

To: **Members of the Cabinet**

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

**Tuesday, 16 June 2026 at 2.00 pm**

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

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



Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

June 2026

**Committee Officer: Democratic Services**  
*Email: [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

### **Membership**

#### *Councillors*

Tim Bearder	Leader of the Council
Neil Fawcett	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources
Judith Edwards	Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources
Gareth Epps	Cabinet Member for Transport
Rebekah Fletcher	Cabinet Member for Adults
Sean Gaul	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Laura Gordon	Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy
Kate Gregory	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities
Liz Leffman	Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair
Dan Levy	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation

*The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting  
will become effective at the end of the working day on 22 June 2026  
unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.  
Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated  
to all Members of the County Council.*

*Date of next meeting: 14 July 2026*

# AGENDA

## 1. Apologies for Absence

## 2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

## 3. Minutes (Pages 11 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 (**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

## 4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am three working days before the meeting, ask a question on an item on the agenda.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

## 5. 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](mailto: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.

## **6. Appointments to Category A Outside Bodies 2026/27 (Pages 17 - 26)**

*Cabinet Member:* Leader

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/100

*Non-key decision*

*Contact:* Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

Tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer (**CA6**)

To confirm the Cabinet's appointments for the civic year 2026/27.

**The Cabinet is recommended to AGREE the appointments set out in the annex to the report**

## **7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 27 - 80)**

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Customer Service Centre Update

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Reports on:-

- a) Minerals and Waste Planning
- b) School Streets
- c) Bus Services and Rural Transport (including Mobility Hubs)
- d) Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme Monitoring
- e) Unauthorised Waste Site near Kidlington: Interim Report

## **8. SEND Reform Plan (TO FOLLOW)**

*Cabinet Member:* Children and Young People

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/107

*Key decision*

*Contact:* Anna Jennings, Head of Transformation

Anna.Jennings@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CA8**)

## **9. Tree Care Framework - Contract Award (Pages 81 - 106)**

*Cabinet Member:* Place, Environment and Climate Action

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/102

*Key decision*

*Contact:* Andy Lederer, Principal Officer - Arboriculture

andy.lederer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CA9**)

Seeking Cabinet approval for award of Tree Care Framework.

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) **approve the use of a Tree Care Framework Contract model to deliver planned and responsive tree management activity for trees within the county council's responsibility as highway authority and property owner.**
- b) **To delegate the award of the contract, and any future extensions, to Director of Environment & Highways in consultation with Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair**

## **10. HR & Cultural Change - Quarterly Employee Data Report Q4 2025/6 (Pages 107 - 122)**

*Cabinet Member:* Resources and Deputy Leader

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/081

*Non-key decision*

*Contact:* Nathan Phillips, Data and Insight Team Manager

*Nathan.phillips@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Director of HR and Culture Change **(CA10)**

Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.

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

## **11. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Performance and Risk Quarter 4 2025-26 and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2025-26 (Pages 123 - 230)**

*Cabinet Member:* Finance, Property and Transformation

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/029

*Key decision*

*Contact:* Verity Royle, Planning and Reporting Manager

*Verity.royle@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) **(CA11)**

To note the report and agree the recommendations

**Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **Note the report and annexes;**
  - Annex A Performance – Quarter 4 2025-26**
  - Annex B Exceptions – Quarter 4 2025-26**
  - Annex C – Complaints and FOI's**
  - Annex D – Provisional financial year end position 2025/26**
  - Annex E – Annual report**

- b) **Note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2025/26 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as explained in Annex D.**
- c) **Reserves:**
  - i. **Approve an £8.0m additional contribution to High Needs DSG risk reserve in 2025/26 (ahead of submission of the SEND Reform Plan to the Department for Education). The balance held in the reserve will be considered as part of the budget process for 2027/28 (Annex D Para 116 -118).**
  - ii. **Approve that the £2.7m 2025/26 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is held in reserves and carried forward for use in future years as set out in Annex D Appendix 4c (Annex D Para 116, 119).**
  - iii. **Approve the creation of a Congestion Charge Reserve, and contribution of £1.4m, to hold and support funding for the ongoing operation of the scheme as well as investments set out in the report to Cabinet in May 2026 (Annex D Para 116, 120).**
  - iv. **Approve a £0.8m contribution to the Budget Priorities reserve to support Education SEND (Annex D Para 121 - 122).**

## **12. Capital Outturn Report 2025-26 (Pages 231 - 250)**

*Cabinet Member:* Finance, Property and Transformation

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2026/043

*Key decision*

*Contact:* Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) **(CA12)**

To note the performance against the capital programme for 2025/26 as set out in the report.

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **Note performance against the Capital Programme for 2025/26.**
- b) **Note the Capital Programme Provisional Outturn Summary for 2025/26**

**Annex 1a: Strategy Programmes Expenditure**

**Annex 1b: Capital Financing**

**Annex 1c: Strategy / Programme Level Reporting during the year**

## **13. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 251 - 260)**

*Cabinet Member:* All

Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,  
[chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include “updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting”. Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA13**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

***The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.***

**14. For information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny item (Pages 261 - 268)**

Repair of defects and superusers

## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

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

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

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

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

### **Declaring an interest**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Agenda Item 3

## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 May 2026 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.00 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Neil Fawcett – in the Chair

Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Judith Edwards  
Councillor Gareth Epps  
Councillor Rebekah Fletcher  
Councillor Sean Gaul  
Councillor Laura Gordon  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor Dan Levy

**Other Members in Attendance:**

Councillor Mark Lygo  
Councillor Glynis Phillips  
Councillor Ian Snowdon  
Councillor Liam Walker

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Paul Fermer (Director of Environment and Highways), Lisa Lyons (Director of Children's Services), Kathy Wilcox (Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer), Jack Ahier (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

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

**66/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none.

**67/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

**68/26 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2026 were approved as a correct record.

**69/26 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

Please see the attached annex.

**70/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

A list of speakers can be found below:

7 - Reports from Scrutiny Committees

Cllr Ian Snowdon

8 – Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan

Luke Marion  
Robin Tucker  
Danny Yee

10 – Quiet Lanes Policy & Pilot Programme

Cllr Emily Kerr  
Robin Tucker  
Danny Yee

**71/26 APPOINTMENTS 2026/27**

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet had before it a report asking it to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways supported the discharge of the Council's executive functions.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources, proposed that the appointments be deferred to the next appropriate meeting, and it was approved.

**RESOLVED:**

**To defer the agreement of appointments to the bodies set out in the annex to the report to the next appropriate meeting.**

## **72/26 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet received the following report from the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will respond in due course:

- a) Domestic Abuse – Safe Accommodation Provision

## **73/26 OXFORD CONGESTION CHARGE INVESTMENT PLAN**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out revisions to the proposed investment plan for surplus income from Oxford's temporary congestion charge scheme, outlining recommended allocations and justifications for spending to support local transport policies, following the item's deferral from the previous Cabinet meeting in April.

Cabinet heard from external speakers on several matters, including the performance of the free park and ride scheme, bus usage, schemes to support NHS staff and teachers, active travel infrastructure and improvements in safety for pedestrians and cyclists at junctions.

Councillor Bekah Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, presented the report.

Cabinet noted the improved reliability and timings of bus services since the temporary congestion charge's introduction in October, which had also led to increased passengers using bus services. Members thanked the outgoing Cabinet Member for his work on this scheme.

Members particularly highlighted the good value of the proposed £3 Park & Ride offer, the incentives specifically for NHS staff and teachers and junction safety improvements but reflected that future income from the scheme was not guaranteed.

Councillor Fletcher moved and Councillor Gaul seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) **Approve the congestion charge investment plan, as detailed at Annex 1 and outlined in paragraph 20, including a £3 combined parking and bus ticket to replace the current free park and ride offer as soon as practically possible after 1 June 2026.**
- b) **Approve the amendments to the council's Fees and Charges for 2026/27 as shown in Annex 2**

- c) **Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Transport Management for:**
- i. **the allocation of any remaining unallocated surplus**
  - ii. **the apportionment of the funds for “Active travel and additional public transport schemes” (Table 1) to specific projects, including but not limited to the list of such schemes in Annex 1**

**74/26 BEST START IN LIFE PLAN**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet received a report on the Best Start in Life Plan, which was aimed at improving early childhood development outcomes for all children but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, presented the report.

Cabinet noted that the intention was to get more children achieving the good level of development (GLD) indicators, reflecting the system-wide approach to achieve this through family support, auto-enrolment on free school meals, early intervention and wider community facilities such as libraries. Cabinet noted the oversight of this plan through the Children’s Trust Board, which reported into the Health & Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Gaul moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) **Note the release of the plan and share any feedback about its content.**

**75/26 QUIET LANES POLICY & PILOT PROGRAMME**

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet considered a report on Quiet Lanes Policy & Pilot Programme, aimed at making rural roads safer and more suitable for walking, cycling, wheeling and horse-riding through pilot schemes using existing allocations of funding and policy frameworks based on support from local areas.

Cabinet heard from external speakers on matters including the benefits for rural communities, road safety and danger, the structured pilot approach working with local communities, the prioritisation of schemes that enhance the wider active travel network and the need to have physical interventions to restrict access to quiet lanes.

Councillor Bekah Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, introduced the report.

Cabinet noted the synergies with the direction set in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), supporting vision zero, healthy streets and public health aims. It was confirmed that after the pilot schemes had been rolled out, evaluation would be undertaken and it would be brought back to Cabinet to present the evaluation and refine the policy if required. Members also noted the importance of engagement with the community, parish council and local councillors to ensure it was requested, as was the case with the introduction of 20mph speed limits.

Councillor Fletcher moved and Councillor Epps seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) Approve the County Council’s Quiet Lanes Policy statement as attached at Annex 1**
- b) Approve the Assessment criteria for consideration of Quiet Lanes at Annex 2 and the Implementation Toolkit at Annex 3**
- c) Endorse the proposed approach to implementing, and testing, the Quiet Lanes Policy across Oxfordshire through a programme of pilot schemes (to be identified with local county councillors and parish/town councils)**
- d) Delegate authority to Director of Environment & Highways, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Transport Management, to bring into operation Traffic Regulation Orders (both permanent and experimental) for the pilot schemes.**

**76/26 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 11)

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

**RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.**

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....



**Divisions: ALL**

**CABINET – 16 JUNE 2026**

**APPOINTMENTS 2026/27**

**Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) **AGREE** the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report.

## **Introduction**

1. The report asks the Cabinet to consider Member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions. The report reflects the basis on which appointments to the respective bodies have been made in the past and, subject to any adjustments that may be considered appropriate, invites the Cabinet to agree arrangements for filling the Councillor places on those bodies.
2. The Cabinet was originally asked to make appointments to the bodies listed in Annex 1 at its meeting on 19 May. However, in view of decision of the former Leader to step down from her position as Leader on 12 May, and the Cabinet meeting occurring before Council could appoint its new Leader on 20 May, the decision to agree arrangements for filling Councillor places on outside bodies was deferred. The membership of the Cabinet and specific portfolios within it have also since been updated, and this report seeks to reflect these changes.
3. Appointments to Outside Bodies are addressed in Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (England) 2000. Schedule 2 sets out the functions which may be (but need not be) the responsibility of an authority's executive. Paragraph 19 provides for:

“The appointment of any individual—

(a) to any office other than an office in which he is employed by the authority;

(b) to any body other than—

(i) the authority;

(ii) a joint committee of two or more authorities; or

(c) to any committee or sub-committee of such a body,

and the revocation of any such appointment.”

4. The Annex to this report only refers to those appointments which are the direct

responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the of Council, its committees or local processes as appropriate. A further report is anticipated over the summer to amend this list as part of a wider update on outside body representation.

### **Joint Committees**

5. These are formal bodies set up to exercise statutory functions jointly with other authorities. Members of joint committees exercising executive functions must be members of the Cabinet.
6. The current joint committees are listed in **Section 1** of the Annex to this report.<sup>1</sup>

### **Local Statutory Bodies**

7. The County Council is required to set up and run a number of local bodies in connection with certain statutory functions, typically with other organisations. County Council representation is not generally limited to Cabinet Members.
8. The current local statutory bodies are listed in **Section 2** of the Annex to this report.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

9. This category comprises Partnerships which the Cabinet has designated as 'strategic' and whose membership Cabinet has agreed should be linked to the role of Cabinet Member/s and not to individually named members.
10. Cabinet are asked to note that the Oxford Local Enterprise Partnership has now become Enterprise Oxfordshire. Further, Cabinet are asked to note that the Integrated Care Partnership no longer refers to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership, but instead the newly-formed Thames Valley Integrated Care Partnership.
11. The current strategic partnerships are listed in **Section 3** of the Annex to this report.

### **Standing Advisory Bodies**

12. This category comprises bodies which have been set up on a permanent basis in connection with particular functions. They do not possess executive powers but provide a forum for discussion and liaison. County Council representation is not limited to Cabinet Members.
13. The current standing advisory bodies are listed in **Section 4** of the Annex to this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the references to Cabinet Member roles in the Annex do not always correlate exactly with current Cabinet Member titles; the closest is nominated.

## **Informal Member/Officer Working Groups**

14. This is a diverse group of informal bodies set up from time to time to assist with the discharge of the responsibilities of the Cabinet. There is a wide variety of form and purpose, from purely internal management tools to inter-authority forums for overseeing issues of common interest. Members and officers share an equal status on these bodies, which are not subject to the access to information rules applying to formal committees and subcommittees; however, some are open to the public and may allow public address at their meetings.
15. These bodies cannot exercise executive functions themselves but provide available forum for discussion of issues outside the formal decision-making processes. Where voting on such groups is permitted, this can only be on the basis of an indicative view and cannot in any way bind the body responsible for the ultimate decision.
16. Please note, that owing to the fact that appointments are made by political group leaders, and not by Cabinet, the Corporate Parenting Panel has been removed from this list.
17. The informal Member/officer working groups are listed in **Section 5** of the Annex to this report.

## **Strategic Outside Bodies**

18. The Cabinet is responsible for appointments to those outside bodies which it has identified as 'strategic' and which have been endorsed as such by the Council.
19. The strategic outside bodies are listed in **Section 6** of the Annex to this report.

## **Member Champions**

20. Cabinet may appoint Member Champions under Part 1.2 of the Constitution. The current Champions are listed in **Section 7**.

## **Financial Implications**

21. There are no direct financial implications for this report.

Comments checked by:  
Drew Hodgson  
Strategic Finance Business Partner

## **Legal Implications**

22. Appointments to joint committees or working groups that exercise executive functions fall within the remit of the Cabinet.

22. Appointments or nominations to outside bodies are made pursuant to the Council's Constitution (Part 3.4 paragraph 1(e)) which gives Cabinet the authority to appoint to a list of external bodies agreed by Council.
23. There are no other specific legal implications directly arising from this report.

Comments checked by:  
Jay Akbar  
Head of Legal & Governance

ANITA BRADLEY  
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Proposed appointments for 2026/27

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager, [tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

June 2026

**Category A - 2026/27 Appointments****Section 1 – Joint Committees**

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Thames Valley Fire Control Service	2		Dan Levy	
			Neil Fawcett	
Traffic Penalty Tribunal - Outside London Adjudication Committee	1	Cabinet Member for Transport	Gareth Epps	
Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee	1	Leader of the Council	Tim Bearder	Neil Fawcett
Thames Valley Collaboration Group	1		Judith Edwards	
Didcot Garden Town Board	1		Judith Edwards	Tim Bearder

**Section 2 – Local Statutory Bodies**

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Adoption Panels	4		Roz Smith	
			Susanna Pressel	
			James Robertshaw	
			Emma Markham	
Fostering Panels	2		Nick Cotter	
			Toyah Overton	
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	4		Roz Smith	
			Imade Edosomwan	
			Vacancy (OxAll)	
			James Barlow	

## Section 3 – Strategic Partnerships

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
<b>Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board</b>	1	Leader of Council	Tim Bearder	Kate Gregory
<b>Health and Wellbeing Board</b>	4	Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Adults , Public Health, Children's and Young People	Sean Gaul	
			Tim Bearder	
			Rebekah Fletcher	
			Kate Gregory	
<b>Children's Trust Board</b>	3	Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and Future Generations Champion	Sean Gaul	
			Kate Gregory	
<b>Health Improvement Partnership Board</b>	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health	Kate Gregory	
<b>Integrated Care Partnership</b>	2	Leader of Council	Tim Bearder	
		Cabinet Member for Adults	Rebekah Fletcher	
<b>Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</b>	1	Cabinet Member for Adults	Rebekah Fletcher	
<b>Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust</b>	1	Cabinet Member for Public Health	Kate Gregory	
<b>Oxford Strategic Partnership</b>	1		Neil Fawcett	
<b>Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance</b>	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities	Judith Edwards	
<b>Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership</b>	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action	Laura Gordon	
<b>Milestone Strategic</b>	1	Cabinet Member for Transport Management	Gareth Epps	

<b>Partnership Board</b>				
<b>Rural Services Network</b>	1		Judith Edwards	Neil Fawcett
<b>South East Employers</b>	3		Neil Fawcett	
			Lesley McLean	
			Laura Gordon	
<b>Viridor Strategic Partnership Board</b>	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action	Laura Gordon	
<b>Resources and Waste Partnership</b>	1		Laura Gordon	
<b>South East Strategic Leaders</b>	1		Tim Bearder	

#### Section 4 – Standing Advisory Bodies

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
<b>Oxfordshire Music Hub Board</b>	3			
			Glynis Phillips	
			Vacancy (Ox All)	
<b>Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group</b>	5	Non-executive County Council Members and 1 observer with no voting rights - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education	Andy Graham	
			Judith Edwards	
			John Shiri	
			Sean Gaul	
			James Plumb	

#### Section 5 - Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Members	Substitute
<b>West End Steering Group</b>	2	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning	Tim Bearder	
			Laura Gordon	

### Section 6 – Strategic Outside Body

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
<b>County Councils Network (CNN)</b>	4	4 County Councillors - in the past this has been Leader/ Deputy Leader	Tim Bearder	
			Neil Fawcett	
			Dan Levy	
			Judith Edwards	
<b>Local Government Association (LGA)</b>			Tim Bearder (C.V)	Kate Gregory
			Dan Levy	
			Neil Fawcett	
			Gareth Epps	
<b>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils</b>	1		Diana Lugova	
<b>Oxfordshire Care Partnership</b>	1		Rebekah Fletcher	
<b>Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum</b>	1		Andrew Coles	
<b>Community First Oxfordshire (formerly Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)</b>	1		Ian Middleton	
<b>England's Economic Heartland</b>	1		Tim Bearder	Laura Gordon
<b>Cooperative Councils Innovation Network</b>	1		Laura Gordon	

**Section 7 – Member Champions**

	<b>Number of Reps</b>	<b>Status of Rep</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Substitute</b>
<b>Active Travel &amp; Cycling Champion</b>	1		Emily Kerr	
<b>Public Transport Champion</b>	1		Chris Brant	
<b>Marmot</b>	1		Bethia Thomas	
<b>Youth Justice</b>	1		Izzy Creed	
<b>Future Generations Champion</b>	1			
<b>Water Resources Champions and Environment</b>	2		Andy Graham	
			Peter Stevens	
<b>Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Champion</b>	1		Robin Jones	
<b>Military</b>	1	The Leader of the Council (or such other person as nominated) acts as Armed Forces Champion on behalf of the County, then each military base has a champion who acts as a point of contact	Tim Bearder	

**Base champions**

Bicester Garrison: Councillor Matt Webb  
 RAF Benson: Councillor Gavin McLauchlan  
 RAF Brize Norton: Councillor Toyah Overton  
 Abingdon Station: Councillor Tom Greenaway  
 Vauxhall Barracks: Councillor Ian Snowdon  
 Shrivenham: Councillor Bethia Thomas

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## Divisions Affected – All

### **CABINET** **16 June 2026**

#### **Customer Service Centre Update** **Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny** **Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and agree its response to them, for inclusion within the Council budget papers, and
  - b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report providing an update on the Customer Service Centre following the implementation of significant changes to the Customer Service Centre's ways of working at its meeting on 17 April 2026.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships, Tom Parsons, Head of Customer Experience, Clare Martin, Strategic Improvement Lead, and Richard Merritt,

Operational Manager Contact Oxfordshire for attending the Committee and answering questions.

## **SUMMARY**

5. Councillor Levy introduced the Customer Experience service update. The Council had prioritised enabling residents to contact the authority through channels that suited them, supported by investment in online and telephone systems. Officers introduced the customer experience team and explained that the redesigned service had gone live on 01 February. Management layers had been streamlined and additional capacity added in workforce planning and complaints to improve response times and learning. The service had been structured around customer feedback (primarily covering complaints, Freedom of Information requests, and MP enquiries), a contact centre covering communities and neighbourhoods (excluding adult social care), a dedicated social and health care 'front door' for adult social care, and a small strategic improvements function focused on customer journeys and working with Zoom.
6. A major demand spike linked to the temporary congestion charge was highlighted, which included handling around 15,000 emails handled in six weeks. The focus had been on reducing avoidable 'chase' calls and switchboard misrouting, and that new Zoom reporting had provided better insight than low response-rate satisfaction surveys, alongside reduced waiting times.
7. In response to the report, the Committee engaged in broad-ranging Scrutiny, making enquiries over staff wellbeing and turnover levels, performance targets for the service and their rationale, preventative activity to reduce calls to the Customer Service Centre, the changing role of Customer Service Centre staff working in conjunction with artificial intelligence (AI), and the in-person support for those making enquiries at County Hall.
8. The Committee wishes to stress its praise for the positive improvements made to the Customer Service Centre for their benefits to residents, innovation and efficiency. It does, however, make a single recommendation around AI voicebots which it sees as an important guard-rail for transparency and setting user expectations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

9. During the meeting, the Committee was given an illustration of the new AI voicebots in action, identifying the intention of a caller from their own words, rather than enforcing a rigid set of options on them. As shown by the illustration, such employment of (AI) and chatbot technology within public services presents significant opportunities to improve responsiveness, efficiency, and ease of use. However, it also raises important considerations

around transparency, trust, and accountability in the Council's interactions with residents.

10. Advising individuals when they are engaging with a chatbot, rather than a human officer, is essential to maintaining public confidence in the Council's services. Transparency in this regard ensures that users have a clear understanding of the nature of the interaction, including its capabilities and limitations. This is particularly important given the realism of voicebots, whose diction has improved significantly. Many residents may expect to be communicating with a person and not be aware that they are not. That distinction may influence the way in which information is interpreted or relied upon.
11. From a governance and accountability perspective, transparency regarding the use of AI aligns with principles of openness and good administration. It reduces the risk of misunderstanding, complaint, or reputational harm arising from perceptions that the Council is obscuring the nature of its services. It also reflects emerging best practice across the public sector, where clear labelling of automated systems is increasingly expected.
12. Finally, explicitly identifying chatbot interactions can help manage user expectations and improve service quality. Where users are aware they are interacting with an automated system, they are more likely to frame queries appropriately and less likely to become frustrated by any remaining limitations in the technology. This, in turn, can support more effective use of staff time by directing complex queries to officers where professional judgement is required.
13. For these reasons, it is considered appropriate and proportionate that the Council should advise residents when they are interacting with chatbot systems as part of its commitment to transparency, accountability, and high-quality public service.

**Recommendation 1: That the Cabinet ensures that there is full transparency over whether a caller to the Council is interacting with an AI voicebot or a human.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

14. The Committee does not necessarily intend to consider the Customer Service Centre as an item again in the current municipal year. However, in view of its pervasive impact on the Council's activity the Committee is expected to request a further report on AI usage and implementation.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a

formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.

16. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Tom Hudson  
Scrutiny Manager  
[tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07791 494285

June 2026

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue: Customer Service Centre Update**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation; Cllr Neil Fawcett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup> 16 June 2026**

**Response to report:**  
*Enter text here.*

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

### Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Cabinet ensures that there is full transparency over whether a caller to the Council is interacting with an AI voicebot or a human.		

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET**

**19 June 2026**

## **Minerals and Waste Planning Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's responsibilities for Minerals and Waste Planning at its meeting on 22 April 2026.
4. The Committee was grateful to Cllr Judy Roberts, then Cabinet member for Place, Environment, and Climate Action, Robin Rogers, Director of Environment and Place, Jason Sherwood, Head of Regulatory Planning Enforcement, David Periam, Planning Development Manager, Matthew Case, Team Leader: Applications, Charlotte Sims, Team Leader: Minerals and Waste Policy, and Neal Richmond, Team Leader: Enforcement, for attending to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

5. An item on Minerals and Waste Planning had initially been suggested to the Committee by parish councils in Appleford-on-Thames and in Sutton Courtney. The Committee was grateful to them for the suggestion and agreed to place such an item on its work programme.

## **SUMMARY**

6. The then Cabinet member for Place, Environment, and Climate Action introduced the report and provided an overview of the Council's statutory responsibilities. The Committee was reminded that Minerals and Waste Planning was a specialist function, distinct from district planning responsibilities, and was delivered through three interrelated functions: namely, Minerals and Waste Policy and Strategy, Minerals and Waste Development Management, and Minerals and Waste Monitoring and Enforcement.
7. Given the scale, operational complexity, and long-term nature with development sites often operating over several decades, Minerals and Waste Planning differs significantly from other planning functions. Officers highlighted that decisions had to operate within national planning policy and enforcement frameworks, and that failure to determine or enforce decisions lawfully and in a timely manner could expose the Council to appeals and potential intervention.
8. During the course of the discussion, the Committee explored resourcing and staffing pressures including workforce skills and service resilience; monitoring, enforcement, and performance measures; site liaison arrangements and councillor support; landfill use, restoration, and future waste planning.
9. The Committee makes six recommendations. The six recommendations are intended to strengthen the Council's Minerals and Waste planning function and focus on three themes: capacity and performance, governance and engagement, and transparency and assurance. Taken together, they are intended to ensure that the Council has the capacity, oversight, transparency, and assurance necessary to discharge its statutory responsibilities effectively.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Capacity and Performance**

10. Minerals and Waste monitoring and enforcement activity is inherently complex, involving long-running sites, phased operations and a combination of informal resolution and formal enforcement. It can also involve multiple agencies. Officers advised that there are no nationally prescribed KPIs for this function and that it has proven challenging to formulate meaningful ones locally.
11. The Committee nevertheless considers that the absence of locally defined, proportionate KPIs limits transparency and makes it difficult for Members to

understand performance, pressures and emerging risks. Appropriately designed indicators can support oversight while respecting professional judgement and case complexity.

12. Acceptance of this recommendation would strengthen governance and evidence-based scrutiny whereas not doing so would be to risk continued uncertainty, reduced accountability, and diminished public confidence.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council should develop and implement proportionate and meaningful KPIs for Minerals and Waste monitoring and enforcement activity, recognising case complexity, and report back on the proposed measures and reporting arrangements.***

13. The Committee was concerned by staffing pressures across Minerals and Waste Planning, including an apparent reliance on temporary and agency support. The Committee also heard of difficulty recruiting to specialist roles. Given the context of needing to ensure that statutory plan-making requirements must be met, the Committee considers this regrettable.
14. Minerals and Waste Planning relies on expertise that is not readily interchangeable with other planning disciplines. The Committee would not seek to become overly involved in operational matters but is aware that the Council is currently undertaking organisational reorganisation. The Committee considers it essential that these functions are explicitly assessed within organisational change to ensure resilience and continuity.
15. Acceptance of this recommendation would reduce legal and operational risk and support sustainable service delivery. Failure to do so risks backlogs, appeal exposure, and increased pressure on already scarce specialist capacity.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council should ensure that its ongoing organisational reorganisation and workforce planning explicitly assess whether Minerals and Waste planning functions are adequately resourced, including succession planning for specialist roles, to meet statutory duties and the 30-month plan-making timetable.***

## **Governance and engagement**

16. The Committee heard that liaison arrangements for major Minerals and Waste sites in Oxfordshire vary significantly in formality, frequency, membership and effectiveness. Whilst some sites benefit from structured and constructive liaison groups, others rely on informal or voluntary arrangements that are inconsistently supported. The Committee considers that this variation risks undermining community confidence and potentially limits the effectiveness of liaison as an early problem-solving mechanism.
17. The Committee notes that other mineral planning authorities have adopted more structured approaches. For example, Derbyshire County Council

supports quarry liaison committees through regular officer attendance, planned site-monitoring updates and formally recorded minutes, ensuring continuity over long operational lifetimes. In Staffordshire, liaison arrangements for major sites have been formalised through clear terms of reference which were set down as a legal condition of the planning application for the site. These councillor-chaired meetings give communities greater clarity on engagement routes and escalation pathways.

18. The Committee considers that Oxfordshire could adopt a proportionate model by establishing minimum expectations for liaison arrangements on major or long-running sites. This could well include defined terms of reference, agreed meeting cycles, clear membership as well as structured officer briefings for councillors. In some cases, liaison arrangements could appropriately be secured through planning obligations or conditions to ensure their continuation across changes in site ownership or personnel.
19. Acceptance of this recommendation would benefit the Council by enabling earlier identification and resolution of issues, reducing escalation to formal complaints or enforcement, and better supporting councillors in their representational and scrutiny roles. Failure to strengthen and standardise liaison arrangements risks continued inconsistency, community frustration and missed opportunities to manage cumulative impacts constructively.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council should strengthen and standardise liaison arrangements for major Minerals and Waste sites, including where appropriate through planning obligations, and improve officer support and briefings for councillors who chair or attend liaison groups.***

20. Enforcement is a core non-executive regulatory function requiring appropriate all-Member oversight. The Committee was concerned that the absence of routine reporting limits transparency and reduces Members' ability to understand enforcement trends, outcomes and pressures.
21. The Committee established that such routine reporting had previously been made to the Planning and Regulation Committee but that this had lapsed over recent years. The Committee considers that reinstating regular reporting would strengthen governance without interfering in operational decision-making. It would be consistent with oversight arrangements in other regulatory areas. It would also, given that it is an area of high public interest, enable visibility of enforcement activity and give assurance to both residents and to members.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council should reinstate regular reporting of formal Minerals and Waste enforcement activity and outcomes to the Planning and Regulation Committee, to support effective oversight of this non-executive function.***

## **Transparency and assurance**

22. Minerals and Waste Planning is frequently misunderstood owing to its specialist nature and separation from district planning functions. The Committee heard that existing online information does not consistently explain the Council's role, powers, limitations or engagement routes.
23. The Committee is of the view that clearer and more accessible information would support better-informed public engagement and reduce avoidable enquiries and frustration. Failure to update online guidance risks continued misunderstanding and reputational harm to the Council.
24. The Committee, therefore, calls for the webpages to be revamped and revised.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council should review and update its online information on Minerals and Waste planning responsibilities, policies and enforcement arrangements, to improve accessibility and clarity for members and the public.***

25. The Committee perceived that concerns relating to Minerals and Waste Planning are systemic rather than case-specific. In particular, concerns were raised about repeated extensions to permissions, cumulative use of section 73 applications, the visibility and consistency of enforcement practice, and whether resources are adequate to manage long-running and complex sites effectively. These concerns arise within an evolving legal context that places increasing emphasis on clarity and lawfulness in the use of section 73 permissions.
26. The Committee notes that other councils facing comparable concern have commissioned proportionate, time-limited independent reviews or inquiries to examine governance, processes and capacity. For example, Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council supported an independent Committee of Inquiry into regulatory arrangements at a quarry in that area, examining enforcement practice, governance and inter-agency working without re-determining individual live decisions. Elsewhere, examples of councils which have undertaken the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service's Peer Challenges include Allerdale Borough Council<sup>1</sup>, Wirral Council<sup>2</sup>, and Cornwall Council<sup>3</sup>.
27. The Committee recognises that a Peer Challenge/Review does come at a cost but observes that these Reviews have been undertaken in other parts of the organisation previously and that their benefits have been highlighted. The Committee believes that a modest cost for taking part in this one would be of benefit.

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://cumberland.moderngov.co.uk/Data/ABC%20Council/201405141830/Agenda/Agenda%20reports%20pack.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-peer-review>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-case-studies/cornwalls-planning-peer-challenge>

28. The Committee envisages that any review commissioned by the Council could be tightly scoped and sample-based, focusing on process, governance and capacity rather than individual determinations. Possible outputs could include recommendations on the use of extensions and variations, enforcement pathways, resource alignment and good practice in managing cumulative impacts, alongside learning to inform future plan-making and service reorganisation.
29. Acceptance of this recommendation would benefit the Council by strengthening public confidence, providing independent assurance to Members, and identifying opportunities to improve resilience and consistency within Minerals and Waste Planning functions. The Committee considers that not exploring the option of an independent review risks continued erosion of trust, increased challenge and reputational harm if longstanding concerns remain unexamined.

***Recommendation 6: That the Council should consider commissioning an independent review of Minerals and Waste planning processes, including a sample review of enforcement practice, the use of extensions and section 73 applications, and the adequacy of resources to discharge the Council's statutory responsibilities.***

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

30. The Committee does not currently anticipate revisiting this topic during this municipal year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Richard Doney Scrutiny Officer

[richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

May 2026

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue:** **Minerals and Waste Planning**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Laura Gordon, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **19 June 2026**

### Response to recommendations:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Accepted, rejected or partially accepted</b>	<b>Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)</b>
1. That the Council should develop and implement proportionate and meaningful KPIs for Minerals and Waste monitoring and enforcement activity, recognising case complexity, and report back on the		

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>proposed measures and reporting arrangements.</p>		
<p>2. That the Council should ensure that its ongoing organisational reorganisation and workforce planning explicitly assess whether Minerals and Waste planning functions are adequately resourced, including succession planning for specialist roles, to meet statutory duties and the 30-month plan-making timetable.</p>		
<p>3. That the Council should strengthen and standardise liaison arrangements for major Minerals and Waste sites, including where appropriate through planning obligations, and improve officer support and briefings for councillors who chair or attend liaison groups.</p>		
<p>4. That the Council should reinstate regular reporting of formal Minerals and Waste enforcement activity and outcomes to the Planning and Regulation Committee, to support effective oversight of this non-executive function.</p>		
<p>5. That the Council should review and update its online information on Minerals and Waste planning responsibilities, policies and enforcement arrangements, to improve accessibility and clarity for members and the public.</p>		

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>6. That the Council should consider commissioning an independent review of Minerals and Waste planning processes, including a sample review of enforcement practice, the use of extensions and section 73 applications, and the adequacy of resources to discharge the Council's statutory responsibilities.</p>		
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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET**

**19 June 2026**

### **School Streets**

## **Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the School Streets programme at its meeting on 22 April 2026. This item was requested by the Committee to scrutinise progress and issues in the implementation of School Streets across Oxfordshire, and to explore the effectiveness of current arrangements in supporting the Council's wider transport and climate objectives.
4. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Andrew Gant, the then Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, Mark Gregory, Team Leader: Behavioural Change and Travel, Cathy Champion, Operations Manager: Civil Enforcement, and Melissa Goodacre, Sustainable Transport

Manager, for attending to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

## **SUMMARY**

5. The then Cabinet Member for Transport Management emphasised that the School Streets programme is a key part of the Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) rather than a standalone initiative. School Streets schemes aim to reduce motor traffic around school gates by restricting non-exempt vehicles at drop-off and pick-up times, encouraging a shift towards walking, wheeling, and cycling. The Committee heard that School Streets have been widely adopted in many local authorities, with over 1,000 schemes nationally, and early evidence in Oxfordshire (for example at Larkrise Primary School in Oxford) showed reduced traffic and improved air quality during operation times.
6. The Committee's discussion focused on how the School Streets programme should develop and expand. Members heard that the scheme is progressing through phased delivery, with further rollout planned following a countywide review of schools. Early evidence was positive, showing reduced car use and increased active travel at Phase 1 sites. However, members were concerned that the programme has so far been more suited to urban settings and may be harder to apply in rural areas or at schools on main roads. They emphasised the need for a broader range of measures, alongside street closures, so that more schools can benefit.
7. A second major theme was how to strengthen the programme's long-term effectiveness and fairness. Members raised concerns about the limits of current enforcement and exemption arrangements, particularly where exempt vehicles cannot be fully monitored and where misuse may undermine confidence. They also discussed the contribution of independent schools to peak-time traffic and the need for more active engagement with them. Finally, the Committee stressed that School Streets and wider active travel principles should be built into new schools and housing developments from the start through planning, section 106 agreements, and developer-funded infrastructure.
8. The Committee makes five recommendations to Cabinet which are focused on strengthening delivery and governance of the School Streets programme as well broadening the programme's reach and long-term impact.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9. The Committee explored how School Streets are developed and agreed at the local level. In discussion, members noted that, whilst interest in new School Streets often originates from school communities or local representatives, the formal processes for developing a scheme could be more transparent and inclusive, involving a wider range of stakeholders. The Committee was keen to encourage early engagement of local stakeholders (especially county

councillors and parish or town councils for the area in question) as this would be crucial to tapping into local knowledge – for example, about traffic patterns, community needs, and potential issues – and ensuring broad support before schemes proceed to consultation. Such engagement would also ensure that a proposal for a School Street had the support of the county councillor.

10. The Committee highlighted that, when it comes to Controlled Parking Zones, 20 mph limits or part-night lighting, the Council typically involves local elected members early in the design phase and uses established consultation frameworks with parish and town councils. The Committee considers that adopting similar engagement and sign-off processes to those used for other local traffic and transport interventions would strengthen governance. It also believes that applying these proven methods to School Streets will enhance the quality of scheme design and foster community buy-in from the outset.
11. Adopting this recommendation would benefit the Council by improving the success rate and sustainability of new School Streets schemes from an early stage. Stronger local engagement and a clear sign-off process would likely result in better tailored schemes, reducing the risk of unforeseen local objections and ensuring alignment with other local traffic measures. It would build community confidence and help manage expectations by making sure plans are understood and refined collaboratively, thereby smoothing implementation and long-term adherence.
12. On the other hand, the Committee is concerned that insufficient input from local councillors and community stakeholders could lead to avoidable design flaws or public dissatisfaction, ultimately undermining the Council's active travel goals and wasting time and resources if schemes have to be halted or reworked.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council should strengthen early engagement and sign-off arrangements for School Streets proposals, including clearer involvement of county councillors and town and parish councils, drawing on established processes used for other traffic interventions.***

13. The Committee almost without exception welcomed the ambition to expand the School Streets initiative across the county, noting that funding has been secured for planned phases 4 and 5 of the programme. However, members were concerned that the pace of the current delivery is constrained by limited officer capacity and finite funding streams. With the programme's success generating growing demand from many communities, the Committee stressed that the Council needs to plan proactively for sustained resourcing of School Streets, ensuring that there are enough trained staff and adequate budget allocations to continue rolling out new schemes and maintaining existing ones.
14. Officers advised that two School Engagement Officers within the Behaviour Change & Travel Plans team are currently supporting the delivery of School Streets among other duties. The Committee was advised that phases 1-3 have been delivered through a mix of council funding and external Active

Travel grant support. Members felt that scaling up the programme to reach more schools will require not only identifying future capital funding for infrastructure and enforcement technology, but also bolstering the staff resources needed to engage with schools, manage consultations, and oversee implementation on the ground.

15. If this recommendation were to be adopted, the Council would benefit from greater clarity and stability in delivering future School Streets, allowing it to plan ahead rather than proceed piecemeal. Adequate capacity and funding would reduce delays, maintain momentum, and support the LTCP's traffic reduction aims. It would also demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling school-run congestion and pollution.
16. The Committee is concerned that limited officer support could slow delivery, miss opportunities where communities want schemes, and overstretch staff. Poor budget planning could also prevent expansion beyond the initial grant-funded phases, weakening long-term impact and public confidence.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council should ensure adequate officer capacity and funding is made available to support expansion of the School Streets programme, including consideration within future budget planning.***

17. The Committee noted that independent schools (i.e., those that fall outside the state-maintained system) can be significant generators of car traffic, particularly in urban areas, contributing to local congestion and air quality issues during peak times. Members observed that, in some but by no means all cases, these schools may not yet be fully engaged with the Council's sustainable travel initiatives, even though many independent school sites face similar traffic challenges as state schools. The Committee believes that a more proactive and coordinated approach to working with independent schools is needed so that they adopt measures to reduce car use for school journeys.
18. Officers informed the Committee that discussions are already taking place with certain independent schools on travel planning and potential measures to alleviate traffic – such as promoting dedicated coach and shuttle services, encouraging car-sharing among parents, and facilitating “park-and-ride” arrangements for pupils. Whilst some independent schools have demonstrated interest in these ideas, members are keen that the Council moves more quickly to bring all such schools into the conversation and to share best practice from successful School Streets or similar schemes.
19. Accepting this recommendation would benefit the Council by reducing peak-time traffic from independent schools and improving road safety and air quality. It would also support county-wide congestion and emissions goals. It would show that the Council expects *all* schools to support safer and more sustainable travel. It could also unlock school-led measures, such as funded transport or staggered start times, that complement the Council's ambitions.

20. If this recommendation is not implemented, traffic problems around independent schools may persist or worsen without a coordinated response. The Council could be criticised for overlooking a significant source of local congestion and failing to show leadership. This could weaken the overall programme, as traffic from a few large schools may offset benefits elsewhere, and leave nearby residents facing continued congestion and safety concerns.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council should accelerate engagement with independent schools to reduce traffic impacts associated with school travel.***

21. The Committee discussed how enforcement of School Streets is carried out and raised concerns about the perceived misuse of exemptions and gaps in current enforcement data. School Streets in Oxfordshire are enforced by ANPR cameras linked to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). These TROs define categories of exempt vehicles (such as residents of the street, blue badge holders, emergency services, school staff and others) which are allowed to enter during restricted times. By design, the Council's camera system does not record trips by exempt vehicles, which means persistent abuse of exemptions is difficult to detect without external reports or cooperation from licensing authorities in cases like taxi misuse.
22. Members acknowledged that enforcement must operate within the confines of national legislation and data protection rules. Nonetheless, the Committee believes there is scope to review the current exemptions list and enforcement practices to address recurring non-compliance. For example, the Committee welcomed the idea of working with district council licensing bodies to remove specific vehicles from the exemptions register if there is clear evidence of them flouting the intent of the rules. Additionally, members supported exploring whether any technological or process improvements could enhance monitoring and compliance without breaching data regulations.
23. If exemptions and enforcement arrangements remain unexamined, loopholes may continue to be seen to undermine the schemes. Visible non-compliance, including repeated use by supposedly exempt vehicles, could erode public trust, discourage active travel, and invite criticism that the Council is not properly enforcing its traffic orders, damaging the credibility of School Streets and related initiatives.
24. However, implementing this recommendation would benefit the Council by making School Streets fairer and more effective. Tighter control and review of exemptions should improve compliance, strengthen safety and environmental benefits, and maintain public confidence and community support. It would also reduce residual traffic during restricted periods, increasing benefits for pupils and residents.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council should review exemptions and enforcement arrangements for School Streets, within legislative constraints, and considers options to tighten controls where persistent issues arise.***

25. The Committee recognises that the most cost-effective way to promote active travel to school is to integrate these principles at the earliest stages of planning new infrastructure. Members discussed the fact that many new schools and residential developments in recent years were approved before current policies on active travel were in place, resulting in designs that still encourage car use by default.
26. The Committee is keen to see the Council take every opportunity to shape future development so that school gate congestion problems are 'designed out' where possible – for example, by ensuring safe walking/cycling routes are built, appropriate drop-off restrictions are in place from the very beginning, and sites are selected or configured to minimise traffic impacts.
27. Officers advised that as part of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, active travel requirements for new developments are being strengthened. The Committee was also told that planning processes can use tools such as section 106 agreements to secure off-site improvements around schools.
28. The Committee welcomed these steps and highlighted the importance of including School Streets or similar measures as explicit standard criteria when negotiating with developers for new school sites and associated housing developments. The Committee considers that, by embedding School Streets principles into planning policy, the Council can ensure that new communities have safer, healthier travel options embedded from the outset. This would, of course, reduce the need for retrofitting costly interventions later.
29. By adopting this recommendation, the Council would benefit from more sustainable and integrated growth. Prioritising School Streets and active travel in planning would help to ensure that future schools are designed for safer, lower-traffic travel which would both support LTCP commitments to reduce car journeys and also improve public health. This preventative approach should reduce the need for later mitigation and encourage walking and cycling from the outset.
30. If this approach is not pursued, the Council risks missed opportunities to address transport impacts at the planning stage. New schools and housing could entrench car-dependent travel and recreate the congestion and safety problems School Streets are meant to prevent. This would undermine climate and health objectives and could increase future costs by requiring retrofitted measures or responses to avoidable traffic issues.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council ensures School Streets principles and wider active travel measures are prioritised within planning, section 106 agreements, and developer-funded infrastructure for new schools and housing developments.***

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

31. The Committee does not currently anticipate revisiting this topic during this municipal year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Richard Doney Scrutiny Officer <a href="mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk">richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

June 2026

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# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue:** **School Streets**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Gareth Epps, Cabinet Member for Transport**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **19 June 2026**

## **Response to recommendations:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Accepted, rejected or partially accepted</b>	<b>Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)</b>
1. That the Council should strengthen early engagement and sign-off arrangements for School Streets proposals, including clearer involvement of county councillors and town and parish councils, drawing on		

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>established processes used for other traffic interventions.</p>		
<p>2. That the Council should ensure adequate officer capacity and funding is made available to support expansion of the School Streets programme, including consideration within future budget planning.</p>		
<p>3. That the Council should accelerate engagement with independent schools to reduce traffic impacts associated with school travel.</p>		
<p>4. That the Council should review exemptions and enforcement arrangements for School Streets, within legislative constraints, and considers options to tighten controls where persistent issues arise.</p>		
<p>5. That the Council ensures School Streets principles and wider active travel measures are prioritised within planning, section 106 agreements, and developer-funded infrastructure for new schools and housing developments.</p>		

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 19 June 2026**

#### **Bus Services and Rural Transport (including Mobility Hubs) Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Bus Services and Rural Transport (including Mobility Hubs) at its meeting on 22 April 2026. This item was requested by the Committee to scrutinise the implementation of the Council's transport policies for rural areas and to explore how connectivity for rural communities could be strengthened.
4. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Andrew Gant and Councillor Judy Roberts, the then Cabinet Members for Transport Management and for Place, Environment, and Climate Action respectively, for attending to present the report. The Committee was also grateful for the attendance and input of Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, and Ben Smith, Strategic Transport Manager, Melissa

Goodacre, Sustainable Transport Manager, Ashley Hayden, Team Leader: Area Travel Plans, Dave Harrison, Team Leader: Public Transport, Eric Manners: Technical Leader: Active Travel.

## SUMMARY

5. The Cabinet Members emphasised that improving rural transport is a key element of the Council's Local Transport & Connectivity Plan. The Committee heard that, since severe cuts to bus subsidies in 2016, significant progress has been made in restoring and enhancing services through new funding streams (such as the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan funding and section 106 developer contributions).
6. As a result, the Council now supports a broad network of rural bus routes, and, in some areas, is exceeding service levels before the cuts. Members recognised achievements such as the introduction of the *MyBus* multi-operator ticket, which has increased bus usage across Oxfordshire, and that most larger villages are again served by a scheduled bus route.
7. The Committee welcomed the progress made in restoring bus services but remained concerned about gaps in rural connectivity, particularly for smaller settlements. Members highlighted the need to explore practical feeder or shuttle options that could connect isolated communities to main routes and reduce barriers to work, services and everyday life.
8. Members also focused on how the network is presented, planned and delivered. Key themes were clearer public communication, including more accessible language for mobility hubs, continued attention to accessibility at stops and along routes, better use of local demand data, stronger alignment with Movement and Place Plans (MAPPs) and section 106 (s.106) priorities, and faster progress on major interchange schemes such as Oxford railway station.
9. The Committee makes seven recommendations: the first three relate to improving rural connectivity and public engagement; the next two focus on accessibility and evidence-based service planning; and the final two concern the integration of transport in planning and accelerating key infrastructure schemes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Connectivity and Communication in Rural Transport

10. The Committee recognises that some rural communities remain at risk of isolation due to infrequent or non-existent bus services. Members discussed examples of small villages or hamlets that lie just beyond the reach of main bus routes, where residents without cars can struggle to access essential

services or larger towns.

11. The Committee explored whether pilot shuttle or feeder bus services could be trialled in such contexts. A shuttle service, using smaller vehicles or flexible timetables, might link a cluster of villages to a main transport corridor or nearby market town, allowing residents to connect with existing bus or train services. Members noted that this approach could complement the fixed-route network by covering the “last mile” gaps, without requiring a full-sized bus on a low-demand route.
12. In considering this idea, the Committee acknowledged that more tailored rural transport schemes have been attempted elsewhere, sometimes with mixed results. Demand-responsive minibus services, for instance, often face high costs and low uptake. However, members felt that focused shuttle or feeder pilots in areas of clear local demand could yield valuable insights at relatively modest cost.
13. By targeting an area where there is community interest – perhaps working with parish councils or volunteer drivers – a pilot could test whether better connectivity leads to increased bus use and improved well-being for residents who currently have few options.
14. Adopting this recommendation would benefit the Council by helping to reduce rural isolation and social inequality. Offering even a limited feeder service could dramatically improve quality of life for those in remote communities, including by providing access to education, employment opportunities, health care and shopping that might otherwise be out of reach.
15. A successful pilot could demonstrate an innovative model of rural connectivity that, if cost-effective, might be scaled up or replicated elsewhere but failing to explore such a possibility might also attract criticism that the Council is too narrowly focused on conventional routes and is not doing enough to support the “hardest to reach” communities in Oxfordshire.
16. The Committee, therefore, recommends that serious attention should be paid to the possibility.

**Recommendation 1: *That the Council should explore pilot shuttle or feeder bus services in rural areas to improve connectivity between smaller settlements and main bus corridors, where this would reduce isolation and improve access to services.***

17. The Committee discussed the ongoing programme of Mobility Hubs and noted that, whilst the concept is strategically important, the terminology itself may be a barrier to public engagement. Members found that the term ‘mobility hub’ itself is not widely understood by residents. There was a concern that it sounds technical or abstract.

18. The Committee heard that mobility hubs are meant to be enhanced transport interchanges offering facilities for buses, bicycles, and other shared mobility options – essentially modern transport hubs – yet this message can easily be lost if the language fails to reflect that. Members therefore considered how communications about such projects could be made clearer and more accessible, most easily by adopting simpler terminology.
19. Officers had outlined that mobility hub plans are integrated across various initiatives (railway stations, Park & Ride improvements, etc.) and two small demonstrator projects had been consulted upon (at Benson and Carterton). The Committee’s concern was that these efforts need public buy-in, and that unduly technical language could undermine that. By referring to them in more familiar terms like “transport hubs” as well as by describing the tangible benefits (safe waiting areas, better connections, cycle parking, etc.), the Council may more effectively convey what is being proposed. In addition, members felt that reviewing communications materials to ensure plain language and local framing would encourage broader participation in consultations and community support for hub projects as they roll out.
20. A straightforward and common-sense term like “transport hub” could reduce confusion and help to integrate these schemes with the public’s existing mental map of bus stops, stations and interchanges. Alienating or perplexing the public by using unfamiliar jargon might attract indifferent or negative responses simply because stakeholders do not grasp the vision or confuse “mobility hubs” with something irrelevant to their needs. In the worst case, this could result in missed opportunities for community input, lower usage of the facilities once in place, or even vocal opposition in some areas – all of which would hinder the Council’s aims to broaden sustainable transport uptake.
21. The Committee does not consider this a controversial recommendation but one simply intended to make things simpler and more straightforward. It hopes that Cabinet agrees.

**Recommendation 2: *That the Council should review the terminology and communications used for “mobility hubs”, including consideration of adopting clearer, more accessible language such as “transport hubs”.***

22. During its discussion, the Committee was particularly concerned by public awareness of bus services. Members shared examples from their divisions of residents being uncertain about what transport options are available, especially following the many changes in bus provision over recent years. This issue was seen as particularly acute in rural areas and amongst older residents or those who may not use digital tools to find travel information. The Committee emphasised that even the best bus service cannot achieve its purpose if people are not aware of it or do not know how to use it.
23. The Committee was pleased to learn of steps being taken by the Council and bus operators to publicise new services – for instance, through community newsletters, parish networks, and the Council’s Oxfordshire Public Transport web pages – but noted that more could be done. Members suggested a

proactive communication and engagement campaign tailored to rural and vulnerable audiences. Examples might include easy-to-read printed timetables or guides distributed through local community venues, targeted social media for villages, or working with libraries, GP surgeries and voluntary groups to spread the word. Clearer, more accessible information on how to use buses (from planning a journey to using the *MyBus* ticket) would help build confidence for less frequent travellers or those who have lost habitual use of buses.

24. By ensuring that all residents know what services exist and how to access them, bus patronage is likely to increase, supporting both the financial viability of routes and the Council's targets for reducing car usage.
25. Without such outreach, the risk is that certain groups (like elderly or isolated residents) remain unaware of options and continue to feel disconnected or rely on less sustainable modes. Underused services could struggle to justify ongoing funding, potentially leading to a cycle of declining routes and lost confidence.
26. The Committee would, therefore, welcome increased public engagement regarding bus services, particularly in rural areas and with vulnerable groups.

**Recommendation 3: *That the Council improves communication and engagement to ensure residents, particularly in rural areas and vulnerable groups, are aware of available bus services and how to access them.***

## **Accessibility and Evidence-based Planning**

27. The Committee's attention was drawn to the physical accessibility of bus services, especially in rural and semi-rural areas. Members noted that obstacles on the journey to and from a bus stop can be a significant deterrent, even if a bus route itself is available. Narrow or absent footways, unsafe road crossings, steep kerbs, and poorly maintained paths were all cited as factors that can discourage people – particularly those with disabilities, older residents or parents with prams – from using buses.
28. The Committee discussed how investment in accessible infrastructure should keep pace with improvements in bus frequency or coverage. The Committee acknowledged that the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan and capital programmes already include elements for upgrading bus stops, installing shelters, and improving nearby pavements or crossings.
29. However, members stressed that this needs to remain a priority and to be approached in a comprehensive way. Each new or existing bus route should be assessed for any environmental barriers that prevent easy access, and these should be addressed as part of service enhancement. The Committee was keen to ensure that improvements such as dropped kerbs, safe

pedestrian crossings to bus stops, good lighting, and step-free access are systematically delivered, so that all residents are able to access the bus network easily.

30. By prioritising accessibility improvements, the Council will enable more people to confidently choose the bus, supporting higher patronage and social equity. It is also the case that better footways and crossings help all pedestrians, not just bus users. Demonstrating visible improvements at street level, whether that be a new crossing or an accessible footpath, would reinforce the Council's commitment to its transport vision but, perhaps more importantly, would make a tangible and positive difference to residents' daily lives.
31. Without such improvement, buses or routes might see limited use if potential passengers physically cannot reach them comfortably or safely. This would not only weaken the return on investment in services but would also fail those who rely on accessible design (for example, wheelchair users or those with mobility difficulties).
32. Progress on these small but significant improvements strikes the Committee as both valuable and achievable. It, therefore, recommends that the Council should continue to prioritise such improvements.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council continues to prioritise improvements to accessibility of bus stops and routes, including footways, crossings and dropped kerbs, as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and capital programmes.***

33. The Committee reflected on the data and analysis used to inform bus service planning, particularly for rural areas. Officers explained that the current network ensures coverage to a large majority of communities above certain population thresholds, with every parish in Oxfordshire with a population of 500 or more having a scheduled bus service and 81% of those with a population between 100 and 500 having one. However, members questioned whether a purely population-based approach fully captures nuanced patterns of need or potential demand. For example, a village of modest size might actually generate high ridership if it has an older demographic or lacks alternative transport, whereas another larger community might see lower demand for reasons such as proximity to a railway station or car ownership levels.
34. The Committee considered that supplementing broad population statistics with more granular data could lead to better-informed decisions about where to maintain, enhance or introduce services.
35. Members suggested that the Council should explore options for gathering and analysing data at a finer scale. This could include usage data from existing services, targeted surveys of residents in specific areas, or liaison with parish councils to gauge unmet needs. By comparing factors like demographics, journey purposes, and current travel behaviours, the planning of bus services could become more responsive.

36. The Committee felt that such evidence – perhaps combined with innovative tools like predictive modelling or pilot projects – would complement the strategic view provided by the Bus Service Improvement Plan and ensure resources are deployed where they can make the biggest difference.
37. A richer evidence base would support more effective and efficient service provision. With deeper insight into localised demand, the Council can work to tailor bus services to actual needs – potentially increasing bus patronage and fare income where demand is higher than raw population might suggest. It also helps to future-proof planning by highlighting emerging trends (such as shifting work patterns or new development-driven demand) early on. In sum, better data and analysis improve decision-making, value for money, and the credibility of the Council's public transport strategy.
38. If the Council relies solely on broad, population-level analysis, important opportunities and issues may be missed. Neglecting under-served areas could lead to community frustration and lost growth, whilst overestimating demand elsewhere would waste resources and undermine confidence. Adopting a more detailed approach would help address these risks and improve the county's bus network.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council should consider options for more granular assessment of demand for bus services, to complement population-based analysis and inform future service planning.***

## **Integrated Planning and Delivery of Transport Infrastructure**

39. The Committee noted the intersection between transport planning and development planning, particularly through tools like Movement and Place Plans (MAPPs) and s.106 agreements. Members were clear that sustainable transport – including local bus services and active travel infrastructure – must be embedded in these processes and not overshadowed by a focus on major road schemes alone. When any large new housing developments are proposed, the planning stage is an opportunity to secure and design in bus routes, safe walking/cycling paths, and even space for future mobility hubs or interchanges (or, given the recommendation above, transport hubs).
40. The Committee sought assurances that the Council uses its planning policies and negotiation of developer contributions to champion such measures, ensuring new growth delivers for local transport needs as well as for strategic infrastructure.
41. Officers outlined that MAPPs are being developed to articulate tailored transport priorities for specific areas, with input from local members and stakeholders. The Committee welcomed this approach and emphasised that the final plans – along with the Council's stance on s.106 priorities – should explicitly reflect bus connectivity and active travel requirements.

42. Members gave examples of previous developments where bus provision or pedestrian access had appeared to be an afterthought, leading to car-dependent communities. By contrast, good practice would involve, for example, requiring developers to fund early bus services or cycle links to town centres as part of their obligations.
43. The Committee believes that firmly integrating these priorities into planning frameworks will help to turn the Council's sustainable transport policies into on-the-ground reality over the long term. By clearly embedding local transport needs into planning and developer-funding decisions, the Council can shape new developments that are less car-reliant and better connected to public and active travel networks from the very beginning.
44. This proactive stance would help to avoid expensive retrofitting of infrastructure later and foster healthier, more sustainable travel habits among residents of new housing areas. It also reinforces the Council's leadership role in advocating for balanced growth – demonstrating both to the public and to partners that bus services, cycling, and walking are being treated with equal importance as roads in Oxfordshire's future plans.
45. If it does not integrate these priorities into its MAPPs as well as s.106 priorities, the Committee is concerned that the Council may miss opportunities to expand its transport network. Developments lacking provision for buses or active travel can result in prolonged high car usage where it is not necessary. This would undermine both climate and congestion goals. Not securing contributions for local transport improvements could also strain Council budgets later.
46. The Committee warns that focusing only on major infrastructure would be counterproductive and therefore calls for MAPPs and s.106 to clearly reflect local transport needs.

**Recommendation 6: *That the Council should ensure that Movement and Place Plans and section 106 priorities clearly reflect local transport needs, including bus services and active travel, alongside strategic infrastructure.***

47. The Committee discussed key infrastructure and interchange projects that impact local bus connectivity and the transport network's success. The Committee considers that timely project delivery is crucial. Oxford railway station redevelopment was highlighted as an example, with requests for interim improvements like better signage and facilities to provide short-term benefits.
48. The Committee believes that integration of local plans with broader corridor and rail strategies, including East-West Rail and regional transit, is necessary. The Council should accelerate parallel planning for feeder links and access, ensuring new infrastructure complements existing services and improves connectivity.

49. Acting quickly would benefit both the Council and residents by speeding up improvements, easing congestion, improving transfers, and building public confidence. Aligning projects would maximise the impact of investment as well as promoting a coherent transport network. Contrariwise, delays or poor integration risk ongoing congestion, missed funding, and reduced public transport appeal. Failure to enhance interchanges or coordinate strategies can leave gaps in connectivity, so timely action is needed to deliver effective transport solutions.
50. Whilst recognising that certain elements are outside the control of the Council, the Committee nonetheless calls for greater progress on key schemes.

**Recommendation 7: *That the Council should accelerate progress on key transport and interchange schemes, including interim improvements at Oxford railway station and integration with wider corridor and rail strategies.***

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

51. The Committee anticipates considering bus services again during the municipal year, particularly the Bus Plan.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney  
Scrutiny Officer  
[richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

June 2026

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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET**

**19 June 2026**

## **Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme Monitoring Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a monitoring report on the Oxford Temporary Congestion Charge at its meeting on 22 April 2026. This item was brought back to the Committee as previously agreed, approximately six months after the scheme's introduction on 29 October 2025, in order to scrutinise its initial outcomes and implementation.
4. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Andrew Gant, the then Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, and Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead: Central, for attending to present the report and for answering the Committee's questions.

5. The Committee was also grateful to the three public speakers who attended to make representations to the Committee. Their addresses highlighted their concerns about data transparency, local traffic impacts, and the effects on businesses of the congestion charge.

## **SUMMARY**

6. The then Cabinet member emphasised that the primary purpose of the scheme was to reduce congestion at known pinch points and to improve safety. He advised the Committee that the scheme had succeeded in doing so.
7. Councillor Gant explained that the scheme should be seen as part of a wider package of transport measures, including bus service enhancements, congestion management, and hospital access arrangements. He explained that the key performance measure related to bus productivity rather than speed alone and that improvements to bus services had been delivered during the time of the temporary scheme.
8. In its discussion, the Committee focussed on the quality and usability of monitoring data, localised impacts and mitigation, and the impacts on businesses as well as the transition from congestion charge to traffic filters once Botley Road reopens.
9. The Committee makes three recommendations: one about improving data; one about mitigations in areas that have seen more congestion; one about contingency plans.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10. The Committee is pleased that, of its eight recommendations when it considered the proposed temporary congestion charge in August 2025, its recommendation for regular data monitoring reports was accepted and that they have been published.
11. However, members were concerned that the current data are difficult to interpret, lack sufficient context, and do not clearly demonstrate either trends or localised impacts. Members also discussed the impact on businesses and expressed concern that promised monitoring of footfall and spend had been delayed owing to data reliability issues.
12. The Committee was advised that alternative data sources were being validated and that spend data was expected to be published shortly, as well as an independently-run business survey. Members stressed the importance of publishing this information before further decisions were taken.

13. The Committee has no desire to relitigate discussions over whether or not the congestion charge should exist but, given that it does, its impact should be able to be properly monitored. The Committee, therefore, calls on Cabinet to ensure that business monitoring is strengthened and that information is published and publicised as soon as it is validated.

**Recommendation 1: *That the Council should ensure that business monitoring is strengthened, with footfall and spend data and survey results published and publicised as soon as validation is complete.***

14. The Committee was told that the scheme had delivered some of its intended benefits so far – including faster bus journeys, increased Park & Ride usage, and reduced congestion in many central areas. However, it was nonetheless the case that, despite anticipated changes broadly aligning with modelling assumptions, some congestion had been displaced to other parts of the network.
15. Monitoring data and local feedback both pointed to rising traffic volumes in some outer routes and suburban areas, including on approaches to the ring road and near the hospital in north and parts of east Oxford.
16. The Committee heard that mitigation measures, such as adjusting traffic signal timings and working with major employers and schools on traffic planning, were already underway to manage these impacts. The Committee welcomed that but recommends that the Council prioritises and publicly reports on such mitigations.
17. This would be to ensure that communities facing extra congestion are not overlooked as the scheme progresses. It would show that improvements in one area are not achieved at an unacceptable cost to another and would show that the Council is actively managing these mitigations.

**Recommendation 2: *That the Council should ensure that mitigations for areas experiencing increased congestion, including parts of north and east Oxford, continue to be developed and reported.***

18. The Committee's final recommendation arises from the recognition that the transport context in Oxford will soon change again. The temporary congestion charge is set to end when Botley Road reopens (following major works), after which the Council's previously approved traffic filter trial is expected to come into place. These transitions will mark a significant shift in traffic management in and around the city.
19. The Committee, therefore, calls on the Council to ensure it has contingency plans in place ahead of these changes. This could include ready-to-implement measures to address any unexpected surges in traffic or other unforeseen effects during any handover period between the end of the charge and the start of the filters.

20. By planning contingencies now, the Council will be better placed to respond quickly and effectively to any emerging issues, thereby minimising disruption for residents and commuters.
21. This recommendation, if adopted, will benefit the Council by ensuring continuity of the positive outcomes achieved so far – such as improved bus reliability – and by reinforcing public confidence that the second phase of traffic management measures will be introduced smoothly and without avoidable problems.
22. Without appropriate contingency measures, the transition from the congestion charge scheme to the traffic filters could pose risks to network performance and public perception. For instance, any gap or delay between the end of one scheme and the start of another might lead to a rebound in traffic congestion, eroding any gains made over the past months.
23. Additionally, if the reopening of Botley Road or the introduction of traffic filters produces travel conditions that differ from expectations, the absence of a prepared contingency could leave the Council reacting defensively rather than shaping events. This could impact journey times and passenger experience, By ensuring that contingency plans are in place – for example, temporary traffic management tactics or communications strategies – the Council will mitigate these risks.

**Recommendation 3: *That the Council should ensure that contingency measures are prepared in advance of the reopening of Botley Road and the implementation of traffic filters.***

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

24. The Committee anticipates that the congestion charge and related measures will feature in its work programme during the 2026/2027 municipal year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney  
Scrutiny Officer  
[richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

June 2026

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

**Issue:** **Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme Monitoring**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Gareth Epps, Cabinet Member for Transport**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **19 June 2026**

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should ensure that business monitoring is strengthened, with footfall and spend data and survey results published and publicised as soon as validation is complete.		

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

2. That the Council should ensure that mitigations for areas experiencing increased congestion, including parts of north and east Oxford, continue to be developed and reported.		
3. That the Council should ensure that contingency measures are prepared in advance of the reopening of Botley Road and the implementation of traffic filters.		

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 19 June 2026**

## **Unauthorised Waste Disposal Site near Kidlington: Interim Report Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

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

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

1. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a report on an unauthorised waste disposal site near Kidlington at its meeting on 22 April 2026. This matter had attracted significant public interest as a result of the scale of the illegal activity and its potential impacts. Although the situation remains under a live criminal investigation led by the Environment Agency, the Committee felt it important to scrutinise the Council's role and response at this stage whilst being careful not to prejudice ongoing legal proceedings.
2. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Liz Leffman and Cllr Judy Roberts, then the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Place, Environment, and Climate Action respectively, and Robin Rogers, Director of

Economy & Place, for presenting the interim report and answering the Committee's questions. The Committee was also grateful for the attendance of Nicola Riley, Cherwell District Council's Assistant Director: Wellbeing and Housing Services, Michael Adcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Jason Sherwood, Head of Regulatory Planning Enforcement, David Periam, Planning Development Manager, Neal Richmond, Team Leader: Enforcement, and Matthew Case, Team Leader: Applications, who provided insights into how the Council and partner agencies have managed this incident so far.

## SUMMARY

3. The then Leader introduced the report and thanked residents, local members, officers, and partner agencies for their work in responding to the large-scale illegal waste site near Kidlington. She emphasised the seriousness and complexity of the illegal waste activity, its links to organised criminal behaviour, and the impact on the local community. Councillor Leffman highlighted the importance of partnership working, particularly with the Environment Agency and district councils, and advised that progress had been made in securing the site and commencing clearance, noting the national relevance of the lessons emerging from the incident.
4. Councillor Roberts supported those remarks and reflected on the technical sophistication and speed of the illegal operation. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that, whilst the response once the scale of the issue was understood had been strong, there were lessons to be learned about internal escalation and member communication. Councillor Roberts stressed the importance of improving early intelligence and governance arrangements.
5. The Director of Economy and Place shared photographs to provide visual context, explaining the site's scale, proximity to the River Cherwell and drainage features, and the vegetation that initially concealed the activity. He described how flooding exposed the waste and increased risk, the protective measures installed to prevent pollution, the creation of a raised working compound to mitigate flooding, and the logistical challenges of removal, including overhead power cables that added to the site's risk profile.
6. The Committee had a wide-ranging discussion and paid particular attention to timelines – including when and how the activity happened and was discovered and when it was reported and to whom. It also explored what powers the Council and other partners had and the effectiveness of their partnership working.
7. In discussing this issue, the Committee recognised the national dimension of waste crime: this is not an isolated case, but part of a wider surge in organised illegal dumping that demands stronger preventative and enforcement measures. The Committee's discussion focused in particular on what the Council can learn from this experience and how it can play its part in preventing and responding to similar incidents in future.

8. The Committee makes two recommendations, one to ensure that lessons are captured and learned and the other to call for elected members to be engaged when crises happen.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The Committee considered the timeline and response to the illegal site near Kidlington to be something of a 'wake-up call.' The case illustrates how quickly a situation can escalate: within weeks, a seemingly minor activity on a rural plot evolved into a major risk, with material piled dangerously near a major road and a river.
10. The Committee heard that initial warning signs were raised by local authorities and the public in June 2025 which led to early engagement by Cherwell District Council and the County Council. A joint site visit with the Environment Agency swiftly confirmed the scale of the wrongdoing.
11. The Committee commends the inter-agency action but believes that more systematic early detection and rapid escalation processes are needed, given the increasingly sophisticated tactics used by waste criminals (such as rapid site changes and opaque land transactions). The Committee was keen to ensure that, in any future incident, Thames Valley Police is involved at the earliest opportunity.
12. The Committee was keen to ensure that all lessons from this incident are identified and learned, not only by the Council but across partner agencies. This means reviewing the detection and response steps taken and identifying what could be done differently to spot and stop illegal waste operations sooner. For example, the Committee noted that better use of intelligence sharing, data analysis and new technologies (such as drone surveillance and waste tracking systems) could provide earlier warnings of unusual activity.
13. The Committee also underlined the need for even closer coordination with the Environment Agency, district councils and others, to guarantee that when one agency receives a report of potential illegal waste, all relevant bodies are alerted at once and can act together. Whilst Local Government Reorganisation will mean that there are fewer councils involved, partnership working will nonetheless remain key.
14. Within the Council, the Committee suggested that internal communication channels should be reviewed to ensure that different services – such as planning enforcement, highways, fire and rescue, and legal – are quickly mobilised and kept aligned when a major environmental incident first comes to light.
15. The Committee considers that adopting this recommendation would benefit the Council by strengthening its ability to prevent and tackle illegal waste activity, both within its own powers and also in partnership with

others. It would help the Council identify future problems at an earlier stage, enable faster intervention, and improve joint working with partners. By capturing the lessons of this case and making practical changes, whether in monitoring, staffing, or inter-agency protocols, the Council can reduce the risk of similar incidents causing harm to communities and the environment. Strengthened early detection and coordination will also support the Council's reputation as a vigilant and proactive authority in addressing criminal waste activities.

16. Without these improvements, the Committee believes there is a risk that a similar incident could go undetected longer than necessary or that the response could be less efficient. The absence of structured learning from this case might lead to repeated mistakes or delays in future, which could expose the Council and the public to avoidable dangers and costs. Failure to build stronger early-warning systems and communication channels might result in continued vulnerability to complex waste crimes which, as seen in this case, can rapidly become major threats to public safety and environmental quality.

**Recommendation 1: *That the Council should ensure that lessons learned from this incident be captured and used to strengthen early detection, escalation, inter-agency coordination, and internal communication in future cases of illegal waste activity.***

17. The Committee emphasised that local councillors must be kept in the loop when a serious incident such as this is unfolding and being addressed. Members noted that their communities look to them for information and reassurance. In this instance, the Committee heard that much of the detail had to remain confidential owing to legal sensitivities and the Committee recognises that was clearly essential to avoid undermining enforcement action.
18. Nonetheless, members felt that there is a need for timely, appropriate briefings so that councillors can fulfil their roles in supporting communities and ensuring accountability. Without breaching necessary confidences, the Council should have protocols for updating relevant members (for example, the local Divisional Members and, if appropriate, the relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair) at key milestones such as when significant enforcement actions are taken, when major risks emerge, or when the situation materially changes.
19. The Committee heard that, initially, officers had underestimated the scale of the site and that it had not, therefore, been escalated to the extent that it might have been. The Committee understood that but considered it extremely regrettable that the relevant Cabinet Member had not been informed until September, over two months after concerns were first raised and two months after the joint site visit by the Council, Cherwell District Council, and the Environment Agency in July. Whilst it is not the role of members to interfere in operational matters, the Committee is of the view that such an incident is so significant as to mean it becomes strategic and is, therefore, something that

must mean that the Cabinet Member is at least formally aware at an early point.

20. Adopting this recommendation would benefit the Council by maintaining trust and transparency between the authority and elected members. If councillors are appropriately informed, they can assist in public communication (within the constraints of legal confidentiality), address residents' concerns effectively, and provide informed democratic oversight. This helps to uphold public confidence in the Council's management of serious incidents and ensures that members are not caught by surprise by developments that affect their communities.
21. If members are not kept informed, there is a risk that misinformation or rumour will fill the void. In the absence of clear updates, councillors may be left unable to answer legitimate questions from residents, leading to frustration and undermining confidence in the Council's response. A lack of member awareness could also hamper the Council's own oversight and decision-making, particularly when issues escalate unexpectedly. The Committee therefore urges the Council to strike the right balance between necessary confidentiality and proactive communication with members as complex incidents play out.

**Recommendation 2: *That the Council should ensure that elected members are kept appropriately informed of progress and key milestones, subject to legal and investigation-related constraints.***

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

22. The Committee anticipates receiving another update during the 2026/2027 municipal year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney  
Scrutiny Officer  
[richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

June 2026

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue:** **Unauthorised Waste Disposal Site near Kidlington: Interim Report**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Laura Gordon, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **19 June 2026**

### **Response to recommendations:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Accepted, rejected or partially accepted</b>	<b>Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)</b>
1. That the Council should ensure that lessons learned from this incident be captured and used to strengthen early detection, escalation, inter-agency coordination, and internal		

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

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

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

communication in future cases of illegal waste activity.		
2. That the Council should ensure that elected members are kept appropriately informed of progress and key milestones, subject to legal and investigation-related constraints.		

## CABINET 16 June 2026

### Tree Care Framework Award

### Report by Director of Environment & Highways

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - (a) approve the use of a Tree Care Framework Contract model to deliver planned and responsive tree management activity for trees within the county council's responsibility as highway authority and property owner.
  - (b) To delegate the award of the contract, and any future extensions, to the Director of Environment & Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair

#### Executive Summary

2. This report details the need for a Tree Care Framework Contract and sets out the approach undertaken to secure the best mechanism and value for money provision to deliver service requirements.
3. A new framework is required to support the management of a very large tree stock, including an estimated 400,000 trees within the Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) and additional trees on council-owned land, through a proactive inspection and maintenance regime.
4. The contract tender was launched in October 2025 and 19 bids were received. The tender submissions were evaluated on quality (48%), cost (40%) and social value (12%) outputs. The contract is awarded in Lots (x5), based on the current second tier authority areas (Districts & City), with each area defined as a Lot. The contract was tendered as an open framework with an 8-year (3+3+2) term under the new Procurement Act 2023.

#### Context

5. Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county with a population of approximately 725,000 inhabitants. There are over 3,000 miles of road infrastructure, much of which is tree lined. Approximate numbers of trees within the Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) are estimated to be 400,000 trees.
6. Trees provide many benefits and it is essential to maintain them to realise these benefits that contribute to the priorities of the council.

7. The current Tree Care Framework is the only method for the council to efficiently manage tree care operations generated by ~100,000 trees being assessed annually. The previous contract expired at the end of March 2026 and needs to be replaced. Currently, only urgent, small-scale works are being issued to preserve larger packages of work that can be awarded on approval of the Tree Care Framework contract.
8. Without a replacement Framework, the council would need to tender individual works separately, which would increase costs, delay response times, reduce service resilience, place additional pressure on officer capacity, and create greater risk of non-compliance with procurement and duty-of-care obligations.

## **Service Need**

9. Tree Care in Oxfordshire is a perennial requirement. It comprises a range of annual planned works according to a maintenance schedule and a range of unplanned works required on an ad-hoc basis in response to service requests and natural events.
10. A proactive, strategic management plan has been developed for trees within the HMPE that was implemented from 1 February 2020. Oxfordshire's Proactive Inspection of Trees on the Highway (OPITH). The management regime is based on a four-year cycle of inspection and maintenance. This involves surveying a quarter of all parishes (approximately 80 parishes per year) across the county annually and undertaking any necessary tree care within the following financial year. This equates to approximately 100,000 tree inspections annually; likely resulting in >70% of the trees inspected requiring some form of tree care. This is an estimate, since the tree stock within HMPE did not have any strategic management historically and therefore, there is a greater likelihood for tree care being required following each tree inspection.
11. Since implementation, the OPITH cycle has reduced insurance claims and brought the inspection commitment for insurance and legal purposes within the prescribed minimum of five years. This programme has enabled the service to become more proactive thus providing efficiencies related to:
  - reduced adhoc enquiry numbers;
  - more accurate financial forecasting;
  - increased customer engagement.
12. This has allowed a broader, specialist, professional service rather than the focus solely being on reactive Highway related inspections.
13. The council is responsible for trees on sites where it is the freeholder –there is some responsibility for trees on leasehold sites although the specific details are stipulated within any lease agreement. Many of these sites have trees present and some have been recorded on the Council's tree database, this figure is currently 61,000 trees but is estimated to be double that figure, approximately 120,000 trees.

14. A framework supports the ability for the council to complete any tree related operations across the entire estate. This enables the council to respond more effectively and efficiently to any tree related enquiry, thus improving customer service, simplifying processes and increasing officer output.

## **Procurement Approach**

15. The existing framework is considered a resilient and value for money approach to provision of services that the council needs to procure in relation to tree management and care. As such, following consideration of alternative models, it was determined to evolve the existing arrangement by harnessing opportunities in the Procurement Act 2023.
16. As part of the business case evaluation, single provider and internal provision were evaluated, both of which failed to provide comparable value for money and these options significantly increased risk.
17. Without taking a framework approach, a tender would be required for every piece of operational tree care. On average, over 450 orders are issued per annum for tree care across the county. This approach would result in:
  - delayed response times;
  - increased tree care costs;
  - increased staff/internal costs;
  - reduced resilience;
  - increased officer time;
  - increased risk of foreseeable failure;
  - non-compliance with procurement regulations due to spend;
  - an inability to comply with duty of care.
18. The approach taken is to procure services for the framework in Lots (x5), based on the current second tier authority areas (Districts & City), with each area defined as a Lot. The contract was tendered as an open framework with an 8-year (3+3+2) term under the new Procurement Act 2023. The contract focuses on enabling tree works for all Local Authorities across Oxfordshire (Parish / Town / District / City) to reduce procurement need for other Local Authorities and abate challenges following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) outcomes because the contract relates to Oxfordshire and all Local Authorities in the County.
19. The contract tender was launched in October 2025 and 19 bids were received. The tender submissions were evaluated on quality (48%), cost (40%) and social value (12%) outputs. Following evaluation, nine contractors are to be awarded the contract with a minimum of four contractors per Lot, ensuring geographic coverage and resilience while maximising distribution across multiple SMEs.
20. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitoring performance for every contractor on the Framework have been incorporated into the Contract as follows:

- (a) Health and Safety Audits
  - (i) Annual company governance (RAMS, Insurance, Staff Competencies)
  - (ii) Monthly on-site checks
- (b) Tree Care Specifications
  - (i) Quality
  - (ii) Timeframe
- (c) Communication
- (d) Meetings
  - (i) All contractors = Quarterly
  - (ii) Individual contractor = Biennial
  - (iii) Feedback
- (e) Social Value

## Council Vision

21. Proactive tree care is supported by the [Tree Policy](#) approved by Cabinet in April 2022, which commits the council to achieve maximum life cycle benefits of tree assets, through delivery of proactive inspection and management, these are listed below:

- [Strategic Plan 2025-2028](#);
- [The Climate Action Framework](#);
- [Climate Action for a Thriving Oxfordshire](#)
- [Active Travel Strategy](#)
- [Oxfordshire Innovation Framework](#)

## Council Priorities

22. The provision of the framework will ensure the council is effective and efficient in its management of trees, which supports the councils strategic plan priority of 'Greener Oxfordshire' in particular supporting creating improved public spaces and nature and biodiversity enhancement.

## Financial Implications

23. The Tree Care Framework (TCF) is available for use by all Oxfordshire local authorities (including city, district, town and parish councils), providing a consistent, high-quality approach to tree care across the county and remaining accessible regardless of future local government reorganisation. Authorities opting to call off contracts from the framework will pay a modest access charge, set at Schedule of Rates plus 2.5%, which presents a small but ongoing opportunity to generate income, while responsibility for contract

management and performance monitoring will remain with each participating authority.

24. The Framework will be procured and funded through the existing service budgets within highways and property services, as detailed in the table below.

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Revenue (Highways)</b>	<b>Revenue (Property)</b>	<b>Years of Contract</b>	<b>Total Value over maximum Term</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>£630k</b>	<b>£50k</b>	<b>Up to 8</b>	<b>£5.44m</b>

25. There will be no RPI or inflationary uplift clauses included in this contract; however, bidders will be permitted to review and revise costs, and the Council will retain the ability to add contractors at two points during the eight-year term. In addition, should there be a requirement to reduce expenditure, the Council reserves the right to scale back or reduce the volume of works delivered through this framework as necessary.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Strategic Finance Business Partner,

[rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Legal Implications

26. The Contract will be procured pursuant to the process set out in the Procurement Act 2023. We do not anticipate Contract award having any significant legal implications. Risk and liability under the Contract is, subject to council's compliance with its terms, limited, because the opportunity contains no minimum spend requirement and should the council's financial position change, and/or funds ceasing to be available or needing to be utilised elsewhere there is no legal requirement or commitment to procure services under the Contract where funding is not available.
27. This procurement pathway enables the County to adhere to responsibilities in the following legislation and regulations:
- (i) Highway Act 1980
  - (ii) Health & Safety at Work Act
  - (iii) Management of Health & Safety Regulations
  - (iv) Occupier's Liability Act
  - (v) Local Government Act
  - (vi) Town and Country Planning Act
  - (vii) Wildlife and Countryside Act
  - (viii) Procurement Act 2023
  - (ix) Public Services Act 2012

28. All contractors awarded the framework will need to agree to adhere to the Tree Policy of the council in the conduct of the Services and any other applicable council policies when undertaking tree care instructed by the council.

Comments checked by:

Name: Fiona Harte

Title: Team Leader (Legal Services)

Email: [fiona.harte@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.harte@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

On behalf of the Director of Law & Governance (Legal Services)

## **Procurement Implications**

29. The Procurement Strategy has been developed by the service and the Commercial Delivery lead. The procurement has been in line with Oxfordshire County Council policies and national legislation, using the competitive open framework procedure, to take advantage of the opportunities that the Procurement Act presents in terms of inclusion, value for money and enhancing resilience of work delivery.
30. Evaluation weighting has been placed on ensuring contractors deliver the Council's Social Value Policy. These include measures aimed at potentially boosting local employment, use of SMEs in the wider supply chain and climate change targeted actions.
31. This procurement exercise to appoint professional arboricultural services to delivery tree care operations has been completed in line with all relevant legislation and guidelines.

Name: Lauren Hawkins

Title: Strategic Commercial Manager Place

Email: [lauren.hawkins@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.hawkins@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staff Implications and Considerations**

32. TUPE does not apply.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

33. An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been completed and provided a positive output score with no negative impacts identified. The EIA can be found in the annexes – ‘Annex 1\_TCF\_EIA\_May26’.

- 34. Equality and Inclusion are a core component of the contract. They will be delivered and monitored through adherence to:
  - (a) OCC’s Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) framework [Including Everyone - 2025 - 2029](#);
  - (b) [Social Value Policy](#);
  - (c) [Tree Policy](#).
- 35. Social Value forms a critical component to support EDI delivery across communities. Social Value is at the core of the Tree Care Framework. The two years that the previous contract was in place delivered just under £1m in Social Value, which equated to nearly 40% more than was committed under the contract terms between June 2023 – June 2025.

*Table 2 – Social Value from Tree Care Framework 2023-2025*

<b>Committed SV £</b>	<b>Delivered £</b>
£694,010.92	£969,441.05

Table 2 evidences that not only would the award of the framework have the contractual commitment to Social Value but that the commitments are delivered and have previously exceeded the contractual commitments.

**Sustainability Implications**

- 36. A climate impact assessment (CIA) has been completed and provided a positive output score of +45. The CIA can be found in the annexes – ‘Annex 2\_TCF\_CIA\_May26’.

**Risk Management**

- 37. There are few risks with approving the contract award. There is no commitment by the council to commit a specific amount of funding with each or any contractor. Should any budget changes take place, there is no risk to the council directly. If a contractor is not performing, there are other contractors that can be utilised to complete the necessary works.
- 38. Some potential risks are listed in Table 3.

*Table 3 – Risk Management*

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
A contractor is unable to deliver the works for the price quoted within the SoR.	Increase in cost and less work completed Contractor withdraws from framework	Medium Low – Due to reputational damage	Work offered to another contractor on the framework.

Works marked as completed when not completed	Foreseeable tree failure	Low – Due to reputational damage and criminal impact	Regular Monitoring of works by OCC Officers
Multiple companies to manage	Increased Tree Officer administration	Low	Tree Officers (5) are assigned a Lot which enables partnership and relationship building with specific contractors, not necessarily all.

Paul Fermer  
 Director of Environment & Highways

Annex:

Annex 1\_TCF\_EIA\_May26

Annex 2\_TCF\_CIA\_May26

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Andy Lederer, Tree Service Manager,  
[andy.lederer@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:andy.lederer@oxfordshire.gov.uk), 07860453603

May 2026



**Oxfordshire County Council**  
**Equalities Impact Assessment**

Tree Care Framework Contract

12/5/2026

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## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Environment & Highways, Countryside & Tree Service – Implications across all directorates
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Award of the Tree Care Framework Contract
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Existing function, although new contract
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	<p>The Tree Care Framework Contract enables the continued delivery of planned and responsive tree care across the county’s highway network and wider estate. The framework is required to support the management of a very large tree stock, including an estimated 400,000 trees within the Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) and additional trees on council-owned land, through a proactive inspection and maintenance regime. Without a replacement Framework, the council would need to tender individual works separately, which would increase costs, delay response times, reduce service resilience, place additional pressure on officer capacity, and create greater risk of non-compliance with procurement and duty-of-care obligations.</p> <p>The assessment has considered all aspects of this process and no negative impacts to people, communities or individuals have been highlighted. The award of the contract should support some of the most vulnerable areas assessed by potentially offering employment opportunities and / or spending council funds within communities that they serve both directly and indirectly via social value provision.</p>
<b>Completed By</b>	Andy Lederer

<b>Authorised By</b>	Teresa Kirkham 13 May 2026
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	12/5/2026

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Tender a new Tree Care Framework Contract that takes advantage of and leverages the new Procurement Regulations, under Procurement Act 2023, that took effect from 24 February 2025.</p> <p>Tree Care in Oxfordshire is a perennial requirement. It comprises a range of annual planned works according to a maintenance schedule and a range of unplanned works required on an ad-hoc basis in response to service requests and natural events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services are required to be carried out in accordance (where applicable) with the most recent iteration of British Standard 3998 (and/or equivalent European standard). OCC considers this to be a minimum standard and requires all contractors to set standards more than this, to deliver high quality tree care operations.</li> </ul> <p>The framework supports the ability for OCC to complete any tree related operations across the entire OCC estate. This enables OCC to respond more effectively and efficiently to any tree related enquiry, thus improving customer service, simplifying processes and increasing officer output.</p>
<p><b>Proposals</b></p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>OCC can only achieve the following requirements via the procurement process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adhere to our Duty of Care;</li> <li>• adhere to responsibilities in the following legislation and regulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Highway Act</li> <li>○ Health &amp; Safety at Work Act</li> <li>○ Management of Health &amp; Safety Regulations</li> <li>○ Occupier's Liability Act</li> <li>○ Local Government Act</li> <li>○ Town and Country Planning Act</li> <li>○ Wildlife and Countryside Act</li> <li>○ Procurement Act 2023</li> <li>○ Public Services Act 2012</li> </ul> </li> <li>• value for money;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high quality works;</li> <li>• professional standards;</li> <li>• ensure adequate resource is available, when required;</li> <li>• ability to adapt and manage impacts of extreme weather events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our equality commitments.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings were arranged with the previous contractors to capture positives and negatives of the previous framework and identify where improvements could be made from both an OCC and contractor perspective. These meetings were undertaken face to face with the owner and senior partners of each business all present at the meetings.</p> <p>Topics covered as part of the market engagement exercise with current and potential contractors were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Framework Benefits</b></li> <li>2. <b>Tree Care Specifications</b></li> <li>3. <b>Pricing</b></li> <li>4. <b>Lots</b></li> <li>5. <b>Potential Improvements / Innovation</b></li> </ol> <p>More specific details available.</p>

<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>All options considered and discounted.</p> <p>Option 1 - Doing nothing was considered but this would leave the council unable to fulfil statutory commitments / requirements in line with legislation / regulation.</p> <p>Option 2 - Undertake procurement for a single term contractor for all tree care related operations. We liaised Cherwell DC regarding their current contract which is a single provider for tree work and grounds maintenance. The tree aspect of the contract is not working, and they do not have the capacity to deliver the necessary requirements for tree care operations. A single contractor leaves the council limited to achieve resilience and significantly increases risk if contract is defaulted or unfulfilled.</p> <p>Option 3 – Create an in-house tree care team. This would require significant financial investment, well in excess of the budget allocated for tree care. Additional and specific site would be required in addition to insurances, equipment and staff that would need to be secured.</p>
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### **Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics**

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
<b>Age</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Disability</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review

<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Race</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review

<b>Sex</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review

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

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consistency of tree care and aligned with urban communities		Tree Service Manager	Annual review
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for employment through Social Value commitment		Tree Service Manager	Annual review
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	Tree Service Manager	Annual review
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for employment through Social Value commitment.		Tree Service Manager	Annual review
Refugees, Asylum seekers and Undocumented migrants (i.e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for employment through Social Value commitment		Tree Service Manager	Annual review

<b>Additional community impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>vulnerable migrants</b>							
<b>Socio-Economic Duty</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for employment through Social Value commitment		<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review

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

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for employment through Social Value commitment		<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offers consistency of tree care for all service areas		<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We don't foresee any impacts on any communities or groups, regardless of which contractor is used because they all have the same requirements and standards to fulfil.	We will continue to monitor any impacts relating to works, separately at the appropriate time, and will ensure appropriate mitigations to reduce or eliminate any differential impact.	<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review
Social Value <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated significant benefits from previous contract. (>£900k value across 6 contractors)		<b>Tree Service Manager</b>	Annual review

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

## Section 4: Review

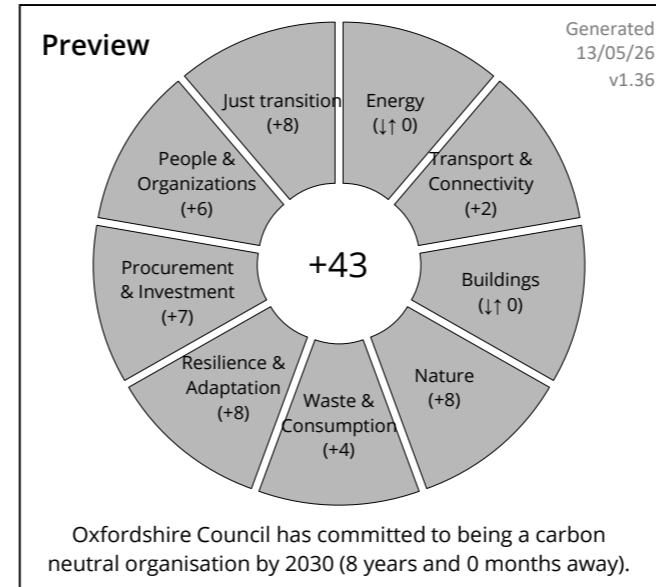
Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question).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

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>12 months after contract award (estimated 01/07/2027)</b>
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	<b>Andy Lederer, Tree Service Manager</b>
<b>Authorised By</b>	<b>Teresa Kirkham, Head of Countryside &amp; Waste</b>

# Climate Impact Assessment

## Summary

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Highways & Environment Countryside & Waste
<b>What is being assessed</b>	Tree Care Framework Contract
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	Existing Function but new contract award
<b>Summary of assessment</b>	Overall, the contract is expected to support positive outcomes for climate adaptation and nature recovery by maintaining and enhancing the tree asset that contributes to flood mitigation, resilience to extreme weather, biodiversity, and wider environmental and wellbeing benefits. The climate impact of this proposal primarily arises through how tree care services are procured, specified and managed.
<b>Completed by</b>	Andy Lederer - Tree Service Manager
<b>Climate action sign off by</b>	Kunal Prasad - Corporate Climate Manager
<b>Director sign off by</b>	
<b>Assessment date</b>	46154



## Detail of proposal

<b>Context / Background</b>	<p>Tender a new Tree Care Framework Contract that takes advantage of and leverages the new Procurement Regulations, under Procurement Act 2023, that took effect from 24 February 2025.</p> <p>Tree Care in Oxfordshire is a perennial requirement. It comprises a range of annual planned works according to a maintenance schedule and a range of unplanned works required on an ad-hoc basis in response to service requests and natural events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All services are required to be carried out in accordance (where applicable) with the most recent iteration of</li> </ul>
<b>Proposal</b>	<p>OCC can only achieve the following requirements via the procurement process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•adhere to our Duty of Care;</li> <li>•adhere to responsibilities in the following legislation and regulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oHighway Act</li> <li>oHealth &amp; Safety at Work Act</li> <li>oManagement of Health &amp; Safety Regulations</li> <li>oOccupier’s Liability Act</li> <li>oLocal Government Act</li> <li>oTown and Country Planning Act</li> <li>oWildlife and Countryside Act</li> <li>oProcurement Act 2023</li> <li>oPublic Services Act 2012</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Evidence / Intelligence</b>	<p>Planting trees provides direct and indirect benefits to the community, as well as contributing to, addressing and improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•flood alleviation;</li> <li>•climate adaptation;</li> <li>•landscape resilience;</li> <li>•carbon sequestration;</li> <li>•noise and air pollution;</li> <li>•wildlife corridors (both urban and rural);</li> <li>•health and wellbeing;</li> <li>•speed reduction.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b>	<p>Quarterly meetings were arranged with the previous contractors to capture positives and negatives of the previous framework and identify where improvements could be made from both an OCC and contractor perspective. These meetings were undertaken face to face with the owner and senior partners of each business all present at the meetings.</p> <p>Topics covered as part of the market engagement exercise with current and potential contractors were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Framework Benefits</li> <li>2. Tree Care Specifications</li> <li>3. Pricing</li> <li>4. Lots</li> <li>5. Potential Improvements / Innovation</li> </ol> <p>More specific details available.</p>

Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	N/A				
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	N/A				
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel			The score here rely on indirect effects (e.g. better tree management → nicer streets → walking), but the contract itself does not materially influence travel behaviour.		
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport			1 Same as above		
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	N/A				
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	N/A				
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings	N/A				
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	2				
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	3				
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	3				
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	1				
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	2				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	2				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	3				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	3				
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability	3				
Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	2				
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	2				
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	2				
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	3				
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	2				
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality	3				

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**Report by Director of HR and Cultural Change**

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

**1. Executive Summary**

This report summarises Quarter 4 (Q4) 2025/26 workforce performance against the Our People and Culture Strategy and highlights the main employee trends across the last four quarters.

Q4 also marks the introduction of the new People Insights Dashboard, giving directors and services easier access to workforce data and service-level drilldown. The analysis in this report is underpinned by data from the Council’s People Insights dashboard, which has been used as the primary source for workforce information. Relevant insights have been incorporated where appropriate to provide a consistent and evidence based account of performance and trends.

To align People and Finance reporting, Q4 data runs to 21 March 2026 rather than 31 March 2026. This may slightly affect quarter-end comparisons but will provide a more consistent basis for future reporting.

The main points of note arising this quarter are:

- Workforce size has remained broadly stable, with full time equivalent (FTE) at 4,653 for the second consecutive quarter and headcount at around 5,500.
- Turnover has continued to reduce, with rolling 12-month voluntary turnover at 9.36%, below the 11.5% key performance indicator (KPI) target and the seventh consecutive quarter of reduction.
- Agency spend reduced by £1.0m between Q3 and Q4, from £9.1m to £8.1m, although some service pressures remain in specific areas.
- Recruitment performance improved significantly, with average time to hire reducing to 39 days, ahead of the 2026/27 target of 55 days.
- Work on culture, inclusion and employee voice continued through the culture review, engagement pulse survey, UNISON Anti-Racism Charter evidence, and targeted workforce planning activity.
- Absence indicators improved quarter on quarter, with stress and mental health remaining the main reason for absence.
- Apprenticeship activity remains strong, with levy utilisation above target and continued support for both entry routes and career development.

**2. Strategic Context**

The Our People and Culture Strategy sets out the council’s ambition to build high-performing, innovative, engaged and agile teams that reflect the communities we serve. Delivery is organised through four pillars: **Attract, Thrive, Grow and Lead**.

During Q4, activity focused on continued work to strengthen capability, widen access to opportunity, and support an inclusive and engaged culture.

## **2.1 Grow**

A standardised workforce planning template was introduced to support a more consistent and strategic approach across services. Roll-out through Strategic People Partners is helping directorates align service planning, workforce risks and future skills needs with corporate priorities.

Oxfordshire County Council has committed to 30 placements for Care Leavers by March 2027. This supports the 'Fairer Oxfordshire' ambition within the strategic plan. The Early Careers team are working in partnership with Children's Services to build a pipeline of engaging opportunities for Care Leavers. The first ten placements continue to be scoped with service areas and will be finalised by the end June. Placements will be for a minimum of 4 weeks, offering Care Leavers the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience and a pathway into further employment. A deep dive update is planned for Informal Cabinet on Care Leavers in July.

## **2.2 Thrive**

A culture review was completed to understand colleague experience and identify strengths and development areas. Its findings are informing the refresh of the Our People and Culture Strategy and helping to target future interventions.

The council also presented a consolidated evidence base against the UNISON Anti-Racism Charter, covering leadership, workforce data, recruitment, learning and inclusive culture. This was well received by the Employers' Joint Consultative Committee.

Pulse survey findings were shared with colleagues and discussed through the Colleague Forum, supporting transparency and informing both corporate and service-level action.

## **2.3 Lead**

A leadership event for the Senior Leadership Team was held in February, focused on the critical leadership challenges colleagues are facing during a period of significant transition. This included a deep dive into the culture review.

The reciprocal mentoring programme continued in Q4. Cohorts 1 and 2 are concluding, with an in-depth evaluation planned to assess the success and impact of the programme. So far, feedback shows the programme is creating early positive impact, particularly in strengthening inclusive leadership awareness and building positive mentoring relationships, while also highlighting the need for clearer progression pathways for Aspiring Leaders. The evaluation will allow for further improvements for cohorts 3 and 4, which will launch in Q1 26/27.

Senior leaders continue to drive organisational redesign, aligned to a clear vision of creating a smaller, more efficient and financially sustainable council. The programme is focused on:

- Reducing workforce size and operating costs, alongside rationalising the council's estate to ensure buildings are used to maximum capacity
- Improving productivity and efficiency through technology, enhancing connectivity with residents and enabling more effective ways of working
- Strengthening partnership working across public services, voluntary and community sectors, reducing reliance on the council as the sole service provider
- Embedding the People and Culture strategy ensuring the workforce is equipped to deliver redesigned services
- Exploring commercial opportunities and alternative delivery models to generate value whilst operating within a defined financial envelope.

- To enable the council to be fit for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The organisation redesign programme delivers a systematic and ongoing transformation approach, and as at the end of Q4 2025/6 has delivered:

- 11 organisation redesign programmes have been completed and have gone live
- 30% of employees have had recently job evaluated roles
- Approximately 44% of roles have been put on the career family framework
- £3.2m of savings have been delivered. Please note some savings are through invest to save initiatives and removing vacant posts
- 35 colleagues have been made redundant or are currently serving their redundancy notice period
- 6 employees have been redeployed into other roles within the council; thus, avoiding redundancies

### 3. Workforce composition/headlines

#### 3.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and temporary staff across previous fiscal years

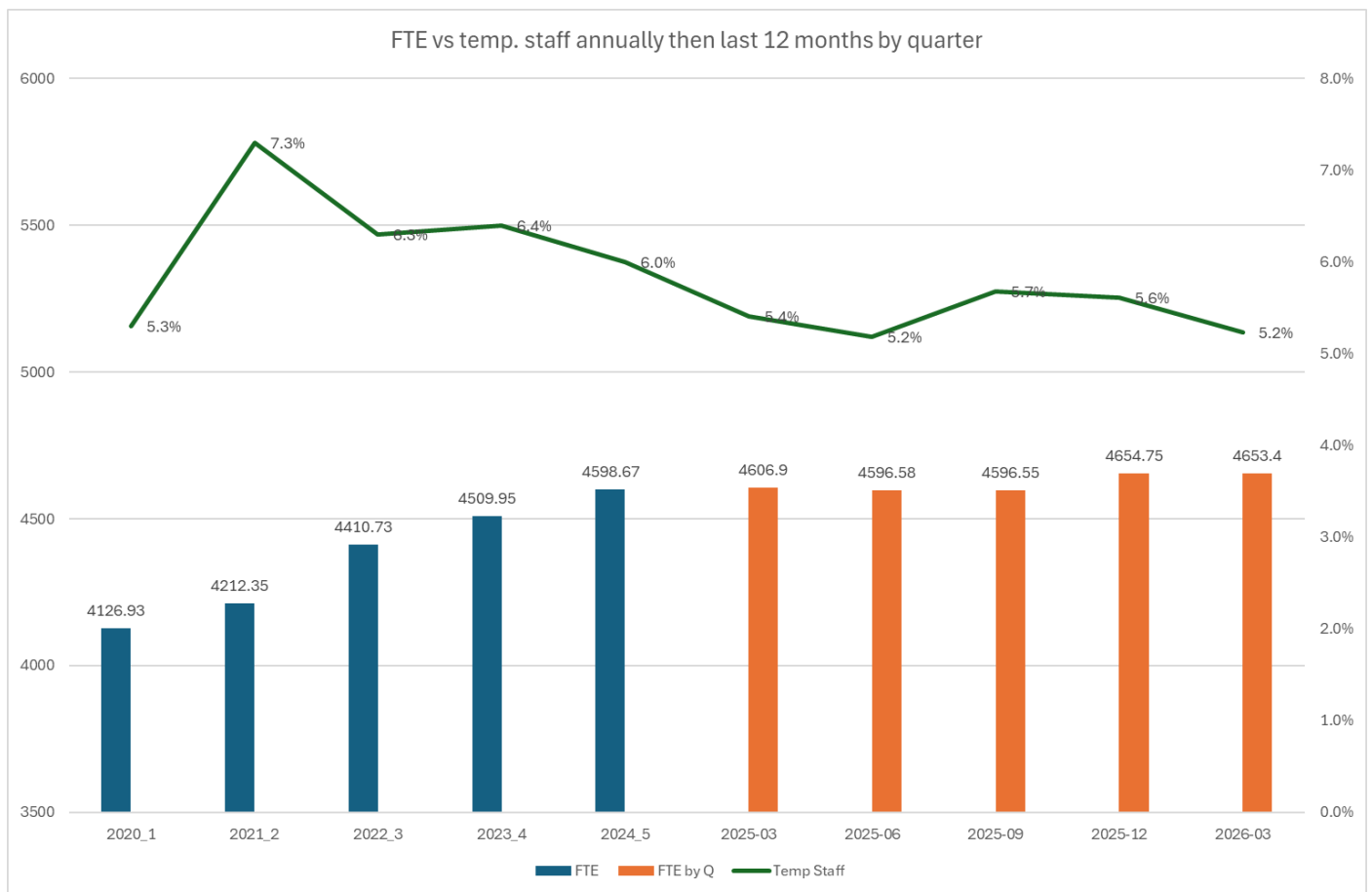


Figure 1: Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and temporary staffing proportion as at Q4 and across previous fiscal years

Overall workforce size has remained stable since Q4 2023, with headcount around 5,500 and FTE around 4,650. Over the same period, the proportion of colleagues on fixed-term contracts has reduced from 6.4% to 5.25% (Figure 1).

It is also important to note that 136 fixed-term colleagues are apprentices, meaning a proportion of temporary roles reflect planned training pathways rather than short-term staffing cover.

Beneath this stable corporate picture, directorate-level changes remain significant and reflect service redesign, recruitment activity and operational demand pressures.

Those Directorates experiencing the most significant proportional or numerical changes include:

- Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience (TDCE) staffing reduced following directorate disbandment through the Redesign programme, with functions redistributed elsewhere.
- Children’s Services increased by around 4%, reflecting successful recruitment to hard-to-fill roles such as social workers.
- Environment & Highways (E&H) increased by 6%, largely due to additional posts in Network Management and related service pressures.

#### 4. Turnover and Workforce Stability

##### Rolling Year Turnover

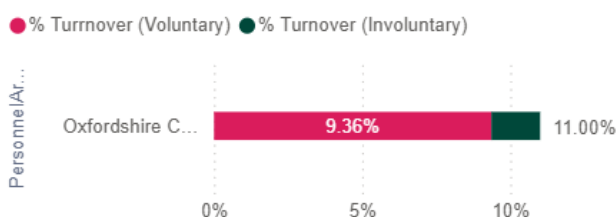


Figure 2: Rolling year voluntary turnover for Oxfordshire County Council

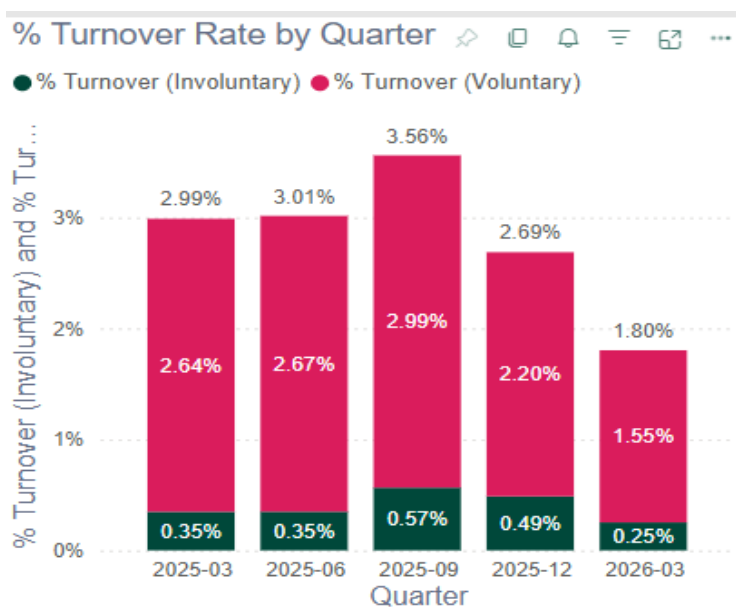


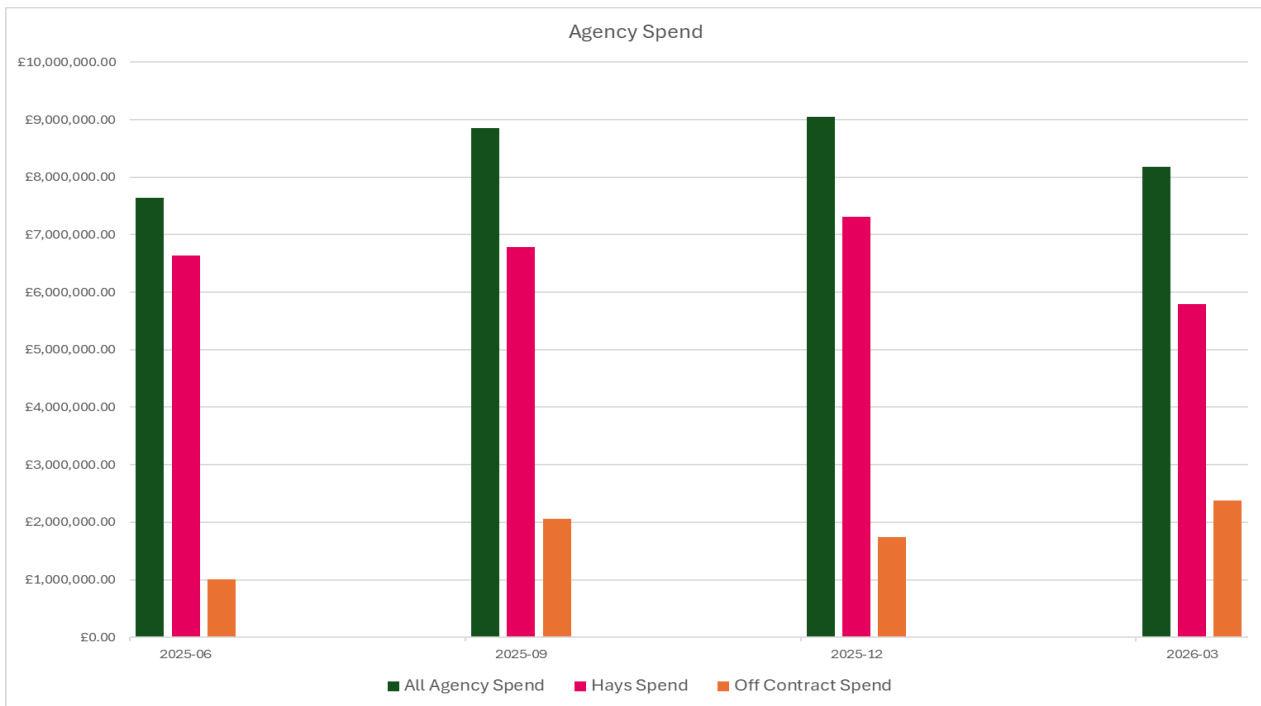
Figure 3: % Turnover by quarter

Overall turnover remains low. At Q4 2025/26, rolling 12-month turnover stands at 9.36% (Figure 2), below the 11.50% KPI target and representing the seventh consecutive quarter of reduction.

Leavers within the first six months of employment fell from 56 in 2024/25 to 51 in 2025/26, suggesting some improvement in induction and early retention. The most common recorded reasons for early leaving were alternative employment, fixed-term contract endings, and health or family commitments.

Work is underway to strengthen exit interview completion and insight quality so that retention action can be more targeted and evidence led.

#### 5. Agency Spend



**Figure 1: Agency spend for 2025\_6.**

Total agency spend decreased by £1.0m between Q3 and Q4 of 2025/26, falling from £9.1m to £8.1m (Figure 4). This reduction reflects a combination of actions taken by the council services to reduce reliance on agency staff, alongside savings measures delivered by Hays in line with the objectives set out in the contract.

The position varies by directorate, reflecting different operational pressures and stages of workforce stabilisation.

- E&H spend has remained broadly stable at around £2.5m, reflecting short-term demand pressures while more sustainable staffing arrangements are developed.
- Legal & Governance (L&G) continues to rely on locum solicitors where recruitment and retention remain difficult; a job evaluation review is underway to support longer-term improvement.
- Customer Experience saw temporary increases over the Christmas period; some roles have since converted to permanent posts, but short-term agency demand is likely to continue into Q1 2026/27.
- Elsewhere, directorates are subject to closer scrutiny of agency use, with a stronger focus on business criticality and value for money.

## 6. Recruitment & Time to Hire

### 6.1 Time to Hire (TTH)

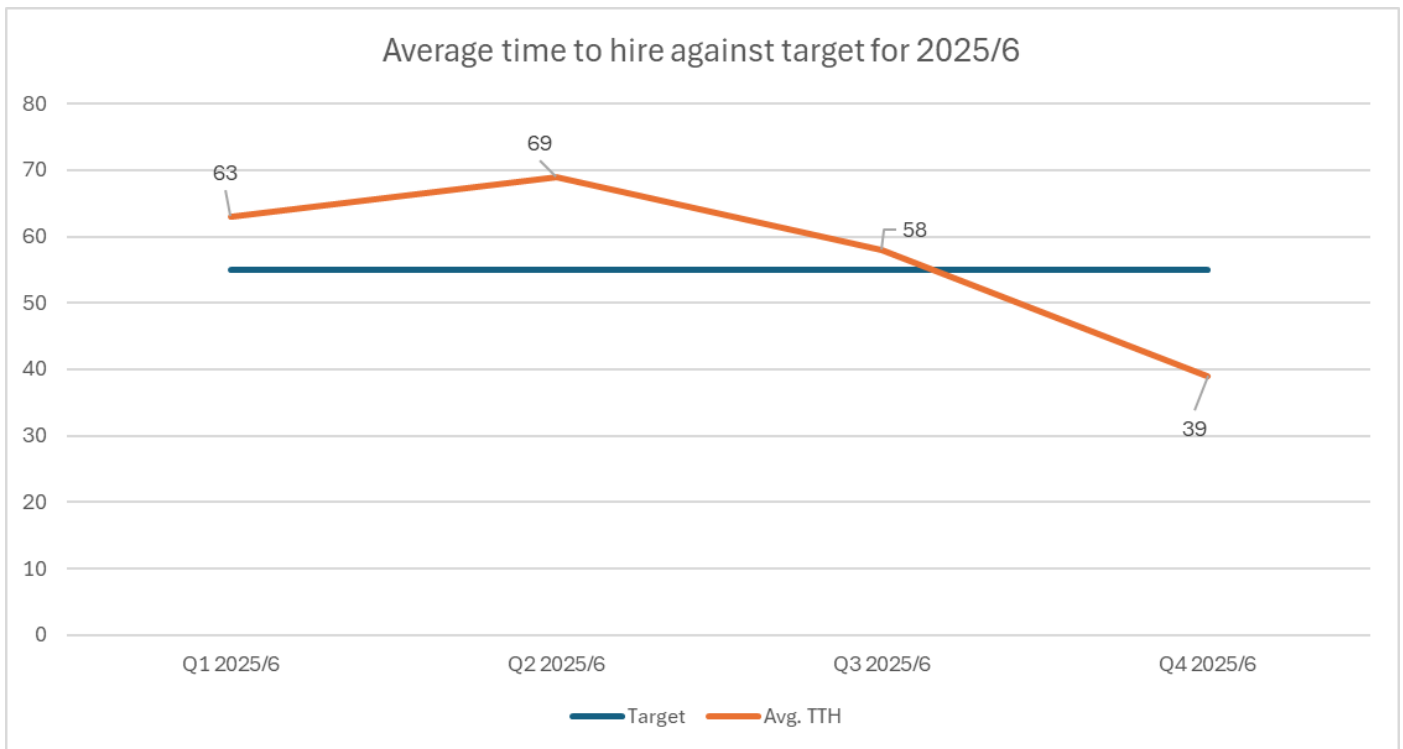


Figure 5 Average time to hire 2025/6

Recruitment performance continued to improve in Q4. Average TTH reduced to 39 days (Figure 5), placing the council ahead of its 2026/27 target of 55 days.

TTH for safeguarding roles improved significantly, falling from 64 to 40 days, while non-safeguarding roles remained stable at 35 days.

This improvement reflects earlier onboarding activity, better hiring manager guidance, improved workflow visibility in Tribepad, the council’s recruitment system and closer working between the Resourcing team and hiring managers.

Hiring manager feedback also suggests Disclosure & Baring Service (DBS) return timescales have improved following integration of the DBS process with Tribepad.

## 6.2 Vacancy controls and Redeployment

The vacancy approval process is now embedded in Tribepad, enabling visibility of recruitment requests and improving vacancy management.

This has also strengthened redeployment during organisational redesign. In Q4, six employees were successfully redeployed, reducing redundancy risk and avoiding unnecessary external recruitment.

## 7. Workforce Diversity & Inclusion (D&I)

### 7.1 Key D&I Metrics

#### Age profile

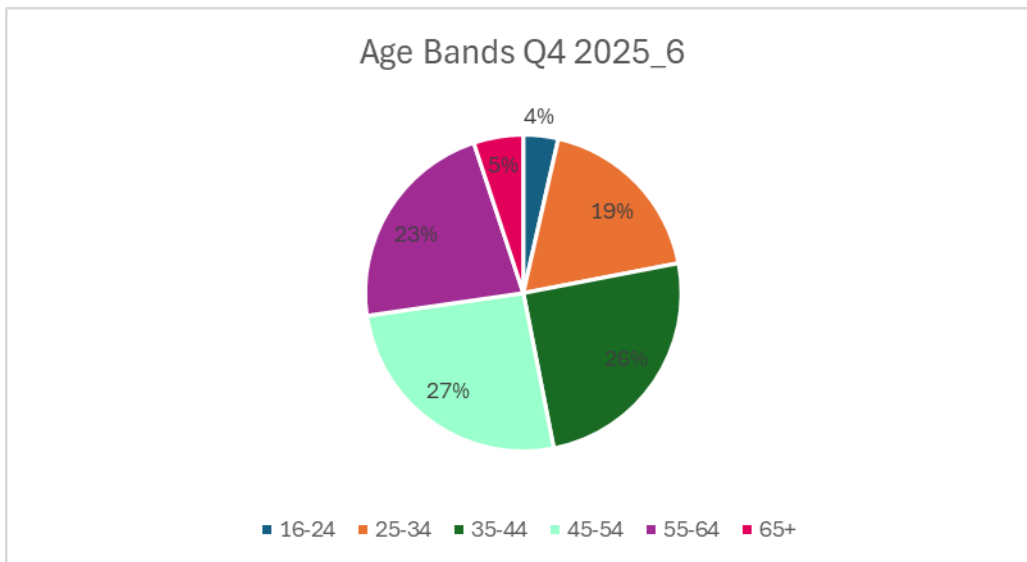


Figure 2: age bands by percentage of whole council

The age profile has remained stable over the last 12 months (Figure 6). Around one-third of the workforce is aged 55+, while around one-quarter is aged 16–34, highlighting both succession risks and opportunities for knowledge transfer.

Continued focus on attracting and retaining younger entrants remains important to strengthen succession and workforce resilience.

### Gender composition

The overall gender profile remains stable. E&H, Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and Fire & Community Safety continue to be more male dominated, although the proportion of women in E&H has increased from 35% to 40% over the last year.

### Ethnicity

Ethnicity proportions have remained broadly stable over the past year. The proportion of colleagues from non-white ethnic groups increased marginally from 11.6% to 11.7%, remaining below the Oxfordshire Census benchmark of 14.4%.

Ethnicity declaration rates reduced slightly to 88.9% but remain above national benchmarks.

Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) reporting, Race Action Plans and UNISON Race Charter activity continue to support improvement in reporting levels.

### Disability

Disability declaration rates among employees have had a small improvement from 9.1% in Q2 25/26 to 9.9% by end Q4 25/26

In Q4 there were 6,271 completed applications for jobs with a recorded disability declaration, a completion rate of 86.8%. Of these, 7.5% declared a disability, 77.3% declared no disability, 2.0% preferred not to say, and 13.2% gave no response.

The level of no response and prefer not to say answers highlights an opportunity to do further work to strengthen confidence, transparency and completion.

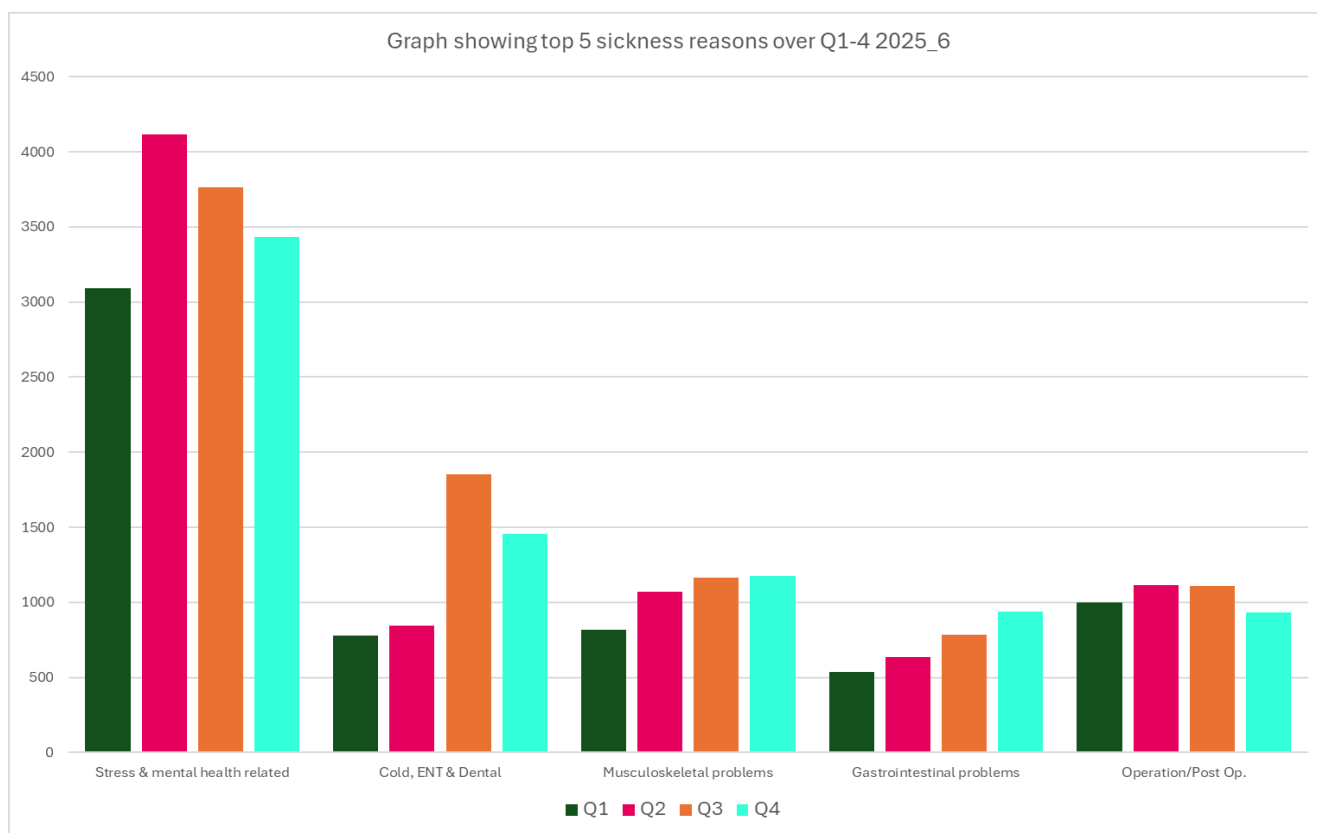
Disability outcomes in recruitment will continue to be monitored. The current declaration rate in recruitment remains below the reported workforce level, indicating a need for continued focus on inclusive recruitment and confidence in disclosure.

## 7.2 Equality & Inclusion Implications

Equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are embedded across all Council workstreams, ensuring that policies, practices, and workforce decisions are assessed for their impact on underrepresented and protected groups. This approach supports our legal duties and strategic commitment to fostering a fair and inclusive organisation.

## 8. Attendance, Wellbeing & Employee Experience

### 8.1 Sickness Absence



*Figure 7: Top 5 sickness comparison across Oxfordshire County Council*

Figure 7 shows that stress and mental health remain the largest contributors to sickness absence in 2025/26, but levels are reducing. Cold and ENT (Ear, nose & throat) related absence has also fallen despite the winter period, suggesting a more positive direction of travel.

### 8.2 Sickness Data Trends

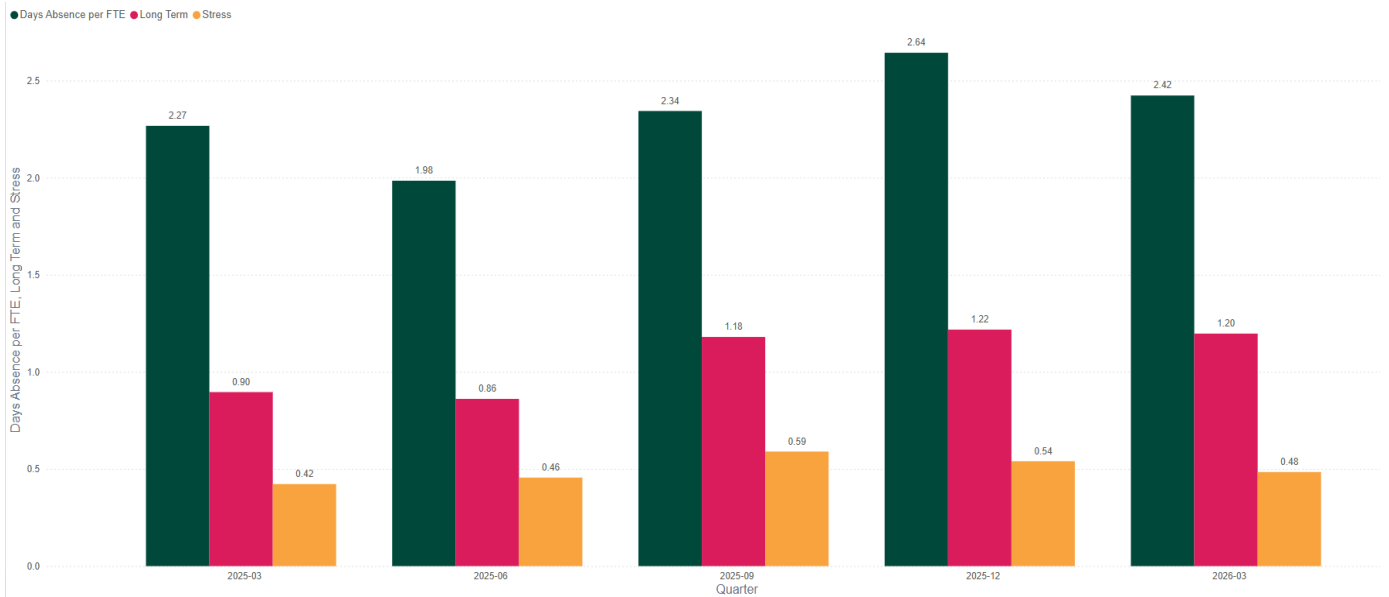


Figure 8: FTE Days absence: total, long-term, stress by quarter.

Figure 8 shows that total sickness, long-term absence and stress absence all reduced from Q3 to Q4. Although still above the same point last year, the quarter-on-quarter trend is positive and is not uniform across all directorates.

### 9. Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy utilisation

Apprenticeship activity remains strong, supporting both entry routes and continuing professional development. Since Q2 2017/18, 561 apprenticeships have been completed, including 49 completions in Q4.

Apprenticeship Levy utilisation remains above the 65% target at over 90% (Figure 9), demonstrating continued commitment to capability building and workforce resilience.

Use of the Apprenticeship Levy remains strong. Spend consistently exceeds the **65% target**, with current utilisation at over 90%. Pointing towards the continued commitment to maintain the dedication to apprenticeships – which speaks to earlier in this report and developing knowledge/skills transfer and resilience.

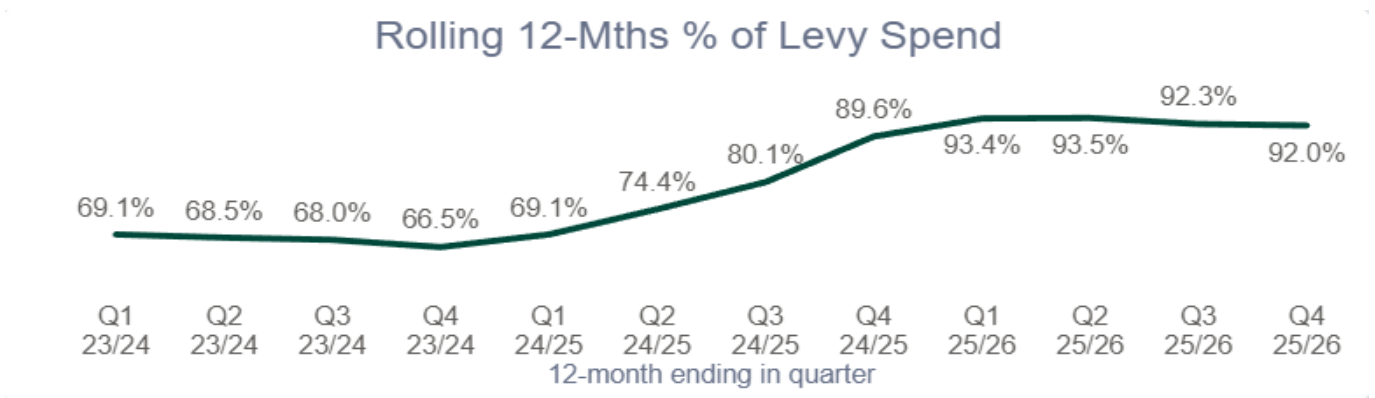


Figure 9: Apprenticeship Levy spend

There are currently 310 apprentices enrolled across the council, of whom 225 are permanent employees undertaking continuous professional development (CPD) and 85 are on fixed-term apprenticeship contracts (Figure 10).

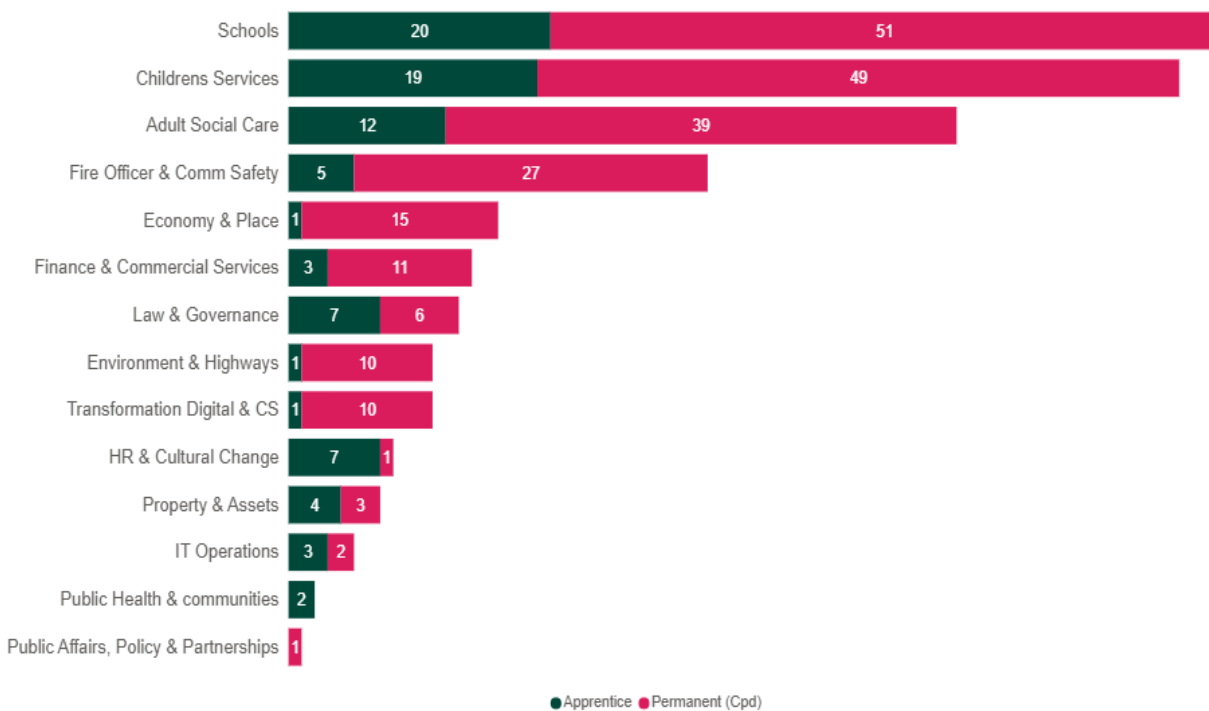


Figure 3: Distribution of apprenticeships in Oxfordshire County Council

Examples of impact across directorates include:

- **Finance & Commercial Services (FCS)**, apprenticeships have supported firefighters to progress into management roles (Levels 3 and 5). These programmes are now concluding, and alternative development routes will be required going forward.
- **Environment & Place (E&P) and E&H**, apprenticeships support professional development in specialist roles such as planning and engineering.
- **ICT**, all four graduates from the most recent cohort have been retained in permanent roles, with plans to recruit a new cohort following redesign aligned to the next academic year.

In Q4 2025/26, 26 apprentices enrolled, with most being existing employees undertaking apprenticeships to support their development, alongside 4 new starters.

- The cohort had a broadly balanced gender split and representation across a wide age range, showing apprenticeships continue to support development at different career stages.
- The distribution of new apprenticeship starts across services is shown in Figure 11.
- Most Q4 starters were existing employees using apprenticeships for career development rather than new entry roles.

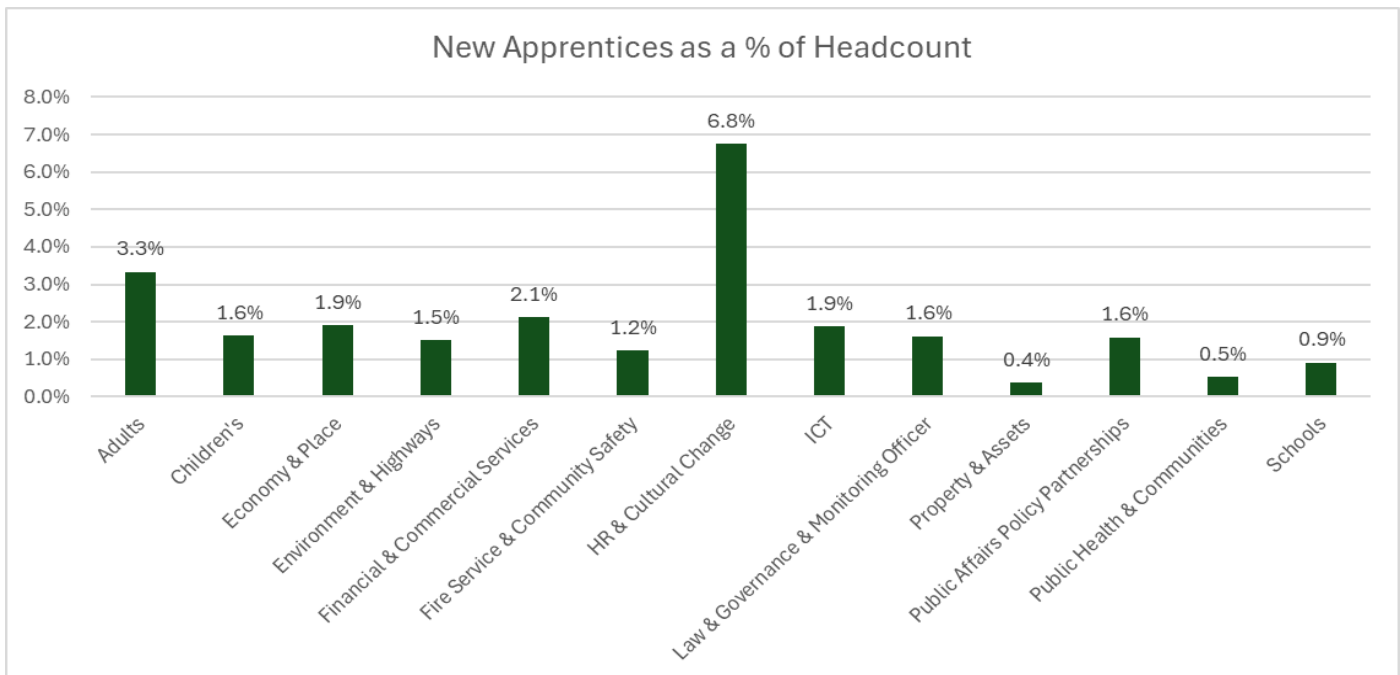


Figure 11: New apprentice numbers as a percentage of directorate headcount.

## 10. Sustainability Implications

A review of the activities and data presented in this report has identified no direct sustainability implications at this time. The council remains committed to embedding environmental and socially sustainable principles across its workforce planning and operational practices, and any future developments with potential impact will be assessed accordingly.

## 11. Risk Management

A review of the data and activities outlined in this report has identified no immediate risk management concerns. The council continues to monitor workforce-related risks through established governance processes, ensuring that any emerging issues, such as recruitment challenges, agency spend, or absence trends are escalated and addressed in line with corporate risk protocols.

## 12. Financial Implications

Costs related to agency staff have contributed to the year - end overspend for services summarised in the Provisional Outturn Report for 2025/26 elsewhere on the agenda. Where relevant on-going pressures arising from challenges with recruitment to specific roles, including those within Legal and Governance, for example, were considered as part of the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2026/27.

Continuing focus is required so that services manage staffing expenditure within agreed budgets in 2026/27 and over the medium term when further savings will be required.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

### **13. Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Anita.Bradley@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

### **14. Staff Implications**

Staff implications have been considered across all relevant workstreams and are reflected throughout this report. Key areas include workforce growth, recruitment trends, agency reliance, absence management, and apprenticeship engagement. These factors collectively inform our approach to workforce planning, service delivery, and organisational resilience.

#### **Cherie Cuthbertson**

Director of HR and Cultural Change

**Background papers:** Nil

**Contact Officer:** Nathan Phillips

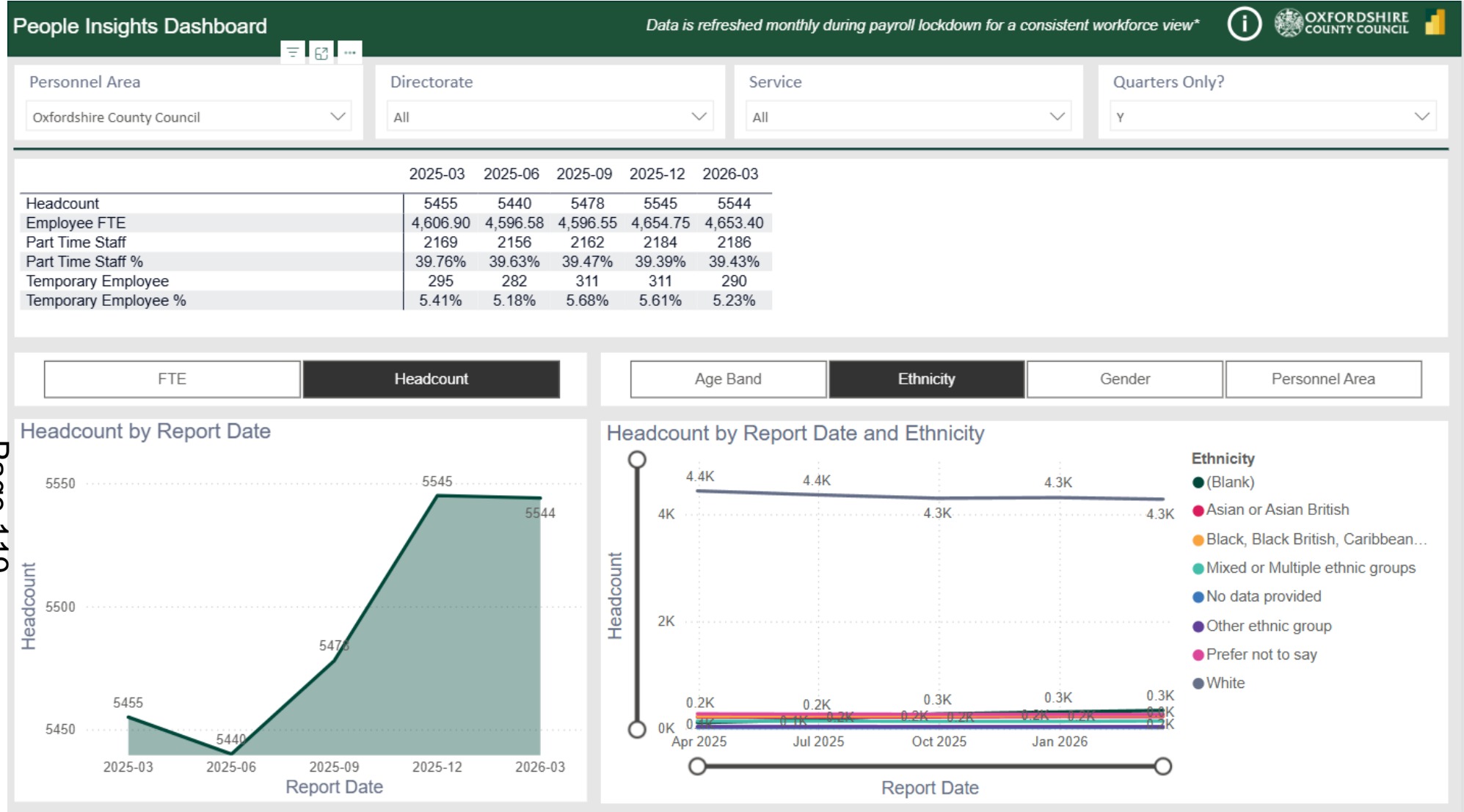


Figure 12 Snapshot of the People & Insight Dashboard (Headcount view)

Personnel Area: 
 Directorate: 
 Service: 
 Quarters Only?:

	2025-01	2025-02	2025-03	2025-04	2025-05	2025-06	2025-07	2025-08	2025-09	2025-10	2025-11	2025-12	2026-01	2026-02
Headcount	5505	5441	5455	5436	5441	5440	5448	5453	5478	5523	5465	5545	5521	5541
Employee FTE	4,646.19	4,598.64	4,606.90	4,598.67	4,597.55	4,596.58	4,606.15	4,610.41	4,596.55	4,638.63	4,580.01	4,654.75	4,636.20	4,652.54
Part Time Staff	2201	2159	2169	2150	2157	2156	2158	2161	2162	2173	2175	2184	2174	2185
Part Time Staff %	39.98%	39.68%	39.76%	39.55%	39.64%	39.63%	39.61%	39.63%	39.47%	39.34%	39.80%	39.39%	39.38%	39.43%
Temporary Employee	309	297	295	283	284	282	290	292	311	316	313	311	303	284
Temporary Employee %	5.61%	5.46%	5.41%	5.21%	5.22%	5.18%	5.32%	5.35%	5.68%	5.72%	5.73%	5.61%	5.49%	5.13%

FTE | Headcount | Age Band | Ethnicity | Gender | Personnel Area

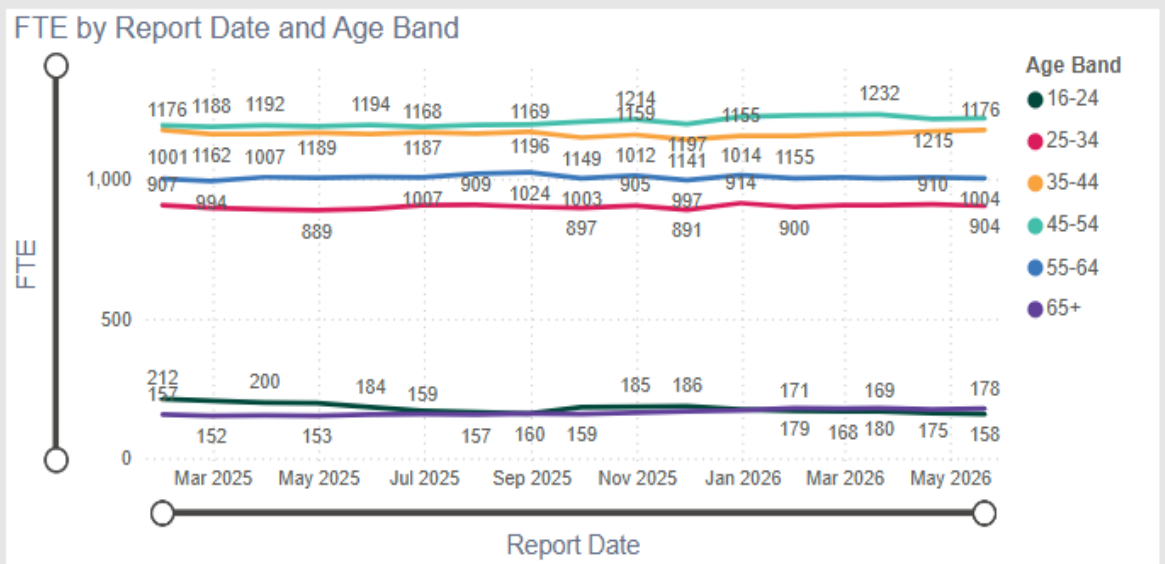
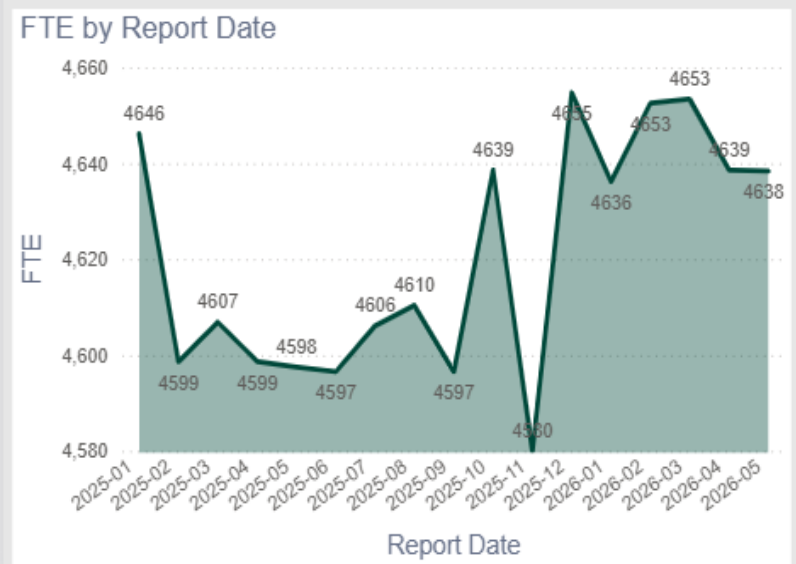


Figure 13 Snapshot of the People & Insight Dashboard (FTE view)

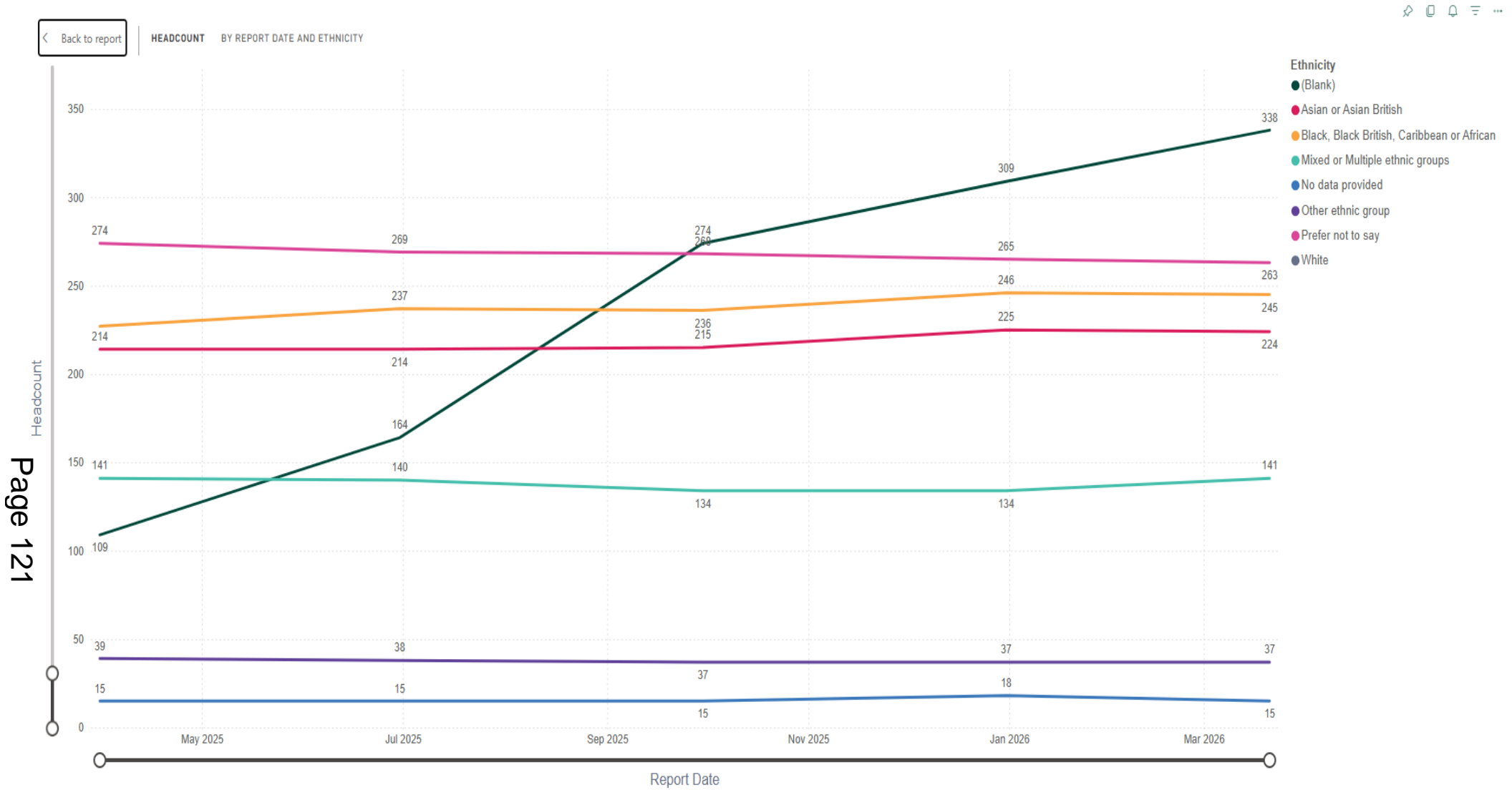


Figure 4 Focussed view of the ethnicity chart shown in Figure 12

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**CABINET**  
**16 JUNE 2026**

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT**  
**PERFORMANCE & RISK Quarter 4 2025/26 AND**  
**PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2025/26**

**Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) Note the report and annexes;  
Annex A Performance – Quarter 4 2025-26  
Annex B Exceptions – Quarter 4 2025-26  
Annex C – Complaints and FOI's  
Annex D – Provisional financial year end position 2025/26  
Annex E – Annual report
- b) Note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2025/26 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as explained in Annex D.
- c) Reserves:
  - i. Approve an £8.0m additional contribution to High Needs DSG risk reserve in 2025/26 (ahead of submission of the SEND Reform Plan to the Department for Education). The balance held in the reserve will be considered as part of the budget process for 2027/28 (Annex D Para 116 -118).
  - ii. Approve that the £2.7m 2025/26 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is held in reserves and carried forward for use in future years as set out in Annex D Appendix 4c (Annex D Para 116, 119).
  - iii. Approve the creation of a Congestion Charge Reserve, and contribution of £1.4m, to hold and support funding for the ongoing operation of the scheme as well as investments set out in the report to Cabinet in May 2026 (Annex D Para 116, 120).
  - iv. Approve a £0.8m contribution to the Budget Priorities reserve to support Education SEND (Annex D Para 121 - 122).

2. The business management and monitoring reports are part of a suite of performance, strategic risk and finance documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.

## Strategic Risk - Summary Position

3. The risk section of this report is focussed on the Oxfordshire County Council strategic risk register. There are currently eight strategic risks.

<b>SR01</b> Financial Resilience	<b>SR10</b> Climate Impact
<b>SR03</b> Housing Infrastructure (HIF1)	<b>SR12</b> Local Government Reform
<b>SR05</b> Special Educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	<b>SR13</b> SEND Sufficiency
<b>SR09</b> Delivering the future together (DTFT)	<b>SR19</b> Cybersecurity

Table 1: Strategic risks included in the strategic risk register as at 31 March 2026

### Strategic risk heatmap, as at 31 March 2026

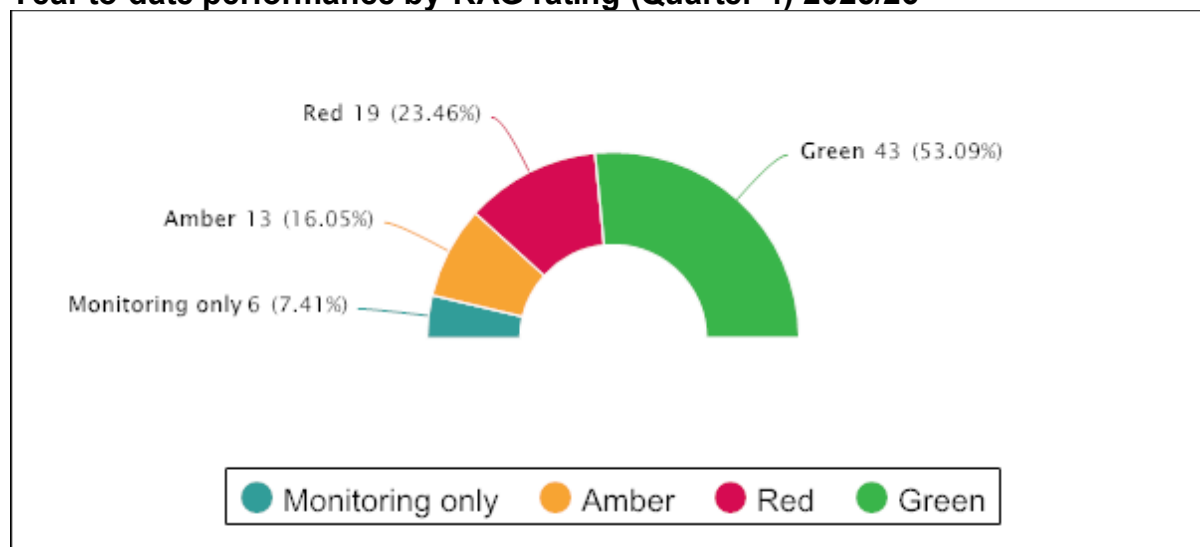


Image 1: Shows the rating of our seven strategic risks as at 31 March 2026.

4. For additional information regarding the performance and management of the strategic risk register, please refer to the Strategic Risk Management and Summary sections of this report.

## Performance Overview

### Year to date performance by RAG rating (Quarter 4) 2025/26



Graph 1: Year to date performance by RAG rating for Quarter 4 2025/26

5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target) for the year-to-date position. The full performance report is included in Annex A.
6. Throughout the reporting year, there is a variety of reporting periods, including monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, and annual. Therefore, the number of measures reported can vary across the year. As of the end of Quarter 4 of 2025/26, 69 measures (18 monthly measures, 19 quarterly measures, 1 half-yearly measure, 31 annual measures and 12 bi-monthly finance measures), were rated as follows:
  - 43 (53.09%) measures rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
  - 19 (23.46%) measures rated as Amber (narrowly missing target)
  - 13 (16.05%) measures rated as Red (significantly off target)
  - 6 (7.41%) measures rated as Monitoring only (Monitoring only with no target)

## Complaints, FOI and EIR requests

### Summary of Statutory and Corporate Complaints (Quarter 2025/26)

7. The customer service team have refined their data processes and are reporting a quarter in arrears. Therefore, the complaints and FOI/EIR performance data relates to Quarter 3 2025/26.
  - A total of 245 complaints were logged during Quarter 3 2025/26, comprising 187 (76.3%) stage 1 complaints, 55 (22.4%) stage 2 complaints and 3 (1.3%) stage 3 complaints. This represents a 35.4% (64 complaints) increase compared to the last quarter.
  - 245 cases were closed, 133 (54.3%) within timescale and 112 (45.7%) outside of timescale.
  - Children's services received the most cases, with 118 (48.2%) of the 245 total cases. Of the 118 cases received 70 (59.3%) were closed within timescale

and 48 (40.7%) outside of timescale.

## **1.2 Freedom of information requests (FOI) and environmental information regulation requests (EIR).**

- A total of 474 requests were logged as FOI/EIR during Quarter 3 2025/26; this represents a 5% (25) increase compared to Quarter 2 2025/26.
- 472 (99.6%) requests have been closed during Quarter 3, 459 (96.8%) within the 20 working days of receiving the initial request and 13 (2.7%) requests were closed outside of timescale.
- 2 (0.4%) requests remain open outside of 20 working days of receiving the initial requests.

Please refer to Annex C for additional information relating to complaints, FOI and EIR.

## Strategic Risk Management

8. A strategic risk is a risk to the council’s strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level. The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed monthly as part of the business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.

Status Indicator	Status Description
High	Residual risk rating is high (Score 16 and above)
Medium	Residual risk rating is medium (Score 10-15)
Low	Residual risk rating is low (Score 1-9)

Table 2: Strategic Risk Key for March 2026

## Strategic Risk Overview

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Inherent Risk Rating	Residual Risk Score	Residual Risk Rating	Effectiveness of Controls
SR10 Climate Impact	25	High	20	High	Partially Effective
SR19 Cyber Security	25	High	15	Medium	Partially Effective
SR09 Delivering the Future Together	25	High	16	High	Substantially Effective
SR01 Financial resilience	25	High	12	Medium	Substantially Effective
SR03 Housing Infrastructure (HIF1)	16	High	12	Medium	Substantially Effective
SR13 SEND Sufficiency	25	High	9	Low	Partially Effective
SR05 Special Educational Needs and Disability	25	High	16	High	Substantially Effective
SR12 Local Government Reform	20	High	20	High	Partially Effective

Table 3: Strategic Risk Overview March 2026

## Strategic Risk Summary

9. There is one change to strategic risk scoring in the final quarter of 2025-26. SR05 has moved from a residual risk score of 20 to 16.

The Performance and Insight team continue to work with all risk and control owners to review their control measures and control effectiveness, facilitating an improvement to identifying mitigation and risk management of all strategic risks.

### Performance Measures where the Year to Date (YTD) rating is Red or Amber

10. Table 5 shows all the measures that have a year to date (YTD) performance of Red or Amber. Annex B contains graphs and the accompanying commentary on each of these measures. There are 13 measures reporting as Amber and 13 measures reporting as Red for this Quarter.

KPI Name	Period RAG rating	YTD RAG rating
OCC01.01 Reduction in corporate emissions within our "Carbon Neutral by 2030" target	Red	Red
OCC01.03 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Red	Red
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag	Red	Red
OCC02.02 Number of times refuge bedspaces have been occupied	Amber	Amber
OCC02.04 Female Inequality in life expectancy at Birth	Amber	Amber
OCC03.06 % of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit, by the age of 12 months old	Amber	Amber
OCC03.11 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year	Red	Red
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 25/26 with no further support request	Red	Red
OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes	Red	Red
OCC05.01 Number of bus passenger journeys	Red	Red
OCC05.03 KM of footway / cycleway maintenance undertaken	Red	Amber
OCC05.04 % of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide concentrations in AQMAs	Red	Red
OCC05.07 Percentage of gullies cleaned against the annual cyclical gully programme	Amber	Amber
OCC05.08 Highways - Number of non-chargeable defects (NCD) identified (works not completed as instructed or failed due to workmanship)	Amber	Amber

KPI Name	Period RAG rating	YTD RAG rating
OCC05.09 Length of roads identified as in need of repair, restored to a good condition	Green	Amber
OCC05.10 Number of locations where positive interventions to improve road safety have been carried out, in accordance with the council's vision zero commitments	Red	Red
OCC05.11 % of the projected 1,400 tonnes of carbon savings achieved in the delivery of the highways service through the use of low-carbon techniques and materials	Amber	Amber
OCC06.01 No of trees planted & established on land OCC own & manage	Red	Red
OCC06.06 Management of Local Wildlife sites	Amber	Amber
OCC07.01 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)	Amber	Amber
OCC07.03 Percentage of children we care for living in county/within 20 miles	Amber	Amber
OCC07.05 Percentage of referrals to children's social care which are within 12 months of a previous referral	Red	Red
OCC07.07 Percentage of children we care for living with foster carers, friends or family	Amber	Amber
OCC07.11 Percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are in education, employment or training	Green	Amber
OCC10.07 Children's Social care complaints completed outside of timeframe	Red	Red
OCC10.08 Corporate complaints completed outside of timeframe	Red	Red
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	Red	Red
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Red	Red
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	Red	Red
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Red	Red
OCC11.12 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Red	Red

Table 5: Performance measures by period and YTD RAG rating of Red or Amber as at Quarter 4.

### Revenue Outturn Summary for 2025/26

11. Annex D sets out the council's revenue outturn financial position for 2025/26. Further information is included as follows:

Appendix 1A	Revenue Outturn Summary for 2025/26
Appendix 1B	Savings & Investments Outturn Position
Appendix 2	Service Area budgets 2025/26: Movement from the Budget Book to Outturn
Appendix 3	Confirmed Government Grants and Business Rates funding updates.
Appendix 4A	Earmarked Reserves
Appendix 4B	Parking Account
Appendix 4C	Maintained School Reserves
Appendix 4D	General Balances

### **Overall Financial Position**

12. Services overspent by £9.7m in 2025/26. There were overspends in Adult Services, Environment & Highways and Economy & Place as well as unachieved cross cutting savings. Part of the overspend has been managed using the contingency budget of £7.2m that was built into the budget for demand and other risks. The rest has been offset by pay inflation that was not needed in 2025/26.
13. Due to interest rates and cash balances during the year being higher than modelled in February 2025, interest on cash balances was £9.5m above the budgeted level.
14. In January 2026 Cabinet agreed that £5.5m would be transferred to the Budget Reserve and it is proposed to add £8.0m to the High Needs DSG risk reserve (ahead of the approval of the SEND Reform Plan). After these transfers there is a council overspend of £0.1m against a budget of £648.4m.

### **Savings and Investment Delivery**

15. £21.8m (76%) of the revised savings target of £28.7m was delivered, with £6.9m unachieved. £10.7m (74%) investments were delivered, with the remaining £3.7m used to support in-year service pressures, helping to maintain financial stability.

### **Reserves and Balances**

16. As at 31 March 2026 general balances were £34.3m, £1.6m above the risk-assessed level for 2026/27. Earmarked reserves increased to £289.0m, reflecting planned contributions and the use of reserves to manage in-year pressures.

### **Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Deficit**

17. The 2025/26 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs was £56.8m. This compares to an overspend of £36.5m in 2024/25.
18. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The deficit has increased the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £92.5m as at 31 March 2025 to £149.3m at 31 March 2026.
19. The Government has confirmed its intention to fund 90% of historic DSG High Needs deficits to March 2026, subject to approval of a local SEND reform plan. Further information is included in a report elsewhere on the agenda.

### **Next Report**

20. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in July 2026 will set out changes to the budget since February 2026 and an overview of the forecast revenue financial position for 2026/27 as at the end of May 2026.
21. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in October 2026 will set out the organisation's performance & risk as at the end of June 2026 and overview of the provisional revenue financial position at the end of August 2026.

### **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

22. 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.'
23. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

### **Sustainability Implications**

24. 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.
25. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from the report. Where relevant updates on performance measures related to sustainability are included by exception.

### **Staffing Implications**

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

### **Financial Implications**

27. The report provides an overview of the council's service performance and strategic risks which contribute to council's financial position and resilience. The council continues to demonstrate financial resilience and has been able to manage service pressures in 2025/26 through the use of one – off funding, contingency and additional interest on balances.

28. While it was possible to manage the service overspend with contingency measures in 2025/26, there is less flexibility in 2026/27. The contingency budget was reduced to £6.2m as one of the changes to balance the budget agreed in February 2026. Based on the Green Book offer of 3.30%, pay inflation not used in 2025/26 will be needed to fund pay awards in 2026/27. In addition, interest on cash balances is less likely to be much higher than budgeted because of the increasing impact of the High Needs DSG deficit and higher interest rates already assumed when the budget was set.
29. When setting its budget for 2026/27 the council made clear that it would need to make savings in future years in excess of £20m as a result of changes made by government to formulas that dictate how much individual local authorities will receive in grant money. Pressures on budgets due to inflation and demands – including in SEND and social care – mean the council is likely to need to save significantly more than this in practice. The council is planning its budget much earlier than normal and looking at all possibilities for savings including staffing levels across the authority. As yet there is no further detail but the council will seek to protect frontline services as much as possible.
30. While the announcement about the treatment of the existing High Needs DSG deficit means there is more clarity about the impact on the council, there is now a requirement to fund the residual element. As at 31 March 2026 funding of £33m held in the High Needs DSG Risk Reserve is available for this purpose. Around £15m of that would be required to fund 10% of the cumulative deficit at 31 March 2026. There are currently no further details provided on deficits which accumulate in 2026/27 and 2027/28, other than to say that the Government will confirm the detail on further support before the end of the statutory override in March 2028.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

### **Legal Implications**

31. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (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.
32. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out the risk, performance and finance position for the Council as at 31 March 2026 as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Jay Akbar, Head of Legal and Governance Services.

**Lorna Baxter, Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)**

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance  
Louise Tustian, Head of Strategic Performance and Programme Management.

June 2026







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25/26 Quarter 4 January-March



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Oxfordshire County Council

## 25/26 Quarter 4 January-March

FROM 01-APR-2025 TO 31-MAR-2026

Linked Items	Unit	Period Performance			YTD Performance		
		Target	Actual	Indicator	Target	Actual	Indicator
OCC01.01 Reduction in corporate emissions within our "Carbon Neutral by 2030" target	#	970.00	509.00	 RED	970.00	509.00	 RED
<p><b>Comments :</b> Comment Note: the figures below are preliminary calculations and may change in final annual GHG report.</p> <p>During Q1 and Q2 of 2025/26 (April to September 2025), Oxfordshire County Council emissions from the scope of our carbon neutrality 2030 target (corporate estate and activities) reduced by 10% (308 tonnes CO2e) compared with the same period in 2024/25.</p> <p>The main factors contributing to this reduction were a 25% reduction in gas demand in OCC's properties and a 13% of reduction in the carbon intensity of UK electricity grid.</p> <p>Our target of reducing cumulative emissions in the 2023/24 to 2025/26 period is 970 tCO2e according to our projections in Carbon Management Plan 2030. Considering that during 2024/25 we reduced only 201 tCO2e in relation to 2023/24, adding the 308 tonnes would get us to 509 tCO2e cumulative reductions, accomplishing more than half (52%) of the cumulative target expected by the end of 2025/26, with only six months remaining to achieve the remaining half of the reductions.</p> <p>The breakdown of the overall reduction in Q1 &amp; Q2 2025/26 by area of operation is the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property emissions decreased by 184 tonnes of CO2e, this is a 23% decrease compared to the same period in 2024/25. Gas demand reduced by 25% as a result of service use changes, property decarbonisation, temperature variations and some equipment in need of repair. Electricity demand decreased by 5% partially resulting from on-site energy generation offsetting increments related with electrification of heating. Finally, a very important contributor to reductions was the UK grid's carbon intensity reducing by 13% in relation to 2024/25.</li> <li>Highways Electrical Assets emissions decreased 84 tonnes of CO2e, this is a 9% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. This reduction is only related with the 13% decrease in carbon intensity of UK grid electricity, which offset an actual increase of 4% in electricity demand.</li> <li>Fleet emissions decreased by 75 ton of CO2e, this is an 11% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. The driver of these reductions are decreases in diesel use in OCC and fire fleets, these reductions offset increases in petrol use. These reductions were translated to an increase of 93% in electricity for charging electric vehicles.</li> <li>Staff mileage emissions increased by 35 tonnes of CO2e, this is a 6% increase compared to the same period in 2024/25. This is the result of total staff mileage increasing by 5% in relation to previous year, with corporate petrol mileage having a large contribution.</li> </ul>							
OCC01.02 Publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	#	1.00	1.00	 GREEN	1.00	1.00	 GREEN
<p><b>Comments :</b> Adopted at October cabinet and published and launched on 12th Nov 25.</p>							
OCC01.03 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	%	61.50	53.93	 RED	61.50	53.93	 RED
<p><b>Comments :</b> Updated to usual one month in arrears. Very minor change on last reporting period. but continuing the trend of reduced performance compared to previous years. Overall likely to remain around this level during all of 2025/26. Oxfordshire residents consistently exceed the national average (44% 2023/24) for household waste recycling. In November 2024, the Central</p>							

government made announcements around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility. It is anticipated that the implementation of national waste policy reforms expected in the next few years will improve performance.

OCC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag	#	9.00	6.00		9.00	6.00	
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**Comments :** Data received June 2025.

**Summary**

Oxfordshire’s greenhouse gases emissions have continued to decrease over time, with transport remaining the largest source of emissions in the county. However, the rate of decrease in emissions has not been aligned with the carbon budgets set out in the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for the Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario, and it is increasingly likely that Oxfordshire will exceed its carbon budget for 2021 – 2025.

**Detail**

This latest data from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) shows that Oxfordshire’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decreased between 2022 and 2023, showing a similar % reduction as the South East region and in contrast with an overall increase in emissions across England. While Oxfordshire met the Climate Change Committee carbon budget it did not meet the ambitious Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way. During 2023 transport emissions (which are hard to decarbonise) continued to dominate for the county. The carbon intensity of the grid also increased in 2021 due to more coal and gas in the mix but has been gradually reducing since.

The 9% year on year reduction target from the PAZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario applies to CO2 only and excludes some transport sources, waste and land use changes.



**Finance Impact**

The latest GHG data highlights the need to continue to invest in climate action and work with partners to stay on course for our county net zero ambitions. The majority of financing for the net zero transition will come from private sources and the council is seeking to create policy and partnerships that enable that investment. The cost of climate impacts such as from recent floods will be increasingly felt as national and global emissions are not reducing fast enough to prevent climate breakdown.











**Risk Impact**

This is the second year that Oxfordshire has not been on track to deliver against the Oxfordshire Leading the Way trajectory. The county is tracking regional and national emissions reductions, showing that national policy is the key driver. Therefore, there is an increasing risk that insufficient government action will prevent Oxfordshire meeting its net zero ambitions, and our public affairs function is key to continue pressing for a more ambitious policy framework nationally.



There is a risk that Oxfordshire will not meet its ambitious carbon budgets as set out in the Net Zero Route map, however it is also possible (albeit decreasing in likelihood) that the county will recover its position given that the grid is decarbonising again since a peak in 2021 and that action is being taken at local and national level to tackle emissions. Further data will be available from DESNZ in summer 2026 relating to 2024 GHG emissions.

OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	#	6,000.00	21,649.00		70,000.00	108,240.90	
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**Comments :** The concern about the accuracy of this data is still being investigated with the supplier, and so the is submitted with a health warning

OCC02.02 Number of times refuge bedspaces have been occupied #	39.00	36.00	 AMBER	39.00	36.00  AMBER
<p><b>Comments :</b> Annual reporting pattern. In 2024/25, 36 people were accepted into refuge from within and Outside of Oxfordshire, and provided with a bedspace, consistent with the 36 accepted in 2023/24. This stability has been maintained despite ongoing challenges in moving people on from refuge due to housing shortages. To address these challenges, we are conducting a service review and strengthening support for individuals with complex needs. Our focus for 2025/26 is to improve this level of access.</p> <p>Analysis:          This is an annual measure with a three-month reporting lag. In 2024/25, refuge bedspaces were occupied 36 times, falling slightly short of the target of 39. Although the decline is minimal, it highlights demand for safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims. The Council continues to seek ways to support residents in need of refuge. Plans are in place to increase the number of spaces available for victims of domestic abuse.</p>					
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries #	115,000.00	184,143.00	 GREEN	1,400,000.00	2,056,230.00  GREEN
<p><b>Comments :</b> The full year total of physical visits to libraries in Oxfordshire is 2.06 million, representing a 1.7% increase on 2024/25.</p>					
OCC02.04 Female Inequality in life expectancy at Birth #	4.40	4.80	 AMBER	4.40	4.80  AMBER
<p><b>Comments :</b> Annual reporting pattern. Reporting Period 2021-2023          This measures the difference in life expectancy between females living in the most deprived areas compared to people in the least deprived areas. For Oxfordshire, the Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females has increased by 0.2 from the previous year (4.6) and remains higher than levels reported before the pandemic (2018-20 - 4.0). However this difference is lower than for England (8.3).          To reduce health inequalities, 14 Community Insight Profiles have been completed in the most deprived areas. These are supported in 13 of the 14 areas by Community Health Development Officers (CHDOs) who work at a local level to improve health based on local need. Contracts for the CHDOs in the initial 10 priority areas are being extended following an evaluation of their roles.</p>					
OCC02.05 Male Inequality in life expectancy at Birth #	5.80	5.40	 GREEN	5.80	5.40  GREEN
<p><b>Comments :</b> Period (2021-23)          This measures the difference in life expectancy between males living in the most deprived areas compared to people in the least deprived areas. For Oxfordshire, the Inequality in life expectancy at birth for males has increased by 0.2 from the previous year (5.2) and remains at the same level reported before the pandemic (2018-20). However the trend in Oxfordshire has been similar in recent years, unlike the trend in England which has been increasing.          To reduce health inequalities, 14 Community Insight Profiles have been completed in the most deprived areas. These are supported in 13 of the 14 areas by Community Health Development Officers (CHDOs) who work at a local level to improve health based on local need. Contracts for the CHDOs in the initial 10 priority areas are being extended following an evaluation of their roles.</p>					
OCC02.06 Number of completed profiles for local communities with the greatest health inequalities #	14.00	14.00	 GREEN	14.00	14.00  GREEN



**Comments :** A total of 14 Community Insight Profiles have now been completed. The final profile for Bicester West is due to be published online by the end of June 2025. All reports are available on the Oxfordshire data hub along with a link to access to the new Interactive Community Insight Profile (iCIP) Dashboard.

OCC03.01 Proportion of opiate users in treatment who are making substantial progress to being drug-free or have sustained reduction in drug use	%	48.00	49.00	 GREEN	48.00	49.00	 GREEN
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**Comments :** Period 2024-25  
This performance is above the national average of 46% and is achieved through the provision of extensive community-based engagement, strong partnership and multi-agency working and high-quality community treatment that is flexible, holistic and person-centred, and supports people to reduce their drug use. This measure demonstrates a focus on quality treatment, which is in line with the local and national drug strategy, and is achieved alongside a focus on increasing the number of opiate users in treatment.

OCC03.02 % of the eligible population aged 40-74 who have been offered NHS Health Check	%	18.00	18.54	 GREEN	18.00	18.54	 GREEN
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**Comments :** Period 2024/25  
The annual achievement of 18.54% is within a threshold that meets the annual targets set for Primary Care for this measure (18% - 22%).













OCC03.03 Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) - self-reported current smokers (2025 definition)	%	12.90	7.50	 GREEN	12.90	7.50	 GREEN
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**Comments :** Period 2024  
Data note: The 2024 Annual Population Survey (APS) returned to using face-to-face interviews as its main method. Based on this new data, the ONS recalculated its adjustment factor and revised all smoking estimates from 2020 to 2023. As a result, single-year smoking indicators for those years were updated in the APS 2024 release. The Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance oversees works to reduce smoking in Oxfordshire. The Alliance has developed a new strategy and action plan for the next 5 years, working in partnership to build on the effective work of the last 5 years, with the aid of a comprehensive new Health Needs Assessment for smoking. This action plan includes work by:  
NHS trusts, Trading Standards  
The Fire Service  
Schools  
New Local Stop Smoking Service, Smokefree Oxon provided by Solutions4Health.  
The additional grant funding from government is helping to target work to priority groups whose prevalence rates are highest. This includes outreach work and alternative support option of Allen Carr Easyway, continued work with Swap to Stop in mental health settings and funding Trading Standards work to tackle illegal tobacco supply.

OCC03.04 Reduce the % of women smoking in pregnancy to contribute towards Oxfordshire smokefree strategy.	%	6.00	4.60	 GREEN	6.00	4.60	 GREEN
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**Comments :** Smoking cessation is now embedded in maternity services at OUH with direct support in place, alongside a new national incentive scheme. This is supported by vape provision to eligible household members.



<p>OCC03.05 Of those residents invited for a NHS Health check, the % who accept and complete the offer</p> <p style="text-align: right;">%</p>	<p>42.90</p> <p>44.24</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>	<p>42.90</p> <p>44.24</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>
<p><b>Comments :</b> Period 2024/25</p> <p>2024/25 saw an increase in the number of NHS Health Check invitations sent compared to the previous year. Of these invitations sent 44.24% of residents chose to take up the offer of an NHS Health Check either in the community or Primary Care.</p>		
<p>OCC03.06 % of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit, by the age of 12 months old</p> <p style="text-align: right;">%</p>	<p>87.00</p> <p>86.90</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> AMBER</p>	<p>87.00</p> <p>86.90</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> AMBER</p>
<p><b>Comments :</b> Period Q3-25</p> <p>This universal review is offered to all children as they approach their first birthday. During the quarter, the service completed 1,566 reviews. Because of family schedules and parental work commitments, some families choose to have the review after the child turns one, up to 15 months. If a family declines or does not attend their appointment, the service follows up and offers another review, which may fall outside the standard 12-month timeframe.</p> <p>In this quarter, 1,657 babies—90.3%—received a review by 15 months. The service has significantly improved uptake, supported by successful recruitment that has strengthened capacity. Targeted work in areas with lower attendance is also helping to identify and address barriers.</p>		
<p>OCC03.07 Reduce the levels of children overweight and obese in year 6 (NCMP data)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">%</p>	<p>31.00</p> <p>30.50</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>	<p>31.00</p> <p>30.50</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>
<p><b>Comments :</b> Period 2024-25</p> <p>Oxfordshire performs well against the England average (36.2%), but there are some areas in Oxfordshire where children have experienced excess weight over a long period. A new all age healthy weight service launched in September 2024 with a focus on addressing inequalities associated with weight is in place although has struggled to see the number expected. To increase referrals a new proactive follow up will start from January 2026. Beezee Oxfordshire will contact (text, call) families with children identified as overweight through the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). New NCMP Co-ordinator recruited to lead this work.</p> <p>Another new option that has launched in October 2025 - Beezee Youth an online programme for children aged 13-17 years old.</p> <p>Work to support more healthy environments continues; latest pilot includes healthier vending in leisure centres to launch Jan 2026.</p>		
<p>OCC03.08 Average response time for attendance at an emergency incident in Oxfordshire by a fire service vehicle</p> <p style="text-align: right;">#</p>	<p>563.00</p> <p>547.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>	<p>563.00</p> <p>547.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> GREEN</p>
<p><b>Comments :</b> 9 mins 7 seconds (547 seconds)</p> <p>We are still seeing a continued improvement since the launch of the fire and rescue cover model. This has had a notable impact across several stations, with teams working diligently to demonstrate that they can maintain availability and ensure swift, efficient responses to incidents.</p> <p>Looking ahead to Q1, we will keep monitoring this measure closely, in line with the recommendations that will be taken forward from the fire and rescue cover model. By maintaining our focus and supporting the stations as they adapt, we'll ensure that standards remain high and the positive momentum continues.</p>		

OCC03.09 Number of people engaged with via Making Every Conversation Count	#	0.00	19,099.00	 GREEN	0.00	19,099.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> Fantastic progress and increases seen in this priority area; as well as winning a national award in 2025							
OCC03.10 Number of accidental fires in people's homes per 100,000 population	#	8.73	5.73	 GREEN	8.73	5.73	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> Q4 actual is below target both for the quarter and also for the year. The total for the year has also decreased when compared with last year 24/25. We are also below the national average, based on this year and 10 years of data.							
OCC03.11 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year	#	155.00	0.00	 RED	155.00	0.00	 RED
<b>Comments :</b> Period 2024/25  Performance data for this measure is currently being updated and expected December 2026. The target is not expected to be achieved for the period. The service is working to increase referrals from all partners of young people using substances, but no increase has been achieved in this period. The service continues to support children and young people with brief interventions, children affected by other people's substance use and families alongside this work.							
OCC03.12 Numbers in treatment: Alcohol only during the financial year	#	794.00	1,002.00	 GREEN	794.00	1,002.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> Period 2024/25  In line with national strategic aims, extensive partnership work and outreach with those with health inequalities has supported the partnership to continue to increase the number of people in treatment over the last year. This demonstrates the impact of additional central government investment linked to the national strategy, with Oxfordshire now exceeding the national drug strategy ambition of achieving a 20% increase on the 2021 baseline.							
OCC03.13 Number of volunteer hours contributed to the library service	#	28,000.00	31,142.00	 GREEN	28,000.00	31,142.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> This is an annual target and we have remained on track across the year - achieving the target.							
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 25/26 with no further support request	%	79.40	75.22	 RED	79.40	75.22	 RED
<b>Comments :</b> Whilst the overall % to independence remains static for the last rolling 12 months, there are improvements that have been seen in the last 3 months following training of strategic providers, increased staffing levels and refinement of the discharge pathway available. Going forward our aim is to reflect these positive improvements in a way that is clear to all. Training continues to be delivered to zonal providers of reablement, prompt recording of outcomes is being actively worked on with the Home First multi-disciplinary team and recruitment to new							



posts.

OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family (Monitoring only)	%	91.68		91.68
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**Comments :** N/A

OCC04.03 % Section 42 safeguarding enquiries where identified risk was reduced or removed	%	93.00	95.00	 GREEN	93.00	95.00	 GREEN
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**Comments :** We continue to see improvements made where the risk to residents is removed or reduced. This is above the national average.

OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes	#	527.00	588.76	 RED	527.00	588.76	 RED
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**Comments :** The winter & Christmas period was challenging and we saw an increase in admissions to care homes as a result of increased activity and acuity. We are monitoring this closely and expect to see a reduction in admissions as we move into Spring.

OCC04.05 Number of carers assessments completed (Monitoring only)	#	320.00		320.00
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**Comments :** No commentary provided

OCC04.06 % of young people referred who have an ASC assessment in place by their 18th birthday	%	90.00	94.00	 GREEN	90.00	94.00	 GREEN
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**Comments :** KPI remains on track at the moment with no concerns.

OCC04.07 The number of people supported into employment (Monitoring only)	#	10.00		38.00
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**Comments :** Connect to Work program is now live and likely to see a steady increase in terms of the amount of people into paid employment over the next quarter.

OCC05.01 Number of bus passenger journeys	#	45.70	39.51	 RED	45.70	39.51	 RED
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**Comments :** Continued growth in passenger numbers but not yet return to pre-Covid levels (40.7m). Continued investment in bus services and fares through OCC and Government budgets will take place over next four financial years and expect to reach pre-Covid levels in 2026/27.

OCC05.02 Number of park and ride passenger journeys	%	0.00	1,610,003.00	 GREEN	0.00	1,610,003.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> Significantly improved due to free P&R temporary associated with the congestion charge.							
OCC05.03 KM of footway / cycleway maintenance undertaken	km	1.40	0.00	 RED	41.40	41.04	 AMBER
<b>Comments :</b> Two Oxford schemes have been delayed to 16 April. On completion, this will mark the full delivery of the Footway programme.							
OCC05.04 % of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide concentrations in AQMAs	%	10.00	3.00	 RED	10.00	3.00	 RED
<p><b>Comments :</b> Annual reporting period. measure reporting a year in arrears. Data is provided during the first quarter of the following year. There are currently 9 air quality management areas (AQMAS) in Oxfordshire declared in relation to nitrogen dioxide concentrations. The highest levels recorded in each of the 9 AQMAS within Oxfordshire were recorded by the District and City Councils. The average of the highest levels recorded was 31.26 µg/m3 which is less than the UK’s statutory limit of 40 µg/m3.</p> <p>The 2024 figure is a 3 % reduction in the average of highest nitrogen dioxide levels recorded in each of the 9 AQMAS (under the 10 % target by 7 %) compared to 2023 levels and a 39 % reduction compared to the baseline year of 2019. Every year air pollutant levels are likely to fluctuate due to weather conditions and other local conditions such as road closures near monitoring site. However, the downward trend is apparent across the UK, with most monitoring sites showing reductions in nitrogen dioxide levels. This is likely to be due to newer road vehicles having to meet stricter emission standards and the uptake of electric road vehicles. A national move away from coal usage in power generation has also impacted nitrogen dioxide levels.</p> <p>Analysis: The Service is working in line with the Council’s Air Quality Strategy and Route Map actions, and the Environment Act 2021 duty to co-operate with the District and City Councils’ Air Quality Management duties of producing Air Quality Action Plans, and supporting the improvement of air quality.</p>							
OCC05.05 Number of cycling trips	#	0.00	0.00	 GREEN	0.00	0.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments :</b> Sport England no longer issuing this data for FY 2024-2025 and above. OCC to internally produce this data going forward.							
OCC05.06 Number of Rail passenger trips originating in Oxfordshire Stations	#	0.00	9.82	 GREEN	0.00	9.82	 GREEN
<p><b>Comments :</b> Rail passenger numbers continued to show signs of recovery from the significant decrease experienced during the pandemic. Oxfordshire stations recorded 19.6 million entries and exits in the latest year (or 9.8 million if counting only trips originating from Oxfordshire). This is a 17% increase from the previous year, and is 90% of the pre-pandemic figures in 2019/20, in line with the recovery experienced nationally.</p> <p>In November 2025, Oxfordshire’s rail plan – also called OxRail 2040 - was adopted by the council to improve rail travel across the county and increase passenger numbers. This includes schemes to deliver new stations and upgrade railway infrastructure, both of which will increase capacity to allow for more passengers and freight. We expect that passenger numbers will</p>							



continue to increase in the coming years, and will likely and eventually exceed pre-pandemic figures.

OCC05.07 Percentage of gullies cleaned against the annual cyclical gully programme	%	100.00	95.00	 AMBER	100.00	95.00	 AMBER
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**Comments :** Programmed to be completed within the first 2 - 3 weeks of the new financial year

OCC05.08 Highways - Number of non-chargeable defects (NCD) identified (works not completed as instructed or failed due to workmanship)	#	25.00	30.00	 AMBER	300.00	446.00	 AMBER
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**Comments :** 3895 instructions were delivered in March but due to the increase volume in defects and resource pressure as a result, the number of inspections at 194 was below the assumed 20% rate, the number of NCDs identified was 30 which is just above the monthly target at 25.

OCC05.09 Length of roads identified as in need of repair, restored to a good condition	km	0.00	2.30	 GREEN	24.20	23.90	 AMBER
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**Comments :** Carriageway programme completed .



OCC05.10 Number of locations where positive interventions to improve road safety have been carried out, in accordance with the council's vision zero commitments	#	43.00	21.00	 RED	43.00	21.00	 RED
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**Comments :** Annual reporting pattern.  
Schemes at design stage / stakeholder engagement, with implementation unlikely to start before September / October







OCC05.11 % of the projected 1,400 tonnes of carbon savings achieved in the delivery of the highways service through the use of low-carbon techniques and materials	%	100.00	96.00	 AMBER	100.00	96.00	 AMBER
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**Comments :** End of year total of 1344 Tonnes of a potential 1400 Tonnes total end of year target.

Analysis:  
The service has achieved 96% of the 100% target.

OCC05.12 Number of people killed or seriously injured on Oxfordshire's roads	#	222.00	217.00	 GREEN	222.00	217.00	 GREEN
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<b>Comments</b> : Annual reporting pattern							
OCC06.01 No of trees planted & established on land OCC own & manage	#	1,100.00	1,001.00	 RED	1,100.00	1,001.00	 RED
<b>Comments</b> : Total number of trees planted is below target, despite the ambition to consult on more than 1500 trees initially. This was due to unforeseen challenges with conflicts for planting below ground. Planting has been well received.							
OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	%	90.00	94.20	 GREEN	90.00	94.20	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Some trees have been lost due to vandalism within a few weeks of planting. We have engaged with communities and police to identify the culprits. Otherwise, planting survival rates are positive and continue to remain high. This has been successful due to early consultation and community engagement prior to and during planting.							
OCC06.03 Volunteer hours on the public right of way (PRoW) network through established groups	#	1,750.00	2,400.00	 GREEN	7,000.00	8,130.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Strong performance over the winter period from out volunteer groups. Winter period works such as scrub clearance does lend its self towards larger work parties.							
OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction	%	90.00	90.00	 GREEN	90.00	90.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : The Countryside Access Team have been working hard to ensure the public rights of way network is accessible. Over the past six months an additional 12km of the network has been recorded as free from serious obstruction.							
OCC06.05 Total number of community activities held as part of the Community Action Group Network	#	3,000.00	8,000.00	 GREEN	3,000.00	8,000.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Data will be available June 2026, so figure of around 8,000 based on trends from previous years							
The data needs to be collected from 120+ voluntary community groups for 2025/6. This process is underway and will be complete at the end of May, we expect the annual report in June 26. The 8000 figure is based on the number of events delivered in 2024/5 - it is expected that numbers will be around that level again for 2025/6.							
Community events include repair cafes, swop shops, markets, fairs, community fridge events, workshops, training, tree and hedge planting, litter picks, community gardening events and lots more							
OCC06.06 Management of Local Wildlife sites	#	50.00	47.00	 AMBER	50.00	47.00	 AMBER

<p><b>Comments :</b> The target has been set at 50% to keep us on track to achieve 70% by 2030, in line with the policy set out in the recently approved Biodiversity Action Framework. We are slightly short of achieving the target; we have put in a request through the 26/27 budget setting process for an increase in funding to the Local Wildlife Sites project, this would support an increase in the management advice provided to owners of Local Wildlife Sites and should enable improved performance against this KPI.</p>							
OCC07.01 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)	%	100.00	96.30	 AMBER	100.00	96.30	 AMBER
<p><b>Comments :</b> In March 2026, timeliness data continued to demonstrate strong and sustained performance in completing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within statutory timescales. A total of 135 EHCPs were issued during March, of which 130 were completed within 20 weeks, equating to 96.3% compliance. This represents a continued improvement on January performance (91.8%) and maintains the high standard achieved in February (97.3%).</p>							
OCC07.02 Number of families open to early help (including being supported by partners) (Monitoring only)	#	1,117.00		12,953.00			
<p><b>Comments :</b> The number of families open to Family Help is similar to last month, this number will likely increase slightly with the Families First pilot in January 2026, when Family Help will lead on a small number of Child in Need plans.</p>							
OCC07.03 Percentage of children we care for living in county/within 20 miles	%	75.00	55.00	 AMBER	75.00	55.00	 AMBER
<p><b>Comments :</b> No commentary provided</p>							
OCC07.04 Number of referrals to children's social care (Monitoring only)	#	555.00		7,309.00			
<p><b>Comments :</b> The number of referrals that lead to statutory interventions remains relatively consistent.</p>							
OCC07.05 Percentage of referrals to children's social care which are within 12 months of a previous referral	%	22.00	25.00	 RED	22.00	25.00	 RED
<p><b>Comments :</b> Of all families referred to statutory children's social care in December 2025, 36% had been referred within the last year. Continued focused effort to address re-referrals.</p>							
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for (excludes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) (Monitoring only)	#	729.00		729.00			

<b>Comments</b> : No commentary provided							
OCC07.07 Percentage of children we care for living with foster carers, friends or family	%	66.00	65.00	 AMBER	66.00	65.00	 AMBER
<b>Comments</b> : No commentary provided							
OCC07.09 Percentage attendance of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools	%	0.00	93.30	 GREEN	0.00	93.30	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Terms 1-4 25/26							
OCC07.10 Rate of permanent exclusions (cumulative through academic year)	#	0.01	0.01	 GREEN	0.01	0.01	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Terms 1-4 25/26							
OCC07.11 Percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are in education, employment or training	%	91.70	93.81	 GREEN	91.70	89.58	 AMBER
<b>Comments</b> : We remain on track							
OCC07.12 Percentage of 2 to 2½ year reviews using Age and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3 third edition of the developmental screening tool)	%	87.00	95.90	 GREEN	87.00	95.90	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Period - Q3-25							
The Health Visiting workforce completed 1,687 reviews this quarter to assess children’s development. When a child is not meeting expected milestones, families are offered advice, support, and referrals to specialist health services where needed. This helps ensure children are ready to learn and thrive when they start school. The team is also improving clinic accessibility and putting measures in place to reduce missed appointments.							
OCC08.01 Deliver a stakeholder and resident engagement programme to inform the development of the county council’s proposal for local government reorganisation	#	1.00	1.00	 GREEN	1.00	1.00	 GREEN
<b>Comments</b> : Outcomes included as in the One Oxfordshire LGR submission <a href="https://oneoxfordshire.org.uk/one-oxfordshire">https://oneoxfordshire.org.uk/one-oxfordshire</a>							

OCC08.02 Publicise the findings of the citizens' assembly on transport in Oxfordshire and deliver a follow-up public engagement exercise	#	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00	
<b>Comments :</b> N/A							
OCC09.01 Percentage of businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance during the period (Trading Standards)	%	90.00	92.00		90.00	92.00	
<b>Comments :</b> Quarterly actual is above target and we end the full year above target, even though our intelligence-led approach, aimed at directing finite resources to those issues and traders of greatest concern, often means we are working to bring some of the hardest situations into compliance.							
OCC09.02 Percentage of businesses that were either compliant when visited or brought into compliance during the period (Protection)	%	90.00	96.00		90.00	96.00	
<b>Comments :</b> 92 audits were completed within the quarter, with 4 remaining non-compliant as we cross into a new quarter/year. It is normal to have some level of non-compliance between quarters, as we continue to support businesses into compliance and/or are undertaking formal action such as issuing Enforcement Notices.							
OCC09.03 Minimum of £1.5m generated in social value from suppliers who have contracts with OCC	£	1,500,000.00	5,166,964.50		1,500,000.00	5,166,964.50	
<b>Comments :</b> Actual social value delivered based on validated values from the Social Value Portal							
OCC09.04 Value of retained Apprenticeship Levy in Oxfordshire measured in £Millions	£	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	
<b>Comments :</b> N/A							
OCC10.06 Adult social care complaints completed outside of timeframe	%	20.00	6.70		20.00	6.70	
<b>Comments :</b> Reporting period Quarter 3. Of the 26 stage 1 complaints received, 26 closed during the quarter, 24 within timescale and 2 complaints were closed outside of the standard timescale.  Of the 4 stage 2 complaints received, 4 were closed at the end of the quarter, 4 within timescale and 0 complaint was closed outside of timescale.							
Analysis:							

During Quarter 3, a total of 30 complaints were logged. The standard resolution timescale for Statutory Stage 1 complaints is 15 working days, and Statutory Stage 2 is 20 working days.

OCC10.07 Children's Social care complaints completed outside of timeframe	%	20.00	61.00	 RED	20.00	61.00	 RED
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**Comments :** Reporting period quarter 3.

Of the 22 stage 1 complaints received, 22 closed during the quarter, 11 within timescale and 11 complaints were closed outside of the standard timescale.

Of the 6 stage 2 complaints received, 0 were closed within timescale and 6 were closed outside of the standard timescale.

Of the 3 stage 3 complaints received, 1 was closed within timescale and 2 were closed outside of the standard timescale.

Analysis:  
During Quarter 3, a total of 31 complaints were logged. The standard resolution timescale for Statutory Stage 1 complaints is 20 working days, Statutory Stage 2 is 65 working days and Statutory Stage 3 is 50 working days



OCC10.08 Corporate complaints completed outside of timeframe	%	20.00	49.40	 RED	20.00	49.40	 RED
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**Comments :** Reporting period Quarter 3.

Of the 139 stage 1 complaints received, 139 were closed during the quarter, 61 within timescale and 78 complaints were closed outside of the standard timescale.

Of the 45 stage 2 complaints received, 45 were closed during the quarter, 32 were closed within timescale, 13 were closed outside of timescale,

Analysis:  
During Quarter 3, a total of 184 complaints were logged. The standard resolution timescale for Corporate Stage 1 complaints is 10 working days and Corporate Stage 2 is 20 working days.

OCC10.09 Number of FOI's/EIR's completed outside of timescale	%	10.00	2.80	 GREEN	10.00	2.80	 GREEN
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**Comments :** Reporting period Quarter 3.

A total of 474 requests were logged as FOI/EIR during Q3-2025

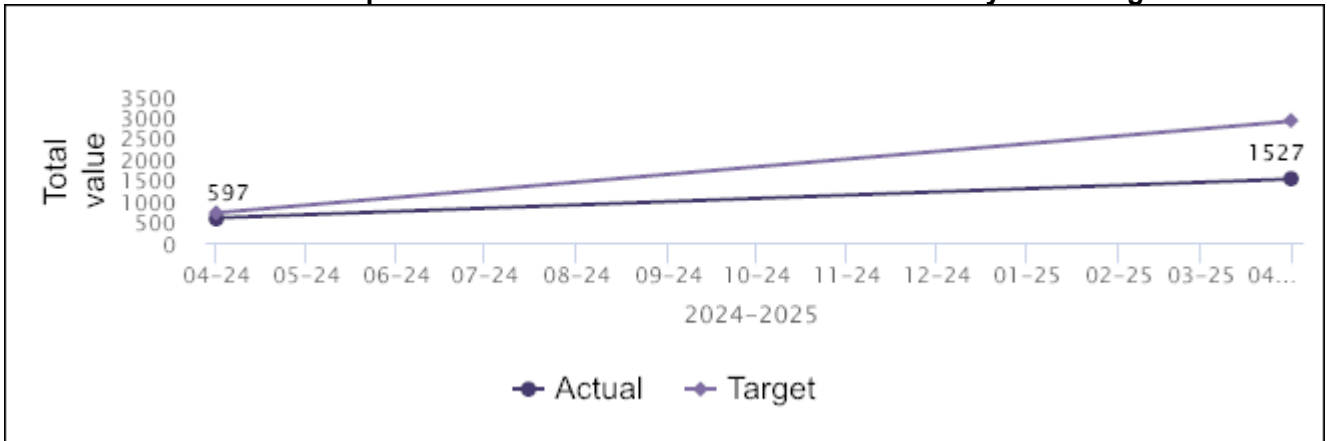
472 requests have been closed during Q3, 459 within the 20 working days of receiving the initial request and 13 were closed outside of timescale.

2 requests remain open outside of 20 working days of receiving the initial requests  
97.2% of requests were closed within timescale.

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**Theme 1 - Greener**

**OCC01.01 Reduction in corporate emissions within our "Carbon Neutral by 2030" target**



**Commentary**

Comment Note: the figures below are preliminary calculations and may change in final annual GHG report.

During Q1 and Q2 of 2025/26 (April to September 2025), Oxfordshire County Council emissions from the scope of our carbon neutrality 2030 target (corporate estate and activities) reduced by 10% (308 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e) compared with the same period in 2024/25.

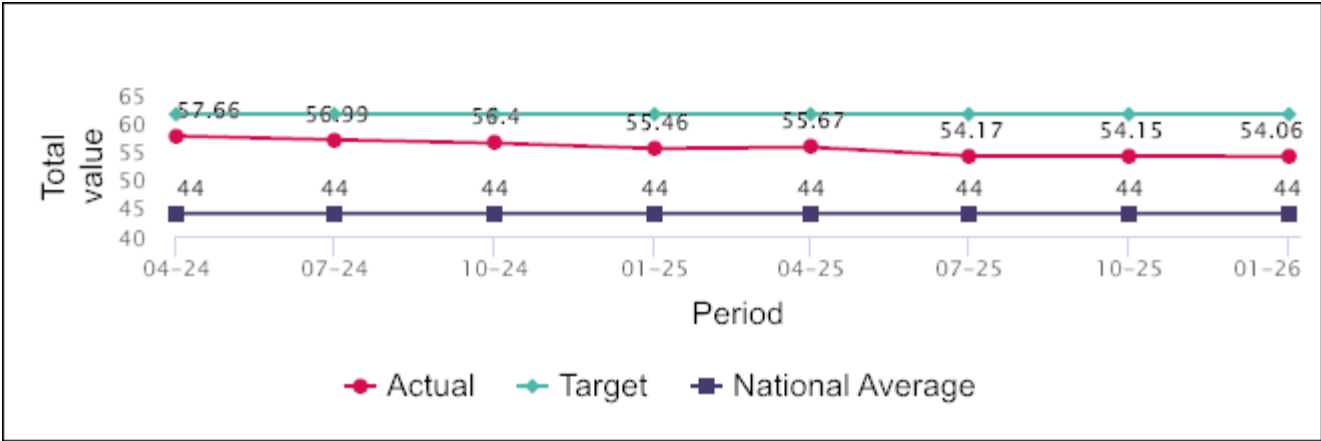
The main factors contributing to this reduction were a 25% reduction in gas demand in OCC’s properties and a 13% of reduction in the carbon intensity of UK electricity grid.

Our target of reducing cumulative emissions in the 2023/24 to 2025/26 period is 970 tCO<sub>2</sub>e according to our projections in Carbon Management Plan 2030. Considering that during 2024/25 we reduced only 201 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in relation to 2023/24, adding the 308 tonnes would get us to 509 tCO<sub>2</sub>e cumulative reductions, accomplishing more than half (52%) of the cumulative target expected by the end of 2025/26, with only six months remaining to achieve the remaining half of the reductions.

The breakdown of the overall reduction in Q1 & Q2 2025/26 by area of operation is the following:

- Property emissions decreased by 184 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, this is a 23% decrease compared to the same period in 2024/25. Gas demand reduced by 25% as a result of service use changes, property decarbonisation, temperature variations and some equipment in need of repair. Electricity demand decreased by 5% partially resulting from on-site energy generation offsetting increments related with electrification of heating. Finally, a very important contributor to reductions was the UK grid’s carbon intensity reducing by 13% in relation to 2024/25.
- Highways Electrical Assets emissions decreased 84 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, this is a 9% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. This reduction is only related with the 13% decrease in carbon intensity of UK grid electricity, which offset an actual increase of 4% in electricity demand.
- Fleet emissions decreased by 75 ton of CO<sub>2</sub>e, this is an 11% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. The driver of these reductions are decreases in diesel use in OCC and fire fleets, these reductions offset increases in petrol use. These reductions were translated to an increase of 93% in electricity for charging electric vehicles.
- Staff mileage emissions increased by 35 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, this is a 6% increase compared to the same period in 2024/25. This is the result of total staff mileage increasing by 5% in relation to previous year, with corporate petrol mileage having a large contribution.

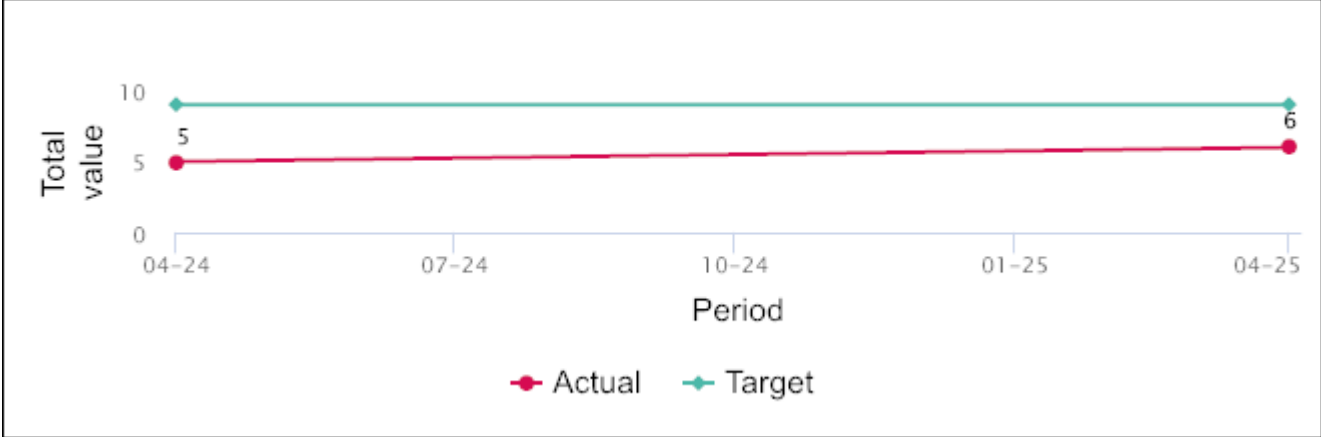
**OCC01.03 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted**



**Commentary**

Updated to usual one month in arrears. Very minor change on last reporting period, but continuing the trend of reduced performance compared to previous years. Overall likely to remain around this level during all of 2025/26. Oxfordshire residents consistently exceed the national average (44% 2023/24) for household waste recycling. In November 2024, the Central government made announcements around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility. It is anticipated that the implementation of national waste policy reforms expected in the next few years will improve performance.

**OCC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year l**



**Commentary**

Data received June 2025.  
 Summary  
 Oxfordshire’s greenhouse gases emissions have continued to decrease over time, with transport remaining the largest source of emissions in the county. However, the rate of decrease in emissions has not been aligned with the carbon budgets set out in the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for the Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario, and it is increasingly likely that Oxfordshire will exceed its carbon budget for 2021 – 2025.  
 Detail  
 This latest data from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) shows that Oxfordshire’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decreased between 2022 and 2023,

showing a similar % reduction as the South East region and in contrast with an overall increase in emissions across England. While Oxfordshire met the Climate Change Committee carbon budget it did not meet the ambitious Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way. During 2023 transport emissions (which are hard to decarbonise) continued to dominate for the county. The carbon intensity of the grid also increased in 2021 due to more coal and gas in the mix but has been gradually reducing since.

The 9% year on year reduction target from the PAZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario applies to CO2 only and excludes some transport sources, waste and land use changes.

#### Finance Impact

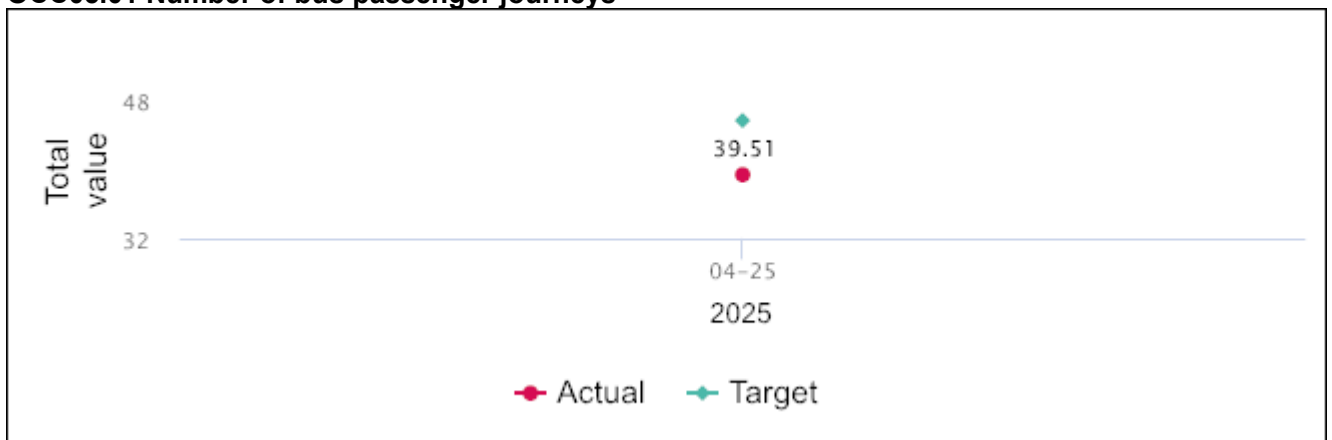
The latest GHG data highlights the need to continue to invest in climate action and work with partners to stay on course for our county net zero ambitions. The majority of financing for the net zero transition will come from private sources and the council is seeking to create policy and partnerships that enable that investment. The cost of climate impacts such as from recent floods will be increasingly felt as national and global emissions are not reducing fast enough to prevent climate breakdown.

#### Risk Impact

This is the second year that Oxfordshire has not been on track to deliver against the Oxfordshire Leading the Way trajectory. The county is tracking regional and national emissions reductions, showing that national policy is the key driver. Therefore, there is an increasing risk that insufficient government action will prevent Oxfordshire meeting its net zero ambitions, and our public affairs function is key to continue pressing for a more ambitious policy framework nationally.

There is a risk that Oxfordshire will not meet its ambitious carbon budgets as set out in the Net Zero Route map, however it is also possible (albeit decreasing in likelihood) that the county will recover its position given that the grid is decarbonising again since a peak in 2021 and that action is being taken at local and national level to tackle emissions. Further data will be available from DESNZ in summer 2026 relating to 2024 GHG emissions.

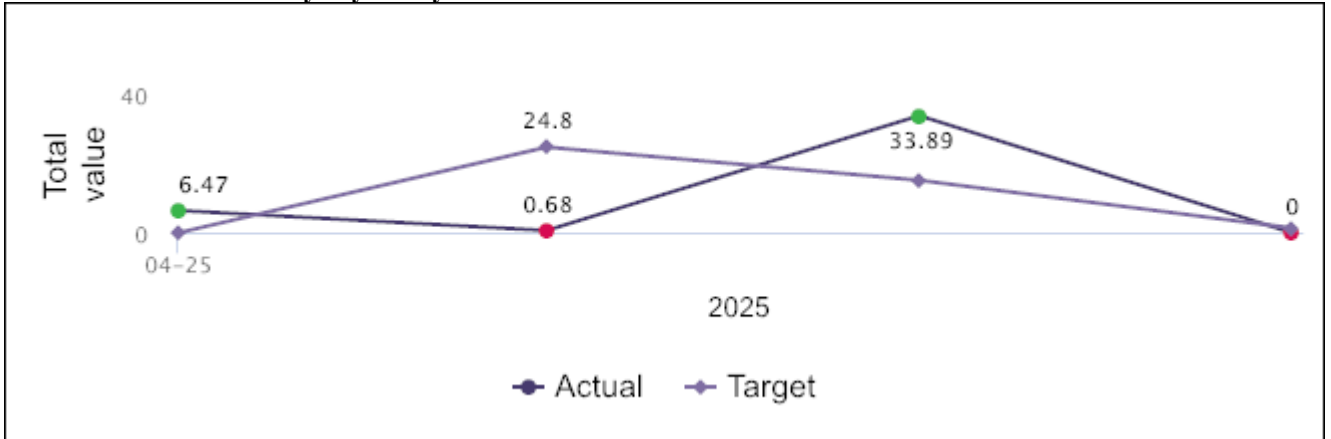
### OCC05.01 Number of bus passenger journeys



#### Commentary

Continued growth in passenger numbers but not yet return to pre-Covid levels (40.7m). Continued investment in bus services and fares through OCC and Government budgets will take place over next four financial years and expect to reach pre-Covid levels in 2026/27.

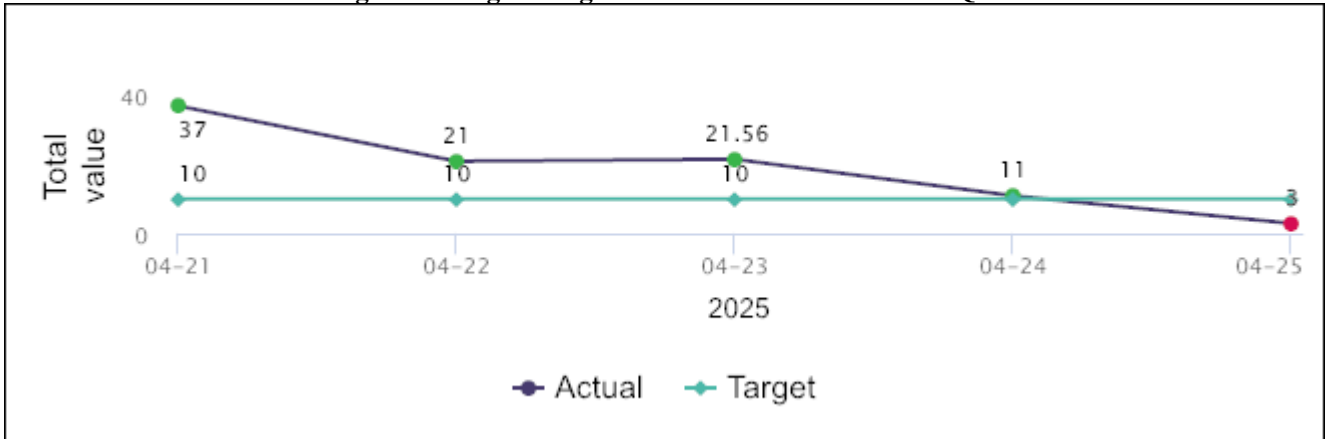
**OCC05.03 KM of footway / cycleway maintenance undertaken**



**Commentary**

Two Oxford schemes have been delayed to 16 April. On completion, this will mark the full delivery of the Footway programme.

**OCC05.04 % of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide concentrations in AQMAs**



**Commentary**

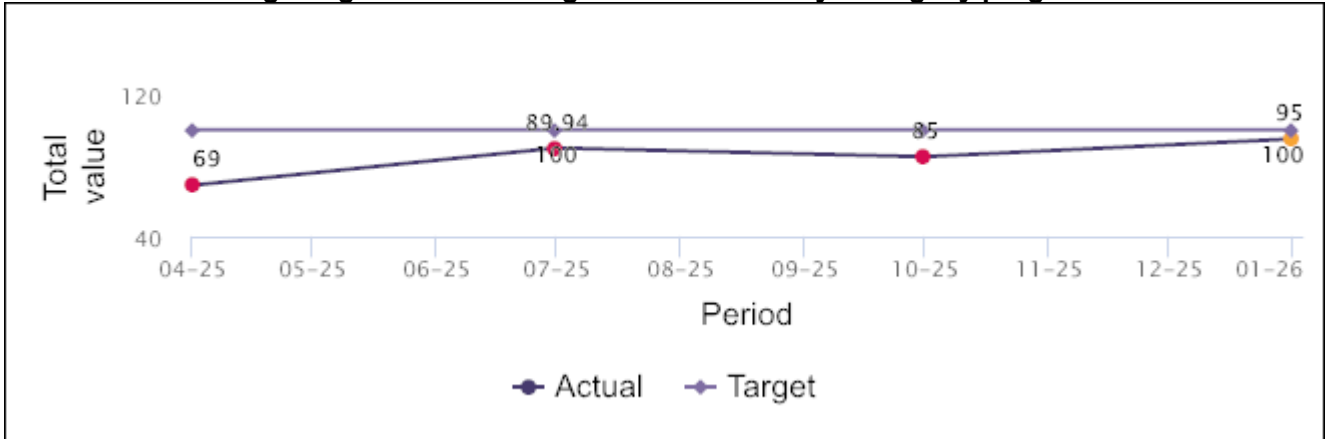
Annual reporting period. measure reporting a year in arrears. Data is provided during the first quarter of the following year. There are currently 9 air quality management areas (AQMA) in Oxfordshire declared in relation to nitrogen dioxide concentrations. The highest levels recorded in each of the 9 AQMAs within Oxfordshire were recorded by the District and City Councils. The average of the highest levels recorded was 31.26 µg/m<sup>3</sup> which is less than the UK’s statutory limit of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The 2024 figure is a 3 % reduction in the average of highest nitrogen dioxide levels recorded in each of the 9 AQMAs (under the 10 % target by 7 %) compared to 2023 levels and a 39 % reduction compared to the baseline year of 2019. Every year air pollutant levels are likely to fluctuate due to weather conditions and other local conditions such as road closures near monitoring site. However, the downward trend is apparent across the UK, with most monitoring sites showing reductions in nitrogen dioxide levels. This is likely to be due to newer road vehicles having to meet stricter emission standards and the uptake of electric road vehicles. A national move away from coal usage in power generation has

also impacted nitrogen dioxide levels.

Analysis:

The Service is working in line with the Council’s Air Quality Strategy and Route Map actions, and the Environment Act 2021 duty to co-operate with the District and City Councils’ Air Quality Management duties of producing Air Quality Action Plans, and supporting the improvement of air quality.

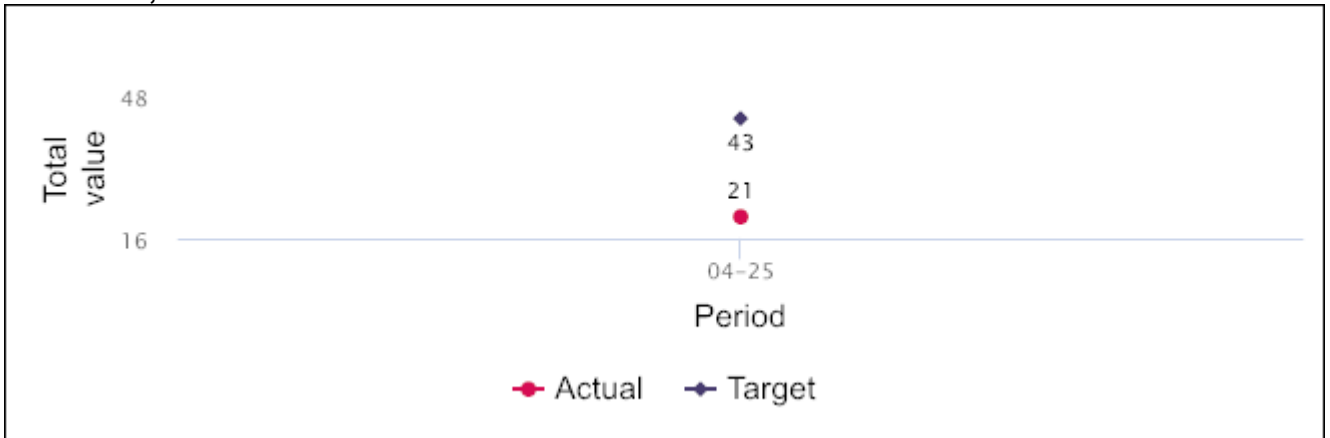
**OCC05.07 Percentage of gullies cleaned against the annual cyclical gully programme**



**Commentary**

Programmed to be completed within the first 2 - 3 weeks of the new financial year

**OCC05.10 Number of locations where positive interventions to improve road safety have been carried out, in accordance with the council’s vision zero commitments**

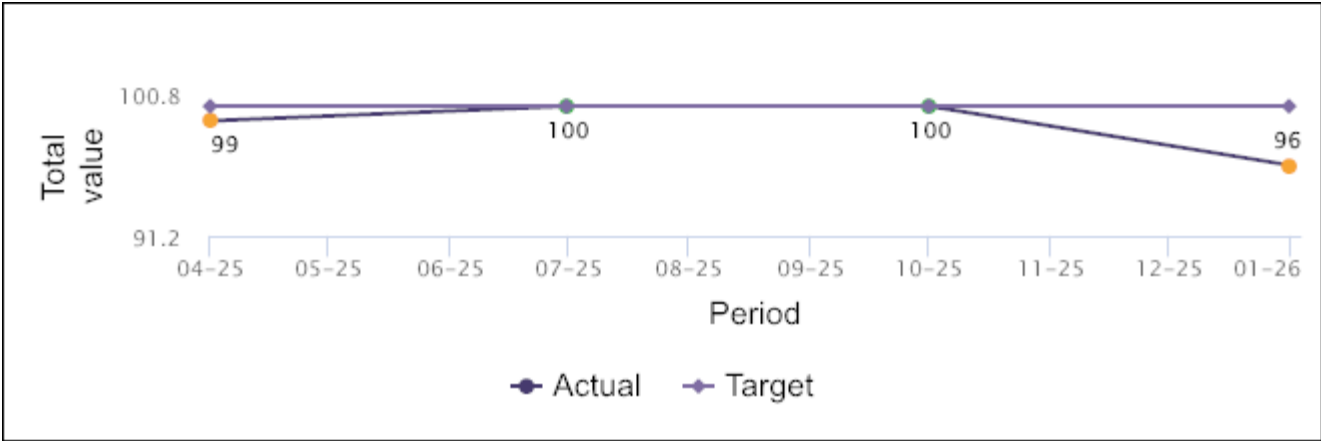


**Commentary**

Annual reporting pattern.

Schemes at design stage / stakeholder engagement, with implementation unlikely to start before September / October

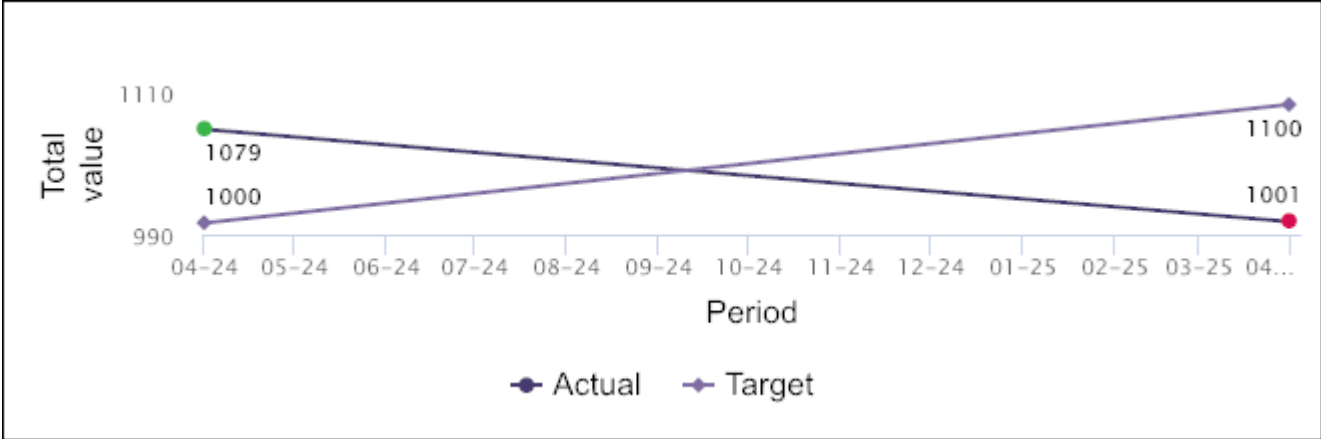
**OCC05.11 % of the projected 1,400 tonnes of carbon savings achieved in the delivery of the highways service through the use of low-carbon techniques and materials**



**Commentary**

End of year total of 1344 Tonnes of a potential 1400 Tonnes total end of year target.  
 Analysis:  
 The service has achieved 96% of the 100% target.

**OCC06.01 No of trees planted & established on land OCC own & manage**



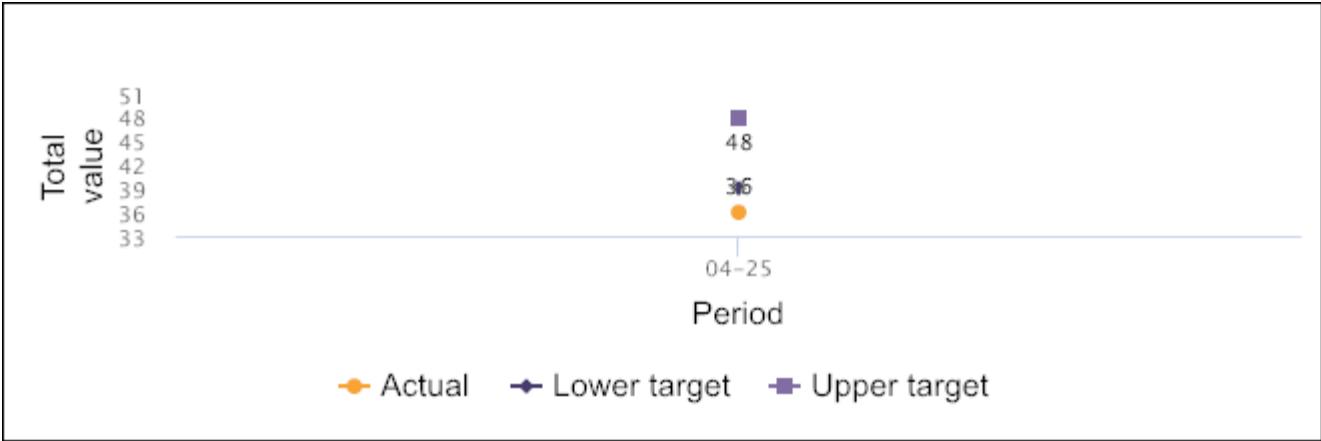
**OCC06.01 No of trees planted & established on land OCC own & manage**

**Commentary**

Total number of trees planted is below target, despite the ambition to consult on more than 1500 trees initially. This was due to unforeseen challenges with conflicts for planting below ground. Planting has been well received.

**Theme 2 - Fairer**

**OCC02.02 Number of times refuge bedspaces have been occupied**



**Commentary**

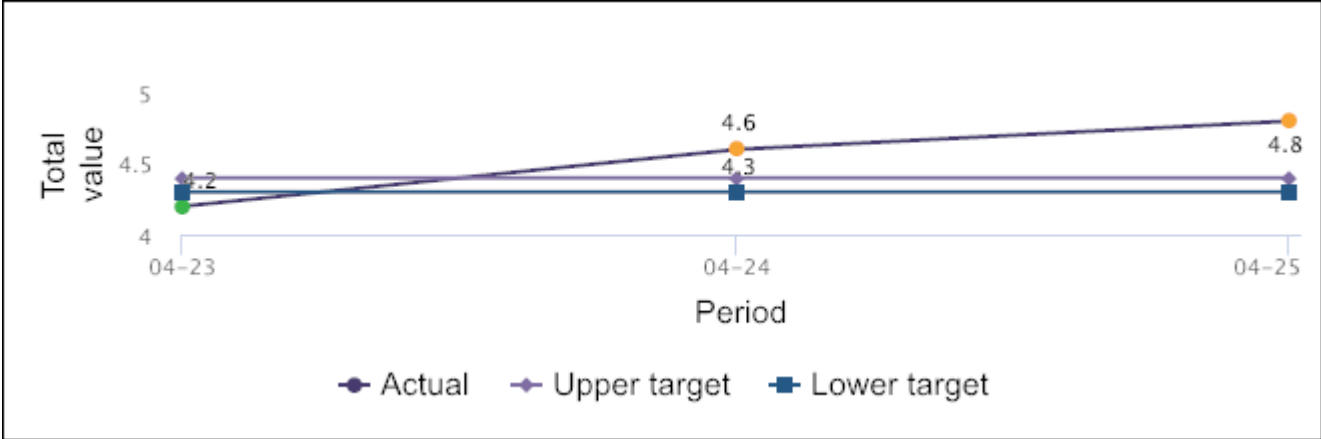
Annual reporting pattern. In 2024/25, 36 people were accepted into refuge from within and Outside of Oxfordshire, and provided with a bedspace, consistent with the 36 accepted in 2023/24. This stability has been maintained despite ongoing challenges in moving people on from refuge due to housing shortages.

To address these challenges, we are conducting a service review and strengthening support for individuals with complex needs. Our focus for 2025/26 is to improve this level of access.

Analysis:

This is an annual measure with a three-month reporting lag. In 2024/25, refuge bedspaces were occupied 36 times, falling slightly short of the target of 39. Although the decline is minimal, it highlights demand for safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims. The Council continues to seek ways to support residents in need of refuge. Plans are in place to increase the number of spaces available for victims of domestic abuse.

**OCC02.04 Female inequality in life expectancy at birth**



**Commentary**

Annual reporting pattern. Reporting Period 2021-2023

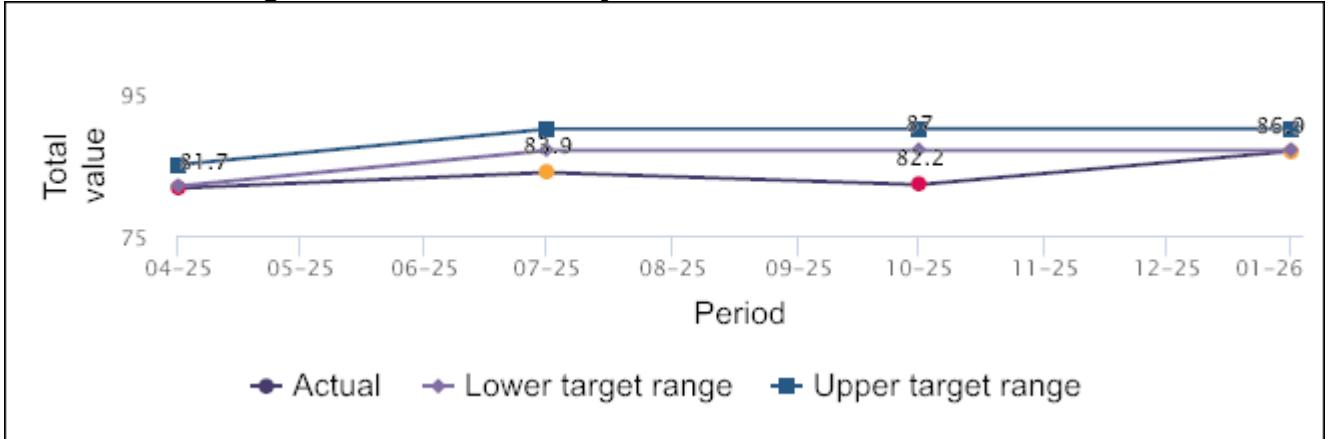
This measures the difference in life expectancy between females living in the most deprived areas compared to people in the least deprived areas. For Oxfordshire, the Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females has increased by 0.2 from the previous year (4.6) and remains higher than levels reported before the pandemic (2018-20 - 4.0). However this difference is lower than for England (8.3).

To reduce health inequalities, 14 Community Insight Profiles have been completed in the most deprived areas. These are supported in 13 of the 14 areas by Community Health Development Officers (CHDOs) who

work at a local level to improve health based on local need. Contracts for the CHDOs in the initial 10 priority areas are being extended following an evaluation of their roles.

**Theme 3 - Healthier**

**OCC03.06 Percentage of 12-month reviews by 12 months**



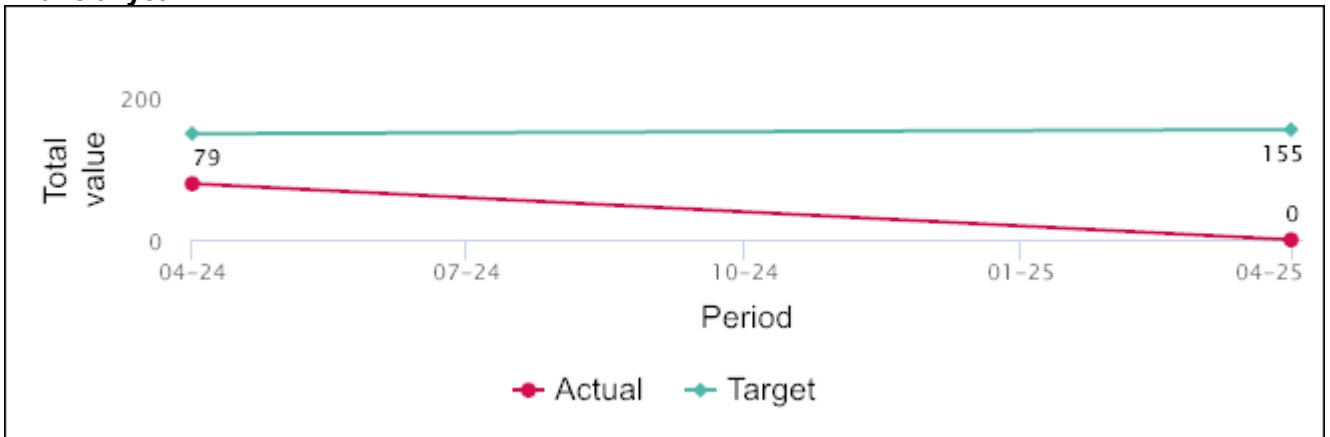
**Commentary**

**Period Q3-25**

This universal review is offered to all children as they approach their first birthday. During the quarter, the service completed 1,566 reviews. Because of family schedules and parental work commitments, some families choose to have the review after the child turns one, up to 15 months. If a family declines or does not attend their appointment, the service follows up and offers another review, which may fall outside the standard 12-month timeframe.

In this quarter, 1,657 babies—90.3%—received a review by 15 months. The service has significantly improved uptake, supported by successful recruitment that has strengthened capacity. Targeted work in areas with lower attendance is also helping to identify and address barriers.

**OCC03.11 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year**



## Commentary

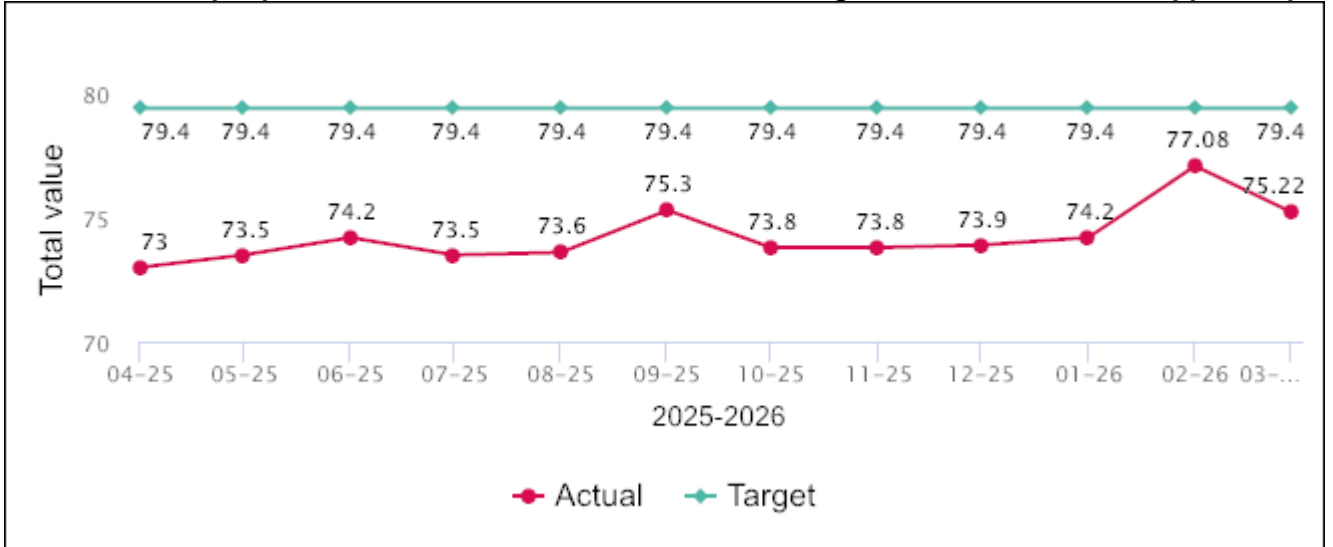
Period 2024/25

Performance data for this measure is currently being updated and expected December 2026. The target is not expected to be achieved for the period.

The service is working to increase referrals from all partners of young people using substances, but no increase has been achieved in this period.

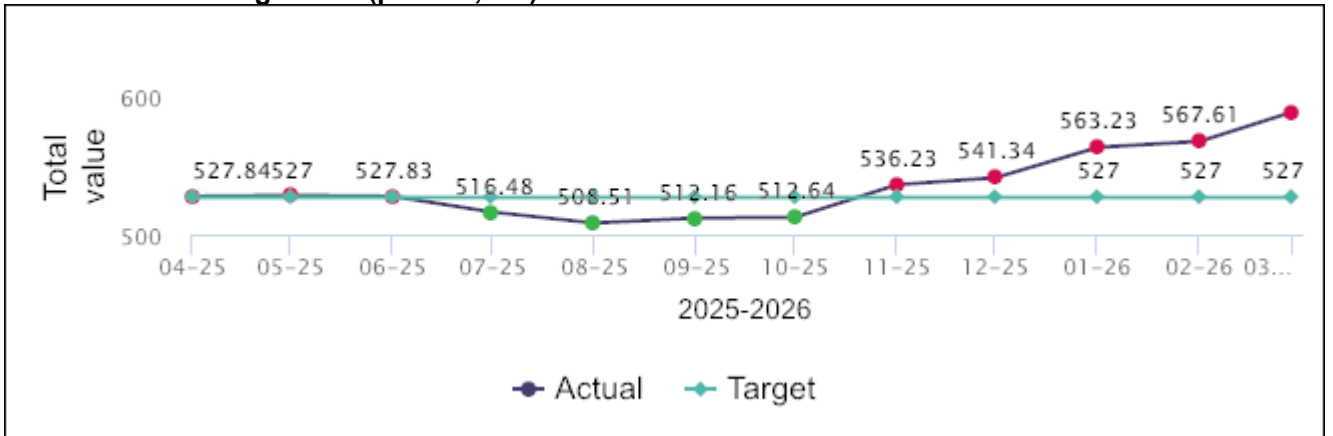
The service continues to support children and young people with brief interventions, children affected by other people's substance use and families alongside this work.

### OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 25/26 with no further support request



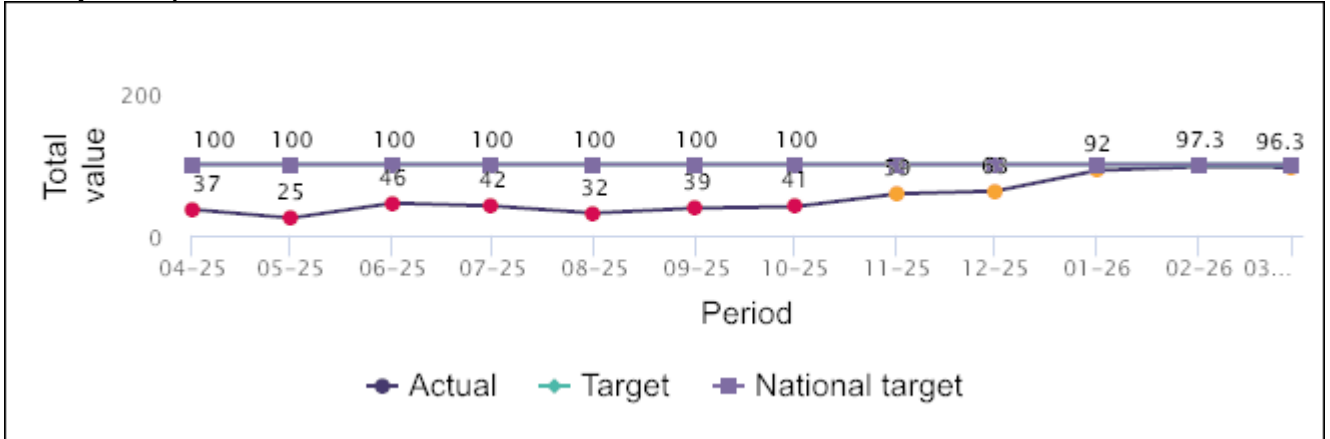
## Commentary

### OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes



## Commentary

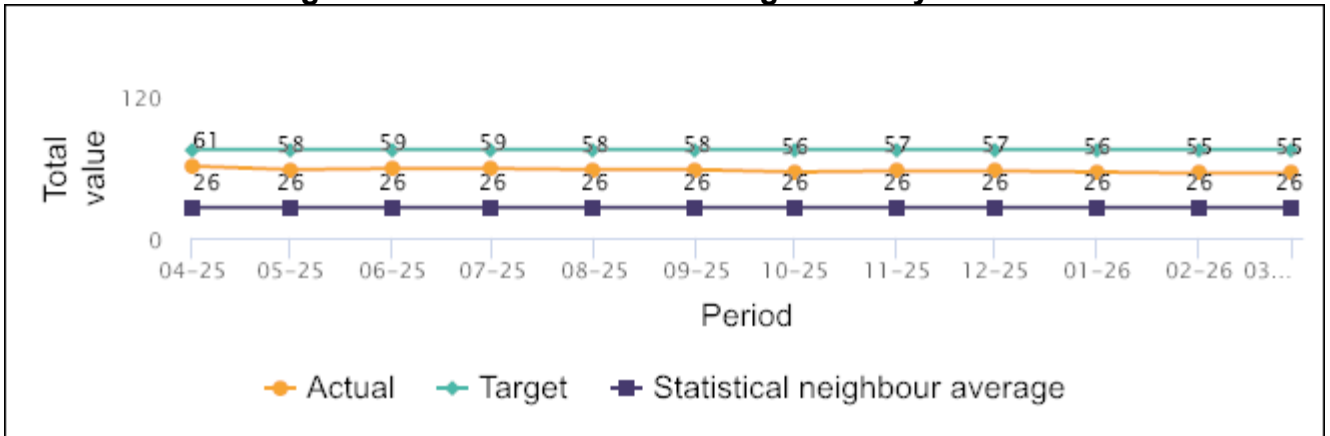
### OCC07.01 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)



## Commentary

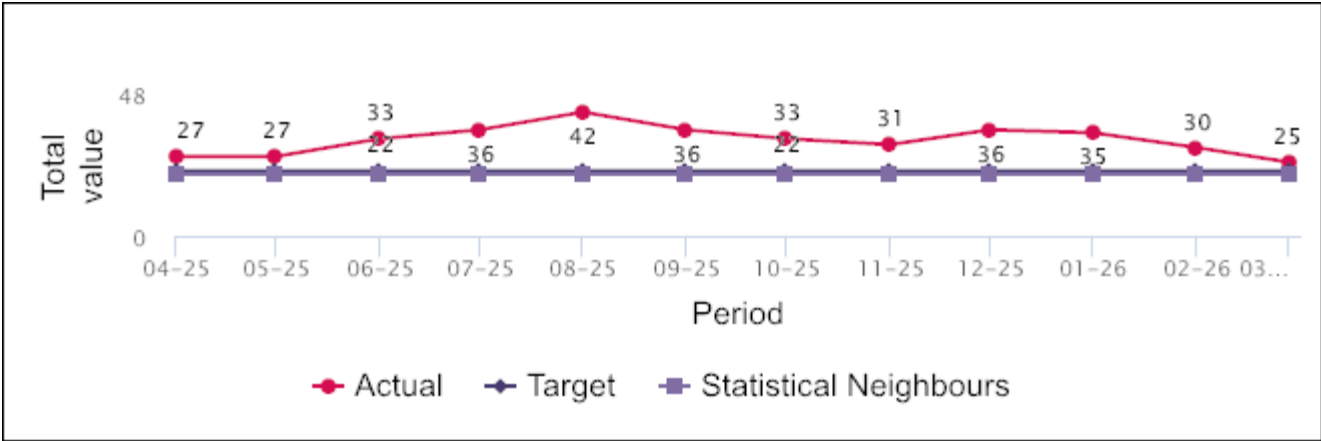
In March 2026, timeliness data continued to demonstrate strong and sustained performance in completing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within statutory timescales. A total of 135 EHCPs were issued during March, of which 130 were completed within 20 weeks, equating to 96.3% compliance. This represents a continued improvement on January performance (91.8%) and maintains the high standard achieved in February (97.3%).

### OCC07.03 Percentage of children we care for living in county/within 20 miles



## Commentary

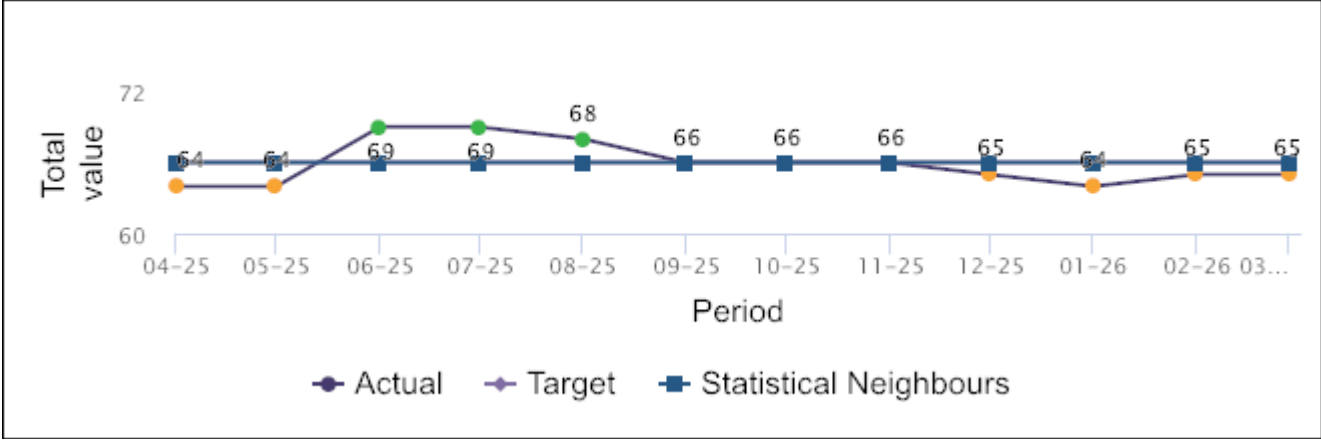
### OCC07.05 Percentage of referrals to children's social care which are within 12 months of a referral



**Commentary**

Of all families referred to statutory children’s social care in December 2025, 36% had been referred within the last year. Continued focused effort to address re-referrals.

**OCC07.07 Percentage of children we care for living with foster carers, friends or family**

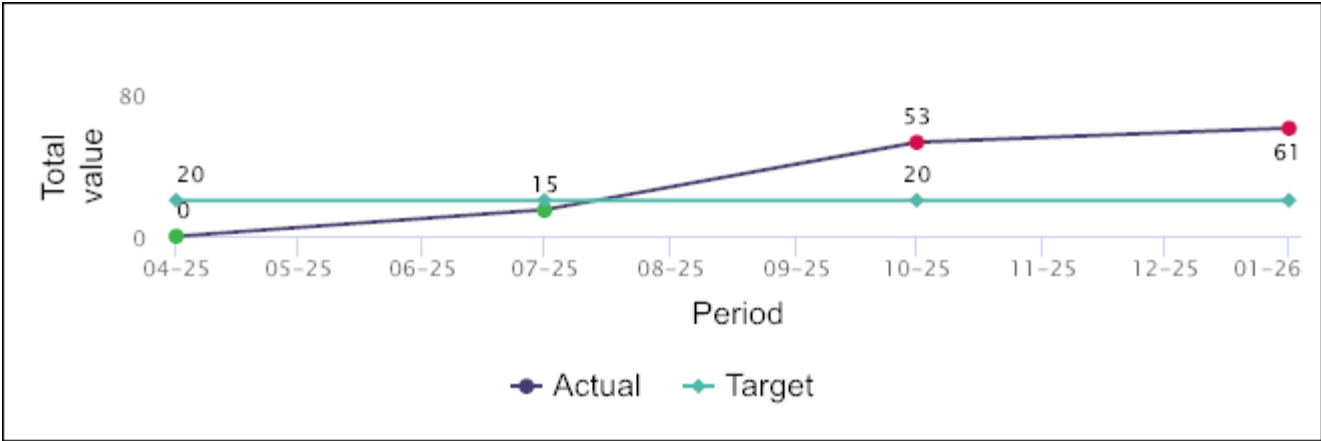


**Commentary**

No commentary provided

**Running the business - Customer experience**

**OCC10.07 Children’s Social care complaints completed outside of timeframe**



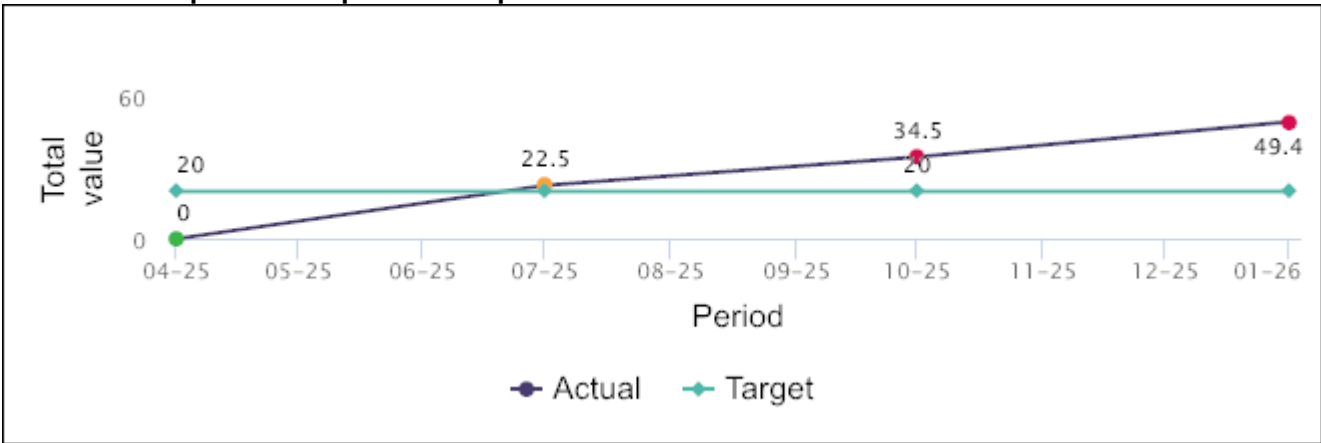
**Commentary**

Reporting period quarter 3. Of the 22 stage 1 complaints received, 22 closed during the quarter, 11 within timescale and 11 complaints were closed outside of the standard timescale. Of the 6 stage 2 complaints received, 0 were closed within timescale and 6 were closed outside of the standard timescale. Of the 3 stage 3 complaints received, 1 was closed within timescale and 2 were closed outside of the standard timescale.

**Analysis:**

During Quarter 3, a total of 31 complaints were logged. The standard resolution timescale for Statutory Stage 1 complaints is 20 working days, Statutory Stage 2 is 65 working days and Statutory Stage 3 is 50 working days

**OCC10.08 Corporate complaints completed outside of timeframe**



**Commentary**

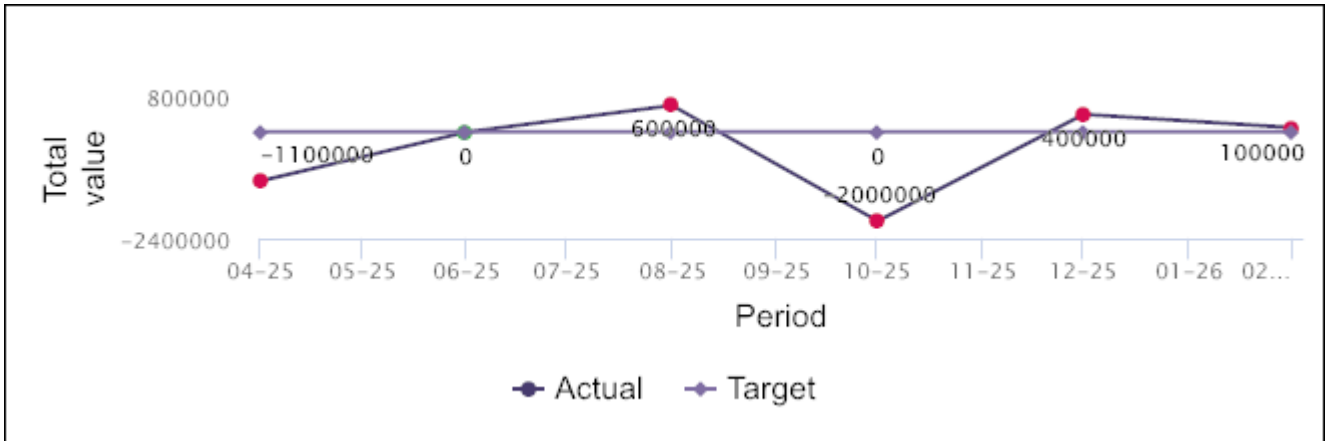
Reporting period Quarter 3. Of the 139 stage 1 complaints received, 139 were closed during the quarter, 61 within timescale and 78 complaints were closed outside of the standard timescale. Of the 45 stage 2 complaints received, 45 were closed during the quarter, 32 were closed within timescale, 13 were closed outside of timescale.

**Analysis:**

During Quarter 3, a total of 184 complaints were logged. The standard resolution timescale for Corporate Stage 1 complaints is 10 working days and Corporate Stage 2 is 20 working days.

**Running the business - Finance**

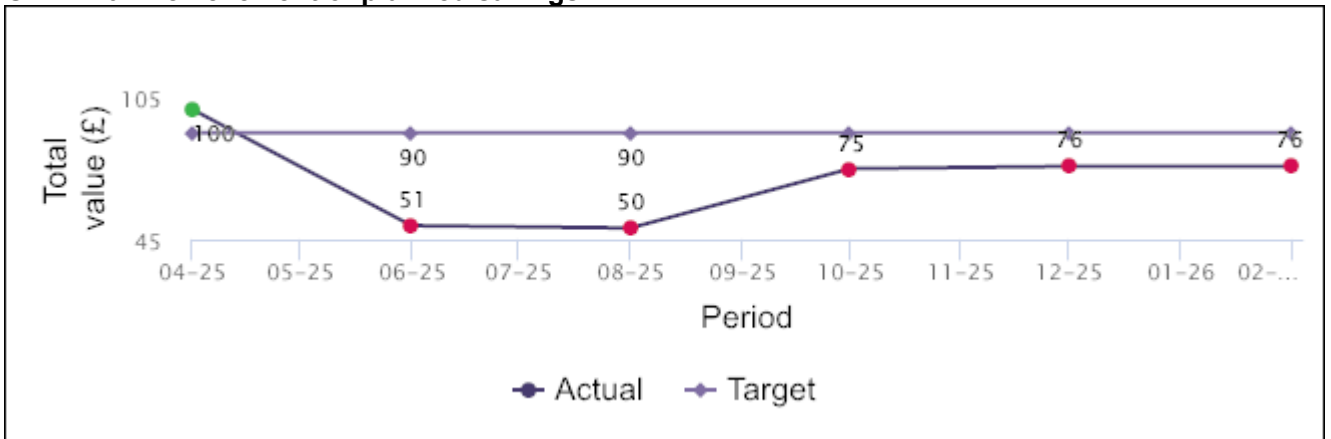
**OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council**



**Commentary**

End of year position

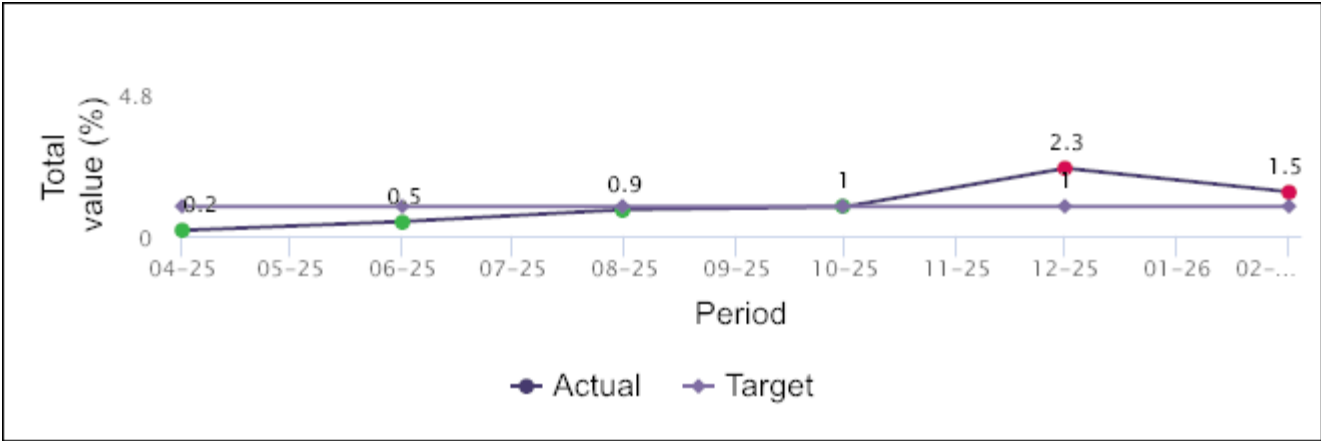
**OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings**



**Commentary**

See finance update in business management and monitoring report.

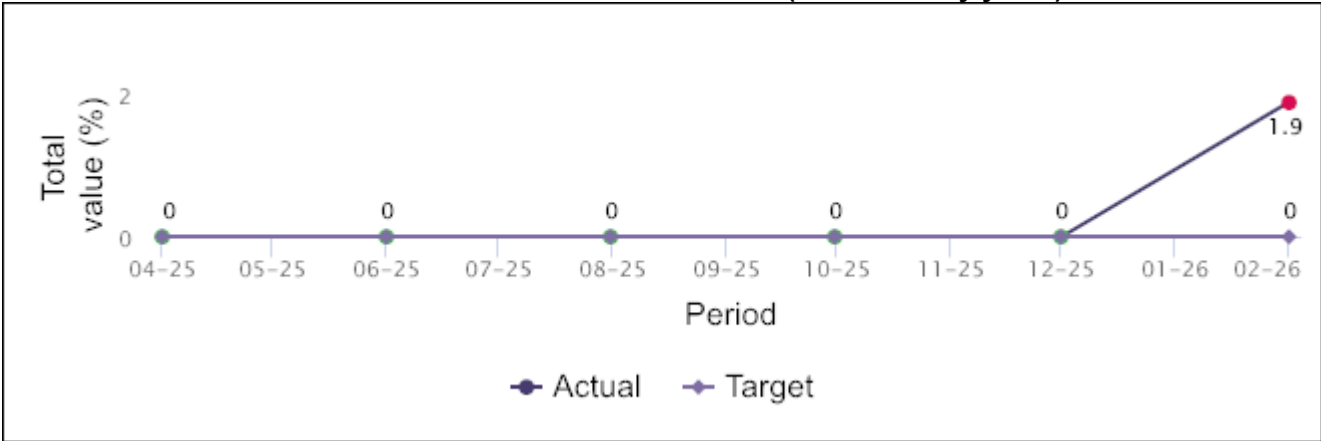
**OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget**



**Commentary**

See finance update in business management and monitoring report.

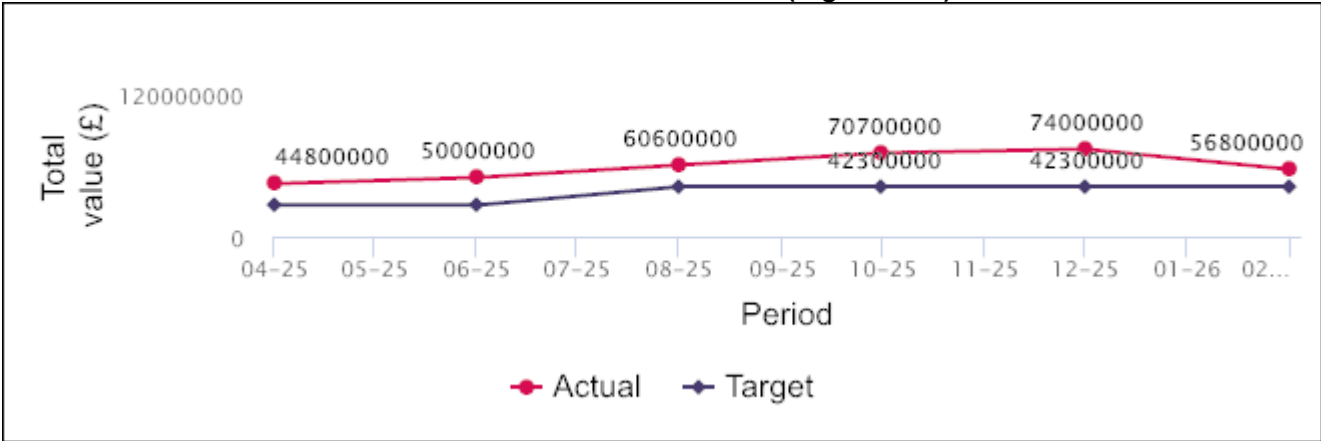
**OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)**



**Commentary**

See finance update in business management and monitoring report.

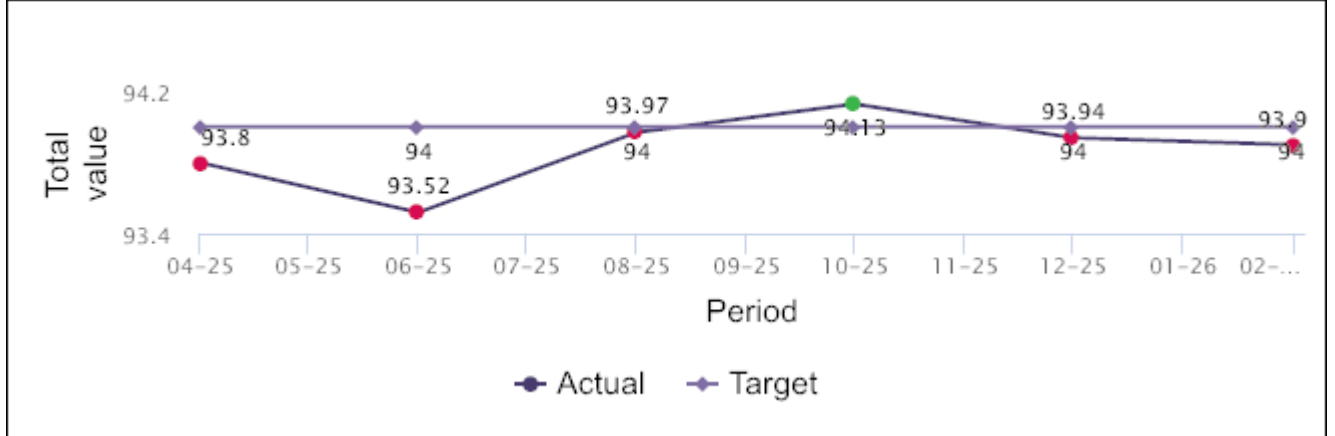
**OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)**



## Commentary

See finance update in business management and monitoring report.

### OCC11.12 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors



## Commentary

In this period, we measured invoices issued in December 2025. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 93.90% for this period, slightly below the new stretch target of 94%.

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Annex C – Complaints, FOIs and EIRs

Stage 1 Complaints											
Q3-2025											
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the quarter	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07. Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale	10. Number upheld	11. Percent upheld
Adult Social Care Corporate Stage 1	3	3	3	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%
Adult Social Care Statutory Stage 1	26	26	24	2	92%	0	0%	0	0%	11	42%
Children's Corporate Stage 1	63	63	37	26	59%	0	0%	0	0%	12	19%
Children's Statutory Stage 1	22	22	11	11	50%	0	0%	0	0%	4	18%
Community Safety Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Economy & Place Stage 1	5	5	2	3	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Highways & Environment Stage 1	36	36	10	26	28%	0	0%	0	0%	7	19%
Law & Governance Stage 1	2	2	0	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Public Health Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Resources Stage 1	27	27	8	19	30%	0	0%	0	0%	7	26%
Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships Stage 1	3	3	1	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24%</b>

Stage 2 Complaints

Q3-2025

	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the quarter	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07. Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale	10. Number upheld	11. Percent upheld
Adult Social Care Corporate Stage 2	1	1	1	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Adult Social Care Statutory Stage 2	4	4	4	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%
Children's Corporate Stage 2	24	24	21	3	88%	0	0%	0	0%	2	8%
Children's Statutory Stage 2	6	6	0	6	0%	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Community Safety Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Economy & Place Stage 2	3	3	1	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Highways & Environment Stage 2	12	12	6	6	50%	0	0%	0	0%	3	25%
Law & Governance Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Public Health Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Resources Stage 2	3	3	2	1	67%	0	0%	0	0%	2	67%
Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships Stage 2	2	2	1	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20%</b>

Stage 3 Complaints											
Q3-2025											
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the quarter	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07. Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale	10. Number upheld	11. Percent upheld
Children's Statutory Stage 3	3	3	1	2	33%	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Number of complaints by service (Direction of travel)

Q3-2025

		Previous Quarter 2 2025/26	Current Quarter 3 2025/26	Actual
Adult Social Care All Complaints	Adult Social Care	29	33	+4
	Adult Social Care Corporate Housing	0	0	0
	Commissioning	2	1	-1
Children's Services All Complaints	Children's Education	55	74	+19
	Children's Social Care	39	44	+5
Environment and Place All Complaints	Highways and Operations	14	22	+8
	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	25	31	+6
	Transport and Infrastructure	13	3	-10
Public Health and Community Safety All Complaints	Public Health and Community Safety	0	0	0
Resources Directorate (CODR and L&G) All Complaints	Customer and Culture	3	5	+2
	Finance	0	32	+32
	HR and OD	1	0	-1
<b>Total All Complaints</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>+64</b>

FOIs									
Q3- 2025									
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the quarter	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07. Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale
Adult Social Care FOIs	25	25	24	1	96%	0	0%	0	0%
Children's Services FOIs	80	80	76	4	95%	0	0%	0	0%
Community Safety FOIs	41	41	38	3	93%	0	0%	0	0%
Economy & Place FOIs	61	60	60	0	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Highways & Environment FOIs	138	138	136	2	99%	0	0%	0	0%
Law & Governance FOIs	15	14	12	2	86%	0	0%	1	100%
Public Health FOIs	10	10	10	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Resources FOIs	92	92	91	1	99%	0	0%	0	0%
Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships FOIs	12	12	12	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>All FOIs Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>

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## Introduction

1. This annex sets out the final financial monitoring update for the 2025/26 financial year. It is based on information covering the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Context about the ongoing effect in 2026/27 and future funding reductions is also included in the report.
2. Additional information is provided as follows:

Appendix 1A	Revenue Outturn Summary for 2025/26
Appendix 1B	Savings & Investments Outturn Position
Appendix 2	Service Area budgets 2025/26: Movement from the Budget Book to Outturn
Appendix 3	Confirmed Government Grants and Business Rates funding updates.
Appendix 4A	Earmarked Reserves
Appendix 4B	Parking Account
Appendix 4C	Maintained School Reserves
Appendix 4D	General Balances

## Overview

3. The budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28 was agreed by Council on 11 February 2025. There was £53.6m new funding to meet inflationary, demand and other pressures along with £30.3m budget reductions. There was also £6.9m funding for new investments.
4. This is the last update for 2025/26 and sets out the final expenditure against the agreed budget as well as an update on the achievement of planned budget savings and investments. The report also explains one – off funding in reserves and balances held by the council.
5. The information in this report will be incorporated into the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26. Both the draft and final Statement of Accounts will be published on the Council's website.
6. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, specifically regulations 9 and 15, the commencement period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the draft 2025/26 accounts and related documents is based on completing the Statement of Accounts by 30 June 2026. Following the amendment to the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the planned public inspection dates will run for six weeks following the publication of the accounts

7. Services overspent by £9.7m in 2025/26. There were overspends in Adult Services, Environment & Highways and Economy & Place as well as unachieved cross cutting savings. Part of the overspend has been managed using the contingency budget of £7.2m that was built into the budget for demand and other risks. The rest has been offset by pay inflation that was not needed in 2025/26.
8. Due to interest rates and cash balances during the year being higher than modelled in February 2025, interest on cash balances was £9.5m above the budgeted level.
9. In January 2026 Cabinet agreed that £5.5m would be transferred to the Budget Reserve and it is proposed to add £8.0m to the High Needs DSG risk reserve (ahead of the approval of the SEND Reform Plan). After these transfers there is a council overspend of £0.1m against a budget of £648.4m.

### **On-going effect in 2026/27 and the Medium Term**

10. While it was possible to manage the service overspend with contingency measures in 2025/26, there is less flexibility in 2026/27. The contingency budget was reduced to £6.2m as one of the changes to balance the 2026/27 budget agreed in February 2026. Pay inflation not used in 2025/26 will be needed to fund pay awards in 2026/27. In addition, interest on cash balances is less likely to be significantly higher than budgeted because of the increasing impact of the High Needs DSG deficit on the cash that the council is holding. Relatively higher interest rates and returns than in 2025/26, were assumed when the 2026/27 budget was set.
11. When setting its budget for 2026/27 the council made clear that it would need to make savings in future years in excess of £20m as a result of changes made by government to formulas that dictate how much individual local authorities will receive in grant money. Rising pressures on budgets due to inflation and demand mean the council is likely to need to save significantly more than this in practice. The council is planning its budget much earlier than normal and looking at all possibilities for savings including staffing levels across the authority. Further details will be shared later in the year but the council will seek to protect frontline services as much as possible.

### **Savings & Investments**

12. After adjusting for budget changes requiring no operational action and adding savings not achieved in 2024/25, the in-year savings target was revised to £28.7m in 2025/26, including £1.3m prior-year reorganisation savings still to be achieved. £21.8m (76%) of these savings have been delivered.

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13. The 2025/26 budget included £14.5m<sup>1</sup> of planned investments, of which £10.7m (74%) were delivered as planned. The remaining £3.7m was used to support in-year service pressures, primarily within Children's Services and Adult Services. All planned investments were fully delivered in Environment & Highways, Economy & Place, Resources and Public Health & Communities. Underspends against Children's Services investments were used to offset unachieved savings in 2025/26 and prior years, helping to stabilise the overall financial position.

#### General Balances & High Needs DSG Deficit

14. General Balances reduced from £45.3m at 31 March 2025 to £33.8m at 31 March 2026. This is £1.6m above the risk-assessed minimum level of £32.7m for 2026/27.

15. The 2025/26 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £56.8m, £14.5m higher than the £42.3m deficit budget approved by Cabinet in July 2025. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The deficit has increased the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £92.5m as at 31 March 2025 to £149.3m at 31 March 2026.

## Service Area Budgets & Expenditure as at 31 March 2026

16. Net expenditure for each of the council's services compared to the final budget and the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2025 is summarised below.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
Adult Services	£259.9m	£262.8m	£3.0m	1.1%	£7.5m	£4.5m
Children's Services	£216.6m	£216.5m	-£0.0m	0.0%	£0.1m	£0.1m
Environment & Highways	£55.3m	£55.9m	£0.6m	1.2%	£0.9m	£0.3m
Economy & Place	£21.8m	£22.7m	£0.9m	4.0%	-£0.0m	-£0.9m
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	£32.6m	£33.1m	£0.5m	1.5%	£0.6m	£0.1m
Public Health & Communities	£14.1m	£14.0m	-£0.0m	0.0%	-£0.0m	£0.0m
Resources and Law & Governance	£72.0m	£71.1m	-£0.9m	-1.2%	-£0.5m	£0.3m
Corporate Savings	-£6.4m	-£0.7m	£5.7m	-89.0%	£5.6m	-£0.1m
<b>Service Areas Total</b>	<b>£665.9m</b>	<b>£675.6m</b>	<b>£9.7m</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>£14.1m</b>	<b>£4.4m</b>

Note: the figures in all tables have been rounded - this may mean the overall totals vary slightly to the sum of the figures included in them.

17. The achievement of savings and investments included within this position is included at Appendix 1B. Grant funding is in Appendix 3, and reserves in Appendix 4A.

<sup>11</sup> In February 2025, the investment programme included £7.3m of projects that had already been completed. Excluding these, the actual investments to be monitored was £14.2m. By June 2025, a further £1.5m of 2024/25 projects had been carried forward, partially offset by £1.2m of rail and flood investment rephased in March 2025, resulting in a total 2025/26 investment programme of £14.5m.

**Adult Services**

18. Adult Services overspent by £3.0m against a budget of £259.9m (1.1%). The final position improved by £4.5m compared to the January 2025 forecast.

Service Area	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Adult Social Care	£28.8m	£29.6m	£0.7m	£0.7m	-£0.0m
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	£7.3m	£6.4m	-£0.9m	-£0.7m	£0.2m
Business Support Service	£1.3m	£1.2m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
<b>Non-Pool Services</b>	£37.4m	£37.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m
Pooled Budgets	£222.5m	£225.6m	£3.2m	£7.5m	£4.3m
<b>Total Adult Services</b>	<b>£259.9m</b>	<b>£262.8m</b>	<b>£3.0m</b>	<b>£7.5m</b>	<b>£4.5m</b>

**Pooled Budgets**

19. There was an overspend of £3.2m (1.4%) against Pooled Budgets.
20. The Age Well pool combines health and social care expenditure on care homes activities relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people.
21. The Live Well pool supports a mix of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and for adults with physical disabilities.
22. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).
23. Budgets allocated for risk, demography and inflationary related pressures within the Pooled Budgets in 2025/26 were £21.7m. £20.5m of this was allocated to the pools to cover demographic and inflationary pressures. £1.2m was used to deliver a third-party saving achieved through management of the care market.
24. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) utilised within the pool was £31.8m in 2025/26, an increase of 2.46% from 2024/25.
25. Activity in the Reablement and Discharge to Assess (D2A) service increased as a result of complexity in D2A episodes, creating a £1.2m overspend in year. This was mitigated by an investment in additional hospital staff and short stay hub beds. The cost of this was shared equally with the ICB and the council's share was £0.4m.
26. A further £1.2m overspend within the pools resulted from an increase in agency staff within the hospital teams, a month long extension of the short stay hub bed contract, and an overspend on equipment.
27. The number of service users who have assessed Mental Health needs but fall outside the scope of the Outcome Based contract, with Oxford Health National Health Service Foundation Trust, has increased. The cost of this service is shared equally between the ICB and the council; the council's share of this overspend was £0.4m.

**Non-Pool Services**

28. There was an underspend of -£0.2m across all other services.

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29. The Adult Social Care overspend was £0.7m compared to the £28.8m budget (2.5%). This includes the cost of operational staff and provider services required to deliver social care within the county. The overspend relates to the non-delivery of a savings target, linked to agency staff, which was allocated to the service as part of the 2023/24 budget.
30. Health Education & Social Care Commissioning and Business Support underspent by -£0.9m against the £8.6m budget (-10.9%). This is a result of vacant posts held, and additional funding received throughout the financial year.

### Children's Services (General Fund)

31. Children's Services broke even against a budget of £216.6m. The final position has improved by £0.1m compared to the January 2026 forecast.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Education Services	£59.5m	£59.5m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.1m
Children's Social Care	£137.8m	£140.5m	£2.6m	£2.0m	-£0.6m
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Improvement	£6.6m	£5.0m	-£1.6m	-£1.1m	£0.5m
Children's Services Central Costs	£12.4m	£11.4m	-£1.0m	-£0.9m	£0.1m
Adopt Thames Valley	£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Schools	£0.2m	£0.2m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>£216.6m</b>	<b>£216.5m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>

### Education Services

32. Education Services and Schools broke even against a budget of £59.5m. This decreased by £0.8m compared to the previously reported position. This is due to expenditure on Home to School Transport being lower than expected earlier in the year.

### Children's Social Care & Central costs

33. Children's Social Care and Central Costs broke even against a budget of £156.8m. Pressures within Children's Social Care have been mitigated by the use of reserves. The residual position was an overspend of £1.0m in Children's Social Care, which was offset by underspend of £1.0m for Children's Services Central Costs. This aligns to the previously reported forecast position.

34. The activity for Children's Social Care, related to Children We Care For was:

	Q4 2022/23	Q2 2023/24	Q4 2023/24	Q2 2024/25	Q4 2024/25	Q2 2025/26	Q4 2025/26
Oxfordshire born children	735	677	624	643	655	663	673
Disabled children	58	51	49	43	48	47	46
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>719</b>
Unaccompanied	108	94	95	99	90	69	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>775</b>

35. The number of Cared for Children during 2025/26, excluding Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, rose to 719 in Quarter 4 compared to 703 in the same period in

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2024/25. The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children has declined significantly to 55 in Q4, compared to 90 in the same period in 2024/25.

### Children's Services (Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG))

36. The cost of providing education services is met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which was £348.0m in 2025/26. Variations against the blocks were:

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Schools block	£128.8m	£128.8m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
High Needs block	£96.7m	£153.5m	£56.8m	£74.0m	£17.1m
Early Years block	£116.8m	£114.6m	£-2.2m	£0.0m	£2.2m
Central Services schools block	£5.8m	£6.0m	£0.2m	£0.0m	£-0.2m
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>£348.0m</b>	<b>£402.8m</b>	<b>£54.8m</b>	<b>£74.0m</b>	<b>£19.1m</b>

37. The final allocation for the High Needs Block, adjusted for recoupment, deductions and direct funding was £96.7m.

38. Due to continued growth in the number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (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. As a result the deficit compared to DSG funding for High Needs was £56.8m in 2025/26. This compares to an overspend of £36.5m in 2024/25, as expenditure continues to increase in line with EHCP growth.

39. Some of the key issues impacting on High Needs DSG block spend in 2025/26 were the cost of placements from September 2024, tribunal challenges to placement decisions, and the increased average costs of education placements.

40. In July 2025 Cabinet approved an increase in the budgeted 2025/26 High Needs DSG deficit to £42.3m. The outturn position is £14.5m above the approved deficit.

41. As part of the Final Local Government Settlement for 2026/27, the government announced that they will fund 90% of deficits up to the end of 31 March 2026 subject to the approval of a SEND Reform plan. Additional details are set out in the June 2026 Cabinet report.

42. Early Years DSG is underspent due to lower than anticipated hours of early years education being funded.

43. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The in-year deficit has increased the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £92.5m at 31 March 2025 to £149.3m at 31 March 2026.

## Environment & Highways

44. Environment & Highways overspent by £0.6m against a budget of £55.3m. The overspend has decreased by £0.3m compared to the January 2026 forecast.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Transport & Property Infrastructure Delivery	£1.8m	£1.0m	£-0.8m	£-0.3m	£0.5m
Countryside & Waste	£37.4m	£36.8m	£-0.6m	£0.0m	£0.6m
Highways & Maintenance	£20.2m	£22.1m	£1.9m	£0.1m	£-1.8m
Network Management	£-5.2m	£-5.2m	£0.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m
E&H Central Costs	£1.2m	£1.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£-0.0m
<b>Total Environment &amp; Highways</b>	<b>£55.3m</b>	<b>£55.9m</b>	<b>£0.6m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>

### Transport, Property & Infrastructure delivery

45. An underspend of £-0.8m is due to increased capitalisation of staff time, with most teams reaching 90-100% of their chargeable time. There was also an increase in permanent staff which reduced higher cost agency spend.

### Countryside & Waste

46. This service area underspent by £-0.6m. £-0.3m of this was due to vacant posts in Countryside Services that were purposely not filled ahead of service redesign.

47. A further £-0.3m relates to Waste services. Although Energy Recovery Facility and Landfill Tonnages costs were higher overall, these were offset by a reduction in spending within composting and recycling, contractual Energy Recycling Facility royalty payments income and recycling credits.

### Highways and Maintenance

48. An overspend of 1.9m mainly relates to defects, drainage and winter maintenance.

49. The overspend in defects is attributable to increased complexity. While the number of defects repaired was not significantly higher than in 2024/25, the size and complexity has driven higher unit costs in 2025/26.

50. The drainage overspend relates to the volume of assets cleared, with over 148,000 assets visited as part of the council's commitment to empty every gully. The condition of the assets, the level of defects identified, and some sites requiring more complex traffic management than anticipated have resulted in spend exceeding the approved budget.

51. Winter service costs increased primarily due to higher fleet vehicle costs than expected and increases in raw material costs, rising from £55 to £65 per tonne.

### Network Management

52. Targets across income streams were exceeded and mitigated the pressure (£1.0m) linked to the delayed implementation of the lane rental scheme to break even overall. Demand for network activity has consistently increased and is projected to continue into 2026/27.

53. Although greater income was achieved within Network Coordination, Parking Services was in deficit for the first time since 2021/22. Parking income has dropped since the introduction of the congestion charge. Fewer motorists are choosing to park in Oxford City Centre and more are opting to take the Park and Ride instead. This resulted in a requirement to support the Parking account with a drawdown from reserves. With this, and an ongoing budgeted contribution to support Highway Maintenance, the net reserve position at the end of 2025/26 is £2.7m as shown in Appendix 4B.

## Economy & Place

54. Economy & Place overspent by £0.9m against a budget of £21.8m.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Place Shaping	£17.8m	£18.7m	£0.9m	£0.2m	£-0.7m
Future Economy	£0.3m	£0.3m	£-0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Regulatory Planning & Enforcement	£0.3m	£0.6m	£0.3m	£0.0m	£-0.3m
Climate Action	£1.3m	£1.0m	£-0.3m	£-0.1m	£0.2m
Ox Local Enterprise Partnership	£0.5m	£0.5m	£-0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Innovation	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Business Performance & Services Improvement	£0.9m	£0.8m	£-0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m
E&P Senior Management Team	£0.6m	£0.8m	£0.1m	£-0.1m	£-0.2m
<b>Total Economy &amp; Place</b>	<b>£21.8m</b>	<b>£22.7m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>£-0.0m</b>	<b>£-0.9m</b>

### Place Shaping

55. £0.2m of the total in-year overspend of £0.9m relates to the council's role as the Strategic Planning Authority for Spatial Development Strategy and Regional Planning. Further costs will be met from the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution reserve in 2026/27.

56. A pressure of £0.2m related to previously reported transport modelling costs for the Oxfordshire Mobility Model and to developing the new approach. The costs are funded from 2026/27. The remainder of the overspend relates to undelivered savings, an unachieved income target and agency staffing costs, resulting from holding vacant posts pending organisational redesign.

### Regulatory Planning & Enforcement

57. This service area overspent by £0.3m. It was noted throughout the year that income targets within the Development Management service would not be achieved due to the reduction in developments across the county. This overspend was partly mitigated through underspends in the Lead Local Flood Authority service and the utilisation of reserves.

### Climate Change

58. Staffing vacancies and recharges to capital schemes contributed to an underspend of £0.3m.

### Innovation

59. This service area reported a breakeven position. Innovate Oxfordshire's new structure went live on 1 April 2026. Business development will be expanding in 2026/2027 to

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support Innovate Oxfordshire's medium term business plan. Delays in relation to Local Government Reform, the ability to engage with the wider public sector, and a service restructure meant that some activities had to pause.

#### Senior Management Team

60. An overspend of £0.1m was due to historic transformation savings that were not met in year. This was offset by a -£0.2m underspend due to the recharge of staff time to capital projects.

#### Public Health and Communities

61. Public Health and Communities broke even after a transfer of £0.8m to the Grants and Contributions Reserve.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Public Health:					
PH - Mandatory Functions	£20.1m	£20.4m	£0.3m	£0.0m	-£0.3m
PH - Non Mandatory Functions	£21.4m	£20.1m	-£1.1m	-£0.9m	£0.2m
Public Health Recharges	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Grant Income & Reserves	-£37.1m	-£36.3m	£0.8m	£0.9m	£0.1m
<b>Public Health</b>	<b>£5.1m</b>	<b>£5.1m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>
Communities:					
Homes for Ukraine	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Libraries and Heritage	£8.9m	£8.9m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Migration	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
<b>Communities</b>	<b>£8.9m</b>	<b>£8.9m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Communities</b>	<b>£14.1m</b>	<b>£14.0m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>

#### Public Health

62. Services funded by the Public Health Grant broke-even after a £0.8m transfer to the Grants and Contributions reserve. Public Health Services funded by the council underspent by £0.1m. Notable variations were:

- Increased spend of £0.3m due to increased demand for sexual health services, particularly those with a higher tariff. This may reflect services better meeting local demand as they continue to recover towards pre-pandemic levels. Overall spend remains within the contractual ceiling.
- Substance misuse underspent by £0.2m due to a combination of unexpected staff vacancies and various activity-dependent costs, principally in residential treatment where costs have been slightly lower than in previous years
- Obesity underspent by £0.1m due to staff vacancies and delayed delivery of work on a whole system approach to healthy weight.
- Other Public Health services underspent by £0.8m following the relatively late notice of an above-inflation 2025/26 Public Health Grant allocation with the majority of spend planned for 2026/27. Two other areas of underspend are Public Health Intelligence, where setting up of the health impact evaluation unit has been taken longer than anticipated, and in the Research Budget with the Research Incubator Fund being implemented at the start of 2026/27.

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#### Communities

63. Libraries & Heritage broke even against a budget of £8.9m.

#### Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

64. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety overspent by £0.5m against a budget of £32.6m.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year-end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Fire & Rescue	£30.7m	£31.4m	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m
Emergency Planning	£0.3m	£0.3m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Trading Standards	£1.5m	£1.4m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
<b>Total Fire &amp; Rescue and Community Safety</b>	<b>£32.6m</b>	<b>£33.1m</b>	<b>£0.5m</b>	<b>£0.6m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>

65. Fire and Rescue overspent by £0.7m mainly due to a combination of higher demand for On-Call firefighters, full-time firefighters' sickness, ill-health and cover, and increased water costs. This is partially offset by vacancy management in Trading Standards.

66. On 15 May 2025, a major fire in Bicester resulted in the tragic deaths of two firefighters and one member of the public. Investigations remain ongoing. Currently a pre-inquest review (PIR) is scheduled for later in 2026. The full inquest hearing has not yet been scheduled, pending completion of the PIR and receipt of all required evidence. A supplementary estimate of £0.5m to support the costs associated with the Bicester Motion investigation in 2025/26 was agreed by Cabinet in March 2026. Further costs will be incurred in 2026/27.

#### Resources and Law & Governance

67. Resources and Law & Governance underspent by £0.9m against a budget of £72.0m.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year-end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
HR & Cultural Change	£5.6m	£5.6m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.1m
Financial & Commercial Services	£12.4m	£11.4m	-£1.0m	-£1.3m	£0.3m
Property & Assets	£21.7m	£21.5m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	-£0.2m
Corporate Services	£0.9m	£0.8m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	£5.9m	£5.8m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m
Law & Governance	£11.1m	£11.8m	£0.7m	£1.2m	£0.4m
Technology & Customer Experience	£14.3m	£14.1m	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m
<b>Total Resources and Law &amp; Governance</b>	<b>£72.0m</b>	<b>£71.1m</b>	<b>-£0.9m</b>	<b>-£0.5m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>

Note: all numbers in all tables have been rounded - which may cause a casting difference

68. Financial & Commercial Services underspent by £1.0m, mainly due to the impact of the service redesign on planned investments.
69. Property & Assets underspent by £0.2m due to lower utilities costs.
70. Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships underspent by £0.1m.
71. Law & Governance overspent by £0.7m. This reflects continued recruitment challenges within Legal Services, leading to higher locum, counsel and external legal costs, and a £0.3m increase in the annual hospital mortuary contract within the Coroner's Service following contract renewal after 30 years.
72. Technology & Customer Experience underspent by £0.2m due to vacancies within Customer Experience.

### Corporate Savings

73. £2.1m savings relating to organisational redesign and £2.6m related to contract and third - party savings were undelivered in 2025/26. To date a further £0.8m contract savings have been achieved in 2026/27 and on-going action is being taken to ensure that these are delivered.

	Target before distribution	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year end Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change
Organisational Redesign Savings	-£3.0m	-£2.1m	£0.0m	£2.1m	£2.0m	£0.0m
Contract & Third-Party Savings	-£5.0m	-£2.6m	£0.0m	£2.6m	£2.6m	£0.0m
Commercial Savings	-£1.0m	-£0.8m	£0.0m	£0.8m	£0.8m	£0.0m
IT Savings	-£0.7m	-£0.7m	-£0.7m <sup>2</sup>	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Voluntary Community Sector Savings	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.0m
<b>Total Corporate Savings</b>	<b>-£9.9m</b>	<b>-£6.4m</b>	<b>-£0.7m</b>	<b>£5.7m</b>	<b>£5.6m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>

Note: all numbers in all tables have been rounded - which may cause a casting difference

74. The initial cross-cutting savings target set as part of the 2025/26 budget was £7.9m. This was subsequently increased by £2.0m, comprising £1.3m relating to the non-delivery of 2024/25 organisational redesign savings and £0.7m of IT savings. As mitigating savings options have been identified and implemented, the associated budget reduction has been allocated to the relevant service areas in line with delivery responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Met from reserves on a one – off basis in 2025/26.

## Budgets Held Centrally

75. The final position for budgets and funding held centrally was:

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>					
Capital Financing	£31.3m	£30.4m	-£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m
Interest on Balances	-£13.7m	-£23.4m	-£9.6m	-£7.5m	£2.1m
Pay Inflation and Strategic Measures	£5.3m	-£0.0m	-£5.2m	-£3.5m	£1.7m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-£59.5m	-£59.7m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Insurance	£1.8m	£1.8m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Position before reserve contributions	-£34.9m	-£50.8m	-£15.9m	-£11.0m	£4.9m
Contingency	£7.3m	£0.0m	-£7.3m	-£7.2m	£0.0m
Contributions to/from reserves and general balances	£10.2m	£24.8m	£14.6m	£4.5m	-£10.1m
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>-£17.5m</b>	<b>-£26.0m</b>	<b>-£8.6m</b>	<b>-£13.7m</b>	<b>-£5.2m</b>

### Capital Financing Costs

76. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either:

- recharged to service areas because certain scheme will provide the service area savings and long terms direct benefits or
- met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs.

These recharges were in line with the budget.

77. Interest payable was £13.0m, which was £1.2m below budget. This reflects the capital outturn position, with a lower-than-expected requirement to fund capital projects through borrowing.

78. The residual movement is due to £0.1m increased charges against developer contributions either interest on the holding balance offset with project management costs, and £0.1m budgeted reserves charges slightly above budget.

### Interest on Balances

79. Interest receivable was £23.4m, £9.6m above the budget. This was a result of higher than forecast cash balances coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates.

80. Cash balances for the year were £149.2m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of the High Needs DSG deficit. The impact of this was an opportunity cost of c£6.0m in unearned interest during 2025/26.

### Pay Inflation

81. £5.3m of the £12.1m pay inflation budget was transferred to services to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation and National Insurance uplifts in 2025/26 following the agreement of the Green, Gold & Grey Books, and Soulbury & Councillor pay

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increases. There was an underspend of £5.3m against the remaining pay inflation budget. The on-going budget not needed to fund pay inflation in 2025/26 will be used meet the cost of pay inflation in 2026/27.

#### Contingency

82. The underspend against the £7.2m contingency budget, which is held to mitigate increases in demand and/or unachieved savings has been used to manage part of the service overspend.

#### Earmarked Reserves and General Balances

83. Movement on earmarked reserves and general fund movements are explained within the Reserves section and Appendix 4. These are a mix of movements agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget or during the financial year, contributions from general balances to fund supplementary estimates agreed during the year and the proposed £8.0m contribution to the High Needs DSG Reserve.

#### Funding

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
Council Tax Requirement	£533.6m	£533.6m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Council Tax Surpluses	£9.2m	£9.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Care Leavers Discount	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Business Rates Top-Up Grant	£42.7m	£42.7m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Revenue Support Grant	£2.5m	£2.5m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Business Rate Local Share	£40.1m	£40.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m	-£0.7m
Section 31 Grant	£20.4m	£20.7m	£0.3m	£0.0m	-£0.3m
<b>Total Central Funding</b>	<b>£648.4m</b>	<b>£649.4m</b>	<b>£1.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>-£1.0m</b>

84. The business rates local share includes estimated gains from the North Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool. These gains remain provisional until NNDR3 returns are completed by the Districts and City and confirmed by MHCLG. For 2024/25, the estimated gain was £0.8m; however, MHCLG confirmed the final position in February 2026 at £0.7m. The 2025/26 estimate is based on Quarter 3 data and will not be confirmed until late February 2027. Due to the complexity and uncertainty of the calculations, the pooling gain was not built into the budget.

85. In March 2026, a £0.3m Section 31 business rates relief grant was received in respect of Storm Henk. This increased funding has been held in the Collection Fund reserve pending a future decision about its use.

## Combined Service and Central Budgets & Expenditure

86. Net expenditure by the council's services compared to the final budget and the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2026 is summarised below. At the end of 2025/26 there was an overall overspend of £0.1m.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
<b>Service Areas Total</b>	<b>£665.9m</b>	<b>£675.6m</b>	<b>£9.7m</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>£14.1m</b>	<b>£4.4m</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	£31.3m	£30.4m	-£0.9m	-2.9%	£0.0m	£0.9m
Interest on Balances	-£13.7m	-£23.4m	-£9.6m	70.2%	-£7.5m	£2.1m
Contingency	£7.3m	-£0.0m	-£7.3m		-£7.2m	£0.1m
Pay Inflation and Strategic Measures	£5.3m	£0.0m	-£5.2m		-£3.5m	£1.7m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-£59.5m	-£59.7m	-£0.1m	0.2%	£0.0m	£0.1m
Insurance	£1.8m	£1.8m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Contributions to reserves	£10.2m	£24.8m	£14.6m	143.5%	£4.5m	-£10.1m
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>-£17.5m</b>	<b>-£26.0m</b>	<b>-£8.6m</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>-£13.7m</b>	<b>-£5.2m</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>£648.4m</b>	<b>£649.5m</b>	<b>£1.1m</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>£0.4m</b>	<b>-£0.7m</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-£648.4m	-£649.4m	-£1.0m	0.2%	£0.0m	£1.0m
<b>Actual Year End Position</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>		<b>£0.4m</b>	<b>£0.</b>

## Savings & Investments

87. During the year the presentation of savings and investments was adjusted to focus on the savings and investments that needed to be achieved in 2025/26 including £1.3m prior year re-organisation savings. Any adjustments relating to savings and investments that were time bound, and finished in 2024/25, were removed from the targets and realigned into net pressures (£1.8m reversal of savings, and £7.0m investments). Children's Services budget movements included a further on-going savings risk adjustment of £4.7m in 2025/26. This was treated as an offsetting negative saving so that the related savings could be tracked and monitored.

88. The achievement of savings against the £28.7m target is summarised below. £21.8m savings were delivered (76%) and £6.9m (24%) undelivered. Further details are available in Appendix 1B.

Service Areas	2025/26 Planned Savings	Actual delivery	Unachieved savings
Adult Services	£6.5m	£7.0m	£0.5m
Children's Services	£6.7m	£4.5m	-£2.2m
Environment & Highways	£2.9m	£2.9m	£0.0m
Economy and Place	£1.1m	£1.5m	£0.4m
Public Health & Communities	£0.8m	£0.8m	£0.0m
Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Resources and Law & Governance	£0.8m	£0.8m	-£0.0m
Corporate savings	£9.9m	£4.3m	-£5.7m
<b>Total savings</b>	<b>£28.7m</b>	<b>£21.8m</b>	<b>-£6.9m</b>

### Adult Services

89. The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £6.5m. £7.0m of savings were delivered, representing an overachievement of £0.5m. Within the total there was a mix of under and over achievement:

- Reviews of care packages, for service users with mental health needs, linked to health funding: **£0.7m shortfall** (not achieved).
- High-cost placements: **£0.8m overachievement**.
- Savings achieved through case reviews/management: **£0.4m overachievement**.

### Children's Services

90. The 2025/26 budget included savings of £11.4m, offset by a risk adjustment budget of £4.7m due to the ambitious scale of the original savings targets, to give net budgeted savings of £6.7m. Actual delivery of savings achieved in year was £4.5m. The resulting net unachieved savings total was £2.2m.

### Economy & Place

91. The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £1.1m. The service overachieved this total by £0.4m. Savings that have been fully delivered include:

- £0.4m Utilise Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to support spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26 (above target)
- £0.4m Manage various pressures associated with policy development under existing budget allocation (offsets pressure EP744)
- £0.3m Innovation Service (iHub): use contribution from reserve in 2024/25 and move to being self funding from 2025/26

92. The 2025/26 budget included planned service area investments of £14.5m<sup>3</sup>. £10.7m (74%) has been spent on planned programmes of work. £3.7m has been used to support service pressures. Notable variations are outlined below. Further details are available in Appendix 1B

	2025/26 Planned Investment	Actual delivery	Supporting service pressures
Adult Services	£0.9m	£0.0m	-£0.9m
Children's Services	£5.5m	£2.7m	-£2.8m
Environment & Highways	£2.0m	£2.0m	£0.0m
Economy & Place	£2.7m	£2.7m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	£0.3m	£0.3m	-£0.0m
Resources	£2.7m	£2.7m	£0.0m
Strategic Measures	£0.3m	£0.3m	£0.0m
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>£14.5m</b>	<b>£10.7m</b>	<b>-£3.7m</b>

<sup>3</sup> In February 2025, the investment programme included £7.3m of projects that had already been completed. Excluding these, the actual investments to be monitored was £14.2m. By June 2025, a further £1.5m of 2024/25 projects had been carried forward, partially offset by £1.2m of rail and flood investment rephased in March 2025, resulting in a total 2025/26 investment programme of £14.5m.

### **Adult Services**

93. Adult Services carried forward £1.0m investment from 2024/25, including the transfer of the Oxfordshire Way investment, funded from the Social Care Grant. £0.1m has been committed for further digital innovation in 2026/27, and the remaining £0.9m is supporting the service's overall financial position.

### **Children's Services**

94. The 2025/26 budget included investments of £5.5m. Actual spend was £2.7m. The total planned underspend against investments was £2.8m, due to prudent budget management of the overall budget, savings delivery risk and the demand-led challenges within placement budgets.

95. Underspends against investments offset the balance of unachieved 2025/26 savings, as well as prior-year unachieved savings which have been permanently addressed as part of the 2026/27 budget.

96. Planned underspends against investments in 2025/26 included:

- £1.0m Investment in developing services to support under 5 years olds. Wholly used to support service area pressures.
- £0.5m New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy) Recruitment & Retention Strategy. Wholly used to support service area pressures.
- £2.0m On-going funding for Children's Prevention. £0.5m used to support service area pressures.
- Foster Care - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25. £0.4m used to support service area pressures.

## **Summary of 2025/26 Budget Changes**

97. Appendix 2 provides a record of where service area budgets have moved since the 2025/26 budget was agreed by Council in February 2025. This mainly reflects the agreement of the 2025/26 pay awards, grant changes, plus service area updates and realignments. Service realignments have also been reflected along with the aggregation cross cutting savings. All other virements are below £1m and have received delegated approval in accordance with the Virement Rules for 2025/26.

98. In March 2026 the following supplementary estimate requests were approved (that increased the budget on a one – off basis funded by general balances):

- £0.5m Bicester Motion fire incident investigation costs
- £0.9m County Council elections in May 2025
- Funding for the £2.2m deficit balance relating to Woodeaton Manor Special School which converted to academy status on 1 October 2025 in accordance with Section 4.3.4 of the Financial Regulations.

## Debt Management

### Corporate Debtors

99. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 97% in March 2026, and on target at 97% for the year. The 120-day collection rate based on invoice value for the year was 92%.
100. The target level for debt requiring impairment at the end of 2025/26 was £0.5m; the final position was £1.4m, £0.9m above target. A change to the impairment approach was agreed and introduced as part of the year end processes, leading to a higher than forecast year end position.
101. 185 debtor write-offs were processed in 2025/26 with a combined value of £0.19m or 0.01% of the value of invoices raised in the same period. A further two cost centre write-offs were processed with a value of £4,000 and 39 historic vendor account balances were written off with a value of £5,300.

### Adult Social Care Contribution Debtors

102. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 94% in March 2025 and for the year. This met the increased collection rate target.
103. The final balance of adult social care contribution debt requiring impairment was £4.03m, £0.48m less than the carried forward balance of £4.51m.
104. There were 291 Adult Social care write-offs processed this year with a value of £0.989m. This equates to 1.8% of the value of invoices raised (£54.5m) and 0.8% above target.

## Revenue Earmarked Reserves

105. On 1 April 2025 one – off funding held in earmarked reserves totalled £254.3m. As set out in Appendix 4 this increased to £289.0m as at 31 March 2026. The increase includes budgeted net contributions to/from reserves totalling £11.9m agreed in February 2025, plus other net changes during the year, from service areas and budgets held centrally, which increased reserves by £22.8m.
106. The DSG reserve held a deficit balance of £92.5m on 1 April 2025. The net deficit added to the reserve in 2025/26 was £56.8m. After taking this into account, the closing deficit balance was £149.3m at 31 March 2026.
107. Reserves held by the council, including planned contributions agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget and other changes during the year, are summarised into the following categories in the table below. The funding is held for specific agreed purposes and will be used to support revenue expenditure, including the council's Delivering the Future Together programme, or to fund capital expenditure. Where relevant, the below totals incorporate the service reserves noted earlier in the report. The planned use of all reserves will be reviewed in 2026/27.
- Revenue Grants Unapplied – these are specific grants received from 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.

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- Corporate Priorities – one – off funding to support and deliver the council's priorities. Examples include the Budget Priorities and Transformation reserves.
- Funding for Risk – funding held to mitigate future financial and service risks. Examples include the Insurance and Collection Fund reserves.
- Capital & Equipment – funding for the council's capital programme and the replacement of equipment and vehicles.
- Other Reserves – funding held for other specific purposes including the On-Street Parking Reserve.
- Unusable Reserves – surpluses and deficits held on behalf of Local Education Authority maintained schools.

Reserves	Balance at 31 March		Balance at 31 March 2026
	2025	Movement	
Revenue Grants Unapplied	£40.7m	-£10.2m	£30.4m
Corporate Priorities	£34.2m	£7.9m	£42.1m
Funding for Risk	£48.6m	£20.9m	£69.5m
Capital & Equipment	£113.0m	£16.5m	£129.4m
Other reserves	£7.1m	-£1.7m	£5.4m
Schools' reserves	£10.7m	£1.4m	£12.2m
<b>Total Earmarked reserves</b>	<b>£254.3m</b>	<b>£34.7m</b>	<b>£289.0m</b>
DSG reserves	-£92.5m	-£56.8m	-£149.3m
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>£161.9m</b>	<b>-£22.1m</b>	<b>£139.7m</b>

Note: the figures in all tables have been rounded - this may mean the overall totals vary slightly to the sum of the figures included in them.

#### **High Risk DSG Deficit reserve (Previously Demographic Risk reserve)**

108. Held to mitigate the impact of the High Needs DSG Deficit on the council. It is proposed to add a further £8.0m to the reserve in 2025/26 ahead of the approval of the SEND Reform Plan. The balance held in the reserve will be considered as part of the budget for 2027/28.

#### **Parking Account**

109. On-Street Car Parking Reserve: Expenditure and income relating to parking is required to be transacted through the Parking Account. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Cabinet is required to approve that any surplus from the Parking Account can be carried forward to support infrastructure and maintenance in future years. After taking into account net income of £3.4m, a subsidy of the Park and Ride ticket offer of £0.7m to compensate for the Congestion Charge has been applied, and a £4.6m contribution to the revenue budget and £0.6m contribution to the capital budget has been made from the reserve as planned. This contribution is primarily to be held for the benefit of the Highways Infrastructure and Parking Account to fund future drawdowns.

#### **Congestion Charge reserve**

110. £1.4m Congestion Charge Reserve held to support Transport Infrastructure initiatives. Cabinet is requested to approve the establishment of a reserve to support the ongoing operation of the scheme as well as investments set out in the report to Cabinet in May 2026.

### Budget Priorities Reserve

111. This reserve is to fund the priorities of the Council. As at 31 March 2026, £11.6m was held in the reserve with a net reduction of -£0.9m during the year. The total held includes the remaining amounts for the investments in flooding and rail agreed in February 2025, that will be utilised as planned in 2026/27. There is also unspent funding for the Councillor Priority Fund and funding for expenditure related to joint use agreements.
112. Funding held for Children’s Services mainly relates to Social Care. A contribution of £0.8m in 2025/26 will be used to mitigate any emerging issues in volumes and prices or other risks in 2026/27.

### DSG Reserve

113. Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023, requires a deficit on the Dedicated School’s Grant to be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought and received from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general council resources.
114. The total deficit transferred to the DSG reserve at the end of 2025/26 was £55.0m and increased the closing deficit balance to £135.3m as at 31 March 2026. This incorporates an overspend of £56.8m on High Needs, offset by £2.2m underspend on Early Years, and other minor adjustments.

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
High Needs block	-£92.5m	-£56.8m	-£149.3m
Central services block	-£0.1m	-£0.2m	-£0.3m
Early Years block	£7.4m	£2.2m	£9.6m
Growth Fund	£4.4m	-£0.2m	£4.2m
School block	£0.4m	£0.0m	£0.4m
DSG & School Forum	£0.1m	-£0.0m	£0.1m
<b>DSG Net Deficit reserve</b>	<b>-£80.3m</b>	<b>-£55.0m</b>	<b>-£135.3m</b>

115. Within the overall total, which also includes positive balances held for Early Years and other purposes, the total unusable High Needs deficit has increased from £92.5m at 1 April 2025 to £149.3m at 31 March 2026.
116. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No 1212), made by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), require DSG deficits to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities’ accounts.
117. As part of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27, published on 9 February 2026, the Government set out that they will:  
“resolve 90% of local authorities’ DSG High Needs deficits accrued to the end of 2025/26”.
118. All local authorities with a SEND deficit will be eligible to receive grant funding

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subject to submitting and securing the Department for Education's (DfE) approval of a local SEND reform plan. Phase one of the support will address historic deficits up to the end of 2025/26. In 2026/27 all local authorities with a SEND Deficit will be eligible to receive a High Needs Stability Grant (HNSG) covering 90% of their DSG deficit accrued up until March 2026.

## General Balances

119. As at 31 March 2025 General Balances totalled £45.3m. During 2025/26, and as agreed in February 2025, budgeted contributions totalling £10.8m were made to the Transformation and Redundancy Reserves, alongside £0.7m to support Innovate and Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) revenue costs in 2025/26.
120. During 2025/26, General Balances increased by £1.5m reflecting planned contributions and excess grant funding, partially offset by a £0.1m overspend. Approved calls on general balances were made in respect of supplementary estimates for Woodeaton Manor (£2.2m), Bicester Motion (£0.5m) and election costs (£0.9m), totaling £3.6m. A summary of the movements is included at Appendix 4D
121. After taking account of these movements, General Balances were £34.3m at 31 March 2026. This is £1.6m above the risk-assessed minimum level of £32.7m required for 2026/27, indicating that balances remain adequate to meet assessed financial risks.

## Annex D

## Business Management &amp; Monitoring Report March 2026

## Appendix 1A - Service Area Actual Spend and Variances

Service	Director	Net Budget	Actual Spend	Actual Variance	Last Reported (period 10)	Change
Adult Social Care	K Fuller	£37.4m	£37.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	-£0.2m
Pooled Budgets (Adults Social Care and	K Fuller	£222.5m	£225.6m	£3.2m	£7.5m	£4.3m
<b>Adult Services</b>		<b>£259.9m</b>	<b>£262.8m</b>	<b>£3.0m</b>	<b>£7.5m</b>	<b>£4.1m</b>
Education Services	L Lyons	£59.5m	£59.5m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.1m
Children's Social Care	L Lyons	£137.8m	£140.5m	£2.6m	£2.0m	-£0.6m
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Improvement	L Lyons	£6.6m	£5.0m	-£1.6m	-£1.1m	£0.5m
Children's Services Central Costs	L Lyons	£12.4m	£11.4m	-£1.0m	-£0.9m	£0.1m
Schools	L Lyons	£0.2m	£0.2m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Adopt Thames Valley		£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
<b>Children's Services</b>		<b>£216.6m</b>	<b>£216.5m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>
Public Health	A Azhar	£42.2m	£41.4m	-£0.8m	-£0.9m	-£0.1m
Public Health Grant Income & Reserves	A Azhar	-£37.1m	-£36.3m	£0.8m	£0.9m	£0.1m
Libraries & Heritage	A Azhar	£8.9m	£8.9m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Communities</b>		<b>£14.1m</b>	<b>£14.0m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>
Transport & Property Infrastructure	P Fermer	£1.8m	£1.0m	-£0.8m	-£0.3m	£0.5m
Countryside & Waste	P Fermer	£37.4m	£36.8m	-£0.6m	£0.0m	£0.6m
Highways & Maintenance	P Fermer	£20.2m	£22.1m	£1.9m	£0.1m	-£1.8m
Network Management	P Fermer	-£5.2m	-£5.2m	£0.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m
E&H Central Costs	P Fermer	£1.2m	£1.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
<b>Total Environment &amp; Highways</b>		<b>£55.3m</b>	<b>£55.9m</b>	<b>£0.6m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>
Place Shaping & Future Economy	R Rogers	£18.4m	£19.6m	£1.2m	£0.2m	-£1.0m
Climate Action	R Rogers	£1.3m	£1.0m	-£0.3m	-£0.1m	£0.2m
Innovate & Enterprise Oxfordshire	R Rogers	£0.5m	£0.6m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
E&P Central Costs	R Rogers	£1.6m	£1.5m	-£0.0m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m
<b>Total Economy &amp; Place</b>		<b>£21.8m</b>	<b>£22.7m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>-£0.0m</b>	<b>-£0.9m</b>
Fire & Rescue	R MacDougall	£30.7m	£31.4m	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m
Emergency Planning	R MacDougall	£0.3m	£0.3m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Trading Standards	R MacDougall	£1.5m	£1.4m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
<b>Total Fire &amp; Rescue and Community</b>		<b>£32.6m</b>	<b>£33.1m</b>	<b>£0.5m</b>	<b>£0.6m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>
HR & Cultural Change	C Cuthbertson	£5.6m	£5.6m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m
Financial & Commercial Services	I Dyson	£12.4m	£11.4m	-£1.0m	-£1.3m	-£0.3m
Property & Assets	V Kurzeja	£21.7m	£21.5m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	S Wintersgill	£6.2m	£6.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Law & Governance	A Bradley	£11.1m	£11.8m	£0.7m	£1.2m	£0.4m
Corporate Services	L Baxter	£0.9m	£0.8m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
Technology & Customer Experience	L Tustian	£14.3m	£14.0m	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m
<b>Total Resources and Law &amp; Governance</b>		<b>£72.0m</b>	<b>£71.1m</b>	<b>-£0.9m</b>	<b>-£0.5m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>
Corporate Savings	L Baxter	-£6.4m	-£0.7m	£5.7m	£5.6m	-£0.1m
<b>Service Areas position</b>		<b>£665.9m</b>	<b>£675.6m</b>	<b>£9.7m</b>	<b>£14.1m</b>	<b>£4.0m</b>
Budgets held centrally	L Baxter	-£17.5m	-£26.0m	-£8.6m	-£13.7m	-£5.2m
Corporate Funding	L Baxter	-£648.4m	-£649.4m	-£1.0m	£0.0m	£1.0m
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>	<b>£0.1m</b>	<b>£0.4m</b>	<b>-£0.3m</b>

## Appendix 1B - Savings & Investments

### Savings

#### Adult Services

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £6.5m. Savings that have been fully delivered or overachieved include:

- £4.2m Review of system contributions from the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board to fund mental health aftercare services, aftercare in mental health services for people with physical disability. Fully achieved.
- £0.9m Reviews of care packages for service users with mental health needs linked to health funding. Underachievement of £0.7m.
- £0.3m Home First Discharge to Assess programme. Fully achieved.
- £0.2m High Cost placement reviews. Overachievement of £0.8m.
- £0.4m Savings achieved through case reviews/management. Overachievement of £0.4m.

#### Children's Services

The 2025/26 budget included savings of £11.4m, offset by a risk adjustment budget of £4.7m reflecting the scale of the original savings target. The net budgeted saving was £6.7m. Actual delivery of savings achieved in year was £4.5m. The resulting net unachieved savings total was £2.2m.

#### Environment & Highways

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £2.9m. These have been fully delivered as follows:

- £1.5m Reduction in streetlighting energy usage as a result of LED lamp replacement investment (previously a pressure under Ref 24EP1)
- £0.5m Drawdown from commuted sums to support previous year's growth in highway maintenance services
- £0.3m Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) income (see 2025L&CO11)

#### Economy & Place

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £1.1m. The service overachieved this total by £0.4m. Savings that have been fully delivered include:

- £0.4m Utilise Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to support spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26 (above target)
- £0.4m Manage various pressures associated with policy development under existing budget allocation (offsets pressure EP744)
- £0.3m Innovation Service (iHub): use contribution from reserve in 2024/25 and move to being self funding from 2025/26

### Public Health & Communities

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £0.8m. This has been fully delivered. Key savings that have been fully delivered include:

- £0.250m Utilisation of Public Health Grant to support Family Solutions Plus
- £0.250m Utilisation of Public Health Grant to help fund Community Capacity Grants
- £0.200m Utilisation of government grant to fund domestic abuse services means £0.200m of council funding was be released on a one - off basis in 2025/26.

### Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £0.030m.

- £0.030m Implementation of interim measures to improve fire engine availability and response times. Reprioritising fire cover by geographical area (rather than total numbers) will reduce the need for additional hours payments.

### Resources

The 2025/26 budget included planned savings of £0.8m. This has been fully delivered. Savings that have been fully delivered include:

- £0.6m Estates - Abbey House rent & service charge
- £0.250m A review has identified a number of opportunities to improve ways of working, with a particular need to focus on confirming and clarifying corporate landlord responsibilities

## **Investments**

### Adult Services

£1.0m of investments were carried forward from 2024/25. An investment relating to the development of the Oxfordshire Way, funded from the Social Care Grant in 2024/25, was originally included in the budget for to Transformation, Development and Customer Services. This was moved to Adult Services in 2025/26. Of the total, £0.1m has been committed for further digital innovation in 2026/27, with the remaining £0.9m supporting the service's overall financial position in 2025/26.

### Children's Services

The 2025/26 budget included investments of £5.5m. Actual spend against investments was £2.7m. The total planned underspend against investments was £2.8m, due to prudent budget management of the overall budget, savings delivery risk and the demand-led challenges within placement budgets.

Underspends against investments offset the balance of unachieved 2025/26 savings,

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### Business Management & Monitoring Report March 2026

as well as prior-year unachieved savings which have been permanently addressed as part of the 2026/27 budget.

Notable and planned underspends against investments in 2025/26 included:

- £1.0m Investment in developing services to support under 5 years olds. Wholly used to support service area pressures.
- £0.5m New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy) Recruitment & Retention Strategy. Wholly used to support service area pressures.
- £2.0m On-going funding for Children's Prevention. £0.5m used to support service area pressures.
- Foster Care - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25. £0.4m used to support service area pressures.

### Environment & Highways

The 2025/26 budget included investments of £2.0m that were all delivered.

Investments that have been delivered include:

- £1.5m for annual emptying of highway gullies.
- £0.4m Park & Ride Joint Ticket support before the Congestion charge implementation.

### Economy and Place

Planned investments of £2.0m have been delivered as follows:

- £1.8m Investment in a flooding emergency fund and to leverage investment in rail including supporting active travel access.
- £0.25m Seed funding for supporting pilot Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus services, building on business case developed through 2025L&CO14.

### Resources and Law & Governance

The 2025/26 budget included planned investments of £2.7m. All of these have been delivered:

- £0.8m Continuation of the Councillor Priority Fund for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The fund enables councillors to support local projects in their communities.
- £0.8m Investment in Revised Data Team Structure.
- £0.75m This investment is to increase the capacity in the Procurement Service.

## Appendix 2 - Summary of 2025/26 Service Area budgets from the Budget Book to Year End

Budgeted		Original Budget (Council Feb 2025)	From Feb – May 2025	Jun – Aug	Sept - Nov	Dec - Jan	Feb - Mar	Movements	Reported Budget
Adult Services	AS	£254.6m	£-1.3m	£6.8m	£-0.3m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£5.3m	£259.9m
Children's Services	CS	£216.8m	£-6.0m	£1.7m	£1.9m	£0.4m	£1.7m	£-0.2m	£216.6m
Public Health & Communities	PH	£12.9m	£0.6m	£0.1m	£0.3m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£1.2m	£14.1m
Environment & Highways	E&H	£53.1m	£-0.3m	£1.7m	£0.5m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£2.2m	£55.3m
Economy and Place	E&P	£20.9m	£0.1m	£0.3m	£0.5m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£21.8m
Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	FRS	£31.0m	£-0.5m	£0.5m	£1.1m	£0.0m	£0.5m	£1.6m	£32.6m
Resources and Law & Governance	RLG	£64.9m	£-3.9m	£-7.5m	£3.6m	£7.2m	£1.2m	£0.8m	£65.7m
Transformation, Digital & Customer	TDCE	£3.8m	£3.4m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£-7.2m	£0.0m	£-3.8m	£0.0m
<b>Total service areas</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>£658.0m</b>	<b>£-7.9m</b>	<b>£3.7m</b>	<b>£8.0m</b>	<b>£0.5m</b>	<b>£3.6m</b>	<b>£7.9m</b>	<b>£665.9m</b>
Budgets held centrally	BC	£-11.7m	£7.9m	£-1.6m	£-8.0m	£-0.5m	£-3.6m	£-5.8m	£-17.5m
Corporate Funding		£-646.3m	£0.0m	£-2.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£-2.2m	£-648.4m
<b>Overall</b>		<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>

Further details of specific virements are available on request

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	AS	CS	E&H	E&P	PH	FRS	RLG	TDCE	SA	SM	Total
<b>Pay Virement</b>											
Pay inflation remove initial estimate and await agreement	£-0.9m	£-1.9m	£-0.3m	£-0.3m	£0.0m	£-1.0m	£-1.2m	£-0.1m	£-5.7m	£5.7m	£0.0m
Reverse NI Estimate	£-0.8m	£-1.2m	£-0.4m	£0.0m	£-0.1m	£-0.5m	£-0.8m	£-0.1m	£-3.9m	£3.9m	£0.0m
NI Uplift	£0.9m	£1.1m	£0.3m	£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.1m	£0.9m	£0.1m	£3.8m	£-3.8m	£0.0m
NI uplifts Social Care	£3.5m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£3.5m	£-3.5m	£0.0m
Grey Book Pay award	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.7m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.7m	£-0.7m	£0.0m
Soulbury Pay award	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£-0.0m	£0.0m
Gold Book Pay Award	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£-0.0m	£0.0m
Green Book Pay Award	£1.4m	£2.4m	£0.5m	£0.4m	£0.3m	£0.2m	£2.0m	£0.0m	£7.3m	£-7.3m	£0.0m
Member Allowance increase due to election	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£-0.2m	£0.0m
On-call Firefighters T&C changes staff retainer scheme	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.9m	£-0.9m	£0.0m
	AS	CS	E&H	E&P	PH	FRS	RLG	TDCE	SA	SM	Total

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**Responsibilities alignment to current structure**

Realignment of Budget holders	-£0.0m	£0.8m	-£0.1m	£0.4m	£0.1m	£0.0m	-£3.1m	£1.9m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m
Clarification of responsibilities	-£0.1m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.6m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m
Transfer Tree budget from Property to Highways £207k	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Align Savings to correct cost centres	-£0.4m	-£0.3m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.6m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Senior Leadership restructure	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£7.2m	-£7.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Identification of contract savings	£0.0m	-£0.4m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.4m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Realignment of Home to School Transport	£0.0m	-£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m

**Saving & Investment updates**

Distribution of 2024/25 Reorganisation savings	-£0.1m	-£0.9m	-£0.3m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.3m	£1.5m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Corp IT Savings to Transformation Reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
2024/25 Investments carry forward	£0.5m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.5m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£1.1m	-£1.1m	£0.0m
Cross cutting saving consolidation	£1.3m	£1.3m	£2.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.5m	-£5.3m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m

**Other adjustments**

Accumulation of small adjustments	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m
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**Funding updates**

Update Government Grant Funding	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m
Removing unringfenced grant treatment to align to new Children's grants	£0.0m	-£3.6m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£3.6m	£3.6m	£0.0m
Removal of the Fire funding	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m
Drawdown of Reserves	£0.0m	£0.4m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.4m	-£0.4m	£0.0m
Update on Corporate Funding	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Supplementary Estimate	£0.0m	£2.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.5m	£0.9m	£0.0m	£3.6m	-£3.6m	£0.0m
<b>Total Movements</b>	<b>£5.2m</b>	<b>-£0.2m</b>	<b>£2.2m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>£1.2m</b>	<b>£1.6m</b>	<b>£0.8m</b>	<b>-£3.8m</b>	<b>£7.9m</b>	<b>-£7.9m</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>

## Appendix 3 - Government Grants and Business Rates Funding

Service Areas			Budget Book 2025/26	Updates from Grant letters	Timing transfers	Actual Allocation	Change in grants
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
R	DHSC	Improved Better Care Fund	13,207	13,207		13,207	0
R	DHSC	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	10,026	10,026		10,026	-1
R	DHSC	South East Association of Directors of Adult Social Services grant **			2,087	2,087	2,087
R	DHSC	Apprenticeship Fund			-60	-60	-60
R	DHSC	Local Supported Employment (LSE) Grant			126	126	126
R	DHSC	Connect to work DWP Grant			352	352	352
<b>Adult Services</b>			<b>23,233</b>	<b>23,232</b>	<b>2,505</b>	<b>25,737</b>	<b>2,504</b>
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	128,827	128,827		128,827	0
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	5,821	5,779	0	5,779	-42
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years	108,620	116,481	-429	116,052	7,433
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs	98,158	96,653	0	96,653	-1,505
<b>Subtotal DSG Grants</b>			<b>341,426</b>	<b>347,740</b>	<b>-429</b>	<b>347,311</b>	<b>5,886</b>
R	DfE	Pupil Premium	8,194	7,523	118	7,641	-553
R	DfE	Core Schools Budget grant (CSBG)	0	6,259		6,259	6,259
R	DfE	Universal Infant Free School Meals	4,047	3,777		3,777	-270
R	DfE	National Insurance contributions (NICs) Grant		2,666		2,666	2,666
R	DfE	PE and Sport Grant	2,217	1,813		1,813	-404
R	DfE	Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	371	434		434	63
R	DfE	Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG)		1,325		1,325	1,325
R	DfE	Early Career Framework - Off Timetable		110		110	110
R	DfE	Early Career Framework - Mentor		42		42	42
R	DfE	ITT (Initial Teacher Training) Mentoring		37		37	37
R	DfE	Teacher's Pension Grant	10	25		25	14
R	DfE	Breakfast Club		23		23	23
R	DfE	Post 16 Schools Budget Grant		4		4	4
<b>Subtotal School Grants</b>			<b>14,839</b>	<b>24,040</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>24,158</b>	<b>9,319</b>

R – Ringfenced grants

DfE Department for Education

MHCLG Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

DHSC Department of Health & Social Care

\*\* - The grants is distributed to other authorities in the South East

Annex D  
Business Management & Monitoring Report March 2026

Service Areas			Budget Book 2025/26 £000	Updates from Grant letters £000	Timing transfers £000	Actual Allocation £000	Change in grants £000
R	AC	Music Service	844	844	70	914	70
R	DfE	Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker		164		164	164
R	YJB	Youth Justice Grant	713	725		725	12
R	HO	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	4,636	5,806	515	6,321	1,684
R	YJB	Remand Framework	71	68		68	-3
R	DWP	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	0	29		29	29
R	HO	Afghan & Hong Kong Support		408		408	408
R	DfE	Adoption Support Fund	0	1,124	816	1,940	1,940
R	DfE	Family Group Conferences	0	54	-12	42	42
R	YJB	Turnaround Programme	0	118	0	118	118
R	HO	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	0	44	0	44	44
R	MHCLG	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	0	1,530	128	1,658	1,658
R	MHCLG	Children & Families Grant	0	3,324	-10	3,314	3,314
R	DCMS	Local Youth transformation Grant	0	62	0	62	62
R	DfE	Best Start Family Hubs Development Grant	0	245	-7	238	238
R	DfE	SEND Intervention Support Fund Grant		1,533		1,533	1,533
R	DfE	Multiply			-212	-212	-212
R	DfE	Early Years Expansion Grant		200		200	200
R	DWP	Gaza Medevac	0	13	0	13	13
<b>Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants</b>			<b>6,264</b>	<b>17,847</b>	<b>1,288</b>	<b>19,135</b>	<b>12,871</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>			<b>362,529</b>	<b>389,627</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>390,604</b>	<b>28,075</b>
R	DHSC	<b>Public Health Grant</b>	<b>34,413</b>	<b>37,117</b>		<b>37,117</b>	<b>2,704</b>
R	DHSC	<b>Local Stop Smoking Grant</b>	<b>795</b>		<b>676</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>-119</b>
R	MHCLG	<b>Homes for Ukraine</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>1,561</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>1,561</b>
<b>Public Health &amp; Communities</b>			<b>35,208</b>	<b>37,117</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>39,353</b>	<b>4,145</b>
R	PackUK	<b>extended Producer Responsibility Grant</b>		<b>4,828</b>		<b>4,828</b>	<b>4,828</b>
R	DEFRA	<b>Local Nature recovery strategy grant</b>		<b>163</b>		<b>163</b>	<b>163</b>
R	DEFRA	<b>National Trails</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>277</b>
R	DCMS	<b>Historic England Grant</b>			<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>
R	Innovate UK	<b>Circular Economy</b>			<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
R	DEFRA	<b>DEFRA Duty to Consult Grant</b>			<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>
R	H&GD	<b>PMO</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>-58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-58</b>
<b>Environment &amp; Highways</b>			<b>284</b>	<b>5,275</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>5,629</b>	<b>5,345</b>
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government						
YJB	Youth Justice Board						
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities						
AC	Arts Council						
HO	Home Office						
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions						
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs						
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport						
H&GD	Department of Work & Pensions						

Annex D  
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Service Areas			Budget Book 2025/26	Updates from Grant letters	Timing transfers	Actual Allocation	Change in grants
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
R	DfT	Zero Emissions Transport City	0		-101	-101	-101
R	MHCLG	LEP	615	789		789	174
R	DEFRA	Lead Flood		119		119	119
R	DBT	Innovate UK	205	859		859	654
R	ATE	Capability & Ambition Fund	125	543		543	418
R	DfT	Future Economy	100	100		100	0
R	DfT	Local Transport grant		364		364	364
R	DfT	Active Travel & Electric Vehicle		275		275	275
R	DfT	Bus Service Improvement Plan	4,580	6,205		6,205	1,625
<b>Economy &amp; Place</b>			<b>5,625</b>	<b>9,254</b>	<b>-101</b>	<b>9,153</b>	<b>3,528</b>
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	1,061	1,014	-1	1,013	-48
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Admin Grant	75	0	-154	-154	-229
R	MHCLG	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	252	252	0	252	0
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	40	40	0	40	0
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue and Community Safety</b>			<b>1,428</b>	<b>1,306</b>	<b>-155</b>	<b>1,151</b>	<b>-277</b>
R	DWP	Household Support Fund	0	5,924	0	5,924	5,924
R	MHCLG	Local Audit Backstop New Burdens Payment	0	76	105	181	181
R	MHCLG	Local Govt Reorg Proposal Development Contributions	0	95	0	95	95
R	MHCLG	Cyber Security		15		15	15
R	DfT	Bus Reform			256	256	256
R	DfT	Bus Services operators Grant ( Fuel Duty & Comet)			420	420	420
<b>Resources and Law &amp; Governance</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>6,110</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>6,891</b>	<b>6,891</b>
U	MHCLG	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	48,596	48,648		48,648	52
U	MHCLG	Employers National Insurance compensation	4,428	4,428		4,428	0
U	OHID	Drug & Alcohol Treatment, Recovery & Improvement Grant	2,978	2,918		2,918	-60
U	MHCLG	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	1,482	1,482		1,482	0
U	MHCLG	New Homes Bonus	1,127	1,127		1,127	0
U	DfE	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	328	328		328	0
U	OHID	Individual Placement and Support in community drug and alcohol treatment	228	298		298	71
U	DfE	Social Care in Prisons Grant	183	211		211	28
U	DfE	War Pensions Disregard Grant	4	105		105	101
U	OHID	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	0	95		95	95
U	DfE	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	1,141			0	-1,141
U	MHCLG	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	1,530				-1,530
U	MHCLG	Grants transferred to another directorate or absorbed into RSG	282			0	-282
U	HO	Firelink	44			0	-44
U	MHCLG	Minor grants (Single use plastics, Trading Standards, etc)		29		29	29
<b>Strategic Measures</b>			<b>62,351</b>	<b>59,668</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,668</b>	<b>-2,683</b>

## Appendix 4 – Reserves & General Balances

### Appendix 4 A – Earmarked reserves

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
<b>Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>			
Grants and Contributions reserve	£30.3m	–£4.5m	£25.8m
Government Initiatives reserve	£6.6m	–£2.0m	£4.6m
COVID-19 reserve	£3.8m	–£3.8m	£0.0m
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£40.7m</b>	<b>–£10.2m</b>	<b>£30.4m</b>
<b>Corporate Priorities</b>			
Budget Priorities reserve	£12.5m	–£0.9m	£11.6m
Transformation reserve	£7.5m	£4.5m	£12.0m
Local Government Reorganisation reserve	£10.0m	–£0.8m	£9.2m
Strategic Waste reserve (2025/26 pEPR)	£0.0m	£4.8m	£4.8m
Commercial Pump Priming reserve	£2.0m	–£0.1m	£1.9m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.4m	£0.2m	£1.6m
Green Financing reserve	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£34.2m</b>	<b>£7.9m</b>	<b>£42.1m</b>
<b>Funding for Risk</b>			
Demographic Risk Reserve/ High Needs DSG Deficit Risk Reserve	£21.0m	£12.0m	£33.0m
Insurance reserve	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m
Redundancy reserve	£4.1m	£5.8m	£9.9m
Collection Fund Risk reserve	£8.1m	–£1.7m	£6.4m
Budget Reserve	£0.0m	£5.5m	£5.5m
IFRS 9 (Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m
Council Elections	£0.7m	–£0.7m	£0.0m
Trading Accounts	£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£48.6m</b>	<b>£20.9m</b>	<b>£69.5m</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Equipment</b>			
Capital & Prudential Borrowing reserves	£109.6m	£16.2m	£125.9m
Vehicle and Equipment reserve	£3.2m	£0.2m	£3.4m
Investment Pump Priming reserve	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£113.0m</b>	<b>£16.5m</b>	<b>£129.4m</b>
<b>Other reserves</b>			
Partnership reserves	£1.7m	–£0.5m	£1.2m
Congestion Charge Reserve	£0.0m	£1.4m	£1.4m
On Street Car Parking reserve	£5.3m	–£2.6m	£2.7m
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£7.1m</b>	<b>–£1.7m</b>	<b>£5.4m</b>
<b>Unusable</b>			
Schools' reserves	£10.7m	£1.4m	£12.2m
<b>Total Earmarked reserves</b>	<b>£254.3m</b>	<b>£34.7m</b>	<b>£289.0m</b>

## Grants and Contributions Reserve

This reserve holds underspends on ringfenced grant funding which need to be used in accordance with the relevant grant conditions in future years.

The net drawdown from this reserve in 2025/26 was £4.5m, reducing the total held to £25.8m.

<b>Grants and Contributions reserve by Service Area and significant reserves held by the service area:</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2026</b>
Adult Services	£0.5m	-£0.2m	£0.3m
Children's Services	£1.6m	£0.2m	£1.8m
Supported Accommodation Reform	£1.3m	-£0.2m	£1.1m
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children grant	£1.2m	-£1.1m	£0.1m
Public Health & Communities	£0.2m	£0.1m	£0.3m
Homes for Ukraine Grant	£8.6m	-£2.3m	£6.3m
Public Health Grant	£4.6m	£0.2m	£4.9m
Environment & Highways	£1.0m	£0.5m	£1.6m
Economy & Place	£0.5m	£0.1m	£0.6m
BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare	£4.9m	-£1.4m	£3.5m
Developer Contributions Revenue s38/278	£2.0m	-£0.7m	£1.3m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£0.5m	-£0.3m	£0.1m
Resources and Law & Governance	£0.3m	-£0.2m	£0.1m
Budget held centrally - Developer grants	£3.0m	£0.8m	£3.8m
<b>Grants and Contributions reserve</b>	<b>£30.3m</b>	<b>-£4.5m</b>	<b>£25.8m</b>

£6.3m grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme that has not been spent by the end of 2025/26 will be used to support the on-going costs of the scheme in Oxfordshire in 2026/27 and beyond.

£3.5m relates to the remaining balance of the BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare that was received in 2021/22 (held within Economy & Place). This will be used to fund future ICT related capital expenditure in accordance with the Gainshare agreement.

Developer contributions and grants (Economy & Place and Budget held centrally) are held to support the capital expenditure in accordance with the relevant agreement

## Government Initiatives Reserve

This reserve is used to hold underspends on service budgets funded by un-ringfenced grants so that the funding remains available for use to support the specified purpose of the grant in future years. The balance held in this reserve at the end of 2025/26 was £4.6m.

Funding held in the reserve at 31 March 2025 was:

- £2.2m for Children Services, mostly to support the provision of the

Wraparound Programme in future years and other social care and education grants.

- £1.4m Domestic abuse grant.
- £0.9m for the Innovation Hub within Economy & Place.

### COVID-19 Reserve

The balance held in the reserve at 31 March 2025 was £3.8m. As agreed in February 2025, the reserve balance planned use of the reserve of £2.3m in 2025/26. The remaining £1.4m was agreed to be transferred to the Transformation Reserve in 2025/26 as part of the 2025/26 budget. This reserve is now closed.

### Budget Priorities Reserve

This reserve is to fund the priorities of the Council. As at 31 March 2026, £11.6m was held in the reserve. The reserve has net movement of -£0.9m.

Budget Priorities reserve by Service Area and significant reserves held by the service area:	Balance at 31 March 2025	Contributions	Drawdowns	Balance at 31 March 2026
Adult Services	£6.0m		-£5.1m	£0.9m
Children's Services	£0.6m		-£0.1m	£0.5m
Education SEND Reserve	£0.0m	£0.8m		£0.8m
SEND Priority Action Plan, and Early Intervention	£0.4m	£0.6m		£1.1m
Economy & Place:				
Rephased Rail Investment to reflect programme		£0.7m		£0.7m
Rephased Flood Investment to reflect programme		£1.4m		£1.4m
Innovation - to be used in 2026/27		£0.4m		£0.4m
Resources and Law & Governance	£0.4m	-£0.2m		£0.2m
Leisure Centres Joint User Agreements Repair & Maintenance Reserves	£0.5m		-£0.1m	£0.4m
Councillors' Priority Fund to be used in 2026/27	£0.1m	£0.6m		£0.6m
Emergency Household Support Fund	£0.5m	£0.1m		£0.6m
Budgets held Centrally	£2.2m			£2.2m
Rural Active travel measures	£1.0m		£0.0m	£1.0m
Tree Planting revenue costs	£0.8m		£0.0m	£0.8m
<b>Budget Priorities reserve</b>	<b>£12.5m</b>	<b>£4.4m</b>	<b>-£5.3m</b>	<b>£11.6m</b>

The Budget Priorities reserve retains a number of specific allocations for Adults Services. The reserve started the year at £5.4m, increased, due to the transference of the Oxfordshire Way investment carry forward, to £6.0m and moved in year by £5.0m.

### Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution Reserve

In January 2025, Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold 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 held to £10.0m. In year drawdown to submit a proposal and for pre decision

due diligence to implement the Government's decision in June / July 2026 was £0.8m

### **Transformation Reserve**

The Transformation Reserve has been used to support the costs of the implementation of the council's transformation programme, Delivering the Future Together.

The opening position as at 1 April 2025 was £7.5m and the £4.5m movements on the reserve during the year were:

- £9.3m added as agreed in the 2025/26 budget to enable the priorities for the next phase of transformation to be delivered and to create a sustainable council for the future funding
- £2.7m spent on transformation projects
- £0.2m spent on Delivery Director
- £0.7m spent on IT
- £0.9m supported revenue budget approved in February 2024.

Consequently, the transformation reserve balance is £12.0m. Commitments and forecast expenditure will be outlined in the first monitoring update for 2026/27.

Other Corporate Priorities reserves are:

- **Strategic Waste reserve:** A new reserve was created as part of the 2025/26 budget to hold the 2025/26 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.
- **Commercial Pump Priming Reserve:** This reserve was created during 2024/25 to support the council's Commercial Strategy.

- **Zero Emissions Zone:** This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in future years. The funding is ringfenced in accordance with the Transport Act 2000. This requires that revenue generated by the scheme be used to cover the cost of the scheme's operation with the net proceeds to be applied to facilitate the achievement of the Council's local transport policies contained in its Local Transport Plan. £0.2m has been added to the Zero Emission Zone reserve in 2025/26. This funding is required to be shared with Oxford City Council.
- **Green Financing:** This reserve is available to support the Council's Green Financing projects.

Other Funding for risks reserves are:

- **Insurance reserves:** This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.
- **Redundancy Reserve:** The balance held in the Redundancy Reserve was £4.1m at 31 March 2025. Reflecting the need to reduce the size of the council to be sustainable in future, £6.5m was agreed to be added to the reserve as part of the 2025/26 budget. Redundancy costs funded from the reserve in 2025/26 were £0.7m. The remaining balance is £9.9m.
- **Collection Fund Reserve:** 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 £6.4m 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.
- **Budget Reserve:** As reported to Cabinet in January 2026 and in the Treasury Management quarterly updates, the council earned £7.5m more from interest on cash balances than budgeted in 2025/26. £2.0m of this supported the 2025/26 revenue budget. The remaining £5.5m was approved for the Budget Reserve. This reserve would help manage any delays in delivering savings and any funding reductions from the Local Government Finance Settlement over the three-year period to 2028/29.
- **Impact of IFRS9:** In 2024/25, the £5.0m reserve was created to manage the impact of pooled investment valuations. Following MHCLG's extension of the statutory override for legacy investments to 1 April 2029, the risk has been deferred. It was therefore recommended to reduce the reserve by £1.0m to £4.0m and redirect the funding to rural active travel measures, with the remaining reserve to be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget.

- **Trading accounts:** Holds funds relating to traded activities which are carried forward each year (whether surplus or deficit).
- **Council Elections Reserve:** holds funds to meet the cost of the County Council elections every four years. The reserve has been used to support the cost of the County Council elections in May 2025.

The Capital & Equipment reserves are:

- **Capital & Prudential Borrowing Reserves:** The Capital Reserve holds capital receipts and other funds to meet the cost of borrowing to finance the capital programme. Funding held in the reserve is expected to be used to meet the costs of the capital programme and pipeline agreed in February 2026.
- **Vehicle & Equipment Reserve:** £3.4m was held in reserves at the year-end for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment.
- **Investment Pump Priming reserve:** Funding held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned.

Other reserves are:

- **On-Street Car Parking Reserve:** Expenditure and income relating to parking is required to be transacted through the Parking Account. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Cabinet is required to approve that any surplus from the Parking Account can be carried forward to support infrastructure and maintenance in future years. After taking into account net income of £3.4m, a subsidy of the Park and Ride ticket offer of £0.7m to compensate for the Congestion Charge has been applied, and a £4.6m contribution to the revenue budget and £0.6m contribution to the capital budget has been made from the reserve as planned. This contribution is primarily to be held for the benefit of the Highways Infrastructure and Parking Account to fund future drawdowns.

- **Congestion Charge reserve:** The reserve is held to support transport infrastructure initiatives. Consistent with the earlier Congestion Charge paper, it is recommended that this reserve is formally established and retained now that the scheme is operational. The creation and holding of the reserve to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of the infrastructure and equipment required to deliver the charging mechanism.

### **Schools' Reserves**

As shown in Appendix 4C maintained schools' balances were £10.8m at 1 April 2025 and increased to £12.2m at 31 March 2026. This is made up of surpluses of £14.9m (for 96 schools) and deficits of £2.7m (for 24 schools).

## Reserves by Service Area

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
<b>by Service Area and Significant reserves held by the service area:</b>			
Adult Services	£6.6m	−£5.3m	£1.3m
Children's Services	£9.6m	−£1.5m	£8.1m
Public Health & Communities	£1.4m	£0.3m	£1.8m
Public Health Grant reserve	£4.6m	£0.2m	£4.9m
Homes for Ukraine Grant reserve	£8.6m	−£2.3m	£6.3m
Environment & Highways	£2.5m	£0.0m	£2.5m
Strategic Waste reserve (2025/26 pEPR)	£0.0m	£4.8m	£4.8m
On Street Car Parking reserve	£5.3m	−£2.6m	£2.7m
Congestion Charge reserve	£0.0m	£1.4m	£1.4m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.4m	£0.2m	£1.6m
Economy & Place	£3.8m	£1.4m	£5.2m
BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare	£4.9m	−£1.4m	£3.5m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£3.6m	−£0.1m	£3.4m
Resources and Law & Governance	£4.5m	−£0.6m	£3.9m
Local Government Reorganisation reserve	£10.0m	−£0.8m	£9.2m
Transformation reserve	£7.5m	£4.5m	£12.0m
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>£74.4m</b>	<b>−£1.6m</b>	<b>£72.8m</b>
Budgets held Centrally	£59.5m	£19.0m	£78.4m
Capital Reserves	£109.7m	£16.2m	£126.0m
Schools	£10.7m	£1.4m	£12.2m
<b>Total Earmarked reserves</b>	<b>£236.9m</b>	<b>£30.9m</b>	<b>£289.0m</b>

### Adult Services

Adults Services	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£0.5m	−£0.2m	£0.3m
Government Initiatives Reserve	£0.1m	−£0.0m	£0.0m
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Trading Accounts	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Budget Priorities	£6.0m	−£5.1m	£0.9m
<b>Total Adult Services</b>	<b>£6.6m</b>	<b>−£5.3m</b>	<b>£1.3m</b>

The Grants and Contributions reserve holds the residual funds for:

- Apprenticeship funding, which was fully utilised in 2025/26.
- £0.1m Newly Qualified Social Worker grant
- £0.1m Accelerated Reform Fund, to expand development of community-based housing and care models, improve support of unpaid carers and

encourage people to live well by improving promotion of existing services.

£1.0m funding held in the Budget Priorities reserve at year end will be used as follows:

- £0.6m Complex Service Delivery and an Accelerated Review Programme continuing into 2026/27
- £0.2m Residual ICB Contribution to support associated schemes.
- £0.1m to support Connect to Work activity within Adult Social Care

### Children's Services

Children's Services	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£4.2m	−£1.1m	£3.1m
Government Initiatives Reserve	£4.0m	−£1.8m	£2.2m
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Trading Accounts	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.2m
Partnership Reserves	£0.3m	£0.0m	£0.3m
Budget Priorities	£1.1m	£1.3m	£2.4m
<b>Reserves before school reserves</b>	<b>£9.6m</b>	<b>−£1.5m</b>	<b>£8.1m</b>

Total earmarked reserves held by the service were £8.1m as at 31 March 2026. These decreased by £1.5m during the financial year.

Grants and Contributions reserve and Government Initiatives mainly relate to ringfenced grants that are expected to be spent in future years.

The Budget Priorities reserve started the year at £1.1m and moved in year by +£1.3m. Allocations include:

- £0.8m supporting Education SEND (increased by £0.8m in year)
- £0.7m Priority Action Plan (increased by £0.4m)
- £0.5m supporting Early Intervention (increased by £0.2m),
- £0.4m for Special Guardianship (decreased by £0.1m)

### Environment & Highways

Environment & Highways	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Strategic Waste reserve	£0.0m	£4.8m	£4.8m
On Street Parking Reserve	£5.3m	−£2.6m	£2.7m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.4m	£0.2m	£1.6m
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£1.0m	£0.5m	£1.6m
Congestion Charge Reserve	£0.0m	£1.4m	£1.4m
Partnership Reserves	£1.4m	−£0.5m	£0.9m
<b>Total Environment &amp; Highways</b>	<b>£9.2m</b>	<b>£3.9m</b>	<b>£13.1m</b>

£1.6m Grants and Contributions reserve held the residual funds for:

## Annex D

### Business Management & Monitoring Report March 2026

- £0.7m for Countryside.
- £0.4m developer funding related to support tree policies
- £0.1m Public Transport , and
- £0.4m Spatial Development Strategy

£0.9m held in the Partnership Reserve is the residual Growth Deal Capacity Fund (£0.6m) which will be used as agreed with the districts in 2026/27, Oxford Rail funding, and £0.3m for the Oxfordshire Waste partnership.

#### Economy & Place

<b>Economy &amp; Place</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>Movement</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2026</b>
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£7.4m	−£2.0m	£5.4m
Budget Priorities	£0.0m	£2.4m	£2.4m
Government Initiatives Reserve	£1.3m	−£0.3m	£0.9m
Partnership Reserves (LEP Balance is £20k)	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
<b>Total Economy &amp; Place</b>	<b>£8.7m</b>	<b>−£0.0m</b>	<b>£8.7m</b>

£5.4m Grants and Contributions reserve includes residual funds for:

- Broadband gainshare funds supporting infrastructure (£3.5m)
- Developer Contributions relating to revenue (£1.6m)

Budget Priorities reserve is mainly held for the phasing of large projects. The £2.0m held reflects the phasing over two years of one – off budget investments agreed in February 2025.

- £1.0m for Rail Investment (SEP202612) 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.
- £1.0m investment in a flood emergency fund (2026EP10)

£0.9m Government Initiatives reserve held the residual funds for the iHub / Innovation service.

Public Health & Communities

Public Health & Communities	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£13.4m	−£2.0m	£11.4m
Government Initiatives Reserve	£1.2m	£0.2m	£1.4m
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Communities</b>	<b>£14.7m</b>	<b>−£1.8m</b>	<b>£12.9m</b>

£11.4m Grants and Contributions Reserve:

- £6.3m Homes for Ukraine to support the on-going scheme in Oxfordshire .
- £4.8m Public Health Grant reserve to support one – off planned expenditure during the year and committed workstreams in future years.
- £0.2m History Service and Museum donations.

£1.4m Government Initiatives Domestic Abuse grant

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue and Community Safety

Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£0.5m	−£0.3m	£0.1m
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	£3.1m	£0.2m	£3.3m
<b>Total Fire &amp; Rescue and Community Safety</b>	<b>£3.6m</b>	<b>−£0.1m</b>	<b>£3.4m</b>

£0.1m Grants and Contributions Reserve:

- £83k Home Office - Building Risk/Fire Uplift Grant. This is to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next year.
- £44k Home Office – Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme. This is to fund commitments related to the programme.

£3.3m Vehicle & Equipment Reserve:

- £2.4m Fire Vehicle replacement fund. A fleet replacement strategy has been developed, and several vehicles have been ordered.
- £0.9m Communications funds to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.

Resources and Law & Governance

Resources and Law & Governance	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Transformation reserve	£7.5m	£4.5m	£12.0m
Local Government Reorganisation Reserve	£10.0m	-£0.8m	£9.2m
Commercial Pump Priming Reserve	£2.0m	-£0.1m	£1.9m
Budget Priorities	£1.4m	£0.5m	£1.9m
Grants and Contributions Reserve	£0.3m	-£0.2m	£0.1m
Council Elections	£0.7m	-£0.7m	£0.0m
<b>Total Resources and Law &amp; Governance</b>	<b>£21.9m</b>	<b>£3.2m</b>	<b>£25.2m</b>

**£0.1m Grants and Contributions Reserve:** Holds the One Public Estate funds to be used in 2026/27.

**£1.9m Budget Priorities reserve:** Mainly held for phasing of large projects. Specific allocations are:

- £0.4m Leisure Centres Joint User Agreements Repair & Maintenance Reserves
- £0.6m Councillor Priority Fund to be used in 2026/27
- £0.2m Community Hubs
- £0.6m Emergency Household Support Fund

## Appendix 4B – Summary of Financial Position for 2025/26 On and Off-Street Parking Account

Designated parking places refer to any bay designated to a class of vehicle or specific purpose and include pay & display bays (some enforcement of rather than income from parking charges), residents' bays, business bays, disabled bays, loading bays, doctors bays, ambulance bays, etc. whether they are inside or outside a controlled parking zone.

Parking contraventions are any other contraventions whether they be inside or outside controlled parking zones.

### ACTUAL INCOME / EXPENDITURE AND IMPACT ON PARKING RESERVE

On - street parking										
	Oxford City	Oxford City	Oxford City	Vale Of White Horse	South Oxfordshire	Cherwell	West Oxfordshire	Sub- total	Bus Lane Camera Enforcement & Moving Traffic Contraventions	TOTAL ON - STREET PARKING
	Pay & Display	Parking Contraventions	Designated Parking Places					a	b	a+b
	£	£	£	£	£	£		£	£	£
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>										
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT	519,409	1,793,831	558,787	82,462	195,841	318,007	442,823	3,911,160	700,322	<b>4,611,482</b>
STAFF COSTS	257,123	241,377	241,535	31,491	31,491			803,017	614,071	<b>1,417,088</b>
OTHER	630,823	369,960	70,315	11,830	16,186	207,150	53,907	1,360,171	418,712	<b>1,778,883</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,407,355</b>	<b>2,405,168</b>	<b>870,637</b>	<b>125,783</b>	<b>243,518</b>	<b>525,157</b>	<b>496,730</b>	<b>6,074,348</b>	<b>1,733,105</b>	<b>7,807,453</b>
<b>INCOME</b>										
TOTAL	-3,266,904	-1,315,900	-2,062,519	-94,853	-176,466	-334,183	-204,480	-7,455,305	-3,536,113	<b>-10,991,418</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-3,266,904</b>	<b>-1,315,900</b>	<b>-2,062,519</b>	<b>-94,853</b>	<b>-176,466</b>	<b>-334,183</b>	<b>-204,480</b>	<b>-7,455,305</b>	<b>-3,536,113</b>	<b>-10,991,418</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (-) or DEFICIT (+)</b>	<b>-1,859,549</b>	<b>1,089,268</b>	<b>-1,191,882</b>	<b>30,930</b>	<b>67,052</b>	<b>190,974</b>	<b>292,250</b>	<b>-1,380,957</b>	<b>-1,803,008</b>	<b>-3,183,965</b>

Annex D  
Business Management & Monitoring Report March 2026

-102,614
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	Off - street parking				
	Water eaton park and ride c	Thornhill park and ride d	Bicester park and ride e	Eynsham park and ride f	Total off-street parking c+d+e+f
	£	£	£		£
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>					
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT	148,808	152,088			300,896
STAFF COSTS	78,727	78,727			157,454
OTHER	255,420	333,990	84,702	1,815	675,927
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>482,955</b>	<b>564,805</b>	<b>84,702</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>1,134,277</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>					
TOTAL	-418,372	-801,562	-92,916		-1,312,850
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-418,372</b>	<b>-801,562</b>	<b>-92,916</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,312,850</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (-) or DEFICIT (+)</b>	<b>64,583</b>	<b>-236,757</b>	<b>-8,214</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>-178,573</b>

**Balance on Parking Reserve as at 1 April 2025** **5,332,849**

On-Street Parking	1,380,957	(a)
Surplus from Camera Enforcement	1,803,008	(b)
Surplus from Thornhill P&R	236,757	(d)
Surplus from Bicester	8,214	(e)
Deficit from Water Eaton	-64,583	(c)
Deficit from Eynsham	-1,815	(f)

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Net Income before Contributions 3,362,538

Contribution to 2025/26 revenue budget -1,919,300

Less Net Parking Budget -2,710,400

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Revenue budget contributions -4,629,700

not included in the table above

Less P&R Ticket Offer -717,683

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTION FROM PARKING RESERVE** **-1,984,845**

Contribution to 2025/26 capital budget **-606,985**

**Balance on Parking Reserve as at 31 March 2026** **2,741,019**

## Appendix 4C - MAINTAINED SCHOOL BALANCES

### Number of Schools with Deficit/Surplus Budgets

	Number of Schools 31 March 2025		Number of Schools 31 March 2026	
	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance
Primary	19	102	23	93
Secondary	1	0	1	0
Special	1	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>96</b>

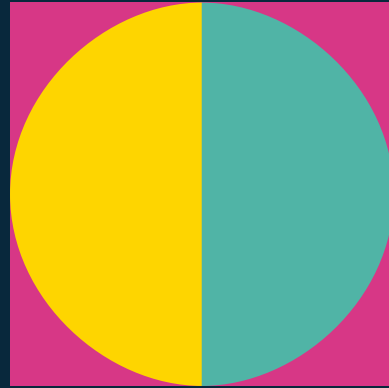
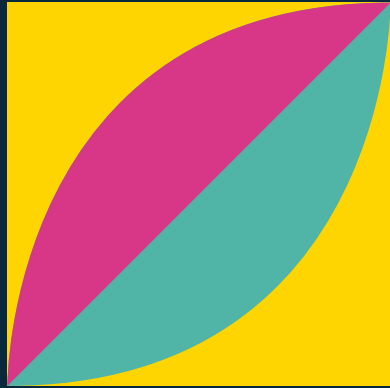
### Balances as at 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2026

	Balances at 31 March 2025			Balances at 31 March 2026		
	Deficit Balance £m	Surplus Balance £m	Total Balance £m	Deficit Balance £m	Surplus Balance £m	Total Balance £m
Primary	1.739	-13.357	-11.618	1.938	-13.570	-11.632
Secondary	0.989	0.000	0.989	0.777	0.000	0.777
Special	1.544	-1.663	-0.119	0.000	-1.298	-1.298
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.273</b>	<b>-15.020</b>	<b>-10.748</b>	<b>2.715</b>	<b>-14.868</b>	<b>-12.153</b>
Schools Contingency, Closed Schools and Other Balances			0.000			0.000
School Loans and Other School Related Reserves			0.000			0.000
<b>Schools Balance as shown in Appendix 4a</b>			<b>-10.748</b>			<b>-12.153</b>

	Balances 31 March 2026	
	Largest Individual Surplus £m	Largest Individual Deficit £m
<b>Primary</b>	- 0.573	0.413
<b>Secondary</b>	-	0.777
<b>Special</b>	- 0.678	-

## Appendix 4D General Balances

<b>General Balances</b>		
General Balances as at 31 March 2025 (Statement of Accounts)	£45.3m	
Less budgeted use to increase funding for transformation and redundancy costs as part of the Reserve and Balances Policy Statement for 2025/26	-£10.8m	
Add: Planned contributions (February 2025)	£2.7m	
Less approved as part of 2024/25 Provisional Outturn Report:	-£0.7m	
Less support for 2025/26 revenue costs - Innovate and BIPC		
<b>General Balances as 31 March 2025</b>		<b>£36.5m</b>
Add/less:		
Add additional un-ringfenced grant	£1.5m	
Less Supplementary Estimate Requests:		
Woodeaton Manor School	-£2.2m	
Bicester Motion	-£0.5m	
Additional election costs	-£0.9m	
Less 2025/26 overspend	-£0.1m	-£2.2m
<b>General Balances as at 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£34.3m</b>
Risk assessed level of balances for 2026/27		£32.7m
Surplus balances compared to risk assessed level for 2025/26		£1.6m



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# Annual report

## 2025–2026

greener | fairer | healthier Oxfordshire

# Foreword

Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council's annual report, providing an overview of our performance and key achievements from April 2025 to March 2026.

Our vision remains to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This is rooted in strong local communities, healthy places to live, and a sustainable and inclusive economy that benefits everyone. Throughout the year, we have continued to work in partnership with residents, businesses and organisations to deliver this vision and improve people's lives.

In November 2025 the council agreed a new Strategic Plan for 2025–2028, setting out our priorities and how we will deliver meaningful change for residents. This report highlights the progress we have made in delivering that plan, including early work on our nine headline projects and wider objectives.

Fairness sits at the heart of everything we do – ensuring that opportunities are shared between communities and between generations. We are committed to providing accessible services, tackling inequalities, and enabling everyone to thrive. This includes

supporting residents through the cost of living, improving outcomes for children and young people, and helping people to live healthy, independent lives for as long as possible.

We have made tangible progress in delivering our priorities, including action on the climate emergency, improvements to transport and infrastructure, and support for residents facing barriers into employment. These achievements reflect both the early delivery of our Strategic Plan and the dedication of our workforce and partners – because we are at our best when we work together with communities and organisations across Oxfordshire.

Looking ahead, the landscape for local government is changing. The programme of local government reorganisation and the opportunities presented by devolution will shape how services are delivered in the future. In the short to medium term the Government's current financial settlement means the council's grant funding is expected to reduce by £27.2 million by 2028/29. Alongside the need to address a £5.4 million budget gap in 2026/27, this will require the council to identify further savings in order to set balanced

budgets in future years and that will only be possible by reducing some of our activities and making difficult decisions that constrain what we deliver.

While this brings uncertainty and challenges, we are committed to working constructively with government, partners and our communities to ensure that any changes deliver the best possible outcomes for Oxfordshire's residents.

As we move forward, we will continue to listen, adapt and innovate, ensuring that we make the most of these opportunities while remaining focused on delivering high-quality services for our residents every day.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and for your continued interest in the work of the council.



**Councillor  
Tim Bearder,**  
Leader of Oxfordshire  
County Council

# Our nine headline projects

to be delivered by March 2028

Our vision is to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This is centred around strong and connected communities, healthy places to live, and a thriving local economy that benefits everyone.



## Greener Oxfordshire

1. Create better spaces for residents and visitors in our town centres.

2. Work with transport partners towards a countywide integrated rail and bus offer.

3. Create two dedicated highways response teams to tackle issues in priority areas.



## Fairer Oxfordshire

4. Roll out a network of family hubs.

5. Through initiatives like Connect to Work, help people overcome barriers to employment.

6. Support young people leaving care into employment.



## Healthier Oxfordshire

7. Increase the number of children who reach a good level of development at age five.

8. Deliver more specialist school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

9. Support an expanded and coordinated programme of youth provision.



# Greener

## Our strategic priorities

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We want our communities to enjoy clean air, access to green space, and safe and sustainable ways to move around.

This means reducing traffic congestion and investing in public transport, cycling and walking; protecting our natural environment; and helping Oxfordshire respond and adapt to a changing climate.

- We were ranked the UK's best performing county council, **topping Climate Emergency UK's 2025 scorecard** for climate action for the second consecutive year.

- We were confirmed as England's **top-performing waste disposal authority** for the 12th year running, with 56.3% of household waste recycled, reused or composted.

- We introduced a **temporary congestion charge in Oxford**. Monitoring data to March 2026 showed faster bus journeys on key routes, increased usage of park and ride, and improved traffic flow in the city centre.



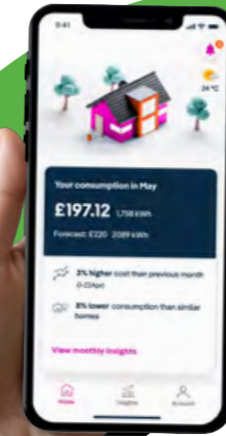
- We **developed OxRail 2040**, an ambitious 15-year plan to improve rail connectivity through new stations, electrification and service upgrades, and helped secure £120m to reopen the Cowley Branch Line.

- A £7.4m **surface treatment programme** improved roads across 70 towns and villages, treating over 930,000 square metres of carriageway.

- We collected £50.6m in infrastructure developer contributions for initiatives that will **mitigate against the impact of developments**.

- We established **lane rental powers**, which we anticipate will generate £2m a year for highway maintenance work.

- We awarded £1.4m to bus companies and community transport groups to deliver **new and converted electric buses** and improve passenger experience.



- The **Energy Saver App solar scheme** passed 100 installations, helping households generate renewable energy and cut bills.
- We improved our **recording and analysis of flood data** and **expanded our flood warden scheme** to allow us to deliver proactive advice and report issues in local communities.
- We introduced a **new booking system for our recycling centres** and explained how to pre-sort materials before visiting them to help reduce long queues at peak times.

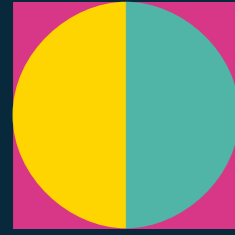
- Around **26,000 tonnes of food waste** was recycled, producing biogas that generated the equivalent of 11,767 megawatt-hours of electricity. This is enough to power approximately 4,358 homes for an entire year.

- Community Action Groups held over **350 repair cafes** across the county, helping residents to save money by keeping items in use and reducing the amount of waste thrown away.

- We deployed new **Highways Asset Response Teams**, taking a proactive, community-focused approach to targeted highway repairs, maintenance and clean-ups in areas most in need.

- We delivered the **275th 20mph scheme**, improving safety and liveability in residential neighbourhoods.





# Fairer

## Our strategic priorities

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We want all our residents to benefit from the advantages our county has to offer.

This means supporting a local economy that benefits everyone; assisting people who face challenges in finding work; making our services as easy to access as possible; and helping communities in need.

- Our **£6.72m cost of living programme** delivered over **219,000 individual interventions** for residents facing financial crisis, including crisis payments and preventative support, from supermarket vouchers to energy meter top ups.

- The introduction of a **low income family tracker** has helped identify residents who are missing out on government support, generating £1.5 million in additional income for households through improved take-up of benefits.

- Adult social care services were rated 'Good'** by the Care Quality Commission, recognising strong partnership working across health and care.

- We launched our **Connect to Work programme** to support residents facing health, disability or social barriers into employment, with the first job in place by March 2026.

- A new co-produced agreement with My Life My Choice **strengthened support for people with learning disabilities** through lived-experience-led services.

- We opened a **brand-new extra care housing scheme** in Faringdon. We now have 21 extra care schemes, offering older residents the opportunity to live independently with 24/7 care and support on site when needed.

- A **Community Catalysts** project which supports local people to set up small, community based enterprises was expanded to West Oxfordshire to help meet demand among older people for access to flexible, personalised support closer to home in rural areas.



- We spent £3.49m ensuring families of children entitled to free school meals received **support with food costs** during the school holidays.

- We piloted a programme with four secondary schools to provide **healthy snacks for pupils** from low-income households, which resulted in improved attendance, behaviour and readiness to learn.

- We created over £246k in **social value** through our tendering activities, from using local businesses in our supply chain to using local residents employed on local contracts.

- The **first all female fire and rescue crew** in 20 years is responding to emergencies in Oxfordshire.

- In November 2025 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission confirmed Oxfordshire had taken **effective action in all priority areas to improve SEND services.**

- Over £1m per year was approved to **expand SEND enhanced pathways** in mainstream schools, supporting nearly 300 children.

- Specialist careers advisers** were introduced in SEND schools to support young people into education, training and employment.





# Healthier

Our strategic priorities

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We want all our residents to be happy, healthy and safe.

This means helping children get the best start in life; creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential; supporting older people to age well and stay independent for as long as possible; and encouraging everyone to make healthy choices.



- Public health evidence showed **progress in reducing health inequalities**, with the number of Oxfordshire communities in the most deprived national deciles falling from 10 to 8 since 2019.
- We completed our first **Local Policy Lab fellowship programme** with Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University, translating academic research into practical policy action on health inequalities.
- A **Tobacco Control Strategy 2026–2030** was published, setting out joint action with partners to reduce smoking rates below 5 per cent.

- We delivered **17,863 NHS health checks** across the county to those aged between 40 and 74.
- We were recognised as establishing a **substantial network for walking, wheeling and cycling in the county**, providing access to a £20m investment over a four year period.
- Home First supported over **4,500 people to leave hospital safely** and provided support to **achieve independence on 1,586 occasions**. More than three-quarters went on to achieve full independence.

- Three new **school street trials** in Carterton, Banbury and Didcot were approved, along with an extension of an existing trial in Headington. School streets restrict motor vehicle access around schools during start and finish times, making the environment safer and healthier for families.
- The **Waiting Well** programme launched with NHS partners to help people improve health outcomes while waiting for surgery.
- Seven schools benefitted from **Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools (ACES) support** services and energy assessments, which ensures that schools are warm and comfortable for children during the winter.
- Developed collaboratively, we **launched DadPad**, an app for fathers offering practical parenting tips and key insights into child development.

- 87** households across the county are benefitting from warmer, healthier homes and lower energy bills thanks to our **Warm Homes: Local Grant** scheme, with 300+ more receiving solar panels and battery storage under an innovative trial subscription model.
- We seized **43,460** counterfeit or smuggled cigarette sticks with an estimated street value of **£15,211.39kg** of other tobacco-related products, such as hand-rolling and chewing tobacco were also seized. This work protects residents and removes income from serious organised crime.
- We had 19,099 conversations with residents about health and wellbeing, through our **Making Every Conversation Count** initiative across Oxfordshire libraries.



# Awards, events and achievements



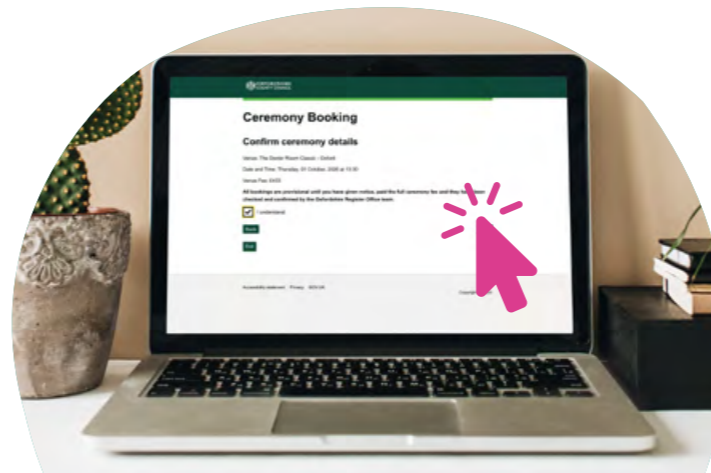
- We hosted two **innovation showcases in Westminster** in June and November 2025, working with Advanced Oxford to bring together parliamentarians and businesses to highlight the county's strengths in future transport and advanced manufacturing.
- In February 2026 we joined Oxford University in signing a **memorandum of understanding** with the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The partnership is designed to drive research led innovation, supporting growth in life sciences, climate solutions and advanced technologies.

- Together with partners, we submitted an expression of interest to the government in March 2026 for a **Thames Valley foundation strategic authority**. This would give us additional powers to coordinate bus and other regional services outside of Oxfordshire's borders.
- In October 2025 we hosted the **UK's Ambassador to the EU** on a two-day visit to showcase the county's strengths in science, technology, education and agriculture, and to arrange meetings with local businesses and partners to promote trade and investment.

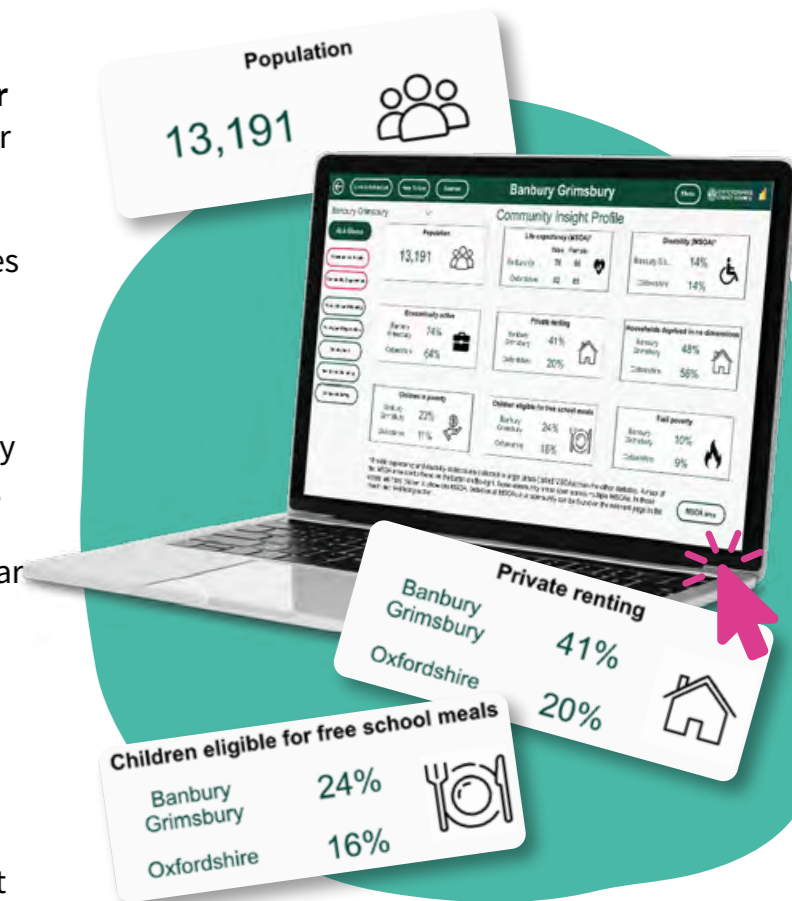


- Our pioneering local government accelerator programme, delivered through our **Innovate Oxfordshire service**, collaborated with 259 local businesses and entrepreneurs to tackle major challenges in the adult social care sector.

- We **worked with law students at the City of Oxford College** following the Activate Learning/T Level Law programme on a project designed to improve their understanding of the Law in Practice.
- After the election in May 2025, we **welcomed 38 new councillors** into an expanded council of 69 members.
- In January 2026 we **launched online bookings for citizenship and marriage or civil partnership ceremonies** - making it far easier for people to choose and manage how they contact us.



- In January 2026 we retained gold status in the **Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme**, recognising our strong support for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families through flexible employment practices and the Armed Forces Covenant.
- It was a double-win for our **climate action team**, scooping the 2025 Utility Week Award in Net Zero Engagement, plus the Edie Net-Zero Awards Smart Systems & Flexibility Project of the Year category.
- We have transformed how residents access information about council services by **embedding artificial intelligence (AI) into our contact centre**, enabling faster, more efficient responses and providing round the clock support through web and voice bots.
- Our HR team won a **PPMA Excellence in People Management Award** for the Best Employer and Trade Union Partnership with UNISON.



- Our Public Health team were shortlisted for **two national LARIA research impact awards** to recognise our work using data to tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire and to develop community insight profiles.



# Awards, events and achievements

- Oxford's electric bus programme, in which we are a partner, won **Best Public Transport Decarbonisation at the Decarbonising Transport Awards 2026**. The introduction of 159 electric buses has reduced carbon emissions by 7,233 tonnes per year and cut roadside nitrogen dioxide levels by 24 per cent.
- In the **2026 Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards**, our Public Affairs team was shortlisted in the 'small team of the year' category.

- The MyBus multi operator ticket was named among the **world's top three regional integrated ticketing schemes at the 2026 Transport Ticketing Global Awards**.  
The award recognises partnership working across Oxfordshire to make bus travel simpler, fairer and more affordable, particularly for young people.



- Our Customer Experience team received a **Zoom Customer Experience Europe Excellence Award 2025** for transforming resident services with Zoom Contact Centre and AI, cutting wait times by over a half.
- In the 2026 MJ Awards, our **Digital Infrastructure Programme team was shortlisted** in the 'community engagement' category, and the **Oxfordshire Migration Partnership** in the 'innovation in housing' category.

- Our community partnership team was shortlisted in the **care team category at the 2025 Oxfordshire Care Awards**. The team provides activities for adults with additional needs from Mayott House, an assisted living residence in Abingdon, as well as outreach support for adults identified as needing more one-to-one, personalised care.
- Innovate Oxfordshire's Digital Infrastructure Programme won the **Independent Networks Cooperative Association (INCA) 2025 Award** for Best Public Sector or Community Project for our GigaHubs initiative. The programme has delivered gigabit-capable broadband to 192 rural public service sites, including schools, GP surgeries, libraries and community centres.



- The Oxfordshire Museum achieved national recognition for the quality of its educational visits with a **Learning Outside the Classroom quality badge** for its work inspiring and engaging young people about Oxfordshire's history.

# 2025/26 in figures



We recorded **7,234** births and **6,138** deaths.



We conducted and registered **2,460** civil partnership and marriage ceremonies.



**93.9 per cent** of applicants were awarded their first choice of primary school.

**85.4 per cent** of applicants were awarded their first choice of secondary school.

Both relate to 2026/27 entry.

Our employment service supported **49** people to find work.



We provided **30,484** hours of home care per week to support people to live at home in their communities.

We supported **7,155** people to be discharged from hospital.



Our libraries welcomed **2,056,321** visitors.

This represents an increase of almost six per cent on the previous year.



Our rights of way team repaired and replaced a total of **152** bridges, cleared **173** hazardous trees and cleared **300km** of summer vegetation.



Our inspectors of weights and measures tested and verified **439** items of weighing and measuring equipment.



We planted **1,011** trees, inspected more than **11,000** individual or groups of trees, and arranged and completed more than **5,000** tree care operations.



We repaired **30,841** potholes and **37,233** highways defects overall.

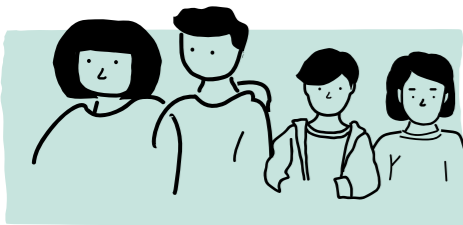


Our trading standards team conducted over **1,595** interventions with Oxfordshire businesses, providing advice and support, testing products and procedures.



Our fire and rescue service attended over **6,072** incidents.

They also completed **421** fire safety audits of commercial premises and **825** fire safety building regulations consultations.



We cared for **1,086** children.

**711** children had a foster placement in year; this includes kinship.

**204** children had a residential placement.



We welcomed **122,390** visitors to the Oxfordshire Museum, providing free access to the county's history.



# Performance and feedback

## Performance summary

This summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our strategic plan.

The quarterly business management and monitoring reports can be found here for further detail of achievements and action plans.

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/performance-reportss](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/performance-reportss)

## Listening and learning

Throughout the year we provide opportunities to our residents to have their say. Whether through customer satisfaction surveys, consultations on our budget, new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback through our website, we are keen to listen to your views.

[letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk)



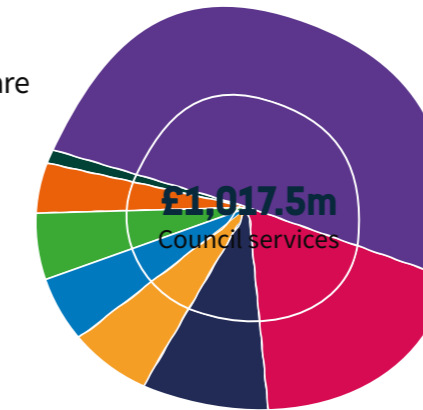
# Finance

The Government's current financial settlement means the council's grant funding is expected to reduce by **£27.2 million** by 2028/29. Alongside addressing a **£5.4 million** budget gap in 2026/27 as part of the budget agreed in February 2026, this will require the council to identify further savings in order to set balanced budgets in future years.

## What we spent on council services

In 2025/26 the council spent **£1,017.5m** on services – our gross expenditure. The chart below shows how much we spent on services in 2025/26.

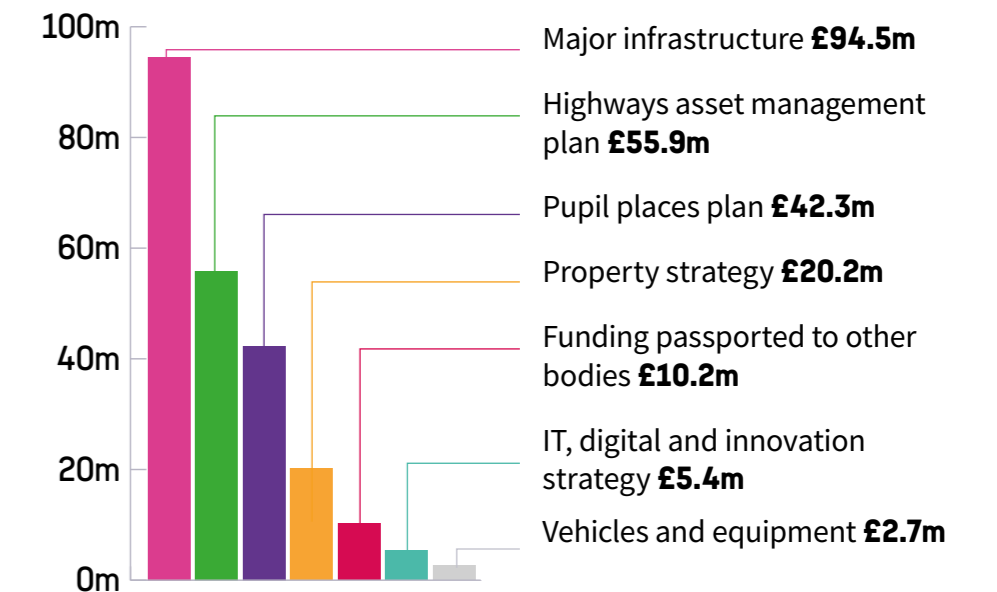
- 51%** Adult and children's social care
- 18%** Education and learning
- 10%** Highways, transport and infrastructure
- 6%** Capital borrowing and other financial costs (eg reserves)
- 5%** Public health improvement and prevention services
- 5%** Waste disposal and recycling
- 4%** Fire and rescue and community safety
- 1%** Libraries, culture and customer service



**+**  
In addition we spent **£253m** on maintained schools and early years providers.

## Capital programme

In 2025/26, we spent **£231.3m** on capital projects which included investment in highway improvements, new school buildings, and children's homes and decarbonisation of the council's buildings. This money can only be used for the purpose it has been given and cannot be allocated to day-to-day council spending.



## Contact us:

[oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us)

01865 519 800

Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

contact


details


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To find out more about how you can **take part in local democracy** by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit:

[oxfordshire.gov.uk/council](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/council)

You can **apply, book, find, report** and **pay** for a range of services on the county council's website:

[oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Let's talk



Have your say in **consultations about changes** to council services or policies at:

[letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Sign up



For **monthly news and updates** from across the county, sign up to Your Oxfordshire and get the latest direct to your inbox.

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## CABINET – 16 June 2026

### CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

Report by Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

#### Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) Note performance against the Capital Programme for 2025/26.
  - b) Note the Capital Programme Provisional Outturn Summary for 2025/26

Annex 1a: Strategy Programmes Expenditure

Annex 1b: Capital Financing

Annex 1c: Strategy / Programme Level Reporting during the year

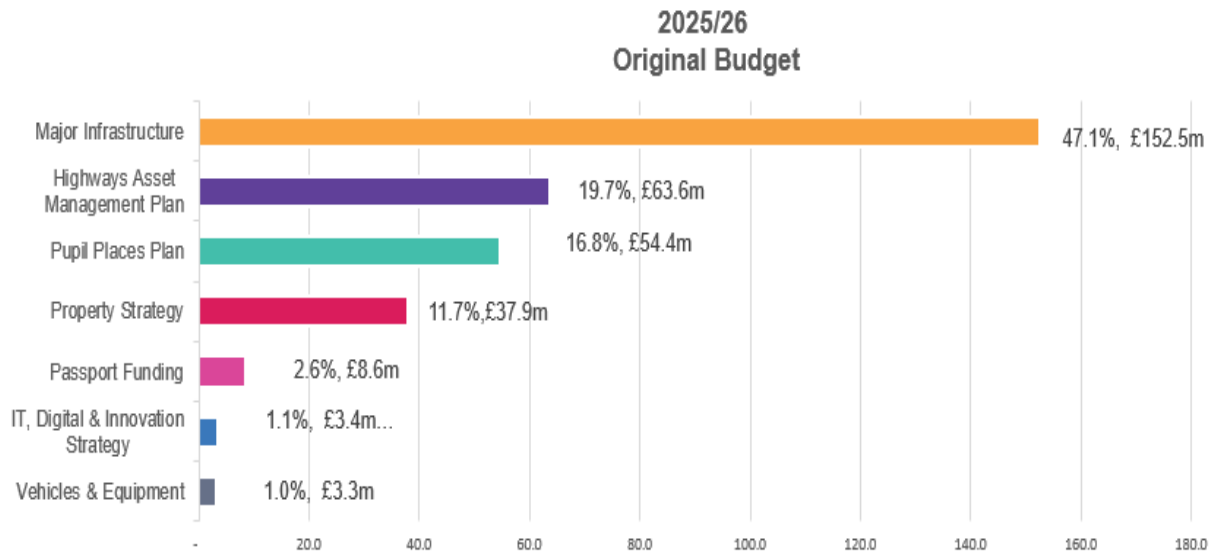
#### Executive Summary

2. The ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. This report updates on the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2025/26 and also compares back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2025. The expenditure and funding for the financial year set out in the report will be incorporated into the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26.
3. The capital programme is updated throughout the year to reflect the latest delivery profiles and cost estimates for each programme. The last update was based on the January 2026 monitoring position and agreed by Cabinet in March 2026. Planned capital spend for 2025/26 totalled £323.7m. Actual capital programme expenditure by 31 March 2026 was £231.3m. The variation between the latest programme and the actual expenditure is -£36.2m (-14%). This spend is now expected to take place in 2026/27.
4. The expenditure was funded by £143.5m of capital grants and other external contributions, £46.2m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy, £2.9m of revenue contributions, and £38.7m of prudential borrowing.

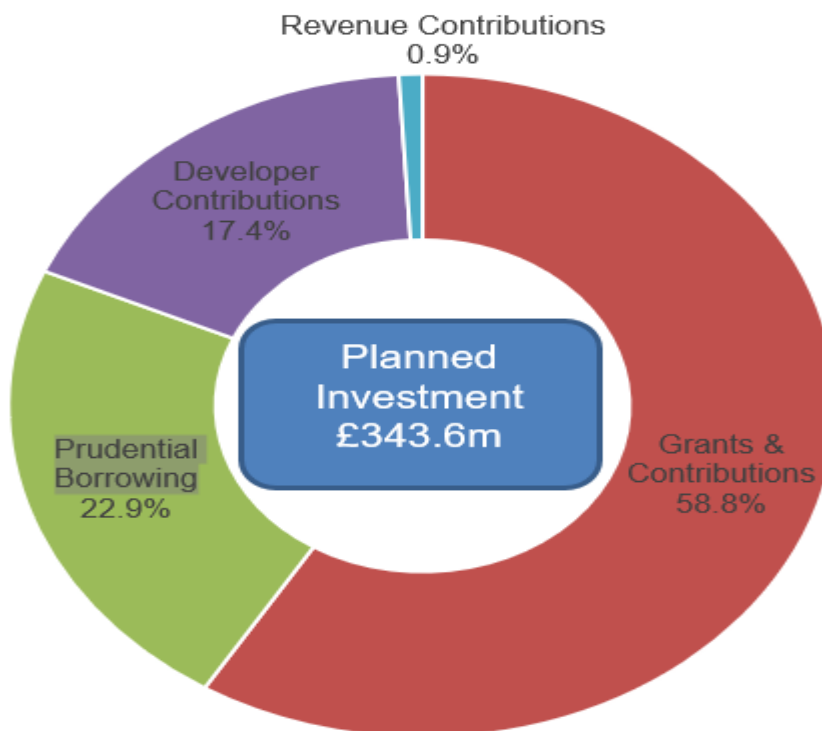
#### Introduction

5. 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 which includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the Council such as academy schools and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.

6. The council's ten-year capital programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Capital and Investment Strategy. This is agreed annually by Council alongside the revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
7. The programme is structured as follows:
  - **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements,
  - **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme,
  - **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges,
  - **Property Strategy:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements and the Investment Strategy,
  - **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy:** including broadband, software and equipment,
  - **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital,
  - **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment,
8. Each strand of the programme is underpinned by supporting strategies which set out the need for capital investment and the contribution of that planned investment towards the council's priorities. These include:
  - Pupil Place Plan and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Plan
  - Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
  - Highways Asset Management Plan
  - Property & Assets
  - Household Waste Recycling
  - Libraries & Heritage
  - Climate Action Framework
  - IT & Digital
9. The original capital programme for 2025/26 was agreed by Council in February 2025 as part of the Capital and Investment Strategy. This sets out anticipated spend of £323.7m plus a further £19.9m from earmarked reserves. This included £54.5m (17% of the overall programme) for the provision of additional school places and new schools, and £216.1m (67% of the overall programme) planned expenditure on major infrastructure projects, including large road improvement schemes, and road maintenance. Funding required to deliver the IT & Digital Strategy was £3.4m and spend on the Property Strategy of £37.8m. The chart below shows the planned spend and the proportion of the overall programme by programme area based on the original budget plans for 2025/26.



10. Planned investment of £343.6m was expected to be funded from £202.1m grants and contributions (58.8% of the planned investment), £59.9m developer contributions (17.4%), prudential borrowing of £78.4m (22.9%) and revenue contributions of £3.2m (0.9%).



11. The capital programme is updated four times each year to reflect the latest forecast profile of expenditure. The latest updated programme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2026 and set out anticipated investment of £267.5m in 2025/26.

12. Annex 1a shows actual expenditure for 2025/26 by strategy area compared to both the original budget and latest budget.

### Performance Summary 2025/26

13. A summary of actual expenditure compared to the latest capital programme update is set out in the table below and Annex 1a.

Strategy Programmes	Jan' 2026 Capital Monitoring (Cabinet March 2026) £m	Actual Capital Expenditure 2025/26 £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme %
<b>Pupil Places Plan</b>	50,419	42,296	-8,123	-16
<b>Major Infrastructure</b>	108,502	94,504	-13,998	-13
<b>Highways Asset Management Plan</b>	62,590	55,922	-6,668	-11
<b>Property Strategy</b>	24,690	20,234	-4,456	-18
<b>IT, Digital &amp; Innovation Strategy</b>	7,599	5,393	-2,206	-29
<b>Passport Funding</b>	10,693	10,236	-457	-4
<b>Vehicles &amp; Equipment</b>	3,032	2,697	-335	-11
<b>Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure</b>	<b>267,525</b>	<b>231,282</b>	<b>-36,243</b>	<b>-14</b>

14. Actual capital programme expenditure for 2025/26 was £231.3m compared with £231.0m in 2024/25 and £175.9m in 2023/24.

### Pupil Places Plan

15. Actual expenditure on pupil places was £42.3m in 2025/26. This is £8.1m lower than forecast in the report to Cabinet in March 2026. The Pupil Place Plan includes 3 main programmes:

- School Expansions (Basic Need) - these are usually school expansion projects that are funded by central government grant and/or Section 106 developer funding to ensure there are enough school places for children within Oxfordshire.
- New Schools (Growth Portfolio) – these are usually new school projects within large housing sites allocated in local plans that are funded from contributions sought from developers via a Section 106 agreement towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure.
- Schools Annual Programmes – this includes the School Structural Maintenance Programme (SSMP) which addresses the highest condition-based priorities within the school estate enhancing the school stock condition and reducing the backlog maintenance, and the School Access

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

16. Projects in the school expansions and new school programmes are either delivered directly by the Council, delivered by a housing developer or by a third party (usually an Academy Trust or Diocese) via a funding agreement. Regardless of how they are delivered, each project brings benefits to residents living in Oxfordshire by improving the quality and facilities at existing schools; providing additional pupil places allowing greater parental choice and ensuring that housing developments have the infrastructure necessary for them to become thriving communities.
17. The School Expansion Programme invested £10.1m on projects in design and construction during 2025/26. Expansion projects at 5 schools started in 2025/26, of which 2 were completed within the year and the other 3 will complete in the first half of 2026/27, creating an additional 300 places.

Schemes completed in 2025/26 include:

- Langtree Secondary School, Woodcote (Refurbishment of 3 science labs and external dining canopy)
- Orchard Meadow Primary School, Oxford (Foundation Stage Accommodation)

Schemes currently in construction which are due to be completed in 2026/27 creating 300 additional places are:

- Woodgreen Secondary School, Witney (150 additional pupil places)
- Marlborough CE Secondary School, Woodstock (150 additional pupil places)
- Fir Tree Junior School, Wallingford (expand from Junior to Primary)

18. There are several projects in the pre-construction phase and it is anticipated that some of these will commence construction in 2026/27.

(Initial place estimate between 30-50 pupil places)

- Botley Primary School, Oxford
- Edith Moorhouse Primary School, Carterton
- Sandhills Primary School, Oxford
- The Blake CE Primary School, Witney
- St Mary's CE Primary School, Chipping Norton
- The Warriner Secondary School, Bloxham
  
- Heyford Park School (150 additional pupil places)
- Faringdon Community College (replacement of temporary accommodation)
- Mabel Prichard Special School, Oxford (23 additional SEND places)
- Grove CE Primary School (105 additional pupil places)
- Mill Lane Chinnor (Replacement Temporary Classrooms)

- St Josephs, Thame (new nursery 30 places)
19. The New School Programme invested £24.5m during 2025/26. Projects currently in construction which are due to be completed in 2026/27 include:
- St Nicholas, Wallingford (315 new pupils + nursery)
  - Didcot Valley Park Primary School (630 place new Primary + Nursery)

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

- Artemis Academy: SEND Free School, Faringdon (118 additional SEND pupil places),
  - Grove Airfield – Secondary phase of a new all-through School (600 additional pupil places),
20. In addition, there are 6 new school projects in the pre-construction phase:
- Great Western Park SEND School, Didcot (120 additional SEND places)
  - Upper Heyford Primary School (315 place new primary + 65 place nursery)
  - Grove Airfield Primary No. 2 (420 plus Nursery)
  - Valley Park SEND School, Didcot (120 places)
  - Woodeaton Manor SEND School – relocation (34 additional places)
  - Brize Meadow Primary School (70 additional places)
21. Schools Annual Programmes invested £6.9m, delivering projects mainly through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme. 26 projects were completed during the year and a further 9 projects are on site. A new programme of works in excess of £2.3m for 2026/27 has been identified and consists of 27 projects.
22. Projects were delivered via the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In total, accessibility improvements were made to 11 primary schools and seven secondary schools enabling disabled pupils to attend their preferred school.

## **Major Infrastructure**

23. Spend on schemes with the Major Infrastructure Programme was £94.5m. The programme is divided into various sub-programme areas as shown in the table below.

Major Infrastructure	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1)	40,900	31,979	-8,921
Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 (HIF2) & A40	21,900	19,360	-2,540
A423 Improvement Programme	450	426	-24
Active Travel & Mobility Hubs	2,800	2,044	-756
Bicester & Banbury Locality	11,275	11,370	+95
Oxford Locality	4,271	4,682	+411
South & Vale Locality	14,300	14,055	-245
<b>Major Infrastructure Sub-total</b>	<b>95,896</b>	<b>83,915</b>	<b>-11,981</b>
Place Shaping	7,822	7,526	-296
Transport Policy	4,784	3,067	-1,717
Other Programmes	0	-4	-4
<b>Major Infrastructure –Total</b>	<b>108,502</b>	<b>94,504</b>	<b>-13,998</b>

24. The overall programme spent £94.5m. This is £14m less than the latest budget forecast of £108.5m.

#### HIF1 Programme

25. The HIF1 programme spent £32.0m, -£8.9m less than the latest budget, with a number of risks causing delays in 2025/26, highlighted in the last capital monitoring report, being realised.

- **Clifton Hampden Bypass** (Stage 3 Delivery) - the start date of the construction phase has been rescheduled and is now planned for 2026/27. Enabling works have begun.
- **Culham River Crossing** (Stage 2 Design) – extended enabling works have started and the start date of the construction phase, is planned for later in 2026/27.
- **Didcot Science Bridge** (Stage 3 Delivery) – enabling works have started but major land costs have been rescheduled into 2026/27.

#### HIF2 & A40

26. Overall, the combined programme spent £19.4m, -£2.5m less than the latest budget. This mainly relates to the Access to Witney (Shores Green) scheme where utility works payments were phased over the months of March and April 2026. The current status of the projects in the programme is:-

- Stage 2 Design – Eynsham to Wolvercote
- Stage 3 Delivery – Access to Witney, Dukes Cut
- Stage 4 Close Out – Phase 1 Oxford North and Phase 2 Science Transit

### Countywide programme

27. The Countywide programme spent £30.1m, £0.3m more than the latest budget. This is due mainly to increased spend in the Cherwell Street and A34 Lodge Hill Slips projects offset by reduced spend in Benson Relief Road, A4130 Steventon Lights and Banbury Road improvements projects. There was increased spend in the Oxford Zero Emission Zone and Oxford Traffic Filters projects, primarily linked to prolongation costs associated with the delay resulting from the closure of the Botley Road.
28. The current status of the projects in the programme are:-
- Stage 1 Feasibility – Oxford Zero Emissions Zone (wider)
  - Stage 2 Design – Bicester Strategic Link Road, Kennington Improvement Programme, Didcot Northern Perimeter Road, Watlington Relief Road, East Oxford Active Neighbourhood, Oxford Traffic Filters, Oxpens to Osney Mead Bridge
  - Stage 3 Delivery – Cherwell Street, Banbury Road Improvements, Steventon Lights, Benson Relief Road, M40 J10 Padbury Roundabout, Tramway Road, Wantage Eastern Link Road, Access to Headington, Active Travel 2 City, Botley Road Mitigation, Riverside Routes, A4185 Iffley Road (Safer Roads), A4165 Banbury Road (Safer Roads), Woodstock Road Corridor

### Other programmes

29. The Active Travel & Mobility Hubs programmes spent £2.0m, which is -£0.8m less than the latest budget. This is due mainly to Benson Lane project, which will progress in 2026/27. All but the Witney High Street project, which is in Stage 3 Delivery, are currently at Stage 2 Design.

### Major Infrastructure – Place Shaping

30. The programme spent £7.5m, which is £0.3m less than the latest budget. Most of the programme expenditure is part payment of £6.5m (£10m total contribution) towards the Oxford Railway Station Development, funded through the previous Enterprise Oxfordshire (previously OxLEP) City Deal Programme.

### Transport Policy

31. The programme spent £3.1, which is £1.7m less than the latest budget, due to a delay in the final claim for the electric buses, as part Zero Emission Bus Regional Area programme, which had been planned for March 2026. All buses and infrastructure have been delivered with the final tranche was rolled out in December 2024.

## Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

32. The expectation is that the HAMP will enable the council to maintain the 4,656km of network that it is responsible for, in as close as possible to a 'steady state' within the funding available.
33. The total HAMP spend for this year was £55.9m, which is -£6.6m less than the latest budget. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below:

Highways Asset Management Plan	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Structural Maintenance Annual Programme	44,800	43,594	-1,206
Improvement Programme	2,830	2,356	-474
Major Schemes & Other Programmes	5,950	5,148	-802
Network Management Programme	8,210	4,477	-3,733
Other	800	347	-453
<b>Highways Asset Management Plan – Total</b>	<b>62,590</b>	<b>55,922</b>	<b>-6,668</b>

34. The planned and delivered activities for the main programmes are shown below:

Project	Planned Schemes	Delivered Schemes	Progress Update
Surface Treatments (schemes)	138	140	Schemes to restore the condition or prolonging the life of existing carriageways. Surface Dressing and Micro-Asphalt programme completed. Pre-patching SD programme currently underway
Carriageways (schemes)	9	8	Surfacing/reconstruction/strengthening of roads. One scheme left to deliver towards the end of the year.
Structural Highways Improvements (schemes)	59	38	Surface inlay and minor patching schemes across the county. Slight delay in this programme due to schemes changing from patching to full surfacing
Footways (schemes)	76	60	Repair/construction of footways and cycleways. Footway slurry programme completed with some footway reconstruction schemes left to deliver.
Drainage (schemes)	37	20	Repair/renewal of existing drainage infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure to resolve known drainage issues. Delay in this programme due to extended investigation works
Bridges (schemes)	13	6	Strengthening/replacement/imposition of management measures on weak structures. Delay in commencing schemes on site due to

Project	Planned Schemes	Delivered Schemes	Progress Update
			extended design works required, intention is to reprofile into future years.
Electrical	1,800 2,700	824 2,867	Additional LED Replacement units being installed this year. Column Replacement
20mph Speed limit (schemes)	9	5	The last remaining schemes of this programme, following consultations that have taken place, have either been implemented by year end as planned or are expected to be delivered during 2026/27.
Section 42 contributions (schemes)	45	45	Programme delivered by Oxford City Council and covering all the unclassified roads and footways within the city. All schemes delivered.

35. The Structural Maintenance Annual Programme spent £43.6m, -£1.2m less than the latest budget. This is the result of an increase in spend, due to the completion of more surface treatment schemes than originally planned and an increase in the scheduled maintenance element of the structural improvements programme. These increases were offset by underspends in all other annual programmes.
36. The Annual Improvement Programme spent £2.3m, which is -£0.5m less than the latest budget, due mainly to underspends in the Vision Zero programme.
37. Major Schemes & Other Programmes spent £5.1m, which is -£0.8m less than the latest budget. This is partially due to a reduced spend in the Street Lighting LED replacement programme, due to the reduced number of LED replacement units being installed.
38. The Highway Network Management Programme spent £4.5m, which is -£3.7m less than the latest budget. This is due mainly to underspends in the Countywide Traffic Signals, Traffic Signal programme, Bus Stop installation and Upgrades and Vehicle Improvement Fund projects (grants to transport providers). The latter is due to the realisation of the late finalisation of grant payments, the risk of which was reported in the last capital monitoring report. Many of the traffic signals sites were in a design phase during 2025/26 and the delivery of these sites will take place in 2026/27.

## Property Strategy

39. Total capital expenditure in 2025/26 was £20.2m, £4.5m lower than the latest monitoring report.

### Estate Decarbonisation Programme

40. The council's property accounts for approximately 35% of the emissions within the 2030 target (based on 2023/24 data). While there is a long-term plan for

decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid, this reflects the Government's commitment to net zero by 2050.

41. As such the council's strategic approach to reaching the decarbonisation targets is to stop fossil fuelled activities within the council's properties, which is predominantly heating, via the electrification of these components.
42. This programme supports both the key objectives within the Climate Action Framework and Carbon Management Plan, but also the Property Strategy.
43. Work has completed or is nearing completion on 23 sites included in the 2024/25 decarbonisation programme, with heat turned on at all of these. The remaining four sites are now expected to complete in 2026/27 due to the timing of electricity grid upgrades, subcontractor insolvency or delays caused by other programmes of work. All eligible grant has been claimed for, and additional works were completed with remaining Salix funding (nine sites). The budget is £9.5m in total and includes £2.6m of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding.
44. For the 2025/26 decarbonisation programme, design work has started on all suitable sites. Construction works have been completed on 4 sites, 3 sites have been paused due to operational reorganisation and discussions with the government grant funder, the remainder are either into contract with works scheduled during 2026/27 or due to go out to tender shortly. The total value is £10.4m, including £0.4m of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding).
45. The combined expenditure over the two programmes in 2025/26 was £5.7m with a cumulative spend to date of £8.3m.

#### Office Rationalisation & Co-location

46. The planned spend for 2025/26 has been re-profiled into 2026/27 in line with the timeline for the County Hall relocation.

#### Children's Homes Programme

47. The Council incurred £3.5m of expenditure in 2025/26 (£10m cumulative spend) against the £10.450m programme for the delivery of four new children's homes (providing 12 additional beds) within Oxfordshire. One of the homes is open and registered, and two others are ready to be registered with Ofsted. The fourth home is structurally complete; however, registration cannot take place until the planning process for the change of use has been approved. This approval has been delayed due to actions required to mitigate the environmental impact of the build.

#### Speedwell House Redevelopment

48. Reflecting the revised Speedwell House redevelopment, the Council incurred expenditure of £0.8m in 2025/26. The overall budget for the scheme has been reduced to reflect the revised plans.

### Warm Homes: Local Grant Capital Retrofit Programme

49. The capital retrofit programme, Warm Homes: Local Grant, was expected to install approximately 130 energy efficiency measures across at least 60 low-income properties with poor energy performance in 2025/26. The programme completed 86 properties, more than the baseline target as a result of additional funding. The total value of the baseline award from the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero was £3.75m for a 3-year programme running between 2025/26 to 2027/28 but has now been increased to over £4m.

### School Energy Loans

50. The council has allocated over £1.8m between 2023/24 and 2026/27 as loan financing available to maintained schools to install retrofit measures (LED lighting, solar photovoltaics and battery storage). Because of the need for schools to schedule work largely in school holidays, in-year expenditure was £0.1m this financial year. For 2026/27, the programme has a strong and growing pipeline, with around 18 schools currently engaged. Based on schemes in development, it is anticipated that approximately £0.6m of energy efficiency improvement work will be delivered by maintained schools in 2026/27.

### Specialist Supported Living Accommodation Programme

51. This programme will deliver much-needed, bespoke, and high-quality specialist supported housing in Oxfordshire for adults who may currently be in hospital or secure units. It marks a vital step forward in improving quality of life and long-term outcomes by enabling people to live more independently within their communities. The initiative is designed to ensure accommodation is provided in a way that is both financially sustainable and socially impactful. In the absence of private sector investment in these essential services, council-led intervention is crucial. Without it, individuals would remain in inappropriate or high-cost settings that do not support autonomy or integration.
52. Actual expenditure in 2025/26 was £1.8m. This will be funded from the £5.9m funding for residential accommodation approved in February 2025.

## **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy**

53. Total capital expenditure on ICT schemes in 2025/26 was £5.4m compared to the previous forecast of £7.6m set out in the March 2026 report. The majority of the underspend was on the 5G Innovation Region Programme.
54. The digital infrastructure programme (to deliver the outcomes of the ITID Strategy) incurred expenditure of £4.4m. The following projects were completed in 2025/26:
- Data Centre Hardware – replacement of ageing data centre equipment and transfer to a new site, to ensure ongoing stable and secure infrastructure to run Council services.

- Reimagining the intranet – a new employee engagement platform was successfully implemented.
- Social care and public health dashboards – multiple dashboards created to inform and enable data led decisions in these areas.
- Public Services Telephone Network Withdrawal – made significant progress to reduce risks and impacts of the withdrawal of the copper telephony network, especially addressing telecare devices used by social care clients.
- End User and network equipment – continued investment in planned regular refresh of hardware so that staff are able to work effectively from multiple locations with secure access and performant devices.

55. IT are working on a number of projects which will continue into 2026/27. These include:

- Public Services Telephone Network Withdrawal – complete work with suppliers to reduce risks and impacts of the withdrawal of the copper telephony network
- End User and network equipment – continued investment in planned regular refresh of hardware so that staff are able to work effectively from multiple locations with secure access and performant devices.
- Cloud migration – move systems from data centre to cloud hosted alternative. This reduces reliance on data centre hardware and improves resilience.
- Cyber security – a programme of investment in systems, services and processes to ensure data and system are protected from malicious attacks.

### Broadband

56. The costs associated with the 5G Innovation Region (5GIR) programme are met by grant funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to increase adoption of 5G connectivity. The programme is a regional partnership, known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH) which comprises local bodies from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire with Oxfordshire as the lead authority. The ECH will develop joint opportunities with the wireless telecoms supply chain and create an Advanced Wireless ecosystem. The project is deploying two physical 5G infrastructure builds: the Science & Innovation Campus Project at Harwell and the East West Railway Project on the track between Bicester and Bletchley.
57. The 5GIR programme spent £0.5m, which is -£2.5m less than the latest budget. Technical complexities on both projects requiring design changes and delays to legal agreements for wayleaves have delayed the project implementations. The remaining budget has moved into the 2026/27 financial year. The grant sponsor (DSIT) provided £0.540m of additional grant funding in the 2025/26 financial year to further support the projects.
58. A further £0.5m was spent on the Digital Places project. The Digital Places project is providing detailed evidence of mobile coverage across the County to

help the Digital and Smart Infrastructure team engage with operators, communities and planning teams to discuss possible solutions and identify funding sources.

## **Passported Funding**

59. Disabled Facilities Grant of £8.8m was passed to the City and District Councils in accordance with the Better Care Fund grant determination. Households are eligible to apply for the grant for home adaptations if a child or adult in the household has a disability. Types of adaptations funded by the grant include stairlifts, level access showers, ground floor extensions designed around a person's needs and kitchens designed for a wheelchair user.
60. Schools Devolved Formula Capital expenditure was £1.2m for the year. This is grant funded by the Department of Education and through local contributions, donations and fund-raising activities. School capital balances have decreased by £0.2m to £1.4m as at 31 March 2026. This is expected as at the end of 2022/23 schools received additional capital funding of approximately 120% of their original allocation and when schools convert to academy status any capital balance is transferred to the Academy.

## **Vehicles and Equipment**

61. At year end, certain vehicles and equipment programmes used by the Fire & Rescue Service and in-house Fleet Management Service have been added to the Council's asset register. The value of Fire & Rescue Service vehicles and equipment purchased in 2025/26 was £1.3m and was funded from revenue contributions built into the budget. The balance held in the Vehicles and Equipment Reserve for the future purchase of vehicles is £2.3m.
62. For the Fleet Management Service, a further £0.3m of expenditure was incurred to purchase 14 vehicles (minibuses, vans and cars). Of these all were full EV electric.

## **Comparison with Original Financial Plans (agreed in February 2025)**

63. The capital programme and monitoring report is submitted to Cabinet four times during the financial year. The table in Annex 1c compares the original budget for 2025/26 to actual expenditure for each programme area at each update.
64. The original budget plan for 2025/26 agreed by Council in February 2025 was £323.7m. Changes to plans set out in reports during the financial year reduced the expected outturn position to £267.5m in the report to Cabinet in March 2026. Actual expenditure for 2025/26 was £231.3m, £92.4m lower than originally forecasted. This represents delivery of 71% (72% in 2024/25) on the original financial plan for the year.

65. The variations during the year were explained within the monitoring reports and can be summarised within the following areas. The variations for schemes within each programme are set out in detail in Annex 1c:

a) Pupil Places Plan: Reduction to original plan of £12.2m

The actual outturn position is £12.2m lower than the original plan. The projects and programmes that were significantly reprofiled were:

- **New Grove Secondary School (-£1.4m)** – the new school to create 600 pupil places is being delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is now planned for completion in the Summer 2026 compared to the original forecast of February 2026.
- **Great Western Park SEN School (-£5.5m)** – The identified site for this project sits within the current footprint of an existing school. The land required for the new school would need to be transferred back to the Council. A consultation has been completed about the implementation of the new SEND School and the impact on the local area. Following the consultation, the land transfer is in progress with a new project timeline.
- **Heyford New Primary School (-£3.5m)** – due to prolonged planning issues for the selected school site and progress on the housing development the anticipated opening date has been pushed back.

b) Major Infrastructure: Reduction to original plan of £58.0m

The actual outturn position of £94.5m is £58.0m lower than the original plan. This is made up of a £44.0m difference between the original and latest plans and a further £14.0m difference between the outturn position and the latest plan. The programmes and projects which were significantly reprofiled were:

- **HIF1 Programme (-£16.9m)** – The August 2025 report explained that due to the finalisation of the detailed design phase and the start of the enabling works, planned for just before the end of 2025, the construction stages would need to be reprofiled into the new financial year. The programme, as a whole, was still planned to be delivered on time, though it meant that the in-year original budget would have to be reduced by £8.0m. Further extensions to the enabling work timeframe and the timings of key major land purchase, the latter specifically linked to the Didcot Science Bridge project has meant that a further £8.9m of previously forecasted spend for 2025/26 is now reprofiled to the new financial year.
- **Access to Witney (-£1.7m)** – due to the phasing of utility works payments over the months of March and April 2026.
- **A423 Kennington Bridge Improvements Programme (-£6.0m)** – The May 2025 report explained that following the receipt of revised cost estimates, which were at the time being reviewed, the construction phase

of the programme would be reprofiled into the new financial year, following the consideration of de-risking activities.

- **Active Travel Phase 3 Programme (-£7.4m)** – The August 2025 and subsequent reports set out that there were a series of programme delays which resulted in the construction phases of a number of key Active Travel projects into the new financial year. In total the original budget was reduced by £6.6m and a further £0.8m in year underspend at outturn against the latest budget is due mainly to a recently handed over project under review.
- **Tramway Rd, Banbury (-2.9m)** – due to programming delays the project is now planned to complete in 2026/27.
- **A34 Lodge Hill Slips (-£7.7m)** – Programme delays mean that the planned phases for the latter part of the year had to be re-profiled into 2026/27.
- **A4130 Steventon Lights (-£5.8m)** – In May 2025 it was reported that the construction stage of the project would be delayed and was partially reprofiled into the new financial year. In subsequent month reporting further reductions were reported totalling a £5.3m reduction to the original budget.
- **Watlington Relief Road (-£2.5m)** – In August 2025 it was reported that this scheme's construction phase would be delayed, pending the planning decision. The budgeted spend in 2025/26 was reduced again in October 2025, leading to a total reduction of £2.4m.
- **Placemaking Oxford Railway Station Development (-£3.5m)** – slippage due to the previously reported phasing of the contribution over two years.

c) Highways Asset Management Plan: Reduction to original plan of £7.7m

The actual outturn position of £55.9m is £7.7m lower than the original plan. This is made up of a £1.1m difference between the original and latest plans and a £6.6m reduction between the outturn position and the latest plan. The programmes and projects which were significantly reprofiled were:

- **Bridges Annual Programme (-£4.5m)** - due to extended detail design phases required for a number of structures, seven bridge schemes had to be reprofiled into 2026/27.

d) Property Strategy: Reduction to original plan of £17.6m

- **Speedwell House (-6.2m)** – in December 2025 it was reported that a change request was required on the redevelopment to reflect the reduced accommodation utilising the existing Speedwell House footprint. The

overall budget for the scheme has been reduced to reflect the revised plans.

- **Carterton Community Safety Centre (-£6.0m)** Because of the Fire Service countywide review and consideration of options on how to manage and operate the property portfolio going forwards this project is currently on hold.
- **Office Rationalisation & Co-location Programme (-£2.9m)** – the planned spend for 2025/26 has been re-profiled into 2026/27.

## Capital Programme Financing

66. The table in Annex 1b summarises the financing of the 2025/26 capital programme and compares it to the financing planned in the original and latest capital programme.
67. Capital grants totalling £143.5m have been used to fund capital investment in 2025/26. These include the various funding streams to support the major infrastructure programme including £41.3m of Housing Infrastructure Funds towards the Didcot Garden Town and A40 programmes, a further £10m for the A34 Lodge Hill scheme and a further £13.1m grant from the remaining Growth Deal infrastructure programme. A total of £37m from various elements of the Integrated Transport Block has been utilised towards the annual Highway Structural Programme.
68. Capital funding for infrastructure works received from developer contributions totalled £44.5m in 2025/26. A total of £46.2m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was used in 2025/26 to finance various capital projects with the majority of this towards the delivery of the Pupil Places Plan programme. The balance of capital developer contributions towards infrastructure works held by the council as at 31 March 2026 is £237.1m. A total forecast of £145m of this funding (including secure funding) is built into the capital programme from 2026/27 onwards. The remainder will be used to support future schemes in line with the relevant agreements.
69. Un-ringfenced grant funding held in the Capital Grants Reserve increased by £1.4m during the year to £112.1m as at 31 March 2026. Within the total there is £36.2m SEN High Needs Capital Grant, £19.6m towards the A40 Oxford Science Programme, £19m Basic Need Grant and £10.9m on various Active Travel Grants.
70. The majority of un-ringfenced grants do not have conditions and are not time limited so can be used flexibly across the Capital Programme, however they are provided for specific purposes. Therefore, where available, other funding sources are used to fund capital expenditure before un-ringfenced grants. The balance of un-ringfenced grants is forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

71. The balance of unapplied ringfenced capital grants held by the Council has remained the same at £18.4m as at 31 March 2026. The balance includes £9.8m of Community Infrastructure Levy funding received towards various projects and £3.7m towards the Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure programme.
72. The capital receipts and capital reserve balances are £40.4m and £87.6m respectively at 31 March 2026. The capital receipts and reserve balances are forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

## **Risk Management**

73. A range of factors will impact on the deliverability and cost of capital schemes. Where schemes are grant funded, there is a risk that slippage could impact on the availability of grant funding as it is not possible to complete the scheme by the funding deadline. Inflationary pressures may also mean that costs increase further by the point the scheme reaches the construction phase eroding the value of the grant funding so that is insufficient to meet the revised scheme costs.
74. These risks are managed through the council's capital governance process at both project and programme level and through the Strategic Capital and Commercial Board. Where necessary action is taken to adjust scheme deliverables and to use value engineering to maintain spend within the available funding.
75. The deadline for claiming grant funding for expenditure on the HIF1 and HIF2 schemes is 31 March 2028 and 31 December 2027, respectively. While there are other sources of funding that are expected to be used to support planned expenditure after each grant deadline any slippage in the grant funded elements would create an unfunded pressure. Progress is being monitored with updates provided through the capital governance process.

## **Sustainability Implications**

76. 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.
77. This report includes updates on the decarbonisation of the council's assets as well as funding for improvements to energy efficiency in maintained school buildings

## **Staff Implications**

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

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

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

## Financial Implications

80. The report sets out the position at the end of 2025/26 for the planned investment and available funding for the ten-year Capital programme.
81. The following risks are inherent within the funding of the capital programme:
- Certainty over the timing and value of future capital receipts and Section 106 Contributions.
  - Certainty over the receipt and security of future grant funding.
  - Ability to meet deadlines for the use of grant funding.
  - Ability to repay forward funding agreed as part of the budget process.
82. If capital receipts or section 106 contributions are not received within the planned timeframe it may be necessary for the Council to temporarily fund capital expenditure through prudential borrowing. The council has a prudential borrowing reserve to help manage the revenue impact of additional prudential borrowing.
83. Where additional funding is required to fund schemes on a permanent basis this will need to be addressed by reducing investment elsewhere within the programme (reprioritisation) or by permanently funding through prudential borrowing. This would require the identification of long-term revenue funding as the Prudential Borrowing is usually repaid over the life of the asset through the Minimum Revenue Provision.
84. Since the introduction of strengthened governance measures in 2022, there has been a clear and sustained commitment to continuous improvement across the Council's capital programme. A key element of this transformation has been the significant improvement in the transparency and accessibility of capital programme data. Through the integration of modern technology tools and digital reporting solutions, senior leaders are now provided with more timely, accurate, and comprehensive insights. This has materially strengthened oversight, enabling more robust challenge and supporting informed, evidence-based decision-making. This is further reinforced by the establishment of the Strategic Place Shaping and Investment Board, which plays a central role in providing strategic oversight of the Council's capital investment pipeline, ensuring alignment with corporate priorities, place-shaping ambitions, and long-term financial sustainability.

Continuous improvement remains a core principle, with ongoing enhancements to both governance processes and digital capabilities. Together, these developments will ensure a more mature, transparent and strategically aligned capital programme which is better equipped to respond to future challenges, whilst maintaining strong accountability and public value.

Comments checked by:  
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

## **Legal Implications**

85. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. In particular paragraph 5.1.1 at the fourth bullet point sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £2,000,000, then Cabinet can agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme, via the periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendations by Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

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

### **LORNA BAXTER**

Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance  
Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

June 2026

Division(s): N/A

## CABINET – 16 JUNE 2026

### FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

#### Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

**Cabinet, 14 July 2026**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Spatial Development Strategy</b> Seeking approval for Oxfordshire County Council to participate in, and help lead, a joint Thames Valley partnership (Oxfordshire, Berkshire unitary authorities and Swindon) to progress the pre-inception phase of work for a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).  Further details can be added to this description in due course.</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/111 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cowley Branch Line Funding</b> The report provides an updates on the Cowley Branch Line scheme and seeks authorisation of funding contributions towards the project.</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/104 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Budget and Business Planning Report - Update (July 2026)</b> To provide background and context to the budget and business planning process for 2027/28.</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/031 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Business Management and Monitoring Report (July 2026)</b> To note the report and approve the recommendations  Update on Finance (August month end position), and Risk and Performance Quarter 1</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/033 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Capital Programme Monitoring Report (May 2026)</b> Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/039 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Update on Recommendations of the Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly</b> To provide an update on the progress of the recommendations</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 25/251 - Leader</p>

<p>from the 2025 Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly, as approved at Cabinet in July 2025.</p>	
<p>▪ <b>Treasury Management Annual Performance Report</b> To note the Council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2025/26</p>	<p>Cabinet, 26/093 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation</p>
<p>▪ <b>Flag Flying Protocol</b> This document sets out the policy for flying flags on the buildings and land owned or managed by Oxfordshire County Council. The policy aims to comply with the planning regulations, respect the national and local significance of certain dates and events, and accommodate the requests of organisations that wish to fly their own flags. It states the responsibilities and decision-making process for the flying of flags, and which flags are excluded. It does not refer to flags flown by citizens on highways or assets, which are treated separately under enforcement powers.</p>	<p>Cabinet, 26/120 - Leader</p>
<p>▪ <b>Economic Development Strategy</b> A new economic strategy for Oxfordshire is currently in development. This item is to approve the strategy, make funding decisions, and delegate authority as necessary.</p>	<p>Cabinet, 26/017 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy</p>
<p>▪ <b>Response to Motion by Councillor Phillips on Oxford Living Wage</b> Full Council recommended that the Motion to apply the Oxford Living Wage from 2027 be considered at Cabinet for a final decision This paper provides a summary and high level options and recommendations for consideration by Members</p>	<p>Cabinet, 26/133 - Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader</p>
<p>▪ <b>Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy</b> The purpose of OxIS is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic infrastructure that is necessary to support future development to 2050.</li> <li>• Function as a statement and evidence base of Oxfordshire's ambition for sustainable infrastructure development that both enables planned growth but recognises and seeks, where necessary to mitigate its impacts on the environment.</li> <li>• Be a key investment document that Oxfordshire can use to engage with government, infrastructure providers, the business community and residents.</li> <li>• Inform, and be informed by individual Local Plans, other planning policies, planning decisions and key studies across</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/113 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy</p>

<p>Oxfordshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an accessible vehicle for engagement and consultation with the Oxfordshire community and wider partners.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Best Start Family Hubs</b> This report sets out the proposed strategic direction for the development and implementation of Best Start Family Hubs in Oxfordshire, as a core delivery mechanism for the council's Best Start in Life Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Cabinet, 26/138 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p>

### Cabinet, 28 July 2026

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Adult Social Care Charging Policy</b> The Adult Social Care (ASC) Charging Policy Review is a major programme to modernise, align and consolidate Oxfordshire County Council's charging arrangements across three core areas: Disability Related Expenditure (DRE), Transport Charging, and Telecare Charging. The project brings previously separate policies together into a single, coherent ASC Charging Policy to improve fairness, transparency, sustainability, and financial viability for the Council and service users.</li> </ul> <p>Driven by significant budget pressures and the need to deliver approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings, the project includes comprehensive data analysis, financial modelling of charging options, and a statutory public consultation covering all three charging elements simultaneously</p> <p>Key priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updating the DRE allowance (modelled at a reduction from 35% to 25%) and understanding the financial and distributional impact on residents.</li> <li>Designing a fair and administratively deliverable transport charging model, aligned with existing transport policy and system capability.</li> <li>Bringing telecare charging into the unified policy through consistent interim arrangements</li> </ul> <p>A full public consultation (minimum four weeks) will take place, supported by accessible materials, postal and digital channels, and targeted engagement for vulnerable groups. Consultation feedback will inform the final policy and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</p>	<p>Cabinet, 26/079 - Cabinet Member for Adults</p>
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## Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, 14 July 2026

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Holiday Activities &amp; Food (HAF) Open Framework Agreement</b> To seek approval to extend the term of the Holiday Activities &amp; Food (HAF) Open Framework Agreement beyond its current expiry of 31 December 2026.</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, 26/114 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Families First - Children's Social Care Reforms</b> Remodel Children's Social Care to align with the requirements of the national Department for Education (DfE) Families First programme.</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, 26/139 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

## Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 3 July 2026

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Faringdon Community College - Replacement of Temporary Buildings</b> Enter into a Funding Agreement with Cambrian Learning Trust, greater than £2m</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 26/123 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Grove CE Primary School Expansion</b> To enter into a Funding Agreement with Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, greater than £2m</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 26/122 - Cabinet

	Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Mabel Prichard Special School</b> Key decision required to enter into a Funding Agreement with The Gallery Trust for a sum greater than £2m.</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation

### **Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair, 16 July 2026**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Didcot Northern Perimeter Road (NPR3) Grant Funding Agreement</b> Key Decision required for Oxfordshire County Council to accept £6.2M of grant funding originally received by South Oxfordshire District Council under a Grant Determination from the Department for Communities and Local Government</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair, 26/088 - Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair
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### **Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 16 July 2026**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Approval to Enter into Agreements - Ambrosden to Bicester Active Travel Scheme</b> Construction contract for Ambrosden to Bicester Active Travel Scheme</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 25/266 - Cabinet Member for Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Botley Road, Oxford - Height Restrictions with Exemptions &amp; Parking Changes</b> Requirement as part of the Botley Bridge Scheme to introduce a TRO for height restrictions with exemptions for buses at a</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport,

<p>certain height. Also includes amendments to parking restrictions</p>	<p>26/080 - Cabinet Member for Transport</p>
<p>▪ <b>Proposed 40 &amp; 50mph Speed Limits - A361, West Oxfordshire</b> Proposed changes for safety reasons along the A361 corridor include reductions to 40 and 50mph on various lengths. Being promoted under the vision zero projects</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/075 - Cabinet Member for Transport</p>
<p>▪ <b>Ladygrove East, Land off Abingdon Road, Didcot - Highway Improvements</b> Pedestrian, Cycle and Vehicular access infrastructure to residential development from the Hadden Hill Roundabout / Abingdon Road. Required to implement the residential development.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/118 - Cabinet Member for Transport</p>
<p>▪ <b>Manor Road, Wantage - No Waiting Restrictions</b> Required as part of planning application and section 278 agreement To maintain safety along Manor Road. Precedent set with existing double yellow lines in place, with proposals being an extension.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/117 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<p>▪ <b>A415 Abingdon Road, Kingston Bagpuize - Proposed 30 &amp; 40mph Speed Limits</b> The proposed Traffic Regulation Order will reduce the existing national speed limit to 40mph on the approach to the roundabout to improve highway safety by lowering vehicle speeds and reducing collision risk. The change will also support safer operation of the junction by improving driver awareness and reaction times. In addition, it will provide consistency with the proposed 40mph speed limit on the adjacent link road, creating a uniform and safer speed environment.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/121 - Cabinet Member for Transport</p>
<p>▪ <b>Proposed Waiting Restrictions - Frontier Park, Chacombe</b> Proposed double yellow lines on access road to development to maintain access and safety. Required prior to adoption of the roads on the development.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/099 - Cabinet Member for Transport</p>
<p>▪ <b>Green Road and Bisecting Byway - Letcombe Regis (Seasonal and Width Restriction TRO)</b> Width restriction to To maintain safety for the majority of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport,</p>

	26/078 - Cabinet Member for Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Godington: Proposed 20mph Speed Limit</b>  Proposed 20mph speed limit being promoted under vision zero </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/091 - Cabinet Member for Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Swinbrook: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</b>  20mph being promoted as part of the councils vision zero project </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/090 - Cabinet Member for Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Proposed Changes to the MyBus Ticketing Scheme (2026/27)</b>  Proposed changes to the MyBus multi operator ticketing scheme, for 2026/27 and beyond, to ensure its long term financial sustainability. </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/053 - Cabinet Member for Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Active Travel Guidance for Streetworks</b>  Proposal to discuss guidance documentation prepared by the network co-ordination team to provide better outcomes </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport, 26/076 - Cabinet Member for Transport

### Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, 10 July 2026

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Updating Thresholds for Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports</b>  To consider updates to Section Flood Investigation thresholds </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, 26/105 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Carbon Management Plan and Greenhouse Gas Report</b>  Approval to publish the 2026 annual update to the Carbon Management Plan and 2024/25 greenhouse gas report. </li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy,

	26/130 - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy
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### Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adults, 14 July 2026

<p>▪ <b>Order of St John (OSJ) Extra Care Housing Retender</b> his project will deliver a short-term recommissioning of Extra Care Housing (ECH) care services across six schemes currently provided by Order of St John Care (OSJ), following OSJ's decision to withdraw from the service. The current arrangements cannot guarantee service continuity beyond March 2027, requiring the Council to put in place an interim solution.</p> <p>The project will design and procure a 2–3 year, like-for-like care contract to ensure continuity of care, resident safety, and operational stability while maintaining alignment with the Council's longer-term ECH recommissioning through the Live Well at Home programme from 2028. The work includes confidential market engagement, development of tender documentation, mobilisation planning, and transition management, including TUPE and provider exit arrangements. The estimated contract value will be confirmed following confidential market engagement and completion of the procurement process. The proposed arrangement is for a 2–3 year, like-for-like interim contract to ensure continuity of care across six Extra Care Housing schemes (in excess of £2M)</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adults, 2026/086 - Cabinet Member for Adults
<p>▪ <b>Banbury Cross Supported living contract</b> Supported living contract via a mini competition through the Live Well Supported Services Framework Lot 2.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adults, - Cabinet Member for Adults

### Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 14 July 2026

<p>▪ <b>Dynamic Approved Provider List Agreement, Primary Care and Community Pharmacy Services.</b> Recommissioning of the Dynamic Approved Provider List Agreement for Primary Care Services Also recommissioning of the Dynamic Approved Provider List Agreement for Community Pharmacy services. Both of these contracts reach their break</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 26/073 - Cabinet
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point on 31st March 2027.	Member for Public Health and Inequalities
<p>▪ <b>Substance Use Service for Children and Young People</b></p> <p>The Children and Young People's substance use service contract is held by Cranstoun, and ends on 31 March 2027. Public Health DLT are currently making a decision on most appropriate option for the service.</p> <p>This item will then be brought to Commercial Board before progressing to Key Decision.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 26/116 - Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

**Issue:** **Repair of Defects and Superusers Report**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Liz Leffman, Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **17 March 2026**

**Response to recommendations:**

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should improve communications with residents, including clearer updates on ongoing works and challenges.	Accepted	We are committed to giving residents clear, accessible and up-to-date information about activity on the network.  All roadworks and planned schemes are published openly through both the roadwork & event system ( <a href="https://one.network/">https://one.network/</a> ) and through our own Highways Schemes Map ( <a href="#">schemes map</a> ),

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

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

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		<p>with the same information available via our local website to ensure consistent public visibility.</p> <p>As part of our preparation for larger schemes, we also provide advance warning signage around two weeks before works begin and carry out targeted letter drops to households directly affected.</p> <p>However, we recognise the importance of strengthening and improving our communication further, especially where works evolve or unavoidable delays occur.</p> <p>In respect of updates to enquires received through FixMyStreet, we are working closely with mySociety (system owners) to enhance the clarity of direct updates received by the public, particularly around explaining why a repair may be delayed, or why a temporary safety intervention is required before a permanent fix can be delivered. This will help ensure updates are more meaningful, transparent, and aligned with resident expectations.</p> <p>We also hope to shortly further enhance the online customer experience through the introduction of a 'Zoom Virtual Agent' (ZVA) on our local website – this is a major digital transformation initiative that will modernise how residents engage with Highway Maintenance enquiries. The ZVA will provide smarter self-service, quicker access to information, and more intuitive guidance - forming a key part of our wider ambition to deliver a more responsive, consistent and digitally integrated Highways service.</p>
<p>2. That the Council should launch the new public-facing statistics dashboard to</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Council recognises the importance of transparency in relation to highway defect volumes and the progress of repairs, which is the reason we are now publishing the latest defect information</p>

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<p>provide visibility of defect volumes and repair progress.</p>		<p>though the council's social media channels - this will continue for as long as it is deemed helpful. These communications are designed to provide residents with an overview of key metrics, including the scale of reported defects and the progress being made to address them.</p> <p>In addition, County Councillors have access to further relevant data via the Members' Resource Hub, which provides up-to-date information on defect levels, repair activity and performance trends to support local oversight and engagement.</p> <p>The council will continue to review how best to present and communicate performance data to both county councillors and members of the public, ensuring that information remains transparent, accessible and meaningful.</p>
<p>3. That the Council should strengthen communication and escalation routes for elected members, including reviewing the adequacy of the out of hours service.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>County Councillors already have communication and escalation routes through the dedicated Councillor Portal Form and Guidance/information webpages on the Hive, ensuring they can quickly find the information and support they need. However, we do recognise this could be improved and are continuing to develop this page and add more information based on common requests and feedback.</p> <p>Improvements have been also made to the council's website recently in respect of the promotion of temporary road closures due to flooding and severe weather, again we will continue to improve based on feedback received.</p> <p>The expectation that teams are proactive and communicate directly on matters within councillor's divisions remains an expectation, and this requirement will be reinforced.</p>

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		<p>In respect of the out of hours service, it is there to service genuine emergency highway issues that arise rather than an out of hours extension to the highway enquiry process. There is a single customer service centre number to call for both councillors and the public, and the customer service centre will escalate to the on-duty officer, Mgroup or in extreme cases our joint resilience team as appropriate. We will remind the company providing the out of hours call service to recognise the role of the county councillor within this though.</p>
<p>4. That the Council should increase visibility and clarity of programmed works, supported by earlier publication of multi-year plans.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Please also see responses under 1 as they are relevant here too.</p> <p>To confirm our larger planned works are multi-year programmes and typically we have a two-year rolling outlook. On the Highway schemes map we publish last year's, this year's, and next year's programme. However, we will also look to publish this in different formats to increase accessibility of this information.</p>
<p>5. That the Council should improve integration of local knowledge, especially of elected members, into prioritisation of repairs and programmed works.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>Input of local knowledge from Councillors is important, but there may be good asset-based reasons for programme decisions which don't along with local opinion on priority. It is appreciated that local knowledge needs to be known and taken into account when making programme decisions, and that the decision made and rationale for it needs to be explained.</p> <p>The process in developing and sharing our annual programmes of planned work will be updated to allow for this.</p>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>6. That the Council should review the FixMyStreet process, ensuring cases are not closed prematurely and status updates are clearer.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>FixMyStreet is already subject to continuous review and ongoing development to improve both functionality and user experience.</p> <p>This includes regular assessment of reporting categories, workflow logic, response templates, and how information is presented back to the public. Feedback from residents, councillors, frontline teams, inspectors, and our contractor is routinely analysed to identify where enhancements are needed.</p> <p>The approach of continuous improvement will continue to be carried out, but we will commit to looking with a particular focus on not prematurely closing cases or managing some of the longer-term issues or service requests in a different way.</p> <p>We are also looking at opportunities to automate more of the responses using inspection schedule and work schedule information to provide a more timely response.</p>
<p>7. That the Council should enhance training and support in relation to the Superuser scheme.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>We will look to run further campaigns to attract additional volunteers to this successful initiative and promote the scheme.</p> <p>There is already a strong training programme, refresher sessions and support activity in place, however, we will carry out further engagement with the superuser volunteer network to understand where improvements might be required.</p> <p>To confirm we carried out an FMS SU survey during Nov 2024, and early 2026 collecting structured feedback on what's working well, where improvements are needed, and ideas for further support the volunteers may find valuable. We will continue to provide an annual feedback survey form. This helps us to shape</p>

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		<p>our future working with our volunteers in relation to our processes and scope of our volunteers across all activities and potential new ones.</p> <p>For awareness since Jan 2026 there have been 30 min on-line drop-in sessions taking place and these will continue with 3 sessions per month planned, plus, ad-hoc ones as required.</p> <p>Using activity data, both individual and general training support is provided as needed. Formal reviews following the initial training are had at 6 weeks, 6 months and annually. An annual in-person refresher training is also held.</p> <p>All OxToG volunteers are also sent a monthly newsletter that includes training updates and defects raised. We welcome and encourage volunteer good news stories, recognising their contributions across all the OxToG activities. These articles help in providing a strong sense of community and appreciation of the work our volunteers do, as well as encourage best practice and potential for crossover OxToG activities.</p>
<p>8. That the Council should review approaches to temporary repairs, including failure patterns on bus routes.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>To strengthen quality assurance, the Council has increased resourcing in this area, with two Highway Officers now dedicated solely to monitoring the quality of completed repairs. Where recurring quality issues arise, they are addressed through formal contractual performance management, which may include financial adjustments and impacts on contractor Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>In addition, the service carried out an end-to-end defect management process review. This programme looked at and has implemented enhancing inspection accuracy, the quality of works instructions, and overall data integrity.</p>

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		<p>In respect to impact of buses, we will explore how we could potentially assess and compare road condition degradation and bus routes to see if there is a correlation or not.</p>
<p>9. That the Council should explore further measures to limit the impact of HGVs on vulnerable roads.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The council accepts the proposal to keep under review additional tools and interventions, including routing measures, improved signage, engagement with freight operators, and strengthened use of planning and development levers where relevant to manage and route HGVs appropriately.</p> <p>With regards to Highways Maintenance specifically, the Council takes into account the need for HGV use on its roads when maintaining them, and looks to use advanced materials and design specifications when developing planned works.</p> <p>Although the use of graphene-enhanced asphalt is still within its infancy, the potential benefits on high-traffic routes to increase resistance to cracking and deformation, extending surface life where Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) loading is greatest.</p>
<p>10. That the Council should undertake a review of the impact of cars being significantly heavier on average than previously and the resultant pressure on roads.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The impact of changes in vehicle weight on road deterioration is primarily being considered at a national level, where research and policy development continue to evolve. Current available evidence does not demonstrate a clear or significant link between heavier cars, including electric vehicles, and increased road damage.</p> <p>Locally, the Council will continue to monitor emerging evidence and remain engaged with national research and guidance. Where appropriate, we will contribute our experience of managing the network to help inform this wider work.</p>

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		In practice, the main drivers of road deterioration in Oxfordshire remain ageing materials, weather-related factors, past levels of maintenance investment, and Heavy Goods Vehicle use.
11. That the Council should consider whether additional inspection capacity is needed and strengthen inspection processes.	Accepted	<p>Work is already underway to review current inspection routes and frequencies to ensure they remain appropriate, targeted, and risk-based. As part of this review, the level of resource required to deliver an effective and resilient inspection regime is being considered, alongside technology and A.I opportunities.</p> <p>In parallel, changes to the structure and associated responsibilities will be considered if deemed to help improve oversight, and enhance the efficiency and consistency of inspections.</p>
12. That the Council should continue to embed learning from repair failures, including materials choices and method improvements.	Accepted	<p>The Council will ensure that reviews and lessons learned are part of continuous service improvement.</p> <p>A key part of this will be planned Pothole Innovation Day, which will bring together a wide range of suppliers and delivery partners to showcase and compare different repair methods and materials. This will give the Council a practical opportunity to see what works best in real conditions, rather than relying on theory alone. The day will also help encourage collaboration and open discussion about what has and hasn't worked in the past. Feedback from operational teams will be gathered and used to improve future approaches, with the outcomes helping to update our standards and ensure we are using the most effective, durable and value-for-money solutions. Overall, this approach will support a more consistent and proactive way of improving repairs over time.</p>