

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

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

Issue: Circular Economy Strategy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations

Date response requested:² 18 June 2024

Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should arrange for improved communications, particularly about reuse, at Household Waste and	Accept	Oxfordshire has one of the highest recycling rates in England, and also one of the lowest residual waste arisings/head. This means residents are good at recycling, but also not producing waste in the first place. To support residents Oxfordshire County

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

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<p>Recycling Centres and in publicity about the same;</p>	<p>Council (OCC) has an active presence on social media, providing regular hints, tips and information on how people can reduce, reuse and repair, run events with the district councils like Oxfordshire reuses, have a look up tool on our website – the waste wizard, that tells residents where an item can be repaired or donated before providing information on which bin it goes in.</p> <p>OCC has also supported the Community Action Group network for over 20 years. That support has helped 4 libraries of things to be established across the county enabling people to borrow rather than buy items which they do not need that often, and in 2023/24 over 260 repair events were held enabling residents to source free or low cost repairs for electricals, textiles and bikes.</p> <p>At HWRCs charity permits are granted to those reusing household goods to enable them to easily and legally dispose of items that they cannot reuse, and reusable goods deposited at the HWRCs are taken to be sold by our contractor out of county.</p> <p>In response to this recommendation we will ensure that we do further promotion of the waste wizard on site, and advertise the repair café website near the electricals recycling bins at HWRC sites.</p> <p>Oxfordshire based reuse will form part of the next HWRC contract (to start in Oct 2027). Our sites are currently very space constrained and do not have the room required for onsite reuse (and associated parking), we will seek to incorporate onsite reuse as we deliver our HWRC infrastructure strategy and expand or replace sites, and investigate offsite, in county, reuse until that is possible.</p>
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<p>2. That the Council should ensure that the outworking of the Circular Economy Strategy results in reduced costs and can demonstrate the scale of savings achieved;</p>	<p>Partially accept</p>	<p>When fully embedded, the transition of OCC to a Circular Economy will support a fair economy, keeping resources local, driving economic resilience and generating jobs and skills for people within Oxfordshire, it will help to create healthier and more connected communities, supporting residents to be independent and healthier for longer, it will enable a more resilient council, less exposed to global market fluctuations, and it will help us meet our net zero goals, reducing the impact of a changing climate on our residents. A circular council helps us become a place shaper of choice and meet our doughnut economic aspirations, ensuring that the needs of residents are met within planetary limits.</p> <p>This transition will ultimately result in stronger, healthier and more resilient localities and OCC delivering both savings and cost avoidance outputs. However, it will take time and investment to reach this state. Full transition requires reframing our relationship with 'stuff' on a fundamental level; changing attitudes and approaches so that borrowing, repairing and second hand becomes the norm. This will require sustained national communications whilst competing against private sector organisations that will continue to be keen to get us to purchase more new items.</p> <p>The transition to a Circular Economy will result in savings, however these may not all accrue to OCC, and not all the savings and benefits are currently able to be captured and audited. The metrics to fully measure the impact of the interplay between different interventions and polices are not yet fully developed and validated (for example how a repair café can help increase connectivity within communities, both avoiding waste, and reducing isolation and associated public health consequences) and OCC is aiming to link with think tanks and researchers in this</p>
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		<p>space to enable better understanding and quantification of activities.</p> <p>In developing the strategy and action plan officers have been aware of the current state of Local Government finances. Action plan delivery will be based upon business cases so that OCC has visibility of the costs and benefits associated with change.</p>
<p>3. That the Council should work to introduce cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities so that Oxfordshire residents can use Household Waste and Recycling Centres outside the county;</p>	<p>Partially accept.</p> <p>Not totally within our gift to deliver</p>	<p>All of Oxfordshire’s neighbouring local authorities have introduced restrictions on cross border usage of their HWRCs in recent years as part of their own financial planning process.</p> <p>OCC has investigated the opportunities around joint working to allow our residents to continue to use sites outside of Oxfordshire for free, but this has not been financially possible to achieve at the current time. We remain open to discussions and are happy to explore ideas to achieve sustainable and best value services for Oxfordshire residents, while being mindful of both our financial situation, and that of other parties. Any changes will be subject to an EQIA and CIA and a full business case to demonstrate benefits and costs.</p>
<p>4. That the Council should make explicit its role in the Circular Economy Strategy as a lead partner and set out how it will build partnerships both within the county and across county borders.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>OCC has already attended a Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting to discuss the development of a countywide strategy and are working with the Local Enterprise Partnership to determine how both Doughnut Economics and the Circular Economy can be embedded into their programme. As part of the Pan-regional Partnership we have worked to update the environmental principles including those that underpin a Circular Economy approach. As a county authority OCC is one of the leaders in this sphere and is keen to keep innovating as we transition.</p>

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		<p>Through the ORWP and our role on several national working groups we will continue to promote the circular agenda, and the role that Oxfordshire, and other Local Authorities can have in shaping the narrative.</p>
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