

Agenda

Council

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Summons

A meeting of the City Council will be held to transact the business set out below on

Date: **Monday 23 March 2026**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber - Oxford Town Hall**

Proper Officer

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

- may register in advance to speak to the meeting in accordance with the [public speaking rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

Information about speaking and recording is set out in the agenda and on the [website](#)

Please contact the Committee Services Officer to register to speak; to discuss recording the meeting; or with any other queries.

This meeting can be viewed live or afterwards on the council's [YouTube channel](#).

For further information please contact:

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager,

☎ 01865 602767

✉ democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk

View or subscribe to updates for agendas, reports and minutes at mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk.

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

Membership of Council

Councillors: Membership 48: Quorum 12.

Lord Mayor Councillor Louise Upton

Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Mike Rowley

Sheriff Councillor Andrew Gant

Members	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan	Councillor Dr Max Morris
	Councillor Lubna Arshad	Councillor Lois Muddiman
	Councillor Mohammed Azad	Councillor Edward Mundy
	Councillor Susan Brown	Councillor Chewe Munkonge
	Councillor Nigel Chapman	Councillor Simon Ottino
	Councillor Mary Clarkson	Councillor Alex Powell
	Councillor Tiago Corais	Councillor Susanna Pressel
	Councillor Lizzy Diggins	Councillor Asima Qayyum
	Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Anna Railton
	Councillor Laurence Fouweather	Councillor Rosie Rawle
	Councillor James Fry	Councillor Dr Dianne Regisford
	Councillor Stephen Goddard	Councillor Ajaz Rehman
	Councillor Judith Harley	Councillor Kate Robinson
	Councillor David Henwood	Councillor Jo Sandelson
	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Councillor Anne Stares
	Councillor Jemima Hunt	Councillor Linda Smith
	Councillor Chris Jarvis	Councillor Roz Smith
	Councillor Theodore Jupp	Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton
	Councillor Emily Kerr	Councillor James Taylor
	Councillor Dr Amar Latif	Councillor Ed Turner
	Councillor Mark Lygo	Councillor Naomi Waite
	Councillor Sajjad Malik	Councillor Ian Yeatman
	Councillor Katherine Miles	

Apologies will be reported at the meeting.

Agenda

The business to be transacted is set out below

Pages

Minute's silence and tributes

To hear tributes and observe a minute's silence in memory of former Lord Mayors or serving councillors or serving senior officers who have died.

PART 1 - PUBLIC BUSINESS

1 Apologies for absence

2 Declarations of interest

3 Minutes

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 26 January 2026 and the budget meeting on 23 February 2026.

Council is asked to approve the minutes as a correct record.

4 Appointment to Committees

Any proposed changes will be circulated with the briefing note.

5 Announcements

Announcements by:

1. The Lord Mayor
2. The Sheriff
3. The Leader of the Council (who may with the permission of the Lord Mayor invite other councillors to make announcements)
4. The Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer

6 Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

19 - 86

Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution relating to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.

Up to five minutes is available for each public address.

The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the [Director of Law, Governance and Strategy](#) by 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 17 March 2026.

The briefing note will contain the text of addresses submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available.

A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items. Responses are included in this time.

7 Urgent Business

The Council may deal with business even though it is not on the Agenda so long as:

- (a) the business is raised by a Motion on Notice under Rule 14 (Motions on Notice);
- (b) the Motion on Notice is delivered to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy not later than 4 hours before the start of the Meeting;
- (c) the Lord Mayor, or Council, if put to a vote, decide that the business is urgent (see Rule a); and
- (d) the agenda relating to the Meeting states that the Council may deal with urgent business at that Meeting.

Should the Lord Mayor determine that a matter is not urgent on the advice of the Monitoring Officer then the decision shall be final, subject to such reasons being explained to the meeting. Where there is no definitive view from the Monitoring Officer any member may, supported by [10] or more member by a show of hands, may request that the matter be put to a vote to determine if it should be heard.

Should the majority determine in any vote that the matter is urgent (whether put to the meeting by the Lord Mayor or by a member supported by ten others) then Council will debate it under Rule 11.20 Rules of Debate. Where it is determined that the matter is not urgent, the matter shall be deferred to the next Ordinary Council Meeting (i.e. not to an Extraordinary Council Meeting).

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

8 HRA Policies: Electrical Safety, Legionella Management

87 - 120

The Director of Housing has submitted a report to approve the following policies: electrical safety, and legionella policies to ensure the maintenance of the housing stock.

Recommendation: That Council resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Electrical Safety Policy
2. **Approve** the Legionella Policy

9 Allocations Scheme Review

121 -
258

The Director of Housing has submitted a report to approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford, following public consultation.

Recommendation: That Council resolves to:

1. **Approve** the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to authorise the date on which the Allocations Scheme is implemented, noting the explanation and timelines in paragraph 23;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make minor changes to the Allocations Scheme in order to comply with changes to legislative and statutory guidance, related Council policies (approved by Cabinet) and to make technical changes to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the scheme.

OFFICER REPORTS

10 Annual Pay Policy Statement

259 -
272

The Head of People has submitted a report for Council to approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

Recommendation: Council resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 to this report
2. **Agree** the proposed pay agreement for April 2026 and April 2027 reached with Unison and Unite as set out in paragraph 3.

QUESTIONS

11 Questions on Cabinet minutes

This item has a time limit of 15 minutes.

Councillors may ask the Cabinet Members questions about matters in the minutes since the previous meeting of full Council.

The Minutes will be published within a supplement ahead of the meeting.

12 Questions on Notice from Members of Council

Questions on notice from councillors received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.11(b).

Questions on notice may be asked of the Lord Mayor, a Member of the Cabinet or a Chair of a Committee. One supplementary question may be asked at the meeting.

The full text of questions must have been received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 1.00pm on Wednesday, 11 March 2026.

These, and written responses where available, will be published in the briefing note.

PART 2 - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCRUTINY

13 Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Public addresses to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution and not relating to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.

Up to five minutes is available for each public address.

The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the [Director of Law, Governance and Strategy](#) by 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 17 March 2026.

The briefing note will contain the text of addresses and questions submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available.

*A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items.
Responses*

14 Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure

273 -
314

rules - Save Our Museum

The petition organiser may address Council upon the petition for up to 5 minutes at the start of this item.

Council is asked to consider a petition meeting the criteria for debate under the Council's petitions scheme.

The full text of the petition is contained in the accompanying report.

If a Member wishes to put a substantive motion/recommendation on a petition they must submit this by 10am on the working day before the full Council meeting (Friday 20 March 2026). These are then published in the Council briefing note. Any amendments to these must be submitted by 11am on the day of the meeting (Monday 23 March 2026).

If no substantive motion is agreed, Council is asked to note the petition.

Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| 15 | Outside organisation report - Partnership report on the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board, and the Council's work for Children and Young People living in the city | 315 -
348 |
| | <p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) and the Transition Director have submitted a report to update Council on the arrangements and board for The Oxfordshire Children's Trust and the Council's work for Children and Young People in the city.</p> <p>Recommendation: Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the report and the documents appended to it | |
| 16 | Outside organisation report - The Oxford Strategic Partnership | 349 -
370 |
| | <p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) and the Transition Director have submitted a report to update Council on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024 to 2025.</p> <p>Recommendation: Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the update outside organisation report on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024 to 2025. | |
| 17 | Scrutiny Committee update report | |

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has submitted a report which updates Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since the last meeting of Council.

Council is invited to comment on and note the report.

The report will be published within a supplement ahead of the meeting.

PART 3 - MOTIONS REPRESENTING THE CITY

18 Motions on notice March 2026

This item has a time limit of 60 minutes.

Motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with the rules in Section 11 of the Constitution by the deadline of 1.00pm on Wednesday, 11 March 2026 are listed below.

As Council deferred the business, including the motions submitted by the Liberal Democrat and Green Groups, at the meeting on 26 January 2026, these will be taken first.

Cross party motions are taken first. Motions will then be taken in turn from the *Liberal Democrat Group (resubmitting their motion from January Council)*, *Green Group (resubmitting their motion from January Council)*, *Oxford Independent Group*, *Real Independent Group*, *Labour Group*, *Green Group*, *Oxford Independent Alliance Group*, in that order.

Substantive amendments to these motions must be sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 10.00am on Friday, 20 March 2026 so that they may be circulated with the briefing note.

Minor technical or limited wording amendments may be submitted during the meeting but must be written down and circulated.

Council is asked to consider the following motions:

- a) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Cllr Jupp, Seconded by Cllr Miles)
- b) Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (Proposed by Cllr Jarvis, Seconded by Cllr Mundy)
- c) Support for Mini Plant Oxford (Proposed by Cllr Linda Smith, Seconded by Cllr Ottino)
- d) Condemnation of Attempted Election Postponement (Proposed by Cllr Snowton, Seconded by Cllr Miles)
- e) Stop the War in Iran (Proposed by Cllr Powell, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

18a Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Cllr Jupp, Seconded by Cllr Miles)

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
- Government can and does vary the rules of the Deal from time to time. Thus far, government has rightly prioritised the spirit and objectives of the Deal above the letter of the agreement.
- Doubt remains that the Oxpens bridge will be able to provide a dry route to Osney Island and thereby unlock housing, due to the low-lying railway underpass in-between.
- The Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) was strongly urged against pursuing the Oxpens bridge project to begin with.

Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:

- That the Growth Deal be varied as necessary to permit the funds to be used for other specified purposes in Oxford;
- That other options be explored to better employ the funds, including but not limited to:
 - Resurrecting the substantive scheme for Woodstock Road improvements to mitigate the effect of housing development to the north;
 - Revisiting the pedestrian bridge across the A40 at Barton Park which was dropped at planning stage, resulting in very real and significant safety concerns for residents;
 - Resurrecting the long-discussed plan for a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames at Jackdaw Lane, providing a safe and convenient alternative to the challenging Plain roundabout for residents of south and east Oxford.

Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's

residents at heart.

18b Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (Proposed by Cllr Jarvis, Seconded by Cllr Mundy)

Council notes

1. Since September 2024 eight remand prisoners detained as a result of alleged activities with Palestine Action have participated in hunger strikes, including at least one individual from Oxford.¹
2. The prisoners are expected to be on remand for over a year before they face a trial², despite the CPS guidance suggesting the maximum time anyone should be held on remand is 182 days.³
3. Among the demands of the hunger strikers are:⁴
 - a. Immediate bail for the prisoners held on remand.
 - b. While they are imprisoned, for the prisoners to be able to send and receive communications without restriction, surveillance, or interference from the prison administration.
 - c. The right to a fair trial.
 - d. For Palestine Action to be de-proscribed.
4. All of those participating in the hunger strikes were detained for alleged activities with Palestine Action prior to parliament adding it to the list of proscribed organisations.
5. While some of the hunger strikers have ended their action, at the time of writing, four are still refusing food and are facing serious risk of long term health issues or death.⁵
6. 67 MPs - including Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran - have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure the treatment of the hunger strikers is "humane" and that their human rights are upheld.⁶
7. A number of other councils, including Belfast⁷ and Derry⁸, have passed motions expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers and for the government to enter proper negotiations with the prisoners to bring an end to the strikes.

Council believes

1. It is extremely concerning that these prisoners have felt that

they had no other recourse to protest against their prison conditions but to engage in hunger strikes.

Council resolves

1. To request that the leader of the council:
 - a. Write to the Secretary of State for Justice and other relevant government ministers, requesting that they
 - I. Meet with the families and representatives of those on hunger strike.
 - II. Enter negotiations to bring the hunger strikes to an end and to prevent any loss of life or long term health complications.
 - III. Do everything they can to ensure that the prisoners on remand have their human rights respected and that they are treated humanely.
 - b. Write to local MPs Anneliese Dodds and Layla Moran requesting that they work to ensure that government ministers carry out the requests in resolves

18c Support for Mini Plant Oxford (Proposed by Cllr Linda Smith, Seconded by Cllr Ottino)

The UK automotive sector is in the midst of a low-volume crisis, and while different car plants are affected in different ways, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Mini Plant Oxford has been (and continues to be) one of the worst hit.

As one of the biggest employers in Oxford, a significant number of agency workers' jobs have been lost as the plant adjusts to the government reinstating the 2030 ban date on new Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) models, the only models the plant currently builds.

In addition, and due to there being no Electric models being manufactured at Plant Oxford, the increased Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) target for 2026 will potentially create a situation whereby ICE production will be need to be artificially lowered to ensure BMW can hit the 33% via imports, or it will be subject to either a £12,000 fine per car or pushed into buying credits from Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) such as Tesla.

Economic growth is the number one mission of the government. Growth will fund our public services, enable investment in our hospitals and schools, and, most importantly, raise living standards for everyone. So it is vital different government departments work in harmony to support UK jobs and industry. It's especially important that the Department of Transport understands the impact of policies

like the ZEV mandate on jobs here in Oxford.

This council therefore resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Transport Heidi Alexander to ask her to:

1. Meet with Unite the Union and its representatives at the factory to hear their concerns and to support their work to make Oxford the future home of affordable EV production.
2. Engage to as full an extent as possible with BMW on the UK's transition to electric vehicles and policies which affect demand for new vehicles and investment and jobs in the UK automotive sector.

18d Condemnation of Attempted Election Postponement (Proposed by Cllr Smowton, Seconded by Cllr Miles)

This council notes that:

- On 18th December 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness wrote¹ to council leaders requesting views on the potential postponement of their local election in May 2026.
3. The Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission wrote² that they were “disappointed by both the timing and substance of [that] statement”, that it created “unprecedented” uncertainty, that “we do not think that capacity constraints are a legitimate reason for delaying long planned elections” and that “there is a clear conflict of interest in asking existing Councils to decide how long it will be before they are answerable to voters”.
 4. On 22nd January 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced³ the postponement of 29 areas’ elections.
 5. The Secretary’s letter identifies “postponement was not sought”⁴ as a reason why an area’s elections would go ahead, implying that all authorities receiving a postponement had expressly sought one.
 6. There was a clear difference in political control between those councils whose elections would be postponed and those that would go ahead as scheduled, with the Local Government Chronicle reporting⁵ that 16 out of 19 Labour-controlled, 4 out of 9 Conservative-controlled, 1 out of 8 Lib Dem controlled and 8 out of 27 NOC councils were set for postponement.
 7. On 16th February 2026, the Secretary of State withdrew⁶ his

decision to postpone elections citing “recent legal advice”.

This council believes that:

8. As a matter of principle, elections should only be postponed in extraordinary circumstances.
2. Any future foreseeable election postponement, whether due to local government reorganisation or any other cause, should be signposted as far as possible in advance, not floated for the first time immediately before the Christmas break and long after the proposed LGR timeline was announced.
2. There is indeed a fundamental conflict of interest in inviting councils to substantially control whether their own election goes ahead, and so any future postponement should be determined by clearly set objective parameters, not whether councils choose to seek or not seek delay.
 - The legal reasoning for the late withdrawal of the planned postponements should be published so as to reduce uncertainty about any further delays.

This council requests that:

- The Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State expressing this Council’s condemnation of the timing and criteria for their proposed election postponements, attaching a copy of this motion.
- The Leader further request the publication of the legal advice that led to the late reversal of the Secretary’s decision.

18e Stop the War in Iran (Proposed by Cllr Powell, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

Council notes

1. On February 28th 2026, the United States of America and Israel launched joint airstrikes on Iran.¹
2. That in response to these actions, Iran responded by utilising missiles and drone strikes against US military bases in the Persian Gulf including amongst others, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.²
3. That there has not been any resolution of the UN security council or other lawful basis for these actions.
4. That the conflict has already resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians including hundreds of children at

Minab school.³

5. That at this time of global uncertainty and trauma, caused by the actions of the US and Israel, the UK government is once again renegeing on its international obligations by reducing the rights of people seeking asylum and introducing Trumpian “visa breaks”.⁴
6. That these attacks were launched while negotiations between the US and Iran had been heralded as yielding ‘significant progress’ just two days before the attack.⁵
7. That Iranian residents of Oxford City have raised their significant concern and anxiety for their family and Friends, many of whom they have been unable to make contact with.⁶
8. That Oxford is home to a diverse range of residents, many of whom are facing extreme anxiety regarding family and friends still located in Iran, as well as other neighbouring countries.
9. That both Oxford Universities have committed the University of Sanctuary scheme but their ability to offer spaces to talented international students has been undermined by policies such as the visa break.⁷

Council believes

1. That the aggression shown by the US and Israel do nothing to make the world safer and have already resulted in an unacceptable loss of life.
2. That as an accredited City of Sanctuary, Oxford has a moral and ethical obligation to speak against moves by the UK government to reduce the rights of people to seek sanctuary, particularly at this moment of global uncertainty.
3. That reducing the grant of leave to remain given to refugees to 30 months is cruel and, at this moment of global uncertainty, represents the UK turning its back on the international community.
4. That the introduction of “visa breaks” targeted at nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan as a result of a “surge in asylum claims from legal routes” is incompatible with the UK’s purported humanitarian commitments and undermines social cohesion in the UK.

Council resolves

1. To request that the leader of the Council:
 - a. Write to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister, requesting that they:
 - I. Clearly condemn the unlawful aggression of the

United States of America and Israel

- II. Operationalise safe and managed routes for people to enter the UK in search of Sanctuary from the conflict.
- b. Write to the Secretary of State for the Home department requesting that they:
 - I. Reverse the decision to reduce the period of refugee settlement to 30 months.
 - II. Reverse the “Visa-break” policy

Matters exempt from publication and exclusion of the public

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any aspects of the preceding agenda items it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act 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.

(The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Section 15 of the Council’s Constitution – sets out the conditions under which the public can be excluded from meetings of the Council)

Updates and additional information to supplement this agenda are published in the Council Briefing Note.

Additional information, councillors’ questions, public addresses and amendments to motions are published in a supplementary briefing note. The agenda and briefing note should be read together.

The Briefing Note is published as a supplement to the agenda. It is available on the Friday before the meeting and can be accessed along with the agenda on the council’s website.

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 and Member 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 Councillors and members of the press and public 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 recordings 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.

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Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 26 January 2026

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Council members present:

Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant (Sheriff)
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Jupp
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Max Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Powell
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Robinson	Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Stares	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Smowton
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Waite
Councillor Yeatman	

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Uswah Khan, Committee and Member Services Officer
David Butler, Director of Planning & Regulatory Services
Natalie Dobraszcyk, Development Management Team Leader
Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)
Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager

75. Apologies for absence

Councillors Latif, Sandelson and Harley sent their apologies.

76. Declarations of interest

Councillors Brown, Smith, Turner, Munkonge and Chapman made a declaration of interest that they were all members of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) for Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL) who own the Meadow Lane land and stated that they did not have a conflict of interest and considered themselves to take the wider public interests to this matter.

Councillor Upton made a declaration that she was previously a member of the SJVG a few years ago, but she had never taken any decisions with respect to the site.

Councillor Hollingsworth stated that he was not on the SJVG for OCHL, but he was part of the SJVG when the current landowner acquired the site but had no part in the decision. He stated he would be coming to the Local Plan debate as a Cabinet Member for Planning with an open mind.

77. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 24 November 2025 and the Special meeting of Council on 14 January 2026.

78. Appointment to Committees

There were no new appointments to committees.

79. Announcements

The Lord Mayor informed Council that she had attended the Saraswati Puja Festival, where many children experienced their first writing ceremony and families

came together from across the community. She also highlighted the Kilsby Boat project, which had received a significant lottery grant to restore canal boat that would be converted into a theatre and educational space.

The Leader of the Council updated Council on the response to the current consultation being conducted by Oxford Fire and Rescue on the fire service in Oxfordshire. She said this was timely, as she had received a letter that morning from the University of Oxford expressing serious concerns which aligned with the Councils. Councillor Brown explained that she and Councillor Arshad recently met with Rob McDougall, Oxford's Chief Fire Officer, to discuss the county proposals for the future of fire services in the city. Although this allowed them to ask questions directly, she did not find the meeting reassuring. She reminded members that the proposals included lengthening response times and potentially removing Rewley Road and Kidlington fire stations, replacing them with one in North Oxford. She outlined the main points of the response submitted to the consultation, emphasising that Oxford had a significantly different risk profile from the rest of the county and that this needed to be reflected in service provision. She highlighted the city's population, large student community, concentration of HMOs, high-rise buildings, major hospitals, world heritage sites and increasing levels of lab spaces, all of which added complexity and access challenges. She stressed that these factors required current resources and response times to be maintained. She stated that a centrally located fire station should be retained unless there was clear evidence of service improvement, which she said was lacking. Councillor Brown also raised concerns about the city's waterways, noting several tragic deaths in recent years and expressed concern that some of the expertise from Rewley Road and Kidlington could be broken up and spread thinly around the county. She criticised the lack of proper consideration given to the community impact report, noting that the EQIA identified negative impacts on Oxford's communities but failed to mitigate them. She stated that the proposals ignored deprivation as a key risk factor, despite evidence that all of the county's most deprived areas were urban and that deprivation increased the risk of fire fatalities. She also highlighted that the EQIA identified a disproportionate impact on non-white British communities in Oxford, justifying this on the basis that ethnicity had not been considered a risk factor regarding accidental dwelling fires. She added that on-call requirement appeared to underpin many of the proposals, yet it was unclear what work had been done to address recruitment challenges. She noted that Council had made representations to the consultation. Stressing the need for formal engagement with all majority stakeholders, including Oxford's education establishments. Furthermore, Councillor Brown added that colleges had only recently become aware of the proposals and were extremely concerned and that the university had now submitted a formal response. She also criticised the consultation survey as difficult to follow and leading respondents towards preferred options. Finally, she said that future growth plans and strategic authority changes should be considered when deciding the future of Oxford's Fire and Rescue Service. She concluded that Council did not support any reduction in resources for the city, stating that response times and service levels should be maintained or improved.

The City Rector noted that it marked the 100th anniversary of John Logie Baird's first display of television in 1926. He reflected on whether television had been a blessing or a curse, suggesting it depended on how it was used. He said this applied to most inventions and questioned whether procedures chose to build

people up or put them down. He thanked Council for their efforts to build up communities and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

80. Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

Council heard 2 addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin
2. Address from Martin Reed

81. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

82. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2026/27

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to show the outcome of Oxford City Council's annual rent review and associated rent setting proposal for 2026/27 in respect of all Council dwellings within the Housing Revenue Account, including the setting of associated services and facilities charges.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, acknowledging the ongoing cost of living crisis but stated that reducing rent prices was not feasible. The housing revenue account business plan required maximising the income to fund investments in Council properties, repairs, landlord services and new homes. Councillor Smith stated that she was pleased that the government indicated it would allow Council landlords to move toward rent convergence, noting that long term tenants had paid less than newer ones due to past calculation methods. She noted that the report agreed to increase the legacy rents by up to £2 a week in addition to the 4.8% rise.

Councillor Snowton asked why there had been a decrease in temporary accommodation charges in paragraph 32 of the report. Councillor Smith explained that lower than expected energy costs created a surplus, allowing a reduction in energy charges for temporary accommodation to reflect actual costs.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** an increase of 4.8% + up to £2 for rent convergence (max) for 2026/27 (subject to any subsequent cap on increases imposed by central government) in social dwelling rents from 1st April 2026 giving an average weekly increase of £8.47 per week, and a revised weekly average social rent of £143.40 as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.
2. **Approve** an increase to rents for shared ownership dwellings as outlined in paragraph 21 of the Financial Implications.
3. **Approve** an increase to service charges by 4.8% (CPI + 1%) to enable the HRA to recover the associated cost of supply.
4. **Approve** an increase to the charge for a garage of 5.0%, equating to an increase of £1.00 per week for a standard garage within a curtilage with a revised charge of £21.00 per week.
5. **Approve** an increase to the rent and service charges for General Fund Temporary Accommodation as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.

83. Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy

The Director of Housing submitted a report to recommend approval of the updated new Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

Councillor Smith introduced the report, explaining that as a housing authority, Council had a duty to publish the tenancy strategy outlining requirements and expectations for all registered social housing providers. She noted that social landlords were required to publish a tenancy policy to ensure compliance with the citywide strategy. The core principles of the new strategy remained consistent with the council's long-standing approach, emphasising secure or assured social tenancies at social rent where possible, or affordable rents at local housing allowance levels, typically 60%, of market rent rather than 80% used nationally. Support for tenants was expected from social landlords, with the strategy placing greater emphasis on cooperation and action to address homelessness, domestic abuse and antisocial behaviour. Councillor Smith also mentioned that housing associations were expected to collaborate with the Council to optimise property use through the shared register for affordable housing. Proper procedures were to be in place to assist tenants who were overcrowded, living in unsuitable housing or seeking to downsize. The strategy and policy underwent public consultation, focusing on feedback from housing association and Council tenant, which received a positive response.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve and adopt** the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, authority to update the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy with minor amendments to keep the documents

up to date with any future changes in legislation, regulations, governance and best practice.

84. Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy

The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen Services submitted a report to recommend to Full Council to approve the new Resident Involvement & Engagement Strategy 25 – 28.

Councillor Smith introduced the report, explaining the regulator of social housing expected transparency, fairness and respect to access services, raise concern, influence decisions and hold the landlord accountable. She acknowledged the need for improvement in this area. She further stated that a consultation with over 400 residents revealed that the relationship between residents and the Council as a landlord required more focus. Resident involvement ranked second only to building safety among priorities. The tenant satisfaction survey showed only 64% felt listened to by the council. The strategy marked a complete reset, addressing tougher regulatory demands and emphasised resident engagement as central to policy and service delivery. It proposed diverse engagement platforms and support for residents, detailed in the report. Furthermore, Councillor Smith added that strategy was built on four principles, resetting relationships, actively listening, responding to priorities and embedding engagement across the organisation. She stated that it outlined five strategic priorities with action plans such as establishing foundations for engagement, enhancing resident knowledge, co-designing inclusive platforms, improving communication and delivering high-quality landlord services. Initiatives included staff and resident training, improving complaint handling and ensuring services reflected resident input with transparent measurable outcomes. Councillor Smith noted that success would be tracked through participation rates, diversity of involvement and impact of resident feedback on services. Achievements and improvements in satisfaction and service quality would be communicated regularly with an annual strategy review.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve and adopt** the Resident Involvement & Engagement Strategy 25 – 28 and action plan attached to the strategy which outlines how the priorities for resident involvement and engagement will be taken forward.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, on approval of the strategy, to put in place the necessary governance and monitoring arrangements to oversee the implementation and delivery of the strategy.

85. Proposed Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045

Council considered the report from the Director of Planning and Regulation seeking approval for the Oxford Local Plan 2045 for public consultation and approve it for consultation and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, if no matters are raised that materially impact upon the Plan strategy, submit the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, introduced the report. He began by thanking the Planning Policy team for their efforts and help with producing the plan in short notice.

For the Green Group amendments, Councillor Hollingsworth accepted the following amendments:

- Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers - In the Policy Context for H11, add the following new bullet point: “The City Council welcomes opportunities for the establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the City”,
- Amendment 2B: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices - In Policy E3, at bullet point f), add “although this is encouraged where possible”, after “other than apprentices” so that it reads: “f) Paying all employees (other than apprentices, although this is encouraged) the Oxford Living Wage”,
- Amendment 2C: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard - In Policy E3, remove or “other social clauses appropriate to the development” in bullet point g),
- Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects - In the Policy Context for Policy R1, add the following as a new bullet point: “The development of local renewable energy projects will be especially welcomed where they are community owned or owned by non-profit making organisations”
- Amendment 5A: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities - In the Policy Context for Policy C1, “Establishments that promote community cohesion, health and wellbeing are particularly welcomed in the city centre, local, and district centres” and,
- Amendment 6: Protecting pubs - In Policy C5, after “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions”, “including pubs”, so that it reads, “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, including pubs, except in the following circumstances:”.

For the Liberal Democrat Group amendments, Councillor Hollingsworth accepted amendment 3 "Urban Design and Heritage" subheading for the site allocation policy SPN1: Diamond Place and Ewert House: "Public toilet facilities are currently located on the site. Development proposals should demonstrate how these facilities will be re-provided or justify an alternative approach".

Councillor Hollingsworth put forward the proposal for Council to endorse the recommendation.

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Brown.

Council received amendments to the draft Local Plan 2040 that were submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules. The following records the decision reached on each proposed amendment.

For the Green Group, Councillor Rawle, on being seconded by Councillor Muddiman, proposed an amendment as follows: amendment 3a, preventing the loss of playground space. In Policy G1, insert after “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of “, “playground space or”, so that it reads: “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of playground space or other green infrastructure features such as hedges or ponds where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest.

Additionally, amendment 3b, encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground. In the Policy Context for Policy G1, include a new bullet point: “The City Centre has a deficit of high quality, accessible playgrounds and the Council will welcome applications that seek to resolve or contribute to the resolving of, this deficit.”

On being put to the vote, amendment 3a was lost and amendment 3b was **carried**.

For the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Snowton, on being seconded by Councillor Fouweather, proposed an amendment as follows: the amendment regarding the quality of cycle parking provision for which it cites out to LTN120 with regard to the physical design of cycle parking. There are four categories, C1 hotels, junior schools, senior schools and other educational establishments.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **carried**.

The Council was temporarily adjourned.

The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services updated Council on officers advice, stating that all sites proposed for allocation have been assessed against the overall strategy of the plan. Those sites where development fits within the strategy have been proposed for allocation. This is particularly important where we have a housing crisis,

substantial unmet housing need and are reliant on neighbouring authorities to help us meet this. This advice would be the same no matter which site was being proposed for removal at this stage.

Whilst removal of an individual site is unlikely to render the Plan unsound in of itself, its removal would not be consistent with the strategy of the Plan and its approach to all other sites. We need to be able to demonstrate that we have assessed and found all available capacity with the city and this amendment would be contrary to this. Officers recommendation is that this amendment would treat one specific site as an exception to the process used and that this inconsistency could undermine the Plan.

For the Independent Oxford Alliance Group, Councillor Henwood, on being seconded by Councillor Malik, proposed an amendment as follows: withdrawal of the policy SPS8: Land at Meadow Lane from the Local Plan, thereby removing the Horse Fields as a designated housing site.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **lost**.

Council voted to defer the items 22, 23 and 24 to the next meeting and agreed to hear the public addresses before concluding the debate on the Local Plan.

Following debate and on being put to the vote, the recommendations were agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan 2045 document, as amended, for public consultation;
2. **Authorise** all the supporting statutory documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), Policies Map and Equalities Impact Assessment;
3. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any necessary minor editorial corrections to the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045, IDP, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment, Policies Map, and to agree the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.
4. **Authorise**, following publication, the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any minor changes to the document deemed necessary as a result of the consultation.
5. **Authorise** submission of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for examination, following Regulation 19 consultation and any minor amendments made according to recommendation 3 or 4 and subject to there being no matters raised in the consultation that are considered to materially impact upon the Plan strategy.
6. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to invite the examining inspector(s) to recommend any

modifications considered to be necessary in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

86. Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Council heard 4 addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address from Shavonne Allen
2. Address from Kaddy Beck
3. Address from Chaka Artwell
4. Address from Dan Glazebrook

87. Designation of Section 151 Officer

The Chief Executive submitted a report to designate the Council's Section 151 Officer following a success recruitment campaign and the recommendation from the Appointments Committee on 28 November 2025.

Councillor Brown introduced and summarised the report, stating that the Section 151 Officer Nigel Kennedy was taking retirement at the end of this Council year and Alister Rush, Interim Group Finance Director, needed to be formally appointed as the Council's Section 151 Officer.

On being seconded by Councillor Smowton, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Designate** the newly appointed Interim Group Finance Director as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from the 6th April 2026.

88. Appointment of Committees for the remainder of the Council Year 2025/2026

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report for Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the remainder of the Council year 2025-26, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15).

Councillor Brown noted that the report included the latest allocations to committee following the changes in membership of different groups, with the addition that Councillor Jupp would stay on the Audit and Governance Committee which was part of the proportional allocation.

On being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in Appendix 1: Committee Structure 2025-2026;
2. **Approve** the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in Appendix 2: Political Proportionalities on Council Committees 2026;
3. **Appoint** to committee seats, against the requirements of political proportionality, and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026 Revised;
4. **Agree** that all members of Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies;

89. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure for Staff

The Head of People submitted a report to seek agreement to implement a new policy and procedure relating to working outside of the United Kingdom.

Councillor Chapman summarised the report, stating that the redraft was now a more pragmatic and enlightened policy than before and moved the report.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the following:
 - a. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure for Employees
 - b. Working Overseas Procedure for Members

90. Constitution Updates

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report to seek approval to further amendments to the Constitution.

Councillor Brown introduced and summarised the report, explaining that the changes made the constitution clearer and more consistent. The report updated the items required on the forward plan, made it easier for officers to be aware of upcoming decisions and the processes for making them and clarified who could place items on agendas. Councillor Brown commented that the rationale for a couple of the amendments was not clear and would be amended before publication.

On being seconded by Councillor Snowton, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any other consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the changes in appendix 1 to the extent that they have not been identified in the above, provided such changes are purely required as a direct consequence.

91. Council and Committee Meetings Programme for May 2026 to May 2028

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report setting out the programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the whole of the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 Council years.

Councillor Brown proposed the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 May 2026 to 31 May 2028 attached at Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with the political Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme in the event that there is any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remits which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

92. Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report explaining the background to the Members' Allowances Scheme and to seek delegated authority for the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider a new Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel will recommend the proposed Scheme to Council later in 2026 for adoption.

Councillor Bown proposed the recommendations as set out in the report and noted that remuneration was decided independently and not by Councillors. She noted that the panel would report their recommendation to Council later in the year.

On being seconded by Councillor Henwood, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

Council resolved to::

1. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy to make appointments to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel as needed, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, up to when the replacement Members' Allowances Scheme will expire in March 2027.

93. Urgent Key Decisions Since July 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report to update Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since 14 July 2025.

Councillor Brown introduced the report.

Councillor Miles noted that at Scrutiny Committee meetings last year, members had recognised a growing trend towards urgent key decisions. Councillor Brown reassured her that decisions coming forward were both key and urgent.

Councillor Fouweather asked whether it had been known in 2023 that the ice rink chillers would not be repairable if they failed and whether an independent report on the chillers had been carried out. Councillor Brown responded that she would provide a written answer but stated that it was an urgent decision and was necessary to ensure the ice rink was functioning. She said she was satisfied it met the criteria for both a key decision and an urgent decision.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report

Councillor Regisford left the meeting.

94. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a. Cabinet minutes – 4 December 2025

No questions were raised.

b. Cabinet minutes – 10 December 2025

No questions were raised.

c. Cabinet minutes – 21 January 2026

No questions were raised.

95. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

24 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 6 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

96. Outside organisation report - Partnership report on the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board, and the Council's work for Children and Young People living in the city

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

97. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

98. Motions on notice January 2026

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

**99. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Cllr Jupp,
Seconded by Cllr Miles)**

As Council voted to defer motions on notice, these motions would need to be submitted again for debate.

**100. Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (proposed by Cllr Jarvis,
Seconded by Cllr Mundy)**

As Council voted to defer motions on notice, these motions would need to be submitted again for debate.

The meeting started 5pm and ended at 9.43pm.

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 23 February 2026

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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To: Council

Date: 26 January 2026

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin
2. Address from Martin Reed

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin

When I arrived in Oxford in the early '90's, one of the first campaigns I was involved in was to oppose the demolition of the dozens of houses on the south side of Botley Rd – you heard right: houses – to make way for the 'out-of-town' retail warehouses. Those very buildings are now being demolished, just 30 years on. To build much needed homes? No, to build tech labs.

Since then, we have seen the expansion of Blackbird Leys, the building of Barton Park. Proposals for or delivery of, housing on precious pockets of open space and local parks – Spindleberry in Blackbird Leys; Bertie Park and Redbridge Meadow in South Oxford and the Horse Fields in Iffley, to name but a few.

The Local Plan has stated clearly over the years that housing will be the priority for this Council. Have we come even close to solving the housing crisis? Hmm...

Yet, acres of brownfield are still identified in this Plan for employment. Maybe housing 'could' go there too. As the Scrutiny committee was told last week. But it should be designated for housing?

Because this City and this County, is not short of jobs, quite the opposite. And it is blessed with full employment.

It is short on housing. Homes fit for the future, at prices local residents can afford. It is also short on local parks, play spaces and nature.

The wealth inequalities in this City aren't because there are hundreds of people looking for work. They are because people don't earn enough in the jobs they do.

Because if you can't afford your rent or mortgage payments, or find somewhere affordable to live, everything else suffers. As it does if you can't easily access open green space and nature.

But just playing the housing numbers game won't solve this problem – as we've seen for the last 30 years. The building of 250 homes, for e.g., on the Wolvercote Paper Mill site was great – if you had upwards of £1/2m to spare to buy one. You're unlikely to find Oxford teachers, nurses and lab technicians living there.

And where is the data, that should be informing the discussion today:

- What is the proposed balance between new jobs (on the one hand) & new housing & green spaces in the city (on the other) & how has this been reached?

In particular, has any of the land previously identified for employment-use been firmly re-allocated for housing? This was a promised policy change around a common theme in many responses in previous consultations. If the plan continues to prioritise a huge increase in employment and economic growth over better provision for housing for the existing population's needs, then Oxford's housing crisis will continue to worsen, as will the related infrastructure issues including flooding, sewage, water scarcity, congestion, pollution and loss of green space.

How can the 'more of the same' strategy this Plan contains, that created and exacerbated these very real challenges we need to solve – result in anything other than more of the same?

- where is the summary report of responses to the last consultation, that should have informed this stage and the explanation of changes made in light of that consultation or the reasons for ignoring it. That information needs to be provided before the plan can properly be considered. The lack of its availability once again undermines democratic process in this City. It reinforces residents' feelings that 'there's no point in participating, no-one listens' and undermining the stated corporate priority to support thriving communities.

And finally, how can you possibly be expected to give full, due consideration to this 900 page document in the time given? The fact that the summary of the responses to the previous consultation is proving to also be very long is simply not a good enough reason not to provide it, but rather suggests more time and attention needs to be given to this entire process. What's the rush?

Be visionary. Be creative. Be courageous. It is in your gift to request more time, or dare I suggest, a different, more democratically-generated Plan, that is genuinely fit for the future this City and its current residents.

Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

The draft Local Plan 2045 does not prioritise employment over housing. It does not add any new employment sites; instead it seeks to ensure that the use of existing employment sites is intensified, in line with the NPPF and Government guidance. The draft Local Plan sets out in Policy E1 the employment strategy for the city which aims to meet the city's employment needs while also facilitating the delivery of much needed housing.

Both the current 2036 Local Plan and the proposed 2045 Local Plan make residential development possible – other planning policies such as flood zones and the like permitting – on every employment site in Oxford. The 2045 Local Plan indeed goes further, and allows for complete loss of a greater number of employment sites than the 2036 Local Plan

A Local Plan cannot force the owner of a particular site to remove their office or their factory and build housing instead. But it can make it clear that that option is available to them, and the current Local Plan and the proposed Local Plan do exactly that.

The Wolvercote Paper Mill site includes 95 units of affordable housing, of which 75 are social housing, the most affordable form of housing available, and the rest are shared ownership. This provides homes that are genuinely affordable to families of all ages, backgrounds and employment.

2. Address from Martin Reed

We are here to request that you remove Policy SPS8 Land at Meadow Lane from the draft new Local Plan and make the **full 2.5 acres** available as a local resource for outdoor education and nature connection, with the opportunity of a Heritage Lottery grant, to benefit children and young people and the future resilience of the city.

This ancient meadow is unsuitable for **any** housing:

It is now included in Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and easily qualifies as a City Wildlife Site. It provides the beautiful rural setting for Iffley's Conservation Area and draws many residents and visitors along the quiet route for active travel bordering the meadow. The value it brings, environmentally, socially and economically, is reflected in the Council's own multifunctionality scoring system, where it would score 13 /17 and it should be protected as Core Green infrastructure.

This particularly sensitive site is identified by the Council's own surveys as unsustainable. With 15 constraints in the Sustainability Appraisal (which is an underestimate, given all the errors and omissions) is the most constrained of any SPS site in this Local Plan. In particular, the site policy fails to recognise that the meadow itself is an essential part of the rural Conservation area and any building here would cause significant harm to the Conservation Area and fail to meet the heritage requirements of the NPPF.

The reduction in the minimum housing number from 29 to effectively ZERO confirms the site is **wholly unsuitable for any housing**. Keeping SPS 8 risks the **soundness of the entire plan**.

The Council needs to get the balance right: the benefits of any housing here would be far outweighed by the multiple harms of any development on this irreplaceable site.

I was born in Iffley and have wonderful memories of childhood. I grew up surrounded by open fields.

I believe a Meadow School on the Horse Fields would bring all the things I enjoyed in my childhood. The teachers from local schools within walking distance of the Horse Fields say this too, with benefits to:

1. mental and physical health
2. learning, social and practical skills and job opportunities
3. Connection between children and communities of different background
4. A feeling of belonging in the local landscape

They also say that it would address the high levels of disadvantage of the children in their catchment areas.

I am who I am because of the childhood experiences I had in nature.

The fields allowed me to be a child, unjudged by adults. I made camps, climbed trees, played games, and explored. I saw birds' nests with eggs in, watched ants' nests. I ran freely racing and laughing with other children of all backgrounds. We appreciated nature and were healthy and happy. We weren't Vitamin D deficient!

As a result of enjoying the outside, I have made lifelong friends.

I attribute my health to early physical activity.

I return mentally to these places that no longer exist, when I need space and peace and wish to remember these lovely times.

I still get artistic inspiration from childhood visions of these places and from the birds and animals I saw, which formed my early imagination.

I became a professional gardener as a result of enjoying the outside.

I was lucky: virtually everything apart from the Horse Fields has now gone.

I feel every child should have the opportunities I did.

The size of the Horse Fields meadow is **just large enough** at 2.5 acres to take managed footfall while protecting and nurturing the wildlife here.

And now we have the support from the local wildlife trust to make this a reality.

BBOWT are leading the submission of Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and the Ray (which we call RBOR), a £4.1 million National Lottery Heritage Fund bid with 12 partners across the landscape between Oxford, Bicester, Aylesbury. Our focus is nature, communities, and heritage, with a specific focus on reconnection, which aligns perfectly with the Meadow School Iffley proposal.

We are working with the organising committee of FOFI to pilot Meadow School sessions with Greyfriars Catholic School and draw up a proposal for working with them for our bid. Should our bid be successful, we can offer some funds to set-up and run the Meadow School, extra capacity, and expertise from our twelve partners and wider RBOR stakeholder network.

We are very excited to be involved in supporting the development of the meadow school, and are confident in FOFI's commitment and ability to develop a brilliant community resource that will last long after our five-year funding is up.

Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

Delivery of housing is a priority for the City Council, and the Local Plan's strategy is to maximise housing delivery while balancing protection of other important assets such as biodiversity, open space and functional floodplain. The minimum housing need figure for Oxford has been calculated by using the Government's Standard Method as set out in National Planning Policy and guidance. The housing need in Oxford is for 1,087 new dwellings per annum over 20 years, a total of 21,740. This housing need is clearly greater than the capacity of the city to deliver it. The assessment of capacity (set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2026) is 9,267 homes over the Local Plan period, or 463 dwellings per annum, meaning that there is an unmet housing need of well over 10,000 dwellings, which this Council will need to look towards our neighbouring District Councils to meet, as before. It is therefore a clear requirements that the Local Plan identify all viable housing sites to contribute towards meeting the housing need within the City's boundaries.

The Meadow Lane site has been an allocated site for residential development since the adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and it is proposed that this continue to be the case for the Local Plan 2045. The sensitivity of the site is acknowledged in the draft allocation policy, including its siting within the designated Iffley Conservation Area and within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) But there is considered to be potential for a scheme that responds appropriately to this setting which delivering much needed housing. This site allocation was drafted with reference to the LNRS. The LNRS is not identified in the draft policy as having the intention of preventing development. The LNRS itself makes this clear: "In these circumstances [where allocations for alternative uses overlap with the mapped extent of the LNRS], Local Planning Authorities should seek to plan positively for the delivery of the potential measures identified in the LNRS within the proposed development..."

In relation to the impact on the Conservation Area, it is entirely acceptable and commonplace for development to occur within conservation areas, especially in historic cities such as Oxford. The principal of developing within a conservation area is acceptable; whether proposals result in harm to heritage assets is something that can only be properly assessed by Development Management officers when a planning application is submitted.

The site did not meet the criteria to be part of the Core Green Infrastructure Network. Although the site is within a conservation area, this in itself does not make it part of the core network. It is not a designated wildlife site, there is only a small area of flood risk, and it appears separated from the main green corridor, which is likely to limit its main corridor function.

When considering whether to allocate a site, officers have considered what the capacity of the site is for housing delivery; a process that was informed by the most up-to-date information available at the time of drafting. It is clear that the site has sensitivities and biodiversity interest, but there is still potential for a development of the site that responds to this appropriately. Given the current understanding of the wildlife value of the site the minimum number of dwellings has been removed from the site allocation policy, allowing a free response to the sensitivities of the site. That is not to

say a scheme bringing forward the previous minimum would not be suitable, but leaves that to be determined in the decision making process for a planning application on the site.

To: Council

Date: 26 January 2026

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Shavonne Allen
2. Kaddy Beck
3. Chaka Artwell
4. Dan Glazebrook

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Shavonne Allen

Madam Mayor, Councillors, thank you for hearing me today.

I am here to propose a county-wide Youth Council and Youth Mayor programme. For many centuries, Oxford has been known for its growth and innovation in multiple areas, such as education; however, we currently lack a modern, county-wide youth voice system.

This is why I am proposing today the establishment of a Youth Council and a Youth Mayor programme to enable young people across the county to become politically involved. By launching a Youth Council and a democratically elected Youth Mayor, Oxford would enrich its democracy as a whole.

This initiative would allow passionate individuals to become politically involved by representing the youth of Oxford in their own form of council, while also collaborating with both Oxford City and County Councils on decision-making and sharing their perspectives. This would enhance younger generations' understanding of politics across schools, communities, and alternative provisions throughout Oxford.

It would also allow young people to become involved in the wider community not just the one in which they live, but communities across Oxford as a whole. This would help break down socio-economic imbalances by bringing together young people from different backgrounds.

Oxford would be following the example of modern councils, such as Bristol and Lewisham, which already involve young people in decision-making through the formation of youth councils. By establishing a Youth Council, Oxford would further reflect itself as a diverse, forward-thinking city.

Thank you for hearing me today.

Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

Thank you so much, we really appreciate you coming and we're so sorry you've had to wait for so long, it doesn't normally take quite that long to come to public speakers, we've had a very busy meeting this evening.

I really welcome your proposals, but I think we probably need to have some further discussions about how to take them forward because you may not be aware, we're in the process of Local Government Reorganisation at the moment which means until July, we don't really know what the future for this Council will be, it won't be this Council as such, we do now that much, there are three proposals on the table. So I think What we would very much like to do, speaking personally, to put some ideas forward for the new Council, whatever that might look like which could include some serious youth representatives as part of that structure going forward. Realistically, it going to be proposals for the new Councils rather than proposals for our existing Council that I think we will need to focus on, so really welcome the start of the conversation, I'm really happy to meet with you and to talk about it further so we can put forward sensible proposals as part of our working which we will be doing over the next two years to out together the proposals for the new Councils.

Thank you very much indeed.

2. Kaddy Beck

I coordinate the campaign to save Bertie Park recreation ground in South Oxford. We have spoken many times about the loss of open space which this development would involve. This time, we'd like to talk about the planning process itself, and highlight objections raised by Thames Valley Police.

You have told us many times you want to build on Bertie Park because it's been on local plans for 20 years. So, we thought it was OK to cut and paste a policy from one plan to another.

When your principal planner said: "For reassurance, a site wouldn't automatically be carried over from one Local Plan to the next but would be subject to a new review of the current planning position and any constraints / opportunities," it was a light bulb moment!

The plan policy states “planning permission will only be granted ... if the existing Bertie Place recreation ground, including a replacement Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), is re-provided on land in plot B” behind Wytham Street.

The current plan was submitted in March 2019, but by that November it was already clear you had no intention of re-providing the recreation ground as required. You announced instead: “a smaller but more modern play area which would be open to the public,” the land behind Wytham St was to become “a nicer environment for the community.” I.e. you decided to depart from the plan policy before the current plan was even agreed in June 2020. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that plan policies be both up to date and deliverable. It is obvious that the submitted plan policy for Bertie Park was neither.

Your planning application was validated in May 2023. It normally takes 13 weeks for proposals to reach planning committee. The first date we were given was that August. For 2½ years you have drilled holes and held meetings. This is just such a waste of council tax money.

We have known for a long time that Thames Valley Police thought the land behind Wytham Street unsuitable for unaccompanied children. They have now officially submitted their advice.

The police say:

“Site B does not have any clear function or purpose, and significantly lacks surveillance, creating significant concern that there will be opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour to flourish in this area... This space is very difficult to activate and is highly likely to be a significant attractor for crime and antisocial behaviour. ...Careful consideration needs to be evidenced how legitimate activities will be promoted in this space and crime/ASB prevented/discouraged. This has not been achieved in the current application.”

They also say:

“The MUGA is located very close to residential properties creating a risk of noise having a negative impact on residents, neighbour disturbances and community tension. This space is a very challenging location for development, with no clear solution. I appreciate the community wish to retain this youth recreation facility, however if houses are to be built here then neither the current location or the previously suggested location in site B are appropriate locations for such a facility.”

The council has not listened to the voices of local residents. We hope that it will listen to the police.

Finally, in October last year, OCC published its Green Spaces Technical Advice note 9. This says if you want to argue that an open space (like Bertie Park) is surplus you would need to “demonstrate a long-term lack of public access and/or use.” You have not done this. It also says that in Oxford, there is no spare pitch capacity, and that, with the population of Oxford growing, if pitches (like our MUGA) are “lost without compensation then so is that opportunity.”

Our recreation ground sits at the heart of our community because it is a physical space where families meet and kids play together. If you build on it, it is gone forever. And so is the heart of our community.

Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

This site is allocated for development in the current Local Plan 2036, and there is an extant planning application for the site that will be determined in due course by the

Planning Committee, who will need to take into account in reaching their decision the Local Plan and all other relevant material considerations, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 38 (6).

All councillors sitting on the Planning Committee must retain an open mind on all applications to be decided by that Committee, including this application.

3. Chaka Artwell

Does Oxford City Council believe it is right, correct, and just, for illegal migrants, and asylum seekers, are prioritised for housing, and welfare needs, by the Home Office and Local Councils, above native English men and women's housing needs?

Response from Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

It is not the case that illegal migrants and asylum seekers are prioritised for housing. Persons from abroad who are claiming asylum are not eligible for inclusion on housing registers when by virtue of their immigration status they are ineligible for an allocation of housing.

Only housing applicants who are eligible and have a qualifying local connection to Oxford (with some exceptions such as domestic abuse survivors and armed forces veterans), will normally qualify for inclusion on our Housing Register and a possible offer of housing.

The Home Office has responsibility for providing accommodation for asylum seekers while their claims are assessed. The previous government stopped processing asylum claims and allowed the number of asylum seekers left in limbo to rise, necessitating the use of asylum hotels, the current Labour government has committed to speed up decisions and end the use of hotels.

As an accredited Local Authority of Sanctuary, the Council has a proud history of supporting households who have settled in Oxford from abroad, including those who have arrived via government back resettlement and visa schemes, with the Council predominantly providing support into private rented accommodation for these groups.

4. Dan Glazebrook

The motion put forward by councillors Jupp and Miles rightly points out what the Friends of Grandpont Nature Park have been saying for some time - that the Oxpens bridge would not provide the floodproof route required for student housing at Osney Mead (rendering it a pointless replication of the existing two bridges in the same area) - and the incredible £14million price tag for the bridge would be far better spent elsewhere. For example - it is surely only a matter of time before there is a serious casualty on the A40 at Barton Park, where there have been several nasty accidents already as residents are forced to dodge speeding traffic every time they want to reach shops, schools or the doctor's surgery. The Council's building of the estate without a bridge or subway was directly counter to both the police's recommendations and County-wide traffic regulations.

Likewise, the lack of a crossing from South to East Oxford at Jackdaw Lane means residents of New Hinksey are forced instead on a long diversion round the Plain, the most dangerous cycling spot in Oxford, where there have already been fatalities. It

would even be useful to have a bridge across the river directly from Osney Mead, to ensure users do not have to cross the flooded towpath under the railway bridge, where a man tragically drowned just last winter. The one place a bridge is not needed is from Grandpont Nature Park to Oxpens Meadow, two sites already linked by an excellent, wide and well-used cycle and foot bridge just 100m from the proposed new one. Yet it seems the Labour Council prefer to use public money to pointlessly augment the private commercial developments of Oxford University than to address the safety and wellbeing of their own constituents.

When the residents of Grandpont and Osney started their campaign in 2024 they were told by a Labour cabinet member that it would not be possible to use Growth Deal funding for projects such as those being put forward today. They were told, quote, that “we couldn’t spend it elsewhere in the city. It can only be spent on infrastructure that enables new development or new housing.” And it is true that this is the usual criteria for projects receiving Oxfordshire Growth Deal funding. But Oxford City Council, unique amongst all the Councils in Oxfordshire, had by then managed to wangle itself an exemption from these criteria. Unlike all the other Councils, the City Council was and is allowed to use Growth Deal funding for projects that do not directly enable new development or new housing. So the funds could have - and can be - used for other projects.

Furthermore, it is now clear that the Oxpens River Bridge as currently conceived does not *itself* enable any new housing or development, whether directly or indirectly. When the bridge went to planning, Council officers were at pains to point out that, quote, “the future developments [at Osney Mead and Oxpens] could go ahead *without* the bridge”, that “The bridge is a standalone development that can be delivered on its own without the need for the Oxpens or Osney Mead allocations to be delivered *and vice versa*”; that “the Osney Mead development could still come forward [without the bridge]”; and that “if the bridge doesn’t go ahead then both the proposed developments [Osney Mead and Oxpens] could come ahead *on their own*.”

There you have it, in black and white: the bridge is not necessary, either for the Oxpens development or for Osney Mead. This is truer than ever since the Environment Agency vetoed the Council’s plans to floodproof the towpath between Osney Mead and Grandpont Nature Park in November 2021. The Council, to this day, don’t have the faintest idea how to floodproof this path, which means that to reach the new floodproof bridge from Osney Mead, users will have to cross a section of towpath that regularly floods - and, where, as I mentioned, someone tragically drowned just last year.

Last time I stood here, the Cabinet Member responsible responded with a long list of outdated documents referring to plans for the bridge. All of these were made redundant by the EA’s ruling in 2021.

The Council are now in breach of Homes England’s funding requirements, which, unlike the Growth Deal, the Council have not wangled an exception from, which state that funds can only be used for infrastructure that unlocks housing developments. The £1.5million they were awarded by that body for the bridge was provided specifically for a path that their application claimed would provide the floodproof exit out of Osney Mead required for residential planning permission to be granted on the site. In fact it will do nothing of the sort. You may, in the coming discussion, seek to ask council leaders how they expect to get millions more from this body for a project which it is not lawfully allowed to fund, as it will not - by their own admission - enable any housing.

Now the Council have diverted a further £3.7million from the local budget for the bridge, including £1million from the maintenance fund, which is supposed to be used to repair council homes. Enough is enough. It’s time to stop throwing good money after bad, and to start addressing the safety and wellbeing of the town’s working class residents rather

than simply subsidising the wealthiest institution in the city with a pointless ornament for their commercial developments.

Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

This address says: “Last time I stood here, the Cabinet Member responsible responded with a long list of outdated documents referring to plans for the bridge. All of these were made redundant by the EA’s ruling in 2021.”

This is attempting to recreate a claim that was rejected by the Judge in last year’s failed attempt to overturn the planning permission granted for this bridge - that the purpose of the bridge is solely to connect the Oxpens and Osney Mead development sites. This was not the purpose when this bridge was first proposed 20 years ago, and it is still not the case. The documents in question may in some instances have existed for some time, but what they say remains entirely relevant, as the judge made clear in his reference to the 2013 Oxpens SPD, for example.

It may be helpful to remind Council of some of these documents, and what they say, and when they said it. And who supported them at the time. All were consulted on widely and at length, debated in Full Council, and then adopted as formal documents.

The West End Area Action Plan, adopted by the City Council in June 2008, sought “A new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Thames to join Oxpens Field to the Thames towpath is proposed. This would link the West End to Osney Mead and the West Oxford Cycle Route. Improvements will also be made to the route running east from the pedestrian bridge.”

This document, with the detail of this bridge being set out in the context and wording of proposed Policy WE2, was finalised by the Executive Board – as the Cabinet was then called – on 14th May 2007 after four years of public consultation and preparation. It was then approved - complete with this bridge - by a special Full Council meeting on 21st May 2007. The then leader of Oxford City Council, Cllr John Goddard, was responsible for the policy and proposed it - complete with this bridge. This Council had the change to oppose the bridge, or to attempt to delete that policy from the plans. The record of the meeting show that no one did so.

When the Council submitted this plan after four years of preparation and consultation to the Government for approval on 15th June 2007, the Oxford Mail reported the enthusiasm for the plans – which included this bridge - of Cllr Goddard. He was reported as saying that “there had also been widespread backing within the city” for the plans submitted.

In November 2013 the **Oxpens SPD** was adopted by the City Council. This explains in detail what is proposed and what the objectives are for the new bridge.

“A new bridge crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably the Grandpont Nature Reserve, and residential areas up/down stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan.”

The maps that are the Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan in the 2013 **Oxpens SPD** include the proposed bridge in almost exactly the location for which planning permission was submitted and approved.

The other bridges across the Thames will remain. The potential to improve the Gasworks Rail bridge was considered by the County Council in 2016-17 and discounted as a workable option. Further review has highlighted considerable challenges, particularly with the footpath alongside Castle Mill Stream which is too narrow to accommodate cycling and the alternative route over the Castle Mill Stream bridge which would require alterations to create a hardened path and altered levels across the protected Meadow.

This bridge will be delivered entirely by external funding, but this is funding which if not used for the bridge will have to be returned to the different funding bodies. The City Council is not able to reallocate it to other projects. Funding from the Growth Deal for Oxfordshire was allocated to this scheme with the support of both Oxfordshire County Council, the responsible body, and Homes England who provided the funding to the County Council.

The proposed bridge provides the opportunity for a new and convenient route across the river, designed specifically for the location and to support the placemaking that will support the development of the West End as a vibrant quarter of the city and connect to other parts of Oxford to the south and west of the city centre.

These are the objectives now, and they were also the objectives of the bridge first proposed by this Council – and its then Leader and his fellow councillors, of different parties - 20 years ago.

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Appendix 1 – List of Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Part 14 Other Committee Procedures

Paragraph	Current	Change	Reason
<p>14.13 Licensing committee procedures</p> <p>(a) who can put items on licensing agendas?</p>	<p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, The Director of Planning and Regulation and the relevant proper officer and the relevant proper officer can put items on licensing committee and sub-committee agendas.</p>	<p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, The Director of Planning and Regulation and the relevant proper officer and the relevant proper officer can put items on licensing committee and sub-committee agendas.</p> <p>Decisions due to be taken by the Committee and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer.</p>	<p>The requirements for the Licensing Committees to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions are expected at other committees.</p>
<p>14.14 Audit and Governance Committee procedures</p> <p>(a) Who can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas?</p>	<p>The Group Finance Director, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, the relevant proper officer and the Council's internal and external auditors can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas.</p>	<p>The Group Finance Director, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, the relevant proper officer and the Council's internal and external auditors can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas.</p> <p>Decisions and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer..</p>	<p>The requirements for the Audit and Governance Committee to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions</p>

			are expected at other committees.
14.15 Standards Committee (a) Who can put items on Standards Committee agendas?	The Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer can put items on Standards Committee agendas.	The Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer can put items on Standards Committee agendas. Decisions and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer.	The requirements for the Standards Committee to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions are expected at other committees.

Part 19 Contract Rules

Paragraph	Current	Change	Reason
19.2 When do these rules apply	For Contracts which are exempted contracts under Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023 (the Act) the following rules will not apply:	Whether under or over the procurement regulatory threshold, for Contracts which are of a description as exempted contracts under Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023 (the Act) the following rules will not apply:	The wording has been updated to reflect the Public Procurement Act 2023, which is the only Act now in force for new Contracts.
19.2 When do these rules apply	Arrangement type The acquisition and disposal or buildings which do not form part of a	Arrangement type The acquisition and disposal or buildings which do not form part of	The wording has been updated to reflect the Public Procurement Act 2023,

	wider transaction under which the Council also procures Supplies, Services or Works	a wider to the extent they fall within Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act	which is the only Act now in force for new Contracts.
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To: Council
Date: 26 January 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.

Responses are included where available.

Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the Cllr answering the original question.

This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.

Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth; Leader of the Council

SB1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

Question

Do you agree with me that some of the housing sites mentioned in the Oxford Growth Commission interim report, for example at Chalgrove, are neither proximal to employment sites nor to rail connections and are therefore likely to foster more car commuting? Will you robustly defend the need for a reduction in car commuting and resultant congestion to the Commission?

Written Response

I warmly welcome the Interim Oxford Growth Commission report and its emphasis on the importance in particular of agglomeration and building housing near the City and/or existing transport hubs. This council's LGR bid for a Greater Oxford is based on the importance of building more housing and employment sites next to existing conurbation and transport links. I welcome Cllr Smowton's support for this proposal and for building housing next to Oxford where it is needed through strategic release of the green belt.

Supplementary Question

None.

Verbal Response

SB2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

<p>Question</p> <p>Do you agree with me that while the Oxford Growth Commission interim report's support for rail is welcome, this leans heavily towards the Cowley Branch Line and gives insufficient attention to much-needed new stations at Ardley, Begbroke and Wantage & Grove? Will you represent to the Commission the need to get behind OxRail 2040 in its entirety?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>No, I don't agree with Cllr Smowton. The Interim report is focused on projects that can be delivered effectively and quickly to encourage housing and growth.</p> <p>The Cowley Branch Line (the funding bid for which was led by the City Council) is, alongside Oxford Station, the rail project that will unlock growth quickest. Both these projects are also a pre-requisite for other rail projects across the county. It is right that the report focuses on delivering the branch line first.</p> <p>The interim report also clearly expresses strong support for rail plans and projects throughout, including stating, on page vi and page 9 and page 13 and page 14, that OxRail 2040 is very strong in its entirety, that it should be delivered, and that the commission is going to work to support the delivery of the plan and the Oxfordshire Metro.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

<p>SB3: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>What work has been done to identify a location for the city centre play park in the Broad Street and St Giles area since the cross-party support for such a facility?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The city council has expressed its support for a city centre play area in principle. Explicit proposals for such a park on the highway would need to be brought forward by the County Council.</p> <p>The Child Friendly City working group has trialled pop-up children's events at both locations.</p> <p>A report on the outcomes of these events is currently being finalised by the County Council and will include recommendations. Early findings suggest</p>

	<p>that softer surfaces, such as grassed areas away from roads and fast cycle routes, are significantly more conducive to encouraging children's play.</p> <p>As part of this work, the feasibility for permanent play space will be considered as will a decision on whether the City or County Council is best placed to utilise the funds available.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford; Deputy Leader of the Council

AR1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Railton

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<p>Question</p> <p>Inconsiderate and dangerous cycling remains a concern for the users of Florence Park. Is there a log of any complaints or any plans to address concerns?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There is no record of any complaints other than the communications from the Cllr. There had been an offer from the County Council to provide some signs left over from another project. However, there has subsequently been no responses to numerous attempts to chase this offer.</p> <p>There is an online form for residents to make comments or complaints here: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/xfp/form/165</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

AR2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton

<p>Question Which park locations have been short listed for the learner cycle park and what criteria have been used to identify the short list?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The short list comprised: Croft Rd Rec, Cutteslowe Park, Florence Park, Milham Ford Park and Sunnymead Rec. This was based off the criteria below (in no particular order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood risk • Safe access by bike (i.e. proximity to key cycling routes, low traffic streets) • Access to car parking (since it would not be reasonable to assume everyone will cycle there and some people will drive) • Access to ancillary facilities like toilets or a cafe • Availability of space in the park <p>Provision of natural supervision (site lines)</p>
<p>Supplementary Question Councillor Miles asked the Cabinet Member if a decision had been taken regarding shortlist for the cycle park?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Councillor Railton responded a decision had been taken that they would start by scoping Florence Park and see if they could make planning considerations work there.</p>

<p>AR3: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</p>	
<p>Question As the portfolio holder is aware, Manzil Way Gardens played host to a winter wonderland during December. During the course of this event, vehicles caused significant damage to the grass. This compounded the damage already caused by vehicles used by contractors from St Hilda's College. Can the portfolio holder please outline what steps are being taken to ensure that events do not result in unnecessary damage to public spaces?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The main ruts were not caused by the short-term use of the site during the event but by the unauthorised access across the grass area by the St Hildas College maintenance vehicles over several weeks previously. The college now accepts this based on photographic evidence provided and has agreed to undertake restoration works at its own cost.</p> <p>All events on City Council land give an undertaking not to cause damage, so if they do they can be required to put it right – there is a standard clause</p>

	in the agreement for this. In this case as I understand it the event did not cause any damage.
Supplementary Question None.	Verbal Response

AR4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton	
Question As discussed during the previous meeting, Manzil Way Gardens was damaged by contractors from St Hilda's College. I am delighted that the portfolio holder has confirmed that St Hilda's will make good the damage. Can they please confirm the timeline for the completion of this work?	Written Response The works will commence in the next few weeks, weather dependent, and will include steps taken to address the compaction and re-seed the affected areas. Temporary fencing will be erected while the new grass re-establishes. The timeline for the grass to re-establish will be partly weather dependent.
Supplementary Question None.	Verbal Response

AR5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton	
Question I was pleased to see the government propose new powers for councils to tackle pavement parking. Noting that responsibility for these powers lies with the County Council as the transport authority, pavement parking nonetheless represents a key issue for residents in	Written Response Yes, I would encourage the County Council to act promptly once the powers are in place. There are huge problems with antisocial pavement parking across the city but they will need to acknowledge that in some areas there may not be an alternative option.

<p>East Oxford. Cowley Road in my ward is a particular hotspot. Will the portfolio holder take this opportunity to encourage the County Council to act as promptly as possible on pavement parking once the powers to do so are in place?</p>	
<p>Supplementary Question None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

<p>AR6: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Railton</p>	
<p>Question The City Council passed a motion to make Oxford easier to walk and wheel around - and we assume this includes the winter months. In the last few weeks we have all experienced the dangerously icy conditions on pavements and cycle lanes and heard evidence of our residents falling from bikes or when walking, and others too fearful to leave their homes. This happened last winter too. We know that the City Council supply the grit bins and top-up the grit, but also that ODS do not provide the people power to actively grit pavements and cycle lanes. Therefore, could the cabinet holder offer some solutions to the problems of how to move the grit to our persistent problems areas - which might include better communications and/or work with community groups, colleges and secondary schools, senior scouts, trained volunteers, parish councils and local residents associations?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The current gritting regime within Oxford is carried out to the County's specification and that does not include specific gritting of footpaths and cycle paths.</p> <p>The Council's web pages are being updated to provide clearer advice to people around gritting, both what each council does and what residents can do with grit bins.</p> <p>A more systematic gritting of key cycle paths and pavements is beyond the placement of a few grit bins, so options are also being explored with ODS into delivering this. Additional budget will be required for an increase in gritting – watch this space at budget council.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

NC1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Chapman

Question

Given the drive for "active travel" it was concerning to see some of the conditions on key routes and a number of injuries during the recent bad weather. Is there an opportunity for Oxford City Council, ODS & Oxfordshire County Council to improve the current processes for these routes?

Written Response

I refer the Cllr to the answer from Cllr Railton AR6.

The County Council, as Highway Authority, is responsible for road safety, and the specification and budget for the work undertaken by ODS in this space. The County Council specification does not include gritting of footpaths and cycle paths. Through our Labour members on the County Council, we are making representations about these matters not least because the County Council wants to encourage safe active travel like cycling yet is doing nothing yet to grit the growing number of cycle paths in icy weather. The cost to the local NHS is significant as is the pain suffered by individuals and the disruption to families and businesses by inevitable absence from work.

Supplementary Question

None.

Verbal Response

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NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman

Question

Storage of bin bags on the pavement on Cornmarket by some food businesses remains a problem - encouraging rodents and destroying the public realm.

Written Response

I do agree this is an issue on Cornmarket and we are doing all we can to improve the situation.

<p>What enforcement action has been taken for non-compliance by businesses on Cornmarket in terms of the requirements for them to store their waste on their premises prior to the official collection time?</p>	<p>The Food Business Operators are given advice on waste as part of the food hygiene Inspection programme. If there is a non-compliance in storing waste prior to collection, this is included in the Food Hygiene Rating Score. Presenting waste for collection on the street at the incorrect time is dealt with by the Community Response Team.</p> <p>Businesses are required to present their waste on the highway to be collected by their Waste Collection Provider. In order to ensure that there is no excess waste left out during the busiest parts of the day and due to vehicle restrictions, waste is collected normally in the early hours of the day. This assists with the movement and safety of the public and allows for cleansing operations.</p> <p>Officers have conducted several operations in relation to commercial waste in the city centre. Businesses and organisations have been written to and a number spoken to in relation to their presentation of waste. There has been a variety of further enforcement actions taken involving service of legal notices and penalty notices being issued to those causing the most nuisance.</p> <p>At the moment, ODS cannot collect and store waste overnight at Cowley Marsh or in their refuse vehicles so a late evening collection is not feasible. We do rely on businesses to co-operate with us but will issue legal notices and penalty notices where necessary.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

<p>Question</p> <p>The public toilets at Manzil Way Gardens are a key resource for residents of East Oxford. However, 3/5 are currently out of order. I have previously received reassurances that these are on the list for reparative work. Can the portfolio holder please outline the timeline for reparative works, including when these facilities will again be open to the public?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There were a number of defects in these toilets, which were actioned and rectified before Christmas. Unfortunately, this appears to be a recurring issue because of vandalism. The current repairs are scheduled to be completed by 30th January at the latest. We will also liaise with the Safer Oxford Team to explore any other avenues for addressing the antisocial behaviour.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

Q2

<p>AH1: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>		
<p>Question</p> <p>Why is all the CIL money collected by the City Council from the numerous developments in Littlemore being funnelled into the Cowley Branch line and not being protected and used for the direct benefit of the Littlemore Community?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The purpose of CIL is to raise funds for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Oxford City Council created a CIL scheme to cover the whole city, and the funds are used to deliver the creation of new, or the repairs of existing, infrastructure. Much of this infrastructure is social and community projects that is of benefit to the whole of Oxford. For example, recent CIL funds have been used to support cycling infrastructure across the whole city, and the wholesale reconstruction of the East Oxford Community Centre, a building which has been and will be used by people from the whole of Oxford and beyond.</p>	

	<p>Over the last 10 years (up to October 2025, which is when the latest figures are available for) Oxford City Council has received £5,439,784 in CIL for developments in the Littlemore ward. Of that sum £815,968 has been given to Littlemore Parish Council for it to spend on infrastructure as it wishes.</p> <p>The allocation of funds to the Cowley Branch Line project will both benefit Littlemore, in creating a local railway station that has been missing for more than 50 years, and Oxford and Oxfordshire more broadly by providing a public transport option that will help to reduce private car journeys. It will also help to allow further development in Littlemore, which will generate further CIL funds. If the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan is passed and adopted then Littlemore Parish Council will have an increased share of those funds, which it can - and I am sure will - spend on local community needs.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Councillor Stares asked the Cabinet Member how much longer would it be before Littlemore had amenities?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth responded that there had been a significant amount of attempts at investment. He added that the Littlemore Parish Council earned a substantial sum of money, with only spending £40,000 out of £815,968.</p>

<p>AH2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>With the introduction of the congestion charge, it is anticipated that Oxford City Council-operated car parks will experience a reduction in usage and associated income.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide a detailed</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council is aware there was a short-term reduction in usage at City Centre car parks, as would be expected with any significant change to the transport network. There was also a short-term increase in use of the City Council operated Park and Ride car parks.</p>

breakdown of the projected or realised revenue losses, disaggregated by individual car park?	<p>However, there is currently only limited data available to understand what the longer-term impact of the introduction of the Congestion Charge might be, and it is too soon to draw any meaningful conclusion.</p> <p>The City Council will be monitoring data closely over time in order to see if any clear pattern or change emerges to all City Council operated car parks.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Councillor Henwood asked the Cabinet Member if they would release the data mentioned in the response received?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth said the data was short term and had short term impacts. He suggested to wait until the data had time to settle and then to draw a conclusion from it.</p>

AH3: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can you please provide details of any impact upon the City Centre parking revenue following the introduction of the Congestion Charge?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>See AH2</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

AH4: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth	
<p>Question</p> <p>Given the ongoing uncertainty and lack of clarity around long-term support for the Bus Filter scheme and its financial implications, will the Council now reconsider the redevelopment of its car parks to offset operational losses, for example through housing or</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Car Parks continue to operate at a surplus, not an operational loss.</p>

<p>employment-led schemes, and if so, which sites are currently under active consideration, and will this require an amendment to the draft Oxford Local Plan?</p>	<p>The current Local Plan 2026 has policies that permit particular forms of development on some specific car parks, varying from location to location. These include Policy SP59 Union Street Car Park which would permit different forms of residential use along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area, Worcester Street and Becket Street car parks in Policy SP1 which covers the whole of the West End of the city centre and is expanded in more detail in the West End and Osney Mead SPD, and Policy AOC5 Summertown District Centre Policy which sets out the principles for rationalising land used for public and private car parking and the site specific Policy SP6 Diamond Place and Ewert House which would permit a range of uses along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area.</p> <p>There are no Local Plan policies preventing development on any car park sites, but other issues such as operational Flood Zones, impacts on Heritage Assets or the Green Belt might well need to be taken into account should any development be proposed. Any application for development on any car park site would need to be judged on its merits against all Development Plan policies and other material considerations. So there is no requirement to change any Local Plan policies.</p> <p>The City Council has been in ongoing discussion with local community groups in Summertown in relation to the Diamond Place site for some time about potential development, and that will continue. Of the other car parks specifically mentioned in the Local Plan policies there are currently no active plans for the redevelopment of Union Street, and the others are not owned by Oxford City Council.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

What reasons did Balfour Beatty give for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project?

Written Response

Balfour Beatty provided several reasons for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project: relationships within the project teams, project delays related to planning and technical approvals and cost recovery and resource constraints as delay had disrupted the original resource planning.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Muddiman asked the Cabinet Member to explain why there was such a reduction of costs from the new contract with Jacksons to the original contract with Balfour Beatty. She further asked if the council would still need the 3.7 million virement.

Verbal Response

Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the main reason for the difference between the two contracts was that Balfour Beatty was a design and construction contract, whereas the contract with Jacksons did not include the design element. Regarding the virement, he stated that this was put in place to have a temporary fix while resources were being sought from elsewhere. This had not yet been finalised, but he stated he was hopeful it would be.

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AH6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

Has the council appointed a new contractor for Oxpens Bridge and if so who is it?

Written Response

A procurement exercise has been undertaken to appoint a new contractor to deliver the bridge. The contractor, Jacksons Civil Engineering Group Ltd, has been selected and it is intended to appoint them once the regulatory procurement and governance standstill periods (as defined in the Procurement Act 2023 Section 51 regulations; these do not formally apply to this contract as the Framework being used was based on the previous regulations, but are regarded as best practice, and so are being followed here)

<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Councillor Muddiman asked the Cabinet Member if they would consider delaying the signing of the contract until the motion was heard?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the Council had been trying to pursue construction of the bridge for 20 years and due to legal challenges, costs had been increased. Therefore, he had no intention of increasing the cost without purpose.</p>
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<p>AH7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>How much has the council spent on buying steel for the Oxpens Bridge project without having a contractor in place</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Council has not purchased steel for the bridge. The potential expenditure was added to the forward plan as it would be a key decision where it required, but it was not. It is now anticipated that this will occur after the contractor has been appointed.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p>

<p>AH8: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Building on the new site at Hill View, Mill Lane in Marston to create 159 new dwellings started last October. Despite concerns over building in green belt, using inappropriate roads for construction traffic and having the exit/entrance through a village with sheltered accommodation for vulnerable people, old buildings of preservation status and local schools; the building has gone ahead - and multiple breaches to the construction site management plan have been made.</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council has taken enforcement action regarding the development at Hill View Farm, but it is important to be aware of the limitations on the legal jurisdiction that applies to some issues, such as speeding by vehicles on the public highways and civil issues between private individuals or between a private individual and an organisation or business.</p> <p>In line with the council's Corporate Enforcement Policy, the Planning Enforcement Team has taken a graduated approach to addressing the</p>

Residents have reported countless breaches of dangerous construction site traffic speeding, or vehicles using residential roads outside agreed times, caused school commuters danger; beautiful old buildings to crack, break and cause foundation damage. Recently the drilling of a deep trench for cabling to the site has caused further structural damage to the cottages adjacent. The planning enforcement team on the City Council have been inundated with evidence, however, they seem to have no cause of action to enforce changes/ agree compensation to residents for considerable housing damage. Thames Valley Police also refuse engagement with the issue of breaches of the traffic plan. How can you reassure us that the conditions within the construction site management plans which are placed on developers hold any weight - and that the City and County Council will actually hold developers, such as Bellway, to account?

issues raised by engaging with contractors and site operatives to resolve matters without the need to take formal enforcement action. However this option remains under consideration and may yet be used.

Officers have visited the site to undertake their own evidence gathering, particularly early in the mornings. Their engagement with the developer has secured additional signage on roads leading to the site, along with the provision of traffic marshals to ensure construction traffic accesses the site during the agreed hours and navigates to and from the site safely.

The City Council does not have the legal jurisdiction to enforce vehicle speeds on the public highway. Speeding is a road traffic offence, and Thames Valley Police are therefore the enforcing authority. A possible option for the affected local residents is to consider establishing a Community Speedwatch programme to support the Thames Valley Police in fining speeding vehicles, and get a greater engagement by Thames Valley Police in addressing issues where it is the authority with the enforcement powers.

Any damage to residential properties is a civil matter between the developers and those affected. The City Council has no jurisdiction to act in such matters nor the legislative authority to seek compensation on their behalf.

The City Council continues to monitor the site to address issues when they are raised, where it was the power to do so, and will be supportive as far as it can of issues where the legal jurisdiction sits with Thames Valley Police or are civil matters.

Supplementary Question

Verbal Response

Councillor Robinson asked the Cabinet Member how the planning enforcement teams graduated approach was in line with its own corporate enforcement policy?

Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the planning enforcement team do not have the power to apply speeding traffic as the polices engagement on that was necessary. The only way it could be changed was on a national level.

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

LS1: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

Question

There is a huge need in The Leys for community space. What is the current timetable for opening of the community centre?

Written Response

Currently, the community centre is set to be delivered in two phases with the building shell & core or envelope being delivered by Peabody, and the internal fit out by the Council. Construction works for the shell and core are due to start at the end of January/early Feb 2026, with completion programmed for March 2027. Delivery of internal fit out will follow and is programmed to take 12 months to complete, making occupation of the centre possible from March 2028. Officers are currently exploring delivery options to try and reduce that timeline.

Supplementary Question

None.

Verbal Response

LS2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

Question

Considering Sandy Lane football pitches, what specific plans are in place to ensure that the football pitches currently proposed for development will be replaced or

Written Response

A report to Cabinet on this development, including proposals to ensure the continued provision, or improvement, of the football pitches and facilities is

relocated? It is vital for our community to maintain access to adequate sporting facilities, particularly for youth and grassroots football programs.	on the Forward Plan for March 2026. Plans will be brought forward in more detail at this time. Consultation with the local football clubs has commenced and will continue, recognising the need for good community access to facilities, and the great work of local clubs like Blackbirds FC and Greater Leys FC who OxPlace and the council wish to work in close partnership with on this project.
Supplementary Question None.	Verbal Response

LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith	
Question Re Sandy Lane football pitches, where will the replacement pitches be located, and what is the timeline for their availability?	Written Response Plans will be brought forward in more detail in the Cabinet report in March, as referenced above. Re-provision of the pitches and facilities will take place ahead of the commencement of any development for much needed affordable homes.
Supplementary Question None.	Verbal Response

LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith	
Question Residents at Knights road have been unable to access their rear gate for many months meaning they cannot for examples use their bicycles. They have raised this with Hill numerous times to no effect and residents'	Written Response Hill and Peabody acknowledge that rear access to some of the existing properties on Knights Rd has been closed off since works started 2 years ago.

fences have been damaged many months ago with a fence erected on the other side which means residents cannot access the alleyway. Residents were promised action back in Oct 2025, so can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Council will be working with Hill to address these concerns.

Works at Knights Road have been delayed by two main issues: the need to replace groundworks subcontractors who went into administration, and prolonged planning processes for two planning applications. The LPA has now approved both the S73 and the application for a new temporary Spindleberry Close access road, and Hill are now working with their sub - contractors to complete the necessary works to handover the first phase of the development. This will open up part of the site and allow rear access to these properties again.

Peabody will be contacting residents with a timetable for when they can expect to regain use of their rear gates, as well as agreeing a solution to the levels issue affecting one particular property.

Supplementary Question

None.

Verbal Response

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Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 23 February 2026

Council members present:

Councillor Arshad	Councillor Azad
Councillor Brown	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Corais
Councillor Diggins	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Fry
Councillor Gant (Sheriff)	Councillor Goddard
Councillor Harley	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Jupp
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Miles	Councillor Max Morris
Councillor Muddiman	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Ottino
Councillor Powell	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Qayyum	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Regisford
Councillor Rehman	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Stares
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Snowton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Waite	Councillor Yeatman

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services
Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive - Place
Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director

Laura Bessell, Local Taxation and Benefits Service Delivery Manager

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

101. Apologies for absence

Councillors Latif and Hunt sent apologies for absence. Councillors Goddard and Djafari-Marbini were noted for a late arrival.

102. Declarations of interest

Councillors Henwood and Stares declared an interest in the line regarding the Littlemore Community Centre in the budget report. They said that they would leave the meeting during this discussion.

Councillors Arshad and Malik declared an interest in agenda item 8 and would leave the meeting during the discussion.

103. Announcements

The Lord Mayor noted that they would adjourn at 5:30 for members observing Ramadan to breakfast. She noted the date of the Lord Mayors Quiz and celebrated the achievement and recent award won by the communications team.

The Deputy Lord Mayor congratulated the communications team for their award. He noted his work at the One World Fair and the opportunity he'd had to give out awards to young musicians in the city.

The City Rector discussed the fourth anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ramifications of this violence. He commemorated those that had suffered in this invasion. He noted the upcoming anniversary of a poet from the seventeenth century and the importance of ordinary, good actions, particularly when they have local impacts.

Councillor Mundy arrived during this item at 17:06.

104. Budget Debate Procedure

Council noted the procedure and times permitted for each stage in the budget debate. The Lord Mayor noted that groups had agreed to have a thirty-minute break after the initial debate, for groups to propose further amendments. Cllr Turner seconded the acceptance of this amendment to the standing orders. Council voted and accepted this amendment to the standing orders for budget debate procedure.

105. Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

Council received one address from a member of the public from Paul Wightman.

Hello, my name is Paul Wightman.

I'm here today as a director of Causing a Scene Ltd, which is a community- owned and run co-operative, set up by a diverse community of music fans, musicians, DJs, managers, producers, promoters, technicians, creatives and community leaders...
...to be the collective voice & champion of Oxfordshire's music scene, and its associated culture.

Specifically, I'm here to support the introduction of the new Live Music Fund, which is outlined in the budget before you for consideration today.

Causing a Scene's vision, is of a vibrant local music culture that's diverse, resilient and deeply valued...

...not only for its creativity, but for the hugely positive role it plays in improving individual wellbeing, community cohesion and a sense of belonging... ..and as a too-often overlooked multiplier of the local economy.

This city is the birthplace and home of extraordinary artists, venues and promoters that we can be rightly proud of.

Whether that's the incredible, diverse talent that you can see performing at a grassroots level on a daily basis..... people who perform for the sheer love of creativity and community connection.

Or the artists that became famous and put us on the global culture map, such as: Radiohead, Ride, Supergrass, Glass Animals, Foals and Stornoway.

You may not be aware, but Oxford was recently crowned the UK's rock music capital in terms of album chart and streaming success over the past 30 years, beating Manchester, Liverpool and London.

In a world where Berlin Techno has just been designated as an intangible global cultural asset by UNESCO, Oxford's music heritage is a largely untapped asset that, with the right backing and strategy, could generate significant income and overnight stays for the local visitor economy.

Meanwhile, a new generation of diverse, up and coming artists, such as: South Arcade, Elmiene, Sammy Virji, Hamdi, and Artemas continue to blow up across the globe.

Elmiene for instance, who came to Oxford as a 5 year-old Sudanese refugee, recently sold out the Brixton Academy, while Sammy Virji is fast becoming one of the world's biggest DJs, and Artemas, in 2024, had the most globally successful single of any UK artist.

They all developed their craft at local grassroots music venues in this city. Venues which continue to act as the Research & Development centres of the next big Oxford export, in a UK music sector that generated over £8 billion for UKDP last year.

So with all this success you might be wondering why a new Live Music Fund is needed?

Across the UK, music and arts venues and artists, are facing existential threats, but in Oxford, there is a very specific additional, underlying challenge.

It's a city with uniquely acute competition for physical space.... which, if left purely to commercial forces, without interventions from public bodies and the occasional benevolence of landlords and philanthropists...

.... means music, arts and community, inevitably lose out to student accommodation, laboratories and boutique hotels...

...despite the fact that, music, art and community are the very things that make people want to move here and to stay and put down roots, especially young people entering the workforce, which employers rely on to drive their strategic growth plans.

No young people, no growth.

If you're yet to be convinced, consider this: Tech start-ups and University spin-outs are essentially subsidised on the basis of their IP until they turn a profit, why shouldn't musicians, or the R&D venues where they learn their craft?

In summary, although we wait with interest to see the finer details of the new Music Fund, and would welcome working with you to ensure it has maximum impact, we urge all councillors to back this aspect of the budget today, as a brave first step in the right direction.

Back the spaces where music lives, the talents that use them, and the communities that thrive in them.

And ensure music's place at the heart of Oxford's cultural life and night time economy for generations to come.

Thank you for your time.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, presented the Council's response to the address from the member of the public.

He said that the matter of live music in the city was very personal to him. He said that in 1995 he worked to keep a music venue open in Oxford and that this issue was salient in 1995 and remains to be an important issue. He discussed the importance of grassroots venues across the city, for musicians and for the people who visit them. Councillor Hollingsworth spoke about the personal positive impacts that attending gigs in Oxford has had on his life and how this demonstrates the importance of live music venues for all in the city.

Councillors Corais, Pressel, and Goddard arrived during this item at 17:14.

106. Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 Licence Fees and Charges for the 2026/27 financial year

The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen Services submitted a report to seek agreement on the licence fees for 2026/27 where the council has discretion over the level of fee charged, following recommendation from the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee on 9 February 2026.

Councillor Miles presented the report. She thanked the Licensing officers for their hard work in enforcement across the city. She discussed the statutory and legal responsibility they held as the Council to set these fees. She moved the report for resolution by the Council.

Councillor Mundy seconded the report.

Council resolved to:

1. **Agree** the licence fees and charges for 2026/27 as recommended by the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee and as set out in Appendix 1.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini arrived during this item at 17:21.

107. Miscellaneous Licensing Fees and Charges for the financial year 2026/2027

The Director of Planning and Regulation submitted a report to seek agreement of the licence fees for 2026/27 where the Council has discretion over the level of fee charged, following recommendation at the General Purposes Licensing Committee on 9 February 2026.

Councillor Muddiman presented the report. She outlined the charges for street traders and the law dictating how they set these fees and charges. She said that although this was an increase, officers had assured them that this was a fair and reasonable increase. She moved the report for Council resolution.

Councillor Rehman seconded the report.

Council resolved to:

1. **Agree** the Miscellaneous Licensing Fees and Charges for 2026/2027 recommended by the General Purposes Licensing Committee as set out in Appendix 1.

108. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, Road Closure Orders, Scrap Metal Dealers, Sex Establishments Street Parties and Commercial Events: Licence Fees and Charges for the 2026/27 financial year

Councillors Malik and Arshad left the room for this item, due to declared interests.

The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen Services submitted a report to seek agreement on the licence fees for 2026/27 where the council has discretion over the level of fee charged following recommendation from the General Purposes Licensing Committee on 9 February 2026.

Councillor Muddiman presented the report. She said that there were no increases to charges to many licenses this year and that the increases for road closures were minimal. She thanked the licensing officers for their work. She moved the report for Council resolution.

Councillor Rehman seconded the report.

Council resolved to:

1. **Agree** the licence fees and charges for 2026/27 as recommended by the General Purposes Licensing Committee and as set out in Appendix 1.

Council broke for members observing Ramadan to breakfast after this item, at 17:26.

109. Chief Finance Officer's report on the robustness of the Council's 2026/27 budget

Council reconvened the meeting at 18:03.

Councillor Morris arrived after the break at 18:03.

Council considered a report from the Group Finance Director, as required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Group Finance Director presented the report. He outlined the context of his report and the bankruptcies which many local authorities in the country had recently faced. He noted the uncertainty caused by Local Government Reorganisation and the late arrival of the information regarding the funding from central government. Despite these issues, he said that they had set a four-year financial plan. He outlined the similarities between this and previous years' budgets and the state of the Council's reserves. The Group Finance Director discussed the risks posed by the Oxford model and its reliance on dividend payments from companies and fees. He said that from his analysis he believed that the reserves and income estimates were robust. He noted that if the Council failed to set the budget and council tax in the current meeting, it could have negative impacts on the Council's billing.

Council noted the report in setting the Council budget for 2026/27 and the indicative budgets for 2027/28 – 2029/30.

110. Report of the Scrutiny Budget Review Group

Council considered the report and recommendations of the Budget Review Group of the Scrutiny Committee to the Cabinet meeting on 11 February 2026 and the Cabinet's response.

Councillor Fry presented the report. He thanked the officers and committee members for their work on the budget. He summarised the main recommendations from the Budget Review Group and noted those which were and were not accepted by Cabinet. He outlined how the Budget Review Group had considered the context of Local Government Reorganisation and how the implications of this matter.

Councillor Turner said that they had a well practicing set of scrutiny arrangements which were adding value to their budget setting and review process. He thanked the officers and committee members for their time managing and reviewing the budget.

Council resolved to note the report and Cabinet's responses to the recommendations.

111. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30 and 2025/26 Budget

Council had before it and considered:

1. The report of the Group Director Finance to Cabinet on 11 February 2026 setting out the outcome of the budget consultation and seeking agreement of the Council's Budget for 2026/27 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2027-28 to 2029-30.
2. The Liberal Democrat Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.
3. The Green Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.
4. The Independent Oxford Alliance Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.
5. The Oxford Community Independents Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.
6. Two individual amendments from Councillor Dr. Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini published with the briefing note.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, presented the report and proposed Cabinet's recommendations. Councillor Turner thanked the Council officers for their work on the budget. He noted the context of Local Government Reorganisation and the uncertainty which this caused for the Council. Despite this, they were pursuing a four-year plan, demonstrating the financial robustness of the Oxford City Council. He thanked the Council's senior leaders and officers for their work and efforts to create a good working environment. He welcomed the additional funding for homelessness mitigation from the funding settlement from central government. He outlined their commitment to addressing the housing crisis in the city and to the Oxford living wage. He said that they were proposing funding for new community wardens and the free collection of bulky waste for all Oxford residents. Councillor Turner said that they budget also proposed further verge cuttings and improvements to the investments of the gritting of cycle paths. He outlined the other proposals the budget was making to fund and improve many areas of life for the city and its residents. Noting Nigel's upcoming retirement, Councillor Turner thanked Nigel Kennedy, the Group Finance Director, for his tireless work to lead the finances of the City Council for years and expressed that Nigel would be sorely missed.

Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, seconded the budget proposal for Council resolution.

a) Alternative budget proposals – The Liberal Democrat Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.

Councillor Snowton presented the amendments. Councillor Snowton, seconded by Councillor Katharine Miles, moved the Liberal Democrat Group's amendments.

Following debate, these were put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (24), than for (7), and 12 abstentions, the Liberal Democrat Group's amendments were not carried.

b) Alternative budget proposals – The Green Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.

Councillor Jarvis presented the amendments and noted a change to the amendments' wording. Councillor Jarvis, seconded by Councillor Powell, moved the Green Group's amendments.

Following debate, these were put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (23), than for (8), and 12 abstentions, the Green Group's amendments were not carried.

c) Alternative budget proposals – The Independent Oxford Alliance Group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note.

Councillors Henwood and Stares left the room at 19:34 for the discussion of this item, due to their declared interests.

Councillor Yeatman presented the amendments. Councillor Yeatman, seconded by Councillor Harley, moved the Independent Oxford Alliance Group's amendments.

Following debate, these were put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (27), than for (2), and 8 abstentions, the Independent Oxford Alliance Group's amendments were not carried.

Council broke for 30 minutes after the discussion of this amendment at 19:51.

Council reconvened at 20:32.

The Lord Mayor proposed that the meeting be extended up to one hour, Councillor Brown seconded. Council passed this amendment to the standing orders.

d) Individual amendments to the budget

- 1) An individual amendment from Councillor Dr Djafari-Marbini, seconded by Councillor Malik, was moved.

Following debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (20), than for (8), and 15 abstentions, Councillor Dr Djafari-Marbini's amendment was not carried.

- 2) An individual amendment from Councillor Dr Djafari-Marbini, seconded by Councillor Malik, was moved.

Following debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (20), than for (8), and 15 abstentions, Councillor Dr Djafari-Marbini's amendment was not carried.

- 3) An individual amendment from Councillor Harley, seconded by Councillor Yeatman, was moved.

Following debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (20), than for (7), and 15 abstentions, Councillor Harley's amendment was not carried.

- 4) An individual amendment from Councillor Snowton, seconded by Councillor Katharine Miles, was moved.

Following debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (23), than for (18), and 1 abstention, Councillor Snowton's amendment was not carried.

- 5) An individual amendment from Councillor Jarvis, seconded by Councillor Powell, was moved.

Following debate, this was put to the vote.

With more Councillors voting against (27), than for (15), and with no abstentions, Councillor Jarvis's amendment was not carried.

e) Decision on the Cabinet Budget

Following debate, the recommendations of the Cabinet as agreed at its meeting on 11 February 2026 including the details of the budget for 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and other matters set out in the published agenda and briefing note for this meeting were put to the vote.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was then taken:

For the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2027-28 to 2029-30 and 2026-27 Budget Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and other matters set out in the published agenda and briefing note:

Councillors

Arshad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Corais, Diggins, Fry, Hollingsworth, Lygo, Munkonge, Ottino, Pressel, Qayyum, Railton, Rehman, Rowley, Linda Smith, Taylor, Turner, Upton, Waite

Against the Cabinet recommendations to Council:

Asad, Fouweather, Gant, Goddard, Harley, Henwood, Jupp, Malik, Miles, Roz Smith, Snowton, Stares, Yeatman

Abstentions:

Jarvis, Morris, Muddiman, Mundy, Powell, Rawle, Regisford, Robinson

With more Councillors voting for than against the recommendations were carried.

Council resolved in accordance with the recorded vote to:

- 1) **Note** the approval by Cabinet on 21 January 2026 and subsequently agreed by the Council on 26 January of an increase of 4.8% i.e. CPI+1% in line with the recent Government announcement referred to in paragraph 28 from 1st April 2026, giving an average weekly increase of £8.47 per week, and a revised weekly average social rent of £143.40 as set out in Appendix 5 based on a HRA budget as set out in Appendix 4;
- 2) **Approve** the 2026-27 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9 and as amended, noting:
 - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £32.185 million for 2026/27 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £10.66 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £367.38 per annum; and
 - b) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6;
- 3) **Agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7;
- 4) **Confirm** the Council Tax Base for 2026-27 of **48,725.2** as per paragraph 17 below and Appendices 11 and 12 attached.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini left the meeting during this item at 20:52.

112. Council Tax Setting

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide the necessary calculations to enable the Council to set the 2026/27 Council Tax for Oxford.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, proposed and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations in the report.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was then taken:

For the 2026/27 Council Tax for Oxford:

Councillors

Arshad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Corais, Diggins, Fry, Fouweather, Gant, Goddard, Harley, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Jarvis, Jupp, Lygo, Miles, Morris, Muddiman, Mundy, Munkonge, Ottino, Powell, Pressel, Qayyum, Railton, Rawle, Regisford, Robinson, Rowley, Linda Smith, Roz Smith, Smowton, Taylor, Turner, Upton, Waite, Yeatman

Against the Cabinet recommendations to Council:

Azad, Malik, Stares

Abstentions:

Rehman

With more Councillors voting for than against, the recommendations were carried.

Council resolved in accordance with the recorded vote to:

1. **Approve** the Council’s precept and Council Tax requirement of £18,191,281 including Parish Precepts and £17,900,664 excluding Parish Precepts.
2. **Approve** the average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £367.38, a 2.99% increase on the 2025/26 figure of £356.72. Including Parish Precepts, the figure is £373.34, a 3.00% increase, noting that this is not the figure that is used to compare to the referendum limit (as set out in paragraphs 2 to 8 of the report).
3. **Approve** a contribution of £10,000 to Old Marston Parish Council in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish Council incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery in Marston (as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report).
4. **Approve** the amount of £773,943 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 15 of the report).
5. **Approve** the Band D Council Tax for the various areas of the city (excluding the Police and Crime Commissioner and Oxfordshire County Council’s precepts) as follows:

Littlemore	£393.69
Old Marston	£402.73
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£399.04
Blackbird Leys	£371.13
Unparished Area	£370.48

These figures include Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate; in addition to the City-Wide Council Tax of £351.50.

6. **Note** Oxfordshire County Council’s precept and Band D Council Tax is as set out in paragraph 19 below
7. **Note** the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley’s precept and Band D Council Tax is as set out in paragraph 20 below, and
8. **Note** the overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax is £2,678.40 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for Oxfordshire County Council).

113. Treasury Management Strategy

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2026/27 to 2029/30, following recommendation from Cabinet.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, proposed and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Turner responded to questions on the report from Councillors Mundy, Miles, and Smowton.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 as set out in paragraphs 11 to 56 of this report and the Prudential Indicators for 2026/27 – 2029/30 as set out in Appendix 2;
2. **Approve** the Borrowing Strategy 2026/27 at paragraphs 32 to 33 of this report;
3. **Approve** the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at Appendix 3 which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account;
4. **Approve** the Investment Strategy for 2026/27 and the investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 37 to 55 of this report and in Appendix 1;
5. **Approve** the Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 4

114. Capital Strategy

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to approve the Capital Strategy, following recommendation from Cabinet.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, proposed and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations in the report.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix 1.

115. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27. To note that the current 2025/26 scheme has been through a public consultation and the proposed changes are reviewed with an Equality Impact Assessment.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, proposed and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations in the report.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the change to the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme to the income bandings in accordance with Option 2 listed at paragraphs 32-37 within the report.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) to draft the details of the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27

The meeting started at 17:00 and ended at 21:52.

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 23 March 2026

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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To: Council
Date: 23 March 2026
Report of: Director of Housing
Title of Report: HRA Property Services Policies

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To approve the following policies: electrical safety, and legionella policies to ensure the maintenance of the housing stock.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith – Housing and Communities
Corporate Priority:	Good, affordable homes
Policy Framework:	HRA Asset Management Strategy

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Electrical Safety Policy 2. Approve the Legionella Policy

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Electrical Safety Policy	No
Appendix 2	Legionella Policy	No

Introduction and background:

1. Further to the Council approving the damp and mould, fire safety, asbestos and disrepair policies, further policies are being presented to the Council to ensure the safety of residents.
2. Making sure residents have a safe, affordable and decent place to call home is the core purpose of this work. Successive Governments has been working to strengthen the voice of residents and introduce legislation to ensure the quality of homes.
3. In 2018, the then Government published the Social Housing White Paper to ensure residents of social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to help when things go wrong. Consequently, the Social Housing Regulation Act (“the Act”) received Royal Assent in July 2023. The Act forms a new regulatory framework for the social housing sector, aiming to give residents greater powers and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems.
4. The Act aims to ensure Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are compliant with the consumer standards by giving the Regulator of Social Housing new powers to address RSLs who are not meeting their commitments to residents.
5. The Social Housing Charter detailed what social housing residents should expect from their landlords, including feeling safe in their homes, knowing how their landlords are performing and having their complaints solved quickly.
6. The Act sets out to deliver against each of these commitments:
 - Residents to be safe in their home.
 - Residents to know how their landlord is performing.
 - Residents to have their complaints dealt with promptly.
 - Residents to be treated with respect.
 - Residents to have their voice heard by their landlord.
 - Residents to have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. The need to ensure high standards are maintained, such as guaranteeing electrical safety standards are met and there is constant action to prevent an outbreak of legionella, can be attained by clear technical policies which ensures consistent follow through with operational work in addressing health and safety objectives.
8. The Council recognises its compliance responsibilities as well as the critical need to listen and act on the lived in experiences of our residents. There has been a series of meetings with the Residents Policy Review Group which has amended and approved the policies which are being presented to Cabinet for approval with this report.
9. The Residents Policy Review Group were critical in considering, amending and approving the policies presented in this report. This has ensured the lived

experience and advice from residents has ensured the policies are fit for purpose to meet the needs of all residents.

10. There is a need for a suite of other policies to be considered and approved by the Cabinet to meet these regulatory standards. It is envisaged that further policies, once they are considered by residents, will be presented to the Cabinet and the Council for approval.

Electrical Safety

11. It is critical that the focus on the safety of residents remain paramount. To that end, this policy addresses the key electrical standards which must be met at all times. It is also a key component of Oxford City Council's Asset Management Strategy that the useful life of individual electrical components is maximised and, hence, value for money is optimised.
12. This policy ensures that there is an electrical inspection and testing cyclical programme consisting of 5 yearly inspections for properties and communal areas. The policy also sets out that there will be a full electrical inspection before re-letting a property.
13. The risk assessment is based on the standard Electrical Condition Inspection Report (EICR) classification – C1, C2, C3, Further information (FI) – as below:

Code	Description	Meaning	Response Time
C1	Danger present	The safety of those using the installation is at risk, and immediate remedial action is required.	Immediate
C2	Potentially dangerous This term refers to a risk over a reasonable period of time where a qualified electrician has judged that a response by up to 30 days will ensure the safety of residents	While C2 issues are not immediate safety hazards, they represent a significant potential risk that should be addressed promptly to prevent accidents or damage.	Reactive Repair Within 30 days To be triaged on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of each issue in order for some cases to be dealt with earlier, if needed, within the 30 day period
C3	Improvement recommended	The installation meets safety standards; however, a C3 classification (improvement recommended) is made for the [specific area/device] to enhance the	Enrolled in a Certification Programme

		overall safety and performance of the installation."	
F1	Further Investigation	Further investigation is required to determine the issue and the corrective action that was not fully resolved after the initial Certification.	Reactive Repair Within 30 days

14. The Council is asked to approve the Electrical Safety Policy.

Legionella

15. Legionella is a bacteria which is common in natural water systems (such as streams, lakes etc) and can therefore be present in hot and cold water systems (such as, for example, storage tanks, pipework, taps and showers).
16. Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia. It was named after an outbreak of severe pneumonia that affected a meeting of the American Legion in 1976. It is an uncommon but serious bacterial disease.
17. Legionnaires' disease results in pneumonia-like symptoms, which in some instances may prove fatal. Symptoms can include high fever, chills, gastric problems, headache and severe muscular ache. This is followed by a dry cough and difficulty with breathing.
18. Infection usually affects middle-aged or elderly people, and it more commonly affects smokers, alcoholics or people with other chest and respiratory problems. Those most at risk include elderly and infirm people, people who suffer from alcohol abuse, and those suffering from cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory or kidney disease and patients using immunosuppressant medication.
19. Infection is caused by breathing tiny airborne droplets of water contaminated by the bacteria and not by drinking contaminated water. Any water application that causes the release of contaminated aerosols into the surrounding area can transmit Legionella bacteria. The bacteria have been proved to be transmitted by wet air conditioning plant, cooling towers, evaporative condensers, showers, taps, humidifiers which create a spray of water droplets such as decorative fountains, whirlpool baths, hydrotherapy baths.
20. For high risk sites, where there are vulnerable tenants, the policy details the actions the Council would take to protect residents as outlined below:

Procedure	Frequency	Progress
Flushing of little used outlets (as identified by the Risk Assessment)	Weekly	Flush through and purge to drain without the release of aerosols all little used outlets – including taps, showers and toilets. Outlets should run for 5 minutes, with care being taken

		regarding drainage capability.
Cold Water Systems Temperature Checks	Monthly	Check and record temperatures at the cold water sentinel taps. The temperature should be less than 20°C within two minutes. If the required temperature of 20°C is not recorded, relevant officers should be consulted (however, it should be noted that during the warmer summer months, water temperatures in excess of 20°C can occasionally be recorded.
Hot Water System Temperature Checks	Monthly	<p>Taps Check and record temperatures at the hot water sentinel taps. The hot water supply should reach 50°C within one minute. If the required temperature of 50°C is not recorded, the Asset and Health and Safety Officers should be consulted. Where a Thermostatic Mixing Valve (TMV) is fitted the hot water supply prior to the TMV should reach 50°C within one minute. A temperature check should be made using a surface temperature probe placed on the hot water pipe entering the TMV.</p> <p>Calorifier (Recirculating Systems Only) Check and record temperature of the water leaving and returning to the calorifier. (Where suitable gauges are not installed the check is made by placing a thermometer with a</p>

		surface probe on to the pipes). Outgoing should be at least 60°C, return not less than 50°C.
Shower Head / Spray Tap Cleaning	Quarterly (minimum) or more frequently if necessary	Dismantle and disinfect all showerheads using suitable materials. Use a de-scale agent (as required) to remove lime scale by soaking the showerhead for 30 minutes, or until the lime scale has been removed. All disinfection, de-scaling and cleaning products must be used in accordance with the COSHH risk assessment for the products.
Hot Water Systems Temperature Checks for Scalding prevention	Six monthly	Carry out inspection and test of all TMV's in line with NHS Model Engineering Specification D08 and or manufacturer's instructions.
Cold water storage tanks	Six monthly	Test temperatures at the incoming water inlet (or closest point) and at a point remote from the ball valve. Tests to be taken once in the winter and once in the summer, temperature should be below 20°C.
Calorifier inspection	Annually	Drain the calorifiers. Check for debris at base of unit. Clean and disinfect as required
Cold water storage tanks	Annually	Visual inspection of the cold water storage tanks to ensure that the tanks

		are in a sound clean condition and conform to all current legislation. If necessary any faults should be rectified and the tanks should be disinfected with certificates issues upon completion.
Cold Water Systems Temperature Checks	Annually	Test water temperature at a representative number of outlets to ensure that the system is reaching satisfactory temperatures throughout. Temperatures to be >50 °C after 1 minute All outlets should be covered over the annual period
Hot Water Systems Temperature Checks for Scalding prevention	Annually	Carry out service to all TMV's in line with NHS Model Engineering Specification D08 and or manufacturer's instructions.

21. The Council is asked to approve the Legionella Policy.

Financial implications

22. These policies will be implemented within the existing budgets. There are no direct financial implications associated with their implementation, which aligns with best practice and regulatory requirements with property standards for electrical safety and legionella.

Legal issues

23. The policies being presented for approval are required under the Consumer Standard as set by legislation and the Regulator for Social Housing.

Level of risk

24. The failure of the Council to have these policies would go against the Corporate Plan to keep residents safe and could lead to regulatory infringements further to the requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing, the Health and Safety Executive and the Building Services Regulator.

Equalities impact

25. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) has been carried out to determine whether the policies being presented to the Cabinet for approval would have an impact

on any member of staff, tenants, or contractor workforce, which unfairly discriminates or disadvantages them in the context of the Equality Act 2010.

26. Whilst the EqIA has identified that there are no particular groups who will be unlawfully disadvantaged by these policies, it is identified that there are certain groups at increased risk from safety infringements. These groups are:
- children
 - adults with learning difficulties
 - oxygen users
 - people taking certain medication
 - those suffering the effects of drugs and alcohol
 - adults aged 65 and older
 - people with disabilities
 - Individuals being supported by the Community Safety team and related support services
27. These policies aim to reduce the risks to these groups of people through proactively identifying these risk factors, raising awareness and education.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

28. Adoption of these policies will contribute towards the good maintenance of properties.

Conclusion

29. By approving the electrical safety and legionella policies, this will help establish the framework to maintain the housing stock and further ensure the safety of our residents. This approval would also help meet the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing that the Council is meeting its regulatory obligations. Further HRA policies will be presented to the Cabinet and the Council for its consideration after residents have been able to assess and, if necessary, amend draft proposals.

Report author	James Watkins
Job title	Housing Projects and Policies Officer
Service area or department	HRA Team
Telephone	
e-mail	jwatkins@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:

List the background documents and, if possible, link to them.

All background papers must be listed in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. This includes, any material which discloses facts or matters on which the report or an important part of it is based and which have been relied on in the preparation of the report

Each document must be listed and a copy of each document made available to members and the public on request, (or they should be directed where to find it if it is already published on the Council's website). All confidential, exempt, copyrighted and published works are EXCLUDED from this requirement.

- 1 Consumer Standard – Regulator of Social Housing - [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK](#)
- 2 Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 - [Landmark Social Housing Act receives Royal Assent to become law - GOV.UK](#)

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Electrical Safety Policy

Contents

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Introduction

- 1.1 Oxford City Council acknowledges its legal duty as a landlord and as the freeholder to leasehold properties to ensure safe electrical installations in its properties.
- 1.2 It is also a key component of Oxford City Council's overall Asset Management Strategy, ensuring that the useful life of individual electrical components is safely maximised and, hence, value for money is optimised.

Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to ensure the safety of residents.

Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by Oxford City Council.

Definitions

- 4.1 Periodic Electrical Inspection – an inspection of the condition of an existing electrical installation, to identify any deficiencies against the current national standard for electrical installations.
- 4.2 Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) – the process of checking electrical appliances for safety through a series of visual inspections and electronic tests.
- 4.3 Lightning Protection Systems (LPS) – a system of external earthing and internal surge protection designed to prevent lightning strike damage to buildings.
- 4.4 Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) – a formal document produced following a periodic electrical inspection which evidences the condition of the electrical installation.
- 4.5 Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) – a safety certificate issued to confirm that a new electrical installation or addition is safe to use at the time it was put into service.
- 4.6 National Inspection Council Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) – a voluntary body that regulates the training and works of electrical contractors and organisations across the UK.

Responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the Property Services Manager's responsibility to monitor the implementation of this policy.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive appoints responsible people to deliver the policy and ensure adequate resources are in place.
- 5.3 The Technical Manager is accountable for the Electrical Safety Policy.
- 5.4 The Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
- 5.5 All Property Services and Housing staff are responsible for implementing and adhering to this Electrical Safety Policy.
- 5.6 All contractors, consultants and partner organisations are responsible for operating by this policy when delivering services on behalf of Oxford City Council.
- 5.7 Oxford City Council will take breaches of this policy very seriously. Any such behaviour will be thoroughly investigated and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Electrical safety aims and objectives

- 6.1 To implement an electrical inspection and testing cyclical programme consisting of five yearly inspections (as a minimum – but potentially less based on Risk Assessment) for domestic and commercial properties and communal areas.
- 6.3 To conduct a full electrical inspection before re-letting a property as well as before approval is granted for mutual exchanges.
- 6.4 To conduct a full electrical inspection before the Council sells or buys a previously occupied property.
- 6.5 Complete an 'Electrical Installation Condition Report' for all properties and complete all repair recommendations by the following descriptions and timescales;

Code	Description	Meaning	Response Time
C1	Danger present	The safety of those using the installation is at risk, and immediate remedial action is required.	Immediate
C2	Potentially dangerous This term refers to a risk over a reasonable period of time where a qualified electrician has judged that a response by up to 30 days will ensure the safety of residents	While C2 issues are not immediate safety hazards, they represent a significant potential risk that should be addressed promptly to prevent accidents or damage.	Reactive Repair Within 30 days To be triaged on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of each issue in order for some cases to be dealt with earlier, if needed, within the 30 day period
C3	Improvement recommended	The installation meets safety standards; however, a C3 classification (improvement recommended) is made for the [specific area/device] to enhance the overall safety and performance of the installation."	Enrolled in a Certification Programme
F1	Further Investigation	Further investigation is required to determine the issue and the corrective action that was not fully resolved after the initial Certification.	Reactive Repair Within 30 days

6.6 To maintain the housing stock and preserve its asset value.

Electrical safety implementation

7.1 To meet the aims that this policy sets, Oxford City Council will:

7.2 Maintain all electrical systems safely and under the current safety regulations and legislation.

7.3 Implement a 5-year testing cycle covering the internal and external electrical systems unless the recommendations on the electrical certificate suggest periodic testing of less than 5 years. If a property's wiring is over 30 years old, an electrician will recommend a more frequent inspection interval such as every 3 years instead of every 5 years for a full or partial rewire, depending on the circumstances within the property.

- 7.4 Maintain an up-to-date and accurate electronic database for electrical certificates, the property's history records, the date the next periodic test must be completed, any electrical appliances installed, and any specific servicing required.
- 7.5 Complete an electrical periodic test on all void properties before the property is re-let.
- 7.6 In respect of mutual exchanges tenants are entitled to exchange (Deed of Assignment). The EICR should be carried out before the deed is completed, but the absence of one will not hold up a move over the statutory deadlines.
- 7.7 Periodic inspection and testing must be carried out only by electrically competent persons registered with the NICEIC/ECA or other government-approved schemes who must provide their registration certificates and insurance details to Oxford City Council.
- 7.8 Operate clear, concise, convenient, and well-published arrangements to complete the periodic tests and any necessary repairs in line with Oxford City Council's repair timescales.
- 7.9 Implement a quality assurance framework involving random sample checks on site to check repairs with a suitably qualified person.
- 7.10 Positively promote the importance of electrical safety to our residents, ensuring that relevant information is made available in alternative languages and versions upon request.
- 7.11 Develop and implement, in consultation with our customers, clear procedures to gain access to undertake the periodic testing.
- 7.12 Where efforts at gaining access have been exhausted, the Council will consider legal proceedings to gain access to carry out the EICR.
- 7.13 Adopt a systematic approach to performance management in monitoring electrical safety and repair services, reporting the key performance results and monthly outturns to the Property Services Manager.
- 7.14 Ensure sufficient and suitably qualified colleagues, consultants and contractors undertake work to enable the Council to meet its periodic testing and repairs responsibilities.
- 7.15 Provide a free electric cooker connection service for tenants being decanted or moved from one property to another. However, Oxford City Council will not provide an electrical maintenance service for domestic appliances in new properties.
- 7.16 Ensure that all colleagues, contractors, and consultants employed to deliver Oxford City Council's electric periodic testing, repairs and maintenance service adhere to the Health and Safety requirements for colleagues and contractors.

- 7.17 Monitor the effectiveness for basis for the arrangements to ensure there are periodic monthly electrical testing
- 7.18 Each classification of defect will be documented. These procedures should also detail the requirements for the re-issue of testing paperwork following completion of rectification works, including those instances where a partial or full new installation is required.
- 7.19 The [Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(Extension to the Social Rented Sector\) Regulations 2025](#) require the Council to carry out In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment (ISIT) (commonly known as PAT testing) on all electrical appliances the Council provide as part of a tenancy such as a Furnished Tenancy.
- 7.20 Some buildings will be installed with a Lightning Protection System and where these are present there is a requirement for them to be maintained in accordance with BS EN 6305.
- 7.21 At the same time as the undertaking of the EICR, ensure that a check is made of any installed Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide alarms. The visiting electrician will test that each appliance is sound and working in line with manufacturer's instructions and industry best practise.
- 7.22 The engineer will replace any existing defective alarms with a battery-operated replacement. In line with expected amendments to the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015, the Council will ensure all properties have an installed smoke alarm and where there are fixed gas appliances a carbon monoxide alarm.
- 7.23 The Council is not responsible for the maintenance of electrical appliances unless the appliance has been supplied by the Council.
- 7.24 The Council has a responsibility for electrical appliances issued or used by staff and also electrical appliances within communal areas that may be used by staff or members of the public. Where the Council is responsible for electrical appliances a PAT will be carried out in line with IET Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment guidance. The frequency of testing would be on a yearly or bi-annually basis depending upon the risk assessment.
- 7.25 Where Lightning Protection System (LPS) are installed to buildings there will be an annual safety inspection carried out by a lightning protection specialist and in line with BS EN 62305.
- 7.26 Valid certification will be in place for all fixed electrical installations and portable appliance within all buildings and properties. The Council will hold and maintain an accurate record within the asset database of all buildings and properties that require an EICR, PAT, LPS safety inspection, together with the last test, testing frequency and the next due date.

- 7.27 Testing schedules will be updated to reflect any property divestments, acquisitions (including new builds) and any changes to maintenance and repair responsibility. In addition, on an annual basis a full EICR property reconciliation will be carried out.
- 7.28 Upon completion of an inspection and test, the Council will obtain from the contractor the EICR, PAT record or LPS safety certificate, which will be then used to update the asset system with the testing date and also the next test due date. The Council will only accept EICRs that are stated as “Satisfactory”.
- 7.29 Further to paragraph 7.7, all sub-contractors who undertake electrical testing must be accredited with The National Inspection Council Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC). The electricians undertaking the testing on behalf of YHG will hold the following qualifications:
- NVQ level 3 Electrical Installation or recognised equivalent.
 - City & Guilds 2382-18 Level 3 Award in Requirements for Electrical Installations BS7671:2018.
 - City & Guilds 2391 or 2394 & 2395
- 7.30 The Council will undertake an assurance check of at least 5% of the housing stock to ensure compliance standards have been met An Equalities assessment will be undertaken with the annual review of the policy.

Resident Engagement

- 8.1 Oxford City Council is committed to providing a high level of customer care and positive communication which is vital to effective fire safety. This will support residents in their understanding of electrical safety and advise them of how they can manage the risks within their properties and encourage them to report any concerns about fire safety.
- 8.2 Further monitoring of feedback will take place through resident surveys and this intelligence will be used to inform future reviews of this policy.
- 8.3 Periodic engagement with residents will take place to ensure that this policy, along with other policies, remain customer facing.
- 8.4 Advice will be provided on the use of electrical equipment in the welcome pack given to new tenants and information that would be sent from Landlord Services to existing tenants.
- 8.5 Residents who are wanting to report a non-urgent safety concern can do so by using the link below: [Report a Building Safety Concern with council housing | Instructions – Oxford City Council](#)
- 8.6 All emergency and urgent fire safety reports should be made to 01865 249811.

Equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability (including most at risk groups)

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out to determine whether the policy would have an impact on any member of staff, tenants, or contractor workforce, which unfairly discriminates or disadvantages them in the context of the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.2 Whilst the EqIA has identified that there are no particular groups who will be unlawfully disadvantaged by this policy, it is identified that there are certain groups at increased risk. These groups are:
- children
 - adults with learning difficulties
 - oxygen users
 - people taking certain medication
 - those suffering the effects of drugs and alcohol
 - adults aged 65 and older
 - people with disabilities who may not be able to quickly escape in the event of an emergency due to reduced mobility
 - Individuals being supported by the Community Safety team and related support services

Policy review

- 10.1 A full policy review will take place in response to any changes in legislation, significant events that may impact on the policy, or at periods not exceeding 2 years.

11. References

Related External Documents	
Reference	Link to reference
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/70
Housing Act 2004	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents
Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2007	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2006/1713/contents/made
Part P of the Building Regulations	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441872/BR_PDF_AD_P_2013.pdf
Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made
Electricity at Work Regulations 1989	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1989/635/contents/made
Related Internal Documents	
Electric Periodic Testing Procedures	

Legionella Policy



Glossary

- Calorifier - A calorifier is an indirect-fired water heater to provide hot water in a heating and hot water system. Indirect fired means the water heater does not contain a burner. It is a storage water cylinder with one or more heat exchanger coils which contain hot liquids (water or solar fluid).
- Dead leg pipes - A dead leg is a section of potable water pipe which contains water that has no flow or does not circulate. If the section of pipe is greater than 1.5 times the diameter of the pipe served, it is considered a dead leg and would require a method of flushing.
- Decant – Moving residents out of properties
- Thermostatic Mixing Valves - Designed to control the temperature of water by mixing hot and cold water supplies, thermostatic mixing valves (TMVs) maintain a consistent and safe water temperature output, preventing scalding. Thermostatic Mixing Valves

Context

- 1.1 Legionella is a bacterium which is common in natural water systems (such as streams, lakes etc) and can therefore be present in hot and cold water systems (such as, for example, storage tanks, pipework, taps and showers).
- 1.2 Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia. It was named after an outbreak of severe pneumonia that affected a meeting of the American Legion in 1976. It is an uncommon but serious bacterial disease.
- 1.3 Legionnaires Disease is one of a group of similar diseases collectively known as legionellosis. The other forms, such as Pontiac Fever and Lochgoilhead Fever, have similar symptoms but are not as serious as Legionnaires' disease.
- 1.4 Legionnaires' disease results in pneumonia-like symptoms, which in some instances may prove fatal. Symptoms can include high fever, chills, gastric problems, headache and severe muscular ache. This is followed by a dry cough and difficulty with breathing.
- 1.6 People of all ages and health conditions can be at risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease through becoming infected from contaminated systems.
- 1.7 Infection usually affects middle-aged or elderly people, and it more commonly affects smokers, alcoholics or people with other chest and respiratory problems. Those most at risk include older people and infirm people, people who suffer from substance abuse, and those suffering from cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory or kidney disease and patients using immunosuppressant medication.
- 1.8 Legionella bacteria are naturally occurring microbes, widespread in nature, mainly living in natural water systems such as rivers and ponds. Outbreaks of the illness

occur from exposure to Legionella growing in purpose-built systems where the water is maintained at a temperature high enough to encourage growth.

- 1.9 Infection is caused by breathing tiny airborne droplets of water contaminated by the bacteria and by drinking contaminated water. Any water application that causes the release of contaminated aerosols into the surrounding area can transmit Legionella bacteria. The bacteria have been proved to be transmitted by methods which includes wet air conditioning plant, cooling towers, evaporative condensers, showers, taps, humidifiers which create a spray of water droplets such as decorative fountains, whirlpool baths, hydrotherapy baths.
- 1.10 The bacterium can survive at low temperatures but special conditions are needed in water systems before the bacterium multiplies and thrives. This bacterium requires both a food source, such as the presence of biofilm, sludge, scale, rust, algae or organic matter, and a water temperature in the range of 20°C and 45°C.
- 1.11 Bacteria naturally aggregate biofilms and within the biofilm matrix, legionella can be protected from high water temperatures which is why routine disinfection of systems with stored supplied is required.
- 1.12 The factors which increase risk include:
 - Not keeping water storage tanks and down-service pipe-work maintained, with biofilms being kept in check.
 - Not maintaining stored hot water supply above 60oC, and distribution below 50oC
 - Not maintaining the cold water supply at 20oC or below.
 - Not maintaining the flow of water through all outlets.
 - Not flushing infrequently used outlets
 - Having the presence of dead legs in water pipes
 - Not adequately managing void sites
- 1.13 Certain conditions increase the risk from Legionella include:
 - Water temperature for growth - 20 to 45oC;
 - Source of nutrients in water tanks such as biofilm, sludge, scale, rust, algae, and other organic matter for Legionella and other bacteria to feed onCreating and spreading breathable droplets, e.g. the aerosol created by a tap, shower head or even a toilet flushing.

Scope

- 2.1 This policy and any management procedures cover the requirement to ensure that all systems for the storage and distribution of water are managed so as to prevent the spread of legionella bacteria and subsequent cases either sporadic or outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease and to comply to the regulatory requirements published by the Health & Safety Executive.
- 2.2 The Council aims to minimise and control the risk from Legionnaires disease and will ensure the following:
- The Property Services Manager will have a duty to put in place an action plan to minimise the risk of legionella and to manage and monitor the necessary work systems and procedures.
 - Identify and assess sources of risk, e.g. where conditions are present that may encourage legionella bacteria to multiply or where there is a means of creating and disseminating breathable droplets and establish any items of non-compliance.
 - Assess the level of risk and look at the possibility of removal or replacement of any risks identified, thereby minimising the chance of the proliferation and dissemination of the legionella bacteria.
 - Where required, arrange a programme of routine inspection and maintenance of water systems, including, where needed, a programme of disinfection.
 - Where modification to any deficient systems and equipment are identified to manage the remedial activity to achieve compliance.
 - Implement, amend and monitor precautions for all relevant systems and maintain records of maintenance, inspection and testing for a period of at least five years.
 - Keep all relevant personnel adequately trained in practices and procedures with respect to the control of Legionella.
- 2.3 This policy will be reviewed on a annual basis or if new knowledge on the subject evolves and /or new guidance is issued.
- 2.4 The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) publish various documentation both legislative and for guidance purposes which reference the risk posed by water systems in relation to both Legionella and scalding:
- Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 – 'Legionnaires Disease: The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems' Approved Code of Practice.
 - The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
 - The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations
 - The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
 - The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 S I 1999 No 1148.
 - The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Amendments) Regulations 1999. S.I. 1506.
 - BS6700: 2006 Specification for Design Installation, Testing and Maintenance of Services Supplying Water for Domestic Use within Buildings and their Curtilages.
 - BS7942: 2000 Thermostatic Mixing Valves for use in Care Establishments.
 - HELA Circular, Scalding risks for Hot Water in Health and Social Care, LAC Number 79/5.

Objectives

- 3.1 This policy and related management procedures cover the requirement to ensure that all systems for the storage and distribution of water are managed so as to prevent the spread of legionella bacteria to comply to the regulatory requirements published by the Health & Safety Executive.
- 3.2 The approach to risk assessment is based on the categorisation of involving a level of risk assessment in that the water system type (from Stored Water to Combi-Boiler type) together with the occupants of the site (from typical tenanted stock to supported accommodation for disabled or older people) are taken into account.
- 3.3 On-going maintenance / control scheme requirements will vary from full monthly temperature monitoring and regular cleaning of systems, to supplying tenants with on-going/ periodic information on how to minimise any risk from Legionella.
- 3.4 The risk categories based on their knowledge of the sites, their water systems and occupant types:

Risk Category	Site Type	Control System
High Risk Sites	Sites with vulnerable groups of tenants	High Risk Annual Assessment
Medium Risk Sites	Sites which have communal areas and / or with stored water / showers / calorifiers	Inspection and Disinfection of Shared Cold Storage and related services every 2 to 4 years (dependent on the circumstances of the specific component). Tenants provided with on-going/ periodic information on how to minimise any risk from Legionella.
Low Risk Sites	Sites with dedicated stored services contained within the site Sites with no stored water such as combination boilers	Review of these sites every five years. Residents provided with practical information in the form of Newsletter or Leaflets (annually) on how to minimise any risk from Legionella

- 3.5 It may be the case that in the initial stages of assessment it is not possible to assign a property into either category. In this case the higher risk category (High Risk) will be applied and the results of a full risk assessment will be utilised to properly determine the risk and risk category.
- 3.6 In addition, if the water system has been changed then a new risk assessment will be carried out to reflect changes and possible maintenance issues.
- 3.7 Suitably experienced and qualified consultants who will be either members of the Legionella Control Association (LCA) or the Water Management Society (WMSoc) will

be appointed by the Council to undertake risk assessment of the water systems within sites deemed to be High Risk.

- 3.8 The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify any areas in the water systems that present a hazard to the occupants of the property.
- 3.9 The Designated Person for addressing water assets must ensure that any property that has a water supply that could reasonably produce a water aerosol is subject to a risk assessment.
- 3.10 It is acceptable for a desk-top study and archetypal survey programme to be carried out where there are large numbers of similar properties such as terraced houses or apartments.
- 3.11 Where a desk-top approach is taken and the sites is deemed to be low risk and not requiring site visits to physically assess the risk, a sample will be taken to confirm the desk-top risk assessments findings. An acceptable figure will be 5% of each property type.
- 3.12 In order to provide a full risk assessment as required for High Risk sites, it is necessary for a survey to be undertaken of the water systems within a property. This is used to assess the potential of exposure of persons to Legionella bacteria.
- 3.13 The full risk assessment will highlight areas of concern and will recommend where changes (both physical and procedural) are required and will form the basis of a written scheme for controlling the risk from exposure.
- 3.14 Physical changes would range from replacement/ reconfiguration of parts of the system through to increases in temperatures and throughputs required to reduce the potential proliferation of legionella bacteria and other microorganisms.
- 3.15 Procedural changes will involve the keeping of records to ensure that the system operating parameters identified as being required are not deviated from.

Scalding

- 4.1 Scalding may occur in many situations in all types of buildings and applications. The degree of potential scalding depends on the water temperature, contact time, susceptibility of individuals and the volume of water delivered.
- 4.2 The risk of burns and scalding is higher with regard to older people, people with mental illness or learning disabilities, unsupervised children, anyone with reduced sensitivity to temperature and people with disabilities (who may not be able to recognise high temperatures or respond appropriately or quickly). Fatal accidents have occurred in the case of whole-body immersion of vulnerable people in baths and showers.
- 4.3 Although susceptibility varies from person to person, it is generally accepted that the risk of scalding is significantly increased at temperatures in excess of 45°C.
- 4.4 As the primary method for controlling the risk of legionella in simple domestic water systems relies predominantly on increasing temperature, tenants in the previously

identified at risk groups will be assessed by either a Support Worker, Social Worker an occupational therapist or other similar support agency.

- 4.5 Where identified, appropriate remedial actions in the form of either the installation of Thermostatic Mixing Valves (TMVs) or appropriate signage will be undertaken.
- 4.6 Similar assessments of outlets in public areas will be undertaken and actions taken as deemed necessary.
- 4.7 In order to control the growth and multiplication of Legionella bacteria, it is necessary to raise hot water temperatures to a level which significantly increases the risk of scalding. In order to address this increased risk, it is necessary to implement precautionary measures to hot water outlets which are accessible to the high risk groups such as installing thermostatic mixing valves (TMVs).

Risk Assessment Review

- 5.1 In High Risk Sites where full Risk Assessments have been conducted, the Council will arrange for the risk assessment to be reviewed annually. The Designated Person for water assets will keep records of the dates of the last risk assessment and arrange for repeat inspections to be carried out.
- 5.2 It would be necessary to carry out ad hoc risk assessment reviews at other times, for example following major refurbishment works or changes of use to the building.
- 5.3 In Medium Risk Sites where annual Inspection and Disinfection of shared stored cold water services are carried out, the annual Inspection and Disinfection Certificate will be retained by the Responsible Person who will keep records of the dates of the last inspection / disinfection and arrange for repeat inspections to be carried out annually.
- 5.4 Health and Safety (H&S) Manual High Risk Sites – Council staff shall be provided with a H&S manual which will incorporate a water hygiene section that complies with Paragraphs 66 to 69 of the Health and Safety Commission’s ACOP and Guidance document “Legionnaire’s Disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems” (L8), and will contain the following:
 - Confirmation of the ‘responsible person’, their duties and any tasks delegated to other personnel under their control.
 - Provision for recording all inspections and work undertaken by contractors or site personnel on the water systems.
 - A copy of the risk assessment including schematic diagram of the water systems and any necessary precautionary measures.
 - Routine monitoring record sheets.
 - The manual must be retained for the life of the building. All inspection reports and records must be filed in the appropriate section of the manual, which needs to be retained for at least 5 years from the date of the inspection.

- 5.5 As identified from the Risk Assessment, checking, inspection, monitoring and cleaning procedures must be carried out as required, by or under the control of the Responsible Person.
- 5.6 The basic temperature monitoring and flushing will be carried out by the nominated officers. Cleaning and disinfection works will be carried out by contractors.

High Risk Sites

- 6.1 A calibrated and certified digital thermometer is required to meet the legal requirements for temperature monitoring

Procedure	Frequency	Progress
Flushing of little used outlets (as identified by the Risk Assessment)	Weekly	Flush through and purge to drain without the release of aerosols all little used outlets – including taps, showers and toilets. Outlets should run for 5 minutes, with care being taken regarding drainage capability.
Cold Water Systems Temperature Checks	Monthly	Check and record temperatures at the cold water sentinel taps. The temperature should be less than 20°C within two minutes. If the required temperature of 20°C is not recorded, relevant officers should be consulted (however, it should be noted that during the warmer summer months, water temperatures in excess of 20°C can occasionally be recorded.
Hot Water System Temperature Checks	Monthly	Taps Check and record temperatures at the hot water sentinel taps. The hot water supply should reach 50°C within one minute. If the required temperature of 50°C is not recorded, the Asset and Health and Safety Officers should be consulted. Where a Thermostatic Mixing Valve (TMV) is fitted the hot water supply prior to

		<p>the TMV should reach 50°C within one minute. A temperature check should be made using a surface temperature probe placed on the hot water pipe entering the TMV.</p> <p>Calorifier (Recirculating Systems Only) Check and record temperature of the water leaving and returning to the calorifier. (Where suitable gauges are not installed the check is made by placing a thermometer with a surface probe on to the pipes). Outgoing should be at least 60°C, return not less than 50°C.</p>
Shower Head / Spray Tap Cleaning	Quarterly (minimum) or more frequently if necessary	Dismantle and disinfect all showerheads using suitable materials. Use a de-scale agent (as required) to remove lime scale by soaking the showerhead for 30 minutes, or until the lime scale has been removed. All disinfection, de-scaling and cleaning products must be used in accordance with the COSHH risk assessment for the products.
Hot Water Systems Temperature Checks for Scalding prevention	Six monthly	Carry out inspection and test of all TMV's in line with NHS Model Engineering Specification D08 and or manufacturer's instructions.
Cold water storage tanks	Six monthly	Test temperatures at the incoming water inlet (or closest point) and at a point remote from the ball valve. Tests to be taken once in the winter and

		once in the summer, temperature should be below 20°C.
Calorifier inspection	Annually	Drain the calorifiers. Check for debris at base of unit. Clean and disinfect as required
Cold water storage tanks	Annually	Visual inspection of the cold water storage tanks to ensure that the tanks are in a sound clean condition and conform to all current legislation. If necessary any faults should be rectified and the tanks should be disinfected with certificates issues upon completion.
Cold Water Systems Temperature Checks	Annually	Test water temperature at a representative number of outlets to ensure that the system is reaching satisfactory temperatures throughout. Temperatures to be >50 °C after 1 minute All outlets should be covered over the annual period
Hot Water Systems Temperature Checks for Scalding prevention	Annually	Carry out service to all TMV's in line with NHS Model Engineering Specification D08 and or manufacturer's instructions.

Medium Risk Sites

- 7.1 A calibrated and certified digital thermometer is required to meet the legal requirements for temperature monitoring

Procedure	Frequency	Progress
Cold water storage tanks	Annually	<p>Test temperatures at the incoming water inlet (or closest point) and at a point remote from the ball valve. Temperature should be below 20°C.</p> <p>Visual inspection of the cold water storage tanks to ensure that the tanks are in acceptable</p>

		<p>condition and conform to all current legislation.</p> <p>Tanks and down-services to be disinfected using appropriated product and method with certificates issued upon completion</p>
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Action in the Event of a Case of Legionnaire’s Disease

- 8.1 If it is suspected or confirmed that an employee or resident has contracted Legionnaires Disease there is a legal obligation to report this to the Health and Safety Executive (under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations - RIDDOR).
- 8.2 If the outbreak is confirmed as originating within a property, the relevant officer will provide any such details and records as the investigating department require. The relevant officer will also ensure that the Chief Executive and Insurers are informed of a potential investigation. An emergency action team will be set up to deal with any requirements for rectifying the situation. Depending on the immediate circumstances, this could involve but not be limited to

- Decanting of tenants
- Clean and disinfection of the system
- Microbiological analysis of the water system
- Evaluation of monitoring/cleaning records
- Co-operation with investigating bodies
- Dealing with media enquiries

Void Property Management

- 9.1 If a property is to remain unused for an extensive period of time (over 4 weeks), the water systems will be fully drained, ensuring that all calorifiers and water heaters are taken off-line.
- 9.2 For shorter periods that exceed one week the procedure will be:
- Flush through and purge to drain without the release of aerosols including with taps, showers and toilets.
 - Outlets should run for 5 minutes, with care being taken regarding drainage capability.
- 9.3 If a system has been out of use and not regularly flushed, it will require disinfecting prior to being used. This process will be carried out by a competent person as the levels of disinfectant must be carefully controlled. There may be airlocks within the system that will require removal if it has been drained down and refilled.

Procedures

10.1 To comply with legal duties the Council as both an employer and as the landlord for the housing stock, is required to:

- Identify and assess sources of risk;
- Prepare a scheme for preventing or controlling the risk;
- Implement, manage and control the scheme of precautions;
- Keep records of the precautions implemented
- Appoint a person to be managerially responsible
- Provide suitable and sufficient training for all relevant personnel to carry out their duties with respect to the control of Legionella.

Equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability (including most at risk groups)

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out to determine whether the policy would have an impact on any member of staff, tenants, or contractor workforce, which unfairly discriminates or disadvantages them in the context of the Equality Act 2010.

11.2 Whilst the EqIA has identified that there are no particular groups who will be unlawfully disadvantaged by this policy, it is identified that there are certain groups at increased risk. These groups are:

- children
- adults with learning difficulties
- oxygen users
- people taking certain medication
- those suffering the effects of drugs and alcohol
- adults aged 65 and older
- people with disabilities
- Individuals being supported by the Community Safety team and related support services

11.3 An EqIA will be undertaken on an annual basis.

Resident communications

12.1 The Council will regularly share information with residents so that they understand their responsibilities in relation to legionella and know how to raise any concerns with the Council. This is undertaken through the Council's resident community strategy which includes sharing regular safety messages through resident emails, letters, leaflets, and social media.

12.2 Key content from this policy will be included in the Oxford City Council Welcome Pack which is sent to new tenants and Oxford City Council webpage for residents to access.

12.3 Oxford City Council is committed to providing a high level of customer care and positive communication which is vital to effective safety. This will support residents in their understanding of safety risks, advise them of how they can manage the risks within their properties, and encourage them to report any concerns about fire safety.

- 12.4 Further monitoring of feedback will take place through resident surveys and this intelligence will be used to inform future reviews of this policy.
- 12.5 Periodic engagement with residents will take place to ensure that this policy, along with other policies, remain customer facing.
- 12.6 Residents who are wanting to report a non-urgent safety concern can do so by using the link below: [Report a Building Safety Concern with council housing | Instructions – Oxford City Council](#)
- 12.7 All emergency safety reports should be made to 01865 249811.

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To: Council
Date: 23rd March 2025
Report of: Nerys Parry, Director of Housing
Title of Report: Social Housing Allocations Scheme

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford, following public consultation.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Priority:	Good, affordable homes
Policy Framework:	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford; 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to authorise the date on which the Allocations Scheme is implemented, noting the explanation and timelines in paragraph 23; 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make minor changes to the Allocations Scheme in order to comply with changes to legislative and statutory guidance, related Council policies (approved by Cabinet) and to make technical changes to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the scheme. 	

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Draft Allocations Scheme	No
Appendix 2	Allocations Scheme Review Equality Impact Assessment	No
Appendix 3	Allocations Scheme Proposals Survey Response	No
Appendix 4	Risk Register	No

Introduction and background

1. The Allocations Scheme is the housing policy used to assess and prioritise Council tenants and other residents in housing need for offers of social housing available in Oxford. Demand for social housing is significantly greater than the supply, so the policy seeks to balance local needs and priorities with current legislation, guidance and best practice.
2. This policy has an important role in helping to prevent homelessness and housing those in the greatest housing need in Oxford, including households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, living in overcrowded or unsuitable homes, or needing to move for health or welfare reasons.
3. Following a review of the Allocations Scheme to identify improvements to the existing policy, and a consultation with Council tenants, including prospective Council tenants in temporary accommodation, other residents and partner organisations a final version of the new policy has been drafted (see **Appendix 1 Draft Allocations Scheme**) taking into account the feedback received and is being submitted for approval.
4. The Allocation Scheme supports the Corporate Priority of **Good, affordable homes** and aims to:
 - Balance competing priorities, helping existing Council tenants seeking to move and new customers in housing need applying for social housing in Oxford.
 - Make the best use of the limited new and existing social housing becoming available in the city owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) and the Registered Providers participating in the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (ORAH) partnership.
 - Help facilitate the churn of existing social housing to increase the supply becoming available to re-let to existing tenants seeking to transfer and new housing applicants in housing need applying for social housing in the city.

Legal Requirements

5. The proposed new policy is OCC's statutory Allocation Scheme issued under s.166A of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. Pursuant to s. 166A(1) of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. All housing authorities must have an allocation scheme for determining priorities, and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation; and they must allocate in accordance with that scheme (s.166A(14)). All aspects of the allocation process must be covered in the scheme, including the people by whom decisions are taken. When framing or modifying their scheme, authorities must have regard to their current tenancy and homelessness strategies (s.166A (12)).
6. The new draft Allocation Scheme has been developed in accordance with the legal requirements set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), including amendments made by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It also reflects duties under the Equality Act 2010, Welfare Reform legislation, and relevant statutory guidance. A comprehensive list has been added in Appendix VI of the scheme.
7. The new Allocations Scheme and its proposed changes from the previous scheme meet these legal requirements, while also supporting the aims of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 23-28 and Tenancy Strategy. The Allocations Scheme also has a role in complying with the amendments introduced by the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and revised consumer standards, specifically the Tenancy Standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard which set out requirements on providers of social housing on how they allocate social housing, and states Registered Providers of social housing (including OCC as a social landlord) should treat tenants and prospective tenants with respect and take into account tenants' views. Council tenants' views, as well as the views of prospective tenants currently in our temporary accommodation (and other housing applicants responding the consultation), have informed and shaped the development of this policy.

Work to develop a new allocations policy

8. The Allocations Scheme is reviewed periodically to ensure it is kept up to date, reflects current guidance and best practice and helps meet current and emerging trends such as rises in homelessness or overcrowding affecting families with younger children. An internal review of the Allocations Scheme has been completed, including a review of current legislation, guidance and best practice and the approach of other Local Authorities with similar high housing need challenges to identify any improvements to be made.
9. While improvements have been identified, having considered the schemes of other Councils, officers have concluded that much of the existing Allocations Scheme is considered to be working well, including the existing housing qualification criteria, use of five housing need priority bands and Choice-Based Lettings to advertise and let social housing. The policy has been operating for some time, and service users on the register and officers have a relatively good level of understanding how the Council's banding system works, which supports transparency and knowledge of how social housing is allocated in Oxford. Choice Based Lettings continues to offer the most transparent and fair system for social housing allocations, maintaining an

element of client choice while being perceived as fairer than direct allocations used in some other councils. However, a number of key areas were identified to improve the existing Allocation Scheme to better meet current priorities and help tenants and other residents in housing need, while delivering better operational efficiency.

10. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of this process (see **Appendix 2 Allocation Scheme Review Equality Impact Assessment**). The new Allocation Scheme has been developed in accordance with OCC's duties under the Equality Act 2010, with commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity between different groups (e.g. disabled and non-disabled people, men and women) and fostering good relations between communities.
11. OCC has due regard to the protected characteristics as defined in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is also required by law to give Reasonable Preference to households meeting categories set out within s66A(3) (a) to (e) of the Housing Act (as amended) - including priority to those who are homeless/at risk of homelessness, living in overcrowded or unsuitable homes, or needing to move for health or welfare reasons and award additional preference to those with urgent housing needs.
12. Following the review a consultation was undertaken on the proposals with Council tenants, other residents and partner organisations seeking their views and feedback on what was proposed to change and what was proposed to stay the same which was used to help draft the final proposed Allocations Scheme.

Proposed changes to the Council's scheme

Change Summary	Rationale	Implementation
<p>Increased Priority for residents at risk of Homelessness with Multiple Housing Needs</p>	<p>Maximise homelessness prevention and to stop residents with multiple needs, from becoming homeless: The Council and our partners seek to help prevent residents in Oxford from becoming homeless. A large number of housing applications are received each year from residents who are at risk of homelessness and can no longer stay in their current home. This includes households living with friends or relatives, or in private rented or tied</p>	<p>To award urgent priority to housing applicants with multiple needs at risk of homelessness, through no fault of their own, who are already living in overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable housing, or those with additional health or social and welfare needs, to improve their chances of being offered housing before they become homeless.</p>

	<p>accommodation, who have been asked to leave through no fault of their own and are unable to find alternative housing at risk of homelessness.</p>	
<p>Help for Homeless Residents from Oxford Housed Outside of the City by OCC</p>	<p>Help for Oxford residents housed out of area in the private rented sector (PRS) /reduce the disincentives to move into private housing:</p> <p>The Council aims to rapidly re-house residents that are homeless living in temporary accommodation into suitable social or private rented housing. Homeless residents are sometimes re-housed in private rented accommodation outside of the City.</p> <p>Due to the high demand for housing in Oxford, it is sometimes necessary for the Council to offer homeless households private rented accommodation outside the city.</p> <p>The Council recognises that while some homeless residents are happy to move to a home outside Oxford — particularly to nearby districts with good links to the city — others may be reluctant to do so and would prefer to live in Oxford, where they have stronger connections and support networks.</p> <p>This can act as a disincentive for people to move and accept PRS offers, increasing stays in temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>To introduce a new significant priority award for housing applicants who are owed a homeless duty by Oxford City Council and who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened with homelessness or currently homeless and living in Temporary Accommodation, and • Re-housed by the Council into private rented accommodation outside the city to discharge a homeless duty owed by Oxford City Council. • This priority would be time-limited for up to 2 years, to give households the opportunity to continue to apply for social housing in Oxford for a reasonable period of time after they have moved and ensure that reasonable preference continues to be given to groups including those who are homeless, overcrowded, living in unsuitable housing or need to move on health or social and welfare grounds.
<p>Freeing Up More Bungalows and Adapted Homes and Helping Existing Tenants</p>	<p>There are social tenants living in bungalows or adapted homes who request to move because they no longer require this type of accommodation and want a different type of home.</p> <p>There are also many tenants and other residents with urgent health needs who require a</p>	<p>The Council is proposing to introduce a new urgent priority award to help tenants who are requesting to move to another more suitable home and free up a higher demand property for another resident in housing need where they are living in a:</p>

	<p>bungalow or an adapted property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bungalow and would like to move to another type of property (excluding a move to another bungalow). • A significantly adapted flat or house they no longer require and would like to move to another property without adaptations.
<p>Freeing up More One-Bedroom Homes and Helping Existing Tenants</p>	<p>There are social tenants aged 55 or older living in one-bedroom flats suitable for younger residents who sometimes request to move to older persons housing. There are also high numbers of younger residents in housing need aged under 55 requiring one-bedroom properties, including those who are homeless living in temporary accommodation, existing tenants needing to move and other residents living in unsuitable housing.</p>	<p>To introduce a new urgent priority award for Council and other social tenants aged 55+ requesting to move where they are currently living in a one-bedroom general needs flat (without an age restriction) and would like to move to lower demand 55+ older persons' housing which is more suitable for their needs.</p>
<p>Making the Best Use of Family Housing</p>	<p>There is a high demand for family housing in Oxford and there are a large number of residents with children in housing need who are homeless living in temporary accommodation, in overcrowded conditions or otherwise unsuitable housing who need to move. Only a small number of family housing becomes available to let each year and unfortunately many families with children wait a long time before they are re-housed living in very difficult circumstances.</p> <p>We seek to make the best use of the scarce family housing becoming available and will normally only allocate family properties to households with dependent children under 18 or where it has been accepted it is</p>	<p>To strengthen the existing approach of prioritising offers of family housing to residents with children under 18 by introducing changes where there are older household members still living with a housing applicant to explicitly state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any adult child aged 22 or older will be excluded from their parents' housing application and not count towards the number of bedrooms they require and their priority to move (unless an exception is agreed). <p>To also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow exceptions where following an assessment of the households housing need it is accepted that is reasonable to include them, for example adults with

	<p>reasonable to include an adult on another's housing application unless an exception has been agreed – including established household members.</p>	<p>health needs needing full-time care who cannot live alone, former care leavers or a full-time student living at home and still studying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise adults they can make their own housing application and will have their housing need assessed based on their individual circumstances – for example a single adult sharing a room while living with their parents will have a one-bedroom housing need and be awarded priority for being overcrowded.
<p>Making the Best Use of Supported Housing</p>	<p>There is a high demand for supported housing in Oxford. This includes young parents, single homeless people, care leavers, and residents in the Mental Health Pathway. The Council aims to make the best use of the limited supported housing in the city. Priority is awarded to help residents who are assessed as ready to “move on” who no longer require supported housing freeing up spaces for those who need this help.</p> <p>The Oxford Register for Affordable Housing currently has 3 housing lists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer List – for tenants of the Council and other social landlords in Oxford • Homeless List – for residents owed a statutory homeless duty by the Council living in Temporary Accommodation • General Register List – for all other applicants, including residents living in the private rented sector, with friends or family (and currently 	<p>To Keep the existing Housing Lists and create a new “Move On” list on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing for residents living in supported housing assessed as ready to move on (and to remove them from the General Register List).</p> <p>This will help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents move to settled suitable social housing or private rented housing and free up more supported housing for residents not yet ready to live independently. • Ensure only properties suitable for households moving on from supported housing are offered to this list and minimise lettings times. • Increase transparency by providing clearer information to housing applicants on each Housing List what properties are available to them. • Make the allocation process more efficient and reduce

	<p>residents living in supported housing)</p> <p>At present, residents living in supported housing are included on the General Register List. However, not all properties becoming available to let are suitable for many households moving on from supported housing. This can create confusion and disappointment and slow down re-let times for other housing applicants when a resident in supported housing is advised they will not be offered a property because it is not considered suitable for their needs. If housing applicants from supported housing are transferred from the General Register List to a new Move On List this will help ensure that only suitable properties are advertised to those leaving supported housing.</p>	<p>offer times to households in housing need.</p>
<p>Guidance on Health and Housing Awards</p>	<p>Residents and support agencies can find the council's process to determine additional priority due to health or disability hard to understand, and the lack of additional information can make it difficult to manage expectations.</p>	<p>Additional guidance has been included in the Allocations Scheme (Appendix V) to provide more detail on how housing applications are assessed when a resident is requesting to move on health grounds. This aims to give the public clearer information on how decisions are made, increasing transparency</p>

Key Areas to Remain the Same

- 13. Housing Register Qualification Criteria, Priority Bands and Choice-Based Lettings** - Social housing in Oxford is in very high demand and far more people apply than can be housed. Housing applicants must qualify for inclusion on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (ORAH) to be considered for any offer of social housing. The new Allocations Scheme proposes to keep existing qualification criteria and exceptions for housing applicants around Local Connection, Income and

Savings, Rent Arrears and Anti-Social Behaviour. The new Allocations Scheme also proposes to continue using five priority bands to assess housing need, and Choice-Based Lettings to advertise and offer most properties, to make this process as fair and clear as possible.

14. **Freeing up More Family Homes and Helping Existing Tenants** - there are social tenants living in larger properties seeking to downsize to smaller, more manageable homes. At the same time, there are also a large number of families with children in housing need who are homeless, overcrowded, or living in unsuitable accommodation urgently need re-housing. The current Allocations Scheme gives high priority to tenants of the Council and other social housing tenants who are under-occupying a family home and requesting to move, this will continue in the new scheme. The Council also offers support and financial assistance to help council tenants move to homes better suited to their needs and free up larger homes for families in housing need.

Consultation

15. A public consultation has been completed to ensure the views from residents, including OCC tenants (and prospective tenants), Registered Providers of social housing and other key stakeholders, including the County Council, other Local Districts, local advice/support agencies and staff, have been taken into account in the drafting of the proposed new Allocations Scheme.
16. The consultation on the proposals included engagement through an on-line survey asking to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with each key area and proposed change (see **Appendix 3 Allocations Scheme Proposals Survey Response**), and feedback from a series of focus group meetings with Council tenants covering each area in detail. A sample of homeless applicants living in Temporary Accommodation were also asked by staff to provide their views too, as prospective tenants. Housing applicants were also able to respond to the survey. The consultation was promoted through a range of mediums, including social media, tenants in touch, the Choice-Based Lettings website (used by tenants and other residents applying for social housing) and targeted contact by staff to tenants and residents they were working with. Registered Providers of social housing and other partners within Oxford were also asked for views.
17. The responses to the survey can be broadly split between residents and other organisations working in housing. Almost 75% of responses were completed by residents living in a range of tenures, including Council and Housing Association tenants, private sector tenants, friends and family, people living in supported housing and temporary accommodation or their own homes. Most of the remaining 25% of responses were on behalf of organisations including Registered Providers of social housing operating in Oxford and other key stakeholders.
18. The majority of respondents to the survey supported the proposals for the new Allocations Scheme and strongly agreed or agreed. Every proposed change was supported by a majority of the respondents. This supports the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the new strategy and policy. **Allocations Scheme Proposals Survey Response in Appendix 3** show a breakdown of the response to each proposal and additional details regarding each proposal.

19. Following feedback received during the consultation engagement activities with tenants, residents and stakeholders the following changes will also be completed to improve outcomes:

- The new draft Allocation Scheme has been updated to confirm tenants and other housing applicants who are survivors of domestic abuse and owed a homeless relief or main duty by OCC will qualify for priority to move.
- The new draft Allocation Scheme has been updated to ensure that rent arrears accrued by tenants or other residents due to domestic abuse will not be taken into account, thus stopping a survivor of domestic abuse being allocated another home.
- Greater promotion of the help offered by the Council and other Registered Providers of social housing to under-occupying social tenants wanting to move, including information on the existing help and incentives available for Council tenants to move to more suitable homes, thereby freeing up more family housing for families with young children in housing need.
- A review of whether any help with removals and/or incentive payments can be made available for qualifying social tenants seeking to move from high demand bungalows, adapted homes or general needs one-bedroom properties they no longer require/need to lower demand housing, thus freeing up more homes for households needing this type of housing.
- A review of the information available to residents to help prevent homelessness where possible.
- A bibliography has been included in Appendix VI of the Allocations Scheme including key legislation relating to the Allocations Scheme.

Local Government Reorganisation

20. Local Government Reorganisation is due to change Council structures in Oxfordshire in 2028, raising the possibility that the Council could choose not to proceed with changes to allocations schemes until the new Council forms. While this has been considered, it's been rejected, due to the current high demand in Oxford for social housing and homelessness services. The Council would be taking a significant risk of doing nothing for two years in light of rising housing demand; as well as ensuring our ongoing compliance with the Social Housing Consumer Standards in terms of council housing allocations. It is also likely that the successor Council for Oxford will continue to use this scheme within the current boundaries of Oxford City at least initially, ahead of agreeing any further changes/a new scheme.

Options

21. **Recommendation** – approve the new draft Allocations Scheme to ensure the Council is compliant with current legislation, guidance, best practice and feedback from tenants and residents taken into account in the drafting of the policy and support housing priorities in this area.

22. **Do nothing** – under this option, the Council would not approve the new draft Allocations Scheme. The Council would risk being non-compliant with legislative

requirements under key legislation such as the Social Housing Regulations Act and Consumer Standards by not taking into account the views of tenants and also other residents and stakeholders – including partner Registered Providers of social housing who support these changes. This would also impact on the ability of the policy to support housing priorities effectively.

Implementation of the new Allocations Scheme

23. This paper also requests the delegation to officers to only activate the new scheme once the Council is ready to implement it fully. This is because the policy changes require changes to the Council's online Choice Based Lettings system, so time is required to amend the Council's housing IT system. Once changed, residents, staff and key stakeholders will be informed of the start of these changes. It is not anticipated this will take any more than 6 months, and in the meantime the current scheme will still be in effect.

Financial implications

24. There are no financial implications in respect of this allocations policy. There should be no increase or decrease in budgeted expenditure through the implementation of this policy.

Legal issues

25. The key piece of primary legislation in respect of the allocation of social housing is section Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 ('the HA 1996'). This details the law in relation to the allocation of housing, eligibility, housing registers, applications and allocation schemes. The HA 1996 was amended by Part VII of the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. As detailed within this Report, s.166A of the HA 1996 requires the Council to have an allocation scheme which determines priorities and the procedure to be followed.

26. As detailed above, the Council has a responsibility as a Local Authority and social landlord to have an Allocation Scheme in place to meet statutory requirements and local priorities. The updated draft Scheme ensures that the Council continues to meet its duties under the Localism Act 2011. Further, it also ensures compliance and alignment with associated legislation including the HA 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. A public consultation has been completed to ensure the views from residents including tenants, and others have been considered; it supports the twin roles the Council has as a Local Authority and Social Landlord, and further demonstrates that the Council is committed to the responsibilities it has for tenants and other residents.

27. The changes proposed to the Allocations Scheme seek to ensure the policy is up to date with current legislation, guidance and best practice and reflects the priorities of tenants, other residents and stakeholders in the City. Thus, it appears that the changes are fit for purpose. This does not mean that it will be immune to challenge, and it may be necessary to update it further if these are successful. However, in the meantime, the changes are well-drafted, thorough, detailed, transparent and clear.

Level of risk

28. A risk register has been completed and can be seen in **Appendix 4**. The Allocations Scheme needs to be changed to reflect currently legislation, guidance, best practice and feedback from tenants, residents and other key stakeholders.

Equalities impact

28. The Allocations Scheme seeks to balance local needs and priorities with current legislation, guidance and best practice as well as local housing conditions. The Allocations Scheme is a key housing policy supporting the priorities of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which include *great homes for all, preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid re-housing response, ending rough sleeping* benefitting all households with protected characteristics in housing need.

29. A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQI) was completed and shared as part of the consultation on the proposals. To reflect part the Council's housing related commitments within the Equality Impact and Diversity Strategy to provide Responsive Services and Customer Care for those with protected characteristics and to improve engagement with tenants and residents in housing policy development. The EQI has been updated following the consultation and is available in **Appendix 2 Allocations Scheme Review Equality Impact Assessment**.

30. The proposed revised Allocations Scheme will benefit the majority of residents including households in housing need with protected characteristics, applying for social housing. However, with a finite supply of housing and increasing demand any changes to the relative priority awarded to applicants applying for housing will have an impact on others on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. These have been kept to a minimum.

31. The relative merits of keeping the Allocations Scheme unchanged or making the proposed changes have been carefully considered and the proposals aim to get the balance right to continue to help house Council tenants and other residents in the highest housing need in the City including those in housing need with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

33. There are no expected carbon or environmental impacts from changing the Allocations Scheme.

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Oxford City Council Housing Allocations Scheme

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Effective from TBC

1. Introduction - Allocations Scheme

1.1. Preamble

Oxford is an area of high demand for social housing. There is a scarcity of affordable housing and a high number of people who wish to be housed. There is also a substantial level of homelessness in the City. Oxford City Council aims to allocate the resources available fairly, objectively and systematically.

Oxford City Council has formed a partnership with the major Private Registered Providers of Social Housing operating within the City. This is the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing Partnership (ORAH Partnership). The Council maintains a common register of social housing on behalf of the Partnership. There is a single application process for housing allocated by OCC.

Oxford City Council works within the legal and regulatory framework governing the allocation of social housing. This scheme also takes into account local need and demand as well as local housing conditions.

Oxford City Council operates a Choice Based Lettings scheme for most housing applicants. This allows applicants (with some exceptions) to have as much choice as possible over where they live, within the limits of what types of accommodation they are eligible for. It is also a system which gives a range of information to applicants,

allowing their choices to be informed and realistic, based on the limits of what stock is available.

This Allocation Scheme is subject to periodic review to ensure that the allocation of properties continues to be fair, objective and systematic whilst meeting local need and statutory obligations.

1.2. Definition of Terms

An Allocation

- a. the selection process by which a person becomes a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by a housing authority; or
- b. the nomination process by which a person becomes a secure or introductory tenant held by another housing authority; or
- c. the nomination process by which a person becomes an assured tenant of accommodation held by a Private Registered Provider.

The term 'assured tenant' includes a person with an assured shorthold tenancy, including of an Affordable Rent property. 'Secure tenant' includes a person with a flexible tenancy granted under s.107A of the Housing Act 1985.

Bidding

The process of applying for a property advertised as available to let through Choice Based Lettings. An applicant must be eligible for that type of property.

Choice Based Lettings

The advert-based system that Oxford City Council uses to let properties. Applicants are assessed, properties are advertised and applicants bid for them.

Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (ORAH)

Also known as the housing register, consists of three separate lists; the General Register List, the Transfer List and the Homeless List. Instead of the Council and PRPs keeping their own different housing registers, applicants can join a single housing list within Oxford City (ORAH). Social housing in the city owned by the Council and its partner PRPs is let through the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. It is administered by Oxford City Council and managed by Oxford City Council and its partners.

Priority Band Start Date

The date on which an applicant is eligible to be included in Priority Bands 1 to 4. and the date used for prioritising order within each of these bands

Registration Date

The date on which an applicant is eligible to be included within Band 5. For assessed applications added to the Housing Register, this is the date the application was received. This is the Priority Band Start Date for applicants placed in Band 5.

PRP

A Private Registered Provider of social housing. The official name for housing associations, housing cooperatives and housing companies that are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing.

REMS

The Removal Expenses and Mobility Scheme is an incentive scheme available to Council tenants living in family accommodation seeking to downsize to a smaller property or move to older persons' accommodation.

Social Housing

Low-cost housing that you rent from a council, PRP, charity or faith organisation.

Transfer Applicant

A secure tenant of Oxford City Council or an Assured tenant or Secure tenant of one of our partner PRPs living in the city and whose application has been accepted onto the ORAH Transfer List. Tenants of OxPlace living in social housing are also eligible to be included. This includes qualifying secure tenants with a flexible tenancy granted under s.107A of the Housing Act 1985.

1.3. Oxford City Council's Principal Housing Objectives

- To allocate housing fairly, consistently and carefully
- To allocate suitable accommodation to households in housing need
- To work to meet the Council's responsibilities to homeless households in Oxford and to work to prevent homelessness
- To provide a high-quality service with courteous and efficient staff
- To make the best use of the Council and our partner PRPs' stock, and any other stock available to us
- To ensure that empty properties are let quickly and efficiently
- To promote the widest possible access to housing to residents of Oxford or those assessed as having qualifying connection to the City, including directing applicants to private rented stock in appropriate circumstances
- To allow applicants to express choice in selecting their accommodation wherever possible, with some exceptions including applicants owed a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 who may be made a Private Sector Offer outside of the Allocations Scheme by the Housing Needs Team or be made a direct offer (and applicants accepted on to the move on scheme)
- To provide clear and easy to understand information to allow applicants to make informed choices

- To set out clear standards so that applicants know what to expect
- To offer appropriate advice to applicants who we are unable to house, including accurate and timely referrals to other agencies
- To promote sustainable communities
- To act legally and adopt best practice
- To review the advice and allocation service with the intention of producing continuous improvement
- To treat members of the armed forces/former members of the armed forces in housing need, equally with regard to a qualifying connection to Oxford (see section 3.3.5.)

2. Responsibilities - Allocations Scheme

2.1. The Council's Responsibilities

2.1.1. The Legal Framework

In framing this allocation scheme, Oxford City Council complies with the relevant legislation, including, but not exclusively: the 1985 and 1996 Housing Acts, as amended by the Homeless Act 2002; the Equality Act 2010; The Localism Act 2011, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (and relevant consumer standards) and other Acts specified within this document (see **Appendix VI Bibliography** for more details)

The Council also takes due account of case law, best practice and government regulations and guidelines, such as the Codes of Guidance on Allocations:

- Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities,
- Providing social housing for local people
- Right to Move and social housing allocations
- Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse
- Improving access to social housing for members of the armed forces.

The scheme also has regard to other Oxford City Council Strategies, including the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Tenancy Strategy and complements the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

2.1.2. Reasonable Preference

The Council is required to give reasonable (but not over-riding) preference to the following categories of person:

- Those who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need)
- Those who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under s.192(3)

- Those in insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory conditions
- Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- Those who need to move to a particular locality in the district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others.

These categories are not discrete, and applicants can fall under different categories.

2.1.3. Additional Preference

Under Section 167 (2) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council can give additional preference to applicants in urgent need. This means the Council can decide which applicants within a particular category should be given the greatest priority for housing, and which of the groups should be prioritised over others.

The Council's Allocations Scheme must also give "additional preference" to a person who falls into a reasonable preference group and is considered to have urgent housing needs where the person:

- is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service, or
- formerly served in the regular forces, or
- has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
- is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

2.1.4. Information Provision

The Council is required to provide information about Allocations Scheme.

The Council will provide a free summary of the Allocations Scheme to any member of the public who asks for one. The Council will provide a full copy of the Allocation scheme, which can be inspected at our offices. The Council will provide a full copy of the Housing Allocation Scheme (at a reasonable cost) to any member of the public who asks for one. The full Allocations Scheme and summary are available on the Council's website.

Personal Information

Applicants have the right to see the information held about them, and receive a copy of information held on computer, or on paper file. This is a "subject access request". Personal information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and will be subject to appropriate confidentiality.

Additional Information

Applicants have the right to be told in writing if they are considered ineligible for housing or do not qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register.

2.2. Equality and Diversity

Oxford City Council:

- Acknowledges and values the diversity of people who live in Oxford
- Is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all and the prevention of discrimination. Oxford City Council aims to promote equal opportunities to contribute to a fair and socially inclusive City
- Recognises the importance of delivering services and running facilities that are accessible to all, and where these are managed by the Council directly, aims to ensure that no-one will be prevented from accessing services and facilities
- Has produced a Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy whereby it has committed to improve its monitoring of take up of housing services by different groups.

2.3. Targets and Monitoring

2.3.1. Annual Lettings Plan

The Housing Register consists of four-separate housing lists:

- **The Homeless List** for applicants to whom Oxford City Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty and placed in temporary accommodation who are waiting an offer of accommodation
- **The Transfer List** for Council Tenants and eligible OxPlace and Housing Association Tenants living in Oxford applying for a move to alternative accommodation
- **The General Register List** for all other households applying for social housing in Oxford
- **The Move On List** for housing applicants living in supported housing in Oxford assessed as ready to move on by the Council (see section 4.3.4. Move-On)

A housing applicant will normally only be expected to be on one housing list or application at the same time.

The Annual Lettings Plan is designed to set allocation percentages, which are targets set by the Council to determine the proportion of social housing offered to different lists within the Council's Housing Register, in order to best balance their competing demands and needs. The Director of Housing will approve the Annual Lettings Plan setting out the percentage of allocations to be made to each group. (see Appendix II).

Factors taken into account in setting the Annual Lettings Plan each year will include:

Supply

- The number of properties that are expected to become available to let during the year (consisting of re-lets and new build properties)
- The proportion of properties expected to become available to let for single-applicants and couples, including designated elderly and older persons accommodation
- The proportion of two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four-bedroom properties or larger that are expected to become available to let.

Demand

- The number of applicants in assessed housing need on each Housing List waiting for one-bed, two-bed, three-bed and four-bedroom properties or larger.

2.3.2. Local Lettings Plans

From time-to-time Oxford City Council may decide to develop Local Lettings Plans for specific blocks or areas, in order to develop balanced and sustainable communities, particularly where there are new developments of 100 units or more. The decision to implement a local lettings plan will be approved by the Cabinet and be made available for members of the public.

Where local lettings plans are introduced, clear evidence will be required of the need to vary the usual policy. The decision will always take into account the implications for equal opportunities and consider the “reasonable preference” & “additional preference” criteria. A local lettings plan will generally be expected to be part of a wider action plan to address the issues in that locality.

Local lettings plans are designed to be time limited and will be monitored to ensure that the plans do not discriminate directly or indirectly on racial or other equality grounds and that reasonable preference is given overall to applicants in the reasonable preference categories.

2.3.3. Monitoring the Allocation Scheme

Oxford City Council will monitor the allocation outcomes so that targets can be altered, should there be a risk that the reasonable preference requirements will not be adequately met. The Allocations and Lettings requirements included in the Tenancy Standard will also be monitored to ensure continued compliance.

2.3.4. Statistical Records

Statistical records by ethnic origin, gender and disability of those applying for and being allocated housing are essential for a proper examination of allocation systems, to enable analysis in terms of the type, age, location and quality of accommodation applied for and subsequently obtained. Such monitoring will demonstrate whether

housing resources are distributed according to need and will highlight any inequality in the allocation of particular property types, or within particular areas of the City.

This information is collated on an anonymous basis from data recorded on housing application forms.

Records are kept and monitored of the entire allocation process. The purpose is to identify how different groups are receiving and taking up offers and to highlight the quality and type of accommodation. This information will provide an indication of the length of time people wait, according to band, bidding patterns and refusal rates after viewing.

Diversity and equality monitoring is by self-assessment by the applicant as part of the application process. This includes disability but does not necessarily mean that the applicant will be considered for accommodation suitable for disabled people. Such property is usually allocated on the recommendation of the Council's Health and Housing Assessment Panel, or by using other assessments, for example, an Occupational Therapist report, and is dependent on the type of property and the level of adaptations an applicant is assessed as requiring.

2.4. Verification

All documents should be verified in line with the Council's verification processes and anti-fraud processes as appropriate.

2.5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about having a professional and lawful approach to handling disclosed information.

Information passed on to officers will be handled sensitively. All information provided by customers will be held securely under the provisions of current General Data Protection Regulations.

The purpose of information sharing is to:

- Assist in addressing housing need
- Enable the provision of appropriate assistance and support
- Combat fraud
- Improve risk assessments
- Help create sustainable tenancies
- Improve communities

Information will be passed on in the following circumstances with the customer's consent. Disclosure of any sensitive information will have to be authorised by an Allocation Officer and will be provided on a need-to-know basis only.

Oxford City Council is under a duty to protect public funds and may use the information provided and match it against other information held by the Council and

other public bodies, or similar external agencies, for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud, and to verify the information provided.

Oxford City Council and other ORAH partners will have consent to make such enquiries as is considered necessary in order to assess the application, and all other departments, organisations and agencies are authorised to provide such information as requested.

Oxford City Council and other ORAH partners have consented to share information on the application form between themselves, with other statutory and voluntary agencies, including other housing providers, health trusts, support providers, police, probation, social services and other local authorities, where deemed necessary, and/or to provide the applicant with advice or assistance regarding their re-housing, or other services that may assist the applicant. The Council and other ORAH partners will not give information about an applicant to anyone else unless the applicant provides written authorisation to do so.

Customers should note that, where consent is refused, it may not be possible to process a housing application and they will not be included on, or will be removed from, the housing register.

Information may be passed on in the following situations **without** the customer's express consent:

- For the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud
- Where not passing on the information is reasonably considered to constitute a safeguarding issue and there is considered to be serious risk to the customer or a third party. In such cases a risk assessment will be conducted and any actions must be proportionate.

2.6. Applicants' Responsibilities

2.6.1. Supplying Information

- Applicants are responsible for giving full and accurate details on all forms and correspondence and in all other communications about their application for housing.
- Applicants must inform the Council of any change in circumstances straight away, especially those which may affect their needs for re-housing.
- Applicants should reply to any correspondence/requests from the Council or ORAH partnership which needs a reply, within the specified time scales
- Applicants who are made an offer should let the Council know their decision about whether to accept it within the timescale specified.
- If information is not supplied, the Council or an ORAH partner may cancel an application, defer it until the information is provided, or withdraw an offer of housing.

2.6.2. False Statements

An applicant who either omits to provide information that is requested or gives false or misleading information will be treated as behaving unacceptably.

Consequently, they will either:

- not qualify for inclusion on the housing register; or
- will be removed from the housing register, and
- will lose any time that they have already accrued on the housing register.

Furthermore, they may be liable to prosecution. Tenancies obtained as a result of false or misleading statements can be terminated. If in the future an applicant re-applies and is allowed to be included on the Housing Register, they will be issued with a new registration/housing need Priority Band Start Date.

2.6.3. Deliberately Worsening Circumstances

Applicants have a responsibility not to deliberately worsen their circumstances in order to progress to a higher band by an action or inaction. They have the responsibility to make best use of the accommodation they have and will be assessed as if this is the case.

Where an applicant is considered to have deliberately deprived themselves of capital or assets they will be treated as having “notional capital” to the value of those disposed of and this will be taken into account in the assessment of their application.

Should an applicant give up more suitable accommodation, or where a deliberate act, or omission to act, results in the worsening of circumstances without good reason, the Council may assess the application based on the applicants housing need in their previous accommodation, prior to the “deliberate” act. Furthermore, if an applicant is not using accommodation that they could reasonably be expected to use to improve their housing situation, their housing need and priority will be assessed as if they are occupying this accommodation.

Applicants considered to have lost previous accommodation due their own actions or behaviour, or that of a member of their household or a visitor, may also be excluded from qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register.

The following applicants will normally be considered to have deliberately worsened their circumstances:

- Homeless applicants found to be intentionally homeless who still qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register
- Former homeless applicants removed from the Homeless List who have refused an offer of suitable accommodation resulting in an end to the Council's homeless duty in the last 12 months since the duty ceased.

In such circumstances applicants will be referred to the Exceptional Circumstance Panel for consideration and are unlikely to be an award higher priority than a moderate Band 4 social and welfare award (see section 4.5.1).

3. Application and Assessment - Allocations Scheme

3.1. Applying for Social Housing through the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (ORAH)

The ORAH is a single housing register operated by Oxford City Council, together with partner Private Registered Providers of Social Housing with stock in the City. The standards and expectations on all parties are set out in a Partnership Agreement. A Partnership Board comprising of senior representatives from the City Council and the partner Housing Associations manages the partnership.

There is a single application process with information available to guide applicants. These are available from local offices of the ORAH partners. Applicants can go to any of these offices for information, advice and support. Further information is also available on the Council website including information about the Housing Options available in Oxford and how to apply for inclusion on the housing register.

3.2. How to Apply

Applicants will be required to complete a housing application and to supply any additional information required for the assessment of their application before they can be included or to remain on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing.

Before applying for housing, applicants are advised to consider other housing options that may help improve their housing situation. Applicants can also seek advice on the range of housing solutions that may meet their needs from the Housing Options team at the Council.

Older Applicants

There are some Older Persons Schemes in Oxford that are only considered suitable for older applicants aged 55 or 60 years or older (see section 5.5 Sheltered/Older Persons Accommodation).

Transfer Applicants

Applicants living in social housing seeking to move, who are already tenants of Oxford City Council, Ox Place or tenants one of the Council's partner Housing Associations living in Oxford can apply for inclusion on the Transfer List. Transfer applicants are also encouraged to apply for a mutual exchange.

Joint Applicants

Applications from partners who are cohabiting may be registered as joint applicants giving both parties joint and several rights and responsibilities for any future tenancy. Partners include same sex couples.

In some cases, one partner may be ineligible due to their immigration status. In this case the other partner will be registered as the sole applicant. Dependents, family

members or other adults who are not partners of the applicant (such as residential carers) cannot usually be joint applicants. If joint applicants wish to change to sole applicants (for example due to a relationship breakdown) they will need to notify the Council and one of the applicants will need to make a sole application. Normally the application will continue in the name of a partner with residency and/or parenting responsibilities. The remaining applicant can make a new application and may be issued with a new registration date/housing need priority band date.

3.3. Eligibility and Qualification

Only applicants who are eligible for housing and who qualify for an allocation of housing will be included on the Council's housing register and considered for offers of accommodation. Applicants who are not eligible or do not qualify for housing will not be included on the housing register. If an applicant has already been included on the housing register and is found to no longer be eligible for housing, or to no longer qualify for housing, they will be removed from the housing register and notified.

3.3.1. Who is not Eligible

Persons from abroad

A person may not be allocated accommodation under Part 6 if he or she is a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation under s.160ZA of the 1996 Act. There are two categories for the purposes of s.160ZA:

- i.a person subject to immigration control - such a person is not eligible for an allocation of accommodation unless he or she comes within a class prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State (s.160ZA(2)), and
- ii.a person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control - regulations may provide for other descriptions of persons from abroad who, although not subject to immigration control, are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation of accommodation (s.160ZA(4)).

The regulations setting out which classes of persons from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No.1294) ('the Eligibility Regulations'). The law on eligibility is subject to change and OCC will apply current legislation. The eligibility provisions do not apply to applicants who are already secure or introductory tenants or assured tenants of a Private Registered Provider if that applicant has a 'reasonable preference' for an allocation. Persons who are able to produce evidence of an in-time appeal of their leave to remain will be treated as though they continue to have leave to remain.

Age of Eligibility

Applicants under the age of 18 who are eligible can only be considered for some supported properties held by our PRP partners unless accepted as statutory homeless (usually if they have a guarantor) and in other exceptional circumstances.

3.3.2. Who Qualifies for Inclusion on the Housing Register?

The sections below provide information on who will normally qualify to be included on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. Once on the Housing Register, applicants are prioritised in terms of housing need and waiting time. However, inclusion on the register does not guarantee an offer of housing, as there are many more applicants than properties available.

3.3.3. Qualification For Inclusion on the General Register List

Social housing is a scarce resource and there are many more people applying for housing in the City than can be housed. Only applicants who have a connection to Oxford through residence, employment or close family associations, with some exceptions, will normally qualify to be included on the Housing Register.

A qualifying connection is established by way of one or more of the following:

1. The applicant or joint applicant is permanently resident in Oxford and that residence is of their own choice and has been continuously so for at least 6 months.
2. The applicant or joint applicant was previously resident in Oxford as a matter of choice and the period of residence was either:
 - At least six out of the last twelve months or
 - Three out of the last five years
3. The applicant or joint applicant is employed in Oxford for a minimum of sixteen hours per week and the work is not short-term, marginal or of a temporary nature. Employment ancillary to work in another District outside of Oxford and voluntary work is excluded.
4. The applicant or joint applicant has close family associations with Oxford. Family association will normally be defined in relation to close relatives (i.e. parents, adult children or siblings) and where there is no estrangement. However, other family associations, wider than immediate family, may be taken into account (for example dependent children, grandparents, grandchildren and step relations) where there is evidence of frequent contact, commitment or dependency. To qualify, the relatives must live in Oxford now and have been continuously resident for a minimum of five years.

With the exception of:

- Existing or former members of the regular armed forces;
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the regular armed forces who are no longer entitled to reside in Services Family Accommodation and the death of the spouse or civil partner was attributable (wholly or partly) to service; or
- Serving or former members of the reserve forces who need to move because of a serious injury, illness or disability attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.
- Applicants aged 60 years or older with no qualifying connection to the City assessed as eligible and suitable for sheltered housing;

- Care leavers (see below for more information) aged up to and including 24 who have spent a period of, or periods amounting to, at least 13 weeks in care in England or Wales since their 14th birthday, of which at least one day was since attaining the age of 16.
- A person who is or has been a victim of domestic abuse carried out by another person and who has been assessed as needing to move for reasons connected with that abuse, including from accommodation initially occupied on a temporary basis.
- “Life and Limb” and other exceptional cases, who need to move away from another area to escape violence or harm, or that have moved to Oxford and approached the Council for housing assistance who are considered to be in high housing need by the Exceptional Circumstance Panel. Such applicants, and others on a case-by-case basis, may be allowed to qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register at the discretion of the Allocations and Assessment Team and notified whether or not they are treated as if they have a qualifying connection. It is expected these cases will be very rare due to the high levels of applicants in housing need with a connection to Oxford already on the Housing Register.
- Homeless clients within the single homeless accommodation commissioned by the Oxford City Council and Homelessness Alliance accommodation in the City awarded an exemption prior to entering the pathway in relation to Rough Sleeping who have no qualifying connection with any area may at the discretion of the Allocations Manager be included on case-by-case basis.
- Residents in Homelessness Alliance accommodation living in Oxford with only a pathway connection to Oxford that have continuously lived there (normally for at least 12 months) may be included at the discretion of the Assessment and Allocations Team.
- Long term residents in Mind or Response Housing (normally for a minimum of 2 years) without a qualifying connection to Oxford or elsewhere may be included at the discretion of the Allocations Manager and awarded a qualifying connection to Oxford.
- Long term residents of other “temporary” accommodation (normally a minimum of 2 years), including Emmaus, without a qualifying connection to Oxford or elsewhere, maybe included at the discretion of the Allocations Manager and awarded a qualifying connection to Oxford.
- Qualifying tenants living in social housing outside of the City who work or need to move to Oxford to take up an offer of work and if they are unable to do so it would cause them hardship. Any such applications will be assessed under Right to Move legislation and guidance (see Appendix IV for more information).

Care Leavers

Where a Care Leaver does not have a qualifying connection to Oxford through residence, employment or close family associations - an exception to this will be applied where they are an eligible child, a relevant child or former relevant child. These are defined as follows:

(a) eligible children as set out in paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) currently being looked-after;

(b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) have been looked after by a local authority in England or Wales for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, since the age of 14, at least one day of which must have been since attaining age 16.

(b) relevant children as set out by section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) no longer a looked-after-child; (b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) a former eligible child

(c) former relevant children aged under 25 as set out by section 23C(1) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) aged 18 to 24; and (b) either a former relevant child or a former eligible child.

* From *The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Victims of Domestic Abuse and Care Leavers) (England) Regulations 2025 SI No 706*

Care Leavers aged under 18 should refer to the section on Age of Eligibility for more information.

A qualifying connection through residence is not established in situations, that include, where the applicant is:

- In prison, a probation hospital or similar accommodation within Oxford
- Detained in Oxford under the Mental Health Act;
- Living in temporary or supported accommodation, which would normally be able to access the “Move-on” scheme within City but whose only connection to Oxford is established through residence in such accommodation. This includes, but not exclusively, residents living in accommodation that forms part of the Homeless Alliance, Mental Health Pathway or the Sapling Project.
- Living in any other form of accommodation considered “temporary” in nature, including hospital accommodation, halls of residence and other forms of supported accommodation not normally able to access the “Move-on” scheme and emergency or interim accommodation provided by an authority in fulfilment of a homeless duty.

Due to the acute shortage of housing in the City and the high demand for housing the Council reserves the right to determine what accommodation is considered permanent accommodation within the City for the purposes of assessing a qualifying local connection through residence and what accommodation should be excluded.

An applicant on the General Register List or applying to be included on the General Register List who would normally fall into to a qualifying group can be disqualified under certain circumstances in accordance with Section 3.4.

3.3.4. Qualification For Inclusion on the Transfer List

The ORAH Transfer List is open to secure tenants of Oxford City Council, Ox Place and secure/assured tenants (including tenants on fixed term tenancies that have successfully completed the first year of their tenancy) of one of our partner PRPs living in Oxford. Tenants with an introductory tenancy or starter tenancy may also be included on a case-by-case basis where there is an urgent need for them to move.

Tenants of our ORAH partners not living in Oxford are not eligible to be included on the Transfer List, but they can apply for inclusion on the General Housing Register if they meet the qualification criteria.

Transfer cases are given priority for an allocation of housing on the same basis as General Register applicants, each applicant being awarded a band according to housing need and taking into consideration both the statutory requirement to give reasonable preference to particular groups, and the locally established additional preferences, if any, which apply.

Where an applicant is an existing secure tenant of the Council or a secure/ assured tenant of a PRP the tenant cannot be disqualified from receiving an allocation of housing on the basis of their immigration status - section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996.

There are a number of locally determined additional preferences that, because they relate to specific rights of secure and assured tenants, or to the management needs of the Council, are applicable only to applicants on the Transfer List. These include additional preference for tenants who are currently under-occupying Council or PRP family properties and who want to move to a smaller home and free up a larger home for a family in need and are dealt with in Section 4.

See also section 7.2 on “under occupation” for details of the Removal Expenses Moving Scheme (REMS) for Council Tenants applying for a transfer to downsize.

An individual applicant on the Transfer List, or applying to be included on the Transfer List, who would normally fall into a qualifying group can be disqualified under certain circumstances in accordance with Section 3.4.

3.4. Who May Not Qualify

Individual Applicants Who May Not Qualify for Inclusion on the Housing Register

The Housing Act 1996 s.160ZA states that social housing may only be offered to qualifying persons and the Council is given the power to determine what classes of person are or are not qualified to be allocated social housing under s.160ZA.

Where the behaviour of an applicant or a member of the applicant’s household is unacceptable, as described below; or where the applicant has not demonstrated financial responsibility; the Council may not register the application or remove them from the Housing Register.

A member of the Allocations and Assessment Team may exclude an applicant whose behaviour has been unacceptable. The reasons can include rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.

3.4.1. Applicants Unlikely to be Re-Housed due to Financial Circumstances

The Council may take into account the financial circumstances of housing applicants (including existing tenants living in social housing) and/or those who fall into one or more of the reasonable or additional preference groups within the Allocations Scheme, when considering whether an applicant qualifies for inclusion on the Housing Register. Social housing in Oxford is a scarce resource, and those applicants with sufficient resources to secure alternative forms of accommodation without undue hardship may be excluded from the Housing Register. (See Appendix III).

3.4.2. Rent Arrears

The Council and the other ORAH partners treat the non-payment of rent very seriously.

Rent arrears are defined as including any money owed to Oxford City Council, another Local Authority, a PRP or a Private Landlord in the form of non-payment of rent, former tenant arrears, hostel charges, chargeable repairs (including any deductions from deposits paid for by the Council's Private Sector Team where the damage is considered to be wilful or unreasonable) and associated Possession Order court costs. Amounts under £400, when combined, may be disregarded for this purpose.

Housing applicants with rent arrears will fall into one or both of the categories below:

- Former tenants – with property related debts relating to a property/or properties where they have previously lived
- Current tenants – with property related debts relating to where they currently live.

Where a housing applicant has rent arrears, they may be excluded from qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register.

3.4.3. Individual applicants that have previously held a tenancy and meet one or more of the following criteria will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register and will be excluded where they are:

1. **A former tenant of the Council, another Local Authority or a PRP** and have been evicted from, or given up their former property, owing rent arrears and still have unpaid rent arrears outstanding (which are legally recoverable) and have not been re-paid in full.
2. **A former tenant of a Private Landlord** and have been evicted from, or given up their former property, owing rent arrears in excess of 2 months or more (which are legally recoverable) and have not been re-paid in full. This includes the loss or partial loss of a deposit paid for by the Council due to re-charges caused by wilful or unreasonable damage to a property (not due to reasonable wear and tear).

NB Criminal damage to a property is covered under ASB.

Where a former tenant has been excluded from the housing register and still owes rent arrears that have not been re-paid in full, they will not usually qualify for inclusion on the housing register until the Council is satisfied that they have proved they are suitable to become a tenant. Suitability can be demonstrated by the applicant making a reasonable re-payment agreement with the landlord and adhering to it consistently for at least 12 months. The exclusion may be re-imposed where an applicant who has kept to a re-payment arrangement later defaults after being included on the housing register.

3.4.4. Individual applicants that currently hold a tenancy and meet one or more of the following criteria will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register and will be excluded where they are:

1. **A tenant of The Council, another Local Authority or a PRP** where a Court Possession Order has been issued regarding rent arrears, the tenant is in breach of the Court Order and/or on-going action is being taken to evict the tenant.
2. **tenant of a private sector landlord** where a Court Possession Order has been issued regarding rent arrears, the tenant is in breach of the Court Order and/or on-going action is being taken to evict the tenant.

If an applicant with rent arrears has been allowed to join, or remain on, the Housing Register they will not normally be considered for an offer of housing until they have demonstrated they are suitable to be a potential tenant and have paid their arrears in full or maintained a satisfactory payment arrangement for a reasonable period of time (see section 5.8.3).

3.4.5. Unacceptable Behaviour

Oxford City Council and its ORAH partners take unacceptable behaviour, particularly, anti-social behaviour (“ASB”) very seriously.

Individual applicants where they, or members of their household, meet one or more of the following criteria will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register and will be excluded:

- Applicants who have been evicted from a Council, PRP or private rented property, for illegal subletting or antisocial behaviour;
- Breach of tenancy for behaviour which is a nuisance or annoyance to those in the locality of the dwelling; or a conviction for using the dwelling for immoral or illegal purposes, or committing an indictable offence in the dwelling, house, or in the locality of it;
- Domestic abuse causing a partner or other family member to leave the property/or loss of an applicant’s accommodation due to this;
- Deterioration of the dwelling house or furniture provided for use under the tenancy due to waste, neglect or fault;
- Tenancy induced by false statement or false statements (see section 2.6.2)
- Housing applicants or members of their household who are considered by the Council responsible for serious ASB including abusive or threatening behaviour to others;

- Applicants or household members who permit visitors that cause serious ASB; or.
- Where they have assaulted a member of staff.
- False or misleading statements or omissions, in connection with a housing application, benefit claim or award.

The list above provides examples only; other forms of unacceptable behaviour may lead to exclusion too. The Council will not tolerate abuse, threats or assaults to staff and will involve the police where appropriate. If an applicant or member of their household is considered responsible for such unacceptable behaviour and their case is referred to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team. Their case will be assigned an Anti-Social Behaviour Investigator and they will be notified of the outcome. Depending on the seriousness of the incident they may receive a warning, or they may be advised they will not qualify for inclusion on the housing register or they will be excluded and removed.

Exceptions may be made by the Allocations Manager if there is persuasive evidence that behaviour has been amended and another tenancy has been successfully maintained.

3.4.6. Duration of Exclusion for Unacceptable Behaviour

Where an applicant has been dis-qualified for inclusion on the Housing Register:

1. For unregistered applications the sanction for un-acceptable behaviour will normally last for a minimum period of 5 years, after which the applicant must be able to prove that the exclusion is no longer valid.
2. If after a minimum of a year an applicant's circumstances change significantly and there is persuasive evidence, they have successfully modified their behaviour for a satisfactory period of time they may reapply. This is only expected to be in exceptional circumstances due to the serious nature of unacceptable behaviour and the impact and risk it has to others.

Where an offence has been committed which potentially compromises another person's safety, this condition may be indefinite pending review.

3.4.7. Applicants Not Meeting the Eligibility &/or Qualification Criteria

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility &/or qualification criteria to be included on the Housing Register will be notified of the reasons in writing. Applicants no longer meeting the eligibility or qualification criteria will be removed from the register and notified in writing of the reason(s) why their application has been cancelled.

Applicants have the right to a review of this decision (see reviews and appeals).

3.5. Household Make-up/ Households with Dependants

3.5.1. Children in Care

Where care is:

- Compulsory: children are treated as though at home, subject to written confirmation from Social and Community Services that the children are to live with the parents on a permanent basis should they be allocated a suitable property. Failing such confirmation, children should not be included on the application.
- Voluntary, children are treated as though at home.

No offer should be made in either case without confirmation from Social and Community Services that the children are to live on a permanent basis with their parent(s)

3.5.2. Day To Day Residence and Parenting Responsibilities

In making an assessment of whether a child can legitimately appear on an application, officers will seek to determine who the child normally lives with by looking at the circumstances. The courts have held for instance that where children have social housing available with one parent it would only be in exceptional circumstances that another unit of accommodation would be made available. A child could live with its parents on a split week basis. The same child may therefore legitimately appear on two applications, but this would be exceptional.

In such cases, the tests below should be used, evidence for this must be available, for example a written agreement and/or sanction of Social and Community Services, or a Residence Order from the Courts. However, these are not determinative. The assessment can for example “look behind” a Residence Order to establish what the practicalities of the childcare are such as taking the children to school, looking after them in school holidays and so on.

In the absence of documentary evidence an investigation would be required to determine who cares for the child, takes them to school etc. A similar test to that contained in part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 should be used:

- Does the child currently reside with the applicant?
- Is the child dependent on the applicant?
- Is it reasonable in the circumstances for the child to reside with the applicant?

Generally, weekend access will not count as day-to-day residence. The applicant must have significant day-to-day parenting responsibilities. As a rule of thumb, this would be for a minimum of three days and nights.

Possible types of documentary evidence which will be considered are:

- A Parental Responsibility Order from a court
- A Residence Order

- Proof of receipt of current Child Benefit
- Legal guardianship

Generally, there is a distinction between married /divorced parents and those formerly cohabiting.

- Where parents are or have been married there will often be a Residence Order settling the arrangements as to where a child will live.
- Unmarried fathers may acquire parental responsibility by inclusion on the child's birth certificate, Residence Orders or making a written Parental Responsibility Agreement with the mother. This should be formalised by completing a signed agreement via a solicitor, which is then registered with the Family Division of the High Court.

Officers may discuss individual cases with senior officers in the first instance and seek guidance from Oxford City Council Legal Services if required.

3.5.3. Extended Families - Minors

In cases where a minor is to be included in, or added to an application, but no parental responsibility exists within the household (e.g. grandchildren, nieces, nephews), satisfactory proof of the reasons for this must be obtained – for example proof of legal guardianship or confirmation from Children and Family Services that this action is necessary and permanent.

3.5.4. Adult Households Members

The Council seeks to make the best use of the very limited amount of family properties becoming available and will normally only offer family properties to households with dependent children.

Adults aged 18 years or older requesting re-housing will normally be expected to apply separately for inclusion on the Housing Register and not be included on another applicant's housing application as a household member unless they are applying as a joint applicant with their partner. This includes adult students studying and living elsewhere.

Established Household Members

Persons may request to continue to be considered as part of the household after they reach the age of 18 years of age, if they still reside with the applicant, and wish to continue to do so, and have continually resided within the household as a child up to that point. However, the Council reserves the right to exclude adult household members where they are not considered to be a permanent member of the household, are considered to have sufficient funds to resolve their own housing situation (see Appendix III), have been responsible for Anti-Social Behaviour or where it is not considered reasonable by the Council for the adult to continue to be included on the applicant's housing application. For example, older adult members, adult children who are pregnant or have their own children, who would normally be

expected to apply for housing separately and not be included on their parent's or another adult's housing application.

Existing adult children aged 22 years or older will be removed unless there are exceptional circumstances to remain in the household, including, where there is medical evidence an adult must live with their parent to provide or receive 24 hour care and other exceptions – for example tenants seeking to downsize to a smaller home, full-time students living at home still studying and care leavers (now living in stable home and wishing to remain).

Any adults excluded from an applicant's household will not be "counted" for the purposes of assessing the size of property they require or when assessing their housing need, such as any overcrowding they may be experiencing.

Persons aged 18 years or older may be required to provide a statement/evidence regarding their financial circumstances on request – failure to do so will result in them being excluded from applicant's housing application.

3.5.5. Adding Adults to an Application

Adults should not be added to an application where this results in the need for larger accommodation than for which the applicant's household was originally eligible, unless an over-riding need such as ill health or disability can be shown (for example, where an applicant needs to look after an elderly parent and live with the parent to provide full-time care, or where a new partner requires a separate bedroom). Such cases must be thoroughly investigated, and discretion rests with the Options/Assessment/Allocation Officers in the first instance.

The desire to be part of the household is not sufficient reason for inclusion on the application in these circumstances. Adults requiring an extra bedroom must only be added to an application if they have a demonstrable need to live with the applicant and if they plan to make their long-term home on a permanent basis with the applicant.

Applicants who require a full-time residential carer may include the carer on their application. Proof of the requirement should be sought from Social and Community Services or a primary health care professional. The carer should be assessed as part of the household even if not resident (i.e. lack of bedroom priority may be due) if 24-hour care is required. The requirement for a separate bedroom should be recorded so that the household is eligible for the correct size of property.

3.5.6. Expectant Mothers

Expectant mothers should provide a MATB1 form or other adequate proof of pregnancy from a health professional (followed by a MATB1 form). Expectant mothers will be placed in an appropriate band based on their current housing circumstances. The unborn child will not be 'counted' as a member of the household, for assessing over-crowding, until proof is received by the Council that the child has been born.

3.5.7. Fostering

Families undertaking long term fostering may be able to include foster children as part of their application to ensure that they are eligible for the appropriate sized property. Long term fostering is normally defined as being fostering for a period in excess of three years (not necessarily involving the same child or children). In exceptional circumstances fostering for less than 3 years will be considered where a long-term relationship is evidenced – in such cases the Exceptional Circumstance Panel will consider whether to allow the child to be included on the housing application. It is essential that written confirmation of the fostering arrangement be obtained from Children and Family Services.

Consideration will be given to this in assessing the application. This does not apply to households living in temporary accommodation to which the Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty. Short-term fostering is discounted.

Due to changes introduced by the Welfare Reform Act and the bedroom under occupation charge (“bedroom tax”), before an offer of family accommodation is made to an applicant on a low income with foster children, the Council will need to be satisfied that the applicant is able to pay any shortfall in rent that may be due from the applicant due to the “bedroom tax”. Foster children are not normally “counted” as household members under the “bedroom tax” rules (but this may change).

3.6. Assessment of Housing Need and Priority for Housing

All applications require officer assessment before being entered onto the Housing Management Information System (HMIS). This section gives information and guidance on matters relating to the assessment process. It is important that such assessments are carried out correctly, as an incorrect assessment could affect an applicant’s banding position, and therefore the applicant’s priority.

As a general principle, applicants/household members can only be registered on one application at any given time. However, there may be situations relating to the care of children where individuals are recorded on two applications. Household formation will be determined on the basis of evidence provided (it is the responsibility of applicants to make such evidence available).

If an applicant moves address, it is their responsibility to notify the Council as soon as practicably possible, and usually within 28 days. In such cases, a new application form should be completed, and the application re-assessed.

All applicants within Oxford City are expected to have their housing circumstances verified and may be visited, at least once, by an ORAH officer or another member of staff from the Council, before an offer of permanent accommodation is made. Applicants applying from outside Oxford City will usually have their circumstances verified by their own Local Authority, or if they are a tenant in Social Housing, by their current landlord.

3.7. Calculation of Overcrowding and Under-Occupation

Definition of Bedroom Usage

Assessing bedroom usage is a major element in determining an applicant's current circumstances and determines what the situation could be, rather than how resources are currently being used. An award of priority is given for each bedroom lacking in the applicant's current accommodation, based on this assessment. The two key aspects that must always be considered are:

The Best Use Principle - the best use should be made of the bedroom resources available so that, for example, a bedroom used for storage should be counted as a bedroom available for use as defined by this principle.

The Control Principle - there may be sufficient bedrooms in a property, but the applicant cannot control how the bedrooms are actually used. They may, for instance, be lodgers or living with a family who control how bedrooms are used.

The most common issues relating to bedroom usage are listed below:

- Studios - Count as having a bedroom, lacking a living room.
- Bedroom availability - Bedrooms available must be counted, even if not used. If claimed not used because unfit for use, this must be verified and advice of the Residential Regulation Team may be sought.
- Sharing a bedroom with non – applicant(s) - Counts as lacking a bedroom.
- Size of bedrooms - Bedroom under 4.2 square metres (45 sq ft) are discounted.
- Best Use (mixture of sexes) - If bedrooms can be better used, assume they are for assessment purposes.
- Need for carer - Where there is a recognised need for a full-time residential carer, then notionally a second bedroom may be lacking for the carer in the current accommodation. Priority can be awarded for the lack of this bedroom.
- Under-occupiers - Under occupying transfer applicants in two bed or larger family properties, may be eligible for incentives to transfer to smaller properties.
- 'Exceptional' cases* – Some cases that have been awarded a priority award by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel may be made eligible to under-occupy a property, by decision of the panel, where the panel considers that the existing housing circumstances of a transfer applicant should not be disadvantaged by having to move.

Decant cases* – Transfer Applicants requiring a permanent decant move will normally only be able to apply for the size of property they are assessed as requiring due to the shortage of housing in the City.

Succession cases* – Where a legal successor is required to move to smaller accommodation, they will normally only be able to apply for the size of property they are assessed as requiring due to the shortage of housing in the City.

* Due to the introduction of the bedroom under occupation charge (also known as the "bedroom tax") by the Welfare Reform Act, applicants including the cases above will not normally be able to move to a property where they are under-occupying a

property unless they are exempt from the “bedroom tax” or the Council is satisfied they will be able to afford the shortfall in rent.

The following rules will be used to decide whether a household has either too many or too few bedrooms available for its use when assessing priority.

Each of the following will be considered to require their own bedroom

- Each couple or a single applicant;
- Each additional adult (aged eighteen and over) considered eligible to be part of the household;
- Two children of the same sex aged under 16;
- Two children of the opposite sex aged under 10;
- Any other child.

3.8. Exceptional Circumstances Panel (ECP)

The Exceptional Circumstances Panel for the ORAH partnership is the body responsible for making priority awards to applicants whose circumstances are not otherwise adequately covered by the Banding Scheme (see Section 4). The Exceptional Circumstances Panel will hear evidence about exceptional cases of housing need.

The banding scheme has been devised to take account of most circumstances, but there will sometimes be applicants in exceptional circumstances, or whose needs are complex and cannot be accommodated by the banding scheme.

The objectives of the Exceptional Circumstances Panel are as follows:

- To make evidence-based assessments of exceptional cases of housing need.
- To make evidence-based assessments of cases of complex need.
- To award additional priority within the banding scheme, where appropriate
- To make decisions on whether to give a “commitment to re-house” to previous ORAH partner tenants within Oxford who have surrendered, or tenants who are about to surrender, their tenancies.
- To ensure a fair and transparent process.
- To comply with the statutory requirement to give reasonable preference to particular groups.
- To assist in making the best use of the housing stock available to the ORAH partnership.
- To assist in achieving the aims of thriving communities and sustainable tenancies.

The Exceptional Circumstances panel will:

- Hear and assess evidence about applicants on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing.
- Make awards as appropriate.
- Impose conditions on awards as appropriate.
- Give advice as appropriate, including alternatives to be pursued.

The Exceptional Circumstances Panel will usually meet monthly. In cases of emergency, where there is a threat to 'life and limb' the panel will be available to convene within 24 hours.

Referrals, in the first instance, can be made by officers within the Housing & Property Team including the Housing Needs Team or by their equivalents in our partner PRPs. Self-referral by applicants or their representatives is not possible.

Applicants should provide evidence to the referring officer, in the first instance, to support their application to the Exceptional Circumstances Panel. This can include (though not exclusively): a summary of events which led up to the application being made; reports from police; education professionals; social and community services, or other agencies involved with the case; details of any action being taken against alleged perpetrators, if applicable, and a proposal for future action to resolve the situation. Independent evidence must be produced for the Panel to be able to review the case. If the officer is not satisfied that there is adequate evidence the officer may decide not to make a referral to the panel (or until such time there is).

Any additional priority awarded by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel will normally be made for a minimum of 3 months in the first instance, with a date set for review by the panel. The Panel can impose other conditions, for example, ensuring that survivors of domestic abuse are not re-housed in areas where they are at risk. The applicant's circumstances will be monitored and the award can be renewed if appropriate, or withdrawn where the applicant's circumstances have changed, making them ineligible for the award. In cases where suitable properties have been advertised but the applicant has failed to place a bid, or has withdrawn a bid, a direct offer may be made or the case referred back to the panel, for the panel to consider removing the original award. If an applicant is made a reasonable offer of accommodation and refuses the case may also be referred back to the Panel to consider whether the award should be moved.

The Exceptional Circumstances Panel will consist of one senior officer in the Rapid Rehousing team or Housing Needs team (usually the Rapid Rehousing Manager, Allocations and Assessment Team Leader or Senior Assessment officer) and an Assessment or Allocations officer. The only exception to this is for Exceptional Priority Band 1 decisions, where a second senior officer will need to sign off the decision.

The Exceptional Circumstances Panel can make the following awards:

- Exceptional Priority (Band 1)
- Urgent Social or Welfare Needs Priority (Band 2)
- Significant Social or Welfare Needs Priority (Band 3)
- Moderate Social or Welfare Needs Priority (Band 4)

An Assessment or Allocations Officer may make a Band 4 Moderate Social or Welfare Needs Priority award based on evidence provided without referring a case to the ECP (see Appendix II).

3.9. Commitment to Re-house

This 'award' may be made by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel as part of a 'negotiated surrender' of a social tenancy by the tenant. Applicants awarded a commitment to re-house are likely to be awarded an Urgent Social & Welfare Award and placed in Band 2 by the Exceptional Circumstance Panel. Conditions may be imposed on the award. The award will not normally be open ended and time restrictions will normally be placed on any commitment to re-house.

The purpose of this, is to give tenants, who may be unable to sustain their tenancy in the short term, the assurance that if they surrender the tenancy, they can be given increased priority on the housing register should they reapply when they are better able to manage a tenancy again. Such an agreement may be appropriate where elderly or unwell tenants are struggling to maintain a tenancy, and need a period of hospitalisation, respite care, or residential rehabilitation.

Should the Panel make this award, the Manager Responsible for Allocations is delegated to apply the award should the person subsequently apply for housing to Oxford City Council, and if the Manager Responsible for Allocations is satisfied that the applicant is ready to take up and sustain a tenancy again.

3.10. Health and Housing Assessments

The Health and Housing Assessment Panel (HAHA) is the body responsible for making priority awards to applicants whose health is either detrimentally affected by their housing or where it is likely to affect their future housing need, and whose circumstances are not otherwise adequately covered by the Banding Scheme (see Section 4).

The objectives of the Health and Housing Assessment Panel are as follows:

- To make the best use of the social rented housing stock
- To make evidence-based assessments of priority for housing where it is affected by health or disability
- To ensure a fair and transparent process
- To improve efficiency
- To improve partnership working
- To reduce the number of letters received from health care professionals.

Oxford City Council and the Primary Health Care Trusts have an agreed method of assessing health and housing and all applications with a potential impact on health will be assessed through this. This process seeks to determine both housing requirements as well as relative priorities of applicants, and to consider whether any other options could address the issue.

The Health and Housing Assessment Panel can make the following awards:

- Urgent Health or Disability Need(s) (Band 2)
- Significant Health or Disability Need(s) (Band 3)
- Moderate Health or Disability Need(s) (Band 4)

Housing Needs Officers, using the set protocols, may also make an award of a Significant (Band 3) or Moderate Health (Band 4). See Appendix II.

Where a household has more than one person with a health need, the HAHA Panel (or Housing Needs Officers following the HAHA protocol) should award the applicant's household the highest appropriate band. Applicants may not move up to another band because more than one person is suffering a housing-related health issue. If Housing Needs Officers, or the HAHA Panel, feel that this award is inadequate given the multiple needs of the applicant's household, the matter may be escalated to the ECP. If the applicant requests a review based on multiple housing-related health needs of the household, the matter should also be escalated to the ECP.

3.11. How Applications are Processed

Housing applicants are required to normally apply on-line and advice/assistance will be available should help be required to do this. Once an application has been accepted it is sent through to the Housing Needs Team. Once received in the team, applications are logged on to the database system and assessed by a Housing Needs Officer. The form includes a number of 'trigger' questions that may prompt, for example, a support needs assessment or health and housing assessment. Once the Housing Needs team has received an application and any supporting information required the Council will seek to assess an application within 10 working days. Where a housing application is incomplete, submitted without all of the required information or if further information is required this will increase the time it takes for the application to be assessed. The application may also need to be returned for it to be fully completed or cancelled.

Once assessed, applications are put into a Housing Need Priority Band (see Section 4) and the applicant will receive notification of their banding, the reason for it and the Registration Date (and Priority Band Start Date, if the applicant is placed in Bands 1 to 4). Applicants not considered eligible and/or to qualify for inclusion the Housing Register will be notified. If in the future an applicant is no longer considered eligible and/or to qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register they will be notified and removed from the Housing Register.

The Housing Needs team will maintain the database until the applicant is housed or resolves their housing situation, or they no longer qualify. This includes updating changes of circumstance and carrying out regular reviews of the list.

3.12. Re-registering and Change of Circumstances

Applicants must re-register periodically when they are asked to complete a review form. If the form is not returned/completed by the date stated on the review form the application will be cancelled.

Applicants have a responsibility to ensure they inform the council of any changes in their circumstances, such as, moving or someone joining or leaving the household, by notifying the Housing Needs Team in writing. If an applicant moves house, they

need to complete a new application form so that their housing need can be re-assessed or their application will be cancelled.

Where applicant's circumstances change, they should inform the Council promptly within 28 days (or as soon as practicably possible if they have exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to inform the Council sooner) so their housing need can be re-assessed based on their new circumstances. If an applicant is unsure whether a change in their circumstances needs to be reported, they should contact the Housing Needs team.

Where an applicant on the General Register List moves and notifies the Council within 28 days their Housing Application will be treated as continuous and they will retain their original registration date. However, the Priority Band Start Date may change if their housing need has changed and they move into/or within one of Bands 1 to 4 (see section 4.10).

Any applicants that move will have their housing need re-assessed based on their new circumstances and their priority band may change. General Register applicants who fail to notify the Housing Needs Team within 28 days of a change of their address, will have their Housing Application cancelled and will be removed from the General Register unless they have exceptional circumstances (see above). In such circumstances if an applicant re-applies for housing in the future (after 28 days of moving) their registration date and Priority Band Start Date will be the date their new application is received and the application will not be treated as continuous.

4. The Banding Scheme – Allocations Scheme

4.1. Banding

Once accepted as eligible and qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register by the Council, applicants will be placed in one of the five bands, which have been designed to reflect broad categories of housing need. The Banding scheme enables the Councils and other ORAH partners to meet their legal responsibilities for housing and also provides a fair and easily understood way of selecting applicants to receive offers of accommodation.

An applicant's circumstances may make them eligible to be placed in more than one band. In this case, they will normally be placed in the highest band for which they are eligible.

4.2. Band 1 (Exceptional Housing Need)

4.2.1. Exceptional Circumstances

Any applicant awarded this priority by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel, where there is an immediate risk to health and safety, complex needs cases, 'place of safety' cases or other exceptional or emergency needs.

This category is intended to be reserved for only the most urgent cases. This includes cases where rehousing is needed to protect the health or safety of the applicant or a member of their family, where there are complex needs, 'place of safety' cases etc. This could include the immediate threat of domestic violence and any other "life and limb cases".

The award of Exceptional Circumstances priority will normally be time limited (to 3 or 6 months) and priority will be reviewed at the end of the period.

4.2.2. Under-occupying by Two or More Bedrooms

Tenants of the Council, OxPlace or other ORAH partner tenants living in Oxford with an assured or secure tenancy, who will be giving up permanent family accommodation with at least two bedrooms more than they require.

Applicants should check whether they are eligible for any incentive schemes to assist with the cost of removals and associated expenses being operated by their landlord. See section 7.2 for more details and the assistance available to downsizing Council tenants through the Removal Expenses & Moving Scheme.

4.2.3. Decants and other Housing Management Moves

Priority is awarded for Council tenants, or tenants of partner Private Registered Providers living in Oxford, who need to move because of refurbishment, re-development or repairs* are due to be carried out, which cannot be done with the tenant living there and who have been awarded a 'decant' status by the Manager Responsible for Allocations.

Awards of this priority will be time limited. Transfer applicants would normally qualify for this status 6 months (or earlier for larger blocks requiring decanting) before they are required to vacate the property. At the end of the 6 months the Council may decide to make a direct offer, if the applicant has not been successful in bidding for a suitable property. This would not prevent an applicant from registering for a transfer at any time before this and being assessed on their current circumstances. *Emergency decants – relating to disrepair, for example due to damp or mould treatment requiring an urgent move may be arranged outside of the Allocations Scheme by the landlord (Council or PRP) by a management move.

4.2.4. Successor Tenants

These fall into two categories:

- Legal successors other than spouses or civil partners
- Policy successors i.e. Applicants (close family members) who would have been entitled to succeed to the tenancy but for the fact that one succession has taken place already.

In both instances priority will usually be awarded where:

- they are occupying a property with adaptations for a disabled person which they do not need, or
- they are occupying a property larger than they would qualify for under the allocation scheme, or
- where occupying the property gives the benefit of facilities and or services for which they would otherwise not qualify.

Legal successors will qualify as transfer applicants and policy successors will be classified as general register applicants for the purposes of the Allocations Scheme.

4.3. Band 2 (Urgent Housing Need)

4.3.1. Urgent Social or Welfare Needs

Applicants assessed as having an urgent need to move on social or welfare grounds and awarded this priority by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel. This includes applicants assessed as being in urgent housing needs and is a:

- former member of the Armed Forces
- bereaved spouse or civil partner of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner

&

This may also include applicants assessed as:

- serious harassment cases
- having multiple needs not already covered by other band categories
- urgently needing to move to give or receive care or support.

4.3.2. Urgent Health or Disability Needs

Applicants assessed as having an urgent need to move because of a health problem or disability and awarded this priority by the Health and Housing Assessment Panel.

Including applicants assessed as being in urgent housing need where the applicant is a:

- serving member of the Armed Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- serving or former member of the Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

4.3.3. Under-occupation by One Bedroom

Tenants of the Council, Ox Place Housing Company or of another ORAH partner living within Oxford, with an assured or secure tenancy, who will be giving up permanent family accommodation with one bedroom more than they require.

Applicants should check whether they are eligible for any incentive schemes to assist with the cost of removals and associated expenses being operated by their landlord. See section 7.2 for more details and the assistance available to downsizing Council tenants through the Removal Expenses & Moving Scheme (REMS).

4.3.4. Move-On

Applicants who have been assessed as ready to move-on* from supported accommodation, including:

- Applicants from voluntary sector hostels and move-on projects, including the Homeless Alliance, Mental Health Pathway, Young Persons' Pathway (including the Oxford Young Parents Project)
- Care leavers: applicants who are former "relevant children" as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002
- Any other similar housing in Oxford agreed by OCC

Applicants will be awarded this band category by the Council, when it is satisfied that the applicant has a qualifying connection to Oxford, is ready to move to secure independent housing and that on-going support will be in place where this is needed to sustain the tenancy. Applicants living in supported/move on accommodation within the City with a connection elsewhere, for example living in Homeless Alliance accommodation, will not normally be considered for Move On priority in Oxford and be expected to apply to the District where they have a connection – for example the District they had a connection to at the time they were accommodated in Oxford. Move On applicants are expected to consider all housing options including suitable Private Rented Sector accommodation too.

The Council reserves the right to remove Move On priority from an applicant at any time, for reasons including but not exclusively, refusal of a suitable offer, where they are not considered to be engaging, bidding realistically, have refused a suitable offer of social housing or private rented accommodation and/or are no longer considered ready to move on by OCC.

Quota arrangements may be used on the number of cases awarded move on priority at any time to balance demand against the supply of suitable properties becoming available each year for those ready to move on from supported housing and the needs of others on the Housing Register.

*Normally applicants with a qualifying connection to Oxford, including Care Leavers, will need to be resident in recognised supported/move on housing in the City to be considered for Move On priority. Exceptions may be agreed on a case-by-case basis but only rarely and in the most exceptional situations due to the very high demand for housing in Oxford - particularly 1 bedroom accommodation. Applicants will normally be expected to apply to the Local Authority where they are living.

4.3.5. Overcrowding by 2 or more Bedrooms Short

Families assessed as being overcrowded and two or more bedrooms short of their needs.

4.3.6 Special Circumstances Transfer (for Council and Social Housing Tenants only)

For existing social tenants qualifying for inclusion on the Transfer requesting to move where they are living in a:

- Bungalow and would like to move to another type of property (excluding a move to another bungalow)
- A significantly adapted flat or house they no longer require and would like to move to another property without adaptations.
- 1-bedroom general needs flat (without an age restriction) and would like to move to lower demand 55+ older persons housing

4.3.7. Band 3 Upgrade

Any applicant who qualifies for two or more compoundable categories in Band 3.

4.4. Band 3 (Significant Housing Need)

4.4.1a. Priority Homeless (not compoundable)

Existing applicants living in homeless temporary accommodation accepted as homeless and owed a main housing duty by the Council under s.193 of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.*

Existing applicants living in private rented accommodation accepted as homeless by the Council under s.195A of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 where:

If within two years beginning with the date on which an applicant accepts an offer under section 193 the applicant re-applies in the first incidence of homelessness for accommodation, or for assistance in obtaining accommodation, and the Council is:

- satisfied that the applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance, and
- satisfied that the applicant did not become homeless intentionally, regardless of whether the applicant has a priority need and
- a valid notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (orders for possession on expiry or termination of assured shorthold tenancy) has been given the applicant will be awarded this priority from the date the section 21 was issued.

*With the exception of restricted cases who may be awarded lower priority as set out in legislation.

Including tenants of the Council and other survivors of domestic abuse owed this duty by OCC.

4.4.1b. Homeless Prevention Duty (compoundable)

Applicants* who have formally been assessed by OCC as being owed a prevention duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (time limited)

4.4.1c Homeless Relief Duty (not compoundable)

Applicants* who have formally been assessed by OCC as being owed a relief duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (time limited). Including tenants of the Council and other survivors of domestic abused owed this duty by OCC.

4.4.2. Significant Social or Welfare Needs

Applicants assessed as having a significant level of social or welfare need arising from their housing situation and awarded this priority by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel. Including qualifying housing applicants on the General Register List:

- With dependent children who are assessed as being of no fixed abode or sofa surfing.

4.4.3. Significant Health or Disability Needs

Applicants assessed as having a significant level of housing need as a result of health problems or a disability and awarded this priority under the Health and Housing Assessment protocols.

4.4.4. Unsatisfactory Housing: Level 1

Applicants living in sub-standard accommodation that a qualified officer has assessed as a category 1 hazard, where repair is not possible or it is not practical in a reasonable timescale.

Applicants living in homes lacking the use of one or more of:
A kitchen (or cooking facilities)*, a bathroom, an inside WC, running water, or electricity will usually be deemed to meet this criterion.

Applicants whose existing housing is of a low standard will have their need assessed against the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (known as HHSRS). In the most urgent cases, or where an inspection is needed, the assessment will be carried out by a member of the Residential Regulation Team or other qualified officer.

A Category 1 Hazard is a defect where the consequences could include serious harm to applicants. For example: accommodation lacking any bathroom facilities, cooking facilities, or a water supply. The band category will not be awarded, if it is possible for repairs or other remedial action to be carried out within a reasonable timescale. Where a landlord has been served with an improvement notice, but remedial work has not been carried out, the Council may decide to award priority at its discretion.

Category 1 hazards can also exist due to overcrowding (the space and room standard). The Allocations Scheme already gives priority to households who are overcrowded in sections 4.3.5 and 4.4.5. Due to the scarcity of housing in Oxford and the high level of overcrowding it is sadly not unusual for category 1 hazards to exist under the HHSRS due to the level of overcrowding in the City. Where a prohibition notice has been issued, the Council may decide to award priority at its discretion (if the prohibition order is suspended and for example will not be enforced until the applicant moves from the property no additional priority will normally apply).

* Persons living in Move-on Hostel accommodation, where meals are available, are excluded from this category unless a qualified officer has assessed as a category 1 hazard. If a demolition notice has been issued priority will be awarded accordingly.

If a tenant of the Council or Housing Association living in social housing needs to be urgently decanted temporarily, for example due to repairs to be completed on their home, this will normally be arranged by the landlord outside of the Allocations Scheme via a management move.

4.4.5. Overcrowding by One Bedroom Short

Applicants assessed as being overcrowded and one bedroom short of their needs where they permanently reside.

4.4.6. Insecure Tied Accommodation (compoundable)

Applicants who are living in accommodation tied to their employment and who have received a formal notice to quit from their employer and where the loss of employment is through no fault of the applicant. This category includes members of the armed forces in married quarters and agricultural workers.

Priority category will only be given where there is clear documentary evidence that the employer is terminating the employment and the use of the accommodation in the near future.

4.4.7. Insecure Private Rented Accommodation (compoundable)

Tenants of private landlords where the landlord is taking action to recover possession of the property and has demonstrated a real intention to proceed to eviction.

Before priority for priority for living in insecure accommodation can be given documentary evidence of the date of eviction will be needed by the Council, depending on the type of tenancy or licence held. The landlord must have shown a real intention to proceed with an eviction. Evidence of Court proceedings for Possession may be required to establish a genuine intention.

4.4.8. Private Rented Sector (PRS) Retained Priority (compoundable and time limited)

Existing applicants on the Housing Register owed a Prevention Duty who are threatened with homelessness or are homeless living in Temporary Accommodation owed Relief or Main housing duty by OCC who are assisted into PRS housing outside of the Oxford by OCC will be able to retain their existing Band 3 priority on the General Register List for up to 2 years from the date their new tenancy starts if they remain in the same property (and re-apply for housing within 28 days of moving). While circumstances remain the same.

4.4.9. Band 4 Upgrade

Any applicant who qualifies for at least two compoundable categories in Band 4.

4.5. Band 4 (Moderate Housing Need)

4.5.1. Moderate Social or Welfare Needs

Applicants assessed as having a moderate level of social or welfare need arising from their housing situation and awarded this priority under the Exceptional Circumstances Panel protocols. Including:

- Qualifying social housing tenants living outside of the City applying for inclusion on the General Register List who are assessed as needing to move to Oxford for employment. Where being unable to move to Oxford would otherwise cause hardship (see Appendix IV Right to Move) and similar employment is not available closer to their current location and they do not fall into a higher reasonable preference group/priority band and they would otherwise fall into Band 5.
- Applicants considered to have Deliberately Worsened their Circumstances by an action or inaction who would normally fall into a reasonable preference group in a higher band and still qualify for inclusion on the housing register (see Section 2.6.3 for more details).
- Homeless applicants found to be intentionally homeless who still qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register and former homeless applicants on the homeless list who have refused an out of area offer without good reason in the last 12 months since the homeless duty was discharged (see Section 5.13.1 for more details).

4.5.2. Moderate Health or Disability Needs

Applicants assessed as having a moderate level of housing need as a result of health problems or a disability and awarded this priority under the Health and Housing Assessment protocols.

4.5.3. Homeless or of No Fixed Abode and Not in a Priority Group (not compoundable)

- Applicants who have been assessed as being of No Fixed Abode (NFA) including those assessed “sofa surfers”, or
- Applicants who are Homeless but have been given a decision that they are not in Priority Need (or are Intentionally Homeless and allowed to remain on the Housing Register where the Prevention or Relief Duty has ceased) or
- Applicants living in Move-on Homeless Alliance accommodation in Oxford who could otherwise access the Move-on Scheme and other similar supported housing. Normally applicants with a qualifying connection to Oxford including Care Leavers will need to be resident in recognised supported/move on housing in the city to qualify for this priority.
- Applicants that have been assessed as having left their last accommodation due to domestic abuse and unable to remain in the District they left living in a refuge in the City.

This category is given where a formal assessment has been carried out under the homelessness legislation and the applicant is found to be homeless but not in a defined priority group. The category will also be given without a formal assessment, where it is clear that the applicant has No Fixed Abode. This includes those living in voluntary sector Move-on Projects within the City.

This category does not include applicants who have been assisted to access the private rented sector, for example through a rent deposit scheme.

This category is not compoundable with other factors. Those who are homeless and have other priority needs will be assessed in accordance with the Homelessness legislation and, if they qualify, will be given a Band 3 priority.

4.5.4. Unsatisfactory Housing: Level 2

Applicants living in sub-standard accommodation that is deemed to have a category 2 hazard and where repair is not possible or it is not practical in a reasonable timescale.

Applicants living in homes lacking a fixed heating system will usually be deemed to meet this criterion. The band category will not be awarded if it is possible for repairs or other remedial action to be carried out within a reasonable timescale. Where a landlord has been served with an improvement notice, but remedial work has not been carried out, the Council may decide to award priority at its discretion.

If a tenant of the Council or Housing Association living in social housing needs to be urgently decanted temporarily, for example due to repairs to be completed on their home, this will normally be arranged by the landlord outside of the Allocations Scheme via a management move.

4.6. Band 5 (Low or No Housing Need)

4.6.1. Adequately Housed

- Applicants who are adequately housed
- Applicants with no immediate need for rehousing
- Applicants sharing where the accommodation is of sufficient quality and there is no overcrowding
- Applicants who do not meet any other category.

This category includes applicants who may have a low level of housing need, but where the circumstances do not give rise to any exceptional problems. This includes:

- formal and informal house-sharing arrangements where the size and standard of the accommodation is adequate for the needs of those living there
- those living with family or friends where the size and standard of the accommodation is adequate for the needs of those living there
- families living in flats where the internal accommodation is adequate for the family's needs but where there is no private garden.

4.7. Compound Needs

Where applicants in Bands 3 or 4 have compound needs (that is, they qualify for more than one compoundable category in the band) they will usually be upgraded to the next band. Compounding is not available for those placed in Bands 2 or 5 because Band 1 is reserved only for the most exceptional cases and Band 5 has no compoundable categories.

Those applicants in Band 4 with a category of 'Homeless and not in a Priority Group' cannot compound this category to move up to Band 3 because the assessment of their homelessness takes into account all other relevant circumstances. If they have additional needs, then this would be reflected in a decision to award either an Exceptional Need category placing them in a higher category band or a Priority Homeless category (Band 3).

4.8. Time Limited Priority

In certain cases priority will be time limited. This includes but not exclusively, circumstances where priority has been awarded because the applicant is:

- Living in supported housing, such as in the Oxford Young Parents Project, Homeless Alliance, Mental Health Pathway or Young Persons Pathway and has been assessed as ready to move on.
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness and owed a prevention, relief or main homeless duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Living in a social housing suitable for a larger family and been awarded priority as a policy successor or another reason and needs to move.

Another example is where a decision to grant a higher band on the grounds of an urgent social or welfare need might be for a limited period. This will normally be three to six months.

In all cases the applicant will be given a reasonable amount of time to bid for alternative accommodation, and the length of time may be adjusted according to the availability of suitable accommodation. Priority will be re-assessed at the end of the period or earlier if the applicant is not considered to be engaging or has refused a suitable offer of housing.

4.9. Date Order

The time an applicant has been in housing need is taken into account when prioritising applicants for an offer of accommodation. Where two or more applicants in the same priority band have bid for the same property, through choice-based lettings scheme, the applicant who is considered to have been in housing need for the longest period of time will normally be offered the property. In some circumstances there are exceptions (see 5.8).

4.9.1. Priority Band Start Date

The Priority Band Start Date is the date used for comparing applicants who are in the same band and who have bid for the same property.

The Priority Band Start Date is normally the date an applicant is placed into a particular band. Most applicants who apply for housing remain in the same band, so their Priority Band Start Date does not change and is the date they first applied to be included on the housing register (also known as the Registration Date). If an applicant's circumstances change and their housing need changes their Priority Band Start Date may change.

4.10. Change of Circumstances

Changes of Circumstance & Priority Band Start Dates.

Where an applicant's circumstances have changed, they should notify the Housing Needs team within 28 days to check whether this has affected their housing need and whether they need to supply any further information.

If the change in an applicant's circumstances (including a change of address) has resulted in:

- Their priority band going up because of an increase in their housing need and they have moved to a higher band they will be issued with a new Priority Band Start Date from the date the change took place, or they were awarded additional priority to move.
- Their priority band going down because of a decrease in their housing need if they move down to Bands 2 to 4 their Priority Band Start Date will normally

remain the same. However, if they go down to Band 5 their Priority Band Start Date will change back to their registration date (the date they first applied for housing).

- Their priority band staying the same the applicant should retain their original priority band start date.

Where an applicant has failed to notify the Housing Needs Team of a change of their circumstances within 28 days without good reason, if the change in the applicant's circumstances has resulted in:

- Their priority band going up because of an increase in their housing need and they have moved to a higher band they will be issued with a new Priority Band Start Date from the date the Housing Needs Team were notified of the change and not the date the change took place.
- Their priority band going down because of a decrease in their housing need they will be issued with a new Priority Band Start Date from the date the change took place and not keep the same date.
- Their priority band staying the same the applicant will be issued with a new Priority Band Start Date if they have moved. If the applicant has not moved their Housing Needs Priority Band Start date will remain the same.

5. Choice Based Lettings - Allocations Scheme

5.1. Statement on Choice in Allocation

The Council operates a Choice-Based Lettings Scheme to advertise the limited number of properties becoming available to let each year for those who are eligible and qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register. The Choice Based Lettings Scheme increases the choice available to most applicants (with some exceptions including restrictions for homeless applicants and time limited priority from some other applicants - see section 4.8) but cannot make more social housing available, which will remain a scarce resource. The availability of feedback on previous lettings enables applicants to make informed choices about their future housing options; including whether to look at alternatives to social rented housing, and what types of properties are available.

Below is Oxford City Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme. This applies to permanent social housing in Oxford; it does not apply to temporary accommodation.

5.2. Assisting Vulnerable Applicants

Staff from Oxford City Council (and its partner PRPs where technology allows) may assist applicants to view property advertisements and to make bids through the website.

Oxford City Council may make information available to staff at support agencies on how the scheme works, and may provide updates when changes happen, so that they are able to offer the most appropriate support to their clients.

Oxford City Council is aware that some applicants with support needs may need longer to obtain advice or support and will endeavour to work with them to help to participate in the scheme.

5.3. Advertising

All the members of the ORAH partnership are committed to advertising their properties as widely as possible. Empty properties will normally only be excluded from the CBL scheme for exceptional reasons, for example when the property is needed to deal with an emergency or is particularly suitable for a household assessed as in high housing need for a direct match – such as an adapted property suitable for a disabled person or another applicant in high housing need such as an applicant on the Homeless List needing to move on from Temporary Accommodation.

- Properties will be advertised in a regular lettings cycle. The length of the cycle may be reviewed periodically.
- Properties will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings website.
- All advertisements will carry a deadline by which the bids for the property must be received. It is not possible for an applicant to make bids after the lettings cycle closes.
- The advertisement will carry a photograph of the type of property, where available.
- Each advert will provide details of the property including (where available):
 - The type of property
 - The number of bedrooms/number of people the property is suitable for
 - The location (street and area)
 - Any adaptations or a description of the level of accessibility for people with mobility difficulties
 - The heating type
 - Type of entrance – communal/own entrance
 - Floor level (for flats)
 - Availability of a garden if any
 - Parking
 - Rent
 - Service charge
 - Landlord
 - Property reference number
 - Expected tenancy start date where available
 - Tenancy type and conditions (for PRPs this will include details of whether the property is being let as a Fixed Term Tenancy or at an “Affordable Rent” where applicable).

5.4. Properties advertised on Choice Based Lettings

As far as possible all properties will be entered into the Choice Based Lettings scheme and will be available for applicants to make bids. However, at certain times, and in order to meet our objectives of assisting in the development of sustainable communities and meeting the Council’s letting targets, some properties will be labelled as being available to certain categories of applicant only; or with initial

preference being given to certain categories of applicant. See section 5.14 on properties not in the Choice-Based Lettings scheme. The Council may in the future advertise private rented properties too which will be let outside of the Allocations Scheme.

5.5. Advert Labels

The following labels will be used for certain properties. The Council uses these labels to ensure the Council meets the letting plan targets to distribute social housing fairly amongst different groups of applicants. The descriptions used below will be represented by symbols in the property advertisements. A key to the symbols will be provided in the scheme guide available on the Council website.

Statutory Homeless Applicants: The label will say preference will be given to the 'Homeless List' – icon "H" on the advert.

To qualify applicants will need to have confirmation that Oxford City Council has accepted a statutory duty under the homelessness legislation (normally a main housing duty) and placed them in temporary accommodation and included them on the Homeless List (see 4.1 The Banding Scheme). Exceptions to be included on the Homeless List may be agreed by the Allocations Manager on case-by-case basis too.

General Register Applicants: The label will say preference will be given to the General Register List – icon "G" on the advert.

To qualify applicants will need to have been included on to the general register, and not to have been accepted as homeless and in priority need and placed on the General Register List.

Transfer Applicants: The label will say preference will be given to the Transfer List – icon "T" on the advert.

Move On applicants: The label will say preference will be given to the Move On List – icon "M" on the advert.

To qualify applicants will need to be a secure tenant or an Assured tenant of the Council, Ox Place or another ORAH partner and living within Oxford. They will have been verified as eligible to be on the transfer list through the application process.

This label is used to ensure the Council and other ORAH partners, can make optimum use of the stock. When a tenant transfers this creates a further vacancy which will normally be available for letting. This helps ensure there is mobility within the stock.

Sheltered/Older Persons Accommodation

The label will say 'Sheltered'. For applicants assessed as suitable for and eligible for sheltered accommodation. Sheltered accommodation is self-contained housing for older persons often with some communal facilities – usually this includes a communal common room, a laundry and a guest room. Some properties may be linked to 24-hour emergency call centres for total cover 365 days a year. A property that is designated as Sheltered Housing will be clearly indicated on the advert label.

This housing is usually let to people aged 60 or over who have an identifiable support need. Some properties have an age restriction of 55+. This housing may sometimes be let to younger applicants who would benefit from the support provided. There is an ageing population in Oxford and in order to help meet this demand some Council owned older persons accommodation may be allocated with preference to older applicants in similar housing need to younger applicants (for example those aged 70 years or older).

Older persons properties are let to applicants who would like to move to this type of accommodation and who have been assessed as having suitable support needs by a member of the housing needs team or a member of staff at one of our PRP partners, and/or who meet the age criteria for the scheme. Support needs are assessed by carrying out a standard support needs assessment at the application stage or where an applicant's support needs have changed.

Some housing is suitable for people with disabilities and this will be specified in the advert label. The guide to older persons' accommodation in Oxford provides more information about the different schemes available in the City. A copy can be requested by contacting the Housing Needs Team, from local housing offices or the Council website.

Designated Elderly Housing

The level of support required to be considered for this type of housing is generally lower than that for sheltered housing.

This is housing that is let to people aged 55 or older with no dependent children. There is no support provided although tenants can be assessed for a community alarm if they require this.

Disabled Adapted Properties

Disabled adapted properties are defined as properties that have been specially built or adapted for people with disabilities. The level of adaptation will be specified in the property advertisement. An adapted property is one containing one or more of the following features:

- A level access shower or wet room
- Ramps/Level access
- A stair lift or through floor lift

- A walk-in Bath.

Assessment of a need for an adapted property will be based on medical evidence such as an Occupational Therapist assessment and may also need validation through the Health and Housing Assessment process. Oxford City Council will attempt to make the closest match between the applicant's housing need and the level of adaptations needed from short listed applicants. The reason for this is to match customers to suitable properties, ensure these properties are used to their maximum potential and to make best use of resources by not having to adapt properties elsewhere (unless necessary).

Applicants choosing to live in disabled adapted properties should not expect to have adaptations removed or to reinstate properties to their original condition, (for example remove a level access shower and install a bath again).

There are a number of properties which have been specially built or adapted for people with disabilities. Where these met the Mobility Standard or Wheelchair Standard, Oxford City Council will attempt to match these most closely to applicants that specifically require this type and standard of accommodation and will specifically label these properties as such. The Council may allocate some adapted Mobility 3 and 4 standard properties outside of Choice-Based Lettings, to applicants in high housing need requiring an adapted property by offering an applicant a property as a direct match when a particularly suitable property becomes available.

Advert labels/preferences for Ground Floor or Adapted Properties are shown below:

- Mobility Level 1: Level Access. Level access into the property (from the street to the front door) and level access throughout the property (no internal steps).
- Mobility Level 2: Mobility Standard. Level access into and throughout the property, although all rooms may not be accessible by a wheelchair. Meets part M of the Building Regulations (e.g. minimum door widths).
- Mobility Level 3: Disabled Adaptations. The property may not meet the other standards, but it has a significant adaptation, such as a level access shower; a stair-lift; or a walk-in bath. Specific details available.
- Mobility Level 4: Wheelchair Standard. The property is specifically designed for wheelchair users. Design features include parking and level access; enhanced circulation space; and specialist fixtures and fittings.

Other Properties that may carry an Advert Label/Preferences

Advert labels may also be applied to properties where a Local Lettings Plan is in operation in order to comply with its requirements, or where a priority may be given to larger families.

Bungalows will normally only be allocated to applicants aged 55 years or older, or to applicants under 55 who have been assessed by the Housing Needs Team as requiring a ground floor level access property (or an adapted property if the bungalow is adapted) or existing older tenants on the Transfer List seeking to downsize from their current accommodation.

5.6. Bidding

Applicants who are eligible for a property advertised as available to let can apply for the property by placing a “bid” through the Choice-Based Lettings scheme.

Applicants will normally only be able to bid for a property suitable for their needs and for which they are eligible. This means that applicants will not normally be able to bid for more bedrooms than they need or for properties specifically designated for other groups of applicants (such as the elderly or disabled). Applicants will be provided with details of how to bid when they are included on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (see the Choice Based Lettings guide on the Council website).

Property Size Eligibility

The rules used to calculate the number of bedrooms an applicant is eligible to apply for are set out in section 3.7. Applicants will be notified in writing of the size of property they are eligible to apply for and will not normally be able to bid for a smaller or larger property.

5.7. Lettings Cycle

A letting cycle will normally consist of the following:

- The Council and other ORAH partners upload properties available to let onto Choice Based Lettings website in a pre-agreed format;
- The Council advertise the properties with any relevant preferences on behalf of the partners in the next available lettings cycle;
- The lettings cycle starts and customers can bid for properties;
- The lettings cycle closes and customers can no longer bid for properties;
- The Council generates final shortlists;
- Council officers check shortlists for eligibility and verification purposes and make an offer or nomination for each property to the successful applicant and notify the landlord;
- Landlords arrange a viewing;
- Landlords offer a tenancy;
- If the successful applicant refuses the property (see section 5.10 Refusals) or is rejected by the landlord, the offer or nomination is made to the next suitable short-listed applicant. This continues until the property is let.

Where no tenancy is agreed the property normally goes back into the next available letting cycle.

5.8. The Selection Process

The successful applicant for each property will normally be the one who is eligible for the size and type of property being offered, and who is in the highest band. Where there is more than one applicant in that band, priority will normally be by date (see below). However, the council and ORAH partners reserve the right not to offer the property to the person highest on the short-list, if the property offers a better match

with the needs of another high priority applicant. The property may be offered to another housing applicant in such cases.

Applicants will be able to bid for up to three social rented properties in a lettings cycle (and any number of shared ownership or private rented properties if any are advertised). Applicants can withdraw bids and add new ones in the course of the cycle but should bid realistically and not withdraw a bid if one has been placed for them by OCC. The Council may place bids for some applicants (including applicants on the Homeless List and other high needs cases) if a property is identified as potentially suitable.

5.8.1. Priority Order

Short-lists will be created with the following priority order:

1. Applicant Type (only if an applicant type preference is specified for property);
2. Mobility Level (only if a mobility level preference is specified for the property);
3. Band – Band priority order is: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5;
4. Local Connection;
5. Age Preference (only if preference is used for older persons accommodation);
6. Size of household (only if a preference to larger families is specified for the property) – larger household has priority;
7. Priority Band Start Date (when applicants in the same priority band are compared).

The Council reserves the right not to offer an applicant in Band 4 or 5 with a need for a ground floor level access (Mobility 1) or Mobility 2 or 3 property if another applicant in higher housing need in Band 1, 2 or 3 has bid for the property. Even if the applicant in Band 1 to 3 does not require a Mobility 1, 2 or 3 property.

5.8.2. Shortlists

Each potentially successful applicant will be checked to ensure they are eligible and suitable for the property and an applicant will only be offered a property where they meet the criteria.

Allocations Officers will investigate whether or not the property matches all the needs of the applicant in first place on the resulting shortlist. There may, for example, be a good reason not to offer an otherwise suitable property to an applicant because health advice has been received that the applicant needs a property in a quiet location and the property on offer is adjacent to a major road, or that the person cannot sustain the tenancy without adequate support arrangements and these arrangements are not able to be set up before the proposed start of the tenancy – such issues cannot be catered for in the generation of the shortlist.

If it can be demonstrated that the property does not match the needs of the applicant, then this is recorded, and the decision verified by the manager responsible for allocations. The allocating officer then proceeds to investigate the suitability of the property for the next applicant on the list, and the process continues until a suitable match is found. If an applicant is successful for more than one property, they will be

contacted where possible and asked to express their preference over which property they would like to be offered.

The Manager Responsible for Allocations is responsible for:

- a. Checking paperwork relating to all allocations and nominations, to ensure that correct procedure has been followed;
- b. Authorising offers and nominations, including decisions as to the reasonableness or otherwise of an allocation or nomination;
- c. Deciding whether to make an allocation of housing where the applicant has been guilty of anti-social or unacceptable behaviour;
- d. Decisions relating to the authorisation of “like-to-like transfers, outside the Allocations Scheme, in sheltered accommodation and other schemes; and
- e. Authorising the making of a Direct Offer to an applicant (see Section 5.14).

5.8.3. Housing Applicants with Rent Arrears on the Housing Register

This section is concerned with making an allocation of a property to applicants who have made a bid.

Where a housing applicant has rent arrears and/or a poor payment history they will not normally be considered suitable for an offer of housing. In order for an applicant to successfully maintain a tenancy they must be able to comply with the terms of the tenancy and to pay the rent regularly and keep up to date with the rent. When considering whether a housing applicant is suitable for an offer of housing their ability to pay the rent and their rental payment history will be taken into account.

Housing applicants who owe rent to their current landlord or a previous landlord can be excluded from qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register (see section 3.4.2 and the definition of “rent”).

Where a housing applicant with rent arrears has been allowed to remain on the Housing Register and they bid for a property and shortlist for a potential offer, an Allocations Officer will make further enquiries into the applicant’s ability to sustain a tenancy before considering them for an offer of housing. If a Transfer Applicant has rent arrears covered by a Court Possession Order and has not been excluded from the Transfer List, no offer will usually be made, unless:

- the tenant has an Exceptional Band 1 Social & Welfare award sanctioned by the ECP & payments have been received in line with the order made, or
- the tenant is seeking to downsize from a general needs property suitable for a family and any compensation due through the REMS (or a similar scheme provided by another ORAH landlord) will clear the debt in full or
- the debt is cleared in full by the tenant.

If a housing applicant is allowed to be included on the Housing Register but has any outstanding rent arrears (but no Court Possession Order), they will not usually receive an offer of accommodation unless:

- either the debt is cleared in full, or
- they have made an agreement to repay the debt and kept to it for a minimum of 6 months.

The following cases will usually be exempt from this:

- Applicants awarded an “Exceptional” Band 1 Social and Welfare award and permission to apply for a move with rent arrears has been sanctioned by the ECP panel and agreed by the landlord of the property the applicant is applying for
- All Temporary Decants, or Permanent Decants where the Council may incur a significant expense if the person is not moved
- Transfer applicants under-occupying a family home eligible for assistance through the Council’s REMS (or the tenant’s landlord) where the compensation will clear the debt in full.
- Technical arrears, where it is confirmed that a Housing Benefit/a Universal Credit award is due that will clear the arrears
- Persons accepted as statutory homeless and housed in temporary accommodation where a satisfactory payment arrangement is in place and the housing applicant is considered to be engaging and suitable for an offer of housing in order to minimise temporary accommodation costs to the Council (unless possession action is being taken due to a breach of tenancy).

The Manager responsible for Allocations may also exempt other cases. This discretion might be exercised where the applicant has made an agreement to clear the debt and has made consistent payments for a period of time (usually for a minimum of 6 months) or where the situation was deemed to be out of the applicant’s control, for example due to domestic abuse; or relates to physical, mental or learning disability.

The Allocations Manager may also consider authorising an offer in other exceptional cases where an applicant has fallen into rent arrears as a direct result of the introduction of changes introduced by the Welfare Reform Act including the “bedroom tax” or “benefit cap”. An exception may also be agreed where an applicant is in high housing need and considered to be taking reasonable steps to pay their on-going rent and the rent arrears they have accrued. In such cases an offer may be considered where the Allocations Manager and landlord of the property the applicant has applied for agree that the housing applicant is considered suitable for an offer and the accommodation is more affordable.

Where a former tenant has been evicted by a PRP within the ORAH partnership and allowed to re-join the Housing Register, they will not normally be nominated to the same PRP once they have demonstrated they are suitable to be a tenant, without prior agreement with the PRP.

5.9. Feedback

Feedback on previous bidding rounds will be available to help applicants assess whether accommodation appropriate to his or her needs is likely to be made available and, if so, how long this is likely to take.

General information about the profile of the stock will be made available, including: the type, size and location of the stock, whether it is accessible or could be adapted, and how old it is. In the case of stock, which is in short supply, an indication of how frequently it is likely to become available will also be included.

Specific information will be published each cycle about accommodation, which has been let through the CBL scheme. This will specify the number of bids received for the property, the band and priority band start date of the applicant who finished first at the end of the cycle. The information will be available on the CBL website.

Applicants who have expressed an interest in the particular vacancy but are unsuccessful may request more personalised feedback on why they were unsuccessful.

Periodically, Oxford City Council will extract generalised information from feedback data to help inform applicants' bidding strategies. This may include tables giving estimated waiting times by area, bedroom size or property type.

Oxford City Council will process all personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and relevant successive legislation. Where information is published about particular accommodation that has been allocated, the information shall not enable a member of the public to ascertain the identity of the individual applicant who has been allocated the accommodation, or to put them at risk of violence or intimidation by other individuals or members of the public. In some cases, the Manager responsible for allocations may make the decision not to publish the fact that a property has been let.

Oxford City Council will provide more detailed feedback to unsuccessful bidders at regular intervals, particularly after they have made a number of unsuccessful bids. This will involve advising applicants about the need to change their bidding strategy or providing them with advice about alternative housing options available to them.

Applicants will be able to review their own bidding history through the website or ask a member of Oxford City Council or its partner PRP to help them do so.

5.10. Refusals

Oxford City Council acknowledges that a "bid" is an application for a property and that applicants may not be in a position to make a firm decision until the property has been viewed. However, there is a high demand for social rented accommodation and the Council and its partner PRPs want to let homes advertised through Choice Based Lettings as soon as possible so applicants should choose carefully before making a bid. If an applicant refuses an offer after a bid has been placed on the property without good reason the Council reserves the right to apply a penalty (see 5.13).

5.11. Failure to Bid

Oxford City Council will look at who is bidding and how often. If an applicant in a high priority group is not bidding despite properties being advertised that are considered

suitable by Council, they may contact the applicant to make sure that they have understood the CBL system and that they have found a method of bidding that suits them. If they are struggling with the system, we may be able to offer help ourselves or we may be able to refer the applicant to a support agency.

Where a customer is on the Homeless List and living in Temporary Accommodation a bid may be placed for the customer by OCC at any time. Furthermore, where a customer is not considered to be bidding enough, realistically or withdrawing bids their access to Choice-Based Lettings may be withdrawn and bids placed for them by OCC staff.

The Council may also place a bid for an applicant or make a direct offer of accommodation in some circumstances, such as, but not exclusively, for tenants on the Transfer List requiring a decant, or where a “legal” or “policy” successor is required to move, and is not bidding, despite suitable accommodation being advertised and help being offered (see 5.13).

5.12. Bidding Time Limits

Most applicants will have no time limits placed on how often they should bid in recognition of the scarcity of social housing in Oxford, although all applicants are encouraged and expected to actively engage with the scheme once they have registered. If they no longer wish to be included on the Housing Register, they should contact the Housing Needs Team to inform them so their housing application can be cancelled.

There will, however, be some exceptions where housing applicants in high priority bands are given time limits in which to bid for a property and penalties may be applied (see section 5.13). Including:

- Applicants accepted as homeless and placed in temporary accommodation (in Band 3) may have bids or direct offers of housing made at any time in order to ensure customers rapidly move on to suitable accommodation as soon possible;
- Applicants assessed as ready to “move-on” from supported accommodation (placed in Band 2) in order to ensure supported housing becomes available to those that require it within the City;
- Applicants awarded “policy successor” priority (placed in Band 1) in order to ensure that they move out of the accommodation they are occupying promptly so the property to can be re-let to another applicant in housing need.

5.13. Penalties for Unreasonable Refusals or Non-bidders

Before imposing a penalty, the applicant may be contacted by a member of the Housing Needs Team, Tenancy Management Team or an equivalent ORAH officer to ensure they are satisfied the applicant understands the process. Where an applicant is not considered to understand the process, they may be given a further opportunity to bid at the discretion of a senior member of the team.

Penalties will only be imposed where, after checks, it appears that either:

- An applicant is deliberately failing to bid (or withdrawing bids placed on their behalf) when suitable properties have been advertised, or
- An applicant has turned down a property when they are deemed to have no valid reason for refusing the property when offered.

5.13.1. Offers to Statutory Homeless Applicants to whom the Council has accepted a duty and placed in temporary accommodation

The Council recognises that it is not desirable for households, particularly the vulnerable and families, to spend long periods of time in temporary accommodation. Therefore, households to whom the Council has accepted a homeless duty are offered secure accommodation as quickly as possible. The Council is only able to maintain a limited amount of temporary accommodation due to the high cost. In order to ensure that temporary accommodation is available for other homeless singles and families it is important that households move as quickly as possible.

Applicants on the homeless list will normally be made one suitable offer of accommodation – this could be an allocation of social housing through the Allocations Scheme or an offer of suitable accommodation within the private rented sector made outside of the Allocations Scheme. Homeless applicants may be given a time-limited priority to bid for properties through CBL. During this time, they could also be made a direct offer of housing at any time. This could include an offer of suitable private rented accommodation to discharge the Council's homeless duty by a member of the Housing Needs Team (outside of the Allocations Scheme).

Homeless applicants who have not been made a direct offer, may be given up to 3 months to successfully bid for a property, or longer, if for example a household requires a very large property, an adapted property or the Council accepts that they cannot go to certain areas within Oxford or elsewhere. If a homeless applicant has not successfully bid for a property or been offered a suitable property in the private rented sector they may have bids placed for them automatically on all suitable properties becoming available (all suitable property types and in all areas) by the Allocations Team and will be offered the first property they shortlist for an offer on, irrespective of whether they have bid for the property or not. Furthermore, if a homeless applicant is not considered to be bidding realistically, bids may be withdrawn and placed for them and access to bidding may be removed altogether and a direct offer may be considered by OCC.

Penalties for an Unreasonable Refusal

If a homeless applicant refuses a suitable offer without good reason the Council will no longer have a duty to accommodate them and ask them to leave their temporary accommodation and to resolve their housing situation themselves. If the applicant does not move out the Council will take action to take possession of the property.

Homeless applicants who are considered to have unreasonably refused an offer by the Council because they consider the property is not suitable for them or a member of their family will continue to have the right to appeal. The Council will not normally be able to end the duty to accommodate the applicant unless they lose the appeal.

5.13.2. Penalties for Applicants on the other lists (General Register & Transfer Lists) Unreasonable Refusals

Unreasonable refusals delay other applicants in housing need moving into a property, cost the Council and other landlords in lost staff time and can result in the landlord losing rental income from having longer void periods.

Applicants on the General Register or Transfer Lists who are considered to have unreasonably refused two suitable offers of accommodation within the last 12 months will be suspended from bidding for 12 months. With the exception of tenants on the Transfer List occupying a property suitable for a family and seeking to downsize to a smaller property. Other exceptions may also be made on a case-by-case basis by the Allocations Manager.

If the applicant is suspended from bidding and disagrees with this decision, they have the right to request a review of this decision (see Reviews & Appeals). If the appeal is successful, they will be able to continue to bid. If the appeal is unsuccessful, they will remain suspended for 12 months.

Policy “successors” will normally be given up to 3 months to bid for a suitable property, after this time, if they have failed to bid or failed to successfully bid for a property the Council will place bids for them on all suitable properties becoming available and may make a direct offer outside of CBL. Policy “successors” will normally be made only one suitable offer of accommodation. If they are made an offer and refuse without good reason the Council will ask them to leave the property and resolve their own housing situation and take action to gain possession of the property if they fail to leave.

5.14. Properties not advertised through CBL (Direct Offers)

Oxford City Council may choose not to advertise certain properties if they are needed for management reasons including temporary decants of existing Council Tenants for repairs to be completed where they cannot stay in their present home. This may include temporary lettings as emergency accommodation for homeless families, housing first accommodation, some types of supported housing, direct lettings to national mobility schemes, or permanent decants (where the properties are being sold, demolished or otherwise disposed of, or where tenants have been given the choice of not returning to a property following refurbishment or re-modelling, and it is not practicable to allocate the property through CBL).

In other cases, for example, very highly adapted properties or for applicants with very individual needs and homeless applicants needing to move on from Temporary Accommodation, it may be necessary to make a direct offer of a property in order to make the most effective use of the scarce resource of social housing and to obtain best value for money for the Council and its ORAH partners.

Oxford City Council will monitor the impact to ensure that it continues to comply with its duty to give reasonable preference to applicants in the reasonable preference categories and choice to General Register and Transfer List applicants wherever reasonably possible.

5.15. Temporary Decants

Where a temporary move is required while modernisation, refurbishment, or repair work is undertaken to any property of Oxford City Council, or its partner PRPs, and the tenant cannot remain in the property for a temporary period while this is being undertaken, the Manager responsible for Allocations may award a Decant category (a tenant may be decanted by the landlord outside of the Allocations process too).

This category is authorised by the Manager responsible for Allocations, and only at such time as the need for the move and its programming has been confirmed by a senior manager in Housing or a partner PRP, as appropriate.

Officers seeking or authorising these categories must be assured that the move is necessary and that appropriate timescales are in place for work to begin on the vacated property, in order to minimise disruption for existing tenants.

Tenants must complete a transfer application where practicable and sign an undertaking to confirm that they will return to their original home once the work is completed, prior to transferring.

The Manager responsible for Allocations may make a Direct Offer outside of the CBL scheme to help facilitate such moves.

5.16. Hard to Let Properties

There are very few “hard to let” properties within Oxford. However, from time to time a sheltered property only suitable for an older applicant may have to be advertised more than once before a suitable applicant is offered the property.

A property will be declared “hard to let”:

- If it has been advertised over 2 consecutive bidding cycles and received no eligible bidders, or
- if it has been advertised over 3 consecutive cycles without a tenancy being created, or
- if an identical property (type, size & area) has been declared ‘hard to let’ within the previous 4 bidding cycles.

At the discretion of the Manager responsible for allocations, such properties may be let on a “first come, first served” basis; that is, any suitable applicant may be granted a tenancy. The Manager responsible for allocations has the discretion to change eligibility criteria (including allowing under-occupation) in these circumstances. “Hard to let” properties will be advertised with other properties but may also be let outside of the advertising cycle.

5.17. Inter-District Moves

The Council may from time to time agree a reciprocal arrangement with another District Council within Oxfordshire, or elsewhere, so that an applicant in high housing

needs from Oxford can be housed outside of the City in another District in return for the Council housing another similar case within Oxford. Even if the applicant does not have a qualifying connection to Oxford. Any such allocation would need to be agreed by the Allocations Manager and the other District authority and normally be made outside of CBL as a direct match.

5.18. Priority for Households with a Qualifying Connection

As part of the allocations scheme priority will also be given to applicants who have a qualifying connection to Oxford over applicants in similar housing need without one. Normally only applicants with a qualifying connection will be allowed to be included on the Housing Register; however, there are some exceptions (see sections 3.3.3 & 3.3.4).

6. Housing Options - Allocations Scheme

6.1. Housing Options Information

Oxford City Council will give all home-seekers and applicants information on other housing options that may be available to them, to assist the applicant in making a reasonable choice as to their best prospect of securing suitable accommodation. This will include information on low-cost home ownership, private sector rented property (including any rent deposit schemes which may be operated by Oxford City Council) mutual exchanges and key worker accommodation, as appropriate.

6.2. Private Rented Sector Access Schemes

The Housing Needs Team provide a range of schemes to people who might otherwise become statutorily homeless with advice, support and financial assistance to be able to successfully secure tenancies in the private rented sector in and outside of Oxford. Private Rented Sector Access Schemes are normally only offered to applicants towards whom the Council has or would have a statutory duty to re-house (i.e. statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness applicants).

6.3. Private Renting

From time to time there may be opportunities to advertise privately rented properties, with the agreement of the landlord. These are most likely to be properties being made available for lettings with the help of rent deposit assistance from the local authority for those threatened with homelessness or homeless in Temporary Accommodation. The properties may be advertised on Choice-Based Lettings in such instances.

6.4. Affordable home ownership schemes (Low-Cost Home Ownership Options)

Lower cost home ownership includes a number of schemes designed to enable people who wish to buy a property and cannot afford to do so. It is targeted at people on housing waiting lists, social housing tenants, key workers as defined by current government legislation and those on a low income unable to purchase a home without assistance.

The Government **GOV.UK website** provides up to date information on the different affordable home ownership schemes available and how they work. There are a number of different scheme types. Depending on your individual circumstances, and subject to availability, you may find that one or more of these are available to you. Customers interested in applying for Shared Ownership properties in Oxford should enquire directly with the marketing agents for the homes for details on how to apply and the eligibility criteria. As well as financial criteria other factors considered may include an applicant's current circumstances, whether they live or work in Oxford and the size of the property.

7. Special Circumstances - Allocations Scheme

7.1. Reviews and Appeals

The Right of Review

An applicant has the right to request an internal review of a decision taken where the Council has decided:

1. That an applicant is not a qualifying person for an allocation;
2. Not to register the application even if the applicant is in a reasonable preference group;
3. Not to allow applicants to bid for a specific period of time, or to overlook them in shortlists while an outstanding issue is being resolved (for example investigations into certain circumstances or the agreed payment of tenancy arrears);
4. Not to make an offer to the highest bidding applicant, where information is available that would make the new tenancy unsustainable or unsafe (for example where an applicant has been allowed to register and has been given a priority, there may be certain properties or areas where it is inappropriate for them to be housed) — also see section 5.8.2;
5. They are ineligible for an allocation by virtue of being a person subject to immigration control who is ineligible for a housing allocation; or
6. They do not qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register.

Where an authority decides an applicant is ineligible, by reason of their immigration status or serious unacceptable behaviour or any other reason that they do not qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register, it must notify them of the decision and grounds for it in writing.

An applicant has the right on request (under Housing Act 1996 s167 4A(c)) to be informed of the facts which will, or will likely, be taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation and has the right to request a review of the facts of

their case. An applicant also has the right to request a review of any adverse allocation decision.

Review of Material Facts (Reassessment)

Any decision may be reassessed at any time on the following basis:

- The applicant's circumstances have changed materially since the decision was made, meaning that their eligibility has changed;
- Substantive new information has become available, not previously available to the Allocations Team, meaning that the new information changes the applicant's eligibility;
- The Council has made an administrative error, which is substantially detrimental to the applicant.

Process for Internal Reviews

1. The original officer will first consider the review, and in light of any new information, may wish to reverse the original decision. If not, the case will be passed to another officer to review.
2. The reviewing officer must not have been party to the original allocation decision and should be senior to the original decision maker.
3. A request for a review must be made, in writing, within 21 days of the date that the applicant is notified of the Council's decision
4. The review must be considered on the basis of policy, law and known fact at the date of review.
5. Reviews should be completed wherever practicable within a 56-day time limit. If the review exceeds 56 days, the applicant must be notified of the delay, in writing.
6. The applicant should be notified that s/he, or a representative acting on their behalf, may make representations in writing in connection to the review.
7. The applicant will be asked for any further information needed in order for the assessment to be completed.
8. Any adverse material must be put to the applicant for their comment.
9. The outcome of the review decision must be notified in writing, with reasons, to the applicant.

An applicant who has been accepted as statutorily homeless by the Council also has the right to request a review of the 'suitability' of a final offer of permanent accommodation. However, such reviews are authorised under the regulations that apply to Homelessness decisions which are similar to the process described above, but are not the same, for example the factors to be taken into account are prescribed by the Regulations.

The Right of Appeal

If the applicant believes that Oxford City Council has not acted reasonably or in accordance with its set procedure, they may have the right to seek a Judicial Review of the decision.

7.2. Under Occupation (and the Removal Expenses & Mobility Scheme)

Under Occupation

Under occupation of properties is a concern for Oxford City Council, due to the high demand for larger properties in the city from families in housing need – including families who are homeless living in temporary accommodation, overcrowded or living in unsuitable accommodation. Under occupation is listed in the Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation as an important area and the Council awards priority to social tenants seeking to downsize through the Banding Scheme to help make the most of the limited social housing becoming available in Oxford.

In addition, the Council has the power (under the Housing Act 1996, Schedule 18, Part I, section 2) to make payments to encourage local housing authority tenants to move to other accommodation within the authority's stock, or accommodation supplied by a registered social landlord such as a Housing Association. (Powers are also provided for in sections 21 and 26 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.) PRPs may have their own expenses and other incentives schemes in place as above, and each PRP should be contacted for details of current schemes. These may also be supported by the Council.

In order to encourage under occupiers to move to smaller accommodation, the following arrangements are in place:

- Oxford City Council tenants, or tenants of partner PRPs within the City, who have 2 or more bedrooms than they need, and who currently live in family accommodation, will be placed in Band 1.
- Oxford City Council tenants, or tenants of partner PRPs within the City, who have 1 bedroom more than they need, and who currently live in family accommodation, will be placed in Band 2.

This excludes successor/"policy successor" tenants who are required to move to a smaller home (who are prioritised separately) and do not qualify for assistance through the REMS as they need to move and the incentives are used for tenants who do not need to move but choose to. Under-occupation priority is not awarded to homeless applicants placed in temporary accommodation. For example, if a homeless applicant has a change of circumstances, they will be required to move to smaller temporary accommodation to free up the property for a larger homeless household in need.

Permitted Under Occupation

There are situations where a degree of under-occupation may be permitted in making an allocation of accommodation including:

- 'Trading down' from larger accommodation to two bed accommodation
- medical recommendation
- tenancy successions to a spouse or civil partner

- Urgent or exceptional moves (e.g. on moving a victim of harassment) (at the decision of the Exceptional Circumstance Panel)
- Decants (at the decision of the Exceptional Circumstance Panel) where permitted by the provisions of a Local Lettings Plan.

The Removal Expenses and Mobility Scheme

Oxford City Council operates a Removal Expenses and Mobility Scheme (REMS). Oxford City Council Tenants who are granted REMS status are eligible for compensation based on the number of bedrooms released by any move, and expenses covering costs associated with moving. Details of the levels of compensation and expenses payable to tenants under this scheme are available on the Council website or on request by contacting a member of the Furnished Tenancy (and Under Occupation) Team who administer the scheme.

8. Tenancies which are Treated Separately from the Normal Allocation Process - Allocations Scheme

8.1. Succession

The Housing & Planning Act 2016 changed the rules to succession. The government has decided that some tenants who succeed to a tenancy will no longer be eligible for a lifetime tenancy.

Secure Tenancies for Oxford City Council tenants

Existing tenants at 15 September 2014

The rights of occupiers of council housing to succeed to a secure tenancy are governed by sections 87 and 88 of the 1985 Housing Act. Secure tenants are able to pass on their tenancy to a spouse, civil partner, co-habiting partner (of either sex) or specific family members on the death of the tenant. Assured tenants can pass their tenancy on to a spouse or civil partner.

There is only one legal right to succession per tenancy. Those entitled to succeed by law are:

- spouses and civil partners (secure and assured tenants)
- family relatives (including blood and step relatives but not cousins)
- co-habiting opposite sex couples
- co-habiting same sex couples

The following conditions apply:

- A spouse, civil partner or co-habiting partner (of either sex) must have occupied the property as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death.
- A family member must have resided with the tenant continuously for 12 months as their only or principal home before the tenant's death.

- There can only be one successor to a tenancy.
- A spouse or civil partner will take precedence over a family member.

Where more than one person is entitled to succeed. If the tenant was a successor, there is no right to succeed. A succession will also have been deemed to be created by: A Right of survivorship (where one joint tenant remains on a tenancy after a death)/An assignment to a person qualified to succeed.

Mutual exchanges are not successions unless the tenant was a successor in relation to the tenancy being assigned by way of exchange (s88 (3) 1985 Act).

Tenants after 15 September 2014

The Localism Act 2011 amended the succession rights of new tenants for tenancies that began on or after 1st April 2012 unless specified in the tenancy agreement. The Oxford City Council tenancy was amended to take account of the legislation on 15 September 2014.

Now only the following have the legal right to succeed to a secure tenancy:

The tenant's:

- Spouse; or
- Civil partner; or
- Cohabiting partner (of either sex).

The successor must have been living with the tenant at the time of her/his death and the property must have been her/his only or main home.

A landlord may wish to provide additional rights in the tenancy agreement which would allow a family member to succeed, such as the tenant's son or daughter.

The law says that other people can only succeed to a secure tenancy which began on or after 1 April 2012, if, when the tenant dies:

- there is no spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner living in the property as her/his only or principal home; and
- the tenancy agreement allows for someone else to succeed.

Oxford City Council's position is set out in the Tenancy Agreement for secure tenants. From time to time the Council may revise the terms of the tenancy agreement and tenants are therefore strongly advised to check with the Council to confirm their position on succession and whether they are eligible to succeed.

Housing Association Assured Tenants/PRPs

Housing Association tenants' right to succeed is laid down in the Housing Act and advice should be taken from the Housing Association

Points to Note on Successions

Where a succession results in the successor, other than a spouse or civil partner, or a co-habiting partner living in a property which:

- is too large; or
- has significant adaptations for disabled persons which are not required by the successor; or
- is otherwise inappropriate to their needs.

The Council may require the successor tenant to move to alternative, more appropriate accommodation. A spouse, civil partner or co-habiting partner may be required to move from a property which has significant adaptations for

disabled persons which are not required by the successor. If a successor refuses to move from the property, the Council will pursue possession proceedings in the County Court.

Where a succession results in the successor occupying a property of the appropriate size for their needs and has not been adapted for disabled persons, they will normally be allowed to remain as a tenant of that property.

Otherwise Excluded Successors

In addition to legal successions, the Council may also agree to “policy successions”.

“Policy successions” generally apply to people who would have been entitled to succeed but for the fact one legal succession has happened. Band 1 priority may be awarded to a close family member who would have been entitled to a legal succession, but is not, because one previous succession has already taken place, by authorisation of the Manager responsible for Allocations, based on the recommendation of the Tenancy Management Manager or equivalent ORAH officer.

If under the affordability guidelines a housing applicant is considered to be able to resolve their own housing situation, they will not normally be included on the Housing Register.

A potential “policy successor” (persons potentially entitled to a new offer of accommodation through the Allocation Scheme) can be asked to move immediately to more appropriate accommodation where a “policy succession” would result in the occupation of a property, which, is more extensive than their needs; or has significant adaptations for disabled persons, which are not required by the occupant.

In this case if the “policy successor” refuses to move then the Council will treat them as an unauthorised occupant and pursue possession action. Civil partners and co-habiting partners of either sex are treated the same as spouses.

“Policy successions” are not successions in law, but new tenancies, which bring their own rights of succession.

8.2. Assignment

Assignment of a secure tenancy can take place on the following grounds (s91(3) of the Housing Act 1985 Act). These are:

- The assignment is pursuant to a Property Transfer Order under Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973.
- The assignment is to a person who would be qualified to succeed if the tenant had died immediately before the assignment.
- mutual exchange.

8.3. Mutual Exchange

Mutual Exchanges are exchanges by way of Assignment. All permanent social housing tenants are able to go onto the register (Assured Shorthold Tenants or Introductory Tenants or demoted tenants are excluded). The Council encourages all eligible tenants who want to move to consider applying for an exchange. Exchanges are possible between multiple tenants – for example, a three-way exchange.

Secure tenants have a right to exchange under section 92 of the Housing Act 1985. Assured tenants have a right to exchange under the 1988 Housing Act Mutual exchanges may be refused in accordance with the Housing Act 1985 (for Council properties) or the Housing Act 1988 (for RSL properties). Consent will only be made conditionally on the breaches of tenancy being rectified. All mutual exchanges can only proceed with the written consent of both landlords.

8.4. Joint To Sole and Sole to Joint Tenancies

Joint to Sole

On receipt of written notice (normally 4 weeks' notice) that one party wishes to end the tenancy, a new sole tenancy for the same property may be granted at the discretion of the Tenancy Management Manager. This will only be considered where the property remains suitable to the needs of the tenant.

Sole to Joint

On written notice by the sole tenant, a new, joint, tenancy for the same property may be granted at the discretion of the Tenancy Management Manager. This will only be considered where the property remains suitable to the needs of the tenants and there has been no previous succession to the tenancy.

Other Properties Within the ORAH Partnership

It is at the discretion of each landlord how they treat applications to transfer from either joint to sole, or sole to joint tenancies. Tenants of Registered Providers should contact their landlord to find out what their policy is.

9. Appendices - Allocations Scheme

Appendix I - Classes of Person Ineligible for an Allocation of Housing by Reason of Their Immigration Status

The following classes of persons are not eligible for an allocation of housing by reason of their Immigration status or lack of habitual residence, unless they are already a secure or introductory tenant of a housing authority, or an assured tenant of accommodation allocated to them by a housing authority. The requirement to be habitually resident in the UK does not apply to “qualifying” EEA nationals such as those working lawfully in the UK. Non-qualifying persons such as EU nationals who are not economically active or exercising their initial 3 month right of residence are ineligible.

- a. A person registered with the Home Office as an asylum seeker.
- b. A visitor to this country (including an overseas student) who has limited leave to enter or remain in the UK granted on the basis that he or she will not have recourse to public funds.
- c. A person who has a valid leave to enter or remain in the UK which includes a condition that there shall be no recourse to public funds.
- d. A person who has a valid leave to enter or remain in the UK which carries no limitation or condition and who is not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area.
- e. A sponsored person who has been in this country less than five years (from date of entry or date of sponsorship, whichever is the latest) and whose sponsor(s) is/are still alive.
- f. A person who is in the United Kingdom illegally, or who has overstayed his/her leave.

The Secretary of State may make regulations which allow allocations to be made to prescribed classes of persons subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, but such prescribed classes of persons shall not include any person who is excluded from housing benefit by Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (exclusion from benefits).

Further information and assistance on these matters is available on request.

The Council will refer to the relevant UK Border Agency Guidelines to ensure compliance with current immigration legislation.

Appendix II – Officer Roles in Relation to the Allocation of Housing and Associated Processes

1. General. The power to operate the Allocation Scheme is a power delegated by full Council in accordance with Oxford City Council's Constitution
2. The Director of Housing may further delegate operation of the Scheme to officers within the service (or on occasion to other officers).

Officer Roles and Responsibilities

Housing Application Officers (and members of the Housing Needs Team as directed by the Rapid Re-Housing Manager or another Senior Member of the Team)

- a. Provision of advice and assistance in accessing appropriate accommodation for all applicants;
- b. Inputting data relating to individual applications onto the HMIS computer system;
- c. Answering general queries by telephone, in writing, and in person;
- d. Verification of documents relating to applications for housing;
- e. Home visits to applicants for housing.

Assessment Officers, Allocations Officers, Senior Assessment Officer and Allocations and Assessment Team Leader (And other members of the Housing Needs Team as directed by the Rapid Re-Housing Manager or a senior member of the team)

- a. Assessment of incoming applications, including application forms and any additional material, carrying out home visits, verification, and any additional investigations required to ensure that those applications truthfully reflect the housing situation of the applicants concerned, and to determine eligibility and qualification for inclusion on the housing register and an allocation of housing;
- b. Drawing up shortlists for allocations of housing, and nominations to PRP properties, investigation of suitability of short-listed applicants for such allocations and nominations, and ensuring that the most suitable allocation or nomination is made, in line with policy;
- c. Provision of general housing advice and assistance to applicants, including signposting and referral to internal and external sources of further advice and assistance, and home visits to applicants;
- d. Initial determination of the reasonableness or otherwise of a refusal of an allocation of housing/nomination to a PRP property;
- e. Awarding Band 3 or 4 priority based on a HAHA assessment as directed by a Senior Officer/Manager in the Rapid Re-Housing Team;
- f. Awarding Band 4 on an ECP assessment;

- g. Answering general queries by telephone, in writing, and in person, and
- h. Decisions as to whether or not an applicant is eligible and/or qualifies for an allocation of housing in light of previous unacceptable behaviour (including outstanding rent arrears);
- i. Decisions as to whether or not an applicant should be excluded from qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register, in light of previous unacceptable behaviour (including outstanding rent arrears), or in light of their financial resources.

Manager Responsible for Allocations (including the Rapid Re-Housing Manager, Allocations and Assessment Team Leader and Senior Assessment Officer)

- a. Checking paperwork relating to all allocations and nominations, to ensure that correct procedure has been followed, and authorising offers and nominations, including decisions as to the reasonableness or otherwise of an allocation or nomination;
- b. Monitoring allocations and nominations to ensure that the correct percentage of lettings are made to each re-housing list, in accordance with the allocations percentages set by Oxford City Council;
- c. Decisions as to whether or not an applicant is eligible and/or qualifies for an allocation of housing in light of previous unacceptable behaviour (including outstanding rent arrears);
- d. Decisions as to whether or not an applicant should be excluded from qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register, in light of previous unacceptable behaviour (including outstanding rent arrears), or in light of their financial resources;
- e. Decisions relating to the authorisation of 'like-to-like' transfers, outside the Allocations Scheme, in sheltered accommodation and other schemes;
- f. Authorisation of over-riding categories to applications where:
 - o a previous commitment to re-house has been made by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel;
 - o a status of permanent or temporary decant is required to facilitate works to the applicant's home;
 - o a successor or 'policy successor' award is required to Band 1 may be awarded to expedite this move;
- g. Decisions to make Direct Offers of accommodation.
- h. Decisions to vary the Housing Need Priority Band Start Date for an applicant in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances Panel

Responsible for review of cases in which circumstances not dealt with by the banding Scheme may have an impact on an applicant's housing need, and the award of increased priority, or other condition or restriction, as appropriate to reflect the applicant's situation.

The panel does not have a fixed membership but will be drawn from officers within the Housing Services/ORAH partners who have sufficient knowledge and experience to contribute to the Panel's effectiveness. The Panel will be chaired by a Senior Officer from the Housing Needs Team. The panel will consist of one Senior Officer (usually the Rapid Rehousing Manager, Allocations Team Leader or Senior Assessment officer) and an Assessment or Allocations officer. The only exception to this is for Exceptional Priority Band 1 decisions where a second senior officer will need to sign off the decision.

The Director of Housing Responsibilities

Resolution of disputes between officers regarding interpretation of the Allocations Scheme and decisions arising from that interpretation.

The Director of Housing has delegated authority to:

Authorise minor amendments to the Allocations Scheme proposed by the Rapid Rehousing Manager where:

- Legislation changes and the Allocations Scheme needs a minor change to comply with new legislation and the change will have a low impact on those on the housing register.
- Best practice or new guidance is introduced that needs to be reflected in the Allocations Scheme and the change will have a low impact on those on the housing register.

Authorise offers of accommodation outside of the banding priority scheme for "management cases" to make the best use of stock for existing tenants, or other applicants (on an exceptional basis). To include:

- Adapted properties no longer required by the tenant
- To facilitate a move as an alternative to adapting a property
- To maximise bedroom occupation and ensure affordability.

Approve the annual lettings plan targets proposed each year by the Rapid Rehousing Manager. Change the annual lettings plan targets during the year if the demand on the housing register has changed significantly and corrective action is required.

Tenancy Management Manager, Area Housing Managers & Area Housing Team Leaders (or equivalents in partner PRPs)

- a. Approval and counter signature of submissions to the Exceptional Circumstances Panel, and Health & Housing Assessment Forms.
- b. Decisions on Joint to Sole and Sole to Joint tenancy applications (Tenancy Operations Manager)

- c. The authority to make a recommendation to award a succession status to an applicant.

Senior Furnished Tenancy Officer/ Furnished Tenancy Officer

Responsibility for administering cases under the Removals Expenses Moving Scheme.

Tenancy Management Officers (or equivalent role within the Council or partner RSLs)

- a. Approval, inspections, and tenancy changes relating to requests for Mutual Exchange of Tenancies
- b. Home visits to some transfer applicants
- c. Landlord references for tenants.

Residential Regulation Officer/OCC Surveyor

Assessment of disrepair and award of priority for a housing condition, where requested by an applicant or member of OCC.

Customer Service Officers/ORAH equivalents

General advice and verification of documents provided by applicants.

Health and Housing Assessment (HAHA) Panel

Responsible for awarding priority and assessing cases in which the health of the applicant, or their household, is worsened due to their current housing circumstances, in accordance with this Allocation Scheme. The award of increased priority, as appropriate, should reflect the applicant's situation.

The panel does not have a fixed membership. This will be drawn from officers from Housing and ORAH partners, and may include a health professional, who have sufficient knowledge and experience to contribute to the Panel's effectiveness. The panel will comprise of a minimum of 2 persons, including 1 manager and health professional or 1 manager and another officer. The Panel will be chaired by a Senior Housing Needs Officer. Officers referring cases to the Panel may make representations but may not sit on the Panel for cases they have referred.

Reviews and Appeals Officer

- a. Responsible for carrying out all internal reviews of allocations decisions;
- b. Advice and assistance to all officers in respect of, technical, policy, or other matters which may affect the progress of an application, including decisions regarding eligibility or the lack of it, for whatever reason.

Appendix III – Guideline Calculations for Affordability

Social housing is a scarce resource. New Applicants applying for housing or existing housing applicants may be excluded from the Housing Register, regardless of their housing circumstances, if there is evidence to suggest that they have sufficient income or assets to resolve their housing situation through the housing market by renting or buying a suitable home. Furthermore, other adult members (including their partner's where applicable) may also be excluded from being included on an applicant's housing application if there is evidence to suggest that they have sufficient income or assets to resolve their own housing situation (or if they refuse to provide this information when requested). Each case will be considered on its merits and where there would otherwise be hardship, priority may be awarded in accordance with the policies and protocols of the Allocations scheme.

Property

Housing applicants who own a property in the UK or overseas that is considered suitable for their households housing needs will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register. However, the property must be physically and legally accessible. If the equity in the property is £16 000 or more and this would provide sufficient funds to resolve their housing situation, then the applicant would normally be expected to make their own housing arrangements.

Adult household members of housing applicants who own a property in the UK or overseas that is considered suitable for their housing needs will not normally qualify for inclusion on an applicant's housing application. Property can include narrow boats and caravans as well as other dwellings that are suitable for occupation and reasonable to occupy.

Savings / Investments / Assets

Housing applicants with savings/investments or assets of £16 000 or more will not normally qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register. Adult household members with savings/investments or assets of £16 000 or more may also be excluded from an applicant's housing application if they are considered to have sufficient funds to resolve their own housing situation.

Income

Applicants with sufficient income to resolve their own housing situation may be excluded from the Housing Register. An applicant's income combined with savings of less than £16000 could be taken into account when making this decision.

Exceptions

The Manager responsible for Allocations can agree exceptions in appropriate cases.

Those applicants to whom the Council has accepted a duty under Homelessness Legislation may not be included in this policy as it would not be in the best interests of the Council to delay getting such persons housed due to the high cost of

temporary accommodation. However, adult household members meeting the criteria for exclusion under the guidelines could still be excluded from an applicant's homeless application for the purposes of assessing the size of property they require.

Those applicants applying for Shared Ownership will be included on the Shared Ownership Register for the purposes of assessing their housing need, but they will not normally be included on the General Housing Register or another applicant's housing application.

Exclusion from the Housing Register

Should a decision be made to exclude an applicant, or a member of their household, they will be informed of this, with the right to request a review, and will be given information as to how to source alternative accommodation and resolve their own housing needs through the open market or private sector.

Verification

Applicants and their household members can be asked to provide evidence of their income, savings and assets in order to verify the affordability assessment. If an applicant fails to provide sufficient evidence, then their registration may not be able to proceed and they will not be included on the Housing Register or they will be removed if they are an existing applicant. If a member of their household fails to provide sufficient evidence, they will not be "counted" as a member of their household for re-housing purposes or assessing their housing need.

Appendix IV – Employment and Right to Move

This guidance on Right to Move relates to existing social housing tenants seeking to move for work and who are assessed as needing to move to Oxford for work and need this take into account the assessment of their housing need. This will not normally apply to social tenants living in Oxford or who live outside of Oxford but who are considered able to commute to Oxford. This is because there are excellent transport links to Oxford and within the City and many people commute to work within Oxford or from outside of the City.

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/967) ('the qualification regulations 2015') provides that local authorities must not disqualify certain persons on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the authority's district. Specifically, a local connection may not be applied to existing social tenants seeking to transfer from another local authority district in England who:

- have reasonable preference under s.166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the Local authority's district to avoid hardship, and
- need to move because the tenant works in the district, or
- need to move to take up an offer of work.

Need to move

The Qualification Regulations 2015 apply to transferring tenants who have reasonable preference under s.166A(3)(e), that is to say the local authority is satisfied that they need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

The local authority must ensure, therefore, not simply that the tenant needs to move for work, but that, if they were unable to do so, it would cause them hardship.

Local authorities must be satisfied that the tenant needs, rather than wishes, to move for work related reasons.

Factors to be taken into account in determining whether a tenant needs to move to be closer to work or to take up a job offer include:

- the distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home;
- the availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of earnings;
- the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home;
- other personal factors, such as medical conditions and childcare, which would be affected if the tenant could not move;
- the length of the work contract; and
- whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship.

Work

The Qualification Regulations 2015 only apply if work is not short-term or marginal in nature, nor ancillary to work in another district. Voluntary work is also excluded.

Short-term

In determining whether work is short-term, factors considered will include:

- whether work is regular or intermittent (particularly if a person is self-employed) and;
- the period of employment and whether or not work was intended to be short-term or long-term at the outset (if a contract of employment is a zero hours contract or is intended to last for less than 12 months this will normally be considered short-term).

Marginal

In determining whether the work is marginal or not consideration will include both:

- the number of hours worked (employment of less than 16 hours a week could be considered to be marginal in nature. This is the threshold below which a person may be able to claim Income Support and the threshold for a single

- person's entitlement to Working Tax Credit. However, the level of earnings will also be considered); and
- the level of earnings (and whether it is regular).

Ancillary

Work must not be ancillary to work in another local authority's district. This means that, if the person works occasionally in the local authority's district, even if the pattern of work is regular, but their main place of work is in a different local authority's district, the work will not meet the qualification criteria for the Right to Work regulations

A further relevant consideration would be whether the tenant is expected eventually to return to work in the original local authority district. If the Council has reason to believe this is the case further verification will be sought from the tenant's employer.

A person who seeks to move into a local authority to be closer to work in a neighbouring authority – for example, where the transport links are better in the first local authority's area – is also excluded from these Regulations.

Voluntary work

The Regulations exclude voluntary work. Voluntary work means work where no payment is received, or the only payment is in respect of any expenses reasonably incurred.

Apprenticeship

The term 'work' includes an apprenticeship. This is because an apprenticeship normally takes place under an apprenticeship agreement which is an employment contract (specifically a contract of service). A copy will be requested in such instances.

Genuine intention to take up an offer of work

Where a tenant has been offered a job and needs to move to take it up, they must be able to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that they have a genuine intention to take up the offer. A letter of acceptance may be requested and the employer will normally be contacted to verify the circumstances. Additional information may also be required including:

- a contract of employment;
- wage/salary slips covering a certain period of time, or bank statements (this is likely to be particularly relevant in the case of zero-hours contracts);
- tax and benefits information – for example proof that the applicant is in receipt of working tax credit (if eligible); and
- a formal offer letter.

Appendix V

Health and Disability Awards/Priority

For an applicant, or a member of their household, to qualify for priority to move on health grounds, there must be satisfactory evidence from a recognised health professional, such as a GP, Health Visitor or CPN, that their current property is having a direct and serious impact on their physical and/or mental health. The Council will need to be satisfied that a move to alternative accommodation will alleviate/resolve the problem or be a major improvement before any priority award is granted. Without evidence, a case cannot be considered for any additional priority.

Many health issues will not be related to the property where a person lives and applicant or household member may have an existing health condition regardless of where they live. While a person may perceive a move elsewhere may help with the health issue – no priority additional priority will be awarded where there is little or no evidence that this is the case.

Where an applicant has a health issue and their accommodation is not impacting on their health or a move to alternative housing will not alleviate the health issue/or make a major difference no additional priority will normally be awarded.

Where an applicant is requesting a permanent move due to a health issue – this is expected to be a long term or permanent health issue. Short-term illnesses or injuries, or convalescence from surgery/or a stay in hospital (or similar such as following childbirth) where recovery is expected within a reasonable period of time will not be considered for a Health and Disability award and any additional priority to move.

The Assessment and Allocations Team has experience of assessing a large number of housing applications from households with a range of housing needs including various health issues and ensuring priority for housing is awarded consistently. Where medical information is provided which has little or no direct relation to the current housing of the applicant or a household member (or is out of date), an Officer may decide it is not necessary to complete further inquiries and consideration for a health and disability award is not appropriate. It is not practical, nor a good use of an officer or health professional's time (such as a busy GP) to complete health and housing assessments or request information for large numbers of housing applicants or their household members, where it is unlikely they will qualify for any additional priority based on the evidence available.

When considering if an applicant or a household member qualifies for a Health and Disability award. The evidence and level of health needs will be considered and where appropriate one of the following awards may be granted following the protocols within the Allocations Scheme depending on individual circumstances of the case:

No award – no additional priority	A moderate health and	A significant health and	An urgent health and disability award – Band 2
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	disability award – Band 4	disability award – Band 3	
<i>The health problem is not related to the person's current housing conditions and cannot be improved by alterations or moving to other accommodation.</i>	<i>A health problem is exacerbated directly by the current housing conditions and requires some priority over a person living in the same circumstances whose health is not affected.</i>	<i>The current accommodation cannot be altered or improved to resolve the health problem and there is considerable risk of deterioration in the person's health that can only be resolved by moving to other accommodation.</i>	<i>There is a very high risk to the health of the person that makes the current accommodation totally unsuitable and they need to move to other accommodation as soon as possible.</i>

There are a large range of health issues that may affect an applicant or a member of their household's housing need and each will be assessed based on the individual circumstances. The list below provides examples, for illustrative purposes of when an award may or may not be granted and is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive.

Health and Disability - No award or additional priority – examples:
An applicant or member of their household with an existing medical condition – relating to their mental and/or physical health - where there is little or no medical evidence the current accommodation is having a serious impact on their health condition and/or a move would be unlikely to result in a substantive improvement in their health.
An applicant or member of their household with medical evidence that they require a ground floor property who is already living in a suitable ground floor property. Priority to move to ground floor accommodation will be awarded but not additional priority as their current home is not affecting their health.
An applicant or member of their household with an existing mental health condition which would be largely unchanged by a move to another property. A desire to move to alternative housing because of a perception this would improve the health condition would not be sufficient to award any additional priority to move and other options to help with the health condition should be considered.
An applicant or member of their household has a medical condition and there is satisfactory evidence they require a separate bedroom because they cannot share a bedroom with others. If it is accepted that an applicant or member of their household requires their own bedroom, they will be awarded priority through the Allocations Scheme to reflect any overcrowding they are experiencing. No additional priority through a health and disability award will normally be awarded as the priority band for overcrowding priority has already taken into account the impact of the person being unable to share a bedroom.

Moderate Health and Disability – Band 4 priority – example:

An applicant living in shared accommodation with a long-term health condition where there is medical evidence that they cannot share a bathroom or kitchen and need to move to accommodation with sole access to these facilities and there are no other realistic housing options available. For example, where there is a medical recommendation an applicant with a stoma requires use of their own bathroom because they use a colostomy bag and cannot do this in the facilities available in their current home.

Significant Health and Disability Award – Band 3 priority – example:

An applicant or member of their household is in receipt of the Enhanced Rate of PIP for mobility or Medium or High Rate of DLA and living upstairs in a house or in a 1st floor flat or above without a lift and there is evidence from a health professional they are struggling with the stairs and need to move to a ground floor property without any stairs.

Urgent Health and Disability Award – Band 2 priority – examples:

Example an applicant or member of their household has provided medical evidence of needing to urgently move to alternative accommodation due to:

- An advanced and chronic or progressive medical condition, such as Motor Neurone Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Advanced/Stage 4 Cancer, AIDS and their current home is no longer suitable and cannot be adapted and moving to alternative adapted accessible housing is the only alternative available and they have been assessed as urgently needing to move.
- Being in hospital and ready to be discharged and assessed as not being able to return home due to long term health needs as their home is no longer physical suitable for their housing requirements, it cannot be adapted and moving permanently to alternative housing is the only alternative available.*
- Being household bound and a full-time wheelchair user and their current home is no longer suitable and cannot be adapted/is not suitable to be adapted and moving to alternative adapted accessible housing is the only alternative available.

**This priority will not be awarded where a property is only temporarily unsuitable in the short-term where the person affected is expected to recover in due course following recovering from a short-term illnesses or injury, or after convalescence from surgery/or a stay in hospital (or similar such as following childbirth) where recovery is expected within a reasonable period of time*

Appendix VI Bibliography

The Allocation Scheme has been developed in accordance with the legal requirements set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), including amendments made by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The legislation and statutory guidance relating to the allocation of social housing includes but is not limited to the following:

Statutory Provisions

Housing Act 1996
Housing Act 1985
Housing Act 2004
Homelessness Act 2002
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
Localism Act 2011
Immigration Act 1971
Immigration Act 1988
Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
Asylum and Immigration Act 2002
Immigration Act 2016
Human Rights Act 1998
Children Act 1989
Children Act 2004
Family Law Act 1996
Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Equality Act 2010
Welfare Reform Act 2012
European Union Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020
Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (and Regulatory Consumer Standards)

Regulatory Provisions

- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015/967
- Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002/3264
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/1294)

- The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 No. 2989
- The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Victims of Domestic Abuse and Care Leavers) (England) Regulations 2025 No 705

Allocations Statutory Guidance

- Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities 18/7/25
- Providing social housing for local people 10/7/25
- Right to Move and social housing allocations 27/3/15
- Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse 27/3/15
- Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces 18/12/24

DRAFT

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Why do an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

1. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is part of Oxford City Council's [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\) \(Equality Act 2010\)](#).

The General PSED enables Oxford City Council to:

- a. **identify and remove discrimination,**
 - b. **identify ways to advance equality of opportunity,**
 - c. **foster good relations.**
2. [An EqIA must be done before making any decision\(s\)](#) that may have an impact on people and/or services that people use and depend on.
 3. [An EqIA form is one of many tools](#) that can simplify and structure your equalities assessment.
 4. We are passionate about equalities, and we highly recommend that [Corporate Management Team \(CMT\) reports and all projects must attach an EqIA](#).

A good EqIA has the following attributes:

1. **Comprehensively considers the [9 protected characteristics](#).**

1. Age	6. Race & Ethnicity
2. Disability	7. Religion or Belief
3. Gender Reassignment	8. Sex
4. Marriage & Civil Partnership	9. Sexual Orientation
5. Pregnancy & Maternity	NEW- Socio-economic inequalities (voluntary adoption)
	NEW- Sanctuary seeking status leading to intersecting inequalities (voluntary adoption)

2. It has **considered equality of treatment** towards service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
3. Sufficiently considered **potential and real impact** of proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members.
4. **Systematically recorded and reported** any potential and real impact of your proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
5. **Collected, recorded, & reported sufficient information and data** on how your policy or proposal will have an impact.

- 6. Offers **mitigations or adjustments** if a PSED has been impacted.
- 7. Provides clear **justifications** for your decisions.
- 8. It is written in **plain English** with simple short sentence structures.

Section 1: General overview of the activity under consideration

1.	Name of activity being assessed.	Proposed changes to improve the Allocations Scheme for residents in housing need.	2.	The implementation date of the activity under consideration:	This is an EqlA on proposed changes to the Allocations Scheme. Following analysis of the responses to the consultation with tenants, other residents, Registered Providers of social and other key stakeholders a final draft of the proposed new Allocations Scheme has been completed with a summary of the responses to the survey, a copy of this EqlA and final recommendations to be approved by the Cabinet and Council ahead of being implemented at date to be determined in 26/27.
3.	Directorate:	Citizens and City Services	4.	Service Area:	Housing Services
5.	Who is (are) the assessment lead(s): Please provide: -Name -Email address	Tom Porter Senior Service Development Officer tporter@oxford.gov.uk	6.	Contact details, in case there are queries: Please provide: -Name -Email address	Tom Porter Senior Service Development Officer tporter@oxford.gov.uk

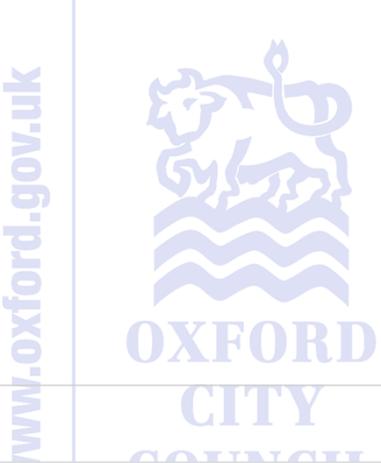
7.	Is this a new or ongoing EqlA?	New	8. If this is an extension of a previous EqlA, please indicate where the previous EqlA is located and share the link to the said EqlA.	Not Applicable
9.	Date this EqlA started:	Nov 25		
10.	Will this EqlA be attached to Corporate Management Team (CMT) reports/updates, which will be published online?			11 Give a date (tentative or otherwise) when this assessment will be taken to the CMT.

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

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12.	Type of activity being considered:	Review of an existing housing policy and the proposed changes to improve the Allocations Scheme for residents in housing need.				
13.	Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028) does this activity fulfil? Please check as needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good, affordable homes	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong, fair economy	<input type="checkbox"/> Thriving Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Zero Carbon Oxford	<input type="checkbox"/> Well run council

<p>14.</p>	<p>Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022) does this activity fulfil?</p> <p>Please check as needed.</p>	<p>Responsive services and customer care.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Diverse and engaged workforce.</p>	<p>Leadership & organisational commitment.</p>	<p>Understanding and working with our communities.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme is the policy the Council uses to allocate social housing within Oxford to those in housing need. It seeks to balance local needs and aspirations with current legislation, guidance and best practice as well as local housing conditions. The Allocations Scheme has a key role in helping to prevent homelessness and to house those in the highest need into the scarce social housing becoming available in the city.</p> <p>As a Local Authority OCC is required to have an Allocations Scheme under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. The Allocations Scheme is reviewed periodically to ensure it is kept up to date and to meet any emerging trends such as a rise in homelessness/increase demand for housing.</p> <p>A review of the Allocations Scheme has been completed to help meet current housing challenges the Council is facing and how could the scheme be simplified to increase operational efficiency. Best practice in many other local authorities has been considered as part of this.</p> <p>This has led to proposals which have been consulted on with tenants, other residents and other key stakeholders, these include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing priority to help residents need with multiple housing needs at risk of homelessness • Help for residents threatened with homelessness or homeless living in Temporary Accommodation re-housed into Private Rented Sector outside of Oxford through the creation of a new time limited retained priority band. • Introducing changes to help existing tenants requesting to move to more suitable homes and freeing up more high demand social housing; one bed general needs, adapted and family accommodation for households in need. 			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to supported accommodation move on to help increase throughput from this high demand housing in the city and make the best use of the limited supported housing becoming available for residents who are unable to live independently. • Strengthening the existing approach to make the best use of family housing becoming available for children in housing need and excluding older adult children/non-dependents aged 22+ from inclusion a parent or another’s housing application unless they meet an exception and need to remain – for example to give or receive care etc. • Greater clarity on health and housing assessments within the Allocations Scheme to provide greater transparency, help customers and reduce queries.
16.	<p>Please outline the consequences of not implementing this activity. For example, -Existing activity does not fulfill Corporate Objectives, -existing activity is discriminatory and not fulfilling Council’s PSED, ... to name a few.</p>	<p>The consequence of not updating the Allocations Scheme impacts its effectiveness in helping to deliver key priorities for the residents and the Council.</p> 

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

17.	<p>Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?</p>	<p>Following a review of the Allocations Scheme to identify improvements to the existing policy a consultation has taken place with tenants, other residents, Registered Providers of social housing and other key stakeholders requesting feedback and comments on the key areas of the Allocations Scheme which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed to change • Proposed to stay the same
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	<p>Please provide details— -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.</p>	<p>The responses to the consultation have been reviewed and considered in the drafting of the new Allocations Scheme. A report has been produced providing a summary of the responses and the proposed new Allocations Scheme with recommendations will be submitted to the Cabinet and full Council requesting approval. The new Allocations Scheme will be available to residents on the Council website, housing applicants on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing and other key stakeholders will be notified</p> <p>This EqIA was shared in a draft form as part of the consultation, helping inform the views of residents/organisations replying to the consultation. Following the closure of the consultation and the feedback received the EqIA has been reviewed.</p>
18.	<p>List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.</p> <p>These could be— -third-party research, -census data, -legislation, -articles, -reports, -briefs.</p>	<p>Analysis of key data, legislation, guidance and best practice has been undertaken as part of the review of the Allocations Scheme and used to identify areas proposed to keep or change to help the Council deliver housing priorities for residents. Including a review of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for housing in the city from tenants and other residents in need on the Oxford Register for Affordable housing. • Limited supply of social housing becoming available to let in the city for tenants and other residents in housing need. • Emerging trends – including the rise in homelessness and households in Temporary Accommodation and increase in residents applying for social housing on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing <p>Responses from tenants, other residents and staff have been considered following the feedback from the consultations on the proposals and this EqIA updated to reflect the responses.</p>
19.	<p>If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?</p>	<p>Not applicable see above.</p>

	<p>Please list the details – -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data.</p>	
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Section 4: Impact analysis.

20.	Who does the activity impact?	Service Users	Yes
	Check as needed.	Members of staff	Yes
	The impact may be positive, negative	General public	Yes
	The impact may be positive, negative		Yes



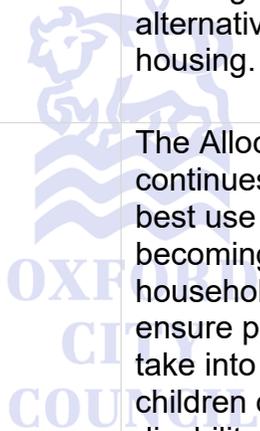
21.	or unknown.	Partner / Community Organisation	
		City Councillors	Don't Know
		Council suppliers and contractors	No

21. Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any protected characteristics as stated within Equality (Act 2010)?

Protected Characteristic	Activity Impact: Positive/Negative/Neutral/Don't know	Data/information/evidence supporting your assessment	Analysis & insight Mitigations
Age	Activity Impact: Positive	The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited family housing becoming available and ensure households with children who are homeless, overcrowded, needing to move on health, social and welfare grounds or living in otherwise unsuitable housing are given priority for the limited social housing becoming available in the City. While ensuring exceptions are allowed for older	<p>The Allocations Scheme is kept under review to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family housing continues to be allocated to families with children – except where older adults need to be re-housed with parents because they cannot live alone. • Single/55+ older persons housing continues to be

		<p>adult children/members who need to continue to live with their parents and be re-housed in family housing.</p> <p>One bedroom/55+ older person housing continues to be prioritised for adults in housing need – including those who are homeless, overcrowded, needing to move on health, social and welfare grounds or living in otherwise unsuitable housing or needing to move to alternative more suitable housing.</p>	<p>allocated to residents in the highest housing need.</p> <p>Where a household’s housing need changes this is reflected in the priority for housing/type of accommodation they require.</p> <p>Changes to the Allocations Scheme will further prioritise family housing to households with children, increasing the positive impact.</p>
<p>21 Disability (Visible and invisible)</p>	<p>Activity Impact Positive</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available suitable for households with a disability and ensure priority is awarded to take into account the needs children or adults with a disability affecting their housing.</p> <p>Checks are completed to understand the housing requirements of a household to ensure they are considered for suitable homes.</p> <p>Adapted accommodation continues to be prioritised for households requiring this type</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure that the housing need of households with a disability is take into account when assessing housing need.</p> <p>Where a household’s housing requirements change due to a disability this is reflected in the priority for housing awarded and the type of accommodation they require.</p> <p>The housing needs/priority of housing households with a disability are kept under review to reflect any new information received including</p>

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		of housing. Including properties with level access shower/stair lifts and wheelchair accessible housing.	recommendations from health professionals affecting their housing requirements.
Gender re-assignment 218	Activity Impact Positive	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise all households in housing need. If a household member is proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a gender re-assignment and this affects the size/type of housing they require this will be taken into account in the assessment of their housing need to ensure they are only offered suitable housing.</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing need of households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need. Including if a household member is proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a gender re-assignment and this affects the size/type of housing they require.</p>
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Activity Impact Neutral	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise all households in housing need - including couples who are married or in a civil partnership.</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing needs of households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need. Including those who are married/in a civil partnership.</p>
Race, Ethnicity and/or Citizenship	Activity Impact Positive	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and</p>	<p>The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing need of households is taken into account</p>

Pregnancy & Maternity

Activity Impact Positive

prioritise households in housing need for all residents of Oxford.

The Council's housing and homelessness evidence base (2023) identifies that the black community is disproportionately homeless in Oxford compared to the size in the community. The same evidence base also highlights that Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Mixed White and Asian, and Other Mixed households are more likely to be overcrowded than other households. Therefore, the provisions in the allocations policy given preference to homeless and overcrowded households should benefit these groups.

The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise all households in housing need - including households who include pregnant women. This includes all single and family households who are homeless, need to move on health or social and welfare

and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need.

Housing advice and support is provided to all residents in housing need requiring advice on their housing options and information provided in appropriate format/language if needed.

Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Mixed White and Asian, and Other Mixed households are more likely to be overcrowded. These households, if they contain children, will benefit from the changes proposed to the assessment of households with adult non-dependants aged 22+ by the policy, while those households made up of more Non dependants will be negatively impacted.

The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing need of households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need. Including where a member of the household is/has been pregnant.

		grounds, overcrowded or living in otherwise unsuitable housing.	
Religion or Belief	Activity Impact Neutral	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise households in housing need for all residents of Oxford.</p> <p>This includes all single and family households who are homeless, need to move on health or social and welfare grounds, overcrowded or living in otherwise unsuitable housing.</p>	The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing need of all households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need.
220 Sex	Activity Impact Positive	<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise households in housing need for all residents of Oxford.</p> <p>This includes all single and family households who are homeless, need to move on health or social and welfare grounds, overcrowded or living in otherwise unsuitable housing.</p> <p>Women are disproportionately impacted by domestic abuse, the allocations scheme</p>	The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing need of all households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need. Including priority awarded homeless survivors of domestic abuse of which a disproportionate number are women.

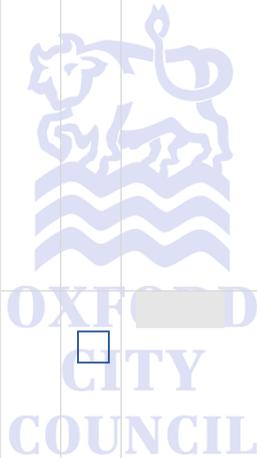
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				prioritises people fleeing domestic abuse.	
Sexual Orientation		Activity Impact Neutral		<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise households in housing need for all residents of Oxford.</p> <p>This includes all single and family households who are homeless, need to move on health or social and welfare grounds, overcrowded or living in otherwise unsuitable housing.</p>	The Allocations Scheme priority bands ensure the housing needs of all households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need.
<p>Socio-economic inequalities such as:</p> <p>21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - income and factors that impact income. -access to jobs <p>This was voluntarily adopted by Oxford City Council on the 13th of March 2024.</p>		Activity Impact Positive		<p>The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and prioritise households in housing need for residents of Oxford.</p> <p>This includes single and family households who are homeless, need to move on health or social and welfare grounds, overcrowded or living in otherwise unsuitable housing affected by socio-economic inequalities unable to secure affordable housing in the city.</p>	The Allocations Scheme qualification criteria and priority bands ensure the housing needs of households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need.
Other (voluntary consideration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity Impact Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Allocations Scheme continues to aim to make the best use of the limited housing becoming available and	The Allocations Scheme qualification criteria and priority bands ensure the housing needs

<p>Sanctuary seeking status leading to intersecting inequalities experienced by</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>asylum seeker, refugee, person with insecure immigration status</p> <p><u>Oxford City Council became a local authority of sanctuary in December 2024</u>, thereby committing to learn from our experiences, embed inclusive practices and share efforts to create a culture of welcome and safety for all.</p>				<p>prioritise households in housing need for residents of Oxford and those needing to move to the Oxford as a place of safety, including survivors of domestic abuse, conflict and refugees.</p>	<p>of households is taken into account and offers of social housing are made to those in the highest need.</p>
<p>Other</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unpaid carers - Prison population - Homeless population -Council suppliers & contractors -Cabinet Members 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Draft Full Impact Assessment

22.		<p>Conclusions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <p>No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with the activity. No need to monitor in the future.</p>
23.	<p>Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.</p>		<p>Benefits of Implementation:</p> <p>The Allocations Scheme seeks to balance local needs and priorities with current legislation, guidance and best practice as well as local housing conditions. The Allocations Scheme is a key housing policy supporting the priorities of the Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy which include <i>great homes for all, preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid re-housing response, ending rough sleeping</i> benefitting all households with protected characteristics in housing need. A draft EqlA was completed and shared as part of the consultation on the proposals. To reflect part of the Council's housing related commitments within the Equality Impact and Diversity Strategy to provide Responsive Services and Customer Care for those with protected characteristics and to improvement engagement with tenants and residents in housing policy development.</p>				

The proposed revised Allocations Scheme will benefit the majority of residents including households in housing need with protected characteristics, applying for social housing. However, with a finite supply of housing and increasing demand any changes to the relative priority awarded to applicants applying for housing will have an impact on others on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. These have been kept to a minimum.

The relative merits of keeping the Allocations Scheme unchanged or making the proposed changes has been carefully considered and the proposals aim to get the balance right to continue to help house Council tenants and other residents in the highest housing need in the City including those in housing need with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

Balancing Competing Priorities

Awarding higher priority to households threatened with homelessness/living insecure housing with multiple needs will help house residents who would otherwise become homeless and move into temporary accommodation arranged by the Council and require housing. This priority will help vulnerable singles and families to be housed more quickly and avoid the disruption and impact of being required to move to Temporary Accommodation before being housed. The additional priority will only be awarded to applicants with high housing need who would need housing anyway so will have a low impact on other housing applicants. Homeless people in Oxford are disproportionately female, Black, pregnant women, and disabled, compared to the general population, therefore there will be a positive equality impact from these changes for people with these characteristics.

A new priority award, for households at risk of homelessness or homeless living in temporary accommodation, housed by the Council into the private rented accommodation outside of the city will help these residents and increase the number of housing applicants on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. However, existing housing applicants in significant, or higher, housing need with an earlier priority date will not be affected and as the award is time limited for 2 years only a low number of housing applicants will qualify for this priority at any point in time having a low impact on others on the housing register. This change will have a positive impact for homeless households with protected characteristics if a move outside of the city is suitable for their needs.

Awarding a new priority award to Council tenants, and other social tenants, requesting to move from high demand housing to homes that better suit their needs will help these tenants – including those who need to move on health or social and welfare grounds or with other protected characteristics. Although this will increase the number of tenants in urgent housing need, this will free up more housing for others housing applicants urgently needing to move to higher demand housing and reduce the time

they wait to be re-housed. Existing applicants in urgent need, including those with protected characteristics, with an earlier priority date will not be disadvantaged and there are only expected to be a low number of tenants requesting to move for this reason at any point in time so the impact on others on the housing register will be low.

The Allocations Scheme seeks to make the best use of the scarce family housing becoming available and will normally only allocate family properties to households with dependent children under 18 or where and exceptions has been agreed that it is reasonable to include an adult on another's housing application – including established household members. Strengthening the existing approach to explicitly state adult children aged 22 or older will be removed from their parent's housing applicant will benefit children in housing need.

There are 259 housing applicants with adult children aged 22+ on the Housing Register – 156 are in high housing need (Bands 1 to 3) and 103 are in lower housing need (Bands 4 to 5). Due to the demand for housing only the 156 in the highest priority bands are likely to qualify for an offer and be affected by the change and many will qualify for an exception. Before implementing this change and to mitigate the impact on the highest priority cases who could be affected a full review of each case in the higher bands will be completed to check whether an exception applies and housing applicants will be given the opportunity provide relevant supporting information.

While some housing applicants with older adult children could be affected – many more families will benefit. There are 1579 families on the housing register with children who would benefit from this change including 1052 in high housing need in (Bands 1 to 3) - including families with children who have been living in unsuitable housing for over 5 years. These changes to increase priority to households with children will have a strong positive impact on those households with children. There will be a mixed impact on other protected characteristics, overcrowded households with children will be prioritised, while overcrowded households made up of non-dependants will be deprioritised, so negatively impacted. The relative benefits and impact of this proposal have been carefully considered and while some households will be impacted – there are exceptions in place to protect those in the highest housing need, including those who with health needs.

Changes to the Housing Register to create a new move on list to help residents to move on from supported housing who no longer require this support will benefit residents, including those with protected characteristics, to move on to settled accommodation and free up spaces for residents requiring support. The impact on other housing applicants will be low. Changes to the Allocations

		<p>Scheme to provide clearer guidance on housing and housing awards will help benefit all residents – including those with protected characteristics</p> <p>The proposals to continue to use qualification criteria to ensure social housing continues to be offered to residents in the highest housing need with a local connection and suitable to be tenants. Exceptions are available to ensure the most vulnerable households, including those without a local connection with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged. The use of priority bands and Choice-Based Lettings will ensure all housing applicants are provided with clear information on the assessment of their housing need, the properties becoming available to let and when they may be made an offer of housing.</p> <p>Tenants requesting to downsize will continue to benefit from high priority to move and support to downsize to more suitable homes and families will benefit from more housing becoming available.</p> <p>Feedback from the responses received from tenants, other residents, Registered Providers of social housing and key stakeholders will be reviewed and influence the final draft of the new Allocations Scheme and Equality Impact Assessment.</p>
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Section 6: Monitoring and review plan.

The responsibility for maintaining a monitoring arrangement of the EqlA action plan lies with the service/team completing the EqlA. These arrangements must be built into the performance management framework such as KPIs or Risk Registers.

24.	<p>Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact?</p> <p>For example-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group,etc. 	<p>Housing Needs Team</p> <hr/> <p>Housing Needs Team</p>
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25.	Who (individual, team, or service area) will be responsible for carrying out the EqlA review?		
26.	How often will the equality impact be reviewed for this activity? For example- -quarterly, -yearly, etc.	Periodically, including when any future changes are made to the Allocations Scheme	27. Date when the EqlA will be reviewed again.

Section 7: Sign-off

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Name:
 Job Title: Senior Service Development Officer
 Signature:

Name:
 Job Title: Head of People
 Signature:
 G Malkin

Name: Richard Wood
 Job Title: Housing Strategy and Needs Manager
 Signature:

Name: Full Name
 Job Title: Type here
 Signature:

Name: Full Name
 Job Title: Type here
 Signature:

Name: Full Name
 Job Title: Type here
 Signature:

Suggested list of people to include are:

- 1) Project lead/manager.
- 2) Head of service area or team.
- 3) Person who completed the EqlA.
- 4) EDI Lead.
- 5) EDI Specialist.
- 6) For joint projects, please consider the following:

1. Other project leads
2. Other service area and/or team lead/manager

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

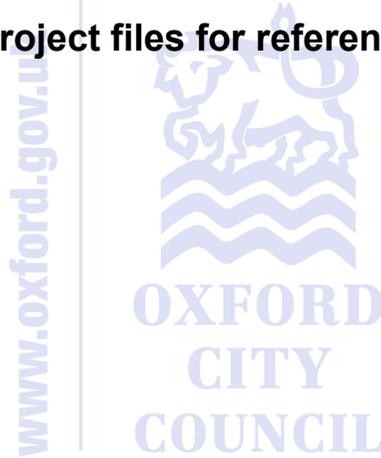
Job Title: Type here

Signature:

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

⚠ Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.

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Appendix 3 Allocations Scheme Review Survey Response

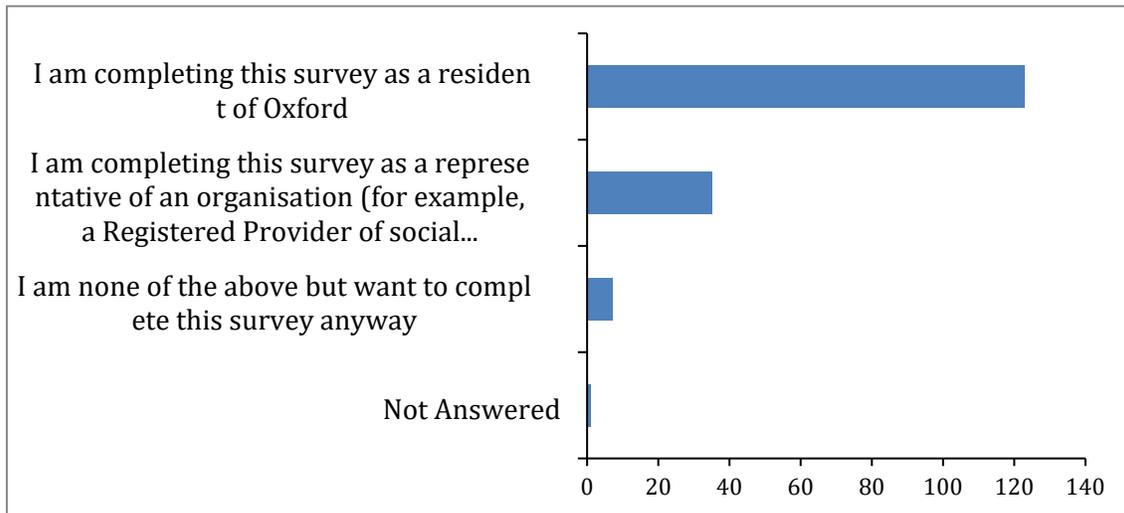
The Allocation Scheme Review

The activity ran from 11/12/2025 to 15/01/2026

Responses to this survey: **166**

1: Please select the option that best describes you:

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.



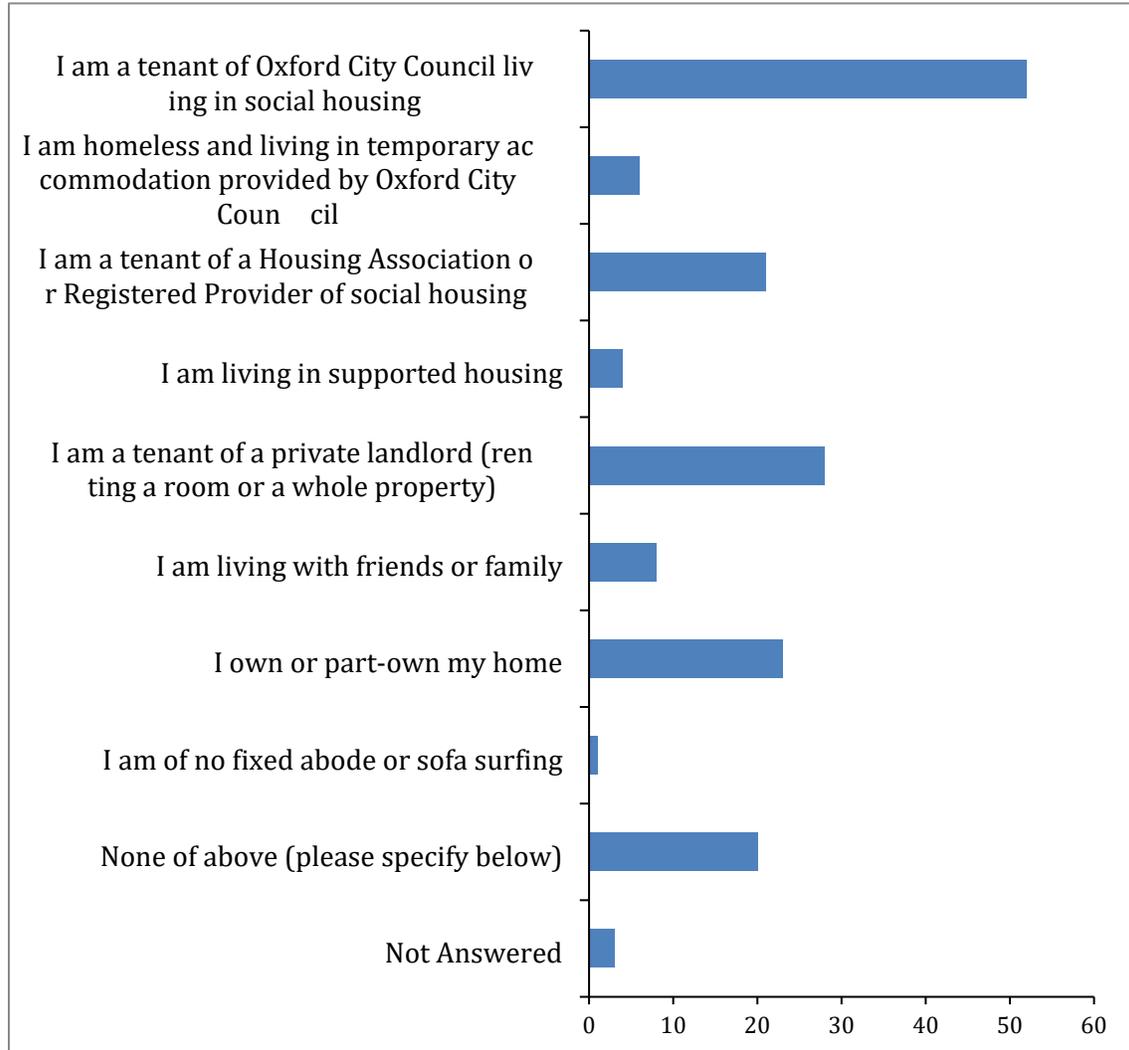
Option	Total	Percent
I am completing this survey as a resident of Oxford	123	74.10%
I am completing this survey as a representative of an organisation (for example, a Registered Provider of social housing, a Supported Housing Provider, an Advice Agency or another service)	35	21.08%
I am none of the above but want to complete this survey anyway	7	4.22%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

2: If applicable, which organisation or service do you represent in Oxford?

There were 50 responses to this part of the question.

3: What is your housing situation?

There were 163 responses to this part of the question.

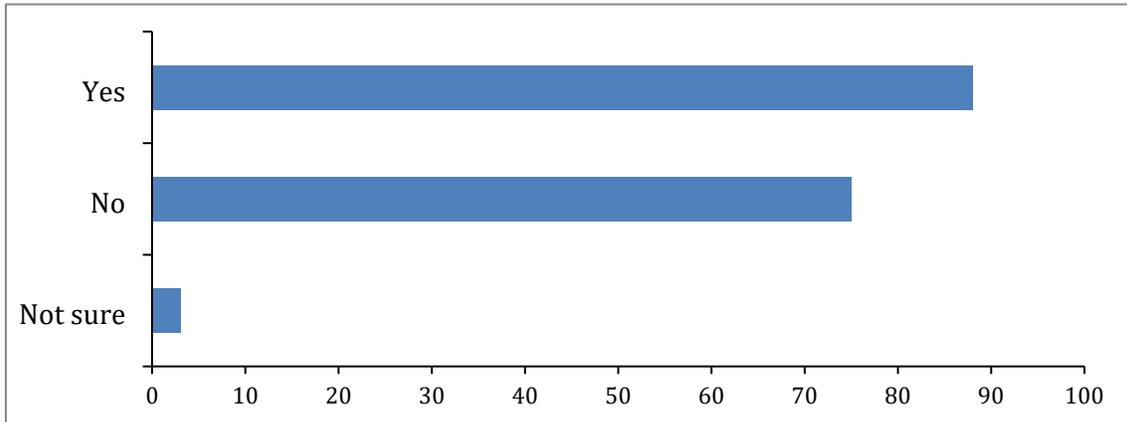


Option	Total	Percent	
I am a tenant of Oxford City Council living in social housing	52	31.33%	
I am homeless and living in temporary accommodation provided by Oxford City Council	6	3.61%	
I am a tenant of a Housing Association or Registered Provider of social housing	21	12.65%	
I am living in supported housing	4	2.41%	
I am a tenant of a private landlord (renting a room or a whole property)	28	16.87%	
I am living with friends or family	8	4.82%	
I own or part-own my home	23	13.86%	
I am of no fixed abode or sofa surfing	1	0.60%	
None of above (please specify below)	20	12.05%	
Not Answered	3	1.81%	

4: Are you currently on the Housing Register* in Oxford, or have you applied to join?

***The Housing Register is referring to applicants applying for an offer of social housing from the Council or a Registered Provider of Social Housing/Housing Association (not Shared Ownership or a Mutual Exchange).**

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.

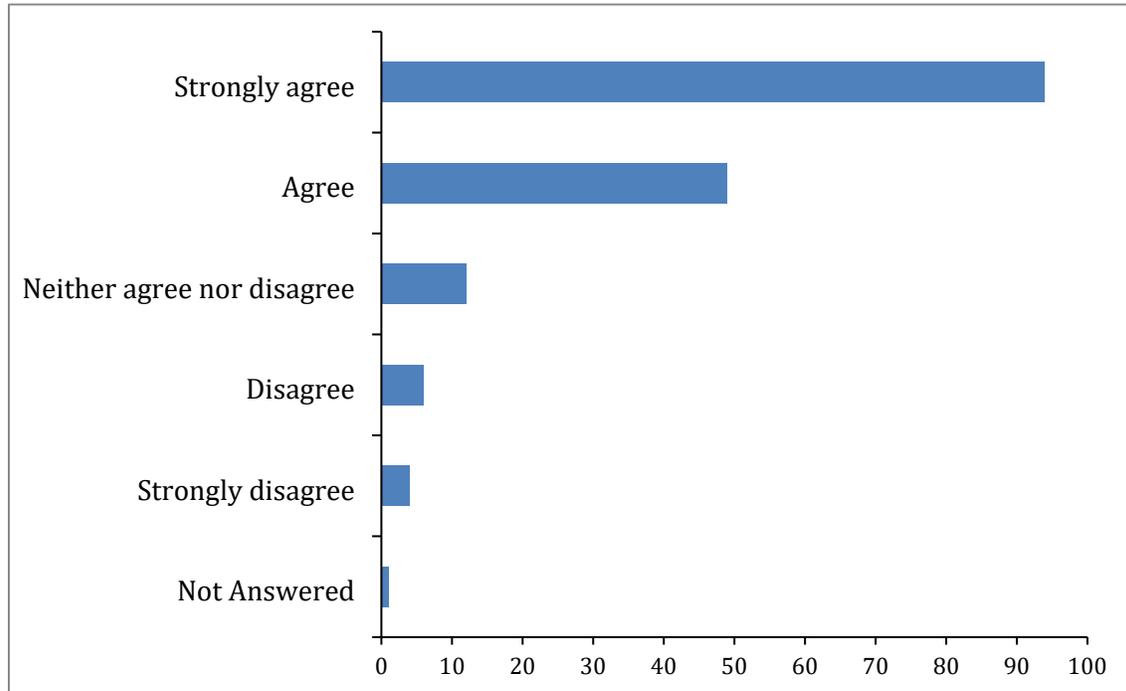


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	88	53.01%
No	75	45.18%
Not sure	3	1.81%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

5: Local Connection

The Council is proposing to keep the current qualification Local Connection criteria and exceptions to ensure social housing is offered to existing tenants, other residents and households who need to live in the city. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.

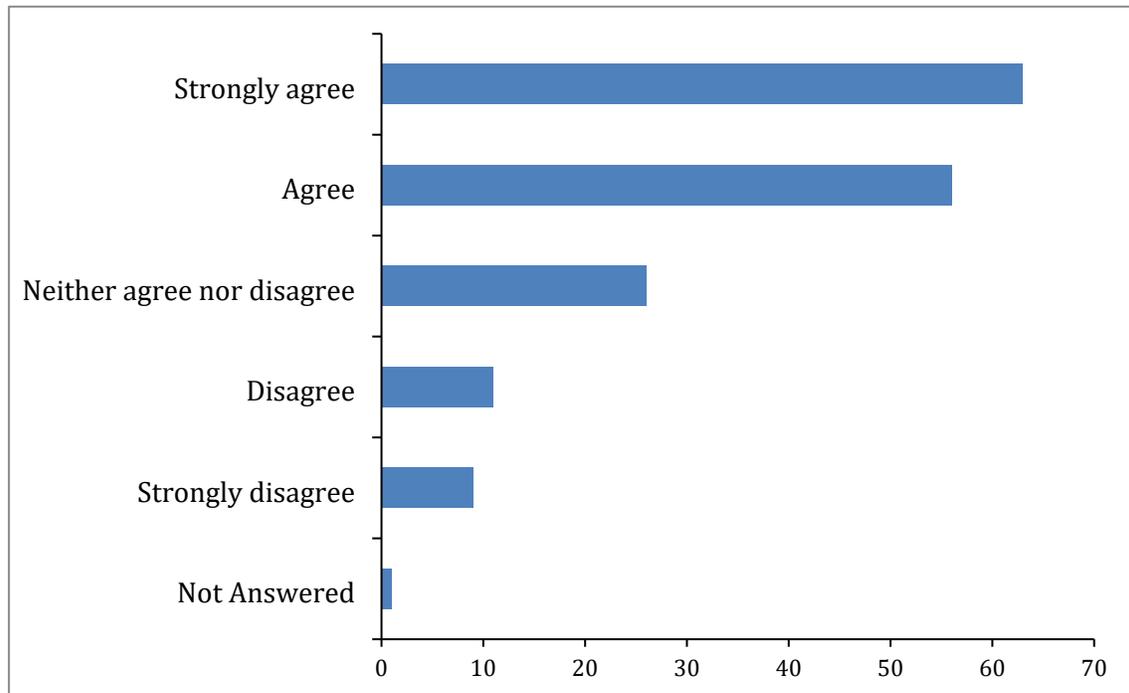


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	94	56.63%
Agree	49	29.52%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	7.23%
Disagree	6	3.61%
Strongly disagree	4	2.41%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

6: Income and Savings

The Council is proposing to keep the existing qualification criteria and exceptions to ensure social housing is offered to residents in housing need unable to secure their own housing in the city. *To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?*

There were 165 responses to this part of the question

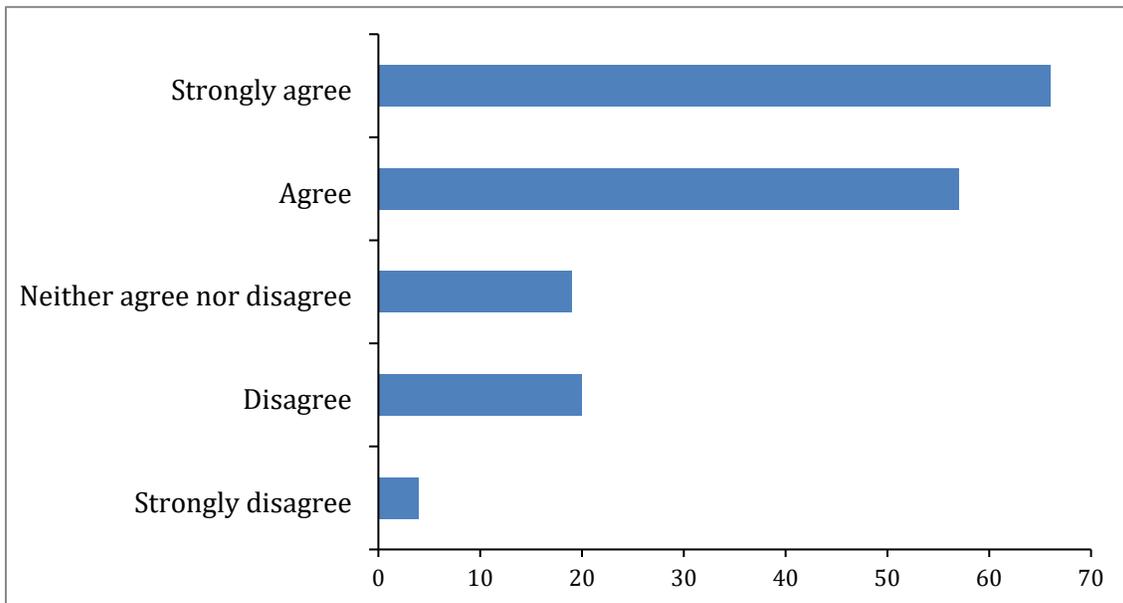


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	63	37.95%
Agree	56	33.73%
Neither agree nor disagree	26	15.66%
Disagree	11	6.63%
Strongly disagree	9	5.42%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

7: Rent Arrears

The Council is proposing to keep the existing rent arrears qualification criteria and exceptions to ensure social housing is offered to residents in housing need who are able to successfully maintain a tenancy with appropriate support in place where required. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.

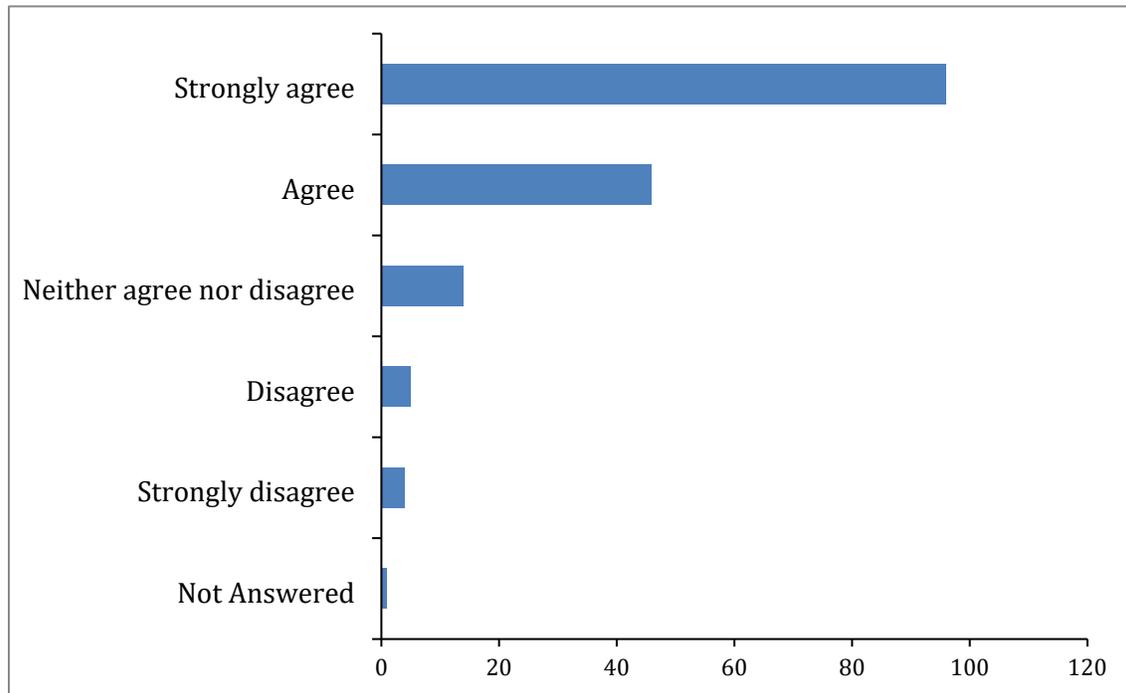


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	66	39.76%
Agree	57	34.34%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	11.45%
Disagree	20	12.05%
Strongly disagree	4	2.41%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Council is proposing to keep the existing qualification criteria on ASB and be able to exclude housing applicants responsible for serious ASB. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	96	57.83%
Agree	46	27.71%
Neither agree nor disagree	14	8.43%
Disagree	5	3.01%
Strongly disagree	4	2.41%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

Qualification Criteria Response Summary

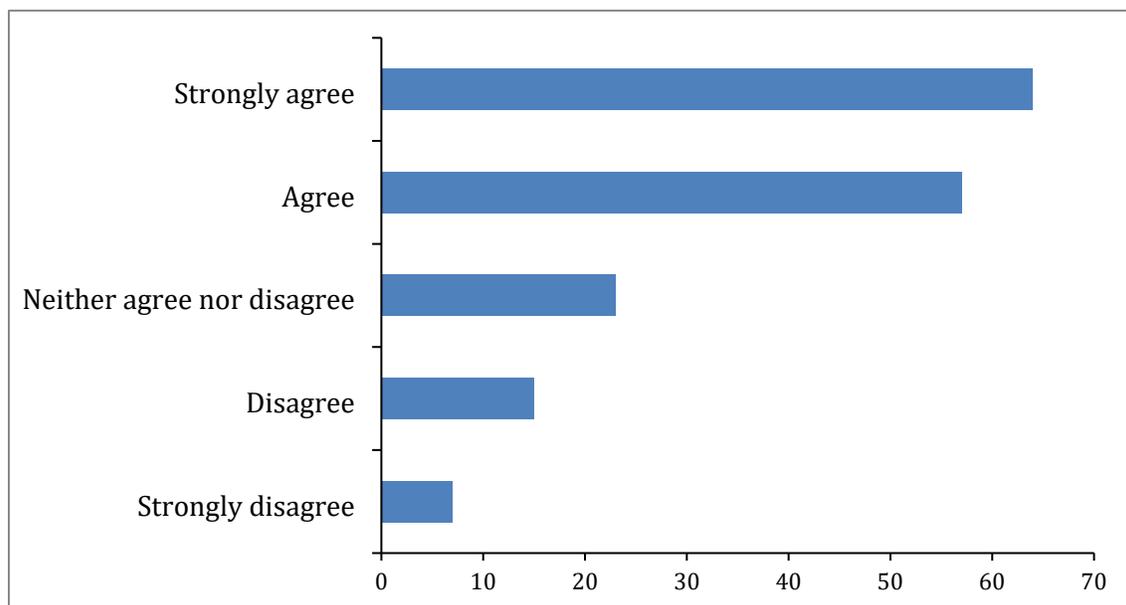
There was strong support for the proposal to keep the existing qualification criteria around Local Connection, Income and Savings, Rent Arrears and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) with over 80% of respondents supporting this approach for each area and only a low percentage disagreeing. Where concerns were raised these were largely covered by the exceptions within the policy to provide safeguards and avoid causing hardship. For example, the proposed Allocations Scheme allows for exceptions to ensure survivors of

domestic abuse and care leavers are not disadvantaged by local connection criteria and can apply for social housing in Oxford. Similarly, residents with higher income and savings who are unable to secure suitable housing elsewhere, such as adapted accommodation due to a disability, will not be disqualified if they need social housing. Housing needs assessments are also designed to ensure the individual circumstances behind any cases with a history of rent arrears or ASB, including a decline in health, lack of support, unaffordable housing or a change in circumstances are considered carefully when determining who will qualify for inclusion on the housing register and an offer of housing.

9: Priority for Housing & Choice-Based Lettings

The Council is proposing to continue using 5 priority bands to assess housing need and Choice-Based Lettings to advertise and offer properties to make this process as fair and clear as possible. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	64	38.55%
Agree	57	34.34%

Neither agree nor disagree	23	13.86%
Disagree	15	9.04%
Strongly disagree	7	4.22%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

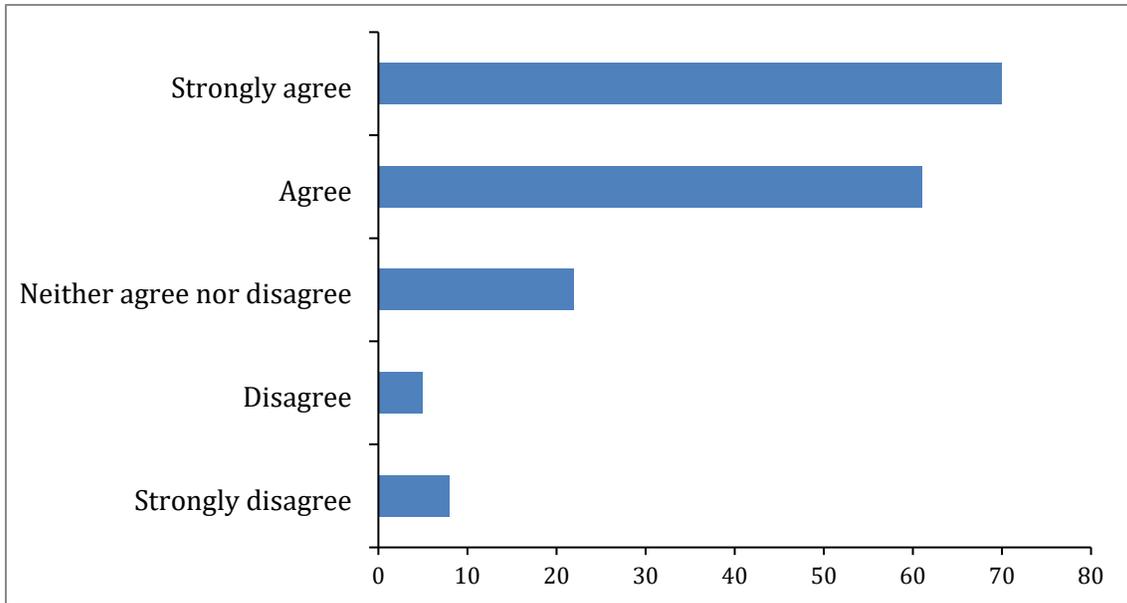
Response Summary

There was support for the continued use of Choice-Based Lettings and five priority bands used to assess housing need with 73% of respondents agreeing with this approach and only a low percentage disagreeing. Responses varied and included some who are understandably frustrated at the long waiting times caused by the high demand for housing and insufficient social housing becoming available in the City and the limited affordable options elsewhere in the private sector. The proposed new Allocations Scheme seeks to make the best use of single and family housing becoming available and to prioritise those in the highest housing need to minimise the time households in wait for an offer of suitable housing. However, with over 3500 households on the housing register and less than 500 properties becoming available last year – there is a long wait for housing and not all those applying can be offered social housing.

10: Homelessness Prevention for Residents with Multiple Housing Needs

The Council is proposing to increase the priority given to housing applicants with multiple needs at risk of homelessness, through no fault of their own, who are already living in overcrowded accommodation or otherwise unsuitable housing, or those with additional health or social welfare needs. To improve their chances of being offered housing before they become homeless. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	70	42.17%
Agree	61	36.75%
Neither agree nor disagree	22	13.25%
Disagree	5	3.01%
Strongly disagree	8	4.82%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Response Summary

The proposal to increase the priority for households threatened with homelessness with multiple needs was strongly supported by 82% of respondents agreeing with this approach and on a low percentage disagreeing. Some respondents reflected this would impact on the priority/waiting times of other households on the housing register and circumstances would need to be verified before awarding this priority. Under the proposed new Allocations Scheme this new priority will help the most vulnerable from becoming homeless, however, the number of housing applicants meeting this criterion is likely to be low, so the impact on overall waiting times for others will be limited and circumstances are checked as part of the assessment process.

11: Help for Homeless Residents from Oxford Housed Outside of the City

The Council is proposing to introduce a new significant priority award for housing applicants who are owed a homeless duty by OCC where they are:

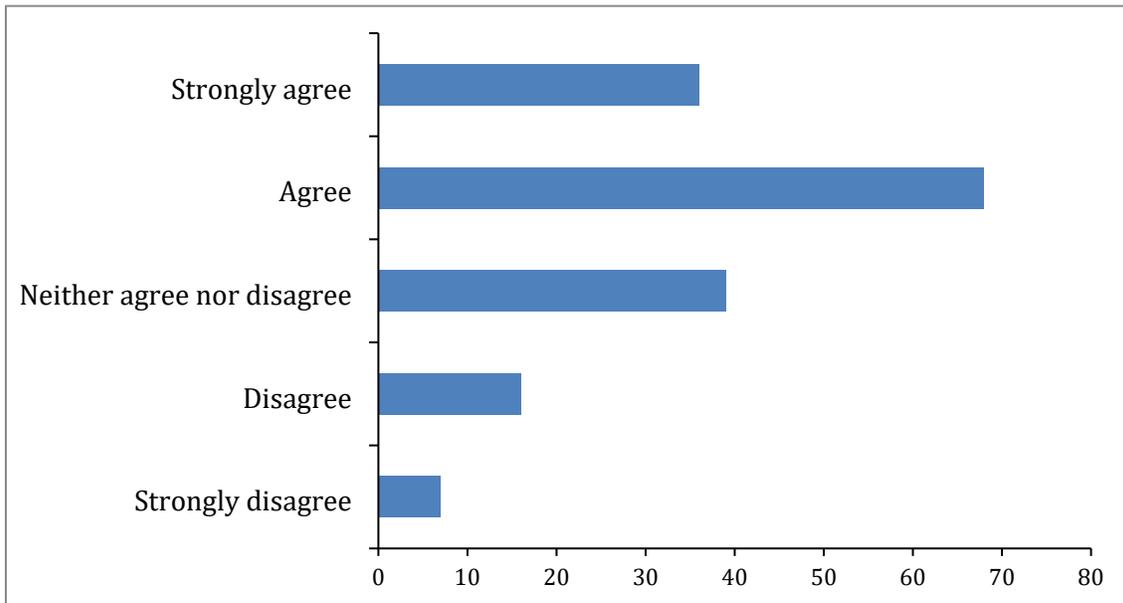
1. *Threatened with homelessness or homeless living in Temporary Accommodation*

And

2. Re-housed by the Council into secure private rented sector housing outside of the city to discharge a homeless duty owed by OCC.

This priority would be time limited for up to 2 years to give the opportunity to continue to apply for social housing in Oxford for a reasonable period of time after they have moved. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	36	21.69%
Agree	68	40.96%
Neither agree nor disagree	39	23.49%
Disagree	16	9.64%
Strongly disagree	7	4.22%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

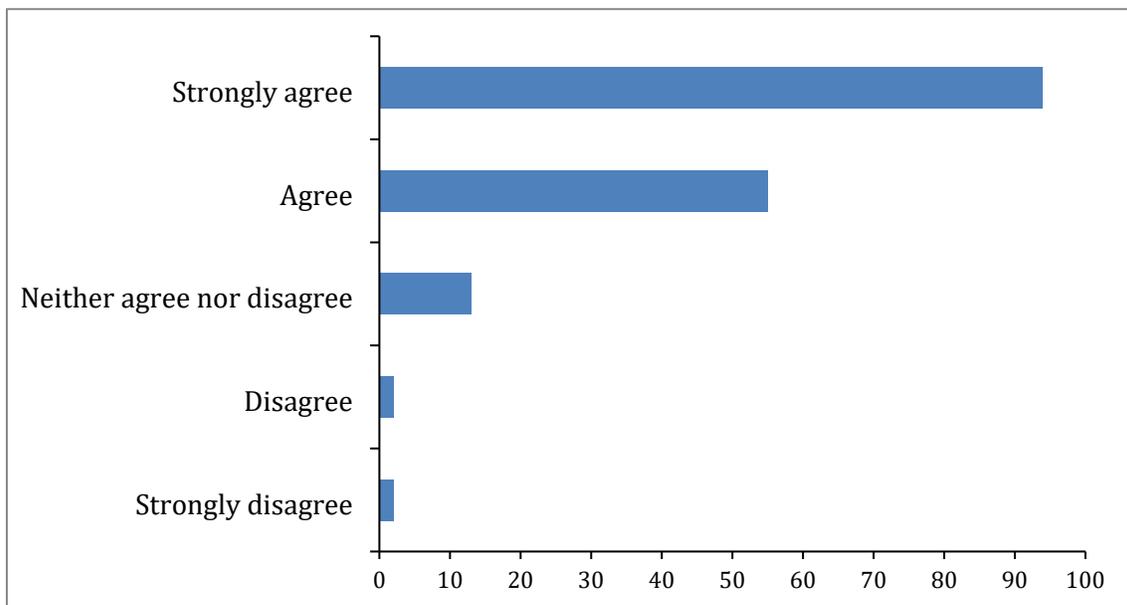
Response Summary

The majority of respondents supported the proposal to introduce a new time limited priority award for homeless Residents from Oxford housed outside of the city with 63% agreeing and only 15% disagreeing. The responses largely indicated that residents understandably would prefer to be offered social housing in Oxford and if private rented housing were offered elsewhere, checks should be made to ensure it was suitable. Some residents also reflected that this would impact on the priority/waiting times for applicants in housing need. The Council already has in place a separate *Homeless Discharge into the Private Rented Sector Policy* (PRS) to ensure that suitability assessments take into account the circumstances of each household before offering a home in the PRS outside Oxford. The number of housing applicants meeting this criterion each year is likely to be low, and the award is time limited for 2 years so the impact on overall waiting times for others will be limited.

12: Freeing up More Family Homes and Helping Existing Tenants Helping tenants downsize

The Council is proposing to continue to provide help and award high priority to Council tenants (and other social housing tenants) who are under-occupying larger homes and wish to downsize. To support tenants requesting to move to more suitable homes and help free up more properties for families with children urgently needing housing. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
--------	-------	---------

Strongly agree	94	56.63%
Agree	55	33.13%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	7.83%
Disagree	2	1.20%
Strongly disagree	2	1.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Response Summary

The proposal to continue seeking to free up more family homes and to help Council and other social tenants wishing to downsize to a smaller home was strongly supported with over 90% of respondents agreeing and only a very low percentage disagreed.

Responses agreed with continuing to encourage under-occupying tenants wishing to downsize to move while ensuring tenants who were happy in their homes were not put under pressure to move. The proposed new Allocations Scheme continues to ensure the wishes of under-occupying social tenants are respected and they are only offered priority to move if they want to. Feedback from respondents encouraged the Council and partners to continue to promote the help available to any under-occupying tenants wishing to move.

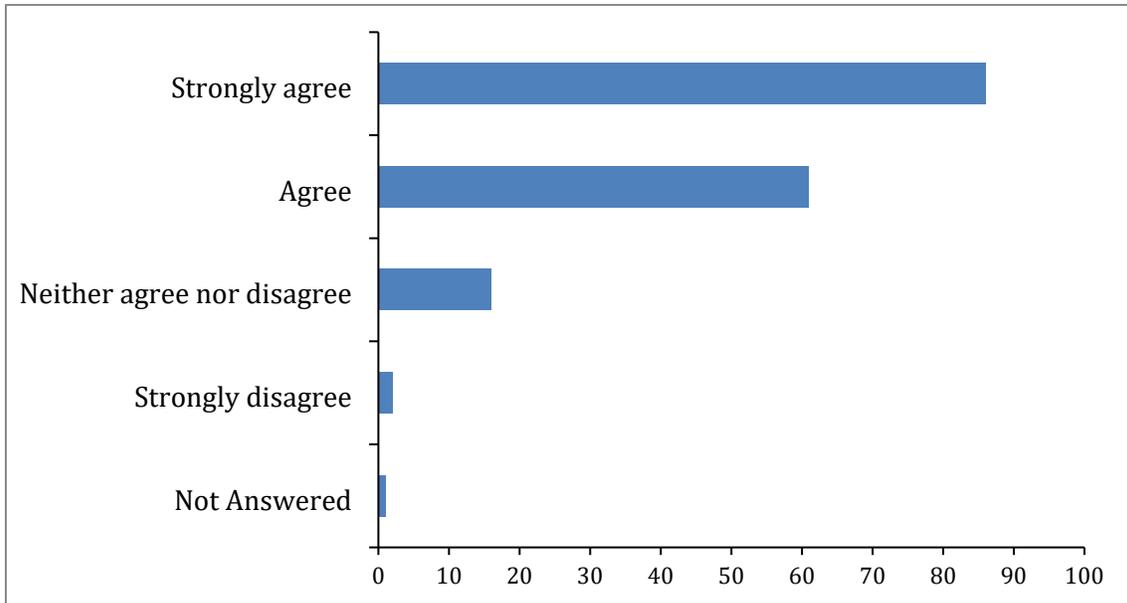
13: Freeing Up More Bungalows/Adapted Homes and Helping Existing Tenants

The Council is proposing to introduce a new urgent priority award to help tenants who are requesting to move to another more suitable home and free up a higher demand property for another resident in housing need where they are living in a:

- *Bungalow and would like to move to another type of property (excluding a move to another bungalow)*
- *A significantly adapted flat or house they no longer require and would like to move to another property without adaptations.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	86	51.81%
Agree	61	36.75%
Neither agree nor disagree	16	9.64%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	2	1.20%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

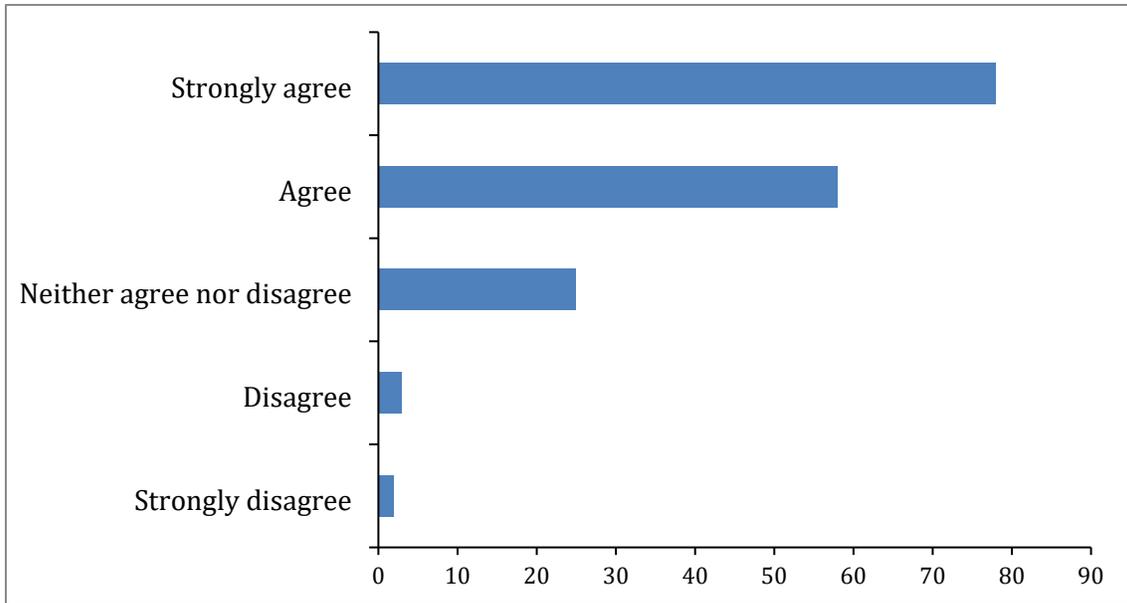
14: Freeing up More One-Bedroom Homes and Helping Existing Tenants

The Council is proposing to introduce a new high priority award for Council and other social tenants requesting to move where they are living in a:

- *1-bedroom general needs flat (without an age restriction) and would like to move to lower demand 55+ older persons housing which is more suitable for their housing needs*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 166 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	78	46.99%
Agree	58	34.94%
Neither agree nor disagree	25	15.06%
Disagree	3	1.81%
Strongly disagree	2	1.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Response Summary to Freeing Up More Bungalows, 1 Beds and Adapted Homes

The proposal to free up more bungalows, adapted homes, one-bedroom general needs housing for existing Council and other social tenants wishing to move to lower demand homes was supported agreed by 82% of respondents and only a very lower percentage disagreed. Responses sought re-assurance tenants would only be moved if they requested to move and any housing offered should be suitable for their needs. Feedback also supported help being offered to Council tenants on a low income/needing help and support to move home (similar to the help already offered to downsizing Council tenants) and asked whether any financial incentive could be offered. The proposed new Allocations Scheme will ensure the wishes of qualifying tenants are respected and they are only offered the opportunity to move if they want to. Further consideration will be given to whether additional assistance can be provided to help facilitate these moves to Council tenants.

15: Making the Best Use of Family Housing

The Council is proposing to strengthen the existing approach on prioritising offers of family housing to residents with children under 18 by introducing changes where there are older household members still living with a housing applicant to explicitly state:

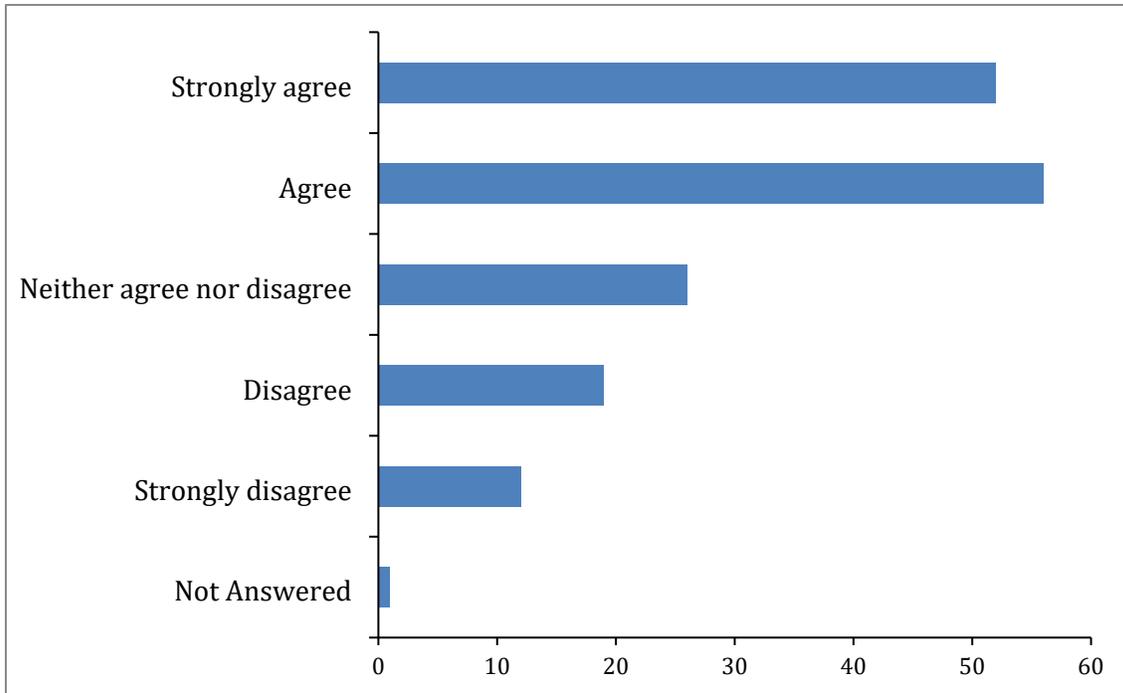
- *Any adult child aged 22 or older will be excluded from their parents' housing application and not count towards the number of bedrooms they require and their priority to move (unless an exception is agreed).*
- *Any other adult (excluding partners) aged 22 or older will be excluded from another person's housing application and not count towards the number of bedrooms they require and their priority to move (unless an exception is agreed).*

The Council is proposing to continue to:

- *Allow exceptions where following an assessment of the households housing need it is accepted that is reasonable to include them for example adults with health needs needing full-time care who cannot live alone, former care leavers or a full-time student living at home and still studying.*
- *Advise adults they can make their own housing application and will have their housing need assessed based on their individual circumstances – for example a single adult sharing a room while living with their parents will have one-bedroom housing need and be awarded priority for being overcrowded.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	52	31.33%
Agree	56	33.73%
Neither agree nor disagree	26	15.66%
Disagree	19	11.45%
Strongly disagree	12	7.23%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

Response Summary

The proposal to continue to make the best use of family housing by strengthening the existing approach in the new Allocations Scheme towards assessing housing applications including adult children and other adults (excluding partners) aged 22+ was supported by the majority respondents – with 65% agreeing and only 19% disagreeing. Responses included supporting the need for more family housing for younger children balanced against ensuring exceptions could be applied and taking into account the potential impact on families with older children, lack of alternative housing options in the City and the long wait for housing could lead to more single adults approaching the Council for assistance.

The proposed new Allocations Scheme seeks to balance the competing priorities of housing households in the highest housing need and a range of exceptions are in place for those still needing to live at home, including adults providing support parents with health needs, or their own health needs requiring full-time care who cannot live alone, former care leavers or full-time students living at home and still studying. Existing Council and other social tenants seeking to downsize will also qualify for an exception.

Before implementing this change and to mitigate the impact on cases who could be affected a full review of each case will be completed to check whether an exception applies and housing applicants will be given the opportunity provide relevant supporting information.

16: Making the Best Use of Supported Housing

The Council Oxford Register for Affordable Housing uses Housing Lists to ensure that a fair number of properties are allocated to existing tenants and other residents.

The Council proposes to:

1. Keep the existing Housing Lists:

- The Transfer List for tenants of the Council and other social landlords*
- The Homeless List for residents owed a statutory homeless duty by the Council living in Temporary Accommodation*
- The General Register List for everyone else – including residents living in the private rented sector and friends and family (and currently residents living in supported housing).*

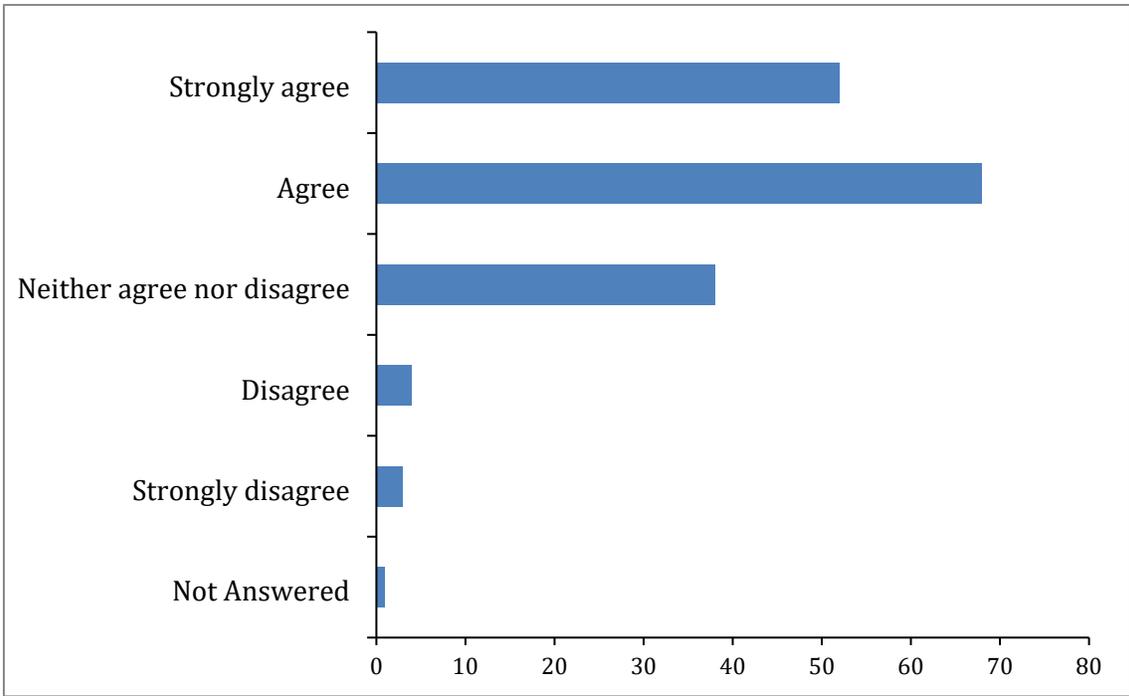
2. Create a new “Move On” list on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing for residents living in supported housing assessed as ready to move on (and to remove them from the General Register List).

This will help:

- Residents move to settled suitable social housing or private rented housing and free up more supported housing for residents not yet ready to live independently.*
- Ensure only properties suitable for households moving on from supported housing are offered to this list and minimise lettings times.*
- Increase transparency by providing clearer information to housing applicants on each Housing List what properties are available to them.*
- Make the allocation process more efficient and reduce offer times to households in housing need*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 165 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	52	31.33%
Agree	68	40.96%
Neither agree nor disagree	38	22.89%
Disagree	4	2.41%
Strongly disagree	3	1.81%
Not Answered	1	0.60%

Response Summary

The proposal to make changes to ensure the best use of supported housing was agreed by 72% of the respondents and only a low percentage disagreed. Responses included ensuring households were offered suitable housing, approving moving on residents no longer needing support to avoid long periods in housing not needed and better used for some-one else and reflected this could impact on re-housing times to others in housing need. The proposed Allocations Scheme has processes in place to ensure suitability checks as part of the offer process. The impact on other housing applicants on the housing register will be limited because move on applicants are already higher priority under the existing Allocations Scheme. The changes proposed are to improve processes and house applicants from support supported housing to suitable homes more quickly.

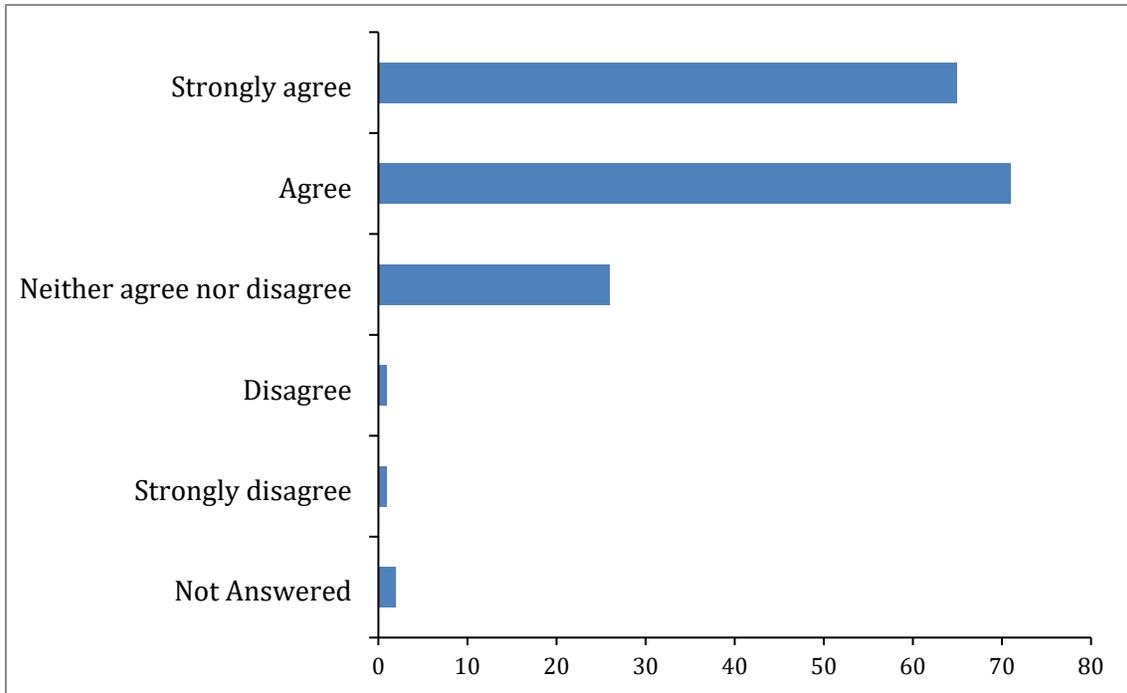
17: Guidance on Health and Housing Awards

The Council is proposing additional guidance is included in the Allocations Scheme in Appendix V to provide more details on how applications for housing are assessed when a resident is requesting to move on health grounds.

This is to provide more information to the public on how decisions are made, increasing transparency.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

There were 164 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	65	39.16%
Agree	71	42.77%
Neither agree nor disagree	26	15.66%
Disagree	1	0.60%
Strongly disagree	1	0.60%
Not Answered	2	1.20%

Response Summary

The additional guidance on health awards was strongly supported by 82% of respondents with very low percentage disagreeing. Responses included ensuring evidence supplied by customers from health professionals is taken into account in this process and responsible for health and housing assessments are suitably trained in this area. The draft Allocations Scheme proposes to continue to use evidence provided by health professionals to assess housing applications and ensure staff are trained in these processes. Staff training will continue to be monitored and reviewed to seek to provide the best outcomes for service users.

Risk Identification

Risks should be identified that may affect the Council's ability to achieve its business objectives, execute its strategies successfully or limit its ability to exploit opportunities.

Risks can be identified through a number of methods, including:

- A 'brainstorming' session or workshop with the whole management team and relevant stakeholders
- Interviews or questionnaires with key stakeholders
- Meetings with smaller groups of people

There are a wide range of methods available that can be used to identify and understand risks. The method that you select will depend upon the type of risk(s) that you are dealing with but typically a management team workshop is the method most commonly used.

Additionally, existing sources of information could help inform this stage. Some examples are listed below:

- Service / corporate plans, strategies and objectives
- Existing risk registers
- Risks or issues raised by internal audit or other scrutiny body
- Risks identified through budget setting processes
- Health & safety risk assessments
- Business continuity risk assessments
- Partnership, programme or project documentation (e.g. business case or project risk register)
- Experience of those participating in the risk identification process

It is the responsibility of those identifying risks to decide which sources of information they should consult. This may be one or more of the sources listed above or it could be something else you think is appropriate.

As well as direct risks to the achievement of our objectives it is important to think broadly about uncertainties that may have an impact on the organisation. The diagram shown below illustrates a variety of different risk themes, expanding on PESTLE prompts, which the organisation could face. Think also in terms of these themes when identifying risks.



Once identified, the risks need to be described in sufficient detail and recorded in a consistent format to support effective decision making on the way that the risk is managed. It is crucial for risks to be defined properly at this stage. Failure to do so can result in confusion about the exact nature of the risk, ineffective risk controls being implemented, or the risk analysis being over or underestimated.

The description of the risk should include the following elements:

- Risk Title – a short and concise header for the risk
- Description – expanding on the risk title outlining the situation or event that exposes us to a risk.
- Risk Cause – also known as the trigger event. Situations or factors which result in the risk becoming a reality.
- Risk Effect – the likely consequences if the risk materialises (The negative impact - consider worst likely scenario)

When describing a risk try not to describe the impact of the risk as the risk itself or define risks with statements which are the converse of objectives. Focus upon the uncertain event that would result in those impacts.

Types of Risk to consider	
Strategic / Commercial	
1	Under performance to specification
2	Management will under perform against expectations
3	Collapse of contractors
4	Insolvency of promoter
5	Failure of suppliers to meet contractual commitments (quality, cost, time)
6	Insufficient capital
7	Market fluctuations
8	Trade/Banking crises
9	Fraud/theft
10	Partnership failing to deliver desired outcomes
11	Situation is not insurable (cost of insurance outweighs the benefit)
Economic / Financial / Market	
1	Exchange rate fluctuation
2	Interest rate instability
3	Inflation
4	Shortage of working capital
5	Failure to meet projected revenue targets
6	Market developments will adversely affect plans
Legal and Regulatory	
1	New or changed legislation may invalidate assumptions upon which the activity is based
2	Failure to obtain appropriate approval e.g. planning consent
3	Unforeseen inclusion of contingent liabilities
4	Loss of intellectual property rights
5	Failure to achieve satisfactory contractual arrangements
6	Unexpected regulatory controls or licencing requirements
7	Changes in tax or tariff structure
Organisational / Management / Human factors	
1	Management incompetence
2	Inadequate corporate policies
3	Inadequate adoption of management practices
4	Poor leadership
5	Key personnel have inadequate authority to fulfil their roles
6	Poor staff selection procedures
7	Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities
8	Vested interests creating conflict and compromising overall aims
9	Individual or group interests given unwarranted priority
10	Personality clashes
11	Indecision or inappropriate decision making
12	Lack of operational support
13	Inadequate or inaccurate information
14	Health and Safety constraints
Political	
1	Change of government policy
2	Change of government
3	War and disorder
4	Adverse public opinion/media intervention
Environmental	
1	Natural disasters
2	Storms, flooding, tempests
3	Pollution incidents

4	Transport problems (including aircraft/vehicle collisions)
Technical / Operational / Infrastructure	
1	Inadequate design
2	Professional negligence
3	Human error/incompetence
4	Infrastructure failure
5	Operation lifetime lower than expected
6	Increased dismantling/decommissioning costs
7	Safety being compromised
8	Performance failure
9	Residual maintenance problems
10	Scope creep
11	Unclear expectations
12	Breaches in security/information security
13	Lack or inadequacy of business continuity

Risk Evaluation and Prioritisation

Once risks have been identified the risk matrix is the main tool for prioritising risks so we can establish which risks are most significant and therefore are in need of greater attention and resources. It also allows us to compare different types of risk with each other across the council.

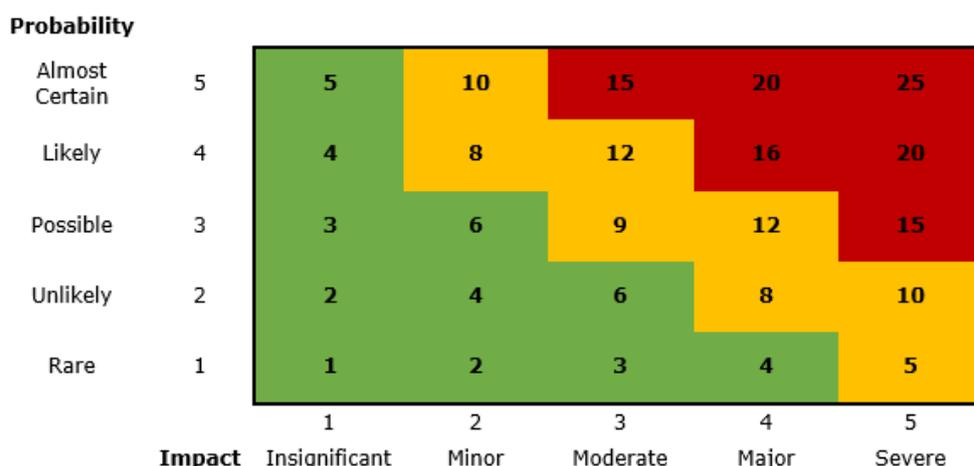
Each risk should be analysed using a five by five matrix for (1) the likelihood it will happen and (2) the impact if it did occur. This assessment should be made on three different basis:

- Gross risk – risk level if existing key controls and mitigations were not in place or not effective.
- Current risk – risk level after existing controls and mitigations are taken into consideration.
- Target risk – anticipated risk level following the introduction of planned controls and mitigations.

Assessing the gross risk allows consideration of the dependency the organisation has upon the existing key controls and informs decisions around risk treatment, and selection of an appropriate target risk level, considered in the next section of this toolkit. It is often helpful to consider the Current Risk first, and then ask yourself what the impact and likelihood of the risk might be if the key controls were not in place.

It is the risk owner's responsibility to ensure the controls they believe are reducing the risk are effective and are working in practice. Controls that are not yet in place should not be considered within the current risk.

Each identified risk should then be plotted onto the risk matrix.



When considering the likelihood of a risk happening you should select the number from 1 to 5 from the risk matrix that you think it will be over the next 12 months (it can be longer or shorter; some risks in the Strategic Risk Register are better considered over 3 to 5 years, some operational risks will be considered over 3 to 6 months). This score will require an element of judgement when considering how likely an event is to occur and you should consider the following:

- Has this event happened before in the Council? (How frequently?) Has this event happened elsewhere? (How frequently?)
- How likely is it that one or more of the causes/ triggers of the event will occur?
- Has anything happened recently that makes the event more or less likely to occur?

The following tables provide some support in quantifying the risk in terms of likelihood and impact.

Risk Probability Assessment Criteria

Scale	Description	Likelihood of Occurrence	Probability of Occurrence
1	Rare	1 in 10 years	The event may occur in certain circumstances
2	Unlikely	1 in 3 years	The event could occur
3	Possible	1 in 2 years	The event should occur
4	Likely	Annually	The event will probably occur
5	Almost certain	Monthly	The event is expected to occur or occurs regularly

When you select the impact you should give consideration to the factors outlined in the risk matrix. For example, if the risk you are scoring has a low financial impact but a high impact on our reputation then you would select the most appropriate number between 1 and 5 that relates to the level of reputational impact. Once again, this score will have an element of judgement.

Risk Impact Assessment Criteria

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Financial	<£50k per annum	£50k - £250k per annum	£250k - £500k per annum	£500k - £750k per annum	>£750k per annum
Service Delivery	No impact to service quality, limited disruption to operations	Minor impact to service quality, minor service standards are not met, short term disruption to operations, minor impact on a partnerships	Significant fall in service quality, major partnership relationships strained, serious disruption in service standards	Major impact to service quality, multiple service standards are not met, long term disruption to operations, multiple partnerships affected	Catastrophic fall in service quality and key service standards are not met, long term catastrophic interruption to operations, several major partnerships are affected
Reputation	Public concern restricted to local complaints which do not attract local media attention.	Minor adverse local / public / media attention and complaints	Adverse national media public attention	Serious negative national or regional criticism	Prolonged, regional & national condemnation
Compliance & Regulation	Minor breach of internal regulations, not reportable	Minor breach of external regulations, not reportable	Breach of internal regulations leading to disciplinary action Breach of external regulations, reportable	Significant breach of external regulations leading to intervention or sanctions	Major breach leading to suspension or discontinuation of business and services
Strategic	Little impact on the organisational strategy	May have an impact on achieving organisational strategy	Would impact on the organisational objectives	Would require a significant shift from current strategy and objectives	Would require a fundamental change in strategy and objectives

Risk Treatment

Once risks have been identified and scored based on current controls the next step is to decide what action needs to be taken to manage them. Generally speaking, there are four approaches to treating risk: Treat, Tolerate, Terminate or Transfer:

Action	Description	Options
Treat / Reduce	Controlling the likelihood of the risk occurring, or controlling the impact of the consequences if the risk does occur	Reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring AND / OR Mitigating the impact if the risk does occur
Tolerate / Accept	Acknowledging that the ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or that the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained.	The ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained in which case the risk is accepted on an "informed" basis.
Terminate / Avoid	Not undertaking the activity that is likely to trigger the risk	Changing the direction or strategy and revisiting objectives or improving channels of communication Obtaining further information from external sources or acquiring expertise Reducing the scope of the activity or adopting a familiar, proven approach Deciding not to undertake the activity likely to trigger the risk
Transfer	Handing the risk on elsewhere, either totally or in part – e.g. through insurance.	Financial instruments such as insurance, performance bonds, warranties or guarantee. Renegotiation of contract conditions for the risk to be retained by the other party. Seeking agreement on sharing the risk with the other party. Sub-contracting risk to a consultant or external suppliers. NB. It may not be possible to transfer all aspects of a risk. For example, where there is or reputational damage to the organisation.

When considering further action required to manage the risk, and indeed the appropriateness of existing controls, an assessment of treatment options should be made alongside a consideration of the Council's risk appetite and tolerance for the current level of risk.

A further consideration is the efficiency of risk treatment in relation to the cost effectiveness of the proposed actions to be taken. Firstly the cost of implementation has to be considered (time, manpower, budget, etc.). The impact expected if no action is taken, should be weighed against the cost of action and the reduction of the impact. There should be a direct benefit from the cost implementation in terms of the reduction of the level of the risk.

Plans should then be put into place to manage the risk with key milestones identified and clear owners – ensuring that they are 'SMART' – Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound.

Oxford City Council has focused on the Red, Amber, Green status of risks in determining the risk appetite of the organization. Red risks are considered unacceptable and every effort must be made to reduce the risk to the organization.

The risk appetite is reviewed periodically or when there are significant changes to the organisation. Changes to the risk appetite level would require a change to strategy and would therefore require approval of the Cabinet.

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To: Council
Date: 23 March 2026
Report of: Head of People
Title of Report: Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2024-28
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
<p>1. Approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 to this report</p> <p>Agree the proposed pay agreement for April 2026 and April 2027 reached with Unison and Unite as set out in paragraph 3.</p>	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27
Appendix 2	Risk Register

Introduction and background

1. The Council is required by legislation to approve and publish a Pay Policy Statement annually.

Overview

2. The Annual Pay Policy Statement in Appendix 1 reflects the Council's current agreements and arrangements with regard to pay.
3. The Council has agreed a new 2-year local pay agreement with Unison and Unite, effective from 1st April 2026. This includes a cost-of-living pay award of 3.5% or £1,500 (whichever is greater) on 1 April 2026, and a further 3% from 1 April 2027.
4. A new Pay Policy introduced on 1 August 2025 provides pay progression to the highest scale point within the grade after successful completion of the six-month probation or review period (the review period applies to existing employees who have moved into a higher-graded role or whose role has been re-evaluated at a higher grade). The policy was implemented on 1 April 2025 in line with a timetable agreed with the unions and so some employees had backdated increments. The Annual Pay Policy Statement (Appendix 1) reflects these arrangements and confirms that home working allowances are no longer payable as this benefit has been removed following consultation with the unions and affected staff. The new Pay Policy also provides clearer guidance on the application of honoraria and acting-up allowances.
5. Following a full review of pay, grading, and pay progression, a new Market Allowance Policy and Procedure was introduced in May 2025. Market Allowances apply to specific roles to support recruitment and retention of critical skills that are in high demand. A formal, organisation-wide review of market conditions will take place bi-annually, with the first review starting in late 2026 and concluding by 31 March 2027. The review will be led by the People Team. In accordance with the Market Allowance Policy and Procedure, decisions on the introduction, increase, decrease, or removal of Market Allowance payments will be approved by the Head of People and the Corporate Leadership Team.
6. The Living Wage Foundation announced increases to the voluntary London and National Living Wage in October 2025. The Oxford Living Wage, set at 95% of the London Living Wage, will rise to £14.06 per hour from 1 April 2026. From the same date, the lowest Council employee pay rate (excluding apprentices) will be £14.06 per hour. Apprentices start below the Oxford Living Wage in line with statutory minimum rates but progress to £14.06 per hour in year two, post-qualification, if aged 21 or over.

Financial implications

7. The financial implications of this Pay Policy Statement and the implications of the proposed pay agreement have been included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The estimated cost is approximately £5.5 million including national insurance and superannuation over the 2-year agreement period.
8. The Council's contract rules require that all contracts include the requirement on the contractor and its supply chain to pay their employees at least the Oxford Living Wage. The Oxford Living Wage is incorporated into the Council's contracts for temporary agency workers, and the requirement to pay the Oxford Living Wage as a minimum also covers its Leisure Services partner and both Oxford Direct Services Ltd and Oxford City Housing Limited, the latter being Council-owned companies.

Legal issues

9. The Council has a legal obligation to produce and publish a pay policy statement annually. In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to approve its Annual Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year and to publish its Annual Pay Policy Statement as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been approved. A failure to approve and publish a Pay Policy Statement by the required date would leave the Council at risk of challenge by way of judicial review.

Level of risk

10. A risk register can be found in Appendix 2.

Equalities impact

11. All changes to pay arrangements are and will continue to be subject to consultation, appropriate approvals, and equality impact assessments.

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Background Papers: None

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Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

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1 Aim

- 1.1 To ensure the Council is competitive in the labour market and can attract and retain talented and motivated people committed to delivering service excellence, whilst providing value for money for our citizens. To achieve this, we need to:
- Offer competitive rates of pay for our sector
 - Be fair and consistent
 - Make sure the difference in pay between the lowest and highest paid is proportionate to levels of responsibility and knowledge and not unnecessarily large
 - Support the delivery of the corporative objectives in line with the organisation's values

2 Decision making

- 2.1 Whilst full Council sets the pay policy, it delegates to the Appointments Committee the setting of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive pay. The Appointments Committee is politically proportionate in that it represents all party groups on the Council. The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service has delegated authority in respect of all other pay decisions. Pay for new roles with an annual salary above £100,000 are subject to full Council approval.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This Pay Policy Statement covers all employees.

4 Definitions

- 4.1 This statement makes reference to the following:

'National Minimum Wage' – *the national minimum wage is determined by Government and sets minimum hourly pay rates for everyone under the age of 21.*

'National Living Wage' – *the national living wage is determined by Government and sets minimum hourly pay rates for everyone who is 21 or over.*

'Voluntary Living Wage' – *the voluntary living wage is a voluntary higher hourly pay rate, that employers are encouraged to pay everyone over the age of 18. The Living Wage Foundation has determined two rates: £14.80 in London, £13.45 in the rest of the UK.*

'Oxford Living Wage' – *Oxford City Council has adopted the voluntary 'Oxford Living Wage' to promote liveable earnings for all workers and runs an employer recognition scheme to encourage employers in Oxford, especially our suppliers, to pay this minimum hourly rate. The rate is set at 95% of the Voluntary Living Wage for London. The Oxford Living Wage is £14.06 for April 2026. It is reviewed annually.*

Employees are paid at the prevailing Oxford Living Wage rate as a minimum with the exception of apprentices.

‘Pay multiple’ - *the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median earnings calculated across the whole Council.*

‘Remuneration’ – *includes all pay elements and severance payments.*

5 Legislation

- 5.1 The Council is required by Section 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011 having due regard to the associated Statutory Guidance including the Supplementary Statutory Guidance issued in February 2013 to prepare, approve and publish a Pay Policy Statement.
- 5.2 The Council must also have due regard to the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency which makes a commitment to follow three principles when publishing data: responding to public demand; releasing data in open formats available for re-use; and releasing data in a timely way. This includes data on senior salaries and the organisation’s structure.

6 Principles

Remuneration

- 6.1 The City Council currently remunerates all staff through the following elements:
- Salary – the Council has adopted an ‘Oxford Living Wage’. No employee or agency worker engaged through Temporary Agency Worker contracts will earn less than the ‘Oxford Living Wage’ of £14.06 per hour from 1 April 2026. The lowest Council employee hourly rate (except for apprentices) will be £14.06 per hour from 1 April 2026.
 - A two-year local pay agreement has been agreed effective from 1st April 2026. Under this agreement:
 - a) There will be an increase in basic pay points of 3.5% or £1,500 (whichever is greater) with effect from 1st April 2026.
 - b) There will be a further 3% increase in basic pay points in April 2027.
 - From August 2025, progression to the highest scale point in the grade will follow successful completion of the 6-month probation or review period (the review period applies to employees who have moved into a higher-graded role or whose role has been re-evaluated at a higher grade). Employees who had completed probation and review periods or, who were at the bottom of the grade on 1 April 2025 received their increment backdated to that date. This applied to National Joint Council (NJC) Grades 3 to 11.
 - No home working allowance will be paid. The transitional arrangements for employees with protected rights has now ended, and all such rights have been removed or bought out. As a result, no employees are eligible for a home working allowance from 1 April 2026 onwards.

- Allowances are payable in addition to normal salary where additional duties are undertaken e.g. standby, call out and overtime. There are various rules regarding these payments such as earnings limits over which certain items cannot be claimed.
- A travel concession is available for all staff travelling to work by public transport and purchasing a multi-journey or season ticket. The concession reimburses 20% of the cost of tickets up to a maximum of £150 per year.
- Other payments and allowances as appropriate in accordance with the conditions for the particular payment including:
 - Honoraria/Acting Up Allowances – where an employee has taken on additional duties or responsibilities for a defined period.
 - Market Allowances – apply to specific roles and are paid in addition to base pay. These allowances are subject to a formal organisational wide review of market conditions every 2 years, with the first review commencing in late 2026 and concluding by 31 March 2027. Market allowances may increase, decrease or be removed based on the outcome of these reviews.
 - Pay protection – where an employee has had a reduction in pay due to a change in responsibilities, or a new role through the Council's Organisational Change process. The employee receives stepped pay protection over a period of 3 years following the change.
 - Weekend and bank holiday working pay enhancements for staff who are required to work on these days as part of their normal working week.
 - Reimbursement of professional fees.

6.2 All staff are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. They are automatically enrolled and are required to opt out should they wish unless their contract is for less than three months when they must opt to join.

6.3 Expenses such as work travel costs are reimbursed. The Council seeks to minimise the use of private vehicles for work purposes by encouraging the use of public transport, pool cars and bicycles. As well as reducing the cost to the Council, use of alternative methods of transport supports the organisation's corporate priority to pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. Where the use of private vehicles is necessary mileage is paid at the current HMRC approved rates. It should be noted that no claim may be made in respect of journeys from or to an employee's home for the sole purpose of going to or returning from a place of duty during normal working hours.

6.4 There is a range of benefits such as flexible working, leisure concessions, cycle scheme, employee assistance programme and various discounts on high street goods and services.

Variations in remuneration

- 6.5 Apart from the differences identified in paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 below, there are no other distinctions made in terms of remuneration. Severance payments are made in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy which applies to all staff employed by the Council.

Current pay schemes

- 6.6 Two pay schemes are operated (in agreement with trade unions) as follows:
- 1) National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, Grades 3 – 11, using a set of standard pay points. This covers the majority of staff (Scheme 1)
 - 2) Senior Management Grades for certain senior positions (Scheme 2)
- 6.7 The schemes in more detail are as follows:

Scheme 1 – the principal scheme was introduced as a result of the nationally-agreed scheme on local government single status and in agreement with Trade Unions. It consists of 9 grades (3 to 11) and was based on the national spinal column points at the point the Council entered into a local pay agreement. It is based on an analytical job evaluation scheme.

Scheme 2 - there are separate grades for senior officers above Grade 11, as follows:

Chief Executive

Deputy Chief Executives

Service Directors

Business Lead (in corporate leadership roles or areas of major staff and budget responsibilities)

Service Manager + (to reflect increased responsibilities above grade 11 for roles smaller in size than Business Lead)

Appointments to roles on the Service Manager+ through to Service Directors are to a fixed or 'spot' salary point on taking up the role, with subsequent inflationary increases to the salary point subject to the same terms as those for Scheme 1 detailed in 6.1 a) and b) above.

Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive salaries are set by the Appointments Committee on taking up the role (as set out in paragraph 2.1) with subsequent increases to the salary point also subject to the same terms as those for under Scheme 1.

Returning Officer

- 6.8 The Council's appointed Returning Officer and its Deputy Returning Officers for elections and referenda are entitled to receive and retain the personal fees arising from performing such duties, in addition to normal salary in accordance with the prescribed fee for each election.

- 6.9 Fees for national polls are set by the Cabinet Office, under a Statutory Instrument and fees for local government elections are determined in accordance with the scale of fees agreed by Oxfordshire County Council each year and adopted by the Returning Officer under a delegation granted by the Council.
- 6.10 The Council's Returning Officer also acts as Deputy Returning Officer for Oxfordshire County Council elections, fees for which are determined by Oxfordshire County Council. These appointments are independent of the Council.

Pensions and severance payments

- 6.11 The Council's Pensions and Retirement Options Statement, including the Council's policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, applies to all staff. In accordance with this policy the Council does not augment pensions.
- 6.12 Severance payments are made in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy which details the Council's redundancy scheme.
- 6.13 All payments are subject to an authorisation process involving Senior Officers including the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers (S151 and Monitoring Officer). Severance packages more than £20,000 must be approved by the Head of Paid Service. In cases where the severance package exceeds £100,000, they are also subject to the approval of full Council.
- 6.14 In accordance with the Council's normal arrangements regarding termination and severance payments, no employee leaving under a settlement agreement with a redundancy payment can be re-employed by the Council within a period of 36 months.
- 6.15 The same arrangements apply to ex-employees seeking engagement through an agency or under a contract for services.

Lowest paid employees

- 6.16 The Council adopted an 'Oxford Living Wage' in 2009 which is now £14.06 per hour. The Council's apprentices commence their apprenticeship below the Oxford Living Wage but progress to £14.06 per hour in year 2 post qualification, if aged 21 or over. The lowest hourly rate of pay for Council staff is £14.06 per hour from 1 April 2026.

** No agency worker employed through Temporary Agency Worker contracts will be paid less than the Oxford Living Wage usually implemented from 1 April each year.*

Pay multiple

- 6.17 As of 30 November 2025 the highest paid officer received £173,913 per annum including all elements of pay. The bottom point of Grade 3 is the lowest rate paid by the Council (except for apprentices) at £25,389 per annum. The Council's current median salary is £42,892 per annum. This makes Oxford City Council's pay multiple 1:4.
- 6.18 The highest salary is 6.8 times more than the lowest salary.

Equal pay

- 6.19 Gender Pay Gap information will be reported annually in compliance with legislation, and the organisation will also publish Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap information.

7 Communication and data publication

- 7.1 The Council will publish its Annual Pay Policy Statement on its website as soon as reasonably practicable following approval.
- 7.2 Any changes to the Pay Policy Statement may be made by resolution of the Council (including during the financial year to which it relates). Any changes will be publicised on the Council's website as soon as possible after revision.
- 7.3 The Council will also publish data annually relating to senior officer remuneration as outlined in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.
- 7.4 The following information is available on the Council's Website:
- Senior Officer Pay
 - Pay scales for all schemes
 - Severance pay information contained in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

8 Monitoring/review

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, as the Head of Paid Service, has overall responsibility for employees and therefore annual publication of the Pay Policy Statement and pay data produced in relation to it.
- 8.2 This policy statement will come into effect on 1st April 2026, superseding the 2025/26 statement and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

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Appendix 2

Risk Register

Ref	Risk Title	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Risk Consequence	Name of Risk Owner	Gross			Current			Target		Risk Control/Mitigation Description	Risk Control Date Due	Progress on Risk Control/Mitigation	Action Owner
						P	I	Score	P	I	Score	P	I				
APPS_001	Non-compliance with statutory publication and approval	Annual Pay Policy Statement not approved by Full Council and/or not published by 1 April as required	Governance delays, timetable slippage, or omission in web publication process	Breach of Localism Act requirements; adverse external audit comment; reputational damage	Gail Malkin	3	4	12	2	4	8	1	3	Legal, Monitoring Officer and S151 review; schedule Council decision on Forward Plan; create pre-publication checklist; prepare document for publication and schedule with Web Team for publishing on approval day	31/03/2026	Draft statement prepared; timetable drafted; approvals scheduled	Steph Nichols
APPS_002	Data accuracy and transparency errors	Incorrect figures published (e.g., pay multiple, Oxford Living Wage rate, allowances)	Manual error, late data updates, misinterpretation of definitions	Public challenge/FOIs; need for correction; reputational harm	Gail Malkin	3	3	9	2	3	6	1	2	Dual verification with Finance/Payroll; cross-check against approved pay scales and published OLV; sign-off by S151 and Monitoring Officer prior to going to Council and publication.	31/03/2026	Data sources identified; validation checklist drafted	Steph Nichols
APPS_003	Employee relations and engagement	Negative reaction to elements reported in the Annual Pay Policy Statement (e.g., pay multiple, market allowance narrative, senior pay disclosures) affects	Insufficient communication or lack of advance stakeholder briefing on figures or narrative included in the APPS.	Reputational risk, challenge from unions or internal stakeholders, delays to approval, or increased scrutiny at committees.	Gail Malkin	3	3	9	1	3	3	1	2	Early engagement with Trade Unions and key Managers; Consultation with Union members; ensure intranet guidance and information is up to date; ensure timely communication and messaging to employees	31/03/2026	Trade Union agreement obtained; Union members consulted on new pay deal; Employees notified about new pay deal via Intranet news article	People Team
APPS_004	Equalities and equal pay compliance	Pay arrangements create or perpetuate inequities (gender/ethnicity/disability) or equal pay challenges	Inconsistent application of job evaluation process; insufficient monitoring	Legal challenge, cost exposure, reputational harm	Gail Malkin	3	4	12	2	3	6	1	2	Undertake Equality Impact Assessments for change elements as required, maintain robust analytical job evaluation; publish pay gap data; legal review as required.	30/06/2026	EqIA completed as part of Pay Project to cover change elements; pay gap data published, JE governance embedded	Steph Nichols
APPS_005	Governance for senior pay and severance	Non-compliance with approvals for senior appointments (>£100k) and severance thresholds	Process oversight or urgent cases bypassing standard routes	Decision challenge; requirement to retrospectively correct; reputational impact	Gail Malkin	2	4	8	2	3	6	1	2	Embed governance checks in recruitment/exit workflows; Senior Officer gatekeeping; review; maintain decision audit trail	Ongoing	Governance checks in recruitment workflow	People Team
APPS_006	Market allowance review impact	Outcome of bi-annual market allowance review (due by 31 March 2027) leads to adjustments that affect retention or affordability	Market changes, inconsistent application, or delays to review	Turnover in hard to fill roles or increased cost pressure	Gail Malkin	3	3	9	3	3	9	2	2	Define clear and concise methodology; engage with services and unions throughout the review; consult with impacted staff; develop and implement comms plan; provide retention actions; agree review schedule and sign-off timeline.	31/03/2027		Steph Nichols
APPS_007	Publication failure (web/data)	Website or process failure prevents timely publication of Pay Policy Statement	Resource constraints or technical issue in Web/Comms team	Late publication causing non-compliance and reputational impact	Gail Malkin	2	3	6	2	2	4	1	2	Schedule in for publication in advance; pre-prepare webpage content; ensure have a primary and secondary contact for publication	31/03/2026	Draft copy prepared (Appendix 1 to Council Report)	Steph Nichols
APPS_008	Pay multiple variance and optics	Significant change in pay multiple from recruitment, restructure or workforce shifts draws negative attention	Changes in senior pay or workforce composition alter the calculated pay multiple.	Media scrutiny; reputational impact; challenge from Stakeholders, pressure for policy change	Gail Malkin	2	3	6	2	2	4	1	2	Monitor pay multiple calculations; ensure decisions align with governance groups before sign off.	Ongoing	Baseline calculated; comms lines drafted	People Team

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To: Council

Date: 23 March 2026

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizen Service

Title of Report: Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules – Keep the Museum of Oxford free

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To consider the petition “ Keep the Museum of Oxford free ”
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture
Corporate Priority:	None
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of the report 2. Hear the address by the petition organiser; 3. Debate the proposal contained within the petition and any relevant motion or recommendations submitted by Members in relation to the petition by the deadline; 4. Agree the action it wishes to take, if any, subject to a further report to Cabinet

Information Exempt From Publication
N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Appendix 1 of 5 January 2026 Officer Decision Form – Charging model for	No

	entry into the Museum of Oxford	
Appendix 2	Risk Register	No
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment	No
Appendix 4 (to be published in the briefing note)	Public Address received from the Petition Submitter.	No
Appendix 5 (to be published in the briefing note)	Motions to Petitions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.14	No

The Petition

1. An ePetition titled 'Keep the Museum of Oxford free' was submitted on 24 February 2026 in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
2. The petition is available to view on the Change.Org website [here](#) and states in full:

Oxford City Council has made a decision to introduce an entrance fee to the Museum of Oxford. This is in spite of hundreds of members of the public signing a petition objecting to this decision which was made without proper consultation. The museum is now celebrating its 50th year and in this time the museum has gone from strength to strength and is a welcoming, friendly and free place which is full of an exciting range of social history objects, personal stories and interactive displays. The museum has recently undergone a refurbishment and now there is even more space, a shop and a room in the basement which is well used for talks, schools and plays. In this museum we learn about the famous Cutteslowe Walls demonstrations led by Olive Gibbs. We learn about the Cowley Road Carnival, the Windrush community, Morris motors, the Pressed Steel factory, Oxford Pride and much more. There are other museums which are free as they are owned by the University but this is the only museum which tells the history of the Oxford people from its founding by Alfred the Great in the 9th century up until the present day. The people of Oxford and its visitors should not have to pay to learn about their own history. Introducing an entrance fee will discourage many people from visiting the museum and, of course, will hit the poorest hardest. Please sign this petition and help to persuade Oxford City Council to keep this gem of a museum free to the citizens of Oxford and to our many international visitors. Please join the campaign to overturn the decision to impose an entry charge and access our website at www.saveourmuseum.weebly.com

Keep our Museum free!

3. As of 10 March 2026, 1,942 people have signed the ePetition.

Constitution Rules and Procedure

4. The Council's Petitions Scheme (Part 11, Annex 1 of the Council's Constitution) outlines the procedure for handling petitions. The scheme specifies that a petition containing at least 1,500 signatures will be debated at Full Council if the petition organiser makes a request for a debate in writing directly to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy at least three weeks prior to the Council meeting.
5. The Constitution states that the petition organiser may address Council upon the petition for up to five minutes before the debate upon the petition at the meeting. The submitted address is attached at Appendix 4.
6. The petition for debate is set out above in paragraph 2.
7. An alternative substantive motion/recommendation must be proposed if councillors wish to take any action other than adopting the proposal in the petition, not adopting the proposal in the petition, or deferring, referring or noting the issues raised by the petition. Following debate on the petition, Council must pass a resolution agreeing the action it wishes to take, which will be subject to a further report to Cabinet.
8. If a member wishes to propose a substantive motion/recommendation on the petition they must let the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy have that motion or recommendation by 5pm on Tuesday, 17 March 2026 (three working days before the Council meeting). These would then be published in the Council briefing note. Any amendments to a motion or recommendation on the petition would have to be with Committee and Members' Services Team by 10am on Monday 23 March 2026 (the day of the Council meeting).

Introduction and background

9. The Museum of Oxford (MOX) reopened in 2021 following a £2.8m redevelopment which tripled the size of the museum space, provided a new shop, improved facilities and hiring spaces. The Council was grateful to receive a grant of £1.86 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to help to support the costs of the redevelopment.
10. Feedback about MOX has been excellent including being rated an average of 4.6/5 on Trip Advisor. Museum staff are regularly praised in reviews and MOX was awarded a Trip Advisor 'Travellers' Choice' commendation in 2025.
11. Estimated footfall has increased year on year after reopening and MOX recorded the estimated footfall of 55,547 in 2024-5, which is a good result for a museum of its size in the current climate. See table 1 below:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
April	6006	8112	6579	4696	6092	243	466	583	2589	3819	3718
May	5198	6564	4834	4964	105	753	566	526	1779	2270	3541
June	5471	7304	6874	5882	32	2976	992	580	2179	2955	4009
July	8266	10241	9104	7779	56	4415	814	1264	3003	4533	6699
August	7617	8661	9315	8719	19	4524	435	324	3529	4546	6499

September	6526	12361	7246	5931	127	3211	464	412	2358	3362	3949
October	7749	7706	8299	5914	3468	3737	615	2402	2534	2954	4646
November	7320	6287	4969	5124	2659	2929	637	1783	2251	2383	4285
December	4429	3723	4607	3773	1952	1251	290	1305	1647	2177	3207
January	3756	3142	2569	2698	2262	1577	518	1285	2588	3393	5331
February	6705	4944	5174	5887	2834	1536	2371	1868	2463	3366	5519
March	7743	5120	4053	4921	328	0	900	1629	2823	3237	4144
Total	76786	84165	73623	66288	19934	27152	9068	13961	29743	38995	55547

Table 1 – recorded footfall in the museum 2014-15 to 2024-5

12. However, the business plan for the museum assumed there would be significantly higher footfall and an increase from the 73,623 footfall recorded in 2016-7 (see table 1 above) to 109,306 in 2024-5 (see Table 2 below):

Visit Projections for Museum of Oxford 2017- 2026

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	Yr 1	Yr 2 closure May to Sept 2018, OE gallery open- 7 months of op	Yr 3 closure capital works, OE gallery open for 12 months	Yr 4 Open July 2020 - 9 months of ops, OE gallery open for 3 months previous	Yr 5 1st full year of opening	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9
Visitor figures	75000	21750	37500	85313	106313	111628	107163	109306	111492
Tours	150	150	150	281	300	360	432	518	622
Events	1500	0	0	2250	3000	3450	3554	3660	3770
Hire space (museum maker and learning space)	3400	0	0	3188	4250	5313	5472	5636	5805
Formal Group Visits to MOO incl schools	1500	0	0	1350	2625	3150	3245	3342	3442
Total onsite	81550	21900	37650	92381	116488	123901	119865	122463	125132
Other outreach	3600	3780	4536	5443	5552	4164	4164	4164	4164
TOTAL	85150	25680	42186	97824	122039	128065	124029	126627	129296

Table 2 – Museum of Oxford Business Plan 2018-25 projected figures submitted as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Bid

13. Predicted visitor figures were significantly higher than the actual recorded figures. In the last three full financial years the difference was 81,885 in 2022-3; 68,168 in 2023-4 and 53,739 in 2024-5. Whilst the gap is narrowing, the difference has had an impact on the income generated.

14. Prior to implementing charging, methods of collecting footfall data have meant that visitors may have been counted more than once during their visit. For example,

prior to the redevelopment, there was a museum gallery which is now the collaboration space at the back of the café. This had one door with a laser counter – a figure was recorded at the end of the day and halved for visitor movement in/out. Explore Oxford (the space that housed the exhibits prior to the redevelopment and where the shop is now) had one door with a laser counter and the figure was recorded at the end of the day and halved for visitor movement in/out. The Gallery and Explore Oxford figures were added together and combined with figures for activities and events in the Old Museum in order to calculate the total visitors. Therefore, it is possible that someone who attended an event and visited the gallery and the Explore Oxford space may have been counted three times. After the museum reopened in October 2021, staff counted people into the museum manually and this figure was combined with those who attended activities, events and hires through ticket sales and attendance numbers, therefore leaving open the possibility of duplicate counting.

15. From the introduction of charging on 26th January 2026, footfall is being counted via gallery entry ticket sales (both online and through the till) along with ticket sales for activities and attendance numbers for hires (as none of these will need to buy a museum ticket to attend) which will avoid any duplication.

Financial overview

16. In 2024-5, the difference between controllable income and expenditure for the museum, prior to apportioned overhead contribution, amounted to minus £218,928. After the agreed budget contribution of £141,867.49 had been accounted for, this left an unbudgeted revenue pressure for the Council of £77,060.54 – see Table 2 below:

Account	Approved budget	Actual spend	Variance
Employees	£269,934.49	£256,729.20	-£13,205.29
Premises	£900	-£6,791.60	-£7,691.60
Transport	£200	£159.60	-£40.40
Supplies and Services	£22,583	£74,460.03	£51,877.03
Income (excluding recharge income)	-£151,750	-£105,629.20	£46,120.80
Total	£141,867.49	£218,928.03	£77,060.54

Table 3 – Approved museum budget, actual spend and variance 2024-5

17. Adding in the budgeted overhead costs for 2024-5 of £32,614 = a total cost of £251,542. The actual cost of the overheads in 2024-5 was £113,045, however accounting conventions would match the overhead budget to the actual cost still leaving the budget gap of £77,061.
18. Ahead of a BBC interview in October 2025, Cllr Hollingsworth was briefed that £4,843 had been raised in the museum shop via the ‘pay what you like’ entry donation in 2024-5. The focus had been on what people had donated at the shop desk as the entry point to the museum and that figure had its own budget line.
19. The briefing figure didn’t include £7,624 which had been raised in additional cash donations made in separate donation boxes in the same year with messaging

including a more programme orientated focus: “any donation you give today will ensure we can keep collecting, researching, protecting and sharing the objects that connect you to over 1,000 years of life in our city.” This figure was recorded in a separate budget line. Taken together, the total of £12,467 was still £10,894 under the projected amount of £23,361 in the Business Plan projections:

MOO APPENDIX TO BP: FORECAST INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FINAL 11.10.17									
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-2024	2024-25	2025-26
	Yr 1	Yr 2 closure May to Sept 2018, OE gallery open 7 months of op	Yr 3 closure capital works, OE gallery open for 12 months	Yr 4 Open July 2020 - 9 months of ops, OE gallery open for 3 months previous	Yr 5 (first full year opening)	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9
INCOME (covering main MOO cost centre budget AJ01 unless stated otherwise)									
EXTERNAL INCOME - FUNDRAISING incl in budget code AJ01 K									
Grants/Trusts/Foundation for staffing or specific activity programme separate to HLF project	-	-	-	22,500	30,000	30,600	31,212	31,836	32,473
Patron and friends support for staffing, activity programme or conservation	-	-	-	3,000	4,000	4,080	4,162	4,245	4,330
Fundraising from special events	-	-	-	4,000	4,200	4,410	4,631	4,862	5,105
Donations									
- Donation boxes	8,000	1,958	3,375	17,063	21,263	22,326	21,433	21,861	22,298
- Donations from free activities and events	-	-	-	750	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
- Donations from outreach activities once HLF funding ceases	-	-	-	-	-	500	500	500	500
Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	1,058	1,111	1,106	1,142	1,179
<i>Fundraising sub-total</i>	8,000	1,958	3,375	47,313	61,520	64,026	64,043	65,446	66,886

Table 4 – Museum of Oxford Business Plan 2018-25 submitted as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Bid

20. Four years on, after a reasonable adjustment period following reopening, a new model of operation was required to close the budget gap, maximise the benefits of the museum and secure its longer term sustainability.

21. At the Cabinet meeting on 22nd October 2025, the Cabinet received a report setting out the options for charging a small entry fee to visit the museum and considered options for eligibility for concessionary and free entry. It resolved to:

- Charge an entry fee for entry to the Museum of Oxford;
- Approve the standard entry fee charges that were proposed;
- Approve the concessions eligibility and concessionary charges that were proposed;
- Approve the eligibility for free access that were proposed;
- Delegate the implementation of charging from January 2026 and the authority to make minor changes to the charging model for the museum to the Director of Citizens and Community Service
- The Director of Communities and Citizens amended the charging model on 5th January 2026 to:
 - Give free entry day tickets including to: children under 5, Oxfordshire school bookings, carers with a Disabled visitor, attendees at pre-booked museum events/activities, Museum Association and Art Pass members;
 - Give a free one-year entry pass to the museum to: those who are registered Disabled, foster carers, those in receipt of state benefits and people with no

recourse to public funds in line with the eligibility criteria for people receiving a discount for the Council's leisure services;

- Ensure those who have donated an object and all museum volunteers who regularly assist the museum (whether creating an exhibition or working as front of house) have free entry with a plus one for a year
- Enable free entry on at least 12 free entry days per year for everyone

22. This provides for a wide range of free and discounted entry; the full list can be found at Appendix 1 – which is Appendix 1 of the 5 January 2026 Officer Decision Form – Charging model for entry into the Museum of Oxford.

Rationale for charging

23. The decision to charge sits firmly within the Council's current medium term financial plan, and any deviation from the decision means that any revenue implications will need to be mitigated against to make an alternative option viable.

24. Developing the museum to become more sustainable and, by extension, more innovative and relevant is the objective. Residents deserve a regenerative museum that has a higher profile in Oxford and beyond, strengthens social cohesion, boosts local economies and preserves the city's unique cultural heritage for future generations to come.

25. Latest sector research, including the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) [*Fragile to Flourishing – Museum Operation Models in an Uncertain World*](#) Report in January 2026, recognises that traditional operating models for museums are no longer fit for purpose and that museums need to adapt operating models, enhance financial skills, and embrace social enterprise and partnerships to flourish.

26. Many other local authorities have introduced an entry fee for their museums including Lancaster City Museum and the Museum of Chelmsford, and it has been standard practice for other local charity run museums to charge for entry too – including for the Museum of Cambridge.

27. Key benefits include increasing revenue to secure operations and enhancing visitor engagement. Indeed, becoming more financially sustainable allows museums to better align their services with the real needs of the community rather than relying on diminishing grants and public subsidies.

28. In October 2025, the Council was able to actively utilise a Museum Renewal Fund grant it received from the Arts Council/DCMS of £227,952 to recruit the specialist skills, capacity and IT systems needed to enable the museum to move to a more financially sustainable approach.

29. The full programme of work undertaken as a result includes:

- Creating Philanthropy & fundraising plans and tools for the Museum, including a case for support and a new part-time Philanthropy Lead role to deliver the plans up to the end of December 2026;
- Delivering a comprehensive city-wide and out-of-home marketing plan and campaign to raise the profile of the museum and encourage visits;
- Undertaking a website accessibility check and embedding recommendations;
- Purchasing a ticketing system and implementing the charging structure approved by the Cabinet focusing on ensuring accessibility for those who

may not be able to afford to visit. This includes a range of free annual passes / discounts and free entry day for all once a month – see <https://museumofoxford.org/visiting/plan-your-visit/>;

- Staff training and development including research/visits to other museums; Museum Association membership; sales, marketing and messaging training for ticket sales and venue hire; ticketing system training;
 - Creating a new business plan for the Museum including realistic financial projections in a different economic climate;
 - Providing a contribution of up to £77K for any budget shortfall 2025-6
30. Embracing a partnership approach to drive footfall into the museum is critical to the museum's objective. This crucially ensures the culture and history of the people of Oxford is shared with a wider audience, and that an expanded visitor base generates more income to further feed the cycle of strengthening cohesion through education, engagement and better data collection, all improving the visitor experience.
31. An open procurement process has already cemented City Sightseeing as a major partner. From 28th March 2026 City Sightseeing is set to offer a combined ticket to their customers that includes the Museum of Oxford. The Museum of Oxford will benefit from City Sightseeing's wider-reaching national and international marketing and continue to receive £4 / £2 concessions as part of the financial arrangements.
32. Another vital foundation for any thriving enterprise is having verifiable customer insight and data. It is hard to deliver a service built around local communities when the demography of museum visitors is unknown. The data from the new ticketing system will enable better business decisions; improved understanding of the museum's performance, more efficient problem-solving improved processes and a better understanding of the market and visitors.
33. Data from the ticketing system will also put the Museum in a better position to apply for grants and to fundraise for additional activity to meet community needs.
34. As predicted, footfall did reduce following the introduction of the new entry fee. In February 2025, the footfall count was 5519 visits and in February 2026 the footfall count was 1534 which represents a reduction of 70%, however a direct comparison cannot be made given the following variables:
- the programmes were different – in February 2025 funded activity was being undertaken with community groups and older people; no funding was available to run this activity in February 2026;
 - in February 2025 there were visits by English Language schools and visits were not made in the same month in the current financial year;
 - in February 2025 there were more hire events which attracted over 500 more people;
 - in February 2025 there was no congestion charge in the city but by February 2026 the charge had been implemented;
 - in February 2026 the whole of the Town Hall was covered in scaffolding giving the appearance that the building was being redeveloped;

- in February 2026 there was significant local and national negative press and protests led by the anti-charging campaign which delayed partnership development

35. In spite of this, from 26th January – 6 March 2026, 1497 tickets were booked and £3732 revenue taken – see table 5 below:

Ticket Sales Summary 26 January 2026 – 6 March 2026

Ticket Type	Ticket Numbers	Revenue
Museum Entry – Adult Day Ticket	726	£2,900.00
Museum Entry – Student Day Ticket	150	£300.00
Museum Entry – Child/Young Person (5–17) Day Ticket	139	£278.00
Museum Entry – Blue Light Card Holder Day Ticket	65	£130.00
Online Sales	74	£124.00
Online Free Entry	27	£0.00
Free Annual Pass – Registered Disabled	3	£0.00
Free Entry – Art Pass Member Day Ticket	32	£0.00
Free Entry – Carer Day Ticket	11	£0.00
Free Annual Pass – Community Partner	3	£0.00
Free Entry – OCC Day Ticket	1	£0.00
Free Entry – Under 5 Day Ticket	67	£0.00
Free Entry – Free Museum Day	179	£0.00
Free Entry – Eligible Groups Day Ticket	20	£0.00
Total	1497	£3,732.00

Table 5 – Ticket Sales 26 January 2026 – 6 March 2026

36. Averaged over the 35 days the museum was open during that period, this = an average of 43 visitors per day and an average of £107 taken in ticket sales per day.
37. The context for these sales was in a cold and wet out of season period with scaffolding on the building and with negative publicity about the entry fee being regularly in the local and national media.
38. Increased sales are expected when the negative publicity subsides and in the peak seasons e.g. the summer for tourist visits and in other holiday times, including Christmas, for residents.
39. If the current figures alone were multiplied over the 300 days the museum is open per year, this would equate to 12,900 gallery ticket sales with £32,100 income.
40. Sales in partnership with City Sightseeing will start on 28 March 2026 and these will generate additional income for the museum which will be monitored closely on a monthly basis.
41. New philanthropy schemes will be launched later in 2026 and will also raise additional funds.

42. At least 12-18 months will be required to assess the impact of introducing an entry fee giving an opportunity to monitor sales across the seasonal calendar without additional variables such as the anti-charging campaign and the Town Hall being clad with scaffolding.

Alternative Options Considered

43. The following options were also considered by the Cabinet alongside charging for entry:

- Digital and virtual experiences – this will be considered again after the charging model framework has been embedded; it could help to supplement a second income stream especially targeted at education services
- Hiring more of the space for events – this is ongoing, but bookings fluctuate and it would not generate sufficient income alone given the space is limited in size and only available during the day
- Creating new exhibition space for free or ticketed exhibitions – this option was discarded as the space is needed for staff offices and involves prohibitive refurbishment costs versus any likely return on investment
- Converting space for a family play area – this was discarded due to prohibitive refurbishment costs versus likely return on investment
- Using space for parties – this was discarded due to out of hours staffing costs, and risks regarding safeguarding, health and safety and possible damage to the museum's collections
- Friends of, loyalty and legacy schemes – whilst these proposals wouldn't generate sufficient income to close the budget gap alone, these are all considered viable and will be introduced later in 2026

44. In summary, charging entry at MOX and for MOX in partnership with other attractions was considered to be the most viable option to mitigate the current revenue budget shortfall alongside a philanthropy campaign which will be launched once the charging model has been embedded. The Museum Renewal Fund grant has been used to assist the museum to make the necessary changes to become a more financially sustainable entity.

45. There is no viable alternative plan that will enable the budget gap to close that doesn't include a charging model, therefore all who are passionate about the museum's long-term future need to get behind the change in order for it to work.

Financial implications

46. The implications of this report will depend on Council's recommendations, if any, and Council should be mindful of the possible costs in formulating its recommendations. Any implications would be subject to a decision that will need to be made by Cabinet.

Legal Implications

47. Pursuant to section 13 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the Council may make a charge for admission to a museum maintained by it under section 12 of that Act. In determining whether, and in what manner, to exercise its powers under section 13 of the Act in relation to the museum, the Council must take into account the need to secure that the museum plays its full part in the promotion of

education in the area and must have particular regard to the interests of children and students. In setting the charges for the museum the Cabinet did consider its duties under section 13 of the Act.

48. In accordance with Rule 4.5 of the Constitution, agreeing the strategy for setting fees and charges and setting fees and charges for executive functions (to the extent that the budget has not set fees and charges) is a decision that must be made by the Cabinet. Should the Council determine that it wishes to recommend that the decision on charges be revisited by the Cabinet a recommendation to reconsider the proposal to charge would be made. A further recommendation to the Council may be required if consequential changes to the budget are required. (EG/80930/13/3/2026)

Level of risk

49. Competing narratives/communication in the public domain has sought to undermine the new charging approach, and in turn could therefore harm the future of the museum.
50. See Appendix 2 – Risk Register. The anti-charging campaign has been added as a new risk.

Equalities impact

51. See Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment.

Report author	Paula Redway
Job title	Culture and Community Development Manager
Service area or department	Communities and Citizens
Telephone	01865 252780
e-mail	predway@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:

List the background documents and, if possible, link to them.

All background papers must be listed in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. This includes, any material which discloses facts or matters on which the report or an important part of it is based and which have been relied on in the preparation of the report. Each document must be listed and a copy of each document made available to members and the public on request, (or they should be directed where to find it if it is already published on the Council's website). All confidential, exempt, copyrighted and published works are EXCLUDED from this requirement.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 5 January 2026 Officer Decision Form – Charging model for entry into the Museum of Oxford |
|---|---|

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APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1: Entry Fees for the Museum of Oxford (MOX) Galleries January 2026 - 31 March 2027

1. In order for MOX to be able to better understand and serve our customers and report to funders, all tickets and passes must be issued/reported through the ticketing system.
2. The minor changes added by the Director of Communities and Citizens are in italics below.
3. List of **charges for entry** into MOX galleries:

Fee	What is included
£4 – day ticket	Standard price for day ticket adults aged 18 and over
£2 – day ticket	Concessionary price for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people aged 5-17 years inclusive • students – part time and full time of any age • non-Oxfordshire based school bookings • Blue Light card holders

4. List of **free entry** options and who is eligible:

Free entry options	Who is eligible?
Free entry – day ticket	Free day ticket for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 5 • Oxfordshire school bookings • Carers with a Disabled visitor • Attendees at pre-booked museum events / activities • Oxford City Council employees • Civic Guests • Museum Association and Art Pass members
Year free entry pass (12 months from date of confirmation)	<p>The following people are entitled to a year free entry pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are registered Blind/Disabled • Foster Carers • Asylum Seekers, refugees and other people seeking sanctuary <p>People in receipt of the following state support are also entitled to a year free entry pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Council Tax Reduction Scheme (please note this does not include Single Person Discount)</i> • <i>Severe Disablement Allowance</i> • <i>Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</i> • <i>Housing Benefit</i> • <i>Universal Credit – Housing Element</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pension Credit</i> • <i>Carer's Allowance</i> • <i>Those living in homeless pathway accommodation</i> • <i>Those supported by Council commissioned services providing Homelessness support</i>
Year free entry pass plus one free day ticket for a guest when in attendance with the year free entry pass holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Volunteers who regularly assist the museum e.g. for front of house, workshops, tours, Museum Development Trust trustees and people who have volunteered a significant amount of time towards a community exhibition/project etc.</i>
Free pass plus one free day ticket for the duration of the display of a donated object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Those who have donated an object whilst it is on display</i>
12 free days per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for everyone on fixed free entry dates spaced throughout the year and published on the museum website

5. Easy read **summary:**

Ticket Type	Price	Who Qualifies
Adult Day Ticket	£4	Ages 18 and over
Concession Day Ticket	£2	Ages 5–17, students, non-Oxfordshire schools, Blue Light holders
Free Day Ticket	£0	Under 5s, Oxfordshire schools, carers, event attendees, Oxford City Council staff, civic guests, MA/Art Pass members
Free Annual Pass	£0	Blind/disabled, foster carers, asylum seekers, <i>certain benefits recipients</i>
Volunteer Pass (+1)	£0	Regular volunteers, <i>community contributors who have volunteered a significant amount of time for MOX</i>
12 Free Days	£0	Everyone on published dates

6. To qualify for **concessionary entry**, the following eligibility evidence may be required to be shown:

Who	Eligibility evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people aged 5-17 • Students (part time and full time of any age) • Non-Oxfordshire based school bookings • Blue Light card holders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Birth/adoption certificate, passport, NHS card, child benefit letter, letter from school, ZIP Oyster card</i> • <i>University or college student card, international student ID card (ISIC), TOTUM card, NUS Extra card</i> • <i>Letter on school headed paper</i> • <i>Blue Light card</i>

7. To qualify for a **free entry day ticket** the following eligibility evidence may be required to be shown:

Who	Eligibility evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 5 • Oxfordshire school bookings • Carers with a Disabled visitor • Attendees at pre-booked museum events / activities • Oxford City Council employees • Civic Guests • Museum Association and Art Pass members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Birth/adoption certificate, passport, NHS card/red book, child benefit letter, letter from nursery</i> • <i>Letter on school headed paper</i> • <i>The Carer is accompanying a Disabled visitor – no ID required</i> • <i>Ticket to events / activities</i> • <i>Staff ID badge</i> • <i>Guest/s are escorted by Councillor or Member of staff with ID badge</i> • <i>Museum Association / Art Pass cards</i>

8. To qualify for a **year free entry pass** the following eligibility evidence may be required to be shown:

Who	Eligibility evidence
People who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Blind/Disabled • Foster Carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Blue badge, Severe Disablement Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) award letter, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) award letter, attendance allowance, Employment and support allowance</i> • <i>Foster carer approval letter, delegated authority form, letter from social worker, fostering agency ID card, carer's allowance confirmation</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum Seekers, refugees and other people seeking sanctuary; people with humanitarian and other types of protection; individuals under resettlement schemes (Ukraine, Hong Kong BN(O), Afghan, Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme), clients supported by Sanctuary organisations • Living in homeless pathway accommodation and being supported by Council commissioned services providing Homelessness support • In receipt of the additional state support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ARC card, BRP card, NASS/ASPEN Card, Bail 101 letter, Section 20 letter, Section 95 letter, Home Office status letter, letter from a recognised Local Sanctuary organisation; UK eVisa details (via UKVI account) showing: Refugee status, Humanitarian protection, Ukraine Scheme / Hong Kong BN(O) visa</i> • <i>By referral by an organisation that works with people living in homeless pathway accommodation using our online form.</i> • <i>Council Tax Reduction Scheme award (please note this does not include Single Person Discount), Housing Benefit award, Universal Credit award for the Housing Element, Pension Credit</i>
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9. To qualify for a **year free entry pass plus one free day ticket** for a guest when in attendance with the year free entry pass holder the following eligibility evidence may be required to be shown:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers who regularly assist the museum e.g. for front of house, workshops, tours etc. • <i>Members of the community who have volunteered a significant amount of time to create a community exhibition</i> • <i>Members of the community who have volunteered a significant amount of time to take part in a MOX-led community project</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Database maintained with regular management approvals</i> • <i>Database maintained with regular management approvals</i> • <i>Database maintained with regular management approvals</i>
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APPENDIX 2 Risk Register

Museum of Oxford Entry Fees

As at: 10 March 2026

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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						
	Reduction in income	Introducing a fee may impact fundraising and secondary spend	Threat	Funder priorities	Could impact other museum income streams	Reduce	22/09/25	Paula Redway	3	3	3	3	9	2	2	Funder priorities have changed in recent years with funders being happier to support activity which has a wide range of income streams and doesn't rely on limited sources. Secondary spend has additional costs (e.g. for stock) therefore even if it does reduce, so will the costs.	Close liaison with key funders; recruitment of capacity to assist with fundraising and increasing philanthropy	31/03/27	Ongoing	50%	Paula Redway
	Reduction in footfall	Introducing a fee may reduce footfall - especially as there are other world class museums in the city which are free to enter	Threat	Cost of living	Could lead to reduced access and inclusion in the museum	Reduce	22/09/25	Paula Redway	3	3	3	3	9	2	2	Entry fee is small. Significant mitigations in the concessions structure. 12 free days per year for everyone to enter for free.	People in receipt of state benefits and young people under 5 have free entry; free entry for people attending events and funded activity; concessionary entry for young people and students; 12 free to enter days per year; marketing budget, capacity and campaign to increase footfall; partnerships developed with other visitor attractions to drive footfall on an ongoing basis	31/03/27	Ongoing	30%	Paula Redway
	Anti-charging campaign	Anti-charging campaign delays partnership development and negatively affects the museum's ability to deliver the philanthropy action plan	Threat	Anti-charging campaign	Could lead to reduced income for the museum	Reduce	10/03/26	Paula Redway	5	3	5	3	15	2	2	Publicity will likely subside after the full democratic process has been undertaken	Engage with Campaigners at Council	23/03/26	In Progress	0%	Paula Redway
													0								
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THE RISK REGISTER IS FORMATTED AS A TABLE. PRESS TAB ON THE LAST TABLE CELL TO INSERT A NEW ROW.

Risk Identification

Risks should be identified that may affect the Council's ability to achieve its business objectives, execute its strategies successfully or limit its ability to exploit opportunities.

Risks can be identified through a number of methods, including:

- A 'brainstorming' session or workshop with the whole management team and relevant stakeholders
- Interviews or questionnaires with key stakeholders
- Meetings with smaller groups of people

There are a wide range of methods available that can be used to identify and understand risks. The method that you select will depend upon the type of risk(s) that you are dealing with but typically a management team workshop is the method most commonly used.

Additionally, existing sources of information could help inform this stage. Some examples are listed below:

- Service / corporate plans, strategies and objectives
- Existing risk registers
- Risks or issues raised by internal audit or other scrutiny body
- Risks identified through budget setting processes
- Health & safety risk assessments
- Business continuity risk assessments
- Partnership, programme or project documentation (e.g. business case or project risk register)
- Experience of those participating in the risk identification process

It is the responsibility of those identifying risks to decide which sources of information they should consult. This may be one or more of the sources listed above or it could be something else you think is appropriate.

As well as direct risks to the achievement of our objectives it is important to think broadly about uncertainties that may have an impact on the organisation. The diagram shown below illustrates a variety of different risk themes, expanding on PESTLE prompts, which the organisation could face. Think also in terms of these themes when identifying risks.



Once identified, the risks need to be described in sufficient detail and recorded in a consistent format to support effective decision making on the way that the risk is managed. It is crucial for risks to be defined properly at this stage. Failure to do so can result in confusion about the exact nature of the risk, ineffective risk controls being implemented, or the risk analysis being over or underestimated.

The description of the risk should include the following elements:

- Risk Title – a short and concise header for the risk
- Description – expanding on the risk title outlining the situation or event that exposes us to a risk.
- Risk Cause – also known as the trigger event. Situations or factors which result in the risk becoming a reality.
- Risk Effect – the likely consequences if the risk materialises (The negative impact - consider worst likely scenario)

When describing a risk try not to describe the impact of the risk as the risk itself or define risks with statements which are the converse of objectives. Focus upon the uncertain event that would result in those impacts.

Types of Risk to consider	
Strategic / Commercial	
1	Under performance to specification
2	Management will under perform against expectations
3	Collapse of contractors
4	Insolvency of promoter
5	Failure of suppliers to meet contractual commitments (quality, cost, time)
6	Insufficient capital
7	Market fluctuations
8	Trade/Banking crises
9	Fraud/theft
10	Partnership failing to deliver desired outcomes
11	Situation is not insurable (cost of insurance outweighs the benefit)
Economic / Financial / Market	
1	Exchange rate fluctuation
2	Interest rate instability
3	Inflation
4	Shortage of working capital
5	Failure to meet projected revenue targets
6	Market developments will adversely affect plans
Legal and Regulatory	
1	New or changed legislation may invalidate assumptions upon which the activity is based
2	Failure to obtain appropriate approval e.g. planning consent
3	Unforeseen inclusion of contingent liabilities
4	Loss of intellectual property rights
5	Failure to achieve satisfactory contractual arrangements
6	Unexpected regulatory controls or licencing requirements
7	Changes in tax or tariff structure
Organisational / Management / Human factors	
1	Management incompetence
2	Inadequate corporate policies
3	Inadequate adoption of management practices
4	Poor leadership
5	Key personnel have inadequate authority to fulfil their roles
6	Poor staff selection procedures
7	Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities
8	Vested interests creating conflict and compromising overall aims
9	Individual or group interests given unwarranted priority
10	Personality clashes
11	Indecision or inappropriate decision making
12	Lack of operational support
13	Inadequate or inaccurate information
14	Health and Safety constraints
Political	
1	Change of government policy
2	Change of government
3	War and disorder
4	Adverse public opinion/media intervention
Environmental	
1	Natural disasters
2	Storms, flooding, tempests
3	Pollution incidents

4	Transport problems (including aircraft/vehicle collisions)
Technical / Operational / Infrastructure	
1	Inadequate design
2	Professional negligence
3	Human error/incompetence
4	Infrastructure failure
5	Operation lifetime lower than expected
6	Increased dismantling/decommissioning costs
7	Safety being compromised
8	Performance failure
9	Residual maintenance problems
10	Scope creep
11	Unclear expectations
12	Breaches in security/information security
13	Lack or inadequacy of business continuity

Risk Evaluation and Prioritisation

Once risks have been identified the risk matrix is the main tool for prioritising risks so we can establish which risks are most significant and therefore are in need of greater attention and resources. It also allows us to compare different types of risk with each other across the council.

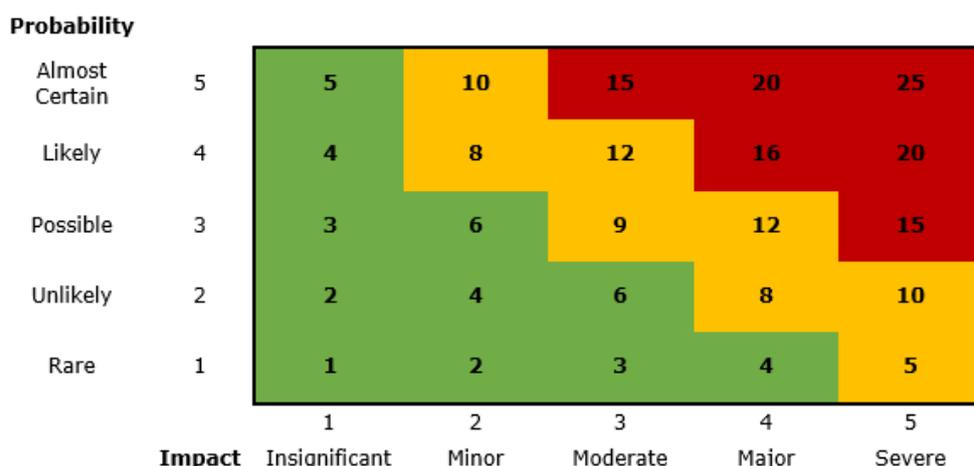
Each risk should be analysed using a five by five matrix for (1) the likelihood it will happen and (2) the impact if it did occur. This assessment should be made on three different basis:

- Gross risk – risk level if existing key controls and mitigations were not in place or not effective.
- Current risk – risk level after existing controls and mitigations are taken into consideration.
- Target risk – anticipated risk level following the introduction of planned controls and mitigations.

Assessing the gross risk allows consideration of the dependency the organisation has upon the existing key controls and informs decisions around risk treatment, and selection of an appropriate target risk level, considered in the next section of this toolkit. It is often helpful to consider the Current Risk first, and then ask yourself what the impact and likelihood of the risk might be if the key controls were not in place.

It is the risk owner's responsibility to ensure the controls they believe are reducing the risk are effective and are working in practice. Controls that are not yet in place should not be considered within the current risk.

Each identified risk should then be plotted onto the risk matrix.



When considering the likelihood of a risk happening you should select the number from 1 to 5 from the risk matrix that you think it will be over the next 12 months (it can be longer or shorter; some risks in the Strategic Risk Register are better considered over 3 to 5 years, some operational risks will be considered over 3 to 6 months). This score will require an element of judgement when considering how likely an event is to occur and you should consider the following:

- Has this event happened before in the Council? (How frequently?) Has this event happened elsewhere? (How frequently?)
- How likely is it that one or more of the causes/ triggers of the event will occur?
- Has anything happened recently that makes the event more or less likely to occur?

The following tables provide some support in quantifying the risk in terms of likelihood and impact.

Risk Probability Assessment Criteria

Scale	Description	Likelihood of Occurrence	Probability of Occurrence
1	Rare	1 in 10 years	The event may occur in certain circumstances
2	Unlikely	1 in 3 years	The event could occur
3	Possible	1 in 2 years	The event should occur
4	Likely	Annually	The event will probably occur
5	Almost certain	Monthly	The event is expected to occur or occurs regularly

When you select the impact you should give consideration to the factors outlined in the risk matrix. For example, if the risk you are scoring has a low financial impact but a high impact on our reputation then you would select the most appropriate number between 1 and 5 that relates to the level of reputational impact. Once again, this score will have an element of judgement.

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
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Financial	<£50k per annum	£50k - £250k per annum	£250k - £500k per annum	£500k - £750k per annum	>£750K per annum
Service Delivery	No impact to service quality, limited disruption to operations	Minor impact to service quality, minor service standards are not met, short term disruption to operations, minor impact on a partnerships	Significant fall in service quality, major partnership relationships strained, serious disruption in service standards	Major impact to service quality, multiple service standards are not met, long term disruption to operations, multiple partnerships affected	Catastrophic fall in service quality and key service standards are not met, long term catastrophic interruption to operations, several major partnerships are affected
Reputation	Public concern restricted to local complaints which do not attract local media attention.	Minor adverse local / public / media attention and complaints	Adverse national media public attention	Serious negative national or regional criticism	Prolonged, regional & national condemnation
Compliance & Regulation	Minor breach of internal regulations, not reportable	Minor breach of external regulations, not reportable	Breach of internal regulations leading to disciplinary action Breach of external regulations, reportable	Significant breach of external regulations leading to intervention or sanctions	Major breach leading to suspension or discontinuation of business and services
Strategic	Little impact on the organisational strategy	May have an impact on achieving organisational strategy	Would impact on the organisational objectives	Would require a significant shift from current strategy and objectives	Would require a fundamental change in strategy and objectives

Risk Treatment

Once risks have been identified and scored based on current controls the next step is to decide what action needs to be taken to manage them. Generally speaking, there are four approaches to treating risk: Treat, Tolerate, Terminate or Transfer:

Action	Description	Options
Treat / Reduce	Controlling the likelihood of the risk occurring, or controlling the impact of the consequences if the risk does occur	Reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring AND / OR Mitigating the impact if the risk does occur
Tolerate / Accept	Acknowledging that the ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or that the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained.	The ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained in which case the risk is accepted on an "informed" basis.
Terminate / Avoid	Not undertaking the activity that is likely to trigger the risk	Changing the direction or strategy and revisiting objectives or improving channels of communication Obtaining further information from external sources or acquiring expertise Reducing the scope of the activity or adopting a familiar, proven approach Deciding not to undertake the activity likely to trigger the risk
Transfer	Handing the risk on elsewhere, either totally or in part – e.g. through insurance.	Financial instruments such as insurance, performance bonds, warranties or guarantee. Renegotiation of contract conditions for the risk to be retained by the other party. Seeking agreement on sharing the risk with the other party. Sub-contracting risk to a consultant or external suppliers. NB. It may not be possible to transfer all aspects of a risk. For example, where there is or reputational damage to the organisation.

When considering further action required to manage the risk, and indeed the appropriateness of existing controls, an assessment of treatment options should be made alongside a consideration of the Council's risk appetite and tolerance for the current level of risk.

A further consideration is the efficiency of risk treatment in relation to the cost effectiveness of the proposed actions to be taken. Firstly the cost of implementation has to be considered (time, manpower, budget, etc.). The impact expected if no action is taken, should be weighed against the cost of action and the reduction of the impact. There should be a direct benefit from the cost implementation in terms of the reduction of the level of the risk.

Plans should then be put into place to manage the risk with key milestones identified and clear owners – ensuring that they are 'SMART' – Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound.

Oxford City Council has focused on the Red, Amber, Green status of risks in determining the risk appetite of the organization. Red risks are considered unacceptable and every effort must be made to reduce the risk to the organization.

The risk appetite is reviewed periodically or when there are significant changes to the organisation. Changes to the risk appetite level would require a change to strategy and would therefore require approval of the Cabinet.

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Why do an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

1. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is part of Oxford City Council's [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\) \(Equality Act 2010\)](#).

The General PSED enables Oxford City Council to:

- a. **identify and remove discrimination,**
 - b. **identify ways to advance equality of opportunity,**
 - c. **foster good relations.**
2. [An EqIA must be done before making any decision\(s\)](#) that may have an impact on people and/or services that people use and depend on.
 3. [An EqIA form is one of many tools](#) that can simplify and structure your equalities assessment.
 4. We are passionate about equalities, and we highly recommend that [Corporate Management Team \(CMT\) reports and all projects must attach an EqIA](#).

A good EqIA has the following attributes:

1. **Comprehensively considers the [9 protected characteristics](#).**

1. Age	6. Race & Ethnicity
2. Disability	7. Religion or Belief
3. Gender Reassignment	8. Sex
4. Marriage & Civil Partnership	9. Sexual Orientation
5. Pregnancy & Maternity	NEW- Socio-economic inequalities (voluntary adoption)

2. It has **considered equality of treatment** towards service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
3. Sufficiently considered **potential and real impact** of proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members.
4. **Systematically recorded and reported** any potential and real impact of your proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
5. **Collected, recorded, & reported sufficient information and data** on how your policy or proposal will have an impact.
6. Offers **mitigations or adjustments** if a PSED has been impacted.
7. Provides clear **justifications** for your decisions.
8. It is written in **plain English** with simple short sentence structures.

Section 1: General overview of the activity under consideration

1.	Name of activity being assessed.	To assess whether the Officer Decision detailing the proposed eligibility criteria for concessions and free passes have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and to identify mitigation measures where necessary.	2.	The implementation date of the activity under consideration:	Late January 2026
3.	Directorate/Department(s):	Communities and Citizens	4.	Service Area(s):	Culture and Community Development
5.	Who is (are) the assessment lead(s): Please provide: -Name -Email address	Paula Redway predway@oxford.gov.uk	6.	Contact details, in case there are queries: Please provide: -Name -Email address	Paula Redway predway@oxford.gov.uk
7.	Is this a new or ongoing EqIA?	Ongoing	8.	If this is an extension of a previous EqIA, please indicate where the previous EqIA is located and share the link to the said EqIA.	The previous EqIA was published as part of the cabinet papers for the meeting of Oxford City Council Cabinet on 22 October 2025. The papers can be found here .
9.	Date this EqIA started:	22 September 2025			
10.	Will this EqIA be attached to Corporate Management Team (CMT) reports/updates, which will be published online?	NA	11.	Give a date (tentative or otherwise) when this assessment will be taken to the CMT.	NA

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

<p>12.</p>	<p>Type of activity being considered:</p> <p>Check the most appropriate.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Which priority area(s) <u>within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028)</u> does this activity fulfil?</p> <p>Please check as needed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Good, affordable homes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, fair economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thriving Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Zero Carbon Oxford <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well run council
<p>14.</p>	<p>Which priority area(s) within <u>Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022)</u> does this activity fulfil?</p> <p>Please check as needed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsive services and customer care.	<input type="checkbox"/> Diverse and engaged workforce.	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership & organisational commitment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding and working with our communities.
<p>15.</p>	<p>Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.</p>	<p>The aim of the activity is to ensure that the Museum of Oxford remains accessible to all in the context of introducing a small entry fee from late January 2026. The Museum of Oxford is the only museum dedicated to telling the stories of Oxford and its people. Staff work closely with diverse community groups to enable those who may not always be heard to tell their stories and write and display their histories. This decision will enable those who may not be in a position to pay the</p>			

		<p>entry fee to gain free or discounted entry. The decision will also enable data collection so monitoring can be undertaken to better understand who is and isn't accessing the museum, to identify gaps or unintended barriers. This will assist with management decisions and fundraising. Significant flexibility is included in evidence requirements for those eligible for free and discounted entry.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Please outline the consequences of not implementing this activity. For example, -Existing activity does not fulfill Corporate Objectives, -existing activity is discriminatory and not fulfilling Council's PSED, ... to name a few.</p>	<p>Not implementing this activity could risk creating barriers to access the museum for people who are unable to afford the small entry fee.</p>

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

<p>17.</p>	<p>Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?</p> <p>Please provide details— -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.</p>	<p>No specific focus group sessions, however, a wide range of systems are in place at the Museum to capture visitor feedback.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.</p> <p>These could be— -third-party research,</p>	<p>Census information Leisure Centre Discounts https://www.oxford.gov.uk/leisure-centres-swimming-pools/leisure-centre-bonus-card Those impacted will be anyone who is unable to afford the entry fee.</p>

	-census data, -legislation, -articles, -reports, -briefs.	
19.	<p>If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?</p> <p>Please list the details – -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data.</p>	Fees and charges are included in the annual budget setting process which the public are consulted on every year

Section 4: Impact analysis.

20.	Who does the activity impact?	Service Users	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
	Check as needed.	Members of staff	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
	The impact may be positive, negative or unknown.	General public	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
		Partner / Community Organisation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
		City Councillors	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>

Council suppliers and contractors	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
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21.		Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any protected characteristics as stated within Equality (Act 2010)?				
Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Don't know	Data/information/evidence supporting your assessment	Analysis & insight Mitigations
Age 302	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free entry for children under 5 Free entry for foster carers Concessions for under 18s Adults aged 18–65 have free entry if they are in receipt of state benefits Older people in receipt of Pension credit benefit from free entry. 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages

<p>Disability (Visible and invisible)</p> <p>303</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p> <p>www.oxford.gov.uk</p>  <p>OXFORD CITY COUNCIL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free annual passes for registered blind/disabled individuals and supporters • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits including Severe Disablement Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) • Free entry for carers with a Disabled visitor • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too
<p>Gender re-assignment</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages • Volunteers, including those who have told their

					help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories	stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too
304	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p> <p>www.oxford.gov.uk</p> <p>OXFORD CITY COUNCIL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary. • Free entry for those participating in

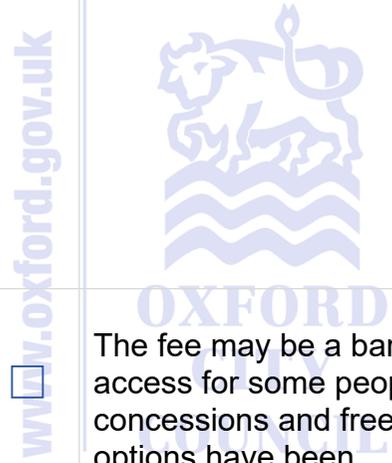
305					<p>sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<p>eligible funded activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for children under 5 • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits

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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">306</p> <p>Religion or Belief</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">www.oxford.gov.uk</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary. • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
<p>Sex</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for children under 5 • Concessions for under 18s • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary.

307					<p>characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for



						<p>a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
<p>Socio-economic inequalities such as:</p> <p>- income and factors that impact income. -access to jobs</p> <p>This was voluntarily adopted by Oxford City Council on the 13th of March 2024.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for people living in homeless pathway accommodation. • Free entry for children under 5 • Concessions for under 18s • Older people in receipt of Pension credit benefit from free entry. • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary. • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits including Council Tax Reduction Scheme (not

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309						<p>including Single Person's allowance), Housing Benefit, Universal Credit – Housing Element and those with no recourse to public funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
<p>Other (voluntary consideration)</p> <p>Council of Sanctuary</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Migrant, refugee, or asylum seekers.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary including those supported by Council commissioned services providing Homelessness support • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessionary rates • Free access for people in receipt of state benefits • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
<p>Other</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unpaid carers - Prison population - Homeless population -Council suppliers & contractors -Cabinet Members 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The fee may be a barrier to access for some people so concessions and free entry options have been included in the charging model. The fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry for people living in homeless pathway accommodation. • Free entry for those participating in eligible funded activity • Free entry for asylum seekers, refugees, and those seeking sanctuary including those supported by Council commissioned services providing Homelessness support and those

www.oxford.gov.uk



						<p>without recourse to public funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessionary rates • Volunteers, including those who have told their stories in the museum, will have a free entry pass for a year – this also allows a free plus one for a year too • 12 free to enter days per year for people of all ages
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Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Full Impact Assessment

22.	Conclusions.						
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stop and reconsider the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>23.</p>	<p>Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.</p>	<p>Benefits of Implementation:</p> <p>It promotes social inclusion by offering free access to marginalised and low-income groups.</p> <p>It encourages community engagement through volunteer recognition.</p> <p>It aligns with corporate priority of Thriving Communities by maintaining accessibility and fairness.</p> <p>It maintains support for those in receipt of state benefits who may need warm space during colder months.</p> <p>It promotes equity and enhances diversity as income will help to sustain the museum and to publicise it to wider and more diverse audiences</p>
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Section 6: Monitoring and review plan.

The responsibility for maintaining a monitoring arrangement of the EqIA action plan lies with the service/team completing the EqIA.
 These arrangements must be built into the performance management framework such as KPIs or Risk Registers.

<p>24.</p>	<p>Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact?</p> <p>For example-</p>	<p>Culture and Community Development Team</p>
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25.	- team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group, etc.		
	Who (individual, team, or service area) will be responsible for carrying out the EqIA review?	Culture and Community Development Team	
26.	How often will the equality impact be reviewed for this activity? For example- -quarterly, -yearly, etc.	Annually	27. Date when the EqIA will be reviewed again. December 2026

13



Section 7: Sign-off

Name: Paula Redway

Job Title: Culture and Community Development Manager

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Name:

Job Title:

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Suggested list of people to include are:

- 1) Project lead/manager.
- 2) Head of service area or team.
- 3) Person who completed the EqIA.
- 4) EDI Lead.
- 5) EDI Specialist

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

3

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

⚠ Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.

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To: Council

Date: 23 March 2026

Report of: Transition Director

Title of Report: 2024/2025 Partnership report on the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Board, and the Council’s work for Children and Young People living in the city.

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with an update on the Arrangements and Board for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Oxfordshire Children’s Trust And; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s work for Children and Young People in the city
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion.
Corporate Priority:	Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	The Council Strategy 2024 to 2028

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
1 Note the report and the documents appended to it

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	2024/2025 update report on the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrangements and Board for the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust; and 	No

	2. The Council's work for Children and Young People in the city	
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Purpose

1. The update paper attached to this report (Appendix One) and supporting appendices provide an annual update on the arrangements and activities of the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board and outlines the Council's initiatives for children and young people in Oxford, for 2024 to 2025.

The Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board (CTB)

2. The Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board (CTB) is a strategic partnership focused on improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire Local Area Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2022-2027

3. The County Council and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care Board ("BOB ICS") share joint responsibility for planning and commissioning services across education, health and social care for children and young people with SEND in Oxfordshire.
4. Oxfordshire developed a [Local Area SEND Strategy](#) ("the Strategy") for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with SEND. The [Strategy](#) aligns with the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is informed by the County Council's [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – progress, 2024/2025

5. OFSTED together with the Care Quality Commission [undertook an inspection of the Oxfordshire SEND provision in July 2023](#), and found 'widespread systematic failings'. As part of the inspection process, in November 2023, the Department for Education published an [improvement notice](#), which was issued to the County Council.
6. An Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB) was established, to drive the action required to deliver better services for SEND children, young people and their families in Oxfordshire.
7. In December 2023, Ofsted approved the partnership's [priority action plan](#). The plan set out what will be achieved across five priority action areas.

The Oxfordshire SEND transformation programme roadmap (May 2024)

8. The [SEND transformation roadmap](#) is a high-level overview of the key milestones and activities for the local area partnership's (LAP) SEND transformation programme.
9. The roadmap covers improvement activity from January 2024 to April 2025. This

follows OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of LAP services for children and young people with SEND in July 2023.

10. The activity on the roadmap is a summary and does not include everything. The roadmap reflects almost all the commitments made in the priority action plan that was published in December 2023, together with a number of other key deliverables.

The Council's work for Children and Young People in the city

11. The update paper (Appendix One) describes various initiatives by the Council and its partners to support children and young people in the city. Key efforts include:
- i. Oxford Children's and Young people Partnership
 - ii. Youth Investment Funding
 - iii. School engagement
 - iv. Locality Working
 - v. Oxford's work in the Community Impact Zone
 - vi. YouMove – Helping Families Stay Active Together
 - vii. Go Active Families
 - viii. Leisure Offers
 - ix. Parks and accessible play
 - x. Museum of Oxford
 - xi. Dancin' Oxford
 - xii. Oxford Cultural Education Partnership
 - xiii. Oxford Community Impact Fund
 - xiv. The Council's safeguarding responsibilities
 - xv. Community centres
 - xvi. Growing partnership working
 - xvii. Youth Employment, Education and Training
 - xviii. Engaging migrant families
 - xix. Oxford Strategic Partnership.

Financial implications

12. There are no financial implications for Oxford City Council arising from this report.

Legal issues

13. There are no legal implications for the Council arising directly from this report.

Level of risk

14. There are no risk implications for the Council arising from this report.

Equalities impact

15. Under its public sector equality duty the council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The Council discharges its public sector equality duty in relation to its safeguarding responsibilities through policies and key strategies related to Children and Young People - such as the Thriving Communities Strategy 2023 to 2027, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
17. Furthermore, the work by both the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust and the Council is a positive contribution to the protected characteristic of children and young people.
18. The Council will continue to monitor equalities impact as programmes grow and develop.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

19. There are no carbon and environmental implications for the Council arising from this report.

Report author	Lucy Cherry
Job title	Policy and Partnerships Officer
Service area or department	Corporate Strategy
Telephone	07483 010 323
e-mail	lcherry@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:
1. Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Arrangements and Board Terms of Reference (2024/2025).
2. Oxford Community Impact Funding 2024/2025.

The Oxfordshire Children's Trust
Arrangements and Board

and

The Council's work for Children and
Young People in the city.



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Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Arrangements and Board

1. The Children’s Trust Arrangements provide the strategic partnership framework for monitoring progress on key health and wellbeing outcomes for all children in Oxfordshire.
2. Acting as the children and young people’s arm of the [Health and Wellbeing Board](#), the Trust works closely with and reports to that Board.
3. Delivery is through the Children’s Trust Board (“the Board”), a small group of senior leaders from across the children’s partnership with authority and accountability for decision-making. The Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People chairs the Board.
4. The Trust Arrangements and Board Terms of Reference are described in [Appendix Two](#). The Trust does not deliver operational work; its role is to oversee progress across existing statutory and strategic boards and duties.
5. Multiple statutory and strategic boards operate within Oxfordshire County Council (“County Council”) and the wider children’s partnership, each with legal responsibilities and medium-term strategies (typically three to five years).
6. The Trust seeks assurance on progress against these boards’ objectives and reviews evidence of improved outcomes for children and young people.
7. The Board includes two mandated positions representing Oxfordshire’s district councils: one permanently held by Oxford City Council (“the Council”) and one rotating among the other districts.
8. The Council’s representative on the Board is the Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion. Since June 2023, the district councils’ representative has been Councillor Rob Pattenden (Cherwell District Council Executive Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities).
9. Engagement by the Council and other districts is supported by the Council’s Corporate Policy and Partnership Officer team.
10. The Trust is required to develop a high-level strategy identifying improvements in key areas affecting all children and young people in Oxfordshire.
11. This strategy is informed by evidence such as the [Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Analysis](#) and aligned with priorities from other statutory boards, legal frameworks, and data sources.
12. The Trust’s role is to provide assurance that intended changes and outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire are being achieved.



13. In developing [Oxfordshire's Children and Young People's Strategic Plan 2024–2028](#), existing ambitions, priorities, and data were adopted by the County Council as the foundation for high-level changes championed by the Trust.
14. The Board focuses on four priorities from the Strategic Plan:
- **Start Well:** Early Help and Early Years
 - **Live Well:** Outcomes for Young People
 - **Achieve Well:** Education and Inclusion
 - **Voice and Influence:** Children and Young People shaping the services that affect them.

Oxfordshire Local Area Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2022-2027

15. The County Council and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and West Berkshire Integrated Care Board (“BOB ICS”) share joint responsibility for planning and commissioning services across education, health and social care for children and young people with SEND in Oxfordshire.
16. Oxfordshire developed a [Local Area SEND Strategy](#) (“the Strategy”) for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with SEND. The [Strategy](#) aligns with the County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is informed by the County Council’s [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).
17. The Strategy was produced by the SEND Strategy Development Group, comprising representatives from the County Council (education and social care) NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, education settings and Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – progress, 2024/2025

18. OFSTED together with the Care Quality Commission [undertook an inspection of the Oxfordshire SEND provision in July 2023](#), and found ‘widespread systematic failings’. As part of the inspection process, in November 2023, the Department for Education published an [improvement notice](#), which was issued to the County Council.
19. An Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB) was established, to drive the action required to deliver better services for SEND children, young people, and their families in Oxfordshire.
20. In December 2023, Ofsted approved the partnership’s [priority action plan](#). The plan set out what will be achieved across five priority action areas:
- Gathering and acting on the views of children and young people with SEND and their families.
 - Developing effective communications systems across the partnership to ensure coordinated approaches.
 - Improved timeliness and quality assurance of education, health, and care plans.

- Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children and young people and their families.
- Producing plans that are co-produced with children and young people and their families, which are rigorously monitored.

The Oxfordshire SEND transformation programme roadmap (May 2024)

21. The [SEND transformation roadmap](#) is a high-level overview of the key milestones and activities for the local area partnership's (LAP) SEND transformation programme.
22. The roadmap covers improvement activity from January 2024 to April 2025. This follows OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of LAP services for children and young people with SEND in July 2023.
23. The timeline reflects what work has been delivered to date. It also looks ahead to include planned activity, including what was needed for the OFSTED and CQC's follow-up monitoring visit due around February 2025.
24. The activity on the roadmap is a summary and does not include everything. The roadmap reflects almost all the commitments made in the priority action plan that was published in December 2023, together with a number of other key deliverables.
25. It will be reviewed quarterly and updated to reflect the changes to the programme timelines and actions.

Oxfordshire SEND transformation progress report (November 2024)

26. The LAP reported that significant progress had been made in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Oxfordshire:
 - Improved Access to Information: The updated Local Offer website saw 138,000 page views from 26,605 active users since its launch in December 2023, with ongoing enhancements to advice and support.
 - Engagement: 787 parents, carers, and young people provided feedback through surveys and events since July 2023.
 - Capacity Increase: The Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) casework team grew to 64 staff (up from 57 in July 2023).
 - EHCP Performance:
 - 7,128 children had an EHCP (up from 6,107 in July 2023).
 - 43% of assessments were completed within 20 weeks (up from 40%).
 - 44% of EHCPs were rated good or outstanding (up from 21%).
 - Parent Concerns: Responses within the statutory 10-day timeframe improved by 160% since July 2023.
 - Neurodevelopmental Assessments:
 - Waiting list grew to 3,646 children (up from 3,049), but median wait time reduced to 63 weeks (down from 79 weeks).
 - Monthly assessment completions are increasing.
 - Decision Timeliness:
 - Six-week decisions took 4 weeks to communicate (previously 3 weeks),

reflecting a 33% increase in volume.

27. In February 2025:

- the County Council approved enhanced learning pathways (bespoke education) for children with SEND. Their Cabinet approved over £2 million per year to fund a further 20 enhanced pathways, spreading support as widely as possible across the county.
- the County Council's Education and Young people Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on progress by the LAP to improve services and support for children and young people with SEND.
 - Alternative Education Provision (AEP):
 - Collaborative AEP Board established; internal review completed, and external review commissioned.
 - Findings will inform a targeted action plan to enhance provision.
 - Guidance issued to schools on creating sustainable AEP pathways; parent/carer guide in development with OxPCF.
 - Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP):
 - Annual review backlog reduced from 200+ (Sept 2023) to <50 (Jan 2025).
 - 100% compliance with statutory deadlines for school entry and Year 6/7 transfers; 94% compliance for post-16 transitions.
 - Key Stage 5 outcomes: EHCP pupils' A-Level points score rose from 25.18 (2023) to 34.57 (2024), above national average and moving Oxfordshire to second quartile nationally.
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing:
 - *TellMe* app commissioned to support young people.
 - Community Wisdom Project launched (February 2025) to provide early universal support for families awaiting specialist care.
 - Speech & Language Development:
 - WellComm pilot launched (January 2025) in 46 primary schools to identify and address early speech and language barriers.
 - Neurodevelopmental Support:
 - Median waiting times for assessments reduced since April 2023.
 - Over 2,000 people accessed "Living Well with Neurodivergence" workshops and webinars via Autism Oxford and CAMHS.
- The full list of progress updates can be accessed by [reading the scrutiny papers online](#).

The Council's contribution to the Trust, Children and Young People Partnership, and Children and Young People living in the city

Oxford Children's and Young People Partnership

28. The Council developed and facilitates the Oxford Children and Young People Partnership ("CYPP"). This partnership is chaired by a city of Oxford secondary head teacher and is made up from:

- The Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- The health sector and business sectors
- Thames Valley Police
- Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action
- Young people.

29. The CYPP provides oversight for the Community Impact Zone, Life Chances and the Cultural Education Partnership, with meetings held approximately every 6-to-8-week period.

Youth Investment Funding

30. Construction commenced on a state-of-the-art youth hub based in Leys Pool and Leisure Centre in Blackbird Leys.

31. The hub is aimed at giving young people new opportunities to enhance their wellbeing, have fun and grow their self-confidence.

32. A grant of £1.1m from the UK Government's Youth Investment Fund will pay for the build of the youth center and an additional £223,000 of funding was allocated for three youth workers and a coordinator for the first year.

33. The new space will benefit both young people and the local community and means more young people can be supported.

34. The project is a collaboration between the Council and the County Council's Targeted Youth Support Service, with young people, supported by both Council's playing a key role in shaping the project.

Youth Ambition work with young people 11-19 years

35. Open access youth clubs and sports sessions:

- These sessions provide a safe and positive environment for young people to play, socialise, and learn.
- Staff build positive relationships with young people and ensure they have a sense of belonging by involving them in all aspects of the running of these clubs and sessions.

- Young people are informally supported and informed to make the right choices and therefore less likely to be prone to risky behaviours.
- The sessions serve as an early intervention for young people who may be struggling with issues including safeguarding and social and emotional challenges, and through participation and relationship building, staff are able to support them.

36. Summer 2024:

- Another successful summer of free and low-cost activities were delivered for young people in Oxford, both by the Council in partnership with key stakeholders and by other providers.
- Additionally, the Youth Ambition team ran a Young Leaders Programme, where young people volunteered to support the delivery of activities and all achieved AQA awards as part of the programmes.

37. Youth Voice:

- Young people are central to everything that the team do, and the Council ensure that their voices influence the decision-making process.
- The Youth Ambition team also facilitated a Youth Voice panel during 2024/2025, consisting of 10 young people aged 11 – 18 years, providing the young people with a platform to share their views and influence services.

38. The Youth Ambition team have a range of skills and knowledge to support young people with care and needs, and roles include:

- Education, Employment and Training Youth Worker
- Mental Health Youth Worker
- Female Participation Lead Youth Worker
- Mentoring Youth Worker.

39. An audit of Youth Ambition's safeguarding activities was included in the 2025/2026 safeguarding action plan. The audit aims to support the new management team in safeguarding compliance and identify areas of best practice and learning opportunities.

40. The audit findings will be shared with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships Performance and Quality Assurance subgroup.

School engagement

41. The Council has a regular presence in secondary schools to build relationships with young people as well as promoting the positive youth work activities available to them in their community.

42. School engagement occurs via the Youth Ambition Team, Community Health Development Officers and You Move Activator, supporting funding, outreach and increasing opportunities for physical activity.

Locality Working

43. The Council is continuing to work to support Children, Young People and their families through its [locality working](#) model.
44. The Localities Team have supported the Youth Ambition Team to secure funding from Oxfordshire County Council to support food provision in all youth sessions across the city.
45. The Oxford Academy (Littlemore) have been supported in gaining funding to support the Break Time Snack Initiative aimed at reducing student hunger and improving concentration.
46. As part of the free school meals campaign, the Locality Team collaborated with the Council's Benefits Team to send letters to residents with children in the city who may be eligible to claim free school meals. This included information on free or low-cost activities families can access.

You Move

47. The Council continues to receive funding from Public Health to deliver the You Move programme
48. You Move is delivered in partnership between Active Oxfordshire, city and district council's, supporting families on low incomes to access low cost and free physical activity opportunities, encouraging families to be active together.



Go Active Families

49. [Go Active Families](#) aims to provide families with all the information needed to be more active in Oxford. The activity offers include:
 - Culture and Creative – Local attractions and activities for the whole family
 - Move More Indoors – Ideas to get the whole family more active
 - Go Active Outdoors – Ideas to get the whole family more active outdoors
 - Youth Clubs and Groups – Regular groups and activities for young people
 - Family Centres – Providing support and advice for children and families
 - Stay and Play Sessions – various sessions for parents/carers and their young children
 - Seasonal Activities and Events – One off temporary events and activities for families.



Leisure offers

50. In partnership with the Council's leisure operator, [More Leisure Community Trust](#), the following offers have been retained for Oxford's children and young people:
- Free Swimming Sessions: Children and young people living in the city (OX1 to OX4) can enjoy free swimming sessions across all Oxford's swimming pools.
 - Concessionary Leisure Membership: Oxford's most vulnerable residents (OX1 to OX4) continue to benefit from significantly discounted access to Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool, and ice rink (both reduced pay as you go and monthly memberships).
 - In-kind community funding: A range of community groups were supported with free use in facilities via the [in-kind community fund](#). Including half-term swimming sessions, ice skating sessions and stay/play sessions.

Parks and accessible play

51. Oxford boasts over 90 green spaces in its communities, [including parks and nature reserves](#). It also offers a variety of exciting play areas. These aren't just typical swings and slides - some feature sand and water play, fostering creativity and imaginative play for children of all ages.
52. Oxford's parks provide the backdrop for outdoor fun and family-friendly activities. The Council continually invests in free play opportunities and secured funding for the installation of a new seasonal splash play area, as well as the installation of a 'learn and play' balance bike and scooter track for younger children in Hinksey Park.
53. This innovative facility combines elements of a traditional splash park with a balance bike and scooter track for younger children to provide year-round play value.



54. There have also been projects across a number of the council's play areas to upgrade play equipment and safety surfaces to ensure facilities remain attractive, safe and fun. All of the council's play facilities, including the splash parks, remain free to use to ensure they are accessible to all children and their families.
55. When considering facilities for older children and teenagers there has been increased focus around the 'make space for girls' agenda. A project at Cowley Marsh has seen the creation of a meeting place shelter specifically for girls, designed in consultation with local teenagers to their own specifications.

Museum of Oxford

56. The [Museum of Oxford](#) (“the MOX”) delivers activity for children in Oxford through its services for communities, [schools](#), [families](#) and under 5s.
57. The Council work in partnership with local communities to collect their cultural stories and share them in the Council’s Museum through exhibitions and events, including by commissioning local cultural experts to deliver family activities.
58. MOX offers:
 - A school’s programme including a range of handling workshops that are targeted to specific areas of the curriculum including history, citizenship, art, and English, as well as contributing to the Cultural Capital agenda.
 - A new topic introduced in 2024/25, Romans in Oxford, focuses on the nationally significant pottery industry that was based in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys.
 - Schools in areas of higher deprivation pilot workshops were delivered free of charge, and work in partnership with them on specific projects, such as the grant funded new Roman’s workshop.
 - Work experience placements for young people and in 2024/25 delivered 1 T Level placement for a student at City of Oxford College Activate Learning, 1 student placement in partnership with Brookes University, 1 work experience placement and 3 placements with Swan School.
 - Tailored activities developed to support specific needs, e.g. free family backpacks with sensory resources are available, and a Visual Story to introduce the museum and the access route in, and school workshops for local SEND schools.
 - Free gallery visits for Oxfordshire based groups of children and young people supported by an optional worksheet.
 - An audio tour of the museums galleries specifically designed for families.
 - Family workshops at a range of price points, with at least two a week in every school holiday, and free trails and activity backpacks around the galleries.

Dancin’ Oxford

59. [Dancin’ Oxford](#) works in partnership with arts, cultural, community & youth organisations, schools, and young people to engage families and young people in high quality dance activity across Oxford and Oxfordshire.
60. Their year-round family engagement projects offer regular high-quality opportunities for families to be creative and have fun together; responding to a need for positive, inclusive activities for all family models that are regular, physical, fun, and social. All projects are either free, pay-what-you-can or low-cost and tap into the health and wellbeing targets for Oxford.
61. Projects include:
 - Fam Jam - combining dance, disco and movement games, face-painting, healthy food, and social time for children 11 years and under and their grown-ups. Sessions run bi-monthly in Rose Hill and Cowley. Over the 12 months, the project engaged 329 participants.
 - Family Dance Party - regular family discos (with facilitated movement games and

crafts activities) are held in partnership with Pegasus Theatre, the North Wall (in Cutteslowe), MOX and Tiny Ideas Festival (across various venues). Over the 12 months, the project engaged over 570 participants.

- Early Years Arts Project (led by artists experienced in early year's practice) - monthly sessions at Donnington Doorstep and John Henry Newman Academy: focusing on creative, stimulative and physical play between the children and their parents/carers to build confidence and embed creative and physical play in the adult / child relationship outside of the sessions. Over the 12 months, the project engaged 618 participants.
62. Across all family sessions Dancin' Oxford seek on-going feedback through dialogue with participating families to ensure the sessions remain relevant and impactful. This includes learning around accessibility, particularly for families with SEND children who can quickly feel overwhelmed.
63. They welcome all family models and aim for the projects to be fully inclusive, ensuring there's an assistant for family access support plus a quiet space available at each session.

Feedback included:

"I've got 3 children who come every Wednesday, and all love it. One has sensory issues, and I feel this environment is so inclusive. All 3 come out of the session so happy. This has been a godsend to me with my children. It's fantastic!"

"The project is just amazing. The children are having so much fun. Emma and Roly are bringing so much enthusiasm. This project should go on and continue!"

"Amazing to have this activity every month. So appreciative for it. We love it every time. Thank you!"

"It's amazing to witness the power of a moment in time like this- a little bit of [him] is braver & stronger and more ready for the world than before. Just thought I'd share, in case you ever doubt the power of what you do."

64. This short (5 mins) film gives an [overview of the family activities Dancin' Oxford](#) offer.
65. Global Dance Stage events: Dancin' Oxford organised two dance stage performance events (at Westgate Oxford) over the year; with a diverse range of community and youth groups performing and showcasing their skills in the heart of the city. These highly valued performance opportunities engaged over 36 dance groups and over 350 children and youth dancers representing a wide range of diverse dance styles. The two events engaged audiences of more than 12,000.

Feedback included:

"Thank you so much for making this wonderful event happen. It was really exciting, and I believe the audience loved it. Personally, for me the highlights were being able to meet young dancers from the other groups and experience music from different parts of the world."

"Thank you as always for providing us with this opportunity. It was lovely to see communities of different backgrounds on stage. We had a blast! Please do share with your team, we all felt very supported."

66. Future additional projects (alongside the family engagement projects) include:
- Bright Sparks (part of Dancin Oxford's 'Barton Moves - Dancer in Community

Residence' programme) – lively, fun, and inclusive creative movement & craft sessions running weekly for 5 – 11-year-olds, including children from non-English speaking families and children who are neurodiverse. The sessions enable the children to build creative and social skills, whilst developing their self-confidence and being active. Based at the Barton Neighbourhood Centre.

- Empowered Sisters (*part of the Blackbird Leys Dancer in Community Residence programme*) - an exciting project for girls aged 11 – 16yrs to grow in confidence, build community and express themselves through dance, movement, creativity, and sisterhood. The sessions combine learning street and social dance styles (e.g. Hip Hop, Popping, Locking, Afro, Dancehall, & House) with Empowerment sessions that include activities and discussions to encourage sharing of ideas to grow into confident leaders who challenge norms, advocate for change, and inspire others. The programme provides high-quality, accessible dance opportunities that everyone can take part in. With cost often a barrier for young people to access sport and the arts, the sessions are free of charge. Based at the Leys Pool and Leisure Centre and the Youth Hub.
- Volunteering for young people – in partnership with Body Politic Dance (as part of their Training Ground programme for 16-19yr olds) – Dancin' Oxford will offer a package of volunteering opportunities across its (participatory and performance) programmes: to build a broad range of skills & experience, and opportunity to work alongside skilled facilitators and practitioners.

Oxford Cultural Education Partnership

67. The Oxford City Cultural Education Partnership (“the OxCEP”) works in partnership with arts and cultural organisations, schools, youth groups and young people to engage young people in arts and cultural activity across Oxfordshire.
68. Projects have included:
 - The continued delivery of a partnership project with The Story Museum working with teachers and pupils at 7 schools with multiple indices of deprivation, creating learning resources and building teacher’s skills to support pupil’s emotional literacy, funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
 - The development of the Oxygen Oxfordshire website with more content, partner profiles and events pages for children and young people.
 - The development of a 3 – 5 year forward plan for the Oxygen CEP and a case for funding.
69. Future projects include:
 - Continued delivery of the final year of the Story Exchange project with The Story Museum and 7 local schools.
 - Developing partnerships with local arts youth boards and a youth ambassador programme.
 - Seeking funding to support the development of 6 local ‘hubs’ in non-traditional delivery venues, creating programmes of creative and cultural activity for children and young people in areas of Oxfordshire where there is less engagement and fewer opportunities for access.

- Participating in ‘Partnerships for the Future’ Arts Council England funded support programme.

Oxford Community Impact Fund

70. The [Oxford Community Impact Fund](#) (OCIF) is a vital initiative aimed at empowering community groups and individuals to create meaningful projects that benefit the wider community. Following a comprehensive grant review in 2021, the OCIF was established to find better ways of supporting community groups and individuals.
71. The OCIF is running for a minimum of 3 years, starting 2022/23, and is reviewed annually.
72. In the 2024 to 2025 financial year, 16 organisations were funded through circa £153,000 of OCIF funding, supporting children and young people with a variety of needs ([Appendix Three](#)). Some examples of the supported organisations and their initiatives include:
 - Donnington Doorstep Family Centre: The organisation has fostered an inclusive environment that supports families, children, and young people from diverse backgrounds. They provided staff with comprehensive training to enhance their understanding of different cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring all families feel respected and valued.
 - Leys Community Development Initiative (CDI): A combination of health and wellbeing, isolation eradication, mental wellbeing and educational sessions were organised and run by CDI have witnessed in excess of 500 different juniors and seniors participating and benefiting from the activities.
 - Makespace Oxford: Created an event space that is genuinely safe, welcoming, and accessible, especially for families with young children and those with neurodiverse needs.
 - Mandala Theatre Company: Mandala’s work enables young people and young artists to have pathways into employment, especially into the Creative industries.
 - Oxford Youth Enterprise Ltd (Name It Youth Project): The project was able to expand further and enable more girls and young women to access the project.
 - Wood Farm Youth Centre: The Youth Centre has provided support for an estimated 50 young people, many of whom are from low-income households. This support has been delivered by their part time youth worker and local volunteers at weekly sessions held at the youth centre and by undertaking outreach work on the Wood Farm estate.
73. These initiatives highlight the Council’s commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive community in Oxford.

The Council’s children safeguarding responsibilities

74. Oxfordshire County Council acts as the Children’s Services Authority (CSA) for Oxfordshire, holding the primary legal responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all children in the county.

75. As a district council, the Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 2004 to:
- Ensure its functions are discharged with regard to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
 - Require any partners delivering functions on its behalf to do the same.
 - Co-operate with the CSA and relevant local partners to improve children's well-being.
 - Participate in budget pooling to support children's trust arrangements.
 - Work collaboratively with local partners to enhance outcomes for children.
76. Under the Care Act 2004, the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board must prepare a Children and Young People's Plan, setting out a joint strategy for improving the well-being of children and young people through partnership working.
77. The Council's Safeguarding Policy [2023 - 2026](#) outlines how these obligations are met and supports staff, Members, and volunteers in safeguarding responsibilities. [Detailed procedures guide](#) staff and contractors on responding to safeguarding concerns.
78. The Council provide an annual financial contribution (£5,000) to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
79. The [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#) (OSAB) and [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#) did not require any agencies to complete a self-assessment in 2024/2025, instead they asked all agencies to respond to the Professional Curiosity questionnaire.
80. Oxford City Council expressed their wishes to continue with the self-assessment to ensure quality assurance, the understanding from the OSAB Manager, is that the self-assessment will be making a return in 2026.
81. To inform an annual self-assessment City Council staff would normally complete an annual safeguarding questionnaire to inform the annual self-assessment. Despite the OSAB and OSCP postponing the annual safeguarding self-assessment with agencies, the Council went ahead with the questionnaire in October 2024.
82. An annual [safeguarding report for 2024/2025](#) was presented to the Scrutiny Committee in October 2025.
83. The internal safeguarding briefing, mandatory for all staff, Members, and volunteers includes the identification, and response to, children's safeguarding concerns.
84. The Council's Community Safety Service Manager is a member of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Council's Safeguarding Coordinator actively participates in subgroups of the OSCP, including Neglect Strategy; Policy, Practice, and Procedure; Learning, Development & Training; and Performance, Audit, and Quality Assurance. Delivering on associated actions and audits as required.
85. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team Officers attend the police Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group meetings that identifies and support young people at risk, and coordinates activities to tackle their exploiters.
86. The Council is a Responsible Authority for the [Oxford Community Safety Partnership](#), chairs and facilitates partnership meetings, and coordinates plans to address the community safety priorities in the city.
87. The current priorities include violence against women and girls, serious and organised

crime, anti-social behaviour, and modern slavery. All priorities have an important safeguarding element running through them, with Council and partner staff trained, planning for, and responding to child safeguarding issues.

88. Toolkits provided by the OSCP are used by colleagues, specifically the Strengths and Needs tool by Homeless Prevention officers to ensure Early Help support is offered at the right time.
89. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 109 child safeguarding concerns were recorded. Of these, 34 referrals were made to the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ([MASH](#)) and six to the Oxfordshire Locality and Community Support Service ([LCSS](#)). Cases not meeting referral thresholds were managed internally by the Council or signposted to appropriate agencies.
90. During the same period, 27 internal Safeguarding Introduction sessions (Children & Adults) were delivered, attended by 401 staff members.

Community Centres

91. The city boasts 16 operational [community centres, all owned by the Council](#).
92. While the Rose Hill Community Centre is directly managed by the Council, the others are run by community associations. These centres offer a variety of activities for children and young people, such as youth clubs for different age groups, stay and play sessions for parents with young children, and various art, cooking, educational, and sports sessions.
93. The Council's Community centres play a crucial role in keeping children and young people active and safe, providing a wide range of children's services either free or at reduced rates.
94. Rose Hill Community Centre serves as a prime example of community engagement and locality working. It supports numerous organisations that work with children, young people, and their families either in partnership or directly. Some of these partnerships include:
 - Rose Hill Youth Club: Offers free activities and meals to over 60 children weekly during term time and summer programmes.
 - Youth Ambition and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Team: Assists young people in finding education, employment, and training opportunities.
 - Film Oxford and The Lights Festival: A successful community initiative involving young people from across the city, now extended to a weekend of free activities.
 - Stay and Play Groups: Free weekly sessions for parents with young children.
 - Other examples: Various art, karate, and kickboxing classes run by private groups.



Growing Partnership working

95. Officers continue to explore opportunities with partners to work with the Council to deliver services such as youth work; by changing the way some services are delivered new sources of funding may be more accessible.
96. The Council's Community Safety Team provides partnership oversight of anti-social behaviour, child exploitation and county drugs lines and modern-day slavery and the Council has used the [Safer Oxford Partnership](#) to cascade and inform its own practice in relation to young people's pathways and access to services.

Educational Attainment – Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

97. The [Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership](#) ("the OIEP") is a countywide group that brings together employers, business, education, community groups and local government including the Council. It is a collaborative effort aiming to build a more equitable region that offers opportunities for all individuals in the county.
98. Four working groups have been established to deliver the OIEP's vision. One of the working groups is focused on educational attainment - looking at early years, educational attainment of GCSE English and Math's and better links between business and education to help shape career choices.
99. The [educational attainment working group](#) identified nine challenges to tackle in answer to the question: *'How might we improve educational attainment in Oxfordshire so that more 16-year-olds are aspirational and level 3 ready?'*:
 - How might Oxfordshire develop a mentoring scheme for Young People so that we promote identity, belonging and motivation?
 - How might Oxfordshire better share key information between one educational setting and another to improve identity, belonging and motivation?
 - How might Oxfordshire analyse achievement data more effectively so that we may identify and prioritise support to tackle disadvantage and discrimination
 - How might Oxfordshire extend the use of online/offline learning tools to overcome barriers to educational attainment of GCSE Math's?
 - How might Oxfordshire develop a framework to extend the voluntary workforce to support learning, and improve signposting to wider support?
 - How might Oxfordshire more effectively bring together all agencies to identify much earlier those Young People who are struggling in their educational journey?
 - How might Oxfordshire plan training and awareness to become a more Trauma Informed County?
 - How might Oxfordshire train and develop teachers to have increased awareness of the everyday challenges facing young people so that they can build better and more meaningful relationships that impact the learner experience?
 - How might Oxfordshire grow the parent advocate model, actively listening to more parents and responding to their issues and insights?

Oxford's work in the Community Impact Zone

100. The [Community Impact Zone](#) (CIZ) is an initiative managed by Oxford Hub under a governance partnership between the Council, the County Council, and Thames Valley Police, with support from Lankelly Chase. In addition to its core governance, the CIZ collaborates with African Families in the UK and Active Oxfordshire to run various programmes.
101. The CIZ aims to tackle inequalities in health, education, and opportunity in South East Oxford. The work focuses on neighbourhoods in this area that experience some of the highest levels of deprivation nationally: Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Littlemore, and Rose Hill.
102. The CIZ's initiatives to address these inequalities include:
 - Providing additional support to help children achieve academic success
 - Offering opportunities for children and young people
 - Creating spaces for people to connect with their community
 - Developing a growing network of peer supporters to help families thrive.
103. The CIZ is not a traditional service or intervention. Instead, it focuses on enabling people to respond to needs in their own communities, build local networks of support, and feel invested in their local community.
104. It also brings agencies and organisations, including the Council, together to collaborate effectively in supporting local communities.
105. The CIZ works to tackle inequalities of health education and opportunity, delivered through initiatives that include:
 - More support to help children at school
 - Opportunities for children to learn to swim and ride a bike
 - A growing network of peer supports to support families to thrive.

Youth Employment, Education and Training

106. In partnership with the Job Centre, the Council run a Youth Employment, Education, and Training (EET) Hub at Rose Hill Community Centre.
107. The Hub:
 - Runs a variety of activities, including, employment training, a job/CV club, 1-2-1 job support, and regular employment fairs
 - Is designed to arm young people with the correct knowledge, tools, and support to pursue achievable and sustainable employment in the future.

Appendices

Appendix Two: Oxfordshire Children's Trust Arrangements and Board Terms of Reference (2024-26)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Children's Trust Board brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes and life experiences for all children and young people who live in the county. The Board focuses its actions on four priorities from the Children and Young People's Plan:

- Start Well: Early Help and Early Years
- Live Well: Young Lives; outcomes for Young People
- Achieve Well: outcomes for education and inclusion
- Children's and Young People's Voices and their influence over the services that shape their lives

1.2 The purpose of the Trust is to:

- Oversee the strategic intent of Oxfordshire multi-agency partners based upon the desired outcomes of Health and Wellbeing Board with a focus upon outcomes and implications for Children and Young People. Along with a focus on effective partnership working across Oxfordshire to best support Children and Young People.
- Drive a long-term Children and Young People's strategy and plan, designed to improve outcomes for children in Oxfordshire in relation to the agreed priority areas of 'Start Well, Live Well, Achieve Well.'
- To receive assurance in relation to the impact and progress of the strategic priorities and to review the impact of other strategic boards and committees in supporting those priorities and progression.
- Champion the involvement of Children, Young People, Parents and Carers in partnership, working with senior managers and politicians.
- Ensure the Health and Wellbeing Board and other partnerships are sighted on the key challenges and outcomes facing Children and Young People in Oxfordshire

1.3. This term of reference sets out the strategic, decision making and operational structure of the Children's Trust Board. This document will be reviewed in line with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the strategic priorities of the County Council and any refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The responsibilities of the Trust are to:

- Report and inform the Health and Wellbeing Board (this does not preclude consultation and reporting to other committees and boards focused upon outcomes for Children and Young People).
- Produce an overarching strategy focused upon key high-level outcomes using the delivery work of other strategic boards and committees to drive outcomes.
- Lead on the production, development and updates the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Review performance via the Children's Trust dataset which is overseen by the Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup of both the Trust and Strategic

- Safeguarding Arrangements for Children and Young People in Oxfordshire.
- Encourage and promote integrated working between children's services, health and social care and other local services including voluntary and public sector services.

3. Structure

- 3.1 Membership: Members of the Trust are required to be of sufficient seniority to be able to:
- Speak for their organisation and make decisions
 - Commit their organisation on policy and practice matters
 - Hold their organisation to account and lead dissemination of communication into and out from their organisation/agency.
- 3.2 The Trust membership is drawn from each of the agencies or organisations set out below:
- Cabinet Member for Children and Families (OCC)
 - Children Education and Family Services (CEF: DCS and Deputy Directors)
 - Director of Public Health
 - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (2 representatives)
 - The City and District Councils: one mandated representative from the District's and City Council on behalf of the others.
 - Thames Valley Police
 - Oxfordshire Children's Strategic Safeguarding Arrangements: Scrutineer
 - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
 - Safer Oxfordshire Partnership
 - Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Representation from schools and colleges'
 - Members of the Children and Young People's Forum will represent the Third Sector
 - Healthwatch ambassador.
- 3.3 Membership will be reviewed in line with CYP strategy updates. Associated colleagues may be invited to attend for specific information and assurance items.
- 3.4 Time limited task and finish groups or specific Invitees: The Trust may, from time to time, establish working groups to pursue particular projects. These groups will be set up on a "task and finish" basis and will be dissolved once the project has been completed.
- 3.5 The Chair: The Trust will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services, Oxfordshire County Council.
- 3.6 Vice Chair: The Vice Chair will be a representative from any of the organisations represented at the Board. The role of the Vice Chair involves chairing and preparing meetings, approving minutes and reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board in the absence of the Chair and leading on agreed specific pieces of work. The duration of the role can be negotiated but continuity is expected given that the Board only meets four times a year.

4. Administration

4.1 Forward Plan: The Trust will produce an annual Forward Plan to ensure clearer oversight of key risks and issues across the system. The Forward Plan will support the overall strategic direction of service delivery with a focus of assurance and escalation of issues as appropriate.

4.2 Meetings:

4.2.1 The Trust will meet four times a year and publish an annual plan for its meetings.

4.2.2 The agenda for three of the meetings will include a focus on at least one of the priorities listed above and include time to consider emerging and core business.

4.2.3 Core business includes:

a. Performance monitoring and assurance

b. Updates from other statutory boards across the partnership

c. New and emerging national, regional, and local developments which impact on the business of the Trust.

4.2.4 Agendas will be published in advance of the meeting.

4.3 Strategy and Plan review:

4.3.1 The Trust will review the programme of assurance in line with the strategies and direction of Health and Wellbeing.

5. Communication, Consultation and Engagement

5.1 The Trust is responsible via a range of mechanisms across the partnership for engaging and involving Children, Young People, their Families, Carers, and other local stakeholders to influence partnership plans that deliver outcomes for Children and Young People.

5.2 To achieve this, the Trust will work with specific partners and agency/partnership mechanisms on a range of participation, engagement, feedback, and the output of coproduction activity, to ensure that the voice of Children, Young People and Families influence and inform the priorities and assurance of the Trust.

6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

6.1 Information used by the Children's Trust Board and provided to external bodies will be accurate, timely and fit for purpose.

6.2 Members of the Trust are encouraged to share information as required for the purpose of planning, developing, and monitoring partnership projects and services by ensuring all data is in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

6.3 All members of the Trust are responsible for communicating any relevant information to their organisation unless that information is deemed confidential to a particular meeting.

7. Values

The Children's Trust Board will be:

7.2 Strategic - members of the Trust can take a strategic overview, to implement system change and thinking and to influence decision making and delivery within their organisation

7.3 Inclusive – the Trust will be a partnership of equals, actively involving all the key players in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and children and young people

7.4 Outcome focused – The Trust will establish common priorities together with agreed

actions and milestones that lead to demonstrable improvements against measurable baselines

7.5 A body that promotes equality – the Trust will serve the needs of all children and young people regardless of age, sex, disability, race, religion, belief, or sexual orientation.

Appendix Three: Oxford Community Impact Funding, 2024 - 2025

2024-25 FUNDING AMOUNT	ORGANISATION	FEEDBACK
£7,500	Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP)	One Thursday this year we took a spot check on the register. 76% of the children that day were having free school meals. It is relatively new for us to be able to know the numbers but the County Holiday play scheme fund for those on free school meals now means we know our numbers far more accurately. Children at BLAP come from many nationalities. We have children from Africa, from Asia and from the Caribbean and many from Eastern Europe as well as many from the UK. They mix well together; we are clear that racial comments will not be tolerated but on the very rare occasion this happens we are very careful to explain why the comment was not acceptable as they might be using expressions learnt at home. On occasion we have also explained our reasoning to a parent. We have received funding from Oxfordshire Community Foundation to help fund the free school meals children at the After School Club. This has helped many families but has meant we need to seek further funding for these children as the financial issues remain for these children when the funding has ended. We are careful to make sure that no child can see from the register which children are funded and which come free.
£8,000	Donnington Doorstep Family Centre	Doorstep has fostered an inclusive environment that supports families, children & young people from diverse backgrounds. Cultural Competency Training: We provide staff with comprehensive training to enhance their understanding of different cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring all families feel respected and valued.
£15,000 342	EMBS Community College Ltd	Students from a range of backgrounds, including Afghanistan wanted to improve their confidence with communicating 'on the street'. Inside the classroom they learned crucial skills for improving their life skills, including language around medicine, shopping and employability. They visited the local Oxfam to put these skills into practice, and teachers organised trips and visits to museums, and local sites.
£20,000	Fusion Arts	Fusion Arts strives for equality and delivers social justice and equity work as a means to striving for this. Story Makers – supported children in deprived areas of Oxford with speech, language and communication need. We worked with young people to support silver arts awards with YWMP. Delivered Lantern making workshops and supported 98 participatory arts sessions working with over 540 children and young people. Supported that African and Caribbean Heritage community as well as other marginalised groups from the Global Majority led grassroots groups – such as working alongside Help the World Oxford and sessions and internships for Faustine Petron from Make it Mandatory. Hosted the Caribbean Living Room Exhibition, supported Windrush Festival and Fusion Arts also fundraised and took on the management of Oxford Cultural Anti Racism Alliance. We supported Oxford Community Action with creative arts holiday sessions for children and families. We were able to host numerous community and local artist led exhibitions with over 1900 visitors attending shows at our 95 Gloucester Green space. https://fusion-arts.org/articles (examples here as articles to a number of exhibitions and projects)
£8,000	Home-Start Oxford	This year we have continued to deliver our non-judgemental, free support to families who have at least one child under the age of 5 through both 1:1 home-visiting, and a raft of inclusive, nurturing groups.

£6,500	Justice in Motion	Our creative practice uniquely uses physical theatre, dance and disciplines such as parkour and trials bikes to engage audiences and participants with difficult social issues. We have developed our own narrative-based movement style, which sits at the core of our approach to delivering programmes, and we are intent on continuing to innovate and explore, building on the learning and experiences from the residencies, workshops and creation process we have delivered to date.
£9,500	Leys Community Development Initiative (Leys CDI)	A combination of health and wellbeing, isolation eradication, mental wellbeing and educational sessions have been organised and run by CDI during the reporting period that have witnessed in excess of 500 different juniors and seniors participating and benefiting from the activities. Stories detailing many of the success stories of the project are visible on CDI's regularly updated website and attached is a video of our juniors on our Summer 2024 course. https://youtu.be/qrzxt-xbeqq
£6,500	Makespace Oxford	We aimed to create an event space that is genuinely safe, welcoming, and accessible, especially for families with young children and those with neurodiverse needs. This inspired three unique resources: Playkit: A pop-up play space with open-ended playthings for children of various ages, accommodating parents who need their children with them. Sensory Kit: Includes adjustable ear defenders, fidget toys, sunglasses, and pen and paper to support neurodiverse individuals who communicate better with less stimulation. Many Voices Collection: A selection of books for children and young people by Black authors, featuring Black protagonists, or carrying an anti-racist message. The Communities Coordinator ensures access needs are met by meeting with each prospective hirer, showcasing available resources, and addressing specific needs. Makespace nurtures relationships and supports underrepresented groups by securing grants for rent support and providing space for key activities in art, music, theatre, domestic abuse, and criminal justice reform. The Community Works events space also regularly hosts racial justice, youth advocacy, Queer Action groups, support for Ukrainian families, Solidarity events, and BAME-led grassroots activities. Additionally, it supports a permanent resident running Oxford's first female Black-owned restaurant.
£6,500	Mandala Theatre Company	Mandala's work enables young people and young artists to have pathways into employment, especially into the Creative industries, we are one of only two Global majority led cultural organisations in Oxford. Our professional company ran workshops and presented Rehearsed Readings of our new project 'Seed Guardians' which focuses on Food Poverty in the UK and Sustainability, to Oxford Schools and colleges, as well as to local community groups, which included many young people seeking asylum and refugees.
343	Oxford Hub	The Community Participation Manager has supported a number of our key projects to develop their participation. We have opened our new Windale Hub, in The Leys, which the Participation Manager co-ordinates as a free space for existing or new ideas for community support - often and including peer support activities. Our Steering Group, consisting of representatives from a number of our user groups, helps refine the Windale space and our support offer. Our coffee morning for parents with young children runs from here, led by a local parent and supported by our Parent Power Team. Our Puzzles group is now run by a local volunteer in partnership with a student volunteer. The Monday BAME Talking Cafe is also co-facilitated by one of our team alongside a local volunteer. Additionally, we host external providers such as the Bee Empowered Family Fitness session - a local mum who we provided with support to access our Participatory Grants and introduced to AfiUK as a host organisation to incubate her idea until they were self-sustaining. Our PGM project this year engaged and trained 7 panelists to evaluate funding proposals and determine funding to improve health and wellbeing for the local area.

<p>£20,000</p>	<p>Oxford Playhouse</p>	<p>Removing financial barriers to attendance/engagement: Accessible pricing (£10 entry points), c2000 free carer tickets annually. Every year we distribute 2,500 tickets free of charge to communities, individuals and school groups who would otherwise not be able to attend, by partnering with local and regional organisations and charities, often working with communities who often feel under-represented, and those who may need to access creativity in an adapted way. Accessible performance options: c40 BSL interpreted, audio described, captioned, dementia and autism friendly performances annually. Targeting social change and structural inequality: We run a dynamic and wide-ranging participation programme, averaging around 15,000 beneficiary contacts per year – whether working closely with some of Oxford’s inner city schools to improve literacy, or working with partners including Age UK to deliver programmes for the later-in-life. Our creative education programme targets areas of deprivation where access to arts education is limited or non-existent. This year Primary Playmaker supported 450 children in 10 state primary schools to write their very own original play. The average across these schools of: EAL pupils is 25% (UK average 22%). Of these, 4 schools had over 35% of EAL pupils, with one at 57%. Pupils receiving SEN support 17.6% (UK average 13.5%). 3 schools at 25% and above. Pupils receiving free school meals 25.7% (UK average 25.9%). 3 schools at 38%, 48% and 50% “It’s the kind of venture that quite simply changes children’s lives through broadening aspirations and horizons” Head Teacher.</p>
<p>£12,000</p>	<p>Oxford Youth Enterprise Ltd (Name It Youth Project)</p>	<p>Our project was able to expand further and enable more girls and young women to access the project. Young women, in particular teenage girls often find barriers in accessing Green Spaces due to a multitude of reasons. Our project enables deeper discussion, awareness, empowerment for the young women to become proactive and more confident in asserting their rights to access green spaces and to demand from local authorities to support their cause through developing their ideas</p>
<p>£5,000</p>	<p>Oxfordshire Science Festival (known as "IF Oxford")</p>	<p>We continuously work to include more diverse representation in our programming, volunteers, staff and trustees because this is one way to better attract audiences more representative of the population.</p>
<p>£20,000</p>	<p>The Story Museum</p>	<p>The Big Ideas grant enables us to continue working towards reducing the inequality of educational attainment in Oxford and tackling high levels of illiteracy in underprivileged areas. We have delivered year-long partnerships with 7 primary schools through which 2,683 pupils and 120 teachers have benefitted from school trips and Museum visits to their school, and of which 120 pupils and 32 teachers receive in-depth, sustained provision targeted at their stated needs. We also worked with 4 family centres in priority areas boosting oracy, literacy, confidence, and wellbeing, amongst very young children helping them prepare for starting school. We continue to distribute Dream Tickets to the participants of all our funded projects so that they can visit the Museum with their families. 309 Dream Tickets offering £1 entry to the Museum have been redeemed and 320 Bursary places to our skills courses were taken up. As an example of our community work, Week of Welcome saw 103 adults and children who have experienced forced displacement visit the Museum for storytelling and craft activities. Through our Learning and Participation programme we reached 13,417 children and families. This includes 2,130 early years, 7,910 from primary schools, 1,056 secondary school students, and 412 teachers.</p>
<p>£5,000</p>	<p>Wood Farm Youth Centre</p>	<p>Over the last year the Youth Centre has provided support for an estimated 50 young people, many of whom are from low-income households. This support has been delivered by our part time youth worker and local volunteers at weekly sessions held at the youth centre and by undertaking outreach work on the Wood Farm estate. The COVID lockdowns have had a considerable impact on the numbers attending the youth centre and we are now only beginning to get back to the number of pre - COVID contacts the staff team had with young people. The staff team also work with parents on the estate and this has resulted in the setting up of support group, called 'Reach', for women who are experiencing mental health issues. The support group meets weekly at the youth centre and is attended by 10 - 12 local women.</p>

<p>£5,000</p>	<p>Young Women's Music Project</p>	<p>In 2023, more than 250 young women, trans and non-binary people attended YWMP workshop activities, with many of these young people coming from under-privileged or vulnerable backgrounds, and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), some of whom live in the most deprived 5% of areas in England. These young people are often vulnerable, some being survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, homelessness, and more. YWMP empowers women, trans and non-binary people by providing musical education and skills development. The sessions provide a creative outlet to work through problems and a supportive safe space to form social links. Data we have collected after the sessions has demonstrated that young people who have previously experienced social problems have grown in confidence and gained skills that have allowed them to go back into education, find themselves work and built up enough confidence to socialise again. Our project provides social interaction, self-exploration, information on opportunities, access to a network of other like-minded people, and education opportunities that are vitally empowering for young people who may not access these things for free elsewhere.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/4q91DZg6nnE</p>
<p>£1,375</p>	<p>AT The Bus</p>	<p>S loved the cinema and Didcot railway centre, thank you so much, he always has such a wonderful time with Yellow Sub, oh and he loved his cheese on toast at Truck'</p> <p>'J loved Drayton Manor! Thank you for putting on such great activities. '</p> <p>'E had a wonderful day in Bournemouth thank you so much. 'The Beattie Method intentionally designs spaces that are inclusive of all identities, cultures, belief systems, socioeconomic backgrounds and accessibility needs. We continued to welcome and value each student for every aspect of themselves. We centred on our students' voices, listened actively and deeply, appreciated and affirmed their perspectives and contributions, and did not make assumptions about their experiences. In every area of our work, we continued to take proactive measures to create conditions of equality, promote diversity and uphold dignity for all. As a dynamic, reflexive practice, the Beattie Method continues to further evolve in pursuance of these goals. This funding has been significant, helping us to improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for 28 children during the Summer 24 Term, and ensuring a full academic year of delivery. Referral data from last academic term (Summer 24) has highlighted the high level of need at Greyfriars school which is in an area of significant disadvantage. 50% of students were 'pupil premium' (national average 21%), 75% of our referred cohort were SEN, 21% had English as an Additional Language and over 40 languages are spoken by pupils with 60% from an ethnic minority.</p>
<p>£1,000</p>	<p>Anne Griffiths</p>	<p>Specific workshop was targeted and the young adults with learning difficulties who attend Yellow Submarine</p>
<p>£475</p>	<p>Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra</p>	<p>This project delivered music education to a primary school in a historically deprived area. The school, Windale Primary, is a small state-funded academy primary school in the Blackbird Leys area of Oxford with children from a range of cultural backgrounds. 43.5% of children are eligible for free school meals. People who attended state schools are consistently underrepresented among professionals in the music industry.</p>

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<p>£ 1,375</p>	<p>Jacari</p>	<p>We have supported 45 children and young people from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking communities in Oxford so far, this academic year. These children are from some of the most diverse communities in the city. Many have recently arrived and are new to English. Regular tutoring from a Jacari volunteer has contributed to reducing the educational inequality experienced by these children by giving them the confidence and English language skills to participate at school and access an education. It has also helped reduce social isolation and help these children feel included and welcomed at their school and within the wider community.</p> <p>We have also facilitated bringing together diverse communities in the city as our volunteers are mostly university students, visiting their pupils in a part of a city they may not otherwise visit and getting to know a different side of Oxford. This has also given their pupils contact with university students so they can hear what it's like to study at Oxford and experience a side of the city they may otherwise be excluded from.</p> <p>We also organised one trip for our pupils to Oxford City Farm in November 2024 which gave them access to somewhere in their community which they may not have experienced before.</p>
<p>£350</p>	<p>BeFree Young Carers</p>	<p>The young carers who use our Befriending service have been identified by our youth workers as the young carers who require an additional level of support. Whether this is because of the challenging situations they face in their home life or external disadvantage including levels of poverty which might mean that the activities they take part in outside of school are often limited compared to their peers. In taking part in the befriending programme, they can have time where they have the attention of the adult who can facilitate activities that they are interested in and might otherwise not be able to experience. Additionally, it gives them the chance to talk about the challenges that they are facing, and this can be beneficial to receive guidance or for the befrienders to be able to gain sign posting recommendations from the Be Free Young Carers team.</p>
<p>£1,300</p>	<p>EMBS Community College</p>	<p>Students from a range of backgrounds, including Afghanistan wanted to improve their confidence with communicating 'on the street'. Inside the classroom they learned crucial skills for improving their life skills, including language around medicine, shopping and employability. They visited the local Oxfam to put these skills into practice, and teachers organised trips and visits to museums, and local sites.</p>
<p>£250</p>	<p>Young Art Oxford</p>	<p>We received almost 3,500 entries from participating schools. Selecting pictures for the exhibition was done on a 1 in 5 basis for every participating schools. This provided a more level playing field for those schools with poorer art facilities. Over 600 pictures were selected for the exhibition at the Ashmolean.</p> <p>We worked with three independent schools to gain participation from state schools. This involved bringing children from those schools into the independent school for a day of art (and in some cases drama and music too). Art produced on the day was submitted to the exhibition. Schools were encouraged to pay visits to the exhibition - some children attended that had never been to a museum before. Many more came with their families.</p> <p>We maintained a £2 entry fee to keep costs as low as possible. Entry to the Exhibition was free at all times.</p>

<p>£ 700</p>	<p>Tiny Ideas</p>	<p>During 2024 we reached families in areas of deprivation in Oxford with our outreach programme of free Early Years shows of 'Material Monsters, Fabric Friends' in local libraries, as well as offering free and low-cost events at our Tiny Ideas festival. We also offered free tickets to paid for festival events to families attending the library performances or the OCC Early Years Project.</p> <p>Material Monsters, Fabric Friends is a sensory show we developed through workshops with the SEN group at Barton Park Primary, and with access consultant and director Robyn Olivia. A fully accessible show, all performances, including library shows, were relaxed and included Makaton, improving access for many families. As part of the wider festival, we prioritised programming relaxed and accessible performances, and Ms Olivia provided wider accessibility advice to both Tiny Ideas and our partner venues.</p> <p>We successfully reflected the diversity of our audiences with at least 50% of the creative freelancers hired or programmed representing marginalised groups (those identifying as female, LGBTQI+, deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent, or from the global majority).</p>
<p>£ 350</p>	<p>Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra</p>	<p>Without FUNomusica concerts, children in Oxfordshire have no way to access classical music in a setting that allows them to move around, interact, and express themselves in the ways children need.</p>
<p>£300</p>	<p>Peep</p>	<p>Our Peep SEND group – which this grant has contributed to - plays a vital role in promoting equality and inclusion in areas of high deprivation by supporting families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We provide a welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment where all families feel valued, regardless of the challenges they are facing. By offering free, targeted support, we help reduce barriers to participation that many SEND families face, such as financial constraints, social isolation or a lack of accessible activities. Our sessions focus on early learning, communication, physical and social development, empowering parents with practical strategies to support their child's progress at home. Our Peep SEND group has created peer support networks of SEND parents, which help to reduce the isolation many SEND families, particularly experience. These networks create a sense of belonging, inclusion and shared understanding. Through making contact with families through the group, and through using our local networks, we also signpost families to further support to promote their inclusion and wellbeing.</p>
<p>£750</p>	<p>The Story Museum</p>	<p>Story Connectors provides young people with free courses to develop creative skills, confidence, and wellbeing. The Community Impact Fund enabled us to deliver 3 courses in Rose Hill and Barton over the course of the year. These areas are among the 20% most deprived in England with fewer opportunities for extra-curricular activities and cultural learning. We offer this skill development courses free of charge to directly address inequality in these communities for young people's learning and skills development.</p> <p>The 3 courses on Zine making, podcasting, and filmmaking helped young people to gain new creative skills, develop their confidence, and broaden their understanding of heritage. We worked with professional artists to deliver workshops which helped participants to meet new role models and explore alternative career opportunities.</p> <p>For sessions held at the museum, we covered the cost of transport and brought young people into the city centre who would not normally visit. We encourage all young people to come into the city and access the cultural opportunities available here, not just The Story Museum. We provided all participants with tickets to come back for just £1, increasing their confidence to return to a familiar venue at a reduced cost.</p>

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To: Council

Date: 23 March 2026

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and Transition Director

Title of Report: Outside organisation report – The Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024 to 2025

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To note the annual update on the Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024 to 2025
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, and Cabinet Member for partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	The Council Strategy 2024 to 2028

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
1. Note the update outside organisation report on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024 to 2025.

Information Exempt From Publication	
State in here what information is to be exempt from publication – where it is, attach it as an appendix and name the appendix as you describe it here	None

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
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Appendix 1	Outside Organisation report – Oxford Strategic Partnership, 2024	No
Appendix 2	Oxford Strategic Partnership – Membership	No

Purpose

1. The planned 2024/2025 update to Council was paused to enable the organisation to prioritise capacity for its Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission and associated workstreams.
2. This report provides a high-level summary of the Oxford Strategic Partnership’s (OSP) work during 2024 to 2025. Full detail is contained in Appendix One and supporting appendices. A report on OSP’s work during 2025/2026 will be provided to a future Council meeting.

Introduction and background

3. The [Oxford Strategic Partnership](#) (OSP) brings together senior leaders from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to address major challenges facing the city. Established in 2003, the partnership acts as an influencer and convenor, providing strategic insight, fostering collaboration, and enabling collective action on shared priorities.

Strategic Vision and Aims

4. The partnership aims to support a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable city, tackling long-standing inequalities and strengthening quality of life.
 Aims:
 - Identify major issues where collective action is needed
 - Bring partners together to design and deliver joint solutions
 - Empower organisations and communities to act
 - Review progress and inform future priorities.

Key Strategic Themes - 2024 to 2025

- i. Economic resilience and transition
- ii. National policy change and local implications
- iii. Inequality and community wellbeing
- iv. Skills, employment and inclusive growth
- v. Climate, net zero and place-shaping
- vi. Global and local engagement – Oxford University.

Sub-Group Overview

5. Economic Development - The Economic Growth Steering Board oversees Oxford's Economic Strategy and leads work on infrastructure, investment, skills, innovation and inclusive growth.
6. Stronger Communities - Activity was paused pending decisions on an internal organisational structure review.
7. Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) - For this reporting period, this was a city-based partnership leading work on net-zero by 2040, industrial decarbonisation, adaptation planning, retrofit, sustainable travel and energy infrastructure. ZCOP has now become the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership with a full countywide remit, the secretariat functions for which is still provided by Oxford City Council.
8. Safer Communities - The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership delivers priorities on serious violence, Anti-Social Behaviour, modern slavery and exploitation, violence against women and girls, preventing extremism and multi-agency problem-solving.

Summary of progress - 2024/2025

9. Across 2024/2025, the OSP has:
 - Provided collective leadership on long-term city challenges
 - Strengthened collaboration across major institutions
 - Supported major programmes on economy, inequality, climate and safety
 - Responded to national policy shifts
 - Helped coordinate citywide priorities and cross-county alignment.

Interim progress summary - 2025/2026

10. The next full annual update - covering the OSP activity during 2025/2026 - is expected to be presented to Council in the first quarter of the 2026/2027 Council year.
11. During 2025/2026, the Oxford Strategic Partnership focused on:
 - i. **Citywide coordination on LGR-related planning**, overview updates of government expectations, ensuring alignment between partners on governance, future service models, and shared priorities, progress on the Council's engagement and preparatory work.
 - ii. **Oxford Growth Commission (OGC)**, The OGC Chair led a discussion on key themes including transport and connectivity, infrastructure, housing delivery and regeneration, and innovation, skills, and employability.
 - iii. **Strategic Planning across Oxfordshire**, including an Oxfordshire County Council briefing on its strategic planning work and shared priorities.
- iv. **Education, Apprenticeships, Training, Employment and Skills Gaps** including an introduction to ongoing skills work, a skills study and inequality study update, discussion on consultancy work and prompts for partnership action.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

12. There are no Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from this report.

Financial implications

13. The OSP is funded and facilitated by Oxford City Council with a 2024/2025 assigned budget of £6,320. The contribution facilitates secretariat responsibilities for the partnership, and the agreed priorities and set objectives for specific areas of work.

Legal issues

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report. (EG/13700/2/3/26)

Level of risk

15. This report is simply providing an update to the Council on the work completed by the OSP and so it is not appropriate for an assessment of risk to be carried out.

Equalities impact

16. The structure and membership of the OSP and its sub-groups is intended to reflect a common commitment among participating organisations to equality. The areas of focus of the OSP and four sub-groups are very much focused on tackling inequality and building inclusivity.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

17. There are no carbon or environmental implications arising from this report. The OSP has a strategic aim in relation to net zero which directly supports the Council's targets to achieve net zero as a city by 2040.

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Background Papers:
1 None

Outside Organisation report



2024 to 2025



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Purpose

1. This Appendix One and supporting [Appendix Two](#), provide an update on the arrangements and activities of the Oxford Strategic Partnership Board, for 2024 to 2025.

Introduction and background

2. The [Oxford Strategic Partnership](#) (OSP) founded in 2003 brings together senior representatives within Oxford from the public, business, community and third sector partners such as voluntary groups, which deliver services, help improve people's wellbeing and contribute to economic growth.
3. This partnership for the city promotes collaboration and openness and provides opportunities to access funding and share resources more easily. A list of members is set out in [Appendix Two](#).
4. The OSP helps provide strategic input to inform decision-making for the city's future, respond to local priorities, and engage more effectively with local concerns.
5. The OSP is an influencer, not an operational entity. It brings organisations together to work in partnership, identifying strategic city challenges that will benefit from collaboration, and prioritising them based on where the partnership can add most value. Its remit is determined by its Chair with input from its members.



Oxford Strategic Partnership Vision

6. The OSP seeks to facilitate, through effective collaboration between local agencies and partners, a thriving city and surrounding area where everyone enjoys a good quality of life - environmentally, economically, and socially, and where long standing inequalities are addressed.

Oxford Strategic Partnership Aims

7. The OSPs aims are to:

- Identify current major issues and concerns that will benefit from collective intervention
- Identify and engage relevant partners, and facilitate their working together to develop and implement collaborative interventions
- Empower partners and communities to take action
- Evaluate outcomes to inform future issues and concerns.

Oxford Strategic Partnership Steering Group

8. The OSP meets quarterly, alternating between online and in-person meetings. Steering group members are drawn from the statutory services, private sector and others (Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, health, police, businesses, universities and community groups), to review and discuss topics of strategic importance.
9. The Chief Executive of the [River Learning Trust](#) took on the role of Chair in October 2022.
10. The work of the OSP steering group is supported by the Policy and Partnerships Team, Oxford City Council.

Oxford Strategic Partnership – Key strategic agenda themes, 2024 to 2025

11. May 2024:

- Local Enterprise Partnership transition planning
- The Local Oxford Economy – Economic development in Oxford City, Oxford's Economic Strategy 2022 to 2032
- Oxford City Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 – Strategy development, key timelines.

12. July 2024:

- Position for the new Labour Government – Opportunities and risks, partnership working
- Future Work programme and collective ownership.

13. October 2024:

- Health Inequalities ([Oxfordshire MARMOT Place](#)) – Local programmes of work to tackle health inequalities, overview of the concept, why we need it in Oxford, what it means and how it is relevant to OSP partners

- Global and Local Engagement (Oxford University) - College/ Schools twinning programme, Schools Sports Partnership, proposal to open libraries and other Oxford University facilities more widely, what it means and how it could be relevant to OSP partners.

14. January 2025

- The governments English Devolution White Paper – Implications for OSP partners, what it means for local geography.
- Zero Carbon Oxford – Key progress, challenges, partner contribution
- ‘Getting Oxford Working’ – The Government’s Get Britain Working White Paper, example initiative(s), implications, and opportunities for Oxford.

Oxford Strategic Partnership Sub-Groups

15. Since its inception in 2003 the OSP’s emphasis on different themes has varied over time, guided by the Chair and the interests of members. To support its breadth of focus, it established four sub-groups that generally meet quarterly and work on:

- [Economic Development](#)
- [Stronger Communities](#)
- [Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership](#)
- [Safer Communities.](#)

Economic Development Steering Board sub-group

16. The Economic Growth Steering Board (EGSB) is the OSPs key forum to steer Oxford’s Economic Strategy and collaborate on economic and business issues in Oxford.

17. Led by, and representative of, the diverse sectors of Oxford’s Business community, the EGSB is supported by Oxford City Council’s Regeneration and Economy Service.

18. Oxford's Economic Strategy (2022 to 2032) is setting a new standard for economic inclusion in the city.

19. Building on the unique strengths of Oxford as an impactful global city economy, drawing on the assets of its historical and cultural assets, the strategy and delivery plan seek to guide an evolving city economy in a way which recognises environmental limits and harnesses the opportunity of net zero carbon.

20. The role and purpose of the EGSB is central to fulfilling the effective delivery of the Economic Strategy in its role to provide oversight and governance.

21. The EGSB needs to fulfil this role in a way that is both cognisant and supportive of the county-wide spatial and economic strategies led by key strategic partners and stakeholders aware of Oxford's county-wide, regional, national, and international economic inter-relationships.

Stronger Communities sub-group

22. The Stronger Communities Board brought together key organisations, such as Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Association, and the Department for Work and Pensions.

23. These organisations contributed towards the development of stronger communities by addressing inequality and poverty, with an increasing focus on issues of health and wellbeing.

24. The sub-group was paused in 2023. Its future purpose and work will need to be considered alongside the transition towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and a targeted operating model following the Government's decision for LGR in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership sub-group

25. A mandate was established by the Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change held in 2019¹, and the Zero Carbon Oxford Summit in February 2021. To set up a partnership to work together to support the city in its journey to net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ten years ahead of the then UK's Government's legal targets.

26. This resulted in the [Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership](#) (ZCOP)², brings together Oxford's most influential organisations including both universities, the health trusts, both the Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils and large businesses such as BMW, Lucy Group, LandSec, SSEN and Unipart.

27. The purpose of the partnership is to work together to support the city in its journey to net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ten years ahead of the UK's Government's legal targets.



¹ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20011/environment/1343/oxford_citizens_assembly_on_climate_change

² Oxford City Council, 'Zero Carbon Oxford Summit'. Available from: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20291/climate_emergency/1431/zero_carbon_oxford_summit

28. Following its formation, the partnership developed a science-based [Roadmap and Action Plan](#) with the Carbon Trust. It sets out a comprehensive and ambitious pathway to net zero carbon emissions for the city, with 5-yearly carbon budgets, sectoral roadmaps and twenty-five cross cutting actions required over the short and mid-term.
29. The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership has now become the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership, with an enlarged membership and countywide reach. Its secretariat functions are still provided by Oxford City Council.

Safer Communities sub-group

30. The [Oxford Safer Communities Partnership](#) (OSCP) was established in 1998 as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended.
31. The Council's Community Safety Service facilitates the Safer Communities sub-group.
32. The partnership identifies the community safety priorities for the city using a Strategic Intelligence Assessment, and an action plan detailing the activities for the coming year.
33. OSCP brings organisations together to work in partnership to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Oxford. It comprises Responsible Authorities, as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and other local partners including Oxford University Hospitals, Oxford Brookes University, the University of Oxford, Turning Point, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
34. Funding supporting some of the delivery of OSCP's priorities is provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). OSCP's priorities complement the priorities of the PCC's crime plan, as set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2024 to 2029.

Key activity and achievements, 2024 to 2025

Economic Development

35. The Economic Growth Steering Board (EGSB) continues to contribute to the delivery of the [Oxford Economic Strategy](#) which was updated and adopted by Council and published in summer 2022 following extensive consultation in 2021.
36. The strategy covers the next 6 years and updates are reported to both EGSB on a quarterly basis and OSP annually. A work plan outlining key roles and responsibilities

for the Economic Strategy delivery is in place along with a dashboard of measures and KPIs.

37. In 2024/2025 in addition to the EGSB oversight of the delivery of the Oxford Economic Strategy, it also established in 2024/2025 a Global City Taskforce to further action on five strategic priorities including:

- I. Cowley Branch line and wider rail infrastructure (including East-west rail development) enabling central government support for the initiative and the endorsement of Lord Hendy for the Green Railways for Growth programme
- II. Inward Investment and Internationalisation linked to the emerging Oxford Growth Commission
- III. Local Plan 2045 review and creating an enabling planning context for commercial workspace, and affordable workspace leading to the development of an Affordable Workspace Technical Advisory Note
- IV. City Skills Strategy and Action Plan leading to the Skills and Equality Study Consultation Sept 25-March 26, an Oxford Skills Strategy being developed with CLES for March 2026 both building on a skills gap, shortages and needs audit undertaken by Tom Story Consultancy in March 2025
- V. Empowering Women's leadership in the innovation ecosystem bringing together Enterprise Oxfordshire, Oxford City Council, Oxford Brookes and Advanced Oxfordshire to build on their research by exploring city specific data and opportunities.

38. The [Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership](#) (OIEP) was established - by Oxford City Council - in 2021. It is a collaborative effort to build a more equitable region that offers opportunities for all individuals in the county.

39. OIEP brings together Members from various organisations across the county including employers, businesses, education, community groups, and the public sector.

40. The OIEP have a [Charter](#) which was launched in January 2023. It helps organisations to embed social value into their operations to work to improve lives of Oxford residents.

41. OIEP aims to work together to create opportunities and benefits for all people within the county. Their work supports the delivery of the outcomes of the Strategic Vision for Sustainable Development in Oxfordshire, which all councils have adopted. This is

done by sharing knowledge, expertise and resources, and creating links between different areas of work.

42. OIEP are focused on four areas to deliver their vision:

- [Inclusive Employment](#)
- [Social value and procurement](#)
- [Educational attainment](#)
- [Place shaping](#).



43. OIEP aims to work with projects across Oxfordshire that can support and grow or amplify their work; as well as building a repository of resources, case studies, and signposting to support organisations working towards a more inclusive economy.

44. The Charter is at the heart of the OIEP's work. It drives progress towards the partnership's goals by uniting organisations around a shared commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive economy.

45. OIEP has more than one hundred organisations, including all six of Oxfordshire's local authorities, Thames Valley Police, and OUH Foundation Trust, signed up to the Charter and who are delivering against their commitments.

46. The working groups have continued to progress with their delivery plans, including:

- Hosted the **Early Years: Why They Matter and What We Can Do** summit with key county partners
- Contributed to Oxfordshire's work as a **Marmot Place**, including:
 - *Giving every child the best start in life*
 - *Creating fair employment and good work for all*
- Delivered a **Social Value Summit** as part of Oxford City Council's Meet the Buyer event
- Hosted the **Oxfordshire Women's Leadership Network**
- Ran a HR Network supporting employers to work with people furthest from employment

- vi. Worked with anchor organisations to strengthen social value policies that both deliver meaningful community benefit and meet organisational needs
- vii. Hosted a panel on 'Working Together for an Inclusive Employment' at the national BCorp festival
- viii. Developed the priorities for the Oxfordshire Anchor Network (OAN) around inclusive employment and social value
- ix. Commissioned the International Rescue Committee to deliver three job readiness training sessions for refugees
- x. Brought OIEP members together to support the Departure Lounge at HMP Bullingdon prison with Getting Oxfordshire On-line providing mobile phones with data, Voi providing discounts for use with their e-bikes and scooters and a coat drive for men released during the winter months
- xi. Secured funding from the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to develop a countywide social value brokerage platform
- xii. Developed a logic model for the partnership
- xiii. Research project with the Local Policy Lab, a new alliance between the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Oxfordshire County Council provided two students to assess the impact of the partnership
- xiv. The partnership also benefitted from research conducted by a student as part of the University of Oxford SDG Community Impact Fellows programme, who produced the report "Community based organisations – addressing the challenges and needs of community-based organisations."

Zero Carbon Oxford

47. In March 2025, following decision from the Steering Board group of local authorities, businesses and institutions, the partnership became the [Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership](#) by expanding to include the entire county. This expansion strengthened cooperation between local authorities, businesses, and other key stakeholders across Oxfordshire, working together.

48. Councillor Susan Brown stepped down as Chair of the partnership and Philip Sharman, was appointed as Chair to the new Board in July 2025.

49. The ZCOP Secretariat has a small team who drive and champion the partnership's climate action, enabling organisations to take urgent steps within their own operations

while fostering collaboration. Building on a strong track record of uniting partners, the Secretariat helps accelerate local net-zero projects by harnessing collective working.

Zero Carbon City Progress 2024 to 2025

50. Industrial Strategy: ZCOP successfully secured £350k funding to produce an Industrial Decarbonisation Plan in 2023. Throughout 2024 to 2025 it led a 14-month collaboration of industrial sites, local authorities, decarbonisation experts, network operators, and academia to assess the current state of industrial decarbonisation and research into a range of scenarios to achieve net zero, engaging with almost one hundred stakeholders.
51. Industrial Decarbonisation – Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership: The final strategy builds on the ZCOP Roadmap and Action Plan, setting out key actions for Energy Supply Infrastructure, Collaborative Financing, and Capacity Building. Collectively these actions will support the delivery of key milestones along a shared journey to net zero industrial emissions by 2040.
52. Climate Adaptation: Through ZCOP, a new Oxfordshire adaptation route map, has enabled collective action to build long term resilience to a changing climate. The 15 priority actions include establishing working groups within ZCOP, identifying funding sources, analysing habitats and crops which are most at risk from climate change, and producing adaptation guidance for developers. [Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Oxfordshire 2025](#).
53. Retrofit: The ZCOP Sprint Group on residential retrofit developed and refined the project, *A House Like Mine*, which spotlights twelve common, real-life homes from across Oxford, to help demonstrate to residents how their homes can be more energy efficient. The homes feature the experiences of eight homeowners and four landlords, who explain how bespoke plans help pinpoint the most effective upgrades, prioritise improvements, and how to avoid mistakes. [A House Like Mine project - Cosy Homes Oxfordshire](#).
54. Sustainable travel: The ZCOP Sustainable Travel workstream has engaged many of the partnership's largest employers, identifying common challenges in promoting sustainable commuting. While good progress is being made, a key issue remains the difficulty in gathering consistent staff travel data, translating it into actionable insights, and effectively engaging employees. To address this, ZCOP is unlocking funding for new research initiatives, such as the development of a website for commuters,

delivering 'activation' trials (e.g., try-before-you-buy an e-bike), and researching staff sentiment on commuting.

55. Beyond this, ZCOP is facilitating the sharing of best practices across the partnership and ensuring that solutions are accessible to all members. By bringing employers together, ZCOP has negotiated lower costs for some transport tools, helping members achieve their sustainability goals for less.
56. The [Oxford Travel Options website](#) is a ZCOP-led initiative designed to be a one-stop shop for all active travel options and information in Oxford. This site provides up-to-date and accurate resources, case studies, and practical guidance for those commuting into Oxford, aiming to inspire others to try new commutes and travel options. It is designed to be helpful and practical for everyone, with a section specifically dedicated to busy employers, offering valuable insights to support their sustainability goals and improve employee commuting experiences. [About Us | Supporting Sustainable Travel in Oxford | Oxford Travel Options](#).
57. Grid infrastructure: ZCOP worked with partners and SSEN, the District Network Operator (DNO), to simplify interactions for infrastructure processes and to ensure future grid upgrade plans reflect local needs. ZCOP engaged partners with SSEN's Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) to ensure organisation's planned development, upgrades and decarbonisation plans are considered in grid upgrade planning. In total, ZCOP engaged over thirty organisations - raising awareness of DFES and encouraging broader data sharing to strengthen local energy planning. ZCOP represented its partners in Ofgem's Working Groups on regional strategic planning function delivered by the National Energy System Operator in the creation of regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs).
58. Oxford Heat Network Partnership: The Zero Carbon Oxford Roadmap and Action Plan identifies Heat Networks as a key methodology for decarbonising institutional buildings. This coupled with buildings as the largest source of carbon and NOx emissions for Oxford, means this is a high priority area of focus for Oxford. In January 2025, 1energy, a commercial Heat Network Developer, was successful in securing £22.9M Green Heat Network Funding (GHNF) from the government to design and construct a £120M Heat Network (HN) in Oxford's City Centre and design an £80M HN for Headington. In response to this, the Council initiated and is leading an Oxford based partnership to examine the opportunity of District Heating for Oxford. A phase 1, District Heating Network could cut carbon emissions by 5% across Oxford. The

Partnership includes, both Universities, OUH Trust, Oxford University Colleges and the County Council, and will collectively define what are the critical success factors for Heat Network/s in Oxford and how they are best delivered.

Oxford Safer Communities Partnership

59. The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership's (OSCP) 2024 to 2025 Rolling Plan set out the partnership's priorities for the year based on an analysis of community safety data contained in the Oxfordshire Community Strategic Needs Assessment. It provided an overview of the work undertaken by the partnership during the previous year and planned activities for the year ahead.

60. OSCP worked with the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership (SOP) to address community safety priorities including modern slavery, serious violence, and domestic abuse. SOP provide the strategic leadership and development, with the OSCP delivering local plans and projects in Oxford.



61. Thames Valley Police launched Operation Purchase that tackled retail crime. Officers undertook a robust operation to address shoplifting within neighbourhoods and the city centre. Over the 12 months from February 2024 to January 2025, there were 2,534 reported crimes, an increase of 39.9% compared to the same period the previous year. This resulted with an increase in the solved crime rate of 35.6%.

62. There were 1,344 anti-social behaviour reports to the police in 2024. The number received by Oxford City Council for the year was 2,242.

63. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Service is comprised of two teams. The majority of Community Response Team (CRT) investigations are into domestic noise nuisance and environmental ASB, such as fly-tipping and littering. In 2024 the team investigated 1,865 cases.

64. Serious violence has been falling in Oxford for the last 6 years with Oxford experiencing the largest percentage reduction in serious violent offences.

65. In 2024, Oxford's Community Safety Problem-Solving Officer collaborated closely with residents by undertaking environmental visual audits, consulting with residents, and implementing projects that improve the community.

66. Several mobile CCTV cameras were deployed across Oxford to support intelligence gathering for Thames Valley Police's Stronghold cases that address drug dealing, abuse, and anti-social behaviour. These were introduced and trained with staff from Oxford City Council on the use of Body Worn Cameras to enhance opportunities for evidence capture and assist in the detection and prevention of crime and ASB.

67. In September 2024, OSCP organised a summit dedicated to the issue of serious violence and knife crime, with a particular focus on supporting young people. Several partner agencies attended, along with county and city councillors. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service, and Youth Groups funded by the PCC gave presentations on their work to combat serious violence.



Appendix 2. Oxford Strategic Partnership Membership, 2024 to 2025

Independent Chair	Chief Executive, River Learning Trust
Leader	Oxford City Council
Liberal Democrat Group Leader	Oxford City Council
Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services	Oxfordshire County Council
Chief Executive	Oxford City Council
Transition Director	Oxford City Council
Director of Law, Governance and Strategy	Oxford City Council
Chair of Town Team and General Manager of Westgate	Land Securities
Co-Executive Officer	Community First Oxfordshire
Co-Chair	Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership
Associate Dean for Research & Knowledge Exchange	Oxford Brookes University
Associate Director – Knowledge Exchange and Impact	Oxford Brookes University
Deputy Director Public Health	Oxfordshire County Council
Chief Operating Officer	Ellison Institute of Technology - Larger Business Representative
Detective Chief Inspector	Thames Valley Police
Deputy Head of Strategy and Partnerships,	Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Senior Director	OxLEP representative
Chair	Oxford Civic Society
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement, Sport, and Community)	Oxford University
Director	Innovation and Engagement, University of Oxford
Director of Economy and Place	Partnership and Delivery, Oxfordshire County Council
Policy and Partnerships Officer(s)	Oxford City Council

Economic Development Manager	Oxford City Council
Environmental Sustainability Business Lead	Oxford City Council

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