

CABINET – 24 FEBRUARY 2026

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

<p>1. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY</p> <p>In the document it states:</p> <p><i>‘Central government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, recognising much of this reduction must happen before 2030.</i></p> <p><i>The framework reiterates key commitments from the strategic plan: that the council aims to be carbon neutral in its direct operations by 2030 and that it is committed to enabling a net-zero Oxfordshire well ahead of 2050.’</i></p> <p>The excellent LTCP Annual Monitoring Report 2024-2025 in Annex B lists a depressingly long list of Oxfordshire’s performance that in key respects is going in the wrong direction. For</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) sets out the legally binding nature of the UK’s target to reach net zero by 2050. Oxfordshire County Council’s (OCC) countywide emissions target is consistent with the UK government’s stated ambitions regarding climate action.</p> <p>The updated Climate Action Framework represents significant progress in the delivery of climate action compared to OCC’s first framework in 2020. It outlines programmes including support for the green economy, countywide domestic retrofit, climate adaptation and communication and engagement. It also has a strong focus on the wider benefits of delivering climate action, including health and wellbeing, energy security and economic resilience.</p> <p>The LTCP monitoring report for 24/25 shows a varied picture across the county with the city on the whole performing well and more challenge in the less densely urban centres such as market towns. The pandemic significantly impacted travel behaviour, which is still being analysed. Car ownership is down by 3% since 2019, and overall vehicle miles have decreased by 5%. Additionally, the city’s congestion charge has reduced car use, and the council’s active travel capability rating has improved, making it one of only 11 areas to make this grade nationally.</p>
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example, comparing targets with outcomes:

Target Replace or remove 1 out of 4 current car trips by 2030. Outcome Between 2019 and 2025 the number actually rose 8.2%

Target Reduce car vehicle miles driven in Oxfordshire by 20%. Outcome Between 2019 and 2024 it only fell 5%

Target Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week: Outcome Between 2019 and 2023 it fell 21% to 490,000.

I could list other shocking realities. My question is:

How do the actions outlined in the Framework, with no real change from the earlier Frameworks, help to achieve the admittedly ambitious targets set out previously, or do they need to be scrapped and revised considerably in the light of the data in the Annual Monitoring Report?

2. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY

How will the in-house team, focusing on social value inside the county, learn from other authorities in assessing the social value of work undertaken by entities whose activities extend far beyond the county, but which also employ staff inside the county? Too narrow a focus on the county risks overlooking the wider benefits from council activities.

COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND TRANSFORMATION

We have consulted a number of councils, including but not limited to County Durham, Essex CC, and Cambridgeshire and learnt what works and what doesn't work for them. This enabled us to build a whole market picture of social value in local government and ensure Oxfordshire is on the best path. We will continue to learn over time and benchmark ourselves internally amongst our peers, and with the policy including a periodic review, this allows us to adapt to changing best practise, legislation and local need.

The new policy is deliberately flexible, using a small set of local social value priorities as themes, rather than fixed or prescriptive measures. For each procurement, service areas select the priorities that best fit the contract and the market, and tailor the social value questions accordingly. This allows suppliers, particularly larger or multi-regional organisations, to propose relevant, achievable local actions, rather than being forced into a one-size-fits-all approach. Social value is therefore assessed on what is realistic and deliverable through that specific contract, while still aligning with Oxfordshire's priorities.