

## Oxfordshire County Council

### Budget and Business Planning 2026/27

#### Overarching climate impact review of Oxfordshire Alliance 2026/27 budget amendments

## Context & Background

1. This document provides an overview of the potential climate action impact of the Oxfordshire Alliance group's proposed budget amendments.
2. As many schemes are in early development, further climate assessment will be undertaken as more detailed business cases are developed through the revenue and capital governance process.

## Revenue Proposals Climate Impact Review

3. Two proposals are included in the budget that would negatively impact the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments and its capacity to contribute to climate adaptation in Oxfordshire:

**3.1 Remove budget for carbon management:** this proposal (2027OA1) removes the budget for carbon emissions management in the council. Removing this budget will stop the current support service for schools' energy efficiency. It will also reduce the strategy function for the council's own energy efficiency and decarbonisation works required to achieve the council's carbon neutrality target by 2030. This proposal could also increase the vulnerability of schools and the council in relation to energy price shocks derived from international fossil fuel price volatility.

**3.2 Reduce Climate Team by 50%:** This proposal (2027OA2) reduces by 50% funding to the Climate Action service of the council. This reduction in funding would significantly reduce the work the council can do to deliver its own estate carbon management plan, and to support reduction of emissions and adaptation to a changing climate in Oxfordshire. Reducing this resource would limit our engagement in the community to leverage climate action. Meeting zero-carbon council policy objectives and implementing adaptation interventions would need to be substantially owned by service directorates. There is a risk that investment would be uncoordinated and lacking in technical advice, increasing costs and putting at risk the council's ability to meet its targets. This proposal would also reduce the council's capacity to work with partners and communities, reduce resource to respond to planning applications, and reduce the council's work to support investment in a low carbon economy.

4. Proposals have been made within the programme that have clear potential to support the **adaptation to climate change impacts**.
  - 4.1 **Additional funding for Potholes, Flooding & Drainage:** this proposal (2027OA7) provides additional funding for highways maintenance with a particular emphasis on measures for preventing flooding through focusing on drainage maintenance supporting the council's strategies to increase resilience to a changing climate.