

**Oxfordshire County Council
Screened Equality Impact Assessment – Opposition Group Budget
Amendment (Green Group)**

Purpose and scope

This EIA considers potential equality impacts arising from the Green Group 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

- One-off public health funding for climate-change adaptation/resilience activity directed at households at risk of extreme heat.
- Support for community-based activity addressing climate-related mental and physical health.
- One-off support for development of a community cohesion action plan and associated work.
- Targeted programme to reclaim and maintain footpaths, cycleways and pavements (vegetation clearance, siding-out, defect repair).

Capital

- Reallocation from Watlington Relief Road to: (i) drainage infrastructure investment; and (ii) delivery of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Who is likely to be affected

- Disabled people and people with mobility impairments: access and safety may improve where pavements and paths are made more even and clear.
- Older people and carers: reduced risk of slips/trips and improved everyday mobility from path and pavement works.
- People in heat-vulnerable or poor-quality housing: targeted climate-resilience activities may reduce health risks during extreme heat.
- Residents in areas prone to flooding and active-travel users: drainage upgrades and LCWIP delivery can reduce disruption and support safer active travel.
- Communities at risk of marginalisation, and social isolation: Community Cohesion work provides opportunities for communities to integrate with one another, and for the organisation to better support them.

Equality impacts

Net direction of impact: likely **positive**, with accessibility and safety gains for pedestrians and cyclists, and health protection for heat-vulnerable groups; distribution will depend on the geographic targeting of works and activities. Positive for communities facing issues around social cohesion.

Key dependencies/uncertainties

Timing and location of works drive who benefits first; benefits depend on programme scope and delivery sequencing.

Procedural controls

Apply PSED in commissioning and works planning; use standard consultation/traffic management processes; monitor for differential impacts using routine EDI data where available. 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 the information provided, proposals are compatible with the PSED and indicate potential **positive distributional effects**, subject to delivery choices.

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