

This budget amendment is rooted in a simple principle: focus council spending on what matters most to residents, while exercising restraint and common sense in areas where costs have drifted away from frontline priorities.

Across Oxfordshire, the issue residents raise with us more than any other is the condition of our roads. Potholes damage vehicles, undermine safety, and create frustration year after year particularly when winter weather exposes long-standing weaknesses and maintenance backlogs. Our amendment responds directly to that concern by redirecting funding towards highways maintenance, ensuring the council has the resources it needs to act earlier and more effectively.

To achieve this, we have identified a series of sensible savings. We propose a reduction in the council's Communications, Marketing, Engagement & Consultation and Policy Team, the removal of free lunches for councillors, and a scaling back of the carbon action team. In addition to these savings, we propose to use a total of £0.786m one – off funding from the Budget Priorities reserve in 2026/27 and 2027/28. These are measured, proportionate changes that do not affect essential frontline services but do free up funding for areas of genuine public concern.

As a result, our amendment delivers an additional £1.3 million extra per year for pothole repairs and preventative maintenance. This investment is specifically intended to reduce the risk of winter backlogs and to ensure that problems are addressed before they escalate into more costly and disruptive failures.

Alongside this, we are proposing a £200,000 boost to Fire Cadets, spread over two years. Fire Cadets play a vital role in engaging young people, building skills, and supporting future recruitment into the fire service. We believe this investment will strengthen long-term resilience and help reduce the likelihood that future proposals to close fire stations will be considered necessary.

Finally, our amendment introduces a new £50,000 one – off funding pot to provide the opportunity for a Parish or Town council, who may wish to be patriotic at Remembrance, Armed Forces day, or national events, the ability to apply for funding to cover costs for the provision of flags or banners on suitable highway street light columns through a county council approved supplier. While we recognise that symbols can divide opinion, we are unapologetic in our belief that there are moments when showing pride in our country is both appropriate and important.

In summary, this amendment rebalances the budget towards practicality, pride, and public priorities and less spent on bureaucracy and self-promotion, more invested in roads, community safety, and the values residents expect this council to uphold.



Cllr Liam Walker
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