

**Oxfordshire County Council
Screened Equality Impact Assessment – Opposition Group Budget
Amendment (Labour & Co-operative Group)**

Purpose and scope

This EIA considers equality impacts from the Labour & Co-operative Group's revenue and capital amendments for 2026/27–2030/31, amendments to the 2026/27–2030/31 budget (revenue and capital), to support lawful and informed decision-making under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

N.B: The amendments are currently being screened for their equality impacts. If any of these amendments are included in the final budget, they will be subject to further detailed review to prevent any unintended negative consequences and to identify measures that could minimise potential adverse effects. After all proposals and amendments to the budget have been agreed, thorough Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be carried out before any programmes or policy changes are put into action.

Current Budget Setting Context:

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

Proposals covered

Revenue

- Targeted early-help activity aligned to Marmot principles (including pilot support for Family Help and related services; time-limited public health reserve funding).
- Additional enforcement capacity and associated income changes; work to identify/prioritise rural mobility hubs; a trial of winter gritting for key walking/cycling routes; LCWIP update; School Streets Phase 6 (noting revenue implications).
- Budget movements including reductions to senior management and to contract/third-party spend.

- Additional revenue to support Best Start Family Hubs in areas of greatest need.

Capital

- Reprofiling in favour of pavement and cycleway improvements (including linkages to School Streets revenue in 2027/28); adjustments to LCWIP/public realm pipeline items.

Who is likely to be affected

- Children and families in areas of higher deprivation: potential benefits from early-help activity focused on greatest need and Best Start Family Hubs alignment.
- Pedestrians, cyclists, and people with mobility impairments: potential safety and accessibility benefits from winter route treatment and active-travel investment.
- Rural residents: potential connectivity gains from work on mobility hubs.

Equality impacts

Net direction of impact: likely **positive**, especially where activity is focused on higher-need localities and on safe active travel; precise distribution depends on scheme selection and grant compliance.

Key dependencies/uncertainties

Enforcement-related changes depend on staffing and operational feasibility.

Procedural controls

Apply PSED through standard programme governance; ensure compliance with external grant conditions; use routine equality monitoring and statutory consultation as appropriate. As above, a full EIA will be developed to assess the implications of these amendments if they are agreed as part of the budget.

Conclusion

On balance, the proposals indicate **positive distributional impacts** for families in higher-need areas and for active-travel users, subject to delivery choices and external funding conditions.

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Date: 05/02/2026

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