

Agenda

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Scrutiny Committee

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 8 September 2021**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **The Old Library - Oxford Town Hall**

For further information please contact:

John Mitchell, Committee Services Officer, Committee Services Officer

📞 01865 252217

✉ DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk

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Committee Membership

Councillor Elizabeth Wade (Chair)

Councillor Nigel Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Tiago Corais

Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Paula Dunne

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton

Councillor Imogen Thomas

Councillor Marie Tidball

Councillor Naomi Waite

Councillor Dick Wolff

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 Apologies given by Cllr Tidball, for whom Cllr Diggins will substitute.	
2 Declarations of interest	
3 Chair's Announcements	
4 Minutes Recommendation: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.	9 - 16
5 Work Plan and Forward Plan The work plan is driven to a very large extent by the Cabinet Forward Plan a summary of which is attached. The Scrutiny Committee agrees its priorities for items coming onto the Forward Plan, which then form part of its work plan. The Committee is recommended to: 1. Confirm its agreement to the current priorities and the work plan both of which are attached.	17 - 30
6 Urban Forest Strategy Cabinet, at its meeting on 15 September , will consider a report on the Urban Forest Strategy. The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations thereon. Councillor Lubna Arshad, Cabinet Member for Parks and Waste Reduction; and Amanda Ford, Environmental Quality Team Manager, have been invited to attend for this item.	31 - 124

7	Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23	125 - 150
	<p>Cabinet, at its meeting on 15 September, will consider a report on the Council Tax Reduction Strategy for 2022/23. The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations thereon.</p> <p>Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member Inclusive Communities; Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager, Revenues, Benefits and Income; and Laura Bessel, Benefit Manager, have been invited to attend for this item.</p> <p>NB: This item was considered in the 2020/21 civic year but no recommendations were made in relation to it.</p>	
8	Tourism Management Review Group Report - Update	151 - 164
	<p>To consider an update on progress against the recommendations and agreed actions from the Tourism Management Review Group. Councillor Mary Clarkson, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism; Matt Peachey, Economic Development Manager; and Iain Nicholson, City Centre Manager, have been invited to attend for this item. The Committee is invited to note and comment on the update.</p>	
9	Reports for approval	165 - 176
	<p>The Committee is asked to approve two reports from the Finance and Performance Panel before they are forward for consideration by Cabinet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Value in Procurement • Aareon QL Implementation 	
10	Report back on recommendations	177 - 178
	<p>Cabinet on 21 July considered Scrutiny recommendations in relation to the Electric Vehicle Strategy. After some discussion at Cabinet, the Chair of Scrutiny Committee agreed that, in light of the troubles with the audio and the lack of majority support from Scrutiny members for some recommendations, there would be merit in asking the Committee to confirm its agreement with the report and its recommendations, with a view to resubmission of them to the next meeting of Cabinet.</p>	

11 Dates of future meetings

Scrutiny Committee

- 05 October 2021
- 02 November 2021
- 06 December 2021

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

Standing Panels

Housing & Homelessness: 02 September, 06 October; 04 November

Finance & Performance: 06 September; 08 December

Companies: 24 November; 13 December (tbc)

Information for those attending

Recording and reporting on meetings held in public

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- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

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.

The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

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.

Declaring an interest

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 Wednesday 14 July 2021

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Committee members present:

Councillor Wade (Chair)

Councillor Corais

Councillor Dunne

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Thomas

Councillor Waite

Councillor Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fry

Councillor Smowton

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Wolff

Cabinet Member

Councillor Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford.
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Rachel Williams, Principal Planner

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

None

27. Declarations of interest

None.

28. Chair's Announcements

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to a message from the head of Legal Services which advised that staffing pressures meant that attendance at all Scrutiny Committee meetings by a member of the legal team could not be guaranteed.

29. Minutes

The Committee agreed with the Chair's proposal that the minutes should be amended to reflect the previous meetings agreement that scrutiny panel membership should be agreed outside the meeting. The Chair noted that this had now happened.

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 08 June 2021 as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment noted above.

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 08 June as a true and accurate record.

30. Work Plan, Forward Plan

The Scrutiny Officer said the Finance & Performance Panel had met since the last meeting and had asked to receive two reports: an update on the implementation of Aereon QL; and one seeking further information about the performance monitoring process.

Given the cancellation of Cabinet in August and only one item currently proposed for the August Scrutiny meeting, the Committee agreed that it should be cancelled and that the Tourism Update item (scheduled for the August meeting) should be moved to the September meeting.

In response to a question about the desirability of Scrutiny consideration of the performance of Leisure Centres it was noted that this was a report at the top of the list for consideration during the year.

31. Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document

Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, introduced the report. The papers before the Committee were being considered in parallel by the relevant Committees of all Oxfordshire's District Councils and the County Council. At this stage all that was being sought was agreement to proceed with a formal consultation exercise for a plan which would set out a vision and planning framework for the County for the period until 2050.

Given that the consultation document had had to accommodate the views of all the parties involved over several iterations, and been produced at some speed, it was difficult to provide a text which ensured perfection at this stage. Adrian Arnold, Head of Planning Services said this had been a very extensive and complex piece of work which had had to be refined up to the last minute.

The plan had to strike a balance between the need to reflect a position which was appropriate and applicable across the County while at the same time not cutting across matters which were proper to individual Local Plans. This was well illustrated in relation to affordable housing where there was agreement about some overarching principles but that the detail of policy was better agreed on a local basis.

A meeting of the authorities' planning officers would take place in a few weeks' time to confirm any editorial changes to the current text ahead of the consultation in the light of these and the parallel discussions now taking place. Furthermore, once the consultation was underway, the Council, as a consultee, could make further suggestions for improvement. Officers agreed to take away detailed comments made and to ensure that they were reflected either in the editorial changes ahead of consultation or in the Council's response to the consultation.

The Committee made a number of detailed observations about the consultation proposals. The desirability of assessing the need for travellers' sites (given the significant draw, for example, of hospitals in the City) while important, was proper to

Local Plans rather than the Oxfordshire Plan. It was suggested that there may be a contradiction between policy options 10 and 16, and not wanting to limit the use of Green Belt land for leisure and recreational use. Officers agreed to consider this. Policy option 13 made no reference to the desirability of preserving parks and open play spaces which was regrettable given the importance of them for those who do not have ready access to open/green space. This was another matter which was more proper to Local Plans. It was noted however that the importance of open spaces and related health matters were very high on the agendas of all the councils involved and was likely to be reflected in the next document which would come before the Committee in due course as a set of draft policies.

There was concern at the navigability of the consultation document once launched. The Committee was reassured that the final, published, version would be professionally produced, complete with relevant hyper links etc and would be considerably more easily navigable than the text now before the Committee. The timescale for completion of the consultation (concluding on 08 October) was considered tight by some but on balance sufficient for the purpose.

While the consultation recognises the importance of creating jobs and the provision of affordable housing, there was no mention of the desirability of stable, and adequately paid jobs (eg OLW as a minimum) given the costs of housing in Oxfordshire. However it had been made clear when the recent Local Plan was being finalised that such references could not be included as part of a formal requirement of a planning document. Nonetheless, officers agreed to consider if it might be possible to include a reference to those principles.

While the consultation referred to the need for support for “ people who can’t afford access to the housing market, those in low paid jobs and newly forming households with the need for smaller accommodation”, account should also be taken of those with larger families. This section of the document was written, in part, to reflect the importance of a range of both urban and rural needs. Officers agreed to consider some refinement to take on board this point.

The section on Water Quality did not currently refer to the widespread presence of man made lakes (ex quarries) throughout the County and officers agreed to consider how this could be remedied.

It was argued that there was a need for improved references to the importance of inclusivity and the needs of disabled people, in for example, policy options 14, 15 and 28. There should be a ‘golden thread’ about these matters throughout the document. While some of these concerns would already be addressed by other mechanisms, officers agreed to consider how to strengthen this. In relation to matters to do with health infrastructure the challenges of engaging effectively with the NHS were noted.

Agreed that a note of the points made would be passed to the officers and Cllr Hollingsworth.

32. Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Strategy

Cllr Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, introduced the report which sought approval to proceed with commissioning the Council's EV strategy. This would shape a citywide approach to EV charging provision by Charge Point Operators and determine the Council's own future role in the EV world, one in which it had some agency. He would be pleased to return to Scrutiny in March 2022 to discuss the strategy once complete.

The Committee raised a number of questions and comments about the report. The inclusion of some references to accessibility, not seen in an earlier draft, were most welcome. Further references to innovation in new vehicles and the desirability of ensuring accessibility in hire schemes (such as Co Wheels) and scooter schemes would be helpful. *Motability* use of electric vehicles is very limited and the Council might use its position of influence to encourage a more flexible approach. The reference to the EV charging infrastructure to be "a vehicle for inclusivity and unobstructive to those making the use of pavements" was welcome and could be usefully linked with the question at 32 g of the report with a reference, for example, to the need for accessible green transport. It would be helpful for the strategy to take account of the Centre for Social Justice's recommendations on transport and its recent report on disability. The term vulnerable drivers might be better replaced by "Drivers with protected characteristics and other needs". In relation to destination charging there would perhaps be merit in enabling residents to make use of some of those charging points at a reduced rate at non-peak times.

Paragraphs 16 and 17, making the connection between electric vehicles and the wish to reduce the number of vehicles in the City overall, were seen to be key and a greater emphasis on the connection between them would be helpful. In response the Committee was reminded that this was not intended as a scoping document but rather a Cabinet report to set the context for the strategy commissioning process.

The Committee suggested that the paper needed to address the question of priorities. This was the subject of discussion concluding with a vote in favour of a proposal, as recorded below.

The final costs of the EV charging rollout were likely to be very considerable but it was not possible at this stage to quantify them. Implementation would be through a mix of private sector and public funding, with the majority likely to be via the private sector.

In relation to the eventual financing of EV charge point installation it was desirable that it should be subject to some ethical funding principles in recognition, for example, of the exploitation of some companies of the "Global South". It was likely that there would be opportunities for ODS to contribute to the installation of EV charge point infrastructure to the benefit of everyone as well as acting as a market disruptor, a market which, if left to its own devices, was likely to focus on the wealthier parts of the City.

The Committee noted that successful introduction of electric vehicles might in turn compromise the effectiveness of the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) and overall wish to reduce private traffic movement through the centre of the City. Councillor Hayes explained that it was for this reason that the Connecting Oxford congestion reduction scheme was designed to be introduced alongside the ZEZ.

In conclusion the Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. When the Council commissions the EV infrastructure study it asks those who produce it to come up with a clear recommended prioritisation for EV infrastructure roll-out which takes account of the wider policy context of reducing overall private car ownership and use in the city. The prioritisation should be clear, widely understandable by and acceptable to the public and the report should indicate how it could be applied in practice;
2. The Council amends paragraph 16 of the report to remove reference to the Council already being committed to Connecting Oxford, and states instead that the Council has agreed to further scheme and business case development of Connecting Oxford;
3. The Council includes within the EV strategy an evolution plan for the ZEZ for when ceases to serve its congestion-reducing function due to increased EV take-up; and
4. The Council agrees not to partner with or commission organisations relating to the EV strategy in which it would be unable to invest because of its ethical investment policy.

33. Scrutiny of Council Companies

It was noted that the proposals for a revised approach to the scrutiny of Council Companies were informed by a recent internal audit of the companies' governance arrangements by the Council's internal auditors, BDO. The Committee agreed that the revised arrangements would provide improved opportunities and better scrutiny of Council Companies.

It was agreed that decisions about clerking the Companies Scrutiny Panel and the consequences of that in terms of the Scrutiny Officer's capacity to undertake other work on behalf of the Committee needed further consideration.

Scrutiny Committee resolved to:

1. **Note** the revised executive arrangements for the governance of the Council's companies and joint ventures;
2. **Note** that proposed changes to the Constitution will be presented to the 26 July Council meeting following consultation with political groups;
3. **Agree** that members of the Companies Scrutiny Panel would seek to attend Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meetings, that Companies Scrutiny Panel meetings would continue to take place prior to Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meetings as a more informal way of agreeing issues to discuss, which would be supported by the Scrutiny Officer; and
4. **Agree** to amend the Scrutiny Operating Principles to remove the rule that Standing Panel and Review Group Chairs must be members of the Scrutiny Committee and instead state that Standing Panel and Review Group Chairs will be accountable to the Scrutiny Committee.

34. Operating Principles

The Committee resolved to agree the amended operating principles.

35. Topics for Scrutiny Commissioned Reports

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report which set out proposals for which reports the Committee might commission during the year. It was agreed that the “Empty Houses in Oxford” topic was not recommended for inclusion but that it could reasonably be inserted as a sub heading for a housing report which was recommended for inclusion.

The Committee Resolved to agree:

1. The list of priority topics as given in Appendix 1 of the report for Scrutiny Commissioned reports subject to including the red-listed report on empty homes within an alternative report, while noting that the Scrutiny Officer will apportion those topics to the relevant dates and forums for consideration; and
2. That the priority topic for a Review Group should be Child Poverty and that a scope would come to the Committee’s September meeting for agreement.

36. Report back on recommendations

The Committee noted Cabinet’s responses to its previous recommendations.

The Committee also noted that the extent to which agreed recommendations were implemented was not always clear. The Scrutiny Officer agreed to explore two options: the addition of an “action to be taken” column in the Cabinet response sheet; and the establishment of a process to feedback on action taken when a subject returns to the Committee.

37. Dates of future meetings

Scrutiny Committee

- 03 August 2021 . *This meeting is now cancelled*
- 08 September 2021
- 05 October 2021
- 02 November 2021
- 06 December 2021

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

Standing Panels

Housing & Homelessness: 02 September, 06 October; 02 November*

Finance & Performance: 08 July; 02 August; 06 September; 08 December

Companies: 20 July; 24 November; 13 December

*revised date

38. Matters Exempt from Publication

No matters were considered in confidential session.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

ChairDate: Wednesday 08 September 2021

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Proposed Scrutiny Work Schedule

October 2021 to November 2021 and Scrutiny-
Commissioned Reports to March 2022

October 2021

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	05 October	Determination of Shared Ownership Rent Levels Climate Emergency Review Group update (Development of Land at South Oxford Science Village)
Finance and Performance	None	
Housing and Homelessness	06 October	Responses to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Housing and the Green Agenda

November 2021

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	02 November	Workplace Equalities and Action Plan Anti-social Behaviour Policy Waterways update
Finance and Performance	None	
Housing and Homelessness	04 November	Small sites Development Proposal Introduction to the Housing White Paper, including a focus on Tenant Engagement

Below are listed the proposed dates for the remainder of Scrutiny's commissioned reports for the year (ie not Cabinet reports). Those reports which were requested and are not on this list are expected to arise at some point as Cabinet reports instead and will be treated as such, hence their omission.

December 2021

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	06 December	
Finance and Performance	08 December	Commercial Property Strategy Update
Housing and Homelessness	None	

January 2022

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	18 January	Approaches to Procurement
Finance and Performance	24 January	
Housing and Homelessness	None	

February 2022

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	01 February	
Finance and Performance		
Housing and Homelessness	02 February	Tenant Empowerment report (4)

March 2022

Committee/Panel	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	07 March	Domestic Abuse Review Group update
Finance and Performance	09 March	Alternative Funding Models for Funding Social Outcomes

Housing and Homelessness		
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** No reports are scheduled for April 2022, although there remain meetings this month. These are liable to be small meetings owing to purdah.

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Scrutiny Priorities

October 2021 to November 2021

Published on 31/08/21

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Key:

Reports in **black** text are Cabinet reports

Reports in **green** text are Scrutiny-commissioned reports

Reports which are **greyed out** do not meet the threshold for Scrutiny consideration

October 2021

Climate Emergency Review Group update

Priority level: Very High

Preferred Forum: Scrutiny

To hear an update on the Council's activities in relation to the recommendations of the Climate Emergency Review Group

Housing and Carbon Reduction

Priority level: Very High

Preferred Forum: Housing and Homelessness Panel

To hear an update on the Council's activities in relation to carbon reduction, focusing on the progress of retrofitting its own housing stock, learning from recent net zero building pilots, and the specifications of the Council's stock as being developed by OCHL.

Responses to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Priority level: Very High

Preferred Forum: Housing and Homelessness Panel

A report to update the Panel on the issues arising from the recently-completed tenant satisfaction survey of the Council's housing tenants.

Determination of Shared Ownership

Priority level: High

Rent Levels	Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
To determine future Shared Ownership rent levels.	

Development of Land at South Oxford Science Village	Priority level: Medium Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
Report on the progress towards the delivery of land that is part of the South Oxford Science Village (land South of Grenoble Road) and options for the delivery of development at the site.	

November 2021

Workplace Equalities and Action Plan	Priority level: Very High Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
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.	

Waterways Update	Priority level: Very High Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
To receive an update on the Council's activities in relation to the City's waterways from a number of perspectives, including ecology, tourism and culture, and housing.	

Small Sites Development Proposal	Priority level: Very High Preferred Forum: Housing and Homelessness Panel
To seek approval for the process for the evaluation of the small sites in OCC ownership and recommendations for development for affordable housing, retention or disposal.	

Introduction to the Central Government White Paper on Housing	Priority level: High Preferred Forum: Housing and Homelessness Panel
To receive an introduction on the main elements of central government's white paper on Housing and to highlight its main changes and expected impacts. A particular focus on its views on tenant empowerment.	

Anti-social behaviour Policy	Priority level: High Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
Renewal of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.	

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	Priority level: High Preferred Forum: Scrutiny
To review the operation of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy, and to amend the policy, if required.	

Asset Management Strategy	Priority level: High Preferred Forum: Finance and Performance Panel
The Asset Management Plan - strategy for the property portfolio for OCC.	

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Forward Plan Summary

September 2021 to April 2022

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Cabinet 15 September 2021

ITEM 15: ID: I026910	Urban Forest Strategy
<p>The trees and vegetation that make up the urban forest provide a range of benefits such as habitat for biodiversity, carbon storage and flood protection. This strategy is for the whole city, not just City Council land and seeks to protect what we have, increase what we have, and engage communities and stakeholders in the process. The strategy has a target to increase the overall canopy cover for Oxford using the “right tree, right place” principle. The strategy highlights specific areas where there is particularly low canopy cover or where benefits can be maximised.</p>	
ITEM 16: ID: I027012	Integrated Performance Report for Q1
<p>A report to Members on Finance, Risk & Performance as at 30 June 2021.</p>	
ITEM 17: ID: I027031	Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23
<p>A report to seek approval for proposals to consult on the Council’s Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23.</p>	
ITEM 18: ID: I027033	Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2020/2021
<p>A report to set out the Council’s Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2020/2021.</p>	
ITEM 19: ID: I027807	A bid for government RSAP funding to support the Council's Homelessness Strategy
<p>To seek approval to proceed with the bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and to agree to include the required match funding in the Council’s budget.</p>	

ITEM 20: ID: I027936	Decarbonisation programme update
Detailed design work being undertaken by the Council's consultants and contractors for the Decarbonisation programme across the Council's leisure estate will be completed in early September, along with final costings for the installation of heatpumps and associated measures. This paper will update Cabinet on the programme and to seek approval for changes to the scope of the schemes it includes against the final costings, within the already approved funding envelope.	

Cabinet 13 October 2021

ITEM 22: ID: I027110	Determination of Shared Ownership Rent Levels Report status: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information
To determine future Shared Ownership rent levels.	

ITEM 23: ID: I027568	Development of land at South Oxford Science Village (Land South of Grenoble Road) Report status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.
Report on the progress towards the delivery of land that is part of the South Oxford Science Village (land South of Grenoble Road) and options for the delivery of development at the site.	

Cabinet 10 November 2021

ITEM 24: ID: I027809	Small Sites Development Proposal Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
To seek approval for the process for the evaluation of the small sites in OCC ownership and recommendations for development for affordable housing, retention or disposal.	

ITEM 25: ID: I026292	Asset Management Strategy Report status: Provisional
The Asset Management Plan - strategy for the property portfolio for OCC	

ITEM 26: ID: I027034	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy Report status:
To review the operation of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy, and to amend the policy, if required.	

ITEM 27: ID: I027035	Workplace Equalities and Action Plan Report status:
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 28: ID: I027797	Anti-social Behaviour Policy Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Renewal of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.	

Cabinet 15 December 2021

ITEM 31: ID: I027113	Budget 2022/23 Report status:
To propose a Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2022/23 Budget for consultation.	

ITEM 32: ID: I027725	Annual Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
To approve the Annual Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement for publication.	

ITEM 33: ID: I027013	Integrated Performance Report for Q2 Report status:
A report to Members on Finance, Risk & Performance as at 30 September 2021.	
Key Decision	Not Key

ITEM 34: ID: I027038	Treasury Management Mid-Year Report Report status:
A report to report on the performance of the Treasury Management function for the 6 months to 30 September 2021	

Cabinet 26 January 2022

ITEM 35: ID: I027032	Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 Report status:
A report to seek approval for the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 following consultation.	

Cabinet 09 February 2022

ITEM 36: ID: I027114	Budget 2022/23 Report status:
To propose a Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2022/23 Budget following consultation.	

ITEM 37: ID: I027039	Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 Report status:
A report to present the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.	

ITEM 38: ID: I027040	Capital Strategy 2022/23 Report status:
A report to present the Capital Strategy for 2022/23 approval.	

ITEM 39: ID: I027041	Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations 2022/23 Report status:
A report to make decisions on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2022/2023.	

ITEM 40: ID: I027042	Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds 2022/23 Report status:
A report to approve the allocation of homelessness prevention funds for 2022/23.	

ITEM 41: ID: I027055	Annual Update of the Council Business Plan Report status:
A report to present the annual update of the Council's Business Plan.	

Cabinet 16 March 2022

ITEM 42: ID: I027100	Food Strategy Report status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
<p>Development of a Countywide Food strategy, working with key partners such as Good Food Oxford, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire District Council and the Community Food system within the City. That addresses the causes of food poverty as part of our wider anti-poverty work. This should include the following: Taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The National Food Strategy; o The considerable work undertaken by this Council to address inequality and to tackle food poverty during the pandemic; o Being a signatory to the Oxford Good Food Charter; o The excellent work of Oxford's voluntary sector to tackle food poverty; o Recommendations on achieving a self-sustaining community food system and Council's role in supporting this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together the views and knowledge of our food network partners to better understand the current root causes of food poverty, and a shared action plan to implement meaningful solutions. • Tackling child food poverty by campaigning to address holiday hunger, increasing take up of free school meals and access to food larders for families with children. • Continuing to use relationships with supermarkets to divert surplus food to those in need and minimise waste to help eliminate Oxford's contribution to climate change by 2040 or sooner, in line with the Zero Carbon Oxford Charter and 	

recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change.

ITEM 43:
ID: I027056

Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2020/21

Report status:

To report on the progress made on the Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2020/21.

ITEM 44:
ID: I027014

Integrated Performance Report for Q3

Report status:

A report to Members on Finance, Risk & Performance as at 31 December 2021.

Cabinet 13 April 2022

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 September 2021
Report of: Head of Corporate Strategy
Title of Report: Oxford Urban Forest Strategy – A Master Plan to 2050

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for the Urban Forest Strategy
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Tom Hayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford
Corporate Priority:	Zero Carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the Oxford Urban Forest Strategy – A Master Plan to 2050, which sets out the strategic direction for how we, as a city, protect, manage and expand our urban forest to help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. Officers will take opportunities to seek external funding opportunities to facilitate the implementation of the strategy; and Authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy to make minor editorial amendments to the strategy document. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Draft Oxford Urban Forest Strategy – A Master Plan to 2050
Appendix 2	Risk Register
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 4	Public consultation – summary of results

Background

- In response to rising concern about the urgent need for action, on 28 January 2019 Oxford City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency and provided for a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change. Oxford became the first UK city to hold a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change in September and October 2019.

2. 90% of the randomly selected representative sample of 50 Oxford residents that made up the Citizens' Assembly responded to the key question asked of them and felt that Oxford should aim to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050. There was also widespread belief that Oxford should be a leader in tackling the climate crisis. Assembly members recognised that action is required to stop climate change and habitat loss in order to avoid significant and irreversible environmental damage. The Assembly opted for the most ambitious biodiversity vision which represented the greatest change to the way people live now.
3. In response to the Citizens' Assembly the City Council committed to a number of actions including the development of an Urban Forest Strategy.
4. Oxford has similar canopy cover to London, which is relatively high compared to other cities, such as Glasgow or Bristol. The majority of our urban forest, and where there is potential for expanding it, is on private land and out of the council's direct control. For example, 19% of the city's land use is private gardens. This presents a great opportunity for planting. We need residents, private land owners and our communities, businesses and institutions to work together, as a city, to deliver the aims of the strategy if it is to have the greatest impact.
5. This is a good moment to celebrate our urban forest and take action to expand, enhance and protect it. Not only do we face climate and ecological emergencies, but the COVID 19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of our natural environment particularly for our mental health and wellbeing. A survey by Natural England showed that around 9 out of 10 people agreed that natural spaces are good for mental health and wellbeing. More than 40% noticed that nature, wildlife, and visiting local green and natural spaces have been even more important to their wellbeing since the coronavirus restrictions began.
6. Oxford's urban forest comprises all the trees and woody vegetation in our city that provide us with numerous benefits, also known as ecosystem services, such as clean air, spaces for recreation and carbon storage. Not only does our urban forest provide essential environmental benefits but importantly investing in our urban forest can help us to raise living standards and tackle inequalities in our city. The data used to develop the strategy shows a correlation between low canopy cover and areas of deprivation in Oxford.
7. The strategy sets a strategic framework for managing our urban forest and seeks to maximise the benefits for both nature and all Oxford's residents and visitors.

Public Consultation

8. An online public consultation was carried out from 28th June to the 26th July. 134 responses were received to the consultation. The consultation was publicised using social media, press releases and direct contact with key stakeholders and community groups. The full draft strategy was made available and it was accompanied by a short questionnaire consisting of 5 questions.
9. Over 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that deprived areas with low canopy cover should be prioritised in the strategy. Over 90% of respondents agreed that biodiversity and opportunities for planting in the Nature Recovery Network should be prioritised in this strategy. The Nature Recovery Network identifies areas where conservation efforts will have the most benefits

for wildlife and the ecosystem services that they provide. Respondents were asked if there are other areas or issues that they would like to see prioritised in the strategy. Responses were varied. The most frequently mentioned issue related to prioritising street trees. The strategy identifies street trees as a key treescape within our urban forest. Principles for street tree management and opportunities to increase them are set out in the strategy. The next steps will specifically identify opportunities for planting and for community engagement through initiatives such as the Trees for Streets project.

10. The consultation questionnaire also asked respondents for their ideas on how we can engage with our communities. The responses are full of creative and practical ideas for events and collaborative working. We also asked what would encourage respondents to plant a tree in their own garden.
11. The full list of responses to all questions asked and how comments have been addressed is included in Appendix 4.
12. The strategy is available to view in Appendix 1 and has been updated following the public consultation to incorporate comments wherever relevant.

The Strategy

13. This strategy is for the whole city, not just council land. It's a long term master plan to 2050 which sets a framework for action. Objectives are set out into 3 parts:
 - Protect, Improve and Manage
 - Expand, Enhance and Develop
 - Engage, Promote and Employ
14. The vision for our urban forest is for it to support the city to address and adapt to climate change and habitat loss whilst conserving and enhancing its distinctive character. We want all communities, regardless of postcode or income, to thrive in nature where they live, and feel pride in Oxford as a liveable city that is healthy, biodiverse, resilient and beautiful.
15. This strategy follows the principle of “right tree, right place” and seeks to ensure high quality planting in order to maximise benefits for nature and for people. In order to support wider biodiversity objectives the strategy makes clear what habitats may or may not be suitable for planting trees and what kind of species we seek to encourage.
16. The strategy establishes important principles that we want to promote in the management of our urban forest and for benefits to be maximised. Data from the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project, which has informed this strategy, has shown that there are opportunities to increase canopy cover in deprived areas of the city where cover tends to be lower and where we also have higher levels of physical and mental health problems.
17. Another key area of focus is on biodiversity and increasing canopy cover within the Nature Recovery Network (where appropriate). A network map is in development led by a partnership of local nature conservation organisations and

local authorities¹. Our urban forest provides a space for our communities to come together as well as a reason for them to come together. Engagement and creating a sense of ownership in communities is essential to successful management of our urban forest.

Next Steps and Delivery

18. The strategy sets out the initial next steps and actions required to deliver the strategy.
19. Seek out external funding opportunities to develop a comprehensive engagement strategy that will better coordinate projects across the city and engage more stakeholders by using and developing existing forums to include encouraging residents to plant trees in their own gardens where appropriate
20. Ensure that the opportunities are taken to input into the review of the Oxford Local Plan 2040 to ensure emerging policies optimise opportunities to implement the strategy
21. Address funding constraints for street tree planting and maintenance by exploring innovative funding mechanisms.

Monitoring and Review

22. It is proposed to review the strategy every 10 years. The long review period is necessary in order to give us a chance to see more change as trees have had more time to grow. The review will include undertaking a canopy cover assessment to assess our canopy cover and enable us to compare it against our existing baseline. The health and composition of our urban forest can be revisited at this time too. The review will also assess levels of engagement in tree planting and management initiatives.

Financial implications

23. As a council we already have policies in the Oxford Local Plan that support the protection of trees (Policy G7) and we are involved in some street tree initiatives. However, to deliver the additional objectives of this strategy, officers will need to work with external partners to raise funds.
24. Roles and responsibilities across the council relating to trees and biodiversity are spread between tree officers in planning, the ecology and biodiversity officer in Environmental Sustainability and officers in the parks service and ODS. Parks and ODS work relates only to trees on land that is owned or managed by Oxford City Council. The Council does not have an officer responsible for our urban forest at a strategic level.
25. The City Council has an important leadership role to play in the city. The majority of our urban forest is on land that is outside of the direct control of the City Council. The City Council is uniquely positioned to effectively coordinate action through our existing partnerships, engagement activities and the central role that we play in place making through the planning system. Taking a leadership role

¹ The partnership includes: Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Wild Oxfordshire, the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and overseen by Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group (BAG), of which Oxford City Council is a member. It has been adopted by the Oxfordshire Environment Board (OxEB).

and strategic approach in this area would enable us to maximise the benefits of the urban forest for the city as a whole.

26. The City Council is under resourced for providing the coordination and leadership role that would make delivery of the strategy as effective as possible. Exploring the possibility of joint funding from a range of partners. Existing projects such as the Oxfordshire Treescapes Opportunity Mapping Project can help to deliver some of the aims of the strategy.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

27. This proposed strategy complies with Oxford City Council's policies and commitments relating to carbon reduction and safeguarding the environment. The strategy brings us closer to our commitment to becoming a Zero Carbon Council by 2030 or earlier and Zero Carbon Oxford by 2040 or earlier. The Urban Forest Strategy provides a strategic direction for the city to maximise the benefits from our urban forest. These benefits include helping us to adapt to climate change by reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, reducing flooding, storing carbon and protecting our biodiversity.
28. The Urban Forest Strategy will support the delivery of the following plans and strategies:
- a. The Council Strategy 2020 – 2024: Includes the priority to pursue a zero carbon Oxford
 - b. Oxford Local Plan 2036: Includes commitments to biodiversity and increasing canopy cover within new developments.
 - c. The Biodiversity Action Plan
 - d. The Green Space Strategy 2013 - 2027

Legal issues

29. There are no legal implications.

Level of risk

30. Please refer to Appendix 2.

Equalities impact

31. The data supporting the strategy shows that there is a correlation between low canopy cover and areas of deprivation in Oxford. The strategy sets out that we will prioritise these areas in order to ensure that the benefits of our urban forest are provided for all our residents. The improved environmental quality that our urban forest brings can lead to better physical and mental health amongst all our citizens, thus helping to tackle some of the inequalities in the city. The strategy may help to attract more investment towards tree planting for areas of deprivation in the city. It is expected that this Urban Forest Strategy will have a positive impact on reducing inequality in Oxford. Please refer to Appendix 3.

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Background Papers: None

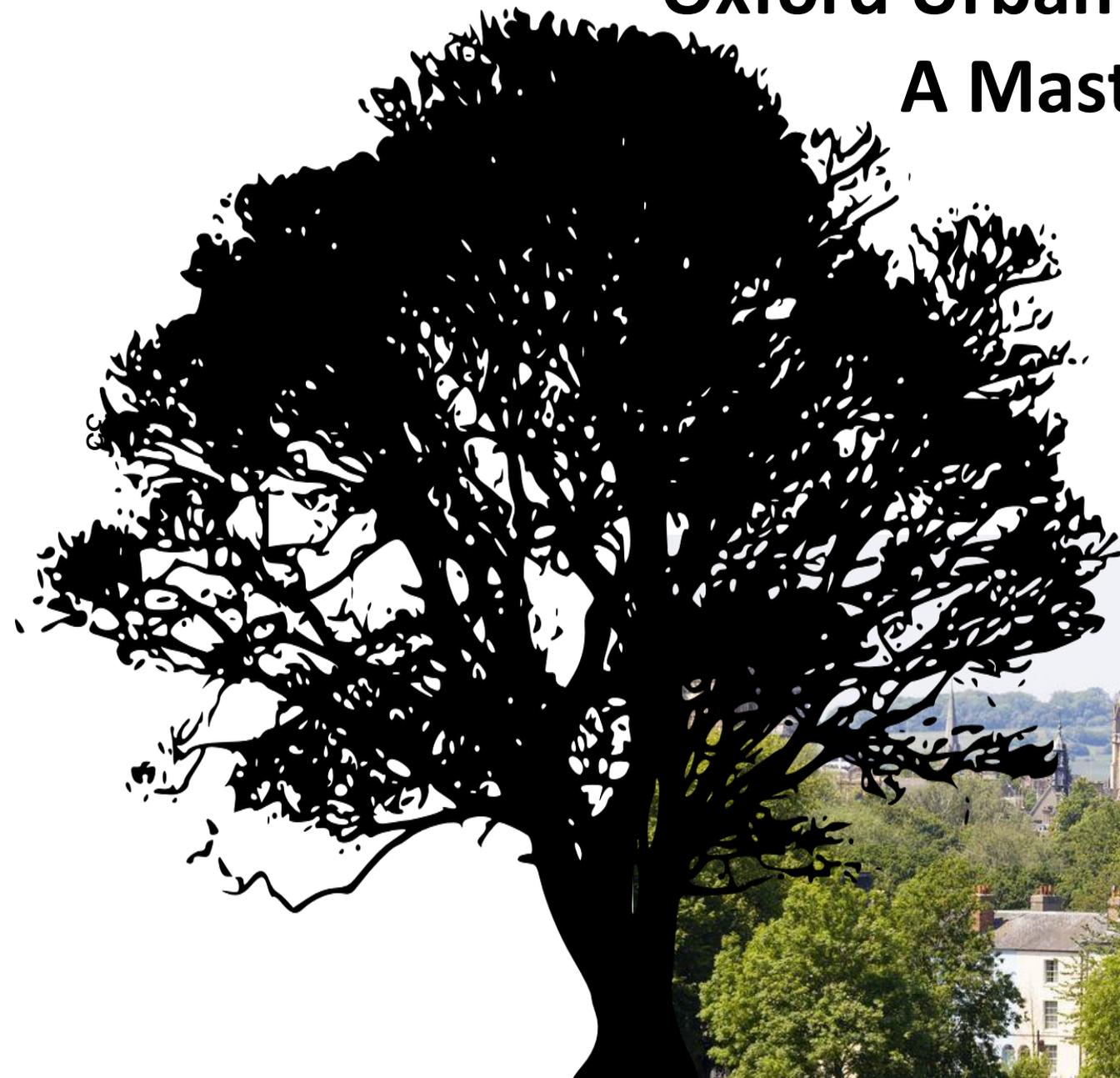
Appendix 1

Oxford Urban Forest Strategy

A Master Plan to 2050

SEPTEMBER 2021

www.oxford.gov.uk



Appendix 1

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Thank you to all of the organisations for their help in developing this strategy. Particular thanks to the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), Wild Oxfordshire, Oxford Direct Services, Environmental Change Institute and Earthwatch Institute.

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Foreword

2020 and 2021 have been years of unparalleled loss and uncertainty. Until the rollout of the vaccines is complete, we will not truly be through this crisis, but now is the time to draw breath and plan for a healthier, greener, and fairer city, and that means putting a richer natural environment at the heart of all neighbourhoods.



Councillor Tom Hayes planting an Earthwatch "Tiny Forest" in Foxwell Drive

Oxford's communities have been responding to the challenges of the pandemic by showing ever greater partnership and innovation. Now is the time to nurture the new collaborative ways of working, and the new way of viewing the city as interconnected (of people, and of people and planet). This will be especially important not only to

respond to the crises which exist today (the pandemic and climate change) but also those which will surely follow (pandemic-related social, economic, racial, and health inequalities). By creating community action to enhance our natural environment, we can create new belongings to people and place, but as critically, tackle inequality and deprivation.

In respect to biodiversity, are we truly meeting the climate emergency that we declared unanimously as a City Council and the ecological emergency that we face? With the potential for trees to cool our streets, enhance our wellbeing, and meet the climate crisis

we face, we must increase our on-street canopy cover and urban forest generally in proportions equal to the demanding expectations of our climate emergency motion and the scale of the crisis we face.

We committed to do everything in our control and influence to deliver against the challenges laid out by the scientific community. By locking in carbon, trees and other green infrastructure represent an important contribution to the Council's ambitious targets to reduce its carbon emissions to zero by 2030 and deliver a Zero Carbon Oxford by 2040.

Investing more in Oxford's largest ever street and parks tree planting programme and pledging to work with community and third-sector organisations to plant more, will be yet another example of the seriousness with which this Council treats our responsibilities to Oxford's current and future residents. I want to thank all those organisations and partners which have contributed to this Strategy.

Oxford's carbon emissions amount to nearly 10 times the total carbon storage of Oxford's urban forest. We need to do more and this Strategy seeks to do more and to do it for the whole of the city.

Councillor Tom Hayes

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford at Oxford City Council

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Executive Summary

This strategy seeks to set a direction for Oxford, as a city, to protect and manage, grow and expand our urban forest to help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies that we face. It's a long term master plan to 2050 which sets a framework for action.

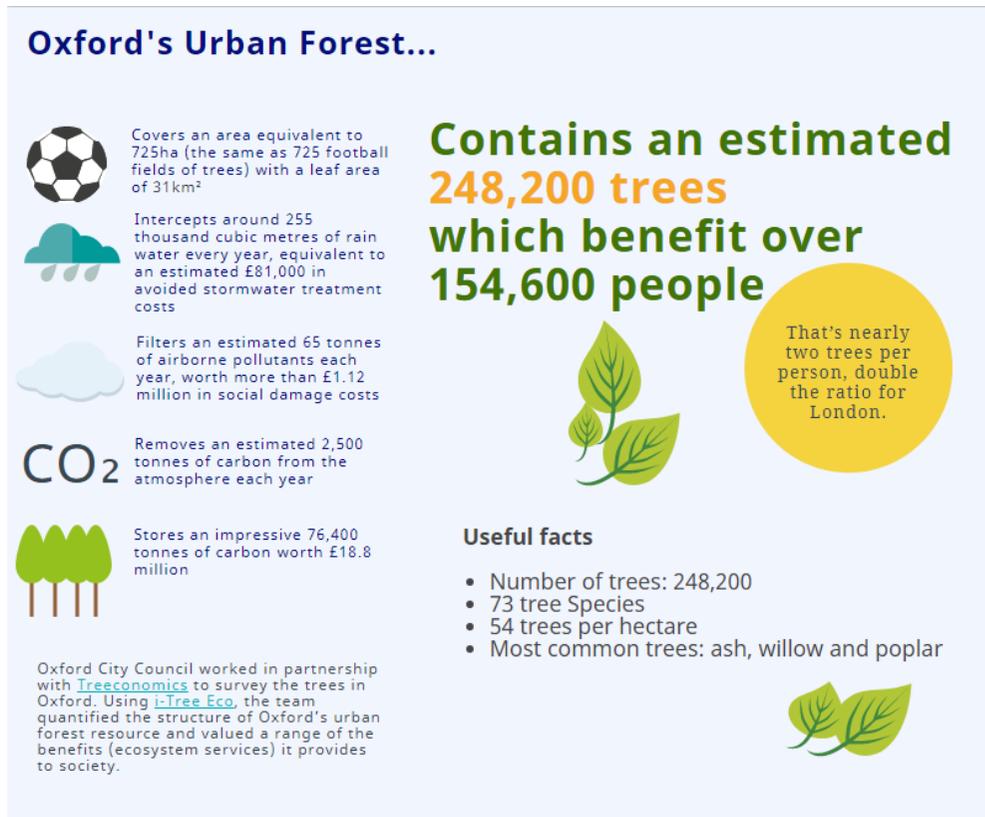
Our urban forest is made up of all the trees and woody vegetation in our city and provides us with numerous benefits, also known as ecosystem services, such as clean air and carbon storage.

The vision for our urban forest is for it to support the city to address and adapt to climate change and habitat loss whilst conserving and enhancing its distinctive character. Regardless of income and postcode, all communities will be able to thrive in nature where they live, and feel pride in Oxford as a liveable city that is healthy, biodiverse, resilient and beautiful.

This strategy follows the principle of “right tree, right place” and seeks to ensure high quality planting in order to maximise benefits for nature and for people.

Objectives are set out into 3 parts:

- Protect, Improve and Manage
- Expand, Enhance and Develop
- Engage, Promote and Employ



The strategy is for the whole city and we need the council, citizens, and communities to work together to deliver the aims of the strategy if it is to have the greatest impact.

External funding opportunities will be sought to get resources to develop detailed planting and engagement plans with key stakeholders and partners to help achieve the objectives of this strategy.

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1. Introduction

In response to rising concern about the urgent need for action, on 28 January 2019 Oxford City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency and provided for a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change¹. Oxford became the first UK city to hold a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change in September and October 2019.

90% of the randomly selected representative sample of 50 Oxford residents that made up the Citizens' Assembly responded to the key question asked of them and felt that Oxford should aim to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050. There was also widespread belief that Oxford should be a leader in tackling the climate crisis.

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David Attenborough mural on East Oxford Games Hall

Biodiversity was a key theme considered by the Assembly. Assembly members were presented with visions of possible futures for Oxford, each listing a series of co-benefits and trade-offs. Taking specific actions to address climate change, such as proactively putting in measures to protect and expand our urban forest, provides us with co-benefits. This means that not only do we tackle the climate emergency but we also improve health and wellbeing, the economy and our environmental quality. The Assembly opted for the most ambitious biodiversity vision which represented the greatest change to the way people live now. Addressing climate change and habitat loss as an emergency means we recognise that we need to accelerate our plans.

Our natural environment, including our trees and forests, play an important role in reducing the effects of climate change and supporting our biodiversity. They provide us with ways to adapt to it through the ecosystems services they provide such as carbon capture, reducing flooding, giving us clean air and supporting our health and wellbeing. They can provide us with beautiful environments that create a sense of place that should be accessible to everyone. But most important of all, they are sanctuaries that connect us to the natural world and for that we need them to be cherished.

Oxford's total canopy cover, including trees and shrubs is similar to that of London. It is quite high compared to other cities like Bristol or Glasgow. This Urban Forest Strategy celebrates our forest resource and the benefits it brings and provides for it to be protected, enhanced and expanded for everyone now and for generations to come. This strategy must be seen in the wider context

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of the significant changes needed in our society to reduce our carbon emissions and the global, national and local plans to achieve net zero², as well as the need to reduce air pollution and protect public health.

With greater awareness of climate change, tree planting has become increasingly popular. However, planting the right trees in the right places is essential. Planting trees on important habitats like wetlands or species-rich grasslands will harm our natural environment by destroying these rarer habitats. In addition, these types of habitat often sequester more carbon than trees so planting trees is not always the best solution.

This strategy follows the principle of “right tree, right place” and seeks to ensure high quality planting in order to maximise benefits for nature and for people.

The strategy seeks to protect and enhance the beauty of Oxford by taking account of Oxford’s distinctive landscape character and its relationship to the built environment.

The strategy is for the whole city, not just city council land. The council’s remit includes the management of city council land and our public parks, tree protection orders and formulation and implementation of planning policy. The council also has an important leadership and influencing role. However, the vast majority of our urban forest, and where there is potential for expanding it, is on private land and out of the council’s direct control. For example, 19%

of the city’s land use is private gardens. This presents a great opportunity for planting. We need residents, private land owners and our communities, businesses and institutions to work together, as a city, to deliver the aims of the strategy if it is to have the greatest impact.

Empowering communities and people to enhance our urban forest and our biodiversity will help to create zero carbon citizens. Where our urban forest and our biodiversity is enhanced in deprived parts of Oxford, and where citizens on lower incomes are playing a leading role, this strategy will help to develop a fairer, more inclusive city.

The strategy seeks to do three things: protect what we have – **Protect, Improve and Manage**, expand what we have - **Expand, Enhance and Develop** and engage people in the process - **Engage, Promote and Employ**. This framework acknowledges that our existing trees are just as important as planting new trees and that engagement is going to be fundamental to achieving the aims of the strategy.

The strategy has been developed taking inspiration and guidance from a number of sources including: The Greater Lyon Tree Charter³, the Woodland Trust⁴ and the invaluable resources produced by the Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG)⁵. The strategy will complement existing City Council strategies such as the Green Spaces Strategy and the City’s Biodiversity Action Plan. The approach of this strategy has been aligned with Oxfordshire County Council’s emerging tree strategy.

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1.1. What does the strategy cover?

The strategy is about our urban forest which is not just trees but also includes other woody plant vegetation, such as shrubs and hedgerows, which are fundamental to the forest ecosystem and the ecosystem services they deliver.

Ecosystem Services are the benefits people derive from ecosystems such as clean air, raw materials, flood protection and spaces for recreation.

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To get a sense of how important our urban forest is, imagine an Oxford without any trees. The negative impact on mental and physical health, quality of life, desirability as a place to live and work, and as a place for tourism, recreation or shops and services would be huge.

Our urban forest is part of our Green Infrastructure. Green Infrastructure is a term that is defined in national planning policy and refers to planned networks of green spaces (such as parks and woodlands) and green features (such as street trees) that provide quality of life and environmental benefits. Thinking of these green spaces as infrastructure recognises that our green spaces can help deliver wider planning policy and is integral to creating sustainable communities.

In 2015 Oxford City Council commissioned Treeconomics to undertake a canopy assessment and subsequent iTree Eco



assessment of our urban forest resource. From this work, we have a good understanding of our canopy cover, species make up, health of our trees and its distribution. We also have an understanding of the value of the ecosystems services that our urban forest provides.

This strategy sets out a vision, aims and a set of 9 objectives which seek to ensure that our existing forest resource is managed effectively and to set principles as to where new planting should take place.

The strategy links to the tree opportunity maps produced by the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project. These maps will help to guide where tree planting will have the maximum

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benefits in relation to particular ecosystem services. The maps have identified that there are opportunities for planting within areas designated as a Nature Recovery Area that would contribute to protecting and enhancing our biodiversity and in the most deprived areas of Oxford which will help to improve the quality of life for communities in these areas.

The principal output will be to develop a detailed planting and engagement plan with partners and key stakeholders that reflect the principles established in this strategy. The strategy will be reviewed every 10 years. This gives us time to see more change as trees have had time to grow.

The strategy is intended to set a strategic direction for the city as a whole, including approaches to tree planting on private land. It is not intended to cover detailed aspects of tree management such as risk and liability issues or interpret existing planning policy which is covered elsewhere.

1.2. Oxford City Council partners and stakeholders

Oxford City Council has a strong focus on partnership working. The City Council will work with the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership⁶ (ZCOP) that it has established to help deliver the strategy, along with many others. The aim of ZCOP is to provide a forum for major organisations and employers based in and around Oxford to work together to help the city achieve net zero by 2040—ten whole years ahead of the UK’s national target of 2050. In order to provide a holistic approach the scope extends beyond emissions reduction and includes nature and biodiversity. The core members include major local institutions, businesses and organisations such as BMW, the

Universities, both NHS Trusts, LandSec, SSEN, Unipart, and Oxfordshire County Council.



Florence Park

Alongside the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership are other stakeholders and partner organisations fundamental to the development and delivery of this strategy.

These include organisations dedicated to advocating for our natural environment and helping our communities to join together and take action such as:

- Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Wild Oxfordshire

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- Oxford Direct Services
- Oxford Green and Blue Spaces Network (GBSN) members
- Oxford Preservation Trust
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
- Community Action Groups (CAG) Network
- Environmental Change Institute
- Oxford Civic Society
- Earthwatch Institute Europe

Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project

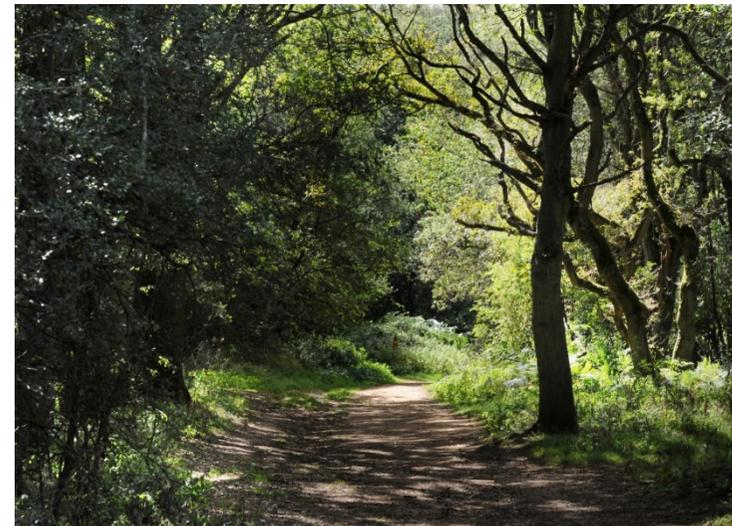
The Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project is a project that is part of the campaign to double tree cover in the UK. Led by the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the project is working to create a tree planting opportunity map for Oxfordshire to show where tree cover might be increased. This mapping project seeks to provide a clear land use plan which helps to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places. The project uses an ecosystem services approach and is intended to be used to help form public policy and strategies and to guide individual plantings. Initial mapping undertaken for Oxford city has been used to inform this strategy. More information about the project can be found here: <https://www.oxtrees.uk/>

The rising awareness of climate change and climate and co-benefits of biodiversity enhancement will lead to new groups, communities, and innovations being tried out. The Council will seek to support new organisations and communities to engage with this strategy. Nevertheless, trees are a matter for all citizens and with most of Oxford's residents having gardens, and many businesses and other

organisations having grounds, there is a real opportunity for individual action that can make a very real difference – and this is also a key part of our strategy.

1.3. Plans, policies, influencing strategies

The Oxford Urban Forest Strategy is based on best practice and national guidance. It has links to and supports the aims of a number of other local strategies, policies and planning documents. For example, this strategy covers elements of biodiversity, but it is not a replacement biodiversity strategy for the city. It must be viewed in conjunction with other relevant biodiversity strategies and biodiversity legislation. Relevant complementary strategies, policies and guidance are listed in Appendix 1.



Shotover Country Park

Appendix 1

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

Protect, Improve and Manage

1. Manage existing tree and vegetation resource according to best practice and improve vegetation health
2. Improve biosecurity and manage ash dieback and other pests and diseases according to best practice

Expand, Enhance and Develop

3. Increase urban forest canopy cover using the right tree, right place principle
4. Increase resilience through greater urban forest diversity
5. Prioritise areas where new tree and other vegetation planting benefits can be maximised
6. Improve biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery areas
7. Conserve and enhance landscape character

Engage, Promote and Employ

8. Engage with key stakeholders, communities, businesses and other organisations, and citizens - particularly residents living in deprived parts of Oxford which especially stand to gain from an enhanced Urban Forest
9. Create opportunities to reap economic benefits from our urban forest

2. Oxford's Urban Forest Strategy

2.1. Vision, aims and objectives

Oxford's Urban Forest will support the city to address and adapt to climate change and habitat loss whilst conserving and enhancing its distinctive character. Regardless of income or postcode, all communities will be able to thrive in nature where they live, and feel pride in Oxford as a liveable city that is healthy, biodiverse, resilient and beautiful.

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The strategy aims to:

- maintain and enhance Oxford's Urban Forest to secure its biodiversity value and the ecosystem services which flow from it
- ensure our urban forest plays a role in the city addressing and adapting to climate change and other challenges
- create a healthier place for people in nature and provide a richer biodiversity in deprived parts of Oxford
- engage and involve all communities and citizens

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random point sampling and has produced estimates for each ward and for the city as a whole.

- **Treeconomics iTree ECO**

In 2017 Oxford City Council commissioned Treeconomics to undertake a further assessment of our urban forest using their i-Tree ECO methodology. This methodology includes undertaking a “bottom-up” survey of trees within the city using sampling plots. It provides information on the structure and composition of the urban forest, such as species, size and age, and allows the benefits of our urban forest to be quantified and valued. For example, how much carbon is stored or how much pollution is removed from our air. The full report is available to view on the City Council’s website.⁸

- **BlueSky Data from Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project**

This data, from 2015, uses aerial imaging and maps actual trees and their size rather than using sampling methods as i-Tree does. This data is likely to be more accurate. The BlueSky data is being used by the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project.

i-Tree data showed that our total Canopy Cover is 22.3% (this includes shrubs as well as trees) and that our Tree Canopy Cover is 15.9%. The BlueSky data shows that our Tree Canopy Cover is likely to be slightly higher at 17.1%. This data is a more accurate measure of canopy cover and we will use this as the basis for analysis going

3. Oxford’s Urban Forest

Oxford’s urban forest is made up of trees and woody vegetation, such as shrubs and hedgerows. It provides Oxford’s residents and wildlife with a huge range of benefits. However, for many people the most critical role that our urban forest plays is enhancing their enjoyment of life and the sense of wonder that trees and green spaces instil.

In Oxford we have outstanding forests and woodlands in and around the City such as Brasenose Wood and Shotover. We have stunning iconic tree lined streets such as St. Giles and trees that help to form important wildlife corridors such as the Boundary Brook Wildlife Corridor. We also have valuable tree collections from around the world such as in Headington Hill Park, University Parks and the Botanic Gardens. We also have trees in our neighbourhoods that create a sense of place for our communities.

3.1. Canopy cover data

We know quite a lot about our urban forest and have a range of sources of canopy cover data.

- **Treeconomics i-Tree Canopy Cover Assessment**

In 2015 Oxford City Council commissioned Treeconomics to undertake a canopy cover assessment⁷. This was undertaken using the i-Tree Canopy software tool. This tool uses aerial imagery and

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forward. Although our data is now a little out of date, it still provides us with a very useful baseline.

Oxford's total canopy cover, including trees and shrubs (22.3%), is quite high compared to other cities. Oxford has a similar canopy cover to that of London (21.9%) but has significantly higher canopy cover than cities like Bristol (14%) and Glasgow (15%) but slightly lower than Birmingham (23%) and Exeter (23%).

The i-Tree data shows that we have 74 tree species but the most common are Ash, Willow and Poplar. We also know where our canopy cover is and which areas may need prioritising.

Figure 1 demonstrates what proportion of land has tree cover compared with the other types of land use in each ward. (Note this analysis was conducted against the former ward boundaries.) Areas with a larger proportion of industrial and commercial activities tend to have lower canopy cover. Figures 2 and 3 shows where our canopy cover is in Oxford. The darker an area, the higher the canopy cover. The low canopy cover in Jericho and Osney can be accounted for because Port Meadow, a significant area of open space with few trees, is located in this ward.

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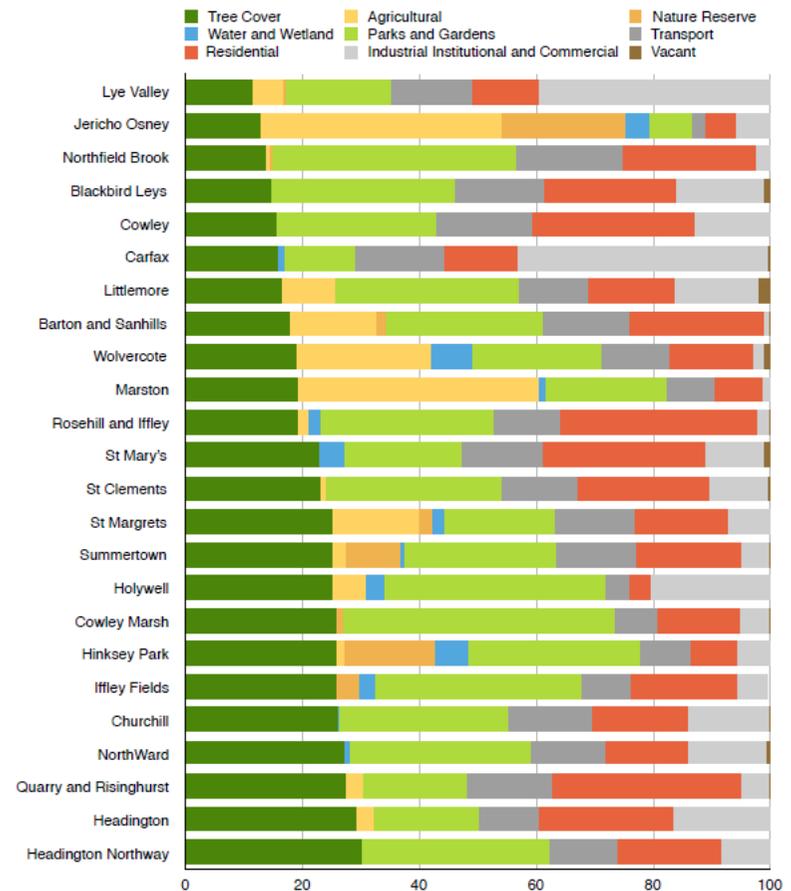
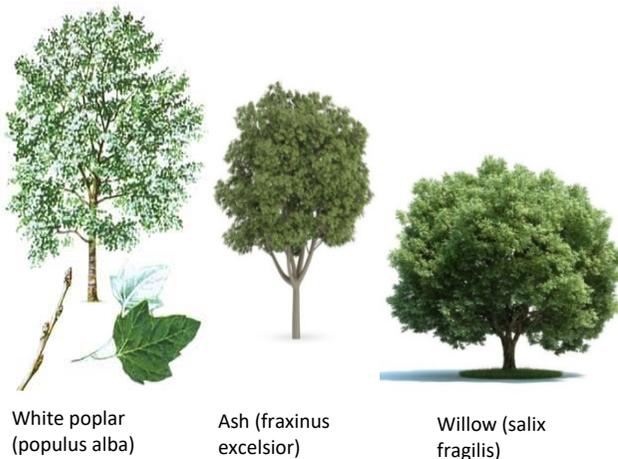


Figure 1 - % Land Use by Ward

Source: Treeconomics iTree Canopy Cover Assessment 2015

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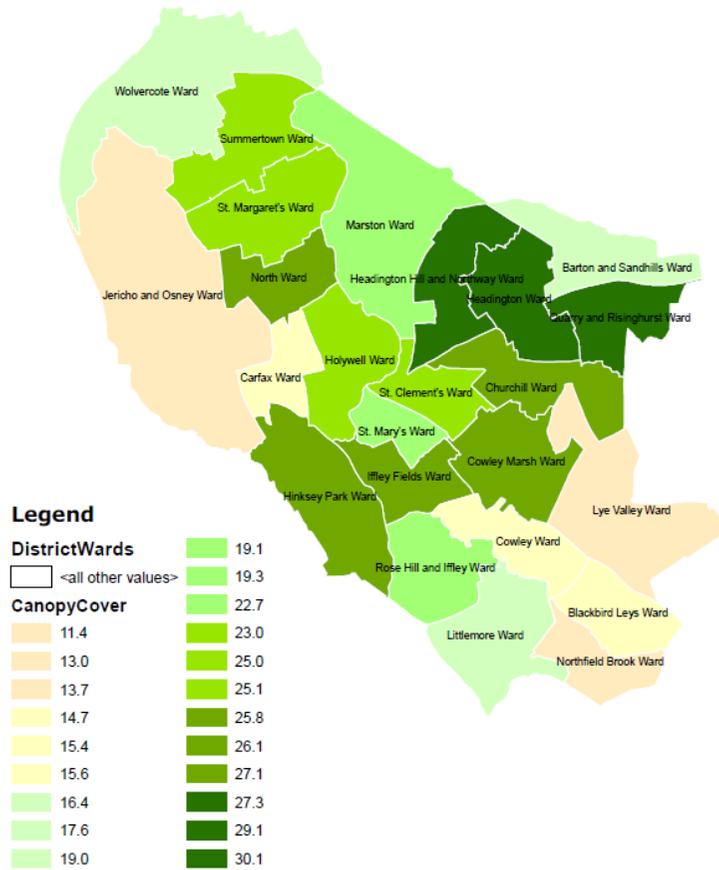


Figure 2 – Canopy Cover Percentages by Ward

Source: Treeconomics iTree Canopy Cover Assessment 2015

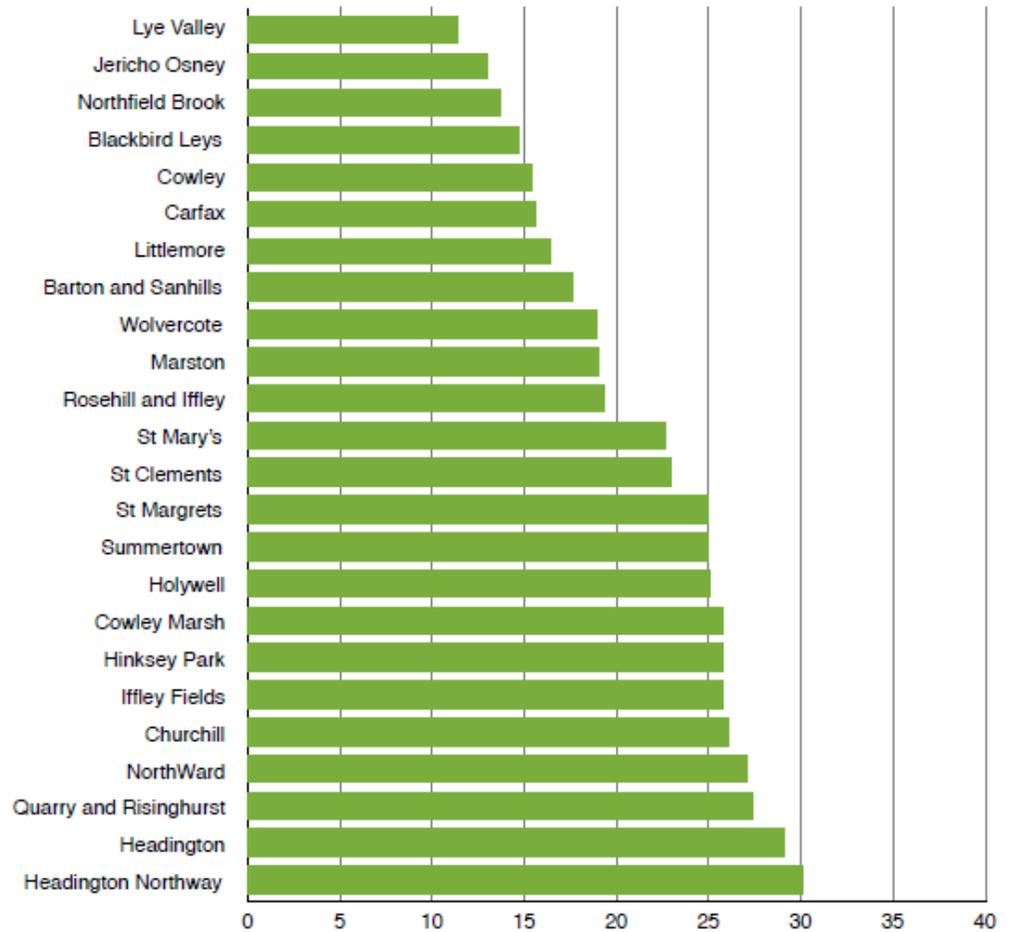


Figure 3 - Canopy Cover by Ward

Source: Treeconomics iTree Canopy Cover Assessment 2015

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3.2. Treescapes

Where is our urban forest? Our Urban forest can be found all over our city from street trees, trees in graveyards, hedgerows, and even in private gardens. It is easy to think of our urban forest as just trees, but it is important to recognise the value of other woody vegetation too, particularly hedgerows. Hedgerows are a hugely undervalued resource that is currently at risk from being lost from our towns and cities. Hedgerows provide many of the same benefits as trees but are particularly important as wildlife corridors because they support a large number species such as pollinating insects and birds.

We have categorised the different areas where we find our urban forest into different “treescapes”. A treescape describes an area of trees or shrubs that forms a function in its environment. These are the main treescapes that are relevant to Oxford:

- Street trees
- Parks, graveyards and open spaces
- Institutional grounds and landscaping (schools, hospitals, universities, business parks etc.)
- Residential gardens
- Allotments and community orchards
- Vegetation along waterways, railway lines and roadside verges
- Woodland and nature reserves
- Farmland/agricultural land
- Hedgerows

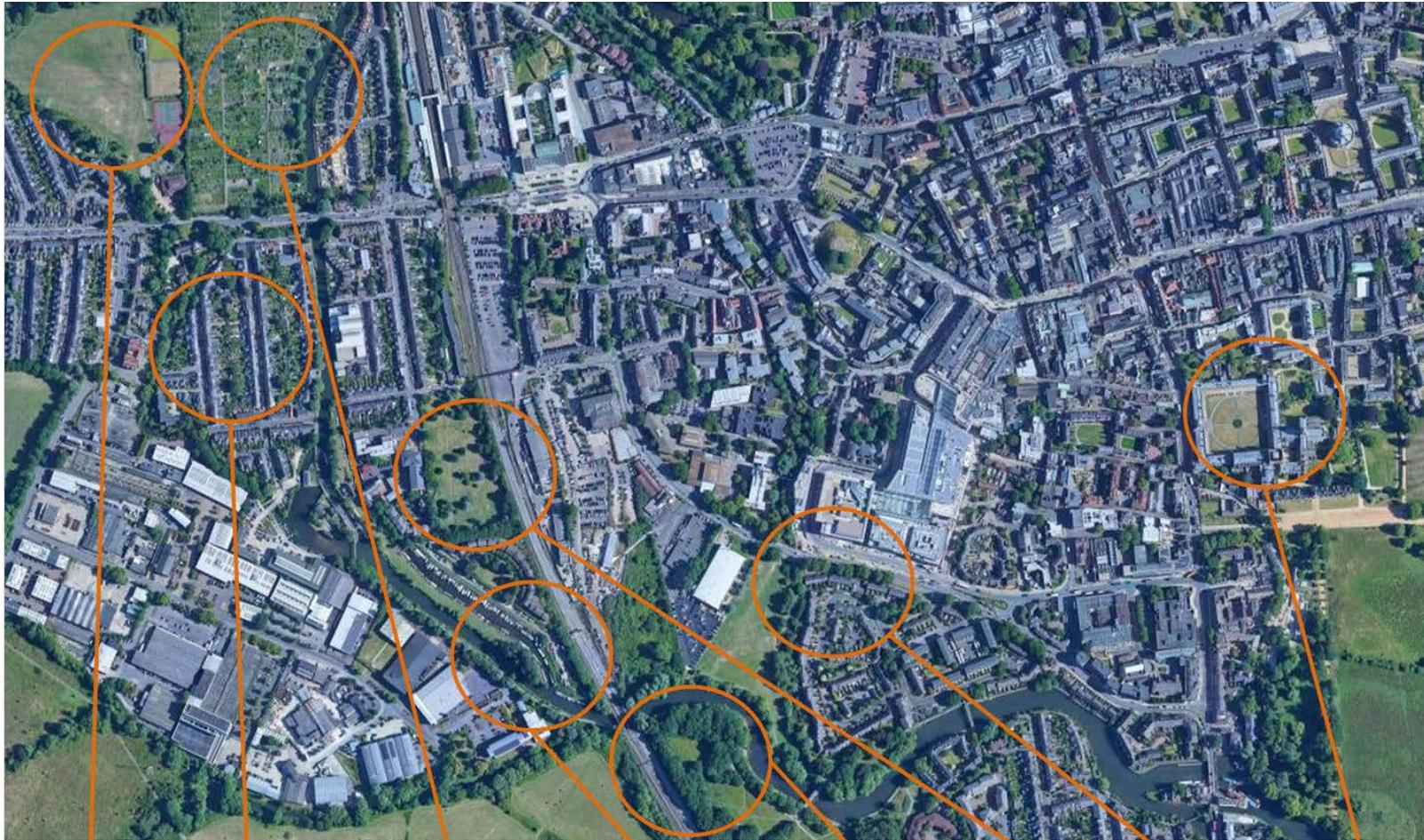
Each treescape provides a variety of ecosystems services valuable to Oxford. The types of trees or vegetation required will differ depending on the function and conditions of each treescape.



Headington Hill

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Public Parks
and Open
Spaces

Residential
Gardens

Allotments and
Community
Orchards

Linear Routes
(along railways
or waterways)

Woodlands and
Nature Reserves

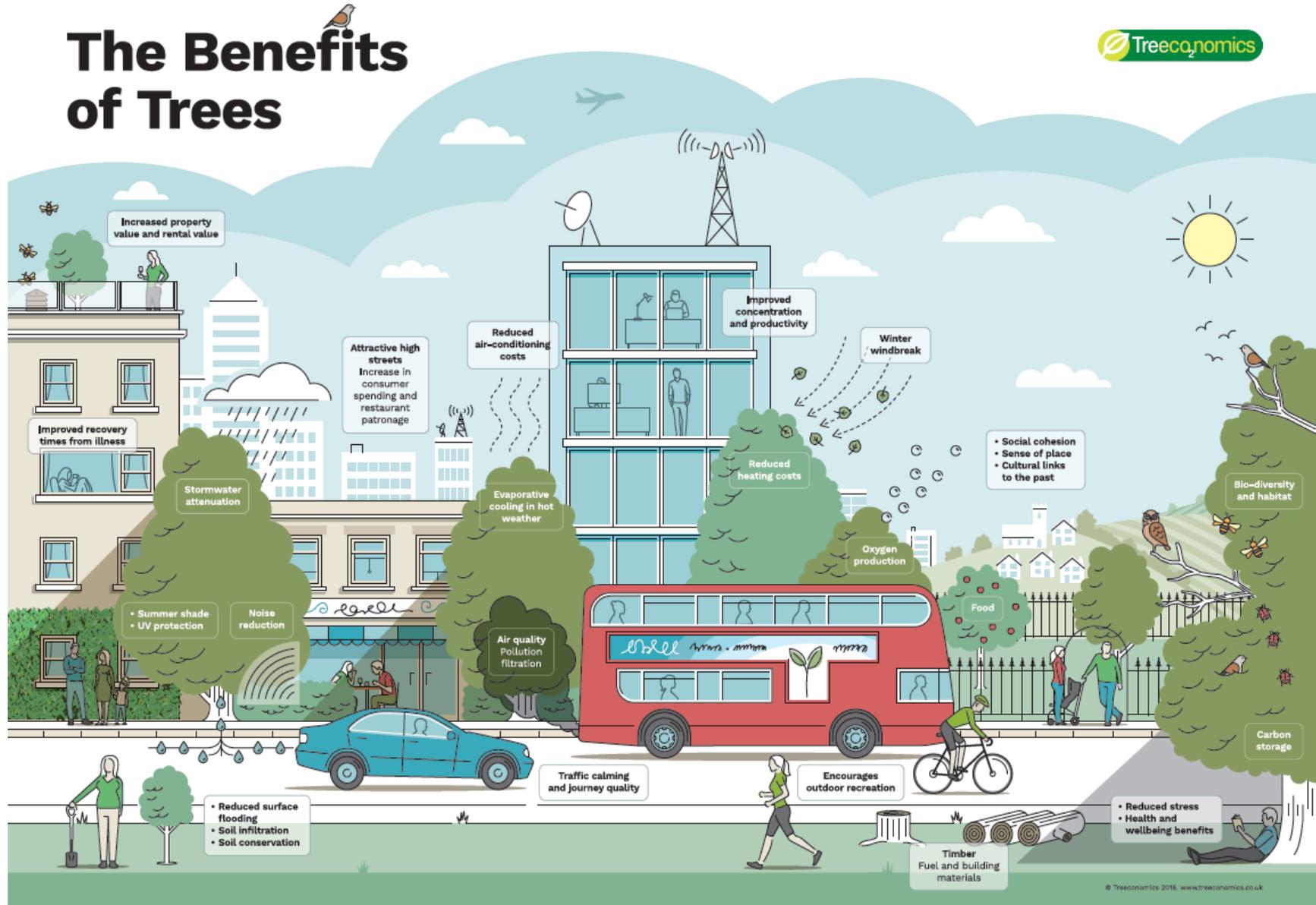
Graveyards

Street
Trees

Institutional
Grounds
(Universities,
schools, hospitals
etc)

Source: Google Maps

The Benefits of Trees



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4. Ecosystems Services and the Value of our Urban Forest

There are a huge number of benefits of urban forests and the wildlife within them. We call these ecosystems services. Our urban forest, and the trees, vegetation and wildlife that it is made up of, is beautiful and makes our city a great place to live. The main benefits Oxford's urban forest provides are outlined in this section.

4.1. Physical and mental health and wellbeing

A survey by the Mental Health Foundation in 2018 found that 74% of people have at some point felt stressed to the point of being overwhelmed or unable to cope. Poor environmental conditions such as noise and air pollution can have a detrimental impact on our mental health and can impair our ability to sleep or exercise efficiently. Studies have shown that nature can have significant positive impacts on mental and physical health. National Trust research⁹ shows a return of £200 billion in physical and mental health benefits for £5.5 billion invested in urban green infrastructure. A recent survey by Natural England showed that around 9 in 10 people agreed that natural spaces are good for mental health and wellbeing.

Access to green space and recreation areas often gives us more opportunities for physical activity. Having good physical health often goes hand in hand with having better mental health. We also often use our green spaces for recreation, to socialise, to walk or to play sports. There are also many community groups and volunteer programmes which get people outdoors and managing our wild spaces. The connection to community and sense of achievement are

also good for our mental health. Our urban forest also provides habitat for wildlife, such as birds, bees and butterflies. Studies suggest that simply observing wildlife and animals can have a calming effect. Furthermore, art is often inspired by nature and the act of creating can be relaxing and good for mental wellbeing too. Ensuring that people have access to green spaces and the presence of trees in their communities is vital to our health and wellbeing. The expectation is that expanding our urban forest and enhancing our biodiversity and green spaces will lead to improvements in mental health. This is particularly important among people and communities that are more deprived.

4.2. Urban Heat Island effect

The Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect happens when temperatures in cities and towns are higher (particularly at night) compared to rural areas because of the heat retained by artificial surfaces (such as the tarmac and concrete in roads and buildings). Temperature differences have been measured up to ten degrees higher in UK cities. Why is this a problem? Excessive heat causes excess deaths. Public Health England reports that over the past four years over 3,400 people have died early during periods of extreme heat in England. We know that climate change is likely to result in significantly hotter and drier summers and the effects of this will be particularly felt in urban areas. The UHI effect also causes increased energy costs, greater carbon emissions, increased air pollution and transport network disruptions (road surface melting, rail tracks buckling etc.).

Alongside measures such as reducing energy consumption and increasing the reflective capacity of surfaces in cities, our urban

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forest plays an important role in reducing the UHI. Trees intercept solar heat, absorb carbon dioxide and actively cool the air through transpiration. Trees must have access to sufficient water in order to be healthy and transpire effectively. Combining street trees with sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) could be an effective way to achieve multiple benefits.

Understanding the Urban Heat Island effect in Oxford and the role the urban forest can play to reduce its impact is part of the objective that seeks to maximise benefits from our urban forest. Currently, we have no information specific to Oxford on this phenomenon.

4.3. Air quality and emissions

In Oxford, we know that 81% of our carbon emissions come from our buildings and the rest (16%) mainly from on-road transport¹⁰. Our urban forest plays a role in helping to reduce these emissions by directly absorbing carbon dioxide and indirectly by shading surfaces and reducing temperatures. In many institutional buildings and offices, that means a reduced need for air conditioning and the carbon emissions that result from it. Using trees and planting to make attractive walking and cycling routes encourages people to use more sustainable forms of transport as well as directly removing pollutants from the air caused by polluting road vehicles. Oxfordshire County Council's emerging transport strategy might assess such opportunities. This strategy seeks to support and promote such plans, developed in partnership with Oxford City Council, which can help us to achieve these benefits.

Air pollution can cause and exacerbate many health conditions. Exposure to poor air quality has been shown to be directly related to

diseases such as cancer, asthma, stroke, heart disease, obesity and dementia. To tackle this problem the whole of the city of Oxford has been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Oxford City Council has produced an ambitious Air Quality Action Plan¹¹ to significantly reduce emissions in Oxford. Oxford is the first UK local authority to set out a city-wide air pollution reduction target that goes beyond the legal targets set out by the UK Government.

Trees and vegetation, when correctly sited, can help reduce the impacts of certain types of pollution through dispersion and deposition. Defra acknowledges that vegetation can help to reduce air pollution in cities. However, they state this is primarily by affecting how these pollutants are dispersed and not by the removal of pollutants¹². Defra's Air Quality Action Group (AQEG)¹³ makes clear that trees can have air quality benefits but on their own they are not a solution to the air quality problems at a city scale.

In Oxford our urban forest is estimated to filter 65 tonnes of airborne pollutants each year. This can be calculated as a saving of over £1.12 million in social damage costs.

The urban forest can help with other forms of pollution too, such as noise pollution. Noise pollution can cause stress and mental health problems. It not only affects our behaviour but that of our wildlife too. Forest Research says that planting "noise buffers" can reduce noise by up to 50% if done correctly. Guidance on how to maximise using trees and vegetation as noise buffers will be promoted through this strategy.

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4.4. Community cohesion and engagement

Our green spaces provide a space for communities to socialise and to relax. However, our urban forest plays a role beyond simply providing a space to be, many people are actively involved in managing it too. Forest schools, volunteer conservation groups, community tree planting projects and citizen science projects are all examples of how communities can engage with our urban forest. Community orchards and the planting of fruit trees in public spaces also brings communities together for harvesting. Often the most successful engagement comes from communities having a sense of ownership of their environment. This strategy seeks to involve more people in such projects from all parts of the city.

4.5. Biodiversity

Biodiversity includes all living things, including all plants and animals and the complex ecosystems which they are part of. It is being recognised all over the globe that biodiversity loss as well as climate change pose a real and significant planetary emergency. The National Biodiversity Network State of Nature report 2019 reported that biodiversity in the UK had fallen by 60% since 1970. In 2010, the Lawton Report advocated for biodiversity efforts to focus on the principle of “more, bigger, better, joined”. The practical application of this principle is relevant now more than ever, and the development of Nature Recovery Networks and improving the management of existing wildlife habitats is underway locally and nationally.

Oxfordshire is currently developing one of these Nature Recovery Networks. The network identifies areas where conservation efforts

will have the most benefits for wildlife and also the ecosystem services that they provide. A network map is in development led by a partnership of local nature conservation organisations and local authorities.¹⁴

The Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project mapping demonstrates that there are opportunities in Oxford for the planting of trees and hedgerows that could significantly benefit the Nature Recovery Network by linking habitats.

Oxford is home to a number of legally protected habitats and species many of which make up our urban forest including: traditional orchards, hedgerows, wet woodland, hedgehogs, water voles and swifts. This strategy will help to direct actions that contribute to the protection of these important habitats and species.

Native vs non-native

Species that are considered native are species that became established in the UK after the last ice age over 10,000 years ago. Native trees and other vegetation are important because the other plants and animals that colonised over that same time developed alongside them using them for their food and habitat. Non-native species refer to species that have been brought to the UK by people. Non-native species do not share the same long relationship with these other plant and animal species and do not support them so well. Native tree and plant species have a much higher biodiversity value than non-native ones because they support the life cycle stages of thousands of native invertebrates, bats and birds. This strategy promotes the use of native species wherever possible. Where non-native species are planted, they should be climate appropriate and their biodiversity value can be enhanced by

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selecting near-native varieties or those with edible fruits, seeds or nectar.

Native species have a much higher biodiversity value than non-native species. Native species should be prioritised over non-natives wherever possible.

4.6. Flood control and water quality

For many parts of Oxford flooding is a significant issue and with wetter winters predicted in the future, it is set to continue. Significant areas of Oxford including South and West Oxford, Port Meadow, and Lower Wolvercote are located within the floodplain of the River Thames and its tributaries. North eastern areas, towards Marston, are located in the Cherwell floodplain, Florence Park areas and parts of Cowley are at risk of flooding from the Boundary Brook, and other areas are at risk of flooding from smaller watercourses, such as the Littlemore Brook or Northmoor Brook. Most of Oxford's flooding is caused by river flooding, where the rivers burst their banks after periods of heavy rainfall. However, this can be compounded by surface water flooding, this occurs where hard surfaces cannot absorb heavy rainfall.

Oxford's urban forest can help with both flooding from rivers and surface water flooding. Canopy cover intercepts the rain and slows it down before it hits the ground. This allows the rain to reach, and infiltrate into the ground more slowly and also allowing some of the water to evaporate back into the atmosphere without it ever even reaching the ground.

In Oxford, our urban forest intercepts around 80 thousand cubic metres of rain each year, which is approximately £120,000 saved in stormwater treatment costs.

By reducing the volume of run-off entering the sewer system, the volume eventually reaching watercourses is also reduced, which can also help reduce flood risk from rivers and reduce raw sewage spillover. Designing urban trees so that they allow more water into the soil (such as removing the asphalt around tree pits) can also help reduce surface run-off.

For river flooding, trees can slow the flow of run-off from farmland into water courses and they provide structure to the soil. However, the benefits of tree planting to significantly reduce river flooding would need to be in the form of flood management upstream to help reduce run-off from farmland. An example is Wild Oxfordshire's Evenlode Catchment Project¹⁵ where a natural flood management demonstration project is being undertaken, and the Environment Agency is looking into more projects of this nature in the Thames Valley.

In Oxford we encourage sustainable drainage systems (or SuDS) in our new developments. There is the potential to incorporate our urban forest into SuDS designs such as in rain gardens (spaces that allow water to infiltrate into the ground naturally) but also through more engineered solutions, such as incorporating SuDS into tree pit design. Not only is this a good use of space but the trees are more likely to reach their full potential.

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The Oxfordshire TreescapE Opportunity Mapping Project is mapping the potential for planting in our riparian¹⁶ zones that could contribute to reducing soil erosion in flood events. A recent study by the Environment Agency¹⁷ showed that wooded buffers scored highly for controlling diffuse pollution, carbon retention and flood management. The study highlighted that trees can reduce airborne spray drift of chemicals used in agriculture as well as tree roots helping to stabilise banks and filtering and trapping pollutants. Trees along rivers also increase shading which cools water temperature and contributes to reducing stress on aquatic life. Some of Oxford's riparian buffer zones overlap with the Nature Recovery Areas and scope for maximising benefits should be assessed.

4.7. Carbon storage

Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as timber. Some of this carbon dioxide is rereleased from wood in the natural processes of decay by bacteria and fungi or by combustion for example, if used as a source of fuel. Putting timber into long-term uses such as construction or furniture keeps the carbon stored for longer. Studies are showing that older, larger trees store significantly more carbon compared to smaller trees. We need to ensure that our largest and oldest trees are healthy so that we maximise their benefits and that we replace with large tree species where appropriate.

In Oxford our urban forest is estimated to remove approximately 2,500 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year. This service has an estimated

value of £619,000. Our urban forest stores over 76,000 tonnes of carbon worth over £18 million.

Objectives in this strategy seek to ensure that our mature trees that are storing more carbon are properly taken care of. New planting will also seek to include species that we know store the most carbon.

4.8. Landscape character, heritage and culture

Oxford's landscape and its relationship to the built environment is iconic. Potential land-use changes, including tree planting, should consider impacts and seek opportunities to enhance Oxford's distinctive character. In 2002 the Countryside Agency in partnership with Oxford City Council undertook a comprehensive Landscape Character Assessment. Although this study is now quite old, it is still relevant. This study outlines the role trees play in the landscapes and identifies some opportunities for enhancement through planting and management. Landscape Character Assessment specifically identifies where new tree planting should be focused to maintain or enhance the character. E.g. Church Cowley Core "...encouraging the planting of new large trees to ensure the long-term survival of the leafy character of this area." The principles for how to ensure that landscape character is conserved and enhanced through this urban forest strategy will be guided by this document.

In 2015 Oxford City Council, in partnership with Oxford Preservation Trust and Historic England undertook an Assessment of the Oxford View Cones¹⁸. Oxford is famous for its skyline and being able to walk in the surrounding countryside and look back at the city's "dreaming spires" is acknowledged to have significant inheritance value and should be managed for future generations. Within the assessments

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of each view cone are details on where tree planting can be used to enhance the quality of views and also where tree management is recommended to re-establish views. Trees play an important role in adding to the quality of views by providing an aesthetic green setting. E.g. the trees in North Hinksey and the valley beyond help to screen some of the 20th century industrial buildings such as Osney Mead and Oxpens. This strategy seeks to ensure that consideration is given to views as important heritage assets where new planting schemes are concerned.

Notable trees

There are so many trees or groups of trees in Oxford that have stories that surround them. Many of them feature in literature from Tolkien to Pullman and Matthew Arnold. There was an outpouring of emotion for the pink blossomed Almond tree outside the University Church of St Mary the Virgin on the High Street when it was felled in 2019 due to safety reasons. Evidence suggests that the tree suffered in the heatwave of summer 2018 and was adversely impacted by the heavy traffic flows of large vehicles passing in close proximity. Replacement trees have since been planted.

The great Yew Tree in Iffley Churchyard is thought to be one of the oldest trees in Oxfordshire. It is at least as old as the church, built in 1160, but is likely to be older and evidence that it may have been a pre-Christian site of worship. The tree may also have been the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Oxford has a wealth of notable trees. Many of these trees may not be notable in the technical sense but are notable to the people who live by them and look out at them every day.

This strategy gives us an opportunity to celebrate these trees and to identify actions that will help us to plan for their replacement. Tree Protection Orders only require replacement trees to be planted after the loss of the original tree. If we wait for trees to die before we replace them, then we will have a significant hole where the tree once stood. However, if we plan ahead, we can plant “understudy” trees otherwise known as “succession” tree planting. These trees will be growing and preparing to replace the original tree when it dies. Oxford City Council looks to secure succession tree planting when approving landscape plans that are required by planning conditions. However, it is important to bear in mind that some trees occupy the perfect location and their loss can only be mitigated by planting in



Almond Tree on the High Street Credit: Tejvan Pettinger

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exactly the same place. The City Council's planning conditions will only cover a small portion of such trees. This strategy seeks to encourage landowners and managers and communities to identify trees that are important to them and to assess opportunities for planting understory trees where appropriate.

There are many other ways we can celebrate and raise awareness of our notable trees such as "Green Plaque" schemes, like the blue plaque scheme but for trees, tree walking trails or tree story competitions.

4.9. Economic benefits and tourism

Economic benefits of urban forest include: the production of by-products (such as timber, mulch and fruit), tourism, increased property values, increased inward investment (high quality landscaping attracts business) and trees can be valued as assets, giving them a financial worth. Our urban forest is also important for our pollinators that are essential to our agriculture, allotments and city farms¹⁹. Oxford is regarded as the tourism gateway to the rest of Oxfordshire. Approximately 7 million people visit each year and they contribute over £750 million worth of income for Oxford's local businesses. The setting of the city and the university with its parks and grounds and its setting within the landscape feature heavily on making it a special place to visit.

The economic benefits from wood by-products are less significant in an urban forest like Oxford due to the lack of space for any sizeable production. Furthermore, orchards are unlikely to be large enough to justify the equipment costs for a commercial operation. There is potential for community orchards and opportunities to develop these should be encouraged. Our urban forest also directly provides

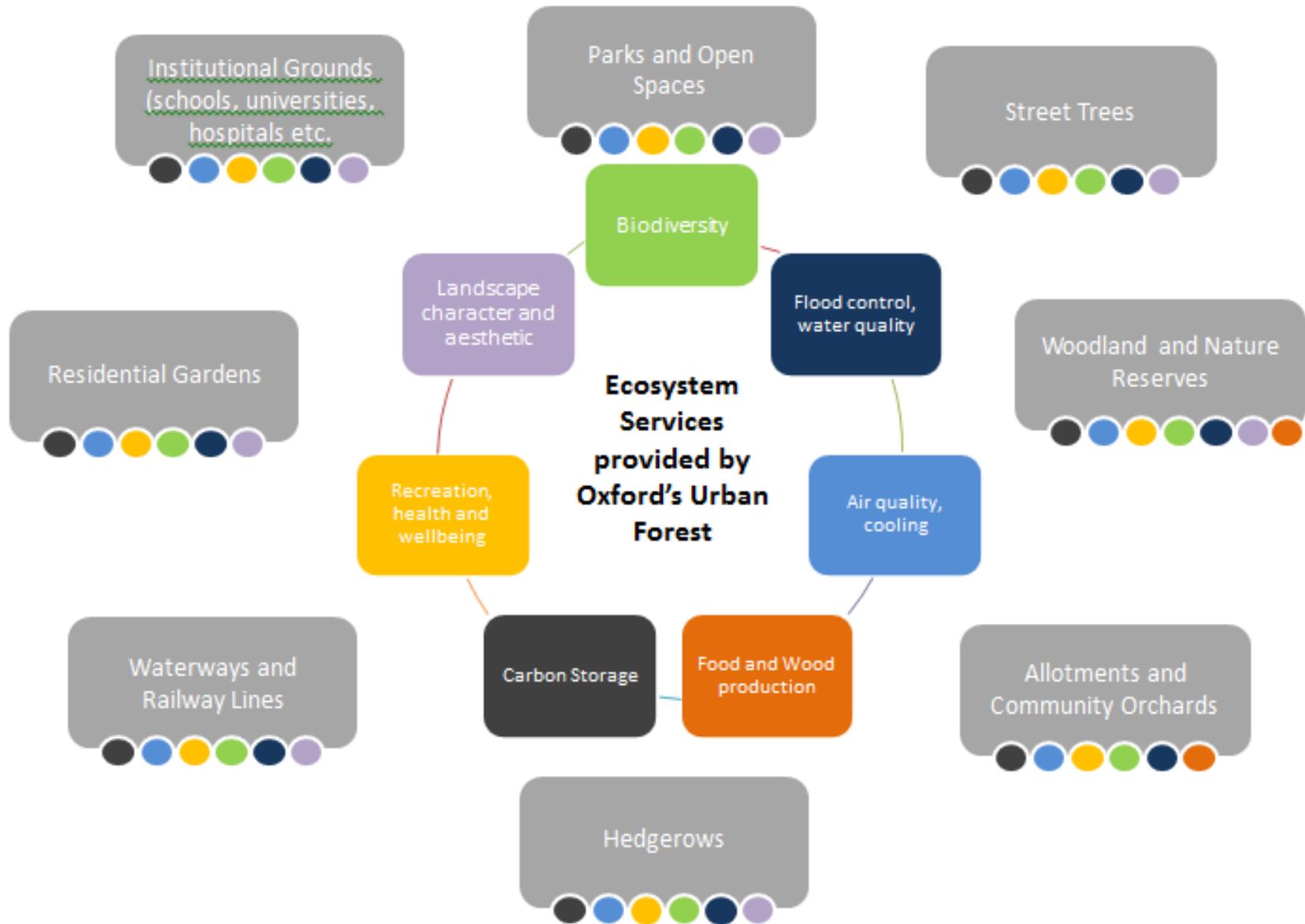
employment such as through tree surgeons and grounds maintenance companies. Research by the Woodland Trust has shown that woodland management can be significantly cheaper to maintain than some types of grassland²⁰. Landowners and managers could benefit economically from shifting their land-use to woodland.

Other economic benefits of the urban forest relate to reduced building energy costs from tree shading and the contribution that trees make to raising property values and investment potential. Studies have shown that people actually spend more if they are shopping in areas with more trees²¹. The importance of good quality place making and design for our economy as well as quality of life is demonstrated. Developers, decision makers and other key stakeholders are encouraged to think about how they can generate the most value from our urban forest.

There are so many benefits of our urban forest but it is also important to acknowledge that trees don't always come without their problems. Some evidence shows that street trees can trap pollutants in certain circumstances and many people suffer health issues from pollen. Such negative impacts give more weight to the need for using the right tree, right place principle where negative impacts can be minimised.

Whilst it is useful to be able to quantify the benefits that we derive from our urban forest we must recognise that trees and the wildlife they support have an intrinsic value irrespective of their benefits to people.

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5. What can we learn from our data?

The Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project uses an ecosystems services approach to determining which trees are suitable for specific locations and has identified:

- A clear correlation between low canopy cover in the southern part of the city and areas of deprivation.
- Scope for prioritising the Nature Recovery Network (NRN) in expanding our urban forest.

Figure 4 shows our canopy cover in Oxford. Figure 5 shows the land use by habitat most relevant to trees and where there may be opportunities for more trees. The highest percentage land use is buildings. 19% of land area is gardens (private residential gardens), which presents an interesting opportunity for new trees. There may be other opportunities in farmed land (13%), roadsides and verges (13%), and amenity grassland (13%).

5.1. Deprivation

Oxford has high levels of inequality. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation²², 9 of Oxford's 83 neighbourhood areas were among the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas are located in The Leys, Rose Hill, Littlemore, Carfax and Barton. These areas experience higher levels of low skilled workers, households on low incomes and crime rates. There are also areas where deprivation for children is in the 10% most deprived nationally. These figures also show that 12 neighbourhood areas in North Oxford, Marston,

Headington, Quarry and Risinghurst and Jericho and Wolvercote are among the top 10% least deprived in the country. We know that poverty increases the risk of poor mental health²³. Figures 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate that there is a general trend for lower canopy cover in more deprived areas of the city.

The Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project has identified that within the areas of deprivation there is potential to increase:

- trees in private and communal gardens
- street trees
- trees in public parks and open spaces

The expectation is that increasing canopy cover will contribute to improving environmental quality, community cohesion and physical and mental health of residents in these areas that in turn can contribute to reducing deprivation.

Areas of deprivation in Oxford have been identified using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). IMDs create a measure to show the relative deprivation between areas²⁴. Multiple components are weighted to combine into a single score of deprivation. The components used are: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment.

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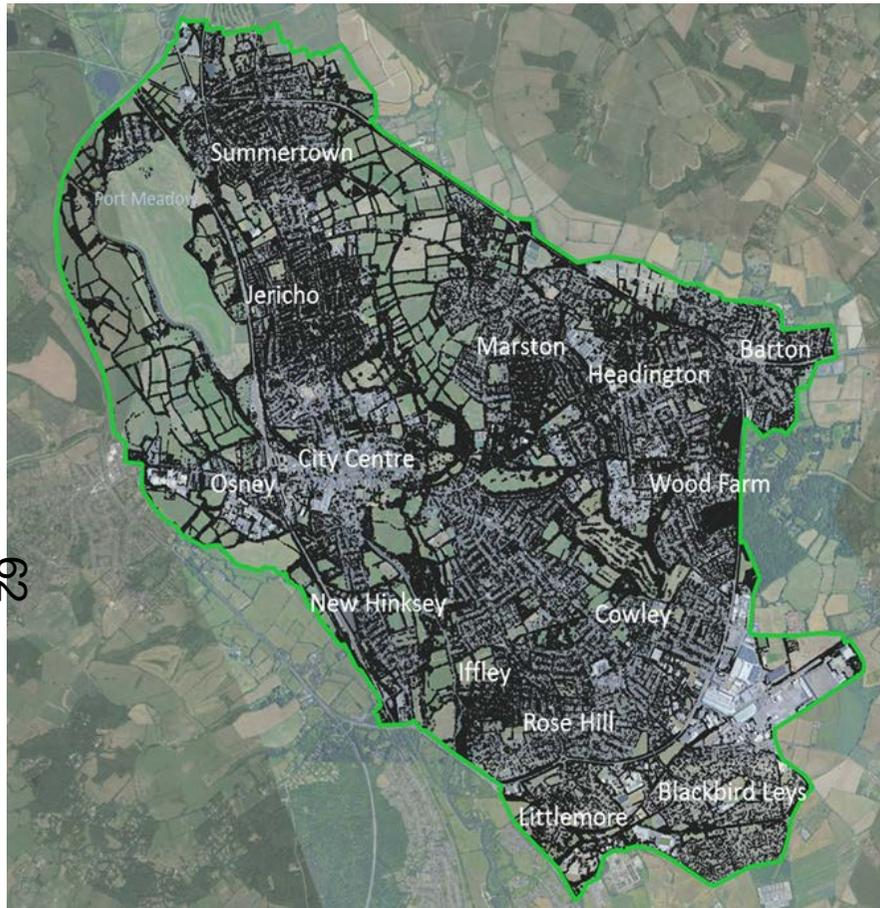


Figure 4 Canopy Cover in Oxford

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

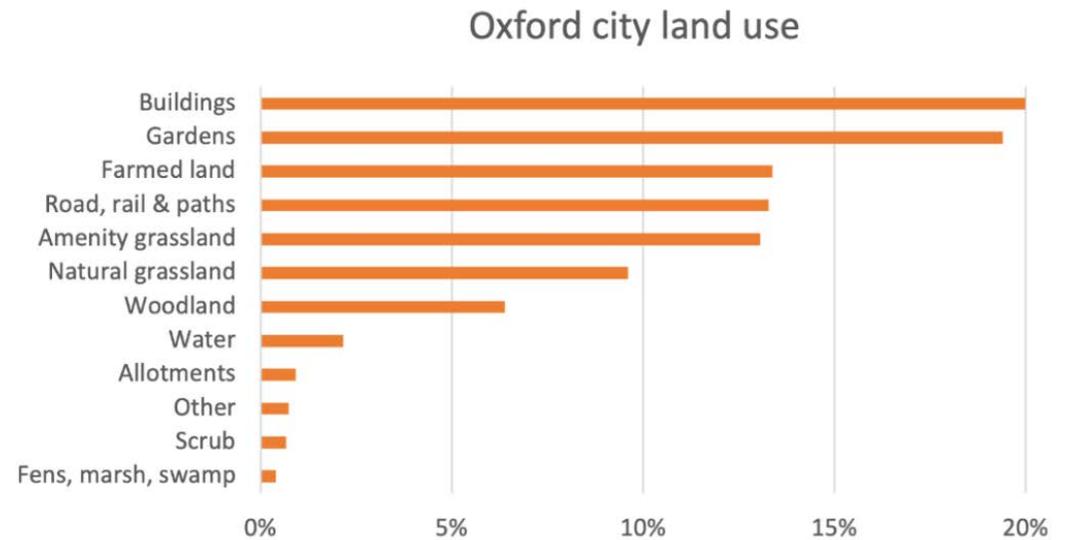


Figure 5 % Land Use in Oxford

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

Correlation between Low Canopy Cover and Index of Multiple Deprivation

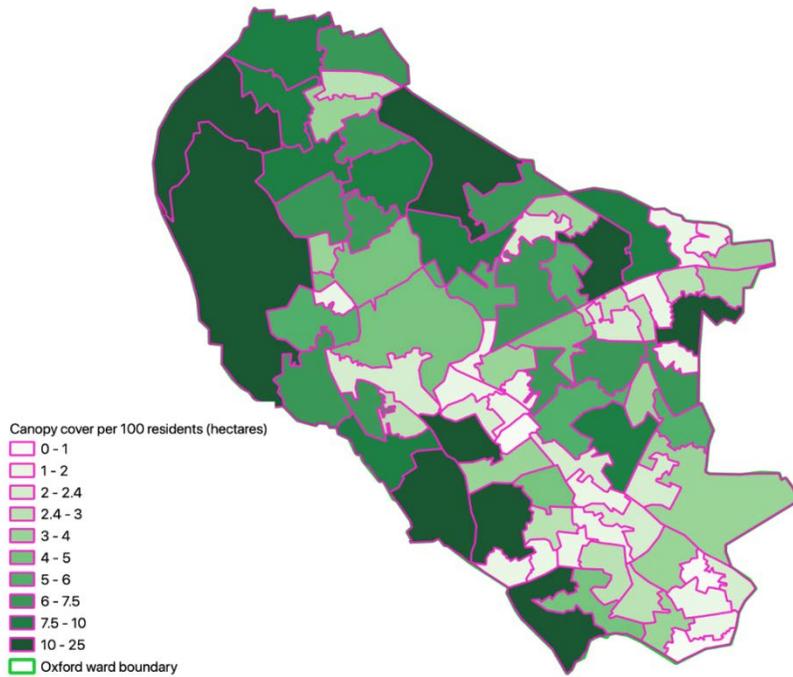


Figure 6 Canopy Cover per 100 Residents (ha)

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

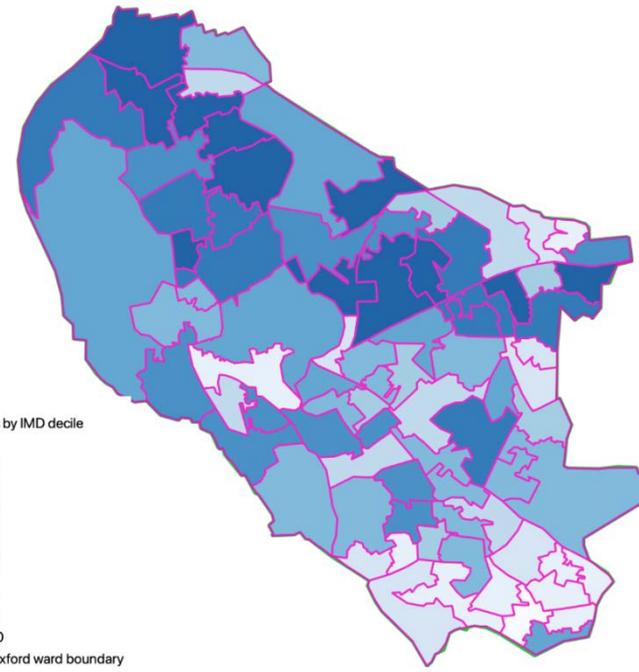


Figure 7 - Index of Multiple Deprivation by LSOA* (deciles - 1 most deprived to 10 least deprived)

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

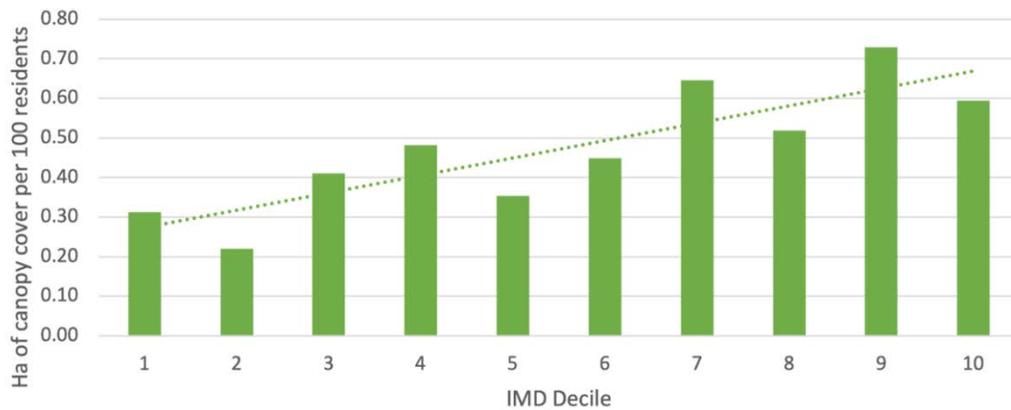


Figure 8 - Canopy Cover (ha) per 100 residents by Index of Multiple Deprivation decile (with trend line)

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

*Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales.

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5.2. Nature Recovery Network (NRN)

The Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network (NRN) identifies areas where conservation efforts will have the most benefits for wildlife and the ecosystem services that they provide.

Oxford has an important role in the Nature Recovery Network and linking to the wider county as it lies at the confluence of the Thames and Cherwell (see figure 10).

There are opportunities to increase canopy cover in areas such as Jericho and Osney, Wolvercote and Marston where canopy cover is lower and also corresponds to the Nature Recovery Network. However, it is important to note that the low canopy cover in Jericho and Osney Ward is significantly affected by the presence of Port Meadow. Port Meadow is one of the largest open spaces in the north of the city. The River Thames flows through it and the flood plains provide important habitat for many species of flora and fauna some of which are rare. Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for this reason. Tree planting is unlikely to be appropriate in much of this area.

A principle objective of this strategy is to strengthen the Nature Recovery Network. The Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project data shows us that the Nature Recovery Network covers 37% of Oxford's area.

Figure 9 shows the land uses within the Nature Recovery Network and identifies that farmed land presents a potential opportunity for increasing our canopy cover. There is not a great deal of overlap

between our Nature Recovery Network and the areas of deprivation (as shown below Fig 11). 91% of the Nature Recovery network falls within the least deprived parts of the city. A focus on the NRN is unlikely to address deprivation significantly and so these two areas of priority will need to be developed independently of each other. However, where there are overlaps, then these areas should be prioritised.

Within the Nature Recovery Network the focus should be on identifying opportunities for:

- new woodland
- hedgerows
- joining up habitats

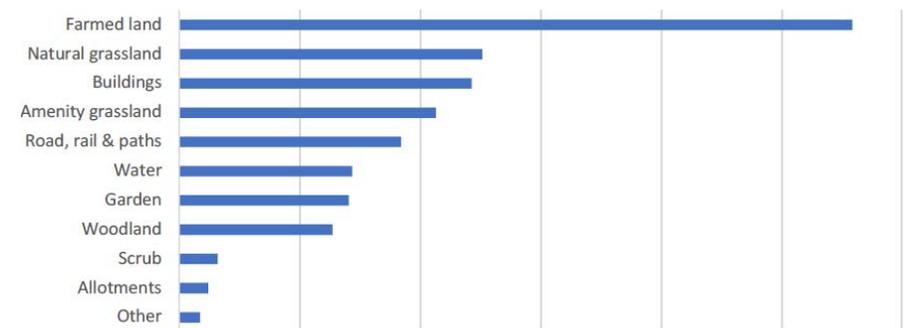


Figure 9 - Land Use within the Nature Recovery Network (ha)

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

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Nature Recovery Network
 NRN_CoreZone (Oxon)
 NRN recovery zone (Oxon)

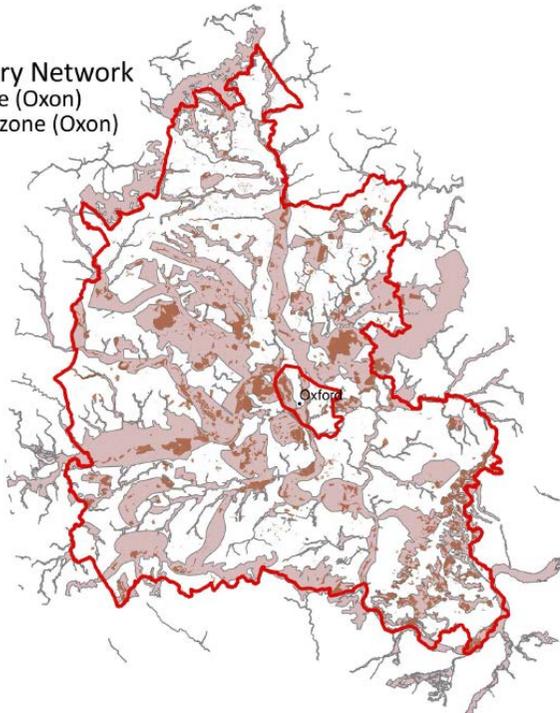


Figure 10 - Nature Recovery Network in Oxfordshire and Oxford

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project

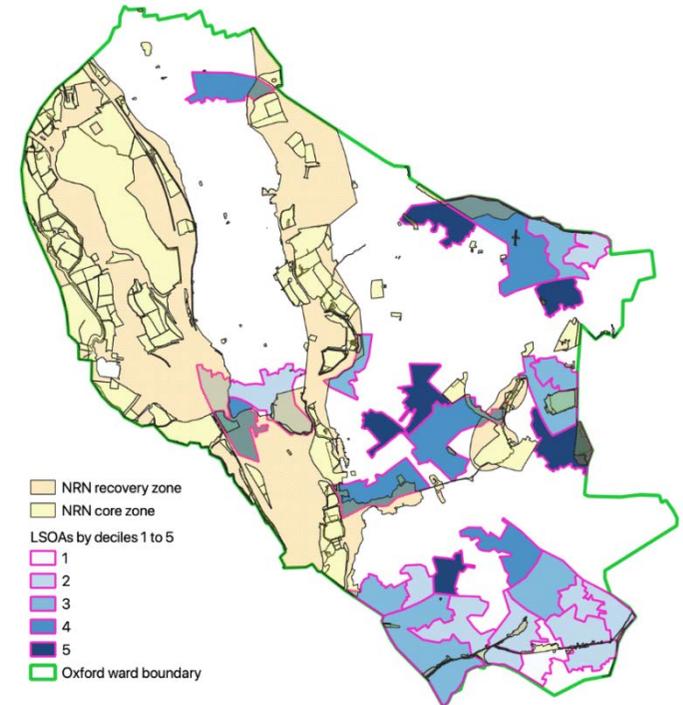
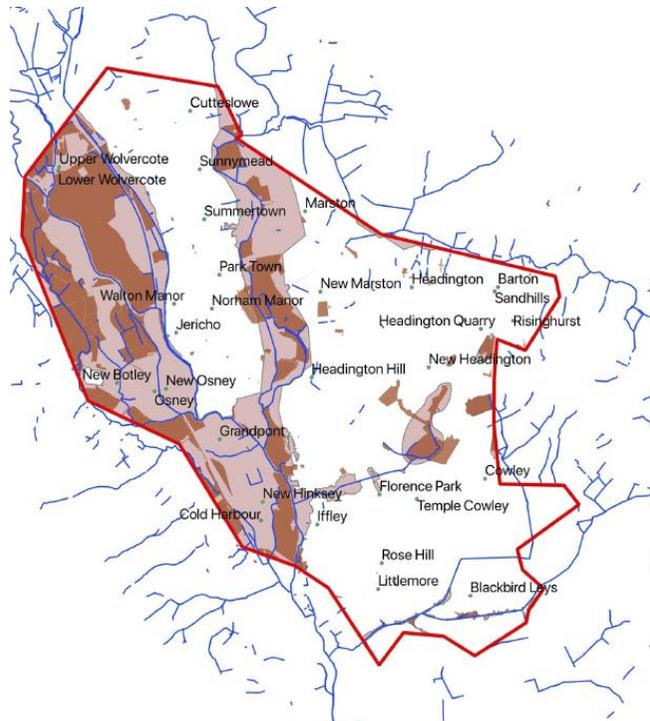


Figure 11 - Nature Recovery Network and Index of Multiple Deprivation (most deprived deciles 1 to 5)

Source: Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project (BlueSky data)

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6. Threats to Oxford's Urban Forest

6.1. Climate change

Climate change is projected to bring us hotter drier summers, and very wet winters. We are likely to experience extreme weather events, such as heatwaves and flooding. The environmental conditions that our urban forest depends on will change and could make it more susceptible to decline. New pests and diseases are likely to emerge and some tree species may not adapt as well to new environmental conditions.

6.2. Lack of diversity and biosecurity

A lack of diversity in the urban forest can make it vulnerable to disease or the impacts of climate change. A healthy ecosystem will have a good range of age, species and spatial diversity. The iTree Eco Report recorded 74 different tree species in Oxford. This represents reasonable species diversity. However, the largest percentage is Ash at 11%. Ash is particularly vulnerable to disease. The loss of 11% of our tree stock would be significant. Fragmentation of habitats can weaken diversity. Maintaining and developing networks of green spaces is crucial to healthy populations and healthy trees are more resilient to pests and disease.

Biosecurity is important for preventing pests and diseases from establishing and spreading. Biosecurity refers to a set of precautions that prevent the introduction and spread of diseases and pests such as insects, bacteria or fungi. Our industry professionals, land managers and land owners all play an important role in helping to maintain our biosecurity.

Ash Dieback

The Woodland Trust warns that ash dieback will kill over 80% of ash trees across the UK. It is caused by a fungus which penetrates the tree, blocks its water transport systems which eventually leads to death. The impact of such a huge loss of trees will have a significant impact on biodiversity and our landscapes. The practical costs of managing the disease and of losing the ecosystems services they provide will be huge. Some ash trees may be tolerant to ash dieback so some population recovery may be possible over a long period of time.

6.3. Ageing or declining tree population

Trees can decline for a number of reasons such as age, unfavourable growing conditions, pest or disease problems or environmental stresses. Stressed trees are more vulnerable to pests and disease and the ecosystems service benefits they provide will not be being realised to their full potential.

6.4. Increase in urban development or inappropriate development

Addressing the need for housing is a key priority for Oxford City Council. The Local Plan includes policies on protecting and enhancing Green Infrastructure and how to compensate and mitigate for loss of trees through new development. Inappropriate tree-planting, lack of space for nature and lack of appropriate maintenance are also significant threats to our urban forest.

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Tree Felling and Replacement

The felling of trees is a concern to many people. Oxford City Council has a Tree Management Policy that sets out that a tree will only be felled if it is identified as dead, dying, diseased, dangerous (and is posing an unacceptable risk to public safety) or damaging property (e.g. subsidence when confirmed by technical evidence). This policy also specifies that any felled tree will be replaced, although it is not always possible or prudent to replace in exactly the same location. Other landowners and managers in Oxford will be encouraged to adopt Tree Management Policies to protect trees from unnecessary felling and to always replace them.

7. Right Tree, Right Place

Deciding where and how to develop our urban forest – right tree, right place

Our urban forest is not just about our trees. Our urban forest includes our trees but also our wild places, cultural landscapes and providing ecosystem services such as carbon storage. Tree planting may not always be the most appropriate solution. This section shows us where planting trees is and isn't appropriate in Oxford.

Creating the conditions for natural regeneration is a great low carbon way of helping new woodlands establish. So consider this as an option first, before deciding to plant trees.

Is the site suitable for natural regeneration?

Sites suitable for natural regeneration will be protected from deer and rabbits, have limited ground or soil disturbance, be close to a seed source and have a history of woodland or tree/scrub cover.



Check out Flora Locale's technical advisory note: "Creating Woodlands Naturally" www.floralocale.org



Tree planting may be the preferred option if the setting is parkland, a cultural landscape or being used as a community or partner engagement tool.

What type of site is it?

The following page shows different habitat types and geographical features in Oxford. If tree or vegetation planting is the preferred option then it is important to understand if the proposed site is appropriate for tree planting. Particular habitats such as wetlands and limestone grassland are not suitable for tree planting. It's a good idea to always seek advice before planting anywhere to make sure you get the most out of it.

GENERAL ADVICE

Reduced pesticide, sympathetic management and structural complexity will all benefit a whole range of wildlife, from plants to invertebrates, pollinators, mammals and bats and birds. Always try to plant native tree species (except in orchards) and try to see what is growing naturally in hedges, field corners and unmanaged places for the most suitable, locally adapted species.

Species

Native species have a much higher biodiversity value than non-native species. Native species should be prioritised over non-natives wherever possible.

Native species suitable for Oxford include: field maple, oak, blackthorn, small leaved lime, hornbeam, birch, hazel, holly, hawthorn, wild cherry, crab apple, various willows, black poplar.

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Residential Gardens

Residential gardens make up a significant part of green infrastructure in urban areas. They can provide important habitats and corridors for wildlife, can reduce surface water runoff and reduce the energy demand of buildings. However, domestic gardens can also introduce problems, such as the introduction of invasive or non-native plant species or the misuse of fertilizers or pesticides. Choose correct size and species such as flowering and fruiting species. Apples, pears, cherries, hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble are all good for encouraging wildlife into the garden and tend to be small. Please also consider neighbours..

Right Tree, Right Place

Institutional Grounds and Landscaping (schools, hospitals, business parks etc)

There are potentially lots of opportunities for greening up sites. Check to see what habitat types you have on your grounds before planting. Choose appropriate species, whilst native species are normally preferable, there may be instances where exotics are appropriate for example if there is a story, history or to continue a designed planting scheme.

Always ensure you have the landowners permission

Don't Plant
Seek Advice
Go Ahead but Follow Guidance

Agricultural Land

Agricultural land is often suitable for tree planting due to the limited wildlife interest/value. It is important to be considerate of hedges and in-field trees though. Permanent pasture is better but a mix of grass, scrub and trees will likely be best for nature. Find out if the site has a tree-past, such as orchards. Re-planting with appropriate fruit trees could be a good decision.

Allotments and Orchards

Orchards are recognised as a priority habitat. Encourages healthy eating, reducing food miles, recreation, health and wellbeing. Potential for small fruit trees on allotments but shade issues need to be considered.

Street Trees

Street trees make our streets beautiful and characterful. They make our neighbourhoods more desirable places to live, not just for people but for wildlife too! They provide significant environmental and cultural benefits to our streetscapes. However, streets are an unnatural environment for trees and therefore need specific protection and management. We need to make sure we all see them as a public asset and value them accordingly. Street trees should follow TDAG Trees in hard landscapes guide and tree pits that also contribute to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be considered.

Former Landfill

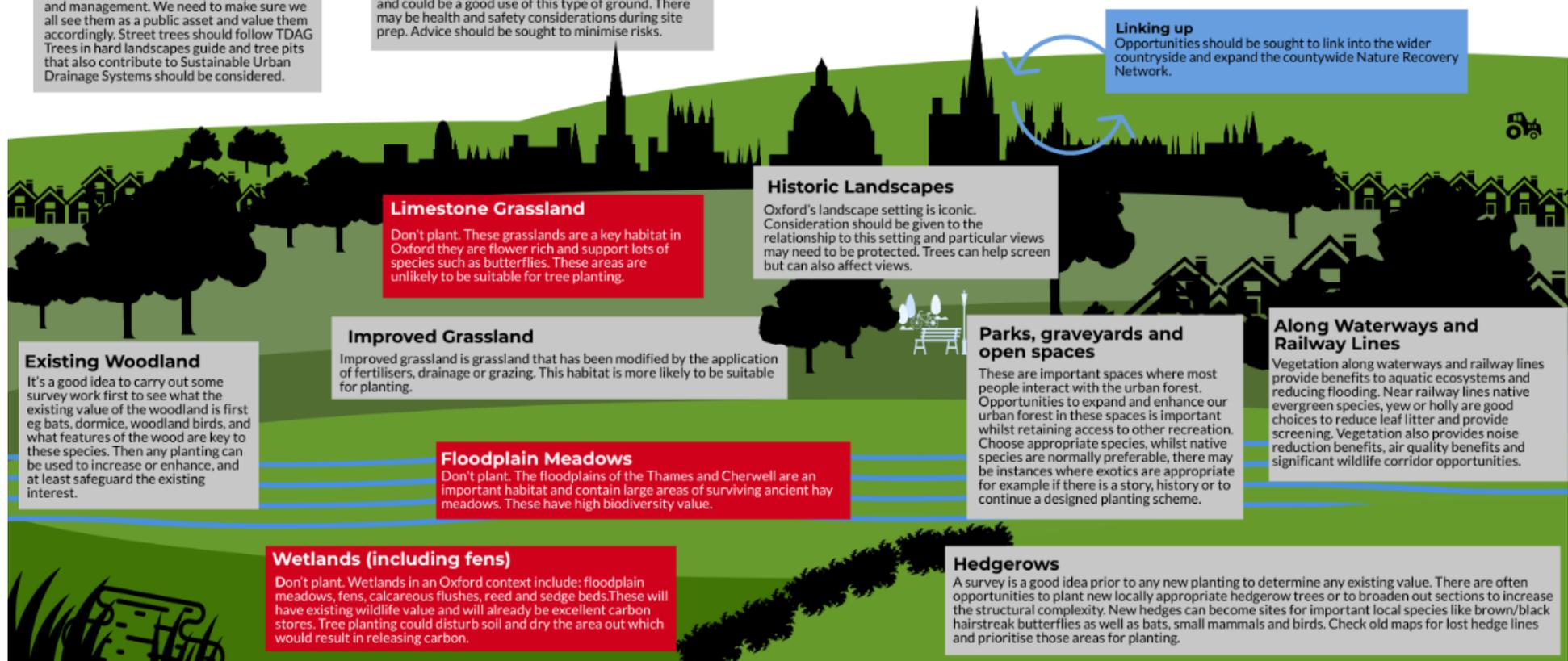
There are a number of former landfill sites in Oxford. Some of these sites may be suitable for tree planting and could be a good use of this type of ground. There may be health and safety considerations during site prep. Advice should be sought to minimise risks.

Nature Reserves

Most legally protected nature reserves/ local wildlife sites/Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) will have a management plan or strategy guiding their progress, so tree planting may or not be compatible, check with the site manager/owner

Linking up

Opportunities should be sought to link into the wider countryside and expand the countywide Nature Recovery Network.



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8. Objectives and Principles for Planting

Protect, Improve and Manage

Objective 1 – Manage our existing tree and vegetation resource according to best practice and improve vegetation health

- Existing trees are just as important as planting new.
- Benefits are not maximised from unhealthy trees.
- Healthy trees are more resilient to disease and pests.
- Healthy trees are more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- Healthy trees are safer.
- Larger, older trees are important carbon stores.
- Larger, older trees sustain and enhance urban biodiversity when maintained in good ecological condition.
- Natural regeneration should be the preferred approach where land is suitable and available especially when adjacent to diverse high-quality native woodland.
- Oxford has a wealth of historic, notable trees that have a heritage and cultural value.
- Larger, older trees provide more canopy cover.
- Trees with sufficient space for their roots are more resilient.
- Larger, older trees provide greater benefits from thermal cooling.
- Trees should only be felled if absolutely necessary. For example, if they are dead, dying, diseased, dangerous (and is posing an unacceptable risk to public safety) or damaging

property (e.g. subsidence when confirmed by technical evidence).

- Felled trees should always be replaced

Oxford City Council will lead by example in the management of our parks, street trees and housing stock. We will promote best practice guidance and a city wide approach.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Interact with our urban forest, get involved in helping to manage and monitor it either at home or in your community.
- Protect and respect the trees and nature we already have.
- Individuals will be empowered with knowledge and support to effectively manage and monitor trees in private green spaces to bring them into better ecological condition.

Landowners and land managers

- We want a balanced approach to tree risk management to be taken across the city following best practice guidance.
- We want to encourage our landowners and land managers to take an asset management approach to their trees.
- Land managers/owners will be empowered with knowledge and support to effectively manage and monitor trees in private green spaces to bring them into better ecological condition.

Objective 2 - Improve biosecurity and manage ash dieback and other pests and diseases according to best practice

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Expand, Enhance and Develop

Objective 3 - Increase urban forest canopy cover using the right tree, right place principle

- Oxford risks losing 11% of its urban forest due to Ash dieback.
- Managing ash dieback properly and according to best practice – including identifying resistant individuals and avoiding preventative felling - can help reduce the spread of the disease.
- Healthy ash trees are more resistant to ash dieback.
- Influencing our supply chains can improve local and national biosecurity.
- Protecting our existing urban forest helps to retain and increase our canopy cover.

Oxford City Council will lead by example in the management of our parks, street trees and housing stock. We will promote best practice guidance and a city wide approach.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Be aware of how you can avoid spreading pests and diseases when you travel to and from wooded areas.
- Learn to spot common diseases in trees and report them.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Become Plant Healthy certified to protect local and national biosecurity.
- Be part of a joined up approach to managing Ash dieback in Oxford.
- Be prepared when new threats become apparent and work together to ensure a joined up response.

- Canopy cover increases with new planting and good management of existing trees.
- Long-term success of planting schemes depend on the right species being planted in the right places.
- To be successful tree planting schemes must plan beyond the planting stage and include measures to protect and nurture young trees for up to a minimum of 5 years.
- Creating the right conditions for natural regeneration, in the appropriate locations, is as important as new tree planting.
- Newly planted forests can enhance carbon sequestration capacity (by trees and in soils).
- To be successful, new planting schemes must involve local communities and stakeholders in the planning, planting and care of the tree to engender a sense of “ownership”.
- Community engagement and citizen science projects will be key to monitoring our progress

Oxford City Council will lead by example and will undertake actions to support this objective including developing a tree planting plan to assess land within the Council’s control for tree planting and natural regeneration potential. This tree planting plan can be made available to other landowners and manager to be used as a model to expand their own tree resource. The council will provide guidance on appropriate species, sites and maintenance for the wider community. The council will implement planning policy in the best

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possible way to secure canopy cover gain through the planning system. The Council will monitor progress towards expanding and enhancing our urban forest and will involve key partners, stakeholders and encourage citizen science projects to help with monitoring and management.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- If appropriate, plant a tree or a hedgerow in your garden or encourage your employer to plant trees
- Get involved in a community tree planting project, or initiate one.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Assess your land for tree planting or natural regeneration potential in line with guidance.
- Support a community tree planting scheme either via offering up land or financial support for set up, maintenance and ongoing monitoring.

Objective 4 – Increase resilience through greater urban forest diversity

- Increased species diversity leads to increased resilience to climate change.
- Greater diversity provides resilience against pests and diseases.
- Diversity of age and size as well as species is also important for a healthy urban forest.

- Large trees need more space. Where there are opportunities for planting large trees such as oak and beech these should be prioritised.
- Large trees that grow to a great age provide opportunities for roosting and nesting, greater canopy cover and great value for their aesthetic and landscape value.
- Oxford has a large number of species present. However, three species dominate making it vulnerable.
- Increasing tree density in already wooded areas could increase canopy cover and species diversity.
- Different species have different carbon storage capabilities.
- Tree and shrub species should prioritise local species that insects, birds and other species are adapted to live on.
- Tree and shrub species should be chosen that provide food sources, shelter and breeding opportunities for a large variety of wildlife.

Oxford City Council will lead by example in our own operations and land management and will develop a set of principles for improved resilience to support other land managers and land owners in the city. We will seek to work with the arboricultural industry and local garden centres and nurseries to influence the type of species that are purchased and planted.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- If planting trees as part of a community group or private householder, make sure you are choosing an appropriate species.

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Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Be part of a joined up approach to trying to increase resilience in Oxford by adhering to any agreed principles and best practice guidance.
- Support citizen science projects by providing funding and taking part in citizen science monitoring programme.

Objective 5 – Prioritise areas where new tree and other vegetation planting benefits can be maximised

- Multiple benefits should be sought from new planting, balancing ecological and social benefits.
- In the first instance priority should be given to focusing on increasing canopy cover in the Nature Recovery Network and most deprived areas.
- Planting should involve increasing habitat diversity and connectivity combining quality and quantity.
- Taking an ecosystem service approach that balances biodiversity, carbon storage and other ecosystem services helps to identify and prioritise the benefits.
- Benefits such as reducing flooding, reducing urban heat island effect and improving air quality will need to be looked at in detail on a site specific basis.
- All opportunities to promote and realise health and well-being benefits should be taken.
- Engagement with communities, particularly schools and community groups, in more deprived areas of the city.

- In order to maximise community engagement, specific activities need to be targeted to engage communities where there is currently a low level of tree cover, providing outreach, engagement and learning opportunities – in particular working with schools and community groups in more deprived areas of the City.

Oxford City Council will assess potential for new planting as identified in the Trees for the Future opportunity maps. We will work with other landowners and stakeholders to prioritise these areas for planting. We will work with community groups to provide guidance and support to homeowners wishing to plant in their gardens or communities.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Get involved with a local community group, encourage your community group to support other community groups e.g. for areas with high canopy cover your group could support other areas of Oxford with lower canopy cover.
- If appropriate, consider planting a tree within the curtilage of your house to provide shade to your house or hard landscaped areas. Encourage your employer or school to do the same.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Be part of a joined up approach to trying to increase canopy cover in prioritised areas.
- Consider helping to support projects that aim to help deprived areas increase their canopy cover.

- Be part of a joined up approach to promoting health and well-being benefits.
- Assess potential for planting on your land to address specific issues such as improving air quality, providing shade to buildings and hard landscaping or incorporating natural flood management.

Objective 6 – Improve biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery areas

- More, bigger, better, joined is the approach we need to take in order to halt biodiversity loss.
- Our urban forest can contribute to providing new habitat for wildlife and joining up habitats.
- Native species planting should be prioritised wherever possible.
- Where non-native trees are planted they should be near-native varieties with edible fruit, seeds or nectar.
- Tree and vegetation management should consider biodiversity. E.g. leaving fallen and standing deadwood wherever possible for the biodiversity benefits it brings and reducing over clearance of vegetation such as shrubs.
- Tree planting can be detrimental to habitats with existing biodiversity value as non-woodland habitats such as fens and flower rich grassland.

Oxford City Council can work with landowners who have land in the Nature Recovery Network to support them in what and where to plant.

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What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Get involved in a local community group or join a conservation work party.
- Encourage more wildlife into your garden, plant a native tree.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Ensure biodiversity is built in to tree management plans and grounds management plans using best-practice guidance.

Objective 7 - Conserve and enhance landscape character

- Oxford's landscape and its relationship to the built environment is iconic.
- Potential land-use changes should consider impacts and seek opportunities to enhance Oxford's distinctive character.
- Oxford has a wealth of notable trees with a particular historic or cultural significance.
- Oxford has significant protected views and distinct character areas that should be considered when planting trees.

Oxford City Council can provide guidance to land managers and landowners on protecting and enhancing features of significance. We will help coordinate information on notable trees identified in the landscape character assessments and view cones studies and review plans for their management.

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What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- If you have a tree that contributes to the character of your area, consider planting an “understudy” tree.
- Get involved with helping us to celebrate our notable trees.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Ensure that tree management plans acknowledge the potential impact on landscape character and view cones.

Engage, Promote and Employ

Objective 8 - Engage with communities and key stakeholders

- Understanding the value of our urban forest is the first step in saving it.
- Engagement and creating a sense of ownership in communities is essential to successful management of our urban forest. Our trees need us and we need our trees.
- Our urban forest provides a space for our communities to come together as well as a reason for them to come together.
- A large proportion of our urban forest is on private land and out of the control of Oxford City Council.
- Working together with all our communities, landowners and stakeholders is essential for a coordinated citywide approach to care and monitoring.
- We can divide our stakeholders into the landowning groups, the supply chain, the implementers and the maintainers.

Oxford City Council will reach out to our communities through our community organisations and networks and to individual citizens, to involve our stakeholders and communities in the delivery of the strategy.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Get involved in a local community group, join a conservation work party.
- Get out into your local park and enjoy the trees.
- Plant a tree in your garden – follow the Right Tree, Right Place approach
- Wildlife-friendly gardening

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Encourage landowners to plant trees in appropriate areas on their land – follow the Right Tree, Right Place approach
- Provide communities with opportunities, such as providing land and/ or support for developing initiatives.

Objective 9 – Understand the value of our urban forest and create opportunities to reap economic benefits from it

- Economic benefits of urban forest include: by-products (timber, mulch and fruit), tourism, increased property values and increased inward investment.

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- Improving environmental quality, reducing impacts such as flooding and improving mental and physical health can have indirect economic benefits.
- Trees should be valued as assets, giving them a financial worth.
- Commercial forestry is not likely to be appropriate in an Oxford context but opportunities exist for green waste management etc.
- Tourism is important for the local economy. The quality of our local environment is fundamental to its attractiveness as a place to visit.
- Woodland management can be significantly cheaper than maintaining some types of grassland.

Oxford City Council will continue to develop the benefits of tourism to our city. We will explore opportunities for generating income from our urban forest.

What does this mean for you?

Individuals

- Get involved with local initiatives to plant trees in your area.

Landowners, land managers and businesses

- Explore opportunities for generating income from your land.
- Value the economic benefit that trees provide to your area/business.
- Take an asset management approach to managing your trees.



Blackbird Leys Park Copse

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9. Implementation

9.1. Tree management and responsibilities

Trees in private ownership are the responsibility of the landowner. Oxford City Council has a Tree Management Policy²⁵ which relates to the practical management of trees owned by the City Council. Most institutions and landowners will have their own management plans that relate specifically to the trees they own. Most street trees are owned by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority.

The Council's Planning Department manage the controls for trees that are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or where they are protected through Conservation Areas. Tree Protection Orders are made to protect individual trees or groups of trees that provide a significant amenity benefit to an area.

The City and County Councils can also create and influence policy in this area for example through Local Plan Policy making or Green Infrastructure Strategies. Oxford City Council planning policy requires new developments to demonstrate an increase in overall canopy cover and there are also requirements with regards to net gain and off-site compensation measures. Net gain is where development leaves biodiversity in a better state than it was before. The net gain concept comes from national planning policy and is a key principle of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. Any development in Oxford that will result in negative impacts on biodiversity must demonstrate how an overall net gain will be achieved.²⁶

There are also duties to protect legally protected nature sites such as Ancient Woodland. For more information see Appendix 2 for a table showing the variety of organisations who are involved in caring for our urban forest.

9.2. What's already going on?

Lots of great action has been going on in Oxford over the last few years to celebrate and support our urban forest. We are not starting from scratch with this strategy. In the last five years, Oxford City Council, with the help of local communities, has planted over 7000 new trees. Community organisations are also very active for example, Low Carbon West Oxford have planted over 2000 trees and have developed a local tree walk guide to the trees in the local area.



Earthwatch Tiny Forest Foxwell Drive, January 2021

There are also community groups setting up community orchards and "tiny forests"²⁷, an initiative led by the Earthwatch Institute. Two

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tiny forests have been planted at Meadow Lane Nature Reserve and Foxwell Drive to help preserve and promote biodiversity in the city. These tiny forests are about the size of a tennis court and will contain about 600 trees each.

There is also the ongoing amazing work of all the volunteers who participate in work parties to help manage sites such as our ancient woodland at Shotover. Whilst there is a great deal of energy and positive activity we must be aware of the significant threats that our urban forest faces.

9.3. Funding

Achieving the aims of this strategy and securing the future of our urban forest depends on ongoing financial support from key stakeholders in the public sector, the private sector, including developers, businesses and landowners and also from the wider community. Council budgets are tight owing to central government underfunding so we need our communities and businesses to help us share the cost and help us to deliver the strategy. We will all benefit from our collective effort.

Understanding the costs involved in successful planting projects tree stock is vital, in particular, ensuring that ongoing maintenance is accounted and planned for.

The City Council and its wholly owned company, Oxford Direct Services (ODS) will continue to manage our parks and street trees

and will continue to source funding whenever it becomes available. For the many community groups that are already doing such great work in this area, the funding that they bring in for planting management work is also vital. It is hoped that this strategy will help to align many of these projects to help us to work towards a common goal.

9.4. Monitoring and Review

The strategy will be reviewed every 10 years. In this process the question of “what have we got?” will be revisited. The canopy cover assessment will be repeated using iTree or similar. This process will enable us to check progress against our objectives, assess what approaches or projects were successful and where improvements could be made. The review process will involve the key stakeholders and will invite engagement from our communities.

9.5. Delivery and next steps

This strategy seeks to set a high level strategic direction for the city. Key stakeholders and our communities have been involved in developing this strategy.

There are so many great projects and initiatives already occurring in Oxford that we have a great base to build on. The next steps will be dependent on achieving external funding opportunities to implement the steps as set out in the table below.

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Next steps and initial actions in achieving the vision

- 1. Better coordinate projects across the city and engage more stakeholders**
Coordinating projects and stakeholders will require resources. External funding will be needed to establish a coordinator role working with partners and communities to deliver the aims of the strategy.
- 2. Develop a detailed planting plan working collaboratively with our partners, communities and stakeholders**
The detailed planting plan will set a realistic target based on identified planting opportunities and mechanisms for delivering them. It will use state of the art tree planting guidance and data from the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project.
- 3. Ensure that the planning system is being used to its full extent to deliver the aims of the strategy**
Developers will ensure species choices for new developments are aligned with detailed planting plans and will deliver well designed habitat networks. Net gain and compensation opportunities will be maximised wherever possible.
- 4. Address funding constraints for street tree planting and maintenance by exploring novel funding mechanisms**
Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services are responsible for managing and maintaining our street tree stock. Opportunities for increasing canopy cover through street trees is currently being explored, such as through community tree sponsorship schemes. Such schemes will enable multiple objectives to be achieved by engaging the community in increasing our canopy cover within particular treescapes.

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Appendix 1 Plans, Policies, Guidance and Influencing Strategies

- Oxfordshire's Forthcoming Nature Recovery Strategy
- Oxfordshire's Forthcoming Environmental Investment Strategy
- Urban Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee (FWAC)
- Oxford's Local Plan 2016 -2036
- Technical Advice Note (Trees)
- [Oxford City Council Tree Management Policy 2016](#)
- Oxford's Sustainability Strategy
- [Oxford City Council Response to Citizen's Assembly 2019](#)
- Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018 – 2023)
- Oxford Transport Strategy (Volume 8 of the LTP)

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- Oxford Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP)
- Oxford Green Spaces Strategy (2013 – 2027)
- Oxford Biodiversity Strategy
- Flooding/Suds
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

- [Oxford Landscape Character Assessment](#)
- [Biodiversity Review for Oxford City Council Parks and Nature Areas 2020](#) – A review of biodiversity and habitat management in Oxford City Council's Green Spaces, and a proposal of actions for further improvements.

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Appendix 2 - Who is responsible for our urban forest?

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	Policy Makers	Landowners	Managers and Maintainers	Planters	The Supply Chain	Advisors
Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services ²⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Oxfordshire County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Institutional land (universities, schools, hospitals etc.)		✓	✓	✓		
Local businesses		✓	✓	✓		
Developers				✓		
Private householders		✓	✓	✓		
Individuals		✓	✓	✓		
Community Groups			✓	✓		
Nurseries and garden centres					✓	
Arboricultural Industry (tree surgeons, landscape gardeners etc.)			✓	✓		
Network Rail		✓	✓	✓		
Canals and Rivers Trust		✓	✓	✓		
Environment Agency		✓	✓			
BBOWT						✓
Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project						✓
TDAG						✓

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References

¹ Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20011/environment/1343/oxford_citizens_assembly_on_climate_change

² Net Zero – any carbon emissions are balanced by absorbing an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The UK Government has legislated that the UK will reach net zero by 2050. In 2019 Oxford City Council held a Citizen's Assembly to discuss how Oxford can achieve net zero. The Council's response can be found in this [report](#).

³ [The Greater Lyon Tree Charter](#)

⁴ [The Woodland Trust](#)

⁵ [Trees and Design Action Group](#) (TDAG)

⁶ For more information on the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership and the full list of members go to:
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1764/council_outlines_next_steps_for_zero_carbon_oxford_partnership

⁷ Oxford i-Tree Canopy Cover Assessment 2015
<https://www.treeconomics.co.uk/projects/oxford-i-tree-canopy-cover-assessment/>

⁸ Oxford iTree ECO study
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20198/trees_woodlands_and_hedges/1348/oxford_i-tree_eco_study

⁹ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/new-research-shows-55bn-fund-needed-to-level-up-access-to-urban-green-space-as-part-of-uks-green-recovery>

¹⁰ [Climate Emergency Strategy Support Report 2019](#) produced by Anthesis as background for the Oxford City Council Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change.

¹¹ [Air Quality Action Plan](#) -
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/133/air_quality_action_plan

¹² <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/faq105.html>

¹³ [Impacts of Vegetation on Urban Pollution, DEFRA Air Quality Expert Group](#)

¹⁴ Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), Wild Oxfordshire and The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and overseen by Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group (BAG). It has been adopted by the Oxfordshire Environment Board (OxEB).

¹⁵ <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/river-catchments/evenlode-catchment/projects/river-restoration-including-water-quality-natural-flood-management-measures/>

¹⁶ Land adjacent to a river or stream

¹⁷ 3D buffer strips – designed to deliver more for the environment October 2020, Environment Agency

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928117/3D_buffer_strips_designed_to_deliver_more_for_the_environment_-_summary.pdf

¹⁷ www.urbanbees.co.uk/trees/trees.htm

¹⁸ Oxford View Study

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford_views_study

¹⁹ www.urbanbees.co.uk/trees/trees.htm

²⁰ Woodland Trust "Trees or Turf? Best value in managing urban green space" <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1828/trees-or-turf-for-urban-green-space.pdf>

²¹ Wolf, Kathleen "Business district streetscapes, trees and consumer response" Journal of Forestry

http://www.naturewithin.info/CityBiz/BizTreesAll_JFor.pdf

²² [Index of Multiple Deprivation Oxford Report 2019](#)

²³ [Poverty and Mental Health](#), Mental Health Foundation

²⁴ The map data has used Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are a geographic hierarchy for reporting statistics in small areas.

²⁵ Oxford City Council Tree Management Policy -

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/1907/tree_management_policy

²⁶ Oxford City Council Technical Advice Note – Green Spaces

file:///C:/Users/egreen2/Downloads/TAN_9_GREEN_SPACES_following_comments_v2.pdf

²⁶ <https://earthwatch.org.uk/get-involved/tiny-forest>

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²⁷Oxford Direct Services (ODS) is a social enterprise wholly owned by Oxford City Council. ODS is responsible for delivering council services

such as parks maintenance and street tree maintenance and management.

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Appendix 2

Risk Register

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Council Reputation	Customer and stakeholder dissatisfaction with the scope and objectives	T	Poor planning/ poor consultation	Damage to City Council reputation. Need for revisions to the strategy.	18/06/21	EG	2	1	1	1	1	1		Reduce the risk - public consultation to be undertaken. Strategy developed with key stakeholder input.				
Council Reputation	Failure to achieve objectives set out in the strategy.	T	Poor planning/ inadequate budget/ inadequate resources planned for delivery	Failure to achieve objectives. Damage to City Council reputation. Need for revisions to the strategy.	18/06/21	EG	2	3	2	2	2	2		Reduce the risk - the need for resources to be allocated for delivery has been raised however no internal resources are available so external funding will be sought.	09/21			AF
Council Reputation 85	Failure to lead by example in tree management and planting as a landowner and manager.	T	Poor planning/ inadequate budget/ inadequate resources planned for delivery	Failure to achieve objectives. Damage to City Council reputation.	18/06/21	EG	2	2	2	1	2	1		Reduce the risk - ODS and parks management teams have been involved in the development of the strategy. The objectives of the urban forest strategy are aligned with the Council's internal Tree Management Policy.				

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Appendix 3

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:

*The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the **9** protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership***

The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:

- (a) To seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;*
- (b) To identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.*

The Council will also ask that officers specifically consider whether:

- (A) The policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*
- (B) The proposed policy / service is likely to have any significant impact on mental wellbeing / community resilience (staff or residents)*

If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:

- 1. **The decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.*
- 2. **The duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.*
- 3. The decision maker must be **aware of the needs of the duty.***
- 4. The **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.*
- 5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).*
- 6. What does 'due regard' entail?
 - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;***
 - b. **Ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;***
 - c. **Proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.****

7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).
 8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"), to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider <http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>
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 intention of the Urban Forest strategy is to promote and seek opportunities to plant the right tree in the right place. The preparation of the strategy has highlighted that in areas of deprivation across the city there is less tree cover. This study provides the evidence base and hence the narrative as to why we need to maximise opportunities for tree planting in such areas when it is appropriate to do so. Residents and other landowners will be encouraged to increase tree-planting on their own land. However that option will not be available to some - typically lower income – households who lack a garden. So we will also seek to connect individuals with community-based tree-planting initiatives. Officers can seek external funding opportunities and work with external partners to bid for funding for tree planting when it appropriate to do so. Officers at the City council and ODS are already seeking out opportunities to develop tree planting schemes where appropriate to do so on council-owned land.

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 strategy contains an action plan and officers will work both internally and externally with relevant partners to bid for appropriate money to implement the strategy.

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

The strategy has been out to consultation and a summary of responses is found in Appendix 4. As the implementation of strategy can only be achieved through working with local groups and external stakeholders that very process ensures a high level of consultation and interaction with groups to ensure we achieve the appropriate type and scale of planting across the city. The following lists the organisations we would expect to consult and work with as outlined in the UFS:

- Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Mapping Project
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Wild Oxfordshire
- Oxford Direct Services
- Oxford Green and Blue Spaces Network (GBSN) members
- Oxford Preservation Trust
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
- Community Action Groups (CAG) Network
- Environmental Change Institute
- Oxford Civic Society
- Earthwatch Institute Europe

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

N/A

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

The UFS outlines the monitoring and review processes.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Amanda Ford

Role: Head of Corporate Strategy

Date: 27 August 2021

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Consultation
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments or Oxfordshire data observatory information where relevant)

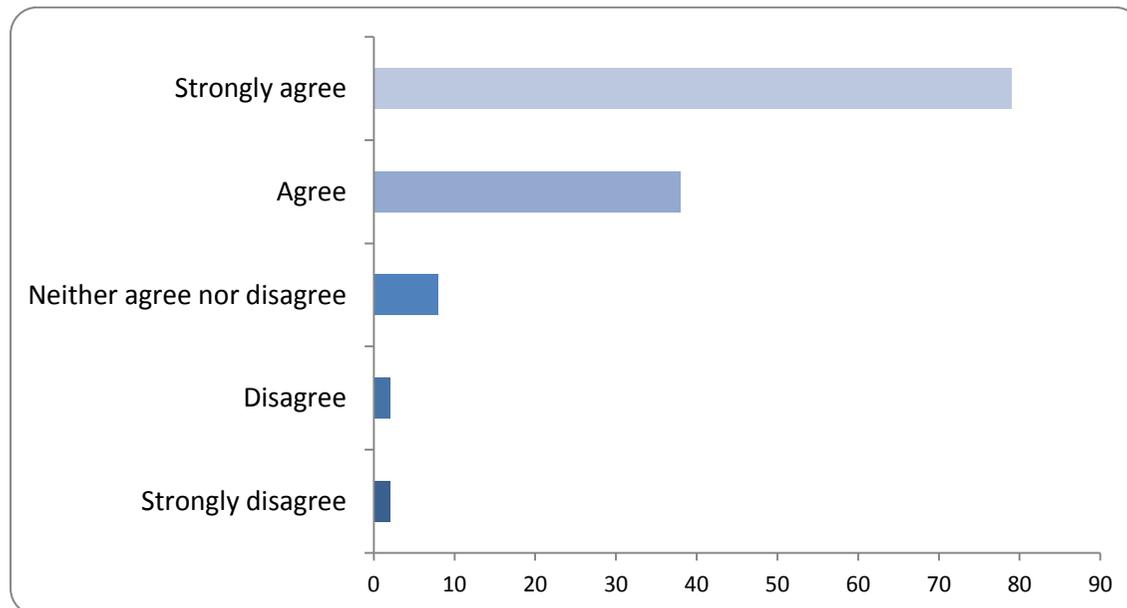
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Appendix 4 - Public Consultation – Summary of questionnaire results

An online public consultation was carried out from 28th June to the 26th July. We received 134 responses to the consultation in total. The consultation was publicised using social media, press releases and direct contact with key stakeholders and community groups. The full draft strategy was made available and it was accompanied by a short questionnaire consisting of 5 questions. The results of the consultation are included below.

Question 1 - We have identified that there is a correlation between low canopy cover and areas of deprivation. The strategy seeks to prioritise areas of deprivation for new planting. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this prioritisation?

There were 129 responses to this question.



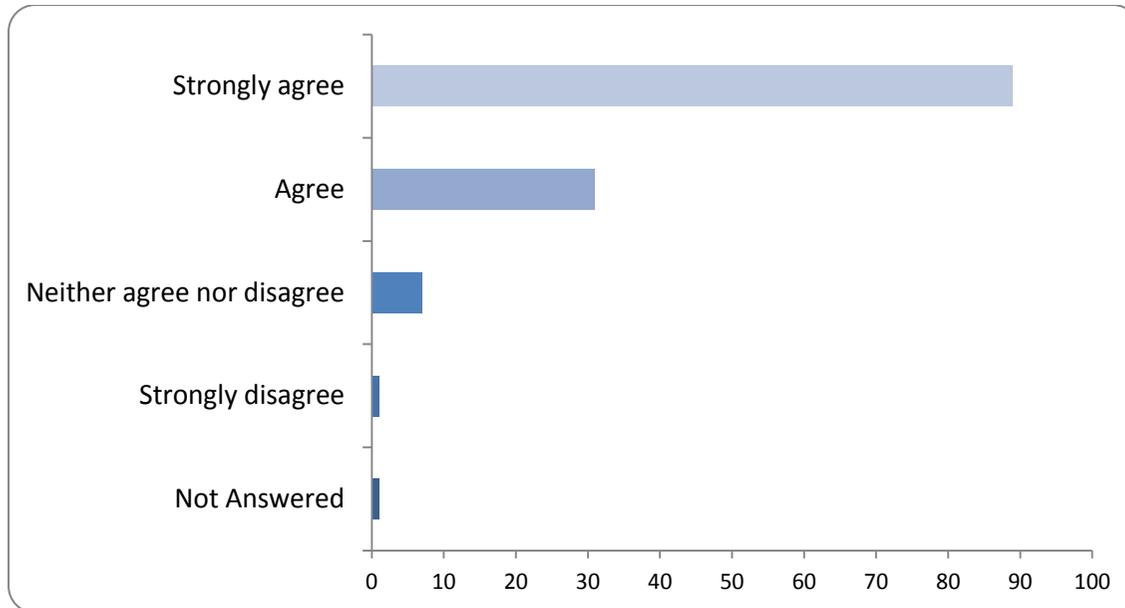
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Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	79	61.24%
Agree	38	29.46%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	6.20%
Disagree	2	1.55%
Strongly disagree	2	1.55%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

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Question 2 - Biodiversity is a key theme in this strategy and it seeks to prioritise finding opportunities for new planting within the Nature Recovery Network. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this prioritisation?

There were 128 responses to this question.



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Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	89	68.99%
Agree	31	24.03%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	5.43%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	1	0.78%
Not Answered	1	0.78%

Question 3 - Are there other areas or issues that you think the strategy should prioritise?

There were 88 responses to this question. These are summarised below.

Suggestions	Number of Times Mentioned	Oxford City Council's Comments
People engagement and support for communities to enhance understanding, use, maintain and value them. Engage people in the planning	6	Addressed – Objective 8 of this strategy specifically relates to community engagement. This strategy sets a strategic direction, more detailed next steps are included in the strategy including the development of a comprehensive engagement strategy.
Increasing hedgerows and providing good quality hedgerow guidance. Trim hedges at times that protect biodiversity.	3	Addressed - Hedgerows are specifically mentioned and their importance highlighted throughout the strategy. Links to guidance on hedge management is included in the "What Can You Do?" resources that will be publicised along with the Urban Forest Strategy.

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Improve access to nature/ green space.	2	Addressed – this strategy fundamentally supports improving access to nature and green space. The Council has a Green Space Strategy that specifically addresses improving access to green space. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2874/green_space_strategy_2013-2027
Verge cutting and management. Reducing mowing/ limit to specific times of year for the benefit of biodiversity	7	Not addressed - Whilst the strategy identifies road verges as a potential opportunity area for new planting, these comments relate specifically to the management of grass and wildflower verges that are not included in this strategy. In 2020 the City Council completed a biodiversity review of Oxford's parks and green spaces. Verge management is specifically addressed in this document which can be found here: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7273/oxford_green_spaces_biodiversity_review_2020
Education via trees and their benefits	3	Addressed - The strategy sets out in detail the benefits of trees. Next step engagement work will involve schools and community groups to educate about our trees and their benefits.
Avoid mowing green spaces when plants are seeding and leaving fringes	5	Not addressed - These comments relate specifically to the management of grass and wildflower areas that are not included in this strategy. In 2020 the City Council completed a biodiversity review of Oxford's parks and green spaces. Grass cutting regimes are specifically addressed in this document which can be found here: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7273/oxford_green_spaces_biodiversity_review_2020
Concerns about building in the green belt/ protection of the green belt	5	Not addressed - The Council's policies relating to development in the green belt are set out in the Local Plan 2016 to 2036. Green belt policy does not form part of this strategy. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20067/planning_policy/1311/oxford_local_plan_2016-2036
Concerns about tree felling especially if lost through new	7	Addressed – An additional paragraph has been included in the Threats to Oxford's Urban Forest section which explains that Oxford City Council has a tree

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development/ especially mature trees.		management policy on when it is appropriate to fell a tree and its policy on replacement planting. The paragraph states that other landowners and managers will be encouraged to do the same. Additional text has also been added to Objective 1 – Manage our existing tree and vegetation resource according to best practice and improve vegetation health – and states that trees should only be felled in certain circumstances and should be replaced. The strategy already includes information about how the planning system requires developers to increase overall canopy cover on sites and provide net gain.
Support for planting trees in private gardens eg supplying trees for those living in social housing.	5	Addressed – the strategy identifies planting in gardens as an opportunity area and commits to developing detailed planting plans.
Increase street trees. Improve their protection, management and community engagement with looking after them. Remove hard standing where possible and consider using planters.	14	Addressed – the strategy identifies street trees as a key treescape within our urban forest and sets out the many benefits of street trees. Principles for street tree management and opportunities to increase them are set out in the strategy. The next steps will specifically identify opportunities for planting and for community engagement through initiatives such as the Trees for Streets project.
Increase street trees in the city centre specifically eg Broad St, High st, Cornmarket St, Beaumont st	9	Not addressed - This strategy does not directly address this point. The purpose of the strategy is to set out a strategic direction for the city as a whole and commits to detailed planting plans being developed next. It was not the intention of this strategy to specific exactly where new trees would be located. The need to address the Urban Heat Island Effect through street tree planting in built up areas is an objective of the strategy. Increasing street trees in the city centre will form part of tackling that problem. This feedback will be carried through to the next stages of our detailed planting plans.
Increase street trees in urban sub-centres eg Templars Square	1	Not addressed - This strategy does not directly address this point. The purpose of the strategy is to set out a strategic direction for the city as a whole and commits to detailed planting plans being developed next. It was not the intention of this strategy to specific exactly where new trees would be located. The need to address the Urban Heat Island Effect through street tree planting in built up areas

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		is an objective of the strategy. Increasing street trees in urban sub-centres will form part of tackling that problem. The strategy prioritises trees in more deprived areas of the city and this could be an area to focus in this part of the city. This feedback will be carried through to the next stages of our detailed planting plans.
Provide manpower and funding to assist communities in their tree/gardening planting and management initiatives.	2	Addressed - This strategy is setting a strategic direction for our urban forest. Next steps and how to deliver this identify funding and community engagement opportunities. This feedback will be incorporated into the next steps.
Require new trees as part of new developments	1	Addressed - The strategy includes information about how the planning system requires developers to increase overall canopy cover on sites and provide net gain.
Ongoing care and management of trees once planted.	6	Addressed - The need for appropriate post planting long-term maintenance and care is made clear throughout the strategy. Objective 3 specifically states that long-term maintenance is required for young trees for a minimum of 5 years.
Community tree planting drives with communities eg friends of groups	2	Addressed - This kind of activity will be part of the engagement plan committed to in the next steps. This feedback will be incorporate into these plans.
Existing trees should be conserved and cared for – pruning should be proportionate	3	Addressed - This is specifically addressed in Objective 1 – Manage our existing tree and vegetation resource according to best practice and improve vegetation health
Engage with schools and nurseries in particular eg junior treewarden scheme.	3	Addressed – engagement with schools is acknowledged as being a key part of successful engagement. It will form a key part of the next steps.
Plant climate change appropriate species	2	Addressed – in the section on native and non-native species, the strategy specifically states that climate appropriate species should be chosen. Objective 4 relates to species diversity and includes species diversity for climate change.
Use trees and vegetation to reduce the impacts of the urban heat island effect.	7	Addressed - The strategy provides comprehensive information on the Urban Heat Island Effect and includes actions on addressing this phenomenon in Oxford in objective 5.
Ensure a proportionate amount of new planting is a	1	Addressed - The requirement for new planting is specified in planning policy in the Local Plan 2016 - 2036. This strategy summarises what the planning policy

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requirement of planning in new developments.		requirements are in relation to increasing overall canopy cover and net gain through new development.
Private landowners and managers disregarding rules – insufficient enforcement of regulations.	2	Not addressed - This strategy sets a strategic direction for expanding and enhancing our urban forest. It's remit does not include enforcement of regulations.
To help with flood protection	4	Addressed – the strategy sets out details of how the urban forest can help with flood protection and the issues of flooding in an Oxford context. Objective 5 relates to maximising benefits of our urban forest such as this. Next step detailed planting plans will assess opportunities further.
Increase carbon capture	2	Addressed – the strategy sets out details of how the urban forest can help with carbon capture. Objective 5 relates to maximising benefits of our urban forest such as this.
Reduce air pollution	3	Addressed – the strategy sets out details of how the urban forest can help with air quality. Objective 5 relates to maximising benefits of our urban forest such as this.
Reduce runoff	2	Addressed – the strategy sets out details of how the urban forest can help with reducing run-off. Objective 5 relates to maximising benefits of our urban forest such as this.
Improve river water quality	1	Addressed – the strategy sets out details of how the urban forest can help with improving water quality. Objective 5 relates to maximising benefits of our urban forest such as this.
Leave deadwood insitu for biodiversity benefit where possible – balance with risk.	1	Addressed – deadwood management is specifically identified in Objective 6 as being beneficial for biodiversity.
Prioritise trees over parking/roads – combine planting and car parks	5	Not addressed - This strategy cannot set land-use priorities. However, detailed planting plans will seek opportunities for tree planting. The planning system seeks to increase canopy cover through new development – which includes car parks.
Plant mini woods	1	Addressed – the concept of mini woods is identified in the strategy and the Earthwatch Tiny Forests is used as an example.
Plant orchards or edible trees	2	Addressed – the benefits of and opportunities for orchards, particularly

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		community orchards is addressed in the strategy.
Provide information boards where enhancements are being made to engage the community.	1	Not addressed - The next steps of delivering the strategy will include engagement activities. This suggestion will be taken forward to the development of the next phase.
Increase diversity of habitats within our public parks and green spaces	1	Not addressed - The strategy acknowledges the importance of supporting a range of habitats for biodiversity. However, this strategy relates specifically to the urban forest and is not an overall biodiversity strategy. The Council's biodiversity strategy is due to be reviewed and updated. This feedback will be communicated to the Ecology Officer.
Link with strategic plans for wider area. E.g. county and Ox-Cam ARC	2	Addressed – a key priority of the strategy is to focus on the Nature Recover Network (NRN). The NRN is a county wide network where conservation efforts will have the most benefit. The Ox-Cam ARC is beyond the remit of this strategy.
Increase planting in our public parks – prioritise over lawn	2	Not addressed – this strategy acknowledges that there are opportunities to plant within our public parks and green spaces. It is important to note that the City Council also has responsibilities to ensure green spaces for sports etc. The Council has a Green Space Strategy that specifically addresses our standards for access to green space and play areas etc. In developing next step detailed planting plans the balance will need to be found. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2874/green_space_strategy_2013-2027
Use greener transport infrastructure changes as an opportunity for more tree planting.	1	Addressed – added in a paragraph about working in partnership with the county council on their emerging transport strategy to seek such opportunities.
Protection of biodiversity	1	Addressed - Protection of biodiversity is a key part of this strategy although it is not specifically a biodiversity strategy. Objective 6 specifically relates to the protection of biodiversity and contribution to Nature Recovery Networks.
Increase pedestrianized areas and plant them	6	Not addressed - This is beyond the scope of this strategy. The Local Plan 2016 – to 2036 and County emergency transport strategy cover pedestrianisation. New opportunities for street trees through new pedestrian zones will be sought through the next phases of the strategy delivery.

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Protect greenfield sites from development, favour brownfield sites.	2	Not addressed - This is beyond the scope of this strategy. The Local Plan 2016 to 2036 sets out the planning policies relating to development sites.
Negative environmental impacts of trees not addressed in the strategy eg pollen or trapping of pollution problems if the wrong tree is in the wrong place.	2	Addressed – an additional paragraph has been added stating that trees don't always come without their problems eg pollen and pollution trapping and that right tree, right place principle can minimise these issues.
Provide incentives for private landowners to plant trees eg providing them with trees.	2	Not addressed – The importance of private gardens for expanding our urban forest is acknowledged in the strategy. The next steps of delivering the strategy will include engagement activities and identifying ways to incentivise residents. This suggestion will be taken forward to the development of the next phase.
Biodiversity net gain to be formalised and made a mandatory requirement of highway maintenance and highways schemes.	1	Not addressed - Biodiversity net gain is talked about in the strategy. Formalising policy with regard to its use is beyond the scope of this particular strategy. This feedback will be relayed to the relevant officers dealing with the development of the net gain policies.
Replace trees that have been removed	3	Addressed – additional text has been added to set out that Oxford City Council has a policy regarding tree replacement and sets it out in the principles for managing our trees under Objective 1.
Ensure long-term maintenance of green spaces with biodiversity interest.	1	Not addressed – this strategy fundamentally supports maintaining high quality nature and green space. However, it is beyond the scope of this strategy. The Council has a Green Space Strategy that specifically relates to green space. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2874/green_space_strategy_2013-2027
Promote wildlife corridors, remove barrier to wildlife, do not isolate trees from each other. Plant around trees	2	Addressed - Wildlife corridors are specifically identified in the strategy. Objective 6 relates to biodiversity and contributing to the Nature Recovery Network. Best practice guidance is promoted through this strategy.
Prioritise native species	7	Addressed - Native species and their importance is specifically addressed in the strategy. Objectives 4 and 6 cover this.

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Reduce urban wind tunnels	1	Not addressed - Although not specifically addressed understanding urban wind tunnels will form part of understanding our urban heat island effect which is set out in objective 5.
Reduce noise pollution from streets	1	Addressed - The benefits of trees for reducing noise pollution is mentioned and comes under objective 5.
Make more space for wildlife generally not just trees	1	Not addressed – This strategy is not a biodiversity strategy for the City. It supports biodiversity objectives specifically in relation to trees and woody vegetation.
Plant on wildlife poor areas rather than wildlife opportunity areas.	1	Addressed - The strategy sets out clearly which habitats that already support biodiversity are appropriate for tree planting. The infographic included in the Right Tree, Right Place section of the strategy outlines Oxford's key habitats and their suitability for tree planting.
Focus on edible plants for biodiversity and pollinator friendly plants	2	Addressed – the value of providing a range of species that includes vegetation and trees that produce berries and food sources for biodiversity is outlined in the strategy. Specific species are listed as being important for this function.
Prioritise areas with heavy traffic	5	Addressed – The contribution that trees make to improving air quality and using green infrastructure to address wider transport objectives, such as encouraging walking or cycling, is outlined in the strategy. Objective 5 addresses these issues.
Clear and ambitious targets	1	Addressed - As part of the implementation plan for the strategy a detailed planting plan is proposed. Once a comprehensive assessment of our realistic planting opportunities is known then we can develop a realistic target.
Concern for welfare of specific trees/groups of trees/mature trees eg Cedars by Ice Rink	2	Addressed - This strategy is a high level strategy to set the strategic direction. Detailed planting plans and management of specific trees/recognising notable trees will form part of next steps.
Use street trees for traffic calming	2	Not addressed – Oxfordshire County Council's emerging Transport Plan will assess how green infrastructure such as our trees, can be used to improve our streets and traffic issue and encourage green travel. This Urban Forest Strategy sets out that the City Council will input into the development of these plans.
Encourage wild planting	1	Addressed – This strategy acknowledges that natural regeneration – or creating the conditions for natural regeneration - is often preferable to planting schemes.
Ensure strategies are joined up so they have greater impact.	1	Addressed – The strategy sets out how it links with existing strategies and emerging strategies.

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Focus on the hard to reach groups	1	Addressed – the engagement strategy part of the next steps will specifically seek to do this.
Ensure top level leadership for the strategy including political representation	1	Addressed – The Urban Forest Strategy will need to go through the City Council's adoption process with Cabinet. The strategy has the support of the key relevant political portfolio holders ie Councillor Hayes and Councillor Arshad.
Plant trees in locations people notice	1	Addressed – The strategy acknowledges the importance of notable trees – and trees that are notable for particular communities. The next steps of the strategy involve developing detailed planting plans. Planting in public and visible locations will be brought through to the next steps.
Work with business to develop initiatives to incentivise planting	1	Addressed – The strategy specifically identifies the potential for business to help support our urban forest. Engagement plans as next steps will realise these actions.
Maximise plant health eg avoid weedkiller and strimming	1	Not Addressed – Maximising plant health is a key objective of this strategy. Specific actions with regard to detailed tree management such as avoiding weedkiller or strimming regimes are beyond the scope of this strategy. Good management practices through the use of best practice guidance are promoted through this strategy.
Plant with vulnerable people/safety mind eg single people who feel vulnerable at dusk	1	Not addressed – The strategy does not specifically address safety or vulnerable people. This point will be taken through to detailed planting planning stages. The strategy seeks to ensure high quality environment for all and this would include making spaces usable and safe.
Right tree, right place principle is paramount	1	Addressed – The strategy is set around this principle.
Disease resistant species should be prioritised	1	Addressed – The strategy sets out the issues around threats to our urban forest and acknowledges the importance of species selection.
Importance for physical and mental health	1	Addressed – The importance of planting for physical and mental health is specifically addressed in the strategy.
Plant to make places more attractive	1	Addressed – The strategy acknowledges the importance of high quality environments that are attractive.
Replace dead or dying trees straight away	1	Not addressed – the strategy promotes good tree management and best practice guidance.
Other habitats eg grasslands	1	Addressed – The strategy specifically acknowledges that trees are not always

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also sequester carbon. Trees are not always appropriate		appropriate and that other habitats also sequester carbon. The strategy includes an infographic that was developed with BBOWT which identifies where trees should and should not be planted. Particular grassland habitats are identified.
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Question 4 - After setting this strategic direction for our urban forest, the next steps will be to work together with businesses, institutions and individuals to help to identify suitable places for new tree planting and engaging our communities in the process. Do you have ideas on how we can best achieve this?

There were 83 responses to this question and are listed below. These ideas will be used in the development of the engagement and planting plans.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local facebook groups and Nextdoor communities advertising Website set up with What Three [Tree] Words incorporated for people to make exact suggestions online for where trees should be planted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maybe contact known residents' associations as they have contact with numerous individuals within communities and often have already come up with ideas about tree planting locally. For example Iffley Fields Residents' association are currently trying to get a re-wilding/tree planting scheme set up on the Meadow Lane Rec.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage participation in schools to use the opportunity for students to attend/help/learn about planting trees and the climate emergency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage households to plant appropriate trees (ie without roots that invade drains or undermine foundations) on the front of houses to green up roads. some roads are very sparse and many people have totally concreted/ paved front drive ways, all designed around cars rather than on biodiversity. check out my house 86 Cornwallis Road OX4 3NL with its haven of biodiversity on a tiny patch. brings great benefit to the street. I have tree surgeons regularly to keep it safe, and planted birches to limit root damage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support to buy trees, education about looking after them, planting on council land and in schools etc is important. This may also reduce tree vandalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with schools and community centres is always a good idea. Also, the University runs an ecosystem restoration network in Oxfordshire which links landowners, ngos, researchers and other bodies to work together. They have a website you can find by looking up Healthy Ecosystem Restoration Oxfordshire.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to have representatives who can talk to the businesses, department and local communities that can help in anyway to support the urban forestation. They should go door to door and talk to everyone to support in whatever they can.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include info on it with letters that go to all residents: eg about council tax or parking information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education campaigns in schools Wellbeing drives in hospitals for patients and especially staff Community projects and campaigns (exploit Street WhatsApp groups that were formed in Lockdown) Use of brown land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone tasked to coordinate. There's many volunteer groups who would plant trees, and many businesses and institutions with space for planting, but just need someone to communicate and arrange. Adverts in local press might help.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing county wide strategies as developed by Wild Oxfordshire to inform decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let people propose locations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small temporary reduction in taxes may encourage private businesses to plant more trees. Or a rating system based of the ratio of trees/plants and other environmentally positive solutions the company has implemented. Like solar panels or fitting brise soleil.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise that this is going to happen early to communities through different media: social media, local news, posters, town hall meetings, door-to-door conversations, etc. Sometimes, using emails/social media, etc misses out a large proportion of the local community or only targets certain groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult the experts, Allow some area for self-seeding and re-wilding, Buy land and re-wild on the edge of cities, Expand existing woodland (Bagley, Shotover etc) plant native trees Plant and re-wild in order to CONNECT existing tree cover and green space as this will maximise biodiversity. Work with local nature groups to benefit from their local knowledge about what will work best (type of planting, species etc). Think also about hedges, not just single trees and include fruit trees work with local schools and youth groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it a campaign or competition - adopt a tree (or three), that kind of thing. Need to identify the right people to talk to within each business as the first contact is really important.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are multiple CAG, volunteering and low carbon organisations that will happily help with this, but would also be useful to engage local schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local councils especially Parish Councils and the Local wildlife Societies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is all very well engaging businesses/the community to plant trees but you must, and don't at the moment seem to have, a

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<p>careful follow up strategy. Baby trees need to be cared for and frequently aren't. Examples: new trees by bus stops at Cowley centre vandalised. New trees on Blackbird Leys (corner of Sandy Lane West) vandalised. I would think that a post pandemic Plant a Tree in Memory would prove very popular as funerals and memorials were so restricted. Maybe tree planting near to care homes with resident participation?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk abouts with local stakeholders to look at the area, and critically informing everyone of what has been done across the continent to create amazing urban forests and spaces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact organisations like friends of the earth, community action groups etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See answer above - the continued commitment of volunteer groups, such as 'Friends of ' groups, Wildlife Trust groups such as the Wild Oxford groups, and City volunteers such as the one lead by Carl Whitehead will ensure continuity after the funding and one-off efforts of transient schemes such as the one being proposed have passed into political history.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Directly engage with CBOs that represent different social groups in the area, including schools, and especially to reach those who are normally excluded from these consultations (from older people, migrants and refugees etc.) 2. When working with business ensure that workers and their representatives are also included 3. Above all this is the ideal opportunity to use citizen assemblies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How about making this an objective for, for example, a youth council (or similar)? And starting with a city-wide network of school groups? How There are many local charities that would relish the opportunity to become part of the solution - perhaps starting with some of the festivals and arts groups? They might well have creative and imaginative ideas about how to energise the process, and stimulate engagement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook. Oxford community has 50k members. Because people use their own names they tend to be more polite. You could start a page specifically on this topic and ask people to comment, or you could just start discussions on existing pages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd suggest an area for rapid gains is where land is currently managed but some public access is permitted. For example, Oxford Business Park in East Oxford - greatly increasing tree numbers should be easily achievable whilst having minimal impact on business park users, but definite benefits for the surrounding community. Similarly, other business and retail parks may be the best way to start fast. The universities, large local employers and (of course) the Council itself should all be able to contribute to an urban forest transformation relatively quickly and economically.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be very clear that the priority is to create self-sustaining, resilient, permanent and biodiverse habitats because our world is in crisis. Yes it helps sequester carbon, but if the strategy is put in economic terms it will fail. Engage local schools, community groups and environmental groups. Distinguish between habitat creation for wildlife, and green spaces as

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amenities for people. They are not the same thing. DON'T use and poisonous chemicals anywhere and run a campaign to stop people using pesticides or herbicides.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More social events to make awareness about the importance of urban forest and biodiversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all new housing developments plan for open, green spaces within all future developments. Make sure any existing green spaces are protected by law. Prevent home owners from destroying their gardens. Use Google Earth to identify areas where planting could begin or be enhanced. Work with local Green Party representatives who will already have much of the information required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to Dr Samuel Yutong Cai, senior environmental epidemiologist at Oxford University and ensure the strategy delivers all the positives of increased green canopy and biodiversity whilst minimising/removing the negatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please take great care not to plant trees in the way of cycling infrastructure. There is a segregated cycle path northbound on the Woodstock Road that is mostly ignored by cyclists because it is constantly interrupted by large trees in the middle of the path. I am not sure these trees are more important than a cycle path, given that they are all surrounded by a very large number of other very large trees. Of course politics is about trade-offs and priorities: in this specific case, *only* because they are surrounded by so many other trees, *and* because of the famously poor provision for cyclists in Oxford (as per National Infrastructure Commission report) I would prioritise the cycle path. If trees need to be located in a transport thoroughfare then perhaps this should be in the middle of a lane used by cars, not the middle of a lane used by cyclists.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a parent of primary school aged children I think schools could be great partners in this. They are looking to expand children's lives, teach them about ecology, mapping, local history, and give them outdoor experiences - this could fit well into all of this.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to council residents(or in the news lettet). Post on local social media. Local consultations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the current community groups, churches, etc who already distribute regular newsletters, and ask them to include an item about planting trees and a means to get in touch about where they would like trees planted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we had more cars for communal use, many parking spaces would be freed (I would) and these could be the places to plant trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfortunately, I don't have any ideas, but as I live in one of the named 'deprived' areas, viz., Cowley (Temple Cowley), I would be happy to try and help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public suggestion forum for under-utilised spaces that could be enhanced. Also make use of the Milestone Design Team who would usually sit in the offices of Oxfordshire County Council. They analyse maps of Oxfordshire in designing highway maintenance and construction schemes, so while they're at it, why not make it part of their jobs to grade any surrounding natural areas for biodiversity / tree - planting potential within 2km of the site? For any areas reaching top marks, have them identify who owns the land, what soil type, what types of plants are there already, etc, so you know who to contact to

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<p>discuss enhancement opportunities and some basics about what could be done on the land. You could then use this information to begin conversations with the landowners. Land owned by the council could be fast-tracked. We should be ever developing more roadside nature reserves.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the local resident associations around Oxford.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest starting with council owned land. You could ask schools and businesses if they have any suitable spaces too
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting local businesses to sponsor local tree planting Getting local neighbourhood groups to have local meetings to encourage people to get involved. Work with the schools in the area as they can inspire their families too get involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting in exchange for advertising. A 'trail' of tree-friendly private business which people can support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release a rough map of the kind of areas available to plant trees, get people to vote where they should go and get people involved in planting trees and teaching them about growing trees and type of trees etc. Also Include teachings about biodiversity that comes from trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine satellite data to find roads with particularly low coverage, find suitable areas for new trees on those roads, then propose these plans to residents on the road. Allow them to propose alternative spots for trees. Use some car parking space to create space for trees. Plant more trees around the edges of parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible (untested)ideas: 1) Hold a tree festival, to inspire and educate on the qualities and benefits of trees, with trees available for public to take home. Communicate upfront via Facebook, Neighbourhood apps and letters to estates or other ways of highlighting that this is happening? 2) On a certain week, issue saplings to participating businesses, so those who attend can take home and plant or distribute via public libraries or Broad Meadow? 3) On-line map where people can 'pin' suggested places for trees? 4) Consider how to reach those who are off-line, through local shops perhaps or a door to door mailing, depending on cost and effectiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the most deprived areas most people do not have big gardens that can accommodate new trees. In these areas we will need businesses and institutions to find space - including the City Council. Perhaps we can incorporate more street trees into the long-term design of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Shopping centre and other public and private carparks could also be used.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully engage with communities at a very detailed level. Time consuming and challenging but fully engaging will encourage people to get involved and feel involved. Look at the other initiatives and identify what are the enablers and barriers to success.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most local roads have the capacity to host planters of some description that local residents could take responsibility for planting and even maintenance: trees, vegetables (whatever works to get people engaged).. The loss of one or two parking spaces is no price to pay to make this happen if the city is genuinely committed to reducing car usage. Many driveways have become hard bases. These are other areas where homeowners could be incentivised to return spaces to be planted, e.g. meadow/ wild flower spaces. Business parks should be treated in the same way. Assuming that a post Covid-19 hybrid way of working may become more normal for more people, there are significant gains potentially to be made in rewilding urban spaces and at the same time improving workers wellbeing and mental health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the universities and Oxford School of Architecture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it worth looking at which are the places that are being under-used - perhaps business park districts? Places where there's a lot of tarmac that isn't being used? Are new developments providing enough greenery? Can we make more verges with trees on pavements without them?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University and more particularly the Colleges have very significant land holdings. The Council is in a position to negotiate with Colleges, for example when they seek planning permission for new student accommodation. Several new student blocks have gone up in the last few years, (eg New College's new Gradel Quadrangles) with no information available about whether they are zero-carbon, have taken sustainability considerations into account, or what planting they are committing to. The University and Colleges are a huge part of the city and shouldn't be allowed to drag their feet on this. Schools are also key - they could be encouraged/supported to plant mixed hedging, have ponds and wild areas, turn small bits of grass over to meadow. Children would love it. Community groups are also valuable. The Parents For Future Oxford group, for example, is very active.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through existing local community networks and collaboration with city-wide campaigns and engagement opportunities as well as financial incentives such as free seeds, trees etc. Involving institutions and schools in the process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have lobbied for tree planting around Templars Square for years with no avail. Authorities are not joined up. The response to tree planting in the area is that the cost associated with planting trees in the street is too expensive (despite the huge benefits they would bring). Furthermore, the (few) trees secured via recent planning permissions have been inadequate - of a young tree stock with no after care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives -- not simply for planting trees, as that could lead to letting them die or even cutting down mature trees to plant new ones -- but for increasing the canopy cover on one's land. Or financial penalties for reducing the canopy cover. Trees can be a financial liability: the leaves need to be cleared, and periodically you need a tree surgeon. They may also increase the frequency with which pavements need replacing. So often the financially savvy thing to do is to cut them all down: we need to change that financial equation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the general public to put forward suitable spaces where they think additional trees would be a benefit.

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Encourage community groups and individuals to get involved to spread the project as widely as possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try local WhatsApp/ googlegroups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think many people would be keen to volunteer with helping plant these new trees. If planting events are well advertised, I think lots of people would get involved. Some charities (e.g. The National Forest, Trees for Life) allow you to dedicate trees to your friends/ family etc. You can get a gift certificate or email informing you the number of trees planted, what species they are and the location they have been planted in. If members of the public could do this, I think it could help increase interest in the scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with local people to help them see the benefits. Involving schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with existing partners/professional relationships; whilst seeking out new links too.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree lined boulevards are very pretty and would make downtown a lot more visually attractive. Would be in favor of taking out wide asphalt roads and planting trees down the middle to create canopy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and engage with landowners and communities. Sell the benefits Show them how it can be done.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love trees and have pioneered community interactive poetry performance in the environment especially in relation to ancient trees the ginkgo and sequoia. I worked in schools under Southern Arts for many years. I am still capable of working locally, both on site and on ZOOM. I created an artist's book HOW! SEQUOIA abased on my photos of the row of 10 in Hinksey Park, its text described a community performance of these magnificent trees. For SPACEX Exeter I created ARAUCARIA ARUCANA, a community event for local children and families by the historic Monkey Puzzles in Poltimore Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think the University and colleges own a lot of open spaces within the city and there's plenty of scope for tree planting (although this generally wouldn't be in the council's priority area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford mail, local tv news, Facebook, Twitter, a series of public meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might want to use what3words to map, share, and navigate in a human-friendly, efficient way to planted trees' locations?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an online platform for virtual local conservation groups to meet up and discuss. Develop local surveys to complement the Oxfordshire Tree information survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise widely, and distribute info to all local low carbon groups, and through the bods who are organising the campaign to double tree cover in Oxon and their mailing list. Also through schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example is a good way to show others how to improve their areas. So if the council starts taking better care of the streets it

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<p>may encourage communities to follow.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council can plant trees in drive ways just next to pavements or directly to pavements if there is space. The trees homogenize the city but also provide natural pacifications in roads.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the inclusion of specific planting requirements a condition of planning approval and review plans to ensure appropriate species are being planted. Encourage primary schools to garden/plant seeds. Consider making appropriate saplings available to individuals to plant. Maybe an urban forest award scheme for businesses who plant trees. As well as charging a workplace car parking levy make planting trees a condition of keeping the spaces - there are suitable species for planting in urban settings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help local community groups (like Low Carbon groups around the city) with their outreach to their community - provide information and materials they can share and facilitate meetings/engagement between those groups and landowners in their area. Have a webpage/email address/ other forms of communication, where people can easily send the council information about where there can be some planting in their area. As simple as - "there is an empty verge at so and so address near my house that can be planted". The percentage of useful information sent that way might not be very high, but I reckon it will provide quite a bit of knowledge that would take the council much more resources to identify in other ways.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing trees in existing vacant plots on local streets. Gathorne road being an example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the model of Ford Motor Company in Bridgend - it put £100K in to the Spirit of Llynfi Woodland, aiming to benefit the health of employees, topping up Welsh Gov funding. I hear that the Mini Plant was even skeptical of natural flood management to protect the railway line it uses, but it may still be worth a concerted effort to see if it can be encouraged to offset the emissions from its operations by tree planting, with the added benefit of huge kudos and health benefits. Talk to the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment about pooling of the interests of lots of businesses in having a healthy attractive environment to work. Individual businesses may provide tokenistic support for trees. Together they can achieve much more. Perhaps a kind of corporate crowdfunding effort?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES!!! WORK WITH US!!! We in Sandhills Naturehood and our partner groups in Risinghurst and Barton are REALLY ENGAGED and ENERGETIC about local biodiversity. We have been working with Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council (PC) for months now to try to propel forward a local tree planting plan. We have carried out street surveys, drawn up indexed maps with proposed tree planting sites, and worked with the PC to try to get these plans put into action. But progress has been painfully slow - as far as we understand, because of beaurocracy, and inability to engage Oxford Direct Services. The PC has really struggled to make any headway, with lack of response from Sam Prior or Andy Lederer. We have been promised a meeting since April, which has yet to happen. This is one example of the painfully ineffective process of today -- Please work with us, and local equivalentents in every local

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<p>community in Oxford, you will be able to get local plans together -- What we need from you are the resources to coordinate the planning, the budget, and then commissioning the planting and management through and effective tree management organisation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media is good. Posters on community noticeboards, the press to mention a few. BBOWT and FOLV have the knowledge and should be part of the consultation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers such as Cala and Thomas White should be required to fund community tree planting days, providing equipment, expert supervision and appropriately aged saplings. This should only take place at the time of year the young trees are most likely to succeed. Plus guaranteed horticulture services should be provided by developers without increasing already high services charges further, both on their sites and in the local area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above. Individuals or local communities can play their part. Urban, residential streets need more trees planted along them. Morrell Avenue looks great and is a good example of what could be achieved, although smaller urban trees would need to be planted so they aren't then cut down when encroaching on windows/homes etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with local community groups vital.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advice and engagement from local wildlife and conservation groups, allotment associations, local community hubs. Encouraging people to water street trees and take appropriate steps to care for trees on their street.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Get a neighbourhood/ street involved in planting and looking after the new trees. I've read that even dirty dishwater is OK for trees. This could become a social focus point as well - meeting your neighbours after washing-up time pouring the water out by the tree. It's a talking point. And we can unite in our desire to make our street a more human- and wildlife-friendly place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Perhaps a bench under some of the trees, so that in summer people can sit under a tree, finding fresh and cooler air, getting outdoor time [vitamin D, microbiome, etc]. * Involve neighbourhoods in hanging bird nesting boxes in the trees. * Education about the trees in the street and what they do to our health [e.g. a leaflet through the door/a sign by a tree with some of the data e.g. leaf surface, how much water a tree drinks each day, tree's name and what they have been used for in the past [e.g. boat and house building, baskets], a guide to some of the wildlife that lives in them * For children, quest-walks, e.g. 'where is the oak tree/ linden tree etc, with a guide of what the trees look like; try and take a picture of a ... [insect] and say where you found it, with prizes. Get lessons into schools about the trees near it, the biology of trees, how humans benefit from trees, how to look after them. * In safe places, perhaps a swinging rope or a swing hanging from a tree?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Oxford has a Sustainability office and many departments and colleges have Green Impact programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and businesses should be reminded that trees provide much-needed shade that can cool our homes and make it

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so much more pleasant to walk outside.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated from 6, and expanded. This contributor: As regards carbon storage/sequestration, peat (as in Lye Valley and if kept wet) holds far more carbon securely, long-term, than the same area being planted with trees, as these release CO2 on death and decay at the end of their lives. This contributor: open grassland of many sorts also sequesters carbon. Never plant trees on natural or semi-natural grassland sites. 'Plant a tree' is a mantra that is over-used. It is not always the best way of increasing or maintaining biodiversity (the Woodland Trust has made some poor decisions in the past.) If planting on either greenfield or brownfield sites, do a proper assessment of the biodiversity to ensure net gain, not replacement of one ecological community by a commoner and possibly less diverse one. Hold local meetings to find out how local people use or would like to use sites proposed for mass tree planting. Engage with their expertise to recruit tree or nature wardens for the area and give them a site to report back to that will forward comments to OCC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes we can plant trees in Begbroke which has the potential of an excellent wildlife corridor.

Question 5 - If you have space in your garden (front or back) what would encourage you to plant a tree?

There were 108 responses to this question and are listed below. Common themes include providing people with appropriate tree species and maintenance guidance. There is particular interest in fruit trees. These ideas will be taken forward in the next steps when developing our engagement strategies further.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit benefit for me and wildlife. Fruit trees are great for biodiversity too.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental agreement with landlords to encourage them to allow tenants to plant trees. Guide for public to know what sort of tree is appropriate for the space you have in your garden including how close a tree can be planted to your house and which tree species are best for wildlife and which ones are native to the UK. Discounts or deals for trees at local garden centres including multiple buys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing - I have too many trees already! If I didn't have too many, then maybe recognition on a website showing that I had contributed or even a council led tree shop potentially with some sort of guide to choosing and then a running total of how many have been planted?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't need encouragement, but if I did then maybe a free tree and maybe if there could be an option of fruit trees, that would be great and might encourage more cooking from scratch as well - for example Apple pies in the autumn, if you had an apple tree gifted for your garden.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sapling collection points would be good where residents can pick up a tree for free or for a donation with advice on planting and caring for it. The Woodland Trust did this well at Countryfile Live giving away native saplings with a one-page of advice (this could also be online).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement to Landlords to do so as the city is increasingly moving to private rentals rather than ownership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see above comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our garden has lots of trees and shrubs/ I to was the first thing we planted. We will always plant any available space with trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More trees in front gardens would be great to serve as street trees. A discount for the brown wheelie bin if you have a tree at the front would make it easier for people to look after their tree/keep their yard tidy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have planted five fruit trees in my back garden. Would like to plant some more in front garden too. However we do have a very large tree just before our front garden. If someone can come and look at our garden and plant some more fruit trees for free that would be so good. We can then look after them ourselves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if it was a fruit-bearing tree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My son would LOVE it!!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on choosing a suitable tree and low cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A free tree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on size n importance. But individuals can't make the difference that the city can. Nature needs to be joined up. All road verges and central reservations and roundabouts could be planted with trees and hedges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the impact of the roots on nearby drainpipes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have already planted some trees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I already have planted several trees in both front and back garden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what tree/large shrub is most suitable for garden size or site. Perhaps a guide on recommended trees/shrubs for small gardens. Information about which ones are most beneficial to the environment and the fauna of our local area. Also details of the companion plants that work well with the tree. Knowing which trees we are lacking in Oxford, so I plant something we are short of.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes but I rent from a private landlord. This information needs to also be communicated with landlords who live in Oxford and those who do not live in Oxford to enable tenants to take part and not be restricted through tenancy agreements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more space!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I didn't rent and have a tiny unsuitable garden space I'd be on it! There are lots of people in my situation- give us an opportunity too or we lose interest; not mowing, indowsill growing, counting species we find, there are lots of ways to engage people who can't plant trees trees keep them in the conversation and have a wider positive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have trees already, but no front garden. I would like to see more street trees on terrace streets, perhaps moveable planters between parking spaces. Insurance companies consider trees a risk so a national strategy about reduction in climate change risk vs falling tree and root problems would be helpful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allready planted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be given a tree that is appropriate and guidance on where and how to plant it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already have one. When these houses were built in the 1930s they all had a fruit tree. Many of us still have these original trees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A baby tree and proper tools for maintenance. Also, watering costs money so locked taps at intervals might be an idea. Key holders could be retired volunteers who could co ordinate unlock times for watering.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have planted as many as I can. However what might encourage others is information about low maintenance trees, trees that won't cause issues for their buildings, and where to buy affordable young trees and transport/deliver them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and support for how to grow/ maintain it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discount tree sale with advice on how to plant it and care for it (watering, pruning, location, time of year)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on size, suitability for soil, care, height, tree options, images of what the look like fully grown, cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the tree, the biodiversity that this would encourage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a very large oak, and equally large ash and sycamore in the end part of my garden - any more, other than shrubs, would be problematic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't have a garden but if I had I would be encoruaged by : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the tree coming free 2. that I could chose it 3. that I could have support in maintaining it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions on what kind of trees would be more beneficial, ressources on how to plant/take care of trees and what to use for gardening without harming the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't have much space left to plant more trees - but would be happy to join in with a city-wide commitment to do so. If the city came up with a commitment that we should plant one new tree for every child in the city today - would that be

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<p>enough? This sort of metric would be very easily scaled to each school/community, and you could imagine designing a simple slogan/campaign on this basis?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing I'm afraid - don't want any trees in my garden as I like light
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater knowledge of the (very) local area e.g. if planting a tree that will require others to cross-pollinate (for fruit perhaps), knowing there are potential matches in range is helpful. More generally, simply encouraging residents to actually plant on their plots is good, especially if providing basic details on which species might work best i.e. what counts as a native tree, how far away from buildings should a sapling go in etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I personally have planted several trees but that's not enough on its own - I don't mow the grass, I have a large uncut hedge, and wildflowers. Planting a single tree doesn't help that much. But people may like to plant fruit trees to enjoy the fruit as well as blossom etc. Most people like birds - encourage them by pointing out the value of trees for birds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultant of a botanic or of an expert to know more about trees and how to take care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone to manage it as it grows at a reasonable cost (most charge a colossal amount for a simple pruning), especially as I am disabled and unable to manage them myself. Ensure that any trees planted will not destroy the foundations of the house over time - ie pick the right species for the space available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We already have as many trees as our space allows. Ensure people have the best advice on the kind of trees to plant in their area and in their space. Offer discounts on a range of the most suitable trees. People can't plant too close to their house due to the risk of root damage. However planting at the limits of a front garden is likely to lead to branches overhanging/obstructing footpaths. Not everyone has the tools, ability, skills or inclination to keep a tree in check and tree surgeons are expensive. Make sure all these factors are considered before people plant. it is irresponsible to just say 'plant trees'. In many cases, planting shrubs is just as beneficial to wildlife and health and should be actively encouraged in the strategy. Again, a list or discount offer on the most suitable varieties would be a great help. It also allows people to feel good about 'doing their bit' if they can't or don't want to plant a tree. Get the Oxford Mail to do an offer on shrubs like they did with bike helmets a while ago. Many people, particularly in the deprived areas, may not have spades, etc. or gardening knowledge to plant shrubs or trees. Offer this assistance eg. loan of tools, someone to plant the shrub for you, etc. to low income families, elderly, or really anyone who wants it. Ensure new builds include shrubs and hedgehog access in the gardens. Make sure new planting doesn't prevent work being done. Some years ago we needed to extend our driveway but were blocked as it was under a tree canopy.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting rid of the automatic TPO on small unexceptional trees in conservation areas. I should say, I am a fan of trees! However many people we know are cautious about planting trees, because when they grow over a certain size they are automatically covered by a TPO, after which the council insists that any shaping or trimming is done by a specialist tree surgeon. This is very expensive, trimming can't be done by a normal gardener, and any trimming requires a form for permission from the council. In my view this is overkill, and this expense and complication (over pretty small trees!) makes people cautious about planting. I understand the intention of automatic TPOs but the blanket implementation, expense, admin, delay, and inflexibility is huge overkill for trimming or replacement of fairly small trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We've already planted loads of fruit trees in our small residential garden over the past 5 years (apple, pear, cherry, plum, and not-so-native quince, lemon, and tangerine). If we hadn't already done that I'd be interested to have been given more advice on how to choose native trees that, as I understand from reading the Master Plan, might have been a better choice from the biodiversity front (if not the dinner table front). Looking to the future I'd still consider, say, replacing part of our privet hedge with hawthorn to make a more natural hedgerow-style border which needs less clipping and might harbour more biodiversity, and I would appreciate more guidance on whether or not it's a good idea to do this, and how to do it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would plant as many as I could
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about how big different species grow, which ones are good for wildlife.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance that help (financial if need be) would be available to care for the tree, so it does no harm the house when grown.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would like to plant trees along the lane and around our fences to act as a hedge for carbon absorption, pollution and noise mitigation, privacy and calming views, but it would involve digging up concrete, gaining permission/approval from our neighbours and buying and planting the trees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There already are trees in my backgarden. If there weren't, I'd say just a fairly simple ad campaign to put the idea in my head, with links to guidance on suitable types of tree and a place I can buy the seeds/saplings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sadly I don't have space. Else I would plant a tree that attracts pollinators.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I already have!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having one donated with instructions of how to plant/ look after
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different variety of tree that wasn't too big and brought colour or fruit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owning private property (I rent, as do many in oxford)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to have to pay too much, and assurance it wouldn't affect the foundations of the house.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A supply of cheap saplings, advice on what to plant for a given space and how to care for the young trees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I rent so unfortunately it's not my garden to plant in, but if I was offered free seedlings maybe and advice I think that'd help people, and info on how to encourage biodiversity within gardens including not mowing grass as often and having wildflower

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<p>areas instead of just lawn.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I already planted 8 small fruit trees and eager and willing to do more! Might need some physical help due to health - and where there's a will there's a way!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would love to plant a tree on the grass verge in front of my house - but it is not my land! I would be pleased to do the work and look after the tree. Perhaps the City Council might have a scheme of granting local residents permission to plant street trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I already have trees and no space. Those that don't and might want to will need support in knowing 'where to start' ie who will pay for the tree, who will dig the hole, who will support me in caring for it, what tree should it be, what do I do if it dies?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surely it would be better to encourage people with garden space to grow hedgerow style plants and shrubs (Hawthorne etc) and appropriate small trees that will attract bees for pollination etc. (Malus and other Apple/ fruit varieties which could be Oxfordshire based heritage varieties?) There is a lot of evidence to suggest that moss is very effective at capturing carbon, so moss walls etc should also be explored as options for smaller urban spaces. In terms of encouragement to plant, a sustainably sourced stock which we could purchase at subsidised rates (or even "x" plants per road offered for free as incentives for wider take up amongst neighbours) would be good. Local nurseries supplying stock so that there are no or minimal transport costs would enable further clean air gain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening, shade, edible yield.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've got almost as many trees as I can fit in my garden front and back - it's a narrow terraced house garden - we have about 5 bigish trees and 15 small ones and loads of shrubs/ivy etc. I think it would be encouraging to be able to adopt a tree for your garden - volunteer to adopt one which you go and choose? Volunteer your front garden to be rewilded and have volunteers come round and plant it - if you're in a nature-deprived area?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would love to plant a tree! In fact I have several trees in pots that I daren't plant in the ground because they're jay-planted oaks and squirrel-planted horse-chestnuts and will end up massive. If I got hold of a silver birch or something similar, that would be lovely. (If you could give my saplings a home, that would also be wonderful.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donated tree's with clear instructions on how to plant. Mini competitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sapling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm afraid my garden already has all the trees it can hold -- sorry!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance in choosing the right sort of tree for the space so that it doesn't get too big and a problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community event with information on how to plant and care for a tree and perhaps subsidised trees to take home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I could own any land in Oxford it would be covered in trees. Making property affordable would be a helpful way to move

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<p>your strategy forward, as landlords genuinely don't care about such things. Having half of Oxford's properties owned by people that don't live in them means that Oxford residents don't have options for planting trees or planting gardens that support biodiversity and pollinators.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost of medium to large sized saplings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I overplant with trees anyway, for others you have to explain personal Benefits: Free tree Help planting with compost and feed A garden "buddy" to help maintain the tree/ planting Environment/ cleaner air/ attracts wildlife/ shade / meeting place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If instructions for how to plant and care for your tree were very clear. Also having links to where you could purchase your trees from, with local businesses and organisations prioritised.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do this already.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have planted a number of trees in my garden. Some purely for wildlife, and some for nut and fruit produce as well as wildlife.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing it wouldn't invalidate insurance or damage property. Making it easy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alas no more room. We have a fine example of a Whitebeam of the original landscaping of our development in our front planting we have professionally pruned every 3 years to match its twin in an opposite house, this makes a fine vista ad you come down our road, softening the brickwork of our tall houses. The tree is now 40 years old but looks very healthy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of tree types that can be filtered by the type of space, size of tree, etc. in order to see the best options for the location.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So that the roots don't damage the building. Knowing what size the tree might get to and what would thrive in the soil.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a lot of trees in our garden, no room for more. But a bit of guidance on how to go about planting and looking after a tree would encourage me. We planted fruit trees once we had an idea of how to do it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a - I sadly do not have a garden of my own.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of what sort of tree to plant and how to support it in the early years of growth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with planting process for a larger tree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promise of fruit!

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on how to look after it, as well as a starter kit of items needed to nurture it in its first year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nice guide with information about the best type of trees you can plant would help. For example, examples of trees for each orientation. My front garden is west, so a tree that is deciduous with not strong roots can be a good choice so in winter it allows the sun to come through, but in summer when it is too hot it shades and protects the house. Having also information about how they can shelter from wind and other benefits for wildlife would be nice. A second idea, would be offering not only advice, but a free tree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the park space is really bad in my area (ox44bt) i use my front garden as park space but i have plants and bushes. Also, i have already fruit trees in my rear garden.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have already planted several but if I hadn't I can imagine that maybe the offer of a free sapling and instructions might have, children can be very persuasive so I think a campaign in local schools would be effective and publicising the benefits trees have to everyone and the possible wildlife that may visit would also encourage people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back garden is already as full of trees as it is likely to be. But regarding the front garden - help with removing some of the paved-over area, as well as advice on which species of trees would be appropriate there and where exactly (for example - closer to the pavement side, so it provides shade to people walking, or will that obstruct the pavement?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to choose and source one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice as to the choice of tree and an initiative to provide cost effective community planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good advice over tree selection and maintenance. Social pressure to do the right thing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas for you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendation of appropriate trees to plant; - Information to all residents about the benefits of planting small trees in gardens; - Incentivisation -eg £5 or £10 off of garden waste annual fee or council tax - Access to discounted tree purchase, perhaps if you are able to negotiate a discount with a preferred supplier.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have enough trees in my back and front garden but I would love an area set aside locally for a community orchardI asked for an area around Bullingdon Community Centre/ Girdlestone Road but was told no. I have seen one prosper in York.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can only afford to rent so cannot plant trees in my current garden. Providing affordable housing with properly planted outdoor spaces or at least a garden that has sufficient topsoil for planting over building rubble would help.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We already have!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's already full of trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I live in a wooded area so my focus is on planting for insects/pollinators and increasing biodiversity and wildlife habitat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Know that it won't grow too large [e.g. Leylandiae :(] and will be manageable to keep

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* Not so big it takes sun or light away from the house - in small gardens around 3-bed semis there isn't a lot of space, * Flowers/ fragrant flowers * Know that it will live - i.e. how to care for it after planting * I love having fruit trees.
• Unfortunately I don't have a yard.
• I already have a birch & an apple tree
• I already have 7 trees on my property, but we would really like to have trees planted to replace the many trees lost on the verges just outside my property.
• I already have slightly too many trees. Only two of them were of my own planting--hawthorn
• I am planning on planting at least 2 trees in my garden in the autumn.
• Free availability of plants.

Responses received by letter

Oxford University Estates

The Oxford University Estates Service has responded to the strategy. In summary, the University support the strategy and are committed to helping us to deliver it. The University is keen to work with the City Council to enable the delivery of street trees and overcome issues with underground infrastructure and services. Species selection is also important in urban areas. The University suggest that in areas of low biodiversity value e.g. car parks that on-native climate resistant species are chosen and the priority is on environmental amelioration. In areas of existing or high biodiversity potential that native species are chosen. The University support the objective to consider tree health and in particular the impact of invasive species and diseases. Working together on this Urban Forest Strategy will help to achieve the University's targets for net zero carbon and biodiversity net gain.

Friends of Lye Valley

The Friends of Lye Valley submitted a response detailing their suggestions for council tree policies, management and the urban forest. A further 3 individuals wrote in endorsing the Friends of Lye Valley response. The response stresses that the right trees, in the right places with the right management is fundamental to ensure their survival. The City Council welcome the well informed detailed comments and will take them into account in the development of detailed planting plans. The Friends of Lye Valley will be invited to be involved in the development of these plans in any case. Their comments have not specifically been incorporated into

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the Urban Forest Strategy as the strategy seeks to set a strategic direction for the city. Detailed tree management and planting plans are beyond the scope of the strategy at this stage.

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To: Cabinet
Date: 15 September 2021
Report of: Head of Financial Services
Title of Report: Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for proposals for consultation on changes to the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the proposals for the 2022/23 Council Tax Reduction Scheme outlined in the report be subject to consultation for an 8 week period from 20th September 2021; and 2. Note the intention of the Head of Financial Services to bring a further report to Cabinet in January 2022 to outline the outcome of the consultation process and make proposals for the 2022/23 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Consultation questions
Appendix 2	Risk register
Appendix 3	Initial Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 4	Glossary of Terms

Introduction and background

1. In April 2013 the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme was replaced by a new Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. The CTB scheme was funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and supported people on low incomes by reducing the amount of council tax they had to pay.

2. The CTR scheme is for working age customers and determined locally by Councils rather than nationally by the DWP. The separate scheme that exists for pension age recipients is a national scheme prescribed by regulation and cannot be varied locally. The basic calculation for CTR is an assessment of the household income versus the amount of money that central government says the household needs to live off. A household can be a single person, couples, families with children etc. The scheme works by applying discounts against the council tax liability based on the financial circumstances of a homeowner. The discount reduces the amount of council tax income to be collected by the authority. Whilst the Government initially provided funding for the new local schemes through the Revenue Support Grant, since the Grant has now reduced to zero there is no funding provided by central government for any CTR scheme.
3. Councils are required to review their CTR working age scheme annually, and determine whether or not to revise it. In order to change its scheme a council is required by law to:
 - Consult with the major precepting authorities
 - Consult with other persons it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

The CTR scheme itself must be adopted by the Council, and the approval of the scheme cannot be delegated to an officer or committee.

4. The CTR scheme must take account of and support:
 - Work incentives and in particular avoid disincentives for those moving into work;
 - The Council's duties to protect vulnerable people (under the Equality Act 2010, the Care Act 2014, the Child Poverty Act 2010, the Housing Act 1996); and
 - The Armed Forces Covenant
5. 2018/19 was the first year that Oxford City Council (OCC) amended its CTR scheme to that introduced by the Government in 2013-14. 2019/20 and 2021/22 saw further amendments, including moving to an Income Banded Scheme, the same as for Universal Credit claimants, The Council's scheme still provides a reduction of up to 100% against the council tax liability and is one of the few remaining Councils to do so.
6. When the Council set its budget in February 2021 the annual estimated total loss of council tax income arising from CTR was £11.874 million based on the current CTR caseload. Reflecting an increase as a result of the COVID19 pandemic, as at 1st July 2021 this has risen to £12.483 million The Council's share of this loss of income based on the Council's Band D council tax at the time that the budget was set was £1.818 million, this has now risen to £1.911m million. At the same point last year the City Councils lost income was £1.739 million.
7. The balance of the income loss is picked up by the major preceptors, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioners
8. Due to COVID 19 there has been an increase in caseload despite a pause in the roll out of Universal Credit as the DWP diverted resources to deal with new claims, and the cost to the Council and its major preceptors from loss of council tax income

has therefore increased. Caseload is now the highest it has been at the same time for the previous 3 years at 10,191 (as at 1st July 2021).

9. Further uncertainty remains around the number of CTR claims the Council is likely to see when the government's furlough scheme ends in September 2021, at the same time as the Self Employed Income Support Scheme. At that point a number of businesses may cease to trade, and employees may be made redundant and CTR claims may increase. As a result council tax lost income will increase.
10. Some of the furloughed workers may already be in receipt of UC/HB and CTR due to low income. Some workers will also have now returned to work as the easing of lockdown fully in July takes effect. More workers are being required to self-isolate which will result in further operational pressures on businesses.
11. Whilst it is impossible to predict how many businesses may cease to trade at the point the furlough scheme ends, it is fairly certain that the number of Universal Credit and CTR cases will increase as this and other business support schemes cease. There are numerous variables that could affect the number of redundancies, and future Cabinet reports will reflect a clearer picture as it emerges.
12. There will also be a clearer indication of how removing restrictions from July and August has impacted on the economic recovery
13. Any increase in the amount of Council Tax due each April will see the amount of CTR increase proportionally, thus increasing the cost of the CTR scheme.
14. Table 1 below sets out the cost and caseload (number of CTR claimants) for the OCC CTR scheme since its introduction. The cost of the scheme is shared by the Oxford City Council (15.31%), the Oxfordshire County Council (73.83%) and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (10.86%) in accordance with the proportion of council tax levied by each. The table shows that the gap between the cost to the Council between 2020-21 and 2021-22 to date has increased by £137k compared to a rise of £195k between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Table 1 Cost of CTR to the City Council and its major preceptors

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 at 1 st July
Cost of Pension Age	£3,172,713	£3,284,610	£3,554,232	£3,841,522	£4,114,145
Pension Age caseload	3,056	2,990	2,918	2,964	2977
Cost of Working Age	£6,318,785	£6,541,638	£6,459,250	£7,609,169	£8,369,251
Working age caseload	5,666	5,558	5,303	5,871	6,056
Total Cost	£9,491,498	£9,826,248	£10,013,482	£11,450,691*	£12,483,396
Total Caseload	8,722	8,548	8,221	8,835	9,033
Cost of the scheme to OCC	£1,546,165	£1,561,391	£1,579,126	£1,774,857*	£1,911,458

Note that figures marked * are net of any discretionary amounts awarded under s13a. During 2020/2021 additional funding was received that allowed us to award a discretionary CTR amount to those liable to pay Council Tax.

15. The Council's caseload has increased by 131 cases since the start of the 2021/22 financial year. The Council still receives a substantial number of new CTR claims daily which has increased this year largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In other cases changes will be related mostly to income fluctuations.

16. The following changes were made to the OCC CTR scheme for the year 2021/22:
- Annual up-ratings for the Income banded scheme
 - Agreement to up-rate the bands using CPI rather than RPI, in line with the DWP annual up-ratings
 - Move to an Income banded scheme for all claimants
17. By making these changes £120k of staffing savings across Financial Services and Business Improvement were achieved as a result of the reduction in the amount of work required to administer the scheme.
18. In making proposals for the 2022-23 consultation officers have considered a range of options for changing the CTR scheme which seek to continue to streamline the process of award and ongoing administration and also provide options on reducing cost to the Council.
19. Appendix 1 shows the suggested consultation questions for the 2022/23 scheme. These are summarised as:
- Whether or not to increase the Income Bands or to freeze at current levels. Where wages are being increased freezing income bands to current levels will reduce the amount of CTR given although clearly in the current environment post pandemic this impact may be negligible since wage rises in most sectors are unlikely to increase rapidly as business try to initiate their recovery.
 - If we do increase, to use CPI instead of RPI, in line with the DWP up-ratings. CPI is generally lower than RPI and notwithstanding the comments above will lead to lower CTR payments.
 - To consider if the banded income approach should take into account family size. Currently the scheme has a single structure for a total income for all applications, with no regard to household composition
 - To consider giving a reduction of up to 100% for passported cases, limiting the reduction to a % or a fixed weekly amount for all other claims. If we were to reduce the % award, or ask all claimants to pay a set amount, our tax base would increase in future years, as there would be fewer Band D equivalents lost as a result of awarding CTR. As a rough example based on the current caseload of 6056:
 - *If everyone were required to pay £1 per week (so a £52 annual charge being a minimum contribution), based on the City Council's share Council Tax at 15.31%:*
 - Estimated Saving of £48k per annum on CTR expenditure before any tax base amendments
 - The Council may need to consider increasing the write-off provision as other authorities have advised small amounts of CT do not get paid, and we do not take court action for debts below £50.
 - *If everyone were required to pay £2 per week (so a £104 annual charge being a minimum contribution), based on the City Council's share of Council Tax at 15.31%;*
 - Estimated saving of £96k per annum on CTR expenditure before any tax base amendments

- May need to consider increasing income collection staff resources as this could increase the number of cases requiring court action for non-payment.
- May need to consider increasing the bad debt provision as more debts could be written off as people may make a partial payment to bring the level of debt down to under £50
- To automatically reduce the CTR award to a maximum of 75% if there is a non-dependant (adult aged 18 or over) in the property. In cases where there is a disability benefit in payment for the applicant or an additional adult, then the reduction would not be applied. This mirrors the application of the single person discount.

Currently we take into account non-dependant income and this increases administration as we have to calculate income and take any changes into account. What we are proposing is to mirror how a non-dependant's income is accounted for in a UC claim, so that we apply a flat rate deduction regardless of their income, unless there is a disability benefit in payment. In effect this may actually increase the amount of CTR for cases where we are currently applying a high non-dependant charge, and we will model this before bringing back any recommendations to Cabinet in January 2022.

20. The income bandings currently being used and based on the methodology above are shown in Table 2. The figures have been calculated using the 2021 figures for the National Minimum Wages (NMW) and Oxford Living Wage (OLW) which are £8.91 and £10.31 per hour respectively. The band 5 value has been updated by 1.1% which is the RPI figure for September 2020.

Table 2

Band	Weekly Income	Discount received	No of claimants
1	£0 - £142.99	100%	793
2	£143.00-£213.99	75%	734
3	£214.00-£309.99	50%	1,350
4	£310.00 - £402.99	25%	1,197
5	£403 and above	0%	1,912

21. Within the Consultation provision has been made to consult on whether a minimum council tax amount should be made by all working age claimants. The Council is in the minority of authorities whose scheme is based on 100% of the council tax entitlement. Consulting whether claimants should contribute some amount of council tax before the discount is applied will retain the option for the Council to initiate this change from 1st April 2022, compared to savings in other areas of the Council's budget, should the Councils forthcoming budget setting round require significant savings to be made from overall net spend.
22. Consultation will be carried out using the Council's online consultation system, and also making use of paper questionnaires if there is no risk associated with Covid-19. The consultation will be promoted by the Council's Communications Team. The consultation will last for a period of eight weeks beginning on 20 September 2021. The proposed consultation document is included at Appendix 1.

Discretionary support

23. The Council Tax Regulations make provision for discretionary support to be made available on application by a customer who is facing difficulty paying their Council Tax.

Financial implications

24. The current cost of the CTR Scheme has been factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan with the Council bearing the full cost of its share estimated at £1.818 million for 2021-22 from council tax income foregone. The cost of the scheme has already increased due to increased CTR arising from the pandemic, to £1.9 million and this may increase further when central government financial support for businesses and individuals start to fall which in turn will lead to further lost income to the council. Any further increases in the council tax charge in 2022/23 will also lead to increased CTR and reduced income for the Council.
25. The proposed consultation seeks views on changes which affect the future affordability of the scheme. It is worth noting that any changes to the scheme can only affect working age claimants as the scheme for pensioners as set by central government may not be changed. This limits the impact of the changes to £8.4 million of the total estimated scheme cost of £12.5m per annum. Furthermore the Council's element of this is around 15.31%, based on the band D council tax.
- The increase in the loss of income from increased council tax support given to claimants does not get accounted for by the authority until the following financial year as it comes through as losses through the Collection Fund.
26. The Council's preferred option would be to continue with a scheme similar to the current one, awarding up to 100% CTR if resources allow, however there have been substantial impacts from the pandemic which are regrettably not being fully compensated by central government. The budget setting process is where this should be fully considered.

Legal implications

27. Local Council Tax Support came into effect on 1 April 2013 pursuant to the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Section 13A(2) of that Act (as amended) provides:
- 'Each billing authority in England must make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of council tax payable, in respect of dwellings situated in its area, by—
- (a) persons whom the authority considers to be in financial need, or
 - (b) persons in classes consisting of persons whom the authority considers to be, in general, in financial need.'
28. Schedule 1A of that Act prescribes what must be included in a Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and places a duty on the authority, each financial year, to consider whether to revise its scheme or replace it with another scheme. The scheme states the classes of person who are to be entitled to a reduction, the type of reduction and whether there are different reductions for different classes. The scheme should also set out the procedure to apply for a reduction and the appeal procedure.
29. Before preparing a scheme, the authority must (in the following order)—

- (a) Consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
 - (b) Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
 - (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
30. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) 2012 further prescribes what must be included in the scheme.
31. The scheme must be approved by Full Council no later than 11 March before the financial year it relates to. After approval, the scheme must be published.
32. Since the introduction of CTR schemes, there have been a number of legal challenges against other local schemes. Most of these challenges have been in relation to the consultation undertaken and have questioned whether due regard was given to any equality impact assessment when changes were made to schemes. A Supreme Court ruling in 2014 (R. (on the application of Moseley) v London Borough of Haringey) determined that consultation on changes to council tax reduction schemes must provide such information as necessary in order for consultees to express meaningful views on the proposal. Enough had to be said about realistic alternatives, and the reasons for a preferred choice, to enable the consultees to make an intelligent response in respect of the scheme. This would include an option for any current scheme to be retained on the same level of funding with a consequent reduction in funding for other services. There are questions in the consultation paper on these options.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

33. By sending details of the consultation electronically we are reducing the use of paper and reducing the environmental impact of transporting these by post.
34. No other carbon or environmental impacts have been identified as a result of this proposal.

Level of risk

35. A risk register is attached at Appendix 2. The identified risks relate to the undertaking of consultation, rather than the changes to the CTR scheme.

Equalities impact

36. An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3.

Report author	Tanya Bandekar
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Background Papers: None

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Appendix 1

Council Tax Reduction Consultation- 2022/23

Background

The Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme provides help for Oxford residents on benefits or low incomes to pay their council tax. This help is provided as a reduction in the amount of Council Tax to pay. The reduction can be up to 100% of the Council Tax bill.

Since the end of national council tax benefit (CTB) in April 2013, councils have been responsible for drawing up their own schemes of support. Oxford is one of a small number of councils who have not reduced the overall level of financial support that was available before 2013, even though government funding for Council Tax support has reduced annually, and ended completely in 2019. Because of government cuts to funding and an increase in caseload due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our CTR scheme will cost us more than £1.9 million this year.

In Oxford, 9,033 people currently get help to pay their council tax, of which 6,056 are working age. The amount of help they get depends on their income and their household, with people on some benefits not having to pay anything. These benefits include income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS), Guarantee Credit and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). People in equivalent circumstances on Universal Credit (UC) will also get 100% CTR support thus protecting the most financially vulnerable. The scheme also currently protects claimants with children and disabled people as this income is ignored when calculating the income band for CTR entitlement.

The Current banded scheme for both Universal Credit claimants and other incomeed claims is;

Income bands		
Band	Your weekly income 2021/22	Discount on council tax bill
1	£0 - £142.99	100%
2	£143 - £213.99	75%
3	£214 - £309.99	50%
4	£310 - £402.99	25%
5	£403 and over	0%

The Council is proposing some amendments to the scheme for 2022/23, and this means we have to ask you for your views on the changes we want to make.

Your CTR will not be affected by our proposals below if you are pension age. Pensioners are still covered by a national scheme of support.

We are consulting you on the following changes we would like to make to our working age CTR scheme:

Consultation Questions

Please either tick the box next to your answer, or write your response in the space provided.

1. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

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Yes

No

2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please state which one?

CTR Scheme amendments

Amendment of income bands

From April 2021 the income banded scheme applies to both claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (a single monthly payment which replaces a number of benefits and tax credits paid to working age people. The Department of Work and Pensions began rolling this out to new benefit and tax credit claimants in Oxford in October 2017) and other income streams such as salary.

UC is designed to allow people to vary their hours at work while still getting support for their living, housing and other costs. This can result in people receiving a different amount of UC each month, which can change the amount of CTR that someone receives. As a result it could be difficult for people getting CTR to know how much council tax they need to pay themselves.

An income banded scheme makes it more likely that people will need to pay the same amount of Council Tax each month, with instalments only changing when income increases, or decreases, by enough to move them into the next band.

Our income banded scheme uses the following bandings to determine the amount of support provided:

Band	Weekly Income	Discount received
1	£0 - £142.99	100%
2	£143.00-£213.99	75%
3	£214.00-£309.99	50%
4	£310.00 - £402.99	25%
5	£403 and above	0%

The rationale for the figures above are as follows:

- £143 is 16 hours on the national minimum wage (NMW £8.91) rounded upwards
- £214 is 24 hours on the NMW rounded upwards
- £310 is 30 hours on the Oxford living wage(OLW £10.31), rounded upwards
- £403 is the Benefit Cap uprated by the September 2020 RPI figure

Proposal 1 is that the bands are uprated for 2022/23 as in previous years as follows:

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- Bands based on the NMW are uprated in accordance with the NMW rate for over 25's from April 2021
- Bands based on the OLW are uprated in accordance with the OLW rate from April 2021
- Band 5 is increased by the Consumer Price Index measure of inflation as of September 2021, in line with the Department for Work and Pensions up-ratings

Uprating the bands in this way will ensure that no-one has to make more Council Tax as a result of getting a pay rise.

Please answer the following questions in respect of the Income Band Scheme:

3. Do you agree with the proposal for uprating the income bands from 2022/23

Yes

No

Don't know

4. Please provide any comments you have on the income band scheme, and this proposal.

Proposal 2 considers whether or not the Council should freeze the proposed uprating of the Bands for 2022/23 due to affordability.

5. Do you agree with the proposal for freezing the income bands at the 2021/22 amounts?

Yes

No

Don't know

6. Please provide any comments you have on the income band scheme and this proposal.

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Currently the scheme has a single banded structure for a total income for all applications, with no regard to household composition. If the Council changes the scheme to take into account the number of people that make up the family composition. This would take change the maximum entitlement for into account single people claims, couple claims and family claims.

7. Do you think the Council should amend the banding structure to take into account the size of the household?

Yes

No

Don't know

8. Please provide any comments you have on amending the banding structure to take into account the size of the household.

The Council currently gives a discount up to 100% of Council Tax liability for all applications for CTR. Should the Council consider adjusting the 2022/23 scheme to reflect that people who are in receipt of passported benefits (Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, and the Standard Allowance of Universal Credit) continue to receive the maximum level of support of 100% and other claims be restricted to a maximum CTR, for example 85%, or pay an amount per week towards their Council Tax- for example £2pw? The will result in claimants having a charge to pay if there is no passported benefit in payment.

9. Do you think we should reduce the maximum amount of CTR for non-passported claimants to a maximum percentage- for example 85%?

Yes

No

Don't know

Appendix 1

10. Do you think we should reduce the maximum amount of CTR for non-passported claimants so that they pay an amount per week towards their Council Tax- for example £2?

Yes

No

Don't know

11. Do you think that all claimants should make some contribution towards the Council Tax regardless of their Income?

Yes

No

Don't know

12. Please provide any comments you have on reducing the amount of CTR for claimants.

The Council currently applies a non-dependant charge to a claim where there is an adult in the property who is not included as part of the household. A household is defined as;

- a single person with no other people in their home
- a couple
- a family, where there is child benefit in payment for children in the home.

In cases where there are other people living in the property who are over the age of 18, for example, elderly relatives or older children who are not awarded child tax credit or child benefit, the Council applies a deduction from the CTR entitlement based upon the income for the additional person.

Gross income on non-dependant	Non-dependant deduction rate
Less than £149.00	£4.05
£149-£216.99	£8.30
£217 to £282.99	£10.40
£283 to £376.99	£12.45

Appendix 1

This results in the Council needing to ask questions about income details for another person in the home to ensure the claimant receives the correct award of CTR. In order to reduce administration of the CTR scheme, the Council is considering applying a maximum entitlement of 75% where there is a non-dependant in the household, as it is reasonable to expect that person to contribute to the household expenses. This reduction would apply regardless of the income of the non-dependant. In cases where there is a disability benefit in place for the applicant or non-dependant, then the reduction in entitlement would not be applied.

13. Do you think we should restrict the CTR award to 75% where there is at least one non-dependant in the household and neither the claimant nor non-dependant is in receipt of a disability benefit?

Yes

No

Don't know

14. Please provide any comments you have on reducing the amount of CTR for certain households with a non-dependant?

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the CTR scheme

As some of the options proposed may reduce the level of support people can get under CTR for the financial year 2022/23, we would like your views on alternative approaches to funding the increasing costs of the Council's CTR scheme.

Do you think we should choose any of the following options when considering how to fund the CTR scheme? Please select one answer for each source of funding.

15. Increase the level of Council Tax

Yes

No

Don't know

16. Find savings from cutting other council services

Yes

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No

Don't know

17. Increase fees and charges

Yes

No

Don't know

18. Please use the space below if you would like us to consider any other options.

19. Please use this space to make other comments on the CTR scheme

About you

We ask these questions:

- to find out if different groups of people in Oxford have been able to take part in the consultation and to identify if any groups have been excluded. This means it is not about you as an individual – we want to find out if people with similar characteristics have had their say
- To find out if different groups of people feel differently about the options and proposals in comparison to each other and all respondents. This means it is not about you as an individual – we want to find out if people with similar characteristics have answered in the same way or not.

This information is completely confidential and anonymous.

Appendix 1

Your personal information will not be passed on to anyone and your personal details will not be linked to your responses.

20. Are you, or someone in your household, getting CTR now?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

21. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Transgender

Prefer not to say

22. What is your age?

16-18

19-24

25-44

45-59

60-74

75 or above

23. What is your ethnic group?

White British

White Irish

Other White

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Other Mixed

Other (Specify Below)

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Other Asian

Caribbean

African

Black Other

Chinese

24. If other, please enter details in the space below

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25. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or life limiting illness?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

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Appendix 2

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
Challenge to consultation process	Customers challenge the effectiveness of the consultation	Opp	Due regard not given to statutory guidelines or relevant case law.	Any changes in the CTR scheme may not be upheld by Tribunals or Courts, when challenged by a customer.	21/7/21	Tanya Bandekar	3	2	1	2	1	2		Reference the relevant regulations and case law in planning the consultation	15/9/20	Green	50	Benefits Manager
Increased customer contact	Customers are concerned at potential changes to the support they get and contact the Council about them.	Threat	Poor explanation of changes, and no mitigation planned.	Customers are not clear about the impact of the changes.	21/7/20	Tanya Bandekar	3	2	1	1	1	1		Simple explanations given of the proposed changes, together with details of mitigation. A glossary of terms is added to reports and consultaion details online	15/9/20	Green	50	Benefits Manager
Council reputation	Proposals for changes not clearly thought through, and impact not properly understood, resulting in damage to Council reputation	Opp	Insufficient modelling undertaken as part of the consultation feedback, and/or impact of changes not properly understood	Informed customers spot impacts of changes that the Council has not properly identified, undermining both the proposals and consultation process.	21/7/20	Tanya Bandekar	3	3	3	2	3	2		Expert team from different service areas assembled to work on the proposals, time taken to model changes and understand customer impact.	15/9/20	Green	50	Benefits Manager
Financial implications	Costs are not correctly calculated, or a change in economic climate, for example the ending of the current furlough scheme in October 2020 leading to more redundancies means more claimants	Threat	Poor budgetting. Insufficient modelling of anything that affects the number of claimants	Changes are costed incorrectly and lead to an increase in scheme costs	21/7/20	Tanya Bandekar	4	3	3	2	3	2	Covid-19 implications co	Work with Finance Team to ensure funding available and changes costed	15/9/20	Amber	50	Service Manager, Revenues and Benefits / Financial Accounting Manager

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Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:

*The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the **9** protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership***

The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:

- (a) To seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;*
- (b) To identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.*

The Council will also ask that officers specifically consider whether:

- (A) The policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*
- (B) The proposed policy / service is likely to have any significant impact on mental wellbeing / community resilience (staff or residents)*

If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:

- 1. **The decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.*
- 2. **The duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.*
- 3. The decision maker must be **aware of the needs of the duty.***
- 4. The **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.*
- 5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).*
- 6. What does 'due regard' entail?
 - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;***
 - b. **Ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;****

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c. Proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.

7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).
 8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"), to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider <http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>
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?

Council Tax Reduction is claimed by low income households in the city. The following groups are over represented in this cohort compared to the general population:

Women

Single parent households

Ethnic Minorities

People with a disability or lifelong illness

Age is not affected by this scheme as Pensioners are covered by the national default scheme and this consultation relates to the working age CTR scheme only.

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

At this stage proposals are only being submitted for consultation. The 2022/23 Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be informed by this consultation process.

This will include:

- Whether or not to increase the Income Bands or to freeze at current levels
- If we do increase, to use CPI instead of RPI in line with the DWP up-ratings
- To consider if the banded income approach should take into account family size. Currently the scheme has a single structure for a total income for all applications, with no regard to household

Appendix 3

composition

- To consider giving a reduction of up to 100% for passported cases, limiting the reduction to 85% for all other claims
- To automatically reduce the CTR award to a maximum of 75% if there is a non-dependant in the property. In cases where there is a disability benefit in payment for the applicant or an additional adult, then the reduction would not be applied. This mirrors the application of the single person discount.

Within the existing Council Tax regulations, there is provision for discretionary payments to be made to people experiencing hardship. Anyone disadvantaged by the Council Tax Reduction scheme can apply for help from this scheme.

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

The main report seeks approval for consultation about changes to the proposed scheme. This includes general public consultation and advice agencies as well as consulting with the major preceptors. We will use electronic means to consult to avoid respondents using paper forms, as with the current Covid-19 pandemic access to the places we would normally place forms is restricted and we also want to limit any opportunity to spread the virus.

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

Within the existing Council Tax regulations, there is provision for discretionary payments to be made to people experiencing hardship. Anyone disadvantaged by the Council Tax Reduction scheme can apply for help from this scheme.

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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

The impact will be monitored via applications for discretionary support. This should highlight any areas of concern.

As people see changes in their circumstances, there will be an opportunity to revise the scheme in future years, if there is any unexpected negative impact on certain groups of customers.

We will talk to other Councils who have adopted different approaches to their CTR scheme to see what works well and what doesn't. The Department for Work and Pensions guidance and case law often influences the approach this Council takes as it will inform us of the impact of certain elements of schemes and the adjustments, if any that are needed.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Tanya Bandekar

Role: Revenues & Benefits Service Manager

Date: 21 July 2021

Appendix 4

Glossary of Terms

Working Age	Age for which the Government expect State Pension to not be claimed. Currently age 66.
Uprating	Department for Work and Pensions annual income-related social security benefit increases each April. These benefits, and the amount which the government state is required to live on each week are increased each April by a percentage. The increase is based on either the Retail Price Index (RPI) or Consumer Price Index (CPI) as at September the previous year.
Income Bands	The amount of weekly net income used in the calculation of the award. Some income is not included, such as certain disability benefits. Where income changes but stays within the same band, then there is no change to entitlement, but the change is still recorded.
Capping	This is a ceiling limit on an award. A capping level could be applied to the council tax bands, so instead of applying Council Tax Reduction (CTR) using all the council tax bands A-H, that only bands A-E are applied. This means that the capping level is at a band E Council Tax amount, and those claims for properties in Bands F-H would only see a maximum level of support to a band E Council Tax liability. The claimant would need to pay the difference between their CTR award and their Council Tax liability.
National Minimum Wage	For 2021/22 the rate is £8.91
Oxford Living Wage	For 2021/22 the rate is £10.31
Benefit Cap	<p>The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit you can get. It applies to most people aged 16 or over who have not reached State Pension Age. A cap is usually applied when a claimant is not in employment for more than 16 hours per week, and is not exempt by disability.</p> <p>The Cap level currently for outer London is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) if you are a couple • £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) if you are a single parent and your children live with you • £257.69 per week (£13,400 a year) if you are a single adult
Non-dependant	A non-dependant is an adult who lives with you. This doesn't mean your partner or adult children who are still dependent on you – for example, because they are in education. It could be for example, an adult son or daughter who is working or unemployed and who still lives with you. A deduction is made on the assumption that the 'non-dependant' should make a contribution towards your council tax of at least the amount of the deduction.

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To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 8 September 2021
Report of: Economic Development Manager and City Centre Manager
Title of Report: Tourism Review Recommendations Update

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	An update report on the progress made against recommendations arising from the Tourism Review Group
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Mary Clarkson
Corporate Priority:	Inclusive Economy
Policy Framework:	Economic Development Strategy
Recommendation:	
1. Members note and comment on the update	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Action Plan Update

Introduction and background

1. Cabinet agreed the vast majority of the recommendations that were endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on May 29th 2019. In the period that followed, officers worked to pursue these recommendations as fully as possible, with areas of notable progress made, despite the major shift in the focus of officer resources brought about by the pandemic. The Update table in Appendix 1 highlights the progress against each of these recommendations since the October 2020 update, and should be referred to alongside this report for a full update.

COVID-19 and the Visitor Economy

2. The COVID-19 Pandemic has dramatically affected the Visitor economy and reduced city footfall from workers and residents, as well as international tourists.

Footfall dropped around 39% year on year and was at the time of the October report 52.9% down for the year to date¹, reflecting Oxford's reliance on workers, students and of course, tourists. Further restrictions through the autumn of 2020 and into this year have further impacted, with additional significant spells of closure for the majority of our businesses and continuing footfall reductions. The Council response has been wide-ranging including facilitating grant and relief support, much of it targeted specifically at visitor economy sectors. The October update to this group suggested that it is expected the economy will take at least three years to recover lost ground² with of 4-7 years to full recovery of demand the global tourism economy³. This is a significant challenge for a city where 15% of employment is visitor economy related.

3. Oxford retains inherent destination strengths. Oxford City Centre will continue to provide an important location for recreation, heritage, creativity and the arts, benefiting the population of the city and its wider hinterland, as well as attracting tourists to the city. As such the importance of the Visitor Economy is recognised in the emerging Oxford Economic Strategy and City Centre Action Plan (due for draft publication and consultation later in 2021). A priority for these strategies will be recovering and rebuilding Oxford's Visitor Economy.
4. While Oxford is already a global tourist destination, more will need to be done to capture longer stays and offer greater diversity of activity to aid recovery and long-term visitor growth. A key part of this will focus on boosting diversity of uses, and in turn resilience of economic activity in the city centre (e.g. Science and technology, creative and cultural, community and residential activity), which will boost worker and resident visits, as well as those of tourists.
5. It should be noted that since March, the City-wide and city centre response and then recovery activity has also fully utilised officer resource across the council. As such, progress of the longer-term planning around the Economic Development Strategy and also the City Centre Action Plan has been delayed to 2021. Inevitably, the Pandemic has shifted the focus - from one of demand management and increasing the value of visits - to a focus on supporting and restarting the visitor economy, following an abrupt halt in demand. By May / June 2021 the city centre was starting to see a slow return of visitor numbers, but at nothing like the levels of previous years. It has also been evident that the type of visitor has been different, to summarise being more local / regional visitors than those from further afield / abroad. This has also impacted on the duration of stays, the days visited and the spend profile, so much so that a particular sector of city centre business community is continuing to report challenging economic circumstances, when a number of others are recovering more quickly.
6. A range of businesses have needed support to survive and restart. This has included £54m of grants, and £58.1m in rate relief to date, support for our tenants, and a range of new street level measures to boost consumer confidence in visitor safety and business confidence in reopening.

¹ Springboard, June, 2021

² Ernst & Young 2020

³ McKinsey, 2020

7. Visible and notable examples of this include the rapid set-up of outdoor tables and new public spaces in key streets, such as Broad Street Meadow and George Street. The City Council, Experience Oxfordshire, Oxford Mail, IndieOxford and CitySightseeing partnership's #RediscoverOxford campaigns have seen a concerted, coordinated effort to welcome back visitors safely. The Reopening High Streets Safely and Welcome Back Funds have been used for this type of activity alongside funds such as Containment Outbreak Management Fund to support public spaces. Our Business Regulation team is providing ongoing support to business to comply with changing Covid-19 restrictions. The focus has been, and remains, on the safe re-opening of our city centre and accelerating recovery for the time being.
8. County-wide OxLEP developed and published an Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) in March 2021 submitted to central Government in, which makes the case for significant and ongoing visitor economy sector support. Officers have worked to ensure that the Visitor Economy is a key part of this. This will build on the case for intervention made in the LIS Implementation Strategy, which OxLEP published in September 2020. The ERP contains a range of measures that will affect the sector positively if they can be properly resourced. Notably, two 'Target Proposals' include, 'Town Centre Renewal – reviving and repurposing our town centres'; and 'Visitor Economy Renaissance – preparing our Visitor Economy to bounce back.'
9. Finally, we have highlighted to Government, through the recent Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Review, that centralised funding, alongside locally raised income is needed to put DMOs on a sustainable footing. We await the outcome of the review and also the review of Local Enterprise Partnerships and their future role. In terms of DMO funding locally, the City Council has funded Experience Oxfordshire until 2023 as an Ambassador of the DMO. It has also commissioned EO on several pieces of work in-line with the actions from this review. See Appendix 1.

Financial implications

10. No direct financial implications.

Legal issues

11. No legal issues.

Conclusion

Members should note the progress made in challenging circumstances and the need to re-prioritise in light of a very different context for the visitor economy and local businesses. The recommendations will need ongoing review in-line with the City Centre and Economic Strategies of which they are a part. However, the current pressing concern still remains supporting those businesses that are directly impacted by current restrictions that affect viability and jobs.

Report authors	Matt Peachey and Iain Nicholson
Job title	Economic Development Manager and City Centre Manager
Service area or department	Regeneration & Economy
Telephone	01865 252021
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Background Papers: None

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Tourism Review Group Recommendations Update

Recommendation	Update as of September 2020 / June 2021
<p>Recommendation 1: That the Council convenes with key partners (e.g. the universities and Experience Oxfordshire) to develop a shared vision for tourism in Oxford. This should also recognise the needs and wishes of residents, and be made public and promoted through the Council’s media channels.</p> <p>Key principles of the vision should situate Oxford as a city that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) welcomes all visitors (local, national and international) b) Aspires to have high-quality, low carbon, transport facilities c) Is best experienced through an overnight stay d) A gateway to other tourism destinations in the region 	<p>It was agreed that this would be pursued as part of the Economic Strategy and City Centre Action Plan, and that consideration was needed regarding locally available resources to deliver on the vision. Consultation drafts are now planned for consultation later in 2021, anticipating this will be best after the worst economic restrictions have eased. Throughout this last 18 months have also had regular consultation with partners on what action is needed, through the Economic Growth Board and City Centre Task Force, also actively engaging in Economic Recovery Planning and delivery. Experience Oxfordshire, OxLEP, and other key partners are part of this. Efforts have been focused on supporting business survival and reopening at this time, but will shift again to the vision.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: That the Council, through its membership on the Boards of Experience Oxfordshire and OxLEP, actively supports local efforts to prepare for the Tourism Sector Deal (such as bidding to become an official Tourism Zone), which would lever in investment to extend the tourism season and improve transport access for visitors to the City.</p>	<p>Government published the Tourism Sector Deal in June 2019. An Oxfordshire working group was set-up to explore Oxford’s needs for potential Tourism Zone (5 were mooted as part of the deal). This included the LEP, Experience Oxfordshire and The City Council. A discussion paper on the options for such as zone in Oxfordshire was prepared.</p> <p>However, there has since been no clarity from government on whether a Tourism Zone policy will be pursued. Officers are still monitoring this for any new announcements or similar initiatives.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: That the Cabinet reviews the process and</p>	<p>In part agreed. This was a budget decision made February 2019</p>

<p>assessment undertaken which led to the proposal to phase out funding to Experience Oxfordshire, and undertakes to work with partners to jointly ensure there is a suitable and sustainable funding model for destination management in the future.. Recommendation</p>	<p>in accordance with the council's procedures. Councillors then assessed this alongside all other budget reductions and proposals. It was agreed it is important we engage in conversations with all relevant stakeholders on finding the most appropriate funding model to permit a sustainable approach to tourism promotion and destination management. We have since commissioned various services from Experience Oxfordshire and are an Ambassador partner of EO until March 2023. The City Council co-funded the England Originals campaign as a way to attract domestic visitor markets post COVID. Another is annual procurement of the data on the volume, value and employment benefits of tourism. We are also working on Welcome Back Fund proposals with Experience Oxfordshire that will meet local needs.</p> <p>The City Council provided £50,000 of new funding to Experience Oxfordshire, to help support the visitor economy in Oxford over the period to March 2023. Experience Oxfordshire will use the funding to signpost and help businesses access grants and wider support, promote Oxford to UK and international visitors, and help the City and County Councils shape longer-term issues around destination management, including tourist coach drop-off and layover.</p> <p>We responded to the DMO review (review to be published Sept 2021) to highlight the need for centrally funded Local DMOs.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: That the Board member for Culture and City Centre becomes the Council's representative on the Board of Experience Oxfordshire, and consideration is given to how their portfolio title can better reflect their remit for tourism matters.</p>	<p>Not agreed. It was agreed that a senior officer, in this case, the Director of Development takes up the position on the board.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: That the Council has a named officer or</p>	<p>Yes. Director of Development with support from a range of</p>

<p>team to be recognised as the lead on tourism matters.</p>	<p>officers from the Regeneration and Economy Service.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: That the Council continues to encourage employers within the hospitality and tourism sectors in Oxford to pay the Oxford Living Wage, including the universities and colleges. Further, that the Council's promotional activity around the Oxford Living Wage incorporates customer facing marketing, which encourages conscience driven spending with Oxford Living Wage accredited shops and services.</p>	<p>This is already resourced in line with previous recommendations. Around 36 businesses have self-certified as OLW employers since the October Visitor economy update. It must be said that only a few of these new sign-ups have been visitor economy related businesses. Under the COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme, officers sought information from applicants as to whether they paid the Real Living Wage of more than £9.30 per hour as part of the evaluation process. 245 of the applicants stated they did pay at least £9.30 per hour, many of these Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. Officers will further encourage those that received grants to accredit formally on either or both schemes (RLW or OLW).</p> <p>Aside from the above, given the sector is struggling due to ongoing restrictions, the future focus is best applied to encouraging enterprises creating new jobs to pay OLW, particularly where they receive business support of any kind. The OLW remains a top priority in the Draft Economic Strategy.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: That the Council, having secured support from the County Council, develops an action plan to become a 'Coach Friendly' city, with key performance indicators and milestones, in accordance with the seven criteria set out by the Confederation of Passenger Transport. This should incorporate short, medium and long term strategic infrastructure plans for improving drop off and layover facilities in the City, linking with key wayfinding routes and providing sufficient facilities for passengers and coach drivers. Key stakeholders including the bus companies and the DMO should be engaged with through this process.</p>	<p>In part. <i>Both Councils are committed to improving the coach operation for the benefit of residents and visitors. We recognise that effective management of coaches can assist in reducing congestion, improving air quality and safety. There are number of challenges that need to be addressed before the Council could meet the seven objectives set by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT). However, we would be happy to engage the CPT in this process. It will probably require a joint city and county resource to be employed/identified for a defined period to be effective.</i></p> <p>Since the review, officers have since engaged with the Confederation of Passenger Transport to understand what is required to become a 'Coach friendly city'. The requirements</p>

	<p>were not immediately achievable without improvement to coach drop off and layover facilities. Following this, County council colleagues have been engaged at length to discuss and agree potential new drop off locations that can be clearly signposted to the industry. Funding was allocated in this year's budget to conduct a feasibility study jointly with the County Council on potential new locations. A survey of coach drivers and passengers was also prepared prior to the COVID pandemic, drawing on lessons from Cambridge. Due to the COVID response and recovery, this has not been advanced as yet, given the lack of coaches in the city.</p> <p>Plans to communicate the information required to drivers and coach firms were also being prepared for City, county and Experience Oxfordshire websites, but have been paused at present due to uncertain demand for future visitor coaches. Surveys would not be appropriate when future business survival is so uncertain for so many operators. We also need to consider links with the wider ZEZ being developed at present.</p> <p>City and county officers have continued to work on the coach drop off / layover issue since the last update and an additional temporary stop off point is being drawn up and consulted on with key stakeholders as a trial step towards reducing the pressure on traditional drop off points. Further updates on this work will be shared with this group as finalised. Officer resource is stretched across a range of economic recovery priorities and this would need to be managed as part of a work programme.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: That the Council makes representations to Oxfordshire County Council concerning the need to distinguish standalone transport and infrastructure plans for tourist coach access in future strategies and policy documents. Further, the Council takes an active role in raising the profile of the tourism sector within key strategic documents, such as the emerging</p>	<p>Yes. See above. Also This is being done as part of the usual policy consultation process, with the County Council preparing a new Transport and Movement Strategy for Oxford, which is intended to align with the Connecting Oxford proposals, which will prioritise public transport.</p>

Economic Growth Strategy and Local Transport Plan 5.	The Economic Development and City Centre strategies place clear priority on sustainable movement and connectivity for the long-term needs for the city's economy as well as a strategic priority to rebuild the visitor economy.
Recommendation 9: That the Council reviews and updates the current drop-off and layover advice for coach operators, as set out on the Council's website, and commits to more frequent engagement with the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the Coach Tourism Association.	Yes – See point 7, which covers this. The website has been reviewed and updated in the interim. See the link .
Recommendation 10: That the Council issues and resources a survey to tourist coach companies, in partnership with Experience Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council, to better understand; the number of coaches that enter the City, their movements, and barriers to making best use of existing facilities. This should broadly reflect the research approach taken in Cambridge	Yes – see point 7, which covers this. The survey has been drafted. The timing of publication needs to be agreed with our partners. The draft will need to be reviewed given the changes in operation brought about by COVID. For reasons outlined above, this will not take place in 2021 either because of the dramatic drop-off in visitor numbers and the change in type / country or area of origin of those who have been or are expected to visit Oxford this year.
Recommendation 11: That the Council remains involved in discussions with similar cities about the introduction of an overnight tourism levy, and supports national efforts to lobby for the ability to introduce such a levy. Any plan must capture all providers of commercial paid accommodation, not just hotels, and assurances are needed that the revenue generated will go towards improving the visitor experience. Consideration should be given to the Local Government Association's role in supporting this effort.	In part. We continue to monitor the situation. Whilst this is not high up the policy agenda for government at present, an LGA survey published in September 2020 suggested 53% of 2,023 UK residents polled for the Local Government Association (LGA) want their local authority to be able to charge a small fee to help support tourism in their area. We will see what opportunities may come forward as Devolution and Local Recovery Policies evolve in the coming months. Local tourism business needs will have to be carefully considered alongside this. The LGA also pushed for piloting of Levies in any Tourism Zones agreed. We continue to monitor the opportunity.
Recommendation 12: That the Council takes an active role in promoting and supporting digital innovations and tourism	In part. The City Council offered promotional or sales support to Experience Oxfordshire, who piloted the Oxford Pass, during the

<p>products that benefit the City and its residents. For example, the Oxford Pass, Wayfinding apps, the Sociability App and Refill Oxford. Official partner status should be sought if considered appropriate.</p>	<p>early phases with the Oxford Bus Company and Blenheim Palace. This offer of support was not required until after the pilot phase was complete, and it might have been expected to be scaled-up. The Oxford Sociability App developers were supported through the Smart Oxford Programme.</p> <p>Through 2020 and 2021, Oxford City Council, the Oxford Mail and others partnered to boost city centre businesses and cultural attractions by encouraging people to 'Rediscover Oxford'. The campaigns aimed to encourage local residents to visit their home city for day trips, and those from further afield within the UK to visit for staycations. The campaign also encouraged local residents to reengage with their city through cultural activities.</p> <p>The recent allocation of 'Welcome Back Fund' (WBF) to Oxford City Council will allow the city council to continue to work closely with partners on some of the interventions outlined in the recommendation. We also helped fund Modern Art Oxford to work with EO to fund 'Inspirational Oxfordshire' a campaign to promote the cultural sector locally.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13: That the Council writes to local Members of Parliament, inviting the support of Experience Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council, to make the case for the Discover England Fund to continue beyond 2019. Consideration should be given to whether this action is time appropriate in light of any parallel bid to become an official Tourism Zone as part of the UK Tourism Yes This will be coordinated with partners.</p>	<p>Yes. The Discover England Fund was already likely to be continued at the time this was first agreed. It has since benefitted Oxford directly. 'England's Historic Cities' consortium year 5 Discover England Fund (DEF) bid was successful with project top up/enhancement/development of nearly £200k. This is a project that enables Oxford to be promoted via VisitEngland with Experience Oxfordshire as the delivery partner on the ground. To date, this project has attracted investment of £1.5million and a link to the website can be found here https://www.englandoriginals.com</p> <p>Since this recommendation was made the government focus has been on recovery and restart, so other funds have been</p>

	<p>able to be used to continue support across Reopening High Streets Safely, Additional Restrictions Grants and WBF. For example, Oxford City Council used Reopening High Streets safely Fund to help match fund the project with £5,000, leveraging in significantly greater funds to promote Oxford. The focus of the project is as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance existing web platform, app and trade engagement • Pivot the project to promote the cities to the domestic markets (previously a USA only campaign) to ensure destinations benefit in the autumn/winter months • Target market is the millennials as the ones that have the most confidence to travel • Continued engagement with USA trade operators to attract return international businesses from spring 2021 • Add to existing product offer • Provide new video and photography assets. <p>We are also working with Experience Oxfordshire on best use of the recently announced Welcome Back Fund worth £134,950 to support local recovery activity, possibly including a significant domestic tourism campaign.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: That the Council reviews its current role in the administration and development of an annual events calendar, and seeks opportunities to be proactive and strategic in shaping a calendar that will increase the City's appeal to regional domestic visitors.</p>	<p>Not agreed at the time of the review.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: That the Council undertakes to revive the Community Toilet Scheme with local businesses, and that it is explicitly within the remit of the Council's new City Centre</p>	<p>In Part. Experience suggests that this was a challenging ask given the potential for ASB issues. The City Centre Manager (CCM) has considered the options available on the scheme and</p>

<p>Management function.</p>	<p>has fed this into the City Centre Action Plan work. If there is business interest and support as part of the strategy consultation, it will be pursued as a project for the action plan. The CCM has had initial conversations with businesses regarding the scheme. Again, officer resource will need to be prioritised accordingly given constraints. Finally external funding is being sought for additional officer resource to enable events programming with partners in the city.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: That the Cabinet commissions an Option report concerning the long term future provision of adequate public conveniences in the City Centre. This should be produced in consultation with Oxford Direct Services.</p>	<p>In part. A members Briefing was provided in October 2019 with a range of options reviewed. Whilst desirable, any new investment in this area will be paused due to budgetary constraints and lack of officer resource. Officers will look at where opportunities for provision can be aligned with future developments across the city centre.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: That provision is made in the Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2020/21 to include an allocation for updating and/or upgrading the current static maps and signage in the city centre. This should specifically include creative signage between the Westgate Centre, the Covered Market and Cornmarket Street. An ongoing revenue allocation should be provided for their maintenance and review.</p>	<p>It was agreed by Cabinet in June 2019, that this recommendation will be explored with the proviso that consideration is given to options that use existing space / street furniture / buildings, that anything done on this is future-proofed and that the emphasis is on innovation and takes into account the need to limit 'street clutter'. This project is identified a priority action in the Draft City centre Action Plan, assuming resource can be identified for delivery.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: That the Council considers the potential of the City's waterways as a visitor attraction and leisure asset in future policy making (e.g. planning and licensing) and investment decisions, and works to support the Oxford Waterways Project to create new tourism opportunities through regenerating and improving facilities (e.g. in particular, boating facilities).</p>	<p>Notable improvements include major towpath resurfacing works to improve cycle/walking and general leisure use of the waterways, new signage and some facilities improvement. Working closely with volunteers, a wide range of environmental improvements include habitat creation and tree planting. Working with the Environment Agency wrecked/abandoned boats have been disposed of to remove hazards and improve the public realm. Investment was made in delivering a tourism promotion campaign in partnership with Experience Oxfordshire over 2020. Work is ongoing to try and implement new visitor</p>

	<p>moorings at Folly Bridge.</p> <p>Safety and maintenance issues have taken priority in the intervening period. Addressing the health and safety concerns around our own waterway assets has been set as the number one priority for the new waterways officer. Finally, Waterways will be a proposed theme in the emerging City Centre Strategy under the overarching aim of Visitor Economy Recovery.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19: That the Council reviews to what extent codes of conduct exist for managing the behaviour of students at language schools (including the management of large groups in public spaces), and seeks to ensure they are being used to safeguard visitors, and satisfy the behaviour expectations of residents.</p>	<p>In part, noting significant resource challenges. Language school managers, police and Safer Oxford colleagues were involved with CCM in an initial meeting in Autumn 2019 with a view to scoping how this type of policy could work. Plans for twice yearly forums with follow up individual meetings were proposed. The COVID19 Pandemic has meant this work is currently paused as Language Schools face significant ongoing financial challenges. When it is appropriate to plan for the management the impact of the sector as the recommendation outlined in 2019, officers will pick this back up. We continue to monitor this.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20: That the Council makes representations to Oxford University, welcoming greater publicity concerning public opening hours for the colleges, and other practical steps to improve awareness of, and access to, the colleges.</p>	<p>Yes. Experience Oxfordshire provides details of the Opening Hours of Oxford's Colleges as does the University of Oxford.</p>

<p>Recommendation 21: That where business led opportunities arise; the Council should take a full and active role in leveraging in the influence of the business sector to improve the public realm and wider visitor offer.</p>	<p>Yes. We are pursuing this on an ongoing basis as part of developments coming forward e.g. Northgate Development, Oxpens and Station Masterplan, for example. Moreover, the City Centre COVID19 Recovery Plan, Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and its successors are being used to enable greater resting, active travel, and outdoor seating space to support people and businesses to return to visiting and trading in the city. The requirement for investment in public realm, has been supported in the OxLEP Economic Recovery Plan and draft City Centre Action Plan. In the pandemic response, we have also put in place outside dining and public spaces including Broad St Meadow, George St, St Michaels St, Cornmarket and many others.</p>
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To: Cabinet
Date: 15 September 2021
Report of: Finance and Performance Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)
Title of Report: Social Value in Procurement

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Finance and Performance Panel recommendations concerning the Scrutiny-commissioned report on Social Value in Procurement
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor James Fry, Chair of the Finance and Performance Panel
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020 - 24
Recommendation: That Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations made in the body of this report.	

Appendices
None

Introduction and overview

1. At its meeting on 02 August 2021, the Finance and Performance Panel considered a Scrutiny-commissioned progress report on Social Value in Procurement.
2. The Panel would like to thank Annette Osborne, Procurement Manager, for authoring and presenting the report, and for answering questions.

Summary

3. The presentation updated on progress against Scrutiny's previous recommendations around social value – the holding of a meeting amongst stakeholders and benchmarking the Council's activities around social value against other councils. The meeting had not taken place owing to Covid, but a lot of work had been done to improve access to the Council's procurement. It had proven more difficult than expected to compare between councils because of the way in which the information was recorded. However, against the four councils who were suitable and whose data enabled comparison Oxford outperformed or equalled those comparators, with 62.5% being spent locally, well above central government's target of 33%.¹
4. In addition to these areas, significant progress had been made elsewhere to develop social value through the Council's procurement. The Constitution had been amended, making it easier for the voluntary sector and cooperatives to deliver goods and services. A 'one quote' mechanism for work up to £10,000 had been implemented, and organisations which had tended not to engage with the procurement portal – SMEs and the voluntary sector – had been given greater opportunity to bid for work outside it. Within the Council's procurement templates the weighting of social value issues had been increased from 5% to 10%.
5. The Panel was also introduced to possible upcoming legislative changes arising from central government's Transforming Public Procurement and its Procurement Policy Statement and their impacts on the Council.
6. In response the Panel explored the responsibility and opportunity within procurement to develop jobs and supply chains in new industries, accountability in procurement decision-making, and the mechanics of choosing between different desirable criteria in different scenarios.
7. The Panel makes two recommendations, the first seeking that the Council works with other local councils and institutions to develop a common approach to social value in procurement, and the second to seek information to enable the Council to benchmark its performance against a wider pool of comparators.

A common local approach to social value in procurement

8. One of the key tenets of social value in procurement is the local 'money-multiplier' effect when money is spent with local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Local SMEs are likely to employ local workers, who spend their money in local shops and on local entertainment. Company owners are more likely to live locally also, meaning dividends are more likely to be re-spent in the local economy. And by virtue of being smaller companies, those dividends are likely to be spent rather than reinvested elsewhere. All are positive impacts which multiply the benefit to the local economy of locally-focused spending far beyond its original cash value. The changes made by the Council referenced

¹ The comparator councils were Southampton, Stoke, Birmingham and Croydon.

above to support and enable SMEs to get greater access to projects procured by the Council are therefore welcomed by the Panel.

9. One characteristic of SMEs, however, is that they have lower capacity to navigate multiple systems and procurement regimes. Lowering barriers to entry may enable some new entrants, but for others the time-investment relative to the expected returns may not be favourable meaning that the bar remains too high. Put in terms of risk and reward, an SME may not risk investing the time to become acquainted with procurement requirements for Council contracts as there may be too few contracts, and therefore too little chance of generating a return from the investment, to do so. Rather than lowering the risk (by making the cost of engaging with the Council's procurement process easier), an alternative and possibly more effective way of encouraging SMEs to become interested is to increase the potential reward. If multiple institutions shared the same approach, the potential pool of possible contracts for the same amount of time invested would be increased.
10. The Panel considers that brokering a shared approach locally to social value should be a strategic aim on the way to realising the Council's plans for an Inclusive Economy. It was heartened, therefore, to hear that work was being commenced locally to explore modifying central government's TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) calculator, which estimates the monetary value of different social value interventions, in order to create a locally-focused one, an 'OxTOMs'. This work to date has included a meeting with two external organisations (Raw and Owned by Oxford) to discuss social value in procurement, and an agreement to set up a meeting with the neighbouring councils, including the County Council, to develop an OxTOMs calculator. The Panel wishes to commend this as a good starting point and is keen that this work is completed, but would wish to see it as an important step in developing a shared approach across other local authorities and institutions, such as the universities and NHS Trusts, in the area.

Recommendation 1: That the Council works with other local authorities and institutions to develop a shared OxTOMs framework in the short term and a shared approach to social value in procurement locally in the longer term.

Comparing performance more broadly

11. The Panel was pleased to see the results of the comparisons between the Council and other similar councils. Although almost doubling central government's target is a sign that the Council's own performance is good, there is the potential that the government's own aspirations are low. It was more pleasing to the Panel to see Oxford comparing favourably amongst other councils who have committed to increasing social value through procurement. The Panel is of the view, however, that there is potential benefit in broadening the field of comparators in order to get a sense of how other organisations – be they private companies, central government or the NHS – compare, and using that knowledge further to improve the Council's own performance. It was suggested at the Panel

that the internal audit be used to look in depth at procurement. This is a good idea but the Panel understands that the internal auditor did undertake a deep-dive into procurement fairly recently and it may not be sensible to revisit this so soon. Nevertheless, it would be expected that they would hold useful information which could be shared to inform the Council of what is possible by different organisations.

Recommendation 2: That the Council requests from its internal auditor data to allow it to benchmark the social value generated through its procurement against a wider pool of comparators.

Further consideration

12. The Scrutiny Committee has requested to consider a report on Procurement more widely, which would likely touch on these issues. It is not expected, however, that a further dedicated report will be sought before the start of the next civic year.

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Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel made on 02/08/2021 concerning the Scrutiny-commissioned Social Value in Procurement report

Provided by Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, Councillor Ed Turner

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council works with other local authorities and institutions to develop a shared OxTOMs framework in the short term and a shared approach to social value in procurement locally in the longer term.		
2) That the Council requests from its internal auditor data to allow it to benchmark the social value generated through its procurement against a wider pool of comparators		

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To: Cabinet

Date: 15 September 2021

Report of: Finance and Performance Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Title of Report: QL Housing Management Software System Implementation

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Finance and Performance Panel recommendations concerning the Scrutiny-commissioned report on the QL system implementation
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor James Fry, Chair of the Finance and Performance Panel
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mike Rowley, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020 - 24
Recommendation: That Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations made in the body of this report.	

Appendices
None

Introduction and overview

1. At its meeting on 02 August 2021, the Finance and Performance Panel considered a Scrutiny-commissioned update report on the implementation of the QL system, a system to manage a broad range of Housing-related functions including the management of the Housing List, rent payments and repairs, as well as supporting the financial processes lying behind those activities.
2. The Panel would like to thank Paul Leo, Interim Executive Director of Housing, for authoring and presenting the report, and to Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services, Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager, and Phil

McGaskill, Revenues Manager, for attending the meeting and answering questions.

Summary

3. The Panel was introduced to the Scrutiny-commissioned report by Paul Leo, Interim Executive Director of Housing. This item was taken in confidential session so only a brief outline is presented here. A full account is available in the confidential minutes of the meeting. The main issues discussed concerned what had caused the problems in the first place, the scale of the disruption caused, and the remedial actions being taken.
4. The Panel makes two recommendations. These recommendations focus on understanding the full cost that the challenges relating to the implementation of the QL system, particularly the exemplary efforts by many staff, and finding ways to recognise and compensate their commitment to mitigating the negative impacts arising from the QL implementation to date.

Accounting for the full cost

5. Owing to the unanticipated difficulties of the QL system's implementation the Council has incurred additional costs to mitigate the consequences of those difficulties. Further costs have and will arise in fixing the causes of these problems. The Panel was informed of the Council's intention to bring in an external organisation to audit the implementation exercise and to quantify the costs arising from its problems. The Panel wishes to express its support for this intention. However, although when it asked for an estimate of the additional costs accruing from the difficulties of the implementation the Panel was provided with one, the scope of that cost was narrow: primarily the cost of bringing in extra staff to backfill roles directed to QL or increasing the hours of part time staff, and the payment of overtime. In discussion of the effect on the authority it is clear that this narrow definition does not come close to reflecting the true cost to the Council.
6. Given the breadth of its functions, the challenges of the implementation have affected many areas of the Council, with many staff at different levels involved in mitigating the negative impact. Most senior staff are not entitled to overtime payments, and yet it was reported that many directly involved have worked evenings and weekends over a sustained duration. These efforts are not measured in a narrow definition of financial cost. Likewise, the definition does not cover those who are not doing additional hours but have had the mitigation efforts prioritised over other areas of work. It was reported, for example, that senior finance staff have had to process payments to suppliers. The cost to the Council of doing this manifests itself in the opportunity cost, resources dedicated to one area mean they cannot be used in another. With staff at senior levels drawn into dealing with the extra work, and high numbers of more junior staff involved in checking the flow of data, this opportunity cost to the Council is significant.
7. The Panel's concern is that if, when its audit is undertaken by an external organisation, only the direct costs are tallied the true costs to the Council will be

significantly underestimated, and the immense collective effort of staff made to recover the situation effectively taken for granted. If the costs are under-counted through narrow definitions this could affect decision on the steps needed to avoid a repeat of the situation, which raises the risk of it happening again. The Panel therefore recommends that the lessons learnt exercise be undertaken on the basis of a broad understanding of the costs, including the indirect costs, associated with the implementation of the QL system.

Recommendation 1: That the Council, in a future exercise to learn lessons from this experience, includes within its audit an estimate of the indirect costs arising from the implementation of the QL system

8. Although it is touched on above, the Panel's view is that the Council is fortunate that many staff (including also at ODS) have gone above and beyond what is required of them to help in the recovery effort. Without these efforts the problems would have been far greater. The Council is indebted to these individuals, particularly as it was reported to the Panel that many had experienced significant stress on the back of their efforts. The Panel is very keen that this is recognised, which it is sure that the Cabinet is also keen to do.
9. One particular issue concerning the Panel is that staff making extraordinary efforts should not be penalised by internal policies which are not designed with such scenarios in mind. The Panel is not aware that the following are real problems, but they are possibilities.
10. Staff are expected not to carry over flex time and TOIL of more than 10 hours from month to month or forfeit it. It is very possible that some staff will have accrued significant TOIL and not been able to take it. The annual leave year also resets in October with a permitted carry-over of 5 days for each year, with any beyond that forfeited unless Heads of Service waive that cap. It is possible that some staff will have deferred (or possibly even cancelled) holiday during the summer holidays, a late point in the leave year, and may not easily be able to take that time before the end of September. In both cases those staff who have shown commitment above and beyond what it reasonably required could potentially be penalised for doing so. The Panel is keen that the Council works with union representatives to explore these and any similar issues and to find suitable ways to ensure that the commitment of staff is not unintentionally penalised by current policies or that suitable compensation is agreed.

Recommendation 2: That the Council recognises the exemplary commitment of staff across multiple functions in managing and mitigating the challenges posed by the QL implementation and works with union representatives to find ways to ensure that these officers are not penalised for their commitment.

Further consideration

11. The Scrutiny function is likely to defer further specific monitoring of this to the Audit and Governance Committee but expects that it will receive regular updates through its consideration of the Integrated Performance Reports.

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Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel made on 02/08/2021 concerning the Scrutiny-commissioned report on the QL Implementation

Provided by Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services, Councillor Mike Rowley

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council in a future lessons learnt exercise, includes within its audit an estimate of the cost the indirect costs arising from the implementation of the QL system		
2) That the Council recognises the exemplary commitment of staff across multiple functions in managing and mitigating the challenges posed by the implementation and works with union representatives to find ways to ensure that those staff are not penalised for their commitment.		

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Date of Cabinet meeting:

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Recommendations to Cabinet for Checking: EV Strategy Report

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Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>1) That when the Council commissions the EV infrastructure study it asks those who produce it to come up with a clear recommended prioritisation for EV infrastructure roll-out which takes account of the wider policy context of reducing overall private car ownership and use in the city. The prioritisation should be clear, widely understandable by and acceptable to the public and the report should indicate how it could be applied in practice.</p>		
<p>2) That the Council amends paragraph 16 of the report to remove reference to the Council already being committed to Connecting Oxford, and states instead that the council has agreed to further scheme and business case development.</p>		
<p>3) That the Council includes within the EV strategy an evolution plan for the ZEZ for when ceases to serve its congestion-reducing function due to increased EV take-up.</p>		
<p>4a) That the Council investigates the practicability of not partnering with or commissioning organisations relating to the EV strategy in which it would be unable to invest because of its ethical investment policy</p> <p>4b) That the Council amends its ethical investment policy to make explicit reference to exploitative mining practices and arms trading as proscribed</p>		

Recommendations to Cabinet for Checking: EV Strategy Report

activities.		
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