

# Agenda

## Cabinet

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 12 July 2023**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Long Room - Oxford Town Hall**

**For further information** please contact:

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

📞 01865 252367

✉ DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk

**Members of the public can attend to observe this meeting and:**

- may submit a question about any item for decision at the meeting in accordance with the [Cabinet's rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

Details of how City Councillors and members of the public may engage with this meeting are set out later in the agenda. Information about recording is set out later in the agenda and on the [website](#)

Please contact the Committee Services Officer to submit a question; to discuss recording the meeting; or with any other queries.

*View or subscribe to updates for agendas, reports and minutes at [mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk](http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk).*

*All public papers are available from the calendar link to this meeting once published*

## **Cabinet Members**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Councillor Susan Brown    | Leader, Inclusive Economy and Partnerships                        |
| Councillor Ed Turner      | Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management          |
| Councillor Shaista Aziz   | Cabinet Member for Safer Communities                              |
| Councillor Nigel Chapman  | Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies |
| Councillor Jemima Hunt    | Cabinet Member for Culture and Events                             |
| Councillor Chewe Munkonge | Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks                              |
| Councillor Anna Railton   | Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice         |
| Councillor Ajaz Rehman    | Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities                          |
| Councillor Linda Smith    | Cabinet Member for Housing  |
| Councillor Louise Upton   | Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities             |

Apologies received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting.

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

# Agenda

Items to be considered at this meeting in open session (part 1) and in confidential session (part 2).

Future items to be discussed by the Cabinet can be found on the Forward Plan which is available on the Council's [website](#)

|  | <b>Pages</b>   |
|--|----------------|
| <b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>   |                |
| <b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>  |                |
| <b>3 Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public</b>  |                |
| <b>4 Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda</b>   |                |
| <b>5 Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues</b>  |                |
| <b>6 Items raised by Cabinet Members</b>   |                |
| <b>7 Scrutiny reports</b>  |                |
| <p>The Climate &amp; Environment Panel met on 27 June, Scrutiny Committee will meet on 4 July, and the Housing &amp; Homelessness Panel will meet on 5 July 2023. The following reports are expected and will be published as a supplement, together with any other recommendations from those meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Retrofit Guidance for Historic Buildings Technical Advice Note</li><li>• Biodiversity Update</li><li>• Safeguarding Report 2022/23 and Safeguarding Policy 2023-26</li><li>• Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Charter / Pledge</li><li>• Citizen Experience Strategy</li><li>• Future Resettlement Commitments for New Refugee Families</li></ul> |                |
| <b>8 City Centre Land Regeneration Scheme</b>  | <b>15 - 22</b> |
| <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p>   |                |

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

The Executive Director (Development) has submitted a report to update Cabinet on progress of the procurement of a development partner to regenerate a council asset in the city centre; to recommend to Council to include additional budget for the scheme; and to seek approval to enter contracts with a preferred development partner and operator consortium to regenerate 38-40 George Street, Oxford.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the appointment of the preferred developer and operator as set out in the report for the reasons provided;
2. **Recommend to Council** the approval of an additional capital budget of £12.1 million for delivery of this regeneration scheme (see Confidential Appendix 1 for more details);
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Council's Head of Financial Services / Section 151 Officer; the Head of Law and Governance; and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to: (i) agree the final terms of, and enter into, the relevant contracts; (ii) agree the final scheme and submission of any planning application; and (iii) authorise any spending within the allocated budget (see Confidential Appendix 1 for more details).

## 9 **City Centre Land Transaction: St Aldate's Chambers**

23 - 28

**Lead Member:** Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)

The Executive Director (Development) has submitted a report to seek authority to let the whole or parts of St Aldate's Chambers.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / S151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to enter into lease(s) to let the whole or parts of St Aldate's Chambers to any tenant on terms which fulfil the requirements of S123 Local Government Act 1972.

## 10 **Oxpens Road Car Park Lease Renewal**

29 - 32

**Lead Member:** Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)

The Head of Corporate Property has submitted a report to seek

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

*Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX*

approval to renew the lease of the car park at Oxpens Road.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** entering into a new lease with OxWED for the Car Park at Oxpens Road; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Property in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management, the Head of Financial Services, and the Head of Law and Governance to agree the final terms and enter into the lease.

## 11 **Future Resettlement Commitments for New Refugee Families**

33 - 46

**Lead Member:** Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Linda Smith)

The Head of Housing has submitted a report to seek approval for future commitments for resettling new refugee families into Oxford, and to seek approval to go to tender to commission the provision of person centred support.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the resettlement of a minimum of 8 refugee families per year from any of the resettlement schemes highlighted in the report for a period of 5 years from 2023 to 2028, on the condition that the requirements in paragraph 21 of the report are consistently met to ensure scheme viability;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to agree the resettlement of additional refugees above this allocation (which will incur additional expenditure from Home Office grant funding for support provision) subject to sufficient grant funding;
3. **Approve** the use of Home Office grant funding of up to £1,313,840 (see Appendix 2) to procure the provision of 2 years of person centred support for each refugee family arriving in Oxford during the 5 year period between 2023 -2028;
4. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to approve the use of the Home Office grant funding to procure additional person centred support as required; and
5. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/S151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing to allocate the

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

approved budget and enter into contract(s) with a provider(s) for the provision of person centred support.

12 **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter/Pledge**

47 - 68

**Lead Member:** Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships (Councillor Susan Brown)

The Executive Director (Development) has submitted a report to seek Cabinet approval to participate in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter and endorsement of a series of Oxford City Council pledges.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** Oxford City Council's participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter; and
2. **Endorse** a series of Oxford City Council pledges that officers in respective service areas will deliver against, within existing committed budgets and for the duration of the current medium term financial strategy. Oxford City Council progress/performance against the pledges will be reported against annually and the results shared on Oxford City Council's website.

13 **Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2022/23 and Safeguarding Policy 2023-26**

69 - 116

**Lead Member:** Cabinet Member for Safer Communities (Councillor Shaista Aziz)

The Executive Director (Communities and People) has submitted a report on progress made on Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan for 2022/23 and to present an updated Safeguarding Policy for 2023-26.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Note** the key achievements of the Safeguarding work delivered through Oxford City Council during 2022/23;
2. **Approve** the Safeguarding Policy 2023-2026;
3. **Note** the Safeguarding Action Plan 2023/24; and
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, to make minor changes to the approved policy in order to continue its alignment with the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

Safeguarding Arrangements.

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 14 | <p><b>Review of the Street Naming and Numbering Policy</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities (Councillor Louise Upton)</p> <p>The Head of Planning Services has submitted a report to seek approval for a revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Approve</b> the draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy (at Appendix 1); and</li><li>2. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Planning Services to make any amendments to the draft Policy as a result of Cabinet's consideration of it.</li></ol>  | 117 - 146 |
| 15 | <p><b>Bus Shelter Infrastructure and Advertising Concession Contract</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p> <p>The Executive Director (Development) has submitted a report to (i) seek approval for the tender of a contract to manage the bus shelter infrastructure; and (ii) to seek delegated authority for the Head of Corporate Property to enter into a long-term contract with a selected supplier to maintain city bus shelters and manage advertising on the shelters.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Grant project approval</b> to tender a contract to manage bus shelter infrastructure maintenance and advertising via a concession contract;</li><li>2. <b>Delegate authority</b> the Executive Director (Development) to finalise the tender documents; and</li><li>3. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Corporate Property in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance, the Head of Financial Services and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to agree the final terms and enter into a contract with the preferred supplier.</li></ol> | 147 - 156 |

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

|    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 16 | <p><b>Citizen Experience Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies (Councillor Nigel Chapman)</p> <p>The Head of Business Improvement has submitted a report to seek approval for a new Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> the Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25 (at Appendix 1).</li> </ol>  | 157 - 216 |
| 17 | <p><b>Future Oxfordshire Partnership Terms of Reference &amp; Memorandum of Understanding</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships (Councillor Susan Brown)</p> <p>The Head of Law and Governance has submitted a report to propose amendments to the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s revised Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding. These will take effect following approval by each of the six Oxfordshire councils.</li> </ol>  | 217 - 240 |
| 18 | <p><b>Appointments to Outside Bodies for the 2023/24 Council Year</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships (Councillor Susan Brown)</p> <p>The Head of Law and Governance has submitted a report to agree appointments to Outside Bodies for the 2023/24 Council Year.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as shown in Appendices 1A – 1D and <b>note</b> the appointments to partnerships as detailed in Appendix 1E;</li> <li>2. <b>Note</b> the guidance for appointees as detailed in Appendix 2; and</li> <li>3. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and where appropriate with other group leaders, to make any changes to appointments to Outside Bodies as may be required during the course of the Council</li> </ol> | 241 - 258 |

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council’s agreement of recommendations.*



year 2023/24.

## 19 Minutes

259 - 266

**Recommendation:** That Cabinet resolves to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 as a true and accurate record.

## 20 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

9 August 2023

13 September 2023

18 October 2023

15 November 2023

13 December 2023

24 January 2024

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

## Matters Exempt from Publication

If Cabinet wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

*Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX*

**Part Two – matters exempt from publication**

|           |  |                  |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| <b>21</b> | <b>City Centre Land Regeneration Scheme - Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4</b> | <b>267 - 296</b> |
| <b>22</b> | <b>City Centre Land Transaction: St Aldate's Chambers Appendix 1</b>   | <b>297 - 300</b> |
| <b>23</b> | <b>Oxpens Car Park Lease Renewal - Appendix 1</b>                      | <b>301 - 302</b> |

*Decisions come into effect after the latest of the expiry of the post-meeting councillor call in period; reconsideration of a called-in decision; or Council's agreement of recommendations.*

*Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX*

## **Information for those attending**

### **Recording and reporting on meetings held in public**

Members of public and press can record, or report in other ways, the parts of the meeting open to the public. You are not required to indicate in advance but it helps if you notify the Committee Services Officer prior to the meeting so that they can inform the Chair and direct you to the best place to record.

The Council asks those recording the meeting:

- To follow the protocol which can be found on the Council's [website](#)
- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- 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.

#### **Members' Code – Other Registrable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing\*\* of one of your Other Registrable Interests\*\*\* then you must declare an

interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code – Non Registrable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests, then you must declare the interest.

You must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room, if you answer in the affirmative to this test:

“Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.”

Otherwise, you may stay in the room, take part in the discussion and vote.

\*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.

\*\* Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

\*\*\* Other Registrable Interests: a) any unpaid directorships b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority c) any Body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

## **How Oxford City Councillors and members of the public can engage at Cabinet**

### **Addresses and questions by members of the public (15 minutes in total)**

Members of the public can submit questions in writing about any item for decision at the meeting. Questions, stating the relevant agenda item, must be received by the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am two working days before the meeting (eg for a Tuesday meeting, the deadline would be 9.30am on the Friday before). Questions can be submitted either by letter or by email (to [cabinet@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet@oxford.gov.uk) ).

Answers to the questions will be provided in writing at the meeting; supplementary questions will not be allowed. If it is not possible to provide an answer at the meeting it will be included in the minutes that are published on the Council's website within 2 working days of the meeting.

The Chair has discretion in exceptional circumstances to agree that a submitted question or related statement (dealing with matters that appear on the agenda) can be asked verbally at the meeting. In these cases, the question and/or address is limited to 3 minutes, and will be answered verbally by the Chair or another Cabinet member or an officer of the Council. The text of any proposed address must be submitted within the same timescale as questions.

For this agenda item the Chair's decision is final.

### **Councillors speaking at meetings**

Oxford City councillors may, when the chair agrees, address the Cabinet on an item for decision on the agenda (other than on the minutes). The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one working day before the meeting, stating the relevant agenda items. An address may last for no more than three minutes. If an address is made, the Cabinet member who has political responsibility for the item for decision may respond or the Cabinet will have regard to the points raised in reaching its decision.

### **Councillors speaking on Neighbourhood issues (10 minutes in total)**

Any City Councillor can raise local issues on behalf of communities directly with the Cabinet. The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one working day before the meeting, giving outline details of the issue. Priority will be given to those members who have not already addressed the Cabinet within the year and in the order received. Issues can only be raised once unless otherwise agreed by the Cabinet. The Cabinet's responsibility will be to hear the issue and respond at the meeting, if possible, or arrange a written response within 10 working days.

### **Items raised by Cabinet members**

Such items must be submitted within the same timescale as questions and will be for discussion only and not for a Cabinet decision. Any item which requires a decision of the Cabinet will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Development)  
**Title of Report:** Proposal to contract with the preferred development partner & operator consortium to regenerate Council owned land at 38-40 George Street, Oxford OX1 2BL currently occupied by Odeon Cinemas

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To update Cabinet on progress of the procurement of a development partner to regenerate a council asset in the city centre;</li> <li>2. To recommend to Council to include additional budget for the scheme; and</li> <li>3. To seek approval to enter contracts with a preferred development partner and operator consortium to regenerate 38-40 George Street, Oxford.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | Yes   |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management  |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | <p>Enable an inclusive economy</p> <p>Pursue a zero carbon Oxford</p>   |
| <b>Policy Frameworks:</b>          | Oxford Local Plan; Oxford Economic Strategy and City Centre Action Plan; Asset Management Strategy  |

| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to: |  |
|---|--|
| 1.  | <b>Approve</b> the appointment of the preferred developer and operator as set out in this report for the reasons provided;   |
| 2.  | <b>Recommend</b> to Council the approval of an additional capital budget of £12.1 million for delivery of this regeneration scheme (see Confidential Appendix 1 for more details);   |
| 3.  | <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Council's Head of Financial Services / Section 151 Officer; the Head of Law and Governance; and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to: (i) agree the final terms of, and enter into, the relevant |

contracts; (ii) agree the final scheme and submission of any planning application; and (iii) authorise any spending within the allocated budget (see Confidential Appendix 1 for more details).

| <b>Appendices</b> |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Appendix 1        | Confidential - Officer Report  |
| Appendix 2        | Confidential - Risk Register   |
| Appendix 3        | Confidential – EQIA            |
| Appendix 4        | Confidential – Proposed Scheme |

## **Introduction**

1. In January 2022, Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director Development to agree the terms, route to market, and then select a preferred commercial partner for the potential redevelopment of council owned land in the city centre, as the current lease was due to expire in September 2024. As noted in that report any decision to enter into contract with the preferred commercial partner for the redevelopment of the land would require a separate Cabinet decision.
2. Following that decision, significant progress has been made following a procurement process. This report sets out the recommendations that have emerged from this process which has resulted in the preferred bidders' proposal for an aparthotel with community use on the ground floor.

## **Background to 38-40 George Street**

3. The property is currently occupied by the Odeon Cinema .The Council's lease to Odeon Cinemas, for the premises at 38-40 George St, expires in September 2024. Given the Council's responsibility to ensure continuity of income from this public asset, it has been desirable to explore other options including redevelopment to avoid an underperforming or empty asset.
4. There are risks with the current occupier of the property. Cinema footfall is down and has not reached pre-pandemic levels which does not support a vibrant city centre. In addition, the current cinema building has limited flexibility to accommodate other uses and tenants in future and so there is a risk to the stability of long term revenue from this Council asset. Given the state of the building, it is also anticipated the current tenant may request capital investment from the Council as part of any new lease negotiation. The property is one of the Council's investment assets and an increase in income helps support our wider corporate ambitions and protects services.
5. The Odeon Cinema was aware that the Council had regeneration ambitions and could have come forward with a proposal, but didn't engage in the process.
6. The site is a key city centre gateway, fronting both onto George St, and onto an important public open space in the city – Gloucester Green. The current building has extensive areas of blank façade at ground floor level and does not relate well to Gloucester Green. The regeneration of the site will increase active frontage to both Gloucester Green and George St providing place making benefits in this area.



## **Policy background**

### **Local Plan**

7. The adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036 seeks to support the vibrancy of the city centre through several policies. These relate to supporting town centre uses, sustainable tourism and cultural and social activities.
8. The plan identifies a key issue within the city is that a very large number of tourists make very short visits, often only for part of, or one day. The economic benefits to the city of these short visits are lower than for longer stays, and they do pose other challenges to the city. The plan identifies that proposals which facilitate longer stays will result in greater spend in Oxford's shops and restaurants which will in turn boost their viability and Oxford's economy. In addition to tourists the plan highlights that the short-stay accommodation market is very strong for business travellers in Oxford and provision of more accommodation would additionally help support the economic objectives of this Plan. This explains that when Oxford's hotel occupancy and room rates are compared with those of comparable cities, there is significant unmet demand and potential for growth in all varieties of short-stay accommodation.
9. The plan also seeks to support cultural and social activities. It highlights that Oxford has a rich infrastructure of cultural and social activities and venues, from theatres, museums, cinemas, galleries, sports and music venues to restaurants and pubs. These uses help to keep the centres vibrant and active and add greatly to the local quality of life. The plan puts in place policies that encourage such uses to develop, modernise and adapt for the benefit of the communities they serve.
10. The procurement of a developer has set policy V7 at the forefront of consideration. The procurement has required compliance with policy V7 to include a social and cultural use at ground floor.

### **Oxford Economic Strategy**

11. Oxford's Economic Strategy identifies the City Centre as a key area of focus. It identifies several areas to consider that are explored further in the City Centre Action plan. Among these are to:
  - Promote and facilitate more overnight visitor stays, increasing their enjoyment of our city, while maximising the contribution to the local economy
  - Prioritise city centre workspace for small and creative businesses
  - Innovate with publicly owned city centre assets to provide more flexible and progressive leases to support inclusive economy ambitions
  - Diversify uses in the heart of city
  - Support the night time economy

### **City Centre Action Plan**

12. The City Centre Action Plan sets out three key areas of focus to ensure the city centre continues to perform for the social, economic and environmental good of Oxford and its residents.

13. Several opportunities for the city centre. Some that are relevant to this site include:

- **Accommodate a wider range of uses across sectors.** A strong and increasing demand for city centre space in the science, tech, co-operative and cultural sectors provides an opportunity to explore new types of space and leases.
- **Increase visitor stays.** Identify further opportunities to support longer visitor stays through provision and promotion of more overnight accommodation alongside the diversification of attractions and experiences
- **Improve safety and ambience.** Improve the safety and ambience of the city, creating a centre that is safe and inclusive for all.
- **Promote distinctive development.** Development should contribute to the city's unique sense of place

14. This leads to four key workstream areas:

- Getting the mix right
- Getting the basics right
- Public realm and animation
- Connectivity and access

15. This site presents an opportunity to address several of the ambitions within getting the mix right, and public realm, and animation workstreams. Oxford city centre has a strong profile of shops and businesses, attracting national brands, as well as strengths in knowledge, innovation, creative and cultural sectors. However, there is a lack of community gathering spaces and live music venues and an undersupply of accommodation to support longer visitor stays. There is an opportunity to diversify the centre's mix of uses, providing new and flexible spaces for businesses, community, and night time offer.

16. The plan identifies George Street and Gloucester Green as a key opportunity area to improve activation and diversification. The current site has limited activation and makes a poor contribution to George Street and Gloucester Green. The redevelopment of the site provides the opportunity to enhance activation and public realm in this part of the city.

### **Asset management plan**

17. The Council's Asset Management Plan identifies the need to diversify the council portfolio including within the city centre in order to promote efficient use of buildings and support the city centre economy.

## **Project Objectives**

18. The policy background has informed a set of project objectives that were reflected in the procurement process.
  - Scheme to align with planning policy
  - Provide a secure income stream
  - Support the City Centre, including improved activation of George St and Gloucester Green
19. Key Council priorities including supporting a zero carbon Oxford, and delivering social value in line with Oxford's Themes, Outcomes, and Measures were also embedded in the procurement process.
20. The procurement process was to find bidding consortiums consisting of both a development partner and operator. Further details on the procurement process, along with details of the preferred development partner, the proposed tenant, and funding arrangements are contained within the Confidential Appendix 1

## **The Procurement Process & Preferred Bidder's Proposal for the City Centre Site**

21. Bidding consortiums were asked to provide a range of material including:
  - a designed scheme, planning strategy, and risk assessed programme making up the quality aspects of the scoring
  - financial offer and legal markup of key documents
  - social value proposals
22. Within the statutory Find a Tender Scheme (FTS) procurement process, 4 qualifying bidding consortiums were taken from the initial qualification (SQ) stage in September 2022, to the competitive dialogue stage of the procurement process in Nov 2022 – March 2023. The proposals received and dialogued included a range of building uses: hotel, student accommodation, aparthotel, and office/medical; all including the required replacement cultural/community use space on the ground floor.
23. During the dialogue stages two bidders fell away. This left the two strongest bidders proceeding to Final Solutions stage.
24. The highest scoring proposed scheme provides an aparthotel, with community space on the ground floor. Aparthotels are used by a wide range of visitors, tourists, and workers, and provide flexible short term accommodation options This has strong regeneration benefits and provides a financially viable scheme with a range of clear benefits being delivered in line with the City's Economic Strategy and City Centre Action Plan.
25. Due to commercial sensitivity, further information and analysis of the preferred bidder's proposal is contained in Confidential Appendices 1-4. However, the headline benefits of the highest scoring bidder's proposal are detailed below:
26. The proposal seeks to regenerate the site by development of a modern new build property that will extend the life of the on-site asset. The current building is unfit for other commercial uses in its current format.

27. The preferred bidder's proposal strongly aligns with relevant Local Plan policies and has taken considerable account of the constraints and opportunities of this location. It provides active frontage to George Street and Gloucester Green as well as providing for a flexible community space complemented by an Aparthotel that will significantly contribute to the objectives of the Local Plan and City Centre Action Plan to increase overnight stays. Aparthotel studios are used by a wide range of visitors, and tourists, and also workers employed on short term projects / shows in the city. Aparthotel users will support adjacent city centre businesses through using a wide range of local food and beverage and retail businesses. The community space on the ground floor increases the amount of activated frontages on George Street, and Gloucester Green. It is proposed to include affordable, hireable space for community groups in the heart of the city centre, and will have uses operating through daytime and into the evening.
28. The proposal commits to meeting the adopted Local Plan policy requirements for sustainable design and construction and identifies opportunities for going beyond these requirements. The bidder explored in detail whether the building could be reused but it was not feasible.
29. The preferred bidder's proposal provides rental income over a long lease term which also protects the ongoing economic sustainability of the City Centre; there is consistent demand for hotel / aparthotel accommodation in the city centre and the use is considered more sustainable than a cinema use at present.
30. In summary, the economic and place-making benefits to the city from this regeneration scheme; providing aparthotel to support longer stays that in turn support the local day and night economy, together with the new city centre community space, and a more sustainable and future proofed building are considered, on balance, to outweigh the loss of the cinema on this site. The cinema within the Westgate centre as well as other existing cinemas within the city e.g. the Phoenix Picturehouse in Jericho, the Ultimate Picture Palace on the Cowley Road and the Vue cinema at the Kassam Stadium provide a range of options for residents and visitors. As a comparison the cinema provision without the Odeon will be in line with York and Cambridge.
31. Odeon have announced the closure of the Magdalen Street cinema. This was not discussed with the Council but may be something that they review.
32. The proposal commits social value through construction but also, due to the long lease, provides social value commitments throughout the lease term. For example, the proposal includes a commitment to pay the Oxford Living Wage to workers during the construction phase, and long term through the operational phase; as well as delivery of a rolling programme of apprenticeships through the life of the project.

### **Milestones and Programme**

33. The programme is dependent on the preferred bidder's proposal and funding for the scheme, being approved by Cabinet and Full Council in July 2023. This is to give the necessary assurance to the preferred bidder to enable them to progress project work in line with the milestones below:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Developer/operator consortium Cabinet approval | 12 July 2023 |
| Approval of funding at Full Council            | 17 July 2023 |
| Complete due diligence                         | Aug 2023     |
| Enter into Contract with the preferred bidder  | Aug/Sep 2023 |
| Complete planning approval process             | June 2024    |
| Construction works on site                     | 2025-2027    |

## **Financial implications**

34. Confidential financial details are provided in the Confidential Appendix 1. However, the proposed scheme provides on acceptable return for the Council's investment, more importantly it provides a new modern building which future proofs the rental income without the need for further investment by way of repairs and maintenance.
35. The Council has to comply with PWLB lending criteria for all of its capital projects in order to be able to access PWLB finance. This project involves the regeneration of a large building in the City Centre and also delivers a number of other policy objectives as outlined in the report. The scheme therefore complies with PWLB criteria as fulfilling both the regeneration activity criteria and service delivery through the other policy objectives that are delivered.

### Financial Treatment

36. The rental income from the tenant will be treated as revenue as the lease will be classified as an operational lease. The decision over whether a lease transaction is treated as a finance lease or an operating lease depends on the substance of the transaction rather than the form of the contract. This decision is based on the long term ownership of the asset, how much of the economic life of the asset is transferred under the lease and whether the asset is so specialised that only the lessee can realistic use the asset. The development is on a City Centre site owned by the Council, developed by a developer under contract and subsequently leased out to an operator on a full repairing long term lease. The lease will not transfer ownership of the asset at the end of the lease and there will be no option to purchase; the Council intends to retain ownership as part of its strategic City Centre asset holdings. The economic life of the development is expected to be in excess of 100 years and the lease length is far less than the expected life of the asset. The asset being constructed is an Apart-hotel and there are many operators who could operate the asset without modifications. Based on these details, this arrangement is therefore considered to be an operating lease.

### Funding required for the City Centre redevelopment scheme

37. Funding for regeneration of Council assets is currently allocated in the MTFs, and so the additional funding that requires approval is £12.1M. Detail of the financial aspects of the funding is contained at Appendix 1
38. Project costs will be financed through Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing, subject to capital financing being undertaken at a corporate level rather than by individual scheme. However, the provisions of the agreement encompass sufficient

flexibility to allow the Council to refinance its position at a later juncture in the project if required.

39. For appraisal purposes, borrowing has been modelled over a 50 year period using an interest rate of 3.4% for the long term borrowing and has been sensitivity tested with an additional 1% interest rate cost.
40. Cabinet is therefore now asked to recommend that Council approve the additional funding for delivery of this project. Changes in budget to be delegated to the Executive Director Development, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management.

### **Legal issues**

41. The Council's legal team has been fully involved in the procurement process , additional legal advice continues to be gained from Browne Jacobson LLP

### **Level of risk**

42. Refer to the attached Appendix 2 – Confidential Risk Register.

### **Equalities impact**

43. This regeneration project will involve the creation of a new building to be leased out to support the City Centre and to generate additional revenue income for funding Council services. An assessment of the foreseen direct and indirect impacts on protected groups is shown in the EQIA at Appendix 3.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

44. This key decision will assist delivery of the Council's priority to pursue a zero carbon Oxford and the council's environmental sustainability team have been engaged through the procurement process in feedback through dialogue stages. The bidders explored options to retain the building but this was not economically feasible and would not have delivered the wider regeneration benefits. However, the preferred bidder has set out how they will seek to minimise the environmental impact of the building through reuse of materials where possible. The proposal meets the adopted Local Plan policies and seeks to exceed them in some areas.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Carri Unwin  |
| Job title                  | Regeneration Manager   |
| Service area or department | Regeneration and Economy                                       |
| Telephone                  | 01865 529012   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:cunwin@oxford.gov.uk">cunwin@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Development)  
**Title of Report:** City Centre Land Transaction

## Summary and recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To seek authority to let the whole or parts of St Aldate's Chambers

**Key decision:** Yes

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management

**Corporate Priority:** Enable an Inclusive Economy

**Policy Framework:** Council Strategy 2020 - 24

## Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / S151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to enter into lease(s) to let the whole or parts of St Aldate's Chambers to any tenant on terms which fulfil the requirements of S123 Local Government Act 1972.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 (Confidential) City Centre Land Transaction background and options  
 Appendix 2 Risk Register

## Introduction and background

1. St Aldate's Chambers (SAC) is now vacant following the consolidation of the Council's office space within the Town Hall and relocation of staff.
2. The letting of SAC is part of a number of measures that the Council is taking in order to reduce cost, secure income, and protect services. Staff have now been relocated to the Town Hall in line with the Asset Management strategy supporting the efficient use of Council assets. Works to the Town Hall have already taken place to ensure an

appropriate working environment and further improvements are envisaged over coming years.

3. A cabinet decision was taken in September 2022 to agree a letting and to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development in consultation to enter into lease(s) to let the whole of SAC in line with the strategy set out in a confidential appendix.
4. A previous letting to a tenant of the whole of SAC was progressing in 2022 but, despite officer discussions and assurances provided to the Council, the letting fell through in February 2023.
5. Officers had already returned the property to the market and a number of offers have been received. See Confidential Appendix 1 for detail.
6. Authority is now sought from Cabinet to widen the officer delegation to enter into lease(s) to let the whole or parts of SAC to any tenant on terms which fulfil the requirements of s.123 Local Government Act 1972. This would include the recommended offer as set out in Appendix 1, which is for the building to be let in its entirety, but also other offers that fulfil these requirements should the current deal not go ahead as planned.

#### **SAC in context of Oxford office market**

7. The current standard city centre office requirement is for 4,000 – 5,000 sq ft of space, grade A specification and in “walk in” condition. Occupier demand for SAC, which extends to c.40,000 sq ft and below grade A specification, is a more specific HQ style building requirement with a tenant looking for a much larger floor area and willing to undertake significant works. These tenant requirements are far fewer and, although SAC offers the only building of this type currently in the market, it is important to secure the current interest given the financial benefits a letting of whole provides.
8. The city centre office rents remain resilient with demand still outstripping supply. North Bailey House, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford is understood to be under offer as a whole (c.20,000 sq ft) at £62.50 psf. This is a newly refurbished property offering Grade A office specification.
9. Park Central, Park End Street is a current off market office proposition. It is understood that the top floor is under offer at £60.00 psf with a further tenant discussing terms at ground and first.

#### **Financial implications**

10. A letting will provide a significant revenue to support the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan. Details of the effect of the proposal are in the Confidential Appendix 1.

#### **Legal issues**

11. Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 empowers a local authority to dispose of land, by way of lease or sale. The disposal of land cannot be for a consideration less than the best that can be reasonably obtained, unless the consent of the Secretary of State is obtained. The proposal is in line with s.123 requirements.



**Level of risk**

12. A risk register is attached at Appendix 2.

**Equalities impact**

13. This will be a property transaction with the Equalities Impact being neutral.

**Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

14. The letting supports the consolidation of staff into a single building (Town Hall) which reduces the council’s footprint and energy requirements. Opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the building will be explored and worked through with the tenant including tenant fit out works (materials used, mechanical and engineering systems, heating and cooling, lighting) which will need to be approved by the council prior to any works commencing. Lease documentation will also provide an opportunity to include relevant sustainability clauses and detail landlord and tenant obligations that could impact carbon and environmental responsibilities.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Alex Miller  |
| Job title                  | Transaction Manager  |
| Service area or department | Corporate Property   |
| Telephone                  | 01865 335849   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:amiller@oxford.gov.uk">amiller@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

This page is intentionally left blank

|  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Appendix 2 - Risk Register</b>      |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Last Updated                           | 04.06.23 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Updated By                             | AM       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Revision                               | 04.06.23 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Leasing of St Aldate's Chambers</b> |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| NO. | Date Raised | Risk Type | Risk Category                | Risk Description  | Current Risk - Probability | Current Risk Impact | Current Risk Score | Risk Response | Mitigating Actions   | Action Due Date | Risk Owner | Risk Status | Comments |
|-----|-------------|-----------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|--|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| 1   | 04.06.2023  | Threat    | Economic, financial & Market | Recommended tenant pulls out of letting prior to completion                               | 2                          | 4                   | 8                  | Accept        | Commercial agents are appointed by both Council and tenant and should problem arise solutions would try to be worked through. Currently there is also a second party who could be contacted again. Solicitors will also be instructed to complete documentation as quickly as possible and regular meetings will take place. | Ongoing         | AM         | Open        |          |
| 2   | 04.06.2023  | Threat    | Economic, financial & Market | Recommended tenant tries to chip terms once legals instructed.                            | 3                          | 3                   | 9                  | Accept        | The recommended tenant has already undertaken building survey and inspected with a number of fit out contractors so they are fully aware of the costs involved in the project. Currently there is also a second party who could be contacted again should "chip" occur and not be resolved.                                  | Ongoing         | AM         | Open        |          |
| 3   | 04.06.2023  | Threat    | Economic, financial & Market | Recommended tenant delays completion of legal documentation beyond financial assumptions. | 2                          | 3                   | 6                  | Accept        | Commercial agents are appointed by both Council and tenant and should problem arise solutions would try to be worked through. Solicitors will also be instructed to complete documentation as quickly as possible and regular meetings will take place. Regular updates to finance on progress of legal documentation.       | Ongoing         | AM         | Open        |          |

27

| Risk Matrix |  |  |  |  |                   |               |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|-------------------|---------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|--|--|--|
|             |  |  |  |  | Probability       |               |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Almost certain    | 5             | 10    | 15       | 20    | 25     |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Likely            | 4             | 8     | 12       | 16    | 20     |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Possible          | 3             | 6     | 9        | 12    | 15     |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Unlikely          | 2             | 4     | 6        | 8     | 10     |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Rare              | 1             | 2     | 3        | 4     | 5      |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Impact            | Insignificant | Minor | Moderate | Major | Severe |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | Probability       | Impact        |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | .1 Rare           | .1 Negligible |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | .2 Unlikely       | .2 Minor      |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | .3 Possible       | .3 Moderate   |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | .4 Likely         | .4 Major      |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |  | .5 Almost certain | .5 Severe     |       |          |       |        |  |  |  |

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Property  
**Title of Report:** Renewal of Lease of Car Park at Oxpens Road

| Summary and recommendations |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>   | To seek approval to renew the lease of the car park at Oxpens Road             |
| <b>Key decision:</b>        | Yes  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>      | Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>  | Enabling an Inclusive Economy  |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>    | Council Strategy 2020-24   |

| Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to: |  |
|--|--|
| 1.   | <b>Approve</b> entering into a new lease with OxWED for the Car Park at Oxpens Road; and   |
| 2.   | <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Corporate Property in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management, the Head of Financial Services, and the Head of Law and Governance to agree the final terms and enter into the lease. |

| Appendices                |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Appendix 1 (Confidential) | Lease Terms and Financial Implications |
| Appendix 2                | Risk Register                          |

## Introduction and background

1. OxWED is a partnership between Oxford City Council and Nuffield College, and it is progressing the redevelopment of the land on Oxpens Road, which includes the car park currently under the management of the Council.
2. The Council currently manages the Oxpens Car Park on behalf of OxWED. It is intended that this arrangement will continue until the redevelopment of the site.

3. The site is in the freehold ownership of OxWED and the Council has a lease over the car park. The Council entered into the initial lease in 2019 and it expired in April 2022. The parties have agreed terms for a lease renewal which are set out in Exempt Appendix 1 – Not for Publication
4. While the negotiations for the renewal have been underway, the terms of the 2019 lease have continued to cover the period between April 2022 and the date of completion of the new lease. The new lease will be backdated upon completion

**Financial implications**

5. Please see Exempt Appendix 1 – not for publication  
Should the Council opt not to enter into the new lease the income will cease. Within the budget it is assumed that the Council will continue to receive income from this car park until at least March 2024 in line with the current OxWED redevelopment programme.

**Legal issues**

6. The documents are drafted and ready to be finalised and completed subject to this approval.

**Risk Register**

7. See Appendix 2.

**Conclusion**

8. It is recommended that approval is granted to allow the Council to enter into the lease. This will allow the Council to continue to manage the Car Park for the benefit of the city centre while the development progresses.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Emma Gubbins   |
| Job title                  | Corporate Asset Lead   |
| Service area or department | Corporate Property   |
| Telephone                  | 07483011033  |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:Egubbins@oxford.gov.uk">Egubbins@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

Appendix 2 - Risk Register

Oxpens Car Park - Lease Renewal

As at: 3rd January 2023

| Ref | Title                                 | Risk Description  | Opp / Threat | Cause                            | Consequence  | Risk Treatment | Date Raised | Owner        | Gross |   | Current |   |       | Target |   | Comments | Control / Mitigation Description                    | Date Due | Action Status | % Progress | Action Owner |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------------------------|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------|---|---------|---|-------|--------|---|----------|---|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
|     |                                       |   |              |                                  |  |                |             |              | P     | I | P       | I | Score | P      | I |          |   |          |               |            |              |
|     | Do not proceed with the lease renewal | The Council does not have to renew the lease on this Car Park | Threat       | Not entering into the new lease. | Loss of income to OCC and loss of control of one of the city centre car parks. | Avoid          | 03/01/23    | Emma Gubbins | 2     | 5 | 2       | 5 | 10    | 1      | 1 |          | Renew the lease in line with the terms recommended. | 03/01/23 | In Progress   | 90%        | Emma Gubbins |

This page is intentionally left blank



**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Housing  
**Title of Report:** Future resettlement commitments for new refugee families

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>          | To seek approval for future commitments for resettling new refugee families into Oxford and seek approval to go to tender to commission the provision of person centred support |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | Yes   |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet member for Housing  |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | Deliver More Affordable Housing and Support Thriving Communities  |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>           | Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028   |

| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to: |   |
|---|---|
| 1.  | <b>Approve</b> the resettlement of a minimum of 8 refugee families per year from any of the resettlement schemes highlighted in this report for a period of 5 years from 2023 to 2028, on the condition that the requirements in paragraph 21 of this report are consistently met to ensure scheme viability;                                 |
| 2.  | <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to agree the resettlement of additional refugees above this allocation (which will incur additional expenditure from Home Office grant funding for support provision) subject to sufficient grant funding; |
| 3.  | <b>Approve</b> the use of Home Office grant funding of up to £1,313,840 (see Appendix 2) to procure the provision of 2 years of person centred support for each refugee family arriving in Oxford during the 5 year period between 2023 -2028;  |
| 4.  | <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to approve the use of the Home Office grant funding to procure additional person centred support as required; and  |

5. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/S151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing to allocate the approved budget and enter into contract(s) with a provider(s) for the provision of person centred support.

**Appendices**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Home Office Funding Schedule   |
| Appendix 2 | Financial modelling for future refugee resettlement  |
| Appendix 3 | Family funding comparison over 5 years for new United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) based on proposed new person centred model (updated 08/07/21) |
| Appendix 4 | Risk Register  |

**Introduction and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to continue the Council’s resettlement programme to potentially resettle a further minimum of 40 families over the next 5 year period and includes the approval of budget provision to procure wrap around support provision for the households.
2. There is an ongoing need to resettle refugee families as globally there are circa 100 million forcibly displaced people. There are currently circa 7000 Afghan refugees that continue to live in bridging hotels across the UK and the Government has committed to resettling 20,000 Afghan refugees over a 3 year period. This requires all local authorities to consider and plan for the successful resettlement of new households into our area.
3. Since December 2015 Oxford City Council has successfully resettled 47 refugee families that have arrived through government resettlement schemes namely Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS), Afghan Relocations and Allocations Policy (ARAP), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) with the last family of our current commitment due to arrive in June 2023.
4. Oxfordshire has been recognised as one of the few counties that continue to support the resettling of refugees within UKRS. Oxford City Council’s resettlement programme has proved its success by assisting refugees to become financially independent to the extent that 66% of the 30 SVPRS families and 80% of the 10 Afghan families have at least one person in employment. This report outlines the potential to continue and build on this work in the coming years by resettling more households.

**Context of wider asylum, migrant & refugee challenges in Oxfordshire**

5. There are many challenges in supporting refugees and asylum seekers as more people seek refuge in the UK and Oxford from war and crisis in other parts of the world. This context is important as we consider new resettlement commitments, alongside the pressures upon resources of housing, support, community and specialist services.

6. At present the Home Office have commissioned the Kassam Stadium Hotel to be used as Asylum Seeker Contingency accommodation where it currently hosts approximately 220 asylum seekers who are currently awaiting the outcome of their respective asylum claims. Once asylum has been granted, there is potential for some individuals to remain in or around the city and will therefore be looking to seek accommodation and support locally, including support for housing from the City Council.
7. Since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Oxford City has welcomed 424 Ukrainian guests as of 21<sup>st</sup> of April, through hosting arrangements. 39 Ukrainian households have moved on into private rent/social housing, some of those moves supported by Oxford City Council, some entirely independent. While Oxford has welcomed Ukrainian refugees this inevitably puts further demand on the housing market.
8. Oxford City Council is working collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council and District Councils to implement and deliver the Countywide Re-matching Service for the Homes for Ukraine project, moving those who have to leave hosting arrangements to new accommodation, to minimise homeless presentations across all City and Districts in Oxfordshire. Countywide work is also ongoing to increase the supply of longer term accommodation for Ukrainian guests and Afghan bridging hotel families, and to implement a support contract to support Ukrainian families.
9. Afghan households in bridging hotel nationally are being moved on by central government, and therefore are being encouraged to self-find their own accommodation. We are already receiving enquiries of support from this cohort.
10. Oxford city has a population of circa 165,000, of which, approximately 56,000 are migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. The Council has already made a commitment to renew its City of Sanctuary accreditation and make any necessary adaptations to its practice to meet the criteria, which will lead it to become a more accessible and welcoming organisation for all migrant cohorts.

### **Why make further refugee resettlement commitments?**

11. Within this difficult national and local context, the Council needs to consider what its plans are for the future of refugee resettlement as there continues to be a growing need to offer sanctuary to those who are victims of war, persecution and the impacts of a changing climate for the foreseeable future.
12. There is a strong ongoing case to take further cohorts of households, seeing as welcoming refugee families into our community meets the Council's obligations of being an Authority of Sanctuary and aligns to our corporate strategy priorities. In addition, the government resettlement schemes are grant funded by the Home Office, therefore the success that the Council has had with resettling 47 families has not incurred a financial burden to the Council and the community.
13. The shared learning of welcoming refugee families has allowed the Council to use the resettlement grant funding to develop and deliver projects such as:
  - a. School Advocacy project – helping parents understand and be part of their child's educational journey.
  - b. Refugee Employment Support Programme – Due to be launched in June 2023, this will be a pilot project which will be a co-produced, bespoke service to assist refugees into their aspired employment pathway.

- c. Refugee Counselling Service – dedicated counselling service for refugees who have been impacted by the effects of trauma which hinders their progress into leading a fulfilling life.
14. The success that has been attained so far with the 17 (UKRS/Afghan) families that have recently arrived here is that 13 of the families do not require additional financial help as they are able to cover their rent through their benefit and/or employment income. The remaining 4 families are claiming Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) which is paid for by grant funding received for the duration of the programme. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the resettlement support to help the families become financially independent.

### **A new refugee resettlement programme for Oxford**

15. Officers have planned for a new 5 year programme for refugee resettlement from any of the Home Office schemes such as Afghan Relocations and Allocations Policy (ARAP), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). It is planned to resettle a minimum of 8 households in the City each year, where the Council will be housing the households in affordable private rented accommodation, with wrap around support for each household which is procured by the Council and all funded via the Home Office grant.
16. As part of this planning, officers have considered the optimum number of households to resettle to deliver in a new resettlement programme, both by using current experience as per financial modelling in Appendix 2, and as per previous modelling comparison (Appendix 3 – Extract from SVPRS/UKRS Brief Update July 2021); 8 families proved to be the most financially viable and would allow for the scheme to be completely self-financing, while still being an ambitious programme that would make a huge difference for refugee households.
17. The Council would receive grant funding of £20,520 per person for each household that it resettles in Oxford through the programme. This figure has not changed since the SVPRS programme commenced in 2015 and it is the same for all resettlement schemes listed above, whether a 3 year or 5 year programme.
18. Appendix 2 illustrates the grant income and expenditure on households, for the UKRS and Afghan families that have arrived since Dec 2021. The first year is the largest expenditure as that includes housing setup costs. The support and resource costs have been based on current costs, and does not factor increase in cost of living.
19. Officers are proposing a 5 year programme of resettlement. The opportunity of a new tender to commission support provision for a longer term will enable design refinement of support delivery encouraging the support provider and stakeholder partners to be able to make efficiencies, and help the planning of local provision giving job security and stability for staff, which in turn helps recruitment and retention.
20. A longer programme of delivery also allows for new longer term investments and opportunities of collaborative working with landlords and partners respectively, improving efficiency of council resources to the benefit of both the refugee community and the wider community in the city.

21. To ensure that there are adequate safeguards in place over a 5 year programme, our commitment will only continue if the following conditions are met, that government funding continues to support the schemes and suitable, and viable private rented accommodation can be secured to resettle households. Should an excess of 8 properties per year be secured, that excess will contribute to the following year's commitment. There will be an annual review of programme viability.

### **Options available**

22. Recommendation –To resettle a minimum of 8 refugee families per year for as long as financially viable for up to 5 years, and for budget provision made available to proceed with the open tender process to secure a support provider to deliver person centred support for new family arrivals.
23. Do nothing – The Council would not facilitate any resettlement in the city, but resettlement is likely to occur anyway through household choice and Home Office decisions, and the Council would not benefit from grant funding to support households. Potential for homelessness presentations from resettling households, that the Council may under its' statutory duties be obliged to rehouse. It would also be perceived that the council will be not fulfilling its commitment to becoming an Authority of Sanctuary and not aligned to its strategic priorities.

### **Financial implications.**

24. There are no budget implications to the Council as the resettlement schemes are modelled and covered by grant provision. To date, there have been no overspend and there is robust mitigation and risk assessment in place to manage the risk of overspend. The Council's successful previous experience has required it to secure properties with upfront costs as per Appendix 2 and to cover costs of the support provision which is currently paid quarterly in arrears. Recommendation 2 will be completely funded by Home Office grant funding. Should there be a need to relieve initial pressure of project setup costs or inflationary pressures, there is an existing underspend on the current programme that can be utilised that is held back and ring fenced for use for refugee resettlement.
25. Appendix 2 has identified a potential surplus and potential allocation of funds for rent bonds on the scheme which to date, no claims have ever been received, therefore both could be used to support Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) or as a potential hardship fund, should the cost of living impact cohort families to the point where we need to provide further support. However, as highlighted in paragraphs 4 and 14 above, families are supported to become financially independent earlier to alleviate potential financial pressures during the remaining term of their respective resettlement programme
26. There will be an annual viability review on the delivery of this programme, so that if financially the scheme is no longer viable costs can be contained by taking no further families, and further details of risks and mitigations can be found in Appendix 4.

## Legal issues

27. The Home Office issue annual funding instructions for all resettlement schemes to ensure all funds are used in accordance to their guidance. The Council would be required to monitor and evaluate families' progress and complete evaluation reports as and when required by the Home Office.

## Level of risk

28. Highlighted in para. 21 the council are keen to ensure that this project remains viable. Using appropriate communication tools it will promote the benefits of welcoming refugee families to our city clarifying that there will be minimal impact on public resource i.e. social housing etc. See risk register Appendix 4 for further details.

## Equalities impact

29. This new programme of refugee resettlement is aligned to and forms part of the effort to deliver the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which has been subject to a full equality impact assessment. There are no adverse impacts in undertaking this activity to continue on the Council's success of welcoming more vulnerable families into our diverse community.

## Environmental

30. There are few environmental considerations arising directly from this report as any new welcomed families would be placed into existing private rented properties within the city which will be registered with the council's selective licensing scheme which takes into consideration environmental impact.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Alan Chandler  |
| Job title                  | Senior Refugee and Migrant Officer                                   |
| Service area or department | Housing Services   |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252381   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:achandler@oxford.gov.uk">achandler@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

# APPENDIX 1

## Home Office Funding Schedule:

### United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)

(ref: Home Office Funding Instruction for local authorities in the support of the United Kingdom's Resettlement Schemes May 22 v1.0)

#### Financial Year 2022-2023

| Funding Period | Amount Received per head (£) | Total income received based on 29 people arriving (Appendix 1)(£) |
|----------------|------------------------------|---|
| Year 1         | 8,520                        | 247,080   |
| Year 2         | 5,000                        | 145,000   |
| Year 3         | 3,700                        | 107,300   |
| Year 4         | 2,300                        | 66,700  |
| Year 5         | 1,000                        | 29,000  |
| Total          | 20,520                       | 595,080   |

### Afghan Resettlement Schemes (ARAP/ACRS)

(ref: Funding Instruction for local authorities in the support of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy INTEGRATION SUPPORT Grant Reference Number: 392 Financial Year 2023-2024 v0.3)

| Funding Period | Amount Received per head (£) | Total income received based on 29 people arriving (Appendix 1)(£) |
|----------------|------------------------------|---|
| Year 1         | 10,500                       | 304,500   |
| Year 2         | 6,000                        | 174,000   |
| Year 3         | 4,020                        | 116,580   |
| Total          | 20,520                       | 595,080   |

Over the 3 or 5 year period all grant funding will be received from the Home Office by instalments as indicated in the tables above.

This page is intentionally left blank



## APPENDIX 2

### Financial modelling for Future Refugee Resettlement

£20,520 grant funded income received per person (totals based on 29 people) whether 3yr Afghan Scheme or 5yr UKRS. Financial modelling based on 8 families being viable.

#### INCOME and Family Configuration

#### Property Type, Rent and LHA

Potential typical households below:

| Number of persons per family | Number of families proposed/properties needed | Proposed total of grant funding income (£) | Number of bedrooms required | Typical rent per month per property as of 25/04/23 (Rightmove) (£) | Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (£) | Shortfall amount between rent & LHA (does not include potential benefit cap) (£) |
|------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6                            | 1   | 123,120                                    | 4                           | 2,200  | 1585                              | 615  |
| 4                            | 4   | 328,320                                    | 3                           | 1,450  | 1100                              | 350  |
| 3                            | 1   | 61,560                                     | 2                           | 1,200  | 912                               | 288  |
| 2                            | 2   | 82,080                                     | 2                           | 1,200  | 912                               | 288  |

41

|  |          |                |  |  |  |  |
|--|----------|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Total (Year 1 commitment)</b>   | <b>8</b> | <b>595,080</b> |  |  |  |  |
| Projected potential totals for 5 year commitment of 8 families (household configuration as above) per year | 40       | 2,975,400      |  |  |  |  |

Appendix 2  
Continued

**EXPENDITURE**

| NB: Costs does not allow for inflation |                     | Cost Type   | Total for 8 properties (£) | Support Type         | Total for 8 families (£)   |                  |   |   |
|--|---------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 42                                     | Housing Setup Costs | Finder's Fee(FF) per property £1000   | 8,000                      | Support and Resource | Person centred support for 2 years (based on current average of provision per £32,841 household) | 262,768          | (equates to £1,313,840 for 5yrs which will be tendered) |   |
|  |                     | 1 month Rent in Advance(RIA)  | 11,600                     |                      | Personalisation Fund (16 adults) £500 incentive to improve route to financial independence       | 8,000            |   |   |
|  |                     | 5 weeks Deposit   | 13,385                     |                      | School Uniform £80 per child (15 children)   | 1,200            |   |   |
|  |                     | Potential up to 2 months Holding Fee (HF) i.e. 2 mths rent equiv.   | 23,200                     |                      | Potential rent top required for 1 year   | 34,548           |   |   |
|  |                     | 12 mths Rent Bond (albeit rarely claimed against if at all) total worth £139,200 but allowed worst case scenario should half be claimed | 69,600                     |                      | OCC Refugee & Migrant Officer (F/T) incl. on costs   | 46,535           |   |   |
|  |                     | Furnishings @ £1800 per property  | 14,400                     |                      | OCC Senior Refugee & Migrant Officer (F/T) incl. on costs  | 58,057           |   |   |
|  |                     | Selective Licensing @ £480 per property   | 3,840                      |                      |  |                  |   |   |
|  |                     | Council Tax void loss (2mths @ £200pcm)   | 3,200                      |                      | Contingency  | 15,000           |   |   |
|  |                     |   |                            |                      |  |                  |   | <b>Total Expenditure per annum (£) (Housing setup costs + Support and Resource)</b> |
|  |                     | <b>Total</b>  |                            |                      | <b>147,225</b>   |                  |   | <b>426,108</b>  |
|  |                     |   |                            |                      | Projected 5 year expenditure ( 573,333 x 5yrs)   | <b>2,866,665</b> |   |   |
|  |                     |   |                            |                      | Potential Surplus (total income – total expenditure)   | <b>108,735</b>   |   |   |

The highest expenditure is within Year 1 as that includes the initial housing setup costs as well as the initial resettling support, however this is mitigated by higher instalments of total funding. Therefore the first year expenditure would total £441,949 (including half of the support costs), however, this includes staffing costs, which have already been subsidised by the surplus of the SVPRS scheme. It should also be noted that funds of £69K have been allocated to be used for rent bonds and to date, no claims have been made against this provision.

## APPENDIX 3

**Family Funding Comparison over 5 years for new UKRS based on proposed new person centred model (updated 08/07/21)**  
 (Extract from SVPRS/UKRS Brief Update July 2021)

|   | <b>10 families (42 people) Jan 2022-Jan 2027 (£)</b> | <b>8 families (34 people) Jan 2022- Jan 2027 (£)</b> | <b>5 families (21 people) Jan 2022-Jan 2027 (£)</b> | <b>3 families (14 people) Jan 2022-Jan 2027 (£)</b> |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Income from Home Office@ £20,500 per head for 5yr period  | <b>861,000</b>                                       | <b>697,000</b>                                       | <b>430,500</b>                                      | <b>287,000</b>                                      |
| ESOL funding for each adult at £850 per head  | 17,000 (20 adults)                                   | 13,600 (16 adults)                                   | 8,500 (10 adults)                                   | 5,100 (6 adults)                                    |
| Initial ESOL Assessment Cost @ £150 adult   | 3,000  | 2,400  | 1,500   | £900  |
| Total remaining for additional ESOL provision on top of existing classes and volunteering methods | 14,000   | 11,200   | 7,000   | 4,200   |
| <b>Expenditure</b>  |  |  |   |   |
| Total Expenditure Based on current SVPRS model  | 840,789  | 691,229  | 431,851   | 308,581   |
| <b>Surplus Total = (Home Office income - Total Expenditure)</b>                                   | <b>20,211</b>  | <b>5,771</b>   | <b>-1,351</b>                                       | <b>-21,581</b>                                      |

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 4 - Risk Register

Future resettlement commitments for new refugee families

As at: 25.04.2023

45

| Ref | Title                     | Risk Description  | Opp / Threat | Cause   | Consequence  | Risk Treatment | Date Raised | Owner         | Gross |   | Current |   |       | Target |   | Comments   | Control / Mitigation Description   | Date Due | Action Status | % Progress | Action Owner |
|-----|---------------------------|---|--------------|---|--|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------|---|---------|---|-------|--------|---|--|--|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
|     |                           |   |              |   |  |                |             |               | P     | I | P       | I | Score | P      | I |  |  |          |               |            |              |
|     | Project viability         | There may be a lack of properties that come forward to allow us to meet our commitment.   | Threat       | Inability to secure suitable properties from the open rental market and competing within a limited rental market with those who are facing homelessness or seeking asylum dispersal accommodation | Would need to give 30 days notice to support provider, may have some financial impact, potential reputational damage   | Reduce         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 3     | 3 | 2       | 3 | 6     | 2      | 2 |  | 1. Marketing and communication tools to advertise our need for properties. 2. The resettlement scheme landlord offer is generous and can be flexible. 3. Afghan FYOA scheme introduced customers will source their own properties. 4. Discussions to be had with local colleges, existing portfolio landlords and Aspire Oxford Social Lettings programme to explore the potential of procuring more properties. 6. Annual viability review. | 01/09/23 |               |            |              |
|     | Affordability             | The private market is incredibly challenging and there is a known shortfall in rent between LHA rates and market rates.                         | Threat       | The local market rent is currently increasing therefore the shortfall gap from LHA is widening. Some families may be victims of the benefit cap rules.  | Some families may require financial support for longer than the programme delivery   | Reduce         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 3     | 3 | 2       | 3 | 6     | 2      | 2 |  | 1. Referrals into early intervention/prevention support. 2. The council have commissioned local partners to deliver a collaborative, sustainable single end to end bespoke service called the Refugee Employment Support Programme to further assist refugees and potentially the wider migrant community to secure employment. This programme is due to commence June 2023  | 01/09/23 |               |            |              |
|     | Meeting the needs         | Some families may have complex needs and may be unable to secure sustainable employment   | Threat       | Inability to secure long term sustainable employment to meet their needs  | Some families may require financial support for longer than the programme delivery   | Reduce         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 3     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 |  | 1. Referrals into early intervention/prevention support. 2. The council have commissioned local partners to deliver a collaborative, sustainable single end to end bespoke service called the Refugee Employment Support Programme to further assist refugees and potentially the wider migrant community to secure employment. This programme is due to commence June 2023  | 01/09/23 |               |            |              |
|     | Partners limited capacity | Local charities have limited resource and are being stretched to capacity to meet the uncontrolled needs of the recent influx of asylum seekers | Threat       | Due to increase on demand on their services from influx of Asylum Seekers without funding to support them.  | May not be able to secure a local support provider to help us deliver this new resettlement commitment   | Accept         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 2     | 2 | 1       | 1 | 1     | 1      | 1 |  | 1. The support contract would go through a tender to select the organisation that could deliver. 2. Any new contract created within this 5 year period will have a break clause included should the event arise that there are insufficient properties or resources available to deliver this programme.   | 01/09/23 |               |            |              |
|     | Project viability         | The UKRS scheme is a rolling year programme therefore will have to await government announcement if it wishes to continue.                      | Threat       | Should insufficient numbers come from other resettlement schemes may become a project viability issue   | Project may become unviable to deliver if insufficient properties available  | Reduce         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 2     | 2 | 1       | 1 | 1     | 1      | 1 |  | Alternative resettlement schemes can be used to ensure project viability met.  | 01/09/23 |               |            |              |
|     | Council resource          | The current Resettlement Migrant Officer post (FTE) is fixed term has been recently extended until 30/06/25                                     | Threat       | Due to uncertainty of role may decide to seek permanent contract elsewhere  | Impact internal resource to fulfill programme delivery effectively and efficiently, there would be a delay in programme delivery until recruitment completed | Reduce         | 25/04/23    | Alan Chandler | 2     | 2 | 1       | 1 | 1     | 1      | 1 | funding from existing UKRS/Afghan schemes covering costs of resource | The financial modelling has made allowance for the Refugee & Migrant Officer post (FTE) and the Senior Refugee & Migrant Officer post (FTE) to be continued for the 5 year period  | 31/03/23 | In Progress   | 80%        |              |

|  |   |  |             |   |   |       |          |               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |          |             |     |  |
|--|---|--|-------------|---|---|-------|----------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|----------|-------------|-----|--|
|  | Adverse public opinion/media intervention | Negative publicity for receiving more new refugee families | Threat      | Mis managed comms regarding new family arrivals | May cause discord with council/community  | Avoid | 25/04/23 | Alan Chandler | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |  | National awareness of plight of refugee issues & positive financial/diverse community gain | 01/09/23 |             |     |  |
|  | Future commitment                         | Not to go ahead with future commitment                     | Opportunity | Council decision not to enter new commitment    | Missed funding opportunities to benefit not only the refugee families but for the wider community who also benefit from initiatives that come from these resettlement programmes. Reputational damage, negative impact upon authority of sanctuary project. | Avoid | 25/04/23 | Alan Chandler | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 1 |  | Report sets out rationale for going ahead with future commitment                           | 25/04/23 | In Progress | 50% |  |

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Development)  
**Title of Report:** Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter/Pledge

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>          | To seek Cabinet approval to participate in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter and endorse a series of Oxford City Council pledges |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | No  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships   |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | Enable an inclusive economy   |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>           | Corporate Plan 2020-24  |

| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to: |  |
|---|--|
| 1.  | <b>Approve</b> Oxford City Council's participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter; and  |
| 2.  | <b>Endorse</b> a series of Oxford City Council pledges that officers in respective service areas will deliver against, within existing committed budgets and for the duration of the current medium term financial strategy. Oxford City Council progress/performance against the pledges will be reported against annually and the results shared on Oxford City Council's website. |

| <b>Appendices</b> |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Appendix 1        | OIEP Charter                             |
| Appendix 2        | Risk Register                            |
| Appendix 3        | Equalities Impact Screening / Assessment |

## Introduction and background

1. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) is a county-wide group that brings together employers, business, education, community groups and local government, including Oxford City Council (“the Council”).

- OIEP’s aim (quoting from public web page) is:

*To work together to create a more equal region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people in Oxfordshire, making use of everyone’s potential, so that we can all benefit from Oxfordshire’s success. We are focused on four areas to deliver our vision: education, employment, social value and procurement, and place shaping. We aim to work with projects across Oxfordshire that the OIEP can support, grow or amplify their work. We are also building a repository of resources, case studies and signposting to support organisations working towards a more inclusive economy.*

- The mission of OIEP is:

*Working together to create a more equal region that creates opportunities and benefits for all people within the county. We are working to tackle some of our region’s biggest problems to create a fairer environment where everyone can contribute and share in our success.*

2. The partnership is co-chaired by Baroness Jan Royall (Somerville College) and Jeremy Long (former OxLEP Chair) and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership provides oversight to the work of the OIEP. The Council contributes project management and secretariat functions to the OIEP through the role of the Partnership Manager and contributions by other officers within the Economic Development team.

### Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter

3. OIEP has developed an Inclusive Economy Charter (at Appendix 1) which is a way for employers to show their commitment and support to making Oxfordshire a fairer and more inclusive place to live and work, by signing up to specific pledges. When organisations sign up to the charter, they are creating a better working environment for their staff, while also generating a clear signal to potential staff, partners and customers that this is a good organisation to deal with. The charter brings additional benefits for the participating organisations by providing an opportunity to better communicate and raise the profile at a countywide level of the social impact they are creating as part of their organisation’s pledges.

4. Employers can choose pledges that are relevant for their own organisations from 6 groups:

- Provide fair wages – *ensuring employees have a fair and decent wage*
- Support local and social economy – *using our buying power to support the local economy and maximise social value*
- Opportunities to work – *supporting those furthest from the labour market on their journey towards secure employment*
- Sharing resources, skills and assets – *practical ways to ensure goods and services are accessible to all*
- Recruit inclusively – *making jobs accessible for all residents and hiring from diverse communities*



- Improve training and educational attainment – *creating workplaces where employees can thrive and grow and supporting education programmes for children*

5. OIEP held a charter launch event on 24 January 2023 with presentations from key stakeholders in the inclusive economy across Oxfordshire as well as businesses that are already implementing inclusive practices. A recording of the event is available here: <https://boxcast.tv/view/oxfordshire-inclusive-economy-charter-launch-pf2bwne4anplvaeh3u9d>

### Oxford City Council Pledges

6. Oxford City Council is committed to creating a more inclusive economy through its Corporate Plan priorities and Economic Strategy commitments and delivery plan. Oxford City Council is therefore already engaging in activities to deliver the following pledges by respective service area and will continue to do so in 2023. It is recommended that the Council should commit as an organisation to these thirteen pledges (out of an available thirty nine) under five (of the available six) themes:

- a. *Support local and social economy - Using our buying power to support the local economy and maximise social value*

| Pledge  | Oxford City Council Lead                      | Related policy or strategy |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| As a buyer we pledge to continue to buy goods and services from purposeful local organisations, including SMEs, social enterprises and cooperatives, wherever possible                                    | Procurement Manager, service area lead        | Procurement Strategy       |
| As a buyer we pledge to continue to assess and account for the social value that a supplier can offer the local community, alongside our assessment of the economic value/financial cost of the contract. |   |                            |
| <i>As a buyer we pledge to buy from organisations who pay the Oxford Living Wage and who request this of organisations in their own supply chains wherever possible</i>                                   |   |                            |
| <i>As a supplier we pledge to use local SMEs in our supply chain wherever possible and to record the percentage of the total spend.</i>   |   |                            |
| <i>We pledge to support our employees to volunteer on local community projects</i>  | Head of Community Services, service area lead | Volunteering Policy        |

***b. Opportunities to work - Supporting those furthest from the labour market on their journey towards secure employment***

| Pledge  | Oxford City Council Lead          | Related policy or strategy |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>As an employer we pledge to continue to be a Disability Confident Employer and support people with health conditions and disabilities</i>  | Head of People, service area lead | People Strategy            |
| <i>As an employer we pledge to improve the diversity of our workforce through more inclusive recruitment practices</i>  |                                   |                            |
| <i>As an employer we pledge to offer work experience to local school/college students from areas where they may experience disadvantage through referrals from partner organisations, where appropriate</i>     |                                   |                            |
| <i>As an employer we pledge that every member of our workforce has the opportunity to share how they contribute to the organisation's success and have opportunities to speak up about concerns and issues.</i> |                                   |                            |

***c. Improve training and educational attainment - Creating workplaces where employees can thrive and grow and supporting educational programmes for children***

| Pledge  | Oxford City Council Lead          | Related policy or strategy |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>As a levy paying business we pledge up to 25% of our unused Levy to help grow apprenticeships in Oxfordshire</i> | Head of People, service area lead | People Strategy            |

***d. Sharing resources, skills and assets - Practical ways to ensure goods and services are accessible to all***

| Pledge  | Oxford City Council Lead                      | Related policy or strategy    |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <i>As an employer we will continue to work with the local food systems</i>                            | Head of Community Services, service area lead | Food Strategy and Action Plan |
| <i>As an organisation we pledge to ensure that our community centres are accessible and inclusive</i> |   | Thriving Communities Strategy |

e. Provide fair wages - Ensuring employees have a fair and decent wage

| Pledge  | Oxford City Council Lead | Related policy or strategy |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>As an employer we pledge to pay the Oxford Living Wage</i> | Chief Executive          |                            |

**Rationale to support the recommended pledges:**

7. The recommended pledges were arrived at after engagement with all the heads of service in the Council and engagement with all staff and the unions. The Council can commit to deliver against all thirteen pledges within existing resources. Doing so would mean that the Council is setting a clear example to everyone in the county about how much every organisation can do to foster a more inclusive economy. If a local authority facing significant resource constraints can commit to thirteen OIEP pledges, then it should raise expectations of what can be done by other organisations, especially those with greater financial capacity.

Alternative options for the Council:

8. The Council could endorse fewer pledges. However, this would undermine the impact and significance of the inclusive economy work which though currently already being undertaken by the Council has not up until now been elevated to become a pledge. If we were to reduce the number of pledges we sign up to it might suggest that some elements of the Corporate Plan or Economic Strategy were relegated to being less important than others, because these areas of activity were charter pledges.
9. The Council could endorse more pledges and indeed may in the future. However, by initially focusing on a range of identified and targeted pledges (within an agreed timescale and currently financed period), capacity and resource to deliver more pledges can be assessed and reviewed in a sustainable and responsible way before agreeing further commitments.
10. The Council could decide not to make pledges or sign up to the charter. However, this is reputationally inadvisable for a founding member and project coordinator of the county-wide OIEP. It would hamper our ability to deliver on one of our four main corporate objectives and prevent us from developing further best practice of inclusive economy as an organisation.

**Other implications**

11. In asking Cabinet to agree to approve participation in the Charter and endorse the related pledges, officers have considered the following other implications that are relevant:
  - Consultation and communications-The charter brings additional benefits for the participating organisations by providing an opportunity to better communicate and raise the profile at a countywide level of the social impact they are creating as part of their organisation’s pledges. Oxford City Council have arranged for extensive staff and union engagement prior to the Cabinet Report being signed off so that we can incorporate staff member’s ideas and involvement in the Charter and its pledges.

- Human resources-The Charter has been informed by the People Team and members of HR as well as a range of HR specialists from across the participating member organisations of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP). At Oxford City Council the People Team and HR are leading on pledges that will enhance our inclusivity as an employer.
- Governance - Officers from each service area will meet quarterly to review progress and we will publish a report annually for at least the next two years setting out progress and performance against the pledge commitments.

### **Financial implications**

12. No financial implications identified due to the fact that the OCC (Oxford City Council) Charter Pledges do not present new or additional service commitments that would require new or additional financial resource during the period of the medium-term financial strategy. The commitment to the pledges and to the charter can then be reviewed if required.

### **Legal issues**

13. No legal implications identified due to the fact that the OCC Pledges do not present new or additional corporate or service commitments that would require assessment from the perspective of legal issues or statutory or non-statutory obligations. Positive opportunities are presented to Oxford City Council of participating in the charter include furtherance of our Public Sector Equality Duty as outlined in the Equalities Impact Full Assessment and Screening.

### **Level of risk**

14. Oxford City Council's participation in the Charter is considered, post Risk Assessment to present Low risk as while the OCC Charter Pledges do not present new or additional service commitments, they will help us to better direct and use our existing funds to secure enhanced impacts and inclusive economy outcomes. Therefore participation in the charter presents opportunities and not threats as it will not require additional capacity/resource for participating service areas.

15. Other risks in terms of management or operational implementation have been considered and also present low to no risk with identified mitigations for the areas of risk assessed. Consideration has been given to how currently resourced priorities may change throughout the identified period and/or potential clashes between pledges and future decisions. Mitigation in place is to plan to time-limit the pledges to the current medium term financial strategy-which is fully funded-and then review where required.

16. Lack of wider awareness and understanding of the charter and its pledges may undermine the value of council signing up to the pledges. This may also pose a risk which is being mitigated by ongoing communications and extensive staff engagement, as identified.

17. The Risk Register is included as Appendix 2.

## Equalities impact

18. The OIEP and its Charter and Pledge scheme contribute to our Oxford City Council Corporate Plan and our Economic Strategy and each of the pledges build on or are explicitly existing commitments of service delivery but will enhance the inclusivity with which our services are offered to Oxford's citizens.
19. The aims and objectives of our inclusive economy commitments present positive equalities implications-The OIEP and its Charter supports an inclusive economy and is committed to improving all aspects of social mobility and increased prosperity for communities and residents, particularly if they are from disadvantaged or minority groups or communities.
20. Both an Equalities Screening and Impact Assessment have been undertaken with advice from the Council's Equalities Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lead officer. Each service will be encouraged to tailor their implementation of pledges to their respective service and the needs of service users so as to maximise opportunity for best practice in terms of EDI, presenting positive opportunity while overall the conclusion is that no adverse impacts are identified.
21. Equalities Impact Assessment included as Appendix 3.

## Carbon and Environmental Considerations

22. While the pledges of the charter are not explicitly related to Environmental or carbon reduction outcomes, they do indirectly present positive opportunity through the support of local businesses and related local supply chains, local food system and networks as well as quality of life benefits which can lead to lower carbon lifestyles and reduced carbon consumption.

## Conclusion

23. The officer recommendation to Cabinet is to approve participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter (Appendix 1) and endorse the specific list of pledges for Oxford City Councils (paragraph 6). These pledges are recommended because they are affordable (para 12), the alternatives are poor options (paragraphs 8-10) and because they will raise the profile of the Council's good practice, seeking to inspire others in the county (paragraph 7).

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Clayton Lavallin   |
| Job title                  | Principal Regeneration and Economic Development Officer              |
| Service area or department | Regeneration & Economy   |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252323   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:clavallin@oxford.gov.uk">clavallin@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| <b>Background Papers:</b> |
| 1 None                    |

This page is intentionally left blank

# Appendix 1: Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter

## Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter

Actively supporting inclusivity across Oxfordshire's economy will generate real benefits for your organisation. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors are increasingly being considered by employees, customers, funders, investors, and partners. Participating in the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, through the pledges you make within this Charter, provides a way of demonstrating your commitment to social issues:

- Promoting your role in Oxfordshire's inclusive economy work will help you to attract people to work with you.
- Accessing the widest pool of talent will support growth and productivity within your company or organisation.
- Purchasing from local suppliers and supporting your staff to undertake volunteering activities within the community will contribute to well-being and a sense of loyalty among your employees, differentiating your organisation from competitors.

Joining the work of the Partnership is not only a good thing to do, but it will make a difference to your business too.

By signing this Charter, you are demonstrating your support for and commitment to making Oxfordshire a fairer and more inclusive place to live and work.

### Charter pledges

As a group of employers, we recognise the importance and value of supporting an inclusive Oxfordshire. We are committed to improving all aspects of social mobility and increasing shared prosperity for both our communities and residents by taking action on these pledges:



#### Improve training and educational attainment

Creating workplaces where employees can thrive and grow and supporting educational programmes for children

#### Recruit inclusively

Making jobs accessible for all residents and hiring from diverse communities



#### Offer opportunities into work

Supporting those furthest from the labour market on their journey towards secure employment

#### Support local and social economy

Using our buying power to support the local economy and maximise social value



#### Provide fair wages

Ensuring employees have a fair and decent wage

#### Sharing resources, skills and assets

Practical ways to ensure goods and services are accessible to all



This page is intentionally left blank



Appendix 2 - Risk Register

OIEP Charter (OCC Pledges)

As at: June 2023

| Ref | Title  | Risk Description  | Opp / Threat | Cause   | Consequence  | Risk Treatment | Date Raised | Owner             | Gross |   | Current |   |       | Target |   | Comments   | Control / Mitigation Description | Date Due | Action Status | % Progress | Action Owner |
|-----|--|---|--------------|---|--|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|---|---------|---|-------|--------|---|--|----------------------------------|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
|     |  |   |              |   |  |                |             |                   | P     | I | P       | I | Score | P      | I |  |                                  |          |               |            |              |
| INF | Service / corporate plans, strategies and objectives                 | Risk additional capacity / resource needed to meet pledge commitments. Considered low risk as the OCC Charter Pledges do not present new or additional service commitments. Therefore presents opportunity to promote existing commitments rather than a threat to delivery of existing priorities. | Opportunity  | OCC Charter Pledges represent an opportunity to further promote and enhance existing service priorities | Opportunity to enhance inclusivity and profile of OCC service delivery   | Accept         | 14/06/23    | CMT/Service leads | 2     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 3 | Mitigation-No new additional commitments posed by pledges to OCC resource or capacity  |                                  |          |               |            |              |
| SRF | Management incompetence / inadequate adoption of management policies | Risk pledge commitments are not delivered due to management failings and inability to carry out actions.  | Threat       | Management failing to adopt and implement actions.  | Failure to delivery against the committed pledges actions could result in reputational risk - considered unlikely given existing commitments and therefore low risk  | Reduce         | 14/06/23    | CMT/Service leads | 2     | 3 | 2       | 3 | 6     | 2      | 3 | Mitigation-CMT and Management sign off and adoption of actions prior to Cabinet approval   |                                  |          |               |            |              |
| HRP | Lack of Operational support  | Staff unaware of or have insufficient ownership of pledge commitments   | Threat       | Staff unaware of or have insufficient ownership of pledge commitments due to lack of commitment.        | Staff failing to own and implement actions, resulting in failure to delivery against the committed pledges actions. This could result in reputational risk. Considered low risk due to pledges commitment being embedded within existing priorities. | Reduce         | 14/06/23    | Service Staff     | 2     | 3 | 2       | 3 | 6     | 2      | 3 | Mitigation-CMT and Management outline responsibilities to their respective staff teams. 'Let's Talk' session to be held for all staff in June 23 to inform and engage staff Council wide |                                  |          |               |            |              |

This page is intentionally left blank

## 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 Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) and its Charter and Pledge scheme contribute to our Oxford City Council Corporate Plan and our Economic Strategy and each of the pledges build on or are explicitly existing commitments of service delivery but will enhance the inclusivity with which our services are offered to Oxford citizens.

The aims and objectives of our inclusive economy commitments present positive equalities implications-The OIEP and its Charter supports an inclusive economy and is committed to improving all aspects of social mobility and increased prosperity for communities and residents, particularly if they are from disadvantaged or minoritised groups or communities.

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

Oxford City Council's participation in the scheme does not involve a new or changed policy but rather is an opportunity to enhance and add value to existing offers across Oxford City Council's services to celebrate and give visibility to our best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion at a countywide level.

The Charter was launched in early 2023 and the pledge scheme is long term and will be reviewed annually with progress reports given on an annual basis focusing on the positive impacts for participating employers, employees and residents which will inform resulting action plans. These action plans will be reviewed by the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) manager in dual role as Oxford City Council member of staff, reporting on behalf of OIEP to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

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 OIEP as a strand of work prioritised by our Economic Strategy was taken to broad public consultation in 2022 prior to the Strategy being approved by Cabinet in June 22 and the wider countywide work of the OIEP has been approved and signed off by all Oxfordshire councils under the governance and accountability of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

Working groups of OIEP intend to further engage residents with focus groups formed of the key stakeholders impacted by the emerging initiatives and delivery on behalf of their respective thematic priorities.

The charter itself is an engagement tool as part of the OIEP's wider communications strategy and approach to inclusivity.

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

No groups are potentially disadvantaged by the proposals and no adverse impacts are identified based on previous consultation, however each service will tailor their pledges to their respective service and service users needs and target audiences so as to maximise opportunity for best practice in terms of EDI.

Future engagements and consultation will aim to build on the range and diversity of stakeholders identified whilst ensuring a proactive engagement of any target group identified as potentially at risk of adverse impact.

Any adjustments that are identified by those potentially at risk of adverse impact will be accommodated by the service area and inform the wider learning at annual review.

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

Any unexpected equality impacts that are identified will be accommodated and acted upon at point of delivery by the respective service area and then escalated to the wider OIEP steering group in order to inform the wider learning at annual review

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Clayton Lavallin

Role: Principal Regeneration & Economic Development Officer

Date: 18.04.23

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)



## Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

63

|   |                                   |                 |  |   |  |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Service Area:</b>  | <b>Regeneration &amp; Economy</b> | <b>Section:</b> | <b>Date of Initial assessment:</b><br>April 2023   | <b>Key Person responsible for assessment:</b><br>Clayton Lavallin | <b>Date assessment commenced:</b><br>June 2023 |
| <b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>   |                                   |                 | OIEP Charter and OCC Pledges   |   |  |
| <b>1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact</b>                                      |                                   |                 | <i>Race</i>  | <i>Disability</i>   | <i>Age</i>                                     |
|   |                                   |                 | <i>Gender reassignment</i>   | <i>Religion or Belief</i>   | <i>Sexual Orientation</i>                      |
|   |                                   |                 | <i>Sex</i>   | <i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>                                    | <i>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</i>        |
| <b>Other strategic/ equalities considerations</b>   |                                   |                 | <i>Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults</i>   | <i>Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience</i>                     |  |
| <b>2. Background:</b><br>Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with the policy which are the |                                   |                 | The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) and its Charter and Pledge scheme contribute to our Oxford City Council Corporate Plan and our Economic Strategy and each of the pledges build on or are explicitly existing commitments of service delivery but will enhance the inclusivity with which our services are offered to Oxford citizens. |   |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>reason for the Impact Assessment.</p>   | <p>The aims and objectives of our inclusive economy commitments present positive equalities policy opportunities because the OIEP and its Charter supports an inclusive economy and is committed to improving all aspects of social mobility and increased prosperity for communities and residents, particularly if they are from disadvantaged or minoritised groups or communities.</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Methodology and Sources of Data:</b><br/>The methods used to collect data and what sources of data</p>  | <p>The data informing the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) is drawn from a wide range of sources national and regional such as Census data, strategy and policy and regional and local data of community and ward level profiles. In addition, the OIEP were supported by a Brookes University internship to undertake community mapping identifying groups by protected characteristic to engage and recruit into the partnership.</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Consultation</b><br/>This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you carried out the consultation.</li> <li>• Details about how you went about it.</li> <li>• A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.</li> <li>• An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.</li> <li>• A statement of what you plan to do next</li> </ul> | <p>The OIEP as a strand of work prioritised by our Economic Strategy was taken to broad public consultation in 2022 prior to the Strategy being approved by Cabinet in June 22 and the wider countywide work of the OIEP has been approved and signed off by all Oxfordshire councils under the governance and accountability of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.</p> <p>Working groups of OIEP intend to further engage residents with focus groups formed of the key stakeholders impacted by the emerging initiatives and delivery on behalf of their respective thematic priorities.</p> <p>The charter itself is an engagement tool as part of the OIEP's wider communications strategy and approach to inclusivity.</p> <p>The summary of the consultation responses informed revisions to the wider Economic Strategy and particularly the inclusive economy pillar and the OIEP related actions of the delivery plan. This and the work of the OIEP partnership will continue to be assessed annually and the policy options reviewed by extension.</p> <p>The OIEP reports to Future Oxfordshire Partnership on behalf of the councils of Oxfordshire and the Economic Strategy delivery reports back to the Economic Growth Steering Board in terms of progress to deliver.</p> |



**5. Assessment of Impact:**

Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

**Race**

Neutral

**Disability**

Neutral

**Age**

Neutral

**Gender reassignment**

Neutral

**Religion or Belief**

Neutral

**Sexual Orientation**

Neutral

**Sex**

Neutral

**Pregnancy and Maternity**

Neutral

**Marriage & Civil Partnership**

Neutral

The Oxford City Council participation in the OIEP Charter and pledge scheme relate to adults and not children but has considered that a proportion of the adults supported may fall under the category of vulnerable. Policies and Procedures are therefore in place to inform the support if and where required.

Each of the respective service areas of OCC signing up to pledges work within corporate policies and procedures in this regard and have budget allocated where relevant and required.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>6. Consideration of Measures:</b><br/>This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy</p>  | <p>No adverse impacts of participation in the OIEP Charter and pledge scheme have been identified that would require mitigation, however several positive impacts in terms of the enhanced ability of services to be delivered in ways which proactivity support EDI outcomes are explicit in participation in the Charter and Pledge scheme by extension of the inclusive economy focus of the OIEP.</p>  |
| <p><b>6a. Monitoring Arrangements:</b><br/>Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.</p> | <p>Each respective service area of Oxford City Council participating in the OIEP charter and pledge scheme have their own systems in place for monitoring and responding to any issues relating to discrimination and or exclusion, subject to Oxford City Council's shared standards and practice, including policy and procedure and structures and systems.</p> <p>In addition, any discrimination and or exclusion identified as well as being acted upon at point of delivery by the respective service area and then escalated to the wider OIEP steering group in order to inform the wider learning at annual review</p> |
| <p><b>7. Date reported and signed off by City Executive Board:</b></p>  | <p>14th June 2023</p>  |
| <p><b>8. Conclusions:</b><br/>What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact</p>  | <p>The conclusion of the policy impact assessment is that while the initiative provides positive opportunities to enhance inclusivity and promote equality a consistent consideration of public sector equality duty should be maintained throughout the lifecycle of the initiative and inform how policies or decisions that affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.</p>   |

|   |         |   |                                     |  |          |
|---|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--|----------|
| <b>9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>   | NO      | <b>10. Date the Service Plans will be updated</b> | In line with Services participating | <b>11. Date copy sent to Equalities Lead Officer</b>     | 18/04/23 |
| <b>13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Executive Board:</b> | June 23 | <b>14. Date reported to City Executive Board:</b> | June 23                             | <b>12. The date the report on EqIA will be published</b> | June 23  |

Signed (completing officer)

Signed (Lead Officer)

Clayton Lavallin

Mili Kalia

67

**Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:**

- Equalities Lead Officer: Mili Kalia Equality, Diversity & Inclusion-Lead, Communities
- Service Manager: Ted Maxwell, Economy, City Centre and Green Transport Lead, Regeneration & Economy
- Lindsey Cane, Legal Services Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Communities and People)  
**Title of Report:** Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2022/23 and Policy 2023-26

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>  | To report on progress made on Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan for 2022/23 and present an updated Safeguarding Policy for 2023-26 |
| <b>Key decision:</b>   | No  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>   | Cllr Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities   |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>   | Supporting Thriving Communities   |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>   | Council Strategy 2020-24  |
| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:  |   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Note</b> the key achievements of the Safeguarding work delivered through Oxford City Council during 2022/23;</li> <li>2. <b>Approve</b> the Safeguarding Policy 2023-2026;</li> <li>3. <b>Note</b> the Safeguarding Action Plan 2023/24; and</li> <li>4. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, to make minor changes to the approved policy in order to continue its alignment with the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.</li> </ol> |   |

| <b>Appendices</b> |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Appendix 1        | Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy 2023-26        |
| Appendix 2        | Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2023/24 |
| Appendix 3        | Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Procedures          |
| Appendix 4        | Risk Register  |
| Appendix 5        | EIA Full Assessment                                    |

## **Introduction and background**

1. This annual report to Cabinet sets out how Oxford City Council fulfils its statutory safeguarding duties by:
  - Outlining the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Oxfordshire.
  - Sharing the results of the safeguarding self-assessment audit 2022.
  - Highlighting the key achievements and progress made in relation to the safeguarding work delivered by Oxford City Council.
  - Updating our Action Plan through the identification of areas to strengthen in 2022/23
  - Approving Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Policy 2023-26.

## **Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Responsibilities**

2. Oxford City Council has a legal duty of care to ensure children and adults at risk are protected within the Council's facilities, services and activities. The Council has legal duties under the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 to:
  - promote the welfare and development needs of children and adults with care and support needs are met
  - protect them from harm, abuse and maltreatment
  - prevent harm to children's health or development and ensuring that they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.
3. Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Policy sets out how the Council fulfils these obligations and supports staff, Members and volunteers in all aspects of safeguarding. The Safeguarding Policy can be found at Appendix 1.
4. The Safeguarding Procedures set out how staff and contractors should respond to safeguarding incidents. The Safeguarding Procedures can be found at Appendix 3.
5. As of April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, Oxford City Council's safeguarding coordination function moved from the Policy and Partnership Team to the Community Safety Service, within Regulatory Services and Community Safety. The Executive Director, Communities and People, is the accountable officer, and the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety is the responsible officer, for embedding these safeguarding duties within Oxford City Council.
6. There is a four-tiered approach to supporting staff with their safeguarding responsibilities:
  - Staff training
  - Line management support
  - Safeguarding Champions network
  - Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)
7. Quarterly internal Strategic Safeguarding meetings and Safeguarding Champion meetings identify training needs, review trends in reporting, and monitor and coordinate delivery of the Safeguarding Action Plan.

8. All safeguarding incidents are recorded on MyConcern, a web-based reporting system conforming to GDPR requirements. Quarterly reports are published in Safeguarding newsletters to show staff across the organisation the current safeguarding themes and trends. Service area and trend reports are discussed at the Strategic Safeguarding Group.

### **Oxfordshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)**

9. Since the introduction of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Oxfordshire County Council, the Integrated Care Board and Thames Valley Police have had statutory responsibility and accountability of safeguarding arrangements in Oxfordshire. The MASA Executive Group consists of the Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board.
10. The development, delivery and quality monitoring of safeguarding service provision is the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB). The governance framework can be found in the background papers.
11. In November 2022, Oxford City Council passed representation of the Oxfordshire district councils on OSCB and OSAB sub-groups to Cherwell District Council. Oxford City Council continue to attend the OSAB Full Board, OSCB Full Board, and OSCB Child Exploitation and Training sub-groups.
12. OSCB's priorities for 2022-2024 are:
  - Leadership and Governance
  - Direction on improving practice
  - Scrutiny and quality assurance
13. More details of the work of OSCB can be found here: <https://www.oscb.org.uk/>
14. The OSAB have developed a new strategic plan for 2023-2027 and the agreed priorities are:
  - Working in Partnership
  - Preventing harm occurring
  - Responding swiftly when harm occurs
  - Engaging effectively with people at risk
15. More details of the work of OSAB can be found here: <https://www.osab.co.uk/>

### **Oxford City Council safeguarding highlights in 2022/2023**

#### **Safeguarding Audit 2022**

16. Section 11, Children Act 2004 requires Oxford City Council to complete an annual self-assessment of its safeguarding children activities. This has been developed into a joint self-assessment audit between the OSCB and OSAB. The full self-assessment is available as a background paper to this report.
17. Oxford City Council is required to evidence its standards in the following areas:
  - Service Delivery, Development & Effective Practice
  - Safer Recruitment, Staff Development & Effective Learning

- People's Experiences of Safeguarding
18. The evidence for each standard is assessed and given a rating:
    - Green – Fully met and evidenced – Best Practice
    - Amber – the standard/compliance point is not met but work has begun or work is underway but has experienced delays in completion
    - Red – the standard/compliance point is not met, work is not underway and there are issues with commencing work
  19. To inform the self-assessment Oxford City Council staff complete an annual safeguarding questionnaire. In October 2022, 423 responses were received, an increase from previous years of 201 and 198 responses.
  20. 22 of 23 standards were rated Green with one standard rated Amber:  
Standard: 'How do you know that your organisation's complaints processes are effective and that children and adults with care and support needs are empowered to challenge services when expected standards/responsibilities are not met?'
  21. Although services such as Anti-Social Behaviour and Youth Ambition empower their users to challenge services and make complaints, it was recognised that formal processes for complaints reporting were under review and improvements such as reporting on specific safeguarding complaints, are underway.
  22. The Oxford City Council Safeguarding Audit 2022 can be found in the background papers to this report.

### **Support for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants**

23. The Refugee and Resettlement Team was created in 2022 and lead Oxford City Council's strategic and operational response to asylum, refugee and migrant resettlement, and hosts and administers the countywide Homes for Ukraine Re-matching Team. The teams work in partnership with community groups to improve access to services for refugee, migrant and asylum seeker groups and the relevant safeguarding teams on a case by case basis.
24. Oxford City Council actively supported increasing access to interpreting services to ensure that residents from all nationalities are able to access appropriate services safely and the Council have a designated contract to offer translation services where required.

### **Child exploitation**

25. Regular attendance at the OSCB CE Subgroup by the Community Safety Service Manager continues, sharing policy developments and delivering operational activities. ASBIT Officers attend the police Joint Tasking and Coordination meeting that identifies and support young people at risk, and coordinates activities to tackle their exploiters.
26. The relaunch of Hotel Watch is in development, working with hospitality providers to train staff, challenge and report incidents of concern regarding child and adult exploitation.
27. Oxford City Council staff have engaged with and are supporting the recommendations from the recent 'Jacob' serious case review and participate in all three work streams highlighted within the report in relation to Education, Child exploitation and System approach.



28. Oxford City Council's Youth Ambition team provide activities and groups for young people in high deprivation areas of the city. The Youth Ambition team are highly skilled in safeguarding and work in partnership with organisations across the city.

#### **Adult homeless support in adverse weather**

29. This winter saw the successful countywide approach to Severe Weather Emergency Provision that provided emergency accommodation to rough sleepers on 32 nights where the temperature was forecast to be below freezing.
30. During the long hot spells of summer 2022, the Council coordinated partnership working to ensure people who were rough sleeping were protected from extreme heat.

#### **Adult exploitation**

31. A New Oxfordshire Adult Exploitation Guidance and Pathways document, developed by Oxford City Council's Anti-Slavery Coordinator, was approved and adopted by partners across Oxfordshire. Since the launch of this new pathway, there has been a significant increase in adult exploitation alerts.
32. 60 cases of adult exploitation have been reported in the City since the data was recorded centrally. 43 of these were individual people, 7 were businesses of concern and 10 were premises of concern. 36 people have been removed from their exploitative situations and work continues to support other people in these situations.
33. Alerts received were from the Home Office, the Single Competent Authority responsible for the National Referral Mechanism, council departments, Adult Social Care and NGO's. Two of the alerts were identified through reports on the Council's MyConcern safeguarding database.
34. In 2022, Oxford City Council led the Violence Against Women and Girls: Safe Journey, Safe Destination partnership project to increase safety in the night-time economy. Core project group organisations included Thames Valley Police, University of Oxford, Brookes University and the City Council.
35. The project received £420k from the Home Office to develop local initiatives which centred on the development of the Oxford City NightSafe Network. This is a network of organisations operating in the night-time economy who, through sharing information and resources, have important roles to play in reducing the risk of violence and harassment to women and girls.
36. The project funded improvements in CCTV, lighting, and other situational crime reduction activities in Oxford and neighbouring towns. It introduced the Oxford City Angels who support vulnerable people during the evening period, set-up a network of Safe Places as respite locations for people in need and improved the management of Park End Street through a new taxi rank, taxi marshals and improved lighting.

## **Domestic abuse**

37. A strategic, planned approach to domestic abuse continues to be taken forward with Oxford City Council's active contribution to the development and delivery of a countywide plan and continued delivery of bespoke services for victims of domestic abuse.
38. Oxford City Council's ASBIT Manager is the Council's domestic abuse lead and represented the District Councils in the commissioning process for the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service and the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service. They are also heavily involved in the delivery of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy and the Safe Accommodation Strategy action plans.
39. Oxford City Council is working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation which will take approximately 18 months to complete. Work continues towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation which is currently in the 'Health Check Stage', identifying good practice, gaps and learning.
40. Two Domestic Abuse Housing Link workers were employed in 2022. The specialist team work closely with domestic abuse victims and survivors with complex needs to ensure that they are housed safely, and their needs are being met. Case examples form an agenda item at the quarterly safeguarding Champion meetings.

## **Learning and training**

41. Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Coordinator joined the OSCB trainer pool and attends trainer workshops.
42. The safeguarding awareness briefing training evaluation form was moved online in July 2022, in line with the Safeguarding Boards' evaluation process. 113 responses have been received, 111 are marked as 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to each of the following questions:
  - I know who we are safeguarding
  - I know why we have this responsibility
  - I know who to seek support and advice from
  - I know how and when to report a concern
  - I know where to get further information
43. Two responses which state 'neither agree/disagree' were followed up by the Safeguarding Coordinator to ensure officers understood all of the above questions.
44. Feedback is used to inform future awareness training discussions and scenario discussions. Feedback comments are responded to, where appropriate, by the Safeguarding Coordinator.
45. The OSCB Neglect Strategy 2020/23 was developed in response to data that showed neglect was a primary reason for safeguarding referrals in Oxfordshire. Training was delivered to Council staff and in October 2022, the staff survey showed twenty officers had used the self-neglect policy and eight members of staff have used the Children's Neglect Toolkit.
46. Between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 239 MyConcern reports were recorded. Housing Services raised the most concerns followed by Business

Improvement and Regulatory Services and Community Safety. The most frequently reported concerns were:

- Domestic abuse/violence
  - Mental ill health
  - Suicidal thoughts
47. The increasing trend in suicidal threats, attempts and suicidal thoughts highlighted the need for further training and the republishing of Oxford City Council's suicide threat guidance for staff, including a section on staff welfare.
  48. Twenty-nine safeguarding awareness briefings were held in 2022/23, an increase of 20% on the previous year. Trainers meet quarterly to review and update the training package in line with local and national updates and evaluation forms.
  49. Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), and their national and local recommendations, are included in the safeguarding awareness briefings which are mandatory for all staff.
  50. Five rapid reviews were returned to the CSPR subgroup in 2022. Rapid reviews inform Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews however, all returns from Oxford City Council were 'nil' returns as the Council had no contact with the child or family members.
  51. Oxford Direct Services (ODS) training was updated and delivered throughout 2022 in partnership with Oxford City Council. Additional MyConcern training was provided to managers. ODS' MyConcern recording rate has increased by 420% since 2020 as a direct result of Oxford City Council's engagement.
  52. Newsletters have been released quarterly throughout the year to all staff.

#### **The key areas of focus for 2023/24**

53. Operational areas of focus for the coming year can be found in the 2023-2024 Safeguarding Action Plan, Appendix 2:
  - Increase communications, ensure trainer understanding of the Service Integration Project, Early Help and Locality Community Support Service tools including Strengths and Needs.
  - Recruit additional safeguarding champions to ensure each service area has at least one representative
  - Increased communications, visual aids
  - Identify appropriate training for individual teams and promote uptake
  - Identify current whistleblowing culture and areas for improvement
  - Identify complaint management systems and data relating to safeguarding concerns
  - Scope Safeguarding Audit 2023
54. The Council's 2023-2024 Business Plan includes the following strategic activities:
  - Work with partners to continue to implement the countywide rough sleeping and single homelessness strategy to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. Work with commissioning partners and the alliance of organisations

delivering services to evaluate the delivery of a housing-led approach – including supporting people through more flexible and responsive services to ensure that the new services are effective.

- With Oxfordshire County Council, which is now investing in youth service provision in Oxford, review our Youth Ambition programme and seek closer partnership working to achieve a more efficient and effective joint approach to support children and young people.
- Embed the new locality-based model for supporting our tenants and residents, shaped by their views and needs, and work with other landlords to improve engagement and service delivery.
- Chair the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to tackle the city's community safety priorities - modern slavery, serious violence, and disruption of organised crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour.
- Continue to work towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation - work started in December 2022 and may take up to two years for full accreditation.

### **Financial implications**

55. Oxford City Council makes an annual contribution towards the running costs of OSCB £10,000, and OSAB £5,000. The Council has one member of staff who is a member of the OSCB training pool.
56. The safeguarding system annual licence fee is budgeted at £4,500.
57. The Safeguarding Coordinator post annual salary cost is £37,334.
58. Oxford City Council make an annual contribution to Cherwell District Council for their attendance at safeguarding board subgroup meetings, on behalf of all four district councils, including South and Vale, and West Oxfordshire.

### **Legal issues**

59. Oxford City Council's legal responsibilities are set out in the Children Act 1989/2004, Care Act 2014, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Equality Act 2010 and Children & Social Work Act 2017. The Council has specific legal responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 to make sure the welfare and development needs of children are met and that children are protected from harm.
60. Failure to meet these legal responsibilities would increase the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults, and cause significant reputational damage for the Council.

### **Level of risk**

61. The Risk Register can be found in Appendix 4.

### **Equalities impact**

62. The Council's Safeguarding Policy Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in May 2023, Appendix 5.

63. The Safeguarding Policy was developed to have a positive impact on each equality strand.
64. The monitoring arrangements for any adverse impact in future includes:
- Quarterly strategic safeguarding group meeting chaired by Head of Business Improvement
  - Quarterly Safeguarding Champion and Designated Officer meeting
  - Annual review in line with Safeguarding action plan
  - Annual self-assessment

**Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

65. No carbon or environmental impacts have been identified. It is considered that the proposal does not affect the council’s climate emergency commitments of pursuing a zero carbon Oxford.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Laura Jones  |
| Job title                  | Safeguarding Coordinator                                       |
| Service area or department | RS&CS  |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:ljones@oxford.gov.uk">ljones@oxford.gov.uk</a> |
| Telephone number           | 07485 325798   |

**Background Papers:**

1. Safeguarding Self-assessment 2022
2. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) Governance Structure

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 1

### Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy 2023-26

www.oxford.gov.uk



---

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Document</b>      | Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy  |
| <b>Owner</b>         | Regulatory Services and Community Safety |
| <b>Author</b>        | Laura Jones                              |
| <b>Date Reviewed</b> | May 2023                                 |
| <b>Review due</b>    | May 2024                                 |

## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction .....   | 3  |
| 2. Legal Framework .....                                      | 3  |
| 3. Oxfordshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements ..... | 3  |
| 4. Roles and responsibilities .....                           | 4  |
| All employees, members and volunteers .....                   | 4  |
| All Heads of Service.....                                     | 4  |
| All Line Managers .....                                       | 4  |
| 5. Safeguarding governance.....                               | 5  |
| Executive Director of Communities and People.....             | 5  |
| The Cabinet Board Member.....                                 | 5  |
| Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) .....                    | 5  |
| Community Safety Service Manager (DSL) .....                  | 5  |
| Head of Business Improvement (DSL) .....                      | 5  |
| Head of Housing Services (DSL) .....                          | 6  |
| Safeguarding Coordinator .....                                | 6  |
| Strategic Safeguarding Group .....                            | 6  |
| Safeguarding Champions .....                                  | 6  |
| 6. Safeguarding prevention.....                               | 6  |
| 7. Safeguarding practice and reviews .....                    | 7  |
| 8. Training.....  | 7  |
| 9. Volunteers .....   | 7  |
| 10. Reporting concerns.....                                   | 8  |
| 11. Supervision and pastoral support .....                    | 8  |
| 12. Commissioned services and contractors .....               | 8  |
| 13. Staff recruitment .....                                   | 9  |
| 14. Whistle-blowing.....                                      | 9  |
| 15. Other relevant policies .....                             | 9  |
| 16. Information sharing .....                                 | 9  |
| 17. Monitoring and Review .....                               | 10 |



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Council's approach to fulfilling its safeguarding duties and responsibilities.
- 1.2 The policy includes the Council's duties to its employees, Councillors and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Council in relation, and its role in promoting well-being and preventing, responding and supporting our citizen's in safeguarding matters, in particular safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all City Council employees, which include contractors and agency staff, all elected Councillors and any person volunteering for Oxford City Council.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Procedures.
- 1.5 Safeguarding procedures, advice and contact details can be found on the Oxford City Council [intranet page](#) or [website](#).

## 2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Under the legal framework of the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the Care Act 2014, the Council has specific duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and adults with care and support needs.
- 2.2 The [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) (MCA) is designed to protect and empower people who may lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions about their care and treatment. It applies to people aged 16 and over.
- 2.3 Oxford City Council must engage as appropriate in any reviews or information sharing in relation to the death of a child or vulnerable adult, as laid out in [Chapter 5: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) and [Section 43 and 44 of the Care Act 2014](#).
- 2.4 There are fundamental differences between the legislative framework for safeguarding for children and for adults, which recognise an adult's right to self-determination.

## 3. Oxfordshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

- 3.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established collective responsibility and accountability for safeguarding arrangements lies with Oxfordshire County Council, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and Thames Valley Police: the three safeguarding partners.
- 3.2 The three safeguarding partners in Oxfordshire work together as an Executive Group and delegate the development, delivery and quality monitoring of safeguarding service provision is the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB).
- 3.3 Oxford City Council will be an active member of both OSCB and OSAB, working with partners to develop and adhere to a collective approach to safeguarding in Oxfordshire.

- 3.4 Robust communication and escalation processes are in place that complements the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) strategies.
- 3.5 An annual Performance and Quality Assurance (PAQA) audit will be completed, as required by the OSCB PAQA Subgroup.
- 3.6 The use of pathways and awareness of joint protocols will be promoted, e.g. the Hoarding Protocol and the MARM process, we will develop toolkits and support and promote cooperation with boards, including joint funding and attending full board meetings.
- 3.7 We will ensure safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards requirements.
- 3.8 The OSCB and OSAB joint annual self-assessment will be completed. Standards which are reported on in the self-assessment and measured against in the annual safeguarding action plan are:
  - Leadership, Strategy and Working Together
  - Service Delivery, Development & Effective Practice
  - Commissioning Arrangements
  - Safer Recruitment, Staff Development & Effective Learning

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Employees, members and volunteers**

- 4.1 All employees, members and volunteers are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse. They must bring matters of concern about safety and welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs to the attention of their line manager or a Safeguarding Champion.

### **Heads of Service**

- 4.2 All Heads of Service must ensure that their employees and volunteers are subject to appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and that their employees, members and volunteers comply with this policy and procedures.

### **Line Managers**

- 4.3 All Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that their employees and volunteers have the appropriate training.
- 4.4 All Line Managers are responsible for safer recruitment of employees and volunteers in their service area and being aware of the policy on recruiting people with a criminal record.

- 4.5 All Line Managers are also responsible for adhering to the appraisal process and for including safeguarding in one to ones and team meetings, where appropriate.

## **5. Safeguarding governance**

### **Executive Director of Communities and People**

- 5.1 The Executive Director, Communities and People has accountability for safeguarding in Oxford City Council.
- 5.2 The Executive Director is the first point of contact for any deaths of children, young people or adults with care and support needs on council premises, in order that the Council ensures there is an effective response.

### **The Cabinet Board Member**

- 5.3 The Cabinet member for Safer Communities holds political responsibility and accountability for Safeguarding, as set out in the [Oxford City Council Constitution](#).

### **Head of Service, Regulatory Services and Community Safety**

- 5.4 The Head of Service, Regulatory Services and Community Safety has responsibility for the delivery of the Council's safeguarding duties.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

- 5.5 All DSLs have responsibility for:
- promoting well-being and preventing, responding and supporting our citizen's in safeguarding matters, in particular safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
  - Ensuring that the City Council procedures for dealing with allegations are in accordance with guidance from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards
  - Resolving inter-agency issues.
  - Overseeing and reviewing the implementation of policy and procedures.

### **Community Safety Service Manager (DSL)**

- 5.6 The Oxford City Council representative on the OSCB Full Board and OSAB Full Board meetings and responsible for ensuring relevant safeguarding information is provided to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and staff.
- 5.7 The lead officer for escalations to partner agencies when necessary.
- 5.8 Responsible for the implementation and promotion of effective safeguarding policy and practice within Oxford City Council.
- 5.9 Responsible for implementing safeguarding training to all staff and Councillors.

### **Head of Business Improvement (DSL)**

- 5.10 Responsible for embedding safeguarding recruitment procedures for posts with direct access to children, young people or adults at risk.

- 5.11 Chair of the Strategic Group.
- 5.12 Responsible for the recommendations and completion of safeguarding actions following a disciplinary hearing.

### **Head of Housing Services (DSL)**

- 5.13 Responsible for the implementation and promotion of effective safeguarding policy and practice within Housing Services.

### **Safeguarding Coordinator**

- 5.14 Ensures Oxford City Council have best practice in safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs, across all of the City Council services and within the community.
- 5.15 Leads on the development and implementation of Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Children and Adults with care and support needs policy and procedures.
- 5.16 Responsible for the completion of the annual safeguarding self-assessment and other reports and audits to the safeguarding boards.
- 5.17 Responsible for the coordination and dissemination of information across the authority, including that related to assessments, audits and learning from Serious Case Reviews.
- 5.18 Responsible for overseeing the internal safeguarding recording system, MyConcern.
- 5.19 Coordinate the delivery of internal safeguarding awareness briefings.

### **Strategic Safeguarding Group**

- 5.20 Members include Heads of Services, managers and individuals who have named responsibility to oversee safeguarding activity within their team. The role of the group is to ensure safeguarding is strategically placed across service area business plans and to ensure that strategies and plans that include safeguarding are in line with the Council Strategy 2020-2024.

### **Safeguarding Champions**

- 5.21 Safeguarding Champions are Council employees who have undertaken Specialist Safeguarding training and provide safeguarding advice to employees, members and volunteers on the appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and referral routes. Their responsibilities also include maintaining safeguarding as a standing agenda item at team meetings and disseminating information.
- 5.22 The Safeguarding Champion structure is promoted through regular communications and training.

## **6. Safeguarding prevention**

- 6.1 Promote wellbeing and early help interventions in line with the OSCB Early Help strategy.
- 6.2 Explore prevention opportunities prior to the requirement of statutory intervention.

- 6.3 Ensure whole-Council approach to safeguarding interventions, ensuring appropriate service areas provide appropriate services at the right time.
- 6.4 Promote use of early help tools available on the OSCB and OSAB websites.

## **7. Safeguarding practice and reviews**

- 7.1 Oxford City Council will contribute to all reviews and associated information sharing into serious safeguarding incidents, including:
  - Safeguarding Rapid Reviews to inform OSCB's Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs).
  - Safeguarding Adult Reviews
  - Homelessness Mortality Reviews
  - Domestic Homicide Reviews
- 7.2 Following a review, lessons learned will be shared and embedded across the organisation.

## **8. Training**

- 8.1 Oxford City Council will provide effective safeguarding training in order that employees, members and volunteers are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs.
- 8.2 All employees, members and volunteers are required to complete the internal safeguarding awareness briefing every two years.
- 8.3 Employees, members and volunteers working directly with children are required to complete OSCB and/or OSAB levels two and three, appropriate to their role.
- 8.4 Training information will be kept up-to-date, accessible and underpin the OSCB and OSAB training requirements.
- 8.5 Training delivered by staff will be assessed through an evaluation process to ensure it is current and effective.
- 8.6 The Safeguarding Coordinator will attend OSCB and OSAB Training Subgroups and workshops to develop training programmes and learning events that meet the safeguarding needs of Council staff.

## **9. Volunteers**

- 9.1 Volunteers will complete the internal safeguarding awareness briefing, in addition to further training appropriate to their role.
- 9.2 Volunteers will report safeguarding concerns to volunteer line manager who will record the concern on MyConcern.
- 9.3 Volunteers are required to comply with Safer Recruitment procedures in regard to DBS checks, as appropriate to their role.
- 9.4 Volunteers will adhere to the service Code of Conduct.

## **10. Reporting concerns**

- 10.1 Oxford City Council employees use the Threshold of Need matrixes for adults and children and report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate agencies, including:
- The police
  - Local Community Support Service (LCSS)
  - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
  - Adult Safeguarding triage team
  - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- 10.2 Where the threshold for safeguarding duties is not met, concerns will be managed internally or signposted to support agencies.
- 10.3 All safeguarding incidents are recorded on an externally provided case management system.
- 10.4 New cases are reviewed and triaged by trained Designated Safeguarding Officers within one working day.
- 10.5 Guidance on reporting and recording concerns is detailed in the Oxford City Council Safeguarding Procedures document.

## **11. Supervision and pastoral support**

- 11.1 Oxford City Council will support its employees by providing access to the Mental Health First Aid team.
- 11.2 Oxford City Council will support its employees, volunteers and members by providing access to the Employee Assistance Programme.
- 11.3 Line managers will provide the opportunity to staff to discuss safeguarding concerns at one-to-one meetings or debriefings.
- 11.4 Safeguarding champions' contact details are available for staff to use for advice and support.

## **12. Commissioned services and contractors**

- 12.1 Oxford City Council require all organisations working on behalf of Oxford City Council to have their own safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 12.2 The Council will review the safeguarding policies of commissioned services to check they meet local and national standards. The Safeguarding Coordinator obtains annual Commissioned Services Safeguarding Self Assessments from each service.
- 12.3 Council grant funded voluntary organisations must comply with the standards set by Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 12.4 Safeguarding guidance is included in the Council's procurement and grant funding processes.
- 12.5 Where relevant to the post, all employment agencies that provide the Council with contracted staff must have procedures in place to safeguard young people and adults with care and support needs in accordance with the requirements of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

### **13. Staff recruitment**

- 13.1 The Council uses a structured Safer Recruitment process to ensure all necessary checks and vetting are in place to minimise the risk of appointing unsuitable people to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- 13.2 Recruiting managers are required to undertake safeguarding training and will adhere to the Recruitment and Selection policy.
- 13.3 Oxford City Council will adhere to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA 74) and ensure all necessary checks are undertaken for exempt positions.

### **14. Whistle-blowing**

- 14.1 The Whistle Blowing Policy encourages employees who have serious concerns about any aspects of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 14.2 The Policy applies to illegal, improper, unethical, or wrong conduct, including safeguarding concerns. The policy applies to the behaviour or actions of staff, councillors, co-opted committee members, anyone representing the Council, partner organisations, contractors, consultants or other suppliers.
- 14.3 Whistleblowing procedure and the Council's response can be found in the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 14.4 When a safeguarding allegation is made, the Head of Business Improvement must be informed and, in their absence, another Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed. The 'Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations against Employees and Volunteers Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults' must be followed.

### **15. Other relevant policies and codes of practice**

- 15.1 The following documents support the aims of this policy and should be read alongside it:
  - Recruitment and Selection Policy
  - Criminal Records Policy
  - Employee Code of conduct
  - Whistle blowing Policy
  - Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations against Employees and Volunteers Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults
  - Relevant risk assessments and health and safety codes of practice

### **16. Information sharing**

- 16.1 Oxford City Council encourages employees, members and volunteers to share information appropriately as part of good safeguarding practise and do so confidently, whilst ensuring personal data is always treated fairly, lawfully and appropriately and that the rights of individuals are upheld.
- 16.2 Oxford City Council is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

- 16.3 To meet the statutory requirements of The Care Act 2014 and The Children's Act 1989 and 2004, all employees, members and volunteers must comply with the following policies, guidelines and protocols:
- [Safeguarding Information Sharing Protocol OSCB](#)
  - Oxford City Council Internet Usage Policy and E-mail Policy internal use only
  - Oxford City Council IT Security Policy
  - Oxford City Council Data protection policy
- Oxford City Council recognises that all information regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with care and support needs should be kept confidential. However, in order that children, young people and adults with care and support needs are protected from harm, in some circumstances, usual considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situations within Oxford City Council may be overridden.
- [Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#)

## **17. Monitoring and Review**

- 17.1 The Council will complete an annual safeguarding self-assessment to measure the organisation's performance against standards set by the local safeguarding boards.
- 17.2 The Council's safeguarding action plan contains actions in support of the self-assessment, safeguarding policy development, OSCB and OSAB's requirements and other local and national safeguarding priorities. Progress on the action plan is reviewed every six months and reported to the Strategic Safeguarding Group.
- 17.3 Monthly updates are provided to the Corporate Management Team.
- 17.4 An externally provided case management system is used to identify emerging safeguarding trends and themes and inform the safeguarding action plan.
- 17.5 This policy will be reviewed annually. All changes will be discussed with the Cabinet Member.
- 17.6 This policy is presented to Cabinet for approval every three years and more frequently if required by the Cabinet Member or Scrutiny process.



**Appendix 2: Oxford City Council Safeguarding Action Plan July 2023 – July 2024**



**Key Influences/inputs**

- Corporate Plan
- The Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (OSCB) Business Plan
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults (OSAB) Business Plan
- Oxford City Council’s Thriving Communities Strategy

The annual Safeguarding Self- Assessment Audit is a joint audit between the OSCB and OSAB.

The Action Plan Framework is based on the Self-Assessment Standards and it is aimed at maintaining best practice across Oxford City Council

1. Leadership, Strategy and Working Together
2. Service Delivery, Development & Effective Practice
3. Commissioning Arrangements
4. Safer Recruitment, Staff Development & Effective Learning
5. People's Experiences of Safeguarding

8

| Standard   | Objective                            | Action   | Input  | Desired outcome   | Lead                     | Timescale     | Bi-annual update Jan 24 |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Service Delivery, Development & Effective Practice | Promote Early Help pathways          | Increase communications, ensure trainer understanding of Service Integration Project, Early help, LCSS, tools including Strengths and Needs. | Understanding and awareness of Early Help across organisation. | Preventative measures in place to support children and vulnerable adults before requirement of statutory intervention | Safeguarding Coordinator | May 2024      |                         |
| Leadership, Strategy and Working Together          | Safeguarding champion representative | Recruit additional safeguarding champions to ensure each service area has  | Service head delegation  | Safeguarding advice and support available and embedded in every service area across organisation                      | Safeguarding Coordinator | December 2023 |                         |

|   |   |  |   |  |                          |               |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|--------------------------|---------------|--|
|   | from each service area                                      | at least one representative  |   |  |                          |               |  |
| Leadership, Strategy and Working Together                 | Increase Safeguarding Champion and DSL awareness            | Increased communications, visual aids  | Team managers' distribution of communications to staff. Safeguarding Coordinator attendance at team meetings. | Increase in positive responses to the annual staff safeguarding questionnaire question: "Can you name a Safeguarding Champion or Designated Safeguarding Lead at Oxford City Council?" | Safeguarding Coordinator | October 2023  |  |
| Safer Recruitment, Staff Development & Effective Learning | Promote specialist safeguarding training                    | Identify appropriate training for individual teams and promote uptake            | Team managers identify most appropriate training and encourage participation                                  | Increase in uptake of relevant training in appropriate teams   | Safeguarding Coordinator | May 2024      |  |
| Leadership, Strategy and Working Together                 | Promote open culture of safeguarding whistleblowing         | Identify current whistleblowing culture and areas for improvement                | Work with investigations team to understand current whistleblowing data and culture                           | Embed culture change, staff feel comfortable to challenge behaviour and report safeguarding concerns   | Safeguarding Coordinator | May 2024      |  |
| People's Experiences of Safeguarding                      | Complaints process reflects safeguarding complaints         | Identify complaint management systems and data relating to safeguarding concerns | Collaboration with OCC complaints and performance team  | Identify complaints relating to safeguarding concerns ensure safeguarding procedures are followed, alongside complaints procedures.  | Safeguarding Coordinator | December 2024 |  |
| Service Delivery, Development & Effective Practice        | Internal audit of safeguarding response across organisation | Scope audit  | Engagement from service areas and associated managers to review current systems and practice                  | Improvement in consistency of practice across service area/organisation<br>Embed safeguarding best practice across organisation  | Safeguarding Coordinator | May 2024      |  |

## 2022-2023 completed actions

| Objective  | Action   | Input  | Desired outcome  | Lead                         | Timescale          |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2022-2023 Neglect Strategy Actions monitored   | Peer review feedback from quarterly neglect strategy meeting to be an agenda item for safeguarding champions meeting quarterly strategic safeguarding group                        | Staff to use neglect practitioner tool to support with assessment and decision making.     | Identify neglect early and evidence appropriate signposting and referrals through MyConcern. Staff survey shows a more confident understanding of the issue. | Dani Granito/<br>Laura Jones | Quarterly meetings |
| Safeguarding policy and procedures remain current  | Annual review and update   | Cabinet sign off and circulated to all staff. Referred to in safeguarding briefing.        | Easily accessible procedural guidance and support for all staff.   | Laura Jones                  | Apr 2023           |
| Raise awareness of safeguarding SCR points cascaded throughout organisation.   | Produce a Newsletter containing MyConcern data, circulated every three months via intranet news page and email. Let's Talk session. Leadership Conversation session. Case examples | Engagement across organisation offering opportunity for learning and accessing information | Visual representation of the safeguarding work across City Council Greater understanding. Dissemination of learning from Serious Case Reviews                | Laura Jones                  | All year           |
| Promote the Safeguarding Champion structure  | Use internal communications to publish profiles of champions.  | Use case management examples to share with staff.  | Embed positive safeguarding culture  | Laura Jones                  | All year           |
| Coordinate external communication plan with Districts and County to ensure coordinated response to key dates and themes. | Quarterly district meetings.   | Communication Strategy for safeguarding and key messaging throughout the year              | Clear communication plan for key messages for maximum impact county wide.  | Laura Jones                  | All year           |
| Support Oxford Direct Services in delivering safeguarding.   | Share training materials, information and updates from Safeguarding Boards.  | Coordinated safeguarding approach from city and Council and ODS                            | Increase knowledge and awareness across ODS and increased reporting rates.   | Laura Jones                  | All year           |

|  |   |  |   |                            |           |
|--|---|--|---|----------------------------|-----------|
|  | Update SLA  |  |   |                            |           |
| Promote and support maintenance of Champions Network at ODS                            | Champions network to provide support and guidance to ODS colleagues   | Improve reporting standards and referral times   | Raising standard of referrals   | Laura Jones/<br>Jon Childs | June 2023 |
| Increase the centrally recorded data on modern slavery cases                           | Where Modern Slavery is suspected on a premises, disclosed or person is at risk of MS details are recorded by Anti-Slavery Coordinator  | Identify training need and reporting trends in service areas.                                | Raise awareness of risks and signs that MS is present   | Nicola Bell                | All year  |
| Support the implementation of new legislation following the Domestic Abuse Act 2021    | Implement and coordinate domestic abuse County strategy in City and Districts.<br>Keep all staff and champions up to date with the changes with regular briefings and at safeguarding officers meeting. | Membership of Domestic Abuse Strategic Group and Domestic Abuse Partnership Group            | Improve outcomes for victims, children and families, and perpetrators.<br>Progress Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA)<br>DAHL support for victims fleeing domestic abuse.<br>Scrutiny review implementation. | Liz Jones                  | July 2023 |
| Continue to work with OSCB Child Exploitation Sub-group and JTAC multi-agency process. | Multi-agency information sharing and guidance.  | Regular attendance at CSE sub-groups and associated meeting and carry out any agreed actions | Joint response to reduce crime and protect children exploitation and serious harm   | Richard Adams              | Ongoing   |
| Hotel Watch scheme to continue. Statement of intent for all hotels in City.            | All hotels to be contacted by city and council.   | Raise awareness of safeguarding and exploitation in all of city's hotels.                    | Reduce opportunity for safeguarding and exploitation in the city.   | Nicola Bell/Richard Adams  | Ongoing   |
| Ensure all grant and commissioned services completed annual                            | Request completed commissioned services audits prior to Oxford City Council submission of S11 audit   | Annual audit of commissioned services  | All commissioned services have safe practises   | Laura Jones                | Ongoing   |

|   |   |  |   |              |           |
|---|---|--|---|--------------|-----------|
| safeguarding audit and any outstanding action from previous year  |   |  | Written evidence in procurement process, contracts and contract monitoring visits |              |           |
| Service providers notify City of all safeguarding incidents referred under Section 42 Care Act and Section 47 Children's Act.   | Serious safeguarding incidents centrally recorded.  | Monitor through contract meetings across service areas.  | Improve practise and information sharing  | Laura Jones  | Ongoing   |
| Support delivery of Countywide Homelessness Strategy  | Monitor countywide homelessness service and prioritise safeguarding actions   | Participation in formal meetings and work streams  | Improved system wide approach to homelessness across county                       | Paul Wilding | June 2023 |
| Participate in Homelessness Mortality Review Group  | Share learning report from HMRG at strategic group and in safeguarding communications   | Contribute to review groups  | Reduction in premature deaths of people experiencing homelessness                 | Paul Wilding | June 2023 |
| Measure training outcomes in practice and assess effectiveness of training staff  | Review evaluation forms, referrals and staff survey   | Accurate picture of effectiveness of safeguarding training.  | Ability to capture staff views and improve service.                               | Laura Jones  | All Year  |
| Deliver internal safeguarding awareness briefings throughout the year. Ensure training information is up-to-date and accessible | Deliver minimum of 12 online awareness sessions in 2022<br>Deliver four (plus additional for any missed) for Councillors<br>Review training package 6 monthly | Quarterly sub training group meeting – plan and support the delivery and development of internal training packages.                | All employees able to meet safeguarding training requirements.                    | Laura Jones  | All year  |
| Attend all OSCB and OSAB Training Groups/ workshops to develop training programmes and learning events that meet                | Represent on training sub-group and attend meetings regularly.  | Provide a collective report to safeguarding training sub group to continually improve our training by listening to staff feedback. | Effective partnership working.  | Laura Jones  | Ongoing   |

|  |   |  |  |                |          |
|--|---|--|--|----------------|----------|
| the needs of our staff arranged for 2022/23  |   |  |  |                |          |
| All identified Young carers are referred to support services.<br>YA to run non-formal sessions of what it means to be a young carer and upskilling staff to refer accordingly. | Details to be recorded on MyConcern   | Younger carers are referred to Carers Oxfordshire and young carer's needs assessment completed.          | Measurable identification and classification of young carers and use of support service. | Leonard Sackey | All year |
| Promote use of pathways and awareness of joint protocols e.g. Adults who don't engage, multi-agency self-neglect policy and Hoarding Protocol                                  | Offer training and guidance to all safeguarding champions.<br>Support Locality HUBS through connecting champions to each and attending complex case meetings.<br>Escalate wider concerns through board process. | Engage partner agencies to provide outcomes and options for individuals who don't engage or use services | Improve partnership working.   | Dani Granito   | All year |

94

#### Document Control

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Document</b>             | Oxford City Council<br>Safeguarding Action Plan 2023/2024    |
| <b>Owner</b>                | Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety |
| <b>Author</b>               | Laura Jones<br>Safeguarding Coordinator                      |
| <b>Date last reviewed</b>   | May 2023   |
| <b>Next Review Date Due</b> | May 2024   |
| <b>Version</b>              | 1  |

**Name:** 'Oxford City Council Safeguarding Action Plan'

**File Location:** M:\Assistant Chief Executive\Safeguarding\Action Plans

## Appendix 3

### Procedures for reporting, referring and recording safeguarding concerns

#### Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction .....   | 3  |
| 2. Training .....   | 3  |
| 3. Safer Recruitment .....  | 3  |
| 4. Information Sharing .....  | 4  |
| 5. Emergencies .....  | 5  |
| 6. Raising a concern .....  | 5  |
| 7. Adult Safeguarding .....   | 5  |
| 7.1. Adult Safeguarding Triage Team .....   | 5  |
| 7.3. Adult Safeguarding Enquiry Criteria .....  | 5  |
| 7.5. Safeguarding Referral .....  | 6  |
| 7.9. Consent .....  | 6  |
| 7.12. Urgent concerns .....   | 6  |
| 7.14. Care needs assessment .....   | 6  |
| 7.16. Concerns for people without care and support needs .....                            | 6  |
| 7.19. Referrals within the City Council .....   | 7  |
| 7.21. Multi Agency Risk Management framework .....  | 7  |
| 7.23. Escalation .....  | 7  |
| 8. Extremism/Radicalisation .....   | 7  |
| 9. Child Safeguarding .....   | 7  |
| 9.1. Early Help .....   | 7  |
| 9.8. Local Community Support Service .....  | 8  |
| 9.11. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub .....   | 8  |
| 9.17. Consent .....   | 8  |
| 9.21. Child sexual exploitation .....   | 9  |
| 9.23. Radicalisation .....  | 9  |
| 9.28. Position of trust .....   | 9  |
| 9.30. Further information .....   | 9  |
| 9.32. Escalation .....  | 9  |
| 10. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking .....  | 9  |
| 11. Allegations against a council employee or volunteer .....                             | 10 |
| 12. Procedure for reporting of child deaths .....   | 10 |
| 13. Procedure for reporting deaths or serious abuse of adults with care and support needs | 10 |

**Procedures for reporting, referring and recording safeguarding concerns**



14. Recording concerns ..... 10



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. These procedures set out the range of work that supports the implementation of the safeguarding policy and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

## 2. Training

- 2.1. Guidance for staff on how to access training is available on the Oxford City Council Safeguarding intranet page. Members and volunteers will be invited to attend relevant training.
- 2.2. The following procedures are in place to ensure employees, members and volunteers complete the appropriate safeguarding training. There are different levels of training available to employees, volunteers and members, defined by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards.
- 2.3. All new employees, members and volunteers will be briefed on their responsibilities towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs during their induction.
- 2.4. All employees, members and volunteers are required to complete the internal safeguarding awareness briefing. This must be refreshed every two years.
- 2.5. Volunteers' line managers should contact the [Safeguarding Coordinator](#) to arrange to book volunteers on to a briefing.
- 2.6. Employees, members and volunteers working directly with children will be required to complete OSCB levels two and three, appropriate to their role.
- 2.7. Employees, members and volunteers working directly with adults with care and support needs will be required to complete OSAB levels two and three, appropriate to their role.
- 2.8. Recruiting managers should follow the Oxford City Council Recruitment and Selection Procedures and undertake the required Oxford City Council Recruitment and Selection training.
- 2.9. Designated Safeguarding Leads, Designated Safeguarding Officers and Safeguarding Champions will be required to attend the OSCB Designated Lead training and OSAB Leader/Manager training course.
- 2.10. When it is uncertain whether an employee fits into any of these categories, line managers should discuss the issue with the Human Resources team or Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 2.11. Specialist training courses are available on the Board websites and participation is strongly encouraged. All courses are free, non-attendance will incur a £50.00 fee. Courses can be booked via the Board websites:  
[OSCB training courses](#)  
[OSAB Training courses](#)

## 3. Safer Recruitment

- 3.1. To ensure safeguarding is embedded in our recruitment and selection procedures this procedure operates in conjunction with following Oxford City Council policies and guidelines:

- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Criminal Records Policy](#)
- [Safer Recruitment guidelines](#) – internal use only

3.2. The Head of Business Improvement is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and compliance with the Disclosure and Barring legislation through the Disclosure and Barring Service ['DBS'].<sup>1</sup>

3.3. The following statement is included in all job descriptions:

- 'Oxford City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.'

## 4. Information Sharing

4.1. Oxford City Council understands the importance of ensuring that personal data is always treated fairly, lawfully and appropriately and that the rights of individuals are upheld. Oxford City Council is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.

4.2. To meet the statutory requirements of The Care Act 2014 and The Children's Act 1989 and 2004, all employees, members and volunteers must comply with the following policies, guidelines and protocols:

- [Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#)
- [Safeguarding Information Sharing Protocol OSCB](#)
- [Oxford City Council Internet Usage Policy and E-mail Policy](#) internal use only
- [Oxford City Council IT Security Policy](#) internal use only
- [Oxford City Council Data protection policy](#)

4.3. Oxford City Council recognises that all information regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with care and support needs should be kept confidential. However, in order that children, young people and adults with care and support needs are protected from harm, in some circumstances, usual considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situations within Oxford City Council may be overridden.

4.4. It is important that employees, members and volunteers can share information appropriately as part of good safeguarding practise and do so confidently.

4.5. [The OSCB 7 golden rules for information sharing](#) provide advice on the sharing of information.

## 5. Emergencies

- 5.1. Call police using 999 if:
- 5.2. There are immediate concerns for the person's safety or urgent welfare checks where there are serious concerns for the individual.
- 5.3. You witness a crime (such as physical abuse) or if you are a victim of crime e.g. public order offences. You don't have to be the intended victim; you can be caused harassment, alarm or distress by someone's actions towards another.
- 5.4. Someone discloses to you that they have just been the victim of crime and the perpetrator is still in the vicinity.
- 5.5. Inform your line manager and a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity. Make a written record of the incident.**

## 6. Raising a concern

- 6.1. **Step 1.** Inform your line manager
- 6.2. If you have concerns about a person's welfare you must inform your line manager and keep them updated about subsequent action.
- 6.3. **Step 2.** Consult a safeguarding champion
- 6.4. Safeguarding champions have completed advanced level safeguarding training. They will guide you through the referral process. Safeguarding champions will not take ownership of the concern or make referrals on your behalf; they are a resource for support and guidance. Details of Safeguarding champions can be found on the [Safeguarding intranet page](#).
- 6.5. **Step 3.** If necessary make a referral
- 6.6. In Oxfordshire there are different referral pathways for adults and children. A safeguarding champion will advise on the most appropriate action. See sections 6 and 7 for guidance.
- 6.7. **Step 4.** Record your concern and the action taken
- 6.8. All safeguarding and welfare concerns should be recorded on the externally provided case management system, currently [MyConcern](#).

## 7. Adult Safeguarding

### 7.1. Adult Safeguarding Triage Team

- 7.2. If you've encountered an issue and are unsure if it is a safeguarding issue or not you can call and request a consultation with the Safeguarding Triage Team.
  - Tel: 01865 328232

### 7.3. Adult Safeguarding Enquiry Criteria

- 7.4. The criteria for a Section 42 (S42) safeguarding enquiry under the requirements of the Care Act 2014 are as follows:
  - The adult is reported as having or appears to have needs for care and support.
  - The adult is reported or appears to be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

- As a result of care and support needs is the adult unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

### 7.5. Safeguarding Referral

7.6. Safeguarding referrals go to Adult Social and Health Care. You can report:

- Online: [Safeguarding referral form](#)

7.7. When a concern is raised with the Social and Health Care team, they will pass this information to the Adult Safeguarding Team. The wishes of whoever is the subject of the concern will always be listened to and acted upon, and then a decision will be made about what needs to happen next.

7.8. Safeguarding Champions and line managers should consult [The Adult Safeguarding Threshold of Need Matrix](#) before advising on a referral pathway.

### 7.9. Consent

7.10. Unless there is a risk to the person's safety you should gain the person's consent before making a referral. Always advise the person of your concern and explain the steps you will take. It is important that the person's wishes are known, when making a referral you will be asked if you have the person's consent and what they want to happen.

7.11. You can make a referral without the person's knowledge if you have good reason to. The person making this decision must make a written record of their decision. If you are unsure seek advice from the Safeguarding Triage Team.

### 7.12. Urgent concerns

7.13. If you have urgent concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a person (that do not require police) contact Social and Health Care during office hours

- Tel: 0345 050 7666
- 8.30am - 5pm Monday - Thursday
- 8.30am - 4pm Friday
- In an emergency, out of hours please contact 0800 833408.

### 7.14. Care needs assessment

7.15. If your concern is not about abuse or neglect but someone not receiving care when you think they should, you should request a Care Needs Assessment using the: [Assessment Form for Professionals](#).

### 7.16. Concerns for people without care and support needs

7.17. If the person does not fit the criteria for safeguarding duties, there will still be help available and staff should always seek advice from a safeguarding champion about the most appropriate referral pathway.

7.18. People who may fall within this category include:

- Adults who may be at risk of harm or exploitation due to their circumstances or other vulnerabilities e.g. age, social isolation

- Adults who are at risk of harm or victimisation due to their lifestyles or specific needs e.g. sex workers, homelessness, drug users, personality disorder
- Adults who repeatedly come to the attention of local services.
- Adults who go repeatedly missing.
- Care leavers who are over 18.
- Adult survivors of child abuse including child sexual exploitation

### 7.19. Referrals within the City Council

7.20. To keep someone safe, staff should always consider what actions the Council can take and ensure everything that can be done has been. Line managers should advise on who should be alerted about the concern.

### 7.21. Multi Agency Risk Management framework

7.22. Where an adult's needs do not meet the threshold for safeguarding but there is a high level of risk and a multi-agency response would be beneficial, officers can refer in to the [MARM Framework](#). This can be used for any adult but will particularly helpful for those who hoard, self-neglect or are homeless. All attempts should have been made to reduce or minimise risk prior to referring to MARM.

### 7.23. Escalation

7.24. Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for handling escalation processes and inter-agency disputes. If there is a need for escalation, the line manager must be contacted in the first instance.

## 8. Extremism/Radicalisation

- 8.1. Protecting those vulnerable to extremism is a safeguarding issue: similar to protecting people with care and support needs from other harms e.g. neglect or exploitation.
- 8.2. If you are concerned about an individual being drawn into extremism you should follow safeguarding procedures.
- 8.3. Inform your line manager
- 8.4. Get advice from a safeguarding champion
- 8.5. Refer Social and Health Care Team Tel: **0345 050 7666**
- 8.6. For more information see the [PREVENT](#) intranet page.

## 9. Child Safeguarding

### 9.1. Early Help

- 9.2. Early help intervention can prevent the requirement for statutory intervention and promote the wellbeing of a child and their family.
- 9.3. When a child or family is identified as benefiting from early help, a whole family, multi-agency Strengths & Needs form should be completed. This can be completed by:

## Procedures for reporting, referring and recording safeguarding concerns

- 9.4. the professional identifying the need of the family
- 9.5. by any professional who knows/has a relationship with the family or is part of a network that supports the child/family
- 9.6. a professional identified by the family as the most appropriate person to support them with the Strengths & Needs conversation
- 9.7. Strengths and Needs forms and other Early Help tools can be found on the [OSCB website](#).
- 9.8. Local Community Support Service**
- 9.9. For emerging concerns that do not require an immediate safeguarding response contact LCSS on Tel: 0345 050 7666 or email [LCSS.Central@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LCSS.Central@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- 9.10. Contact the LCSS if you wish to complete a No Names Consultation. This means you can discuss the issue and get help and advice without giving the name of the child or family.
- 9.11. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**
- 9.12. For urgent safeguarding concerns contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on Tel: 0345 050 7666
- 9.13. You should call MASH immediately if there is an urgent safeguarding concern, for example:
  - allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused
  - concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
  - concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk
  - the child is frightened to return home
  - the child has been abandoned or parent is absent
- 9.14. Following a conversation with the MASH team you may be asked to submit a referral form.
- 9.15. [The Oxfordshire MASH Referral Form](#) for professionals only to refer children to social services.
- 9.16. Or you can email a report to MASH on the secure email on: [mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk)
- 9.17. Consent**
- 9.18. When gaining advice or making a referral you should ideally do so with the families knowledge and consent. The MASH and LCSS will ask you if you have parental consent to share the child's details. If you wish to discuss a concern without a family's knowledge or consent you can do so via a No Names Consultation only.
- 9.19. There will be situations where it is not appropriate to ask for consent e.g. if the parent is suspected of abuse and doing so may put the child at increased risk.
- 9.20. For further information sharing guidance please see the document below:

- [Information sharing for practitioners](#)

### 9.21. Child sexual exploitation

9.22. If a child has made a disclosure regarding sexual exploitation, or if you think a child may be at risk of being sexually exploited, please contact MASH on 0345 050 7666.

### 9.23. Radicalisation

9.24. If you are concerned that a child or young person is being radicalised;

9.25. Make safe, call 999 if you have concerns for the safety of the child, young person or the public.

9.26. Follow child safeguarding procedures

9.27. For more information see Oxford City Council [PREVENT](#) intranet page

### 9.28. Position of trust

9.29. If you have a concern about a professional or person in a position of trust you should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to report an allegation or concern.

- Tel: 01865 810603
- Email: [LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### 9.30. Further information

9.31. Visit the [OSCB Themes page](#) to find out more about topics such as:

- private fostering
- child sexual exploitation
- female genital mutilation
- disabled children
- forced marriage
- children missing education
- preventing extremism

### 9.32. Escalation

9.33. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are responsible for handling escalation processes and inter agency disputes. The Council has signed up to the OSCB Escalation process

9.34. .DSL with overall escalation responsibilities is:

- Community Safety Service Manager

## 10. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

10.1. The Council has additional responsibilities to report incidents of human trafficking and modern slavery.

- 10.2. For procedures on reporting and referring Modern Slavery and Exploitation at Oxford City Council, completing and NRM and Duty to Notify, contact Oxford City Council's [Anti-Slavery Coordinator](#) and refer to this document:
- [Oxfordshire's response to Adult Exploitation and Modern Slavery](#)
- 10.3. Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Oxford City Council prepares a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year. A Section 54 Statement must detail the steps taken during the previous financial year to ensure that no slavery or human trafficking is taking place in any part of its business or in any of its supply chains (or a declaration that no such steps have been taken).
- [Oxford City Council Modern Slavery Statement 2021-22](#)

### 11. Allegations against a council employee or volunteer

- 11.1. The Council has additional policy for managing allegations involving council employees or volunteers.
- [Policy and Procedure for Managing Allegations against Employees and Volunteers](#)
- 11.2. Allegations of abuse against an employee, member or volunteer will be reported to Oxfordshire County Council Children's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by the Head of Business Improvement and the initial consultation will be to determine whether the allegation is so serious that it should immediately be referred to Social Services and/or the Police.
- 11.3. The Council recognises that it may be difficult to inform on colleagues but assures all employees, members and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person, or adult at risk may be being abused or bullied.
- 11.4. The Council's [Whistle Blowing Policy](#) is available on the Council's web pages.

### 12. Procedure for reporting of child deaths

- 12.1. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board is required to review deaths of children where there is at least a suspicion that the death resulted from abuse or neglect. The Board will also review serious cases of abuse or neglect of children.
- 12.2. If you become aware of a child death on Council premises, you should immediately contact:
- The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety
  - Otherwise you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

### 13. Procedure for reporting deaths or serious abuse of adults with care and support needs

- 13.1. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is required to review deaths of adults with care and support needs where there is at least a suspicion that the



death resulted from abuse or neglect. The Board will also review serious cases of abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.

- 13.2. If you become aware that an adult with care and support needs has died or been seriously harmed on Council premises, you should immediately contact:
- The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety
  - Otherwise you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- 13.3. If the death of a young person aged 16-17 or adult with care and support needs has or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person they are related to or who they have been in an intimate personal relationship or who is a member of the same household, this will trigger a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR). If appropriate the DHR will be carried out jointly with a Serious Case Review. In such circumstances, you should contact:
- Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety
  - Domestic Abuse Lead
  - A Designated Safeguarding Lead

## 14. Recording concerns

### 14.1. MyConcern



- 
- 14.2. MyConcern is the current central reporting system for safeguarding concerns raised by Oxford City employees and Councillors. The system is monitored by a group of Designated Safeguarding Officers and each new concern is triaged by a member of the group. Where there are outstanding actions they will direct actions to be completed to the case owner and notify the relevant teams to follow up. Once referrals are completed (internally or externally) the report can be closed.
- 14.3. Accurate reporting on MyConcern is essential to correctly interpret the data, complete lessons learnt and identify trends and training issues.
- 14.4. User information**
- 14.5. MyConcern training forms part of the internal Safeguarding Awareness briefing which is mandatory for all staff.
- 14.6. Account set up and further training is available from the [Safeguarding Coordinator](#).
- 14.7. Recording concerns**
- 14.8. Recording and reporting of concerns should be:
- Factual – Who are you concerned about, where do they live, what happened? Why are they at risk?

- Have context – what was the purpose of the visit/interaction? Are they a council tenant? Are they known to other departments?
- **Remember:** If making an external referral, record reference numbers and names of professionals spoken to. You can add more than one person to a concern. If you don't know the name put 'unknown' this can be updated later.

### 14.9. Referral details

14.10. Always apply referral details to the concern. This can be done through the 'Update Concern' option. Click on the concern you wish to update and go to the referral tab. Enter the date of the referral and choose from the list of agencies. Choose the outcome which is most appropriate.

### 14.11. No referral required

14.12. You may have discussed your concern with a safeguarding champion and decided that no further action needs to be taken. E.g. the situation is already being managed internally or by another agency.

14.13. If there are no new concerns or information to give to the primary agency you should not repeat the same information. If there are new or escalating concerns about an on-going situation then you should record your concern on MyConcern and inform the primary agency.

**Appendix 4: Safeguarding Policy Risk Assessment**

| 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 |
| Safeguarding Policy | Poor staff awareness of safeguarding indicators | Threat      | Lack of access to training and support. | Ineffective response to safeguarding incidents.        | 23/05/2023  | Richard Adams | 4     | 4 | 4       | 3 | 4        | 2 | Training programme in place delivered by a staff pool that needs expanding. | Training programme in place delivered by a staff pool that needs expanding. | 31/03/2024 | On-going |            | Laura Jones  |
| Safeguarding Policy | Poor staff awareness of reporting procedures    | Threat      | Lack of access to training and support. | Ineffective response to safeguarding incidents.        | 23/05/2023  | Richard Adams | 4     | 3 | 3       | 3 | 3        | 2 | Training programme in place delivered by a staff pool that needs expanding. | Training programme in place delivered by a staff pool that needs expanding. | 31/03/2024 | On-going |            | Laura Jones  |
| Safeguarding Policy | Poor safeguarding recording levels on MyConcern | Threat      | Lack of access to training and support. | Lack of insight and response into safeguarding trends. | 23/05/2023  | Richard Adams | 3     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 2        | 2 | Newsletters and reminders to record on MyConcern. Regular review of data.   | Newsletters and reminders to record on MyConcern. Regular review of data.   | 31/03/2024 | On-going |            | Laura Jones  |

This page is intentionally left blank



## Appendix 5

### Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

|  |                   |                                  |  |   |   |  |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Service Area:</b>   | <b>RS&amp; CS</b> | <b>Section: Community Safety</b> | <b>Date of Initial assessment: 10/05/2023</b>  | <b>Key Person responsible for assessment: Richard Adams</b> | <b>Date assessment commenced: 21/05/2023</b>  |  |
| <b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>  |                   |                                  | Safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs Policy  |   |   |  |
| <b>1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact</b>                 |                   |                                  | <b>Race</b>  |   | <b>Disability</b>                             |  |
|  |                   |                                  | <b>Gender reassignment</b>   |   | <b>Religion or Belief</b>                     |  |
|  |                   |                                  | <b>Sex</b>   |   | <b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>                |  |
| <b>Other strategic/ equalities considerations</b>  |                   |                                  | <b>Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults</b>   |   | <b>Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience</b> |  |
|  |                   |                                  | <b>Countywide Homelessness Strategy</b>  |   | <b>Thriving Communities Strategy</b>          |  |
| <b>2. Background:</b><br><br>Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with |                   |                                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford City Council's Business Safeguarding policy sets out publicly the Council's response and commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.</li> <li>The Safeguarding policy is guided by the national safeguarding legislation and references the Care Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 and the Children's Act 2004.</li> </ol> |   |   |  |

the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.

3. The Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy was developed in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult's Board policies and is supported by the Oxford City Council Safeguarding procedures and action plan.
4. The Safeguarding Policy has been benchmarked against other district Council safeguarding policies.

The Safeguarding Policy sets out:

- Legal framework
- Multi agency safeguarding arrangements
- Roles and responsibilities
- Safeguarding governance
- Safeguarding prevention
- Safeguarding practice and reviews
- Training
- Volunteers
- Reporting concerns
- Supervision pastoral support
- Commissioned services and contractors
- Staff recruitment
- Whistleblowing
- Other relevant policies
- Information sharing
- Monitoring and review

Service areas involved and impacted include:

- Corporate Strategy
- Housing Services
- Regeneration
- Financial Services
- Regulatory Services and Community Safety
- Corporate Property
- Business Improvement
- Planning Services

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | OX Place<br>ODS<br>Community Services<br>Law and Governance   |
| <p><b>3. Methodology and Sources of Data:</b></p> <p>The methods used to collect data and what sources of data</p>   | <p>To inform and guide the assessment, key variables and determinants have been taken from:</p> <p>National legislation<br/> Local safeguarding boards' priorities and requirements<br/> Review of district Council policies</p> <p>Data from the externally provided, confidential case management system, currently 'MyConcern' is used to identify themes and trends of safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>HR records identify themes and trends of safeguarding concerns relating to staff.</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Consultation</b></p> <p>This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you carried out the consultation.</li> <li>• Details about how you went about it.</li> <li>• A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.</li> <li>• An assessment of your proposed policy (or</li> </ul> | <p>Consultation was carried out to ensure the safeguarding policy is comprehensive, relevant to and understood by each service area and to provide opportunity for collective input into the policy development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In May 2023, A meeting was held with eight officers from a range of service areas who are experienced in safeguarding and policy development.</li> <li>2) During the meeting, additional relevant officers were identified and the draft policy was subsequently shared with sixteen officers from seven service areas, including Heads of Service, for review and comment.</li> <li>3) Safeguarding procedures were shared with the Safeguarding Champions, a team of 14 officers from a range of service areas, to allow identification of any gaps, ensure procedures are understood in lay terms and enable opportunity for an organisational-wide, joint approach to developing procedures.</li> <li>4) The safeguarding policy will go through the Cabinet clearing process and therefore reviewed and agreed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety</li> <li>The Director of Communities and People</li> <li>Legal representative</li> <li>Head of Financial Services</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>policy options) in the light of the responses you received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A statement of what you plan to do next</li> </ul> | <p>Cabinet member for Safer Communities</p> <p>5) Citywide conversations (strand 1, 2 and 3) for TCS which provides various action for Priority 3, Thriving Communities.</p> <p>As a result of the meeting which was held with officers from a range of service areas who are experienced in safeguarding and policy development, and subsequent further sharing of the draft policy, feedback was received and the policy amended to align with other relevant policies.</p> <p>Benchmarking against other local district council safeguarding policies was undertaken.</p> <p>OSCB and OSAB undertake consultation with vulnerable adults and young people and their families in the creation and adoption of their policies and procedures. These policies and procedures inform the Oxford City Council safeguarding policy and procedures.</p> <p>Subsequent reporting will use data collated from the Census and BIU (Business Intelligence Unit). Other independent sources of data, such as reporting from local police, will also be used for a more comprehensive consultation exercise.</p> |
|--|--|

|  |  |   |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
|--|--|---|------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| <p><b>5. Assessment of Impact:</b><br/>Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the nine primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and /</p> | <hr/> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>Race</b></td> <td><b>Disability</b></td> <td><b>Age</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> </tr> </table> <hr/>                                 |   |            | <b>Race</b>                    | <b>Disability</b>                       | <b>Age</b>                | Positive | Positive | Positive |
|  | <b>Race</b>  | <b>Disability</b>                       | <b>Age</b> |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
|  | Positive   | Positive                                | Positive   |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
|  | <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>Gender reassignment</b></td> <td><b>Religion or Belief</b></td> <td><b>Sexual Orientation</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> </tr> </table> <hr/> |   |            | <b>Gender reassignment</b>     | <b>Religion or Belief</b>               | <b>Sexual Orientation</b> | Positive | Positive | Positive |
| <b>Gender reassignment</b>   | <b>Religion or Belief</b>  | <b>Sexual Orientation</b>               |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
| Positive   | Positive   | Positive                                |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
| <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>Sex</b></td> <td><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></td> <td><b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Positive</td> </tr> </table> <hr/>  |  |   | <b>Sex</b> | <b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> | <b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b> | Positive                  | Positive | Positive |          |
| <b>Sex</b>   | <b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>   | <b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b> |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
| Positive   | Positive   | Positive                                |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |
| <hr/>  |  |   |            |                                |   |                           |          |          |          |



or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

The Safeguarding policy was developed and subsequently updated with the aim to have a positive impact on each equality strand.

The internal safeguarding awareness briefing includes legislation relevant to safeguarding, including the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding duties and the Council's response to safeguarding applies to all children and adults with care and support needs. The Council's duties and response will be maintained irrespective of any of the above equality strands.

- Race - PREVENT training is promoted throughout organisation and available through the safeguarding boards.  
Support for asylum seekers, migrants and refugees is provided by a dedicated team.  
Partnership work is undertaken in line with the anti-racism charter and Race Action Plan.  
The annual self-assessment background paper details consultation with ethnic minority groups.
- Disability – disabilities are recognised as a care and support need for which safeguarding duties apply to adults. This legislative framework forms part of the safeguarding policy.
- Age – the safeguarding policy sets out the legislation relating to safeguarding duties for children and adults and how these differ. The safeguarding procedures detail different referral pathways depending on the age of the person the organisation intends to safeguard.
- Gender Reassignment - Hate crime has increased since the end of pandemic restrictions, this may result in increased reports of safeguarding. The policy ensures that the Council will use the appropriate referral pathways and work with appropriate organisations to ensure victims get the support that they need.
- Religion or belief – Honour based abuse training is available through the OSCB. Oxford City Council works in partnership with countywide organisations in line with the anti-racism charter and Race

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual orientation – Hate crime has increased since the end of pandemic restrictions, this may result in increased reports of safeguarding. The policy ensures that the Council will use the appropriate referral pathways and work with appropriate organisations to ensure victims get the support that they need.</li> <li>• Sex – Our approach to domestic and sexual abuse ensures our services are flexible to the needs of the sex of the victim.</li> <li>• Pregnancy or maternity – Women are at heightened risk of abuse and violence during this period. DASH risk assessments are completed by domestic abuse housing link workers, this includes pregnancy and maternity. The DA lead was consulted in the development of the updated policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Marriage and civil partnership – We can respond and ensure those who need a safeguarding response because they are a victim, will be able to access a suitable response.</li> </ul> <p>Impacts on each strand are proportionately positive. Any disproportionate impacts will be monitored within safeguarding processes.</p> |
| <p><b>6. Consideration of Measures:</b></p> <p>This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy</p> | <p>There is no alternative approach. Oxford City Council have a statutory duty to comply with local safeguarding boards' requirements and national legislation.</p> <p>Mitigation of adverse impact is ensured upon consideration of actions within the safeguarding action plan.</p> <p>Training and awareness of safeguarding and associated policies and procedures exceeds annual targets, this mitigates any impacts where the policy and procedures may not be fully understood.</p>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>The 23-24 annual safeguarding action plan includes an internal audit of safeguarding practices within the organisation. This will also mitigate any impacts of non-compliance due to lack of awareness or training.</p> <p>The Safeguarding policy has been developed with reference to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Thriving Communities Strategies, grants reviews and the service integration project. These include mitigation of impact and associated EIAs; using a whole system approach and collaborative, collective working</p> <p>Other associated strategies and consideration of measures:<br/>Easy read documents mitigate negative impacts emerging from visual impairment or where English is not a first language.</p>   |
| <p><b>6a. Monitoring Arrangements:</b></p> <p>Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.</p> | <p>The Council will complete an annual safeguarding self-assessment to measure the organisation's performance against standards set by the local safeguarding boards.</p> <p>The safeguarding risk register identifies areas of risk and associated impacts. Identification of these risks creates an awareness to help mitigation of negative impacts.</p> <p>The Council's safeguarding action plan contains actions in support of the self-assessment, safeguarding policy development, OSCB and OSAB's requirements and other local and national safeguarding priorities. Progress on the action plan is reviewed every six months and reported to the Strategic Safeguarding Group.</p> <p>Monthly updates of recorded safeguarding concerns to Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>Using externally provided case management system to identify emerging safeguarding trends and themes and inform safeguarding action plan.</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed annually. All changes are discussed with the Cabinet Member.</p> |

|  |                               |   |          |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|---|----------|--|--|
|  |                               | This policy is presented to Cabinet for approval every three years and more frequently if required by the Cabinet Member or Scrutiny process.   |          |  |  |
| <b>7. Date reported and signed off by Cabinet:</b>   |                               |   |          |  |  |
| <b>8. Conclusions:</b><br>What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact |                               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep monitoring the protected characteristics. Prompt service heads when next collecting data for any risks to protected characteristics.</li> <li>2. Ongoing plans of delivering equalities training which will help.</li> <li>3. Training and awareness raising through service planning, focussing on frontline services.</li> </ol> |          |  |  |
| <b>9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>  | YES<br>Training and awareness | <b>10. Date the Service Plans will be updated</b>   | On-going | <b>11. Date copy sent to Equalities Lead Officer</b>     |  |
| <b>13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet:</b>  |                               | <b>14. Date reported to Cabinet:</b>  |          | <b>12. The date the report on EqlA will be published</b> |  |

Signed L Jones

Signed

**Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:**

Safeguarding Coordinator, Regulatory Services and Community Safety  
Community Safety Service Manager, Regulatory Services and Community Safety  
EDI Lead, Community Services

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Planning Services  
**Title of Report:** Review of the Street Naming and Numbering Policy

| Summary and recommendations |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>   | To seek approval for a revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy              |
| <b>Key decision:</b>        | No   |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>      | Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>  | Support Thriving Communities; Enable an Inclusive Economy                      |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>    | Council Strategy 2020-24   |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:  |
| 1. <b>Approve</b> the draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy (at Appendix 1); and  |
| 2. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Planning Services to make any amendments to the draft Policy as a result of Cabinet's consideration of it. |

| Appendices |  |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy |

## Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council is the relevant authority to issue new street names and numbers within the Council's administrative area.
2. The Council is empowered by the provisions of the Oxfordshire Act 1985 (sections 13 and 14), the Public Health Act 1925 (sections 17 to 19) for the purpose of naming street and by Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 for the purpose of the numbering of properties.
3. The operational process of applying for and determining street names and numbering is governed by the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, which is reviewed every three years. The current policy was approved by Cabinet on 11 November 2020.

## **Revision of the Policy**

4. The purpose of the Policy is to guide applicants and officers with the process for applying for new street names or numbers, including instances where re-naming or re-numbering is desired.
5. It sets out the kind of names appropriate for different street typologies, the types of names that are not appropriate due to, for example, trademark issues, and the community consultation that the Council undertakes for new street names.
6. The current Policy, whilst still fit-for-purpose, has had minor updates to reflect best practice. Furthermore, the responsibility for the area has passed from Law and Governance to Planning Services and so elements of the Policy need to be updated to reflect this.
7. The Policy is reviewed formally every three years, with the next review point due in November 2023. However in order to make sure that the escalation procedure in particular reflected the recent change of service lead the revised Policy is being brought to Cabinet early.
8. The revised draft Policy retains the delegation for minor amends of the Policy to be made by the Head of Planning Services. Policy re-drafts or significant changes will require approval by the Cabinet.
9. Cabinet could choose to defer the review of the Policy until November, this is not recommended as the revised Policy better reflects best practice and also how the service is managed.
10. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet approve the revised Policy, noting that it will be reviewed in three years' time with any following revisions coming before Cabinet.

## **Financial implications**

11. There are no financial implications to the revised Policy. Charges for the service are reviewed as part of the budget setting process, and cannot exceed the cost of providing the service.

## **Legal issues**

12. There are no legal issues with the revised Policy. The Oxfordshire Act 1985 gives the Council the power it is exercising within the Policy, an extract of which is included within the Policy to aid applicants.

## **Level of risk**

13. There is no risk attached to the policy revision.

## Equalities impact

14. The revision of the Policy does not give rise to any new equalities impacts. The Policy retains the provision that “Names that could be construed as discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 or could be considered as ‘not in the spirit of’ this act will not be considered.” (Para 11 of Appendix 4 and para 3f of Appendix 4 of the Policy)

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | David Butler   |
| Job title                  | Head of Planning Services  |
| Service area or department | Planning Services  |
| Telephone                  | 01865 529067   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:dbutler@oxford.gov.uk">dbutler@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

This page is intentionally left blank



## Appendix 1



### Oxford City Council

### Street Naming and Numbering Policy

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Approved by<br/>Cabinet</b> | <b>Next due for review</b> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| V2             | July 2023                      | July 2026                  |

| <b>Contents</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Introduction   | 3           |
| 2. Policy aim   | 4           |
| 3. Policy objectives  | 4           |
| 4. Powers   | 5           |
| 5. Claims for compensation  | 5           |
| 6. Policy scope   | 6           |
| 7. Roles and responsibilities   | 6           |
| 8. Consultees   | 6           |
| 9. Monitoring and review  | 7           |
| 10. Naming of new streets   | 6           |
| 11. Renaming of streets   | 7           |
| 12. Addresses for properties  | 8           |
| 13. Renumbering of properties   | 9           |
| 14. Allocation of postcodes   | 9           |
| <br>  |             |
| Appendix 1: The Oxfordshire Act 1985 (Extract)                        | 11          |
| Appendix 2: Policy on naming of streets                               | 13          |
| Appendix 3: Policy on numbering of properties                         | 17          |
| Appendix 4: Policy on naming of properties                            | 19          |
| Appendix 5: Consultation remit and process                            | 21          |
| Appendix 6: Charges for naming of streets and numbering of properties | 24          |
| Appendix 7: Renaming of streets process                               | 25          |
| Appendix 8: Notification of street naming and numbering changes       | 26          |

## **1. Introduction**

- a) Oxford City Council (“the Council”) has the legal responsibility for the naming and numbering of streets and properties within the Council’s administrative area. The Council acts under the provisions of the Oxfordshire Act 1985 (sections 13 and 14), the Public Health Act 1925 (sections 17 to 19) for the purpose of naming streets and Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 for the purpose of the numbering of properties. The Council can charge for the street naming and numbering process under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 which allows local authorities to charge where they provide a service.
- b) The objective of the Council’s street naming and numbering policy is to enable it to provide a unique and unambiguous address for every property in the city of Oxford. This will ensure that;
  - Emergency Services can find a property quickly;
  - Reliable delivery of post and other such deliveries;
  - Location of an address is clear; and
  - Consistency of property-based information across local government databases and within the community.
- c) Many legal transactions associated with properties are withheld until they can be identified by street names and/or numbers. For instance, utilities suppliers will not normally connect their services until such time as the premises have been given a formal postal address.
- d) The Council has an obligation to provide address data to the National Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council follows best practice by conforming to:
  - GeoPlace Data entry conventions and best practice for addresses: DEC - Addresses Version 3.4, September 2016. This guide assists in making address data uniform across the UK; and
  - British Standard 7666 - Spatial datasets for geographical referencing. This guidance specifies a national format for holding details on every property and street.
- e) A Street Naming and numbering application can be made to the council. Information on how to apply is provided on the Oxford City Council website.

## **2. Policy aims**

- a) The aim of the Street Naming and Numbering Policy (“the

Policy”) is to set out the correct process, rules, and fees for the following activities within the administrative area of Oxford City Council:

- Naming of new streets and numbering properties on those streets;
  - Naming and numbering new properties on an existing street;
    - (a) Renaming and renumbering properties on an existing street;
    - (b) Addition or changes to a house name for properties with an existing number;
    - (c) Allocation of numbers to properties with names only;
    - (d) Reviewing the names of existing streets;
    - (e) Renaming existing streets;
    - (f) Consultation on naming new streets; and
    - (g) Confirmation of what are considered to be acceptable street names, property names and numbering schemes.
- b) The naming of a street includes any road, court, footpath, alley, or thoroughfare.

### **3. Policy objectives**

- a) To achieve the above aims the Council will:
  - a) Provide names and numbers for streets as necessary;
  - b) Alter the names of properties as requested/necessary;
  - c) Register new names for properties with an existing number only;
  - d) Allocate numbers to properties with names as required; and
  - e) Consult appropriate persons/groups on the naming of new streets;
  - f) Consult appropriate persons/groups when reviewing the names of streets.
- b) The above will be carried out in accordance with:
  - a) The relevant legislation;
  - b) The policy for street naming (See Appendix 2);
  - c) The policy for property numbering (See Appendix 3);
  - d) The policy for property naming (See Appendix 4); and
  - e) The procedure for consultation (See Appendix 5).

### **4. Powers**

- a) The Council has the statutory power to name streets and number

properties. It can allocate and rename or renumber roads, new developments, property conversions and existing addresses within its administrative area. This includes residential properties, conversions and subdivisions, commercial and industrial premises.

- b) It acts under the following guidance and legislation when naming and numbering streets:
  - a) Oxford City Council's Constitution;
    - i. The Oxfordshire Act 1985 (part III, sections 13-14) (see Appendix 1); and
  - b) Best-practice guidance:
    - i. GeoPlace Data entry conventions and best practice for addresses: DEC-Addresses Version 3.4, September 2016.
    - ii. British Standard 7666 - Spatial datasets for geographical referencing.
  - c) The Policy operates in accordance with the following legal powers of the Council, as outlined in the Oxfordshire Act 1985:
    - i. To name any street as necessary;
    - ii. To alter the name of any street as necessary;
    - iii. To allocate numbers to any buildings in a street as necessary; and
    - iv. To alter numbers allocated to any buildings in a street as necessary
  - d) Please see Appendix 1 for an extract of relevant sections from the Oxfordshire Act 1985.

## **5. Claims for compensation**

- a) The Council is not liable for any claims for compensation arising directly or indirectly from the naming of streets, re-naming of streets, numbering or renumbering of properties, naming, or renaming of properties.
- b) Individuals and developers must not give any postal addresses, including the postcode, to potential occupiers, either directly or indirectly (for example via solicitors or estate agents) before the official naming and numbering scheme has been issued for it by the Council. The Council will not be liable for any costs of damages caused by failure to comply with this requirement.
  - i. Street naming and numbering is a statutory function that applies to all property numbers, names, and roads name allocations, whether properties are new developments or not;
  - ii. No other organisation such as Land Registry, Council Tax,

HMO, Selective Licensing, Planning or Building Regulations has the legislative powers to create or allocate property and street numbers/names.

## **6. Policy scope**

- a) This Policy applies to all functions undertaken relating to street naming and numbering and to all employees and council members involved. It also applies to all developers seeking to name/number developments and any consultee on any street naming scheme.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

- a) The Council officers responsible for the day-to-day carrying out of street naming and numbering are;
  - i. Customer Services Applications Officers (Street Naming and Numbering); and
  - ii. The Authority Address Custodian (the ICT Application DevOps Specialist).
- b) Oversight for these functions comes from;
  - i. Customer Services Applications Team Leader and Team Manager; and
  - ii. Head of Planning Services.
- c) Final responsibility rests with the Head of Planning Services in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.

## **8. Consultees**

- a) The Council consults on the names of new streets. Consultation responses will be considered when naming streets, but the Council has the final decision-making power. During any consultation, consultees must read and adhere to this Policy and associated documents, particularly Appendix 2 (Policy for naming of streets), and Appendix 5 (Consultation remit and process).
- b) The Council has no duty to consult on property names or street numbering schemes. These will be determined solely by the Authority Address Custodian and the Street Naming and Numbering Team.

## **9. Monitoring and review**

- a) This Policy will be reviewed every three years or as necessary to reflect changes in legislation.
- b) Minor amendments to the Policy may be approved by the Head of Planning Services. Policy re-drafts or significant changes, as determined by the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the relevant portfolio holder will require approval by Cabinet.

#### **10. Naming of new streets**

- a) Where a new development creates new street(s), the individual or developer is required to apply to the Council to have these officially named.
- b) The process for street naming is outlined in Appendix 5. The individual or developer are encouraged by the Council to submit proposals for street names but must be aware that the final determination will be made by the Council. Street names not adhering to the guidance in Appendix 2 will not be included in any form of consultation by the Council.
- c) The individual or developer is responsible for the cost of installing the street signage.

#### **11. Renaming of streets**

- a) Streets will only be renamed under exceptional circumstances, such as when there are potential problems for the emergency services in identifying and locating an address, or there is substantial evidence (including from residents in the street) that the current name is no longer deemed suitable. Having considered the particular circumstances if, in the opinion of the Head of Planning Services having consulted with the relevant portfolio holder, it is necessary to rename any street in such exceptional circumstances, this will proceed as specified in the Oxfordshire Act 1985, Section 13(2) a-c. In the event of there being a balance of judgments to be made or unresolved objections following consultation about possible names (other than those relating to potential problems for the emergency services) the Cabinet will take the decision, following a written report to it from the relevant portfolio holder.”
- b) The Cabinet would consider whether a review should be carried out on receipt, by the Council, of representations from local Councillor’s and evidence that a substantial proportion of those

who live in properties in the street or road are calling for a change in the street name. Having considered the particular circumstances if, in the opinion of the Cabinet, it is necessary to rename any street following such a review, this will proceed as specified in the Oxfordshire Act 1985, Section 13 (2) a-c. In the event of there being any unresolved objection(s) following consultation the Cabinet will take the decision on the new name for a street.

## **12. Addresses for properties**

- a) Official addresses will not be issued where the development does not have the necessary permissions. However, the issuing of an address does not serve as confirmation that any building or structure is authorised under Planning, Building Regulations, or any other legislation.
- b) The Council may allocate unofficial addresses as a temporary measure until an official address has been obtained for emergency services purposes and for internal authority purposes e.g., collection of Council Tax. For unofficial temporary addresses, no postcodes will be requested from Royal Mail.
- c) Requests for new or amended addresses will only be accepted from or on behalf of the owner(s)/occupier(s) of the property. Where the request does not come from the owner of the property directly, written consent of the owner must be obtained, or the occupier must have and evidence of a minimum of three years for their lease left to run.
- d) All new properties will be allocated a number, the only exception to this are new properties on existing streets where there is no numbering scheme, in such cases the property will be named. Numbering will accord with nationally accepted best practice to ensure that it is logical and sequential.
- e) Once a property has been given a number it must be used and displayed on the property. Where a name has been given to a property together with its official number, the number must always be included in the address. The name is an optional addition, not an alternative. For example, if the name requested is "New Place" at 13 Banbury Road, the full address will be New Place, 13 Banbury Road.



- f) All new addresses or changes of address will be notified to the relevant council services.
- g) For further detail on how properties are numbered or addressed, please see Appendix 3.

### **13. Renumbering of properties**

- a) Properties will only be renumbered in exceptional circumstances, such as when there are potential problems for the emergency services in identifying and locating an address. Having considered the particular circumstances if, in the opinion of the Head of Planning Services it is necessary to renumber a property, this will proceed as specified in the Oxfordshire Act 1985;

### **14. Allocation of postcodes**

The responsibility of postcodes lies with Royal Mail. For any queries regarding this please see their code of practice.

1. Royal Mail can be contacted at:

Address Management Centre  
Royal Mail  
Admiral House 2  
Admiral Way  
Doxford International Business Park  
SUNDERLAND SR3 3XW

Telephone 03456 011110

Email: [addressdevelopment@royalmail.com](mailto:addressdevelopment@royalmail.com)

2. The Council will notify the Royal Mail of new addresses, but it will be the responsibility of the Royal Mail to update their records.
3. The Council will send a notification/request regarding unauthorised addresses to ask Royal Mail to add a note to the postcode stating that no new addresses should be added without City Council agreement.

## **Appendix 1: The Oxfordshire Act 1985 (Extract)**

13(1) Subject to subsection 13(2) below the council may name any street or any part of a street in their district which is without a name, or which bears two names and may from time to time alter the name of any street or any part of a street in their district.

13(2) (a) Where the council propose to alter the name of a street or part of a street they shall:

(i) post notice of the proposal in a conspicuous position at each end of the street or part to which it relates; and

(ii) serve a copy of the notice on the owner or occupier of every dwellinghouse in that street or part.

(b) The notice under paragraph 13(2(a)) above shall state the new name proposed and that objections to the proposal may be made in writing to the council before a day specified in the notice, not earlier than 28 days after the council have complied with paragraph 13(2(a)) above.

Before determining any alteration of name in accordance with a proposal to which this subsection applies, the council shall consider all objections made as provided in paragraph 13(b) above and, in the case of an objection by the owner or occupier of any dwellinghouse in the street, give the objector an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by a committee or sub-committee of the council.

13(3) The council may from time to time cause the name of any street or any part of a street to be placed or marked on a conspicuous part of any building or other erection in their district in or near the street.

13(4) Any person who, without reasonable excuse, removes any such nameplate shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

13(5) The following enactments shall cease to have effect in the county:

(a) in the words in the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 introducing sections 64 and 65, the words "naming the streets" and;

(b) in the said section 64 the words from "and shall" to "to be known as", and the words "or name" wherever occurring;

(c) section 21 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907; and

(d) sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act 1925.

14(1) The council may allocate numbers to buildings in a street in their district as they think fit.

14(2) Where number(s) has/have, been allocated to a building under this section or any other enactment, the council may serve on the owner or occupier of the building a notice requiring them within such period, no less than three weeks, to mark the building with that number(s), in such a way as to make the mark legible from the street.

14(3) The owner or occupier of a building shall:  
(a) maintain the mark in such a way that it remains legible from the street; and  
(b) keep the view of the mark from the street unobstructed to such extent as is practicable.

14(4) The council may alter the number or numbers allocated to a building and where they do so subsections 14(2) and 14(3) above shall apply to the altered number or numbers.

14(5) The council may, instead of requiring a building to be marked with a number or numbers under this section, require it to be marked with such other means of identification as they may, at the request of the owner or occupier, allow; and subsections 14(2) and 14(3) above shall have effect accordingly.

14(6) The owner or occupier of a building who without reasonable excuse:  
(a) fails to comply with a notice served on him under subsection 14(2) above; or  
(b) contravenes subsection 14(3) above;

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale:

14(7) The following provisions of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 shall cease to have effect in the county:

- (a) in the words introducing sections 64 and 65, the words “and numbering the houses”;
- (b) in section 64 the words from “shall from time to time” to “think fit” and the words “number or” wherever occurring; and
- (c) Section 65.

## **Appendix 2: Policy on naming of streets**

The Council recognises that Oxford has many distinctive street names, which reflect its history and culture. For new street names the following will normally apply:

- 1) Street names will not duplicate existing names in the Authority's area or adjoining Authorities' areas, nor will they be sufficiently similar as to cause confusion. For example, "Bear Lane, Bears Lane, Bear Street" would not be allowed within the same area as it can cause problems in identifying the correct address in an emergency.
- 2) Street names should not be awkward to spell. In general, words of more than three syllables should be avoided as should multiple words.
- 3) Preference will be given to street names that refer to the history and heritage of the local area.
- 4) Proposals relating to a living person's name will not be permitted, with the exception of names relating to the Royal Family. If a developer or individual wishes to suggest a name relating to the Royal family or a Royal title (Queen, King, Princes etc.), then they must seek the appropriate consent from the Lord Chamberlain's Office (Constitutional Branch) prior to suggesting the name to the council. Additional time will not be given during the consultation period for this permission to be sought.
- 5) Proposals relating to the name of a deceased person will only be accepted when proof of death is provided and there is a proven historical connection to the land intended for development or the wider locale of Oxford. Evidence of historical connection such as newspaper articles or written testimonials must accompany such name proposals. Additional time will not be given during the consultation period for this information to be submitted. The part of the policy that avoids the duplication of names will still apply.
- 6) In order for the name of a deceased person to be considered the individual must have been dead for at least 5 years.
- 7) Before the name of a deceased person is proposed, due consideration should be given to possible sensitivities that may arise from naming streets after individuals and should also consider the likelihood that the public perception of a deceased person may change considerably – for better or worse – in the future.

- 8) Where it is desired to name a street after a deceased individual, the person or organisation suggesting the name is responsible where practicable for obtaining any written permission from the estate of the deceased, as required, before suggesting the name to the Council. Additional time will not be given during the consultation period for this permission to be sought.
- 9) Names of fictional characters will not be allowed due to issues of copyright.
- 10) If the name of another locale is proposed, only the anglicised version of the name would be allowed for consideration. This is to ensure that names comply with GeoPlace data entry conventions in terms of names being easily pronounceable in case of contact with the emergency services: e.g., Köln becomes Cologne.
- 11) Names that could be construed, either in themselves or in association with particular political or historical occurrences, as discriminatory or offensive under the Equality Act 2010; or those which could be considered as 'not in the spirit of' this act, will not be considered.
- 12) Names that could be construed as obscene will not be considered, nor will names which encourage nameplates to be defaced to create an obscenity.
- 13) Any names that would promote or advertise a company, service or product are not permitted. An exception to this may be made for a company that no longer exists, if used solely in a historical context where the claim of advertising cannot be made.
- 14) Names that would, in the opinion of the Head of Planning Services having consulted with the relevant portfolio holder, give rise to spelling difficulties for the majority of residents or would involve punctuation should not be accepted.
- 15) Phonetically similar names within a postal area will be avoided; for example, "Church Hill Road," "Birch Hill Road," "Tyne Road" and "Pine Road," or "Holly Well Road" and "Hollywell Road."
- 16) Street names should not commence with "The."

- 17) Names should not:
- a) Include a number either in numerical or written form. i.e. 'Two-Foot Lane,' as it can cause confusion.
  - b) Use full stops as part of the official approved SNN Authority Street Name. For example, "St. Stephens Road" must only be recorded as "St." if the full stop is part of the Official Address.
  - c) Ampersands must be replaced with the word "and."
  - d) Abbreviations or punctuation must not be used in the Primary Address, First Floor" rather than "1st Floor" and "Marks House" rather than "Mark's Hse. The only exception is "St" for "Saint."
- 18) All new street names should end with a suffix which reflects the nature, history and / or location of the street.

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Avenue</b>   | for residential roads (usually lined with trees)                                    |
| <b>Circus</b>   | for a large roundabout  |
| <b>Close</b>    | for a cul-de-sac only   |
| <b>Crescent</b> | for a crescent shaped road  |
| <b>Drive</b>    | for residential roads   |
| <b>Gardens</b>  | for residential roads subject to there being no confusion with any local open space |
| <b>Grove</b>    | for residential roads (usually relating to an area of trees)                        |
| <b>Hill</b>     | for a hillside road only  |
| <b>Lane</b>     | for residential roads   |
| <b>Mews</b>     | for residential roads   |
| <b>Place</b>    | for a road that has no throughway or leads to a dead end.                           |
| <b>Rise</b>     | for residential roads (usually relates to upward rising thoroughfare)               |
| <b>Road</b>     | for any thoroughfare  |
| <b>Row</b>      | a group of attached properties not a thoroughfare                                   |
| <b>Square</b>   | for a square only   |
| <b>Street</b>   | for any thoroughfare  |
| <b>Terrace</b>  | a group of attached properties not a thoroughfare                                   |
| <b>Vale</b>     | for residential roads (usually relating to low land or near a river/stream)         |
| <b>Way</b>      | for any thoroughfare  |
| <b>Wharf</b>    | for residential roads which are near water  |

19) All pedestrian ways should end with one of the following suffixes:

**Walk, Path, Way, Alley, or Footpath**

### **Appendix 3: Policy on numbering of properties**

- 1) A new street should be numbered with the odd numbers on the left and the even numbers on the right from the most important street from which they lead.
- 2) In the case of a small cul-de-sac, consecutive numbering in a clockwise direction is preferred.
- 3) All numbers should be used in the proper sequence. No numbers will be excluded from a numbering scheme including the number 13.
- 4) Private garages and similar buildings used for housing cars should not be numbered
- 5) Where an existing street is to be extended and it would be appropriate to continue to use the same street name, the numbering will be a continuation of the existing scheme.
- 6) If a property is to be subdivided or a new property is to be built on the grounds of an existing property new property numbers will be required. Planning permission or any other relevant consent should be obtained first. Infill developments on existing numbered streets will be numbered into the existing sequence by the use of suffixes (e.g., 15A, 15B etc.).
- 7) Buildings (including those on corner plots) will be numbered according to the street which provides direct access to the property, generally the street that the front door of the property faces. Any manipulation of numbering to obtain a different address, to secure a "prestige" address or to avoid an address, is not acceptable.
- 8) Where flats and units have individual doors to a street, they shall be given individual numbers to the street where possible; the sequence of the numbering depends on access to the front doors of individual premises.
- 9) If a multiple occupancy building has entrances in more than one street, then each entrance can be numbered in the appropriate road.
- 10) Where a property is sub-divided, individual properties should always be numbered rather than suffixed with a letter or described (e.g., Flat 1, 36 High Street rather than 36A, Flat A or First Floor Flat).
- 11) Where two or more properties on a numbered street are merged, the numbers of the original properties should normally be retained. For



example, 4 and 6 High Street being combined would become 4-6 High Street.

- 12) Abbreviations or punctuation must not be used in the Primary Address, First Floor” rather than “1st Floor” and “Marks House” rather than “Mark’s Hse. The only exception is “St” for “Saint.”

#### Appendix 4: Policy on naming of properties

- 1) All new properties will be allocated a number, the only exception to this is new properties on an existing street where there is no numbering scheme. In such cases property names will be considered.
- 2) Numbered properties may, in addition, be given a name. In these cases, the number must always be included in the address and displayed on the property.
  - a. Where a property has both a number and a name, Royal Mail will regard the number as the main identifier and will only hold the name as an “alias” and may not pass this name on to other organisations that use their database to identify addresses.
- 3) Whilst the Council cannot impose a name on a property, it will not register as official any name which has not been agreed in line with the following guidelines:
  - a. The principal property name should be unique and not duplicated within the locality or postcode. For example, ‘Rose House’ and ‘Rose Cottage.’
  - b. Property names should not replicate street names.
  - c. Names of fictional characters, places, commercial brands will not be allowed due to issues of copyright.
  - d. The word “Flat” should not be used in the principal property name as this can cause confusion.
  - e. Properties should not be named with a business name; this will be added to the address separately by Royal Mail
  - f. Names that could be construed as discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 or could be considered as ‘not in the spirit of’ this act will not be considered.
  - g. Names that could be construed as obscene or offensive will not be considered.
  - h. No abbreviations or punctuation should be used; (Marks House and not Mark’s Hse).
  - i. Property names should not include a number either in numerical or written format
  - j. All named blocks should end with a suffix which reflects the layout

|         |                                    |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| Court   | For flats or residential buildings |
| Mansion | For flats or residential buildings |
| House   | Residential buildings or offices   |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Point     | High residential buildings or offices over five floors |
| Tower     | High residential buildings or offices over five floors |
| Lodge     | For flats or residential buildings                     |
| Apartment | For flats or residential buildings                     |

- k. In cases of amendments to buildings of public interest or in prominent locations the Council will reserve the right to follow the same consultation process as the naming of the street.

## **Appendix 5: Consultation remit and process for street naming**

### **1. Street naming**

- 1.1. The Council consults on new street names when these are required for new developments, or when a street must be re-named. Consultation is intended to make sure that street names chosen are appropriate and acceptable to the interested parties local to the area in which the street is to be named. The Oxfordshire Act 1985 gives the Council final determination on any street name within its area of authority. A decision will be taken by the Cabinet in the event of any unresolved objection(s) following consultation after presentation of the issues and any evidence by the relevant portfolio holder to the Cabinet.
- 1.2. Consultation will always include:
- Ward Councillors for the area concerned.
  - Parish Councillors for the area concerned.
  - Those individuals and organisations that were formally consulted as part of the planning application process.

The consultation process may also include societies or groups with a knowledge of relevant local history.

### **2. Street naming consultation process**

- 2.1. Below is the process to be followed when consulting on street naming cases:
- Developments that include road names will go through a consultation process this is split into 3 Phases.
  - Phase 1 – 14-day consultation to notify local parties of development and gather suggestions for road names.
  - Phase 2 – 14-day consultation for voting on Phase 1 supplied names
  - Phase 3 – Confirmation of agreed names and 7 days allowance for further substantial objections.

### **3. Guidelines for consultees**

- 3.1. Consultees are selected based on council wards and parishes, and will include ward and Parish Councillors. The individuals and organisations who have been consulted on planning development proposals will be consulted if and when those proposals require street names to be allocated.
- 3.2. At the initial stage consultees will be given the opportunity to make their own suggestions. Consultees should read the street naming and numbering policy carefully, along with all associated documents before submitting names for consultation. Where suggested names do not comply with the relevant policy

there will be no extension of the consultation period to allow for consultees to suggest additional names.

- 3.3. Consultees will be sent the initial consultation documents and should return them to the Street Naming and Numbering (“SNN”) Team within the timescale set out in the letter (14 days): incomplete consultation responses or those received by the SNN Team after the stated deadline will not be considered.
- 3.4. In the case of a naming proposal concerning a deceased person the consultee is responsible for submitting proof of death and the required proof of historical connection.
- 3.5. In the case of a naming proposal requiring the permission of an estate executor or family, the consultee submitting this name is responsible for submitting simultaneously, or before the close of the consultation period, the confirmation of consent in writing from the executor or family.
- 3.6. Incomplete consultation responses or those received by the SNN Team after the stated deadline will not be considered;
- 3.7. Where consultees act on the behalf of a group (such as a local interest group), the chairperson or appointed individual must collate any group response on one consultation form and return to the SNN Team: individual responses from members of such organisations will not be considered.
- 3.8. There may be more than one consultation stage but the opportunity for suggesting alternative names is closed after the initial stage and the opportunity for objections is closed after the final consultation stage. The end date of the final consultation stage will be notified to all consultees (14 days).
- 3.9. Consultees are reminded that whilst the Council will take all comments on street naming proposals into consideration, the final decision for naming streets rests with the Council.
- 3.10. All consultees will be notified of the Council’s final naming decision.

#### **4. Grounds for objection to a name proposal**

- 4.1. When the Council consults on a proposed name for a street it will take all relevant considerations into account, but certain categories of objection will be given more weight when deciding not to use a proposed name for a given street;

- The suggested name(s) does not comply with the Oxford City Council guidance for street naming.
- The suggested name(s) does not comply with BS 7666 or GeoPlace Data entry conventions and best practice for addresses: DEC- Addresses Version 3.4, September 2016.
- It is foreseen that the suggested name could cause problems for the emergency or other services, and supporting evidence of this is supplied.

4.2. Objections to proposed street names will also be considered if they;

- Are provided within the required time period and before the final consultation period ends.
- Provide strong reasons why an individual name may be unacceptable or preference for an alternative.

## **Appendix 6: Charges for the naming of streets and numbering of properties**

### **1. Charges for naming and numbering**

- 1.1. The Council charges for the administrative activities associated with the street naming and numbering process. Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, Local Authorities have the power to charge where they provide a service if they are authorised, but not required, to provide the service. The charge must not exceed the cost of providing the service.
- 1.2. The charges for the street naming and numbering service are displayed on the Oxford City Council website. These charges will be reviewed by the Council on an annual basis.

### **2. Street naming and numbering in the absence of payment of charges**

- 2.1. The Council will remind individuals and/or developers of new properties of the need for an official address and the process to follow. Preparation of new addresses will not commence until the appropriate fee has been paid to the Council.
  - 2.2. If payment of fees is not received within 3 months of the development completion date, the Local Authority may allocate official addresses for emergency services purposes with no further consultation. If the developer, individual or owner requests amendment to the allocated naming or numbering at a later date, the standard street naming and numbering processes and the current fees and charges will apply.
3. In this case internal notifications will be made for Authority business purposes only but no requests for postcodes will be made to Royal Mail.
  4. If payment of fees is not received in relation to adding, amending, or removing an existing property name, the official name will remain unchanged.

## **Appendix 7: Renaming of streets process**

1. Once a street is thought to need renaming, the Council will:
  - a) Post notice of the proposal in a conspicuous position at each end of the street or part to which it relates; and
  - b) Serve a copy of the notice to the owner or occupier or every dwelling-house in that street or part.
2. The notice under paragraph 1(a) above shall state the new name proposed and that objections may be made in writing to the Council by the deadline specified in the notice, not earlier than 28 days after the posting of the notice.
3. Before determining any alteration of name, the Council shall consider all objections made as provided in paragraph 2. The Cabinet will make the final decision if there are any unresolved objections at the end of the final consultation period.
4. The Cabinet will give considerable weight to the views of those residents living in the street and would expect the proposed name to have the active support of a substantial proportion of those residents living in the street at the time of the consultation



## **Appendix 8: Notification of street naming and numbering changes**

- 1) As part of the street naming and numbering process the SNN Team will inform the following internal council departments of any street naming and numbering changes;
  - a. Council Tax
  - b. Electoral Services
  - c. Local Land and Property Gazetteer
  - d. Development Management
  - e. National Non-Domestic Rate
  - f. Waste Team
  - g. Selective Licensing
  - h. Building Control
- 2) Occupiers should always check that the Council has the correct address for their property when dealing with the Council.
- 3) Individuals and developers must not give any postal addresses, including the postcode, to potential occupiers, either directly or indirectly (for example via solicitors or estate agents) before the official naming and numbering scheme has been issued for it by the Council. The Council will not be liable for any costs of damages caused by failure to comply with this requirement.
- 4) Street naming and numbering is a statutory function that applies to all property numbers, names, and roads name allocations, whether properties are new developments or not.
- 5) Street Naming and Numbering is a chargeable service, and the process is only carried out when the relevant Planning Permission has been granted for a development and the Street Naming and Numbering fees have been paid.
- 6) No other organisation such as Land Registry, Council Tax, HMO, Selective Licensing, Planning or Building Regulations has the legislative powers to create or allocate property and street numbers/names.

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Development)  
**Title of Report:** Bus shelter infrastructure and advertising concession contract

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>          | To (i) seek approval for the tender of a contract to manage the bus shelter infrastructure; and (ii) to seek delegated authority for the Head of Corporate Property to enter into a long-term contract with a selected supplier to maintain city bus shelters and manage advertising on the shelters |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | Yes  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management   |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | Enable and Inclusive Economy<br>Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford  |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>           | Council Strategy 2020-24   |

| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to: |  |
|---|--|
| 1.  | <b>Grant project approval</b> to tender a contract to manage bus shelter infrastructure maintenance and advertising via a concession contract;   |
| 2.  | <b>Delegate authority</b> the Executive Director (Development) to finalise the tender documents; and   |
| 3.  | <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Corporate Property in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance, the Head of Financial Services and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to agree the final terms and enter into a contract with the preferred supplier. |

| <b>Appendices</b> |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Appendix 1        | Risk Register |

## **Introduction and background**

1. The council has a long-standing contract in place with Clear Channel UK (CCUK) to provide cleaning and maintenance services to Oxford city bus shelters in exchange for the exclusive right to place advertising on the shelters and retain, for its own account, all advertising income generated.
2. The current contract expired on the 30 November 2022 and the Head of Corporate Property approved a procurement exemption to extend the existing contract for a maximum period of 12 months whilst a specification is developed to seek a supplier who can offer terms that are better aligned to the council's corporate objectives and secure revenue income from the advertising on the shelters for the council.
3. The following sets out the options considered in preparation to go to market.

## **Bus shelter estate and the current contract**

4. There are 190 bus shelters in Oxford. 157 are owned by Clear Channel UK (CCUK), 33 are owned by the City Council. There are an additional 16 shelters in the city which are owned by Oxfordshire County Council. It is intended that the County Council Shelters will be included in the new contract arrangements.
5. 94 of the Clear Channel shelters include advertisements, 29 of these shelters include digital displays. 87 shelters include Real Time Passenger Information displays, which are managed by Oxfordshire County Council.
6. The shelters are maintained via the existing contracting arrangement with CCUK, which has been in place since 1987 when the council entered a Principal Agreement with CCUK. The terms of which were extended via a Supplemental Agreement for a period of 15 years in 2007.
7. The current arrangement is that CCUK clean, maintain and, where necessary, replace the bus shelters, at no cost to the council, in return they manage advertising on the shelters and retain all revenue generated through this. Whilst this contract has no direct cost to the council it is understood that the level of income generated by advertisements on the bus shelters is high and therefore the council should adopt an approach like other local authorities and secure a contract with a supplier whereby the council also takes a proportion of the advertising profit.
8. The shelters in Oxford have either digital advertising on them, or paper or a mixture of paper and digital. Most revenue is generated via digital panels which either feature two digital images or six, which rotate to share several different adverts. These are in the city centre and on main roads.
9. The actual amount of advertising income generated via the existing contract is not currently shared with the Council.

## **Market considerations**

10. As well as CCUK there are other large providers operating in this market who manage the maintenance of the shelters as well as the advertising. To better understand the potential for a new contract, market engagement was completed. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was launched on the 15th of March 2023 inviting suppliers to a market engagement session on the 13th of April 2023. This resulted

in eight organisations making enquires and six attending the market engagement session. A series of follow-up questions were asked to all the providers who attended the session. These were returned in writing on the 5th of May.

11. Key insights offered are as follows

- a. Suppliers prefer a minimum 15-year contract, this is because bus shelters have a 20-year lifetime
- b. There is appetite to increase the digital advertising capability, subject to planning approval
- c. Providers are committed to the Zero Carbon agenda the potential increase in the number of green roofs, the use of sustainable energy and materials for the new shelters
- d. Transition period (to install new bus shelters) likely to be between 12-18 months

**Options considered**

12. In February 2023 Development Board reviewed the options and agreed the recommended procurement route to retender the contract on the existing basis, and seek an external operator to manage the repair, maintenance, cleaning, and advertising whilst in addition, providing a share of the profit from advertising revenue to the Council. The mechanism for this will be Fixed Fee and Profit Share payment per advertising bus shelter on which advertising consent is granted.
13. **Purchase of the existing CCUK owned shelters-** most of the city shelters are in CCUK ownership. The existing contract includes an option for the council to purchase from CCUK all bus shelters provided and installed under the terms of the existing agreement at their 'net book' value. This was not considered a feasible option given the capital investment required for this, though the tender will test whether it is feasible for the new providers to acquire existing shelters, where these are in good condition, from the current provider.
14. **Extending the current contract term** – given the total duration of the existing contract term it is necessary to test the market to seek more favourable terms and therefore this option is not recommended.
15. **Take back management of the shelters** – early consideration was given to this option which would see the council take back the management of the shelters and for ODS, under an SLA, to undertake this role. This option was rejected as the council and ODS do not have the skills and experience to be able to manage the advertising and therefore generate the revenue needed to offset the cost to supply and maintain the shelters. This was discussed with the Director of Operations at ODS and was not considered a viable option for the council or ODS.
16. A **competitive dialogue tendering** approach was considered though given the result is fixed in terms of the provision of bus shelters, it is believed an open FTS tender is most suited.
17. It is recommended that a concessionaire contract will be offered for 15 years initially with the option to extend for a further period of five years.

**Proposed procurement timeline**

18. Indicative timeline for the process:

- Development Board approval of procurement route- 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023
- PIN Notice launched – 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Market engagement – 13<sup>th</sup> April
- Cabinet approval – 12<sup>th</sup> July
- Tender launched – 21<sup>st</sup> July
- Evaluation and recommendation for contract award – September
- Contract implementation period – October
- Contract start – November

### Policy implications

19. Through the proposed contract the council is seeking high quality, safe and secure waiting and interchange facilities that are kept clean and well maintained throughout the contract term, to encourage passenger growth and meet Zero Carbon Oxford objectives. The contract will also support the achievement of the [Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan](#), which has been produced by Oxfordshire County Council in part-fulfilment of the requirements of the National Bus Strategy and the Oxfordshire [Enhanced Partnership](#) Plan and Scheme.
20. In return, the council is offering the supplier the exclusive advertising rights on these assets in accordance with Office of Fair-Trading guidance on Street Furniture Advertising issued in May 2012. The contract will also include provision to ensure the council receives a proportion of free advertising space on the shelters throughout the duration of the contract.
21. The council has set the [Zero Carbon Oxford](#) goal to achieve zero emissions across the city by 2040, which is ten years ahead of the legal deadline set by government. It is predicted that by 2040 action taken through this approach will have reduced Oxford's emissions by 88% from 2018 levels. This means reduced emissions across 5 key areas (domestic, commercial, industry, institutional and transport) with transport related emissions being reduced by 88%. Encouraging more people to choose to use to travel by bus, rather than car, will play a large part in contributing to this. Improving street furniture, like bus shelters, and the facilities available at those shelters will make this mode of travel more attractive.
22. We will work with Oxfordshire County Council to explore the use of their Climate Emergency Fund to secure new green roof shelters in the city. If funding is made available to purchase additional shelters through this route these shelters will form part of the new contract.
23. Oxfordshire County Council manage the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) available at bus shelters in the city. The new contract will ensure bus shelters have the capability of being fitted with the current RTPI displays and that the new contract provider works with the County Council's RTPI suppliers to enable the supply and maintenance of the RTIP. We will continue to work with the County Council to enhance this offer where possible and will use the tender process to explore the cost to expand this offer via the contract.

## Other implications

24. The Council intends to include in the new contract, an ongoing obligation on the operator to identify new or potential improvements to the bus shelter estate. For example, the emergence of new and evolving relevant technologies which could improve the service, improvements to the integration of services provided by third parties or the Council which might result in efficiency or productivity gains or changes in ways of working which would deliver greater benefits to the council.
25. Given Oxfordshire County Council are the lead transport authority and own several shelters, as well as manage the RTP1, they have been involved in the development of this contract. They have provided advice and guidance and will be part of the tender evaluation panel. They will continue to be a partner in the delivery of the contract.
26. The new contract also gives the council the opportunity to specify the standard of bus shelter/stop and consider carbon reduction initiatives where appropriate and potentially increase the proportion of green roofs across the city. In line with wider plans to introduce a new electric bus fleet across the city's SmartZone in early 2024 there will be opportunities to work with the Enhanced Partnership to brand bus stop infrastructure.
27. The main bus companies operating in Oxford; Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach have been informed for the plans to tender for this new contract. The Oxford Bus Company, along with Oxfordshire County Council, supported the market engagement event and have supplied passenger data. They will be consulted on the proposed shelter design and provision included in the tenders.
28. There is potential to include contract 'add-on's which could see smaller areas, such as neighbouring district or Parish councils, utilise this contract to secure shelters in their areas. This could result in further income to the council either via an agreement to utilise our terms and conditions, or through securing additional advertising revenue.
29. Advertisements used on the shelters must adhere to Adhere to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Code of Practice. The contract will also make clear that the advertising for certain products of, or companies dealing in, the tobacco industries; gambling, pay day loans, junk food and petrol/diesel vehicles for example will not be accepted.
30. Information panels will be included in the shelters for timetables and information about the Smartzone. We will also seek to include a proportion of free advertising space for the council and partners to promote campaigns and services.
31. The following factors have been considered and are relevant:
  - **Crime and disorder** – durable materials, improved lighting and connectivity will be used for the new shelters. Regular checks (at varying times of the day) will be conducted, and a simple reporting system will be put in place to ensure the public can report any faults.
  - **Sustainability** – sustainable materials will be used for the new shelters and there is potential to introduce additional green roofs such as the one the council have installed in East Oxford. These improve biodiversity and support the council's Zero Carbon agenda.

- **Environmental** – increased bus patronage is a key aim of the proposed contract, encouraging more people to make an active choice to use a bus rather than a car to make a journey.
- **Social Value** – the tender requires the bidders to include proposals for how they will provide social value through this contract such as paying staff the Oxford Living Wage and providing job/apprenticeship opportunities to residents.

### **Plans for moving between the old and new contract**

32. The existing shelters will be removed by CCUK and the new provider will supply and install new shelters, at their own cost. Officers are working with the existing provider to develop a comprehensive exit plan for their contract. Once a new provider is appointed, the council will coordinate meetings between the two parties to ensure a smooth transition between the two contracts. Tenders will be asked to supply their implementation plan as part of the tender process. These plans will ensure the removal and replacement of the shelters over the initial contract implementation period keeps the impact on bus shelter users to a minimum, though it is possible there will be periods of time when some stops are without shelters.
33. Although it is industry standard for new providers to replace the existing shelters, though the tender process we will ask how the providers will work with the existing provider to adhere to sustainability standards/zero carbon agenda to come to an arrangement that limits unnecessary shelter replacement.
34. The new contract will include key performance indicators to track the installation plan for the new shelters and monitor response times in terms of cleaning and maintenance. Regular meetings will take place to ensure a partnership approach to the delivery of the contract is achieved.

### **Financial implications**

35. This contract approach is financially sustainable as it means it covers damage, cleaning, and maintenance of the shelters from the advertising income. There may be surplus generated through the advertising to be shared with the council, resulting in an income stream.
36. A capital budget (feasibility) of £31, 500 has been approved by Development Board for staff time (project management and Legal advice) to develop the procurement process and tender documentation. This is thought to be sufficient to enable the council to enter the new contract. No other costs are envisaged as the capital cost of the shelters will be covered by the new supplier.

### **Legal issues**

37. Current staff may be eligible to TUPE over to the new provider. Details of eligible staff will be made available via the tender process so costs can be considered. It is thought only one member of staff would be eligible to transfer.
38. Legal assistance is required for the final contract agreement. We will also need to liaise with legal officers at Oxfordshire County Council to finalise the terms of the agreement, as the County Council will be a party to this. It is expected that each authority will be responsible for their own legal costs associated with the negotiation of the agreement.



### Level of risk

39. Please see attached Risk Register at Appendix 1.

### Equalities impact

40. Through the tender process the suppliers will be asked to demonstrate how they have considered equalities in their proposals for bus shelter improvements. Accessibility, signage, and lighting will be key issues for consideration. Social value provides options for suppliers to demonstrate how they could offer opportunities for greater inclusion to be achieved through this contract.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Elaine Swapp   |
| Job title                  | Principal Regeneration Officer                                 |
| Service area or department | Regeneration and Economy                                       |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252912   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:Eswapp@oxford.gov.uk">Eswapp@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <b>Background Papers:</b> None |
|--------------------------------|

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 - Risk Register

Bus shelter infrastructure contract

As at: 23/06/23

| Ref | Title                                   | Risk Description   | Opp / Threat | Cause   | Consequence  | Risk Treatment | Date Raised | Owner | Gross |   | Current |   |       | Target |   | Comments   | Control / Mitigation Description  | Date Due | Action Status | % Progress | Action Owner |
|-----|---|--|--------------|---|--|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|---|---------|---|-------|--------|---|--|---|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
|     |   |  |              |   |  |                |             |       | P     | I | P       | I | Score | P      | I |  |   |          |               |            |              |
|     | Lack of interest from the market        | Lack of interest from suppliers in bidding for the tender  | Threat       | Not interested in bidding for the contract; doesn't fit with existing portfolio, lack of resources, unsuitable contract terms | Unable to appoint new supplier to manage contract  | Reduce         | 01/03/23    | ES    | 5     | 2 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 | The council don't have the resources/expertise to run the contract directly and ODS don't wish to take this on. New contract could be offered with existing provider.  | PIN notice and market engagement event demonstrated market interest and 5 suppliers are engaged in the process. This is a relatively high number for the size of the market.  | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 70%        | ES           |
|     | No tenders                              | No infrastructure operator bids for the new contract   | Threat       | Lack of interested suppliers  | Further contract extension on current terms and seek feedback to the re-tender   | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 4 | 2       | 2 | 4     | 1      | 2 | The current supplier has delivered the contract terms for 15 years (and the original terms since 1987). They have the experience to deliver the contract and have provided a good service. There is no evidence to suggest they couldn't build on their offer to bring the provision more in line with our new requirements  | We have done some soft market testing and we have evidence that suggests the current supplier will bid again so as minimum we will have 1 tender but also have had interest from other suppliers through that process | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 70%        | ES           |
|     | No income share secured in new contract | Income share suggested during market engagement not achieved   | Threat       | Cost to deliver the contract higher than anticipated  | No additional income is secured for the council but no additional cost.  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 2 | 2       | 2 | 4     | 2      | 2 | Once all costs are accounted for, the profit share suppliers are able to provide may be lower  | We did soft market testing. Market is experienced and understands the cost implications involved and the value of the advertising generated and have indicated there is an opportunity.                               | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 30%        | ES           |
| 155 | Planning permission requirements        | Planning permission/conservation requirements mean it is not possible to increase digital advertising offer  | Threat       | Permissions   | Suppliers have expressed interest in increasing digital advertising offering as this means increased revenue and therefore profit share so this could affect the income levels the council receives. | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 2 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 | Planning are engaged and will guide what is included in the tender. It will be made clear that suppliers are responsible for seeking any necessary permissions prior to installing any new advertising etc.- this was made clear during market engagement.   | Early engagement with planning/conservation colleagues. Pre-app advice will be sought prior to contract award. In assessing the proposals planning will be engaged to minimise risk.                                  | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 30%        | ES           |
|     | Delays in tendering/contracting         | Delays in the process mean the new contract is not in place by 30th November 2023  | Threat       | Delays in launching the tender, delays in contracting as a result of concern over contract clauses                            | Further extension of existing contract, potential loss of revenue  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 2 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 | Minimum tendering period is 6 weeks. Tender will be launched following Cabinet approval. Draft contract will be included in the tender pack.   | Tender documents drafted ahead of Cabinet and Procurement engaged so we can launch tender following July Cabinet. Contract published with tender pack.  | 12/07/23 | Ongoing       | 50%        | ES           |
|     | Disruption to service users             | Delay in transition from old to new provider results in periods of time where bus stops are without a shelter/disruption to footpath caused by shelter replacement | Threat       | Inadequate transition plan in place between old and new provider  | Stops are without shelters/seating for a period of time  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 | Council will be conduit between old and new supplier and ensure that no shelter is removed without an agreed plan in place for its replacement within a short time period. Though the tender process we will ask how the providers will work with the existing provider to adhere to sustainability standards/zero carbon agenda to come to an arrangement that limits unnecessary shelter replacement | Thorough transition plan in place and agreed by all relevant parties. We are also seeking evidence of experience in managing a change of supplier in the tender documents   | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 40%        | ES           |
|     | Shelters not supplied on time           | New provider fails to provide shelters in timely manner  | Threat       | Contracting delays, supply issues, transition arrangements not in place between old and new supplier                          | Stops are without shelters/seating for a period of time  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 1      | 2 | The provision of bus shelters will be included as a KPI and Service level and a service failure credit will be applied should they fail to deliver on time.  | Thorough transition plan in place and agreed by all relevant parties. We are also seeking evidence of experience in managing a change of supplier in the tender documents.  | 30/11/23 | Ongoing       | 70%        | ES           |
|     | No new innovation                       | Lack of innovation demonstrated in tender  | Threat       | Supplier fails to deliver any innovation  | Bus shelter offer doesn't align to environmental needs and technological developments over time  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 3     | 3 | 2       | 2 | 4     | 1      | 1 |  | Test innovation at tender stage   | 01/09/23 | Ongoing       | 70%        | ES           |
|     | Public perception                       | Public confusion about the need to replace bus shelters  | Threat       | Ineffective Comms explaining the contract situation   | Increased calls to the council/complaints  | Reduce         | 30/04/23    | ES    | 4     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 | Other local authorities who have gone through this type of contract change have experienced some negative press  | Public to be made aware of changes in advance. Aim is to limit unnecessary shelter replacement.   | 01/09/23 | Ongoing       | 30%        | ES           |

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Business Improvement  
**Title of Report:** Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>          | To seek approval for a new Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25                              |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | No  |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | All   |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>           | Council Strategy 2020-24  |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Recommendation:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:                           |
| 1. <b>Approve</b> the Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25 (at Appendix 1). |

| <b>Appendices</b> |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Appendix 1        | Citizen Experience Strategy  |
| Appendix 2        | Consultation Findings        |
| Appendix 3        | Risk Register                |
| Appendix 4        | Equalities Impact Assessment |

## Introduction and background

1. This Citizen Experience Strategy (“the Strategy”) outlines the approach the Council will be taking to provide a positive experience for all of Oxford’s citizens in accessing its services and engaging with it as a provider of them.
2. This Citizen Experience Strategy is more wide ranging than our previous customer contact strategy which were more transactional in nature and more focused on the first point of contact. This strategy will ensure that all of the City Council Services are in tune with the approach, and also embraces other organisations and

community groups so that together, we provide the right support for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.

3. Since its last Customer Contact Strategy which covered the period 2019 to 2022, the impact of digital technology in day-to-day life has grown significantly, and driven further improvements in the way we deliver services. In addition, the Council's response to the Covid Pandemic has taught it much about the ways it can interact with its citizens, and that citizens rightly expect to be able to engage in a range of ways including using more digital channels.
4. The Council has taken this learning to review its approach and consulted with all of its stakeholders to present the Citizen Experience Strategy, which can be found at Appendix 1.

### **Current Context**

5. It is important to understand the key demographics of the citizens the Council is serving, to ensure that any strategy we develop is relevant in addressing the city's needs.
6. Oxford is a changing city that is becoming more diverse. According to the ONS Census 2021 data the population of Oxford is 162,040. The population is made up of 15.4% (24,991) Asian, 4.7% (7,535) Black, 5.6% (9,005) Multiple Ethnic groups, 70.7% (114,561) White and 3.7% (5,948) 'other' Ethnic groups.
7. The census also shows the profound health inequality that continues to exist in our city. Those aged 65+ years make up for 12% of the population in the city. 3.3% (5,415) of the population are living with either 'Bad or very bad health'. 14.5% (23,491) of the population identify as being disabled under the Equality Act.
8. Inequality also exists in significant parts of the city experiencing extreme poverty. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 results show Oxford has one Lower Layer Super Output Area within the 10% most deprived areas nationally (Northfield Brook) and there are 9 areas in total among the 20% most deprived nationally, which are located in The Leys, Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Carfax.
9. Digital disadvantage is also widespread. The Oxford Internet Institute recently conducted a survey of local residents to explore the impact of the digital divide in the city. The results revealed that almost a quarter of Oxford residents lack access to the internet, and this lack of access disproportionately affects those from lower-income households and minority ethnic backgrounds.
10. There are 4,580 registered businesses within the Oxford boundaries that provide approximately 113,900 jobs, each of whom will have a high expectation about how they engage with the city to be successful employers.
11. Visitors to the city also want a positive experience, and Oxford remains a key destination attracting approximately 7-million-day time and staying visitors per year.

### **Current Service**

12. The scale of our current front line business activity is significant. In 2022/23, the Council's customer contact centre handled just under 140,000 telephone calls (with over 96% of these calls resolved without recourse to the back office), the Customer

Service Officers handled over 4,000 face to face enquiries, and there were over 30,000 online form submissions on its website. For 2022/23 customer satisfaction with the Council's face to face service was over 97%, for its contact centre was over 80% and for the website was 41%.

13. The City Council has been accredited with the Customer Service Excellence quality mark since 2013. This standard recognises organisations that deliver efficient and effective services that place customers at the heart of service provision. The Council's most recent assessment was in March 2023, where it passed with flying colours with only one partial compliance across the 57 criteria. Additionally, this year the assessors awarded 11 Compliance Plus ratings where the Council were judged to have gone "above and beyond" what was expected.
14. The Council's face to face service relocated to the Westgate Library in January 2022, operating for 3 days each week alongside Citizens Advice Oxford. The benefits of this way of working are so much more than co-location. Working together has delivered speedier advice for citizens, joining up access to all Council services (particularly Council Tax, Benefits and Housing). The City Council has been able to signpost more directly to Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice.
15. The City Council's Covid response introduced locality hubs to ensure communities received the support and advice they needed during the pandemic. The City Council has built on that approach, creating locality networks in its communities, joining up service delivery across the Council and working with the County Council, other organisations and community groups to ensure it is supporting citizens to get access to the best support and advice.
16. The development of these locality networks will specifically help to tackle the health and poverty inequalities communities are experiencing. These networks will also help to bridge the digital divide which is a key enabler to improving quality of life.
17. Understanding the changing demographics as highlighted above, the organisation has access to a comprehensive range of language support services including telephone interpreting, face to face interpreting (Including British Sign Language Interpreters), video calls and document translation services. The current supplier for these is Word360, but we are currently re-tendering for this service, looking for a like-for-like offer which will be in place by the end of August.
18. Insight shows that Google Translate is widely used by non-English speaking citizens when accessing the internet and so site-specific translation services are not always required.

### **Consultation process**

19. The draft Citizen Experience Strategy was taken to the Leader's meeting on 25/01/23 and approved as a draft for consultation.
20. Citizens have been consulted in a number of ways. These opportunities were used to test objectives and language, and also to understand what barriers are faced in getting access to services. Officers visited existing Community Larders in Rose Hill and Barton and attended a Community Champions Forum at the Museum of Oxford and an online Diversity Forum. In addition, citizens using the contact centre and visiting the front-line service at the Westgate were surveyed on their views.

21. The Council commissioned a special session for advice providers to understand how the strategy and its objectives would affect their services.
22. A session was also held with the Director for Customer Experience and Cultural Services at Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure that the partnership approach suggested aligns with their direction of travel.
23. Individual discussions were held with every Service Head and representatives of their teams, to seek their feedback on the proposed strategy, its objectives and language. This feedback has been used to develop the Citizen Experience action plan and for services to consider their own more specific actions.
24. Staff were given the opportunity to share their views again on the objectives and language of the strategy, and also on what they would need to help them embrace and deliver against the proposed principles of the strategy. This was achieved using a series of online and in person sessions.
25. Different dimensions of the strategy were further tested with the Policy Officer Group and Equalities Steering Groups, in addition to their feedback on objectives and language. The Policy Officer Group were asked to consider alignment with other existing City Council policies, whilst the Equalities Steering Group has supported the development of the Equalities Impact Assessment.

### **Data and Insight Summary**

26. The insights gathered has been used to enrich the action plan, ensuring priorities already underway are still relevant. They have significantly shaped the language used. It has also been a valuable exercise to ensure that all Council services are fully aligned to the strategy principles. The full consultation findings can be found in Appendix 2.
27. There will be a greater emphasis on supporting those in digital poverty or with lower literacy skills. The action plan includes a review of the Community Involvement Policy, a commitment to explore how the new Resident's panel can be better used and how young people can be more formally engaged.
28. The Council also found a clear opportunity to work closely with its commissioned advice providers to ensure they are able to champion the benefits of digital access and are included in the locality network approach.
29. Improving the website was unsurprisingly a big priority in the feedback. There was a widespread demand for it to be more user-friendly, with better quality information that is updated regularly. A new approach to the content management of our website is being developed, and citizens will be engaged as part of this process.
30. The digital divide reported by the Oxford Internet Institute is concerning and persistent. Work has already begun with Activate Learning at the Blackbird Leys Technology Campus. We will be working together using their resources to provide digital skills and employability support for citizens. They will also be helping the City Council to be seen as a viable employer in the community and supporting citizens to apply for roles with us, in particular for the forthcoming apprenticeship scheme.
31. Better use of data and insight was another key theme. This is reflected in our priority to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the customer feedback and insight we



gather from a range of sources including member enquiries, comments and complaints and freedom of information requests. Internally, we also need to ensure that the organisation understands and uses that insight to support decision making and policy formulation.

32. Through the consultation process, services have also committed to undertake a range of actions to improve their offerings in line with the Strategy principles. These include policy reviews, improving web content, reviewing processes and service standards.
33. In terms of the language of the Citizen Experience Strategy itself, there was some debate regarding the use of “citizen” or “customer”. Comments included “customer” having a transactional or consumer meaning but may be a friendlier term. Some feedback said “citizen” may be a word that may exclude some of our communities; visitors for example may not feel they are citizens. There was no clear preference overall, or other more suitable suggestions but a strong feeling that whatever word is chosen, a definition is included in the strategy. A strap line to the Citizen Experience Strategy has been added to provide further clarity.
34. A definition has been included to say “citizens” are those who live, work in and visit the City Council.
35. A strap line to the strategy has been added to say “For everyone that lives in, works in or visits the City of Oxford”.
36. There was feedback over the vision which used the term “putting at the heart of everything we do”, which was said to be overused. In addition, the citizen feedback said that what was really important to them was knowing they had been listened to and understanding what the Council had done with any feedback given. The vision has therefore been amended to say “Put communities and citizens at the heart of how we work, ensuring they actively shape our services and that the right support is available for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.”
37. Staff feedback also had clear themes. They were clear they need a better staff directory as well as development in customer service and equalities skills to support citizens and fulfil the ambitions of the Strategy. Staff also wanted to set clearer expectations for citizens of the service standards that the Council is working to. This feedback is reflected in the action plan to develop the citizen experience “culture” in the organisation.

### **Strategy Summary**

38. The shaping of and the emerging priorities of this new “Citizen Experience Strategy” differs from previous customer contact strategies. Wherever and however our citizens touch the Council’s business and services, it aims to ensure its promises and aspirations are always met. Work has been done to ensure alignment to the Thriving Communities, Equalities, Inclusive Economy and People Strategies.
39. The Citizen Experience Strategy sets a vision for modern, inclusive and accessible services. Embracing the benefits of digital technology and automation to make the experience quicker and easier whilst also meeting the needs of Oxford’s diverse communities, with access to the appropriate specialisms for more complex interactions.

40. The Council is equally committed to ensure that no-one gets left behind, utilising a range of access channels including face to face options to make that possible.
41. The Council will make the most of its data and insight, whether that is using customer feedback to improve processes, involving citizens in service design, or utilising data to spot trends and support business policy and decisions.
42. Strengthening support within communities and working collaboratively with partners, agencies and community groups will give holistic, right first-time solutions and advice. This is not just about solving short term day to day issues but ensuring early intervention, improving resident outcomes overall and reducing the call on council services, so it can focus on the most complex needs. The locality model is intrinsic to stimulating this approach.
43. The Citizen Experience Strategy has 4 pillars that accord with the Customer Service Excellence Standard. They are:
  - Citizen focused
  - Positive Citizen Experience
  - Inclusive Access
  - Get it right first time

### **Delivery**

44. The action plan for delivery of the Strategy, showing how each of the 4 pillars are addressed can be found within the Strategy.
45. Delivery of the Citizen Experience Strategy action plan is overseen by the Fit for the Future Board. An Annual update on progress will be drawn up for the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to share more widely.
46. We will be improving digital access to services for citizens and improving back-office automation that will mean less manual intervention by staff. We will be measuring how successfully citizens use these new digital processes. We will also continue to measure satisfaction with our web, contact centre and face to face services. These will be stretching targets that sit alongside clear plans for improvement.

### **Financial implications**

47. Implementing this strategy will contribute to savings already included in the medium term financial plan (MTFP) and currently requires no additional funding beyond that already identified in the MTFP, such as for the website redevelopment. Should any additional requirements or savings surface over time, they will be included in the budget process in the usual manner.

### **Legal issues**

48. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. In delivering services the Council must be mindful of the public sector equality duty to consider how its policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

**Level of risk**

49. This can be found at Appendix 3.

**Equalities impact**

50. This can be found at Appendix 4.

**Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

51. One of the central themes of the Citizen Experience Strategy encourages citizens that can to access services to use digital channels. It also promotes early intervention by using our locality networks. This all helps to minimise travel which reduces the impact on the environment.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Helen Bishop   |
| Job title                  | Head of Business Improvement                                     |
| Service area or department | Business Improvement   |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252233   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:hbishop@oxford.gov.uk">hbishop@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <b>Background Papers:</b> None |
|--------------------------------|

This page is intentionally left blank



www.oxford.gov.uk



# CITIZEN EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2023 – 2025

*For everyone that lives in, works in or visits  
the City of Oxford*



# Foreword

Everyday hundreds of the city's citizens engage with Oxford City Council, whether as individuals or as part of organisations and businesses. In addition, Oxford welcomes thousands of students and visitors a year who use our services. All those contacts help create Oxford City Council's reputation and done well, encourage investment in the city as well as making it a great place to live, work and visit.

That is why Citizen Engagement matters, and why we need a robust and forward-looking strategy which will help shape the right priorities for our city. This strategy outlines a vision which is richer and more relevant than the narrower transactional nature of our current Customer Services strategy. It commits us to a more systematic engagement with all our citizens to ensure your feedback makes all we do of the highest possible quality.

We are facing a profound digital revolution with Councils like ours expected to meet higher standards than ever in terms of ease of use and access to services. For many citizens, interacting with the Council digitally and on the move is now the default expectation.

But we also must continue meet the needs of citizens who are digitally disadvantaged. There are stark differences in the city in terms of access to technology and broadband. We will continue to invest in telephony and face to face services so that no one is left behind, and in widening digital access.

We will continue to listen and work collaboratively with you to understand and make the changes we need to continually improve our services.

Change in an area like Citizen Engagement is a given; we must be at our best to meet and stay ahead of your changing demands.

And we will measure our performance, with clear targets which stretch to meet our collective ambition. We will celebrate our meeting them and explain and improve where we fall short, as we work hard to deliver this exciting vision.



Councillor Nigel Chapman

Cabinet member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

# Introduction

This Citizen Experience Strategy outlines the approach we will be taking to provide a positive experience for all of our citizens in accessing our services and engaging with us as a provider of them.

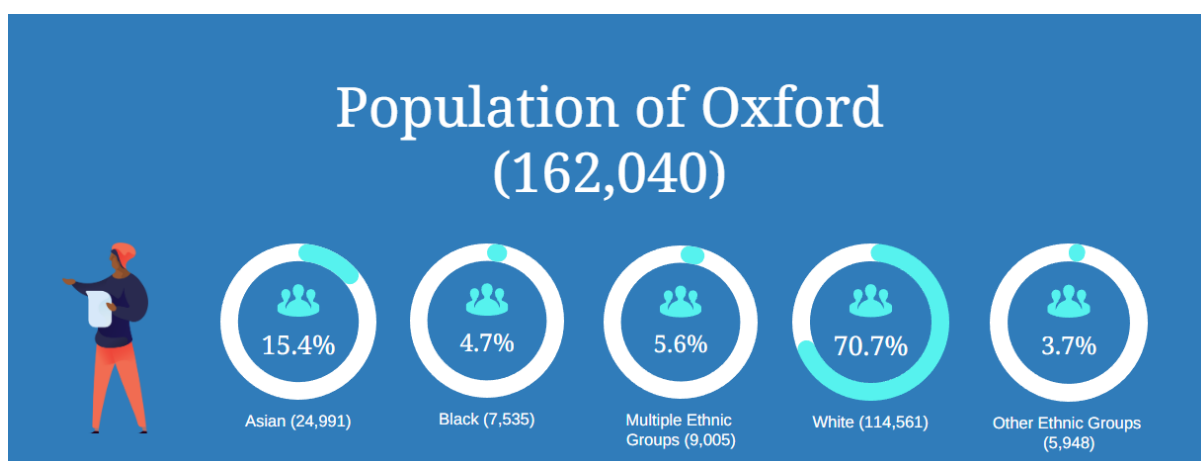
This Citizen Experience Strategy is more wide ranging than our previous customer contact strategies which were more transactional in nature and more focused on the first point of contact. This strategy will ensure that all of the City Council Services are in tune with the approach, and also embraces other organisations and community groups so that together, we provide the right support for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.

Since our last Customer Contact Strategy which covered the period 2019 to 2022, the impact of digital technology in day-to-day life has grown significantly, and driven further improvements in the way we deliver services. Alongside this, our response to the Covid Pandemic has taught us much about the ways we can interact with our citizens, and quite rightly the expectation is to be able to engage in a range of ways including using more digital channels.

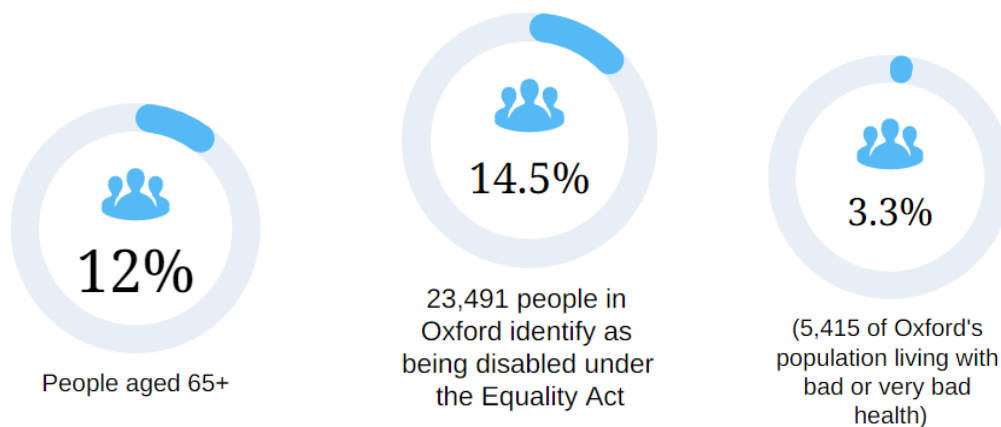
# Current Context

It is important to understand the key demographics of the citizens the Council is serving, in order to ensure that any strategy we develop is relevant in addressing the city's needs.

Oxford is a changing city that is becoming more diverse. According to the ONS Census 2021 data the population of Oxford is 162,040.



The census also shows an ageing population and the profound health inequality that continues to exist in our city.



Inequality also exists in significant parts of the city experiencing extreme poverty. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 results show Oxford has one Lower Layer Super Output Area within the 10% most deprived areas nationally (Northfield Brook) and there are 9 areas in total among the 20% most deprived nationally which are in The Leys, Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Carfax.

Digital disadvantage is also widespread. The Oxford Internet Institute recently conducted a survey of residents to explore the impact of the digital divide in the city. The results revealed that almost a quarter of Oxford residents lack access to the internet, and this lack of access disproportionately affects those from lower-income households and minority ethnic backgrounds.

There are 4,580 registered businesses within the Oxford boundaries that provide approximately 113,900 jobs, each of whom will have a high expectation about how they engage with the city to be successful employers.

Visitors to the city also want a positive experience, and Oxford remains a key destination attracting approximately 7-million-day time and staying visitors per year.

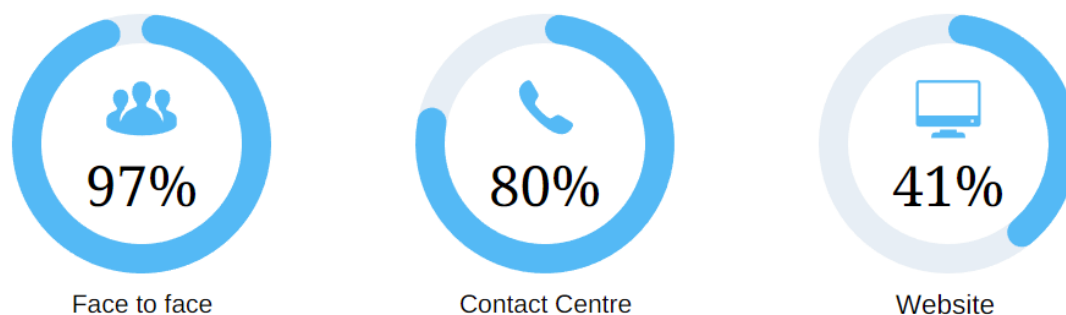


## Current Service

The scale of our current front line business activity is significant.



## Customer Satisfaction



The City Council has been accredited with the Customer Service Excellence quality mark since 2013. This standard recognises organisations that deliver efficient and effective services that place customers at the heart of service provision. The Council's most recent assessment was in March 2023, where it passed with flying colours with only one partial compliance across the 57 criteria. Additionally, this year the assessors awarded 11 Compliance Plus ratings where the Council were judged to have gone "above and beyond" what was expected.

The Council's face to face service relocated to the Westgate Library in January 2022, operating for 3 days each week alongside Citizens Advice Oxford. The benefits of this way of working are so much more than co-location. Working together has delivered speedier advice for citizens, joining up access to all Council services (particularly Council Tax, Benefits and Housing). The City Council has been able to signpost more directly to Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice.

The City Council's Covid response introduced locality hubs to ensure communities received the support and advice they needed during the pandemic. The City Council has built on that approach, creating locality networks in its communities, joining up service delivery across the Council and working with the County Council, other organisations and community groups to ensure it is supporting citizens to get access to the best support and advice.

The development of these locality networks will specifically help to tackle the health and poverty inequalities communities are experiencing. These networks will also help to bridge the digital divide which is a key enabler to improving quality of life.

Understanding the changing demographics as highlighted above, the organisation has access to a comprehensive range of language support services including telephone interpreting, face to face interpreting (Including British Sign Language Interpreters), video calls and document translation services. The current supplier for these is Word360, but we are currently re-tendering for this service, looking for a like-for-like offer which will be in place by the end of August.

Insight shows that Google Translate is widely used by non-English speaking citizens when accessing the internet and so site-specific translation services are not always required.

## **How we consulted**

Citizens have been consulted in a number of ways. These opportunities were used to test objectives and language, and also to understand what barriers are faced in getting access to services. Officers visited existing Community Larders in Rose Hill and Barton and attended a Community Champions Forum at the Museum of Oxford and an online Diversity Forum. In addition, citizens using the contact centre and visiting the front-line service at the Westgate were surveyed on their views.

The Council commissioned a special session for advice providers to understand how the strategy and its objectives would affect their services.

A session was also held with the Director for Customer Experience and Cultural Services at Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure that the partnership approach suggested aligns with their direction of travel.

Individual discussions were held with every Service Head and representatives of their teams, to seek their feedback on the proposed strategy, its objectives and language. This feedback has been used to develop the Citizen Experience action plan and for services to consider their own more specific actions.

Staff were given the opportunity to share their views again on the objectives and language of the strategy, and also on what they would need to help them embrace and deliver against the draft principles of the strategy. This was achieved using a series of online and in person sessions.

Different dimensions of the strategy were further tested with the Policy Officer Group and Equalities Steering Groups, in addition to their feedback on objectives and language. The Policy Officer Group were asked to consider alignment with other existing City Council policies, whilst the Equalities Steering Group has supported the development of the Equalities Impact Assessment.

## **How we have used our findings**

The insights gathered have been used to enrich the action plan, ensuring priorities already underway are still relevant. They have significantly shaped the language used. It has also been a valuable exercise to ensure that all Council services are fully aligned to the strategy principles.

There will be a greater emphasis on supporting those in digital poverty or with lower literacy skills. The action plan includes a review of the Community Involvement Policy, a commitment to explore how the new Resident's Panel can be better used and how young people can be more formally engaged.

The Council also found a clear opportunity to work closely with its commissioned advice providers to ensure they are able to champion the benefits of digital access and are included in the locality network approach.

Improving the website was unsurprisingly a big priority in the feedback. There was a widespread demand for it to be more user-friendly, with better quality information that is updated regularly. A new approach to the content management of our website is being developed, and citizens will be engaged as part of this process.

The digital divide reported by the Oxford Internet Institute is concerning and persistent. Work has already begun with Activate Learning at the Blackbird

Leys Technology Campus. We will be working together using their resources to provide digital skills and employability support for citizens. They will also be helping the City Council to be seen as a viable employer in the community and supporting citizens to apply for roles with us, in particular for the forthcoming apprenticeship scheme.

Better use of data and insight was another key theme. This is reflected in our priority to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the customer feedback and insight we gather from a range of sources including member enquiries, comments and complaints and freedom of information requests. Internally, we also need to ensure that the organisation understands and uses that insight to support decision making and policy formulation.

Through the consultation process, services have also committed to undertake a range of actions to improve their offerings in line with the strategy principles. These include policy reviews, improving web content, reviewing processes and service standards.

In terms of the Citizen Experience Strategy itself there was some debate regarding the use of “citizen” or “customer”. Comments included “customer” having a transactional or consumer meaning but may be a friendlier term. Some feedback said “citizen” may be a word that excludes some of our communities; visitors for example may not feel they are citizens. There was no clear preference overall, or other more suitable suggestions but a strong feeling that whatever word is chosen a definition is included in the strategy. A strap line to the Citizen Experience Strategy has been added to provide further clarity.

A definition has been duly included to say “citizens” are those who live, work in and visit the City Council.

A strap line to the strategy has been added to say, “For everyone that lives in, works in or visits the City of Oxford”.

There was feedback over the vision which used the term “putting you at the heart of everything we do”, which was said to be overused. In addition, the citizen feedback said that what was really important to them was knowing they had been listened to and understanding what the Council had done with any feedback given. The vision has therefore been amended to say, “Put communities and citizens at the heart of how we work, ensuring they actively shape our services and that the right support is available for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford”.

Staff feedback also had clear themes. They were clear they need a better staff directory as well as development in customer service and equalities skills to

support citizens and fulfil the ambitions of the strategy. Staff also wanted to set clearer expectations for citizens of the service standards that the Council is working to. This feedback is reflected in the action plan to develop the citizen experience “culture” in the organisation.

## **Our vision is simple:**

***Put communities and citizens at the heart of how we work, ensuring they actively shape our services and that the right support is available for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.***

In this strategy, “Citizens” are those who live, work in and visit the City Council. The outcomes and actions in this strategy also cover our relationships with businesses, communities and partners.

We will deliver modern, inclusive and accessible services that embrace the benefits of technology to make the experience quicker and easier for everyone.

Ensuring no-one gets left behind, we will provide a range of ways to contact us with access to specialists for more complex enquiries.

We will make the most of our data and insight, whether that is using citizen feedback to improve our processes, involving citizens in our service design, or utilising our data to spot trends and support business policy and decisions to ensure our services meet the needs of our citizens.

We will strengthen support within communities and work together with partners, agencies and community groups to give holistic, right first time solutions and advice to ensure the early prevention of issues.

## **We pledge to deliver these simple and ambitious outcomes:**

### **Citizen Focused**

- We will put you at the heart of how we work, and develop a learning culture to continually improve our offer to you
- We will listen, use insight and feedback to make sure our services are based on what is needed, and measure success in a way that is accountable to you
- We will use insight to spot trends where we are failing to meet the service standard and improve performance
- We will work collaboratively with our communities, and design services to meet your needs through a variety of contact channels
- We will develop a diverse and engaged workforce that is representative and in tune with

### **Positive Citizen Experience**

- We will make sure the citizen experience as a whole is quicker, easier and better
- We will ensure our staff are supported to give a professional and helpful experience with access to the right tools and technologies
- We will take ownership for delivery and get the basics right
- We will set clear expectations, do what we say we will do and keep you informed of progress

### **Inclusive Access**

- We will deliver modern, accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities and promote our equalities objectives. This includes:
  - An easy to use website for information and guidance, accessible through a range of devices including lap tops and smart phones
  - Self-service to access personal information and request services
  - Keeping updated with messages and alerts
  - Interactive social media
- We will deliver face to face and other assisted support, and help the most vulnerable people to ensure their complex needs are met and no one gets left behind
- We will make our services and information clear, concise and accessible to all using language that reinforces our values
- We will do all we can to reduce digital exclusion by improving our citizens skills and access to technology

## Get it Right First Time

- We will resolve your needs at the first point of contact where possible
- We will act swiftly to remedy individual service failures and communicate these actions to you
- We will work collaboratively with partners, agencies and community groups to ensure early intervention
- We will ensure our systems and processes reduce unnecessary contact for you, so your needs are resolved at the first time you contact us

## Action Plan

The data and insight received during the consultation have helped shaped this strategy and its emerging priorities, and are now embedded in a clear action plan which is laid out below. The delivery of this action plan will be overseen by the Council’s senior management team and progress reported to the relevant Cabinet portfolio holders.

| Outcome                            | Workstream  | Start Date     | Finish Date                                  |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| <b>Citizen Focused</b>             | Maintaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation                           |                | Next annual assessment date is November 2023 |
|                                    | Reviewing our corporate standards, key performance indicators and service offer | June 2023      | November 2023                                |
|                                    | Reviewing the improvement of services from data insight                         | April 2023     | April 2024                                   |
|                                    | Review and refresh of the Community Involvement Policy                          | September 2023 | December 2023                                |
|                                    | Re-launch and ongoing engagement through the Residents Panel                    | July 2023      | Continuous                                   |
| Outcome                            | Workstream  | Start Date     | Finish Date                                  |
| <b>Positive Citizen Experience</b> | Website redesign and content refresh  | May 2023       | TBC  |
|                                    | Development of new online forms   | May 2023       | Continuous                                   |
|                                    | Implementation of the revenues and benefits new online forms automation         | April 2023     | October 2023                                 |
|                                    | Communications Plan to support and encourage digital access                     | June 2023      | October 2023                                 |

|                                |  |                   |                    |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                | Service based process improvement programme  | May 2022          | May 2023           |
| <b>Outcome</b>                 | <b>Workstream</b>  | <b>Start Date</b> | <b>Finish Date</b> |
| <b>Inclusive Access</b>        | Development of face to face assisted support model for vulnerable and more complex queries                                 | Continuous        |                    |
|                                | Development of collaborative approaches with community groups, partner and agencies offering (Thriving Community Strategy) | Continuous        |                    |
|                                | Supporting our communities to have access to digital technology and better digital skills                                  | May 2023          | Continuous         |
| <b>Outcome</b>                 | <b>Workstream</b>  | <b>Start Date</b> | <b>Finish Date</b> |
| <b>Get it Right First Time</b> | Service integration optimised across organisation  | Continuous        |                    |
|                                | Developing and aligning commissioned advice offer  | May 2023          | May 2024           |
|                                | Behavioural insight  | January 2023      | March 2024         |
|                                | Developing citizen experience culture for staff including digital and technology skills                                    | April 2023        | March 2024         |

## Success Measures

The Council will be improving digital access to services for citizens and improving back-office automation that will mean less manual intervention by staff. The Council will be measuring the extent and success of how citizens use these new digital processes. It will also continue to measure customer satisfaction with its web, contact centre and face to face services. These will include stretching targets that sit alongside clear plans for improvement.





CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME  
**FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

## **Citizen Experience Strategy and Operating Model**

**Conversations Feedback**

**April 2023**

# Citizen Experience Strategy and Operating Model



## Contents:

- **General Feedback**
  - Language
  - Citizen / Customer/ Comments
  - Anything Missing?
- **Accessing our services**
  - Barriers
  - Solutions
- **Emerging Actions – for the Organisation**
  - Overview
  - Detail by theme
- **Emerging Actions – by Service Area**
- **Staff Feedback**
  - What more Teams can do
  - What help do staff need

# General Feedback



## Language

### Suggestions to **remove**:

- Citizen first approach
- Doing **to** you
- 'Front Door'

### Other comments :

- Too many words – Use visuals
- Needs to be plain English
- Use accessible colours
- Define the word 'you' in many places
- Digital; by design or choice? - needs consistency
- Needs to be within constraints of legislation
- 'Right first time' must be a positive comment and make clear it is referring to us getting right first time not the citizen
- The strapline is well used already – try something new
- Customer / citizens / residents – be consistent
- Grammar and punctuation needs looking at
- Tenants may not recognise themselves in "Citizens" and from Regulator perspective it's not a common term

### Suggestions to **add**:

- 'Putting you first'
- Making your experience inclusive, seamless, accessible, easy and automated where appropriate for speed and simplicity
- Doing **with** you
- Something about listening to and hearing our citizen's voice rather than putting citizens at the heart of what we do
- Tenants satisfaction – could be a measure for success

# General Feedback



## Citizen?, Customer? Or something else?

- No clear preference
- Other suggestion- Residents, Community

## Comments:

- 180
- Customer – Suggests transactional, consumer  
More friendly
  - Citizen – Suggests the need to have citizenship; legal aspects  
The communities don't use this word, so wont identify  
Old and outdated  
Does not cover visitors to the City
- Some of our customers (Planning) are neither our citizens or residents
  - Have our customers asked to be called something else ?
  - Whichever is chosen, include a definition

# General Feedback – Is anything missing ?

- An elevator pitch / summary
- Why this is necessary
- Where do the Members fit in?
- Where do Support Services (Enablers) fit in?
- Ensure this reflects our businesses too
- How ODS and OXPlace fit in?
- Make sure we acknowledge we won't be able to give everyone everything they want
- Needs to reflect different levels of contact for different teams
- How this is going to work
- How we will communicate and engage
- ~~Co~~ emphasis on retaining a face-to-face offering
- ~~Co~~ What we are moving from, and to and why it is important
- Examples – how this will work
- Profiles
- Videos
- Data
- Our corporate values and standards
- Examples of the high-level work streams from the programme
- Our reporting mechanisms
- How we will know we have succeeded - What does good look like
- List of interaction points – who is their first point of contact
- In order to deliver, lack of ICT resource (even with prioritisation) is major issue

# Accessing our Services

## Citizens & Advice Agencies Feedback



### Barriers

- Website not user friendly - too distracting, too many fonts, too clunky.
- Having to use Google to find the right webpage on the website as can't find it from the homepage!
- Hidden disabilities can be ignored/not recognised/not fully catered for (on website for example)
- Digital Poverty
- Literacy levels
- Blackbird Leys BLITZ IT hub is no more.
- Library staff no longer support with computer skills.
- Advice Centre has limited resources to help with online services.
- Unclear signage at library
- So many services and not knowing how to navigate it, find it difficult to do it over the phone or online

# Accessing our Services

## Citizens & Advice Agencies Feedback



### Suggestions:

- How to videos on the website
- Offices in local areas saves transport
- Keyboard shortcuts
- In person 'how to' sessions
- Different languages on the website
- Clear options on the phone line, so citizens know they are going in the right direction
- Communicate back to citizens what we have done against our promises – however big or small – that's what they want to hear about





# Emerging Actions for the Organisation (1/4)



## Website

1. Improvements and better quality information on website; updated regularly, and resources to do this
2. How to use - videos on website to carry out tasks
3. Better links between OCC and OXPlace websites.

## Translation

1. Better internal awareness and use of translation services available

## ICT

1. CivicaPay
2. Improved phone signal for WFH
3. Wider roll out of Power BI

## FOI

1. Strategic support for FOIs - communicating the importance and expectations for all staff to support, and learning from them

# Emerging Actions for the Organisation (2/4)



## Links

1. Link to:
  - Digital Inclusion Strategy for County
  - Leisure Options
  - Census data
  - Transformation work in Housing Needs and Homeless Prevention strategy
  - Integrated Care strategy
2. Converse with other bodies and hold them to account to listen to our citizens
3. Explore widening role of Residents Panel to allow for testing of strategies etc.
4. Use our new developments to join up and integrate our work
5. Residents Panel

## Intranet

1. Better Staff Directory

## Data

1. Plan for better use of and sharing of data & insight internally and externally
2. Feed in and use data from Oxford Residents Survey
3. Better use of data and improved data sharing internally
4. Build a library of best practice, case studies etc
5. Volumetrics for managing demand

# Emerging Actions for the Organisation (3/4)



## Reporting

1. Review of corporate standards (CSE feedback)
2. Review of operational reporting metrics
3. Review of quality and number of Corporate and Service KPIs
4. Increased Power BI resource

## Face to Face

1. Space in the community (Comm Centre) for sensitive conversations and 'drop in' conversations
2. Explore opportunities for working from Community Centres and promoting how people can book these spaces
3. In person 'How to' sessions
4. Ask citizens what they want and how they want to be engaged with

## Training

1. Training around how to have conversations to understand needs of the citizen
2. A proper shadowing offer for staff
3. Ensure Advice Centres understand our service delivery
4. Make citizens feel like a person
5. EDI Training for staff
6. Comms training

# Emerging Actions for the Organisation (4/4)

## Comms

1. Open, honest, timely communication about decision making and any changes in these
2. Better promotion of 'AccessAble'
3. Training in comms
4. More awareness and better use of the new Residents Panel when in place
5. Support and encourage use of videos within comms
6. More opportunities to show we listen and we do
7. Comms Plan to support the channel shift towards digital

## Online offering

1. Ask citizens what they want and how they want to be engaged with
2. More online forms
3. Online platform for reporting defects

## Culture

1. Structured engagement
2. Platform for best practice
3. An INTERNAL customer-focused culture
4. Continue to develop ways to provide recognition to staff for their hard work

## EDI

1. Making it easier for everyone to apply for our jobs - show case our diverse workforce
2. More targeted support to our diverse communities
3. Youth Voice



# Law and Governance - Emerging Actions



## Service Area:

- Policy Review (changing he/she to they)
- Roll out of new database for Information & Governance
- Re-tendering of Case Management for Legal Services
- Lesson learning from Staff Survey (Law & Governance)
- Improving webpage content with rollout of refreshed website
- Publish FOIs on website via new system

189

## Organisation:

- Improvements to website
- Services learn from their FOIs
- Strategic support for FOIs - communicating the importance and expectations for all staff to support with these
- Staff directory and intranet
- Open, honest, timely communication about decision making and any changes in these

# Planning - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- GIS in place
- Local Land Charges digitisation project
- Improve webpages
- Review service standards
- Review of storage of applications – scanning an option?
- Replacement of Uniform

## 19 Organisation

- Re-fresh of website
- Review of corporate standards (CSE feedback)

# Community Services - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Better use of data
- Demonstrating impact
- Digital inclusion
- Online booking systems

191

## Organisation

- Link to Digital Inclusion Strategy for County
- Plan for better use of and sharing of data & insight internally and externally
- Training around how to have conversations to understand needs of the citizen
- A proper shadowing offer for staff
- Better promotion of 'AccessAble'
- Comms. training

# Corporate Strategy - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Website re-design/refresh project
- More digital newsletters - in particular Housing/Tenants
- Residents Panel refreshed
- Review of quality and number of Corporate and Service KPIs
- Roll out of Oxford Residents Survey
- Review of operational reporting metrics

## Organisation

92

- Better quality information on website and updated regularly
- Raise awareness internally of translation services available
- Feed in and use data from Oxford Residents Survey
- Review of operational reporting metrics
- Review of quality and number of Corporate and Service KPIs
- More awareness and better use of the new Residents Panel when in place



# Regulatory Services - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Helping citizen know structure of the team and therefore understand where to go for help (website and upskill Contact Centre)
- Online forms for HMO
- Better info on webpages
- Better use of Power BI for case management

## Organisation

- Better info on website to reduce contact/queries from citizens
- Better use of and awareness of translation services
- Better intranet - in particular staff directory
- Better use of data and improved data sharing internally (particularly demographic data to ensure representative)
- Increased Power BI resource
- Space in the community (Comm Centre) for sensitive conversations and 'drop in' conversations
- Explore opportunities for working from Community Centres and promoting how people can book these spaces
- Ensure Advice Centres understand our service delivery
- More on-line forms

# Corporate Property - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Right To Buy - improving process - making slicker - explore automation
- More prominent automated affordability calculator on line (RTB)

## Organisation

- Support to provide good content for new website (capacity an issue in services)

# Regeneration & Economy Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Structured engagement
- Use of videos in comms.
- Explore Govdelivery
- Sharing positive comms.
- SIP Phase2 and embed with Locality Managers
- Regular briefs with CSO
- Online form for general questions

## Organisation

- Converse with other bodies and hold them to account to listen to our citizens (enabling role)
- Explore widening role of Residents Panel to allow for testing of strategies etc.
- Utilisation of our Community Solutions database to support B2B and tactical conversations
- Support and encourage use of videos within comms
- Structured engagement
- Wider offer around Youth Voice

# Finance - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Increase presence in the community (to build trust with citizens and support channel shift)
- Civica Collect
- RPA
- Revs & Bens portal
- QL portal
- Text messaging

## Organisation

- Improved intranet
- Improved phone signal for WFH
- CivicaPay
- Staff directory
- Platform for best practice

# Housing - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- CBL needs to go live - ongoing probs with QL etc
- Deliver Online form
- Deliver Enhanced Housing Options
- Secondment from Housing to IT to help with Power BI
- Training from housing to upskill to Contact Centre on key housing issues to improve "end to end Journey"
- Review housing needs triage process to improve citizen journey
- Mobile working solutions - devices to be rolled out along with versa forms
- 197 Through LS transformation, understanding what the tenancy management offer will be in locality, face to face (sits alongside a significantly enhanced digital offer)
- End to end process map from assessment to allocations to drive out efficiency/new ways of working

## Organisation

- Power BI needed across organisation
- Volumetrics to manage demand
- Refreshed focus on corporate homelessness prevention

# OxPlace - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Review social media channels
- Automate handover
- Consultation events and feeding back to citizens
- Collect more feedback and use it to inform what we can deliver - design, installations, fittings, access to information
- Follow through the process of service user feedback into future design/build

## Organisation

- Better link between OCC and OX Place websites - not duplicating information and making sure webpage on OCC looks like OX Place webpage
- Build a library of best practice, case studies etc.
- Online platform for reporting defects

# Business Improvement - Emerging Actions



## Service Area

- Update website with better and more informative information for citizens to help themselves
- Analyse what difference automation would; make to our front line (Face to face and Calls)
- Look at where we can do more user-led (engaging citizens/users - hearing their voice) design of our service improvements, process changes, new systems and comms.
- Provide ways for staff to go out into and work from the communities we serve. (This will also be part of our evolving 2F offer)

## Organisation

- q Ensure there is a Comms Plan in place to support the launch of the new website and the rollout of other new online services
- q Continue to develop ways to provide recognition to staff for their hard work

# Staff Feedback

Citizen focused



## What more could teams do ?

- Ask citizens about barriers they encounter
- Act on user needs
- Sentiment analysis
- Escalation process (R&B)
- Remove internal barriers so we are seen as one entity

## What help do staff need?

- More resources
- Time to read about what the Council is doing
- A strategic steer on addressing ICT needs
- Customer Services training



# Staff Feedback

Positive Citizen  
experience



## What more could teams do ?

- Co-design our services - work collaboratively
- More automation on accuracy of claims (R&B)
- Ensure processes are in place and clarify timescales (Property)
- Online bookings for schools/ museum (Comm Services)
- Corporate templates
- Adopt a conversational approach rather than transactional (C.Centre)
- Building blocks (capabilities) in place to provide good online transactions e.g. reusable integration with payments, booking system, etc (ICT)
- Better way to gather feedback online. Not getting useful feedback from GovMetric currently. Not getting any feedback from online form transactions (ICT)
- Reusable integrations with third party systems (e.g. Uniform, QL etc.) rather than just sending emails to service areas when someone submits an online form (ICT)
- Think long-term about online services. Currently contracts end, new systems procured, and all work on integration on old system is lost and has to be re-done (ICT)
- Let citizen/customer know how long each transaction they make online will take to process and what to do if it takes longer (ICT)
- Update citizens on progress of their online transaction to stop repeat contact about the same issue (ICT)
- Focus on delivering good online service for high volume services that currently can't do online e.g. Housing repairs, Bulky Waste Collection, Rent queries, P&R permits (ICT)

## What help do staff need?

- Specific and updated training and information to all (eg questions around energy)
- A Website giving more transparency on timeframes of service (R&B)
- Staff directory up to date with current staff, clear descriptions of roles and responsibilities so a search is effective and finds the right person (community services)
- Better internal comms (Community Services)
- Enhanced staff engagement (C.centre)
- Clearer guidelines and timeframes so that citizens are not kept wondering what is going on. (PROPERTY & RB Team)
- Clear strategic direction and technical capability/skills/resource to integrate various systems (ICT)
- Less third -party applications to deliver online services which all work slightly differently (ICT)
- A better understanding of what is available to citizens, so we know how to signpost (L&G team)

# Staff Feedback

Inclusive access



## What more could teams do ?

- Equality impact assessments and Surgeries (L&G team)
- Still offering PDF and Word-based forms on our website as the only digital channel for completing a transaction.  
Should be replaced with integrated online forms (ICT)
- More inclusive communications
- Need to ensure that all PDF/Word docs on our website comply with legal accessibility standards - WCAG 2.1. Currently quite far away from compliance on this (ICT)
- Have a F2F presence maybe teams call with public/in person rota R&B team

## What help do staff need?

- Time - needed to absorb all the info that is already available – (L&G team)
- Time, Testing of forms - efficiencies that are mapped need to be applied (R&B team)
- Corporate-led initiatives to train staff in accessibility best practice (Community Services)
- Staff engagement - are staff in a position to improve on their levels of engagement? What's creating barriers?
- Resource needed to comply with legal accessibility standards for online documents. Also requires whole organisation change in mindset/skills (ICT)

# Staff Feedback

Get it right first time



## What more could teams do ?

- It's not so much the TEAM getting it right. This needs to come from the top down, getting it right for their staff, the emphasis has been on the teams to improve far too much
- Corporate standard processes would help everyone internally and externally (L&G team)
- Automation - removes the opportunity for human error speed will stop 2nd chasing calls R&B team

## What help do staff need?

- The staff directory up to date
- One single system that gives a single view of a resident/property, so anyone can see history/notes/contact etc (Community Services)
- Ensuring that we get things right, needs major spend on either staffing or technology, to ensure that we have the resources to get it right.( PROPERTY)
- Corporate understanding of objectives - pressure points, government drivers (R&B)
- Time (L&G)

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3 - Risk Register

205

| Ref    | Title                 | Risk Description   | Opp / Threat | Cause  | Consequence  | Risk Treatment | Date Raised | Owner      | Gross |   | Current |   |       | Target |   | Comments | Control / Mitigation Description  | Date Due | Action Status | % Progress | Action Owner |
|--------|-----------------------|--|--------------|--|--|----------------|-------------|------------|-------|---|---------|---|-------|--------|---|----------|---|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
|        |                       |  |              |  |  |                |             |            | P     | I | P       | I | Score | P      | I |          |   |          |               |            |              |
| CEX001 | Project Scope         | Detailed scope of roles/activities cannot be agreed with services                      | Threat       | Competing priorities. Limited capacity. Service pressures.   | Unable to progress with project.   | Reduce         | 09/06/22    | Ian Wright | 4     | 3 | 3       | 2 | 6     | 2      | 2 |          | Robust RACI in place within Project Scoping ToR. This will need to be agreed with each Project Lead and their HoS at scoping stage along with the scope of the project.   | 31/05/24 | Ongoing       | 50%        | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX004 | Delay of efficiencies | The level and rate of efficiencies realised /savings is reduced by descopeing or delay | Threat       | Change in priorities. Delay in implementation of ICT - internally or via extranal services to implement. Data to demonstrate efficiencies lacking. | Increased pressure on services as agreed savings are taken. Inability to meet MTFP.  | Reduce         | 09/06/22    | Ian Wright | 4     | 4 | 4       | 3 | 12    | 3      | 3 |          | Ensure digital technology roadmap is prioritised to enable savings for customer. Where benefits have an ICT element this is now going to be highlighted on the Benefits Tracker to activate conversations at OCB around resource for this ICT work. Put in place robust front door of change process to ensure CMT can prioritise project and make decisions relating to prioritisation and potential impact on savings. Engaging HoS via commissioning conversations whereby we set out a clear RACI and project scope at the very start. Inter-dependencies understood and picked up in the conversations to shape the Corporate Business Plan. Robust governance in place via weekly Delivery Boards attended by Project Leads | 31/05/24 | Ongoing       | 10%        | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX005 | Delay of web/digital  | Delays in deployment of web/digital offer due to deployment of ICT on other projects   | Threat       | Competing and changing priorities within ICT. Staff changes. Team capacity.  | Delayed rollout of online forms/applications and RPA. Delay to process improvements and efficiencies/savings being made. Delay to channel shift of customers. Customer experience remains unimproved.                      | Reduce         | 09/06/22    | Ian Wright | 4     | 4 | 4       | 4 | 16    | 4      | 3 |          | Online forms and website refresh reported on under CEX Programme tracker to help prioritise and align objectives. □ ICT a standing item at the CEX Delivery Board weekly meeting to discuss inter-dependencies and timelines. (Attended by Rocco and/or Harry). □ Where benefits have an ICT element this is now going to be highlighted on the Benefits Tracker to activate conversations at OCB around resource for this ICT work which is engaged on other project activities.   | 31/05/24 | Ongoing       | 10%        | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX006 | Channel Shift         | Channel shift outcomes delayed   | Threat       | See CEX005   | Delay to process improvements and efficiencies/savings being made. Customer experience remains unimproved.   | Reduce         | 09/06/22    | Ian Wright | 4     | 4 | 4       | 4 | 16    | 4      | 3 |          | Develop and identify key customer team members to be upskilled to develop simple forms without interfaces to other systems with minimal reliance on ICT digital team support. There will be a specific project once the Operating Model is agreed to support, encourage and upskill customers to channel shift which will include use of Behavioural Insight.   | 31/05/24 | Ongoing       | 10%        | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX007 | Digitally Excluded    | Digitally excluded are not impacted by these changes                                   | Threat       | Impact not understood through an EIA. Insight and feedback from customers/citizens not actively sought or considered ongoing.                      | Digital gap is increased in the city. Increase in inequalities. Some customers/citizens not able to access services. Increase in calls and face to face visits places greater pressure on services. Savings not delivered. | Reduce         | 09/06/22    | Ian Wright | 4     | 4 | 3       | 4 | 12    | 3      | 3 |          | Equality Impact Assessments in place and regularly reviewed. □ Ensure a fit for purpose offer is still in place within the community. □ Ongoing consultation with the EDI Steering Group.   | 31/05/24 | Ongoing       | 20%        | Helen Bishop |

|        |                                     |  |        |  |  |        |          |              |   |   |   |   |    |   |   |  |   |          |           |      |              |
|--------|-------------------------------------|--|--------|--|--|--------|----------|--------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|--|---|----------|-----------|------|--------------|
| CEX009 | Campaign Management                 | Campaign management with customers is fragmented and causes avoidable demand during implementation                       | Threat | Lack of Comms Plan and support. Reactive comms.  | Some customers/citizens not able to access services. Increase in calls and face to face visits places greater pressure on services. Savings not delivered. | Reduce | 09/06/22 | Ian Wright   | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 9  | 2 | 2 |  | Put in place a governance (including a RACI and scope) to manage campaigns with our customers.□ Monthly Demand Management with Tom Jennings.  | 31/05/24 | Ongoing   | 10%  | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX010 | Website                             | Benefit impact and stakeholder management impact due to delay in procurement or deployment process for web/digital offer | Threat | Capacity in business to write new content.   | Some customers/citizens not able to access services. Increase in calls and face to face visits places greater pressure on services. Savings not delivered. | Reduce | 09/06/22 | Helen Bishop | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 9  | 2 | 2 |  | Clear governance to monitor and review progress, training for content authors and engagement with business. Stakeholder mapping and plan in place   | 30/09/23 | Ongoing   |      |              |
| CEX011 | Service Capacity                    | Capacity and commitment in services to lead and deliver on projects.   | Threat | Competing and changing priorities within Services. Team capacity stretched. Poor Comms with services re: Fit for the Future portfolio. Lack of clear direction from Senior Management. | Delays to delivery of projects and therefore efficiencies, savings and process improvements for the customer/citizen.                                      | Avoid  | 01/0922  | Vicki Galvin | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | 2 | 2 |  | Robust Terms of Reference to be agreed in scoping meeting complete with RACI to ensure roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear from the start of each project. Service Leads to attend Customer Experience Delivery Board to provide update and raise any issues/blockers each week. | Ongoing  | Ongoing   | 10%  | Vicki Galvin |
| CEX012 | Strategy & Operating Model sign off | Delay in agreement of Strategy & Operating Model due to challenges back from internal and/or external stakeholders       | Threat | Poor comms/engagement with stakeholders. Competing priorities.   | Delay to implementation and therefore realisation of benefits.   | Reduce | 15/12/22 | Ian Wright   | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4  | 2 | 2 |  | Engagement Plan in place to ensure user-led design.   | 31/05/23 | Completed | 100% | Helen Bishop |

## Appendix 4



### Form to be used for the initial assessment (Equality Impact Assessment)

|   |   |  |  |            |
|---|---|--|--|------------|
| <p><b>Service Area:</b> Business Improvement</p> <p>207</p>                             | <p><b>Section:</b> Fit for the Future</p> | <p><b>Key person responsible for the assessment:</b><br/>                 Helen Bishop (Head of Business Improvement and Citizen Experience Delivery Lead)</p> <p>Vicki Galvin (Senior Programme Manager for Citizen Experience)</p> | <p><b>Date of Assessment:</b> May 2023</p>     |            |
| <p><b>Is this assessment in the Corporate Equality Impact assessment Timetable?</b></p> |   |  | <p>Yes</p>                                     | <p>No</p>  |
| <p><b>Name of the Policy to be assessed:</b></p> <p>Citizen Experience Strategy</p>     |   |  | <p><b>Is this a new or existing policy</b></p> | <p>New</p> |

**1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy**

The Citizen Experience Strategy and Operating Model have been developed from user-led conversations with citizens, staff, Unions and Members between August 2022 and February 2023.

The external facing strategy sets out our vision for the future, our principles and our objectives. It is a promise to our customers about the consistent high quality experience they can expect from the Council across all of our communication and access channels.

The vision states we want to be: 'Working with our communities to ensure our citizens are at the heart of service delivery, getting everything they need to enjoy living and working in the city of Oxford.'

The four main principles of the strategy are:

- Citizen focused
- Positive Citizen experience
- Inclusive Access
- Get it right first time

The strategy also lays out that in delivering on our strategy the organisation will apply principles to how we operate, will live up to our promises and standards, will empower our staff, will work as one, will introduce new, innovative technology and will provide a choice of contact channels to our citizens.

The internal facing operating model provides the framework for implementation of our Citizen Experience strategy over the next 3 years. It outlines the building blocks we have and will put in place to deliver on our promise. These include early intervention, our contact channels, enablers such as insight, marketing and culture and a mixed service delivery method.

The model outlines how we will achieve the outcomes defined in the strategy, the different measures of success, how we will use these to improve the citizen experience and where we will source evidence of performance against these.

In developing the outline of a strategy and operating model a representative team of key staff from across the organisation were involved in six workshops that looked at demand management, data and insight, process improvement, digital by design, culture and the key building blocks for a successful strategy and operating model. From this data emerging priorities were developed under the headings of data, design, delivery, measurement, culture, leadership, process and technology as well as the requirements of our core functions. Conversations then took place with



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>the wider organisation, citizens, Members and partners so that the strategy is developed based on the needs and experiences of users and the operating model incorporate all services.</p> <p>Both the strategy and operating model align with our corporate objectives and design principles as well as other key Council strategies including the Thriving Communities Strategy, Equalities Strategy and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>It is important that the Citizen Experience strategy is reviewed on an annual basis and refreshed every 3 years.</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way</b></p> <p>209</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All citizens of Oxford which includes residents and businesses*</li> <li>• Our staff</li> <li>• Our Members</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Visitors**</li> </ul> <p>Strengthening support within communities and enhancing the role of prevention, this strategy will improve resident outcomes overall and reduce the call on council services, which can then focus on the most complex needs. The locality model is intrinsic to stimulating this approach.</p> <p>Streamlined channels of contact and consistent ways of working. Technology, systems and processes will be integrated between the customer operations and operational services, to ensure the needs of our customers are met in a seamless way, whilst staff can focus their efforts where they are most needed.</p> <p>*According to the ONS Census 2021 data the population of Oxford is 162,040 which is made up of 15.4% (24,991) Asian, 4.7% (7,535) Black, 5.6% (9,005) Multiple Ethnic groups, 70.7% (114,561) White and 3.7% (5,948) Other Ethnic group. Those aged 65+ years make up for 12% of the population in the city. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 results show Oxford has one LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Area) within the 10% most deprived areas nationally (Northfield Brook) and there are 9 areas in total among the 20% most deprived nationally which are located in The Leys, Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Carfax.</p> <p>There are 4,580 registered businesses within the Oxford boundaries that provide approximately 113,900 jobs.</p> |

The Oxford Internet Institute (OII) recently conducted a survey of local residents to explore the impact of the digital divide in the city. The results revealed that almost a quarter of Oxford residents lack access to the internet, and this lack of access disproportionately affects those from lower-income households and minority ethnic backgrounds.

\*\*Oxford attracts approximately 7 million day time and staying visitors per year

### 3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy?

Outcomes have been defined under each of the four main principles of the strategy. The current known workstreams to deliver these outcomes and the potential EDI implications for each of these have been set out below.

#### Citizen focused

- Putting our Citizens at the heart of everything we do
- Using insight and feedback, developing a learning culture to continually improve our offer to citizens

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- Customer Service Excellence accreditation
- Corporate standards, KPIs, service offer and standards
- User centred design methodology and approach
- Continuous improvement of services from data insight (3Cs, FOI, Member enquiries, etc)
- Data protection considerations and awareness
- Business Intelligence Unit - making sure the organisation understands the insight available
- Review and refresh of the Community Involvement Policy
- Relaunch of the Residents Panel

The EDI implications here are

- Ensuring we continue to actively seek citizen feedback from a representative range of people so our insight is up to date, inclusive and in line with our citizen's changing needs.
- Ensuring opportunities to engage in user-centred design and a user-led approach are fully inclusive
- Ensuring our Residents Panel is representative and inclusive.

#### Positive Citizen experience

- Making sure the experience is quicker, easier and better

- Working collaboratively with our communities, designing services to meet our citizen's needs through a variety of contact channels

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- New digital and technology platforms e.g. Digital Platform and Customer Contact Platform
- Redevelopment and exploitation of new online forms
- Website redesign and content refresh
- Roll out of Revs & Bens Portal

The EDI implications here are

- Ensuring 'no one gets left behind' as new digital and technology platforms are introduced, particularly people with no/limited access to internet/devices, people with no/low digital skills and confidence, people with learning disabilities, people with visual impairments, people with English as a second language.

#### Inclusive Access

- Delivering modern, accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities & promote our equalities objectives
- Delivering face-to-face and other assisted support, helping the most vulnerable and complex cases and ensuring no one gets left behind

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

11

- Assisted support model for vulnerable and more complex queries
- Maximisation of community group, partner and agency offering (Thriving Community Strategy)
- Digital skills and technology for communities
- Explore introducing a form of Youth Parliament/reviewing our Youth Voice offer

The EDI implications here are

- Ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are aware and can access our assisted support model when needed via the contact channel that suits them
- Ensuring the digital skills for communities offer reaches those who need it most and is accessible
- Ensuring our Youth Parliament/Youth Voice offer is representative and inclusive

#### Get it right first time

- Resolving our citizen's needs holistically at the first point of contact where possible
- Ensuring our systems and processes reduce unnecessary contact for our citizens

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- Service integration optimised across organisation
- Optimisation of advice sector
- Behavioural insight

- Citizen Experience mindset and culture established
- Digital and technology skills for staff

The EDI implications here are

- Ensuring our Citizen Experience culture develops in line with our Equalities Strategy values and behaviours
- Ensuring the digital skills for staff offer reaches those who need it most and is accessible

Where appropriate these individual high level workstreams will develop their own Equality Impact Assessments so the specific impacts can be thought through, assessed and mitigated as far as possible.

|  |  |  |                                    |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff engagement, buy-in and commitment to implementing the strategy and operating model</li> <li>• Perceived capacity for implementing and embedding the operating model</li> <li>• Level of cultural change achieved in some areas</li> <li>• Leaders consistently leading by example</li> <li>• Timely implementation of the Digital Strategy</li> </ul> |  |                                    |
| <b>5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Oxford citizens</li> <li>• Our staff – including ODS and OX Place</li> <li>• Our Members</li> <li>• Unions</li> </ul>   | <b>7. Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?</b> | Oxford City Council – all services |
| <b>6. Are there concerns that the policy <i>could</i> have a differential impact on racial groups.</b> | Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate   | N  |                                    |

|  |  |          |  |
|--|--|----------|--|
| <p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>                      | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p> |          |  |
| <p><b>7. Are there concerns that the policy <i>could</i> have a differential impact due to gender</b></p>      | <p>Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate</p>  | <p>N</p> |  |
| <p><b>8. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>                   | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p> |          |  |
| <p><b>9. Are there concerns that the policy <i>could</i> have a differential impact due to disability?</b></p> | <p>Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate</p>  | <p>N</p> |  |

|  |  |          |  |
|--|--|----------|--|
| <p><b>10. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>                              | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010) and is committed to delivering accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities &amp; promote our equalities objectives and ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p> <p>Delivering face-to-face and other assisted support, helping the most vulnerable and complex cases. We will use insight and customer feedback as a way to continually develop our services while incorporating digital by design to our services. We will always offer alternative contact channels to suit our citizens requirements at the time they need to contact us.</p> <p>Our insight already tells us that many citizens would do and/or would like to use online services.</p>     |          |  |
| <p><b>11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?</b></p> | <p>Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate</p>  | <p>N</p> |  |
| <p><b>12. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>                              | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010). and is committed to delivering accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities &amp; promote our equalities objectives and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p> <p>Delivering face-to-face and other assisted support, helping the most vulnerable and complex cases. We will use insight and customer feedback as a way to continually develop our services while incorporating digital by design to our services. We will always offer alternative contact channels to suit our citizens requirements at the time they need to contact us.</p> <p>Our insight already tells us that many citizens would do and/or would like to use online services.</p> |          |  |
| <p><b>13. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to</b></p>                     | <p>Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate</p>  | <p>N</p> |  |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| their age  |  |   |   |
| 14. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?  | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010). and is committed to delivering accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities &amp; promote our equalities objectives and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p> <p>Delivering face-to-face and other assisted support, helping the most vulnerable and complex cases. We will use insight and customer feedback as a way to continually develop our services while incorporating digital by design to our services. We will always offer alternative contact channels to suit our citizens requirements at the time they need to contact us.</p> <p>Our insight already tells us that many citizens would do and/or would like to use online services.</p> |   |   |
| 15. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief            | Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate   | N |   |
| 16. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?  | <p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>   |   |   |
| 17. Could the differential impact identified in 8-13 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy | Y  | N | Unclear at this time. This will be determined as we implement. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate. |

|   |     |   |  |   |   |   |  |
|---|-----|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| 18. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason | Y   | N | TBC – see above.   |   |   |   |  |
| 19. Should the policy proceed to a partial impact assessment  | Y   | N | If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA          | Y   | N   |   |  |
|   |     |   | Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by |   |   |   |  |
| 20. Are there implications for the Service Plans?<br>206  | YES |   | NO   | 21. Date the Service Plan will be updated | All Service Areas will be expected to include references to this strategy in their emerging Service Plans from 2023 onwards | 22. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in Policy, Performance and Communication |  |
| 23. Date reported to Equalities Board:  |     |   |  | 24. Date to Scrutiny and Cabinet          |   | 25. Date published  |  |

Signed (completing officer): \_\_\_ Signed (Lead Officer) \_\_\_



**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 12 July 2023

**Report of:** Head of Law & Governance

**Title of Report:** Updates to the Memorandum of Understanding and the Terms of Reference of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b> |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose of the Report:</b>      | <p>Recent changes to the programmes within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal require some adjustments to the working of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and this report proposes corresponding amendments to the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding.</p> <p>The proposed changes to the governance documents will result in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision being explicitly mentioned in the Terms of Reference for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. Future work programmes will be expected to contribute to the delivery of the outcomes in the Strategic Vision.</p> |
| <b>Key decision:</b>               | No   |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>             | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader – Inclusive Economy and Partnerships  |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>         | All  |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>           | Council Strategy 2020-24   |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Recommendation:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:  |
| 1. <b>Approve</b> the Future Oxfordshire Partnership’s revised Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding. These will take effect following approval by each of the six Oxfordshire councils. |

| <b>Appendices</b> |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1        | Revised FOP Terms of Reference          |
| Appendix 2        | Revised FOP Memorandum of Understanding |

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal is entering its final phases, and the governance documents for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) now need to be updated to reflect the current position.
2. The **Terms of Reference** were originally drafted in 2014 at the formation of what was then known as the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and were last subject to substantive change in 2020 following a review. Since then there have been minor drafting changes reflecting the change of name to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
3. The **Memorandum of Understanding** was introduced in 2018 as a requirement of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and sets out operational aspects of decision making and responsibilities in relation to the deal. As with the Terms of Reference, the last substantive change was made in 2020 and subsequent updates have replaced references to the Growth Board with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
4. Three particular areas of change have arisen which are described in the following paragraphs.

## **Cessation of Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

5. Following the decision in August 2022 to cease work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, it is proposed to remove references to that work programme from the Terms of Reference.

## **Homes from Infrastructure Programme**

6. The final tranche of funding for the Homes from Infrastructure Programme, the last remaining major element of the Housing and Growth Deal, is subject to a number of governance and reporting requirements which were set out in a letter dated 5 December 2022 from the then Housing Minister.
7. These requirements and their implications were described in detail in a report presented to the 20 March 2023 meeting of the FOP by the Director of Finance, Oxfordshire County Council, and are not repeated here. Oxfordshire County Council has subsequently written to DLUHC and Homes England confirming acceptance of the final funding and agreement to the associated governance and reporting requirements.
8. The changes which are proposed to the Terms of Reference are intended to reflect the new requirements from government which have now been agreed.
9. Corresponding changes are proposed to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out responsibility for decision making on matters of funding and work programmes. Although it is now a requirement that Oxfordshire County Council should be held accountable for delivery of the remaining programme, the MoU sets out some commitments to positive partnership behaviour and in particular to consultation with partners over any proposed changes to the programme of infrastructure delivery.
10. It should be noted also that the district councils are expected to provide quarterly updates to the county council regarding housing delivery on sites which benefit

from this investment in infrastructure. In turn the county council will provide the data to DLUHC as part of its quarterly reporting regime.

### **Adoption of the Strategic Vision**

11. Finally, an overhaul of the Terms of Reference provides an opportunity to include reference to *Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development* which was endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at its meeting of 22 March 2021, and subsequently in April 2021 by each individual council.
12. It was agreed that the Strategic Vision should be a basis for informing partners' future work planning and strategy. It is therefore appropriate to make reference to this document in the Terms of Reference for the partnership, without seeking to repeat details which are contained in the vision document itself.

### **Financial Implications**

13. There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference.

### **Legal Implications**

14. There are no legal implications arising directly from the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference. At its March 2023 meeting the members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership agreed to accept the final instalment of Housing and Growth Deal funding, and these amendments are required to capture the new governance and reporting obligations.

### **Other Implications**

15. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership's Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding are matters reserved for decision by each local authority's Cabinet / Executive.
16. If endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership at its meeting on 13 June 2023, indicative dates for these governance updates to be considered by individual partners' cabinets are as follows:

| <b>Authority</b>                     | <b>Cabinet date</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cherwell District Council            | 3 July 2023         |
| Oxford City Council                  | 12 July 2023        |
| Oxfordshire County Council           | 18 July 2023        |
| South Oxfordshire District Council   | 22 June 2023        |
| Vale of White Horse District Council | 23 June 2023        |
| West Oxfordshire District Council    | 12 July 2023        |

### **Conclusion**

17. The revised governance documents are required to set out how the councils will meet the requirements set out in DLUHC's letter dated 5 December 2022, securing the final £30 million of funding for infrastructure to support the accelerated delivery of new homes.
18. Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed changes.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Rhian Davies   |
| Job title                  | Interim Head of Law & Governance                                 |
| Service area or department | Law & Governance   |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252402   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:rdavies@oxford.gov.uk">rdavies@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers:** None

## The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Joint Committee Terms of Reference xxx 2023

### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners working together to deliver the bold and ambitious outcomes of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development.
- 1.2 Oxfordshire's growing economy is set to create challenges and opportunities for the County related to housing, infrastructure, public services and the environment. These issues will best be addressed through joined up planning between local councils which prioritises sustainable development and quality of life. Collective planning, where it makes sense to do so, will be the most effective means of minimising the unwanted impacts of a growing economy, whilst leveraging the maximum benefit from the opportunities it brings for our existing and future communities.
- 1.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership ("Joint Committee") will:
- 1.4 Coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits;
- 1.5 Support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government's stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world; and,
- 1.6 Seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the Joint Committee's constituent local authority members.

### 2.0 Membership

- 2.1 The Joint Committee's core membership includes the local authorities within Oxfordshire comprising, Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Voting rights are reserved to local authority members only.
- 2.2 It also includes co-opted associate members from those organisations listed below:
  - Chair of OxLEP
  - Chair of the Oxfordshire Skills Board
  - Universities Representative
  - OXLEP Business Representative-Bicester
  - OXLEP Business Representative-Oxford City
  - OXLEP Business Representative-Science Vale
  - Homes England Representative
  - DEFRA Agencies Representative
  - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board Representative

- 2.3** When considering transport infrastructure matters, Network Rail and National Highways will have the right to attend as associate members. As the Joint Committee is constituted to be able to discharge executive functions if delegated to it by the constituent authorities, then the appointed person must be from the Executive of the constituent authorities. There should be one member from each constituent authority.
- 2.4** Each constituent authority shall appoint a substitute (also being an Executive member). The substitute member shall have the same rights of speaking and voting at the meetings as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 2.5** The Joint Committee, with the agreement of the local authority members, may co-opt other associate members to its membership where it is considered conducive to the effective consideration of any matter.
- 2.6** The Joint Committee may appoint representatives to the other outside bodies for which the Committee has membership.

### **3.0 Governance**

- 3.1** The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is a Joint Committee under s101 (5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) and s9EB Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000) and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.2** Notwithstanding the above each constituent authority will retain all non-executive and executive functions generally and specifically in relation to economic development, housing provision, strategic spatial planning and strategic transport planning.
- 3.3** The Joint Committee will meet in public subject to the provisions of s100 LGA 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. The Joint Committee will be hosted under local government arrangements and chairing will be rotated between the local authorities on an annual basis in line with the arrangements at 9.1.
- 3.4** The policy advice and support will be provided by the Joint Committee's Executive Officer Group (Chaired by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director), Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, reporting to the Local Authority Chief Executive Group.
- 3.5** The resources and capacity required to deliver the Joint Committee's work programmes, and the work of any associated advisory groups, will be agreed by the Chief Executive Group.

### **4.0 General functions**

- 4.1** To facilitate and enable collaboration between local authorities and key partners to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits.

- 4.2 To facilitate strategic alignment of spatial, economic and infrastructure plans in a way that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable in order to safeguard Oxfordshire's unique historical, cultural and environmental character.
- 4.3 To facilitate collective engagement of Joint Committee Partners with other national, regional and sub-regional bodies on matters concerning the environment, infrastructure and strategic planning and where relevant, comment on wider proposals and decisions from national agencies, where these have a strategic impact on Oxfordshire.
- 4.4 To act as the voice of Oxfordshire to Government and other national and Sub National bodies to ensure Oxfordshire's infrastructure and housing needs are recognised in future investment priorities and funding.
- 4.5 To provide a strategic partnership forum for the identification and development of sustainable strategies and plans for Oxfordshire related to the environment, spatial planning, economic development, housing and transport.
- 4.6 To coordinate the prioritisation of funding from devolved funding sources for infrastructure schemes, where this funding is not already within the remit of the Local Transport Authority, to ensure that decisions are made in one place and supported by all relevant partners and stakeholders.
- 4.7 To oversee the delivery of detailed work programmes as delegated to the Joint Committee by the constituent authorities, as set out under specific functions at 5.0.
- 4.8 To bid for the allocation of resources and investment to support the above purposes.

## **5.0 Specific Functions**

### ***Strategic Planning***

- 5.1 To oversee joint work on cross border issues to ensure partners meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate under S33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and wider national planning policy.
- 5.2 To assess whether strategic spatial planning, infrastructure and public services are integrated and delivered in a sustainable way, and to make recommendations to encourage this, while recognising the sovereignty of individual Local Plan processes.
- 5.3 To appoint representatives on behalf of the Joint Committee to other partnerships as required, including the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership and England's Economic Heartland.

## ***The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal***

**5.4** To oversee and facilitate delivery of remaining elements of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (“the Deal”), noting that:

- Oxfordshire County Council as accountable body shall, acting reasonably at all times and in consultation with the Joint Committee, take any decisions regarding the inclusion, timetabling and delivery of schemes in the Homes from Infrastructure programme
- the City and District councils shall provide information on housing numbers relating to this programme to Oxfordshire County Council in a timely manner in order to enable the accountable body to fulfil its reporting obligations to central government.

**5.5** To approve and monitor the implementation of work programmes for the delivery of the Deal (including infrastructure and capacity funding).

**5.6** To oversee the delivery of a productivity stream work programme to be delivered by OxLEP.

**5.7** To support an Advisory Group to oversee delivery of work programmes to meet the agreed milestones and targets set out in the Deal relating to Infrastructure.

**5.8** To receive and publish quarterly performance and finance monitoring reports as set out in the Deal Delivery Plan.

## **6.0 Voting**

**6.1** Only local authority Members (or their substitutes) shall be designated as voting members and shall be entitled to one vote on items of business considered by the Joint Committee, although members intend to agree matters on a unanimous basis where possible.

**6.2** A majority vote shall be required. In the event of there being an equal number of votes for and against a particular proposition, a casting vote by the Chair may be exercised.

## **7.0 Quorum and Safeguard**

**7.1** The quorum for a meeting shall be four voting members.

**7.2** Where the effect of a particular proposition, if adopted by the Joint Committee on a majority basis, would give rise to policy, contractual or financial implications for a constituent authority that it does not support, that authority may opt out of participation in that proposition in so far as it affects their authority before any vote is taken but this will not prevent the other parties proceeding with the proposition. In respect of other matters, all other voting will be on a normal majority basis.

**7.3** Normal rules as to declarations of interest to be applied to local authority members in accordance with the respective Council’s Code of Conduct.

## **8.0 Accountable Body**

**8.1** The Accountable Body for the Joint Committee is Oxfordshire County Council. It will provide Section 151 and Monitoring Officer roles to the Committee in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between Oxfordshire County Council and the Joint Committee.



**8.2** The County Council's Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) will provide the Joint Committee with quarterly financial reports for funding that has been allocated directly to Oxfordshire County Council as the Accountable Body. These reports will provide the Joint Committee with an overview of the funds spent and funds committed against funds allocated.

**8.3** For those programmes and funding streams where another local authority is the Accountable Body, the relevant Section 151 Officer will provide the financial and performance information to the County Council's Section 151 Officer, for integration into the quarterly reporting process.

## **9.0 Meetings**

**9.1** The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee will be elected at the first meeting in each Future Oxfordshire Partnership year, which runs from 1 June to 31 May.

**9.2** The Future Oxfordshire Partnership Director shall be responsible for convening meetings in consultation with the Chief Executive of the authority which holds chairing responsibilities.

**9.3** Meetings shall usually be held six times each year. However, meetings may be called by the Chair, Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive Group, or any three voting members of the Joint Committee, in circumstances where business cannot be reasonably deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

**9.4** Agendas and minutes will be published, and meetings held in public, in accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. A Forward Plan of items to be considered will be published online each month, and included with each agenda.

**9.5** Public speaking procedures will be established in line with a separate protocol as agreed by the Joint Committee.

## **10. Advisory Groups**

**10.1** The Joint Committee will establish Advisory Groups to oversee specific work programmes or broader thematic areas as required. Advisory groups, reporting into the Joint Committee, will be managed in accordance with separately published terms of reference as agreed by the Joint Committee.

**10.2** The role, remit and membership of Advisory Groups will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain flexible to the demands of ongoing and new programmes of work.

## **11. Scrutiny Arrangements**

**11.1** A non-statutory Scrutiny Panel with a cross party membership of councillors from each constituent local authority reviews decisions and actions taken by the Joint Committee. The Scrutiny Panel is managed in accordance with separately published terms of reference.

**11.2** The Scrutiny Panel is non-statutory ~~225~~ not strictly constituted in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. The Panel's function therefore

complements, rather than replaces, the statutory overview and scrutiny duties of the constituent authorities, as set out under the Local Government Act 2000.

## **12. Funding Contributions**

- 12.1 The budget for the Joint Committee's administration will be endorsed no later than 1 December of the preceding financial year by the local authority membership of the Joint Committee. The cost of meeting the expenditure planned in the budget shall, to the extent not met from other sources, be divided among all members of the Joint Committee, with discretion to vary fees between associate and local authority membership.
- 12.2 The budget endorsed by the Joint Committee will subsequently be recommended to each Local Authority member for approval during the February budget setting process.

## **13. Withdrawal**

- 13.1 If any member determines that they no longer require membership to the Joint Committee, they may give written notice to the Joint Committee's Chair and Director no later than 1st January preceding the financial year to which the budget will apply. Unless they withdraw that notice in writing, they shall cease to be a member from 1st April of that year. Any member which has not given due notice shall be obliged to pay its subscription for the next year.

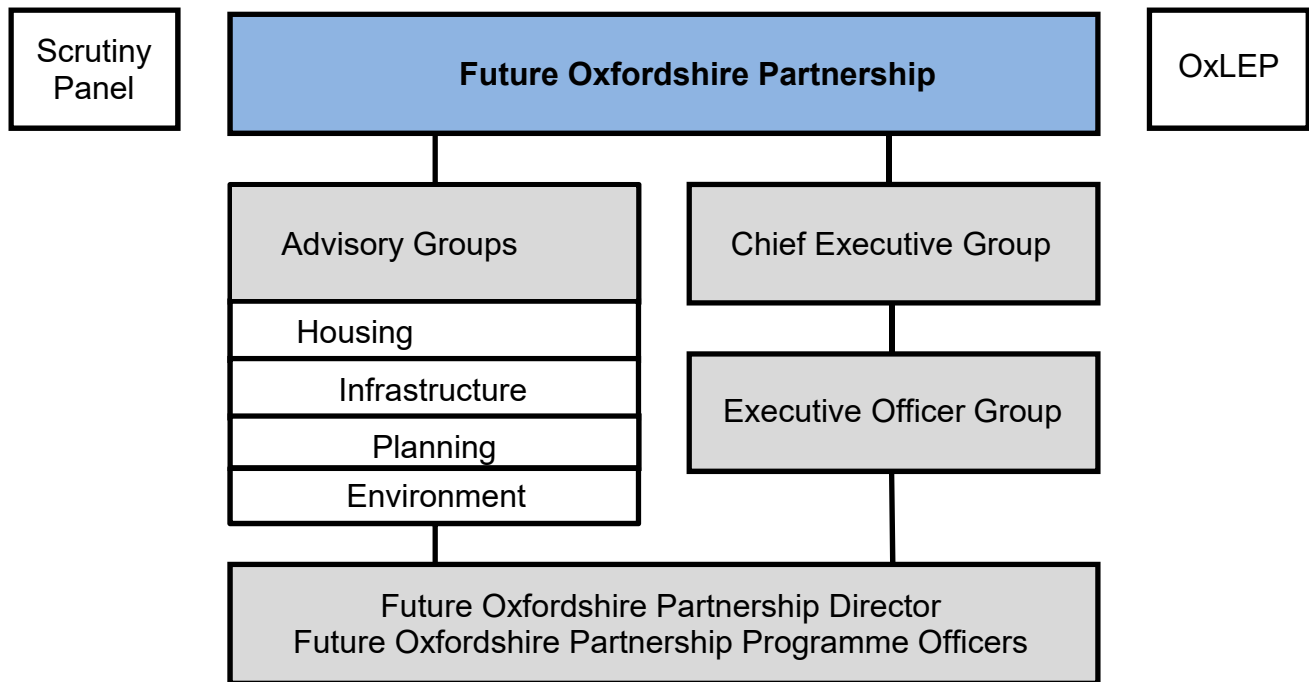
## **14. General principles**

- 14.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure they remain fit for purpose and flexible to meet the requirements of ongoing and future work. Any changes to the Joint Committee's powers or functions will be a matter for each constituent authority to agree.
- 14.2 In adopting these terms of reference, members of the Joint Committee agree to support the purposes of the Joint Committee by ensuring that in their decision making, they:
- Collaborate and cooperate with each other
  - Are open and accountable to each other

- Adhere to all relevant statutory requirements
- Deploy appropriate resources
- Act in good faith

14.3 These principles are not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or rights shall arise from this.

### Appendix 1 – Future Oxfordshire Partnership High Level Governance



This page is intentionally left blank

**Future Oxfordshire Partnership Memorandum of Understanding  
xxx 2023**

This memorandum of understanding is made by and between the Parties:

- i) Oxfordshire County Council of County Hall, New Road, Oxfordshire OX1 1ND
- ii) Future Oxfordshire Partnership; a joint committee formed by Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

The local authorities listed above comprising of the county, city and district councils are together referred to as “the Parties” and each a “Party.” Individual constituent members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership are as each a “Council.”

**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership, (formerly known as the Oxfordshire Growth Board), was established in 2014 and has the purpose of facilitating and enabling collaboration between Oxfordshire local authorities and other bodies operating in Oxfordshire in relation to economic, housing and infrastructure development.
- 1.2 Oxfordshire County Council is the designated accountable body for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership providing Section 151 and Monitoring Officer related services to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. References in this MoU to “Oxfordshire County Council” are in its capacity as accountable body unless stated otherwise.
- 1.3 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council may change these arrangements by mutual agreement, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) shall be reviewed annually by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure it is accurate and complete.
- 1.4 The purpose of this MoU is to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of Oxfordshire County Council acting as accountable body for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and that of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership itself and therefore the Parties hereby agree the Scheme of Roles and Responsibilities set out in Section 6 hereto. This MoU also sets out commitments made in respect of existing joint programmes of work overseen by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and incorporates material elements of the formerly established Memorandum of Information Disclosure, which will cease in effect from the date of the signing of this document.
- 1.5 This MoU shall commence upon the date hereof and shall continue in effect until terminated by either Party.

**2. Termination and Variation**

- 2.1 Termination can be enacted by either Party upon giving six months’ notice in writing to the other. In terminating this MoU the Parties shall comply with the requirements, if any, of Central Government and any other funding agencies.
- 2.2 If Oxfordshire County Council cease to be the accountable body, it shall:
  - i) Continue to co-operate with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and any successor accountable body and with all grantors to ensure a smooth transition; and

- ii) Provide to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership or the new accountable body (where requested to do so by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership) all such invoices, receipts and other relevant records which are in its possession and which it holds in connection with its role of accountable body. For the avoidance of doubt, documents will be retained in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Retention Schedule Policy.
- 2.3 This MoU shall terminate automatically upon the disbanding of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. In such case, Oxfordshire County Council and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership shall complete all of their obligations concerning:
- i) Monies granted to or by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership;
  - ii) Other assets held by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; and
  - iii) Any accounts required to be submitted to Central Government or to any other relevant funding organisation.
- 2.4 This MoU shall be varied in writing only by the mutual agreement of Oxfordshire County Council and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership save that this shall not prevent the Future Oxfordshire Partnership from making amendments to its Governance and Working Arrangements. Where a variation of this MoU requires a change to be made to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's governance and working arrangements, that change shall not come into effect until the governance and working arrangements have been duly amended in accordance with its requirements.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- 3.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is responsible for defining its strategic vision and overseeing delivery of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership priorities in accordance with any relevant funding arrangements.
- 3.2 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership will operate in accordance with:-
- i) Its Terms of Reference;
  - ii) This MoU;
  - iii) The guidelines provided by Central Government or any other body whose regulation controls the use of funds provided to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; and
  - iv) Statutory requirements.
- 3.3 In addition, Future Oxfordshire Partnership members will
- i) where possible, work together to procure services to ensure best value is achieved;
  - ii) give assurance and commit to do everything reasonably possible to ensure the objectives and targets of jointly funded programmes (such as the Housing and Growth Deal) are met.
  - iii) once the Future Oxfordshire Partnership has determined funding allocations, take steps required to reflect those allocations within their budgets.
  - iv) accept that in certain circumstance spend relating to individual workstreams may be greater than the funding allocations. In these circumstances the source of additional funding will be clearly identified.

- 3.4 Oxfordshire County Council will operate in accordance with:-
- i) Its Constitution;
  - ii) This MoU;
  - iii) Individual project collaboration agreements;
  - iv) The guidelines provided by Central Government or any other body whose regulation controls the use of funds provided to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; and
  - v) Statutory requirements.

#### **4 Financial Management Arrangements**

- 4.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is currently allocated public funding under a Housing and Growth Deal. Use of this funding, and any other future funding deals, must be undertaken in accordance with statute and the principles of democratic and financial accountability.
- 4.2 This requires there to be a public-sector body identified as the accountable body for audit and transparency purposes. Oxfordshire County Council is the accountable body for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 4.3 As the accountable body, Oxfordshire County Council is held accountable for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's funds in the same way that it is for its own funds. All funding received and expenditure incurred on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership will be subject to the same scrutiny. This means that Oxfordshire County Council will administer any funds held on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership under its own accounting policies, financial procedure rules and contract procedure rules as set out in the Council's constitution to ensure that funds are applied and accounted for appropriately. This will be carried out under the direction of the Section 151 Officer.
- 4.4 Oxfordshire County Council, as recipient of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's grant allocations from Central Government in relation to the Housing and Growth Deal is responsible for compliance with the grant conditions (including those set out in the letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities dated 5 December 2022) which may include the obligation to repay, in whole or in part, grants in the event of non-compliance with grant conditions.
- 4.5 Oxfordshire County Council will, subject to the terms hereof, hold any funding it receives and all interest or income earned for and on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and ensure that the money is not moved or converted to cash without specific instruction from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 4.6 Oxfordshire County Council will consolidate the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's cash balances with its own cash balances and deposit the co-mingled funds in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council 's Treasury Management Strategy. Oxfordshire County Council will pay interest on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership daily cash balances based on the 'Average 7 Day Rate'.
- 4.7 Any infrastructure constructed or acquired by Oxfordshire County Council acting on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's behalf, will be accounted for as part of the Council's asset register in line with Oxfordshire County Council's normal accounting procedures.

## **5 Provision of Services by Oxfordshire County Council**

- 5.1 Oxfordshire County Council provides a range of services to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. Those that are only incurred because of the requirement to have an accountable body are provided free of charge. These include Section 151 Officer time to provide advice and support to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and relevant sub committees/groups with regard to the use of any public funds that are allocated to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. This also includes Monitoring Officer time to provide advice in relation to legal matters.
- 5.2 In addition, Oxfordshire County Council also provides the following chargeable services to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:
- i) Finance functions relating to the monitoring and reporting of total funding received and available to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership; the monitoring and reporting of programmes and schemes; the payment of funds to Future Oxfordshire Partnership delivery partners; the calculation of interest earned on funds received; the provision of financial information for internal and external audit requirements and the completion of relevant government financial returns
  - ii) Internal Audit functions in regard to the governance arrangements between the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the accountable body as well as use of public funds allocated to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership
  - iii) legal functions including preparation of funding agreements with regard to the use of any public funds that are allocated to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and advice on state aid / subsidy issues.
- 5.3 Chargeable and non-chargeable arrangements will be reviewed annually and if/ when the scale of accountable body responsibilities, managed resources or project portfolio resource requirements increase significantly. Where specific, additional work is required then these may be charged where mutually agreed.

## **6 Scheme of Roles and Responsibilities**

- 6.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership shall:
- i) make all decisions on the allocation of grant funding agreed by Government with the exception that from the date of agreement of this revised MoU Oxfordshire County Council shall make decisions regarding the remainder of the Homes from Infrastructure programme arising from the Housing and Growth Deal, following consultation with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership;
  - ii) prioritise and allocate funding and be accountable for the delivery of projects funded by funding streams awarded to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and for which Oxfordshire County Council is to act as accountable body, with the exception of the remainder of the Homes from Infrastructure programme arising from the Housing and Growth Deal;
  - iii) monitor all activities financed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and ensure that all decisions are fully documented and recorded in writing;
  - iv) for future programmes other than the Homes from Infrastructure programme arising from the Housing and Growth Deal, agree robust and transparent assessment criteria against which funding will be allocated;
  - v) for future programmes other than the Homes from Infrastructure programme arising from the Housing and Growth Deal, ensure that projects are approved only after an appraisal has been carried out and that the separation of duties between project appraisal and project approval;



- vi) for future programmes other than the Homes from Infrastructure programme arising from the Housing and Growth Deal, through agreed project plans, ensure appropriate timescales and operating practices are in place to support effective implementation of decisions made;
- vii) following approval, request Oxfordshire County Council to effect the payment of funding to the relevant organisations;
- viii) fulfil the client role vis a vis Oxfordshire County Council as the accountable body and, in particular, give Oxfordshire County Council clear and comprehensive instructions in relation to the performance by Oxfordshire County Council of its roles and responsibilities as set out in paragraph 6.2 below;
- ix) Co-operate with and assist Oxfordshire County Council acting in its role as accountable body in undertaking the day to day responsibility for financial matters.

6.2 Oxfordshire County Council shall:

- i) provide support and assistance to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to ensure both legal and financial probity in relation to the receipt and use of specific funding for which it acts as accountable body;
- ii) ensure decisions and activities of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership conform with legal requirements with regard to transparency, equalities, social value, environment, State Aid / subsidies and procurement;
- iii) ensure that funds are used appropriately and advise the Future Oxfordshire Partnership on the procedures necessary to ensure formal compliance with any terms and conditions of funding or grant;
- iv) provide advice on proper and effective governance for overseeing the allocation and spend of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership funding;
- v) enter into funding agreements on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for agreed funding streams;
- vi) enter into appropriate legal agreements or contracts with the relevant Future Oxfordshire Partnership member on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership once the project is approved by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership following a successful due diligence process;
- vii) ensure that the funding is passed on to the relevant Future Oxfordshire Partnership member without delay and in line with the conditions of the funding; where this is to be passed onto a third party it will be for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership member to action;
- viii) submit the claims to the funding body and prepare and submit relevant documents for inspection by Central Government or external auditors as required;
- ix) where the funding stream is working on a claim basis, ensure that the claimed funding is passed on to the relevant Future Oxfordshire Partnership member delivery partner without delay and in line with the conditions of the funding or loan agreements;
- x) ensure that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership performance and financial systems are robust;
- xi) provide details of all monies expended in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding;
- xii) monitor approved projects during and after implementation in line with the agreed monitoring framework or as required by the funding body;
- xiii) inform and keep the Future Oxfordshire Partnership informed of any grant funding allocations received and the procedures and recommended criteria for distributing the funding based on the funding body's requirements;
- xiv) assist the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in identifying other sources of funding or to apply for these where commissioned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership;

- xv) ensure that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership adheres to its assurance framework in respect of maintaining the official record of Future Oxfordshire Partnership proceedings and holding copies of all relevant documents relating to funding; and
  - xvi) report and take appropriate action where it has reason to believe that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, or anybody acting as its agent, is failing to
    - a) adhere to the terms and conditions of funding requirements or the funding or loan agreements;
    - b) comply with its governance and working arrangements or any statutory requirement;
    - c) provide a suitable standard of probity.
- 6.3 Specifically in relation to the Homes from Infrastructure programme, being the remainder of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, Oxfordshire County Council shall from the date of the agreement of this revised MoU:
- i) make all decisions on the allocation of the remaining grant funding agreed by Government
  - ii) prioritise and allocate funding and be accountable for the delivery of projects funded by this funding stream
  - iii) act reasonably and in good faith, modelling positive partnership behaviour specifically by making no changes to the programme without careful consultation with affected district partners, and by not seeking to remove schemes from the programme or to reduce their scope as long as they remain on track for delivery on time and within budget.

## **7 Audit**

- 7.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership shall
- i) co-operate with and assist Oxfordshire County Council in audit examinations relating to governance arrangements, use of public funds and all operating systems;
  - ii) act upon all agreed management actions contained within Oxfordshire County Council's internal audit report;
  - iii) report to Oxfordshire County Council any financial irregularity or suspected irregularity in the use of any funding.
- 7.2 Oxfordshire County Council shall
- i) maintain proper records, in accordance with its Constitution, of all monies received and disbursed for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and make such records available for inspection by both internal and external regulators;
  - ii) arrange regular audit examination of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's activities with regards to use of public resources and, following each audit, present a report to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership with recommendations to strengthen their governance and management practices;
  - iii) allow funding bodies to have access to all files and records of projects for which it acts as accountable body; and
  - iv) supply, as necessary, completed statements of income, expenditure and disbursements to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, funding organisations, Central Government and external auditor.

## **8 Recovery of funds**

- 8.1 The conditions where funds will be recovered will be laid out in the initial funding or grant agreement. Where recovery of funds is at risk, the general stage of fund recovery

will be as follows:

- i) Stage 1: Oxfordshire County Council will send notice containing the reason for concern, outlining the potential fund recovery situation and giving time where appropriate for corrective action;
- ii) Stage 2: If corrective action is not taken or is deemed insufficient to avoid fund recovery a further notice will be sent by Oxfordshire County Council asking for the return of funds with a deadline for the return of the funds. In cases of particular difficulty Oxfordshire County Council may accommodate a fund return payment plan of instalments over an agreed period of time. However, this must be agreed in writing and cannot be assumed;
- iii) Stage 3: If funds are not returned within the set deadline then Oxfordshire County Council may then instigate debt recovery procedures which may result in legal action being taken.

8.2 Oxfordshire County Council will only take the step to recover funds from those Future Oxfordshire Partnership members it has a direct agreement with. In the case of a third party such as a subcontractor it would be up to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership member Oxfordshire County Council is seeking funds from to determine and take any action they require to recover their losses from any third parties.

8.3 Oxfordshire County Council does not wish to undertake stage 3 if at all avoidable but will do so in order to protect the public purse and ensure that public funding is being used appropriately.

## **9 Data Protection**

9.1 The Parties hereto shall comply with their obligations under the EU General Data Protection Regulation EU 2016/679(GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and any subordinate legislation made under such Act together with any guidance and codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant government department in relation to such legislation in the performance of their obligations under this agreement.

## **10 Publicity and Disclosure in Relation to Meetings**

10.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership will operate in accordance with the publicity requirements applicable to a joint committee under Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972. Papers relevant to meetings of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership will be placed into the public domain in the normal way by the Party with administrative control of that joint committee in compliance with s100A to 100K (and Schedule 12A) of the Local Government Act 1972. In accordance with those provisions confidential information as defined in that Act will not be disclosed. Exempt information as defined in that Act may or may not be disclosed. It is acknowledged that under these provisions' information is exempt if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **11 Requests under Freedom of Information and Environmental Information**

11.1 The Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Monitoring Officers of the relevant Councils have developed a Protocol for Handling Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests. This is based on the principle that the Future Oxfordshire Partnership itself and each member authority is a 'freedom of information authority' in its own right. The agreed Protocol (Annex 1 to the MoU) shall guide how

the Board and the member authorities will handle requests relating to the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

## **12 Confidentiality**

- 12.1 Each Party agrees not to unilaterally disclose any information identified by any Council as confidential information or exempt material (under the Local Government Act 1972) information unless required by law without giving notice of at least 14 calendar days to the Council or Councils who provided the confidential/exempt information. No confidential/exempt information will be disclosed without full consideration having been given to any objection made to its disclosure, unless disclosure is otherwise required by law.
- 12.2 Neither Party will use or disclose any confidential material provided by the other pursuant to this agreement otherwise than for the performance of their obligations under this agreement, save as may be otherwise agreed or required by law.
- 12.3 For the avoidance of doubt, confidential information shall not include (a) any information obtained from a third party who is free to divulge such information; (b) any information which is already in the public domain otherwise than as a breach of this agreement; or (c) any information which was rightfully in the possession of a Party prior to the disclosure by the other Party and lawfully acquired from sources other than the other Party.

## **13 Dispute resolution**

- 13.1 If either Party has any issues, concerns or complaints about any matter in this MoU, they shall notify the other Party and the Parties shall then seek to resolve the issue by a process of consultation. If the issue cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time, the matter shall be escalated to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's Chairman (or if the Chairman is an Oxfordshire County Council appointee, the Vice-chairman) and Oxfordshire County Council's Section 151 Officer (or if the dispute is between the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council, one of the district/city council's Section 151 Officer) who shall decide on the appropriate course of action to take.
- 13.2 If either Party receives any formal inquiry, complaint, claim or threat of action from a third party they shall notify the other Party and co-operate with each other to respond, or take such action, as is appropriate and/or necessary

## **14 The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999**

- 14.1 The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this MoU but this does not affect any rights which are available apart from this Act.

## **15 Status**

- 15.1 This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU. The Parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

## **16 Governing Law and Jurisdiction**

- 16.1 This MoU shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

**This Memorandum of Understanding is agreed and signed by:**

Signed for and on behalf  
of Oxfordshire County Council in its capacity as accountable body

.....

**FUTURE OXFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**

Signed for and on behalf  
of Oxfordshire County Council

.....

Signed for and on behalf  
of Oxford City Council

.....

Signed for and on behalf  
of Cherwell District Council

.....

Signed for and on behalf  
of South Oxfordshire District Council

.....

Signed for and on behalf  
of Vale of White Horse District Council

.....

Signed for and on behalf  
of West Oxfordshire District Council

.....

## Annex 1

### FOI/EIR PROTOCOL – INFORMATION REQUESTS RELATING TO THE FUTURE OXFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP

This process has been agreed by Oxfordshire's Monitoring Officers and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership managers. It provides a means of handling Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests regarding the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. Each member authority of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's officers themselves may be recipients of information requests.

This outline provides a legally compliant means of dealing with such requests while providing a degree of mutual consultation whilst also ensuring the identity of requesters is not disclosed to other members of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. **Each authority will be responsible for responding to requests submitted to it. Authorities should not simply redirect requesters 'to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership'** but should answer the request on the basis of any information held by the receiving authority in relation to it.

Freedom of Information Teams should adopt the following principles and process:

1. Each of the county's principal councils, and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, are **separate FOI authorities** in their own right. Requesters may therefore submit requests from time to time to any or all of the bodies, about the Future Oxfordshire Partnership partnership's work.
2. Should there be such an FOI or EIR request in relation to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's work received by any of the authorities, then the **receiving body's FOI Team will notify each of the other bodies' FOI Teams**: for the purpose of consulting them about how the receiving authority intends to respond.
3. The original receiving body will **consider all representations** (which shall also be made at the earliest opportunity) received in discharging its statutory obligations. The requester's **name will not be disclosed** to the other authorities.

4. In the event of a disclosure of information in response to a request under the Environmental Information Regulations or the Freedom of Information Act, the **disclosing body shall notify all other Councils immediately** and shall provide an explanation of its decision-making process on request.
5. A similar process will then be followed if an Internal Review request is received; or an Information Commissioner referral.
6. This process is on the basis that, while each authority is an FOI authority in its own right, **consultation between authorities** on a proposed response does not breach that principle.
7. If all authorities receive the same request, then each must respond to it at its own relevant level of management. **Achieving a 'consistent' response can not be the primary aim.** While approaches can be discussed, it will be for each authority to 'sign off' its own responses. This will also be important if a request is referred to the Commissioner, who would be likely to ask how each authority addressed the response.
8. It should be borne in mind that **a requester can also ask for the 'metadata'** to any request, which would bring into frame any information shared between authorities in the consideration of a response.

NB The County Council will be acting as FOI advisers to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

This page is intentionally left blank



**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 12 July 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance  
**Title of Report:** Appointments to Outside Bodies 2023/24

| <b>Summary and recommendations</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>   | To agree appointments to Outside Bodies for the 2023/24 Council Year |
| <b>Key decision:</b>  | No   |
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>  | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships  |
| <b>Corporate Priority:</b>  | Support Thriving Communities   |
| <b>Policy Framework:</b>  | Council Strategy 2020-24   |
| <b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as shown in Appendices 1A – 1D and <b>note</b> the appointments to partnerships as detailed in Appendix 1E;</li> <li>2. <b>Note</b> the guidance for appointees as detailed in Appendix 2; and</li> <li>3. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and where appropriate with other group leaders, to make any changes to appointments to Outside Bodies as may be required during the course of the Council year 2023/24.</li> </ol> |  |

| <b>Appendices</b> |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1A - E   | List of nominations to charities, trusts, community associations, other organisations and strategic partnerships for 2023/24 (with 2022/23 appointments listed for reference) |
| Appendix 2        | Guidance Note for Members appointed to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations.   |

## Introduction

1. The Council currently has representatives on a total of 55 outside bodies (17 community associations, 20 other organisations, 8 trusts and 10 charities). These are detailed in Appendices 1A – 1D. Many Council representatives sit on the

committee of the organisation to which they have been appointed, with many acting in a non-voting advisory role or simply being invited to attend meetings as an observer. Councillors who have been appointed to charities and trusts generally serve as Trustees on those bodies.

2. The Council also has representatives on several strategic partnerships (see Appendix 1E for details) these appointments are either made by the individual partnership or determined by virtue of a councillor's position as a portfolio holder on the City Council's Cabinet.
3. Guidance to assist Council representatives on these organisations is provided upon appointment. This ensures that all appointees understand their role and responsibilities in representing the Council on the organisation. A copy of the guidance is attached at Appendix 2.
4. The list of Outside Bodies and the appointment of representatives to those organisations is a decision for the Leader of the Council, who chooses to seek Cabinet agreement to the nominations. This is done annually in June or July.
5. Proposed changes to individual nominations or to the list of outside bodies will be reported to the Cabinet as required during the year. Since 2017 the authority to approve any change to the representation on an individual organisation has been delegated to the Head of Law and Governance in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and where appropriate with other group leaders. This delegation is restated annually to provide for good governance and clear decision making.
6. In 2019 Cabinet endorsed the Leader's preferred approach, based on custom and practice, that nominations for Council representatives to Outside Bodies should be drawn from the cohort of serving councillors; and that existing representatives who were no longer serving councillors should be permitted to serve out their terms of office should they wish to do so.

### **Categories for appointments to outside bodies**

7. The list of organisations to which the Council makes appointments has evolved over time. The justification for the inclusion of many of the organisations on the list is self-evident but in some cases the reasons for the Council to continue to appoint to an organisation is less obvious.
8. To address this the following categories are used to provide some rigour to the decision making underpinning the Council appointments to Outside Bodies:

|    |  |
|----|--|
| A. | Appointments to organisations that have a significant impact on the achievement of any of the Council's corporate policy objectives and service priorities and/or organisations who receive funding from the Council   |
| B. | Appointments to organisations with established historical links to the local community, the city of Oxford or the City Council on which representation is desirable and should be maintained as a matter of local goodwill and for as long as nominations are forthcoming from members |
| C. | Appointments which will allow the Council to influence policy at a national or regional level  |
| D. | Appointments which are a statutory requirement and/or to a partnership   |

## Proposed appointments and changes to representation in 2023/24

- Appendices 1A – 1D set out the proposed nominations to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations for 2023/24.
- The Leader of the Council has proposed the following specific changes to the list of organisations for 2023/24:

| Outside Body  | Decision   |
|---|--|
| Regal Area Community Centre Association   | No reappointment;<br>remove from list of Outside Bodies. |
| Rose Hill Community Association   | No reappointment;<br>remove from list of Outside Bodies. |
| NABAEMC (National Association of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Councillors (UK) | No reappointment;<br>remove from list of Outside Bodies. |
| Association Public Service Excellence (APSE)                                      | No reappointment;<br>remove from list of Outside Bodies. |

## Legal and Financial issues

- Representation on outside organisations presents legal implications for the Council if the roles and responsibilities of those involved are not fully defined. Council representatives are provided with detailed written guidance on their roles and responsibilities (Appendix 2).
- The appointments proposed in this report have no direct financial implications for the Council.

## Level of risk

- Representation on outside organisations should result in benefit to both the Council and the organisation concerned. There is a risk that such benefit may be lost to either or both parties if representation is withdrawn or inadequately resourced or briefed.

## Equalities impact

- An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. The Council seeks to appoint nominees that represent as far as possible the diverse nature of the Outside Bodies and the communities that they serve.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report author</b>       | Celeste Reyeslao   |
| Job title                  | Committee & Member Services Officer                                  |
| Service area or department | Committee and Member Services  |
| Telephone                  | 01865 252946   |
| e-mail                     | <a href="mailto:creyeslao@oxford.gov.uk">creyeslao@oxford.gov.uk</a> |

This page is intentionally left blank

**Appendix 1A: Community Association Nominations 2023-24**  
**These appointments are annual. The local ward councillors are usually appointed to Community Associations.**

*Names ~~struck through~~ are no longer councillors.*

|     |   | <b>2022-23 Appointment(s)</b>         | <b>2023-24 Ward Councillor Appointment(s)</b> |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Barton Community Association              | Cllr Nala-Hartley                     | Cllr Rowley                                   |
| 2.  | Bullingdon Community Association          | Cllr Rehman<br>Cllr Lygo              | Cllr Lygo<br>Cllr Rehman                      |
| 3.  | Cotteslowe Community Association          | Cllr Fouweather<br>Cllr Sandelson     | Cllr Fouweather<br>Cllr Sandelson             |
| 4.  | Donnington Community Association          | Cllr Rawle<br>Cllr Pegg               | Cllr Rawle<br>Cllr Pegg                       |
| 5.  | Donnington Doorstep Family Centre         | Cllr Rawle<br>Cllr Pegg               | Cllr Rawle<br>Cllr Pegg                       |
| 6.  | East Oxford Community Association         | Cllr Hunt<br>Cllr Hayes               | Cllr Hunt<br>Cllr Rehman                      |
| 7.  | Florence Park Community Association       | Cllr Dunne<br>Cllr Latif              | Cllr Dunne<br>Cllr Latif                      |
| 8.  | Headington Community Association          | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Altaf-Khan      | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Smowton                 |
| 9.  | Jericho St Barnabas Community Association | Cllr Diggins<br>Cllr Hollingsworth    | Cllr Diggins<br>Cllr Hollingsworth            |
| 10. | Littlemore Community Association          | Cllr Corais                           | Cllr Douglas                                  |
| 11. | North Oxford Association                  | Cllr Landell Mills<br>Cllr Fry        | Cllr Fry<br>Cllr Miles                        |
| 12. | Northway Community Association            | Cllr Chapman<br>Cllr Coyne            | Cllr Chapman<br>Cllr Coyne                    |
| 13. | Regal Area Community Centre Association   | Cllr Rawle<br>Cllr Pegg               | No replacement                                |
| 14. | Risinghurst Community Centre              | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Smowton         | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Smowton                 |
| 15. | Rose Hill Community Association           | Cllr Aziz                             | No replacement                                |
| 16. | South Oxford Community Association        | Cllr Waite<br><del>Cllr Tidball</del> | Cllr Railton                                  |
| 17. | West Oxford Community Association         | Cllr Muddiman<br>Cllr Pressel         | Cllr Muddiman<br>Cllr Pressel                 |

This page is intentionally left blank

| <b>Appendix 1B: Nominations to Other Organisations 2023-24</b> |  |                                    |                                     |
|--|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  |  | <b>2022-23 Appointments</b>        | <b>2023-24 Nominations</b>          |
| 1.   | Citizen's Advice Bureau  | Cllr Dunne<br>Cllr Mundy           | Cllr Mundy<br>Cllr Aziz             |
| 2.   | Fusion – Oxford’s Community Arts Agency  | Cllr Aziz                          | Cllr Hunt                           |
| 3.   | Historic England South East - Heritage Champion                                    | Cllr Clarkson                      | Cllr Clarkson                       |
| 4.   | Homeless Oxfordshire   | Cllr Hollingsworth<br>Cllr L Smith | Cllr Hollingsworth<br>Cllr L Smith  |
| 5.   | Modern Art Oxford  | Cllr Hollingsworth<br>Cllr Pressel | Cllr Hollingsworth<br>Cllr Hunt     |
| 6.   | Mortimer Hall Management Committee   | Cllr Upton                         | Cllr Upton                          |
| 7.   | NABAEMC (National Association of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Councillors (UK)) | Cllr Arshad                        | No replacement                      |
| 8.   | Oxford and District Sports and Recreation Association for the Disabled (OXSRAD)    | Cllr Coyne                         | Cllr Coyne                          |
| 9.   | Oxford Asian Cultural Association  | Cllr Rehman<br>Cllr Latif          | Cllr Rehman<br>Cllr Latif           |
| 10.  | Oxford Sports Council  | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Lygo         | Cllr Munkonge<br>Cllr Hollingsworth |
| 11.  | Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action   | Cllr Djafari-Marbini               | Cllr Djafari-Marbini                |
| 12.  | Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils  | Cllr Humberstone                   | Cllr Humberstone                    |
| 13.  | Oxfordshire Museums Council  | Cllr Aziz                          | Cllr Hunt                           |
| 14.  | Oxfordshire County Council School Organisation Stakeholder Group                   | Cllr Munkonge                      | Cllr Munkonge                       |
| 15.  | South East England Councils  | Cllr Brown                         | Cllr Railton                        |
| 16.  | South Oxford Adventure Playground Executive Committee                              | Cllr Waite                         | Cllr Waite                          |
| 17.  | The Porch  | Cllr L Smith                       | Cllr L Smith                        |
| 18.  | Association Public Service Excellence (APSE)                                       | Cllr Chapman                       | No replacement                      |
| 19.  | LGA General Assembly (appointment normally reserved for Leader of the Council)     | Cllr Brown                         | Cllr Brown                          |
| 20.  | Local Government Information Unit  | Cllr Hollingsworth                 | Cllr Hollingsworth                  |

This page is intentionally left blank



## Appendix 1C – Nominations to Trusts 2023-24

OCC preference is to appoint serving councillors to vacancies on Trusts

Names ~~struck through~~ are no longer councillors.

|    |                             | Current Appointment    | Expiry | Status and length of appointment  | Nominations 2023-24                                   |
|----|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------|---|---|
| 1. | Katherine Rawson Trust      | <del>Cllr Gotch</del>  | 2024   | Trustee x 3<br>(with voting rights)<br>4 year term                      | Mike Gotch wishes to continue to the end of his term. |
|    |                             | Cllr Sandelson         | 2026   |   |   |
|    |                             | Cllr Goddard           | 2026   |   |   |
| 2. | Old Marston Charities Trust | <del>Cllr Haines</del> | 2024   | Trustee x 2<br>(no voting rights)<br>4 year term<br>2 meetings per year | Mick Haines wishes to continue to the end of his term |
|    |                             | Cllr Clarkson          | 2024   |   |   |
| 3. | Oxford Leon Trust           | Cllr Rowley            | 2026   | Trustee x 2<br>4 year term  |   |
|    |                             | <del>Cllr Tanner</del> | 2023   |   | Cllr Fry  |
| 4. | Oxford Playhouse Trust      | Cllr Pressel           | 2023   | Observer<br>Annual  | Cllr Hunt   |
| 5. | Oxford Poverty Action Trust | Cllr Rowley            | 2023   | Trustee x 1   | Cllr Rehman   |
| 6. | Oxford Preservation Trust   | Cllr Diggins           | 2025   | Trustee x 2<br>(with voting rights)<br>3 year term                      |   |
|    |                             | Cllr Upton             | 2025   |   |   |
| 7. | Oxfordshire Building Trust  | Cllr Clarkson          | 2025   | Trustee x 1<br>3 year term  |   |
| 8. | Pegasus Theatre Trust       | Cllr Aziz              | 2023   | Non-voting<br>observer<br>Annual x 1                                    | Cllr Hunt   |

This page is intentionally left blank

| <b>Appendix 1D – Nominations to Charities 2023-24</b> |   |                            |               |   |                            |
|---|---|----------------------------|---------------|---|----------------------------|
|   |   | <b>2022-23 Appointment</b> | <b>Expiry</b> | <b>Status and length of appointment</b>             | <b>2023-24 Nominations</b> |
| 1.  | Agnes Smith Advice Centre                                   | Cllr Djafari-Marbini       | 2023          | Attends Management Committee<br>Annual x 1          | Cllr Djafari-Marbini       |
| 2.  | Alice Smith Trust and Sarah Nowell Educational Organisation | Cllr Humberstone           | 2025          | Trustee x 1<br>4 year term                          |                            |
| 3.  | City of Oxford Charity                                      | Cllr Lygo                  | 2024          | Trustee x 6<br>4 year term                          | Cllr Fry                   |
|   |   | Cllr Pressel               | 2025          |   |                            |
|   |   | Cllr Mundy                 | 2026          |   |                            |
|   |   | Cllr Hollingsworth         | 2026          |   |                            |
|   |   | Cllr Hunt                  | 2026          |   | Cllr Coyne                 |
|   |   | Cllr Smowton               | 2026          |   |                            |
| 4.  | The Gatehouse   | Cllr L Smith               | 2023          | Annual appointment – Member of Management Committee | Cllr Dunne                 |
| 5.  | Headington Parish Charity                                   | Cllr Clarkson              | 2023          | Trustee x 2<br>4 year term                          | Cllr Clarkson              |
|   |   | Cllr Smowton               | 2025          |   |                            |
| 6.  | Non Ecclesiastical Charities of St Mary's Magdalen          | Cllr Brown                 | 2024          | Trustee<br>4 year term                              |                            |

|     |   |             |            |  |             |
|-----|---|-------------|------------|--|-------------|
| 7.  | Parochial Charities of St Clement, Oxford | Cllr Hunt   | 2026       | Trustee x 2<br>Cllr term of office.<br>Should be Cllrs for St Clements or St Mary's wards. |             |
|     |   | Cllr Jarvis | 2024       |  |             |
| 8.  | Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre      | Cllr Corais | Annual x 2 | Attend meetings of Board of Trustees   | Cllr Corais |
|     |   | Cllr Turner |            |  | Cllr Turner |
| 9.  | St Aldate's Parochial Charity             | Cllr Waite  | 2025       | Trustee x 1<br>4 year term   |             |
| 10. | Susan Kidd Charity                        | Cllr Upton  | 2026       | Trustee x 1<br>4 year term   |             |

## Appendix 1E – Strategic partnership appointments 2023-24

| Partnership   |  | Cabinet Member and Portfolio   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) and subgroups</b>   |  |  |
| 1.  | Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP)                   | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships |
| 2.  | Economic Growth Steering Group                       |  |
| 3.  | Low Carbon Oxford                                    | Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice       |
| 4.  | Oxford Safer Communities Partnership                 | Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities                            |
| 5.  | Stronger Communities Steering Group                  | Councillor Ajaz Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities                         |
| <b>Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board) and Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Sub-Groups and Scrutiny Panel</b> |  |  |
| 6.  | Future Oxfordshire Partnership                       | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships |
| 7.  | Infrastructure Advisory Sub-Group                    | Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities           |
| 8.  | Planning Advisory Sub-Group                          |  |
| 9.  | Housing Advisory Sub-Group                           | Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing                                       |
| 10.   | Environment Advisory Sub-Group                       | Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice       |
| 11.   | Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel        | Councillor Tiago Corais<br>Councillor Katherine Miles<br>Councillor Lois Muddiman        |
| <b>Other</b>  |  |  |
| 12.   | The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) | Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships |
| 13.   | Fast Growth Cities                                   |  |
| 14.   | Ox-Cam Pan Regional Partnership                      |  |
| 15.   | Safer Oxfordshire Partnership                        | Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities                            |
| 16.   | Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel                 |  |
| 17.   | Health & Well Being Board                            | Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities           |
| 18.   | Health Improvement Board                             |  |

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 19. | Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership | Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies         |
| 20. | South East Employers                        |   |
| 21. | Youth Partnership Board                     | Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks                   |
| 22. | Oxfordshire Sport Partnership               |   |
| 23. | Oxford International Links Committee        | Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management |

# **Guidance for Members who are appointed by the Council to serve on Outside Bodies**

## **Introduction**

This guidance has been produced to support Councillors who are appointed to serve on outside bodies by outlining their responsibilities and obligations in that role. The guidance does not attempt to provide definitive answers to every particular set of circumstances but rather to provide a framework against which members can exercise judgement when faced with potential conflicts.

Councillors may be appointed to a wide range of outside bodies. Most appointments are made by the Cabinet. Councillors may also be appointed directly by the outside body itself to serve in a private capacity (for instance as a member of the community) rather than as an elected member of the Council, or they may be serving as a member of that body before being elected as a Councillor.

The roles of Councillors on outside bodies will depend upon the legal nature of that organisation and the capacity in which they are appointed to act. Councillors must act according to the framework set by the outside body and take an informed role in the management of the outside body's affairs. This involves attending meetings on a regular basis and carrying out their duties to the best of their abilities. Whilst it is permissible for a Councillor to take account of the Council's interests, Councillors should apply their own judgement in any given situation.

## **The application of the council's code of conduct**

Members must adhere to the council's code of conduct as set out in the council's constitution when taking part in council business.

## **Interests**

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in a matter to be considered at the meeting you must not speak or vote on the matter. You should also leave the room during any discussion of, or vote on, any matter in which you have a DPI.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (ORI) you must disclose the interest. You must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room

When councillors discuss matters relating to an outside body on which they serve at council meetings, they may take account of that outside body's interest. However, they should not vote simply in accordance with the mandate of that outside body. The primary consideration is the public interest.

Where a Councillor has been appointed to an outside body as a representative of the council he/she may regard themselves as not having an interest. It is important to

remember that simply by appointing a Councillor to an outside body the council does not grant the person an automatic exemption from conflicts of interest in every circumstance relating to that body.

### **Bias and Predetermination**

If a member is found to have been biased when making a council decision, the decision is likely to be set aside in the event of legal challenge. (Where actual bias has not been established the personal impartiality of the Councillor is to be presumed.)

In summary, the duties of a Councillor as a Director, or a trustee or a member of a management committee may well give rise to a legitimate fear of lack of impartiality.

The fundamental principles of this guidance are as follows:-

- Councillors will act according to the rules, constitutions and frameworks set by the relevant outside body and, where possible, with those of the Council
- Councillors will make independent and personal judgements based on their responsibilities to the outside body
- Councillors will report back on their involvement with the outside body – you will be asked to complete a feedback form each year about the organisation to which you are appointed for consideration by the Cabinet

The guidance addresses three specific circumstances which arise from time to time and as a result of which potential conflict can arise. These are:-

- Where the Councillor is appointed Director of a Company
- Where the Councillor is appointed as a Trustee
- Where the Councillor is appointed to an Unincorporated Association

### **Insurance**

You should establish as soon as you are appointed what, if any, insurance is in place that covers you in your role.

You should establish what insurance the organisation itself holds for other purposes, for example third party liability insurance and employers liability insurance (the second of which is a legal obligation for all organisations which employ staff). Clearly adequate and comprehensive insurance cover for the organisation is likely to limit any residual exposure for you as a Trustee, Director, Committee member, etc.

The ability of local authorities to indemnify councillors and officers for any personal liability arising from actions or decisions taken by them in the course of their official duties is covered under [The Local Authorities \(Indemnities for Members and Officers\) Order 2004](#).

### **Where the Councillor is appointed Director of a Company**

Companies can be:

- Limited by shares, usually operating a trade or business. They have shareholders and distribute profits to shareholders as dividends.
- Limited by guarantee, “not for profit” organisations. This type of company may also be a charity and has members rather than shareholders.



Companies offer limited liability which means that the members or shareholders are usually not personally liable for the company's debt and liabilities, subject to some limited exemptions.

The powers of the directors are usually set out in the Articles of Association. These are the rules that govern the internal management of the company.

The Director cannot vote simply in accordance with the Council mandate, to do so would be a breach of duty.

When acting as a Director a Councillor owes a fiduciary duty to the company, not to the individual shareholders, to act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the company as a whole. Directors must take proper care of the interests of the company.

A general duty of care and skill to the company is imposed, but a Director requires no greater skill than might reasonably be expected of someone of that individual's particular knowledge and experience. A Director is not deemed to be an expert, but is expected to use due diligence and to obtain expert advice if necessary.

There may be actual or potential conflicts between the interests of the Council and the interests of the company. In such circumstances it would be inappropriate for the Councillor to take part in discussions upon such topics both as a Councillor and as a Director. If the conflict is a serious one or repeatedly presents itself then it may be appropriate for the Councillor to resign as a Director of the company. If in doubt, Councillors should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about any potential conflicts of interest.

Directors are not allowed to make a private profit from their position. They must therefore disclose any interests they or their family have in relation to the company's contracts. Whether they are then allowed to vote will depend upon the Articles of Association of the company.

Directors must ensure compliance with relevant companies' legislation in relation to the keeping of accounts and the making of relevant returns to the Registrar of Companies. Failure to do so incurs fines and persistent default may lead to disqualification as a Director.

Directors should also ensure that the company complies with other legislation such as Health and Safety legislation if the company employs staff or employs contractors to undertake work.

### **Where the Councillor is appointed as a Trustee**

A number of useful publications are available on the Charity Commission's website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

Those who are responsible for the control and administration of a charity are referred to as trustees, even where the organisation is a company limited by guarantee where they are not strictly trustees.

Trustees must take care to act in accordance with the Trust deed and to protect the charity's assets. They are also responsible for compliance with the Charities Acts and the Trustee Act 2000.

Trustees must not make a private profit from their position. They must also perform their duty with the standard of care which an ordinary, prudent business person would show. Higher standards are required of professionals and in relation to investment matters.

Charitable Trustees must ensure that the information relating to the Trust and Trustees is registered with the Charity Commissioners and annual accounts and returns are completed and sent.

If charitable income exceeds £5,000 the letters, advertisements, cheques, etc., must bear a statement that the organisation is a registered charity.

Trustees are under a duty to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation for example in relation to tax and health and safety.

### **Where the Councillor is appointed to an Unincorporated Association**

Groups which are neither limited companies nor charitable trusts may be “unincorporated associations” which have no separate legal identity from their members.

The rules governing the members’ duties and liabilities will (or should) be set out in the organisation’s constitution, which is simply an agreement between members as to how the organisation will operate. Usually the organisation’s constitution will provide for a management committee to be responsible for the everyday running of the organisation. Management Committee members must act within the organisation’s constitution and must take reasonable care when exercising their powers.

### **The Code of Conduct for Councillors**

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Members’ Code of Conduct which has been adopted by Council. When Councillors are representing the Council on another body, they must follow the code unless it conflicts with a legal duty owed to the other body.

Some outside bodies may require the Councillor to treat their business as confidential. This may sometimes create a dilemma for the Councillor and may seem contrary to the idea of assisting public accountability. However, a Councillor will be bound by any confidentiality undertaking given.

### **General**

As mentioned earlier these guidelines are intended solely for the purpose of providing a general basis upon which members appointed to outside bodies can exercise their judgement when balancing their respective responsibilities as a Councillor and a nominated representative. The guidelines cannot provide a detailed answer for all circumstances and consequently, if in doubt, a Councillor should seek further advice and guidance from the Council’s Monitoring Officer.

**Rhian Davies**  
**Head of Law & Governance**  
**April 2023**

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 14 June 2023**



### **Cabinet members present:**

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Councillor Brown  | Councillor Turner      |
| Councillor Aziz   | Councillor Chapman     |
| Councillor Hunt   | Councillor Munkonge    |
| Councillor Rehman | Councillor Linda Smith |
| Councillor Upton  |                        |

### **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager  
Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)  
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services  
Douglas Kerrigan, Interim Development Manager  
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Peter Matthew, Interim Executive Director of People and Communities  
Nerys Parry, Head of Housing  
Malcolm Peek, Property Service Manager  
Carolyn Ploszynski, Head of Regeneration and Economy  
Gail Siddall, Team Leader, HMO Enforcement Team  
Karoline Soisalo de Mendonca, Regeneration Manager  
Steve Stansfield, Building Compliance and Safety Manager  
Steve Weitzel, Regeneration Manager  
Tom Woodhams, Team Leader Lawyer  
Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety

### **Also present:**

Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Chair of the Child Poverty Review Group  
Councillor Lucy Pegg, Chair of Scrutiny

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Railton sent apologies.

## **1. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public**

None.

## **2. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda**

None.

### **3. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None.

### **4. Items raised by Cabinet Members**

None.

### **5. Scrutiny reports**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Lucy Pegg as Chair of Scrutiny for the 2023/24 Council year.

The Scrutiny Committee had met on 7 June 2023 and the Housing and Homelessness Panel had met on 24 April 2023. Councillor Pegg presented the reports and recommendations from those meetings relating to (i) the Housing Management System Implementation; and (ii) the revised tenancy agreement for Council tenants.

In relation to the Housing Management System Implementation, Scrutiny had had a wide-ranging discussion which had included lessons learned; timescales going forward and whether any further delays or issues were anticipated; procurement; budgets; disaster recovery; and software implementation processes. One recommendation had been made, which related to ensuring that there was a contingency plan when reaching a critical point in future projects, so that project implementation could be reverted back to an earlier 'working' status if issues and/or errors arose. Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, responded that the recommendation was accepted as a general principle, but commented that it had not been practical to do this in this particular case due to the inter-connectivity with other systems.

In relation to the Tenancy Agreement, one recommendation had been made which related to the Council considering every three years if it would be appropriate to revise the tenancy agreement (rather than every five years as currently). Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, responded that the recommendation was accepted.

Councillor Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Chair of the Child Poverty Review Group, presented its recommendations. These had initially been brought to Cabinet in June 2022, but had been deferred to allow for further consideration and a more detailed response from Cabinet Members, which was now included.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini drew particular attention to recommendations 16 and 17, which related to the Council producing a Poverty Strategy within the next eighteen months and the Council agreeing (subject to securing funding) to hold a poverty truth commission. Councillor Djafari-Marbini highlighted that these actions would have potential to add value to the work which was currently being undertaken.

In relation to recommendation 11, which related to the Council agreeing a cross-party motion committing to formally adopt the socio-economic duty and using its influence to encourage local partner institutions to do the same, it was noted that a motion to this effect had been passed by Council on 3 October 2022. However, Councillor Djafari-Marbini commented that almost a year had now passed since that original recommendation had been made.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, acknowledged that it had taken some time to pull together all of the responses, but highlighted that the work which sat behind the responses had been continuing in the interim. It was noted that the Council motion had sought further reports to Cabinet on options to implement the socio-economic duty and options to develop a Child Poverty Strategy which would provide an opportunity for these to be further considered.

Councillor Brown thanked the Child Poverty Review Group for the thorough and detailed work which it had undertaken, which was important in informing the work undertaken by the Council to tackle poverty (and in particular child poverty) across the city. This work was of particular importance given the current cost of living crisis.

## **6. Review of the Corporate Enforcement Policy**

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety had submitted a report to review the Corporate Enforcement Policy and seek approval for an amended policy for a further three years.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, reported that the policy had operated well since it had last been reviewed in 2019. The updated policy before Cabinet had been reviewed and refreshed, but minimal changes were proposed. These were mainly to include additional detail and clarification. The policy was high level and related to general principles for corporate enforcement: the service area plans and enforcement policies which sat below it contained more detailed procedures.

Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services, drew attention to paragraph 1.2 of the policy, which set out that the Council's enforcement approach would take corporate and local priorities into account. This would enable action to be taken which was relevant to the people of Oxford.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the amended Corporate Enforcement Policy (at Appendix 2) for a further three years.

## **7. Ice Rink Future Car Parking Provision**

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report to seek approval for the favoured on-site option for future car parking provision for users of the Oxford Ice Rink when the Oxpens car park was closed permanently for redevelopment.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, highlighted that the report represented the outcome of work undertaken following a previous report to Cabinet in August 2022. The report was forward-looking, and therefore some of the costs outlined could be subject to change.

Councillor Munkonge informed Cabinet that much work had been done with the car park users, which had resulted in the preferred option. It also represented the most cost-effect solution, as the land was owned by the City Council.

Carolyn Ploszynski, Head of Regeneration and Economy reported that the closure of the car park was anticipated to be at least two years away, and so the chosen option would not be implemented immediately. However, the planning permission would likely be sought earlier, to ensure that it was in place as the project progressed.

In response to a question about costs, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks clarified that the expected cost (before adjustment for inflation) was c£320,000 which

was considered reasonable. Due diligence had been undertaken. The budget of £580,000 being sought was therefore higher than the anticipated cost of providing the parking spaces. It was also noted that the car park was income generating, which would likely cover the capital cost associated with borrowing of the £580,000, should this be needed.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** for option 1 (car parking at the front of the ice rink) being progressed on the basis of seeking to achieve around 25 spaces in total;
2. **Recommend to Council** to establish a budget of £580,000 within the Council's capital programme, profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26, to fund the provision of new car parking at the front of the ice rink, subject to OXWED's programme for closing the Oxpens car park, and approve the payback of previously spent feasibility funding of £46,000 into the feasibility budget; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities to finalise the scope of works, undertake the necessary procurements, and negotiate and enter into all contracts for the detailed design, construction works, and all associated professional services, for the new ice rink car park within the agreed budget.

## 8. Fire Door Replacement Programme

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to seek approval and delegated authority to award works contract(s) to replace all applicable resident front doors in Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers, Oxford with certificated compliant fire doors.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, reported that work to replace doors at the other towers had either already been completed or was currently underway. The budget for the works had already been allocated; therefore no new spending was being sought.

It was noted that some issues had been raised relating to the weight of fire doors, which had caused difficulty for frailer residents. Alternatives were being investigated for the doors to communal areas. Councillor Smith advised that letters would be sent to residents to inform them of the forthcoming works and it was suggested that when following-up and scheduling the work, Housing Officers could take the opportunity to identify any special needs.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to allocate the approved budget of £2.6m agreed by full Council in 2021/22 to enable progression of the replacement of all resident front doors at Plowman, Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers, Oxford, with certificated compliant FD30 fire doors; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) or the Head of Housing Services to award the fire door replacement programme

contract(s) to ODS, or others as required, following the procurement process outlined in the Constitution.

## **9. Agency Agreement to Undertake Land Drainage and Flood Investigation Services on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council**

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval to enter into an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 to undertake duties relating to the Land Drainage Act 1991/Flood and Water Management Act 2010, on behalf of and as an agent of Oxfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority.

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, reported that the Council had already been undertaking some of the works covered by the report on behalf of the County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority) for a significant amount of time. This involved investigating floods in the city; issues around water course construction; and licences to move water courses. Approval was now being sought to formalise the arrangement in return for a sum from the County Council which was considered reasonable and would cover the costs. The City Council already had officers with the expertise to undertake the work.

The risks associated with entering into the agreement were considered to be minimal given the length of time in which the Council had already been undertaking the work, and the lack of any previously identified issues.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant approval** to enter into an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 to undertake ordinary watercourse consenting and other duties relating to the Land Drainage Act 1991/Flood and Water Management Act 2010 on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, as described in the report.

## **10. Blackbird Leys Development Project - Land Appropriation**

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek approval to advertise the Council's intention to appropriate land (change the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council) at the Blackbird Leys District Centre and Knights Road to facilitate the Blackbird Leys Development Project. The intent to appropriate related to land owned by Oxford City Council only.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Manager, reported that the Blackbird Leys development was an ambitious project which would provide new affordable housing, a new community centre, and an improved retail offer (subject to a successful planning application). Councillor Turner clarified that the proposal before Cabinet related to re-designation of land which was already in its ownership, in order to enable development. The legal process required prior advertisement of the Council's intention to appropriate the land.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the public notification process to consider the proposal to exercise the Council's powers to appropriate land in its ownership at Blackbird Leys District

Centre and Knights Road (see plan at Appendices 1 & 2) (“the Land”) to planning purposes;

2. **Approve** the publishing of a notice in a local newspaper for two weeks consecutively expressing the Council’s intention to appropriate the Land in accordance with section 122 Local Government Act 1972 to planning purposes so as to rely on section 203-205 Housing and Planning Act 2016. This is necessary to facilitate Phase 1 of the Blackbird Leys Development Project.

## 11. East Oxford Community Centre

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to provide an update on progress of the project to deliver the development of the East Oxford Community Centre at Princes Street in upgrading the main building and providing a modern new build extension in a single place. The report also set out, for approval, options to address the unprecedented construction inflation.

Councillor Ajaz Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities, reported that of all the options considered, only one (option 1) was considered to be feasible: consultation with users of the centre had indicated that it offered the minimum space which they wanted, and value engineering on material and methods had allowed the effects of very high construction inflation to be mitigated.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management, highlighted that situations such as the current very high construction inflation environment required challenge and judgement to be made as to whether projects which were feasible at one price remained feasible when costs were substantially higher. Councillor Turner commented that in the case of the East Oxford Community Centre an alternative scheme would likely involve a full re-design with a new planning application (which would involve risk of refusal), as well as risking disappointment to the local community. It would be likely to result in a scheme which was similar to the current one but at an even higher price, or alternatively a smaller scheme which did not meet the community’s needs. Therefore, he recommended the increase to the project budget, whilst highlighting that officers would need to proactively continue to manage costs at all stages of the construction.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** option 1;
2. **Recommend to Council** to increase the project budget by £1.298m (from £5.496m to £6.794m);
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services/S151 Officer; the Head of Law and Governance; the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; and the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities to award the construction contract to Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODSL) for the sum of £5.9m and enter into the contract;
4. **Approve** (subject to Council’s agreement to recommendation 2 above) that the 2023 construction contingency budget is applied to the East Oxford Community Centre project, to make up the budget increase required as set out in the report.



## 12. Housing Management System Implementation

The Executive Director (Communities and People) and the Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to update Members on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Housing Management System and the outcome of discussions with the supplier as to potential settlement; and to seek additional budget approval for further development of the product after the move to 'business as usual' which had now been secured.

Councillor Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, presented the report and acknowledged the issues which had arisen during the implementation of the system. The system had been commissioned in 2016, and it was only recently that it had been stable enough to meet requirements. Many lessons had been learned as a result, and it was to the Council's credit that it had commissioned its own report to identify areas where mistakes could have been avoided.

The project had also been more costly than expected: partly because of the amount of time needed to fully implement the system, and partly because of the need to commission expert staff in order to successfully complete the implementation. Retrospective approval of additional budget of £263k in the last financial year was sought: this had been approved by the Project Board but required formal approval by Cabinet and Council. Going forward, an additional budgetary amount of £497K of capital and £97k of revenue over the next 4 year period had been identified, in order to fully maximise and optimise the use of the system.

Councillor Chapman also advised that, following discussions with the supplier, proposed settlement terms had been reached with regard to compensation for some of the extra costs incurred. This was considered to be a fair settlement and was recommended for approval.

The Head of Financial Services corrected an error within paragraph 9 of the report: Council had given budget approval for £538k of capital (not £528k). The Head of Financial Services also clarified that whilst the legal implications section of the report referred to extending the contract, this requirement had subsequently been resolved in negotiations.

The Head of Financial Services also commented that in spite of all the issues, the experience had demonstrated successful collaborative working between many areas of the Council (including Finance, ICT and Housing) and ODS in order to achieve recovery to a steady state.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the lessons learned from the system implementation;
2. **Approve** the proposed settlement terms offered by the supplier as referenced in Appendix 4 (exempt) and **delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services and the Head of Law and Governance to finalise the terms;
3. **Recommend to Council** the approval of additional budget of £263k in 2022-23 as detailed in paragraph 8 of the report; and

4. **Recommend to Council** the inclusion of an additional budgetary amount of £497k of capital and £97k of revenue over the next 4 year period for the further development of the system (paragraphs 9-11).

### **13. Minutes**

**Cabinet resolved to approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 as a true and accurate record.

### **14. Dates of Future Meetings**

12 July 2023  
9 August 2023  
13 September 2023  
18 October 2023  
15 November 2023  
13 December 2023

All meetings start at 6pm.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.57 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Wednesday 12 July 2023**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank