

Agenda

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Scrutiny Committee

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This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Tuesday 1 September 2020**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Zoom - Remote meeting**

For further information please contact:

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Committee Membership

Councillor Andrew Gant (Chair)

Councillor Dr Joe McManners (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Councillor Lubna Arshad

Councillor Shaista Aziz

Councillor Tiago Corais

Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Richard Howlett

Councillor Pat Kennedy

Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Craig Simmons

Apologies and notification of substitutes received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting. Substitutes for the Chair and Vice-chair do not take on these roles.

Agenda

	Pages
1 Apologies for absence	
2 Declarations of interest	
3 Chair's Announcements	
4 Minutes	7 - 12
<p>Recommendation: That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 July 2020 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.</p>	
5 Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	13 - 34
<p>Cabinet, at its meeting on 09 September, will consider a report on the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy. This item provides the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the report and make recommendations to Cabinet if it wishes.</p> <p>Marie Tidball, Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities; Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager; and Richard Wood, Strategy & Service Development Manager, have been invited to attend for this item.</p>	
6 Air Quality Action Plan	35 - 86
<p>Cabinet, at its meeting on 09 September, will consider a report on the Air Quality Action Plan. This item provides the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the report and make recommendations to Cabinet if it wishes.</p> <p>Councillor Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford; and Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager have been invited to attend for this item.</p>	

7 Work Plan and Forward Plan (including selection of review group topics)

87 - 118

The Scrutiny Committee operates within a work plan which is agreed at the start of the Council year the latest version of which is attached. The work plan is driven to a very large extent by the Cabinet Forward Plan. A summary of the latest version of the Forward Plan is attached.

The Committee is also asked to consider the attached report concerning potential review group topics to inform selection of the next topic. The report also deals with related administrative matters.

8 Report back from Panel representatives and on recommendations to Cabinet from the Committee and its Panels.

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Since the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, the Housing & Homelessness Panel has met. Councillor Shaista Aziz will provide a verbal update.

At its meeting on 15 July, Cabinet received the Committee's recommendations in relation to Local Growth Funded Workspace Projects and the Finance & Performance Panel's recommendations in relation to Social Value and the Q4 Integrated Performance Report. Copies of Cabinet's responses to those recommendations are attached.

At its meeting on 12 August, Cabinet received the recommendation of the Housing & Homelessness Panel in relation to the Housing Delivery Plan. A copy of the Cabinet's response to the recommendation is attached.

9 Draft Annual Report

Each year Scrutiny provides an Annual Report on the activity of the Scrutiny function over the last civic year. The Committee is recommended to read the draft text of the 2019/20 Annual Report and to agree it having raised any necessary amendments.

The draft report will be issued as a supplement.

10 Dates of future meetings

Meetings are scheduled as followed:

Scrutiny Committee

- 06 October
- 03 November
- 01 December

Standing Panels

- Housing & Homelessness: 03 September, 08 October, 05 November
- Finance & Performance: 02 September, 29 September, 14 December
- Companies Scrutiny: 14 September, 14 December

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

Information for those attending

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Please be aware that you may be recorded during your speech and any follow-up. If you are attending please be aware that recording may take place and that you may be inadvertently included in these.

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Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

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Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". The matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Monday 6 July 2020

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Committee members present:

Councillor Gant (Chair)

Councillor Azad (for Councillor Howlett)

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Simmons

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Corais

Councillor Fry

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Also present:

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Carolyn Ploszynski, Planning Policy and Place Manager

Matthew Peachey, Economic Development Manager

Andrew Humpherson, Regeneration Manager

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors McManners and Howlett sent apologies.

19. Declarations of interest

None.

20. Chair's Announcements

None.

21. Minutes

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020 as a true and accurate record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 June had been revised in accordance with the wishes of the meeting on 17 June and were also before the Committee for approval. The Committee approved the revised minutes as a correct record.

22. Report back on recommendations

The Chair was pleased to report Cabinet's support for the bulk of the Committee's recommendations in relation to both the report on "Covid-19 update and work areas moving forward" and the "Annual Update Report on the Corporate Plan 2016-20". Similarly, Councillor Fry, in his capacity as Chair of the Finance and Performance Panel, was pleased to report Cabinet's support for the Panel's recommendations in relation to the "April Budget Monitoring Report."

23. Feedback from Panel representatives

Councillor Fry, in his capacity as Chair of the Companies Scrutiny Panel, drew attention to some of the key issues arising from its recent meeting. In relation to Oxford Direct Services (ODS) there had been discussion about its trading performance and the steps being taken to address a high sickness rate, the latter was partly but not wholly attributable to Covid-19. A recommendation from this discussion was the desirability of ensuring that the social value of capital projects was taken into account when commissioned from ODS by the Council. In relation to Barton Park there had been recognition of the detrimental effect Covid-19 had had on the value of some houses. In relation to Oxwed, a report was scheduled for Cabinet in November which would set out the phasing of this important project. In relation to the Housing Company, the Panel had been pleased to welcome its new Managing Director and there had been discussion about the potential merits of off-site development of buildings.

More generally he noted that the scale of the task for the Companies Scrutiny Panel (dealing with 4 companies at one meeting) was such that consideration might usefully be given to dividing the task amongst two panels in the future.

24. Local Growth Funded Workspace Projects

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council, introduced the report. The present economic situation was taking its toll. The funding described in the report provided a timely opportunity to refurbish some of the Council's city centre commercial properties which were in urgent need of attention. This would, among other things, support the Council's ambition to support small local businesses and start ups.

Matt Peachey, Economic Development Manager, said Oxford's city centre business growth lagged behind some comparable city and town centres. This was probably partly attributable to its principal dependence on just two sectors, education and

tourism, the latter was likely to suffer particularly as a result of Covid-19. Encouraging a more diverse range of enterprises was therefore important and this in turn required the development of flexible and accessible work spaces of good quality which were relatively affordable. The funding sought by the report would unlock the potential of the sites described in the report. Preparatory work was well advanced and the projects were achievable in the timescales demanded by the conditions associated with the funding. It was noted that the timescales referred to in paragraph 27 were in need of updating and this would be done before the report went to Cabinet.

The report referred to a vacant site adjacent to Standingford House. The Committee was keen that sight should not be lost of its possible use for housing rather than office accommodation. Officers confirmed that while the focus would be on office accommodation, both sites would be looked at in their entirety and consideration given to the most beneficial mix of commercial and housing use. It was also confirmed that the views and needs of the buildings' current tenants would be fully taken into account and that social value would be an important consideration as the projects develop.

The Committee were concerned lest the market for the type of accommodation described might not be buoyant enough to make the proposal economically sustainable. Officers said that while there was still a great deal of uncertainty about the market, current indications were that it would be sustainable and the project would be supported by good commercial advice throughout.

It was in the Council's interests that the improvement of these properties was on a sound commercial basis; it would not be appropriate for them or parts of them to be made available for community use.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed that a recommendation should be made in relation to the brief for the development at Standingford House, Cave St. The brief should include the adjacent Council owned land and that it was for mixed business/residential use.

25. Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2020-2025

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, introduced the report which fulfilled a statutory requirement. The report detailed the many planning policy documents, which will supplement the 2036 Plan. The report also drew attention to the intention that the 2040 plan should align with neighbouring local authorities' plans. This would, in turn, facilitate the broad alignment of plan end dates and the evidence base of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 which is broadly being worked up in key 10 year tranches. This would save a considerable amount of time and effort on technical work necessitated by plans which were not in sync with one another at the time of examination.

He noted that the report had been written in advance of an anticipated Government announcement about plans for significant changes to planning legislation, potentially the most profound changes since the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.

The Committee were concerned that some current policies, such as zero carbon housing, might be at risk through reviewing the Local Plan. Carolyn Ploszynski, Planning Policy & Place Manager said that any review of a Local Plan would always

be underpinned by the intention to build on existing policies rather than undermining them. The main risk would come from national changes introduced by the Government which might, for example, change the ability to set local targets for policies such as carbon reduction. It wasn't possible, therefore, to say that the Council's current policies would necessarily be protected forever.

The Committee questioned whether the Technical Advice Notes (TANS) might be used to add further elements to the Oxford Local Plan 2036 policies, which the Council thought desirable. The Planning Policy & Place Manager said TANS could not be used to add requirements to adopted policies but, rather, to provide advice about how a policy requirement could be met. This can include drawing attention to best practice.

The report contained references to potential means of reviewing CIL arrangements which would be driven, in due course, by the need to secure the most effective approach in securing developer contributions towards infrastructure costs in Oxford.

The Committee had no recommendations to make in relation to this report.

26. Longlist of potential items for Scrutiny Committee review

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report which set out proposals for the Committee's work plan for the remainder of the Council year, including potential subjects for review groups. He reminded the Committee of the 'TOPICC' methodology for ranking proposed subjects. The methodology had been tweaked slightly to take account of the consequences of Covid-19 and the temporary focus on reports destined for Cabinet. The Committee was recommended to select those subjects with a TOPICC rating of 8 or above.

The Chair noted that the subject of "Tourism Review Group Update" was rated 7, just below the proposed threshold for inclusion. However, given the importance of tourism to the City and the detrimental consequences of Covid-19 to it, he proposed that it should be included in workplan nonetheless.

The Committee agreed that the significance of the "Climate Emergency Review Group Update" warranted the promotion of Climate Emergency to be the subject for a further review group. The scope of original review had had to be constrained and limited to buildings. Consideration of a further review could start with the original scope and then be honed down to the extent necessary.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations contained in the report, subject to the addition of the two items mentioned above.

27. Dates of future meetings

Scrutiny Committee

- 04 August 2020
- 01 September 2020

Standing Panels

- Housing & Homelessness: 03 August
- Finance & Performance: 29 September
- Companies Scrutiny: 14 September

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm

Chair Date: Tuesday 4 August 2020

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To: Cabinet
Date: 9 September 2020
Report of: Head of Financial Services
Title of Report: Review of Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek approval to amend the current Discretionary Housing Payment Policy and to note the trends in expenditure detailed in the report.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Marie Tidball, Board Member for Supporting Local Communities
Corporate Priority:	Support flourishing communities and foster an inclusive economy
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1. Approve the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
Appendix 2	Case Studies
Appendix 3	Risk Register
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction and background

1. On 12 June 2013 the City Executive Board (CEB) approved a new Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy. The policy made significant changes to the way the Council administered DHPs. The most significant change was that awards would be subject to an agreed action plan to improve the applicant's financial sustainability. Against a backdrop of significant welfare reform and consequent reductions in benefit entitlement, this approach was introduced to ensure that people being supported with DHPs were taking steps to find more sustainable solutions to their situation. Since 2013 the policy has been reviewed regularly to help manage expenditure in line with changes to the DHP grant provided by the Government.
2. Government funding for DHPs has fluctuated in recent years to meet the Department of Work & Pensions' (DWP) assessment of need. This has ranged from a peak of £514,496 to a low of £288,092. The Council's DHP grant is £459,192 for this financial year, an increase from £336,825 in 2019/20.
3. The Welfare Reform Team has reviewed the existing policy in light of the anticipated increase in demand for support as a result of the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. The revised policy is set out in Appendix One to this report.

Expenditure

4. The table below summarises the council's DHP expenditure since 2013.

Table 1 - Annual DHP Expenditure and Grant since 2013-14			
Year	Grant	Expenditure	Percentage of Grant*
2013/14	£525,369	£431,244	82%
2014/15	£514,496	£476,147	92%
2015/16	£288,092	£270,505	94%
2016/17	£376,792	£379,009	101%
2017/18	£509,495	£494,566	97%
2018/19	£405,010	£377,039	93%
2019/20	£336,825	£409,108	121%

* Rounded to nearest whole number

5. In 2019/20 602 DHP applications were made by 383 individual residents. 512 (85%) applications were successful. DHP awards are typically made for short periods to facilitate close joint working between residents and caseworkers but can be renewed, with each renewal counting as a new application, leading to the difference between the number of applications and residents. 121 residents received a second DHP award and 59 a third award in 2019/20.
6. Although it is the Council's intention to award DHP for short periods, 42 residents last year were in receipt of DHP for over one year, and 9 residents for over 2 years. This is a significant reduction on the equivalent figures for 2015/16 when 149 awards were made to residents who had been in receipt of DHP for over a year. This reflects the positive outcomes that residents have been able to achieve whilst engaged with the Welfare Reform Team. Those in receipt of DHP for longer periods of time tend to be residents

with more complex needs, or those with no practical options to change their circumstances.

7. 90 applications were turned down in 2019/20 compared to 154 in 2018-19. The most common reason to turn down applications in the last two years has been that the application “doesn’t meet DHP Policy criteria” and 60 cases were turned down over the 2 year period for this reason. The cases will typically fall within section 2.4 of the DHP Policy, which outlines the circumstances where an award of DHP is not normally intended (see Appendix One).

Reason for refusal	2019/20 Nos	2018/19 Nos
Doesn't meet DHP policy criteria	23	37
Resident has no rent shortfall	17	30
Means tested shortfall only	12	14
Failed to supply requested information	7	11
Can now afford shortfall	8	7

8. Table 3 compares the details of the council’s DHP awards and expenditure by benefit category for all years since 2013/14, when the Benefit Cap and Bedroom Tax were introduced. The category of “Other” relates to circumstances where an applicant is not entitled to full Housing Benefit. This will usually be as a result of having greater income than the minimum level which attracts full Housing Benefit or due to deductions made in respect of non-dependant adults living at the property. The total expenditure for each year in Table 3 doesn’t match the yearly expenditures in Table 1, this is because Table 1 presents expenditure after overpayments of DHP are collected.

Reason For Claim	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Benefit Cap	£213,065	£224,293	£128,180	£237,161	£418,410	£295,313	£261,917
Bedroom Tax	£124,386	£95,135	£40,860	£38,136	£31,037	£40,996	£52,624
Local Housing Allowance	£93,005	£121,441	£83,006	£92,370	£71,532	£83,408	£105,109
Combination of Above	£1,681	£5,410	£1,219	£636	£1,670	£2,584	£9,849
Other	£12,550	£29,870	£17,240	£10,812	£6,591	£20,831	£7,356

9. Clearly the main driver of DHP expenditure for the Council is the Benefit Cap. Since the Benefit Cap was reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 in November 2016, 301 residents have gained an exemption from the Benefit Cap with the support of the Welfare Reform Team, 179 of whom have found work. Payment of DHP allows a resident the time and space to work with the Welfare Reform Team to obtain a benefit which qualifies them for an exemption from the Benefit Cap. Appendix Two to this report contains a couple of case studies which illustrate how the payment of DHP facilitates the Welfare Reform Team to support residents affected by the Benefit Cap.
10. Each DHP award requires an action plan to be agreed so that residents are supported to manage their financial shortfalls themselves. The top five actions agreed for the last two years are shown in the table below. An action plan would not be agreed for awards made for a short fixed period, such as supporting someone as they move into employment. There have only been 22 awards made without conditions in the last two years.

Agreed action	Conditions Totals 2019/20	Conditions Totals 2018/19
Look for work	165	156
Apply for another benefit	181	144
Engage with a specialist support service	66	88
Obtain Debt advice	75	73
Look for smaller accommodation	62	60

Monitoring

11. The consistency of decision making will continue to be monitored by undertaking a check on 10% of all applications, whether successful or unsuccessful. DHP expenditure is also tracked on a weekly basis. On a monthly basis expenditure is reported to management, and a forecast for the annual expenditure is made so that pressures can be identified as early as possible.

Policy Changes

12. Views on policy changes were sought from frontline teams within the Council, as well as the advice sector. The main objective of the DHP policy remains unchanged. This is to provide short term relief to applicants in order to give them time to find more sustainable solutions to their financial arrangements. The following paragraphs outline amendments that have been made to the policy.
13. Paragraph 1.2 of the policy outlines some specific objectives of the DHP policy. The revised version of the policy adds the objective of supporting the transition into permanent accommodation for people housed temporarily as part of the Covid19 pandemic emergency response.
14. Paragraph 2.4 of the policy covers situations in which the Council will not usually award a DHP unless to do so would strongly support the policy objectives. The revised version of the policy adds the situation of overlapping tenancies, where the current tenancy would not be at risk, if the rent for the previous tenancy was not paid.
15. Paragraph 3.3 includes examples of conditions that can be made on DHP awards. The revised version of the policy adds the condition of applying for any other relevant

benefits which would reduce the impact of, or provide exemption from any of the welfare reforms.

Promotion of DHPs

16. The majority of DHP applicants are now in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) which is administered by DWP, instead of Housing Benefit (HB), which is administered by Oxford City Council. This makes it harder to identify people likely to be entitled to a DHP because DWP does not share this data with the Council. The Welfare Reform Team has worked closely with DWP locally, in the form of the Oxford Jobcentre to promote DHPs.
17. The Jobcentre refers residents where a benefit shortfall is identified, or where a household is struggling to pay its rent. A relationship has also been established with the service centre which processes UC claims for Oxford. Service centre staff directly message residents affected by the Benefit Cap to signpost them to the Welfare Reform Team. DHPs are also promoted through partners including the advice sector, and providers of housing support.

Financial implications

18. Oxford's DHP grant from central government for 2020/21 is £459,192. Regulations permit local authorities to spend two and a half times their grant on DHPs and therefore a maximum of £1,147,980 can be spent on DHP, provided the Council funds the shortfall. Where DHP provides financial support for council tenants, subject to approval by the Secretary of State, funds can be transferred from the HRA to fund this. Any surplus grant funds are repaid back to central government at the year end.
19. By making effective use of the Discretionary Housing Payment budget, and targeting awards effectively, the Council will save the costs of placing people in temporary accommodation or dealing with people who are homeless. Typically the cost of placing someone in temporary accommodation can be 18 times that of sustaining a tenancy using DHPs.
20. DHP expenditure up to 20 July 2020 was £137,795 which is 30% of this year's grant. As this is almost a third of the way through the year, expenditure so far this year is within the monthly budget profile of the grant. However demand for DHP's increased in June due to the economic impact of Covid19, and this could increase yet further as the furlough scheme ends and unemployment rises, leading to a significant risk of overspending this year's grant. This new demand is mitigated by the fact that people who were previously in work are protected from the Benefit Cap for nine months.
21. DHP expenditure will continue to be closely monitored over the coming months to assess how the economic impact of the pandemic is changing demand. The new DHP policy objective to support move-on from Covid19 emergency accommodation, outlined in paragraph 13, will be monitored to ensure it has the desired effect in supporting these residents to move into secure accommodation. However, for the majority of residents approaching the council for DHP support not in Covid19 related accommodation it is not possible to reliably determine which have been directly impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic or not, with residents often facing a range of issues impacting on their ability to afford their housing costs. Instead the overall impact of the pandemic on DHP demand will be measured by monitoring the increase in expenditure and number of awards over the period compared to past periods.
22. Last year's DHP grant was overspent by £87,000. This was mitigated by a £60,000 contribution from the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS)

(funded by the Home Office), and £27,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The SVPRS scheme was able to contribute due to households on the scheme receiving DHP awards, with several families significantly impacted by the Benefit Cap. Local Authorities can use funding from the HRA subject to Secretary of States approval to cover the costs of DHPs paid to council tenants. In 2019/20 £89,000 was spent on DHPs within this group. These sources of funding would also be available to mitigate any overspend in the current financial year.

Legal issues

23. The draft policy is within the scope of the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 and The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI2001/1167), and subsequent amendments. Whilst the regulations give a very broad discretion, the Council has a duty to act fairly, reasonably and consistently. Each case must be decided on its own merits, and decision making should be consistent throughout the year.

Risk

24. An evaluation of the risks associated with the DHP policy has been carried out. A detailed Risk Register is attached at Appendix Three.

Equalities impact

25. An initial impact assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix Four. No undue, adverse impacts have been identified.

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Oxford City Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

1. Aims

- 1.1. The overarching objective of this policy is to distribute funding granted under the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme (DHP) in order to prevent homelessness. This will be achieved by providing short term relief to applicants in order to give them time to find more sustainable solutions to their financial arrangements. The policy is also intended to support people who have little scope to change their personal circumstances. Funding provided by this policy is only intended to be used to cover housing costs.
- 1.2. Demand for support through awards of DHP remains high as a result of multiple welfare reforms implemented in recent years, such as the under occupancy criteria in the social sector, the Benefit Cap, and the freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates until the current financial year, plus the continued rise in private sector rents in the city. In addition to the overarching objective of the policy outlined in 1.1, the policy also aims to:
 - alleviate child poverty and keep families together
 - support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life, including young people leaving care; and
 - support the vulnerable in the local community
 - support the transition into work, particularly for people at risk of homelessness and those moving on from hostel accommodation
 - supporting the transition into permanent accommodation for people housed temporarily as part of the Covid19 emergency response
 - support the aims of the Financial Inclusion Strategy

2. Determination of Applications

- 2.1. Applications for DHP awards must be made on the form shown at Appendix 1. The Welfare Reform Team will consider all applications for DHP on their individual merit.
- 2.2. In order to be considered for an award of Discretionary Housing Payment applicants must either be entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit. The exception to this is for residents on Universal Credit moving into temporary accommodation, or specified accommodation, and as a result have a period of no entitlement to either benefits, when they can then be considered for DHP for the period of underlying entitlement.
- 2.3. DHP's can not be awarded in the following circumstances:
 - To top up an award made under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme¹
 - To contribute to the cost of ineligible service charges
 - To assist in paying for rent increases imposed as a result of incurring rent arrears
 - To assist in paying for rent costs arising from the suspension of a Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim

¹ Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides for Local Authorities to make reductions in the amount of Council Tax owed by an individual.

Appendix 1

- To assist in paying for rent costs which arise from the imposition of sanctions or reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These include any reduction made as a result of not complying with work related conditionality, or deductions to recover benefit overpayments, or in arranging maintenance as directed by the Child Support Agency, or breaching a community service order
- To cover the rent for the initial period between making a claim for Universal Credit and having Universal Credit entitlement confirmed

2.4. It is not intended to award DHP in the following circumstances, unless to do so would strongly support the policy objectives outlined above:

- Assistance with moving costs, rent in advance, and deposits (unless moving to more affordable accommodation)
- Shortfalls caused by a non-dependent deduction or housing cost contribution
- Where Capital in excess of £6,000 is held for people of working age, or £10,000 for those of pensionable age
- Where the tenancy was not affordable when it was taken on
- Where the rent charged is of such an amount that the tenancy would still be unsustainable even if realistic steps to improve the household situation were achieved
- Where an applicant has multiple outstanding debts, and has no plans to seek professional debt advice, or to deal with the debt
- Where there is affordable and suitable available alternative accommodation
- Where applicants are not prepared to take steps to reduce or remove their need for DHP, and/or state the period of time they require the DHP
- Where multiple family units or households are living in one property, and another household could be expected to make additional contributions to the rent
- Where overlapping tenancies exist and failing to pay the previous tenancy would not put the current tenancy at risk
- Where fraud has been admitted or proven in relation to claims for Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, Council Tax Benefit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme or Discretionary Housing Payments
- To cover the reduction to Universal Credit awards due to the imposition of third party debt deductions

2.5 In deciding whether to award a DHP, consideration will be given to:

- how the award will meet the policy objectives, with priority being given to:
 - applicants who have limited scope to change their circumstances (e.g. a disabled applicant affected by the under-occupancy rules who has had adaptations made to their property)
- the shortfall between Housing Benefit/ Housing Element of Universal Credit and the rental liability
- any steps taken by the applicant to reduce their rental liability
- any steps taken by the applicant to find work, or increase their hours of work
- the financial and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the applicant, their partner and any dependants and any other occupants of the applicant's home
- the income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home. (All applicants will be required to complete an Income & Expenditure Form.) Where it is felt that expenditure is inappropriate or incompatible with award of a DHP, the applicant will be referred for debt advice or financial capability support
- any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant or their family

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- the level of indebtedness of the applicant and their family
- the exceptional nature of the applicant and his / her family's circumstances
- whether total DHP expenditure is within the legally permitted level of two and a half times the government's contribution
- the possible impact on the Council of not making such an award, e.g. the pressure on priority homeless accommodation
- any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Welfare Reform Team

3 Amount and condition of awards

3.1 The Welfare Reform Team will decide how much to award based on all the circumstances. However, the main determining factor will be a consideration of the applicant's scope for reducing their reliance on DHP's in the future. Where this is possible, awards will usually be made for a maximum of thirteen weeks or three months. If an applicant has limited options for making changes in their circumstances awards will be made for longer periods, of up to 12 months. An award of a DHP does not guarantee a further award at a later date even if the applicant's circumstances have not changed.

3.2 . The start date of the award will normally be:

- the Monday after the Welfare Reform Team receives the written claim for a DHP in cases where the applicant is claiming Housing Benefit; or
- The first day of the current Universal Credit monthly assessment period the applicant is in when their DHP claim is received, where the resident claims UC; or
- the date on which entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit starts; or
- another date, where this fulfils the objectives of this policy better than the dates above

3.3 An award of DHP will have conditionality attached to it in the majority of circumstances. Any conditionality will be linked to increasing the applicant's income, reducing their rental liability or reducing other outgoings. Conditions will be agreed with the applicant, and support will be available to help them achieve them, either from the Council or from partner organisation(s). Examples of types of conditionality could include:

- Attending work related coaching with one of the Council's partners
- Actively looking for work, with or without the support of the Council, or one of our partners
- Applying for any other relevant benefits which would reduce the impact of or provide exemption from any of the welfare reforms
- Registering for housing and bidding for suitable properties in each cycle
- Seeking assistance to manage debts
- Paying rent arrears
- Engaging with specialist support services

The intention of any conditionality is to assist the resident in improving their circumstances; it is not a punitive measure. However an award of DHP can be cancelled if a resident has not undertaken the agreed activity. Where employment is a reasonable outcome for someone, a condition related to moving into work will always be applied.

3.4 The maximum amount of DHP is calculated under the following rules:

- For applicants claiming Housing Benefit, the difference between the weekly Housing Benefit award and the weekly eligible rent

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- For applicants claiming Universal Credit, the maximum award amount is the level of the monthly Housing Element of the residents Universal Credit award, alongside the requirement that they need further support for housing costs

3.5 When making a repeat application for an award, the resident must have met the conditions applied to their previous award, be able to set out what actions they have undertaken as a result of that support, and explain their next steps in order to reduce their reliance on DHP awards. Such applications will require an interview with a Council officer before an award can be made.

3.6 When an application for a DHP is declined, the applicant will still be offered support in resolving their situation, either directly from the Welfare Reform Team, from another Council department, or through a referral to one of the Council's partner organisations.

4 Administration of Payments

4.1 Where the applicant appears to be entitled to another state benefit that they are not receiving, they will be advised to make a claim, and provided with details of other agencies in the city who may be able to help with such a claim. Any DHP will be reviewed in light of the result of this claim.

4.2 The Welfare Reform Team may need to revise an award of a DHP where the applicant's circumstances have materially changed. Any revision to the award will take effect from the same day as any change to the Housing Benefit award, or the start of the relevant Universal Credit assessment period. If a revision of an award leads to an overpayment then steps will be taken to recover this money if it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so.

4.3 A DHP will normally be made payable to the person receiving the Housing Benefit payment or Housing Element of Universal Credit, unless the aims of the policy are better served paying someone else. Where Housing Benefit or HCE is paid to the landlord, and a DHP award is made for more than three months, the Welfare Reform team will review the claim to ensure that payment should continue to be made to the landlord.

4.4 DHP will be paid by the most appropriate means available. This will normally be by BACS transfer. The payment frequency will normally be made in line with payments of Housing Benefit, or four weekly for Universal Credit payments.

4.5 Decisions regarding DHPs will be notified to the applicant within 10 working days of receiving the last piece of information required to determine the application, and will include:

- Reasons for the decision
- The start and end date of the award
- The amount of the award
- Conditions attached to the award
- The applicant's right of review
- Advice that future awards may not be made

4.6 A Senior Officer will review any DHP decision that is disputed by the applicant. If the decision is still upheld, any further dispute must be dealt with through the Council's complaints procedures and ultimately by judicial review.

4.7 Where a resident has a complaint in the way we have applied our policy, they may ask the Local Government Ombudsman to look at their case, after exhausting the Council's own complaints procedure.

5 Fraud

5.1 Oxford City Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a DHP by falsely declaring their circumstances, or providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006. Where the Welfare Reform Team suspects such a fraud may

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have occurred, the matter will be investigated and this may lead to the instigation of criminal proceedings.

6 Monitoring

6.1 Reports will be extracted from the DHP software on a monthly basis to ensure that expenditure is within budget and is correctly profiled to ensure no overspend at the end of the financial year. Overpayments will be reconciled on a monthly basis. A 10% check will be made of all DHP applications, whether successful or not, to ensure that decision making is consistent and complies with this policy.

6.2 The reasons for making a DHP award will be monitored and reported based on the following list:

- Benefit Cap
- LHA Reductions
- Housing Benefit reductions due to under-occupation
- Combination of reforms
- Other

This will be reported back to DWP in accordance with their requirements.

7 Communication of Policy

7.1 The Welfare Reform Team will publicise the scheme and will work with all interested parties to achieve this. A copy of this policy statement will be made available for inspection and will be posted on Oxford City Council's website.

8 Review

8.1 This policy is effective from 16 September 2020. It will be reviewed no later than 18 September 2022.

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Appendix 1:

DHP Application form

Application for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

Section 1: About you

To help us to process your claim quicker, please give us your current contact details.

Full Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

..... Post Code:

Claim reference number: 80-

Home number: Mobile:

Email address:

Please note we may contact you regarding your claim and your appointments. We have found that contacting residents by email and text is an efficient way of getting in touch quickly. If you have any preferences about the way you are contacted please let us know.

Section 2: About your circumstances

1. Why are you applying for DHP e.g. bedroom tax, local housing allowance (LHA) shortfall, benefit cap, personal circumstances?

2. Have you applied for DHP before?

Yes- please answer question 2A

No- Please answer question 2B

2A. Please tell us what are you doing to meet the conditions of your last award?

2B. Please tell us what have you tried to do to improve your current situation?

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3. Are you getting help from anyone at the moment e.g. Tenancy Sustainment, Connection, Crisis, Aspire, Mind, Advice Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Job Clubs, Social Services, etc.?

4. Is there anything else you would like us to know about when we are considering your claim e.g. risk of eviction, health, pregnancy, addiction issues.

5. When would you like your DHP to start and why? If you want DHP for past period, tell us why did you not apply before?

Section 3: About your new DHP award

6. DHPs provide short term financial help for people who are working towards improving their situation so they can afford to pay their rent without this support in the future. Which

Appendix 1

of the following options are you taking or are you prepared to take to improve your situation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/training towards work | <input type="checkbox"/> Downsizing (moving to a smaller home) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing working hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Debt/money advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving to cheaper accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> Lodger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below): | |

Section 4: About your financial situation

Please give us details of your Income and Expenditure as accurately and completely as you can. This information is needed to make a decision about your Discretionary Housing Payment. You may be asked to provide proof of the amounts declared.

Please state period as Y = yearly or Q = quarterly or M = monthly or W = weekly

Income

Income Type	Period	Amount	Income Type	Period	Amount
Wages			Industrial Injuries Benefit		
Wages (partner)			Pension Credit		
Jobseeker's Allowance			State Retirement Pension		
Income Support			Occupational Pension		
ESA			Sick Pay		
Child Tax Credit			Maternity Pay		
Child Benefit			Carer's Allowance		
Disability Living Allowance			Attendance Allowance		
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)			Student Income/ Loans		
			Savings/ Investments		
Maintenance			Armed Forces		
Working Tax Credit			Independence Payment		
Money from Non-Dependant			Universal Credit		
			Other (please specify)		
Rent from lodger					

Bills

Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Total Rent*			Pay TV/ Internet/ Phone Package		
Council Tax (after CTRS*)					
Water Rates			Maintenance Payments		
Gas			Service Charges		
Electricity			Private Pension payments		

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Coal/Wood/Other Heating			Insurance e.g. contents, life, pets		
TV Licence					
Mobile Phone 1			Other (please specify e.g. repairs)		
Mobile Phone 2					

Housekeeping					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Food			Childcare		
Takeaway			Healthcare Prescriptions		
Baby Food/ Milk			Health & Beauty (please specify e.g. haircuts)		
Toiletries					
Nappies			Clothing		
Laundry/ Dry Cleaning			Disability Related Care Expenditure		
Cleaning Materials					
School Uniform			Gym Membership		
School Meals			Other (please specify)		
School Trips					

Travel					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Public Transport			Disability Related Mobility Expenditure		
Petrol					
Insurance			Breakdown Cover/ MOT		
Road Tax			Other (please specify)		
Taxi					

*Total Rent- tell us what your actual rent is

*CTRS- Council Tax Reductions Scheme

Please state period as Y = yearly or Q = quarterly or M = monthly or W = weekly

Other costs					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Going Out/ Entertainment			Cigarettes		
			Alcohol		
Savings			Gambling		
Pets e.g. food, vets			Holidays		
Pocket money			Meals at work		
Afterschool Clubs			Newspapers/ Magazines		
Birthdays			Subscriptions/ Charities		
Religious Holidays e.g. Christmas, Eid			Other (please specify)		

Debt			
Expenses	Period	Amount	Total amount of debt
Personal Loans e.g. family, friends			
Pay Day Loans			
Credit Cards			
Rent Arrears			
Utility Arrears e.g. gas, water, electrics			
Council Tax Arrears			
HB overpayments/ deductions			
Hire Purchase/ White Goods Loans			
Court Fines/ Bank Costs			
Maintenance Payments			
Catalogue Payments			
Student Loans			

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Other (please specify)		
------------------------	--	--

Section 5: Your declaration

I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

I understand the following:

- If I give incorrect or incomplete information, the council may take action (including court action) against me;
- Oxford City Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the purpose of processing personal data in the performance of its legitimate business. You can view the council's data protection policy and privacy notice at www.oxford.gov.uk/privacy
- We may share your information with and obtain information about you from other departments within Oxford City Council, other local authorities, government departments or financial organisations to ensure that the information is accurate; prevent or detect crime and fraud and protect public funds. We will not sell, share, or rent this information to others in ways different from what is disclosed in this statement.
- The council will use the information I have given to assess my claim for Discretionary Housing Payment, and I agree that the council can verify this if needed;
- I will tell the council about any changes in my circumstance that may affect my claim.

Your signature:

Date:

If you had help filling in this form or someone filled it in for you, please ask them to complete the next section.

I can confirm that I have completed this form on behalf of the claimant. The information contained within the form has been given to me by the claimant. The claimant confirms that this information is correct.

Name and relationship to you of the person who filled in the form:

Appendix 2

Appendix 2 – DHP Case Studies

To protect the residents' identity, the names and some of the details below have been changed.

Kathleen

Kathleen is a woman who is 60 and lives in the private rented sector. Her property became unaffordable due to a rent increase, and she had a shortfall between her Local Housing Allowance and her rent of £59 per week. The resident had been looking for work to afford her full rent but has found it difficult due to her age. She had used up all of her savings to pay her rent before seeking assistance with a DHP. After the first DHP meeting various options were discussed including moving to a social housing property for the over 55's. She was supported in applying to the housing register and getting a housing assessment for over 55s accommodation. She was successful in bidding, and so now has both affordable and more secure accommodation.

Mariamamma

Mariamamma is a single mum of 5 living who was placed by our private sector team into a property in our Rent Guarantee Scheme. She had a large benefit shortfall caused by the Benefit Cap, of £1,000 per month. The resident was supported to seek debt advice, and in setting up deductions from Universal Credit to pay her landlord directly, and in making an arrangement to reduce her arrears. She then found a part job but she wasn't working enough hours to be exempt from the benefit cap. She was encouraged to ask her employer for additional hours. The resident increased her hours from 15 to 20 hours per week and is now earning enough to be exempt from the benefit cap.

Shannon

Shannon is a home choice tenant and had a benefit shortfall due to the benefit cap of £120 per week. She was previously working but due to having to have her son's hours at school reduced, she had to stop work. She was hoping to return to work so needed a DHP for a short while. However, due to ongoing issues with her son's behaviour, that wasn't possible. I discussed options with the resident in meetings including applying for DLA for her son. The resident was at first reluctant but after a number of conversations she agreed and was recently awarded DLA and is no longer affected by the benefit cap.

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Appendix 3

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
							I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Managing demand	Residents applying for DHP later in the year may not receive support due to high levels of expenditure earlier in the year	Threat	Greater demand for DHPs in the first half of the year	Reduced budget available later in the year	21/07/20	Paul Wilding	3	3	3	2	3	1		Expenditure monitored on weekly basis	31/3/21	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding
Impact of Covid19	Higher unemployment driven by Covid19, leads to high demand for DHPs	Threat	Increase in people claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit	More applications for DHP form those in the PRS, and those affected by the Bedroom Tax	21/07/20	Paul Wilding	3	4	3	4	2	4		Work with residents to ensure those who can, progress into work, or claim exempting benefits	31/3/21	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding
Legal challenge	Council successfully challenged on application of policy by unsuccessful applicants	Threat	Inconsistent application of DHP policy, or awards made which are incompatible with policy	Reputational damage and potential award of costs	21/07/20	Paul Wilding	4	2	4	2	2	1		10% check of applications carried out to ensure decision making is consistent	31/3/21	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding
Resident impact	Unintended negative impact on specific resident groups	Threat	Unforeseen consequence of policy on some resident groups	Some resident groups are discriminated against and more likely to be unsuccessful with their DHP applications	29/3/18	Paul Wilding	3	2	3	2	2	1		Monitor successful and unsuccessful applications against the criteria established in the policy	31/3/21	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding

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Appendix 4

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The Discretionary Housing Payment policy is intended to support those who are disadvantaged by changes to Housing Benefit rules, specifically the under occupation rules in the social sector, the Benefit Cap and the changes to Local Housing Allowance rates. The under occupation rules disproportionately impact older residents (from 45 to pension age) and people with a disability. The Benefit Cap affects mainly households where there are lots of children (and in most cases a single parent). The Local Housing Allowance changes impact mainly on households with children. As such, if the DHP policy is not applied correctly, these groups could be disadvantaged.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?
Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The Welfare Reform team have developed strong partnerships with a wide range of support organisations. Where financial support cannot be provided, residents will be referred to appropriate organisations for support. This includes the advice organisations funded by the council, a range of providers of housing support, and mental health organisations.

As the policy is discretionary people who are in groups at risk of being disadvantaged can still receive DHP awards if to do so meets the policy's broader objectives.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision. Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

We have not consulted formally on the change to the DHP policy, although we have asked partners for their views. The changes to the DHP policy are minor in nature, and in any case all applications are considered on their own merits, and any award made is at the discretion of the Council. As such the process of consultation may raise unrealistic expectations and would be an unproductive exercise at this point, as it would not generate any information

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that the Council hasn't already anticipated or did not know. In the event that significant changes were planned to the DHP policy, a formal consultation exercise would be carried out.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?
Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

As this policy is discretionary, all applications will be considered on their merit. Where an application meets the aims of the policy, it is intended to provide support.

The policy is a fairly straightforward one to apply. Cabinet should note that, as it is a discretionary payment the Council are not intending to set out any circumstances in which we definitely wouldn't support someone. If an application meets various policy aims, it will be successful.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.
Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

A 10% check of applications will be carried out to ensure consistency of decision making. This will be done for both successful and unsuccessful applications. Monitoring will be carried out on a monthly basis, and this will also include the reason for the application being made.

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 September 2020
Report of: Transition Director
Title of Report: Draft Air Quality Action Plan

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To approve the Draft Air Quality Action Plan for public consultation
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Tom Hayes - Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford
Corporate Priority:	Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1. Approve the Air Quality Action Plan for Public Consultation	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025 (Draft)
Appendix 2	Risk Assessment

Background

1. The Oxford City Council is due to publish a new Air Quality Action Plan to tackle the ongoing challenge of poor air quality and its impact on health. This is the right moment to set out a new action plan; there is currently a clear positive shift in priorities nationally when it comes to the environment. The national government is supporting a reallocation of road space to more active modes of travel and harmful emissions from homes and industry are being tackled through schemes aimed to improve energy efficiency.
2. There is a significant shift to more active travel, not least in response to the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic which has seen more people than ever enjoying the city's streets with lower levels of traffic and hence air pollution. The first couple of months of the lockdown saw significant reductions in air pollution in the city; up to a 60% reduction in NO₂, with levels at the lowest ever recorded in the city since monitoring began.

3. The feedback from Oxford's residents has been overwhelmingly positive through experiencing much cleaner air and it is clear that there is support for these improvements to be maintained. A recent survey of Oxford residents by the Council showed support for making changes in the city to allow it to reopen safely and nationally support for a narrative of Build Back Better is growing.
4. Reports¹ are emerging which link the severity of COVID19 to air pollution and this adds to the now mounting evidence of the negative impacts of air pollution on health. Over 40,000 people die prematurely each year as a result of poor air quality in the UK. Air quality has significant impacts on health and is linked to several serious health conditions such as cancer, strokes and heart disease. The impact of early exposure to poor air quality has lifetime effects, such as high rates of obesity, asthma and low lung function.

Oxford Air Quality

5. Air quality tends to be worse in cities than elsewhere in the country and the city of Oxford, in common with many UK urban areas, experiences air pollution.
6. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is the pollutant of most concern for the city. Parts of Oxford continue to see levels above legal limits, although there has been an overall decline of 26% in NO₂ since 2013. Data from the Council's most recent air quality monitoring campaign (2019) shows that there are still exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean limit value at six locations in the city: St. Clements Street/The Plain, St Clements Street East, George Street, St Aldates, High Street and Long Wall Street.
7. Emissions are about more than nitrogen oxides (NO_x), they're also about particulate matter (PM); the city is currently fully compliant with legal limits (Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)) as well as World Health Organisation advisory limits for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Oxford has seen a 31% reduction in Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) and 36% reduction in Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) in the places where it is being monitored since 2013.
8. Transport is the main source of NO₂ emissions, but not the only one. Some parts of Oxford with high levels of road traffic experience higher levels of air pollution.
9. The entire city of Oxford has been a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) since 2010, due to the continuous exceedances of the annual mean limit value of NO₂ in several areas of the city.
10. An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was adopted by the Council in 2013, with a set of measures targeted at improving air quality levels in the city for the period 2013-2020. Overall, the delivery of the AQAP 2013-2020 was responsible for a decline of 26% in NO₂ levels during this period, driven by large changes in traffic emissions.

Overview

11. Oxford City Council has a statutory duty (under the local air quality management regime set out in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995) to "prepare a written plan in pursuit of the achievement of the air quality standards and objectives in the designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/13/compelling-evidence-air-pollution-worsens-coronavirus-study>

12. The new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) needs to outline the actions the Council and its partners will take to improve air quality in Oxford between 2021 and 2025.
13. Oxford City Council's main priorities for the period 2021-2025 are focused on the reduction of emissions from transportation. These priorities concern the delivery of two major schemes: Oxford's Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) and Connecting Oxford; the former seeks to reduce emissions from vehicles in parts of the city while the latter seeks to reduce the number of private cars on the city's roads.
14. The new AQAP will seek to build upon these proposals and identify new measures to complement and link them together. By supporting and building upon existing proposals, tangible improvements in air quality can be achieved quicker at scale.
15. The draft AQAP at Appendix 1 is fully integrated with Oxford's Local Plan 2016-2036 and with Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan, and is aligned with the findings of the Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change and this Council's response in December 2019.
16. The draft AQAP sets for the first time a new target for Oxford for air pollution reduction. It sets a stricter target for NO₂ reduction for the city than the legal target set by the Government. It is believed that this will be the first time that a local authority in the UK has set a local target for NO₂ in a citywide AQAP.

Local Target

17. To reflect the Council's commitment to tackling air pollution the draft AQAP sets out a new local target for NO₂. This is much lower than the legally binding target set by the 2008 Ambient [Air Quality Directive](#) (ED/2008/50/EC) and has been introduced to drive the reduction of air quality locally in order to protect health.
18. During the COVID19 pandemic the Council has received feedback from residents who have been enjoying much cleaner air as a result of reduced traffic and who wish to see it go further and faster in locking in the benefits experienced as a result of the "lockdown".
19. The legal target for NO₂ is 40 ug/m³ as set out by The 2008 Ambient [Air Quality Directive](#) (ED/2008/50/EC), however research² shows that this target is not going to achieve the safest level of air quality. Studies³ show that harmful effects of air pollution are seen at levels below the legal levels of air quality, that is, those previously considered to be safe. The overall objective of this new draft AQAP for the whole of the Oxford city area is to:

**Achieve a local mean annual mean NO₂ target of 30 ug/m³ in the city of
Oxford by 2025**

20. According to the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants ([COMEAP](#)), a 1 ug/m³ reduction in NO₂, would lead to about 420,000 to 903,000 life years saved in the UK over the next 106 years, associated with an increase in life expectancy (at

² [https://www.biologicalpsychiatryjournal.com/article/S0006-3223\(18\)30064-7/fulltext](https://www.biologicalpsychiatryjournal.com/article/S0006-3223(18)30064-7/fulltext)

³ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180803103315.htm>

birth) of around 2 to 5 days. It is therefore expected that a 10 ug/m³ reduction in NO₂ will lead to a significant improvement in health of residents and visitors to Oxford.

21. The local target is not legally binding, but progress will be reported annually through the publication of the Air Quality Annual Status Report.

Actions

22. According to the latest [Source Apportionment Study](#) completed by Ricardo Energy and Environment, the transport sector in Oxford continues to be by far the largest contributor (68%) to total NO_x emissions in the city, followed by domestic combustion (19%), combustion from industry and services (12%) and others: waste, agriculture, solvents, nature (<1%).

23. Under the new draft AQAP, a set of actions and measures have been developed that can be considered under 4 key priority areas of intervention:

- Developing Partnerships and Public Education;
- Support for the uptake of Low and Zero emission vehicles;
- Reduce the need to travel and explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport;
- Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services;

24. The actions are to be delivered by a range of partners including Oxfordshire County Council (which has been closely involved in developing the draft AQAP because of their role as the local transport authority).

Monitoring and Assessment

25. The key to the success of the new Air Quality Action Plan will be the ability to monitor and report the progress of measures and assess their impact. This will allow the AQAP to be further developed and ensure transparency and accountability.

26. The new AQAP will be subject to an annual review. Progress each year will be reported in the Annual Status Reports (ASRs) produced by Oxford City Council as part of its statutory Local Air Quality Management duties. The Council will endeavour to share the annual updates with the largest number of citizens and give them the most robust scrutiny through the Council's scrutiny function.

Public Consultation

27. There is a statutory duty to conduct public consultation on the draft AQAP. It is proposed that this will be carried out from the 10th September to the 31st October (7 weeks), enabling a post-consultation report to the Cabinet in November 2020.

28. The consultation will be widely publicised and responses can be made in both paper and online formats.

Climate Change/Environmental Impact

29. The draft AQAP contains measures and targets to reduce emissions from a range of the Council's programmes that are designed to reduce impacts on climate and air pollution.

Financial implications

30. The draft AQAP includes 30 actions which are aimed at achieving compliance with legal and local limits of air pollution. The actions present no immediate financial implications for the Council. The majority of actions will be delivered by existing staff and under existing work programmes. Of the 30 actions just 5 are not fully funded at this stage. Further details are outlined below.

31. Two actions outlined in the draft AQAP will be subject to further and separate budget processes, namely the Zero Emission Zone and Connecting Oxford which are major programmes being overseen by a joint member led Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council Steering Group.

32. For the remaining three actions which are not fully funded at this stage, the draft AQAP commits to 'exploring possibilities' and it is expected that external grant funding will be required to deliver these actions. The Council has significant success at securing external funding for the delivery of its sustainability objectives and it will build on this success to secure funding and partnership with innovation partners.

33. A number of actions in the draft AQAP are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council and hence present no financial burden for the Council. These actions have been included in the AQAP following extensive engagement with Oxfordshire County Council through a joint AQAP steering group.

Legal issues

34. Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995 ("the Act") provides that every local authority shall review the air quality within its area, both at the present time and the likely future air quality within the programme of Local Air Quality Management established under requirements within Part IV of that Act .

35. Local authorities have a duty under Section 83(1) of the 1995 Act to designate those areas where the air quality objectives (as set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000) are not being met, or are likely to be shown to be at risk of not meeting them, and where people are likely to be regularly present, as AQMAs. Once the area has been designated, Section 84 requires the local authority to develop an Action Plan, to include public consultation, detailing remedial measures to tackle the problem within the AQMA. The Council may amend or revoke an area as appropriate in the light of subsequent reviews.

36. The local annual mean target for NO₂ is legally non-binding and does not override any legal targets set by central government.

Level of risk

37. A risk assessment is available for review on Appendix 2

Equalities Impact

38. Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality are often the less affluent areas. Poor air quality affects people in different groups differently. Minority groups and low income households might be disproportionately impacted by poor air quality.
39. Older people have around twice the level of risk of hospitalisation and death associated with poor air quality and babies and children are also particularly vulnerable. People with pre-existing asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are very vulnerable to air pollution. Similarly, obese people (children in particular) are also at risk.
40. While nationally levels of air pollution are often highest in areas of deprivation, this same pattern is not seen in Oxford, mainly due to the majority of these areas being located away from high levels of traffic, such as estates. However there are high levels of air pollution on routes used by children and in areas with high levels of young people, such as the city centre which has a large student population.
41. The delivery of the range of measures set out in this draft AQAP will reduce air pollution levels across the whole city, which in turn will contribute to reduce health inequalities. It is therefore expected that the draft AQAP will have a positive impact on reducing inequality in Oxford.

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Background Papers: None

DRAFT for Consultation



Oxford City Council

DRAFT Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025

In fulfilment of Part IV of the
Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management

September 2020

Foreword



We all have a right to breathe clean air. However, harmful levels of air pollution are harming people’s health, damaging our quality of life and cutting lives short. The poorer and more disadvantaged people in our country are disproportionately affected, facing shortened lives and lifelong health problems. Air pollution is, at its heart, a social justice issue.

With our measures we have reduced the main pollutant of concern by 26% over the last seven years. We need to go further and faster to clean air.

Oxford City Council is setting a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which, for the first time, sets a target for the reduction of air pollution. We believe that it is the first time any UK local authority has set a city-wide air pollution reduction target through its AQAP. By setting a strict target through the preparation of our AQAP (that is, by discharging our statutory duty) we make the case for clean air, public health, and social justice.

37 of Britain’s 43 air quality zones are exceeding the legal limits for the main harmful pollutant of concern. Our action plan moves Oxford beyond the focus upon achieving local compliance, which is an issue for so many action plans for many authorities. We are choosing to set a target which is significantly stricter than the legal target.

We have been calling on Government to meet their legal responsibilities and, instead of simply highlighting problems, we have proposed ten solutions in the development of Oxford’s Charter for Cleaner Air—the first formal cooperation of its kind between a local authority and Greenpeace UK and Friends of the Earth. We have called on the Government to tighten the legal target; now we are setting our own tighter target.

By 2025 Oxford will have met legal compliance in the four air pollution hotspots that remain today. We will have achieved legal levels across the whole city and met our nitrogen oxide target of “30 by 25”.

The founding document of the modern social security state made suggestions aimed at eradicating the five “giant evils”. One evil identified by the report was “disease”, yet today air pollution blights our neighbourhoods just as it did when Clement Attlee’s government enacted the recommendations of Sir William Beveridge. We need to bring air pollution to the lowest and safest possible levels and that means even bigger interventions from the level of government nearest to our communities.

Cllr Tom Hayes

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford

Executive Summary

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the actions we will take to improve air quality in Oxford City from 2021 to 2025. It also fits within and furthers our wider ambitions to improve air quality, health, and climate.

The key objective of this AQAP is to bring NO₂ emissions into legal compliance as soon as possible. However, we also want to reach beyond legal compliance for the whole city. Oxford City Council is committing to becoming the first UK Local Authority to set a local annual mean NO₂ target in a city-wide AQAP. The overall objective of this AQAP for the whole of the Oxford City area is to:

Achieve a local annual mean NO₂ target of 30 µg/m³ by 2025

“30 by 25”

The legal annual mean limit value for NO₂ is 40 µg/m³. Research now shows that this legal limit is not a safe limit. Several health studies show that harmful effects of air pollution are seen at levels below air quality legal standards that were previously considered to be safe. We take the health of our residents and visitors very seriously and the decision to set a new low target for NO₂ is evidence of our commitment to improve health outcomes for all.

According to the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants ([COMEAP](#)), a 1 µg/m³ reduction in NO₂, could lead to about 420,000 to 903,000 life years saved in the UK over the next 106 years, associated with an increase in life expectancy (at birth) of around 2 to 5 days. It is therefore expected that a 10 µg/m³ reduction in NO₂ will lead to a significant improvement in the health outcomes for Oxford residents.

We want to achieve the lowest possible air pollution levels which means Oxford City Council will go beyond the legal limit. This commitment is consistent with Oxford's record of leading by example and the ambition of implementing innovations aimed at reducing air pollution levels in the cityⁱ.

The 30µg/m³ target is determined by our analysis of several air quality modelling projections. It is intended to be stretching but within the boundaries of possibility. Without the delivery of key schemes such as the Oxford Zero Emission Zone and Connecting Oxford, we are unlikely to meet the local target. While the City Council is setting this target for the whole city, in no way can we achieve it on our own. In order

ⁱ Oxford was the first city in the UK to implement Park & Ride schemes (1973), the first city in the UK (outside London) to implement a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for buses (2014), and the first city in the UK to develop plans to implement a Zero Emission Zone (2017).

to be able to meet this target, we propose a set of 30 actions and measures to be delivered with our partners and which sit within four priority areas of intervention:

- 1) Developing partnerships and public education;
- 2) Support for the uptake of low and zero emission vehicles;
- 3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, industry and services
- 4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increase the uptake of sustainable transport

A list of the 30 actions is available in Table 5. Oxford City Council's main priorities for the period 2021-2025 are focused on the delivery of two major schemes which have been developed to tackle road traffic emissions and the dominance of the car on our roads: Oxford's Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) and Connecting Oxford. The new AQAP will principally seek to build upon these proposals and identify new measures to complement and link them together. It is felt that by supporting and building on ambitious proposals, tangible improvements in air quality can be achieved more quickly and at greater scale. The ZEZ and Connecting Oxford are being delivered in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.

Emissions are about more than nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and we are also concerned about particulate matter (PM). While the city of Oxford is exceeding legal limits for NO₂ it is currently fully compliant with legal limits, as well as WHO advisory limits for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Historical analysis of our air quality data shows that we have seen an overall decline in air pollution. With a reduction of 26% in NO₂, 31% in Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) and 36% in Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) at sites where air quality monitoring has been in place since 2013. However, new and emerging studies are indicating that there is no safe level for air pollution. Critically, there is now clear evidence that particulate matter has an impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases. Oxford City Council considers that actions outlined in this AQAP will contribute to reducing levels of particulate matter.

The case for clean air

This is the right moment to set out a new action plan. We have an opportunity to achieve cleaner air as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Action on air pollution has never been more important because, in addition to the annual burden of disease and deaths caused by air pollution, it looks to be making us more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Long-term exposure to air pollution is associated with increased morbidity and chronic diseases, some of which have been identified as increasing the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms. Given this, it would not be surprising if there was a link between exposure to air pollution and the occurrence or severity of COVID-19

infection, but currently there is no clear evidenceⁱⁱ on this or on the magnitude of any effect.

Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. Over 40,000 people die prematurely each year as a result of poor air quality in the UK. Air quality has significant impacts on health and is linked to several serious health conditions such as cancer, strokes and heart disease. The impact of early exposure to poor air quality has lifetime effects, such as high rates of obesity, asthma and low lung function. Air pollution harms our health, our economy and our quality of life.

There is an increased salience as people have realised that clean air is possible and want it to stay. During the COVID-19 lockdown, levels of NO₂ air pollution dropped by 20-30% across the UKⁱⁱ – primarily from a significant reduction in private car use. During the first couple of months of the lockdown, Oxford saw significant reductions of air pollution in the city; up to a 60%ⁱⁱⁱ reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), with levels at the lowest ever recorded in the city since monitoring began. People have noticed and appreciated the cleaner air and safer streets.

A recent survey of Oxford residents showed clear support for action to reduce motorised traffic in order to make the city more cycle and walking friendly. During lockdown millions of people have changed their routines in ways that reduced air pollution by working from home, and walking and cycling more, and many are willing to continue to do so. It is easier to maintain a habit than foster a new one, so we want to build on this unique moment to create lasting change.

There is a positive shift in priorities nationally when it comes to our environment and air quality. Across the country we are seeing a reallocation of road space to more active modes of travel, more people walking and cycling, and harmful emissions from homes and industry being tackled through schemes to improve energy efficiency. We are experiencing a significant shift towards active travel, not least in response to the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic which has seen more people than ever enjoying our streets with lower levels of motorised traffic – and hence air pollution.

It is expected that many of the measures in this action plan to improve local air quality will also contribute to the Council's plans to address the climate emergency that this Council formally recognised in January 2019.

ⁱⁱ The Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) issued a rapid review in June 2020 on the estimation of changes in air pollution emissions, concentrations and exposure during the COVID-19 outbreak in the UK. The document acknowledges that there is some evidence to suggest that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM) and ozone (O₃) may increase susceptibility to respiratory infections or worsen disease prognosis, although it recognises that there are still insufficient studies or mixed evidence for specific combinations of endpoints, infection types, age groups or pollutants. Studies of the associations of COVID-19 disease with both past and contemporary air pollution exposure are also limited by an, as yet, incomplete understanding of the factors controlling the transmission and progression of the disease, and especially individual risk factors.

ⁱⁱⁱ [Ricardo Energy & Environment - Blog update on COVID-19 and changes in air pollution](#)

The role of transport in Oxford's poor air quality

The city of Oxford, as with many urban areas throughout the United Kingdom, is subject to poor air quality, particularly in areas with high levels of road traffic. According to our latest [Source Apportionment Study](#), the transport sector in Oxford continues to be by far the largest contributor (68%) to total NO_x emissions, followed by Domestic Combustion (19%), Combustion from Industry and Services (12%) and Others: waste, agriculture, solvents, nature (<1%).

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is the pollutant of most concern as we continue to experience levels above the legal limit in several areas of the city. Continuous exceedances mean that the entire city of Oxford has been a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) since 2010.

An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was adopted by the Council in 2013, with a set of measures targeted at improving air quality levels in the city between 2013 and 2020. Overall, with the delivery of the AQAP (2013-2020) there has been a decline of 26% in NO₂ levels in the City^{iv}. The majority of the reductions are the result of targeted changes in traffic emissions, such as the introduction of a Low Emission Zone for buses. Despite this success, Oxford City is still not compliant with the NO₂ annual mean limit value at all sites. At the time of writing, data from our most recent air quality monitoring campaign (2019) shows that we have exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean limit value at six of the 71 monitored locations in the city: St. Clements Street/The Plain, St Clements Street East, George Street, St Aldates, High Street and Long Wall Street.

In this AQAP we outline plans to effectively tackle air quality issues that are within our control. The AQAP recognises that the City Council can achieve so much. We will continue to engage and work with a wide set of stakeholders, institutions, and citizens, so that everyone can play their part. The work the Council is doing is wide-ranging, and engagement with our communities and partners is key. Air pollution results from activities we all contribute to, it is a shared problem and therefore requires shared solutions.

The 30 actions proposed in this AQAP build on a number of successful and award winning programmes. This includes extending engagement programmes to raise awareness about air pollution in local schools that we have successfully partnered with Friends of the Earth to deliver. We also propose to promote active travel, as well as the electrification of the Oxford bus fleet, and the roll out of EV charging infrastructure. There are a number of air quality policy areas that sit outside of our direct influence (such as vehicle emissions standards). However, our evidence and experience are important, and so we will continue to work with central government and key partners to develop the best measures, powers, and funding needed to deliver clean air.

^{iv} The complete list of air quality actions that have been delivered in the city to date and their impact on the reduction of air quality levels in the city, is available for review in our published Air Quality [Annual Status Reports](#).

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Introduction

This action plan outlines the actions that Oxford City Council and its partners will deliver between 2021 and 2025 in order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the health and quality of the life of residents and visitors to the city of Oxford.

It has been developed in recognition of the legal requirement on the local authority to work towards Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and relevant regulations made under that part and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

Our action plan moves beyond a focus upon achievement of legal compliance. Our plan seeks to achieve the lowest levels of air pollution possible over the next five years and sets an ambitious target to drive action as quickly and effectively as possible.

Transparency is key to the delivery of this AQAP. This document will be subject to an annual review. Progress each year will be reported in the Annual Status Reports (ASRs) produced by Oxford City Council as part of our statutory Local Air Quality Management duties.

The following sections set out the scale of the air quality problem in Oxford and its causes. They outline the priority areas that we consider to be crucial to be focusing on to reduce emissions and improve air quality in the city. This action plan contains a complete list of air quality actions and measures that we aim to deliver under each one of those priority areas, in order to achieve compliance with the local annual mean air quality target for NO₂ that we commit to in this AQAP.

National Context

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires the Secretary of State to publish a national Air Quality Strategy and gave Local Authorities statutory duties to implement the system of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM), which commenced in 1997.

The 2008 Ambient [Air Quality Directive](#) (ED/2008/50/EC) sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air for major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), to be met before 2010. The limit values were established in 2008 and are now over 10 years old. Most UK cities failed to meet the objective by 2010 as required by the Directive.

A summary of the air quality objectives for pollutants of most concern: Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), and Particulate Matter (PM), are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Air Quality Objectives for NO₂ and PM in England

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective	
	Concentration	Measured as
NO ₂	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
PM ₁₀	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
PM _{2.5} ⁱⁱ	25 µg/m ³	Annual Mean

The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

The UK currently has a total of 605 AQMAs that have been declared based on failure to meet the air quality objectives for NO₂. Air quality is a significant issue in the UK, with [37 of Britain's 43 air quality zones](#) still exceeding legal limits for nitrogen dioxide, with London being the worst European capital for the pollutant.

In response to the UK leaving the EU, the UK Government introduced a new Environmental Bill to Parliament in October 2019. Along with the commitment to set targets on air quality for the UK, the new Bill also promises the creation of a new independent Office for Environmental Protection to scrutinise environmental policy and law, investigate complaints, and take enforcement action against public authorities, if necessary, to uphold current and future environmental standards.

Air Quality and Public Health

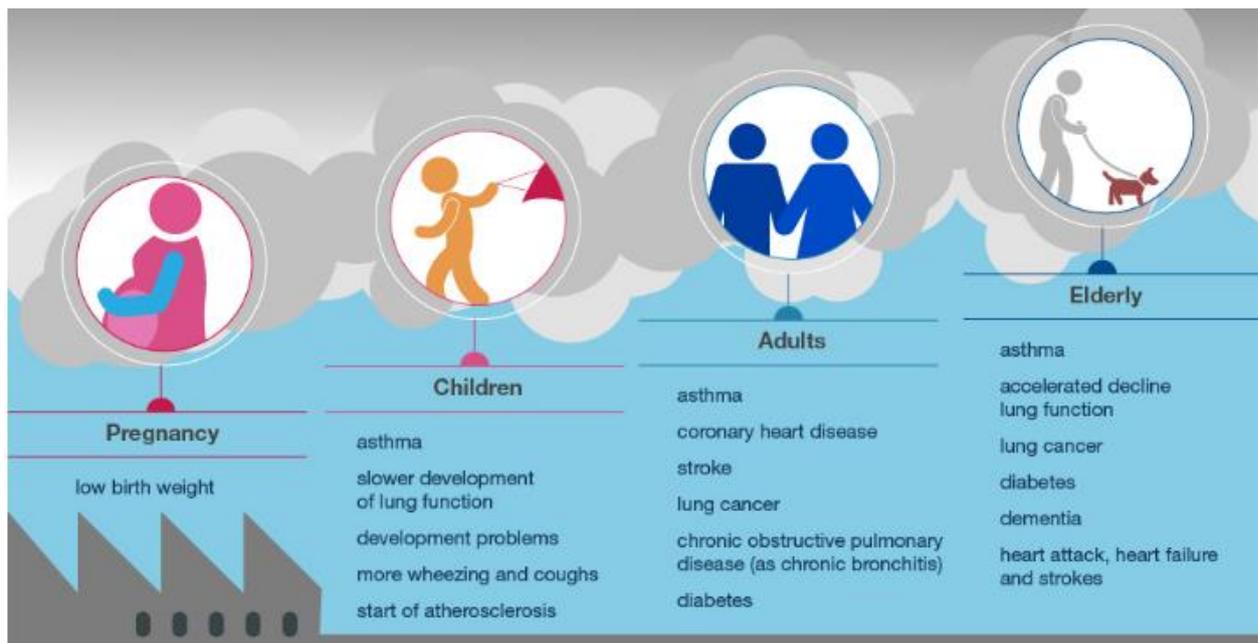
1.1 Health Impacts of air pollution

Air pollution can cause, complicate, or exacerbate many adverse health conditions. It usually manifests as respiratory or cardiac symptoms and can lead to chronic health issues. Recent studies show that poor air quality can affect every organ in the body^v and even cause damage to cognitive performance^{vi}. Exposure to poor air quality is directly related to diseases such as cancer, asthma, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and dementia^{vii}.

According to the [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO), air pollution kills an estimated 8 million people worldwide every year, of which 4.2 million are attributed to exposure to outdoor air pollution and 3.8 million to indoor air pollution. Currently nine out of 10 people in the world breathe air containing health impacting levels of air pollutants.

Figure 1 shows how air pollution affects people throughout their lifetime.

Figure 1- Air pollution: Health impacts of throughout lifetime^{viii}



Although air pollution affects people from all regions, ages, and social groups, it is likely to have greater impacts on those who experience heavy exposure and those who have greater susceptibility^{ix}. The most vulnerable are children, the elderly, or

^v [Air Pollution and Non communicable Diseases](#) (A Review by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies' Environmental Committee, Part 1: The Damaging Effects of Air Pollution)

^{vi} [The impact of exposure to air pollution on cognitive performance](#)

^{vii} [Even low levels of air pollution linked with serious changes in the heart, according to new UK research](#)

^{viii} This figure forms part of the Guidance "Health Matters: air pollution", which was published by Public England on their [website](#) on 14th November 2018

^{ix} [Air Pollution linked with fetal brain development problems](#)

those with pre-existing medical conditions. Harmful effects of air pollution are seen at levels below air quality standards previously considered to be safe.

We are now also seeing several research [studies](#) linking the severity of COVID19 to air pollution. Several of these studies suggest that air pollution worsens the health impacts of the virus, makes people more susceptible to COVID-19, and also contributes towards its transmission. This adds to the now mounting evidence of the negative impacts of air pollution on health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set guideline^x values for key air pollutants based on evidence of their health impacts. The recommended WHO guideline values are significantly lower for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} than the current UK limit values. The WHO guideline values for NO₂ currently corresponds to the UK limit value of 40µg/m³ (annual mean) and 200 µg/m³ (hourly mean). However, both short and long-term studies have found adverse health impacts at concentrations that were at or below the current UK limit values. Some studies even suggest that there are in fact no 'safe' levels of air pollution, and that governments should therefore be aiming for the lowest possible air pollution levels. A revised version of the air pollution WHO Guidelines is expected to be published in 2020/2021.

1.2 Health impacts at local level

There have been several studies produced over the years that have tried to estimate the true health impacts of air pollution in Oxford.

In April 2014, a [report](#) issued by Public Health England presented estimates of local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. The report shows that long term exposure to anthropogenic particulate air pollution in Oxford could be responsible for 6% of all deaths of people aged 25 and over.

More recently, in November 2019, a [scientific study](#) conducted by Kings College London provided a series of statements about the potential risks to the public in Oxford and several other cities in the UK and Poland, from exposure to air pollutants.

Finally, in January 2020, a study from [Centre for Cities](#) found out that at least one in 17 deaths in Oxford is related to air pollution.

^x WHO sets recommended limits for health-harmful concentrations of key air pollutants both outdoors and inside buildings and homes, based on global synthesis of scientific evidence. WHO guidelines cover annual and daily concentrations of fine particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone ([WHO, 2005](#))

Air Quality in Oxford

2.1 Historical Background

The process of review and assessment of air quality in Oxford has been taking place since 1999. At the time, the air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide, both annual mean and hourly mean were exceeded in areas dominated by traffic.

The City Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for NO₂ in central Oxford in 2003, which was expanded in 2005. In relation to this AQMA the Council produced and published its first AQAP in 2006 seeking to address pollution in central Oxford, by focussing on emissions from buses which were identified as the main source.

Despite good progress being made with the 2006 AQAP, significant breaches of the national objectives for NO₂ still existed and additional hotspots were identified. Therefore, following further detailed assessments of air quality, a city-wide AQMA was declared in September 2010. A new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was adopted by the Council in 2013, with a new set of measures targeted at improving air quality levels in the city for the period 2013-2020.

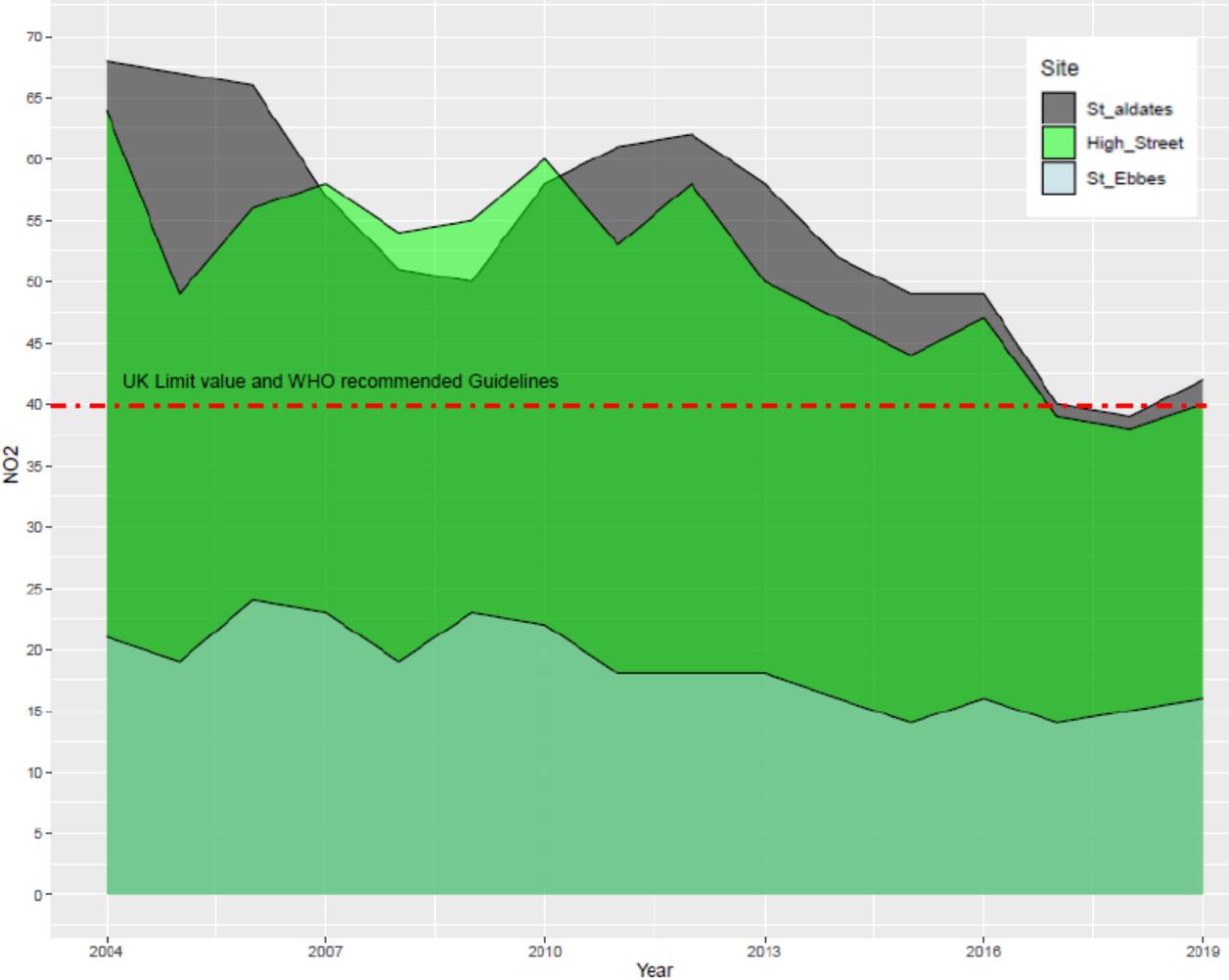
Historical analysis of air quality data (see Figure 2 below) shows that since that period, NO₂ levels have significantly improved in the city of Oxford. In 2003 we saw NO₂ of over 70 µg/m³, while in 2019 levels were around 40 µg/m³.

Since 2013, we have seen an overall decline of 26% in NO₂, 31% in Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) and 36% in Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) in the places where air quality is being monitored.

The majority of the reductions observed over the period are related to significant changes in traffic emissions. The introduction of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for buses in the city in 2014 and the retrofit of several buses to cleaner Euro VI engines (which achieve an estimated 99.5% reduction in NO_x emissions compared to Euro V) have contributed to these improvements.

However, air quality monitoring results from the most recent years have shown that the rate of these reductions is now slowing down. In many cases, air quality levels seem to have plateaued in the city, suggesting that more robust action to tackle air quality in the city is now required.

Figure 2- Long term trends of Annual Mean NO₂ (µg/m³) at Oxford’s continuous monitoring stations, 2004-2019.



2.2 Current Air Quality Status

At the time of writing, data from our most recent air quality monitoring campaign (2019) shows that we still experience exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean limit value at six locations across in the city. Those locations are St. Clements Street/The Plain, St Clements Street East, George Street, St Aldates, High Street and Long Wall Street.

The 2019 monitoring results also showed positive result in that there are no exceedances of the UK limit values or the WHO recommended guidelines for particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) in Oxford, in all the locations where these pollutants are measured.

Air quality is monitored annually across the city. To see full details of where we monitor, why we monitor in those locations, and the latest data on air quality, you can [visit our website](#). The current status of air quality levels in Oxford can be found in our latest official Annual Status Report which can be also downloaded from our [website](#). All our current monitoring locations and the latest monitoring data can also be viewed [using this interactive map](#).

Sources of Air Pollution in Oxford

The AQAP measures presented in this report are targeted towards the predominant sources of emissions within Oxford.

In December 2019 Oxford City Council commissioned Ricardo Energy & Environment to conduct a source apportionment study (SAS) to assess::

- the contribution of each activity sector to total emissions of NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in Oxford;
- within the road transport sector, the contribution of each vehicle type to total road emissions of NO_x, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ in Oxford.

The complete source apportionment report was published by Oxford City Council on the 26th June 2020 and is available for review on Oxford City Council's [website](#).

3.1 Emission sources by activity sector

The contribution of each activity sector to the total emissions of NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in Oxford is shown on Figures 3 to 5 below.

Figure 3- Sources of total NO_x emissions in Oxford

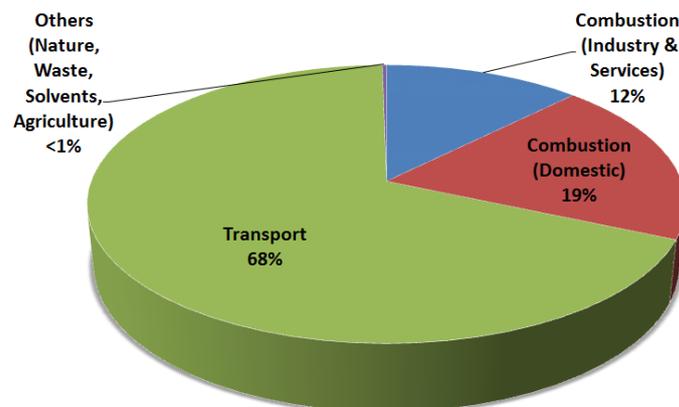


Figure 4- Sources of total PM₁₀ emissions in Oxford

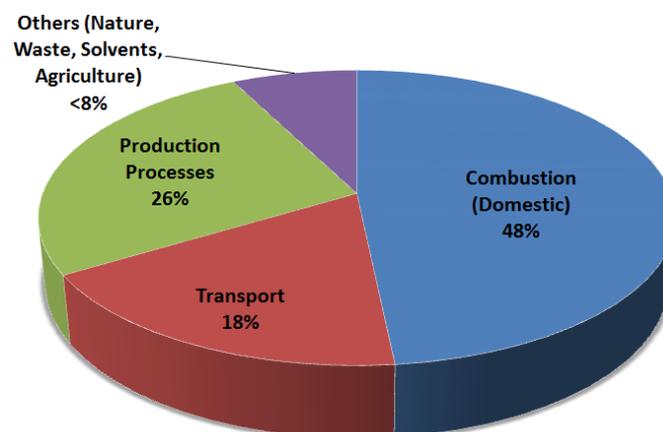
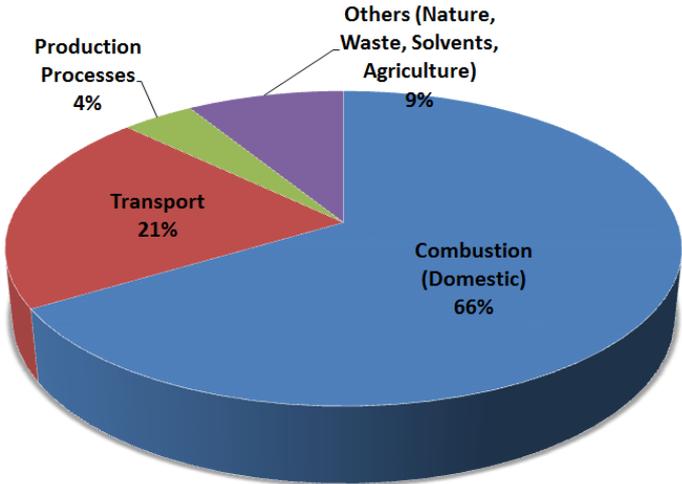


Figure 5- Sources of total PM_{2.5} emissions in Oxford



Figures 3 to 5 show that in Oxford, transport comprises approximately 68% of the total emissions of NO_x, in comparison to only around 18% of total PM₁₀ and 21% of total PM_{2.5} emissions. Domestic combustion, on the other hand, makes up just 19% of NO_x emissions compared to 48% of PM₁₀ emissions and 66% of PM_{2.5} emissions.

3.1.1 Changes since 2013

The results of the new source apportionment study provide useful evidence demonstrating how different emission contribution sectors have changed over time.

Table 2 show a direct comparison between the two source apportionment studies that were conducted for NO_x in 2013 and 2019.

Table 2 – Historic comparison of the contribution of each sector to total NO_x emission in Oxford.

Activity Sectors	2013	2019	Comparison (2013 vs 2019)
Transport	75%	68%	-7% 
Combustion (Domestic, Industry & Services)	25%	31%	+6% 
Others (Agriculture, Solvents, Nature, Waste)	<1%	<1%	Unchanged

The results of this comparison show that the contribution of the transport sector to total NO_x emissions have reduced by 7% since 2013, with the contribution from combustion sources associated with domestic combustion, industry and services increasing in the same proportion. This reduction in transport emissions is due to fleet upgrades, which are partly the result of local government interventions such as the introduction of a Low Emission Zone for buses in 2014. It was recognised that buses contributed a significant proportion of emissions and, through cooperation and

close working with bus services providers, the targeted action of local government contributed to a reduction of emissions.

Similar comparison was not possible for Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), as the 2013 source apportionment study did not include Particulate Matter.

3.2 Vehicle fleet composition and emissions

The contribution of each vehicle type to the total road emissions^{xi} of NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in Oxford is shown on Figures 6 to 8 below.

Figure 6- Total road NO_x emissions in Oxford, per vehicle type.

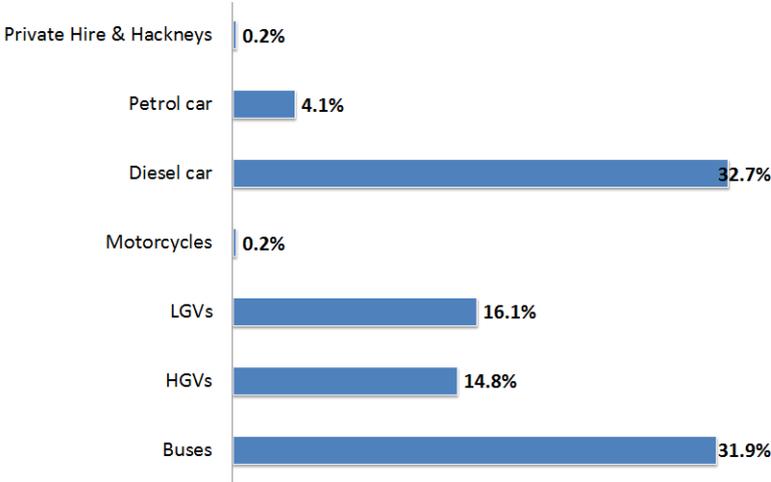
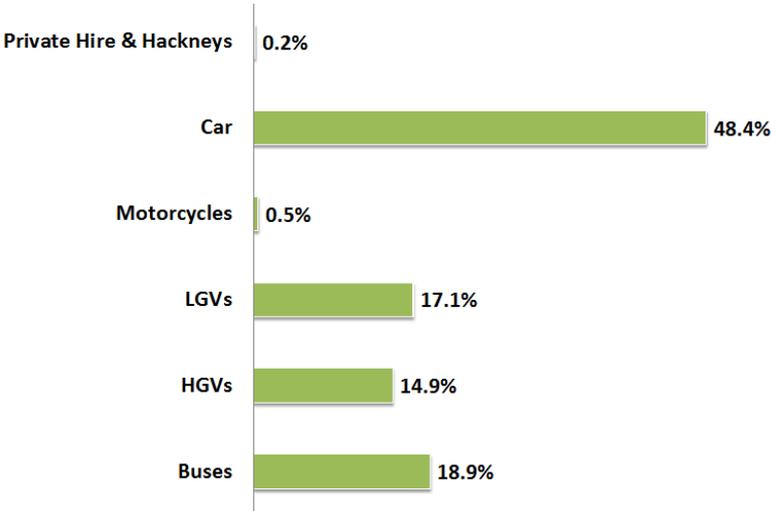
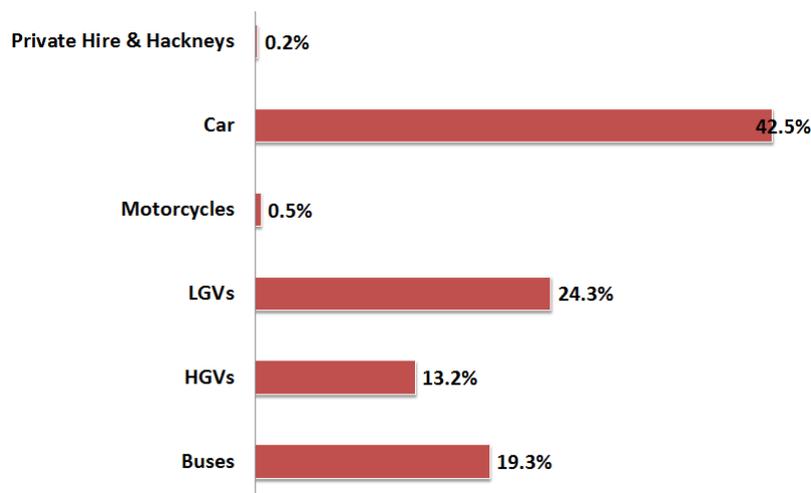


Figure 7- Total road PM₁₀ emissions in Oxford, per vehicle type.



^{xi} the percentage of NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions for Hackney carriages and Private Hire was calculated on the basis of the information that was available for review. Not all the road links used in the air quality model had information related with Private Hires and Hackneys. This is an indication that the contribution of these vehicle types to total road NO_x, and PM emissions in Oxford may be in fact slightly higher than that shown in Figures 6-8

Figure 8- Total road PM_{2.5} emissions in Oxford, per vehicle type.



The breakdown of contributions to NO_x emissions per vehicle type shows that the current biggest contributors in the city are diesel cars (32.7%) followed closely by buses (31.9%).

For PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, the biggest transport contributor is the car, with 48.4% and 42.5% of all PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions in the city attributed to this vehicle type.

3.2.1 Changes since 2013

The results showed in Table 3 represent a big shift in the contribution of each vehicle type to total emissions of NO_x in the city if we compare them with data from 2013.

Table 3 - Historic comparison of the contribution of each vehicle type to total NO_x emission in Oxford.

Vehicle type	2013	2019	Comparison (2013 vs 2019)
Private Hire & Hackneys	3%	<1%	-2% 
Cars	15%	37%	+22% 
Light Goods Vehicles	6%	16%	+10% 
Heavy Goods Vehicles	12%	15%	+3% 
Buses and Coaches	64%	32%	-32% 

The results of table 3 show that since 2013, the contribution of buses to total road NO_x emissions have reduced by 50%. This shows how effective measures such as the introduction of the city’s Euro V Low emission Zone for buses in 2014 and the

retrofitting of a significant amount of buses to Euro VI standard have been in reducing air pollution from this vehicle type.

On the other hand, the data also reveals that the contribution from cars to total road NO_x emissions have increased by 22% - from 15% to 37%. This significant percentage increase can largely be explained by the reductions observed in bus emissions during the same period, as well as by the update in car emissions data (post VW scandal), which now reflect the impact of real world car emissions.

While we have seen significant improvements overall in air quality in the city, we know we have to do much more to ensure our residents and visitors can breathe clean air, particularly when it comes from emissions from fossil fuel vehicles.

3.3 Required Reduction in Emissions

Air Quality levels are known to be historically poor at 4 locations in the city: St Clement's, George Street, High Street and Cutteslowe Roundabout. Specific information about these 4 hotspots can be found in Appendix A.

On Table 4, we present the road NO_x reductions that will be required at the four historic NO₂ hotspot locations identified above to meet:

- the National NO₂ annual mean air quality objective of 40 µg/m³;
- Oxford's new NO₂ annual mean local target of 30 µg/m³.

The required reduction in emissions has been calculated in line with chapter 7 of DEFRA's statutory Technical Guidance document (LAQM.TG16).

Table 4 – Road NO_x reductions required to achieve compliance with the NO₂ legal annual mean limit value as well as with Oxford's NO₂ annual mean local target at Oxford's 4 air pollution hotspots

Diffusion Tube Code	Location	NO ₂ measured in 2018, ug/m ³	NO _x background, ug/m ³	(A) Roadside NO _x from NO ₂ calculator, ug/m ³	(B) Roadside NO _x to achieve compliance with current limit value, ug/m ³	(C) Roadside NO _x to achieve compliance with local target, ug/m ³	Road NO _x reduction required to achieve limit value ug/m ³ (A-B)	Road NO _x reduction required to achieve local target ug/m ³ (A-C)	Road Nox reduction required for Limit Value (%)	Road Nox reduction required for Local Target (%)
DT55	St Clement's	46	21.1	66.03	51.3	28.6	14.7	37.4	22.3%	56.7%
DT48	George St	42	26.4	50.09	45.3	22.9	4.8	27.1	9.5%	54.3%
DT56	High St	44	24.9	56.65	47.0	24.6	9.6	32.1	17.0%	56.6%
DT26	Cutteslowe	41	17	58.39	55.9	33.0	2.4	25.4	4.2%	43.5%

Table 4 shows that the required reduction in emissions for St Clement's Street / The Plain to achieve compliance with the NO₂ annual mean Limit Value is 14.7 µg/m³ or 22.3%. For George Street, High Street and Cutteslowe the necessary road NO_x reductions are of 4.8 ug/m³, 9.6 ug/m³, 2.4 ug/m³ or 9.5%, 17%, and 4.2% respectively.

Calculations also show that there needs to be road NO_x reductions of above 50% for most sites to achieve compliance with Oxford's new local target for NO₂. At St Clement's, George St, High St and Cutteslowe, NO_x reductions of 56.7%, 54.3%, and 56.6% are required to achieve compliance with the new target. At Cutteslowe, the level of road NO_x reduction required is slightly lower at 43.5%.

Vision and aims of the AQAP

The scope of this AQAP is to set out a range of actions to reduce air pollutants from different sectors of activity in response to the declaration of an AQMA for exceedances of the annual mean objective for NO₂.

4.1 Oxford NO₂ target

The key objective of this AQAP is to bring NO₂ emissions across the city into legal compliance as soon as possible, however importantly we want to reach beyond legal compliance for the whole city. Oxford City Council is committing to becoming the first UK Local Authority to set a local annual mean NO₂ target in a city-wide AQAP.

The overall objective of this AQAP for the whole of the Oxford City area is to:

Achieve a local annual mean NO₂ target of 30 µg/m³ by 2025

“30 by 25”

The legal annual mean limit value for NO₂ is 40 µg/m³. Research now shows that this legal limit is not a safe limit. Several health studies show that harmful effects of air pollution are seen at levels below air quality legal standards previously considered to be safe. We take the health of our residents and visitors very seriously and the decision to set a new low target for NO₂ is evidence of our commitment to improve health outcomes for all.

According to the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants ([COMEAP](#)), a 1 µg/m³ reduction in NO₂, could lead to about 420,000 to 903,000 life years saved in the UK over the next 106 years, with an increase in life expectancy (at birth) of around 2 to 5 days. It is therefore expected that a 10 µg/m³ reduction in NO₂ will lead to a significant improvement in the health outcomes for Oxford residents.

4.1.1 Why are we proposing a new NO₂ target?

A significant amount of research has been completed since the air quality directive was established and since the WHO published guidelines on outdoor air pollution. This now suggests that there are in fact no ‘safe’ levels of air pollution and that governments should, therefore, be aiming for the lowest possible air pollution levels. Our setting of a lower target is a key step towards reducing air pollution to the lowest possible level, thereby protecting the largest number of people’s health and lives.

Recent [studies](#) show that there is strong evidence of a relationship between long-term exposure to NO₂ and respiratory effects, particularly the development of asthma

in children. Results suggest that both short and long-term exposure to NO₂ maybe be associated with cardiovascular and related metabolic effects, as well as premature mortality. Further to that, long-term exposure may be associated with poorer birth outcomes, and cancer.

Oxford City Council has pioneered measures to reduce air pollution levels and address climate breakdown. Including:

- Oxford pioneered the first enduring UK Park and Ride bus scheme (1973) and provided a model for other cities, notably Nottingham, York, Leicester, Norwich, and Cambridge.
- Oxford was the first UK city to follow London in the implementation of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for buses (2014).
- Oxford launched plans (2017) for the UK's first Zero Emission Zone in Oxford City.
- Oxford became the first UK city to host a Citizens' Assembly on Climate breakdown (2019), which addressed measures to reduce air pollution.
- Supported by the City Council, Oxford is home to the £41m project Energy Superhub Oxford, which includes the world's largest hybrid battery system and supports the roll out of electric and zero emitting vehicle charging capacity and fleets.
- Supported by the City Council, Oxfordshire is trialling a £40m industry-first local energy system, called Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire). This smart local energy system explores how growth in local renewables, electric vehicles, battery storage, vehicle-to-grid technology can be supported by a local, flexible, and responsive electricity grid, which will enable zero emission mobility.
- Supported by Oxford City Council, trialling 'OxPops', the world's first residential 'pop up' on-street electric vehicle charging point to enable the shift towards zero emission mobility.

Setting a stretching target and increasing our ambition is also helping to secure additional investments in the innovative areas where the city has strengths and a strong record of success. The City Council seeks to support large investment into the city which will enable us to clean Oxford's air as much as we can, and as quickly as possible. Thereby improving public health, reducing early deaths, and addressing climate breakdown. While also supporting local businesses, jobs, and inclusive economic growth. The rapid expansion of the Green Economy is especially important as Oxford seeks to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

4.1.2 Why are we setting a new local NO₂ target fixed at 30 µg/m³?

The decision to choose the target of 30ug/m³ was based on the 2018 analysis of the results of several air quality modelling projections and studies, the analysis of our city centre historic air quality monitoring data for the period 2002 - 2018, and taking into account the expected air quality impacts of the complete set of air quality measures that are being put forward in this AQAP. In short, the target-setting is evidence-led.

The air quality models and resources used for this analysis were:

- [Air Quality Modelling for ZEZ Feasibility Study](#)
- [DEFRA's Roadside Projection Factors](#);
- JAQU's modelling work for targeted feasibility study
- [Oxford City Council's historical diffusion tube data \(2003-2018\)](#)
- Review of Air Quality impact of measures set out in the new AQAP

A comparative analysis across these sources showed that a target NO₂ value of 30 ug/m³ would be both stretching, and realistically achievable, in the specified time period.

It is important to set clear and realistic targets so that we inspire the confidence of citizens and partners in our plans, and they can understand their potential role in our shared efforts. This local authority will seek out opportunities to make a greater contribution and a larger reduction than our headline target wherever possible.

4.2 Zero Emission Zone and Connecting Oxford

The new AQAP is anchored in two transport and air pollution management schemes that the City and County Councils are in the process of delivering; the Zero Emission Zone and Connecting Oxford. We believe these will be the main drivers and contributors to the reduction of air pollution levels in the city. It is felt that by supporting and building upon these existing proposals, tangible improvements in air quality can be achieved more quickly.

Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4, published in 2015, set out proposals to introduce a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) in Oxford starting in 2020. Since then, proposals have been developed by Oxford City Council, in partnership with the County Council, for a ZEZ in Oxford to be rolled out in phases starting in 2020. The overall aim of this journey to zero is to eliminate transport 'tailpipe' emissions in Oxford city centre by 2035. Transitioning businesses and residents to ultra-low and zero emission vehicles is a critical building block of this zero emission ambition. The councils consulted on [initial proposals](#) for a ZEZ in 2017. After 15 months of listening to businesses, residents, transport operators, and health experts in Oxfordshire, [updated proposals](#) were published in January 2019 for emissions requirements to be implemented in Oxford city centre in a phased approach to allow for learning from

2021 to 2035. Detailed information about the current and future ZEZ plans [can be found on Oxford City Council's website](#).

In January 2020, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council cabinet approved the development of proposals for the delivery of Connecting Oxford. This is a traffic management scheme that is designed to increase connectivity, reduce congestion, and tackle air pollution and climate breakdown. The proposed plans include the delivery of a set of traffic restrictions and the implementation of a workplace parking levy in parts of the city. Detailed information about the Connecting Oxford proposals [can be found on Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

Several of the actions in the AQAP are linked to these two schemes and facilitate a significant modal shift towards active travel, as well as the transition to zero emission transport. This includes the installation of electric vehicle charging points in the city, as well as the introduction of electric car clubs to allow residents to take up zero emission vehicles.

4.3 Priorities and Actions

This AQAP provides a framework for continuing current activity in the city to reduce NO₂ emissions whilst also developing new actions to complete our journey to legal emissions, and go beyond the council's new NO₂ local target. Please see the table on the next pages for a detailed breakdown of our proposed measures, interventions, and key priorities.

Actions will be delivered by a range of partners including Oxfordshire County Council who as local transport authority are responsible for many of the actions related to transport modal shift.

Priority 1 - Developing Partnerships and Public Education

Encouraging behavioural change to clean up the air in our cities through public education and effective communication can play a significant role in the reduction of air pollution. By raising awareness, we can see that we all have a role to play and we are all part of the solution; our everyday decisions can have an impact on the air we breathe.

The set of measures that are being presented within this priority area are aimed at delivering a solid foundation of environmental education in our community. They build upon the successful delivery of behavioural change and air quality communication programmes, such as the Award winning [STOP](#), [WOW](#), [Anti-Idling Campaign](#) or [OxAir](#).

Core actions will be to:

- Continue to work with schools, children, and young people to raise awareness of air pollution, discourage idling and promote active travel;
- Support city wide events that aim to accelerate the uptake of sustainable transport;
- Support projects that increase Oxford's Air Quality/AQ & Health evidence base such as [OxAir](#);
- Develop partnership work with the NHS, the third-sector, as well as public health commissioners and providers to increase awareness of air pollution amongst patients and reduce their personal exposure to air pollution;
- Improve air quality communication on our website and associated websites to assist the public in accessing reliable information about air pollution;
- Explore opportunities to use green infrastructure as a way to reduce exposure to poor air quality levels;
- Deliver city-wide campaign on how to implement DEFRA's best practice on the use of open fires and wood burning stoves, and on how to reduce burning of inappropriate fuel;
- Work with the District and County Councils on a co-ordinated approach to public awareness and education.

Priority 2 - Support for the uptake of Low and Zero emission vehicles

This priority area is aimed at the delivery of air quality measures that support the city's plans for the implementation of a Zero Emission Zone. It is expected that the delivery of the measures under this key priority area will substantially contribute to the reduction of transport emissions in the city. According to our source apportionment, transport is responsible for 68% of total NO_x emissions in Oxford.

The main measures to be delivered include the introduction of a new Euro VI Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for buses in Oxford, a road user charge scheme for all non-zero emission vehicles in Oxford city centre, the delivery of EV charging infrastructure, plans for the electrification of the City Council's own fleet, opportunities for the complete electrification of Oxford's bus fleet, as well as the commitment to incentivize zero-emission vehicles or to place restrictions on other vehicles in Oxford.

Core actions will be to:

- Introduce a Euro VI LEZ for buses in Oxford;
- Continue to introduce tighter Ultra Low emission standards for Hackney Carriage Vehicles;
- Deliver the Zero Emission Zone to incentivise zero emission vehicles or place restrictions on other vehicles in Oxford;
- Increase the amount of EV charging infrastructure in the City;
- Expand the City Council's EV Fleet (electrification of 25% of vehicle fleet);
- Develop an EV Strategy for Oxfordshire;
- Work with bus operators on the electrification of Oxford's bus fleet;
- Deliver Oxford's Energy Super Hub including the installation of more than 20 ultra-rapid + 30 fast vehicle EV chargers for the public use + the provision of ground source heat pumps for more than 300 homes;
- Deliver Air Quality Benefits through Planning System (EV charging infrastructure + efficient/less pollutant technologies);
- Explore opportunities for the delivery of electric infrastructure that could accelerate the uptake of electric boats and reduce their reliance on fossil fuel use for domestic heating.

Priority 3 - Reducing emissions from Domestic Heating, Industry and Services

The proportion of emissions from domestic heating, industry and services has increased as transport emissions have reduced. With the decrease in air pollution emissions from transport, air pollution levels generated from these other sectors gain more importance every year. In particular, when it comes to the role they play in the generation of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions. With regards to NO_x, these activities also contribute to 31% of total NO_x emissions of the City.

The city of Oxford is currently fully compliant with legal limits, as well as WHO advisory limits, for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. However, recent studies clearly indicate that there is no safe level of air pollution, and there is already clear evidence that particulate matter has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases.

Most of the measures proposed under this priority area are related to the reduction of combustion emissions via increased energy efficiency, thereby reducing NO_x and PM emissions. I.e. replacing old combustion sources such as boilers, shifting to low fuel appliances, and exploring heat networks.

Core actions will be to:

- Upgrade the Energy Efficiency of City Council's Housing stock;
- Provide Energy Advice Services, by employing Energy Advice Officers to visit Council homes and advise tenants, whilst also identifying energy saving improvements to the properties;
- Use central government's ECO Flexible Eligibility funding to identify and designate households as eligible under the Affordable Warmth Scheme;
- Review of Smoke Controlled Zones and implement revised government legislation for smoke nuisance;
- Encourage the development of local heat networks.

Priority 4 - Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increase the uptake of sustainable transport

One of the key themes of Oxfordshire's current local transport plan is to support the transition to a low carbon future by minimising the need to travel and reducing the proportion of journeys made by private car by making the use of public transport, walking and cycling more attractive.

The City and County Councils and partners have been supporting a shift to more sustainable and low emission modes of travel as well as reducing the proportion of car-based travel to and around the city, as this is an important way to reduce transport emissions.

The main measures to be delivered include exploring the possibility of implementing a Work Place Parking Levy in the city, introducing new vehicle access restrictions, implementing a local cycle and walking infrastructure plan, as well as introducing bus priority measures.

Core actions will be to:

- Deliver Connecting Oxford;
- Deliver sustainable transport measures such as cycling improvements and bus priority lanes;
- Roll-out Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) to discourage non-residential parking;
- Work with businesses to explore the inclusion of innovative sustainable travel modes into their business models;
- Explore opportunities to address city centre freight emissions by creating consolidation centre/s;
- Work with schools to reduce exposure to air pollution by reducing the need to travel during drop off/pick up times;
- Support Bikeability (free cycling lessons provided to pupils).

4.4 AQAP Measures

Table 5 shows the complete list of AQAP measures for each one of the 4 key areas of intervention identified above. It contains:

- a list of the actions that form part of the plan;
- the responsible individual and departments/organisations who will deliver this action;
- expected benefit in terms of pollutant emissions and/or concentration reduction;
- the timescale for implementation.

4.5 Policy Integration

Oxford City Council has several relevant planning and policy documents that have been developed and accounted for during the process of developing the measures in this AQAP. Some of these documents are being updated at the time of writing. If you are interested in learning more about those and the way they link with the new AQAP please click on the hyperlinks below:

- [Oxford's new Local Plan 2036](#)
- [Air Quality Planning Application Guidance](#)
- [Local Transport & Connectivity Plan](#)
- [Oxford's Sustainability Strategy](#)
- [Climate breakdown: Citizen's Assembly report](#)

Table 5 – Air Quality Action Plan Measures

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	1	Work with school to raise awareness of air pollution and promote Active Travel	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council + Local Friends of the Earth	Annually	2021-2025	Number of: walking, cycling, scooting, car, and park & stride trips, Number of participating schools and of activities delivered	NOx reduction not estimated, but increase of up to 23% in walking rates and reduction of up to 30% car journeys, Nox reduction difficult to estimate, but increase of awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Delivery in progress	2025	Prevention of obesity, reduction of noise and traffic accidents, reduction of nuisance
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	2	Support city wide events that aim to accelerate the uptake of sustainable transport	Oxford City Council + Other partners (e.g., Green TV)	Annually	2021-2025	Total amount of attendees and businesses participating, number of business adopting sustainable delivery options, number of business compliant with the ZEZ	NOx reduction not estimated, but increase of awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Planning Phase	2025	Acceleration of EV and e-bike uptake, promotion of sustainable deliveries, promotion of behavioural change, reduction of noise and CO ₂
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	3	Support projects that increase Oxford's Air Quality/AQ & Health evidence base	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council (Pub. Health)	Annually	2021-2025	Total amount of partnerships created, amount of AQ/health studies delivered	Not directly applicable – NOx reduction not estimated	Already being delivered	2025	Development of future policies, promotion of behavioural change, backed by more robust evidence
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	4	Develop partnership work with NHS, commissioners and providers to increase awareness of air pollution amongst patients and reduce their personal exposure to air pollution.	Oxford City + Oxfordshire County Council (Pub. Health)	On-going	2021-2025	Number of workshops/training sessions delivered, reduction in number of hospital admissions for COPD patients	NOx reduction not estimated, but communication campaigns can increase of awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Not started	2025	Promotion of behavioural change and reduction of personal exposure to poor air quality

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Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	5	Improve air quality communication on our website and associated websites to assist the public in accessing reliable information about air pollution.	Oxford City Council + All other District Councils	On-going	2021-2025	Number of website visitors, reduction of public requests for AQ information, reduction of hospital admissions	NOx reduction not estimated, but communication campaigns can increase awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Planning Phase	2025	Air Quality education and reduction of personal exposure to poor air quality
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	6	Explore opportunities to use green infrastructure as a way to reduce exposure to poor AQ levels	Oxfordshire County Council + Highways England	2020	2021-2025	Air Quality data after implementation	Reduction of up to 50% in exposure to air pollution levels where green infrastructure is installed (Greater London Authority)	Not started	2025	Reduction of noise, reduction of nuisance
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	7	Delivery of city-wide campaign on how to implement DEFRA's best practice on the use open fires and wood burning stoves, and on how to reduce burning of inappropriate fuel	Oxford City Council + Local Friends of the Earth + River Trust	2021	2021-2025	Reduction of nuisance complaints, PM10 and PM2.5 data	NOx and PM reductions not estimated, but communication campaigns can increase of awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Not Started	2025	Promotion of behavioural change, reduction of nuisance, reduction of nuisance investigations
(1) Developing Partnerships and Public Education	8	Work with the District and County Councils on a co-ordinated approach to public awareness and education	Oxford City Council + All other District Councils	2020	2021-2025	Number of campaigns run together between all the District Councils	NOx reduction not estimated, but communication campaigns can increase of awareness of up to 12% and behaviour change of up to 6% (Clean Air Day)	Planning Phase	2025	Division of resources, simplified message (integrated approach increases the power and effectiveness of the message) and reaches more people
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	9	Introducing a Euro VI LEZ for buses in Oxford	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council + Bus Operators	2020	2021	LEZ Approved bus database	5% to 12.8% total Road NOx emissions (Ricardo's Source Apportionment Study)	Delivery in progress	2022	Reduction of health impacts associated with air pollution

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	10	Introducing Ultra Low emission standards for Hackney Carriage Vehicles	Oxford City Council	2019	2020-2025 (phased approach)	Amount of New HCV Applications, enforcement stats	Up to 0.2% total Road NOx emissions (Ricardo's Source Apportionment Study)	Delivery in progress	2025	Reduction of health impacts associated with air pollution
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	11	Delivery of Zero Emission Zone (measures to incentivise zero emission vehicles or place restrictions on other vehicles in Oxford)	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council	2020	2021-2030 (phases 1 to 4)	Behavioural responses, AQ monitoring, ANPR counts	By 2035 (after full implementation), up to 66% reduction in city-wide NOx emissions and of 100% transport emissions in the city centre	Planning Phase	2021-2030 (phases 1 to 4)	Reduction of noise, traffic, CO ₂ and PM emissions, better walking and cycling environment, improved townscape and historic environment
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	12	Increase the amount of EV charging infrastructure in the City	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council	2019	2020-2025	Number of EV chargers installed	NOx reduction not estimated	Delivery in progress	2025	Reduction of noise, CO ₂
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	13	Expansion of City Council's EV Fleet (Electrification of 25% of vehicle fleet)	Oxford City Council	2020	2020-2023	Number of Electric vehicles purchased	NOx reduction not estimated	Already being delivered	2023	Reduction of noise, CO ₂
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	14	Development of an EV Strategy for Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire County Council + Other District Councils	2020	2021	Publication of EV strategy and adoption of Strategy by all District Councils	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2021	Reduction of noise, CO ₂
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles	15	Work with bus operators on the electrification of Oxford's Bus fleet	Oxfordshire County Council + Bus Operators	2020	2021-2025	% of bus fleet ZEV	Up to 32% of the city's total road NOx emissions (Ricardo's SAS)	Planning Phase	2025	Reduction of CO ₂ and noise, improvement of passenger experience, reduction in operating costs

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles + (3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	16	Delivery of Oxford's Energy Super Hub (installation of more than 20 ultra-rapid + 30 fast vehicle EV chargers for the public use + provision of ground source heat pumps for more than 300 homes)	Oxford City Council + partners	2019	2021	Number of GSHP installed, AQ monitoring	20,000 tonnes of CO2 per year saving by 2021, rising to 44,000 tonnes per year by 2032 + up to 22% reduction of NO2 emissions from transport by 2032 (Oxford City Council)	Planning and Construction Phases	2021	Reduction of carbon and PM
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles + (3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	17	Delivery of Air Quality Benefits through Planning System (EV charging infrastructure + efficient/less pollutant technologies)	Oxford City Council	2020	2020-2036	Number of developments with EV chargers installed/number of EV chargers installed, number of planning conditions	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Already being delivered	2025	Reduction of noise, CO ₂ , requirement for minimum NOx emission standards from IAQM guidelines to be followed
(2) Support for the uptake for Low and Zero emission vehicles + (3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	18	Explore opportunities for the delivery of electric infrastructure that could accelerate the uptake of electric boats and reduce their reliance on fossil fuel use for domestic heating	Oxford City Council + River trust + Environment Agency	2021	2021-2025	Number of installations delivered, number of boats relying on energy sources that are locally emissions free	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Exploratory Phase	2025	Promotion of behavioural change, reduction of nuisance, reduction of nuisance investigations, reduction of NOx and PM emissions, improvement in quality of life for those who use the canals
(3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	19	Upgrade Energy Efficiency of City Council's Housing stock	Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2025	Number of boiler upgrades, insulations and high efficiency storage heaters installed per year	NOx/PM reductions not estimated, but this measure is responsible for savings of at least 199 tonnes carbon dioxide (CO2) per year	Already being delivered	2025	Reduction of carbon and PM

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	20	Provide Energy Advise Services: employ Energy Advise Officers to visit Council homes and advise tenants, whilst also identifying energy saving improvements to the properties	Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2025	Total amount of home visits and of energy savings per year	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Already being delivered	2025	Reduction of carbon and PM
(3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	21	Use of central government's ECO Flexible Eligibility funding to identify and designate households as eligible under the Affordable Warmth Scheme	Oxford City Council	2020-2025	2020-2025	Total amount of households being granted with energy efficiency improvements	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Already being delivered	2025	Reduction of carbon and PM
(3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	22	Review of Smoke Controlled Zones and implementation of revised government legislation for smoke nuisance	Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2025	Implementation of new enforcement methods / reduction of the amount of nuisance complaints	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Exploratory Phase	2025	Government's future AQ Plans: a) extension of existing SCA's smoke emission standards to the whole of England b) provision of new powers for local to respond to instances of nuisance smoke pollution from boats with improvement and enforcement action
(3) Reducing emissions from domestic heating, Industry and Services	23	Encourage the development of local heat networks	Oxford City Council	2021	2021-2025	Number of planning applications using heat networks	NOx and PM reductions not estimated	Exploratory Phase	2025	Reduction of carbon, maximise energy efficiency, reduction of PM

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	24	Delivery of Connecting Oxford (explore opportunities for implementation of Workplace Parking levy + introduction of access restrictions)	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	2020	2023	Traffic counts, numbers of people travelling by bus, cycling or walking, number of businesses enrolled, enforcement stats	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2023	Prevention of obesity, reduction of noise and traffic collisions,
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	25	Delivery of sustainable transport measures such as cycling improvements and bus priority lanes	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2030	Scheme delivery Transport monitoring (e.g. cycle counts)	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2030	Reduction of CO ₂ , prevention of obesity, reduction of noise and traffic collisions, reduction of traffic
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	26	Roll-out of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) in order to discourage non-residential parking	Oxfordshire County Council	2020	2021	Implementation of the new CPZs	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2021	Reduction of CO ₂ , reduction of noise and traffic collisions , reduction of traffic
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	27	Work with businesses to explore the inclusion of innovative sustainable travel modes into their current business models	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2025	Number of businesses adopting sustainable travel modes	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2025	Reduction of traffic, acceleration of e-bike uptake, reduction of noise, promotion of sustainable transport

Key priority area	Measure	Measure	Lead Authority	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Key Performance Indicator	Target Pollution Reduction in the AQMA	Progress to Date	Estimated Completion Date	Associated benefits
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	28	Explore opportunities for implementation of consolidation centre to address city centre freight emissions	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	2020	2021-2025	Number of businesses enrolled	NOx reduction not estimated	Exploratory Phase	2025	Reduction of traffic, acceleration of e-bike and EV uptake, reduction of noise, promotion of sustainable transport
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	29	Work with schools to reduce exposure to air pollution by reducing the need to travel during drop off/pick up times	Oxfordshire County Council	2020	2021	Number of streets closed, schools enrolled	NOx reduction not estimated, however estimated high levels of human exposure to NO2 at local level during school pick-up/drop off times (school gates)	Planning Phase	2021	Reduction of traffic, collisions, acceleration of e-bike and EV uptake, reduction of noise, promotion of sustainable transport
(4) Reduce the need to travel, explore opportunities for mode shift and increasing the uptake of sustainable transport	30	Support Bikeability (free cycling lessons provided to pupils)	Oxfordshire County Council	2020	2021-2025	Number of schools enrolled	NOx reduction not estimated	Planning Phase	2025	Reduction of traffic, acceleration in uptake of cycling, reduction of noise, promotion of sustainable transport

Appendix A: Oxford's air pollution hotspots

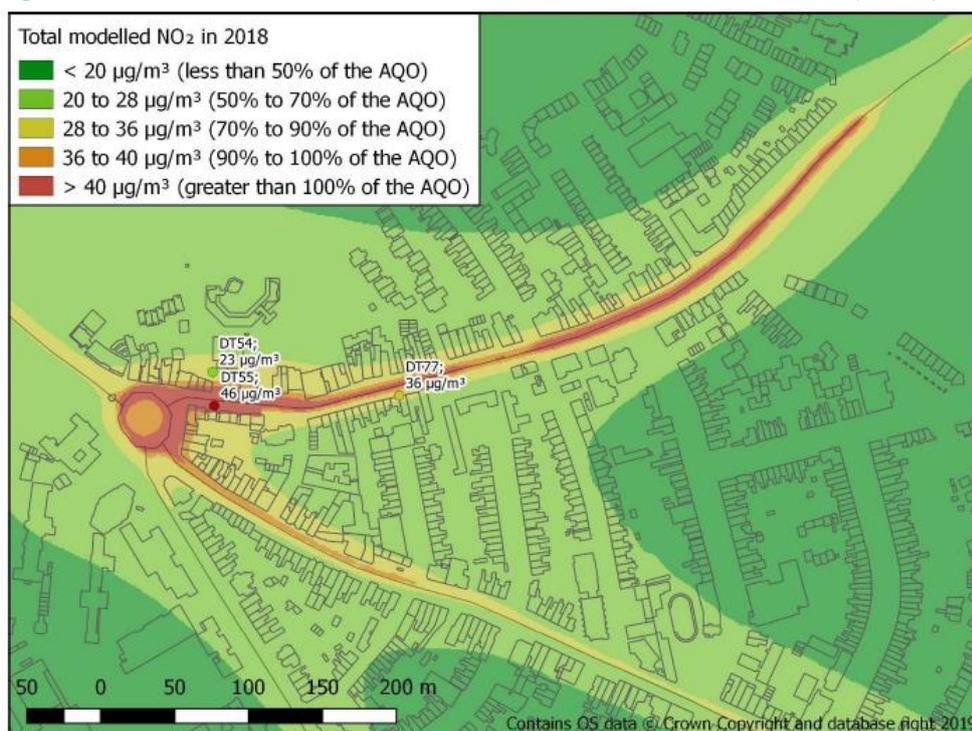
This section of the AQAP provides additional information about the City's four historic air quality hotspots.

Figures 9-12 (below) show air quality modelling and measured data from 2018. Shading shows air quality modelled data, points are diffusion tube (measured) data. Both modelled and monitored data was used to inform Oxford's most recent [Source Apportionment Study](#).

St Clement's

St Clement's is the location that historically registers the highest levels of NO₂. This road link is in the commercial centre of the city, within Oxford City Council local authority area. The road is a key city centre route, which connects east and west Oxford through The Plain Roundabout. St Clement's St is the most direct route that connects the east with the centre of the city,

Figure 9 - Modelled and Monitored total NO₂ concentrations (2018) at St Clements



Traffic builds up from St Clement's towards The Plain roundabout, with queues regularly extending beyond 125m. Several bus stops are along the road link which accommodates local bus services. 24h Coach services to London and the airports are also on the street with stops located in both east and west directions.

There is also a significant number of delivery and service vehicles using this road, as it serves as an access point to the city centre from the east. There is a high number of businesses which receive daily deliveries.

The main causes of the relatively poor air quality at this location are the narrow street layout, and obstructions to traffic flow. The street layout creates a canyon effect, which encourages pollutant entrapment. The obstructions include 4 bus stops for local buses and national coaches; daytime on street parking (by the Alms Houses); and frequently stopping delivery and servicing vehicles that supply local retailers.

In 2017, an Air Quality steering group was created, including elected Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Council councillors for St Clement’s, and officers. The objective was to develop measures that could address the problem of NO₂ exceedances at that location. Several options were brought forward as a result of the work developed by the group and air quality modelling was used to estimate the impacts of each option. The air quality modelling results indicated that upgrading the current Euro V requirement for buses to Euro VI would lead to the quickest reduction in NO₂ levels at St Clement’s. This will ensure compliance with the annual mean legal limit value of 40µg/m³ for NO₂ once the scheme is fully delivered. The introduction of a Euro VI Low Emission Zone is planned for 2021.

George Street

George Street is located in the heart of Oxford’s City Centre. Its eastern end meets Broad Street at a crossroads with Cornmarket Street to the south and Magdalen Street to the north. Its western end meets Hythe Bridge Street at a crossroads with Worcester Street.

George Street is perhaps the most striking example of an air pollution problem caused by a combination of traffic and historic street planning in Oxford. It is a narrow street with tall buildings on both sides that are close to the road. This creates a canyon, which traps polluted air, leading to high levels of nitrogen dioxide from vehicle exhausts.

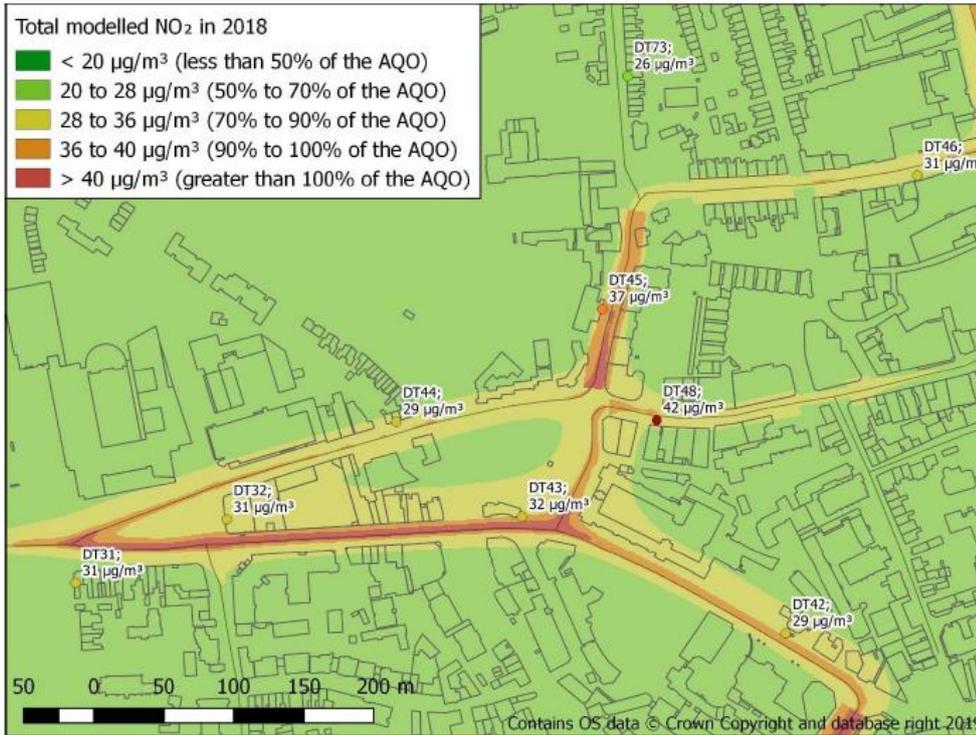
The street is covered by a bus gate which excludes several vehicles types for the majority of the day. Full details can be seen on table 6 below:

Table 6 – Vehicle restrictions on George Street

Bus gate	Time	Vehicle types allowed through the gate
George Street	10am – 6pm	Local buses, taxis/licensed private hire (not private rental) and exempt emergency vehicles only
	6pm – 10am	Access for loading allowed

The restrictions mean that the majority of traffic in the road is buses. Bus stops are located where footways are narrow and so bus tailpipe emissions are close to pedestrians, residents, and occupiers of shops and offices. Additionally, buses using these stops contribute to traffic congestion more generally by blocking flow (particularly of larger vehicles), as well as posing a risk for cyclists. Bus flows are high and tend to be at stops for a while whilst passengers board.

Figure 10 - Modelled and Monitored total NO₂ concentrations (2018) at George Street and surrounding area.



High Street

High Street is a busy city centre street with shops located on both sides.

It has a pavement on each side of the road, as well as several bus stops along its length. The road is frequently used by cyclists and has very high numbers of pedestrians on the pavements. High Street is covered by a bus gate which excludes several vehicles types for the majority of the day. Full details can be seen on table 3 below:

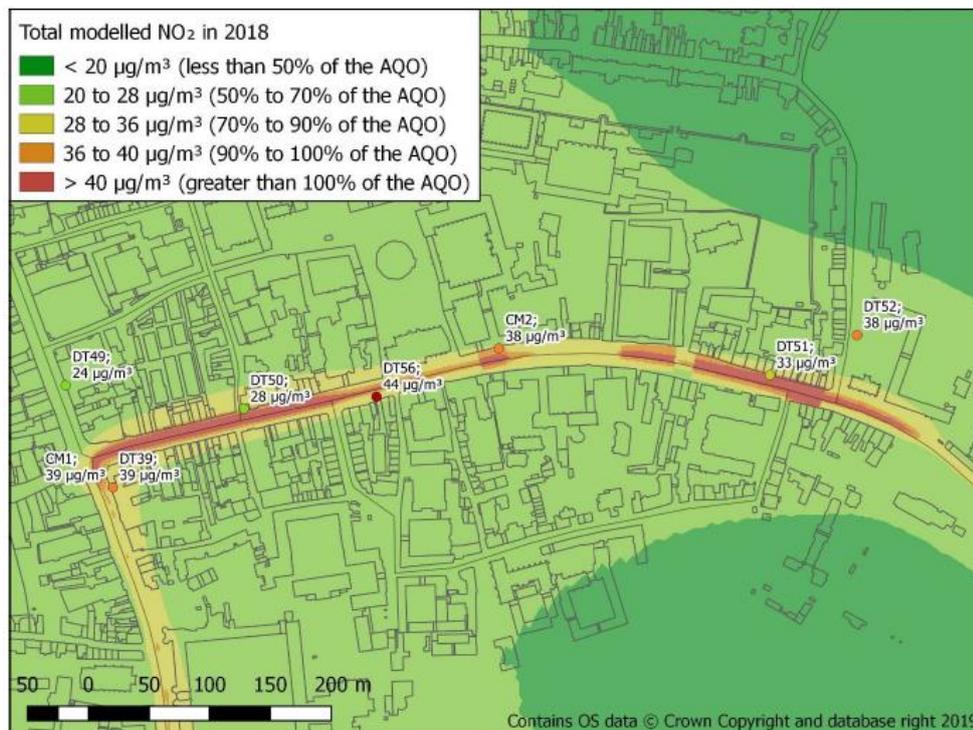
Table 7 – Vehicle restrictions on High Street

Bus gate	Time	Vehicle types allowed through the gate
High Street	7.30am – 6.30pm	Local buses, taxis/licensed private hire (not private rental) and exempt emergency vehicles only
	6.30pm – 7.30am	Any vehicle type allowed.

While vehicles are banned from going through the bus gate, they can enter the zone to make deliveries, for servicing and access purposes, but cannot use it as a through

route. Buses enter High Street eastbound from St Aldates and Queen Street, whilst westbound flow is generated from the Plain roundabout. Intensively used bus stops and high numbers of frequently stopping delivery and servicing vehicles creates congestion throughout the day, impacting flow in both directions.

Figure 11 - Modelled and Monitored total NO₂ concentrations (2018) on High Street

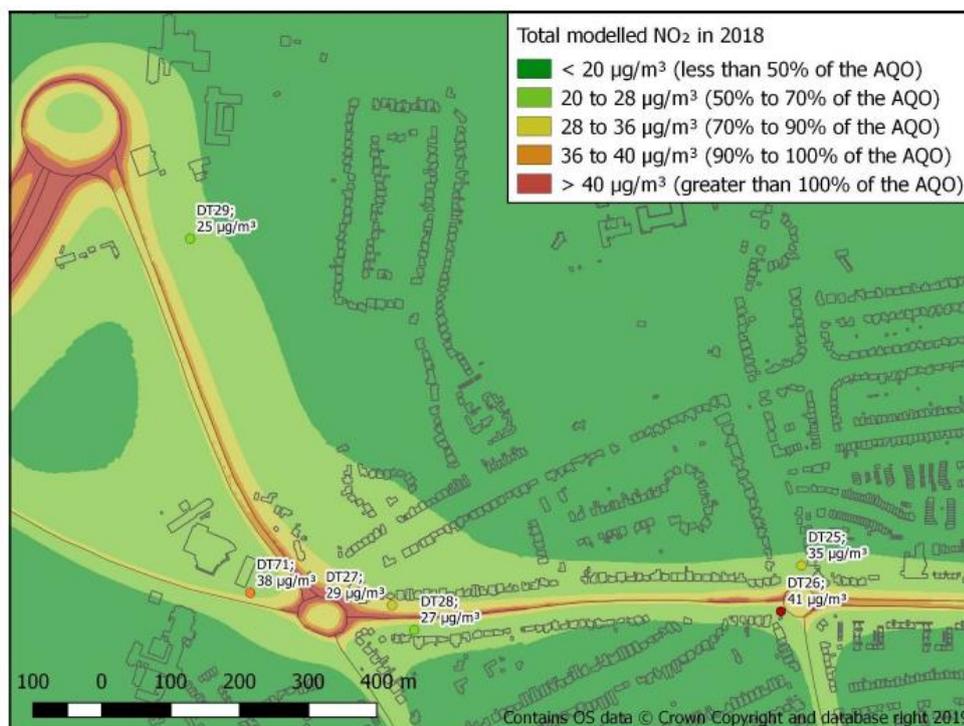


Cutteslowe Roundabout

Of the four historic NO₂ air pollution hotspots in Oxford this is the only one that is not in the city centre.

This is important to highlight, as locations outside the city centre usually have much lower footfall levels (due to the absence of shops and services in those areas). As such, human exposure to air pollution in these locations is much less pronounced, and occurs for less time, in comparison with the city centre. Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts are located on the Northern boundary of the city. Through these roundabouts, daily direct links are established to the city centre (via Banbury Road), as well as with the A40 going east (Cheltenham/Swindon) and west (serving John Radcliffe Hospital). The direct access from Oxford to the A34 going north (Bicester) and south (Abingdon) is also here, which makes it one of the biggest traffic arteries of the city.

Figure 12 - Modelled and Monitored total NO₂ concentrations (2018) at Cutteslowe



We are confident that the measures included in this AQAP, including the implementation of all Oxford’s ZEZ and Connecting Oxford measures and proposals, will bring down NO₂ levels well below compliance with the current limit value at these four hotspot locations.

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the local authority intends to achieve air quality limit values
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
AQS	Air Quality Strategy
AQO	Air Quality Objective
ASR	Air quality Annual Status Report
CBTF	Clean Bus Technology Fund
COLTA	City of Oxford Licensed Taxi Association
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
COPERT	Computer Programme to calculate Emissions from Road Transport
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DT	Diffusion Tube
ED/EC	European Directive/European Commission
ESO	Energy Super Hub Oxford
EU	European Union
EVs	Electric Vehicles
EWNI	England, Wales and Northern Ireland
GULO	Go Ultra Low Oxford
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
JAQU	Joint Air Quality Unit

LAQM	Local Air Quality Management - A UK Government policy framework that requires local authorities to periodically review and assess the current and future air quality in their areas
LAQM TG16	Local Air Quality Management – Technical Guidance 16
LES	Low Emission Strategy
LEZ	Low Emission Zone - The application of emissions limit for nominated vehicles operating within a defined area
LGV	Light Goods Vehicle
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NAEI	National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory
NO	Formed from nitrogen in the atmosphere during high temperature combustion, and the main constituent of NO _x , commonly known as nitric oxide
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide - Formed in small amounts in the atmosphere during high temperature combustion, but the majority is formed in the atmosphere through the conversion of nitric oxide in the presence of ozone
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
OTS	Oxford Transport Strategy
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm (micrometres or microns) or less
PM _{2.5}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less
STOP	Schools Tackling Oxford's air Pollution
UK	United Kingdom
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOW	Oxfordshire County Council's Walk to School programme
ZEZ	Zero Emission Zone

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Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Risk Assessment

					Date Raised	Owner	Risk Rating						Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			Gross		Current		Residual			Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
							I	P	I	P	I	P						
Council Reputation	Customer or stakeholder dissatisfied with scope/objectives of AQAP	T	Poor planning/poor consultation.	Damage to City Council standing. Need for revisions to AQAP.	20/07/2020	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive public consultation to be undertaken				
Council Reputation	Customer or stakeholder dissatisfaction with delivery of Action Plan	T	Poor planning/poor consultation.	Damage to City Council standing. Need for revisions to AQAP.	20/07/2020	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive public consultation to be undertaken				
Council Reputation	Failure to achieve targets /objectives set out in the AQAP	T	Poor planning. Weak corporate functioning	Damage to City Council standing. Need for corrective action.	20/07/2020	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive development has taken place in forming AQAP which secures its delivery				
Council Reputation	The AQAP fails to achieve compliance with regulators requirements	T	Poor planning / inadequate delivery	Intervention / penalty by regulator. Unbudgeted cost of corrective action. Reputational damage.	20/07/2020	PA	3	2	2	2	2	2	Some levers outside council control such as national legislative changes	Significant planning has taken place to ensure delivery				
Council Reputation	Introduction of new savings that threaten delivery of the AQAP	T	Future unforeseen budgetary cuts.	Impaired delivery of AQAP Failure to achieve targets /objectives. Reputational damage.	20/07/2020	PA	3	3	3	2	3	2		Accept risk				

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Scrutiny work plan

August 2020 to May 2021

Published on 21/08/20

www.oxford.gov.uk



The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its people.

Time is allowed within this plan to consider topical issues as they arise throughout the year as well as decisions to be taken by the Cabinet.

The plan sets out the work of scrutiny for this council year and will be reviewed at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our [suggestion form](#). See our [get involved webpage](#) for further details of how you can participate in the work of scrutiny.

Some topics will be considered at Scrutiny Committee meetings and others will be delegated to standing panels. Items for more detailed review will be considered by time-limited review groups.

The Committee will review the Council's [Forward Plan](#) at each meeting and decide which Cabinet decisions it wishes to comment on before the decision is made. The Council also has a "call in" process which allows decisions made by the Cabinet to be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented.

Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel responsibility and membership

Committee / Panel	Remit	Membership
Scrutiny Committee	Overall management of the Council's Scrutiny function	Councillors: Andrew Gant (Chair), Joe McManners (Vice Chair), Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Lubna Arshad, Shaista Aziz, Tiago Corais Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, James Fry, Richard Howlett, Pat Kennedy, Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan, Craig Simmons
Finance and Performance Panel	Finance and budgetary issues and decisions, performance	Councillors: James Fry (Chair), Chewe Munkonge, Craig Simmons, Roz Smith.

	management	
Housing and Homelessness Panel	Strategic housing, homelessness and landlord issues and decisions	Councillors: Nadine Bely-Summers (Chair), Shaista Aziz (vice-Chair), Mike Gotch, Sian Taylor, Elizabeth Wade, Dick Wolff Tenant co-optee: Tony Buchanan
Companies Panel	Shareholder function for companies and joint ventures	Councillors: James Fry (Chair), Tom Landell Mills, Chewe Munkonge, Craig Simmons.

Current and planned review groups

TBC

Timings of review groups

TBC

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Scrutiny Committee

01 September 2020 - reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	Yes	To review the operation of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy, and to amend the policy, if required.	Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities	Richard Wood, Strategy and Service Development Manager
Air Quality Action Plan	Yes	Seeking approval for public consultation on draft Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025	Deputy Leader - Green Transport	Mai Jarvis, Environmental

			and Zero Carbon Oxford	Quality Team Manager
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06 October 2020 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Street Naming and Numbering Policy	Yes	Revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy for adoption	Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services	Emma Griffiths, Lawyer
Annual Air Quality Status Report	Yes	To consider the findings of the recently published Annual Air Quality Status Report	Deputy Leader - Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
East Oxford Community Centre - & Housing Development	Yes	To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities	Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager
Tourism Review Group Update	Yes	An update report on the progress made against recommendations arising from the Tourism Review Group	Cabinet Member for City Centre, Covered Market and Culture	Matthew Peachey, Economic Development Manager
Leisure provision in the city	Yes	Leisure provision in the city	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services

03 November 2020 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Oxford's Waterways	Yes	To receive an update report on the progress of the Oxford Waterways Project	Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford	Councillor Marie Tidball, Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities
Workplace Equalities and Action Plan	Yes	A report to seek approval for the publication of the annual Workforce Equality Report and report on progress on the Equalities Action Plan 2018 to 2021.	Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services	Helen Bishop, Head of Business Improvement
Oxpens Redevelopment Update	Yes	The report is an update position on the redevelopment of the Oxpens Lane key City Centre site; the required delivery structure to take the project forward; and the Heads of Terms discussions. The City Council has formed a joint venture company, OxWED, with Nuffield College to progress the delivery of this scheme	Leader - Economic Development and Partnerships	Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)

06

01 December 2020 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Annual Monitoring Report 2019/20	Yes	To approve the Annual Monitoring Report for publication.	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery	Rachel Nixon
Safeguarding Report 2020/21	Yes	To report on the progress made on the Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2019/20	Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services	Daniella Granito

Sustainability Strategy	Yes	Consideration of the Council's draft Sustainability Strategy	Deputy Leader - Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford	Jo Colwell, Service Manager Environmental Sustainability
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12 January 2021 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22	Yes	A report to seek approval for proposals for consultation on changes to the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22.	Supporting Local Communities	Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits

02 February 2021 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Grant allocations to community and vol orgs 2021/22	Yes	A report to make decisions on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2021/2022.	Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services
Zero Emission Zone	Yes	Decision on whether to support Oxfordshire County Council's introduction of the Red Zone Zero Emission Zone	Deputy Leader - Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager

02 March 2021 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Council Business Plan 2021-22 and Business Plan	Yes	The annual business plan sets out the key actions and objectives for the next financial year, to support delivery against each of the four	Leader - Economic Development and	Shelley Ghazi, Policy and Partnerships Officer

2020-21 update		corporate priorities set out in the Council Strategy 2020-24. The document also includes an update on delivery against the previous year's business plan.	Partnerships	
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08 April 2021 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
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Items with dates to be determined

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Apprentices and NEETs	Yes	To consider the Council's and Oxford Direct Service's future plans for employing apprentices. This may include inviting the County Council to set out their work to support people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Also to get an update on the progress of the current apprenticeship scheme, and any planned changes in light of Covid-19	Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services	Paul Adams, HR & Payroll Manager
Acceptable Behaviours in the City Centre	Yes	To consider the outcome of the Acceptable Behaviours Consultation, and next steps.		Richard Adams, Community Safety Service Manager

Finance and Performance Panel

02 September 2020 - reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Revised Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21	Yes	The annual business plan sets out the key actions and objectives for the next financial year, to support delivery against each of the four corporate priorities set out in the Council Strategy 2020-24. It had been intended that the 2020-21 Business Plan was considered by the April 2020 Cabinet. However this was overtaken by the pandemic, and the whole Business Plan has had to be reviewed to reflect the current budgetary pause of new expenditure as well as new workstreams developed as a response to COVID-19.	Leader - Economic Development and Partnerships	Shelley Ghazi, Policy and Partnerships Officer
Treasury Management Performance: Annual Report and Performance 2019/20	Yes	A report to set out the Council's Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2019/2020.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
Procurement Strategy 2020 - 2021	Yes	To present the Council's Strategy for the Procurement of Goods and Services for the period 2020- 2021.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management	Annette Osborne
Quarterly Integrated Performance 2020/21 - Q1	Yes	A report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30 June 2020.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy

			Management	Manager
Performance Monitoring 2020/21 Q1	Yes	A report detailing performance against relevant KPIs and an update on progress made against the Council's 2020/21 business plan.	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management	Rocco Labellarte, Chief Technology and Information Officer

29 September 2020 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Social Value in Procurement	Yes	An update report on the progress made on implementing the inclusion of social value weightings within procurement contracts, including managing the challenges that this brings	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management	Annette Osborne

03 December 2020 - provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Infrastructure Funding Statement	Yes	Report on receipt, expenditure and future expenditure of CIL and S106 contributions	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery	Lorraine Freeman, Development Funding Officer
Treasury Management Mid – Year Report	Yes	A report to report on the performance of the Treasury Management function for the 6 months to 30 September 2020	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
Quarterly Integrated Performance 2020/21– Q2	Yes	A report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30 September 2020.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy

			Management	Manager
Performance Monitoring 2020/21 Q2	Yes	A report detailing performance against relevant KPIs and an update on progress made against the Council's 2020/21 business plan.	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management	Liz Godin
Budget Review Recommendations Update 2019/20	Yes	An update on the progress made against recommendations from the Budget Review Group report 2019/20	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

27 January 2021 - provisional reports

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Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22	Yes	A report to present the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
Capital Strategy 2021-22	Yes	A report to present the Capital Strategy for 2021/22 approval.	Deputy Leader - Finance and Asset Management	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
Council Borrowing Options	Yes	To present the different sources of borrowing for the Council and their benefits and drawbacks	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager

			Management	
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Housing and Homelessness Panel

03 September - Provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Review of the Additional HMO licensing scheme	Yes	The report provides findings from a review carried out for the HMO Licensing Scheme and seeks approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation to renew the scheme in January 2021	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery	Gail Siddall, Team Leader , HMO Enforcement Team
Proposal to improve the Private Rented Sector through selective licensing.	Yes	The report provides findings from a review carried out into the housing conditions within the private rented sector and seeks approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation into the introduction of selective licensing of the private rented sector across the city	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery	Gail Siddall, Team Leader , HMO Enforcement Team

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08 October 2020 - Provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Housing Performance 2020/21 Q2	Yes	An update on the Council's Housing Performance against its KPIs for Q2		Tom Rice, Principal Planner

05 November 2020 - Provisional reports

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Rough Sleeping Update	Yes	An update report on the Council's activities in relation to Rough Sleeping, particularly in light of Covid 19, to include consideration of Floyds Row, the impact of the 'everyone in' policy, and future plans around 'everyone in' (with specific reference to the availability of move-on accommodation).	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing	Nerys Parry, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager
Housing and Carbon Reduction	Yes	A report to inform the Committee of the Council's current plans with regards to carbon reduction in housing, looking specifically at retrofitting plans and possible funding models for paying for improvements to energy efficiency, as well as new housing supply.	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing	Rachel Nixon

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Feb mtg - date TBC

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Housing Performance 2020/21 Q3	Yes	An update on the Council's Housing Performance against its KPIs for Q3		Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services / Director Housing Companies
Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds 2021/22	Yes	A report to approve the allocation of homelessness prevention funds for 2021/22.	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services / Director Housing Companies
Update of Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation	Yes	Minor changes to allow clarification around discretionary grant and joint custody	Cabinet Member for Affordable	Becky Walker, Home Improvement Agency

Policy 2021		arrangements	Housing	Team Manager
Additional HMO licensing scheme renewal	Yes	To report on the findings of the consultation and to seek approval for the next steps in relation to additional HMO licensing in the city	Affordable Housing	Gail Siddall, Team Leader , HMO Enforcement Team

04 March 2021 – no provisional reports at present

Items with dates to be determined

Agenda item	Cabinet item	Description	Cabinet portfolio	Lead officer
Tenant Satisfaction	Yes	An update report on the results of the tenant satisfaction survey, and actions being taken in light of the learnings	Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

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Companies Panel

14 September 2020 - reports will be the same as those at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting

14 December 2020 - reports will be the same as those at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting

15 March 2021 - reports will be the same as those at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting



Criteria

The following TOPICC criteria may be used by the Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and prioritise suggested topics:

- **Timely** – is it timely to consider the issue?
 - **Oxford priority** – is it a council priority or relates to an essential service?
 - **Public interest** – is it of significant public interest?
 - **Influence** – can Scrutiny have a meaningful influence and add value?
 - **Cost** – is there a significant financial impact or an area of high expenditure?
 - **Cabinet** – is it a Cabinet item? (Temporary consideration)
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Forward Plan

CABINET 09 September

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ITEM 8: ID: I022534	Revised Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21
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The annual business plan sets out the key actions and objectives for the next financial year, to support delivery against each of the four corporate priorities set out in the Council Strategy 2020-24. It had been intended that the 2020-21 Business Plan was considered by the April 2020 Cabinet. However this was overtaken by the pandemic, and the whole Business Plan has had to be reviewed to reflect the current budgetary pause of new expenditure as well as new workstreams developed as a response to COVID-19.

ITEM 9: ID: I025338	Implementation of the Housing Infrastructure Funding for Oxford North (Northern Gateway)
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This report is to consider whether to enter into an agreement with Thomas White Oxford (TWO) to deliver the HIF funded infrastructure at Oxford North

ITEM 10: ID: I024856	Land acquisition and Project Approvals for the development of homes in the HRA Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
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Proposed acquisition by Oxford City Council of 2 sites from Oxfordshire County Council : Northfields Hostel and County Depot at Lanham Way. Proposed transfer of a strip of land at Speedwell House from Oxford City Council to Oxfordshire County Council. The land transfers being contained in a single or parallel contracts. To also seek project approval and delegations to progress further development sites within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), subject to a revision of the HRA Business Plan and HRA budget allocations.

ITEM 11: ID: I024439	Procurement Strategy 2020 - 2021 Report status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.
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To present the Councils Strategy for the Procurement of Goods and Services for the period 2020- 2021.

ITEM 14: ID: I025473	Approval of a contract award for a revenues and Benefits system Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
The current contract for the revenues and Benefits system expires at the end of March 2020. Having conducted a procurement exercise approval is needed to proceed with the purchase.	

ITEM 15: ID: I024514	Treasury Management Performance: Annual Report and Performance 2019/20 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to set out the Council's Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2019/2020.	

ITEM 16: ID: I024876	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
To review the operation of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy, and to amend the policy, if required.	

ITEM 17: ID: I025090	Air Quality Action Plan Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
Seeking approval for public consultation on draft Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025	

ITEM 18: ID: I024379	Review of the Additional HMO licensing scheme Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
The report provides findings from a review carried out for the HMO Licensing Scheme and seeks approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation to renew the scheme in January 2021	

ITEM 19: ID: I024380	Proposal to improve the Private Rented Sector through selective licensing. Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
The report provides findings from a review carried out into the housing conditions within the private rented sector and seeks approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation into the introduction of selective licensing of the private rented sector across the city	

ITEM 21: ID: I024512	Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to seek approval for proposals for consultation on changes to the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22.	

CABINET 14 October

ITEM 22: ID: I023386	Street Naming and Numbering Policy Report status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.
Revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy for adoption	

ITEM 23: ID: I015275	East Oxford Community Centre - & Housing Development Report status: Provisional : Decision needs further consideration or information
To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	

ITEM 24: ID: I025474	Leisure provision in the city Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Leisure provision in the city	

ITEM 25: ID: I025205	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Report status: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information
The SCI has to be prepared by the City Council as a legal requirement. The current one adopted in July 2015 needs to be updated to inform future plan-making and decisions made on planning applications. This updated SCI will explain how the City Council will engage with communities, stakeholders and the public in the planning system.	

CABINET 11 November

ITEM 26: ID: I024617	CIL Charging Schedule Review Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Review of CIL charging schedule - To seek approval to consult on a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule	

ITEM 27: ID: I019467	Oxpens Redevelopment Update Report status: Provisional
The report is an update position on the redevelopment of the Oxpens Lane key City Centre site; the required delivery structure to take the project forward; and the Heads of Terms discussions. The City Council has formed a joint venture company, OxWED, with Nuffield College to progress the delivery of this scheme	

ITEM 28: ID: I024517	Workplace Equalities and Action Plan Report status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.
A report to seek approval for the publication of the annual Workforce Equality Report and report on progress on the Equalities Action Plan 2018 to 2021.	

ITEM 29: ID: I025488	Alcohol and Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Extension, amendment or expiry of existing city-wide Alcohol and Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders.	

CABINET 09 December

ITEM 30: ID: I024518	Budget 2021/2022 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to propose a Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2021/22 Budget for consultation	

ITEM 31: ID: I024519	Quarterly Integrated Performance 2020/21– Q2 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30 September 2020.	

ITEM 32: ID: I024611	Infrastructure Funding Statement Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Report on receipt, expenditure and future expenditure of CIL and S106 contributions	

ITEM 33: ID: I024614	Annual Monitoring Report 2019/20 Report status: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information
To approve the Annual Monitoring Report for publication.	

ITEM 34: ID: I024521	Treasury Management Mid –Year Report Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to report on the performance of the Treasury Management function for the 6 months to 30 September 2020	

CABINET 20 January

ITEM 35: ID: I024520	Council tax reduction scheme 2021/2022 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to seek approval for the Council’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22 following consultation	

CABINET 10 February

ITEM 36: ID: I024525	Grant allocations to community and vol orgs 2021/22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to make decisions on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2021/2022.	

ITEM 37: ID: I024522	Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to present the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.	

ITEM 38: ID: I024523	Budget 2021/22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to present the outcome of the budget consultation and agree the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022-23 to 2024-25 and 2022-22 Budget for recommendation to Council.	

ITEM 39: ID: I024526	Capital Strategy 2021-22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to present the Capital Strategy for 2021/22 approval.	

ITEM 40: ID: I024506	Additional HMO licensing scheme renewal Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
To report on the findings of the consultation and to seek approval for the next steps in relation to additional HMO licensing in the city	

ITEM 41: ID: I024186	Update of Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy 2021 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
Minor changes to allow clarification around discretionary grant and joint custody arrangements	

ITEM 42: ID: I024527	Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds 2021/22 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to approve the allocation of homelessness prevention funds for 2021/22.	

ITEM 43: ID: I024511	Zero Emission Zone Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
Decision on whether to support Oxfordshire County Council's introduction of the Red Zone Zero Emission Zone	

CABINET 10 March

ITEM 44: ID: I024529	Integrated Performance Report for Q3 Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
A report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 31 December 2020	

ITEM 45: ID: I025318	Council Business Plan 2021-22 and Business Plan 2020-21 update Report status: Confirmed for this meeting
The annual business plan sets out the key actions and objectives for the next financial year, to support delivery against each of the four corporate priorities set out in the Council Strategy 2020-24. The document also includes an update on delivery against the previous year's business plan.	

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To: **Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **01 September 2020**
Report of: **Head of Law and Governance**
Title of Report: **Scrutiny Review Groups 2020/21**

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To agree Review Group topics and administrative issues for 2020/21
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	All
Recommendations: That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:	
1.	Note the previous decision that the Finance and Performance Panel undertake a Budget Review, agree that this review will be supported for the Housing section by members of the Housing and Homelessness Panel
2.	Select the topic of the second Review Group from: climate emergency, domestic abuse, and citizen engagement.
3.	Appoint a Chair to selected Scrutiny Review Group from the membership of the Scrutiny Committee and decide the number of members
4.	Seek nominations from political groups for membership of the Review Group following the Committee meeting, and for those Review Group members to hold a scoping meeting to agree a proposed in-depth scope for ratification by the Committee at a future meeting.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Outline Rationales for topics proposed for consideration as Review Group topics

Introduction and background

1. At its meeting on 06 July 2020 the Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Committee's work plan for the civic year 2020/21. In considering that report it was noted that decisions regarding Scrutiny Review Group topics would be considered at the Committee's August meeting. That meeting, however, was cancelled, and this decision was therefore deferred until the current meeting.

Review Groups - Introduction

2. Scrutiny Review Groups are Scrutiny's opportunity to found small sub-groups to carry out detailed reviews, where it would be impractical for the whole committee to be involved. Review Groups are informal task and finish groups established by the Scrutiny Committee to gather evidence and produce a report and recommendations on a specific issue within a limited timeframe.
3. The agreed Scrutiny Operating Principles state that if the Committee runs three Standing Panels, as it has chosen to do this year, there is capacity to run two Review Groups over the course of the civic year. At its meeting on 02 June 2020 the Committee agreed to the recommendation that the Finance and Performance Panel undertake the annual review of the Council's budget. The Committee therefore has to decide on the topic of its other Review Group, and administrative issues around both.
4. Review Groups are not required under the Committee's Operating Principles to reflect the Council's political balance but the Committee will use the following cross-party principle guide for appointment:

4 members: 2 Labour, 1 Lib Dem, 1 Green
6 members: 3 Labour, 2 Lib Dem, 1 Green
5. Review Group Chairs are required to be members of the Scrutiny Committee. However, the remaining membership may be made up from any non-executive members of the Council. Chairs may be asked to report back to the Scrutiny Committee on progress of the Review Group.
6. No substitutions are allowed on Review Groups. This is due to the need for continuity of membership within a focused area of review and avoids duplication of work.
7. It is the Scrutiny Committee which commissions and agrees the scope of the work of Review Groups and therefore has final agreement on their recommendations.

Budget Review Group

8. Scrutiny of the Council's budget proposals for the forthcoming year is a core responsibility of the Scrutiny function, and operates as part of the Council's wider budget consultation process as mandated within the Council's constitution. As such, it has been an annually-recurring Review Group, taking place in early January each year, following the publication of the Council's draft budget proposals. Heads of Service are invited to talk through the budget proposals in their area and to respond to questions arising from them.
9. Due to the overlap in skills required, members of the Finance Panel (now Finance and Performance Panel) have historically been appointed to undertake the Budget Review, with the Chair of the Finance Panel taking on the role of Chair of the Budget Review Group. This was confirmed by the Scrutiny Committee on 02 June

2020 as part of the establishment of the Finance and Performance Panel. Historically, members of the Housing Panel (now Housing and Homelessness Panel) have been invited to participate in the meeting at which Housing-related budgetary proposals were considered.

10. The model of extending membership relating to Housing has worked well in previous Budget Review Groups, and it is recommended that it be replicated. The Committee is therefore recommended to agree that in addition to the Finance and Performance Panel members, members of the Housing and Homelessness Panel participate in Housing-related budget questioning.

Other Review Group Topics

11. At its previous meeting, the Scrutiny Committee agreed three topics to have three outline rationales developed. These topics were as follows:
 - Climate Emergency
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Public participation in decision making and citizen involvement
12. Attached to this report is Appendix 1, which contains the outline rationales requested, which have been put together following discussion with relevant officers and members.
13. The Committee is asked to review these rationales and agree one Review Group topic to take forward. It is also recommended that a Chair for the Review Group be appointed.
14. The typical number of members for such Review Groups is four or six. Both have worked well in the past, though additional members provide wider opportunity for involvement and greater resilience in case of illness or other absence.
15. As referenced in paragraph 7 of this report, the Scrutiny Committee is ultimately in control of the Review Groups it establishes. Practically, however, it is difficult to agree membership of the Review Groups at the same time as they are established. It is recommended, therefore, that the Committee agrees to seek nominations from political groups for membership of the Review Group following the Committee meeting, and for those Review Group members to hold a scoping meeting to agree a proposed in-depth scope for ratification by the Committee at a future meeting.

Conclusion and Next Steps

16. The Committee is asked to agree the recommendations as set out in the summary of this report. The Committee will have a further opportunity to consider the scope of the chosen Review Groups when the proposed scopes are put together by nominated Review Group members for sign-off. The date of this will be dependent on the timing of the Review Group, which will be dependent on the topic chosen and the membership.

Report author	Tom Hudson
Job title	Scrutiny Officer

Service area or department	Law and Governance
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Background Papers: None

1. Climate Emergency Review Group

- Rationale

The Scrutiny Committee agreed in the last civic year to establish the Climate Emergency Review Group. This group met and submitted its report (though due to an agreed delay and then Covid no response has yet been made to the recommendations). Due to the enormity of the topic the Climate Emergency Review Group focused on a relatively narrow scope, primarily considering buildings. The areas of focus considered at the Citizens' Assembly, those needing to be addressed in order to respond to the Climate Emergency, were far broader than simply the built environment. Consequently, there remain significant areas which remain unconsidered by Scrutiny.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also ushered in significant changes – some positive, such as increased interest in walking, cycling and appreciation of the outdoors, greater powers to local authorities around implementing sustainable travel measures without extensive pre-consultation, home working and reduced traffic. However, in addition to its public health impacts it has also brought other major negative impacts, particularly financial. As such, there is a challenge and opportunity for the council to 'build back better,' in which environmental improvements would be expected to play a major role.

However, there are also greater financial pressures also, meaning the Council's existing position, as well as Scrutiny's recommendations require cost-assessing, and a prioritisation exercise of previous recommendations and new opportunities to be undertaken in light of the constrained financial environment.

- Key Lines of Enquiry

Speaking to previous Review Group members and relevant officers the main areas of focus are:

- The opportunities afforded by new local authority powers in regards to sustainable transport
- Monitoring progress of minimal-cost items announced by the Council and recommended by the Climate Emergency Review Group, particularly the development of Technical Advice Notes and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Ways to 'build back better' including greening the city and the potential of living streets in improving quality of life, sustainable transport, and learning from the C40 Mayors' Covid Taskforce
- Learning from the Council's work on retrofitting and pilot project of pre-fabricated, zero carbon buildings
- Setting target KPIs for the Council to assess its success in responding to the Climate Emergency
- Considering the priority of new and existing proposals by the Council and Climate Emergency Review Group in light of the Council's financial situation

- Integration with other Council work
A report is expected to come to Cabinet in November or December outlining the Council's proposed changes to the Climate Change agenda in light of the significantly altered post-Covid environment. Cabinet responses to the original Climate Emergency Review Group are expected at this time also. In January the Council will consult on its proposed budget. These would all be expected usefully to contribute to the work of the Review Group.
- Pre-establishment lead member:
The Review Group was proposed by Councillor Simmons. However, an alternative Chair may need to be sought.

2. Domestic Abuse Review Group

- Rationale
Though the stresses of Covid-19 have increased incidents of domestic abuse and lockdown policies have exacerbated the danger by removing the pressure valve of leaving the house, domestic abuse is not a new issue. Prior to its raised profile during Covid, it was estimated that just under 6% of adults aged 16 to 74 suffered domestic abuse in 2019,¹ with an estimated third of all women aged between 16 and 59 expected to experience it in their lifetimes, and two women a week being killed by current or former partners in that year.² Prevalent and deadly before Covid, the pandemic has led to vastly increased incidences of domestic violence, with the charity Refuge reporting in May increases of 957% for visits to its website.³ It should be noted, however, that this was not replicated in police reports or reports to local domestic abuse services across the country.

For victims of abuse, leaving their abuser often involves leaving their home. Women's Aid's Annual Audit (2019) found a shortfall of refuge bed spaces of 1,715 in England, and that over 30% of service providers had had to cut staffing due to reduced funding. Amidst a capacity shortage of refuge spaces, therefore, fleeing domestic violence can mean homelessness for victims of abuse. One class of people fleeing abuse, however, face an even more acute challenge, those without recourse to public funds for the government does not consider such people to be eligible for what refuge capacity is available. Eligibility criteria for recourse to public funds rely on whether a person is

¹[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2019#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Crime%20Survey,last%20year%20\(Figure%201\).&text=The%20remaining%2057%25%20\(746%2C219\),as%20domestic%20abuse%2Drelated%20crimes.](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2019#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Crime%20Survey,last%20year%20(Figure%201).&text=The%20remaining%2057%25%20(746%2C219),as%20domestic%20abuse%2Drelated%20crimes.)

²<https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/domestic-violence/domestic-violence-the-facts/>

³<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52755109>

subject to immigration control, meaning having no recourse to public funds is an issue experienced by members of BAME communities (though not all BAME communities). As an ethnically diverse city, where even in 2011 almost 20% of residents were born in non-EU countries, the link between domestic violence and homelessness, and the limited role the Council can play in addressing this in light of legislation around recourse to public funds is particularly pertinent.

An issue to be noted is that due to the complexity of domestic abuse as an issue, with multiple causes, expressions and impacts, responding to it is not the responsibility of one single body. Locally, a network of parties – City and County Councils, Police and Health Services, charities and community groups – all have an active part in working together locally to respond to domestic abuse. Though the City Council is not the body primarily responsible for coordinating the response to domestic abuse, in two particular areas it is the lead body: homelessness prevention, and its work with BAME communities. It is possible, therefore, to conduct a well-focused review group on the topic on areas in which the Council can have a meaningful impact.

- Key Lines of Enquiry

Speaking to those members who have expressed an interest in the review group and key council officers the broad issues for consideration would include:

- Understanding the variety and experience of domestic abuse, and its impacts on those who suffer it
- Exploring the links between homelessness and domestic abuse, means of prevention and the effectiveness of the Council's response, particularly the Sanctuary Scheme
- The particular issues and challenges facing BAME sufferers of domestic abuse, in particular those with no recourse to public funds
- The support required by BAME communities in recognising and supporting victims of domestic abuse and what good practice can be learnt from successful schemes elsewhere
- The robustness of the Council's own processes in identifying and supporting victims of domestic abuse
- Opportunities for training and awareness raising to prevent or reduce the impact of domestic violence
- Consideration of the Safeguarding Families Plus approach, and broader measures to reduce the environmental factors in which domestic abuse might take place

- Integration with other Council work

The proposed Key Lines of Enquiry touch on a number of important areas of the Council's work:

- Homelessness prevention, particularly in relation to the Council's sanctuary scheme
- The Council's safeguarding duty

- Grant funding of community and charitable groups, and communities work
 - A review report is being written currently on a recent Home Office-funded BAME experience project, in which violence against women featured as the key strand
- Pre-establishment lead member:
The Review Group was proposed by Councillor Aziz

3. Citizen Engagement Review Group

- Rationale
The theme of citizen engagement has previously been put forward for consideration by Scrutiny, though not selected.

As most recently instanced in the divisiveness of the management of the Brexit vote, unclear or conflicting advice over Covid-19, and controversy over the handling of Dominic Cummings' trip to County Durham during lockdown, public faith in political institutions is low currently. Research has shown a significant decline in the public's trust of politicians, with 32% stating that they almost never trust government, up from 11% in 1986 (NatCen 2012). This has the potential to affect social cohesion among local communities, as faith becomes lost in the political system.

This trend has not yet extended to local councils, with research showing that 74 per cent of residents trust their council to take decisions about the local area – compared to just 15 per cent who cited central government.⁴ Whilst the corrosion of faith in local government does not reflect that of national government, maintaining and improving engagement in local democracy is vitally important. Local councils have a unique role to play in maintaining local esteem by becoming bastions of local democracy. A recent [LGA report](#) on engagement highlights:

“It has been said that engagement is everybody’s responsibility in a local authority, but all too often it ends up being nobody’s. There can be a temptation to think it is an abstract process that somebody deals with. In reality, good dialogue with residents and securing mutual trust between the council and the community needs to be part of the whole council’s DNA (p.4)”⁵

Councillors believe every person in Oxford should know how, and be able to, effect change within the Council. Though the Council can clearly benefit from its access to world experts on multiple topics on its doorstep, the lived experiences of stakeholders who will be impacted by decisions are of even

⁴ ‘Polling on resident satisfaction with councils’, LGA, October 2016, p.12

⁵ <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New%20Conversations%20Guide%2012.pdf>

greater importance. By ‘co-producing’ policy with citizens there is an opportunity to make more informed decisions and build a more cohesive and empowered society.

Whilst generally believing councils to make decisions in their interests, citizens nationally often perceive engagement by local government as tokenistic, overly formal and unlikely to make a difference. Through research,⁶ we understand that many people are unaware of the Council’s decision making process, and how best to engage and influence. Other councils, such as Kirklees Borough Council, are leading the country in terms of local authority democratic innovation. Their cross-party Democracy Commission recent review succeeded in engaging over 1000 people in shaping their future democratic structures. Lessons can be learnt from them and others.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also forced the Council to adapt the way it runs and delivers services for its residents, such as the provision of its Hub services, the establishment of a 5000-strong group of volunteers, and the movement to online Committee meetings. This brings with it challenges, but also opportunities to maximise the benefits of these adaptations.

- Key Lines of Enquiry
 - o Auditing all current opportunities for Oxford residents to input into council decision making. What are they? What is the take up? How does this compare to national averages?
 - o Evidence gathering of best practice from other local authorities, such as Kirklees Borough Council’s Democracy Commission. What ideas have others trialled and found successful? What have the impacts been?
 - o What innovative methods to better connect with citizens exist, and how they might operate in Oxford, and what level of resources are available within the Council to deliver on such activities? These methods may include: community mapping, public meetings, focus groups and workshops, web based consultation, citizens’ juries, citizens’ panel, street stalls, questionnaires and surveys, local community meetings.
 - o Scrutiny of the recent engagement review undertaken by the Communities team, the initial impact of the Residents’ Panel, and Covid-related changes to identify greater and more valuable citizen engagement.

- Integration with other Council work

As referenced above, engagement is a cross-cutting theme in the Council’s delivery of its functions. However, areas of particular relevance include:

 - o Public involvement in committees
 - o Statutory and non-statutory consultations

⁶ Kirklees Democracy Commission, 2017. Available at: <http://www.democracycommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Kirklees-Democracy-Commission-full-report-June-2017-WEB.pdf>

- Advisory groups – Citizens’ Panel, Tenants’ Panel
 - ‘User’ feedback on services
 - Community governance review
- Pre-establishment lead member:
This Review Group is carried over from last year, when it was proposed by Councillor Howlett. Councillor Howlett is unable to Chair the Review Group should it be set up. Councillor Gant has offered to do so.

Cabinet Responses to Scrutiny and Panel Recommendations

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee) made on 25/02/2020 concerning The Social Value Act 2012 and Social Responsibility in Procurement

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council benchmarks its spending with SMEs against other similar councils nationally	Yes	We have already done some of this work informally and we would like to take this forward as far as data permits.
2) That the Council underwrites an event for social value similar to that run by Fraud Prevention, which brings neighbouring Councils, support service providers and experts together to improve overall standards. The Council should also seek to understand better from SMEs the barriers faced and seek to reduce them.	Yes	We will try to take forward an appropriate event (whether in person or virtual) as part of our new procurement strategy.

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Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 06/07/2020 concerning the Local Growth Funded Projects report

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
That the Council confirms that the brief for the development at Standingford House, Cave St includes the adjacent Council-owned land and that it is registered as being for mixed business/residential use.	Partially	The Council's plans do include the land adjacent to the Standingford House site. The land is, at present, registered as commercial (not mixed use). A change to mixed residential/commercial use is being considered as one option. It is contingent upon a full appraisal of the options and subject to planning permission, and would include no loss of commercial space.

Cabinet Responses to Scrutiny and Panel Recommendations

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel made on 07/07/2020 concerning the Integrated Performance Report 2019/20 Q4 report

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>1) <i>That the Council reviews the service charges it makes to Council housing tenants to ensure current levels reflect actual costs.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>The Council takes its responsibilities towards tackling poverty and extremely seriously and recognises that now is a particularly sensitive time financially for many. To ensure that tenants are not overcharged a selection of the charges made to tenants are reviewed each year. This has proven to be a cost-effective means of monitoring charging levels. It is worth noting that previous reviews have indicated minimal differences between the charges levied by the Council and its actual expenditure (between five and ten pence per week).</i></p> <p><i>When we reconcile the actual charges for leaseholders each year, we compare those costs against the tenant service charges in the blocks and then make any changes to tenant service charges ahead of budget setting for the following year. It should be noted that the accounting periods for tenants and leaseholders are different so the charges won't be completely identical but they are usually very similar.</i></p> <p><i>Where the Council has found discrepancies it has made changes, previously removing the window cleaning charges when the service was not fully delivered. It is the intention of the Council to continue to review the suitability its charging schedule and make any adjustments as</i></p>

Cabinet Responses to Scrutiny and Panel Recommendations

		<i>required. This will obviously be especially important this year in view of the circumstances.</i>
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Cabinet response to recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel made on 03/08/2020 concerning the Housing Delivery Plan

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council updates its programme of engagement and progress to date to include dates for recommencement of paused activities	Yes	Previously paused workstreams are restarting over the next few weeks, and the updated information on these will be added to the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan before submitting to MHCLG

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