

Oxfordshire County Council

Budget and Business Planning 2026/27

Overarching climate impact review of Green Group 2026/27 budget amendments

Context & Background

1. This document provides an overview of the potential climate action impact of the Green 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 have been made in the budget that address the health impacts of climate change and therefore improve climate adaptation and resilience:

3.1 Funding for public health focused climate change adaptation/resilience:

this proposal (2027GG1) entails one-off funding for supporting public health projects in relation to climate change adaptation/resilience. Funded by the Public Health reserve, this fund aims to fund additional home visits and phone assessments to support households at risk of extreme health through measures such as providing advice and offering 'cool packs' where appropriate.

3.2 Support for CAGs to support climate related health impacts:

this fund (2027GG2) taken from the Public Health reserve, aims to support community action groups to develop approaches to address the physical, psychological and mental health impacts of climate change.

4. One proposal has been made that has the potential of supporting resident's ability to choose to reduce car trips and therefore contributes to the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, particularly its target of achieving a net zero transport network by 2040:

4.1 Reclaim footpaths, cycleways and pavements:

this proposal (2027GG4) intends to provide specific funding aimed at maintaining infrastructures for pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities to ensure paths and pavements

are in a safe and usable state through actions such as vegetation clearance, siding-out and repair of uneven surfaces and defects.

Capital Proposals Climate Impact Review

5. A proposal has been made that has the potential to positively impact the council's commitment to achieve a net zero county by 2050 and that may impact on the **OCC Local Transport and Connectivity plan target to achieve a net zero transport network by 2040**. Through the proposed redirection, this proposal may also improve climate adaptation resilience:

5.1 Defunding Watlington Relief Road (WRR) to increase Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and Drainage Infrastructure funding:

through the redirection of funding, this proposal aims to substantially increase funding for Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and for Drainage Infrastructure. The proposal is to redirect funds allocated to Watlington Relief Road in 2025/26 and 2026/27 to LCWIP and Drainage Infrastructure. The climate impact assessment of the WRR was conducted in the [CIA of budget 2025/26](#) and it was assessed then that the scheme had a risk of induced traffic (although assessed by an external contractor to be minimum) and mitigation is planned to ensure this does not happen through town centre redesign and potentially other measures. The scheme also necessarily will have embodied emissions related with the construction of the road itself, which may be mitigated through the use of a contractor with a carbon management accreditation (PAS2080). The CIA also noted that the proposed scheme will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, enhancing active travel options, as well as deliver a new coach drop-off and pick-up facility that will serve Icknield Community College – and, in doing so, remove coach movements from the local highway network within the central area of Watlington, improving air quality.

The impact of this proposed redirection of funds may be net positive because: 1) The increase in availability of funding for LCWIPs would increase the Council's ability to meet its target of a net zero transport network by 2040; 2) The increase in funding for drainage infrastructure could improve resilience to climate change; 3) If the funding redirection resulted in the WRR scheme not being constructed, negative risks including any potential for minimal induced traffic would be avoided. However, negative impacts in air quality in Watlington town centre are likely to persist, since the objective of the WRR was to move motorist emissions out of the town. 4) If the WRR scheme is not developed, the embodied emissions of the scheme would also be avoided. Alternative active travel infrastructure would also have embodied emissions, but these have a substantially lower carbon footprint per meter than motor-vehicle roads.