

PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 SEPTEMBER 2025

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT & CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT (FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

Report by Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

- consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet.

Executive Summary

2. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a constitutional responsibility to scrutinise 'corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting.'
3. The Cabinet is informed of the Council's performance via the Business Management and Monitoring Report (BMMR). To aid the ability to scrutinise, the Committee has agreed to focus on Children's Services in September. The next meeting is expected to focus on Environment & Highways.
4. To reflect this focus an abridged version of the BMMR as at the end of 2024/25, plus the summary finance position reported to Cabinet in July 2025 is provided as Annex 1a. Information regarding capital expenditure is included below. Information on performance and risks can be found in Annex 2 & 3.

Background

5. The paper reports on the Council's performance in terms of finance, delivery and risk, including detail at a service level. The 2024/25 Outturn report BMMR report submitted to Cabinet was considered on 17 June 2025, containing data up to March 2025. To support a focus on Children's Services, there are only excerpts relating to the service included here. In that respect, the report is the same as that considered by Cabinet on 17 June 2025 with updates on the Finance position for 2025/26 consistent with the report to Cabinet in July 2025.

Performance

6. Committee members should be aware that they are being provided with the scorecard of the Council's performance in relating to annual measures and specific measures directly relating to Children's Services (either directly or indirectly through services provided by Public Health) in Annex 2. A summary of the KPIs included in the annex is provided below:

Children's Services

- OCC07.02 Number of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- OCC07.03 % of children we care for placed out of county and more than 20 miles away from home.
- OCC07.04 Number of Children and Young People accessing the Music Service
- OCC07.05 The number of children subject of a child protection plan
- OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for.
- OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks
- OCC07.08 The number of Education Health Care Plans maintained by the local authority.

Public Health

- OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face to face New Birth Visit.
- OCC03.07 Reduce the levels of children overweight and obese in year 6 (NCMP data).
- OCC03.13 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year.

Financial Position

7. As a result of action taken during the year, Children's Services overspent by £0.1m against a budget of £202.1m.
8. Expenditure on High Needs DSG was £36.5m higher than the ringfenced grant funding in 2024/25 and increased the cumulative deficit to £92.3m. Based on the forecast shared with Cabinet in July this will increase to over £130m in 2025/26.
9. Further information about the council expenditure and High Needs DSG in 2024/25, along with an update on the 2025/26 position as at the end of May 2025 is included in Annex 1.

Capital Programme

10. Updates on the Capital Programme are provided in the Capital Monitoring and Outturn Reports to Cabinet.
11. Actual expenditure on pupil places was £26.0m in 2024/25 and is forecast at £59.2m in 2025/26. The **Pupil Place Plan** includes 3 main programmes:

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. The Basic Needs Programme invested £8.1m during 2024/25. This created 140 additional pupil places and 16 additional Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) pupil places. Anticipated spend is £12.0m in 2025/26.

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. The Growth Portfolio programme invested £12.2m during 2024/25. One new school opened during 2024/25 creating 210 additional primary school places. Spend of £38.1m is forecast in 2025/26.

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. The Schools Annual Programmes invested £5.5m, delivering projects mainly through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme. A total of 19 projects were completed during the year, with a further 10 projects on site. The School Structural Maintenance Programme for 2025/26 has highlighted a total of 25 projects to be completed over a two-year programme. A further 33 projects are in various stages of progression of delivery. The latest spend forecast is £8m in 2025/26

12. Projects were also 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 13 primary schools and nine secondary schools enabling disabled pupils to attend their preferred school.
13. Projects in the basic need and growth portfolio 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.

Schools' Energy Loans

14. 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).
15. In 2024/25 the council issued loans totalling £0.3m to seven maintained schools to install retrofit measure such as LED and Solar PV. An additional 18

schools applied for a further £1.0m of which £0.8m is forecasted to be delivered in 2025/26.

Children's Social Care

16. Within the council's **Property Strategy** Corporate Estate Development included the Children's Homes Programme for which Children's Services successfully secured DfE match funding to purchase and refurbish four new children's homes (12 additional beds) at a total cost of £10.450m.
17. A revised delivery date of 31 March 2026 has been agreed with the Department of Education (DfE). It is expected that all four homes will achieve practical completion by December 2025, with occupation to follow pending successful Ofsted registration.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

18. Overall corporate performance supports all the Council's policies and strategic priorities. Whilst the work of Children's Services has cross-cutting input into all the Council's strategic priorities also, its work primarily furthers the Council's ambitions to "Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire", "Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents", and "support carers and the social care system".

Financial Implications

19. There are no additional financial implications beyond those outlined within the appendices to this report.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

20. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a specific responsibility within its terms of reference, under Part 6.1A of the Constitution 5 (1) (a) to scrutinise 'corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting'.
21. There are no additional legal implications beyond those outlined within the appendices to this report.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance:
kim.sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex 1: Abridged Business Management and Monitoring
Report – Finance section – March 2025 + May 2025

Annex 2: Abridged Business Management and Monitoring Report – Performance section – March 2025

Annex 3: Management and Monitoring Report – Strategic Risk Register section – March 2025

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Verity Royle
Financial Planning and Reporting Manager
verity.royle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

August 2025