

CABINET
21 January 2025

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT
NOVEMBER 2024

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Note the report and annexes.
 - b) Approve the virement requests in Annex B-2a and note the requests in Annex B-2b
 - c) Approve the creation of a new reserve to support costs associated with Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation and the transfer of £5.0m to the reserve.
 - d) Approve the transfer of £3.0m from Adult Services to the Budget Priorities reserve.

Executive Summary

2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The [2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) sets out the Council's ambitions. It also shows the priority activities for the current financial year.
3. This report presents the November 2024 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
4. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:
 - i. Annex A – Performance
 - ii. Annex B – Finance
5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target, Amber for the last two consecutive months or more). The full performance report is included at Annex A.

Amendments to Measures:

6. **OCC10.06 Overall customer satisfaction rates for standard Registration Service** has been moved to service level. Performance of this measure over the last three years has been consistently exceeding the target set, and therefore this measure does not allow the Council to show progress in this area. As part of the business planning process all KPIs are being reviewed and developed for 2025/26.

7. **OCC10.07 Overall customer satisfaction rate for Coroners Inquest Service** has been moved to service level. Performance of this measure over the last three years has also been consistently exceeding the target set, and therefore this measure does not allow the Council to show progress in this area. As part of the business planning process all KPIs are being reviewed and developed for 2025/26.
8. **OCC9.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire** has been moved to service level.

Measures where the data is unavailable:

9. **OCC10.03 Overall customer satisfaction rate for the Customer Service Centre – telephony:** As per last month, the customer satisfaction score (CSAT) process has been placed on hold, while the service embeds the new Zoom system. The Customer Service Centre is designing a new measure to be reported on from 2025/26.
Zoom has been implemented as the new omnichannel contact centre platform, replacing 8x8. The system went live with voice only on 8th September, with further functionality and contact methods coming in the near future. The implementation of Zoom will give the Council greater insight and data capabilities which will improve the customer journey and experience, in line with the customer experience strategy, whilst also improving efficiencies.

Performance Overview

10. The Outcomes Framework for 2024/2025 reports on the council’s nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the Customer Service Centre and measures included in the council’s Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities comprises monthly, quarterly, termly, six-monthly and annual measures which may change as the year progresses. At the appropriate period, relevant measures will be included in the report.
11. As at the end of November 2024 the measures were rated as follows:

November 2024	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data Unavailable		Number of complaint measures where no complaint received or open within time*		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Monthly	14	46.7%	5	16.7%	0	0%	6	20.0%	1	3.3%	4	13.3%	30	100%
Total	14	46.7%	5	16.7%	0	0%	6	20.0%	1	3.3%	4	13.3%	30	100%

Table 1: Summary of November 2024 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin. This table does not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). *This column refers only to complaint measures where there were no complaints received or complaints were still open within timescale.

- a) A total of 30 measures reported in November 2024 (Table 1), consisting of:
- 14 measures rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
 - Five measures rated as Amber (missing the target by a narrow margin), of which three were Amber for 2+ months.
 - Zero measures rated as Red (missing the target by a significant margin).
 - Six measures rated as Monitoring only (No target).
 - One measure as Data unavailable.
 - Four measures as no data due to no complaints being received and within timeframe.

12. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the fourth of 2024/2025. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year, please note the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year. Any complaints measures that do not receive a complaint within the reporting period are removed for reporting purposes.

Reporting month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only / No data		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
April 2024	13	48%	3	11%	2	7%	9	33%	27
May 2024	22	58%	6	16%	2	5%	8	21%	38
June 2024	35	64%	7	12%	2	4%	11	20%	55
July 2024	22	55%	6	15%	4	10%	8	20%	40
August 2024	15	52%	5	17%	2	6%	7	24%	29
September 2024	43	64%	9	14%	7	10%	8	12%	67
October 2024	18	60%	4	13%	1	3%	7	24%	30
November 2024	22	58%	6	16%	3	8%	7	18%	38

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025. *April, June, August and October measures do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). This table does not include complaint measures where no complaints were received in the reporting period.

- b) There are three measures reporting as Red for the reporting period.

Performance measures reporting Red for November 2024
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings
OCC11.06 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures November 2024 Reporting Period.

c) This table indicates the direction of travel of measures compared to October 2024.

Status changes – October to November 2024	
Red to Green	OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales
Amber to Green	OCC11.05 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (Schools / Early years)
Red to Amber	Not applicable
Green to Amber	OCC10.04 Answer 80% of calls to the Customer Service Centre within 30 seconds exclude Social Healthcare Team (SHCT)
	OCC10.13 The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre
Amber to Red	Not applicable
Green to Red	Not applicable

Table 4: Change in Performance across October to November 2024.

Performance Exceptions

13. This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (*consecutive for two months or more*) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focuses on six exceptions, three measures have Red ratings, and three measures have Amber ratings for two months or more.

Priority OCC01: Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our activities.

This priority has two measures being reported in November 2024: one (50%) is reporting as Green and one (50%) is reporting as an Amber exception.

Measure	October Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Amber	Amber	Paul Fermer

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exception - November 2024

OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted

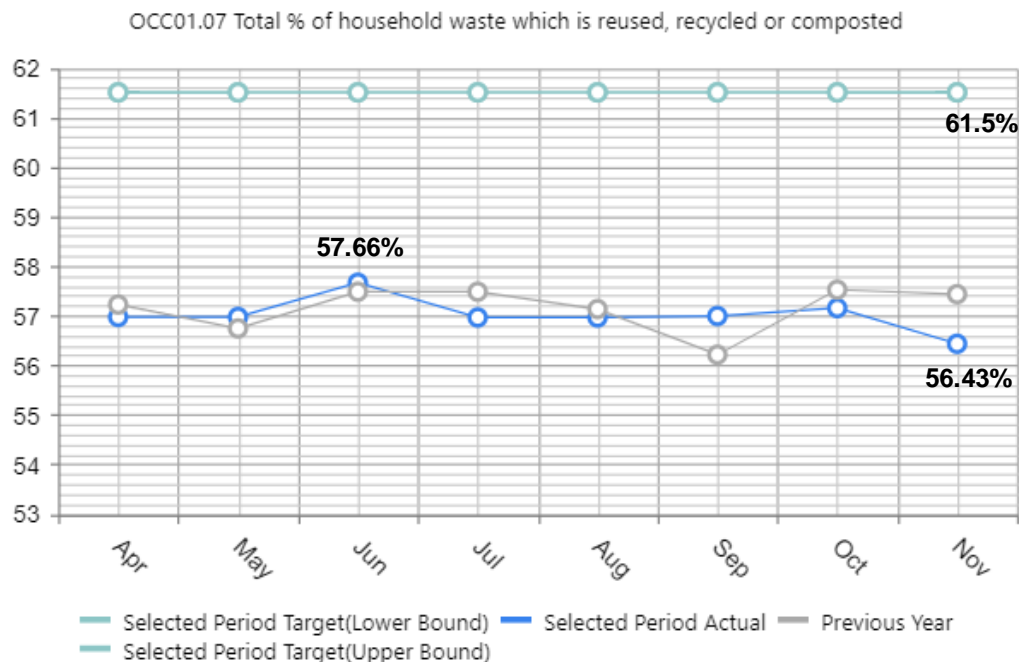


Figure 1: OCC01.07 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year.

The Service continues to wait for policy guidance from DEFRA. There is no indication from government when this will occur. The target remains at 61.5%.

Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system

This priority has five measures being reported in November 2024: two (40%) are reporting as Green and two (40%) are reporting as Amber exceptions. One measure (20%) is reported as monitoring only.

Measure	October Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller

Table 6: Priority OCC04 Measure Exception – November 2024

OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request

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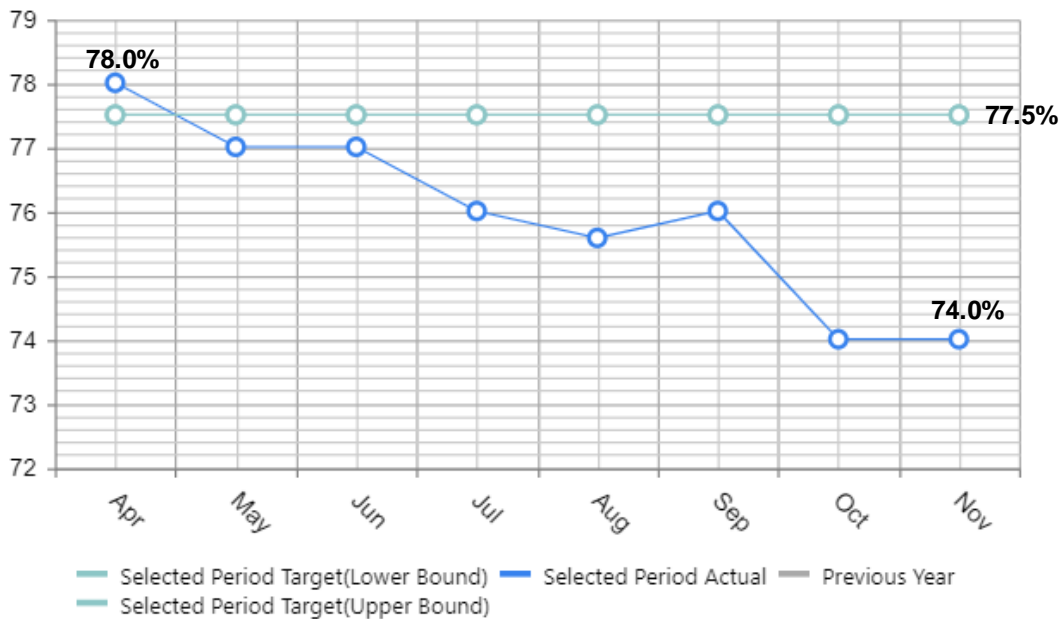


Figure 2: OCC04.01 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The percentage of residents who received reablement, that needed no on-going care has remained at 74%, below the national target 77.5%.

The council is showing significant improvements each financial year and by expanding the criteria of those who are able to access this service, we have increased the number of people who receive this service and therefore, increasing the care we are providing to residents.

In the first 8 months of this year 1,775 people have completed reablement compared with 1,437 in the same period last year 2023/2024 (an increase of 24%). 1,310 people who have used the service were completely independent (compared to 1,147 this time last year) and 207 people had reduced care needs compared to 174 people last year. If 21 of the 207 people with reduced care needs had become completely independent, then the measure would be at target.

OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)

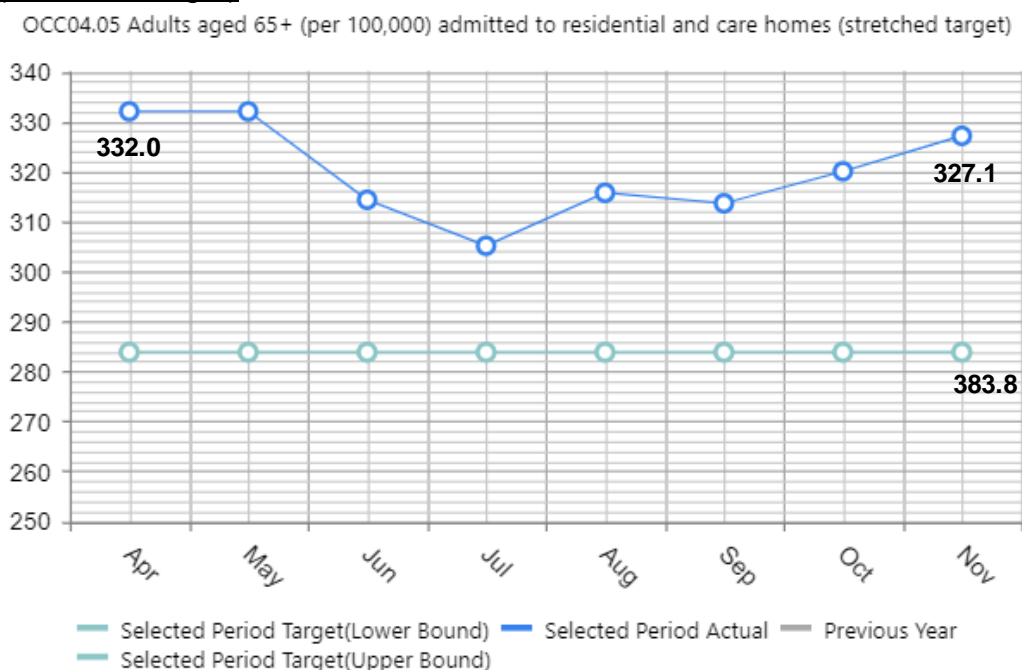


Figure 3: OCC04.05 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

In November, the rate of adults aged 65 and over admitted to residential and care homes in Oxfordshire was 327.1 per 100,000 residents, much lower than the national average of 560.8 and lower than Oxfordshire's rate in 2022/23 (357.7).

Since April 2024 the rate of adults admitted to residential and care home has decreased from 332.0 in April to 327.1 per 100,000.

The target set for this measure is provided as part of the Better Care Fund (BCF), which is a stretched target, based on our previous year's performance. This target would place the Council in the 10% of all top performers nationally.

Priority OCC11: Running the business

This priority has 12 bi-monthly measures being reported in November 2024: eight (67%) are Green, one (8%) Amber, and three (25%) Red.

Measure:	Sept Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.06 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment – Corporate debtors	Amber	Amber	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 7: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - November 2024.

Please refer to 'Financial Position' Section and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

Performance Highlights

14. This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering the council's strategic priorities.

Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

Link: [Communities and Council Win National Recycling Award](#)

Oxfordshire County Council and over 100 community action groups (CAG Oxfordshire) have won the partnership category at the 2024 Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee awards. This award recognises their joint efforts to improve recycling and reduce waste. The partnership has diverted around 2,000 tonnes of material from disposal in 2023/24. The council and CAG Oxfordshire support grassroots initiatives to reduce, reuse, and repair, significantly contributing to environmental sustainability and community resilience.

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Link: [Oxfordshire celebrates Get Online Week 2024](#)

Events were held during the week of 14 October across the county to help people improve their digital skills as part of Get Online Week. The UK's largest digital inclusion campaign, Get Online Week, aims to help tens of thousands of people get online in just one week.

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

Link: [New mental health app for young people in Oxfordshire](#)

Oxfordshire County Council has launched a new mental health support service for young people aged 11 to 18 through the Tellmi app. This app provides 365-day access to a safe space where young people can discuss their feelings anonymously. It offers pre-moderated peer support and in-house counsellors for high-risk users. The app also connects users to over 700 crisis specialists and local support services. This initiative aims to address the increasing mental health needs among school pupils in Oxfordshire, as highlighted by the 2023 OxWell Student Survey.

Support carers and the social care system

Link: [One year on - positive impact of innovative hospital discharge programme revealed](#)

A programme that supports people in Oxfordshire to leave hospital more quickly to continue their recovery at home, has shown significant benefits for residents since its roll out last year. Discharge to Assess is a system partnership programme, involving staff from Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Age UK Oxfordshire, working together to identify the best way of supporting a patient to leave hospital safely and quickly. The latest figures demonstrate it has enabled 23 per cent more people to leave hospital compared to last year.

Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network

Link: [£106,500 of Grants Awarded to Support Community Transport in Oxfordshire](#)

Oxfordshire County Council has awarded £106,500 in grants to nine organisations to support community transport services. These grants, ranging from £2,730 to £21,000, will fund drivers, operating costs, volunteer recruitment and training, and promotion. The recipients include the Volunteer Driver Service, OurBus Bartons, Vale Community Impact, and others. This funding aims to sustain vital community transport services that fill gaps where public transport is unavailable, providing safe, accessible, and cost-effective transport options.

Preserve and improve access to nature and Green spaces.

Link: [People in Oxfordshire urged to have their say on local nature recovery](#)

Oxfordshire residents, landowners, businesses, farmers and other organisations are being offered the chance to help shape the priorities for recovering areas of nature and wildlife across the county. Last year, Oxfordshire County Council was named by the government as a responsible authority for driving nature recovery. The council is one of 48 authorities who have been funded by the government to work with local people and organisations to develop a local nature recovery strategy (LNRS).

Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

Link: [Transforming young people's lives one coffee at a time](#)

After years as a youth worker and seeing firsthand the issues that so many young people face, Tim Parkhouse came up with an idea: a business that provides coffee but also helps at risk young people gain employability skills for the future. With support from Oxfordshire County Council's Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) 55-year-old Tim Pakouse has made his idea a reality. Get Fed CIC (Community Interest Company) launched back in 2022 as a means of supporting young people identified as at particular risk of exploitation or exclusion from school. It aims to help them access employment while developing entrepreneurial skills along the way.

Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit

Link: [Record-breaking monthly event empowers entrepreneurs](#)

Oxfordshire County Council's Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) has organised a record-breaking monthly event that empowers aspiring entrepreneurs. The event, which saw over 100 participants in September, provides a platform for networking, sharing knowledge, and growing businesses. The BIPC offers various free resources and support services, including workshops and one-on-one consultations, to help individuals turn their business ideas into reality. This initiative is part of the council's broader efforts to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

Strategic Risk Management Overview

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. Of the ten strategic risks, all remain static, with the same scoring as reported in October 2024.







Status Indicator	Status Description
	Residual risk rating is high (Score 16 and above)
	Residual risk rating is medium (Score 10 - 15)
	Residual risk rating is low (Score 1 – 9)
	Residual risk rating has decreased
	Residual risk rating has maintained
	Residual risk rating has increased

Table 7 Strategic Risk Key for November 2024

Risk name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	12	12		→
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15		→
03. HIF1 & HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council.	16	12	12		→
04. Managing Demand across Adults' and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	8	8		→
05. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	20	12	12		→
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16		→
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the council's objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	12	12		→
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25	8	8		→
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	8	8		→
10. Climate Impact	Increasing vulnerability to climate impacts leads to failure of key infrastructure and services with a direct impact on health, safety, environment, and businesses.	25	20	20		→

Table 8 Strategic Risk Overview for November 2024

Financial position

18. As shown below there is a forecast service area overspend of £4.3m. This has reduced by £1.8m compared to the position reported to Cabinet in November 2024. After taking account of an underspend against budgets held for contingency and inflation, additional interest receivable on balances held by the council and anticipated capital financing costs, the overall position is a forecast underspend of £8.5m.

	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 %	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Adult Services	250.1	250.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	200.6	201.9	1.3	0.7%	3.5	-2.2
Environment & Highways	69.4	70.2	0.8	1.2%	0.6	0.2
Economy & Place	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.7	29.4	0.7	2.3%	0.7	0.0
Public Health & Communities	12.6	12.8	0.2	1.6%	0.0	0.2
Resources and Law & Governance	57.8	59.1	1.3	2.3%	1.3	0.0
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	8.1	8.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Service Areas Total	628.8	633.1	4.3	7.9%	6.1	-1.8
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	21.3	17.9	-3.5	-16.2%	-3.5	0.0
Interest on Balances	-10.7	-15.3	-4.6	43.5%	-3.9	-0.7
Contingency	7.5	7.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Pay Inflation	14.4	9.7	-4.7	-32.8%	0.0	-4.7
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-55.5	-55.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-15.4	-28.2	-12.8	83.3%	-7.4	-5.4
Net Operating Budget	613.5	605.0	-8.5	-1.4%	-1.3	-7.2
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-613.5	-613.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Forecast Year End Position	0.0	-8.5	-8.5	-1.4%	-1.3	-7.2

Table 9 Finance overall forecast position

Service Areas

19. The breakeven position for Adult Services reported to the November Cabinet remains unchanged. Due to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) now funding their share of the section 117 aftercare support costs for older mental health service users, this is after taking account of a proposed contribution of £3.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve. This will be used to support future risks within social care.
20. The forecast overspend of £3.5m for Children's Services has reduced by £2.2m since the position reported in November 2024 due to a reduction in the staffing budgets forecast overspend and underspends noted in investments. There are still risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
21. The forecast overspend for Environment & Highways has increased by £0.2m compared to the position in November because of increased waste tonnages. There is still a £2.2m pressure in Network Management relating to the underachievement of lane rental income savings, offset by a £1.6m underspend in Highways maintenance from a reduction in energy costs from lower energy activity.
22. The forecast breakeven position for Economy and Place remains unchanged.
23. Public Health & Communities are forecasting an overspend of £0.2m due to pressures in the Library Service. Within that a forecast £0.6m underspend against the Public Health grant funding is assumed to be transferred to reserves at year end.
24. The forecast overspend of £0.7m for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety remains unchanged and is due to risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
25. The forecast overspend of £1.3m for Resources and Law & Governance remains unchanged from the position reported to Cabinet in November and is in part driven by high locum costs in the Legal service.
26. Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience are forecasting a breakeven position.
27. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas savings of £30.1m. 54% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 75% are forecast to be delivered.

Budgets Held Centrally

28. £6.5m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget has been used to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green Book pay award. £1.9m will be held to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts when they are recruited to, £1.3m is proposed to be used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve. This leaves a one - off underspend of at least £4.7m which has been reflected in the forecast. The on-going budget that is not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 will roll forward. £3.5m is assumed to be used to fund the anticipated

pay award in 2025/26.

29. £3.7m of the £7.4m on-going funding held in the contingency budget is proposed to be used to fund a one-off contribution to a new reserve intended to support costs related to Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation. The remaining balance is being held to meet potential risks around demand increases in Adults and Children's Services in the remainder of the financial year. If these do not materialise there would be a further underspend of £3.7m by year end.
30. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the forecast underspend, balances are currently forecast to be £10.8m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2024.
31. The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £28.4m, £7.1m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £84.2m at 31 March 2025.

Financial Implications

32. This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2024. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets in 2024/25 and on-going into 2025/26.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer.

Legal Implications

- a) The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.
- b) 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 as at November 2024 performance, risk and finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

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

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

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