents – for example, allowing use of preferred names/pronouns in all interactions, and supporting the LGBTQ+ community through events and youth groups. It is important to note that most council services are universal and not specifically gendered; the main aim is to ensure inclusive, respectful treatment and to remove any barriers for trans people in accessing services. (*Legal context update:* A recent UK Supreme Court judgment (*For Women Scotland Ltd v Scottish Ministers* (UKSC, 16 Apr 2025) clarified definitions related to sex and gender under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is updating its Code of Practice accordingly. The Council will follow any new guidance, but at present continues its established approach of inclusion for trans and non-binary people.)

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Gender Reassignment:

- **All Budget Proposals (General):** There are no budget proposals in 2026/27 that target or differentiate services by gender identity; no specific proposal has an identified impact (positive or negative) on trans or non-binary people as a group.
- **Impact:** Taken together, the impact is **Neutral** with ongoing best practice. No service is being reduced or changed in a way that would uniquely affect transgender or non-binary people. In some cases, as services are improved generally (e.g. more things done online), this can be beneficial to trans and

non-binary individuals who might otherwise face uncomfortable in-person interactions – but these are indirect, minor positives. Overall, we anticipate no negative or differential outcomes for this group from the budget.

In summary, the budget is not expected to have any disproportionate or unique impact on people due to gender reassignment. All changes are either neutral or broadly applied across the population. The key mitigation is simply maintaining our inclusive approach in implementing all proposals, ensuring that transgender and non-binary individuals continue to feel respected, welcome, and safe using Council services or working for the Council. We will remain vigilant, but at this stage no specific budget measure requires corrective action related to gender identity.

Protected Characteristic: Marriage & Civil Partnership

Impact: Neutral

Context (Marriage & Civil Partnership in Oxfordshire): This characteristic is distinct in the Equality Act – it mainly protects individuals from workplace discrimination based on marital status. In service provision, it is less frequently a factor, except in ensuring equal access for married vs. unmarried couples and recognition of civil partnerships. In Oxfordshire, the 2021 Census recorded 132,060 households of married couples and 983 households of same-sex civil partners. A significant portion of adults are married (around 47% of adults), while others cohabit or are single. The Council's Registration Service handles marriages and civil partnerships – officiating approximately 2,000 ceremonies per year (pre-COVID levels). There is no known inequality of service in that domain; same-sex couples have had access to marriage since 2014, and civil partnerships are now open to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. In employment, the Council applies policies equally regardless of marital or partnership status (e.g. pension and next-of-kin rights, leave entitlements).

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Marriage/Civil Partnership:

- **Registration Service and Ceremony Provision:** The 2026/27 budget does not cut or change the Registration Service. All statutory registration functions (weddings, civil partnerships, births, deaths) continue as before.

Impact: Neutral. Couples planning to marry or form a civil partnership will see no change in fees or availability as a result of the budget. Ceremony services and appointments remain fully provided.

- **Employee Benefits/Policies:** No budget proposals affect employee benefits related to marital status. The Council will continue to ensure that policies (like parental leave, pensions, etc.) apply equally to those who are married, in civil partnerships, or neither. If any internal restructures occur, selection criteria will not include marital status (as per law and our policies).

Impact: Neutral on staff. All genders and marital statuses are treated the same, and nothing in the budget alters that.

- **Service Access:** No Council proposals create different rules for married vs. unmarried people in accessing services.

Overall, being married or in a civil partnership does not change one's service experience with the Council, and nothing in the 2026/27 budget changes that. No specific project or saving has been identified that would affect people based on this characteristic.

Mitigations (Marriage & Civil Partnership): Since no negative impacts are identified, no targeted mitigation is required. The Council will maintain its standard practice of equal treatment:

- In conclusion, the budget has no direct impact – positive or negative – on equality in relation to marriage and civil partnership. The Council will continue to provide services (like wedding ceremonies and staff benefits) in a way that treats married, civil-partnered, and unmarried people equally. We will remain vigilant to avoid any form of discrimination or differential outcome in this area, but none is anticipated from these proposals.

Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy & Maternity

Impact: Neutral

Context (Pregnancy & New Parents in Oxfordshire): Oxfordshire sees about 7,300–7,400 live births annually. In 2021, there were 7,380 births, a slight uptick (6% increase from 2020). Pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic is about ensuring pregnant women and new mothers are not discriminated against, particularly in employment, and that they have equal access to services. Key relevant services for this group include maternity healthcare (largely NHS-run), health visiting and children's centres (joint NHS/council responsibilities), and childcare/early education (partly council-commissioned). The Council also has duties as an employer – offering maternity leave, flexible return-to-work arrangements, etc., which it does. One direct area of Council service touching on maternity is the network of Family Centres, which provide support groups for new parents (e.g. breastfeeding support, baby clinics, stay-and-play sessions). Oxfordshire generally has good outcomes in maternity care (low teenage pregnancy rates, strong uptake of antenatal services), but rural access and support for postnatal mental health remain areas of focus. The Council works with partners to ensure services like housing and social care consider the needs of expectant and new mothers (for example, priority housing status for pregnant women at risk).

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Pregnancy/Maternity:

- **Children's Services & Family Support Funding:** The 2026/27 budget does not cut funding to Children & Family Centres or related early years support services. All existing eight Family Centres remain open with their current services.

Impact: Neutral to Positive for those who are pregnant (and their partners). This means expectant and new parents can continue to access antenatal classes, baby groups, health visitor clinics, and peer support at these centres just as before. By avoiding reductions, the Council ensures that vital preventative and support services (which can help with maternal mental health, breastfeeding, parenting skills, etc.) are sustained.

Mitigations: Because there are no changes in this area, no new mitigation is needed.

- **Workplace Policies (Council as Employer):** None of the proposals reduce staff benefits or protections around pregnancy and maternity. The Council will continue its generous maternity leave policy and flexible working options for returning mothers.

Impact: Neutral for staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave. We will meet all our legal duties as an employer.

Overall, the budget is friendly to the needs of pregnant women and those on maternity – it does not introduce any new hardships or remove supports.

Mitigations (Pregnancy & Maternity): Given the neutral stance, the main actions are to continue current good practice:

- In summary, the 2026/27 budget is neutral regarding pregnancy and maternity. It preserves crucial community services and does not create any new barriers for this group.

Protected Characteristic: Race (including Ethnicity and National Origin)

Impact: Neutral to **Slight Positive**

Context (Ethnic Diversity in Oxfordshire): Oxfordshire's population is increasingly diverse. In 2021, about 168,000 residents (23% of the population) identified as being from a minority ethnic background (i.e., not White British), up from about 16% in 2011 – a significant rise. The largest minority groups are "White: Other" (including European nationals), Asian/Asian British (notably Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Chinese communities), and Black/African/Caribbean British. For example, the county's Muslim population is roughly 23,500 (3% of residents) and Hindu population around 6,300 (1%), reflecting the size of South Asian communities. Oxford City is a minority-majority city (approximately 47% of residents are from non-White British backgrounds) while rural districts have smaller proportions (often under 10%). Race intersects with other factors – some ethnic communities experience higher deprivation (e.g. parts of East Oxford and Banbury have concentrations of South Asian and Black African families in more deprived areas) and may have language barriers or different needs in service delivery. The Council has an objective to "tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire," which includes addressing racial inequalities. This involves ensuring equal access (e.g. offering translation of key information, culturally

appropriate services where needed) and fostering a diverse workforce trained to eliminate discrimination.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Race:

- **Libraries, Hubs, and Community Services:** The budget keeps all libraries and community hubs open; no closures or reductions are proposed. This is relevant because these facilities are often vital resources for ethnic minority communities.
Impact: Neutral/Positive. By not cutting these services, minority ethnic residents continue to benefit from them. For instance, in Banbury (which has a significant Pakistani and Bengali community), the plan for a new library in coming years is on track. In Oxford City, libraries serving diverse neighbourhoods (e.g. Cowley, Barton) remain operational; these libraries are frequented as study space for students from minority backgrounds. Maintaining these services contributes to equity by ensuring access to information and community life for all groups.
- **General Service Provision:** During the EIA process, each budget proposal was examined for disproportionate impact on any ethnic group. All proposals came out either neutral or positive in this regard. For example, savings were focused on back-office efficiencies, procurement, or countywide service areas rather than specific community grants or cultural services. This approach avoids unintentionally hitting disadvantaged or minority communities that often rely on public services. Additionally, many of the investments in this budget (transport, libraries, social care) benefit areas with diverse populations, thereby indirectly supporting racial equality by improving services in urban and deprived locales where more minority residents live.

Impact Summary: None of the budget changes are designed in a way that differentiates by race, and because we have largely protected frontline and community services, people of all ethnic backgrounds will continue to access services similarly to before. If anything, maintaining services in areas of need (which often have higher minority populations) is a slight positive for race equality outcomes.

Mitigations (Race/Ethnicity): Even with no direct harms identified, the Council will take steps to promote race equality through implementation:

- **Continued Support for Minority Community Groups:** The budget includes a £100k Discretionary Rent Concession fund to help voluntary/community groups with premises costs. Several of these groups in Council properties serve ethnic minority communities (e.g. community associations for particular national groups, advice centres in East Oxford). By funding this concession, the Council indirectly supports those groups' sustainability

- **Inclusive Consultation & Communication:** As we roll out changes or new initiatives, we will use culturally appropriate engagement.

In conclusion, none of the 2026/27 budget measures create an inherent disadvantage based on race or ethnicity. By maintaining key services and targeted support, the Council upholds its Public Sector Equality Duty to foster good relations and advance equality for Oxfordshire's diverse population. The above mitigation and engagement steps will help ensure that as changes are put into practice, racial and cultural differences are respected and catered for, keeping the impact neutral or better for all communities.

Protected Characteristic: Religion or Belief

Impact: Neutral

Context (Religion in Oxfordshire): Oxfordshire has a mix of religious affiliations. In the 2021 Census, about 47% of residents identified as Christian (down from 60% in 2011), 40% stated they have no religion (up from 28%), and the remainder belong to other faiths or did not answer. The largest minority faith communities are Muslims (3% of the population, as mentioned 23,500 people) and Hindus (1%, 6,300 people), followed by smaller numbers of Buddhists, Jews, Sikhs, and others. There is also a growing secular/non-religious population. The Council's services must accommodate religious needs where relevant (for example, providing halal or other special dietary options in social care meals, allowing prayer space or breaks for employees, scheduling around major religious holidays for important public events). The Council also has staff networks and community forums that include faith representatives to ensure inclusion.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Religion/Belief:

- **Operational Services:** None of the budget changes adversely affect how any religious group accesses Council services.
Impact: Neutral. People of all faiths (or none) will experience Council services much as before.
- **Employee Considerations:** The Council will continue to support employees' religious observance needs (e.g. flexible leave for Diwali, Eid, Yom Kippur, etc.) per HR policies.
Impact: Neutral for Council staff of various faiths.

In general, no religious or faith group should experience any change in how they access services or are treated due to this budget.

Mitigations (Religion or Belief):

- **Respectful Implementation:** As we implement any changes or new initiatives, we will remain mindful of religious calendars and needs. For example, if a public consultation meeting about a budget-related service change were needed, we would avoid scheduling it on major religious

holidays or at times of day that might exclude observant practitioners (e.g. avoiding dusk during Ramadan fast breaking time if consulting a Muslim-majority community).

- **Engagement with Faith Communities:** The Council will continue to use its Faith Forums and direct contacts with religious leaders to disseminate important information about services or changes.
- **Equal Treatment in Service Design:** We will maintain our approach that council services are provided in a secular, impartial way but are accommodating in practice.
- **Monitor Feedback:** We will monitor any complaints or feedback that might indicate a religion/belief issue emerging indirectly.

Overall, the budget is neutral regarding religion and belief. It continues the Council's approach of providing services in a way that people of all faiths (and none) can use them without barriers. The mitigations above are ongoing good practices to ensure that remains the case through any service adjustments.

Protected Characteristic: Sex

Impact: Neutral

Context: This section considers the impacts on people due to sex (being male or female). Oxfordshire's population is almost evenly split by sex – about 50.1% female and 49.9% male. Many Council services are used roughly equally by all genders (roads, waste disposal, libraries, etc.), but some services and outcomes have a gender dimension. For example, women make up the majority of older service users in adult social care (because women live longer on average) and also form the majority of carers both paid and unpaid. Certain Council initiatives specifically focus on one sex – for instance, domestic abuse services primarily support women (though male victims are also supported), and some public health programmes target men's health or women's health issues. In the Council's workforce, women are well-represented overall but concentrated in particular sectors (e.g. social care and customer services have predominantly female staff, whereas the fire service and some highways teams are predominantly male). Ensuring budget decisions do not inadvertently create or exacerbate gender inequalities – either among the public or our staff – is important. We also consider representation and voice: ensuring both men and women have their say in consultations and service design.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Sex:

- **Domestic Abuse Services (Community Safety):** The budget does not reduce support for domestic abuse victims or prevention services. The domestic abuse budget, which is largely funded via government grants and our Community Safety funds, is maintained.

Impact: Positive for women, who are the majority of domestic abuse

survivors. Services like refuges, helplines, and advocacy for victims (e.g. the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service) remain in place and are being expanded to meet legal duties. The Council's commitment to domestic abuse services means that women facing abuse will continue to have access to support and a route to safety. Male victims of domestic abuse (who form a smaller proportion) also continue to have access to support – this remains unchanged.

- **Services for Children and Families:** No cuts to childcare, early years, or parenting programmes are in the budget (as noted under Age). Consequently, support that often benefits women – who still frequently are primary caregivers – remains intact.
Impact: Neutral/Positive for women (and for fathers too, but mothers statistically use these services more). Keeping these services open ensures women are not further burdened at home due to service withdrawal.
- **Adult Social Care and Carers:** The budget invests in adult social care to meet demand (see Age and Disability sections). This benefits both men and women in need of care, but it is worth noting that a large proportion of carers (both paid care workers and informal family carers) are women. *Impact: Neutral* (with a preventative positive effect for many women carers).
- **No Disproportionate Reductions in Any Gender-Skewed Service:** We have not identified any service cut that would primarily hit one gender.

Mitigations (Sex): Since the impact is assessed as neutral, no major mitigation is required specifically on the basis of sex. In summary, we expect neither men nor women to be adversely impacted by these budget proposals. We have highlighted positive steps, such as continuing funding for domestic abuse support (benefiting women's safety) and ensuring social care is funded (indirectly relieving many women carers). Mitigations are largely about continuing these vigilant practices and making sure implementation of the budget is fair.

Protected Characteristic: Sexual Orientation

Impact: Neutral

Context: Oxfordshire has a sizeable LGBTQ+ population, though exact numbers are not precisely known. National estimates suggest around 2–3% of people identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), which in Oxfordshire's population would be on the order of 15,000–20,000 people, but this may be an underestimate as younger generations report higher percentages and not everyone declares it. The 2021 Census included a question on sexual orientation for the first time, and results for Oxfordshire show a few percent identifying as LGB+ (with a significant portion not answering). In recent years, public acceptance in Oxfordshire is generally high, and the Council has been supportive of LGBTQ+ visibility (e.g. flying the Pride flag during Pride month, supporting LGBT History Month events). The Council also has an internal LGBTQ+ staff network and supports youth groups like TOPAZ and

MyNormal (which are for LGBTQ+ young people, often funded via community grants or youth service support). Key considerations for this protected characteristic often involve ensuring that policies (from housing allocations to social care assessments) treat same-sex couples equally to different-sex couples and that any needs specific to LGB individuals (such as older LGBTQ+ people who may lack traditional family support networks) are not overlooked.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Sexual Orientation:

The budget has *no* proposals that explicitly or implicitly draw distinctions based on sexual orientation. All services remain available regardless of whom one loves, and none of the changes create barriers unique to LGB individuals. For instance:

- **Access to Services:** Library memberships, school admissions, social care eligibility, etc., remain based on need and circumstance, not orientation. Nothing in the budget or its implementation will alter these fundamental equalities.
- **Community Support and Events:** The Council provides some support to community initiatives, including those for LGBTQ+ people. Typically, these might be small grants for events (e.g. Oxford Pride celebrations, LGBTQ+ history exhibitions) or officer support for internal networks.

Given all the above, the effect of the 2026/27 budget on sexual orientation is **neutral**. There are no differential outcomes expected.

Mitigations (Sexual Orientation): The Council will continue its inclusive practices to ensure the impact stays neutral:

- **Inclusive Engagement:** For any public engagement related to budget changes, we will ensure outreach to LGBTQ+ communities where appropriate.
- In summary, we foresee a neutral impact on residents and staff regardless of sexual orientation. The Council's ongoing commitment to equality and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people will ensure support and visibility are maintained.

3 (continued): Additional Community Impacts

Beyond the nine protected characteristics, the Council also considers impacts on other groups that are important in our local context, such as rural communities, the armed forces community, carers, and those facing socio-economic disadvantage. While not mandated by the Equality Act, assessing these areas aligns with our commitment to fairness and the spirit of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance priorities. Below, we outline these additional impacts.

Additional Community Impact: Rural Communities

Impact: Positive

Context (Rural Oxfordshire): A significant portion of Oxfordshire's population lives in rural areas. Outside of Oxford and the larger towns, we have hundreds of villages and hamlets. Roughly one-third of residents live in settlements under 10,000 population. Rural communities face distinct challenges: limited public transport, greater reliance on cars and local roads, fewer local services (post offices, shops, schools may be farther away), and often a higher average age profile (many rural villages have older populations as younger people sometimes migrate to cities). On the other hand, rural areas generally have lower rates of deprivation than urban centres in Oxfordshire, but issues like isolation, access to healthcare, and digital connectivity remain concerns. The Council aims to 'rural proof' its policies, meaning we check that decisions do not inadvertently disadvantage those in the countryside.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Rural Communities:

- Highways Maintenance, infrastructure and HGV Traffic Pilot**

- (Environment & Highways/Economy & Place):**

Rural areas will benefit from the significant capital and maintenance funding allocated to highways. The budget ensures that routine road maintenance (pothole repairs, resurfacing) continues across the network, much of which is rural roads. Additionally, the Drainage interventions project (£4m over two years) will proactively fix drainage on roads to prevent flooding – many rural lanes flood in heavy rain, so this project will directly help rural communities by keeping roads passable and reducing property flood risk.

- The HGV traffic restriction pilot is targeted at rural towns/villages (like the Henley area and Windrush valley) to reduce lorry through-traffic on unsuitable roads. If effective, this will significantly improve quality of life in those rural areas (less noise, safer roads, less damage to roads/bridges). The budget provides £1.6m in 26/27 (and more in future years) to implement recommendations from the pilot studies – a clear plus for those rural communities affected by heavy traffic. Another funded project is the Wantage Market**

Place pedestrianisation scheme (£150k) – while Wantage is a market town (semi-rural), this will enhance its town centre for pedestrians, benefiting local

residents and businesses by creating a more pleasant, accessible environment.
(Impact of infrastructure projects

- *Impact: Positive* for rural communities. Well-maintained rural roads improve safety and connectivity for those living in smaller villages and farming areas – fewer potholes and better drainage mean less risk of accidents or isolation due to impassable roads. The HGV pilot should enhance quality of life in affected rural towns/villages by reducing heavy lorry traffic: villagers will experience less noise, vibration (which can damage old cottages and church buildings), and pollution on their narrow streets. It also can prolong the life of rural roads and bridges not designed for modern HGV weights. Better drainage and flooding measures improve both physical and psychological safety for residents in communities who have long suffered with the challenges posed by adverse seasonal weather resulting in flooding. There is a great amount of benefit in the pedestrianisation of Wantage Market Place. Improved accessibility, and a more pleasant environment benefits local residents and businesses, and offers further opportunities to meet in the local community in a safe and equitable way.
- *Mitigations:* The highways maintenance programme will be scheduled considerately to avoid cutting off villages for extended periods during works. Advanced notice and alternative route signage are standard practice and will continue. For the HGV pilot, mitigation focuses on monitoring unintended consequences – e.g., ensuring one village's restriction does not simply push trucks into another equally unsuitable route.

In summary, the budget explicitly considers rural needs and allocates resources to improve conditions in the countryside. There is no urban-centric reallocation that leaves villages worse off; indeed, rural communities see direct investment.

Mitigations (Rural Communities):

- **Communication Infrastructure:** Recognising that rural communities may have communication challenges (some areas still suffer from poor broadband or mobile connectivity, and not everyone reads social media), the Council will use appropriate channels to reach residents about new or changing services.

Given these proposals, rural communities stand to gain from the 2026/27 budget. The mitigations are mostly about ensuring these gains are fully realised across our villages and are sustained beyond the initial launch.

Additional Community Impact: Armed Forces Community (Serving personnel, veterans, and families)

Impact: Neutral

Context (Armed Forces in Oxfordshire): Oxfordshire is home to a notable Armed Forces presence, including the large RAF Brize Norton airbase, smaller Army reserve units, and many veterans who have settled in the area post-service. According to Ministry of Defence data, we have around 5,800 service personnel stationed here and 23,541 veterans in Oxfordshire. Under the Armed Forces Covenant, the Council and its partners commit to ensuring that those who serve or have served, and their families, are not disadvantaged in accessing public services, and that special consideration is given in certain circumstances (especially for bereaved families or those injured in service). The Council has a Civilian-Military Partnership that meets regularly to address issues like school admissions for service children (who often move frequently), healthcare for veterans, and advice services. OCC has achieved Gold status in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for our support to the Armed Forces community as an employer.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Armed Forces Community:

- **Armed Forces Covenant Work:** The Council's work to support Armed Forces Covenant activities (such as supporting the partnership board, s, or contributing to events like Armed Forces Day) will continue to ensure service families and veterans are integrated and supported.
Impact: Positive (sustained). The Armed Forces Community – including serving personnel, spouses, children, and veterans – will see no reduction in the Council's commitment.

No instances were identified where a budget cut would negatively impact Armed Forces communities.

Impact: Neutral (possibly slight positive in that continued focus means previously identified issues can be worked on).

Mitigations (Armed Forces Community):

- **Covenant Governance:** The Oxfordshire Civilian-Military Partnership Board (which includes Council, military, health, education and charity representatives) will continue to review any major service changes for Covenant compliance.

In summary, the duties and support for the Armed Forces community are upheld in this budget. There is no detriment to armed forces personnel or families, and the mitigations are continuations of how we honour the Covenant in practice.

Additional Community Impact: Carers (Unpaid family/friend carers for adults or children)

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Context (Unpaid Carers in Oxfordshire): Carers are people who provide informal, unpaid care to relatives or friends due to illness, disability, or age. According to the 2021 Census, Oxfordshire had 52,674 residents providing some level of unpaid care – about 10% of the population. Notably, 13,636 people provide over 50 hours of care a week (2.8% of residents); this group often experiences significant strain and a higher likelihood of health problems themselves. Carers are spread across all ages – including young carers (under 18s caring for a parent or sibling). Areas of Oxfordshire with higher deprivation (parts of Oxford city like Blackbird Leys, parts of Banbury) have slightly higher rates of intense caring (up to 4-5% of residents providing 50+ hours). The Council and NHS support carers through information/advice services (like **Carers Oxfordshire**, which we commission), carers' assessments (which can lead to respite services or direct payments), and various community grants (for carer support groups, breaks, etc.). A key equality concern is that carers, while not a protected group in law, are often impacted by changes to services for the cared-for person – if formal services are cut, the burden falls back on carers (often disproportionately on women as noted). Conversely, investments in services can ease carers' loads.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Carers:

- **Adult Social Care Funding Increases:** As detailed earlier, the budget puts extra resources into adult social care to meet the rising demand. This means eligible needs of people receiving care can continue to be met mostly through formal services (home care, day services, etc.), rather than expecting families to fill gaps.
Impact: **Positive** for carers. By bolstering formal care provision, the Council ensures that family carers are not asked to do even more than they already are.
- **Supported Living Contract Changes (Learning Disability services):** One flagged area that could affect carers is the proposal to achieve efficiency savings in supported living for adults with learning disabilities (the HOWDAB contracts). If not handled carefully, a slight reduction in paid support hours might mean families (ageing parents of learning-disabled adults, for instance) could be asked to provide additional help or supervision. This is recognised as a potential risk.
Impact on carers: **Potentially Negative** if mismanaged.
Mitigations for carers: The Council has committed that any changes in supported living will involve thorough consultation, including with families of those in supported living. We will conduct a full EIA specifically for this change, which will explicitly assess carer impact. If it appears that a particular planned reduction would shift care tasks to families, we will reconsider or put in mitigating actions.
- **Young Carers Support:** Under Children's Services, our support for young carers (those under 18 who have caring responsibilities) continues. The

Council funds a young carers' team (which works with schools to identify young carers and provides activities and support through a commissioned provider). There are around 800 known young carers in Oxfordshire receiving support. The budget does not cut this.

Impact: Neutral. Young carers will still receive help like homework clubs, or having a designated staff member to talk to. Not cutting this service means we avoid a negative impact on a group that often has poorer educational and social outcomes if left unsupported.

In summary, carers as a group benefit from the budget's protection of social care services and are not targeted by any cut. The only area of caution is the efficiency in adult disability services, which will be carefully handled to avoid shifting burden to families.

Mitigations (Carers):

- **Consult Carers in Service Changes:** For any changes to services used by cared-for persons, the Council will actively seek input from their family carers.
-

Overall, the budget largely supports carers by sustaining or improving services for those they care for and by not reducing direct support to carers themselves. The only caution is around the supported living efficiency – which, with the mitigations planned, aims to be achieved in a way that does not harm carers' wellbeing. We believe, with these measures, the net impact on carers will be neutral or slightly positive (owing to general service improvements and no new burdens placed on them).

Additional Community Impact: Areas of Deprivation / Socio-Economic Disadvantage

(Note: Socio-economic status is not a protected characteristic in law, but the Council chooses to consider it in our EIAs, in line with our commitment to tackling inequality.)

Impact: Neutral (some targeted positives)

Context (Deprivation in Oxfordshire): Oxfordshire is overall one of the least deprived counties in England, but it contains pockets of significant deprivation. According to the Indices of Deprivation 2025, there are 2 small areas (Lower Super Output Areas, each a few thousand people) in Oxford City that rank in the most deprived 10% nationally, and 9 areas in the most deprived 20%. These include parts of Oxford (Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill, Littlemore), parts of Banbury (Grimsbury and Ruscote wards), an area in Abingdon and one in Witney. These communities often face higher unemployment, lower incomes, poorer health outcomes, and lower educational attainment. Additionally, the high cost of living (especially housing) in Oxfordshire means that even some working families struggle financially – so socio-economic disadvantage can be widespread in certain respects (e.g. many families

qualify for some level of Council Tax Reduction or other support). The Council has adopted the principle of considering socio-economic "poverty" impacts to ensure our policies do not widen inequalities. Key issues include: ensuring charges for services remain fair, that we continue support for those on low incomes (like welfare assistance), and that we channel resources to where need is greatest.

Budget Proposals & Impacts on Socio-Economic Disadvantage:

- **Council Tax and Council Tax Reduction (CTR):** The budget for 2026/27 assumes a Council Tax increase (within referendum limits). Recognising that this can be regressive (a flat percentage tax affects lower incomes more), mitigation largely lies with the District Councils' CTR schemes (which the county does not set but works closely with districts on). All Oxfordshire district councils have chosen to maintain or slightly enhance their CTR schemes for 2026/27, meaning households on the lowest incomes continue to get a significant reduction or complete exemption from Council Tax.
Impact: Mitigated Neutral. A low-income household on benefits in Oxfordshire will still pay little or no council tax, so the budget's council tax rise does not directly hit them.
- **Household Support & Welfare Assistance:** The budget includes the continued use of national grants like the Household Support Fund (HSF) to help residents with essential costs (food, energy) during the ongoing cost-of-living pressures. While this is ring-fenced government money, the Council's role is to ensure it is distributed effectively to those in need in our communities. *Impact: Positive* for people on low incomes/in poverty. Struggling families will continue to access emergency support when needed. No reduction in that frontline assistance means we are still addressing socio-economic inequality.
- **Service Access Costs:** A principle in the budget has been to avoid introducing any new charges that would disproportionately affect those on low incomes. For example, there was no new charge introduced for formerly free services. Maintaining free library services (including free internet access in libraries) is very important for low-income residents who may not have broadband. *Impact: Neutral to Positive* – by preventing additional costs for individuals, the Council is not exacerbating financial hardship.
- **Services in Deprived Areas:** We paid special attention to not cutting services that are heavily used in our more deprived communities. The budget sets aside public health funding for targeted community initiatives to continue. Also, as part of budget negotiations, the Council decided to fund some specific initiatives that benefit deprived communities, such as discretionary rent relief for charitable groups (£100k) which helps, among others, some food banks and family centres in poorer areas by removing rental costs. *Impact: Positive* as far as targeted help continues for those communities.

- **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Support:** The budget includes an item of £100k to extend discretionary rent concessions for voluntary groups using Council-owned premises (as mentioned under Race, but it is a socio-economic measure too). Many of these groups directly support disadvantaged populations – e.g., food banks, advice centres, children’s charities. By waiving their rent, we enable them to focus resources on service delivery. This is a clear positive for those who rely on these charities (often low-income residents).

To summarise: the 2026/27 budget does not worsen socio-economic inequalities in Oxfordshire; it maintains support for low-income groups and even improves certain aspects (through things like targeted funds).

Mitigations (Socio-Economic):

- **Proactive Outreach:** We will ensure that people in the most deprived areas are aware of the services and support that the budget sustains or enhances.

Overall, the Council has taken a cautious approach to ensure this budget is as fair as possible socio-economically. Many proposals actively cushion or improve the situation for those with fewer resources. With mitigations focused on maintaining that fairness in implementation, we assess the impact as neutral (not aggravating inequality, possibly slightly improving it through targeted measures).

Health Impact Statement

Overall, the proposed Capital programme shows predominantly positive or “likely good” health impacts, especially where projects enhance access to nature, active travel, and community infrastructure. Examples include the Oxfordshire Tree Propagation Project, library refurbishments (e.g., Wantage, Goring, Didcot), Benson Mobility Hub, Controlled Parking Zones, and reuse initiatives linked to HWRCs—each of which can social connection physical activity, affordability, and air quality improvements. Several highway and safety schemes (e.g., Road Safety, A34 Lodge Hill, Didcot central corridor) also align with injury prevention and modal shift objectives. These strengths are consistent with core Health Impact Assessment principles that seek to maximise benefits across the wider determinants of health, particularly where green and blue infrastructure and walkability are designed in from the outset.

However, the review identifies material gaps that should be addressed to meet a Health in All Policies approach to tackle inequalities. Several schemes have insufficient detail or reference to health outcomes, where health could be negatively impacted (e.g., Improving Highway network, Bridges, or ARP Phase 3 – reduction of OCC estate, North Oxford Fire), with limited coverage of rural communities relative

to towns and insufficient plans to monitor and evaluate health outcomes (e.g., no clear research/evaluation proposals, nor metrics to track equity impacts over time). To mitigate these risks, schemes should explicitly reference Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Oxfordshire as a Marmot Place, commit to green infrastructure and access to nature actions and include longitudinal evaluation plans to capture benefits and unintended consequences, so that other priorities do not widen health inequalities.

Additional Community Impact: Other Considerations (Staff and Social Value)

Finally, a brief note on some other considerations not covered above:

- **Impact on Council Staff:** The budget includes some efficiency measures that affect staff, but these are handled via our organisational change processes with full staff consultation and support. No across-the-board job cuts or pay cuts are instituted; instead, any staffing impacts are limited to specific restructures. The Council has provided for the nationally negotiated pay award in the budget, so staff will get the expected pay rise – that is a positive for staff welfare and helps lower-paid staff cope with inflation. We anticipate the overall impact on the Council workforce to be largely neutral; we will monitor staff morale through our regular surveys to ensure the changes are not causing undue stress. Wellbeing resources remain available for any staff affected by changes.
- **Impact on Service Providers / Contractors:** Many Council services are delivered by external providers (care agencies, charities, etc.). The budget provides inflationary uplifts for key contracts (like adult social care providers, transport operators), which helps prevent provider failure that could disrupt services to residents. For voluntary sector partners, we maintained grant funding and even bolstered it in some cases. This strengthens the sector's capacity to support communities (especially protected groups and deprived communities).
- **Social Value:** The Council includes social value clauses in procurement. Nothing in the budget reduces our commitment to social value in contracts. Conversely, as we invest in capital projects and new contracts, we have opportunities to generate more social value. We will pursue those in each relevant procurement.
- **Fees and charges:** The council has not introduced any new fees or charges for services that were previously free for Oxfordshire residents. New charges have been introduced for non-Oxfordshire residents wishing to use our HWRCs, which means that those from neighboring areas will be contributing to the upkeep of our services in a more equitable way.

4: Future Monitoring

Although many proposals are still in design phase, it is our view that the budget does not unduly negatively impact communities in respect to our statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As we progress from design into implementation stages and beyond, we will regularly review our proposals, develop complete EIAs and ensure that we are working collaboratively with communities and partners to develop the best possible outcomes. We will keep a close eye on the actual impacts as the budget is put into action:

- We will check in with services to make sure that we are implementing inclusive services and programmes of work, and where we anticipate any negative impacts, we address those within dedicated EIAs.
- If any unintended problem comes up – for example, if a particular group of people feels a decision has caused them difficulty – we will investigate and try to fix it. The council will always take on board the views and challenges of residents.
- We will also continue to do what we can to improve equality in Oxfordshire, not just avoid harm. That means seeking opportunities, like making our services more accessible, encouraging diverse participation in consultations, and supporting community projects that promote fairness.

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Oxfordshire County Council

Budget and Business Planning 2026/27

Overarching climate impact review of 2026/27 budget proposals

Context & Background

1. This document provides an overview of the potential climate action impact of proposed changes to the budget.
2. As many schemes are in early development, further climate assessment will be undertaken as more detailed business cases are developed through the capital governance process.
3. On 4th November 2025, Council approved the [Strategic Plan 2025-2028 \(pdf format, 5.6 MB\)](#). This builds on the 2022-2025 plan and retains the overarching vision of a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire. This is centred around strong and connected communities, healthy places to live, and a thriving local economy that benefits everyone. This commitment is strengthened further by the Councils' priority to 'put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work'. The council's adopted climate action framework also commits the council to:
 - Being carbon neutral in its operations by 2030
 - Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire well ahead of 2050

In addition, aligned climate action targets and commitments have been included in Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan:

- Achieving a net zero transport network by 2040
- Take into account embodied, operational and user emissions when assessing a potential infrastructure project and its contribution to Oxfordshire's carbon budget and to a net-zero transport network by 2040
- Use PAS 2080 to assess, manage and minimise carbon emissions in transport infrastructure projects throughout the project lifecycle, including maintenance.

4. The council has a cross-organisational work programme to deliver on these commitments. The latest report on this programme can be found at [Decision - Climate Action Programme Six Month Update | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
5. In July 2024 a new government took power proposing new policies for the delivery of the national Net Zero target by 2050. This is outside the scope of this report, but central government funding will be a key factor in enabling the delivery of local climate objectives. Decisions made by central government in this context will also influence private sector investment in this area.

Revenue Proposals Climate Impact Review

6. A number of proposals are included in the budget that impact positively the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments **whilst promoting cost savings including:**

- **Utility cost savings.** Partially as of energy efficiency measures (item RES106) adopted in OCC properties, both cost and carbon reductions will continue to be delivered in 2026/27.
- **Investment in procurement for cost reduction which will also favour carbon reduction.** Procurement service is proposing to invest to enhance its department's capacity and capabilities to develop savings in 2026/27 (item RES102). This investment will allow the procurement service to deliver savings whilst implementing the recently approved Ethical Procurement Policy which includes climate requirements aligned the previous supply chain carbon emissions policy and the adoption of principles of carbon governance in procurement such as PAS2080. PAS2080 is a governance standard in infrastructure that has shown that both cost and carbon reduction can be achieved in infrastructure projects.
- **Children's Home to School Transport improvement programme.** the council has been working on optimising the children's home to school transport operation through the use of the council's own fleets, optimising school routes, promoting the use of bus and rail transport and promoting the use of shared taxis, among other measures. These measures will have a positive impact in reducing carbon emissions, reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality. An important part of this programme is to build capabilities and confidence in children (including those requiring assistance) so they become more independent in their journeys.

7. A number of proposals are included in the budget that impact positively the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments **whilst improving air quality across Oxfordshire including:**

- **Investment in improved bus services,** the Council has invested in real time passenger information assets across the bus network as part of Bus Service Improvement Plans. In 2026/27 the Council is further investing in properly maintaining such assets (2026E&H5) so they continue enhancing the bus service across Oxfordshire and therefore improve bus adoption an objective in OCC's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan which in turn will contribute to achieving the council's LTCP target for a Net Zero transport network by 2040.
- **Keeping as much as possible the subsidy for P&R ride joint ticket.** The council currently subsidises the park and ride joint ticket which has been very successful. Nevertheless, the level of success has been larger than anticipated and the council is proposing to allocate more funds for subsidizing this joint

ticket. If approved this additional funding will contribute to reducing car dependence, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions, all of these objectives included in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

- **Energy from waste to be included in UK's Emissions Trading Scheme.** Energy from waste incineration will be brought into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028 to incentivise decarbonisation of the sector. It is expected that the costs of carbon trading arising from the fossil carbon element of residual waste delivered to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility, such as plastic waste, will be passed to the council. The council is proposing provisions to prepare a strategy for this change in policy (item 2026 EH&9). There remain uncertainties about how the scheme will be implemented, although central government has recognised the need for supporting local government and may partially cover the costs. Ways of mitigating the additional cost by bringing down waste are being considered with the contractor, including working in partnership with the district councils to reduce residual waste through more recycling, the contribution that might be made by implementation of national waste policy changes.
- **Reducing air pollution from waste burning emissions:** the council is investing in reducing air quality emissions (NOx) resulting from burning the residual waste delivered to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility as a result of a new law requiring limiting air pollution (2026E&H3). This investment will improve local air quality in Oxfordshire improving health of its citizens and given that NOx emissions also contribute to global warming, this initiative will also have positive impacts in mitigating climate change.

8. A number of proposals are included in the budget that impact positively the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments **whilst promoting Oxfordshire's biodiversity:**

- **Dealing with tree ash dieback disease in Oxfordshire:** Ash species make up 12% of OCC's Highway tree stock (~400000 trees total) which aligns with data advising 13% of Oxfordshire's treescape is ash species. Ash Dieback (ADB) is a fungal disease that is airborne and once trees become infected, there is no known cure. As the disease progresses, action must be taken to prune or fell them. ADB has become more prevalent across Oxfordshire in the last 18-24 months with ash trees exhibiting signs of decline. Through initial assessment, we have seen an increasing presence of the disease across the county. The broader impact will provide a large landscape-scale loss which will change the amenity and visual landscape of Oxfordshire. This project aims to address the emerging issue as a proactive programme of assessment, inspection and intervention.

- **Increased funding for the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategy:** the council contributes to fund an external partner to manage 200+ Local Wildlife Sites. The existing funding is insufficient, and the nature sites manager have asked all partners for additional funding. This is part of delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and our Biodiversity Action Framework and the percentage of LWS in active management is a Corporate KPI.

9. One proposal entails further collaboration with contractors to understand the magnitude of the potential climate impact in **OCC 2030 carbon neutrality target and net zero target well ahead of 2050:**

- **Investment in Microsoft CoPilot licenses:** the council is investing in Microsoft CoPilot licenses in 2026/27 (RES101). The emergence of AI and the increasing energy demands, and further environmental pressures of data centres require a responsible approach to manage the potential climate and environmental impacts of this emerging technology. OCC has identified the need for a sustainability policy and/or framework based on the precautionary principle that can guide the responsible use of AI. For this purpose, in 2026/27 the council will build upon the UK's Royal College of Engineering "[Foundations for Environmentally Sustainable AI](#)" to develop a policy framework for the responsible use of AI and guide decision making around this technology.

10. One proposal reduces the council's ability to deliver 'beyond carbon neutrality ambition' and may reduce the council's ability to meet the principles of its offsetting policy [Offsetting Policy](#) (buying local credits):

- **Cease market making activity for local carbon credits:** The council is proposing to cut the budget allocated to the "Beyond Carbon Neutrality" policy to incentivise the development of the carbon removal market. By cancelling the funding to incentivise a local carbon removal market, the council may be unable to meet its "Beyond Carbon Neutrality" ambition and may experience additional challenge in meeting the principles of purchasing local, high quality offset set-out within Oxfordshire approved in the Offsetting Policy for the council's carbon neutrality by 2030 target. There is a known pressure in 29/30 for funding offset for the 2030 target. Removal of this budget may add to this pressure.

Capital Proposals Climate Impact Review

11. Proposals have been made within the programme that support OCC's target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 **whilst supporting community services**.

- **Expansion of Bicester Community Support Services:** This investment will deliver an extension and internal refurbishment works to expand capacity and enhance the functionality of Bicester Community Support Service. This will improve service delivery, accessibility, and overall user experience for the local community.
- **Works to the Forum, Kidlington:** This project will deliver agile workspaces for Oxfordshire County Council partners at the Forum, Kidlington. It will also provide welcoming facilities for families and children visiting social services.
- **Expansion of Didcot Library:** Investment into Didcot Library will deliver expanded capacity and will improve facilities. This will create a more accessible, modern space that supports a wider range of services and community needs.
- **Works to Wantage Library:** The investment in Wantage Library will create a flexible, accessible space that supports a wider range of activities and resources. The improvements aim to enhance facilities and capacity, promoting learning, engagement, and inclusion while delivering a modern library experience for all users.
- **Works to Goring Library:** Improvement works to Goring Library will enable the service to expand its offering and better meet the needs of the local community. The project will deliver a more flexible and accessible space, supporting a wider range of activities and resources. This will promote learning, engagement and inclusion, providing a modern library experience for all users.
- **Additional Community Facilities in Libraries:** This fund will support investment into a number of libraries enabling improved community facilities and spaces, including meeting rooms, small pods, charging spaces and study spaces. These interventions will support greater community engagement, cultural activities and access to services across the County.
- **Replacement of Woodeaton School:** The proposed investment, which is in addition to other funding, will fund the relocation of Woodeaton Manor Special School into a modern, purpose-built facility, providing improved learning environments and enhanced accessibility to better support pupils' educational and wellbeing needs.

12. Proposals have been made within the programme that have clear potential to support the **adaptation to climate change impacts**.

- **Investment into Drainage Infrastructure:** This investment will deliver highway drainage system repairs to ensure that the increased gully emptying regime delivers the expected benefits. The new gully emptying programme has identified a number of new issues that were not previously known.

13. Proposals have been made in this budget to **enabling a net zero county by 2050 and promote nature recovery:**

- **Ash Die Back tree stock replacement:** This project will deliver a proactive approach to managing Ash Dieback, which has been increasingly prevalent across Oxfordshire, with trees showing significant decline. The proposed investment is to replace the Council's highway tree stock as the programme to assess and respond to infected trees is initiated.
- **Oxfordshire Tree Project:** This investment will establish a sustainable tree propagation unit in central Oxfordshire to supply locally sourced trees for public projects and will become a hub for community-led satellite nurseries. This initiative will deliver environmental, societal and educational benefits, whilst supporting long-term sustainability. It will also enable the Council to replenish trees lost to Ash Dieback by utilising its own stock, thereby delivering cost benefits by avoiding external sourcing.

14. Proposals have been made that contribute **to better manage waste** whilst reducing carbon emissions:

- **New Bicester HWRC:** The project will deliver a modern Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bicester, replacing Ardley Fields, to improve access, increase capacity, and support sustainable waste management for the growing community.
- **HWRC Capital Site Maintenance:** The Council plans to carry out essential repair and maintenance works across several Household Waste and Recycling Centre sites over the next two years. These improvements will ensure the facilities remain safe, functional, and fit for purpose for both Oxfordshire residents and the site operatives who manage day-to-day operations.

15. Proposals have been made within the programme that have clear potential to **impact positively to the county's capacity to achieve a net zero transport network by 2040.**

- **Investment to deliver Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs):** The investment will deliver schemes that will promote active travelling. Therefore this investment will contribute to reduce car trips in alignment with targets in the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.
- **Quiet Lanes Programme.** The Quiet Lanes programme aims to pilot a range of interventions to make minor roads safer and more comfortable for walking, cycling and horse-riding. This initiative seeks to enhance local and county-wide connectivity for non-motorised users whilst promoting sustainable travel options.

- **The Rights of Way Bridges Capital Programme** ensures Oxfordshire's 2,970 footpath bridges are maintained, refurbished, or replaced to meet safety standards and accessibility principles. This investment ensures that this ongoing work to keep the network connected, safe, and fit for purpose. It will also ensure that there is the flexibility to respond to urgent repairs and unforeseen events.
- **Heavy Goods Vehicles Pilot Interventions:** This programme will deliver targeted improvements based on the findings of the 2024/25 High Goods Vehicle (HGV) studies, aiming to enhance road safety, reduce congestion, and support sustainable freight movement across Oxfordshire.
- **Abbey Meadows Bridge:** The bridge between Abbey Meadows and Barton Fields in Abingdon is overdue a replacement as the structure is made from timber and has gradients that do not comply with the Equalities Act. Works have begun with M-Group to design the bridge in accordance with the Equalities Act to achieve gradients of 1:20 minimum to allow all users to access the bridge and the green spaces it connects to. M-Group is a PAS2080 certified contractor with Science Based Carbon reduction targets.

16. Proposals have been made within the programme that have potential **to improve the public realms whilst promoting active travelling** and therefore reduce emissions:

- **Public Realm Improvements:** This additional funding will enable a greater level of maintenance to take place in our Towns and City targeted at public realm assets which will sustain and strengthen their appeal as vibrant destinations for local communities, visitors, and inward investment.
- **Wantage Market Place:** This investment will progress design and construction for Phase 1 of the Wantage Market Place project, focusing on the West End. Building on previous design work and consultation, the scheme will replace the tarmac surface with paving in keeping with the historic town centre, creating a safe, traffic-free space with step-free access. The project will enhance the local environment, support businesses, and provide an attractive setting for markets, events, and community activity.
- **Oxford City Centre Regeneration:** Regeneration and public realm improvements in Oxford city centre will benefit both businesses, residents and visitors, creating vibrant streets and beautiful spaces that reflect Oxford's international reputation for quality and excellence, supporting the thriving local retail and hospitality enterprises.

17. Proposals have been made within the programme that have potential to impact the council's commitment in its Local Transport and Connectivity Plan of achieving **a net zero transport network by 2040 and will require follow up to address remaining aspects:**

- **Didcot Central Corridor.** Didcot Central Corridor is a programme of work to combine transport improvements with urban design to create a more accessible environment, through walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities, a more attractive central space for markets, events and community activity and therefore supporting local businesses. The proposed investment will progress the programme of work to deliver a short list of options to progress. Whilst the scheme will likely reduce car use and therefore reduce greenhouse emissions, it also needs to aim to minimize emissions released during its construction (whole life carbon emission approach). For such purpose it should adopt the carbon governance standard PAS2080 following Policy 27 of Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

18. One proposal entails further collaboration with contractors to understand the magnitude of the potential climate impact in **OCC 2030 carbon neutrality target** and **net zero target well ahead of 2050**:

- **IT Strategy:** This programme will modernise the council's technology estate to improve security, digital inclusion, and service delivery, while supporting collaboration and innovation ahead of local government reorganisation. The emergence of AI and the increasing energy demands, and further environmental pressures of data centres require a responsible approach to manage the potential climate and environmental impacts of this emerging technology. OCC has identified the need for a sustainability policy and/or framework based on the precautionary principle that can guide the responsible use of AI. For this purpose, in 2026/27 the council will build upon the UK's Royal College of Engineering "[Foundations for Environmentally Sustainable AI](#)" to develop a policy framework for the responsible use of AI and guide decision making around this technology.

Capital and Investment Strategy

2026/27 to 2035/36

Executive Summary

1. The Capital and Investment Strategy outlines the council's approach to capital investment over the next ten years and incorporates the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Local Authorities.
2. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021 requires that for each financial year, a local authority should prepare at least one Investment Strategy containing the disclosures and reporting requirements specified in the guidance. The Strategy must be approved by full Council.
3. The definition of an investment covers all the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios.
4. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure that the capital expenditure plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved.
5. The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital plans, investments, and debt in the light of overall organisational strategy and resources and ensure that decisions are made with sufficient regard to the long-term financing implications and potential risks to the authority.
6. The Prudential Code sets out that in order to demonstrate that the authority takes capital expenditure, investment and borrowing decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability, authorities should have in place a capital strategy. The capital strategy should set out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk and reward and impact on the achievement of priority outcome. In line with the Code's requirements the following annexes are also included in this strategy:
 - Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2026/27 (Annex 1)
 - Prudential Indicators for Capital Finance (Annex 2)

7. The Capital and Investment Strategy supports the Council's Financial Strategy, which sets out the approach the Council will take to ensure it is financially sustainable over the medium and long term. It also supports the Council's more detailed objectives of service strategies and plans. Integrated and aligned strategies and plans are imperative to financial resilience and stability as the

impact of actions or decisions on one or more of these strategies will have an impact on the others.

8. Changes to the Treasury Management Strategy will be recommended to Council to be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance.

Long term context

9. The Council's Strategic Plan has set out a clear vision for the county, centred around strong local communities, healthy places to live, and a thriving economy that benefits everyone, with zero carbon at its core. The council is also developing an Oxfordshire Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy which will outline future demand, the infrastructure requirements and target regeneration areas in advance of growth. Implementation of the Spatial Development Strategy in advance of growth will reduce costs and disruption.
10. The strategic plan has nine priorities with a set of objectives for each.

The Council's capital investment will support the following Strategic Plan objectives in delivering its Greener, Healthier and Fairer objectives, found [here](#)

11. The Council's capital investment will support the objectives being developed as part of growth and special planning:

'Master & Spatial Development' objectives:

- Identify and invest in areas of future growth
- Investment in areas requiring regeneration

12. As well as the above defined objectives, the Council will pursue investment opportunities that combine achieving the Council's priorities with a commercial return, and which will encourage external investment from third parties. Such investments may include (but are not limited to) green energy schemes and supporting innovative 'Green Tech' businesses via investment funds. The Capital programme also supports statutory functions such as school placements and urgent health and safety capital maintenance works.
13. A ten-year Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use capital expenditure to deliver these council priorities. The Capital Programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned to the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.

14. Current schemes within the capital programme are challenged at project gateways to ensure the project's objectives and benefits align with the Council's current strategic plan.

Capital risks

15. There are a number of external factors increasing the risk to the future deliverability and cost of capital schemes in the council's capital programme. There are also challenges arising from the availability of workforce – both skilled and unskilled and construction materials. Inflation is impacting on contract values and the ability to maintain an agreed price. These pressures place further demands on council resources and the ability to meet the Council's ambitions, expected outcomes and benefits.

Capital Programme Prioritisation Categories

- Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health & safety, schools, and delivery of business-critical services
- Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost avoidance strategies
- Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings
- Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve Oxfordshire towns
- Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions
- Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress

16. As well as supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic plan, the capital programme is also informed by service strategies and plans (a list of the key strategies is included in Annex 4). These strategies are informed by the latest population forecasts, changes in demography, and changes in service demands.

Infrastructure and Assets

17. The council owns and manages a range of infrastructure and property assets including maintained schools, offices, roads, bridges, park and ride sites and waste recycling centres.

18. Effective asset management is one of the key contributing factors to attaining the county's vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Approach to Capital Investment

19. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the Council (e.g., buildings, vehicles and equipment), and spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003. This includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the Council such as academies and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.

20. The approach aims to ensure that:

- Capital expenditure contributes to the achievement of the Council's priorities set out in the Strategic Plan including commitment to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of the council's work and to explore opportunities for social value, as well as the priorities emerging from the development of the Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy;
- An affordable and sustainable capital programme is agreed;
- Use of resources and value for money is maximised;
- A clear framework for making capital investment decisions is provided;
- A corporate approach to the use of capital resources is maintained;
- Sufficient assets to provide services now and in the future (as set out in service specific strategies, see annex 4) are acquired, or built, and maintained;
- Invest to save initiatives to make efficiencies within the Council's revenue budget are encouraged;
- Investment in existing assets to enhance their value, including acquisition of land, is supported;
- An appraisal and prioritisation process for new schemes is robust

Capital Financing Principles

21. The Council's capital programme financing principles are:

- Non ringfenced capital grants are treated as a corporate resource and used flexibly.
- Capital receipts are treated as a corporate resource and used across the capital programme flexibly.
- The Council will continue to be proactive in ensuring, as far as possible, that all additional capital investment needs arising from new developments are funded from developer contributions.

- Ringfenced resources are used for the purposes for which they are issued.
- Prudential borrowing will only be considered where:
 - i. there is a robust invest to save model; or
 - ii. the council has a significant unmet capital need.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds be secured and directed to the most appropriate capital schemes to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area.
- The Council will hold 3% capital contingency in reserves. This contingency is for unforeseen emergency works. Project and programme level contingency is determined and agreed for each project (by gateway) and is agreed within its budget provision.
- Where appropriate, the council will seek to work with third party organisations and attract inward investment to deliver schemes.

The Capital Programme

22. The council plans for a ten-year capital programme to ensure that schemes and programmes can be developed, delivered and funded over the medium term in line with the supporting strategies.

The **capital programme (the firm programme)** is made up of schemes that have been agreed to address identified need. These schemes have an approved initial business case, articulating a clear case for change, a defined scope, an indicative budget/investment and an agreed indicative timeline including a 'go live' date. The Capital Programme is a ten-year rolling programme.

Funded pipeline capital schemes support our priorities, have an agreed need, a confirmed alignment with the prioritisation framework and a basic mandate. These are our priority schemes but are subject to further development and an approved initial business case. Schemes in the funded pipeline are subject to optioneering and feasibility assessment and have only estimated costs. These schemes may change in both scope and value before being agreed through the capital governance process and brought forward into the firm programme reflecting changes in the underlying need and value for money assessment. Once approved, these schemes will be included within the firm capital programme.

Unfunded pipeline schemes are also identified by service areas. These schemes are at a very early stage and in some cases, it is not yet clear if they meet a predicted need and/or align to the prioritisation framework. Others have identified a need and align to the prioritisation framework, but due to budget constraints, are currently unfunded pending funding becoming available. This can include future property investment projects that deliver regeneration and / or growth.

Proposed Programme for 2026/27 – 2035/36

23. The proposed programme is based on the latest capital programme 2025/26 to 2034/35 as reported to Cabinet in the Capital Programme Monitoring Report in December 2025; it includes latest approvals and amendments to budget provisions and funding allocations, and recommendations set out in the budget report. Proposed changes to the programme are set out in Section 5.3. Section 5.4 sets out the detailed draft Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2035/36 by year and programme area. Some of the changes set out below reflect the addition of 2035/36 to the programme and extend the existing programme into that year.

24. The table below sets out the proposed programme by strategy and the split between the Firm Programme (£848.1m) and Funded Pipeline Programme (£405.6m).

Strategy / Programme	Current Year 2025/26 £m	Proposed Firm Programme (2 years) £m	Proposed Funded Pipeline Programme £m	Total Programme £m
Pupil Places Plan	52.3	79.8	96.8	228.9
Major Infrastructure	111.4	463.2	88.6	663.2
Highways Asset Management Plan	64.4	107.1	98.9	270.4
Property Strategy	27.5	71.9	20.3	119.7
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	8.2	2.8	0.0	11.0
Passported Funding	10.1	11.0	2.6	23.7
Vehicles and Equipment	4.1	12.3	9.7	26.1
Total Estimated Capital Programme Expenditure	278.0	748.1	316.9	1,343.0
Earmarked Reserves	0.0	100.0	89.0	141.9
Total Estimated Capital Programme	278.0	848.1	405.6	1,531.7

25. The proposed 'firm programme' for 2026/27 to 2027/28 has been developed. A full list of schemes proposed to be added to the draft Capital Programme can be found in Section 5.3.

26. All capital proposals have been evaluated to confirm their alignment with the established prioritisation framework and the Council's strategic priorities as defined in the Strategic Plan. The total available funding from the Council's capital resources amounts to £24.1m. This includes £16.1m returned to the Capital Programme, reflecting savings from completed schemes together with funding released from projects where scopes have been reduced or discontinued and £8m of corporate interest. The Council's capital investment is generally applied alongside funding already secured from sources such as Section 106 developer

Section 5.1

contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding; however, this is not always the case, and some proposals are fully funded by the Council where required.

27. Schemes that comply with minimum statutory duties relating to health and safety, schools, and the delivery of business-critical services include a proposed investment of £5.2m - funded through Section 106 developer contributions, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding for 2025/26, and £1.0m of previously agreed corporate resources - will deliver a new, purpose-built Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bicester, replacing the current Ardley Fields facility. Designed to meet the needs of the growing town and surrounding communities, the new centre will provide improved access, greater capacity, and modern facilities to make recycling and waste disposal easier and more efficient. This development will support responsible waste management, promote environmental sustainability, and offer a cleaner, safer, and more convenient service for all users.
28. An investment of £2.6m, which is in addition to other secured and anticipated funding, is proposed to relocate Woodeaton Manor Special School into a modern, purpose-built facility. The new site will provide enhanced learning environments and improved accessibility, ensuring pupils receive the best possible support for their educational and wellbeing needs.
29. To maintain business-critical IT services and drive digital transformation, an investment of £3.1m is proposed. This funding, to be allocated over a 2-year period, will enable the adoption of innovative, scalable, and secure technologies, improve operational efficiency and deliver greater value for residents and stakeholders.
30. To build on resident feedback, calling for better and safer roads, a contribution of £5.6m is proposed to deliver improvements to the highway network. This includes a £4.0m investment, over a two-year period, for essential drainage infrastructure repairs to ensure gully cleansing is as effective as possible and that roads are kept clear of flooding. In addition, a two-year investment of £1.6m is proposed to deliver targeted improvements informed by the 2024/25 Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) studies which aims to enhance road safety, ease congestion, and support sustainable freight movement across Oxfordshire. This allocation is in addition to government funding and in addition to £42.6m of corporate resources funding committed through February 2025 Council.
31. An investment of £7.5m is proposed to encourage and facilitate active travel and improve Oxfordshire's towns. Schemes that will benefit from this investment include £0.35m to continue the work to ensure that Oxfordshire's footpath bridges are maintained, refurbished or where necessary, replaced. An additional £0.5m is proposed to be allocated to Abbey Meadows Bridge, to complete the much-needed replacement of this community asset.

Section 5.1

32. To further strengthen the Council's investment in Active Travel, an additional £1.7m fund to deliver schemes that have been identified through the Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plans is proposed. The investment will deliver practical place-based improvements that make walking, wheeling and cycling safer, easier and more attractive to local communities.
33. Building on the £0.5m already allocated through the February 2025 budget-setting process, an additional £1.0m investment is proposed to commence delivery of the Wantage Market Place West End (Phase 1). The funding will be drawn from anticipated contributions from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and supplemented by £0.15m from corporate resources.
34. A £1.5m investment is proposed to deliver public realm enhancements across key locations, including the city and market towns to strengthen their appeal as vibrant destinations for communities, visitors and future investment. This is in addition to a further £1.5m investment into Oxford City Centre to support the creation of vibrant streets and beautiful spaces for both residents and visitors, supporting Oxford's international reputation for quality and excellence. The proposed funding will fund the design and partial delivery of key improvements across city centre locations; further funding is to be sought to deliver the full vision for the city centre.
35. A further £3.0m is proposed to be allocated to ensure the successful delivery of the Watlington Relief Road - a scheme that will alleviate noise, congestion and air pollution in the town centre whilst enabling more sustainable modes of transport. The additional funding, which is in addition to the £11.1m approved by Council in February 2025, will cover increased costs due to regulatory requirements, design changes for environmental features, additional highway works as well as an increased risk and contingency allowance due to the complexity of the scheme.
36. The Council continues to invest in schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions. An investment of £0.1m over a two-year period, to establish a sustainable tree propagation unit in central Oxfordshire, is proposed. This initiative will supply locally grown trees for public projects, support community-led satellite nurseries across the county, and deliver environmental, social, and educational benefits. As a proactive programme of work to address Ash Die Back is initiated, this investment will support the replenishment of trees with locally grown stock, enhancing long-term sustainability and reducing costs associated with external sourcing.
37. In line with Oxfordshire's property strategy, which seeks to deliver a an efficient, innovative and accessible estate whilst supporting climate commitments and generating social value, a £0.77m investment is proposed targeting a number of community buildings. The proposed funding, which is in addition to other funding sources for library redevelopment projects, will create welcoming spaces for community use, including the installation of meeting pods and confidential areas to hold private conversations with partner organisations. The investment will also

Section 5.1

deliver a major transformation to Didcot Library, which is in addition to £1.7m S106 Developer Contributions and £0.75m Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

38. Bicester Community Support Services, which provides adult day centre services and surrounding areas, is to benefit from works to improve the facility. This is to be funded by £0.3m of S106 developer contributions with further works planned when funding becomes available. For families visiting social services, at the Forum in Kidlington, a proposed investment of £0.15m will deliver a more welcoming facility as well as providing an agile workspace for Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Services colleagues.
39. Building on the £4.0m investment agreed through February 2025 Council, an additional £2.0m funding is proposed to ensure that infrastructure schemes, which are partly funded by S106 developer contributions, are progressed through to delivery.
40. The funding requirements do not include any additional prudential borrowing to help finance the new capital proposals. The current total prudential borrowing amount to £210.9m over the ten - year period. The use of prudential borrowing will increase the Council's Capital Financing Requirement. The Council is required under statute to set aside a Minimum Revenue Provision to pay down the Capital Financing Requirement.
41. In addition to the above, £3.9m Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is expected. This comprises £3.0m from South Oxfordshire District Council and £0.85m from the Vale of White Horse District Council. The specific schemes to be supported by this funding will be agreed and approved by South and Vale before being incorporated into the capital programme and will be subject to the Council's capital governance.
42. The Capital Programme is currently over programmed over the ten - year period by £10.4m. The table below sets out the resources expected to be used to deliver the capital programme.

Financing	Total Programme £m
Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy	224.1
Grants and contributions	844.6
Prudential Borrowing	210.9
Capital receipts	136.2
Revenue Contribution	17.7
Subtotal	1,433.4
Capital Reserves	87.9
Total Financing	1,521.3

43. When necessary and where funding is available, the Capital Programme can fund schemes in advance of receiving specific funding by utilising other resources within the wider programme on an interim basis. Any advancements would need to be considered and agreed by the s151 officer. At present, the capital Programme has approved approx. £35m of forward funded schemes. Not all expenditure has been incurred and therefore the actual value incurred will be lower as it is forecasted that some of the income is expected to be received before all the expenditure associated with the forward funded schemes are incurred. This excludes any cashflow implications arising from the Speedwell and Oxford Rewley Road Fire Station developments.

Recent Funding Announcements & Assumptions

44. In December 2025, Department of Transport (DfT) issued the Local Transport Consolidated Funding Settlement Letter. The new local transport funding system confirmed funding allocations for the next spending review period (2026/27 - 2029/30).

45. Each council receiving funding is required to produce a Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP), setting out details of how all the available funding has been prioritised. The funding allocations are shown below:

TRANSPORT FUNDING	26/27 £'000	27/28 £'000	28/29 £'000	29/30 £'000	Total £'000
Integrated Transport Fund (ITF)					
Highways Maintenance - Baseline	25,307	28,180	31,351	37,366	122,204
Highways Maintenance – Incentive	9,328	12,005	12,079	12,284	45,696
Local Transport Grant	3,999	5,239	7,180	9,120	25,538
Active Travel Grant	4,085	4,085	4,085	4,085	16,340
Local Bus Grant	3,247	3,312	3,377	3,443	13,379
Total Capital Funding	45,966	52,821	58,072	66,298	223,157

46. The council is required to report to DfT at regular intervals on progress against their LTDP and the Local Transport Outcome Framework. Within the funding allocations is an element of incentive funding which have different arrangements. Further guidance will be issued based on the two main funding conditions. At least 25% of the annual incentive funding will be dependent on publishing transparency reports. Also 50% of the incentive funding will be subject to performance. Further details on the performance based measure will be issued later.

47. The full funding for Highways Maintenance has been allocated towards the annual structure maintenance programme. The funding allocations for the other areas will

be held within earmarked reserves pending the publication of the Local Transport Delivery Plan and released in accordance with the capital governance framework.

Property Investment Strategy

48. The Council's property investment objective is to support growth, regeneration and help deliver the Council's strategic priorities.
49. The council uses the following two broad investment categories:
 - a) Maximise use of and value (both financial and social) of Council owned assets (land and buildings) linked to the council's Property Strategy, and
 - b) Investments for current and future service delivery in land and buildings (including through acquisition) primarily and directly for the delivery of public services and place shaping (including in support of specific regeneration, growth and local infrastructure objectives).
50. In addition, property investments are made in accordance with Treasury Management Strategy, including cash, money market funds, property funds, bond funds and equities.
51. In accordance with the prudential code, the Council does not make investments primarily for commercial purposes.

Green Investment Strategy

52. The Council's key strategic objective through its Green Investment Strategy is to support the delivery of net zero for Oxfordshire.
53. The Council's emerging green Investment Strategy supports the participation of the Council as a more active participant in identifying and creating investable opportunities, and as a direct or indirect investor into green investment opportunities.

Capital Governance Arrangements

54. The Prudential Code sets out that the responsibility for decision making and on-going monitoring in respect of capital expenditure, investment and borrowing, including prudential indicators, sits with full council. However, detailed implementation and monitoring may be delegated to a committee.
55. Council and the Cabinet are the key democratic decision-making bodies as per the Council's constitution. The Council approves the key policy documents and the capital programme as part of the Council's Policy and Budgetary Framework. The Cabinet recommends priorities, policy direction and the capital programme to the Council for approval. The Cabinet also approves new inclusions to the capital programme in line with the scheme of delegation and the financial procedure rules.

56. Delegations to officers are set out in full in Section 5 of the Council's Financial Regulations and all officers are bound by the scheme of delegation.
57. The capital programme is supported by robust governance arrangements that are in place to effectively manage and monitor the Council's expenditure, review and manage any operational risks across the programme and to enable a strong decision-making framework and structure. Processes to support the management of the Capital Programme are under continuous review to identify areas for improvement.
58. There are five capital programme boards: Environment & Climate, Major Infrastructure, Innovation, Digital & Customer, Property and Highways which report into the Strategic Capital and Commercial Board (SCCB). SCCB meets monthly and is chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, the Executive Director of People, the Director for Economy & Place, the Director of Environment & Highways, Director of Property and Assets and the Director of Financial and Commercial Services. The Board reviews and manages issues and pressures escalated from the capital programme boards as well as the wider strategic risks, which are escalated to Cabinet in line with established governance procedures.
59. A comprehensive capital investment handbook has been published for staff guidance and support. This handbook sets out the governance, roles and responsibilities including an overview of the governance structure, terms of reference for each governance level, and a description of key roles and responsibilities. It also includes a reporting framework, set of KPIs, and aggregation method for how reporting will be established by exception. The handbook includes a high-level and detailed approval process and description of each stage of capital project delivery, from Stage 0 to Stage 4. It sets out key meetings and documentation required for each step, including specific guidance around capital expenditure, and how key aspects, such as Council strategic outcomes, and the capital and investment strategy, can inform the prioritisation process.

Measuring the delivery of the Capital & Investment Strategy

60. The overall performance of the Council-wide Capital Programme will be reported to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
61. This will include an overview of the performance across each of the capital programmes with a specific focus on:
 - The most significant variances (in terms of timeline, scope, and budget);
 - The most significant risks and issues (e.g. those with the largest potential impact etc.);
 - The most significant successes; and,

Section 5.1

- Overall benefit realisation and strategic alignment to Council outcomes

62. In line with the Council's Financial Regulations, the Cabinet will also take decisions on any changes to the existing programme on any proposed variation that meets the following thresholds:

- Any new scheme not already in the firm programme, including grant funded schemes
- Any cost variation over £2m
- Any material scope variation that impacts the projects' ability to achieve its overall objective/benefits/savings
- Any time variations that impact the 'go live' date

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2026/27

1. The Council is required by statute to charge a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to the General Fund Revenue account each year for the repayment of debt. The MRP charge is the means by which capital expenditure which has been funded by borrowing is paid for by council taxpayers.
2. Legislation¹ requires local authorities to draw up a statement of their policy on the annual MRP, for full approval by Council before the start of the financial year to which the provision will relate.
3. The implementation of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) requirements brought some service concession arrangements on balance sheet and resulted in some leases being reclassified as finance leases instead of operating leases. Part of the service charge or rent payable is taken to reduce the balance sheet liability rather than being charged to revenue accounts. To ensure that this does not result in a one-off increase in the capital financing requirement and in revenue account balances, an amount equal to the amount that has been taken to the balance sheet is included in the annual MRP charge.
4. The Council is recommended therefore to approve the following statement:

For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008, the MRP policy for 2017/18 onwards will be a straight-line charge of the outstanding pre-2008 expenditure as at 1 April 2017 calculated over a 50-year period.

For all unsupported (prudential) borrowing, the MRP policy will be based on the estimated life of the assets for which the borrowing is undertaken (Option 3 – Asset Life Method or Annuity Method).

In the case of finance leases and on-balance sheet Private Finance Initiative (PFI) type contracts, the MRP requirement will be regarded as being met by a charge equal to the element of the rent/charge that goes to write-down the balance sheet liability, including the retrospective element in the first year (Option 3 in modified form).

¹ Statutory Instrument 2008 no. 414 s4

Prudential Indicators for Capital Finance

1. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021 requires the Council to set and monitor against Prudential Indicators in the following categories:
 - Prudence – Capital Expenditure and External Debt
 - Affordability
 - Treasury Management
2. The indicators have been based on the February 2026 capital programme which will be approved by Council on 10 February 2026 as part of the Business and Budget Planning Report.
3. The capital expenditure figures for beyond 2026/27 will be able to be revised in twelve months' time.

Prudence

Estimates of Capital Expenditure

4. The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the total of capital expenditure (including earmarked reserves) that it plans to incur during 2026/27 and the following two financial years. The Council must also approve the actual expenditure for 2024/25 and revised forecast expenditure for 2025/26. The table shows the actual capital expenditure for 2024/25 and how that was financed. It also shows the estimated capital expenditure and financing from 2025/26 to 2029/30.

Capital Programme Estimates	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m	2028/29 Estimate £m	2029/30 Estimate £m
Capital Expenditure	231.0	278.1	463.9	384.3	176.7	141.6
Financed by:						
Prudential Borrowing	53.7	63.8	60.8	51.4	7.4	27.2
Grants and Contributions	174.0	211.9	400.6	256.9	89.3	73.8
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	71.0	30.2	3.8
Revenue	3.3	2.4	2.5	5.0	3.0	0.8
Reserves	0	0	0	0.0	46.8	36.0
Total Capital Investment	231.0	278.1	463.9	384.3	176.7	141.6

The Capital Financing Requirement

5. Estimates of the end of year Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for the Authority for the current and future years and the actual Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2025 that are recommended for approval are set out in the table below. The actual CFR for 2024/25 was £490.208m. The estimate for 2025/26 is £537.640m and for 2026/27 £579.504m.

Year	Actual/Estimate	£m
2024/25	Actual	490.208
2025/26	Estimate	537.640
2026/27	Estimate	579.504
2027/28	Estimate	609.543
2028/29	Estimate	593.558
2029/30	Estimate	597.028

6. The Capital Financing Requirement measures the authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. In accordance with best professional practice the County Council does not associate borrowing with particular items or types of expenditure. The authority has an integrated Treasury Management Strategy and has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. The Council has, at any point in time, a number of cashflows both positive and negative, and manages its treasury position in terms of its borrowings and investments in accordance with its approved treasury management strategy and practices. In day-to-day cash management, no distinction can be made between revenue cash and capital cash. External borrowing arises as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the authority and not simply those arising from capital spending. In contrast, the capital financing requirement reflects the authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose.

Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

7. The Authority has an integrated treasury management strategy and manages its treasury position in accordance with its approved strategy and practice. Overall borrowing will therefore arise as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Authority and not just those arising from capital spending reflected in the CFR.
8. The Authorised Limit sets the maximum level of external debt on a gross basis (i.e. excluding investments) for the Authority. It is measured on a daily basis against all external debt items on the Balance Sheet (i.e. long and short-term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long-term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long-term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Authority's existing commitments,

Section 5.1

its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

- The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).
- The Operational Boundary has been set on the estimate of the most likely, i.e. prudent but not worst-case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements. The Operational Boundary links directly to the Authority's estimates of the CFR and estimates of other cashflow requirements. The table shows the operational boundary for external debt remains within the authorised limit for external debt throughout the period 2025/26 to 2029/30.

	2025/26 Probable outturn £m	2026/27 Estimate £m	2027/28 Estimate £m	2028/29 Estimate £m	2029/30 Estimate £m
Operational Boundary for External Debt					
Borrowing	540.000	590.000	620.000	600.000	610.000
Other long-term liabilities	25.000	25.000	25.000	25.000	25.000
TOTAL	565.000	615.000	650.000	625.000	635.000
Authorised Limit for External Debt					
Borrowing	550.000	600.000	630.000	610.000	620.000
Other long-term liabilities	30.000	30.000	30.000	30.000	30.000
TOTAL	580.000	630.000	660.000	640.000	650.000

Actual External Debt

- This indicator enables the comparison of Actual External Debt at year end to the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit. Total external debt as at 31 March 2025 was £288.326m.

Total External Debt as at 31.03.25	£m
External Borrowing	271.383
Other Long-term Liabilities	16.943
Total	288.326

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

Section 5.1

12. This is a key indicator of prudence. In order to ensure that the medium-term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that the gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement (CFR) in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional increases to the capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

13. From 2021/22 onwards the CFR has been higher than the level of external borrowing, the balance of which has been funded through internal borrowing. This is forecasted to continue over the medium term, consistent with the approach set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, taking into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the approved budget.

Debt	31.03.25 Actual £m	31.03.26 Estimate £m	31.03.27 Estimate £m	31.03.28 Estimate £m	31.03.29 Estimate £m	31.03.30 Estimate £m
External Borrowing	271.383	264.383	298.383	295.383	291.383	276.000
Long Term Liabilities	16.943	15.316	8.689	7.062	2.166	1.483
Total Debt	288.326	279.699	307.072	302.445	293.549	277.483

Affordability

The Ratio of Financing Costs to the Net Revenue Stream

14. This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs. The definition of financing costs is set out in the Prudential Code. The ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream is estimated to remain within 4-5% in each year going forward and was 3.9% in 2024/25.

Year	Actual/ Estimate	Financing Cost £m	Net Revenue Stream £m	Ratio %
2024/25	Actual	26.4	669.8	3.9
2025/26	Estimate	28.2	703.7	4.0
2026/27	Estimate	31.8	752.6	4.2
2027/28	Estimate	34.6	783.8	4.4
2028/29	Estimate	36.8	816.2	4.5

15. Financing costs include interest payable on borrowing, interest and investment income and the amount required for the minimum revenue provision (MRP).

The Ratio of Net Income from Commercial and Service Investments to the Net Revenue Stream

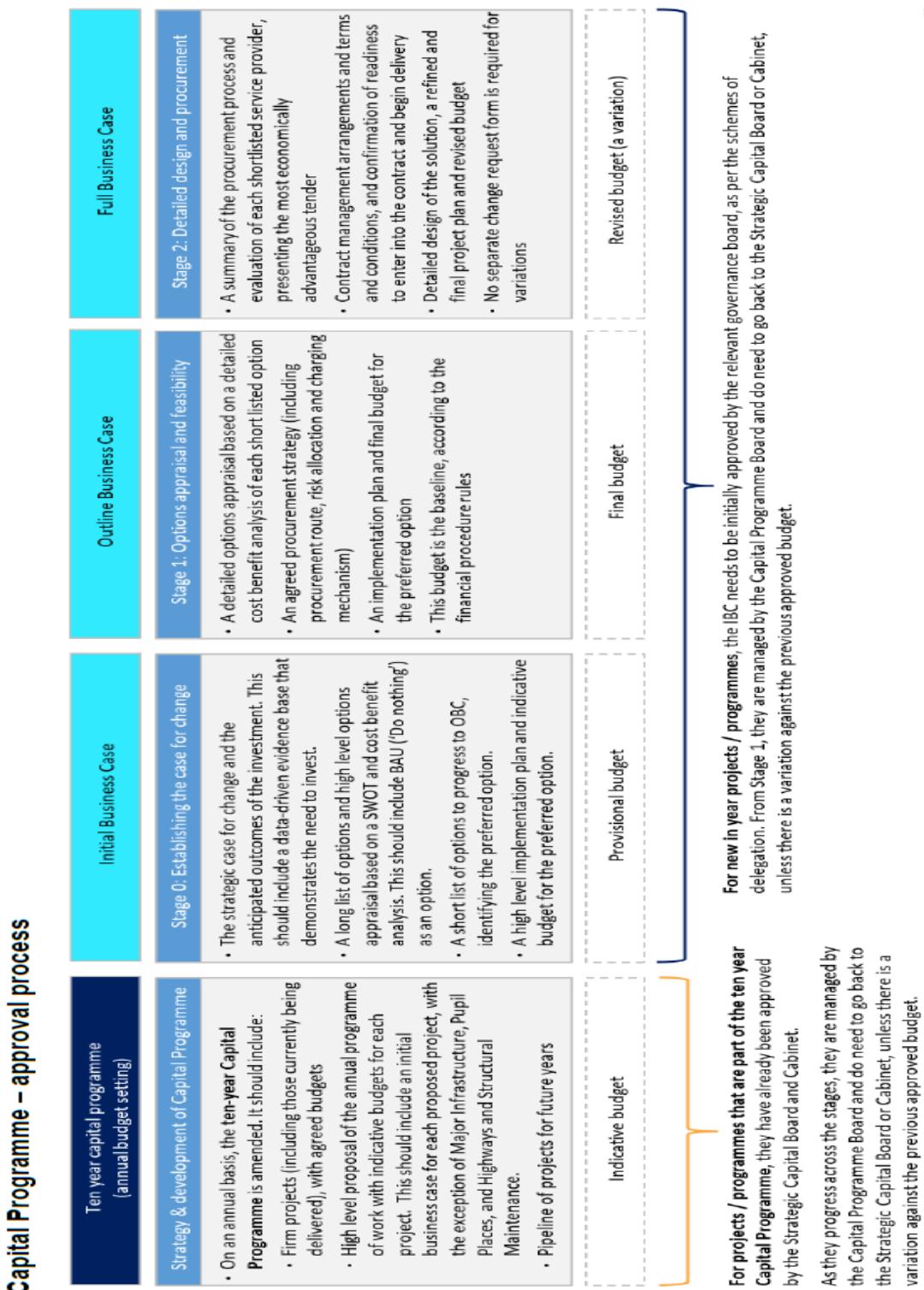
16. This is an indicator of affordability and is intended to show the financial exposure of the authority to the loss of income from commercial and service investments. The definition of commercial and service income is set out in the Prudential Code. Based on current activity the ratio of service income compared to the net revenue stream remains at a maximum of 0.03% from 2025/26 to 2028/29.

Year	Actual/ Estimate	Commercial & Service Income (*) £m	Net Revenue Stream £m	Ratio %
2025/26	Estimate	0.032	703.7	0.00
2026/27	Estimate	0.197	752.6	0.03
2027/28	Estimate	0.200	783.8	0.03
2028/29	Estimate	0.200	816.2	0.02

(*) Estimated annual cash yield from the council's £5m Service Investment in the Resonance Supported Homes Fund.

Annex 3

Governance framework and decision-making overview



Strategies that have informed and help us deliver our Capital Strategy

The Capital Programme is informed by, and supports the achievement of, the following county council strategies and plans:

- Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy 2022
- Property and Assets Strategy 2022
- Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050
- Pupil Place Plan 2023/24-2027/28 (January 2024)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Plan 2022/23-2026/27
- Household Waste Recycling Strategy (2023-2043)
- Libraries and Heritage Strategy (2022-2027)
- Climate Action Framework (2021)
- Local Industrial Strategy | OxLEP (oxfordshirelep.com)

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Executive Summary

1. The Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27 outlines the council's strategic objectives in terms of its debt and investment management for the financial year 2026/27.
2. The forecast average cash balance for 2026/27 is £345m. The council will maintain its investment in strategic pooled funds with a purchase value of £88m (25%). The remaining £257m (75%) will be managed internally with a mixture of short, medium and long-term deposits.
3. The Bank of England Base Rate is forecast to start the year at 3.75 or 3.50%, reducing to 3.25% by the end of the financial year.
4. UK Government Gilt yields are forecast to fall from 4.80% to 3.80% over the medium term.
5. As the council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is proposed to increase significantly over the medium term, the strategy will aim to decrease long term investments to allow for greater internal borrowing.
6. Changes to the Treasury Management Strategy will be recommended to Council to be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

Changes from 2025/26 Strategy

7. Reflecting the anticipated level of cash balances over the medium and long term, lending limits are proposed to be updated as follows:

	From	To
2026/27	£150m	£150m
2027/28	£140m	£100m
2028/29	£100m	£80m
2029/30	£100m	£80m
2030/31	n/a	£80m

Background

8. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require the council to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
9. The Act requires the council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (as required by Investment Guidance issued subsequent to the Act). The Annual Investment Strategy sets out the

council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

10. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
11. The proposed strategy for 2026/27 is based upon the views of the council's Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST)¹, informed by market forecasts provided by the council's treasury advisor, Link Treasury Services. The forecast and economic background provided by Link Treasury Services can be found in Annex 1.
12. It is proposed that any further changes required to the Annual Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy, continue to be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance.

Forecast Treasury Portfolio Position

13. The council's treasury forecast portfolio position for the 2026/27 financial year comprises:

	Principal £m	Average Rate %
Opening External Debt Balance		
Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)	239.383	4.470
Lender's Option Borrower's Options (LOBOs) ²	20.000	4.029
Money Market Loans	5.500	3.990
TOTAL EXTERNAL DEBT	264.383	
2026/27 Average Forecast Cash Balance		
Average In-House Cash	256.872	
Average Externally Managed	88.059	
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	344.931	

14. The average forecast cash balance for 2026/27 is comprised of the following:

	Average Balance £m
Earmarked Reserves	242.400
Unusable Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve	-160.000
Capital and Developer Contributions	303.660
General & School Balances	39.620

¹Comprising the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer, Financial Manager – Pension Fund Investments, Head of Corporate Finance, and Treasury Manager.

² See paragraphs 28 & 29 for detail

Cashflow and Working Capital Adjustments	201.434
Internal Borrowing	-291.923
Provisions and Deferred Income	9.740
TOTAL	344.931

Prospect for Interest Rates

15. The council's TMST, taking into account the advice from Link Treasury Services, market implications and the current economic outlook, have determined the interest rates to be included in the Strategic Measures budget for 2026/27 and over the medium term. TMST forecast that the bank rate will start the year at 3.75 or 3.50% and reduce further to 3.25% by the end of 2026/27. Bank rate is then forecast to remain at 3.25% for the medium term, with significant risks to the downside.
16. The TMST team has agreed that based on the current portfolio of deposits and market rates, the target in-house rate of return should be as set out below. These rates have been incorporated into the strategic measures budget estimates for interest receivable and reflect the mix of rates expected to be achieved on existing and new deposits:

2026/27	4.00%
2027/28	3.50%
2028/29 - 2031/31	3.50%

Borrowing Strategy

17. The council's Capital Programme Financing Principles require the application of capital grants, developer contributions, capital receipts and revenue contributions to fund capital expenditure. Prudential borrowing will only be considered where:
 - i. there is a robust invest to save model; or
 - ii. the council has a significant unmet capital need; or
 - iii. It contributes towards the overall investment approach
18. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) sets out the council's requirement to prudentially borrow for capital purposes. This borrowing can either be met through external loans or by temporarily using existing cash balances held by the council.
19. The council's chief objective when borrowing money externally is to strike an appropriate balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
20. Borrowing rates are forecast to fall from a high of 6.00% in December 2025 to 4.60-5.60% over the medium term.

21. External borrowing taken out by the council is expected to fall well below the CFR by 2029/30 due to increased capital expenditure and £83m of debt repayments by that point.
22. Given the high level of balances and the forecast for borrowing rates to reduce in the medium term, the council's TMST have agreed that the council should maintain the option to fund new or replacement borrowing through internal borrowing. The limit of internal borrowing will be combined with the long term lending limit, and will not exceed £450m in 2026/27. The exception to this is the exploration of issuing a new green bond.
23. Based on current forecast of balances and the proposed extra £65m borrowing for structural maintenance, the council may be required to externalise some debt from 2026/27 onwards.
24. The proposed extra borrowing of £65m for structural maintenance will have an ongoing annual revenue cost of £4.2m.
25. The TMST monitor the borrowing rates on a daily basis. If changes in interest rate forecasts mean the policy to borrow internally is no longer in the short term or long-term interests of the council, the TMST may agree to take out new or replacement borrowing to give the council certainty of costs over the long term, and to reduce Interest Rate Risk and Refinancing Risk in the short to medium term. Any increase in borrowing costs as a result of new external borrowing will be offset by an increased return of interest on balances. Any new external borrowing will be reported to Cabinet.
26. The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
 - Public Works Loan Board and any successor body
 - UK local authorities
 - any institution approved for investments (see below)
 - any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK
 - UK public and private sector pension funds
 - capital market bond investors
 - special purpose companies created to enable joint local authority bond issues
 - community municipal investments
27. The council has historically set a maximum limit of 20% of the debt portfolio to be borrowed in the form of Lender's Option Borrower's Option (LOBOs). As at 31 December 2025 LOBOs represent 7.6% of the total external debt. This compares to 16.6% of the total external debt in 2025/26. The council has no intention of entering into any new LOBO arrangements, however as the level of PWLB debt is due to fall over the medium term, the percentage of LOBOs compared to total external debt will increase. Therefore, it is recommended that the limit for 2026/27 remains at 20%.
28. The council has two £5m LOBOs with call options in 2026/27, one of which has two call options in year, with the second having a single call option in year. At

each call date, the lender may choose to exercise their option to change the interest rate payable on the loan. If the lender chooses to do so, the council will evaluate alternative financing options before deciding whether or not to exercise the borrower's option to repay the loan or to accept the new rate offered. It is likely that if the rate is changed the debt will be repaid. The TMST have agreed that if the new proposed rate is higher than the equivalent PWLB certainty rate, it's default position will be to repay the loan without penalty.

Prudential Indicators

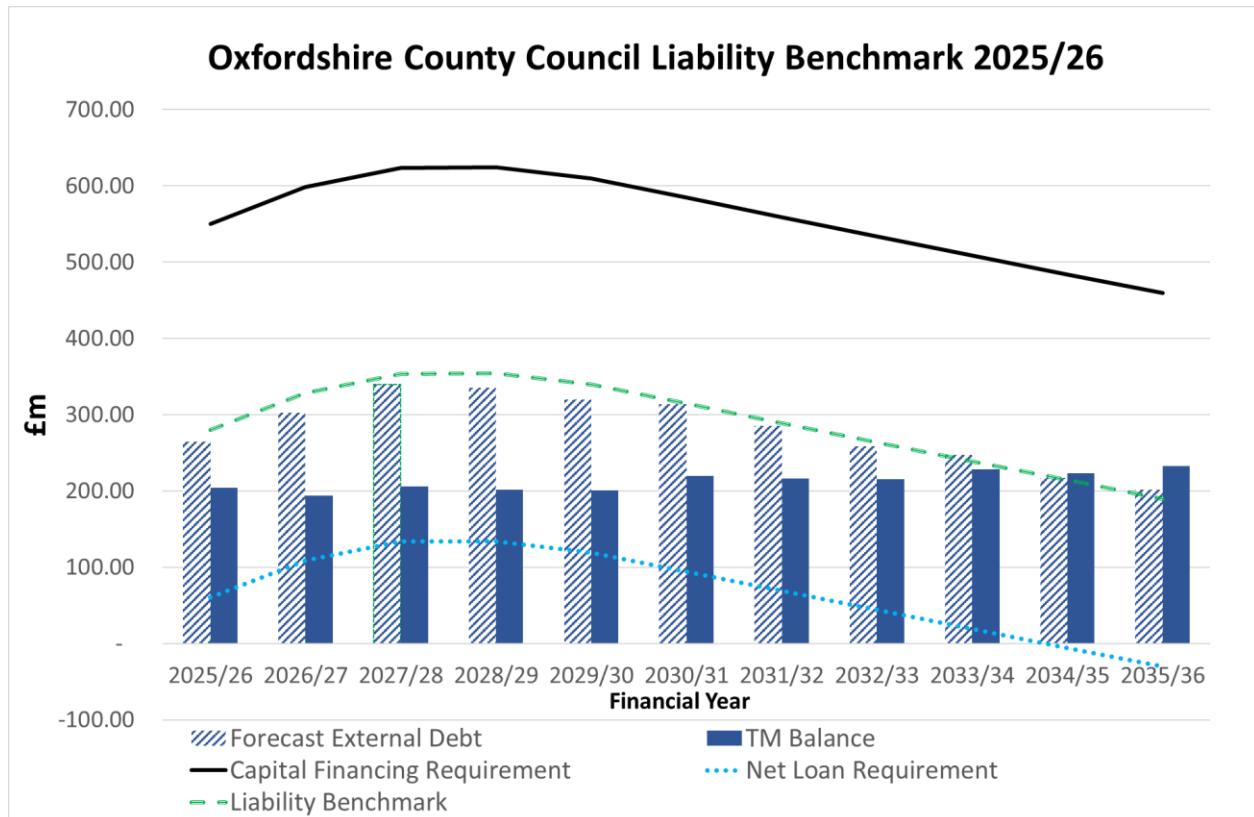
29. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2021 requires the council to set and monitor against Prudential Indicators in the following categories:
 - Prudence – Capital Expenditure & External Debt
 - Affordability
 - Treasury Management

30. This report includes the indicators for Treasury Management. The indicators for Prudence and Affordability are included in the Capital & Investment Strategy agreed by Council.

Liability Benchmark

31. This indicator identifies the minimum future borrowing needs, compared to the capital financing requirement compared to the actual level of external debt.
32. The gap between the capital financing requirement and the minimum borrowing requirement³ represents the maximum amount of financing that can be temporarily funded through internal borrowing. Based on the assessment below the council could internally borrow up to £300m in 2026/27. The forecast internal borrowing position for 2026/27 is £295m.

³ The minimum borrowing requirement is calculated by taking the capital financing requirement, netting off usable reserves and working capital, and adding on a liquidity allowance.



Upper and lower limits to maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing

33. This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.
34. It is calculated as the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment.
35. LOBOs are classified as maturing on the next call date, this being the earliest date that the lender can require repayment.

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing during 2026/27	Lower Limit %	Upper Limit %	2026/27 Forecast %
Under 12 months	0	20	12.86
12 months and within 24 months	0	25	9.84
24 months and within 5 years	0	35	9.60
5 years and within 10 years	5	40	24.56
10 years and above	25	95	43.14

36. Prudential Indicators are reported to and monitored by the TMST on a regular basis and will be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee and Cabinet in the quarterly Treasury Management reports and the Treasury Management Annual Performance Report.

Annual Investment Strategy

37. The council complies with all relevant treasury management regulations, codes of practice and guidance. The council's investment priorities are:

- The security of capital and
- The liquidity of its investments

38. The council also aims to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and the council will not engage in such activity.

39. The Treasury Management Code of Practice requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Policy Statement. Good practice requires that this statement is regularly reviewed and revised as appropriate. Council approved the statement in February [2019](#). The statement is reviewed annually and there are no revisions proposed for 2026/27.

Investment Instruments

40. Investment instruments identified for use in the 2026/27 financial year are set out in the Specified and Non-Specified instrument tables below:

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

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

41. Guidance states that specified investments are those requiring “minimal procedural formalities”. The placing of cash on deposit with banks and building societies ‘awarded high credit ratings by a credit rating agency’, the use of Money Market Funds (MMFs) and investments with the UK Government and local authorities qualify as falling under this phrase as they form a normal part of day to day treasury management.

42. Money market funds (MMFs) will be utilised, but good treasury management practice prevails and whilst MMFs provide good diversification the council will also seek to diversify any exposure by using more than one MMF where practical. It should be noted that while exposure will be limited, the use of MMFs does give the council exposure to institutions that may not be included on the approved lending list for direct deposits. This is deemed to be an acceptable risk due to the benefits of diversification. The Treasury team use an online portal to provide details of underlying holdings in MMFs. This enables more effective and regular monitoring of full counterparty risk.

43. All specified investments will be sterling denominated, with maturities up to a maximum of 1 year, meeting the ‘high’ credit rating criteria where applicable.

44. Non-specified investment products are those which take on greater risk. They are subject to greater scrutiny and should therefore be subject to more rigorous justification and agreement of their use in the Annual Investment Strategy; this applies regardless of whether they are under one-year investments and have high credit ratings.

45. A maximum of 50% of internal investments, and 100% of external investments will be held in non-specified investments.

Non-Specified Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	Max Maturity Period
Term Deposits – other Local Authorities (maturities in excess of 1 year)	N/A	In-house	5 years
UK Government Gilts with maturities in excess of 1 year	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers	5 years in-house, 10 years fund managers
Collective Investment Schemes ⁵ but which are not credit rated	N/A	In-house and Fund Managers	Pooled Funds do not have a defined maturity date

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

Non-Specified Investment Instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	Max Maturity Period
Registered Providers	As agreed by TMST in consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance	In-house	5 years
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies (maturities in excess of 1 year)	Short-term F1+, Long-term AA-	In-house and Fund Managers	3 years
Structured Products (e.g. Callable deposits, range accruals, snowballs, escalators etc.)	Short-term F1+, Long-term AA-	In-house and Fund Managers	3 years
Bonds issued by Multilateral Development Banks	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	25 years
Bonds issued by a financial institution which is guaranteed by the UK Government	AA	In-house and Fund Managers	5 years in-house
Sovereign Bond Issues	AAA	In-house on a buy and hold basis. Fund Managers	5 year in-house, 30 years fund managers
Reverse Repurchase Agreements - maturity in excess of 1 year, or/and counterparty not of high credit quality.	Minimum long-term rating of A-	In-house and Fund Managers	3 years
Covered Bonds	AAA	In-house and Fund Managers	20 years

Changes to Instruments

46. There are no proposed changes to instruments

Credit Quality

47. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (2021) recommends that councils have regard to the ratings issued by the three major credit rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's) and to make decisions based

on all ratings. Whilst the council will have regard to the ratings provided by all three ratings agencies, the council uses Fitch ratings as the basis by which to set its minimum credit criteria for deposits and to derive its maximum counterparty limits. Counterparty limits and maturity limits are derived from the credit rating matrix as set out in the tables at paragraphs 59 and 61 respectively.

48. The TMST may further reduce the derived limits due to the ratings provided by Moody's and Standard & Poor's or as a result of monitoring additional indicators such as Credit Default Swap rates, share prices, Ratings Watch & Outlook notices from credit rating agencies and quality Financial Media sources.
49. Notification of any rating changes (or ratings watch and outlook notifications) by all three ratings agencies are monitored daily by a member of the Treasury Management Team. Updates are also provided by the council's Treasury Management advisors Link Treasury Services and reported to TMST. Appropriate action will be taken for any change in rating.
50. Where a change in the Fitch credit rating places a counterparty on the approved lending list outside the credit matrix (as set out in tables at paragraphs 59 and 61), that counterparty will be immediately removed from the lending list.
51. The Authority defines "high credit quality" organisations as those having a credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher with the Fitch ratings agency.
52. Prior to lending to other local authorities, due diligence is undertaken on their financial resilience. The council will not arrange investments with local authorities that are deemed to have poor financial management and/or standing, or whose operations are deemed to be inconsistent with the council's priorities.

Liquidity Management

53. The council forecasts its cash flow to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a pessimistic basis, with receipts under-estimated and payments over-estimated to minimise the risk of the council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the council's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast. The council uses instant access bank deposit accounts and money market funds for balances forecast to be required at short notice to meet commitments due. The TMST will continue to monitor options available to maintain the required liquidity and will open new accounts with approved counterparties as appropriate.

Lending Limits

54. In addition to the limits determined by the credit quality of institutions, the TMST apply further limits to mitigate risk by diversification. These include:

- Limiting the amount lent to banks in any one country (excluding the UK) to a maximum of 20% of the investment portfolio.
- Limiting the amount lent to any bank, or banks within the same group structure to 10% of the investment portfolio.
- Actively seeking to reduce exposure to banks with bail in risk

55. Where the council has deposits on instant access, this balance may temporarily exceed the 10% bank or group limit. However, the limits as set out in paragraphs 59 and 61 will still apply.

56. Counterparty limits as set out in paragraphs 59 and 61, may be temporarily exceeded by the accrual and application of interest amounts onto accounts such as call accounts, money market funds or notice accounts. Where the application of interest causes the balance with a counterparty to exceed the agreed limits, the balance will be reduced when appropriate, dependent upon the terms and conditions of the account and cashflow forecast.

57. Any changes to the approved lending list will be reported to Cabinet as part of the Business Management and Monitoring Report.

58. The council also manages its credit risk by setting counterparty limits. The matrix below sets out the maximum proposed limits for 2026/27. The TMST may further restrict lending limits dependent upon prevailing market conditions. BBB+ to BBB- ratings is included for overnight balances with the council's bank, currently Lloyds Bank Plc. This is for practical purposes should the bank be downgraded.

LENDING LIMITS - Fitch Rating	Short Term Rating	
Long Term Rating	F1+	F1
AAA	£30m	£20m
AA+	£30m	£20m
AA	£25m	£15m
AA-	£25m	£15m
A+	£20m	£15m
A	£20m	£15m
A-	£15m	£10m
BBB+, BBB, BBB- (bank with which the Council has its bank account)	£20m	£20m

59. The maximum lending limit to other Local Authorities is £30m per Authority. The maximum lending limit for AAAmmf rated Money Market Funds is £25m.

60. The council also manages its counterparty risk by setting maturity limits on deposits, restricting longer term lending to the very highest rated counterparties. The table below sets out the maximum approved limits. The TMST may further restrict lending criteria in response to changing market conditions.

MATURITY LIMITS – Fitch Rating	Short Term Rating	
Long Term Rating	F1+	F1
AAA	3 years	364 days
AA+	2 years	364 days
AA	2 years	9 months
AA-	2 years	9 months
A+	364 days	9 months
A	9 months	6 months
A-	6 months	3 months
BBB+, BBB, BBB- (bank with which the Council has its bank account)	Overnight	Overnight

External Funds

61. The council uses external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three-year period. The council will have no more than 50% of the total portfolio invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding MMFs). This allows the council to achieve diversification while limiting the exposure to funds with a variable net asset value. And, in order to ensure appropriate diversification within externally managed and pooled funds these should be diversified between a minimum of two asset classes.

62. As at 30 November 2025, the council had £90m (original purchase value of £88m) invested in external funds (excluding MMFs), representing 19% of the council's total investment portfolio. Whilst market volatility has seen the capital value fluctuate, they are held with a long term view, and there is no intention to divest from any of the funds at present.

63. The IFRS9 Statutory Override, which mandates that fluctuations in the value of pooled fund investments are taken to the balance sheet, is ending on 31 March 2029 for investments made before 1 April 2024. From 1 April 2029 fluctuations in the fund value are therefore reflected in the revenue account. To mitigate against any reduction in value, a ringfenced IFRS9 reserve was created in 2024/25 with funding of £5.0m. Options to change the funding available in this reserve are being considered as part of the Budget & Business Planning process. If the value of the funds is below the purchase price at the balance sheet date, funds will be released from the reserve to ensure that there is no net impact to the revenue account. Similarly, if the fund value is above the

purchase price at the balance sheet date, any unrealised gain will be transferred to the IFRS9 reserve. It would only be appropriate to release such gains to the revenue account when the funds are divested from and gains are crystallised.

64. The external funds have a targeted income return of 3.75% which has been incorporated into the medium term financial strategy.
65. The performance of the pooled funds is monitored by the TMST throughout the year against the funds' benchmarks and the in-house investment returns. The TMST will keep the external fund investments under review and consider alternative instruments, fund structures and the proportion of external funds to cash balances, to manage overall portfolio risk. It is recommended that authority to withdraw, or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers, continue to be delegated to the TMST.

Investment Approach

66. The TMST will aim to maintain the balance between internal borrowing to temporarily finance the CFR, with short and medium term deposits with high credit quality financial institutions. Money Market Funds will continue to be utilised for instant access cash. This approach will reduce the interest receivable on balances compared with a strategy with a higher level of long term investments, but this will be offset by saving on borrowing costs in the short to medium term whilst borrowing costs remain relatively high.

Treasury Management Indicators for Investments

Upper limit to total of principal sums invested longer than 364 days

67. The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the risk of loss that may arise as a result of the Authority having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.
68. The long term lending limit is based on 50% of the forecast average cash balance. Based on forecast balances reducing to £123m over the medium term, the proposed limits for investments longer than 364 days is set out below:

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m
Upper limit on principal sums invested longer than 364 days	150	100	80	60	60

Policy on Use of Financial Derivatives

69. The council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the council is exposed to.

Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

70. Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
71. It is the view of the TMST that the use of standalone financial derivatives will not be required for Treasury Management purposes during 2026/27. The council will only use derivatives after seeking expertise, a legal opinion and ensuring officers have the appropriate training for their use.

Performance Monitoring

72. The council will monitor its Treasury Management performance against other authorities through its membership of the CIPFA Treasury Management benchmarking club.
73. Arlingclose benchmark the performance of their clients against each other on a quarterly basis, looking at a variety of indicators including investment risk and returns.
74. Latest performance figures will be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee and Cabinet in the quarterly Treasury Management reports and the Treasury Management Annual Performance Report.

Treasury Management Training

75. All members of the Treasury Management Strategy Team are members of CIPFA or other professional accounting bodies. In addition, key treasury management officers receive in-house and externally provided training as deemed appropriate and training needs are regularly reviewed, including as part of the staff appraisal process.
76. The council has opted up to 'professional client' categorisation with under the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II). In order to achieve this, evidence was required that the person(s) authorised to make investment decisions on behalf of the authority have at least one year's relevant professional experience and the expertise and knowledge to make investment decisions and understand the risks involved. Members of the TMST currently meet these criteria and training needs will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure continued compliance.

Financial Implications

- 77. Interest payable and receivable in relation to Treasury Management activities are included within the overall Strategic Measures budget. In house interest receivable for 2026/27 is budgeted to be £10.30m.
- 78. Dividends payable from external funds in 2026/27 are budgeted to be £3.34m.
- 79. Interest payable on external debt in 2026/27 is budgeted to be £13.04m.
- 80. Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, Financial & Commercial Services
kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 81. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report save for the need for ongoing collaborative working between the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. CIPFA guidance promotes the need for consultative working and collaboration between these respective roles to promote good organisational governance.
- 82. The duties of a local authority in relation to Treasury Management are set out in Local Government 2003 as set out in paragraph 8 and 9 above. In addition, the responsibilities of a local authority in monitoring its treasury management are set out in The Treasury Management Code of Practice introduced in 2001/02. Local authorities are required to "have regard" to the code in setting up and approving their Treasury Management arrangements. The Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code, form two parts of what is known as the Prudential Framework. This includes statutory guidance published by the then Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) - Guidance on Local Authority Investments and the Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (5th edition) which was updated on 10 April 2024 and applies to accounting periods starting on/after 1 April 2025. The latest versions of the above codes and guidance have been considered in setting the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.
- 83. The functions of the Audit and Governance Committee include the monitoring of the system for Treasury Management. (Council Constitution Part 5.1A paragraph 1(a) 6)).
- 84. Comments checked by:
- 85. Jay Akbar, Head of Legal and Governance Services,
jay.akbar@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

86. The report does not create any staffing implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

87. There are no equality or inclusion implications arising from the report.

Sustainability Implications

- 88. This report is not expected to have any negative impact with regards to the Council's zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.
- 89. The Treasury Management Strategy Team will consider investments that may make a positive contribution to the Council's carbon commitment when appropriate opportunities become available. The TMST will continue to explore ethical, sustainable and good governance (ESG) investment practices.
- 90. Where the Council has investments in externally managed funds, each of the fund managers is a signatory to the United Nations Principal for Responsible Investment.
- 91. Furthermore, the Council will not knowingly invest directly in organisations whose activities include practices which are inconsistent with the values of the Council or the Council's zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.
- 92. The Treasury Management function is now completely paperless and working in line with the council's agile working policy with a mix of office based and remote working.

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex 1 External View from Link Treasury Services.

Background Papers: Nil
Contact Officer: Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager,
tim.chapple@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January 2026

Annex 1

External view by Arlingclose

ARLINGCLOSE INTEREST RATE FORECASTS 2025-2028

	Current	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25									
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	3.90	3.65	3.50	3.40	3.35								
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	3.92	3.90	3.85	3.80	3.75	3.80	3.80						
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.48	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.30	4.30						
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	5.13	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75	4.80	4.80						
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.73	4.50	4.50	4.45	4.50	4.50							
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85

PWLB forecasts are based on PWLB certainty rates.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY ARLINGCLOSE

- **Economic background:** The impact on the UK from the government's Autumn Budget will influence the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2026/27. Other influences will include lower short-term interest rates alongside higher medium- and longer-term rates, slower economic growth, together with ongoing uncertainties around the global economy, stock market sentiment, and ongoing geopolitical issues.
- The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained Bank Rate at 4.00% in November 2025, following a 0.25% cut in August. At the November meeting, five members, including the Governor's deciding vote, supported holding rates steady, while four favoured a further reduction to 3.75%.
- The accompanying Monetary Policy Report projected modest economic growth, with GDP expected to rise by 0.2% in the final calendar quarter of 2025. Annual growth is forecast to ease from 1.4% before improving again later, reflecting the delayed effects of lower interest rates, looser monetary conditions, stronger global activity, and higher consumer spending. The view of modest economic growth going forward was echoed by the Office for Budget Responsibility in its Economic and fiscal outlook published in line with the Autumn Statement which revised down its estimate of annual real GDP to around 1.5% on average between 2025 and 2030.
- CPI inflation was 3.8% in September 2025, unchanged from the previous two months and below the 4.0% expected. Core CPI eased to 3.5% from 3.6%, contrary to forecasts of a rise to 3.7%. The Bank of England's November Monetary Policy Report projects inflation to fall from this level - expected to mark the peak - to 3.2% by March 2026, before steadily returning to the 2% target by late 2026 or early 2027.
- The labour market continues to ease with rising unemployment, falling vacancies and flat inactivity. In the three months to September 2025, the unemployment rate increased to 5.0%, while the employment rate slipped to 75.0% and the inactivity rate held at 21.0%. Pay growth for the same period eased modestly, with total earnings (including bonuses) rising by 4.8% and regular pay up 4.6%. Going forward, the Bank predicts the unemployment rate will increase modestly to around 5.0% by around the end of 2025 before trending downwards at a gradual pace over the rest of the time horizon.
- The US Federal Reserve also continued to cut rates, most recently reducing the target range for the Federal Funds Rate by 0.25% at its October 2025 meeting, to 3.75%-4.00%, in line with expectations. Financial markets anticipate a further 0.25% cut in December, although Chair Jerome Powell has cautioned that this is not guaranteed, signalling the Fed may pause before any additional easing. A factor influencing a potential pause is the ongoing government shutdown, which has delayed the publication of several important data releases used to inform monetary policy decisions.
- The European Central Bank (ECB) kept its key interest rates unchanged in October for a third consecutive month, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and the main refinancing rate at 2.15%. The ECB reiterated that future policy decisions will remain data-dependent, noting that inflation is close to its 2% target and that the euro area economy continues to expand despite a challenging global environment, including heightened geopolitical risks and trade tensions.
- **Credit outlook:** Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices, which spiked in April 2025 following President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff announcements, have since trended lower,

returning to levels broadly consistent with their 2024 averages. Although CDS prices rose modestly in October, the overall credit outlook remains stable, and credit conditions are expected to remain close to the range seen over the past two years.

- While lower interest rates may weigh on banks' profitability, strong capital positions, easing inflation, steady economic growth, low unemployment, and reduced borrowing costs for households and businesses all support a favourable outlook for the creditworthiness of institutions on Arlingclose's counterparty list. Arlingclose's advice on approved counterparties and recommended investment durations is kept under continuous review and will continue to reflect prevailing economic and credit conditions.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLANNING 2026/27 - 2035/36

BUDGET PRIORITY PROPOSALS - Changes to existing Capital Programme

Strategy - Capital Investment Need	Budget	Prudential Borrowing	Specific Funding	Corporate Need
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Programmes & Other Funding				
Additional Financial Year				
School Condition (School Structural Maintenance)	4,000	0	4,000	0
Schools Devolved Formula Capital	650	0	650	0
Fire & Rescue Service (Vehicles)	800	0	800	0
Additional Funding				
Disabled Facilities Grant 2026/27	7,262	0	7,262	0
Total Inclusions to Capital Programme	12,712	0	12,712	0
Annual Programmes & Other Funding				
Enterprise Zone Funding				0
Enterprise Zone Funding - EZ1 & EZ2 Business Rates Income	14,000	0	14,000	0
CIL Funding (October 24 to September 25)	3,884	0	3,884	0
Total Inclusions to Earmarked Reserves	17,884	0	17,884	0
Total New Funding - Specific Funding	30,596	0	30,596	0
Pipeline Schemes (indicative funding subject to initial business case)*				
Prioritisation				
1) Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health & safety, schools, and delivery of business-critical services	6,303	0	0	6,303
2) Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies	0	0	0	0
3) Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings	5,600	0	0	5,600
4) Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve market towns	9,150	0	0	9,150
5) Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions	1,032	0	0	1,032
6) Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions, but require additional funding to progress	2,000	0	0	2,000
Total Prioritisation Category 1 - 6	24,085	0	0	24,085
TOTAL BUDGET PROPOSALS	54,681	0	30,596	24,085
General Funding, Accounting, Realignment				
Outturn 24/25, final accounts and other funding returned				2,500
Previous Provisions realigned				13,600
Interest from Balances				7,985
Corporate Funds made available				24,085
Current over-programme of the Capital Programme - Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)				-10,365
Capital Programme Over-programmed				-10,365

Capital Financing	£'000
New Funding	
Capital Grants	11,912
Revenue Contributions	800
Prudential Borrowing	0
Interest	7,985
S106 & CIL	3,884
EZ BR Income	14,000
Total Funding	38,581
Budget Realignments	16,100
General Funding & Accounting - Total	54,681
Total Budget Proposals	-54,681
Current over-programme of the Capital Programme - Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)	-10,365
Capital Programme Over-Programmed -Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)	-10,365

Local Transport Consolidated Funding	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Highway Maintenance Block					
Highways Maintenance - Baseline	25,307	28,180	31,351	37,366	122,204
Highways Maintenance - Incentive	9,328	12,005	12,079	12,284	45,696
Sub-total - Highways Maintenance	34,635	40,185	43,430	49,650	167,900
Other Transport Funding					
Local Transport Grant	3,999	5,239	7,180	9,120	25,538
Active Travel Grant	4,085	4,085	4,085	4,085	16,340
Local Bus Grant	3,247	3,312	3,377	3,443	13,379
Total - Local Transport Consolidated Funding	45,966	52,821	58,072	66,298	223,157
Inclusions to Capital Programme					
Highway Maintenance Block	34,635	40,185	43,430	49,650	167,900
Held in Earmarked Reserves					
Local Transport Grant	3,999	5,239	7,180	9,120	25,538
Active Travel Grant	4,085	4,085	4,085	4,085	16,340
Local Bus Grant	3,247	3,312	3,377	3,443	13,379
Funding Held in Earmarked Reserves	11,331	12,636	14,642	16,648	55,257

High priority capital schemes to which indicative funding is proposed to be allocated

Prioritisation criteria	OCC Contribution (estimates subject to business case)
Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health & safety, schools, and delivery of business-critical services	£6.303m
Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies	NA
Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings	£5.600m
Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve Oxfordshire towns	£9.150m
Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions	£1.032m
Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions, but require additional funding to progress	£2.000m
Total	£24.085m

Compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health and safety, schools and delivery of business-critical services	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
Woodeaton School	£2.600m	NA	Countrywide SEN funding, capital receipt and S106 developer contributions	The proposed investment, which is in addition to other funding, will fund the relocation of Woodeaton Manor Special School into a modern, purpose-built facility, providing improved learning environments and enhanced accessibility to better support pupils' educational and wellbeing needs.
Works to Fire Crew Housing	£0.250m	NA	NA	This fund will ensure timely implementation of any remedial works identified through health and safety audits.
Ash Die Back	£0.018m	NA	NA	This investment will enable a proactive approach to managing Ash Dieback and will ensure that lost trees are replaced. An increase in prevalence of the disease has been observed across Oxfordshire with trees showing significant decline. This investment will ensure continued growth in the number of highway trees, as the programme to assess and respond to infected trees is initiated.
HWRC Capital Site Maintenance	£0.075m	NA	NA	The Council plans to carry out essential repair and maintenance works across several Household Waste and Recycling Centre sites over the next two years. These improvements will ensure the facilities remain safe, functional, and fit for purpose for both Oxfordshire residents and the site operatives who manage day-to-day operations.
IT Strategy	£3.110m	£1.930m	NA	This 2-year investment will harness innovative, scalable and secure technologies that enable Oxfordshire County Council to lead digital transformation, improve operational efficiency, and deliver greater value to residents and stakeholders.
Expansion of Museum Resource Centre	£0.250m	NA	NA	This investment will ensure that essential remedial works can take place at St Luke's to ensure the integrity of Council records are maintained ahead of a larger programme of work to review the Council's approach to Heritage.
New Bicester Household Waste and Recycling Centre	NA	£1.000m	S106 Developer Contributions & Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) fund	The project will deliver a modern Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bicester, replacing Ardley Fields, to improve access, increase capacity, and support sustainable waste management for the growing community.
Total	£6.303m			

Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
New Warehouse Premises for Civil Enforcement	NA	NA	Service capital contribution £0.500m	The Parking Enforcement team is currently based in a leased facility, where the agreement is approaching its expiration. Alternative accommodation has been found but requires some capital works to ensure the building is fit for purpose. This investment will enable some refurbishment work to take place to ensure it meets the needs of the team and will also deliver some cost savings to the Council.
Total	£0m			
Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) Pilot Interventions	£1.600m	NA	NA	This programme will deliver targeted improvements based on the findings of the 2024/25 High Goods Vehicle (HGV) studies, aiming to enhance road safety, reduce congestion, and support sustainable freight movement across Oxfordshire.
Investment into Drainage Infrastructure	£4.000m	NA	NA	This investment will deliver highway drainage system repairs to ensure that the increased gully emptying regime delivers the expected benefits. The new gully emptying programme has identified a number of new issues that were not previously known.
Total	£5.600m			

Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve Oxfordshire towns	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
Public Rights of Way (Bridges)	£0.350m	£0.250m	NA	The Rights of Way Bridges Capital Programme ensures Oxfordshire's 2,970 footpath bridges are maintained, refurbished, or replaced to meet safety standards and accessibility principles. This investment ensures continuity of work to keep the network connected, safe, and fit for purpose. It will also ensure that there is the flexibility to respond to urgent repairs and unforeseen events.
Oxford City Centre Regeneration	£1.500m	£0.87	£0.050m contribution from Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (COMPF)	Regeneration and public realm improvements in Oxford city centre will benefit both businesses, residents and visitors, creating vibrant streets and beautiful spaces that reflect Oxford's international reputation for quality and excellence, supporting the thriving local retail and hospitality enterprises.
Public Realm Improvements	£1.500m	NA	NA	This additional funding will enable a greater level of maintenance to take place in our Towns and City targeted at public realm assets which will sustain and strengthen their appeal as vibrant destinations for local communities, visitors, and inward investment.
Quiet Lanes Programme	£0.250m	NA	NA	Quiet Lanes are part of the Council's Active Travel programme ambition. The intention is to make minor roads safer and more comfortable for walking, cycling and horse-riding. This initiative seeks to enhance local and county-wide connectivity for non-motorised users and promote sustainable travel options.
Wantage Market Place	£0.150m	£0.500m	Expected CIL contribution of £0.850m	This investment will progress design and construction for Phase 1 of the Wantage Market Place project. The scheme will create a safe, traffic-free space with step-free access and improve the public realm. The project will enhance the local environment, support businesses, and provide an attractive setting for markets, events, and community activity.
Watlington Relief Road	£3.000m	£11.100m	Combined S106 funds and Growth Deal funds totaling £8.201m	An additional £3m is required for the Watlington Relief Road scheme to cover increased costs due to design changes required to support requests through the planning permission process. The risk and contingency allowance have also been increased due to the scheme's complexity and challenges.
Didcot Central Corridor	£0.200m	£0.850m	NA	This investment will progress and develop schemes identified in the Didcot Central Corridor. The scheme will deliver transport and public realm improvements to create a more accessible environment (through walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities), supporting a more attractive central space for markets, events, local businesses and community activity.

Abbey Meadows Bridge	£0.500m	NA	£0.500m CIL funding & District Council funding	Additional investment is required due to increased budget forecast following initial design and cost estimates for the replacement of this key bridge.
Investment to deliver Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)	£1.700m	NA	NA	The investment will deliver schemes identified through the LCWIP recommendations.
Total	£9.150m			

Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
Expansion of Bicester Community Service Centre	NA	NA	£0.305m Section 106 Developer Contributions	This investment will deliver refurbishment works to enhance the functionality of Bicester Community Support Service. This will improve service delivery, accessibility, and overall user experience for the local community.
Works to Goring Library	NA	NA	£0.750m CIL contributions	Improvement works to Goring Library will enable the service to expand its offering and better meet the needs of the local community. The project will deliver a more flexible and accessible space, supporting a wider range of activities and resources. This will promote learning, engagement and inclusion, providing a modern library experience for all users.
Works to Wantage Library	NA	NA	£0.360m S106 Developer Contribution / CIL funding	The investment in Wantage Library will create a flexible, accessible space that supports a wider range of activities and resources. The improvements aim to enhance facilities and capacity, promoting learning, engagement, and inclusion while delivering a modern library experience for all users.
Additional Community Facilities in Libraries	£0.220m	NA	NA	This fund will support investment into a number of libraries enabling improved community facilities and spaces, including meeting rooms, small pods, charging spaces and study spaces. These interventions will support greater community engagement, cultural activities and access to services across the County.
Expansion of Didcot Library	£0.550m	NA	£1.700m S106 Developer Contributions £0.750m CIL funding	Investment into Didcot Library will deliver expanded capacity and will improve facilities. This will create a more accessible, modern space that supports a wider range of services and community needs.
Works to The Forum, Kidlington	£0.150m	NA	NA	This project will deliver agile workspaces for Oxfordshire County Council partners at the Forum, Kidlington. It will also provide welcoming facilities for families and children visiting social services.
Oxfordshire Tree Project	£0.112m	NA	NA	This investment will establish a sustainable tree propagation unit in central Oxfordshire to supply locally grown trees for public projects that deliver public good with the aim of becoming a hub for community-led satellite nurseries across the County. This initiative will deliver environmental, societal and educational benefits, whilst supporting long-term sustainability. It will also support the Council to replenish trees lost to Ash Dieback by utilising locally grown stock, thereby delivering cost benefits by reducing external sourcing.
Total	£1.032m			

Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions, but require additional funding to progress	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previous year allocations	Other funding sources	Description
Infrastructure Schemes	£2.000m	£4.000m	S106 developer contributions	This investment will aid the delivery of infrastructure schemes that are partly funded by S106 developer contributions but require further funding to progress.
Total	£2.000m			

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Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2035/36

Capital Investment Total: Approved budget, development budget, financial contribution or available funding

SOURCES OF FUNDING	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2029/30 +	CAPITAL RESOURCES TOTAL £'000s
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
Formulaic Capital Allocations	68,727	114,388	100,434	61,822	70,048	7,590	423,009
Devolved Formula Capital- Grant	650	650	650	650	650	650	3,900
Prudential Borrowing	63,809	60,794	51,400	7,432	27,185	275	210,895
Grants	84,467	205,564	93,498	2,177	0	693	386,399
Developer Contributions	53,580	62,078	53,901	24,243	3,153	27,120	224,075
Other External Funding Contributions	4,398	17,852	8,500	500	0	0	31,250
Revenue Contributions	2,432	2,540	4,987	2,958	800	4,000	17,717
Use of Capital Receipts	0	0	70,965	30,151	3,840	31,232	136,188
Use of Capital Reserves	0	0	0	46,769	35,959	5,188	87,916
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROGRAMME RESOURCES UTILISED	278,063	463,866	384,335	176,702	141,635	76,748	1,521,349
TOTAL ESTIMATED IN YEAR RESOURCES AVAILABLE	279,460	411,905	308,488	125,172	105,676	71,560	1,302,261
Capital Grants Reserve C/Fwd	104,167	93,800	38,959	0	0	0	0
Usable Capital Receipts C/Fwd	37,329	38,769	41,649	4,761	0	0	0
Capital Reserve C/Fwd	77,592	87,916	87,916	87,916	41,147	5,188	0

PUPIL PLACES CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES (EXPANSIONS)								
Existing Demographic Pupil Provision - Pipeline)	1,569	2,308	13,813	12,683	15,554	11,000	48,039	104,966
Langtree School, Woodcote (ED997)	1	410	9	0	0	0	0	420
Woodstock, Marlborough - 1FE Expansion (ED982)	343	2,900	1,140	100	0	0	0	4,483
Wood Green - Expansion by 1FE to 8FE (ED973)	369	3,400	500	70	0	0	0	4,339
Stonesfield - Impr to external areas (ED998)	0	123	0	0	0	0	0	123
Orchard Meadow - Foundation Stage Accommodation (ED995)	42	750	220	26	0	0	0	1,038
Heyford Park School - 1FE Expansion (ED987)	237	500	3,600	1,600	446	0	0	6,383
Bampton CE Primary School - Early Yrs	0	100	32	0	0	0	0	132
Bishopswood (Secondary) - Improvements (ED980)	0	5	160	39	0	0	0	204
Existing Demographic Pupil Provision - Completions)	0	1,754	526	482	0	0	205	2,967
PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES (EXPANSIONS) PROGRAMME TOTAL	2,561	12,250	20,000	15,000	16,000	11,000	48,244	125,055
NEW SCHOOLS								
SEND Free School - Faringdon (ED985)	15	1,185	0	0	0	0	0	1,200
Brize Airfield - Secondary School (ED965)	7,536	15,550	37	0	0	0	0	23,123
St Nicholas Primary School, Wallingford - 2FE Primary School (ED930)	1,378	11,000	1,570	11	0	0	0	13,959
Fir Tree, Wallingford - Expansion to Primary School (ED930)	36	740	219	0	0	0	0	995
Heyford New Primary School (ED988)	109	800	2,900	509	0	0	0	4,318
New SEND School, Great Western Park, Didcot (ED992)	310	500	6,700	13,000	314	0	0	20,824
Didcot, Valley Park - New 3FE Primary School (ED993)	15	500	1,400	169	0	0	0	2,084
Brize Meadow New 1FE Primary School (ED942)	42	75	500	2,500	7,110	0	0	10,227
Grove Airfield - Primary 2 (ED1004)	3	10	75	400	1,112	0	0	1,600
Project Development Budget	50	25	0	0	0	0	0	75
New School Programme Completions	61,053	1,487	1,418	0	0	0	342	64,300
NEW SCHOOLS PROGRAMME TOTAL	70,547	31,872	14,819	16,589	8,536	0	342	142,705
ANNUAL PROGRAMME								
Schools Access Initiative	287	250	250	250	250	250	250	1,787
Temporary Classrooms - Replacement & Removal	194	69	0	0	0	0	0	263
School Structural Maintenance (inc Health & Safety)	8,178	7,300	6,400	5,161	3,500	3,500	3,500	37,539
ANNUAL PROGRAMME TOTAL	8,659	7,619	6,650	5,411	3,750	3,750	3,750	39,589

PUPIL PLACES CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME								
Early Years Capital	0	600	750	600	600	381	328	3,259
EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME TOTAL	0	600	750	600	600	381	328	3,259
RETENTIONS PROGRAMME TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	106
PUPIL PLACES CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE TOTAL	81,767	52,341	42,219	37,600	28,886	15,131	52,770	310,714

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
HIF 1 PROGRAMME								
HIF 1 Didcot Science Bridge	12,298	11,800	40,000	41,500	3,537	0	0	109,135
HIF1 Culham river crossing	19,718	18,000	92,000	43,086	0	0	0	172,804
HIF1 Clifton Hampden bypass	12,719	10,400	26,000	17,000	572	0	0	66,691
HIF1 DGT -Development	1,403	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,403
HIF1 PROGRAMME TOTAL	46,138	40,200	158,000	101,586	4,109	0	0	350,033
A40 CORRIDOR (Incl HIF 2)								
HIF2 - A40 Eynsham to Wolvercote	29,132	5,900	40,000	45,850	0	0	0	120,882
HIF2 Dukes Cut Bridge	4,325	650	4,000	456	0	0	0	9,431
HIF2 - A40 Development	879	0	0	0	0	0	0	879
A40 Science Transit Phase 2 - Eynsham Park & Ride	31,034	400	300	211	0	0	0	31,945
A40 Access to Witney - Shores Green	10,953	12,400	3,472	0	0	0	0	26,825
A40 Oxford North (N G'way)	10,663	100	100	100	0	0	0	10,963
A40 CORRIDOR (incl HIF2) PROGRAMME TOTAL	86,986	19,450	47,872	46,617	0	0	0	200,925
KENNINGTON BRIDGE PROGRAMME								
Kennington Bridge - Replacement & Improvements	12,280	700	2,500	14,000	18,000	42,705	0	90,185
KENNINGTON BRIDGE PROGRAMME TOTAL	12,280	700	2,500	14,000	18,000	42,705	0	90,185
ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME								
Active Travel Phase 3 Programme	3,087	2,111	7,207	0	0	0	0	12,405
Active Travel Phase 4 Programme	111	484	2,559	0	0	0	0	3,154
Active Travel Phase 5 Programme	0	100	200	0	0	0	0	300
School Street P2	343	81	0	0	0	0	0	424
Mobility Hubs - Benson & Carterton	80	200	992	0	0	0	0	1,272
Wantage Market Place Improvements (Development Budget)	0	400	100	0	0	0	0	500
ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME TOTAL	3,621	3,376	11,058	0	0	0	0	18,055

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
COUNTYWIDE PROGRAMME								
NW Bicester A4095 Road Roundabout Improvements	11,822	400	178	0	0	0	0	12,400
M40 J10 Improvements	6,054	2,450	76	0	0	0	0	8,580
Tramway Rd, Accessibility Improvements	6,028	8,300	1,669	0	0	0	0	15,997
NW Bicester A4095 Road Realignment (Development Budget)	147	250	1,600	2,003	0	0	0	4,000
(BSIP) Cherwell Street Corridor, Banbury	373	900	2,600	294	0	0	0	4,167
Watlington Relief Rd	4,002	500	2,709	0	0	0	0	7,211
Benson Relief Rd	5,205	1,200	85	0	0	0	0	6,490
Wantage Eastern Link Rd (Phase 1-2 Contribution, P3)	9,742	400	33	0	0	0	0	10,175
A4130 Steventon Lights	2,683	2,300	7,500	835	0	0	0	13,318
Bridgwater Northern Perimeter Road 3 (Development Budget)	1,182	750	397	0	0	0	0	2,329
16 Lodge Hill Interchange	7,979	11,600	16,507	0	0	0	0	36,086
Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford Bus Priority (BSIP)	0	600	633	0	0	0	0	1,233
Other Completed / Development schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	565	565
OXFORD PROGRAMME								
Oxpens to Osney Mead Cycle	6,022	40	2,738	0	0	0	0	8,800
Oxford - Traffic Filters	2,842	675	1,200	1,500	349	0	0	6,566
A44 Corridor Improvements (Peartree & Cassington Roundabouts)	23,307	226	0	0	0	0	0	23,533
North Oxford Corridors - Kidlington	4,859	76	0	0	0	0	0	4,935
Woodstock Rd Improvements (Woodstock Rd Corridor)	3,676	324	0	0	0	0	0	4,000
Active Travel Phase 2	5,612	475	16	0	0	0	0	6,103
Oxford Zero Emission Zone	1,579	700	1,000	2,200	333	0	0	5,812
Broad Street	564	21	0	0	0	0	0	585
East Oxford Active Neighbourhood (EO Mini Holland)	70	200	2,800	1,576	0	0	0	4,646
A4158 (Oxford, Plain to Eastern By-pass) Iffley Rd	134	650	156	0	0	0	0	940
A4165 (Oxford, St Giles - Cutteslowe R'about) Banbury Rd	130	700	256	0	0	0	0	1,086
Traffic Congestion - Traffic Filters Delay Mitigation	14	480	3	0	0	0	0	497
Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA)	34,551	4,264	0	0	0	0	0	38,815
Other Completed / Development schemes	0	320	0	0	0	0	55	375
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE (Other Schemes) PROGRAMME TOTAL	138,577	38,801	42,156	8,408	682	0	620	229,244
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE TOTAL	287,602	102,527	261,586	170,611	22,791	42,705	620	888,442

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s	
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s		
PLACE SHAPING									
North	0	535	215	0	0	0	0	750	
South	2,252	655	3,350	1,470	0	0	0	0	7,727
Central	899	6,962	5,149	770	665	0	0	0	14,445
PLACE SHAPING TOTAL	3,151	8,152	8,714	2,240	665	0	0	0	22,922
TRANSPORT AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME									
East-West Rail (Contribution)	1,616	600	600	600	600	600	600	6,439	11,055
Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund	0	0	750	1,000	1,003	0	0	0	2,753
S106 Combined Programme	0	120	4,610	12,520	10,640	0	0	0	27,890
Colley Branch Line (Contribution)	0	0	0	0	0	2,500	0	0	2,500
TRANSPORT AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE TOTAL	1,616	720	5,960	14,120	12,243	3,100	6,439	0	44,198
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE									
TOTAL	292,369	111,399	276,260	186,971	35,699	45,805	7,059	0	955,562

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
<u>STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME</u>								
Carriageways	6,181	8,284	6,960	6,960	6,960	6,960	0	42,305
Surface Treatments	11,792	12,943	14,585	14,585	14,585	14,563	0	83,053
Structural Highway Improvements	7,175	9,060	8,250	8,250	8,250	8,250	0	49,235
Footways & Cycleways	5,091	3,495	3,599	3,599	3,599	3,599	0	22,982
Drainage	2,445	2,666	2,746	2,746	2,746	2,746	0	16,095
Bridges	5,604	4,413	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	0	42,017
Electrical	671	1,042	1,191	1,191	1,191	1,191	0	6,477
Safety Fences	798	365	230	230	230	230	0	2,083
Minor Works: Traffic Schemes	771	841	867	867	867	867	0	5,080
Operations: Scheduled Maintenance	1,491	1,941	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	358	12,790
STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE ANNUAL PROGRAMMES TOTAL	42,019	45,050	49,428	49,428	49,428	46,406	358	282,117
<u>IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES</u>								
Accessibility & Road Safety Schemes	1,381	1,400	16	0	0	0	0	2,797
Vision Zero (Road Safety) (Speed Management)	1,353	1,727	920	0	0	0	0	4,000
20mph Speed Limit	3,440	474	286	0	0	0	0	4,200
USVF Road Safety: RAF Barford St John	3,499	495	0	0	0	0	0	3,994
Drayton Traffic Calming Scheme	18	43	815	0	0	0	0	876
Harwell. A417 Toucan Crossing	0	30	180	37	0	0	0	247
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES TOTAL	9,691	4,169	2,217	37	0	0	0	16,114
<u>MAJOR SCHEMES & OTHER PROGRAMMES</u>								
Street Lighting LED replacement	36,448	4,274	91	0	0	0	0	40,813
Drayton Depot	666	84	0	0	0	0	0	750
Highways Bridges Recovery Programme	887	828	1,035	0	0	0	0	2,750
STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE MAJOR SCHEMES TOTAL	38,001	5,186	1,126	0	0	0	0	44,313

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
HIGHWAYS NETWORK PROGRAMMES								
Bus Journey Time Reliability	668	222	0	0	0	0	0	890
BSIP (Countywide Traffic Signals)	396	847	0	0	0	0	0	1,243
BSIP (Real Time Passenger Information)	1,743	57	0	0	0	0	0	1,800
BSIP (Traffic Signal Programme)	0	916	19	0	0	0	0	935
BSIP (RTI Upgrades)	0	1,004	0	0	0	0	0	1,004
Controlled Parking Zones	591	656	326	0	0	0	0	1,573
Park & Ride	900	900	200	0	0	0	0	2,000
Part 6 Moving Vehicles Violations Cameras	839	350	900	855	0	0	0	2,944
Upgrade of CCTV camera's	407	193	0	0	0	0	0	600
Traffic Signals (TSOG - Obsolescence Grant)	0	600	42	0	0	0	0	642
Traffic Signals Programme	278	390	471	450	450	450	0	2,489
BSIP Programme	0	2,903	0	0	0	0	0	2,903
HIGHWAYS NETWORK MANAGEMENT TOTAL	5,822	9,038	1,958	1,305	450	450	0	19,023
DEVELOPER FUNDED (S106 & CIL) PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS TOTAL	0	1,000	800	800	600	600	600	4,400
HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE TOTAL	95,533	64,443	55,529	51,570	50,478	47,456	958	365,967

PROPERTY & ESTATES & INVESTMENT STRATEGY PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
<u>CORPORATE ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</u>								
Carterton Community Safety Centre	805	200	2,000	4,295	0	0	0	7,300
Oxford Rewley Road Fire Station	0	0	0	4,825	7,900	2,575	0	15,300
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Phase 1 (Rewley Rd Development)	325	350	1,000	1,093	339	0	0	3,107
Children's Homes Programme	6,534	3,804	112	0	0	0	0	10,450
Re-provision of Banbury Library (PE39)	2	100	1,400	1,536	0	0	0	3,038
New Salt Store & Accommodation (R20)	1,990	840	0	0	0	0	0	2,830
Joint Use Agreement Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbury, Mill Arts Relocation	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	50
Oxford Accommodation Strategy - Speedwell	2,104	1,500	4,500	13,000	2,894	0	0	23,998
Greenwood Centre - Supported Accommodation	0	165	1,200	565	0	0	0	1,930
CORPORATE ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TOTAL	11,760	6,959	10,262	25,314	11,133	2,575	0	68,003
<u>CORPORATE ESTATE CONDITION (Non-School) PROGRAMMES</u>								
Health & Safety (Non-Schools)	765	200	200	200	200	200	235	2,000
Fire Remedial Works P2&P3	0	1,500	1,500	700	0	0	0	3,700
Minor Works Programme	578	527	0	0	0	0	0	1,105
Defect Liability Programme	10,525	600	0	0	0	0	475	11,600
Energy Saving Measures	2,571	7,290	9,608	700	0	0	97	20,266
Gypsy & Travellers Sites	238	762	0	0	0	0	0	1,000
Witney Library Roof Replacement	8	280	112	0	0	0	0	400
Abingdon Fire Station - Roof	0	100	125	0	0	0	0	225
Westgate Library (Development Budget)	0	33	400	150	0	0	0	583
Breathing Apparatus & Decontamination Areas at Fire Stations	32	100	600	594	0	0	0	1,326
CORPORATE ESTATE CONDITION PROGRAMMES TOTAL	14,717	11,392	12,545	2,344	200	200	807	42,205
<u>INVESTMENT STRATEGY</u>								
Office Rationalisation & Co-location Programme	1,623	2,000	2,800	1,896	0	0	0	8,319
Planning Consents Programme	320	550	350	648	0	0	0	1,868
INVESTMENT STRATEGY PROGRAMME TOTAL	1,943	2,550	3,150	2,544	0	0	0	10,187

PROPERTY & ESTATES & INVESTMENT STRATEGY PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME								
Warm Homes Grant	0	1,787	1,377	1,378	0	0	0	4,542
Schools Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund	298	400	600	567	0	0	0	1,865
Tree Policy	632	500	600	293	0	0	0	2,025
Thames Path Bank Repairs	233	700	500	67	0	0	0	1,500
LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure)	0	110	2,828	1,555	0	0	0	4,493
Public Rights of Way	344	360	480	467	125	125	21	1,922
Public Rights of Way (developer and Other funded)	475	300	350	350	350	41	0	1,866
Redbridge Maintenance - Stabilisation Works	61	100	1,338	0	0	0	0	1,499
Redbridge HWRC (Site Redevelopment)	0	50	300	1,500	4,250	445	0	6,545
New Bicester HWRC (Development Budget)	0	31	100	0	0	0	0	131
Waste Recycling Centre Infrastructure Programme	749	155	35	0	0	0	0	939
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME TOTAL	2,792	4,493	8,508	6,177	4,725	611	21	27,327
ADULT ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME								
Adult Short Breaks Accommodation	0	600	700	0	0	0	0	1,300
Adult - Gibbets Farm, Witney	0	800	185	0	0	0	0	985
Adult - Whitehorns Way Drayton	0	600	200	0	0	0	0	800
Adult - Crescent Way Witney	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	75
RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME TOTAL	0	2,075	1,085	0	0	0	0	3,160
RETENTIONS PROGRAMME								
RETENTIONS PROGRAMME TOTAL	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	54
PROPERTY & ESTATES, AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE TOTAL	31,212	27,523	35,550	36,379	16,058	3,386	828	150,936

ICT STRATEGY CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
ICT STRATEGY PROGRAMME								
Digital Infrastructure	3,676	5,155	2,096	200	0	0	0	11,127
5G Innovation Region: Connected Heartland	1,341	2,999	0	0	0	0	0	4,340
Digital Places	0	0	500	0	0	0	0	500
ICT STRATEGY PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE TOTAL	5,017	8,154	2,596	200	0	0	0	15,967

PASSPORTED FUNDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s	
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s		
PASSPORTED FUNDING									
Disabled Facilities Grant	0	8,261	8,262	0	0	0	0	16,523	
Devolved Formula Capital	0	650	650	650	650	650	650	3,900	
PASSPORTED FUNDING TOTAL	0	8,911	8,912	650	650	650	650	20,423	
SPECIALIST HOUSING & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE									
ECH - New Schemes & Adaptations to Existing Properties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	550	550
Deferred Interest Loans (CSDP)	0	50	50	50	50	50	50	0	250
Loans to Foster/Adoptive Parents	0	300	300	115	0	0	0	0	715
Safe Sapce (Financial Contribution)	0	850	945	0	0	0	0	0	1,795
SPECIALIST HOUSING & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TOTAL	0	1,200	1,295	165	50	50	550	3,310	
PASSPORT FUNDING PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE TOTAL	0	10,111	10,207	815	700	700	1,200	23,733	

VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME - Latest Spend Forecast

Project/ Programme Name	Previous Years Actual Expenditure £'000s	Firm Programme		Provisional Programme				Total Budget £'000s
		2025/26 £'000s	2026/27 £'000s	2027/28 £'000s	2028/29 £'000s	2029/30 £'000s	29/30 + £'000s	
<u>Vehicles & Equipment</u>								
Vehicle Management Service - Replacement Programme	1,419	2,000	3,500	7,000	4,081	0	0	18,000
Vehicle Management Service - EV Charging Point	355	450	205	0	0	0	0	1,010
F&RS Vehicles replacement	0	800	800	800	800	800	4,000	8,000
Henley Library - Refurbishment	24	331	0	0	0	0	0	355
Witney Library - Refurbishment	42	511	0	0	0	0	0	553
VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE	1,840	4,092	4,505	7,800	4,881	800	4,000	27,918
TOTAL								