Agenda

Cabinet

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 22 October 2025**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

For further information please contact:

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer, Committee Services Officer

01865 252784 DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk

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

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

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

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

Cabinet Membership

Councillors: Membership 10: Quorum 3: No substitutes are permitted.

Leader/ Chair

Cabinet Members

Councillor Susan Brown	Leader, Partnership Working
Councillor Ed Turner	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management
Councillor Lubna Arshad	Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford
Councillor Nigel Chapman	Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture
Councillor Chewe Munkonge	Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion
Councillor Anna Railton	Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford
Councillor Linda Smith	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

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

Agenda

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

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

		Pages
1	**Apologies for Absence**	
2	**Declarations of Interest**	
3	**Minutes of the previous meeting** **Recommendation:** That Cabinet resolves to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2025 as a true and accurate record.	13 - 26
4	**Addresses by members of the public** Public addresses relating to matters of business for 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 Thursday, the 16th of October.**	
5	**Councillor addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda** Councillor addresses relating to matters of business for this agenda, up to five minutes is available for each address. **The request should be received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by 5.00 pm on Thursday, 16 October 2025.**	
6	**Councillor addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**	
7	**Items raised by Cabinet Members**	

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

8 Reports from the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee will meet on 14 October 2025 to consider the following items. Report and recommendations, including those from its working groups, from the meeting will be published as a late supplement.

- Project approvals and delegations for the Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill affordable housing development
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Annual Safeguarding Report 2024/25
- Optimism Bias on sizeable commercial properties in the City Centre
- Quarterly Performance Integrated Report - Q4 2024/25
- Quarterly Performance Integrated Report - Q1 2025/26

9 Museum of Oxford entry fee

27 - 56

The Director of Communities and Citizens submitted a report to Cabinet to consider options for charging a small entry fee to visit the museum and consider options for eligibility for concessionary and free entry.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Charge** an entry fee for entry to the Museum of Oxford
2. **Approve** the standard entry fee charges as proposed in Appendix 1
3. **Approve** the concessions eligibility and concessionary charges as proposed in Appendix 1
4. **Approve** the eligibility for free access as proposed in Appendix 1
5. **Delegate** the implementation of charging from January 2026 to the Director of Citizens and Community Services

10 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

57 - 132

The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizens submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet approves the Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2026-29.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2026-29; and

2. **Delegate** authority to the Community Safety Service Manager to publish the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and to make any typographical amendments as may be required, before publication. To make minor changes in the future to reflect any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

11 Draft Air Quality Action Plan

133 - 218

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval of the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 for public consultation.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 for Public Consultation

12 HRA Policies

219 - 296

The Director of Housing submitted a report to Cabinet to seek the approval of the following policies: fire safety, damp and mould, asbestos and disrepair to ensure the maintenance of the housing stock.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the Damp and Mould Policy
2. **Approve** the Fire Safety Policy
3. **Approve** the Asbestos Policy
4. **Approve** the Disrepair Policy

13 Review of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme - Approval to Consult

297 - 316

The Director of Planning and Regulation submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation to renew the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in 2026.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Agree** to proceed with a statutory 10-week consultation on the

basis that it is necessary to renew the licensing scheme in its entirety for a further 5 years.

14 Local Nature Recovery Strategy

317 - 572

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet agree that approval be given to the Oxfordshire County Council to publish the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. That Cabinet agrees to give approval to the Oxfordshire County Council to publish the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy by.

15 Domestic Abuse Policy for Council Staff

573 - 602

The ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet approve the Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Approve** the Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff (Appendix 1)
2. **Delegate** authority to the Domestic Abuse Lead, to make minor changes in the future to reflect any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

16 Project Approval and Delegations for Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill affordable housing scheme

603 - 612

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability submitted a report to Cabinet to seek project approval and delegations to progress the development of affordable homes at Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill. This includes delegated authority to enter into build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs, and the virement of capital funds in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Grant project approval** to finalise agreement to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;
2. **Delegate authority to the Director of Housing,** in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts to facilitate the development within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing;
3. **Grant approval** for a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs of £5,693,000. The virement will be from the "Properties purchased from OCHL" (Oxford City Housing Limited) purchase line into a new scheme line to be profiled to match the build programme across the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29.

17 Contract for Annual Real Estate Asset Valuations

613 - 618

The Group Finance Director submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet provide Project Approval and delegate authority to officers to enter into a new contract or contracts with suitably qualified firms to undertake real estate valuations.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Give Project Approval** to approve the procurement of a suitably qualified firm of real estate valuers to undertake valuations of council-owned properties recorded within the General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts
2. **Delegate** authority to the Deputy Chief Executive – Place in consultation with the Group Director of Finance, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Assets to determine the form of the procurement, contract, and award and enter into the final contract with the preferred supplier

18 Dates of future meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 10 November 2025 (special meeting)
- 19 November 2025
- 10 December 2025
- 21 January 2026

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

Matters Exempt from Publication

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

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

Information for those attending

Recording and reporting on meetings held in public

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

The Council asks those recording the meeting:

- To follow the protocol which can be found on the Council's website
- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

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

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

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

Declaring an interest

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

Members' Code – Other Registrable Interests

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

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

Members' Code – Non Registrable Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillors speaking at meetings

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

Councillors speaking on Neighbourhood issues (10 minutes in total)

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

Items raised by Cabinet members

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 17 September 2025

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Committee members present:

Councillor Brown
Councillor Arshad
Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Turner
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Railton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services
Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor
Kate Protheroe, Asset Manager
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Alison Daly, Team Leader Lawyer
Clare Paterson, Strategic Finance Manager
Kieran Edmunds, Rapid Rehousing Manager
Emma Gubbins, Corporate Asset Lead
Sally Hicks, Business Intelligence Unit Lead
Nick Kowalski, Affordable Housing Development Manager
Brendan Lewis, Senior Rough Sleeping Officer
Jiajia Miao, Corporate Consultation Officer
Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager
Dave Scholes, Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead
Megan Woodward, Housing Options Team Leader
Stuart Hosieh, Mechanical and Electrical Manager
Esther Knight, Category Manager, Operations (ODS)
Owain Pearce, Transport Manager ODSL (Systems & Specifications)
James Vilijoen, Technical Engineering Manager
Clive Tritton, Interim Director, Regeneration, Economy and Sustainability

Also present:

Councillor Alex Powell

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Munkonge sent apologies.

41. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Munkonge sent apologies.

Councillor Arshad arrived late.

42. Declarations of Interest

None

43. Minutes of the previous meeting

Cabinet resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 August 2025 as a true and accurate record.

44. Addresses by members of the public

None received.

45. Councillor addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None received.

46. Councillor addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None received.

47. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

Councillor Railton joined the meeting.

48. Reports from the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 9 September and reviewed the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025 and the Scrutiny Budget Review Group Scope, there were no recommendations for the Budget Review Group Scope. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group met on 2 September 2025 to consider the Re-procurement of Housing First Support Service, Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, Housing Service Q1 Performance for 2025/26 and Annual update on Social Housing Allocations and Lettings. Councillor Alex Powell noted there were only recommendations for the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy. The Climate

and Environment Working Group met on 4 September 2025 to consider the Heat Network Update, Local EV Infrastructure and Local Energy Area Planning. Councillor Powell noted there were no recommendations for the Local Energy Area Planning.

Councillor Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations for the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025, reflecting on the Committee's discussions.

- **Recommendation 1:** That the Policy specifically assigns locality managers a role in the dissemination of consultations, making use of their deeper understanding of each local area's needs and dynamics with the intention to tailor engagement efforts more effectively.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the Policy acknowledges and identifies busy time periods to be avoided for consultations, to ensure residents or participants have adequate opportunity to participate, particularly where the consultation topic requires more focused attention.
- **Recommendation 3:** That every consultation document undergoes an inclusivity check by an officer, resident panel, or elected member prior to release for readability and understandability by all audiences.
- **Recommendation 4:** That Cabinet ensures the Policy is applied in a manner that maximises the inclusion of disabled people in the Council's consultation processes.
- **Recommendation 5:** That Cabinet requests officers to undertake exploratory work to incorporate a system for ranking the importance of each consultation, and to investigate whether the use of incentives could effectively increase participation and engagement.

Councillor Chapman observed that scrutiny, on occasion, blur the lines between strategy, policy and the operational delivery. Referring to the recommendation which involved the role of localities manager, he explained this would be better placed in the operational plan rather than set out as a general provision in the policy. In relation not the fifth recommendation, Councillor Chapman expressed appreciation for the Committee's intent but highlighted the difficulties in ranking consultations, stating that it was not always possible to do as each varies in scope and impact. He also cautioned that use of incentives may produce perverse outcome in that participants could be motivated by incentives rather than the substance of the consultation, in addition to creating financial implications. Overall, he valued the constructive discussions at Scrutiny, confirming his support for three and indicating partial agreement with two of the above listed recommendations.

Councillor Powell also reported the Housing and Homelessness Working Group's recommendation to the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy. In presenting this, he conveyed concerns regarding the statutory six week limitation on placements in temporary accommodation and whether this period could be reduced. It was however understood that the six week limit is prescribed in legislation.

- **Recommendation:** That Cabinet ensures the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy incorporates a degree of flexibility to take account of extraordinary employment circumstances including those who work irregular hours or on variable contracts, in order to support fairness and further clarity.

He proceeded to draw attention to the key points discussed during the Working Group's consideration of the Social Housing Allocations and Lettings report. These included the

significant demand for one-bed homes and their underrepresentation within the current stock; issues of unseen overcrowding in council properties; the need for greater transparency around eligibility of applicants placed in Band 5 where likelihood of being housed is very low; and the potential benefits of downsizing incentive schemes. He confirmed that no formal recommendations were made in respect of this item.

Councillor Powell then presented the Climate and Environment Working Group's discussions and recommendations on the Heat Network Update. He pointed out that this topic had also attracted considerable interest amongst members of Scrutiny upon endorsing the recommendations, noting that it was positively received by both the Committee and the Working Group.

- **Recommendation 1:** That social value creation is explored and embedded in the delivery of the heat network, with particular focus on mitigating the negative impacts of construction, including compensation for any disruptions to local businesses, safety concerns, damage to properties, and other community impacts, and that income generated through the network is directed toward addressing fuel poverty through measures such as insulation and energy efficiency upgrades.
- **Recommendation 2:** That Council ensures there is further scrutiny specifically around the ownership models of the infrastructure under consideration for the heat network.
- **Recommendation 3:** That concerns around potential monopoly are duly noted, and that commercial arrangements include mechanisms that will ensure long-term public benefit and enable public oversight; that any profits or financial turnover generated through the network are shared with the City Council and used to directly benefit residents; and that where possible, infrastructure is retained in public ownership or alternative safeguards are implemented to ensure dependency on a single private provider is prevented.

Lastly, Councillor Powell presented the Climate and Environment Working Group's recommendation on the Local EV Infrastructure.

- **Recommendation:** That OX Place, as a council-owned company, ensure that EV charge points in new developments are accessible to the wider community; and that further work is undertaken to explore the use of workplace EV charging points by local residents during evenings and weekends, potentially through planning conditions.

In response to Councillor Powell, Councillor Smith expressed agreement with the recommendation seeking flexibility within the Placement Policy particularly to allow employment to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Councillor Railton confirmed her acceptance of all three recommendations relating to Heat Network noting the discussions had been constructive. In respect to the final recommendation concerning EV charge points, Councillor Chapman acknowledged the positive intent but advised that, in practice, such condition would be unworkable. He explained that the Council would be unable to enforce this requirement unless private owners voluntarily agreed to make their charge points publicly accessible at designated times, which could itself give rise to complex practical issues. Differentiating this from communal EV charge points, he highlighted further issues around sharing access with the wider community, laudable though the aim might be.

Councillor Brown thanked Councillor Powell for his contributions, and Scrutiny's work on various reports presented to Cabinet in this meeting.

49. Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q4 2024/25

The Group Finance Director had submitted a report to Cabinet to note the update to the Cabinet on the financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2025.

Councillor Turner introduced the report, commenting on its usefulness in reviewing both successes and challenges, as well as lessons learned for setting the budget for the coming year. He acknowledged the need to transfer some amount from the reserves particularly in light of the significant pressures arising from temporary accommodations in the past year. He noted that the budget for this had now been increased, recognising that the homelessness crisis remains a pressing issue in the city. Councillor Turner also drew attention to issues surrounding housing benefit and supported accommodation, describing these as an unwelcome policy quirk which would benefit from review. With respect to the HRA account, he highlighted a one-off income from disposal while also noting the ongoing challenge of repair costs, which he advised would need to be closely monitored and addressed. Turning to the Capital Programme, the councillor acknowledged inevitable slippage but expressed confidence that the Council's monitoring and planning processes in this area had improved. Lastly, he provided assurance that the Finance Team was carefully estimating likely capital expenditure, at levels lower than the total capital programme, to ensure the Council did not unnecessarily held funds in reserve and thereby incur avoidable interest costs.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial outturn and performance of the Council for the year 2024/25 and the recommended transfer of £1.549 million from the risk reserve; and
2. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the General Fund of £0.083 million in accordance with paragraph 6.

50. Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q1 2025/26

The Group Finance Director had submitted a report to Cabinet to note the update to the Cabinet on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters at 30th June 2025.

Councillor Turner introduced the report. He explained that Q1 reporting is useful for identifying trends and addressing emerging issues before they escalate, rather than focusing on the bottom line given the early stage. He reported that the General Fund is currently forecasting an overspend of £600k but emphasised that there remains scope to mitigate this. He also highlighted pressures relating to temporary accommodation, as referenced in the previous report, noting significant costs and year-on-year movements, though with an expected HRA recharge. On the matter of the HRA, Councillor Turner was keen to point out that the Council is not currently experiencing the same level of repair issues as the previous year. He welcomed this as a positive development, given earlier concerns about the difficulty of achieving a turnaround, and expressed hope that this improvement would be sustained.

Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director, confirmed that budgets had been topped up this financial year to address pressures on the HRA, following the overspend in the previous year. Whilst noting that it is still early in the financial cycle, the Q1 position suggests these measures have brought the situation under control. However, the

Group Finance Director did emphasise, in line with Councillor Turner's comments, that this position may change over the course of the year.

Caroline Green, Chief Executive, added that in response to last year's challenges, officers have identified a series of actions which alongside reducing budget pressures, are enabling the council to shift from 'more' to a planned approach. She noted that a significant programme of work was underway, and highlighted that improved monitoring through out the year remains a key priority. She also concluded that whilst the Q1 position is looking positive, continued focus will be required as the year progresses.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial position for quarter 1 (Q1) 2025/26 including forecast outturn, as well as the current position on risk and performance at 30th June 2025.

51. Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025 - Adoption of Plan

The Director of Communities and Citizen Services had submitted a report to Cabinet to request the approval to adopt the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025.

Councillor Chapman introduced the report, thanking Jiajia Miao, Corporate Consultation Officer, for authoring it. He emphasised the importance of meaningful citizen engagement, noting that the Council must understand residents' needs, views and priorities in order to make sound decisions about the allocation of limited resources. Beyond this, he stressed that proper engagement lies at the heart of accountability, enabling residents to contribute at the appropriate stage in the development of strategies, policies and proposal. Councillor Chapman highlighted that the Policy sets out a comprehensive range of tools for engaging with communities across the city, including hard-to-reach groups, but underlined that its effectiveness ultimately depends on how skilfully the Council uses the information gathered. The Policy also acknowledges the varied and distinct needs of different communities, incorporating factors that shape how citizens and groups engage, and incorporates elements of tenant engagement. Whilst there is no single national blueprint for this work, he noted that existing guidance including from the Local Government Association, had informed its development.

Finally, Councillor Chapman noted that the Policy reflects recent discussions on the Citizen Experience Strategy. In particular, points raised by Scruiny on the provision of language interpretation in parts of the city, and the importance of proactive engagement with children under 12 and young people where relevant, have now been embedded in the Policy, which he considered the appropriate place for them.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Communities and Citizen Services to publish the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy and to make any typographical amendments as may be required, before publication.

52. Re-procurement of Housing First support service

The Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizen Services had submitted a report to Cabinet to request the approval of the commencement of a re-procurement exercise for

a support service to enable the Housing First service in Oxford to continue after 31st March 2026.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, firstly by emphasising Housing First as a vital strategy in reducing homelessness in the city. She noted that the model has been successfully applied internationally, and that in Oxford, more than 50 individuals have already benefited from Housing first tenancies. She explained that unlike traditional approaches where accommodation and support are provided together in shared or supported settings, Housing First offers individuals a permanent home of their own, with personalised support provided separately. This meant that as residents stabilise and move forward with their lives, the level of support is gradually reduced enabling long-term independence.

She stated that the Council currently works with three providers: Beam Up, A2 Dominion, and St Mungo's in order to deliver support. Contracts with two of the providers are approaching renewal and are dependent on future government funding.

Ossi Mosely, Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager, stressed the importance of Housing first in providing stable homes for some of the city's most vulnerable residents, many of whom have experienced repeated homelessness and rough sleeping. She explained the intention to begin a procurement process in advance so that contracts can be awarded promptly once government funding is secured.

Richard Wood, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Manager, advised that funding announcement is expected around Christmas time. With only three months remaining on the existing contracts, early reprocurement is intended to ensure continuity of service once confirmation of money is received.

Councillor Turner suggested that, in light of recent reshuffling of responsibilities amongst ministers, it would be beneficial to revisit previous work on wider homelessness funding challenges. He noted that Members of Parliament representing similar areas have observed the effects of certain policy changes, and reviewing this work could provide more preferable outcome. Councillor Brown endorsed the point made by Councillor Turner, emphasising the importance of lobbying the government to secure funding and continue this very important work of supporting people experiencing homelessness. She offered her thanks to the Housing Officers and Councillor Smith for leading on the Housing First programme and stated that she was proud there was such provision in the city

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the commencement of a re-procurement exercise for a Housing First support service;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, on completion of the procurement exercise and subject to funding, to award contracts in relation to Housing First support provision.

53. Introduction on the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to Cabinet to approve the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, referring to earlier discussions on the pressures of temporary accommodation in Oxford, where demands has doubled over the past year. She explained that the Policy outlines the mitigations the Council has

implemented to manage this demand as well as expand the availability of units. The Policy also included measures aimed at preventing the need for temporary accommodation and reducing homelessness. She said that, despite these efforts, the present reality was that there remains a continued need to place people in temporary accommodation. The Policy sets out how the Council makes its decision regarding allocations to such accommodation. Councillor Smith further noted that the Council does not own sufficient temporary accommodation to meet all demand, and as a result, nightly charge accommodations are utilised. The councillor emphasised therefore, the importance of transparency in the Council's decision-making and the need for allocations to be conducted in a fair and legally compliant manner.

Megan Woodward, Housing Options Team Leader, reiterated the councillor's points, adding that the Policy would ensure the Council's decision-making is consistent and strengthen its ability to meet statutory obligations whilst safeguarding the rights and well-being of its citizens.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy as set out in Appendix 1.
2. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing to make minor amendments to the policy in response to operational or legislative changes, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing and Communities.

54. Appropriation of land at Underhill Circus

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet that requests to appropriate the land (change the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council) within the General Fund ("GF") to the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") and the appropriation of the land for planning purposes. The land is currently held as garages and for public open space purposes at Underhill Circus (the "Land") for the objective of building affordable housing.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report. She noted that the underused garages in Barton had attracted antisocial behaviour and become unsightly, and was pleased to propose the provision of affordable housing as a new use for the site.

Dave Scholes, Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead advised that the site formed part of the small sites programme. Cabinet had considered the matter in January 2024 at which time the appropriation process commenced, including the issue of notices of intent and receipt of objections. He explained that following a late review, some ambiguity had been identified in the recommendations as drafted and set out in the agenda. An amendment had therefore been tabled to recommendations 2 and 3, substituting the word 'recommend' with 'approve'. This was intended to clarify that the proposal was to move the purpose from the General Fund to a planning purpose, and subsequently for Cabinet to recommend to Council that, during the construction phase, the units be transferred from the General Fund to the HRA to take affect following planning consent.

Councillor Hollingsworth queried the lease arrangements for the garages and whether any constraints existed on ending such arrangements, specifically in cases where a small number of garages might remain in use and where releasing them could make sites developable. He also sought clarification on whether the proposed wording change had any implications, specifically whether garages within the site were currently

held in the General Fund or already in the HRA. In response, the Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead explained that garages were typically let by the Council on short agreements terminable by either party within a week's notice. In this specific case, some garages had remained empty for considerable time and had not been let to private individuals. He further stated that half of the garages were being used by shopkeepers, in some cases forming part of their leasehold demise. These arrangements had since been terminated and the garages separated from the shop leases, allowing the council to progress the site for development. He confirmed that all garages on the site were currently held within the General Fund and that, once developed, the transfer to the HRA would occur as part of the process.

Councillor Brown introduced an amended recommendation, which was agreed by Cabinet.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** that following the statutory public notification process of the Council's intention to appropriate the Land to planning purposes, no written representations were received in response to the public notice; and
2. **Approve** the appropriation of the land in the Council's ownership at Underhill Circus (see Image 1) ("the Land"), to planning purposes;
3. Subject to obtaining planning consent, **recommend to Council** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council that forms the development site for housing at Underhill Circus from the General Fund ("GF") into the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") at the established red book valuation figure.

55. Acquisition of land at Knights Court into the HRA

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet that requests project approval and delegations to progress the development of affordable homes at Between Towns Road (Knights Court). This includes delegated authority to enter into the land purchase, build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs, and virement of HRA capital funds.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, noting that the site was a former office block near Cowley Centre. She explained that the proposal was to retain the existing fabric of the building and convert it into residential use, which if achievable, would be an interesting and environmentally sustainable form of housing development. The proposals include the provision of units for temporary accommodation, helping to address the pressures previously discussed.

Councillor Brown commented that for clarity in future discussions, the site should continue to be referred to as "the site on Between Towns Road" as there had been some confusion around its naming.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the freehold acquisition of the Between Towns Road site Knights Court on the terms set out in this report and at Appendix 1 and 2;
2. **Grant project approval** to finalise the scheme design, to the proposals to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the

allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;

3. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into agreements for the purchase of land; build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts to facilitate the development within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing; and
4. **Grant approval** for a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs of £8.9 million. The virement will be from the "Properties purchased from OCHL" (Oxford City Housing Limited) purchase line into a new scheme line to be profiled to match the build programme across the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29;

56. Acquisition of land at Elsfield Hall into the HRA

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet that requests for project approval and delegations to progress the development of affordable homes at Elsfield Hall. This includes delegated authority to enter into build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs, virement of HRA capital funds and the approval to commence the process regarding the appropriation of land from the General Fund ("GF") to the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") (changing the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council).

Councillor Arshad joined the meeting.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report. She noted that this site was an empty office block already owned by the City Council with potential for development. The proposals involved demolishing the existing building to make way for a new structure. It is hoped that at least 30 new homes would be constructed in the site, subject to viability and planning. The councillor expressed delight in being able to bring this to Cabinet as part of the council's commitment to building more affordable homes in Oxford.

Nick Kowalski, Housing Development Manager, noted that the current proposal of 30 homes mirrors the adjacent Cannon Court site, a development built by OCHL for the Council. He stated that the target was to deliver more homes on the site, though this is subject to detailed design work and planning risks as explained by Councillor Smith.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to finalise the scheme design, to the proposals to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts to facilitate the development within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing;

3. **Grant approval** for a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs of £11.7 million. The virement will be from the "Properties purchased from OCHL" (Oxford City Housing Limited) purchase line into a new scheme line to be profiled to match the build programme across the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29;
4. **Recommend to Council** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

57. Acquisition of land at Cave Street into the HRA

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet that requests project approval and delegations to progress the development of affordable homes at Cave Street. This includes delegated authority to enter into build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs, virement of HRA capital funds and the approval to commence the process regarding the appropriation of land from the General Fund ("GF") to the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") (changing the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council).

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, noting that the site was owned by the City Council with proposals to develop at least 19 homes, more if achievable. She further noted that this development would be 100% affordable housing.

Dave Scholes, Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead, added that proposed development for this site focuses heavily on one-bedroom homes. Whilst Elsfield would be more mixed, this as well as the site on Between Town Road would provide a number of one-bedroom units directly feeding into the reports and pressures heard earlier to address the need for single bedroom properties and relieving the pressure of using B&B accommodation for homeless households.

Councillor Chapman offered a general observation, noting that across the four reports considered, the schemes represented a substantial contribution towards meeting the Council's target of delivering 1600 affordable homes by March 2029, including 850 for social rent. He remarked that few councils nationally appeared on track to meet such ambitious targets and suggested that some recognition should be taken from this progress. He commended officers for their work in identifying potential development sites across the city and surrounding areas, including smaller sites which taken together, contribute significantly to overall target. He emphasised that this effort by the lead member and officers should not go unacknowledged.

Councillor Brown endorsed these comments, highlighting the value of seeing affordable homes for social rent being delivered in the city. She expressed thanks to officers for their work and noted that these achievements reflected positively especially when showcased to visitors.

Cabinet moved to closed session to discuss matters within the exempt portions of the report. This is in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet moved back to open session to conclude the item.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to finalise the scheme design, to the proposals to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;

2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts to facilitate the development within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing;

3. **Grant approval** for a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs of £5.9 million. The virement will be from the "Properties purchased from OCHL" (Oxford City Housing Limited) purchase line into a new scheme line to be profiled to match the build programme across the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29;

4. **Recommend to Council** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Cave Street from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

58. 4 x Food Waste 18T Dennis Terberg Topload RCVs

The Group Finance Director had submitted a report to Cabinet to request to award a contract to Dennis Eagle T/a Terberg Matec UK under the Halton Framework for the purchase of four (4) 18T Terberg single compartment toploading food waste refuse vehicles.

Councillor Chapman introduced the report, remarking food waste and the proper collection of it as a very important issue. He noted that a number of the Council's food refuse vehicles are reaching the end of their seven to ten year life cycle, and to avoid operational difficulties arising from an ageing fleet, approval was sought for the procurement of replacement vehicles. The councillor explained that procurement will be through a call-off contract with the only supplier able to meet the city's required specification. He further added that budget provision was in place and that the proposal will ensure Council maintains a modern and reliable fleet.

In endorsing the report, it was remarked that the new top-loaded vehicles "look absolutely smashing" and support was expressed for the swift procurement and delivery into service.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Enter into** a contract with Dennis Eagle T/a Terberg Matec UK under the Halton Framework for the purchase of four (4) 18T Terberg single compartment toploading food waste refuse vehicles.

59. Agreement to procure the provision and award including the budget for the Lift Servicing and Maintenance and minor/major works contracts

The Director of Property and Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to request an agreement to procure and award the Lift Servicing and Maintenance contract from the committed budget for a 5-year term with an optional (+1) (+1) year extension.

Councillor Turner introduced the report explaining that the contract will include social value provisions including Oxford Living Wage requirements and an appropriate balance between price and quality.

In moving the recommendations, it was remarked that this item allowed the meeting to finish on a high.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the procurement of a 5-year contract with two 12-month extensions, for the inspection, servicing, maintenance and repair of lifts with an approximate value of £330,000 per annum.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Property and Assets to award a contract for inspection, servicing, maintenance and repair of lifts following a lawful procurement exercise.

60. Dates of future meetings

Cabinet noted the dates of future meetings.

Councillor Railton left the meeting and did not return.

61. Matters Exempt from Publication

Cabinet agreed to exclude the press and public in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

62. Disposal of City Centre commercial property

The Director of Property and Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to request the disposal of a City Centre Commercial Property.

Councillor Turner introduced the report.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Property and Assets, in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Group Finance Director to consider any comments received through the consultation pursuant to section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 following a statutory advertisement for disposal of open space and if considered appropriate following consideration of any comments and or objections agree the final sale terms and dispose of the freehold title.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm

Chair …….. **Date: Wednesday 22 October 2025**

When decisions take effect:
Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired
Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued
All other committees: immediately.
Details are in the Council's Constitution.

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22 October 2025
Report of:	Director of Communities and Citizens
Title of Report:	Museum of Oxford Entry Fees

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	The report will consider options for charging a small entry fee to visit the museum. It will also consider options for eligibility for concessionary and free entry.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture
Corporate Priority:	Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Thriving Communities Strategy

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Charge an entry fee for entry to the Museum of Oxford
2. Approve the standard entry fee charges as proposed in Appendix 1
3. Approve the concessions eligibility and concessionary charges as proposed in Appendix 1
4. Approve the eligibility for free access as proposed in Appendix 1
5. Delegate the implementation of charging from January 2026 to the Director of Citizens and Community Services

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Museum of Oxford Entry Fees and Concessions Proposal	No
Appendix 2	Options for increasing income	No
Appendix 3	Risk Register	No
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment	No
Appendix 5	Confidential appendix	Yes

Introduction and background

1. 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. Oxford City 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.
2. Feedback about MOX has been excellent including being rated an average of 4.6/5 on Trip Advisor, with over 88% of visitors being very/extremely likely to recommend it to others. Museum staff are regularly praised in reviews and MOX was awarded a Trip Advisor 'Travellers' Choice' commendation in 2025.
3. In line with the national picture, however, footfall has reduced. Whilst MOX welcomed 55,000 visitors in 2024-5, which is a good result for a museum of its size in the current climate, it is significantly lower than the 74,000 visitors per year welcomed prior to the redevelopment and only 55% of the 100,000 annual footfall anticipated in the business plan for the expanded offer. This left an unbudgeted revenue pressure for the Council of £77K in 2024-5.
4. Four years on, after a reasonable adjustment period following reopening, a new model of operation is required to maximise the benefits of the museum and secure its longer term sustainability.
5. A report entitled Research into Admissions Pricing Policy in museums and its Impact: Success Guide in 2023, which included representatives from Arts Council England, the Association of Independent Museums, Museums Galleries Scotland, the Welsh Government, the National Museum Directors' Council and the Art Fund on the steering board, stated that that *"the move from free entry to charging for admissions highlights the most positive impact being a rise in total admissions income, followed by positive impacts on the number of visitors and the dwell time of visitors. Beyond that, many museums highlighted that there was no change in impacts, although some suggested that there were negative aspects around fewer visitors and a reduction in on-site spontaneous donations."*

Challenges and Opportunities

6. Whilst the offer at MOX is greatly appreciated by those who visit, marketing the museum is challenging in a competitive market which includes world renowned museums such as the Ashmolean and National History Museum Oxford. MOX is housed in a civic building without any 'shop window' visible at street level and it isn't immediately clear what the building is for and who is allowed access. Conservation restrictions limit what is possible in this regard.
7. In an attempt to compete and to be inclusive, visitors have been given free access, but it is possible that the free entry may have had a negative impact on visitor's perception of the potential quality of the offer and therefore tourists and residents from Oxford's diverse communities may have missed the opportunity to learn more about the history of the city and its people.
8. Contrary to initial expectations, where charges have been implemented at MOX for previously free programme activities, more people have attended and the dwell time has also increased. The income has also contributed towards the increasing costs of running the museum.
9. Introducing a charging model for entry to MOX will build on this. It will also give the team an opportunity to capture data about attendees and enable the council to work in partnership to drive more footfall and income whilst also increasing the diversity of visitors.

10. We have considered the need to promote education by allowing free entry for under 5s, providing funded learning activities and concessionary rates for schools, students and other groups, including a free downloadable audio guide and allowing 12 free to enter days per year for everyone.
11. The council also leads Oxford Cultural Education Partnership providing cultural education directly in and for schools.

Working in Partnership

12. There is an opportunity to work in partnership by offering joint tickets with other visitor attractions. This would increase the number of sales points, raise more awareness and drive more footfall to the museum. It would also enable the museum to benefit from increased marketing resources.

Key Features of the Charging Proposal

13. In order to maintain access, and create more educational and promotional opportunities, the proposal is to have 12 entry-free days a year to coincide with relevant events e.g. Oxford Open Doors and the Christmas Light Festival.
14. Moving to a charging model will increase data collection and give the team the ability to do wider promotions e.g. at the shop.
15. It is expected that this low-cost charging model will not only assist the longer-term sustainability of the museum but also increase its use and public benefit.
16. Free access will be maintained for funded programmes and for residents on special occasions e.g. as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, on identified days in school holidays etc. at least once a month. People will also be able to 'pay it forward' to give free entry for those who otherwise would not be able to attend.

Other Options Considered

17. See appendix 2 for a list of the pros and cons of other options that were considered. Whilst some options could be delivered alongside the charging option, no other option would have been likely to generate enough to fill the budget gap without including the charging option.

Recommendation

18. Given the potential to fill the ongoing budget gap, it is recommended to introduce fees and concessionary rates for entry to the Museum of Oxford as outlined in Appendix 1.
19. It is recommended to introduce these fees in January 2026.

Financial implications

20. Charging an entrance fee and offering joint tickets with strategic partners through a procurement call has the potential to raise significant additional income to assist the longer term sustainability of the museum.

Legal issues

21. 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 this Act.

22. 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.

23. The Council has considered its duties under section 13 of the Act and its findings are set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 above.

24. 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 the decision that must be agreed by the Cabinet.

Level of risk

25. See the attached risk register at appendix 3.

Equalities impact

26. See the attached Equalities Impact Assessment at appendix 4.

Report author	Paula Redway
Job title	Culture and Community Development Manager
Service area or department	Communities and Citizens' Services
Telephone	01865 252780
e-mail	predway@oxford.gov.uk;

Background Papers:
List the background documents and, if possible, link to them.
1 Not applicable

Proposed Charging Model for MOX 2025-26

As ticketing data is unavailable, estimates are based on 50% of 2024–25 footfall at MOX and conversations with other visitor attractions who wish to offer joint tickets with MOX. Actual totals may be significantly lower.

Potential Charging Income

Category	Footfall	Charge	Total (£)
50% of current MOX adult visitor footfall	20,000	£4 – standard ticket for adults	£80,000
50% of current MOX under 18s visitor footfall	5,000	£2 – standard ticket for under18s	£10,000
Joint tickets with other attractions – adults	9,750	£4	£39,000
Joint tickets with other attractions - concession customers	3,250	£2	£6,500
Total			**£135,500**

See note above regarding footfall assumptions.

Suggested Concessions and Estimated Cost

Category	Footfall (estimated visits/year)	Estimated Total cost of concessions (£)
Children under 5 free	304	£608
Carers free when supporting	304	£1,216
People on benefits – free	800	£3,200
Students – concession (£2 discount)	608	£1,216
Blue Light card holders – concession (£2 discount)	152	£304
Museum Association/Art Pass members – free	50	£200
Council employees with ID – free	558	£2,232
Civic guests – free	50	£200
12 free Open Days per year (including adults and children)	2,400	£7,200
Oxfordshire School bookings (free access for children)	4,405	£8,810
Event attendees (adults and children free if attending events)	6,271	£18,813
Funded activity (free for adults and children)	1,840	£4,440
Volunteers and a plus one free	160	£480
Total	**17,542**	**£48,919**

Net Potential Income After Concessions

Total Potential Income	£146,000
Less Concessions Cost	£48,919
Net Income	**£86,581**

Note: This figure may be significantly lower due to repeat visits the percentage of which is currently unknown.

Proposal:

It is proposed that the following people have free entry to the museum galleries:

- Children under 5
- Oxfordshire school bookings
- Carers when supporting
- Those in receipt of state benefits
- Attendees at museum events / activities
- Oxford City Council employees
- Civic Guests
- Museum volunteers (who will also be entitled to bring a guest for free)
- Museum Association and Art Pass members

It is proposed that the following people have concessionary entry to the museum galleries:

- Children 5 and over
- Non-Oxfordshire based school bookings
- Students
- Blue Light Card holders

This page is intentionally left blank

Options considered for increasing income for MOX

Option	Pros	Cons
1. Maintain free entry as per the status quo	Free public access maintained	Budget deficit remains No opportunity to develop audiences in partnership No additional income for marketing
2. Charge a higher entry fee	Potential to increase income	Could reduce footfall and income if too high
3. Enable free access for Oxford residents	Free public access maintained for Oxford residents	Some budget deficit would remain Additional administrative burden for staff and residents
4. Have fewer concessions	Could increase income	Could reduce footfall and reduce the accessibility of the museum
5. Concentrate on increasing room hire or changing the programme offer instead of charging	Could bring in some extra income	Some budget deficit would remain Hours of operations is only daytime and additional resource would be needed to cover outside of these Town Hall meeting rooms are not at capacity This could be done alongside charging with both income streams being monitored continually
6. Concentrate more on fundraising via grants and philanthropic giving instead of charging	Could bring in some extra income	Some budget deficit would remain Grants require additional capacity and delivery costs with little, if anything, left for bottom line contribution Concentrated fundraising already being done via the Museum Development Trust Fundraising could continue to be done alongside charging with both income streams being monitored continually

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 6 Risk Register

Grant allocations to community and voluntary organisations 2023-4

As at: 16 October 2024

									Gross		Current			Target							
Ref	Title	Risk Description	Opp / Threat	Cause	Consequence	Risk Treatment	Date Raised	Owner	P	I	P	I	Score	P	I	Comments	Control / Mitigation Description	Date Due	Action Status	% Progress	Action Owner
	Reduction in income	Introducing a fee may impact fundraising and secondary spend	Opportunity	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	31/01/26	Ongoing	30%	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	Opportunity	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	31/01/26	Ongoing	30%	Paula Redway
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								

THE RISK REGISTER IS FORMATTED AS A TABLE. PRESS TAB ON THE LAST TABLE CELL TO INSERT A NEW ROW.

This page is intentionally left blank

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.**	Introduction of a small entry fee to visit the Museum of Oxford. It will also consider options for eligibility for concessionary and free entry.	**2.**	**The implementation date of the activity under consideration:**	Early 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?**	New ☒	**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.	NA
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

www.oxford.gov.uk

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

12.	**Type of activity being considered:** Check the most appropriate.	☐	☐ Decommissioning	☐ Commissioning	☐
		☐	☒ Others. Please specify: Introduction of fee and charge		
13.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	☐ Good, affordable homes	☒ Strong, fair economy	☒ Thriving Communities	☐ Zero Carbon Oxford	☒ Well run council
14.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	☐ Responsive services and customer care.	☐ Diverse and engaged workforce.	☐ Leadership & organisational commitment.	☒ Understanding and working with our communities.
15.	**Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.**	The aim of the activity is to safeguard the long term sustainability of the Museum of Oxford. 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. Implementing a small entry fee will help to provide an essential marketing budget to increase awareness of and visits to the museum.			

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

16.	**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.	Not implementing this activity would leave a structural budget deficit of c.£77K per year which threatens the museum's long term sustainability and reduces the opportunity to attract diverse audiences.

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

17.	**Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?** **Please provide details—** -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.	No specific focus group sessions, however, a wide range of systems are in place at the Museum to capture visitor feedback.
18.	**List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.** **These could be-** -third-party research, -census data, -legislation, -articles, -reports, -briefs.	Research into admissions pricing policy in museums and its impact: Success Guide

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY

19.	**If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?** **Please list the details –** -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data.	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?** **Check as needed.** The impact may be positive, negative or unknown.	**Service Users**	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Members of staff	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		General public	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Partner / Community Organisation	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		City Councillors	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Council suppliers and contractors	Yes ☒	No ☐	Don't Know ☐

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		☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Disability **(Visible and invisible)**		☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Gender re-assignment		☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, the fees will also help to ensure the	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

					sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories	includes people in receipt of state benefits
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Race, Ethnicity and/or Citizenship		☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Pregnancy & Maternity	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, the fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected characteristics to continue	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits

www.oxford.gov.uk

					to tell their stories and document their histories	
Religion or Belief	OBJ	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Sex			☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Sexual Orientation	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, the fees will also help to ensure the sustainability of the museum to enable people with all protected	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits

www.oxford.gov.uk

					characteristics to continue to tell their stories and document their histories	
Socio-economic inequalities such as: **-** income and factors that impact income. -access to jobs This was voluntarily adopted by Oxford City Council on the 13th of March 2024.	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Other (voluntary consideration) **Council of Sancturary** **For example:** Migrant, refugee, or asylum seekers.	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits
Other **For example:** - Unpaid carers - Prison population - Homeless population -Council suppliers & contractors -Cabinet Members	☐	☐	☒	☐	Whilst the fee may be a barrier to access for some people, 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	12 free to enter days per year; free funded activity; concessionary rates; free access includes people in receipt of state benefits

www.oxford.gov.uk

Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Full Impact Assessment

22.		**Conclusions.**							
	☐	Stop and reconsider the activity.	☐	Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.	☒	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.	☐	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with the activity. No need to monitor in the future.	
23.	**Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.**		**Benefits of Implementation**: **Promotes Equity**: Income will help to sustain the museum and to market it to wider audiences **Enhances Diversity**: Income will help to sustain the museum and to market it to wider audiences **Improves Representation**: Income will help to sustain the museum and to market it to wider audiences						

CITY COUNCIL

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.

24.	**Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact?** **For example-** - team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group,etc.		Culture and Community Development Team		
25.	**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.**	October 2026

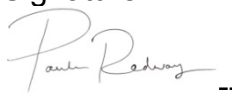
www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Section 7: Sign-off

Name: Paula Redway

Job Title: Culture and Community Development Manager

Signature:



Name:

Job Title:

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:

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 EqIA.
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/managers.

This is not an exhaustive list.

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

⚠ **Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.**

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22nd October 2025
Report of:	Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizens
Title of Report:	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Approve the Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2026-29.
Key decision:	Yes.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lubna Arshad, Portfolio title: Community Safety
Corporate Priority:	Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Corporate Enforcement Policy

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Anti-social Behaviour Policy 2026-29; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Community Safety Service Manager to publish the Anti-social Behaviour Policy and to make any typographical amendments as may be required, before publication. To make minor changes in the future to reflect any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

Information Exempt From Publication	
	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	ASB Policy 2026 –29 Draft	No
Appendix 2	ASB Policy Consultation 2025	No
Appendix 3	Tenant Resident Group	No
Appendix 4	ASB Policy Consultation 2025 - Reach	No
Appendix 5	ASB Procedures 2026 - 29	No

Appendix 6	Equalities Impact Assessment	No
Appendix 7	ASB Policy Risk Register	No

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council is committed to tackling all forms of anti-social behaviour. Its responsibilities are integral to its role as a housing provider, environmental champion and a Responsible Authority for the Oxford Community Safety Partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, places a legal duty on the council to work in partnership to tackle the city's crime and disorder priorities.
2. Oxford City Council's existing Anti-social Behaviour Policy is reviewed every three years. The current policy expires in December 2025.

Policy summary

3. The policy (Appendix 1) sets out the council's responsibilities as a landlord, environmental protection champion and lead member of the community safety partnership.
4. It sets out the Council's view of what is, and what is not, anti-social behaviour and sets service standards depending upon the nature of the case. Anonymous cases that have no complainant details will not usually be investigated.
5. The policy describes the five core principles that underpin the council's commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour, and activities that support these principles. These are:
    - Principle One: No one should have to suffer from anti-social behaviour.
    - Principle Two: Reports of anti-social behaviour will be treated seriously and dealt with professionally.
    - Principle Three: Anti-social behaviour will be addressed firmly, fairly and proportionately.
    - Principle Four: We will work with partners in order to deliver an effective ASB service for our communities.
    - Principle Five: We will deliver high quality customer service.
6. The policy includes a reference to Oxford City Council's Compliments, Complaints and Comments process for customers who wish to provide feedback on the service they have received.

Consultation

7. A public survey on the policy ran between 9th June and 4th August 2025, receiving 188 responses (Appendix 2).
8. The overwhelming majority of respondents had experienced some form of anti-social behaviour (79%) or environmental crime (63%): noise (54%), drug related activities (46%), littering (59%) and fly-tipping (55%). These findings reflect the proportions of case types currently received by the ASB Service. Most of the

respondents (55%) reported the incident to either Oxford City Council (39%) or Thames Valley Police (35%).

9. Most respondents felt that the policy standards were appropriate (66%) with email (58%) and phone calls (40%) the most popular communication method. A majority of respondents (66%) supported contact every 2 weeks unless agreed otherwise, and 71) agreed with the requirement to contact the complainant within 5 working days, with the majority believing this was important (94%).
10. For Category 1 cases involving hate crime, safeguarding or threatening behaviour 47% of respondents felt 3 days for an initial contact was a suitable time period, with 43% disagreeing.
11. It was felt very or important that people are informed of case closure (95%) and 54% were willing to participate in mediation.
12. The majority completing the survey were female (60%). For age of those completing it was 45-54 years (20%). Council tenants (41%) were the highest tenure type completing the survey.
13. Different methods were used in promoting the consultation including regular media releases and a video by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Arshad. This was widely circulated on social media platforms and promoted by Thames Valley Police and Office Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
14. The consultation link was included in Council publications including Your Oxford, Tenants in Touch, and the Oxford City Centre Newsletter to local businesses. Locality Officers disseminated the consultation to local community groups and contacts.
15. The Council's Tenant Involvement Team brought together a Tenant ASB Policy Review Group who reviewed the policy and its implementation. Most of suggestions and recommendations from the group were included within the new proposed policy (Appendix 3).
16. A fuller detailed breakdown of the consultation metrics is included in Appendix 4.

Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023

17. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 Neighbourhood and Community Standards require the Council to work with local partners to help tenants live in a safe, clean, and well-maintained neighbourhood and make sure they feel secure in their home.
18. This Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures (Appendix 5) are one part of our commitment to delivering the Consumer Standards requirements:
    a. Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
    b. Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they deter, and tackle hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.

c. Registered providers must enable ASB and hate incidents to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case.

d. Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB and hate incidents, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them.

e. Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB and hate incidents, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance.

19. Through our tenant engagement processes we will continue to work collaboratively with tenants to develop our approach to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour and improve our public spaces.

Safeguarding

20. The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults with care and support needs is often an element in anti-social behaviour cases. The policy recognises how the investigation of anti-social behaviour cases supports and is supported by the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

Policy review

21. The policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle.

Financial Implications

22. All financial implications are covered within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

23. The policy assists in fulfilling our duties under Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which "without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area."

24. The policy fulfils the Council's duty under Section 218A, Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, requiring local authority housing providers to formulate and publish anti-social behaviour policies and procedures.

25. The Council has a range of legal powers` to deal with environmental anti-social behaviour such as noise, graffiti, litter, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. These responsibilities derive from various statutes and case law, but in particular from the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Environmental Implications

26. The policy makes a clear statement on the council's approach to tackling environmental crimes by using available powers. The implementation of this policy does not have any negative impact upon the environment.

Health and safety

27. All officers carrying out functions relating to the ASB Policy will adhere to the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, team risk assessments, personal safety training and ensure correct personal protective equipment is worn when necessary.

Equalities Impact

28. The consultation did not give rise to a negative impact of those with protected characteristics and therefore supports the assessment that the impact of the policy is likely to be positive rather than negative. The policy focuses on support and protection of victims of anti-social behaviour and has a positive impact on people with protected characteristics.

29. The impact of decisions on those with protected characteristics, whether they are the complainant or alleged subject of anti-social behaviour, will be assessed, considered and mitigated where possible on a case-by-case basis by officers and throughout a live case.

30. Disability through mental illness being the most common protected characteristic, the policy requires officers to identify where possible any support needs and seek to address them in partnership with third sector and statutory partners (Appendix 6).

Level of risk

31. ASB Policy Risk Register can be found in Appendix 7.

Report author	Richard Adams
Job title	Community Safety Service Manager
Service area or department	Community Safety
Telephone	01865 252283
e-mail	rjadams@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:
N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2026-29

DRAFT

DRAFT

Contents

Contents

1. Scope and purpose of this policy document....3
2. The Council's responsibilities....3
3. Concerns for children, young people and vulnerable adults....3
4. Reporting Anti-social behaviour....3
5. What is anti-social behaviour?....4
6. Anti-social behaviour categories....5
7. Policy principles....6
8. Service Standards....8
9. The Council's role as a landlord....8
10. Data analysis....9
11. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014....9
12. Section 218A, Housing Act 1996 requirements....9
13. Comments, compliments and complaints....10
14. Vexatious complaints....10
15. Other relevant policies....10

DRAFT

1. Scope and purpose of this policy document

This is the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour **policy** document. It tells you what the Council means by 'anti-social behaviour' (ASB) and sets out the principles the council applies when responding to a report of anti-social behaviour. It explains how the Council responds when people experiencing ASB contact us for help and details the service quality the Council will provide.

2. The Council's responsibilities

Oxford City Council believes that no-one should tolerate anti-social behaviour. The Council works in partnership with other agencies and will use appropriate tools and powers available to local authorities to address anti-social behaviour. The policy sets out our approach to fulfilling our duties as:

A Responsible Authority of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act requires the Council to work with the police and other agencies to reduce crime and disorder in Oxford. The Council makes a significant contribution to dealing with anti-social behaviour of all kinds and undertakes both investigations and prevention activities.

A landlord because the Council has a duty to respond to ASB affecting the properties we manage. Our landlord duties and powers complement the duties and powers we have to deal with anti-social behaviour by non-council tenants.

An environmental protection champion: the Council has a range of legal powers to deal with environmental anti-social behaviour such as noise, graffiti, litter, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. These responsibilities derive from various statutes and case law, but in particular from the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The Council will not normally be the lead investigating agency for cases in other social landlords' and private landlord's properties. We may offer support and assistance using available powers and fulfil our duties to investigate statutory nuisances.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Oxford City Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/corporate-enforcement-policy

3. Concerns for children, young people and vulnerable adults

Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Policy sets out how officers respond to a report of abuse or neglect of a child, young person, or adult with unmet care and support needs. It is not uncommon for safeguarding concerns to arise at the initial report stage or during an anti-social behaviour investigation.

The requirements of the Safeguarding Policy take primacy over this policy and these safeguarding responsibilities will influence the investigation of ASB cases.

4. Reporting Anti-social behaviour

DRAFT

- The Council is not an emergency response service. Incidents where there is an immediate risk of harm to person or property must be reported to the police or other appropriate emergency service.
- Incidents of a criminal nature must be reported to the police, for example, drug dealing. The Council work closely with the police and will consider criminal behaviours and information from criminal investigations when investigating an anti-social behaviour case.
- We will not disclose a complainant's personal details to the alleged perpetrator of the behaviour without their consent. The source of a complaint will be advised prior to a contact with the subject of the complaint.
- The Council will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. It is important for us to be able to speak to a complainant about the behaviour they are concerned about. The Council may record the report for intelligence purposes.
- The Council rely on evidence by the complainant and from other sources. Without necessary evidence the response to a complaint can be very limited or unachievable.
- Many incidents of anti-social behaviour can be resolved by the parties involved with no involvement by the Council or other agency. The Council will encourage this course of action, including mediation.

5. What is anti-social behaviour?

5.1. Oxford City Council considers anti-social behaviour to be:

- Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises; or
- Any act that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons; or
- Using or threatening to use Council property for unlawful purposes.

5.2. Determination to investigate.

The Council will decide whether to investigate a complaint of anti-social behaviour by assessing:

- the level of evidence.
- the public interest use of officer time and funds to pursue an investigation.
- if it is reasonable and proportionate to open a case.
- if the complaints are vexatious.
- the prospect of successful action.
- on the conclusion of an investigation, if enforcement action is in the public interest.

5.3. The Council will not investigate:

- Children playing in a public place or a garden.
- Neighbour complaints regarding boundary disputes, shared driveway disputes, location of waste receptacles, cooking smells, smoking and untidy foliage in gardens.

DRAFT

- Noise from vehicles on the highway carrying out their routine activities, noise from emergency service vehicles, aircraft, helicopters or other motorised airborne vehicles and noise from demonstrations.
- Reasonable living noise in domestic settings such as lawn mowing, household DIY, crying, loud talking, toilets flushing, sexualised noises, banging doors, noise from flooring and floorboards and noise from household appliances. Where poor insulation is suspected, the landlord should be contacted.
- Cycling, skateboarding, or riding e-scooters on the pavement and reports of inconveniently or illegally parked vehicles. Obstruction of the highway and pavements should be reported to the Highways Authority or to the police.
- Alcohol consumption in a public space that is not causing anti-social behaviour.
- Sporadic noise from people moving through public spaces.
- Flying drones. This should be reported to the Civil Aviation Authority or the police.
- People who are rough sleeping and not causing any anti-social behaviour.
- Complaints regarding the positioning of domestic CCTV cameras and video doorbells.
- If the complaint is over 12 months old, if there is insufficient evidence or it is considered vexatious. Exceptions to this may include if the complaint involves a safeguarding concern.

6. Anti-social behaviour categories

Anti-social behaviour cases are categorised to determine the Council's response time as described below.

Category 1	**Target time for first contact with victim or referrer: three working days**

Definition

1. Behaviour that presents a risk of serious harm to individuals or the neighbourhood, which may include violence, serious threats of violence or other criminal activity.
2. Any complaint where there have been previous incidents, and it appears to the case officer that a greater risk has developed or may be developing.

Category 1 includes the following behaviours:

- Hate related incidents (hostility towards a person's race, sex or ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, or transgender identity)
- Physical violence and threats of harm
- Child or adult safeguarding including cuckooing
- Domestic abuse
- Kerb crawling and aggressive, predatory and intrusive sexual behaviour
- Serious harassment, intimidation and threatening behaviour

DRAFT

- Racist, hate related or other offensive or inciteful graffiti will be either covered or removed within one working day of receipt of a report. Other non-urgent graffiti will be removed as per Service Level Agreements.
- Threats to Oxford City Council or Oxford Direct Services staff
- Drug possession or supply. The police take the lead on investigations. Where relevant, the Council will support the police in resolving cases.

Category 2	**Target time for first contact with victim or referrer: within five working days**

Definition:

1. Behaviour that is causing harassment, alarm or distress not listed in Category 1.

Category two includes:

- Noise disturbances due to unreasonable behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Allegations of sex working and sexual acts
- Other forms of anti-social behaviour between two or more parties
- Properties and gardens that may harbour pests or present a public health risk
- Litter, incorrect refuse disposal from domestic and commercial properties, fly tipping, flyposting and dog fouling
- Nuisance car repairs on the highway
- Damage to Council-owned property, land or vehicles

7. Policy principles

7.1. No one should have to suffer from ASB.

We will:

- make people aware of what anti-social behaviour is.
- publicise and promote our ASB service.
- We will provide information to the source on how an ASB case is investigated and where to access additional support.
- encourage people to report ASB and make it possible for them to do this using a range of reporting methods.
- respond to each reported case of ASB within our target times.
- undertake a risk assessment and victims charter when appropriate, that sets out how we will keep the complainant informed of progress and possible enforcement powers.
- Take a harm centred and trauma informed approach to the case, recognising the circumstances of both the source and subject of a complaint.
- We will assess the needs of both the source and the subject and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

7.2. Reports of ASB will be treated seriously and dealt with professionally.

DRAFT

We will:

- triage reports and take action in accordance with our service standards.
- treat all reports as personal or sensitive information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation and not disclose personal information unless with the person's consent or permitted to by the relevant legislation.
- share information with other organisations for the prevention or detection of crime or disorder, in accordance with data protection laws and information sharing agreements.
- encourage criminal activities to be reported to the police.
- log each anti-social behaviour report and give each case a unique reference number and named case officer.
- fully investigate the complaint, which will usually involve interviewing alleged perpetrators and witnesses.
- refer cases between the different departments of the Council and to other agencies, as necessary.
- ensure cases are not open longer than necessary.
- respond promptly to complaints about the service.
- explain our reasons if we take no action, and suggest other alternative courses of action, including private legal proceedings.
- explain to the complainants how their evidence will be used and their role in possible court proceedings.

7.3. ASB will be addressed firmly, fairly, proportionately and holistically.

We will:

- make our best efforts to identify if a source or subject of a complaint is a vulnerable person and adjust our approach as necessary.
- prioritise responses to the most serious cases, based on the details of the case, taking any necessary early action to protect people and property.
- investigate the circumstances and seek to understand all the facts of any matter reported to us.
- seek always to resolve cases at the lowest level of intervention, using the legal tools and powers available to us according to our professional judgment.
- provide information in other languages and formats when necessary.
- with the consent of the people involved, refer suitable cases to mediation.

7.4. We will work with partners in order to deliver an effective ASB service for our communities.

We will:

- work with social housing providers, private landlords, letting agents, universities and businesses, police, local authorities, health services and

DRAFT

other partners to provide advice and support as required so that these organisations can act confidently to prevent or tackle ASB making use of their own resources.

- participate in multi-agency case conferences and problem-solving meetings
- participate in relevant ASB prevention initiatives.
- play a full part as a lead member of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

7.5. We will deliver a high-quality service

We will:

- ensure that staff receive relevant ASB, equality, diversity and inclusion, domestic abuse, mental health and safeguarding training.
- train staff in ASB policies and procedures.
- obtain citizen feedback through surveys of users of the ASB service provided by Oxford City Council to rate their satisfaction with the service.
- act on any negative feedback to improve our service when appropriate.
- Learn from ASB Case Reviews to inform practice.

8. Service Standards

We will:

- Contact the source of Category 1 complaints within 3 working days.
- Contact the source of Category 2 complaints within 5 working days.
- Complete a Risk Assessment where an individual is the target of the behaviour.
- Complete a Victim's Charter where an individual is the target of the behaviour.
- Contact with the source of the complaint how and when we have agreed with them under the Victim's Charter.
- Case officers will review cases every two weeks.
- Inform the complainant when the case has been closed.

9. The Council's role as a landlord

The **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (on GOV.UK)** was introduced to improve the lives of people living in social housing. The new Consumer Standards set out what tenants can expect from Oxford City Council as a landlord.

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard require us to work with local partners to help you live in a safe, clean, and well-maintained neighbourhood and make sure you feel secure in your home.

DRAFT

Through our tenant engagement processes we will work collaboratively with tenants to continue to develop our approach to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour and improve our public spaces.

We work closely with the police and other criminal justice agencies, other housing providers, Oxfordshire Local Authorities and support agencies to address anti-social behaviour. Oxford City Council teams who have a role include our Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team, Community Response Team, Green and Blue Spaces Team, Landlord Services and Housing Needs teams, Property Services and Oxford Direct Services.

This Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures are our commitment to delivering the Consumer Standard and the specific requirements:

- Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
- Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they deter, and tackle hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
- Registered providers must enable ASB and hate incidents to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case.
- Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB and hate incidents, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them.
- Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB and hate incidents, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance.

10. Data analysis

The Council will analyse reported ASB data and other partner data to identify ASB trends and locations where types of ASB are more prevalent. The Council will use these insights and feedback from our communities to address the ASB issues with our partners.

11. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides local authorities, social housing providers and partners with a range of powers to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Act introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review, a mechanism for victims of anti-social behaviour to request a review of their case where there has been no effective action. More details can be found on the Oxford City Council website.

12. Section 218A, Housing Act 1996 requirements

This document fulfils the requirements of section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) with regard to the publication of the ASB procedures of a local authority landlord.

DRAFT

This policy underpins Oxford City Council's statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which places a legal duty to work in partnership to tackle the city's crime and disorder priorities. Section 17 of that Act states: "each authority needs to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder and to ensure services give due regard to crime and disorder."

13. Comments, compliments and complaints

Oxford City Council strives to excel in citizen satisfaction. We welcome feedback where our staff, services, policies and procedures have exceeded expectations.

To ensure we receive your feedback, either positive or negative, please use our on-line form that can be found here or call our Contact Centre on 01865 249811.

14. Vexatious complaints

Where the Council has reason to believe that a complaint is false, malicious or unreasonable, we will consider taking appropriate action against the complainant under the Council's Vexatious Complaints Procedure. Vexatious complaints cause distress to the alleged party and places unnecessary burdens on Council and partner resources.

15. Other relevant policies

Other relevant Oxford City Council policies are:

- Corporate Enforcement Policy
- Domestic Abuse for Service Users Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure

DRAFT

DRAFT

Community Safety Service
Oxford City Council
Oxford Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford, OX1 1BX

XXXXX 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Consultation

https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/community-services/anti-social-behaviour-policy-consultation

This report was created on Tuesday 05 August 2025 at 10:18

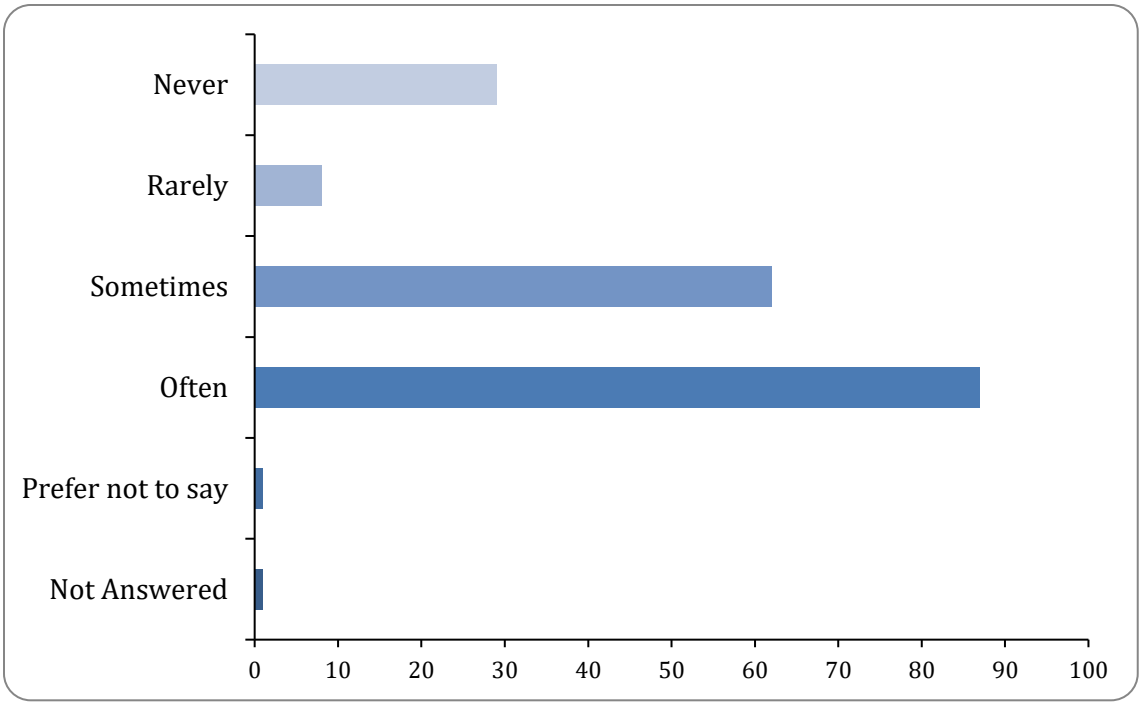
The activity ran from 09/06/2025 to 04/08/2025

Responses to this survey: **188**

1: Have you experienced any anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the last 12 months?

ASB experience

There were 187 responses to this part of the question.



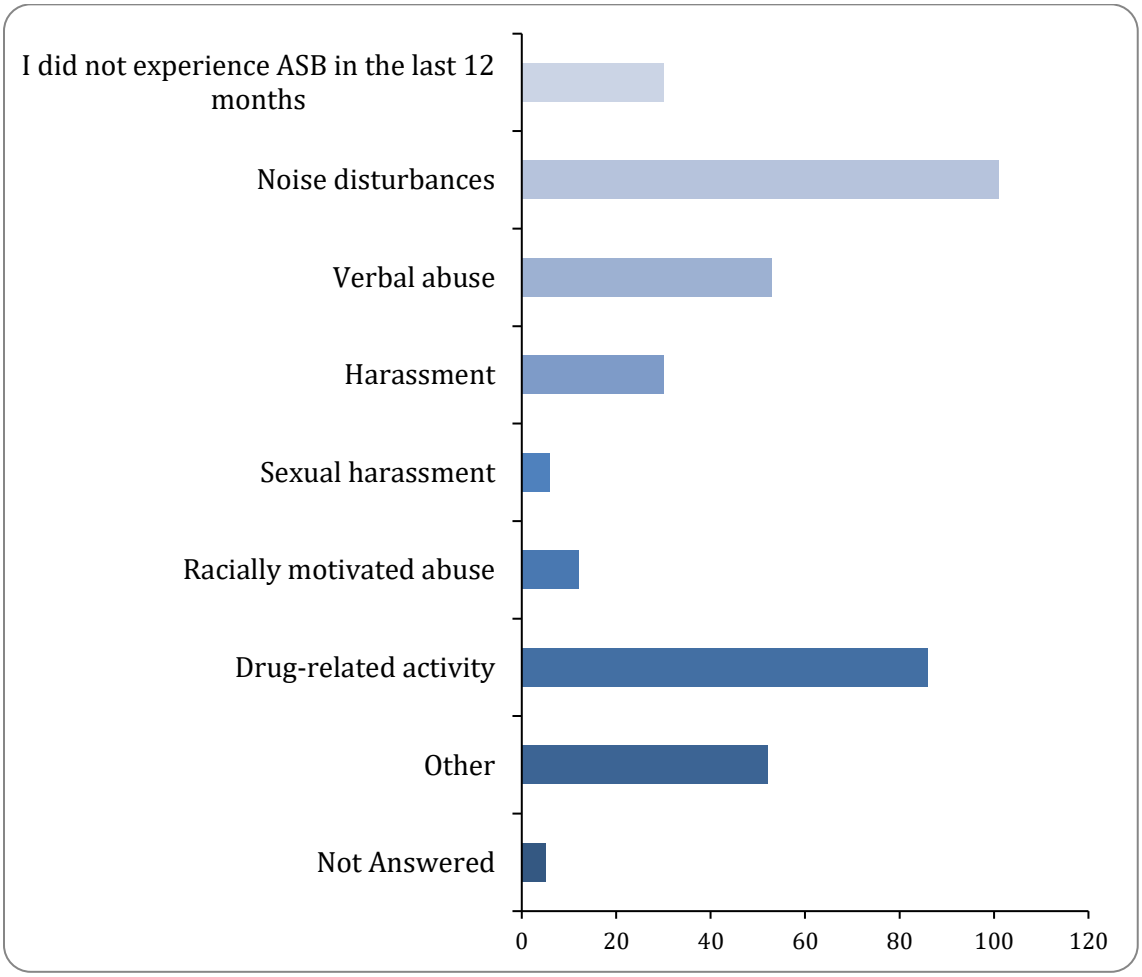
Option	Total	Percent
Never	29	15.43%
Rarely	8	4.26%
Sometimes	62	32.98%
Often	87	46.28%
Prefer not to say	1	0.53%

Not Answered	1	0.53%

2: Which type(s) of ASB have you experienced in the last 12 months?

ASB incidents

There were 183 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
I did not experience ASB in the last 12 months	30	15.96%
Noise disturbances	101	53.72%
Verbal abuse	53	28.19%
Harassment	30	15.96%
Sexual harassment	6	3.19%
Racially motivated abuse	12	6.38%
Drug-related activity	86	45.74%

Other	52	27.66%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	5	2.66%

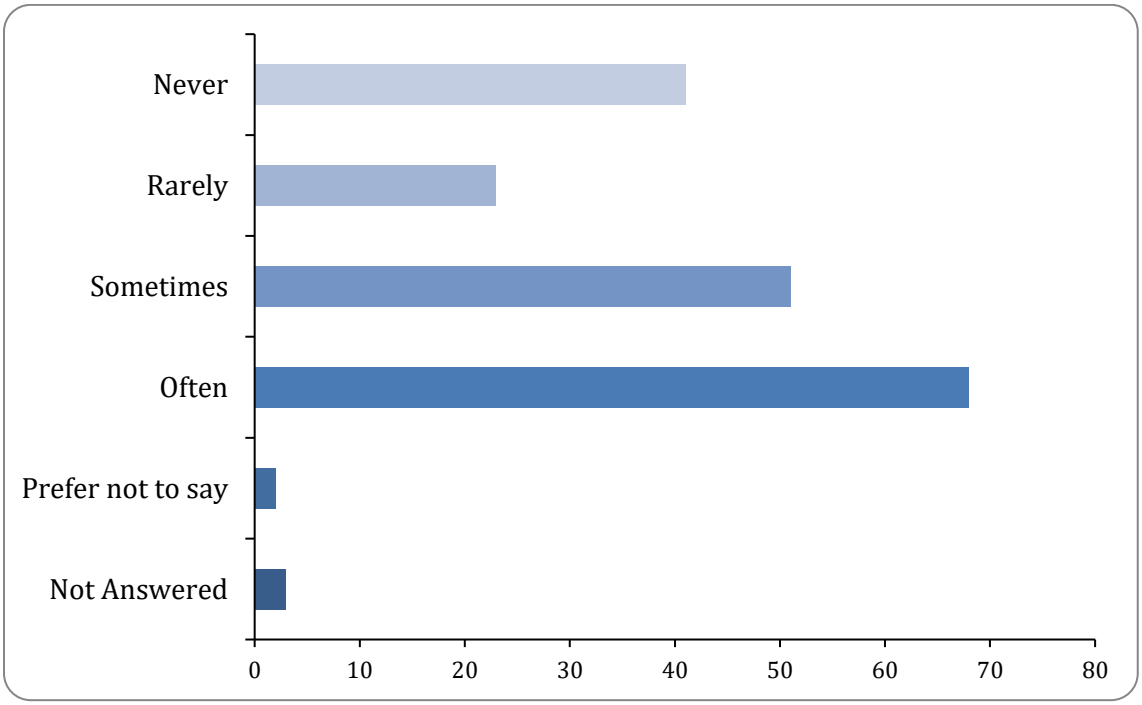
If you selected 'other', please specify below:

There were 51 responses to this part of the question.

3: Have you experienced environmental crime in the last 12 months?

Environmental crime

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.

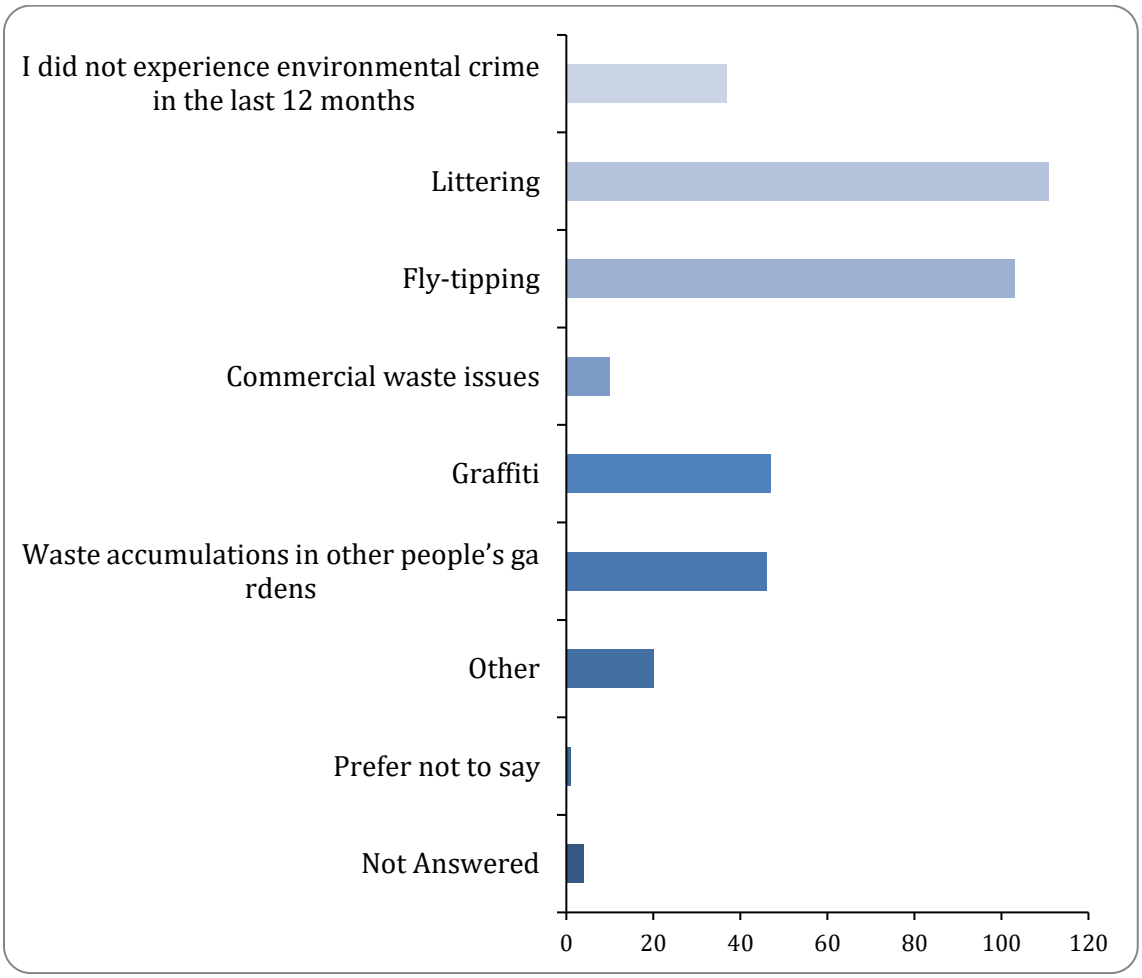


Option	Total	Percent
Never	41	21.81%
Rarely	23	12.23%
Sometimes	51	27.13%
Often	68	36.17%
Prefer not to say	2	1.06%
Not Answered	3	1.60%

4: Which type(s) of environmental crime have you experienced in the last 12 months?

environmental crime incidents

There were 184 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
I did not experience environmental crime in the last 12 months	37	19.68%

Littering	111	59.04%
Fly-tipping	103	54.79%
Commercial waste issues	10	5.32%
Graffiti	47	25.00%
Waste accumulations in other people's gardens	46	24.47%
Other	20	10.64%
Prefer not to say	1	0.53%
Not Answered	4	2.13%

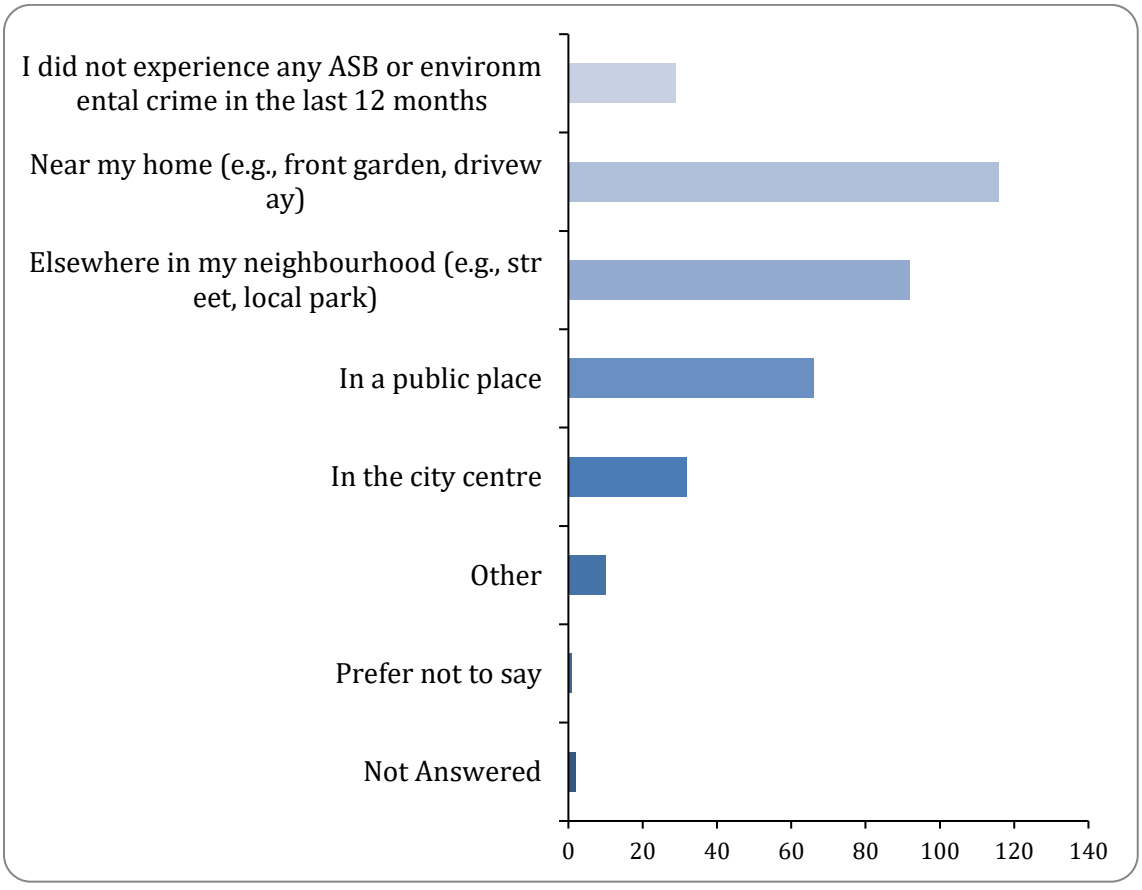
If you selected 'other', please specify below:

There were 25 responses to this part of the question.

5: Where did you experience these ASB or environmental crime incidents?

where did you experience

There were 186 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
I did not experience any ASB or environmental crime in the last 12 months	29	15.43%
Near my home (e.g., front garden, driveway)	116	61.70%
Elsewhere in my neighbourhood (e.g., street, local park)	92	48.94%
In a public place	66	35.11%
In the city centre	32	17.02%
Other	10	5.32%
Prefer not to say	1	0.53%
Not Answered	2	1.06%

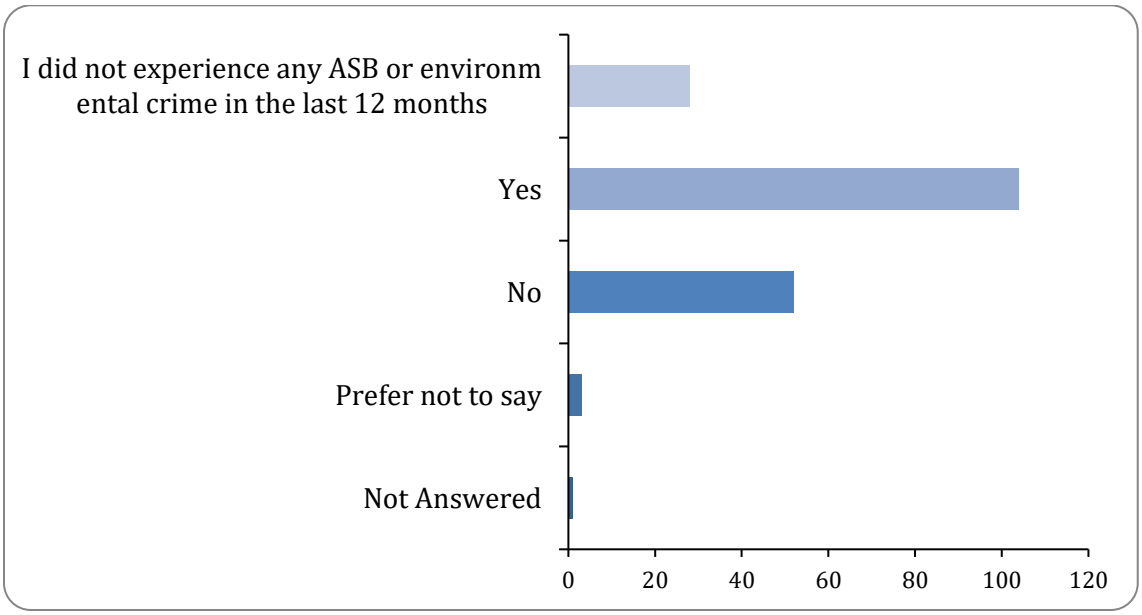
If you selected 'other', please specify below:

There were 13 responses to this part of the question.

6: Did you report any of these incidents?

report

There were 187 responses to this part of the question.



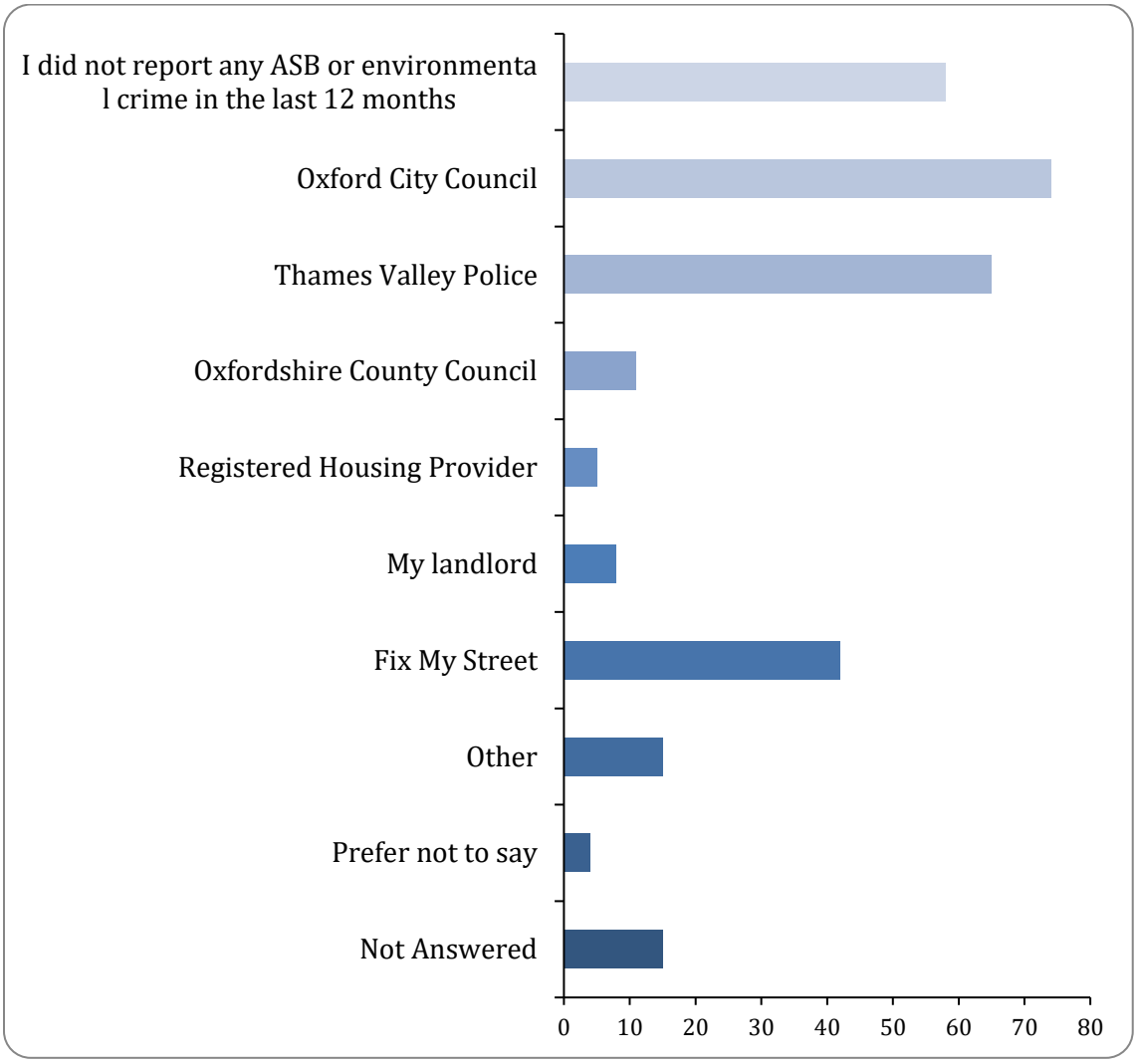
Option	Total	Percent
I did not experience any ASB or environmental crime in the last 12 months	28	14.89%

Yes	104	55.32%
No	52	27.66%
Prefer not to say	3	1.60%
Not Answered	1	0.53%

7: If you have reported the incident(s), who did you report it to?

who did you report to

There were 173 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent

I did not report any ASB or environmental crime in the last 12 months	58	30.85%
Oxford City Council	74	39.36%
Thames Valley Police	65	34.57%
Oxfordshire County Council	11	5.85%
Registered Housing Provider	5	2.66%
My landlord	8	4.26%
Fix My Street	42	22.34%
Other	15	7.98%
Prefer not to say	4	2.13%
Not Answered	15	7.98%

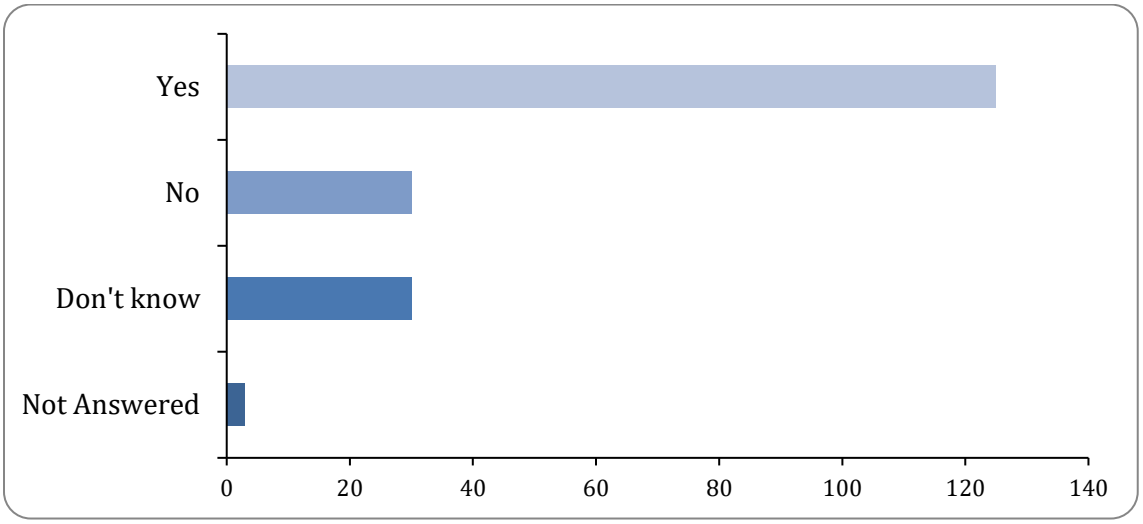
If you selected 'other', please specify below:

There were 18 responses to this part of the question.

1: Do you feel the five Principles are appropriate?

5 principles

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	125	66.49%
No	30	15.96%
Don't know	30	15.96%
Not Answered	3	1.60%

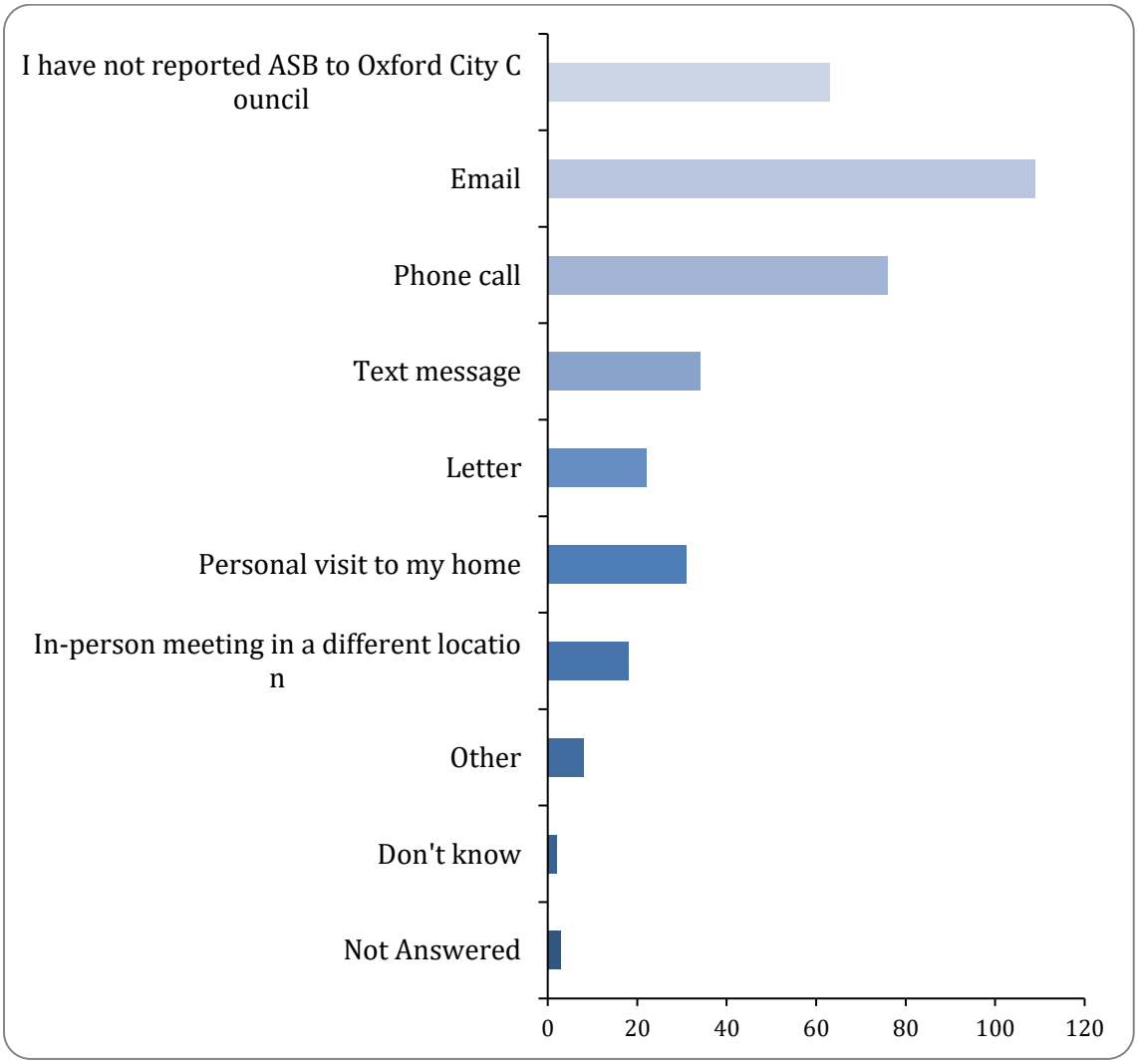
If you selected 'no', please explain below:

There were 27 responses to this part of the question.

2: If you reported ASB to us, which methods of communication would you prefer the most?

communication methods

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent

I have not reported ASB to Oxford City Council	63	33.51%
Email	109	57.98%
Phone call	76	40.43%
Text message	34	18.09%
Letter	22	11.70%
Personal visit to my home	31	16.49%
In-person meeting in a different location	18	9.57%
Other	8	4.26%
Don't know	2	1.06%
Not Answered	3	1.60%

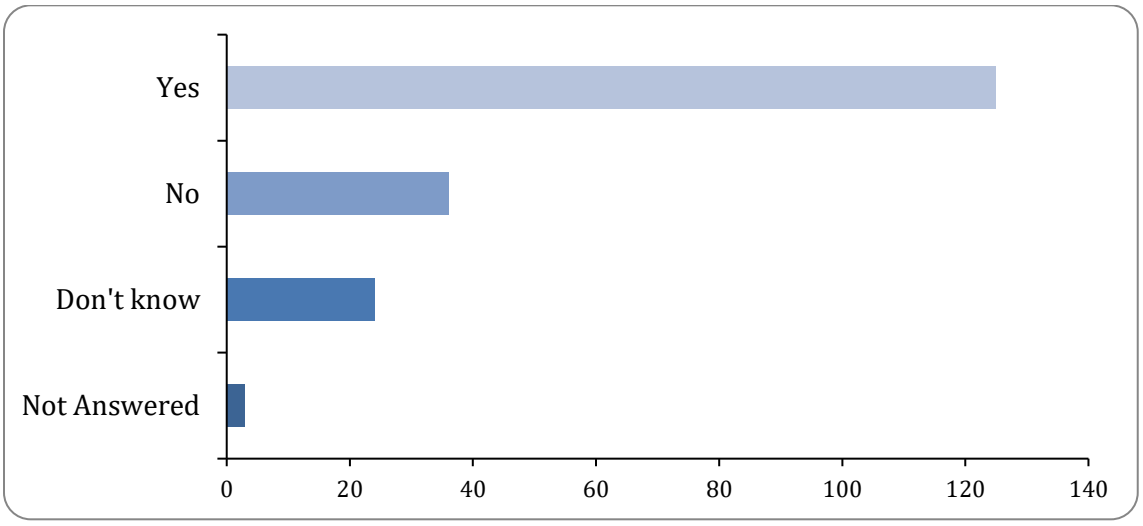
If you selected 'other', please specify below:

There were 10 responses to this part of the question.

3: Our standard is to contact a complainant every 2 weeks during a live case (unless otherwise agreed). Do you feel this approach is suitable?

contact approach

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	125	66.49%
No	36	19.15%
Don't know	24	12.77%

Not Answered	3	1.60%

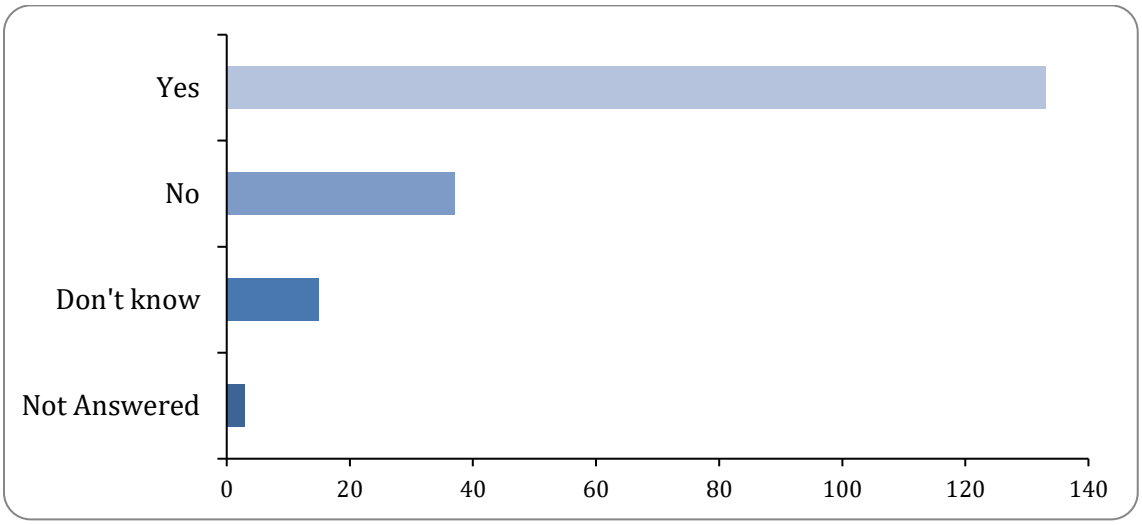
If you selected 'no', please explain below:

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.

4: The Council is not an emergency service, but we believe it is important to contact the complainant with 5 working days (Monday – Friday) of the initial report. Is this a reasonable timescale?

contact timescale

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	133	70.74%
No	37	19.68%
Don't know	15	7.98%
Not Answered	3	1.60%

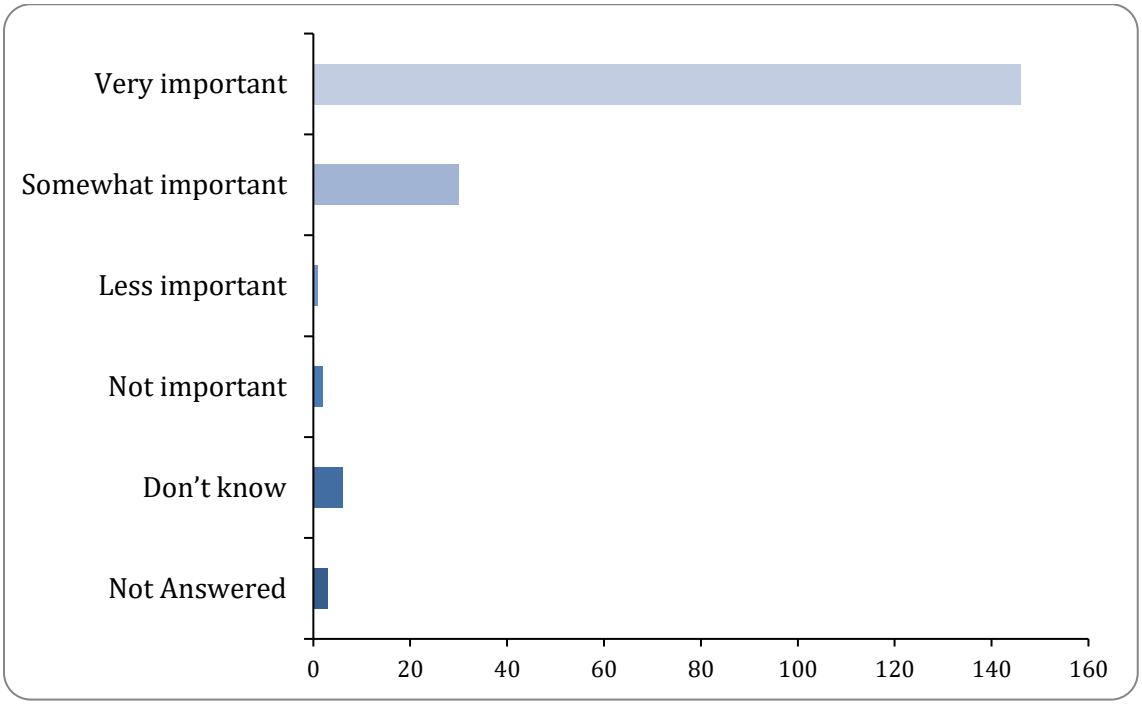
If you selected 'no', please explain below:

There were 37 responses to this part of the question.

5: How important is it to you that we contact the complainant within 5 working days of the initial report?

importance of 5 days contact

There were 185 responses to this part of the question.

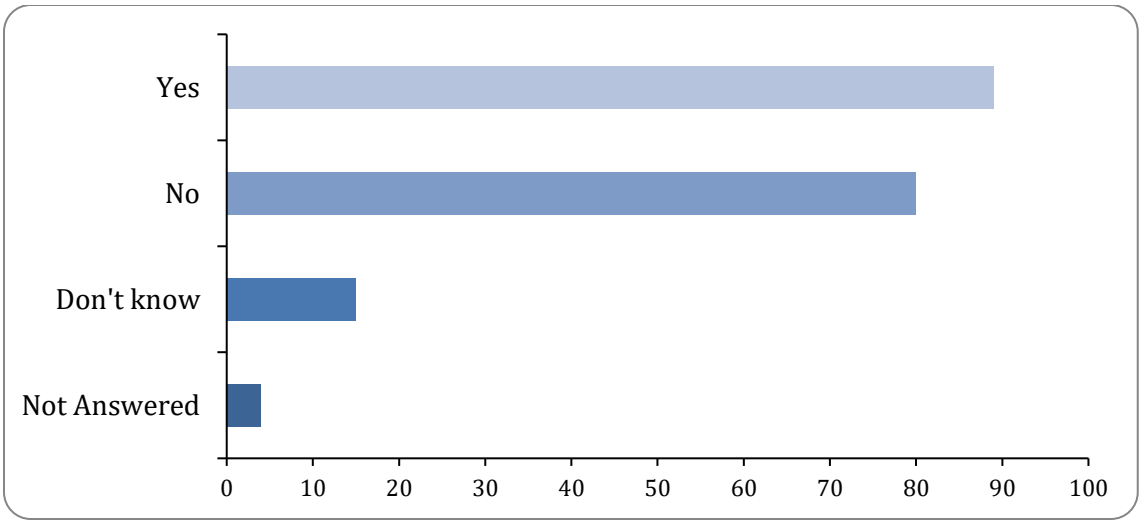


Option	Total	Percent
Very important	146	77.66%
Somewhat important	30	15.96%
Less important	1	0.53%
Not important	2	1.06%
Don't know	6	3.19%
Not Answered	3	1.60%

6: In cases involving violence, hate crime, child safeguarding, or threatening behaviour, we aim to contact the complainant within 3 working days of the initial report. Is this a reasonable timescale?

3 days contact

There were 184 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	89	47.34%
No	80	42.55%
Don't know	15	7.98%
Not Answered	4	2.13%

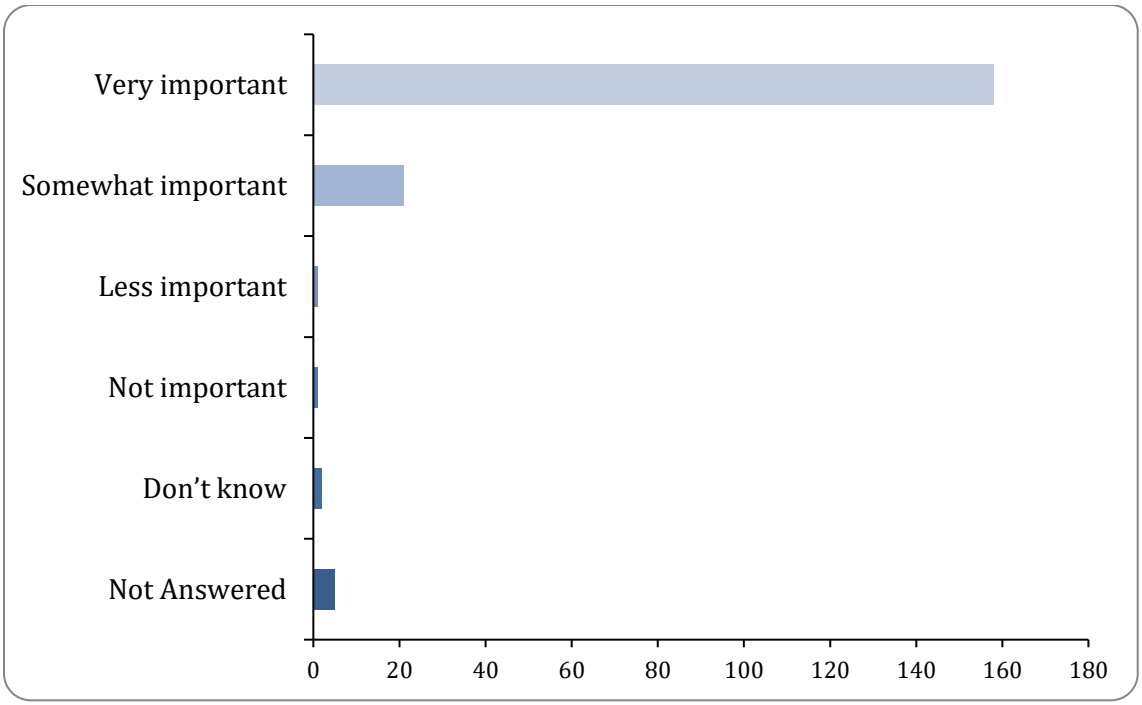
If you selected 'no', please explain below:

There were 66 responses to this part of the question.

7: How important is it that the complainant is informed when the case is closed?

closure contact importance

There were 183 responses to this part of the question.

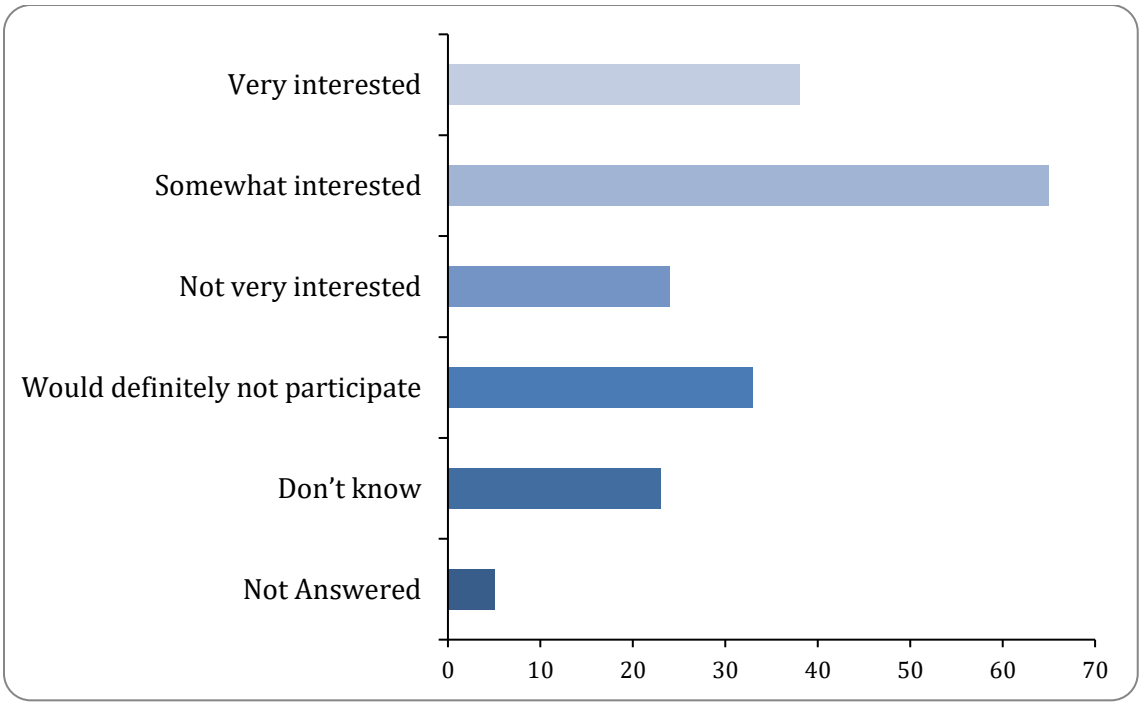


Option	Total	Percent
Very important	158	84.04%
Somewhat important	21	11.17%
Less important	1	0.53%
Not important	1	0.53%
Don't know	2	1.06%
Not Answered	5	2.66%

8: One way to resolve neighbour disputes is for people to speak to each other about their concerns. This may involve a mediation service to help with the case. If you reported anti-social behaviour to the Council, how willing would you be to explore mediation as an option?

mediation

There were 183 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Very interested	38	20.21%
Somewhat interested	65	34.57%
Not very interested	24	12.77%
Would definitely not participate	33	17.55%
Don't know	23	12.23%
Not Answered	5	2.66%

1: What is your postcode?

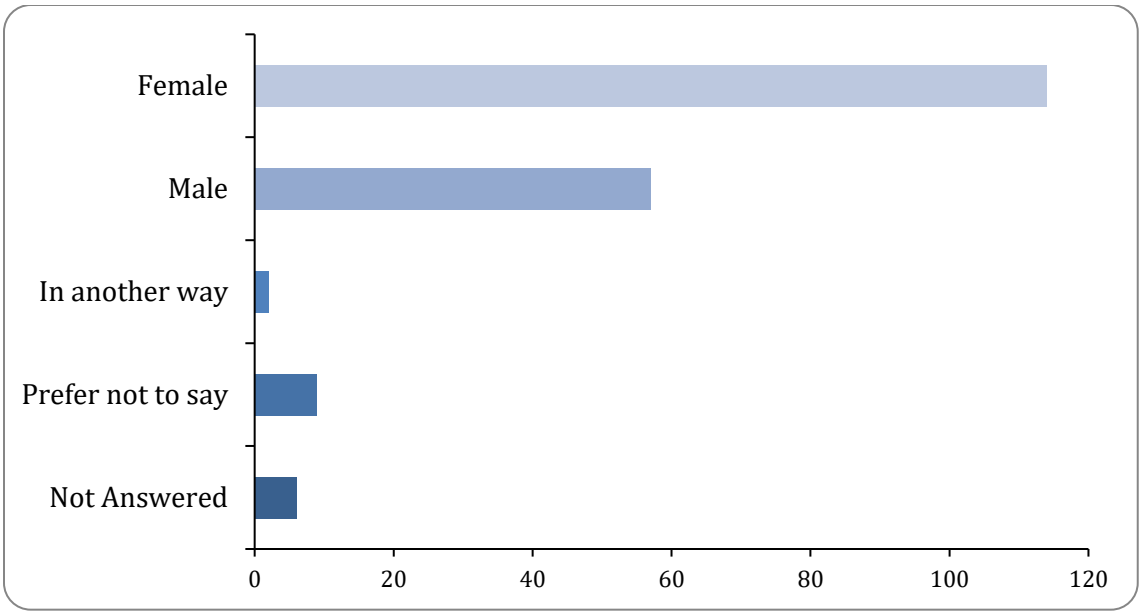
Postcode

There were 174 responses to this part of the question.

2: Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

Sex

There were 182 responses to this part of the question.

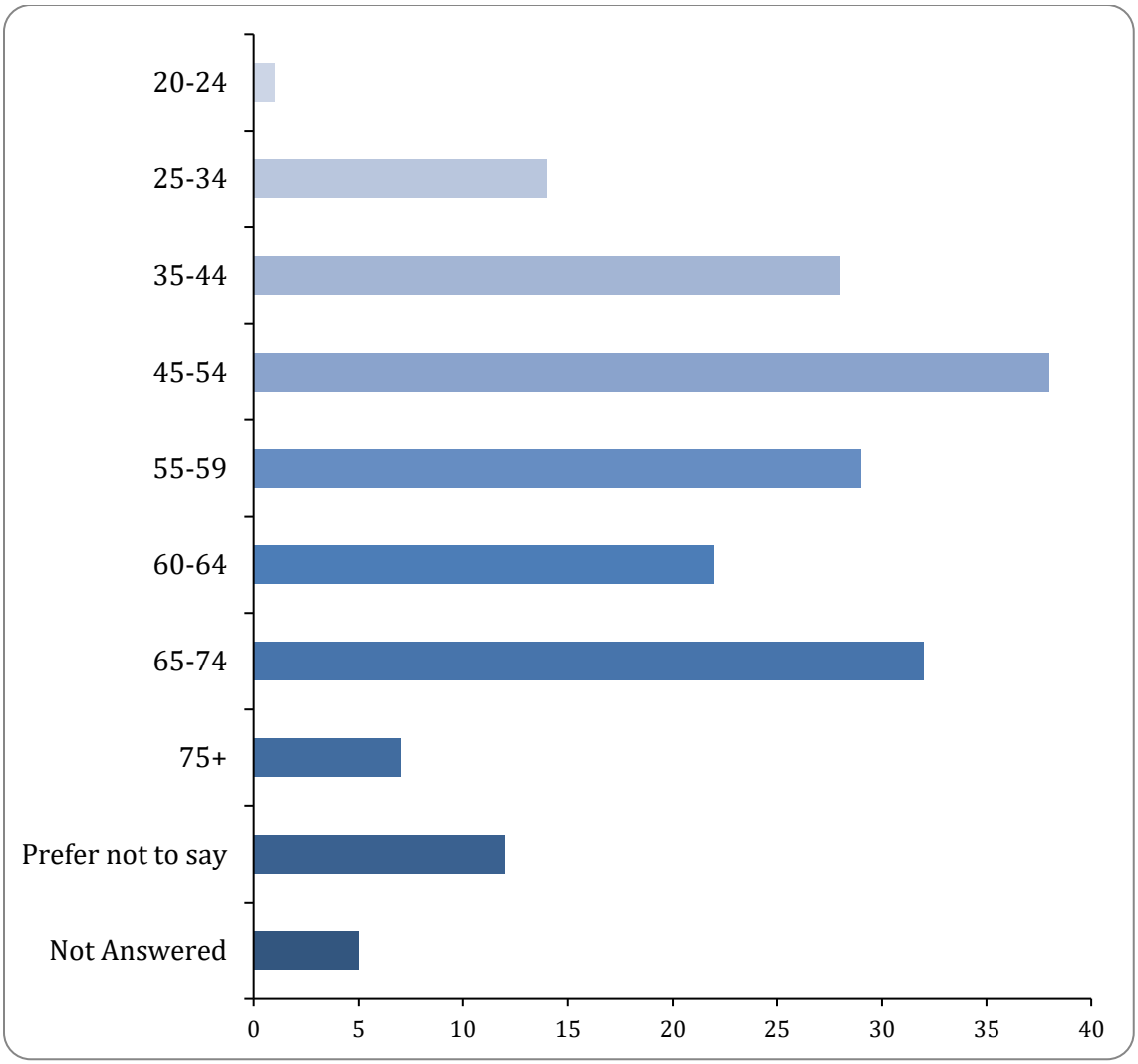


Option	Total	Percent
Female	114	60.64%
Male	57	30.32%
In another way	2	1.06%
Prefer not to say	9	4.79%
Not Answered	6	3.19%

3: Which age bracket do you fall into?

Age

There were 183 responses to this part of the question.

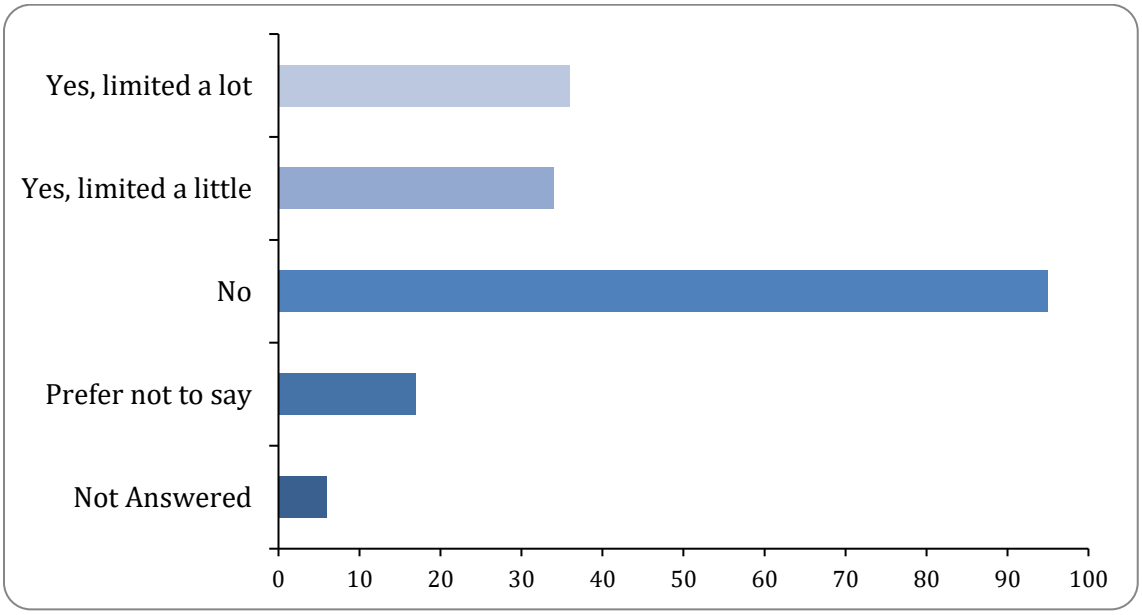


Option	Total	Percent
Under 16	0	0.00%
16-19	0	0.00%
20-24	1	0.53%
25-34	14	7.45%
35-44	28	14.89%
45-54	38	20.21%
55-59	29	15.43%
60-64	22	11.70%
65-74	32	17.02%
75+	7	3.72%
Prefer not to say	12	6.38%
Not Answered	5	2.66%

4: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Disability

There were 182 responses to this part of the question.

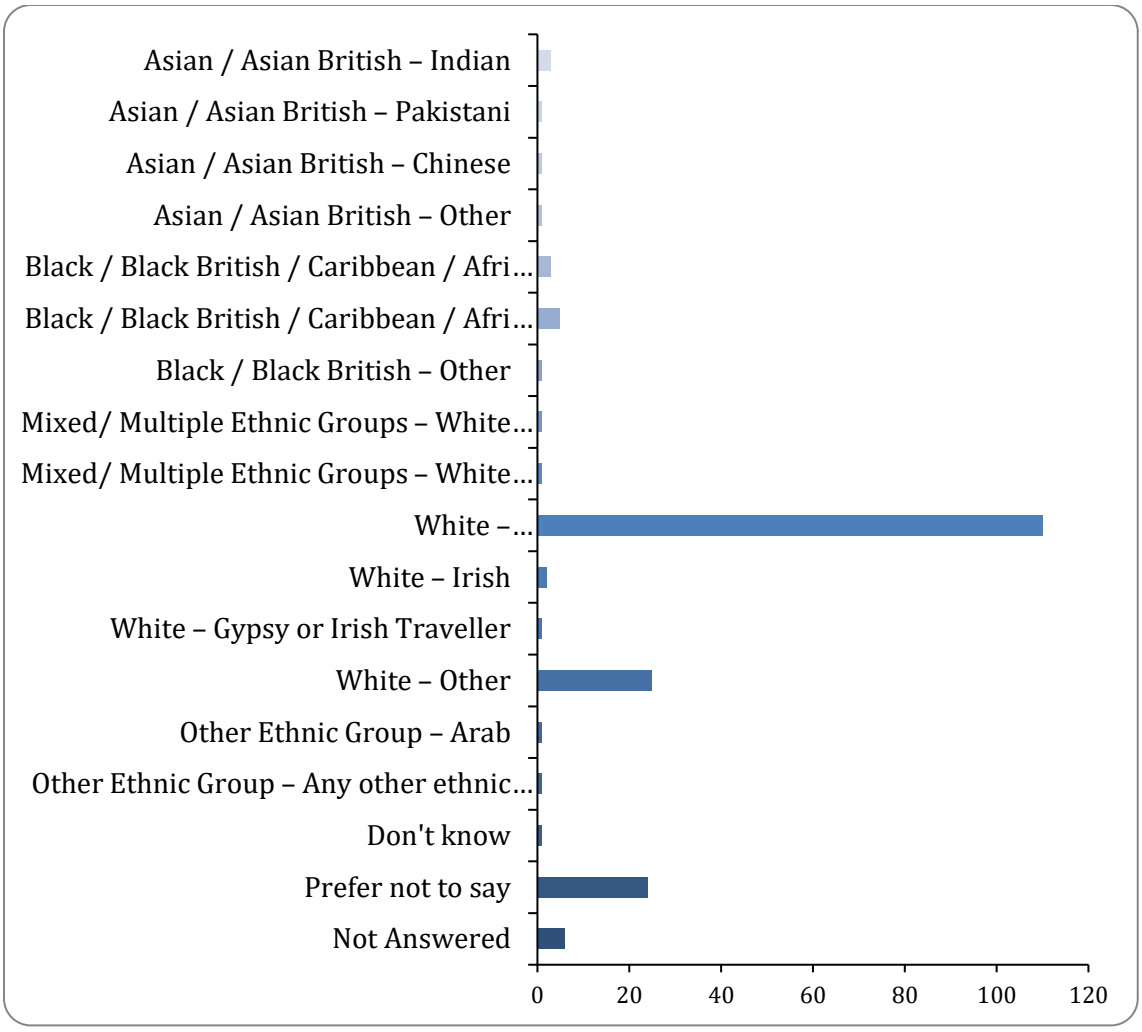


Option	Total	Percent
Yes, limited a lot	36	19.15%
Yes, limited a little	34	18.09%
No	95	50.53%
Prefer not to say	17	9.04%
Not Answered	6	3.19%

5: Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?

Ethnicity

There were 182 responses to this part of the question.



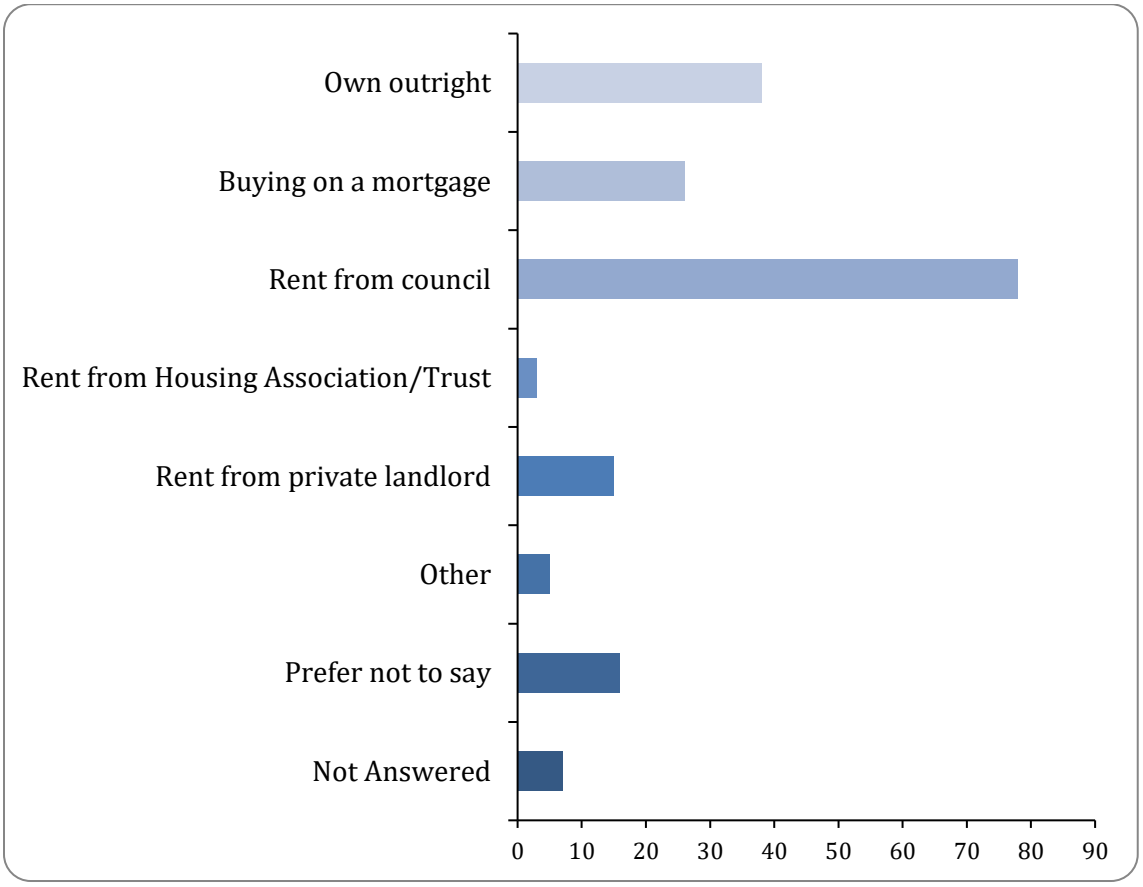
Option	Total	Percent
Asian / Asian British – Indian	3	1.60%
Asian / Asian British – Pakistani	1	0.53%
Asian / Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Asian / Asian British – Chinese	1	0.53%
Asian / Asian British – Other	1	0.53%
Black / Black British / Caribbean / African – Caribbean	3	1.60%
Black / Black British / Caribbean / African – African	5	2.66%
Black / Black British – Other	1	0.53%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups – White and Black Caribbean	1	0.53%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups – White and Black African	0	0.00%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups – White and Asian	1	0.53%

Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other	0	0.00%
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	110	58.51%
White – Irish	2	1.06%
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0.53%
White – Roma	0	0.00%
White – Other	25	13.30%
Other Ethnic Group – Arab	1	0.53%
Other Ethnic Group – Any other ethnic group	1	0.53%
Don't know	1	0.53%
Prefer not to say	24	12.77%
Not Answered	6	3.19%

6: How does your household occupy your current home?

tenure

There were 181 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Own outright	38	20.21%
Buying on a mortgage	26	13.83%
Rent from council	78	41.49%
Rent from Housing Association/Trust	3	1.60%
Rent from private landlord	15	7.98%
Other	5	2.66%
Don't know	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	16	8.51%
Not Answered	7	3.72%

If you selected 'other', please specify:

There were 7 responses to this part of the question.

This page is intentionally left blank

Anti- Social Behaviour policy and service standards review group – Session 1.

A summary of the key questions and recommendations from involved residents taken from the transcript.

Subject 1 – Online survey consultation report feedback requests

Residents felt that more clarity is needed when presenting consultation data. They felt that background information could perhaps preface the written data report about how results were collated.

This request related back to the results seeming inconsistent around response numbers and lack of additional comments and the option of no comments from the drop-down menu created data confusion.

Residents suggested that a commitment could be included in the written report that the responses not been "tampered with" or amended by staff.

Response: Agreed
The Cabinet report will include an Appendix detailing the full consultation process. This will contain more detailed analysis of the free text responses.

The headline report is generated by the consultation software, so it is not available for editing by officers.

Subject 2 – Communication and engagement recommendations

Residents noted the online results demonstrate evidence that there are challenges around inclusive engagement. Residents fed-back that the age ranges appear to be limited, the respondents are mainly women and what provision is there for including those who have no access to computers?

Inclusive Engagement
Residents wanted to understand and review how we can extend the invitation, so no one gets left behind? A discussion was held around communal computers/access to laptops and then issues of security and maintenance and GDPR.

Promotion of how to report ASB
On communication, a resident requested that the Safer Oxford telephone number and email address should be more proactively marketed in the community, not just reliant on tenancy management staff.

Response: Partially agreed
The challenge of more inclusive engagement is recognised by the Council and is relevant to the wide range of matters residents and tenants are consulted upon. The ASB Service will work within the wider corporate approach to improve access to those people who we struggle to engage with, including those without access to a computer, where English isn't a first language and with under-represented age groups.

Agreed
Promotion of the saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk email and other ways to report ASB will be taken forward following the publication of the policy. A statement within the policy will commit to making reporting more accessible.

Subject 3 - Service improvements requests

From user experience, residents reported the fact the noise app is difficult to download, difficult to understand and difficult to use and recommended this be reviewed.

Residents would like to understand how many use the app, what success on the noise app there has been, and how communications are managed for the noise app service.

Residents requested that a report is provided on the Noise App use and outcomes.

Residents recommended that an action plan is developed aimed at improving communication and information about the Noise App, to include more support for downloading to be offered to those who are not technically minded.

Response: Agreed
The ASB Service will review the noise app and develop an action plan to improve customers understanding of its use. We will provide data on its use and outcomes of cases that use it.

Subject 4 – Policy Wording request

Residents recommended that the wording be improved in the policy around the clear distinction between being homeless and being homeless and anti-social, and more detail around how the homeless are referred for support.

Response: Agreed

Subject 5 - Multi-agency working arrangements recommendations

Residents recommended that residents would welcome communication and information across Oxford around how the ASB team works with the Police and other Housing Associations.

They would like more transparency to be given to these relationships, and our ongoing leadership on improving those arrangements.

Response: Agreed.
We will strengthen the explanations in the policy regarding multi-agency working and our approach to resolving ASB with our partners.

Subject 6 – Performance requests

Residents recommended that residents would welcome more information around the internal performance of the ASB team, a report that would include what are the Key Performance Indicators they are working towards, and how successful have they been achieving targets set.

Response: Agreed.
This will be part of the wider Council approach to performance management and feedback to our tenants. We will include a statement to this effect in our policy.

Subject 7 – Internal staff arrangements

The residents requested a stronger understanding of how resources are managed in responding to Category 1 cases and asked whether the team have the correct resource allocation to manage sickness, absences for training and meetings, and for meeting own response targets. Residents queried whether the team has sufficient resources for the level of work they currently have.

Response: Not agreed. This is not a policy issue. We discussed the current level of resourcing and the ability of the Service to adhere to our performance standards. See Subject 8 below regarding the urgent case timescales.

Subject 8 – Response times

Residents felt that the target of 3 days to respond to an urgent case seems too long, especially if they have gone to the police and the police have then signposted them to the Council team. Residents requested that this be reviewed and assessed to see if this can be reduced?

Response: Agreed.
On receipt of a report to saferoxford, the Service will undertake its triage process. The saferoxford inbox is reviewed every working day and if a report requiring an emergency response is received, the person is contacted immediately and advised to contact the correct emergency service.

For those cases where the nature of the issue is a Category 1 we will contact the person within three working days. This is to balance the resources in the team with the need to start an investigation. These cases are more likely to be resolved through partnership working with support agencies and emergency services.

The Service will review the 3 working days policy.

Questions raised in chat: -

"Harm, alarm, distress, annoyance, nuisance are vague terms-are there definitions anywhere?"

"Harassment is also subjective. What is the definition"

Response: Legal definitions provided in the team's chat. These definitions are contained in the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014. They make a technical distinction between residential and non-residential ASB and thereby set different legal thresholds of evidence when applying for certain court orders.

"Re additional staff: could other sectors in Oxford contribute to the funding of the service: e.g. Universities, private colleges, any tourist sector?"

Response: There are strict legal requirements when funding local authorities. However, we have worked closely with the universities on joint activities and the delivery of an out of hours service in East Oxford on a Wednesday night during term time.

"Could you look at the data for response times and **how** officers are getting back to people? Because it seems like the experience residents are having is different from the data in your dashboards"

Response: The case management system collects information on when we have contacted or tried to contact. We will review whether the method of contact can be reliably identified.

"Is there a process in place for responding to emails/calls e.g. emails: acknowledge receipt, initial response with time-range for action."

Response: An email to saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk should generate an automated response each time. We will review the response content and that of individual cases managers.

Next steps

The managers closed the meeting confirming they will go through all the recommendations and requests raised and feed-back their comments and action plans at the next meeting.

They will also explain what they can change, and what they cannot change, and why.

The next meeting is on **Thursday 4th September 6 – 7.30pm online**.

A draft report will then be sent out to the group to review and comment on.

This report will then form part of the cabinet report covering the consultation process and ASB policy and service standards review outcomes and changes made.

Wendy Hind has agreed to share all the information downloaded by the ASB Manager during the meeting in chat to attendees.

This page is intentionally left blank

ASB Policy Consultation 2025 Reach

Reference	What	Metrics	Notes
1	ASB Policy Consultation	188 responses	https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/community-services/anti-social-behaviour-policy-consultation/#:~:text=We%20are%20now%20consulting%20on,to%20develop%20this%20new%20policy.
2	ASB video Cllr Arshad	Facebook • Views: 7,303 • Reach: 4,560 • Likes/ reactions: 83 • Comments: 48 • Shares: 13 • Watch time: 17 hours	20/06/2025
3	ASB video Cllr Arshad	Instagram • Views: 4,842 • Reach: 3,381 • Likes: 83 • Comments: 14 • Watch time:	20/06/2025

		11 hours • Shares: 1	
4	ASB video Cllr Arshad	TikToK • Views: 2,667 • Reach: 2,300 • Likes: 151 • Comments: 1 • Shares: 57 • Saves: 9 • Watch time: 7 hours	20/06/2025
5	ASB video Cllr Arshad	YouTube • Views: 326 • Reach: 173 • Watch time: 1.5 hours • Likes: 8	20/06/2025

6	ASB Graphic link	Facebook • Views: 1,580 • Reach: 1,013 • Likes/reactions: 2 • Comments: 3 • Shares: 3 • Link clicks: 3	28/07/2025
7	ASB Graphic link	Instagram • Views: 540 • Reach: 431 • Likes: 4 • Comments: 0	28/07/2025
8	ASB Graphic link	Linkedin • Impressions: 518 • Reach: 356 • Link clicks: 8 • Reactions: 2 • Comments: 0	
9	Website press release		

10	MailChimp	6000 resident users	2,500 'opens' 131 'clicks'
11	Residents Involvement Email	189 recipients	
12	City Centre Newsletter	• 640 recipients	
13	Facebook ASB video likes	• OPPC • NDV: Neurodiverse Voices • Oxfordshire African Caribbean Multicultural Association	
14	Attached to email footers		
15	Retweets OPPC and TVP		
16	Emails sent to all Locality Officers,		

	EDI Officer, Landlord Services		
17	Your Oxford	72,156 people sent out to: • 1 August: 9,040 • 25 July: 9,040 • 18 July: 9,024 • 11 July: 9,010 • 4 July: 9,019 • 27 June: 9,014 • 20 June: 9,011 • 13 June: 8,998	8 editions
18	Localities	• Oxford Jewish Congregation	Circulated
19	Localities	• Littlemore Parish Council	Circulated

20	Localities	Faith partners, including • Jewish • Christian • Muslim (four mosques) • Hindu • Oxford Council of Faiths	Circulated
21	Localities	Community groups including, • Oxford Community Action • Nigerian • Syrian • Asian Women's • Sudanese • East Timor	Circulated
22	Localities	• Cowley Road businesses representatives	Circulated

23	Localities	Community partnerships and contacts: • Littlemore • Rose Hill • Donnington RTA	Circulated
24	Localities	Youth contacts: • Rose Hill • East Oxford • Littlemore • Donnington	Circulated
25	Localities	Larders: • East Oxford • Rose Hill • Littlemore	Circulated
26	Localities	• Oxford Job Centre	Circulated
27	Emails to TVP and OPCC		
28	Housing Policy Forum		Peter Davies

29	ASB Residents Group	• 2 Presentations, feedback	Wendy Hind Peter Davies
30	Tenants in Touch	• Printed version sent to 3,741 households • Electronic version to 4,972	
31	Local media	Oxford Mail article 21/06/2025	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25253787.oxford-city-council-opens-anti-social-behaviour-consultation/

Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures 2026-29

Scope and purpose of the procedure document 3
The Council's responsibilities 3
Stages of an investigation 3
Housing-related remedies for Council tenants 4
Introductory tenancies 4
Secure/Assured/Licence Tenancies. 4
Possession Proceedings. 4
Absolute Grounds for Possession 5
Anti-Social Behaviour tools and powers 5
Civil Injunction....6
s.152 Housing Act 1996 Injunction. 6
Injunctions for trespass....6
Injunctions under s.222 Local Government Act 1972....6
Closure Notices and Closure Orders. 7
Seizure of sound equipment. 7
Seizure of vehicles....7
Environmental Protection Act 1990. 7
Community Protection Notices. 7
Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). 8
Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO). 8
Evidence gathering....8
Statements....8
Community Harm Statements....9
The Noise App. 9
Incident diaries....9
Letter drops....9
Photographs. 9
Surveillance. 9
Council-owned CCTV 9
Supporting victims and witnesses 10
Information sharing arrangements....11
Logging concerns for children, young people or vulnerable adults 11
Monitoring the service....11
Professional discretion 11
Comments, compliments and complaints....11

Scope and purpose of the procedure document

1. This document is one of two documents that tells you about Oxford City Council's anti-social behaviour (ASB) responsibilities and what we do to prevent and investigate ASB. This **Procedure** document explains how we manage your case should you report an ASB problem to the Council.
2. Our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Corporate Enforcement Policy should be read alongside this document and tells you what we mean by 'anti-social behaviour' and sets out the principles of our ASB service.

The Council's responsibilities

3. OCC believes that no-one should tolerate anti-social behaviour and will use tools and powers available to local authorities, where appropriate, to address all forms of nuisance.
4. These powers arise from three complementary roles:
    - As a Responsible Authority for the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership
    - As a landlord
    - As an environmental protection champion
5. Anti-social behaviour refers to nuisance, disorderly behaviour, intimidation or harassment that impact on a person's quality of life.
6. For ASB cases within other social landlords' and private landlords' properties the Council will not lead the case investigation but offer support and assistance, unless there are exceptional circumstances or we have a statutory duty to investigate, for example, statutory nuisance offences.
7. The Council is not an emergency response service. Incidents where there is an immediate risk of harm to person or property must be reported to the police or other appropriate emergency service.
8. Incidents of a criminal nature must be reported to the police, for example, drug dealing. The police are the lead response and investigatory service for criminal offences. The Council work closely with the police and will consider criminal behaviours when investigating an anti-social behaviour case.

Stages of an investigation

9. Many incidents of anti-social behaviour can be resolved between the parties with no involvement by the Council or other agency. Where appropriate, the Council will encourage mediation between both parties.
10. Where suitable, referrals to diversion activities, support agencies, mediation and mentoring will be recommended. Many cases of anti-social behaviour are resolved informally through additional support by partners and community organisations.
11. Not all anti-social behaviour cases will follow the process set out below; however these stages are used as a guide to ensure that our investigations are robust and proportionate to the nature of the case. A case whose seriousness increases rapidly may result in moving straight to emergency court action, particularly where there is a serious threat of violence. The key stages to case investigation are:

- Reporting. On receipt of the initial report the case is allocated to the appropriate team, based on the nature of the report.
- Initial contact with the source of the complaint, investigation and evidence gathering
- Early intervention and the involvement of support services
- Enforcement activities and possible court actions
- Case closure

Housing-related remedies for Council tenants

12. Early intervention techniques including accessing relevant support agencies, mediation, warning letters and voluntary Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs). There are cases where these remedies either do not work or need to have enforcement activities running alongside them. Listed below are the most commonly used tools to address anti-social behaviour.

Introductory tenancies

13. Introductory Tenancies are a "trial" tenancy where, if there are no problems with the tenancy after a year, the tenant will move onto a more secure form of tenancy agreement. The Council will adhere to the legal process set out for dealing with ASB related Introductory Tenancies. Options if the Introductory Tenancy is not successful are:
    - Extension of Introductory Tenancies
    - Termination of Introductory Tenancies
    - Final Warnings
    - Possession proceedings

Secure/Assured/Licence Tenancies.

14. This is the most common form of tenancy and if the tenancy agreement is breached, can be dealt with using:
    - Written warnings
    - Demoted tenancies. A demoted tenancy is a less secure form of tenancy. ASB can result in the tenant being served a Demotion Notice and the Council making a court application for a Demotion Order. Demotion tenancies generally last for a period of 12-18 months.
    - Possession proceedings

Possession Proceedings.

15. The council can consider applying to the court to repossess a tenant's home where the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour is a council tenant or someone living with or visiting a tenant. The behaviour complained of is a breach of the terms of the tenancy agreement, or, in the case of secure tenants, one of the grounds for possession as defined by the Housing Act 1985 applies.

16. The grounds for possession can include where the tenant or a person living with or visiting the tenant is guilty of anti-social behaviour. The court must be satisfied that it is reasonable to evict the tenant based on the level of evidence.

Absolute Grounds for Possession

17. Absolute Grounds for Possession were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. If one of the following five conditions is met the court must make an order for possession:

    - the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a person visiting the property has been convicted for a serious offence;
    - the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a person visiting the property has been found by a court to have breached an injunction to prevent anti-social behaviour;
    - the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a criminal behaviour order;
    - the tenant's property has been closed for more than 48 hours under a closure order for anti-social behaviour; or
    - the tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a noise abatement notice or order (convictions in practice are exceptional and are likely to relate to very serious noise issues).

18. Application for possession will be a last resort due to the negative impact of homelessness, and particularly where there is likely to be serious harm to the mental health of the tenant. Examples of cases where eviction would be considered include:

    - Dealing/supplying/cultivation of drugs from council property;
    - Using violence or severe intimidation against neighbours or staff;
    - Using council property for serious criminal activity;
    - Where properties have been closed using anti-social behaviour closure powers;
    - Where the anti-social behaviour is persistent and other attempts to prevent it have failed.

Anti-Social Behaviour tools and powers

19. Prior to formal enforcement action, the case officer will ensure all reasonable steps have been taken to identify vulnerabilities and safeguarding needs, and that all appropriate supportive actions have been considered.

20. Our policy is to take the lowest level of intervention suitable to the case. Often matters can be resolved by explaining the impact of a person's behaviour on others. Verbal or written warnings may be used. Officers have discretion to take more invasive actions as are proportionally required in each case in order to prevent harm or risk to public health.

21. In complex cases enforcement options will be discussed with the Council's Legal Services Team. The Case Officer will compile a full case file with all documentary

evidence obtained during the investigation. This will include all available evidence such as photographs, statements, letters, ABCs, Cautions and CCTV evidence. In these complex cases, all draft legal notices will be sent to Legal Services for their approval, prior to serving.

22. All complex cases that involve homeless or vulnerably housed people or may bring a significant media attention on the Council will be signed off at Service Manager level or above.
23. Managers will provide advice and guidance in relation to appropriate legal measures, taking account of the perpetrator's age, tenure, vulnerabilities, protected characteristics and the seriousness of the case. Proportionate responses to protecting complainants, victims and communities may mean that a perpetrator with protected characteristics is enforced against. Where there is enforcement action and a negative impact is identified on a person with a protected characteristic, mitigations will be considered that are proportionate to the anti-social behaviour. Enforcement action may involve legal tools and powers including possession of property action (where the premises is a council property) if proportionate to the seriousness of the anti-social behaviour of the perpetrator. Before taking such action there will be consideration of the negative impact of this on any person with protected characteristics and mitigations will be considered.
24. In line with Home Office guidance, no enforcement action will take place if it would result in an individual being disproportionately and unreasonably affected. Reasonable steps will be made to obtain relevant information and advice on a person's vulnerabilities from support agencies, which may include outreach teams, GPs, mental health services, housing providers and the police.
25. Graffiti deemed to be racist, hate related, against a persons Protected Characteristics, inflammatory, inciteful or that is considered to be offensive; will be reported to be covered or removed by Oxford Direct Services.
26. Additional future tools and powers may be created by the Government, Home Office or other authority in respect of new or amended: legislation, statute, orders, regulations or further advisory documents. These will be incorporated into these Procedures as appropriate when available to use.

Civil Injunction.

27. The ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced a Civil Injunction granted by the County Court. It is available for perpetrators of ASB aged 10 years or over. There is no minimum and maximum term for an injunction for adults but for under 18s, the maximum term is 12 months and the local Youth Offending Team must be consulted.

28. The Injunction can include positive requirements which are relevant to getting the perpetrator to address underlying reasons for their ASB. A power of arrest can be attached if violence has or is threatened, or there is significant risk of harm to others.

29. Breach of an injunction is a contempt of court and not a criminal offence. However, the county court can still apply serious sanctions including prison.

s.152 Housing Act 1996 Injunction.

30. This injunction is granted by the County court in order to prohibit a person from engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct causing or likely to cause a

nuisance or annoyance to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in residential premises. This also includes using the premises for immoral or illegal purposes. A power of arrest (s.153) can be attached.

31. In very serious cases it may be possible to apply for an Interim Injunction whereby the court issues the injunction without the need for the perpetrator to be at the hearing. A full hearing is scheduled for a later date.

Injunctions for trespass

32. The Council can send a prohibition letter banning individuals from entering council-owned land. If the letter is ignored this will be trespass and the Council can apply for an injunction banning the individual from continuing the trespass.

Injunctions under s.222 Local Government Act 1972

33. The Council can use the authority of s.222 Local Government Act 1972 to bring proceedings in the County Court to prohibit a person from continuing to cause a public nuisance, if it can be shown that it is expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of the inhabitants of the area.

Closure Notices and Closure Orders.

34. The Council can issue a Closure Notice and if relevant apply for a Closure Order for a premises that is the cause of significant and persistent disorder, or persistent serious nuisance to a community. The Closure Notice lasts for a maximum period of 48hrs if signed by a police Superintendent or Senior Council Official, and 24 hours if signed by a police Inspector. A Notice can prohibit everyone from the premises or allow access to certain people, for example, the people who habitually live on the premises and the owner of the premises. A Closure Order is issued by the court and the application must be made within 48hrs of the issuing of a Closure Notice. The closure period is three months and can be extended to a maximum of 6 months.

Seizure of sound equipment.

35. Section 10(7) of the Noise Act 1996 confirms the power of a local authority to abate any statutory noise nuisance by seizing and removing equipment used in the emission of the noise in question.

Seizure of vehicles.

36. Vehicles may be seized under different legislation dependant on the offence, including if the vehicle is making a statutory noise nuisance with its alarm system. Legislation to control waste offences; The Control of Waste (Dealing with Seized Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 section 5 of the Control of Pollution Amendment Act 1989, section 34B of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Environmental Protection Act 1990.

37. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides the legal framework for the management of litter, domestic and commercial waste disposal, and duty of care responsibilities. Section 79 and 80 of the Act contains public health and statutory nuisance definitions and provisions for legal action.

Community Protection Notices.

38. Community Protection Notices (CPNs) can be issued to stop a person, aged 16 or over, business or organisation from causing anti-social behaviour. The behaviour must be unreasonable, persistent and has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. A warning of a CPN (CPW) must be issued first, followed by the CPN if the behaviour continues. Failure to adhere to the CPN can result in a fixed penalty notice, prosecution at court or the Council can undertake remedial action. The CPN can include positive requirements on the person or organisation, although the Council cannot prosecute for breaches of positive requirements.

39. CPNs are most commonly used for environmental crimes and noise complaints. For the less complex cases a set of common prohibitions are available for case officers to use. Complex cases involving more bespoke prohibitions the CPWs and CPNs are agreed with Legal Services as set out in paragraph 7.2. Remedial actions can be taken and a court can issue seizure or remedial orders.

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

40. PSPOs are designed to deter anti-social behaviour in public spaces by placing conditions on the use of the area. Breaches of a PSPO will usually result in officers issuing a verbal warning, often alongside an information sheet that explains the Order in more detail. Further breaches can result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or prosecution at court. Current PSPOs can be found on the Oxford City Council website.

Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO).

41. Available to the Crown Prosecution Service and Local Authorities, these Orders can be applied for on conviction of a criminal offence and are designed to curb the behaviour of perpetrators of persistent ASB and criminality. The Council may apply for a CBO when a person is convicted of breaching a CPN, PSPO, Environmental Protection Act 1990, S80 abatement notice, bye-law or other criminal offence the Council has the power to prosecute.

Evidence gathering

42. The Council will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. It is important for us to be able to speak to a complainant about the behaviour they are concerned about.
43. We will not disclose a complainants personal details to the alleged perpetrator of the behaviour. Where it is necessary to speak to the alleged perpetrator, the complainant will be advised prior to a contact.

44. In order to investigate reports of anti-social behaviour we are evidence-led and rely on evidence supplied by complainants and witnesses. We will not investigate cases where no evidence or details of the case is provided.

45. It is essential that high quality evidence is gathered at an early stage to ensure risks are identified, the correct courses of actions are taken, support agencies are involved and, if necessary, court files prepared. Case officers will ensure all investigations are thorough and all avenues of potential evidence are explored to determine the most effective means to resolve complaints of ASB.

46. This information is recorded on the ASB case management system. Any evidence provided in support of an anti-social behaviour case may be used as evidence in legal proceedings, where appropriate.

47. The Council do not support invasive evidence gathering by members of the public. Where such techniques are considered to be anti-social or acts of harassment or intimidation, we will consider taking action against the party involved. The Information Commissioner's Office has some useful advice on the use of private CCTV systems which explain the rights and limitations of using this type of evidence gathering.

Statements

48. Witness Statements can be taken from any person over the age of 10 years, but for anyone under 18 an appropriate adult is advised. Persons under 18 years are entitled to special measures and best evidence principles should be considered. Everyone who gives a statement is liable for cross examination in court unless the defence have accepted the evidence as per section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1972.

49. A victim personal statement should always be included in all case files.

Community Harm Statements

50. May be used, where appropriate, in order to highlight the harm an individual's behaviour is having on the wider community. Statements may be exhibited as part of legal proceedings or may be used as part of non-legal interventions.

51. Professional witnesses can be used in situations of harassment, threat or intimidation where a witness is not prepared to make a statement.

The Noise App.

52. The ASB service has signed up to the RHE Noise App which allows individuals to download the app free of charge onto their smart phones. Noise can then be recorded and digitally diarised over a two week period. During this period the digital diary will be accessed by an allocated case officer from the ASB service and a relevant investigation plan formulated.

Incident diaries

53. Incident diaries will be made available to all complainants of ASB and will be:

- provided with guidance of 'how to complete'
- made available in community languages where requested
- provided with a freepost envelope, on request
- made available digitally on request.
- Alternative methods of capturing information can be arranged if preferable.

Letter drops.

54. Neighbours may be written to asking whether they would like to report any cases of anti-social behaviour or have information relating to a case. All responses are kept confidential.

Photographs.

55. Photographic evidence is particularly used when prosecuting environmental offences such as dog-fouling, fly-tipping, illegal parking and incorrect presentation of domestic or commercial waste. Caution is advised when taking photographs which can be intrusive and present a risk to the witness.

Surveillance.

56. Where surveillance operations are to be used to obtain directed covert CCTV evidence, an appropriate Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) authorisation will be sought. Private CCTV systems are commonly used, including door bells. Use of these systems must adhere to statutory guidance found on the Information Commissioners Office website.

Council-owned CCTV

57. CCTV can be a significant tool in the fight against ASB. The impact of CCTV can also help detect crime, as well as identifying missing persons and other public safety concerns.

58. The ASB service has a number of redeployable overt and covert CCTV cameras available for monitoring ASB hotspot areas throughout the City and within communal areas of council owned properties. These cameras are managed by the ASB Service.

59. The Council own body-worn video (BWV) cameras for use by case officers when undertaking their evidence-gathering and investigate roles. The Council has a separate procedure for the use and management of the cameras and the data gathered, including the use of privacy zones.

60. The Council adhere to the principles set out by the Information Commissioner Office.

61. Oxford's public space CCTV cameras are currently managed under a partnership agreement between Oxford City Council and Thames Valley Police.

62. The cameras, except those in the Park and Ride sites, are managed and monitored from the CCTV Suite in St Aldates Police Station. The cameras are located in the following places:

- Oxford City Centre
- Park and Ride sites
- Cowley Road
- Temple Cowley
- Rose Hill
- Wood Farm
- Barton
- Blackbird Leys
- Oxford City Council tower blocks and some low rises.

Supporting victims and witnesses

63. When a complaint of ASB is reported to the ASB Service the case officer will explain the process, agree with the complainant how often they want to be contacted, assess the risk to them and update them as the case progresses.

64. Every complainant will receive information on what they can expect from the case officer, how they can gather evidence, what tools and powers are available and the investigation process.

65. The case officer, if appropriate, will sign post or refer complainants to other support services.

66. To tackle ASB effectively, victims and witnesses must feel able to provide evidence in confidence and without fear. We will discuss with the complainant their views on anonymity, particularly in regard to court hearings that usually require a witness statement and subsequent appearance at court.

67. For cases that go to court, the case officer must consider compiling a "Victim personal statement" detailing the effects of the perpetrator's behaviour on the witness's life. The court is obliged to take this statement into account when dealing with the offender.

68. Officers will ensure that any instructions issued to legal representatives will include full consideration of the needs of the witness especially with regard to the availability of special measures. Officers will always advise complainants of the final outcome of cases and of any measures aimed at preventing problems from recurring.

69. Officers may consider a council property to be assessed for security improvements to help prevent further crime or victimisation. We will provide recommendations on an individual case basis that are reasonable and appropriate.

Information sharing arrangements

70. Information sharing arrangements are governed by the Oxfordshire Community Safety Information Sharing protocol that can be found on the Oxfordshire Insight website. This is based on the power to share information for the prevention or detection of crime and disorder as set out in statute. The protocol describes how data will be managed in line with data protection principles.

Logging concerns for children, young people or vulnerable adults

71. In the course of an investigation an officer may come across a person whose welfare may raise concerns. Whether or not the subject has a direct connection to the case under investigation, it remains the duty of officers to ensure that these concerns are properly logged on the Council's safeguarding reporting system and passed to social services through the Council's safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring the service

72. Oxford City Council is committed to delivering a high quality anti-social behaviour service. Our aim is to continuously improve the way we work and to acknowledge, and learn from, the occasions when the service fails to meet expectations.

73. How we deal with ASB in the community is also monitored against an agreed set of minimum standards of performance, established in the Oxford Local Offer for ASB. We report on our performance against these standards.

Professional discretion

74. Our ASB policy commits us to dealing with anti-social behaviour fairly and proportionately. Our services are constantly evolving and each ASB case is unique. When appropriate, we will use our discretion to vary our approach depending on the circumstances of the case.

Comments, compliments and complaints

75. As a service provider, Oxford City Council strives to excel in citizen satisfaction. We particularly feedback where our staff, services, policies and procedures have exceeded expectations.

76. Oxford City Council's objective is to build a world class city for everyone and excel in our service provision. We recognise that things sometimes can go wrong. When they do, we want to put them right as soon as possible and learn from what happened to develop and improve services and procedures.

77. To ensure we receive your feedback, either positive or negative, please call us on our mainline number: 01865 249811 or use our on-line form that can be found here:

http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decVanilla/CommentsComplimentsorComplaints.htm

Community Safety Service
Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Oxford City Council
St Aldates Chambers
109 St Aldates
Oxford, OX1 1DS

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Service Area: **Regulatory Services and Community Safety**	**Section:** **Community Safety Service**	**Date of Initial assessment:** **15th July 2025**	**Key Person responsible for assessment:** **Richard Adams**	**Date assessment commenced:** **2nd September 2025**	
Name of Policy to be assessed:	ASB Policy 2026-29				
1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact	***Race***		***Disability***		***Age***
	Gender reassignment		***Religion or Belief***		***Sexual Orientation***
	Sex		***Pregnancy and Maternity***		***Marriage & Civil Partnership***
Other strategic/ equalities considerations	***Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults***		***Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience***		
2. Background: Give the background information to the policy and the	Oxford City Council is reviewing its Anti-social Behaviour Policy. Addressing anti-social behaviour is a complex and challenging work area with an increasing number of adults with care and support needs. Safeguarding concerns and exploitation feature. Mental health considerations are an important aspect in determine appropriate courses of action.				

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

perceived problems with the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.	
3. Methodology and Sources of Data: The methods used to collect data and what sources of data	Anti-social Behaviour Service case data collated on the Council's case management system.
4. Consultation This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following. • Why you carried out the consultation. • Details about how you went about it. • A summary of the replies you received from people	Officers have run a wide-reaching consultation process. The actual consultation was responded to by 188 people; this is considered a figure that allows for meaningful interruption of the results. There were different methods used in the promotion of the consultation in addition to regular media releases. A video fronted by Portfolio Holder for Community Safety; Councillor Lubna Arshad was produced by OCC Comms Team. This was widely circulated on social media platforms and additionally promoted by Thames Valley Police and Office Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Reporting was included in OCC publications that include Your Oxford, Tenants in Touch, City Centre Newsletter to local businesses. Promotion across communities and harder to reach communities was aided by Locality Officers. Advice was sought from Housing and Tenant Involvement. A group of tenant residents were identified and narrowed down to a Resident Tenant ASB Working Group. Several meetings were conducted to align with the tenants in the evening over several weeks. Documentation was sent and a presentation made to the group by officers. This then followed a Q and A session. A selection of recommendations and questions were then fed back in a separate evening meeting. Availability was made for an officer to have separate 1-2-1 meetings with tenants who wished to expand on their lived experiences and use of the ASB Service.

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

<table>
<tr><td>you consulted.
• An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.
• A statement of what you plan to do next</td><td>An example of a suggested accepted change was a rewording of ASB Policy 2022 – 25 over making a clear distinction between being homeless and being homeless and anti-social. Plus, detail around the support that is offered.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><table>
<tr><td>Race</td><td>Disability</td><td>Age</td></tr>
<tr><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gender reassignment</td><td>Religion or Belief</td><td>Sexual Orientation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sex</td><td>Pregnancy and Maternity</td><td>Marriage & Civil Partnership</td></tr>
<tr><td>Positive</td><td>Neutral</td><td>Neutral</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>6. Consideration of Measures:

This section should explain in detail all</td><td>No adverse impacts of the policy have been identified. The policy principles set out how the Council will treat all citizens fairly and equally, making appropriate adjustments for those who may find it challenging to report anti-social behaviour.
The policy states the Council will:</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy	Take a harm centred and trauma informed approach to the case, recognising the circumstances of both the source and subject of a complaint. We will assess the needs of both the source and the subject and make reasonable adjustments where possible. Make our best efforts to identify if a source or subject of a complaint is a vulnerable person and adjust our approach as necessary. Provide information in other languages and formats when necessary. Ensure that staff receive relevant ASB, equality, diversity and inclusion, domestic abuse, mental health and safeguarding training. We acknowledge that there may be occasions where we have to take enforcement action to protect citizens, complainants, victims and communities. These may impede on a perpetrators protected characteristics. Cases that are identified where this may happen, will be conducted so that it is proportionate and reasonable to impact that perpetrator is having on others. Support and further triaging to appropriate agencies and services will be provided.
6a. Monitoring Arrangements: Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found	The Community Safety Team will oversee the use of all enforcement actions in accordance with the Council's ASB Enforcement Policy and Procedures.

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

any evidence of discrimination.					
7. Date reported and signed off by Cabinet:	N/A				
8. Conclusions: What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact	The ASB Policy recognises the needs of citizens with protected characteristics and sets out a number of requirements on officers to ensure they take these into account as detailed in section 6. The relevant training will continue to be provided to officers. The consultation did not give rise to a negative impact of those with protected characteristics and therefore supports the assessment that the impact of the policy is likely to be positive rather than negative. The impact of decisions on those with protected characteristics, whether they are the complainant or alleged subject of anti-social behaviour, will be assessed, considered and mitigated where possible on a case-by-case basis by officers and throughout a live case.				
9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?	No	**10. Date the Service Plans will be updated**		**11. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in HR & Facilities**	
.**13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet:**	N/A	**14. Date reported to Cabinet:**	N/A	**12. The date the report on EqIA will be published**	

Signed (completing officer)

Appendix 3: ASB Policy 20226-29 – Equalities Impact Assessment

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

Richard Adams, Community Safety Service Manager

Appendix 2: ASB Policy 2026-29 Risk Assessment

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
ASB Policy	Multi agency enforcement	Lack of enforcement officers	Financial cutbacks in police and council	Ineffective legislation and negative public feedback	02/09/2025	Richard Adams	4	2	4	2	2	2	Continued partnership working with the police and other internal Council teams.	Training process in place. Joint working arrangements developed with local neighbourhood policing teams.	31/10/25	On-going	75	Richard Adams
ASB Policy	Increased demand.	Capacity overstretched.	Inappropriate reporting.	Poor customer service, sign-posting to correct organisation.	02/09/2025	Richard Adams	4	2	4	2	2	2	Clear descriptions of types of ASB that Council will not investigate available on the website and in Contact Centre scripts. Data dashboard to monitor adherence to housing regulator standards	Training process in place.	31/10/25	On-going	75	Richard Adams
ASB Policy	Not having an ASB Policy	Legal requirement	Policy not approved.	Judical review of cases, poor customer satisfaction, increase in ASB complaints.	09/02/25	Richard Adams	4	1	1	1	1	1	ASB in place for over 10 years.	ASB Policy produced and approved	31/10/25	On-going	90%	Richard Adams

This page is intentionally left blank

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	**22nd October 2025**
Report of:	**Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability (Clive Tritton)**
Title of Report:	**Draft Air Quality Action Plan**

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To approve the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 for public consultation
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Anna Railton - Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice
Corporate Priority:	Zero Carbon
Policy Framework:	No
Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:	
1. Approve the Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 for Public Consultation	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 (Draft)
Appendix 2	Risk Assessment
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction and background

1. Air pollution poses a significant global health burden, contributing to millions of deaths and years of healthy life lost each year. Its impact is now considered comparable to other major health risks such as poor diet and tobacco use. Recognised as the single greatest environmental threat to human health, air pollution demands urgent and sustained action worldwide.
2. Air pollution disproportionately affects society's most vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing heart and lung conditions. Low-income communities also face greater exposure to poor air quality, further deepening health and social inequalities.

3. In September 2021[1], the World Health Organisation (WHO) presented robust evidence showing that adverse health effects from air pollution occur at concentrations significantly lower than the UK's current legal limits for various pollutants.
4. In January 2021, recognising the need to go beyond legal compliance, Oxford City Council became the first local authority in the UK to adopt a more ambitious air quality target for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). The Council introduced a stringent local annual mean target, committing to achieve this across the city by the end of 2025 in all locations relevant to public exposure.
5. In December 2024, the European commission also introduced more stringent legal limits[2] for air pollution, with a target for compliance across Europe by 2030. This move aims to narrow the gap between existing legal targets and the levels considered safest by the WHO. It highlights that the UK is now lagging behind the EU in the adoption of progressive air quality standards.
6. According to the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP), a reduction of just 1 µg/m^3 in NO_2, could result in an estimated 420,000 to 903,000 life years saved across the UK over the next 106 years. This improvement is associated with an increase in life expectancy at birth of approximately 2 to 5 days.
7. As part of its statutory responsibilities, Oxford City Council is preparing to publish a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the city, covering the period 2026 - 2030. The plan will outline a proposed set of measures aimed at addressing the ongoing challenge of poor air quality and its impact on the health of local residents and visitors.
8. This work has been developed by Oxford City Council, with the contribution of Oxfordshire County Council, reflecting its key role as Oxford's Transport Authority. To support the plan's development, a joint Local Authority Officer Steering Group (comprising officers from both councils) was established in January 2025. The group met a few times and worked collaboratively to review key evidence, to help define the plan's key areas of intervention, and to finalise the full list of proposed actions contained in this draft.

Assessing Oxford's Air Quality and Progress on the Local NO_2 Reduction Target

9. Air quality is generally poorer in urban areas, and Oxford, like many UK cities, continues to experience elevated levels of air pollution.
10. Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) is the pollutant of greatest concern in Oxford. It is primarily emitted from high-temperature combustion processes, such as road transport and energy generation. Due to its relatively short atmospheric lifetime (typically just a

[1] The WHO global air quality guidelines offer quantitative health-based recommendations for air quality management for the various pollutants. They serve as a global target for national, regional and city governments to work towards improving their citizen's health by reducing air pollution.

[2] The revised Ambient Air Quality European Directive cuts the allowed legal annual mean limit value for NO_2 by half (from 40 µg/m^3 to 20 µg/m^3), in complete alignment with WHO's interim target II.

few hours) NO_2 tends to remain concentrated near its sources, resulting in a distinct localised pattern, particularly in urban areas and along busy roads**.**

11. Since 2010, the entire city of Oxford has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), due to persistent exceedances of the legal annual mean limit in several locations. As a result, the City Council has a statutory duty to develop and implement an Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) aimed at directly addressing NO_2 levels across the city.
12. In January 2021, Oxford City Council adopted an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) comprising a comprehensive set of 30 measures, jointly agreed with key partners. These measures were designed to improve air quality across the city during the 2021–2025 period.
13. Key air quality measures delivered under the current AQAP included the launch of the Energy Superhub (2021), the Zero Emission Zone Pilot (2022), the implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (2023), the city-wide expansion of Oxford's Smoke Control Area (2024), and, more recently, the electrification of Oxford's bus fleet through the ZEBRA scheme (2024).
14. Over the past decade (2014–2024), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels across Oxford have decreased by approximately 50% on average, with 25% of that reduction occurring since 2021 (the year the current AQAP was adopted). While this progress is encouraging, Oxford City Council recognises that much more remains to be done, especially in light of compelling evidence from the World Health Organisation and the wider scientific community indicating that there is no safe level of air pollution.
15. In 2019[3], 47% of Oxford's air quality monitoring sites recorded nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels above the city's local annual mean target of 30 µg/m³ (to be achieved by 2025). By 2024, that figure had dropped to just 3%. This significant improvement indicates that Oxford City Council is on track to meet its commitment of achieving the local NO_2 target citywide by the end of 2025.
16. Air pollution is not limited to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2); particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) is also a major concern. $PM_{2.5}$ refers to tiny airborne particles (around 20 times smaller than the width of a human hair) that are not gases. On an urban environment, these particles originate from residential combustion (especially wood burning), transport, and construction activities. Once emitted, $PM_{2.5}$ can remain suspended in the air for days or even weeks, travelling hundreds of miles and posing serious health risks**.**
17. Oxford is currently fully compliant with UK legal limits for $PM_{2.5}$ in all monitored locations - limits that are expected to be met nationally by 2040. The city's $PM_{2.5}$ levels are only slightly above the current World Health Organisation advisory thresholds. Between 2014 and 2024, Oxford has achieved a 40% reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations, with 14% of that progress occurring since 2021.

[3] Although the AQAP was published in January 2021, the year 2019 was used as the baseline for this comparison because 2020 and 2021 were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During those years, lockdowns and traffic restrictions led to an artificial and temporary improvement in air quality. As a result, comparing data from those years with 2024 would not provide a realistic assessment of long-term trends and improvements.

Overview

18. Under the local air quality management framework established by Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), Oxford City Council has a statutory duty to prepare a written Air Quality Action Plan aimed at achieving national air quality standards and objectives within the designated city-wide Air Quality Management Area.

19. The new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must set out the actions that Oxford City Council and its partners will undertake to improve air quality across the city during the 2026–2030 period.

20. Oxford City Council's new AQAP sets out a clear vision: to ***Deliver Clean Air for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford.*** To achieve this, the plan is built around three core aims:

a) Alignment with the World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines - These guidelines will serve as the city's reference standard and long-term target. This AQAP commits to pursuing WHO's Interim Target III for NO_2.

b) Raising Public Awareness - The plan aims to increase understanding of the health impacts of air pollution, empowering residents with information and encouraging behavioural change.

c) Leading by example -Through local action and policy, the Council will demonstrate its commitment to cleaner air and healthier communities, influencing broader change.

21. The main priorities for the 2026–2030 period focus on continuing the reduction of transport emissions. These priorities take in consideration three major schemes that are currently being led and developed by Oxfordshire County Council, the highways authority for Oxford: the Traffic Filters trials, the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy, and the expansion of the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ). The first two initiatives aim to reduce the number of private vehicles on the city's roads, while the ZEZ expansion targets emissions from vehicles operating in central areas of the city. Note that many elements of these schemes are still subject to public consultation and political approval, meaning their scope and final design may evolve as the process unfolds.

22. The new AQAP will build on existing proposals and identify additional measures to complement and integrate them.

23. The draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) also introduces a new local air pollution reduction target for Oxford: an annual mean NO_2 concentration of 20 µg/m³ to be pursued citywide by the end of 2030, in all locations relevant to public exposure. This builds on the work initiated in January 2021 under the city's current AQAP.

24. The proposed NO_2 target of 20 µg/m³ marks a substantial tightening relative to both the UK's current legal limit of 40 µg/m³ and Oxford's existing local target of 30 µg/m³, established in the previous Air Quality Action Plan. This new target is fully aligned with the World Health Organisation's Interim Target II and the European Union's recently adopted legal standard - both set at 20 µg/m³, with the EU standard also expected to be met by 2030.

25. Oxford City Council was the first local authority in the UK to set its own, more stringent local NO_2 target back in 2021. Now, it is once again leading the way - becoming the first to actively close the gap between the UK's current legal limit and the World Health Organisation's guideline values for NO_2.
26. By taking this step, Oxford City Council reinforces its commitment to clean air and sends a clear message about the importance of going beyond mere legal compliance. It continues to champion efforts to improve air quality for everyone who lives in or visits the city, advocating for healthier, safer environments through sustained pollution reduction.
27. While the city's proposed new NO_2 local target is legally non-binding and does not supersede any current or future national standards, Oxford City Council will regularly monitor progress toward its achievement. Annual updates will be provided through the Air Quality Annual Status Report, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Policy Context and Alignment with Oxford City Council's Strategic Objectives

28. In 2019, Oxford City Council declared a Climate Emergency and convened the Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change. The Assembly delivered a clear mandate: residents want the city to continue leading efforts to reduce carbon emissions and enhance biodiversity across Oxford.
29. The draft Air Quality Action Plan included in Appendix 1, is fully integrated with Oxford's draft Local Plan 2042, Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, and the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan. It also aligns with the outcomes of Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change and supports the objectives of the Oxfordshire Zero Carbon Partnership.
30. The draft AQAP also supports the delivery of two of Oxford City Council's corporate priorities:
    a. **Pursuing a Zero Carbon Oxford** – This priority aims for city-wide zero carbon emissions by 2040. The proposed AQAP contributes directly to this goal by improving air quality and supporting climate action.
    b. **Supporting Thriving Communities** – Healthy communities are built on clean air. By reducing air pollution, the AQAP helps mitigate its harmful health impacts, address health and social inequalities, and prevent both physical and mental health conditions - recognising the established link between air pollution exposure and increased risk of mental illness

Actions

31. According to the latest Source Apportionment Study conducted by Ricardo Energy & Environment in February 2025, the transport sector remains the dominant source of NOx emissions in Oxford, accounting for 44% of the total. This is followed by emissions from industry and services (30%), domestic combustion (26%), and other minor sources - including waste, agriculture, solvents, and nature – collectively contributing less than 1%.

32. The draft AQAP outlines a comprehensive set of actions and measures, structured around four key priority areas for intervention:

- Promoting Sustainable Travel and Reducing the Need to Drive
- Accelerating the Transition to Low and Zero Emission Transport
- Reducing Emissions from Domestic Hesting, Industry, and Services
- Facilitating behaviour change by enhancing public awareness and fostering collaborative partnerships

33. The actions outlined in the draft AQAP will be delivered through collaboration with a range of partners, including Oxfordshire County Council, which has played an active role in its development due to its responsibilities as the local transport authority.

34. Although DEFRA requires this proposed Air Quality Action Plan to focus primarily on reducing NO_2 concentrations (so that Oxford's Air Quality Management Area for NO_2 can eventually be revoked) it is important to highlight that several of the proposed measures will also deliver co-benefits by indirectly reducing $PM_{2.5}$ emissions.

Monitoring and Assessment

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

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

Public Consultation

37. In March 2025, a Citizens' Assembly[4] made up of 40 randomly selected Oxfordshire residents overwhelmingly voted in favour of bold changes to the city's transport system. The results of this assembly indicate a growing public appetite for cleaner, more accessible, and people friendly streets.

38. On the 29th April 2025, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have jointly delivered an Air Quality Workshop (hosted at the Westgate Collaboration Space) where there was active engagement with 20+ local residents and representatives of local community action groups, with the objective of gathering views that could help inform the process of shaping this draft version of AQAP.

[4] The full Citizens' Assembly report—detailing the discussions, key outcomes, and conclusions reached by participants - is available for download/consultation here

39. There is also a statutory duty to conduct a more formal public consultation on this draft AQAP. It is proposed that this will be carried out from the 24th October to the 30th November 2025 (5 weeks).

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

41. Each individual scheme proposed within this Air Quality Action Plan will be subject to its own detailed design, planning, and construction process. Implementation of these schemes will be carried out independently, ensuring that appropriate assessments, approvals, and stakeholder engagement are undertaken for each project prior to commencement.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

42. The draft AQAP includes targeted measures and emissions reduction goals across a range of Council-led programmes aimed at tackling both climate change (through carbon reduction) and air pollution.

Financial Implications

43. The draft AQAP includes a list of 30 actions which are aimed at achieving compliance with legal and local limits of air pollution.

44. Three important actions outlined in this draft AQAP (Zero Emission Zone Expansion, Traffic Filters, and Workplace Parking Levy) are of the single responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council to deliver and hence present no financial burden for the City Council. They have been included in this proposed AQAP following extensive engagement with Oxfordshire County Council through a joint AQAP steering group and are the result of current transport planning strategies and already on-going work.

45. Many of the actions proposed in this AQAP are already embedded within existing internal workstreams being developed by various teams across Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. As such, they are currently already being pursued using available funding and resources.

46. For certain actions not yet fully funded, the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) includes a commitment to *exploring opportunities* for delivery. It is anticipated that external grant funding will be necessary to implement these measures. The Council has a strong track record of securing external funding to support its sustainability objectives and will continue to build on this success. This includes seeking partnerships with innovation-focused organisations. However, it is important to note the significant reduction in UK Government funding for local air quality initiatives in recent years - particularly following the cancellation of DEFRA's Air Quality Grant programme, which previously supported local authorities in delivering air quality improvements.

47. The delivery of this Air Quality Action Plan may also face financial and operational risks linked to the proposed reorganisation of local government in Oxfordshire. Currently, air quality improvements are supported through a two-tier

governance model, with Oxfordshire County Council acting as the transport authority and Oxford City Council leading on statutory air quality duties.

48. The anticipated redistribution of responsibilities and budgets resulting from the proposed local government reorganisation (expected to be finalised by 2026 and implemented by 2028) could significantly affect the prioritisation and funding of key measures within the AQAP.

49. Existing initiatives may need to be re-evaluated or re-approved under new governance structures, potentially altering their scope, design, and pace of delivery. These uncertainties must be carefully considered to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of air quality improvements in Oxford.

Legal Issues

50. Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995, (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) provides that every local authority in England shall review the air quality within its area, both at the present time and the likely future air quality within the programme of Local Air Quality Management established under requirements within Part IV of that Act.

51. Local authorities have also a duty under Section 83 (1) of the Act to designate those areas where the air quality objectives (as set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2010) are not being met (or are likely to be shown to be at risk of not meeting them) and where people are likely to be regularly present, as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS).

52. Once an AQMA has been designated, Section 83A requires the local authority to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), to include public consultation, and detailing the list of remedial measures to tackle the problem within the AQMA. The Council may amend or revoke an area as appropriate in the light of subsequent reviews.

53. In August 2022, DEFRA published the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 and introduced a new warning process for overdue AQAPs which came into effect on 30 June 2023. If AQAP submission requirements are missed, the enforcement approach sets out an escalation process, ultimately end as a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action.

54. The city's proposed new local annual mean target for NO_2 is legally non-binding and does not override any current or future legal targets set by central government.

Level of risk

55. A risk assessment is available for review at Appendix 2

Equalities Impact

56. Air pollution disproportionately affects the most vulnerable members of society—including children, older adults, and individuals with heart and lung conditions. There is also a strong correlation with social and economic inequalities, as areas with poorer air quality are often less affluent. Moreover, minority groups and low-income households may face heightened exposure and health risks, making air pollution not only an environmental issue but also a matter of social justice.

57. Older adults face approximately twice the risk of hospitalisation and death linked to poor air quality, while babies and children are also particularly vulnerable due to their developing respiratory systems. Individuals with pre-existing conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of air pollution. Additionally, obesity (particularly in children) has been identified as a factor that can increase sensitivity to air pollution, further compounding health risks.

58. While air pollution levels across the UK are often highest in areas of deprivation, this pattern is less evident in Oxford, largely because many lower-income neighbourhoods (such as housing estates) are located away from major traffic routes. However, elevated pollution levels are still present along routes frequently used by children and in areas with high concentrations of young people, such as the city centre, which has a large student population. Air pollution affects different groups in different ways, and minority communities and low-income households may still be disproportionately impacted.

59. The implementation of the measures outlined in this draft AQAP is expected to reduce air pollution levels across Oxford, contributing to improved public health and a reduction in health inequalities. By targeting pollution sources city-wide, the plan will help ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged communities benefit from cleaner air, thereby supporting a more equitable and inclusive urban environment.

    An Equality Impact Assessment is included in Appendix 3.

Report author	Pedro Abreu
Job title	Principal Air Quality Officer
Service area or department	Environmental Sustainability
Telephone	01865 249811
e-mail	pabreu@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Oxford City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030 (DRAFT)

In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
(as amended by the Environment Act 2021) Local Air Quality Management

January 2026

Building a world-class city for everyone

Foreword

Clean air is not a luxury: it is a basic right. Yet air pollution remains one of the biggest threats to our health, damaging lungs and hearts, cutting lives short, and falling hardest on the most vulnerable in our communities.

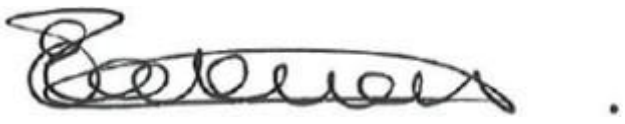
Oxford has shown that progress is possible. Over the past decade, nitrogen dioxide levels in our city have fallen by more than half (52%). Since our last Air Quality Action Plan began in 2021, we have seen a further 25% drop in NO_2, supported by ambitious measures such as introducing the world's first Zero Emission Zone, rolling out 159 electric buses, delivering a citywide Smoke Control Area, and launching Europe's most powerful electric vehicle charging hub at Redbridge.

But while this progress is encouraging, we cannot be complacent. There is no safe level of air pollution. Even at lower levels, dirty air harms our health and widens inequalities. In 2023, people living in the 20% most deprived areas were exposed to 8% higher average air pollution levels than those in the least deprived, despite being least likely to contribute to It [a]. That's why, in 2021, Oxford was the first city in the UK to set its own local air quality target: to reduce annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels to 30µg/m³ by 2025 ("30 by 25.)" We are on track to meet that goal.

So now it's time to raise our ambition again. This Action Plan commits Oxford to go further, with a new target of "20 by 30" - 20µg/m³ by 2030. This matches the latest World Health Organisation recommendations and the new EU standards, going further than the UK's own legal limit.

Achieving this will require bold action. Working with Oxfordshire County Council and many other partners, we will continue to transform how people move around our city, tackle emissions from heating and industry, and empower residents with the information and choices they need.

Air pollution may be invisible, but its impact is not. Through this Action Plan, Oxford will continue to take the next steps towards delivering cleaner air, healthier communities, and a fairer future for everyone in Oxford.



Councillor Anna Railton
(Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford)

[a] Royal College of Physicians. A breath of fresh air: responding to the health challenges of modern air pollution. RCP, 2025

Executive Summary

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been developed in accordance with Oxford City Council's statutory responsibilities under the Local Air Quality Management framework. It sets out the measures Oxford City Council and its partners intend to implement to improve air quality in Oxford City between 2026 and 2030. The plan also supports the City's broader goals to enhance public health, reduce pollution, and address the climate crisis. Our vision for this AQAP is to:

Deliver Cleaner Air for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford

This vision is anchored in three important premises:

- ✓ **Air pollution affects everyone** throughout the different life stages and can harm all organs of the body.
- ✓ **There is no safe level of exposure to air pollution** - even low, long-term exposure can impact future health.
- ✓ **Air pollution contributes to health inequalities**, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups.

The core aims that we have set up in this action plan to help us deliver it are:

- ✓ **Alignment with the World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines**. These guidelines will serve as the city's reference standard and long-term target. This AQAP commits to pursuing WHO's Interim Target III for NO_2.
- ✓ **To raise public awareness of the health impacts of air pollution**, empowering residents with information and encouraging behavioural change.
- ✓ **To influence change and lead by example through local action and policy,** demonstrating the Council's commitment to cleaner air and healthier communities.

The overarching objective of this AQAP for the entire Oxford city area is to:

Pursue a local annual mean NO_2 target of 20 µg/m³ by 2030

"20 by 30"

This Action Plan outlines **30 targeted actions and measures** to be delivered by a range of partners, including Oxfordshire County Council - who are the Transport Authority for Oxfordshire and as such, have played a key role in shaping this draft AQAP. These actions are grouped under four strategic priority areas:

- **Promoting Active Travel and Reducing the Need to Drive.**
- **Accelerating the Transition to Low and Zero Emission Transport.**
- **Reducing Emissions from Domestic Heating, Industry, and Services.**
- **Facilitating Behaviour Change by enhancing public awareness and fostering collaborative partnerships**

The plan is built around three transport initiatives currently being pursued by Oxfordshire County Council in its role as the Lead Local Transport Authority:

- **Trial Traffic Filters**
- **Workplace Parking Levy**
- **Zero Emission Zone Expansion**.

While the expected air quality improvements from these measures, underpin this strategy, many elements of these schemes are still subject to public consultation and political approval, meaning their scope and final design may evolve as the process unfolds.

In addition, Oxford City Council and its partners aim to reopen the Cowley Branch Line for passenger services by 2030. This project will connect key residential and employment areas to the city centre in under 10 minutes, supporting over one million passenger journeys annually. This modal shift from car to rail is expected to ease congestion - especially during peak hours - and reduce commuter traffic into the city centre. All these transport schemes are designed to **enhance connectivity and reduce congestion**, freeing up space for active travel and significantly cutting road transport-related air pollution during the AQAP's implementation period (2026–2030).

The Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) is also expected to play an important role in reducing air pollution over the next five years. By convening stakeholders from the public, private, and academic sectors, ZCOP fosters coordinated action to decarbonise buildings and energy systems (key contributors to air pollution) through initiatives such as:

- Electrification of heating
- Promotion of renewable energies
- Support for low-carbon technologies in industry and commerce.

This AQAP is a cornerstone of Oxford's broader environmental and public health strategy. It aligns with local transport, climate, and planning policies and directly supports two of Oxford City Council's corporate priorities:

- **Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford** – aiming for city-wide zero carbon emissions by 2040. This AQAP contributes by improving air quality and mitigating climate change.

- **Support Thriving Communities** – recognising that clean air is essential for physical and mental health. The AQAP helps reduce health inequalities and prevent pollution-related illnesses, including those linked to mental health.

While DEFRA requires this AQAP to focus primarily on reducing NO_2 levels - so that the city's Air Quality Management Area can eventually be revoked[1] - many of the proposed measures will also indirectly reduce $PM_{2.5}$ emissions, which pose serious health risks.

[1] Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime in England, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is typically only revoked after five consecutive years of measured compliance with legal limit values. Oxford has achieved compliance with the annual mean NO_2 limit for three consecutive years (2022-2024), and while this marks significant progress, the AQMA remains in place pending further sustained compliance.

Table of Contents

Foreword 2
Executive Summary 3
Table of Contents 5
List of Figures 7
List of tables 7
Glossary of Terms 8
Introduction 10
Understanding the UK's Air Quality Obligations 11
National Responsibilities 11
Local Authority Duties 11
1. What is Air Pollution and why it matters? 12
1.1 Key Urban Air Pollutants and Their Sources 12
1.1.1 Gases 12
1.1.2 Particles 12
1.2 Air Pollution as a Public Health Crisis 13
1.3 Air Pollution and the Climate Emergency 14
1.3.1 Main advantages of joined-up action 15
1.4 Who Pays the Price? Air Pollution, Economics, and Inequality 15
1.5 Navigating global and local standards for Clean Air 16
2. Oxford's Air: Pollution Levels and Progress 18
2.1 What action has been taken over the last five years? 19
2.2 Air Quality levels in Oxford 22
2.2.1 Tracing the evolution of Air Quality Management in Oxford 22
2.2.2 Oxford's Air Quality Over Time 22
2.2.3 Timeline and milestones that made a difference 25
2.2.4 How far is Oxford from delivering on its local NO_2 target? 26
3. Sources of Air Pollution in Oxford 28
3.1 Emission sources by activity sector 29
3.1.1 Breaking down the data by sector in more detail 29
3.1.2 A decade of change: Tracking the evolution of NO_x emissions by sector in the city 30
3.2 Road emission sources by vehicle type 31
3.2.1 A Changing Fleet: How vehicle types have shaped road emissions in Oxford over a decade 32

3.3 Understanding road-based sources of Particulate Pollution 33
3.4 The Impact of residential heating on $PM_{2.5}$ emissions 34
4. Vision and aims of this AQAP 36
4.1 Oxford's Commitment to Clean Air 36
4.2 Oxford's Local Target 38
4.2.1 Rationale for Oxford's New Local NO_2 Target of 20 µg/m³ 39
4.3 Required reduction in emissions 40
5. Oxford's air quality priorities for 2026-2030 42
5.1 Strategic Air Quality Interventions Planned for Oxford 42
5.2 Priorities and actions 45
5.3 Policy Integration 49
5.4 AQAP Proposed Measures 52
6. Development and Implementation of Oxford's AQAP 62
6.1 Establishment of the AQAP Steering Group 62
6.2 Consultation Process and Community Involvement 62
6.2.1 Joint Air Quality Workshop 63
6.2.2 Public Consultation 63
7. Appendix 65
7.1 Oxford's air pollution hotspots 65
7.1.1 St Clements 65
7.1.2 Oxford City Centre Area - St Aldates and High Street 66
7.1.3 Cutteslowe Roundabout 67

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Mapping the Health Effects of Air Pollution Across the Body 14
Figure 2 - Timeline of annual mean standards for NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ and the institutions behind them 17
Figure 3 - Boundary of Oxford's current city-wide AQMA for NO_2 18
Figure 4 - Key accomplishments from Oxford's Air Quality Action Plan (2021-2025) 20
Figure 5 - Key accomplishments (II) from Oxford's Air Quality Action Plan (2021-2025) 21
Figure 6 – NO_2 annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites 23
Figure 7 - PM_{10} annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites 24
Figure 8 -$PM_{2.5}$ annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites 24
Figure 9 -Oxford's Clean Air Journey: A Timeline of Action 25
Figure 10 – Oxford's NO_2 Monitoring Map: Locations and latest readings from OXONAIR. 27
Figure 11 – Share of total emissions of NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ by activity sector in Oxford 29
Figure 12– Share of total road emissions of NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ by vehicle type in Oxford 31
Figure 13 - Breakdown of particulate matter emissions from road transport in Oxford 33
Figure 14 - Breakdown of $PM_{2.5}$ Emissions from Residential Heating Sources 34
Figure 15 - Legal Air Quality Objectives (UK) and WHO Air Quality Guidelines 37
Figure 16 - How dirty air continues to affect Oxford's Health 37
Figure 17 - Infographic showing the insights of the collaborative Air Quality workshop 64
Figure 18 – Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 at St Clements/ The Plain. 65
Figure 19 - Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 on the High Street and St Aldates city centre areas 67
Figure 20 - Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 near Cutteslowe Roundabout 68
Figure 21 - Historic diffusion tube trends of annual mean NO_2 in Oxford city centre 69

List of tables

Table 1 - Oxford's current compliance status with NO_2 legal and local targets. 26
Table 2 – Historic comparison of each sector's weight to total NO_x emissions in Oxford. 30
Table 3 - Different vehicle types and their historic weight to NO_x Emissions in Oxford 32
Table 4 - Road NOx reductions required to achieve compliance with Oxford's proposed NO_2 annual mean target at Oxford's main air pollution hotspots (µg/m³) 40
Table 5 - Complete list of all the local policies and strategies that are relevant to Oxford's AQAP 49
Table 6 - Complete list of measures included in AQAP 2026-2030 54

Glossary of Terms

Terms and Abbreviations	Description
Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)	A detailed plan of measures, actions, achievement dates and (AQAP) implementation methods, which must be prepared by the local authority as part of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process, if an Air Quality Management Area is designated, and that shows how the local authority intends to reduce air pollution levels.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the UK legal air quality objectives for specific air pollutants.
Air Quality Strategy (AQS)	Document produced by UK Government and that sets out all the national plans and policy options for dealing with all sources of air pollution in the UK from today into the long term.
Air Quality Objectives (AQS)	Limit values for pollutants set by UK Government, usually expressed as a maximum concentration to be achieved within a specified timescale, possibly with a permitted number of exceedances.
Annual Mean NO_2	The average NO_2 concentrations measured over a 12-month period (Calendar year). The current UK Annual Mean limit value for NO_2 is set at 40 µg/m^3.
AURN	National network of automatic monitoring stations that measure concentrations of key air pollutants across urban and rural locations in the UK. It is the primary network used for compliance reporting against the Ambient Air Quality Directives and supports public health and environmental policy.
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the name for a group of long-term lung conditions that cause breathing difficulties. It primarily includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
Local Annual Mean NO_2 Target	The annual mean target set by Oxford City Council, to be achieved in all locations of relevant public exposure in Oxford City.
Air Quality Annual Status Report (AQ ASR)	Document that reviews on an annual basis current and likely future air quality and assess whether air quality objectives are currently being achieved or are likely to be achieved.
Concentration	The amount of a substance in a volume (of air) typically expressed as a mass of a pollutant per unit volume of air, e.g. micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m^3).
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DT	Diffusion Tube: is a simple, cost-effective device used to measure the concentration of gaseous pollutants in the air, particularly over a period of time (typically 4 weeks).
EU	European Union.
Exceedance	When a UK air objective is not achieved
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management - A UK Government policy framework that requires local authorities to periodically review and assess the current and future air quality in their areas
LAQM TG22	Local Air Quality Management -Technical Guidance 2022
LAQM PG22	Local Air Quality Management – Policy Guidance 2022
Limit Value	Legally binding pollution levels that must not be exceeded. Limit values are set for individual pollutants and are made up of a concentration value, an averaging time over which it is to be measured, the number of exceedances allowed per year, if any, and a date by which it must be achieved. Some pollutants have more than one limit value covering different endpoints or averaging times.
LTP	Local Transport Plan.
Microgramme (µg)	One millionth of a gram.

Micrograms per cubic metre of air ($\mu g/m^3$)	A unit describing the concentration of an air pollutant in the atmosphere, as a mass of pollutant per unit volume of clean air.
NHS	National Health Service
NO	Formed from nitrogen (N) in the atmosphere during high temperature combustion. Commonly known as Nitric Oxide.
NO_2	Formed in small amounts in the atmosphere during high temperature combustion, but the majority is formed in the atmosphere through the conversion of nitric oxide (NO) in the presence of ozone (O_3). Commonly known as Nitrogen Dioxide.
NOx	A collective term used to refer to NO and NO_2. These are produced from the reaction of nitrogen and oxygen gases in the air during combustion, especially at high temperatures. At normal temperatures, oxygen and nitrogen gases do not react together. Nitrogen oxides are produced from fuel combustion in mobile and stationary sources. The combustion of fuel in cars emits NOx into the atmosphere (mobile source). Stationary emissions come from coal fired power plants, electric power plants and domestic heating.
NRMM	Refers to a broad category of mobile equipment and transportable industrial machinery powered by internal combustion engines, which are not designed for transporting goods or passengers on public roads. Examples include equipment such as diesel generators, construction machinery, and certain types of agricultural or industrial vehicles.
O_3	Refers to ground-level ozone (often called “bad” ozone). Prolonged exposure to high concentrations can lead to respiratory issues such as coughing, throat irritation, reduced lung function, and the worsening of conditions like asthma and COPD. It also causes inflammation of the airways and contributes to environmental damage, harming crops, forests, and other vegetation
PM_{10}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm (micrometres or microns) or less.
$PM_{2.5}$	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less.
UK	United Kingdom.
WHO	World Health Organisation.
ZEZ	Zero Emission Zone: an area in Oxford where only zero-emission vehicles (such as electric cars, bikes, and hydrogen vehicles) can enter without paying a charge. Other vehicles—such as petrol, diesel, and hybrid vehicles—are allowed but must pay a daily charge to drive within the zone, unless they qualify for a discount or exemption.

Introduction

This Action Plan sets out the measures that Oxford City Council and its partners will implement between 2026 and 2030 to reduce air pollutant concentrations and limit public exposure to air pollution. These actions aim to improve the health and quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford.

The plan has been developed in accordance with the Council's statutory duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), and in line with the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework.

Importantly, this Action Plan goes beyond mere legal compliance with air pollution limits. Building on the achievements of the previous plan, it introduces a new and even more ambitious local target for annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). The new proposed target - an annual mean of 20 µg/m³ - is completely aligned with the World Health Organisation's recommended Interim Target II for NO_2 (published in September 2021[2]) and mirrors the European Union's newly adopted legal limit, effective from December 2024[3].

This alignment underscores the strong commitment from the City and County Councils to achieving the lowest feasible levels of air pollution in the city over the next five years and to taking decisive, proactive steps to safeguard public health.

Transparency is fundamental to the success of this Action Plan. To ensure accountability and drive continuous improvement, the plan will be subject to annual reviews. Progress on the implementation of its measures will be reported through the Annual Status Reports (ASRs), which are annually appraised by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and published by Oxford City Council as part of its statutory duties under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework.

The following sections provide an overview of the current air quality challenges in Oxford, the sources of pollution, and the progress achieved to date. They also identify the key priority areas for intervention and detail the specific actions and measures that City and partners expect to deliver under each area, to meet the city's new local air quality target for NO_2.

---

[2] On the 22nd of September 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) updated its global air quality guidelines for outdoor air pollution. Clear evidence was finally provided of the damage air pollution inflicts on human health at much lower concentrations than previously understood. The new WHO guidelines establish a much more stringent set of concentrations (called guideline values) for several pollutants, (including for NO_2) which highlight the value at which the pollutant become health impacting. The WHO has also set a number of interim targets for NO_2 concentrations aimed at promoting a gradual shift from high to lower levels of air pollution.

[3] The new EU Air Quality Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/2881) significantly strengthens air quality standards, aiming to align with World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations by 2030. Key changes include tighter legal limit values for several pollutants, especially $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_2, and provisions for access to justice and compensation for all those affected by air pollution.

Understanding the UK's Air Quality Obligations

The UK's approach to managing air quality in our towns and cities is underpinned by a legal and regulatory framework that combines national strategy with local implementation. This framework is primarily established through Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), and which mandates the central government to develop a National Air Quality Strategy and assigns air quality statutory duties to local authorities in England, under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system.

National Responsibilities

Under the Environment Act, the Secretary of State is required to publish and periodically review a national strategy for air quality. This strategy sets out:

- ✓ **The existing air quality standards and objectives** (as set out by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010) for key pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), and others.
- ✓ **The complete list of national policies and measures** that support the achievement of these objectives.

The strategy[4] must be reviewed at least every five years, or sooner, if necessary, to ensure it remains effective and aligned with evolving scientific evidence and public health priorities.

Local Authority Duties

Oxford currently has a Two-Tier Local Authority structure. Oxford City Council, as a Tier 2 authority, has the core duty to deliver air quality improvements for Oxford through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework[5]. It is required to:

- **Regularly assess and review** air quality in their areas.
- **Designate Air Quality Management Areas** (AQMAs) where national air quality objectives are not being met or are at risk of being breached.
- **Develop and implement Air Quality Action Plans** (AQAPs) that outline targeted measures to reduce pollution and protect public health.

Recent amendments under the Environment Act 2021 have reinforced these responsibilities and broadened the scope of public bodies required to actively collaborate on local air quality improvements - these now include County Councils, NHS bodies, National Highways, the Environment Agency, and the UK Health Security Agency. The Act also introduces clearer accountability mechanisms, including enhanced annual air quality status reporting to DEFRA and the issuance of warning letters to local authorities that fail to comply with their statutory duties.

[4] England's current Air Quality Strategy was published on the 28th April 2023 and can be found here.

[5] The LAQM framework is a statutory system in the UK that requires local authorities to assess and manage air quality in their areas. It was established under the Environment Act 1995 and is overseen by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations. For more details, please consult Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance 2022 (LAQM PG22).

1. What is Air Pollution and why it matters?

Air pollution is the presence of harmful substances in the air we breathe. These substances can be in the form of gases or particles, and they can damage our health, the environment, and the climate.

1.1 Key Urban Air Pollutants and Their Sources

1.1.1 Gases

These are invisible to the human eye and include pollutants like:

- **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)** - Nitrogen dioxide is a gas which is generally emitted from high-temperature combustion processes such as road transport or energy generation. NO_2 has a clear local pattern and is mostly concentrated where it is emitted: in urban areas and by busy roads, due to its relatively short lifetime (a few hours).

- **Ground level[6] Ozone (O_3)** - Ozone is not emitted directly into the atmosphere in significant quantities but is a secondary pollutant[7] produced by reaction between nitrogen dioxide and hydrocarbons, in the presence of sunlight. Peak ozone episodes are therefore strongly linked to typical summer weather conditions (high temperatures, sunny weather), giving rise to the so called "*summer smog*".

1.1.2 Particles

Particles, also known as particulate matter (PM) is everything in the air that is not a gas. These tiny, microscopic solid or liquid substances can originate from natural sources such as pollen, sea spray, forest fires and dust from soil or volcanic activity, as well as human made sources such as smoke from wood burning, emissions from construction, industry and vehicles, and wear from tyres and brakes.

. They can be divided into two different size categories:

- **$PM_{2.5}$** – These are fine particles smaller than 2.5 micrometres (approximately 20 times thinner than the width of a human hair), and which can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream.

[6] Ozone high up in the sky (stratospheric) is good because it protects us from the sun's harmful UV rays. But ozone near the ground (tropospheric) is bad because it pollutes the air and can make it hard to breathe.

[7] A secondary pollutant is a type of air pollutant that is not directly emitted into the atmosphere. Instead, it forms through chemical reactions between primary pollutants and other atmospheric components, often in the presence of sunlight.

- **PM_{10}** – These are slightly larger particles (up to 10 micrometres), which can still affect the respiratory system.

Urban areas are hubs of human activity, but they also concentrate many of the sources of air pollution that pose serious risks to public health and the environment. Typically, the most significant contributors to urban air pollution are:

- **Road traffic** (especially diesel vehicles) – is one of the major sources of NO_2.
- **Domestic heating** – including wood-burning stoves and open fires, which are large contributors to PM.
- **Industrial activities** – contributing to both gases and particle emissions.
- **Construction and demolition** – releasing dust and PM.
- **Chemical reactions in the atmosphere** – forming secondary pollutants like ozone

1.2 Air Pollution as a Public Health Crisis

Air pollution is no longer just an environmental concern - it is a pressing public health emergency.

According to a recent report[8] from the Royal College of Physicians' "*A Breath of Fresh Air"*, air pollution is responsible for an estimated 30,000 deaths annually in the UK and contributes to a wide range of chronic and acute health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, dementia, and mental health disorders.

The report reinforces what has become increasingly clear since the World Health Organisation released its updated air quality guidelines in September 2021:

There is no safe level of exposure to air pollution

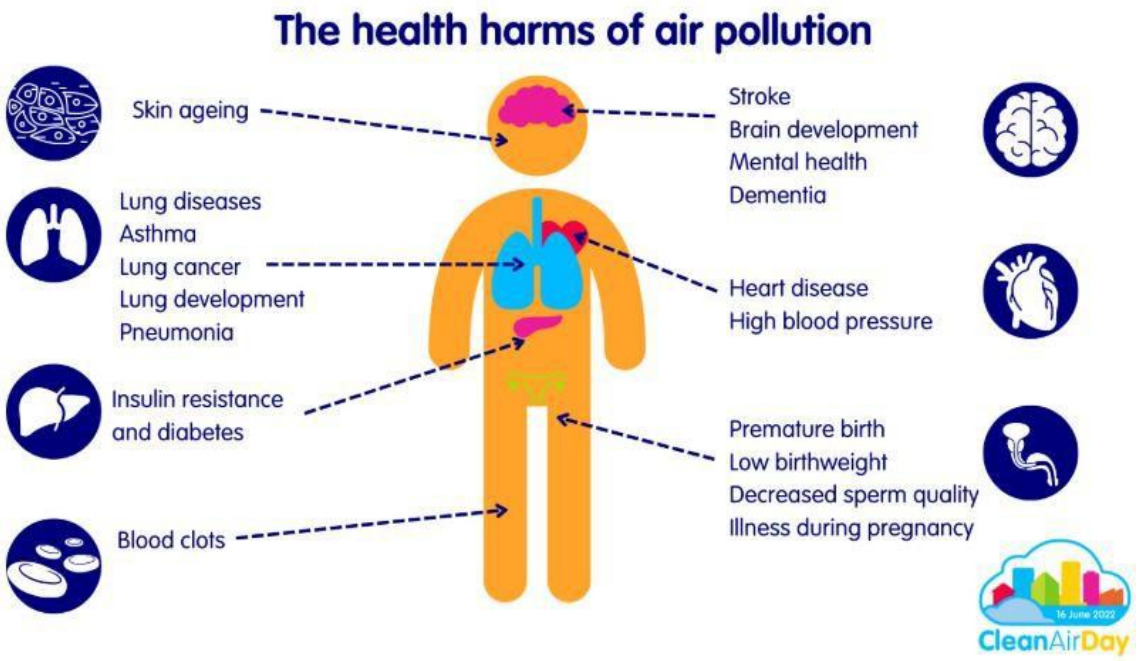
Even concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and ozone well below current legal limits have been shown to cause harm. Clear evidence demonstrates that air pollution can negatively affect health across the entire life course - from prenatal development through to old age.

Figure 1 below shows how air pollution impacts nearly every organ in the human body. Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and ozone (O_3) can penetrate deep into the respiratory system, triggering asthma, lung cancer, and reduced lung development. These pollutants also enter the bloodstream, contributing to heart disease, high blood pressure, and even blood clots.

[8] A breath of fresh air: responding to the health challenges of modern air pollution report, published on Clean Air Day (19th June 2025).

The brain is vulnerable too, with growing evidence linking air pollution to stroke, dementia, and mental health disorders. Exposure during pregnancy can lead to premature birth and low birthweight, while long-term exposure is associated with insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. From skin aging to impaired reproductive health, the effects of polluted air are widespread and serious - making clean air essential for a healthy life.

Figure 1 - Mapping the Health Effects of Air Pollution Across the Body[9]



1.3 Air Pollution and the Climate Emergency

Air quality and the climate crisis are closely connected. Air pollutants and greenhouse gases often originate from the same sources (particularly the burning of fossil fuels in the transport and energy sectors), and so often share the same solutions.

As described above, key urban air pollution is focused on gases like NO_2 and O_3, and particles (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), which directly harm our health, especially our lungs and heart. The climate crisis is driven by greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (CH_4), which trap heat and disrupt ecosystems. This leads to indirect health impacts through extreme weather and changing environmental conditions.

Some air pollutants also directly contribute to global warming. For instance, black carbon - a component of $PM_{2.5}$ produced by the incomplete combustion of coal, gas, wood, peat, and crop residues - accounts for up to 15%[10] of global warming.

[9] Image sourced from the Global Action Plan website (accessed on 1st September 2025)
[10] Science for Environment Policy, Air pollution and climate change (2010)

Similarly, methane and ground-level ozone are both harmful air pollutants and potent greenhouse gases, playing a significant role in climate change.

Both air pollution and climate change pose serious risks to public health. Air pollution causes immediate and direct harm, contributing to millions of premature deaths each year. In contrast, climate change affects health more indirectly - through extreme weather events, food and water insecurity, and the spread of infectious diseases.

1.3.1 Main advantages of joined-up action

A very important report from the Clean Air[11] fund highlights the key benefits of joined up action on air pollution and climate change. A short resume of the key points is highlighted below:

- ✓ **Improved Public Health**
  Reducing air pollution lowers the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, while tackling global warming reduces the threat of heat-related illnesses, infectious diseases, and extreme weather impacts. Both actions save lives and ease the burden on healthcare systems.
- ✓ **Faster Emissions Reductions**
  Many sources of air pollution (e.g. transport, energy, industry) also emit greenhouse gases. Tackling them together accelerates progress on climate goals.
- ✓ **Economic Savings**
  Integrated policies can reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and deliver better value for money through shared infrastructure and planning.
- ✓ **Support for Vulnerable Communities**
  Poorer populations often suffer most from both dirty air and climate impacts. Joint action can help address these inequalities.
- ✓ **Stronger Political and Public Support**
  Health benefits from cleaner air are immediate and visible, helping to build momentum and public backing for climate policies.
- ✓ **More Resilient Cities**
  Cleaner, greener urban environments are better prepared for climate shocks and offer improved quality of life.

1.4 Who Pays the Price? Air Pollution, Economics, and Inequality

Air pollution is not just an environmental issue - it is also a pressing matter of social and economic justice. The health and financial burdens it creates fall in many cases disproportionately on low-income households and marginalised communities, who

[11] Joined-up Action on Air Pollution and Climate Change (2021)

are more likely to live in areas with higher pollution levels[12] due to historical housing inequalities, limited political influence, and proximity to major roads or industrial sources.

These communities tend to experience elevated risks of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, reduced life expectancy, and increased healthcare costs (pressures that deepen existing inequalities and perpetuate cycles of poverty). Vulnerable groups such as children, older adults, and individuals with pre-existing conditions like asthma, COPD, or obesity are also particularly at risk.

While this pattern is evident nationally (where deprived areas often coincide with higher pollution levels), Oxford presents a more complex picture. Many of the city's most deprived areas are located away from major traffic routes, such as housing estates, and therefore experience relatively lower pollution levels. However, high pollution persists in central areas heavily used by children and young people, including students. This highlights the importance of looking beyond averages to understand who is most affected and where.

The economic impacts of air pollution extend beyond individual health to broader societal costs, including lost productivity, increased public health spending, and reduced educational outcomes. Yet, these costs are not shared equally. Wealthier populations often have the means to avoid exposure and access better healthcare, while vulnerable groups are left to bear the brunt.

A strong UK-based reference for the estimated economic costs of air pollution comes from a Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) briefing[13]. It states that:

Between 2017 and 2025, the total estimated NHS and social care cost of air pollution in England will be at least £1.6 billion.

This figure reflects the direct burden on public health services due to air pollution-related illnesses, particularly from pollutants like particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), which are linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

1.5 Navigating global and local standards for Clean Air

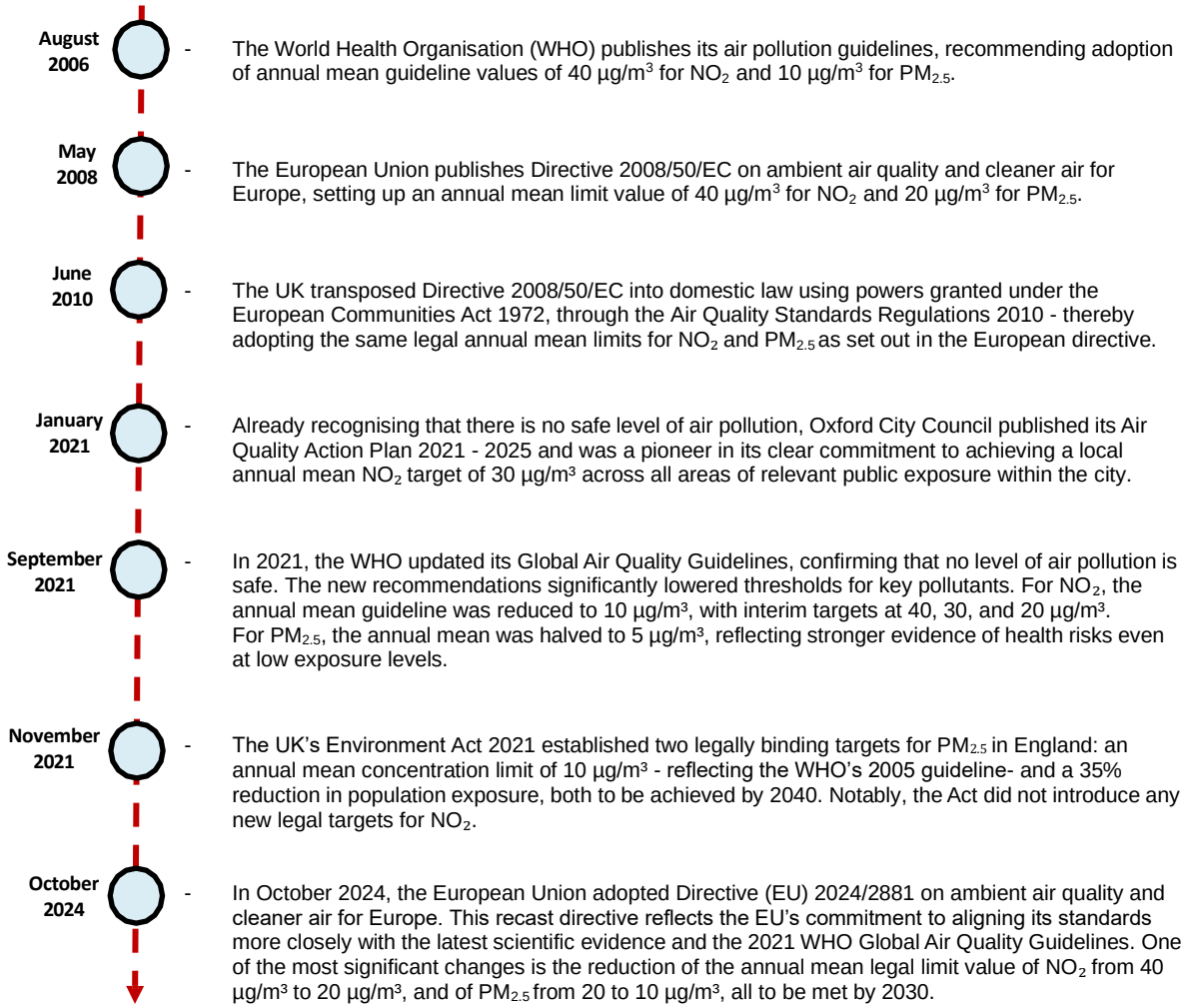
Air quality standards form the backbone of efforts to protect public health and the environment, yet they vary significantly across jurisdictions. From the World Health Organisation's science-based guidelines to the legally binding thresholds set by the European Union, the United Kingdom, and local authorities like Oxford City Council, navigating this complex landscape is essential for understanding both the progress

[12] In 2023, people living in the 20% most deprived areas experienced 8% higher average $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations than those in the 20% least deprived (Royal College of Physicians' "*A Breath of Fresh Air"* report).

[13] The UK Parliament Post on Urban outdoor air quality (from January 2023) can be found here.

made and the challenges ahead. This section explores how these standards align or diverge, and what they mean for achieving truly clean air at every level.

Figure 2 - Timeline of annual mean standards for NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ and the institutions behind them



The information derived from Figure 2 highlights three important key points:

- The legally defined air pollution limit values do not necessarily represent the safest thresholds in terms of human exposure and associated health risks.
- The local annual mean target adopted by Oxford City Council in January 2021 - six months prior to the World Health Organisation's release of its updated air quality guidelines - aligns precisely with the WHO's current Interim Target II.
- The UK Government is now lagging behind the European Union in terms of both air quality standards and legislative progress.

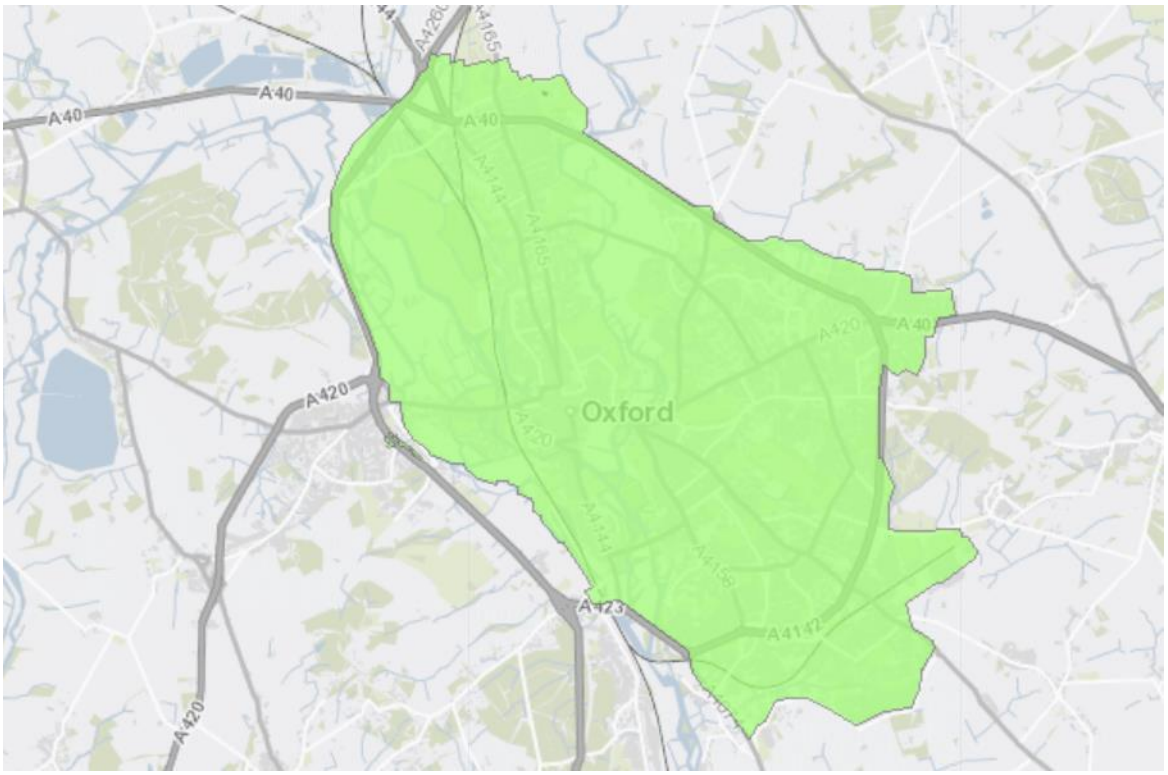
2. Oxford’s Air: Pollution Levels and Progress

Oxford is a historic city in Oxfordshire, England, situated approximately 56 miles (90 km) northwest of London. It has an estimated population of 165,200, with university students making up about 22% of its residents. Around 74.3% of the population is of working age (16 - 64 years)[14]. Oxford also has the second highest proportion of ethnic minority residents in Southeast England, and 35% of its population was born outside the United Kingdom - underscoring the city’s diversity and the global reputation of the University of Oxford.

The city’s rich heritage is reflected in its medieval street layout, narrow lanes, and historic architecture, which together create a distinctive and cherished urban environment. However, these same features pose significant challenges for modern transport and air quality management. Many roads in the city centre were never designed for motor vehicles and now struggle to accommodate current traffic volumes. With limited space for road expansion or major infrastructure upgrades, traffic often becomes concentrated in certain areas, leading to elevated levels of air pollution.

Since 2010, the entire administrative area of Oxford has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to repeated exceedances of the UK’s legal nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) limits. Figure 3 below highlights the current extent of the city’s AQMA in light green.

Figure 3 - Boundary of Oxford's current city-wide AQMA for NO_2



[14] As of June 2023, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Despite the challenges outlined above, Oxford has made notable progress in reducing air pollution in recent years. This chapter explores how air quality levels have evolved over time and highlights the most impactful measures delivered through the city's previous Air Quality Action Plan. These actions have played a key role in helping to create cleaner, healthier air for everyone who lives, works, and breathes in Oxford.

2.1 What action has been taken over the last five years?

Oxford has taken ambitious and forward-thinking steps to improve air quality through its previous Air Quality Action Plan (2021-2025).

To the best of our knowledge, Oxford was the only local authority in the UK to have established its own local air quality target for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in January 2021: an ambitious annual mean concentration of 30 µg/m³ to be achieved citywide by 2025 at all locations where people are regularly exposed.

This target is significantly more stringent than the current national legal limit of 40 µg/m³, underscoring Oxford's proactive commitment – already evident in 2021 - to safeguarding public health and setting a leading example in air quality management.

To support this goal, the city has implemented 30 targeted air quality actions across four key priority areas: promoting cleaner vehicles, encouraging sustainable transport, reducing emissions from homes and businesses, and increasing public awareness.

Figures 4 and 5 below present a summary of some of the most impactful measures delivered under the 2021-2025 Air Quality Action Plan.

Figure 4 - Key accomplishments from Oxford's Air Quality Action Plan (2021-2025)

City-wide Smoke Control Area

We have introduced a city-wide Smoke Control Area, covering the entire administrative area of the city, which introduced some rules on how people burn solid fuels and use wood-burning stoves to try to reduce (human health damaging) $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in the city

Energy Super Hub

Oxford City Council and its partners have delivered the world's largest hybrid battery system (50MW) at Redbridge Park & Ride, offering fast and ultra-rapid charging infrastructure for 42 vehicles at once and with potential for charging up to 400 vehicles in the future.

Bus Electrification

159 new electric buses have been delivered in Oxford, thanks to a successful bid that was put forward to DfT under the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. This now means that 69% of the entire bus mileage of the city is made on electric buses

Air Quality Website OXONAIR

Delivery of a new Oxfordshire air quality website, which consolidates air quality information from various councils in Oxfordshire into one platform. The website features real-time air quality data, forecasts, and resources to help residents understand and address air pollution

Oxford City Council's Electric Fleet

Oxford City Council initially set a target to electrify 25% of its fleet by 2023. As of April 2025, this goal has been exceeded, with 35% of the fleet - 118 out of 338 vehicles - now fully electric

Zero Emission Zone Pilot

This is an area where zero emission vehicles (such as fully electric motorcycles, cars and vans) can be used without incurring a charge but where all petrol and diesel vehicles, including hybrids, will incur a daily charge if they are driven in the zone, unless they have a 100 per cent discount or exemption

Figure 5 - Key accomplishments (II) from Oxford's Air Quality Action Plan (2021-2025)

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)

An LTN is an area where motorised traffic is prevented from taking shortcuts through a residential area, creating quieter and safer streets, leading also to air quality improvements. LTNs were delivered in Cowley and at East Oxford at St Marys, St Clements and Divinity Road.

E-cargo bike trials

The partnership between Oxford City Council and Velocity Cycle Couriers offered the possibility for city centre businesses to trial subsidised, zero-emission deliveries by e-cargo bike. The scheme is part of a broader effort to promote sustainable transport options.

Eco-moorings

Three eco-mooring bollards were installed at the visitors' moorings located at Aristotle Lane, which aim to provide visiting boaters with electrical power infrastructure as an alternative to diesel engines, generators, and wood burners for their daily heat and energy needs.

Electric Charging for Taxis

7 new charging points (a total of 14 new bays) have been installed in Oxford at the following locations: Keble Road, Blackbird Leys Leisure centre, Headington Car park and Old Greyfriars Street, to enable the electric vehicle transition of the Oxford Hackney and Private Hire trade.

Oxford's EV Strategy

Oxford City Council has developed a strategy which sets out clear targets for the city of Oxford to meet by 2026, 2030 and 2040, in terms of infrastructure deployment and EV uptake, which measure the city's fulfilment of its net zero ambitions.

Do You Fuel Good? campaign

We have delivered a city-wide awareness raising campaign, in partnership with local Friends of the Earth and the Canal & River Trust, specifically addressing wood burning and the use of inappropriate fuels and highlighting the negative health impacts caused by these.

2.2 Air Quality levels in Oxford

2.2.1 Tracing the evolution of Air Quality Management in Oxford

Since 1999, Oxford has undertaken a continuous process of reviewing and assessing air quality. At that time, NO_2 levels - both annual and hourly means - exceeded air quality objectives in areas primarily affected by traffic.

In 2003, Oxford City Council declared its first Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for NO_2 in central Oxford, which was subsequently expanded in 2005. In response, the Council published its first Air Quality Action Plan in 2006, focusing on reducing emissions from buses - identified at the time as the primary source of pollution in the area.

While the 2006 AQAP led to notable progress, significant exceedances of national NO_2 objectives persisted, and additional pollution hotspots were identified. As a result, following further detailed air quality assessments, a city-wide AQMA was declared in September 2010. To address the broader scope of air quality challenges, the Council adopted a new AQAP in 2013, introducing a revised set of measures aimed at improving air quality across Oxford for the period 2013 - 2020.

The city's most recent AQAP was published in January 2021, introducing a new suite of ambitious measures to be implemented between 2021 and 2025. These measures reflected a continuous strong commitment from the City Council and its partners to improve air quality across the city. Notably, for the first time in an Oxford AQAP, the plan included the city's commitment to achieve compliance with a local nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) target of 30 µg/m^3, a target significantly more stringent and ambitious than the current UK legal standard for this pollutant - 40 µg/m^3.

2.2.2 Oxford's Air Quality Over Time

Figure 6 (below) presents long-term trends in NO_2 concentrations across Oxford from 2004 onward - just one year after the City Council declared its first Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for this pollutant. The data, drawn from the three sites where automatic monitoring has been consistently maintained (including two stations within the national AURN network[15]), is plotted alongside three key benchmarks: the UK's current legal limit for NO_2, the World Health Organisation's recommended guideline, and Oxford's own local target, as set out in the 2021–2025 Air Quality Action Plan.

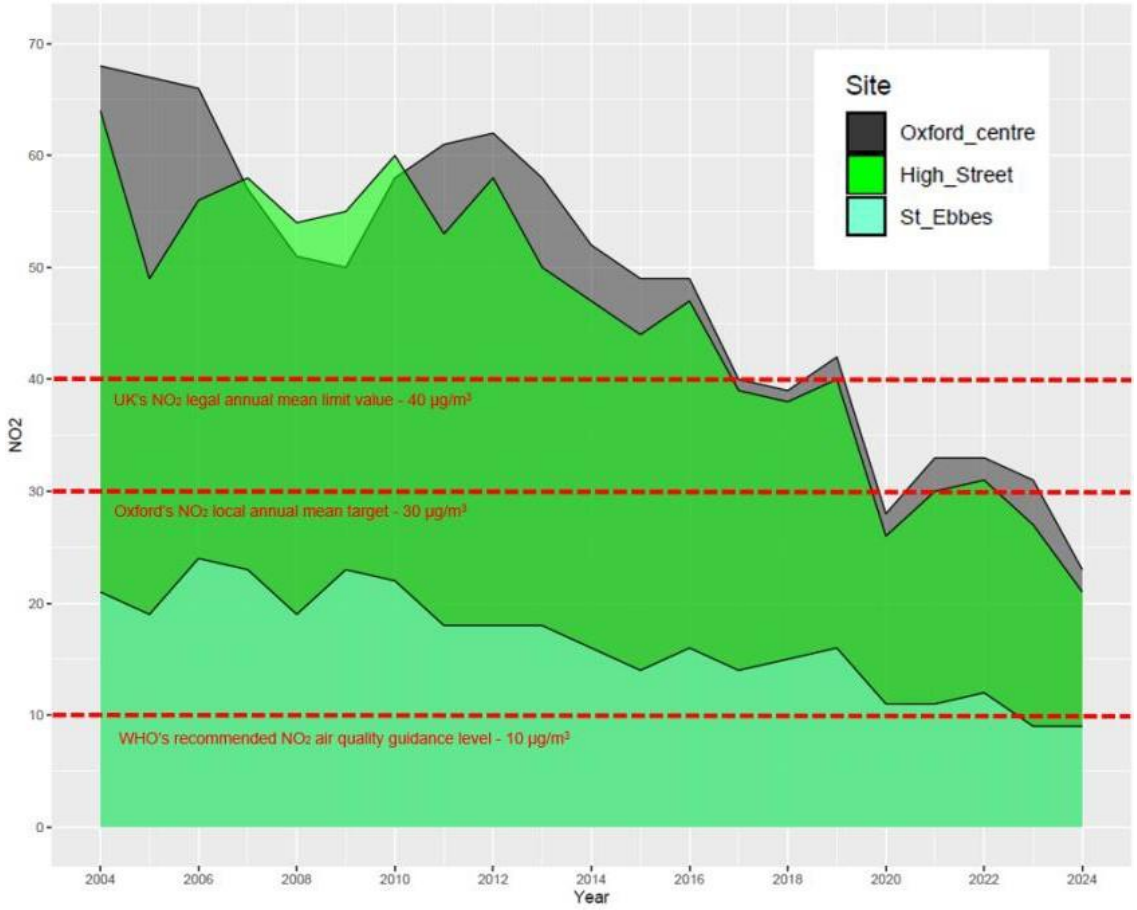
Over the past 20 years, concentrations at these key monitoring sites have declined by an average of 65%.

One particularly striking comparison underscores the scale of this improvement and of the substantial progress made in improving urban air quality in Oxford: in 2024, the annual mean NO_2 concentration at the roadside monitoring site on High Street -

[15] The AURN stands for the Automatic Urban and Rural Network. It is the UK's national air quality monitoring network, managed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in partnership with the Environment Agency. It is in place to provide high-quality, real-time data on air pollutants across the UK, supporting compliance with national air quality standards.

located in the very heart of Oxford city centre - was 21 µg/m³. Remarkably, this matches the level recorded at the urban background station at Oxford St Ebbes in 2004. Over the last two decades, NO_2 levels in one of the city's busiest traffic corridors have been reduced to levels once typical of quieter, less traffic-impacted areas.

Figure 6 – NO_2 annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites



Similarly, Figures 7 and 8 below illustrate the long-term trends in PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at Oxford's automatic monitoring sites where these pollutants have been historically measured - namely, Oxford High Street and Oxford St Ebbes.

Figure 7 reveals a clear and sustained downward trend in PM_{10} concentrations. Between 2011 and 2024, levels of this pollutant have declined by an average of 45%. Oxford now remains comfortably below both the UK's legal annual mean limit and the World Health Organisation's recommended guideline for PM_{10}, reflecting significant progress in reducing particulate pollution.

Figure 8 highlights a 40% reduction in urban background $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at Oxford St Ebbes over the past decade. In recent years, Oxford has consistently remained within the UK's legal limits for $PM_{2.5}$ and is now just 2 µg/m³ away from meeting the World Health Organisation's recommended annual mean of 5 µg/m³ - widely regarded as the safest level of exposure for human health.

Figure 7 - PM_{10} annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites

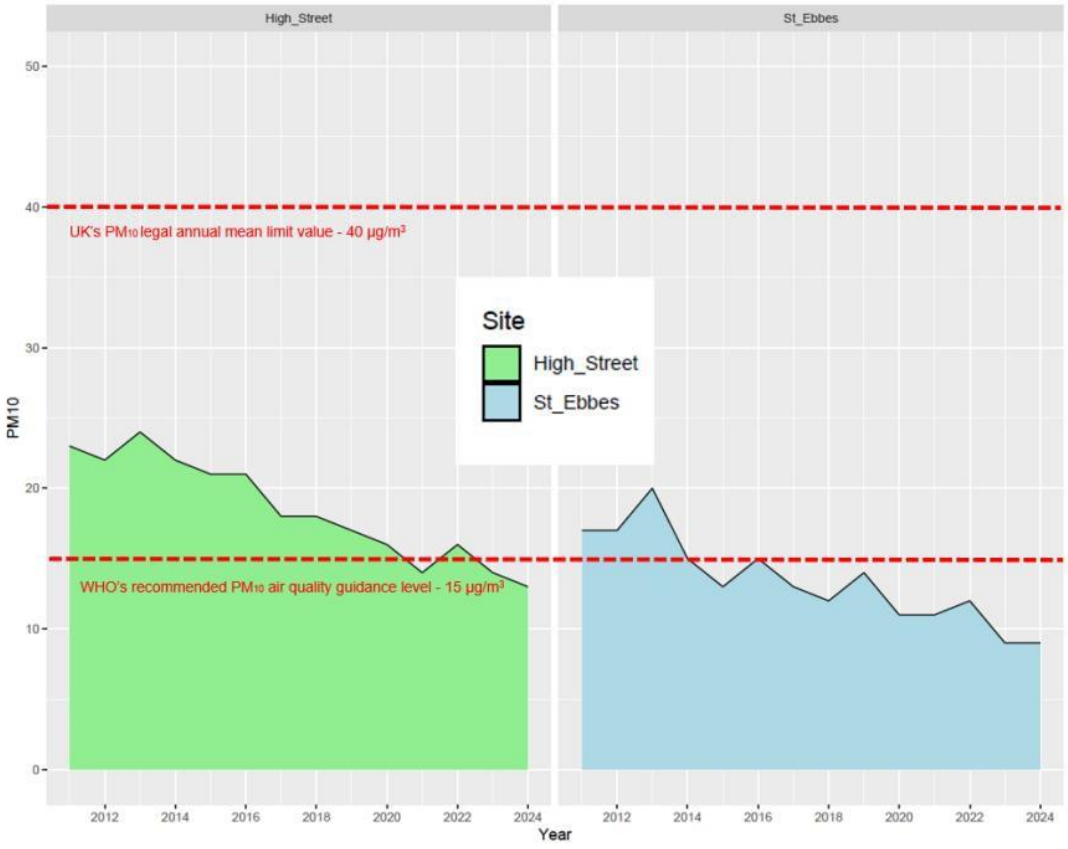
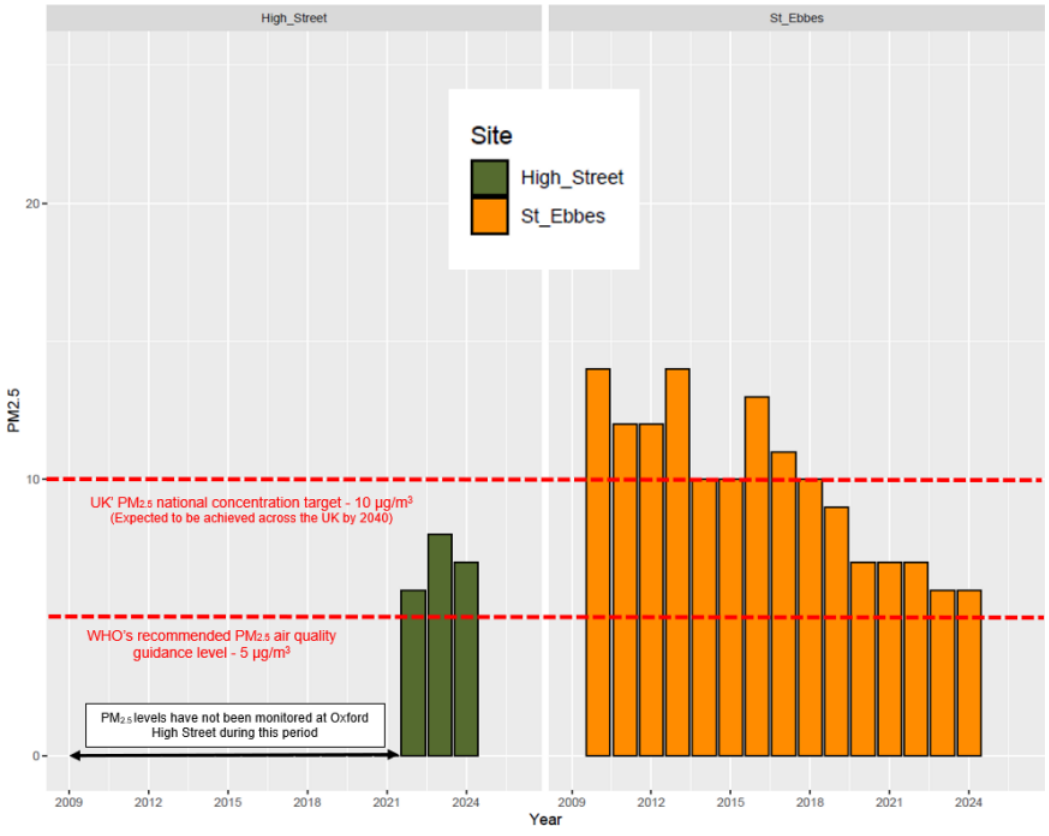


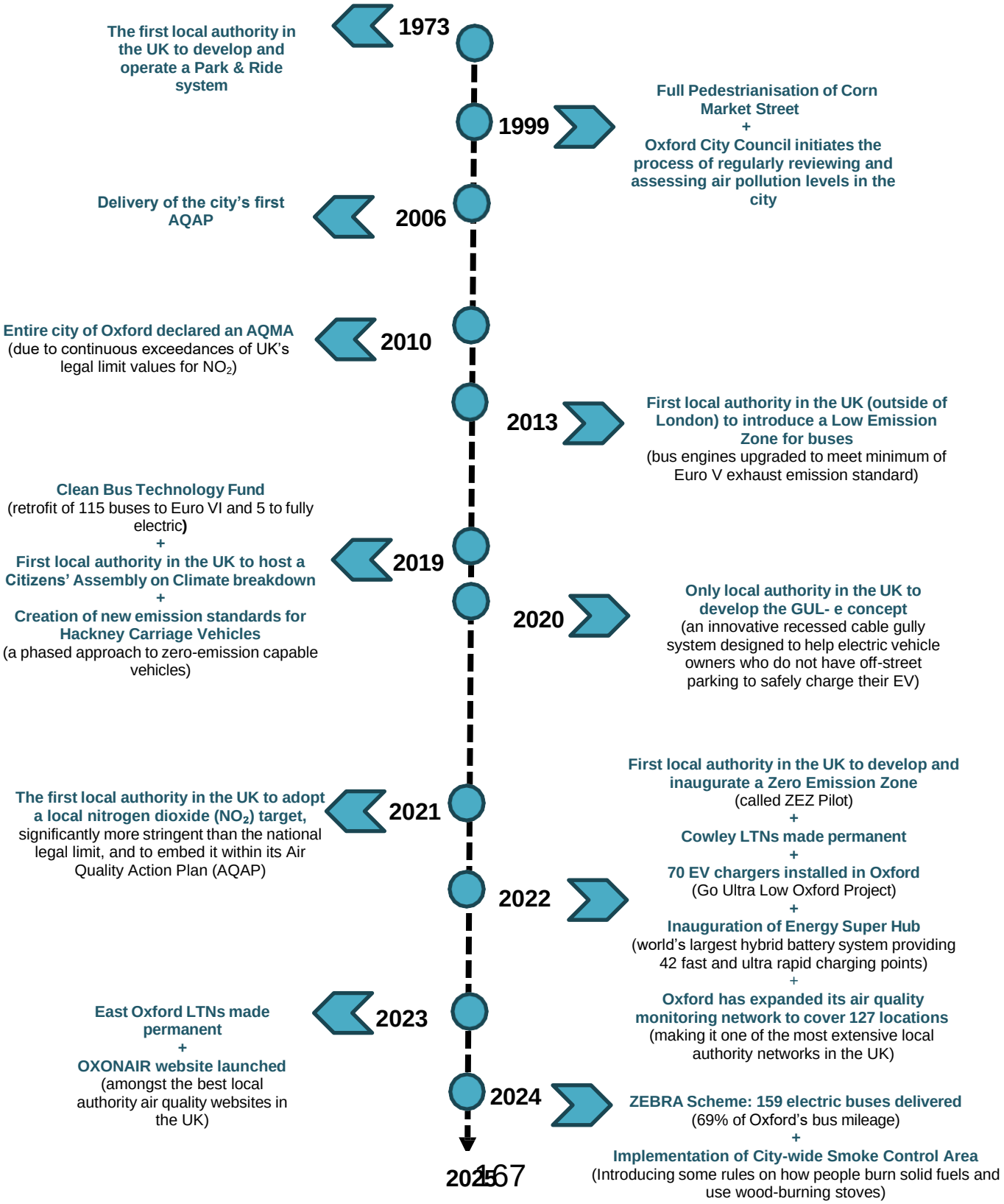
Figure 8 -$PM_{2.5}$ annual mean historic trends of Oxford's automatic monitoring sites



2.2.3 Timeline and milestones that made a difference

Figure 9 below presents a timeline of the most significant air quality measures implemented in Oxford over the years. It highlights Oxford's pioneering role and leadership in delivering innovative interventions to tackle air pollution. The timeline provides a clear overview of the key historic actions that have shaped the city's progress and offers valuable context for understanding how Oxford has reached its current position in its journey to cleaner air.

Figure 9 -Oxford's Clean Air Journey: A Timeline of Action



2.2.4 How far is Oxford from delivering on its local NO_2 target?

As outlined in earlier sections of this document, Oxford City Council published its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in January 2021, setting at the time a strong and ambitious commitment to achieve a local annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) target of 30 µg/m³. This target is significantly more stringent than the UK's legal limit of 40 µg/m³ and applies to all locations across the city where people are regularly exposed to air pollution[16].

Table 1 below presents a comparison between air quality monitoring results from 2019[17] - the last full year before the COVID-19 pandemic - and 2024, the most recent year for which air quality data is available at the time of writing.

Table 1 - Oxford's current compliance status with NO_2 legal and local targets.

Metrics	2019	2024
Total amount of monitoring sites ≥ the UK's NO_2 legal annual mean (40 µg/m³)	13	**1**
% legal exceedances over totality of monitoring sites	18%	1%
Total amount of monitoring sites ≥ Oxford's NO_2 local annual mean target (30 µg/m³)	35	**4**[18]
% local target exceedances over totality of monitoring sites	47%	3%

It is evident that the measures implemented over the past five years have had a substantial impact in reducing NO_2 levels across Oxford. As shown in Table 1, these actions have enabled the city to achieve compliance with the UK's legal annual mean limit for NO_2, with the only exceedance occurring at Headington Hill - a location not considered relevant for public exposure.

More importantly, the data also demonstrates that Oxford City Council's commitment to meeting its more ambitious local target of 30 µg/m³ by the end of 2025 is within reach.

[16] According to DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Policy Guidance, "*relevant exposure*" refers to locations where the public is regularly present and potentially exposed to air pollution over the relevant averaging period. I.e., for annual mean objectives, this typically includes areas near residential properties, schools, care homes, and hospitals.

[17] Although the AQAP was published in January 2021, the year 2019 was used as the baseline for this comparison because 2020 and 2021 were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During those years, lockdowns and traffic restrictions led to an artificial and temporary improvement in air quality. As a result, comparing data from those years with 2024 would not provide a realistic assessment of long-term trends and improvements.

[18] The monitoring locations include Headington Hill, two sites along the Oxford Ring Road, and St Clements – The Plain. However, the sites at Headington Hill and the Ring Road are not designed to assess direct human exposure to air pollution. Instead, they are intended to monitor potential air quality impacts from traffic displacement linked to future transport schemes being considered in Oxford. As such, these locations fall outside the scope of the city's 2025 local air quality target.

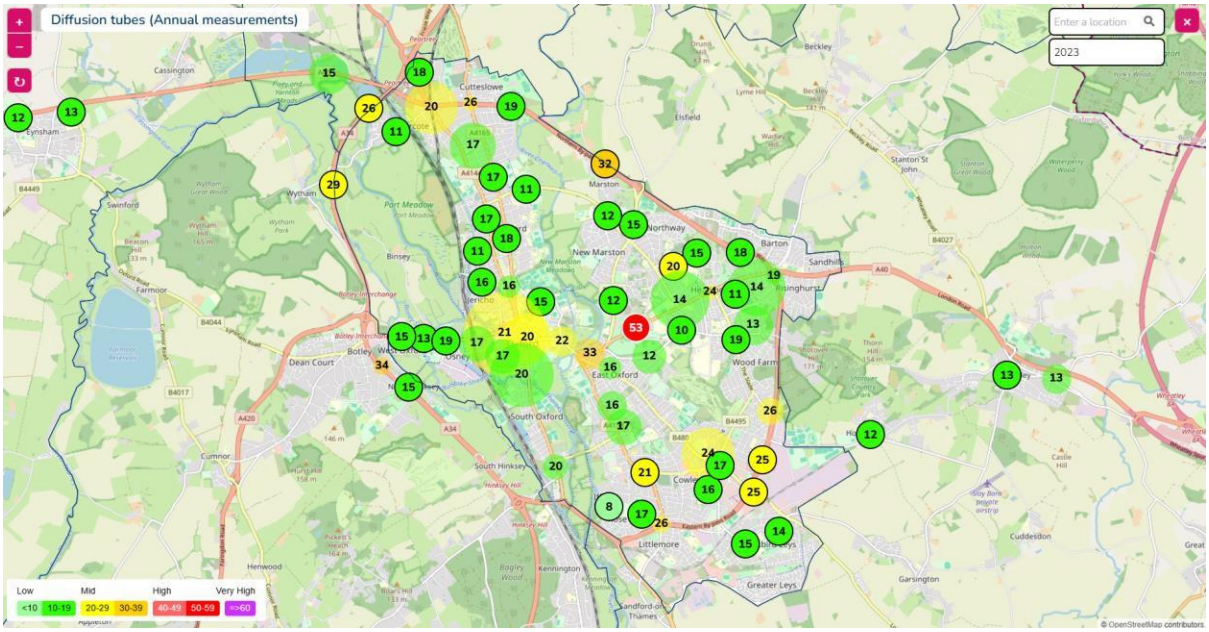
When considering only locations of relevant exposure, the city is just one site short of full compliance: St Clements – The Plain, which recorded an annual mean of 34 µg/m³ in 2024.

It is important to note that the full benefits of the bus fleet electrification will only be reflected in 2025, as electric buses were gradually introduced throughout 2024. With a full year of operation in 2025, further reductions in NO_2 levels are therefore expected - potentially bringing St Clements into compliance and marking full delivery of the city's local air quality target.

Air quality is monitored annually at 118 locations across the city using two complementary methods: automatic monitoring stations and passive diffusion tubes.

For detailed information on monitoring locations, the rationale behind their selection, the latest air quality data, and a wealth of additional resources, please visit the OXONAIR website.

Figure 10 – Oxford's NO_2 Monitoring Map: Locations and latest readings from OXONAIR.



3. Sources of Air Pollution in Oxford

The measures outlined in this Air Quality Action Plan are specifically designed to target the main sources of air pollution within the city of Oxford.

To support this targeted approach, Oxford City Council commissioned in October 2024 the air quality consultancy Ricardo Energy & Environment to carry out a comprehensive source apportionment study. The purpose of the study was to provide a detailed, most up to date understanding of the key sources of air pollution in Oxford, and it included the following components:

- **Emission sources by activity sector:** A refined analysis of the contribution of each activity sector to total emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x)[19], particulate matter (PM_{10}), and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), offering greater detail than previous studies.

- **Road emission sources by vehicle type:** An assessment of the road transport sector, quantifying the contribution of different vehicle types to total road transport emissions of NO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.

- **Understanding road-based sources of PM:** A further disaggregation of road transport emissions, identifying the relative contributions of tailpipe emissions, road surface abrasion, and brake and tyre wear to road transport emitted PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ levels.

- **The Impact of residential heating on $PM_{2.5}$ emissions:** A breakdown of emissions from the domestic combustion sector, detailing the impact of various heating and fuel types on $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from residential sources in Oxford.

The full source apportionment study was conducted in accordance with the Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM TG22) and was published by Oxford City Council on 13 February 2025. It is available for public review on the Council's website.

[19] Nitrogen oxides (NOx) are a collective term used to refer to nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). Both are produced from the reaction of nitrogen and oxygen gases in the air during combustion processes, especially at high temperatures. Total oxides of nitrogen (NOx) are used for the required reduction in vehicle emissions. This is routinely used for vehicle emissions standards instead of NO_2. Vehicles emit nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and nitrogen oxide (NO) which make up the total NOx. The NO reacts with ozone in sunlight to create NO_2. The relationship between NOx emitted and ambient NO_2 is not linear hence required emission reductions tend to always be presented as NOx rather than NO_2.

3.1 Emission sources by activity sector

The contribution of each activity sector to the total emissions of NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ in Oxford is shown on Figure 11 below

Figure 11 – Share of total emissions of NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ by activity sector in Oxford

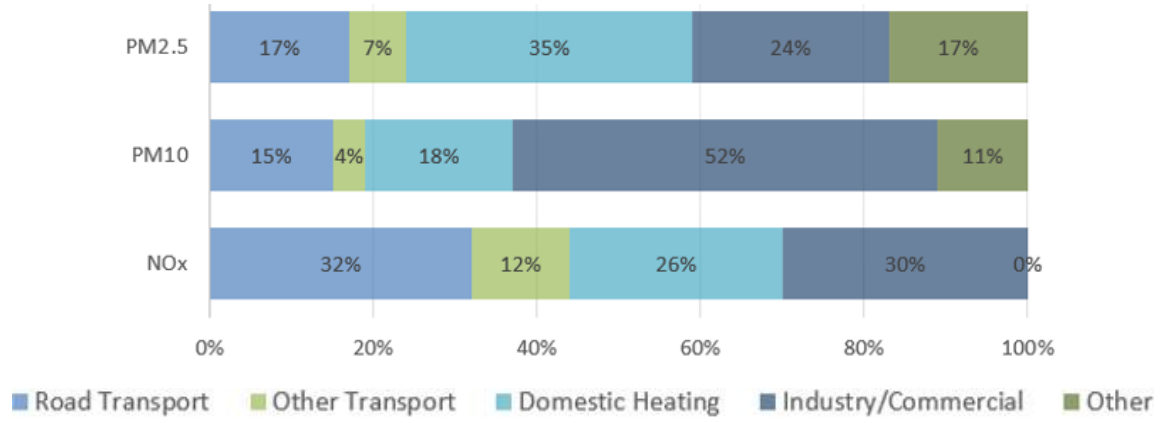


Figure 11 illustrates that for the first time, the transport sector (including both road and other transport modes) accounts for less than 50% of all NOx emissions (approximately 44% of total NO_x emissions) in the city. In contrast, its contribution is significantly lower for PM_{10} (19%) and $PM_{2.5}$ (24%).

Meanwhile, domestic heating emerges as the primary source of $PM_{2.5}$ emissions, contributing 35% to the total. For PM_{10}, the industry/commercial sector is the most significant contributor, responsible for 52% of the total emissions.

3.1.1 Breaking down the data by sector in more detail

Below is a more detailed breakdown of what is included or aggregated under some of the activity sectors referenced in Figure 11, specifically: “Other Transport,” “Industry/Commercial,” and “Others.”

Other transport

NO_x (12%) – This total includes contributions rail transport (3.0%) and a combined contribution from military aircraft and inland waterways (8.9%).

$PM_{2.5}$ (7%) – This total includes contributions from rail transport (0.6%) and a combined contribution from military aircraft and inland waterways (6.8%).

PM_{10} (4%) – This total includes contributions from rail transport (0.3%) and a combined contribution from military aircraft and inland waterways (3.4%).

Industry/Commercial

NO_X (30%) – This total includes contributions from Industry combustion (3.4%), Point sources[20] (19.7%), and non-road mobile machinery[21] (7.1%).

$PM_{2.5}$ (24%) – This total includes contributions from Industry Combustion (1.9%), Production Processes (9.7%), Point Sources (9.0%), and Non-Road Mobile Machinery (3.0%).

PM_{10} (52%) – This total includes contributions from Industry Combustion (0.9%), Production Processes (44.7%), Point Sources (5.3%), and Non-Road Mobile Machinery (1.5%).

Other

NO_X (<1%) – This total includes residual contributions from Waste (0.1%) and Agriculture (0.2%).

$PM_{2.5}$ (17%) – This total includes residual contributions from Waste (8.2%), Agriculture (0.2%), Nature (4%) and Solvents (4.5%).

PM_{10} (11%) – This total includes residual contributions from Waste (4.4%), Agriculture (0.7%), Nature (2.1%) and Solvents (3.3%).

3.1.2 A decade of change: Tracking the evolution of NO_x emissions by sector in the city

The findings from Oxford's recent source apportionment study offer valuable insights into how the contributions of different emission sectors have evolved over time. Table 2 presents a direct comparison of the last three NO_x source apportionment studies conducted in 2013, 2019, and 2025 to inform the city's various AQAPs.

Table 2 – Historic comparison of each sector's weight to total NO_x emissions in Oxford.

Activity Sectors	2013	2019	2025
Transport (all)	75%	68%	44%
Combustion (Domestic, Industry & Services)	25%	31%	56%
Others (Agriculture, Solvents, Nature, Waste)	<1%	<1%	<1%

[20] A point source refers to an emission source located at a specific, identifiable site with known grid references, allowing it to be directly mapped. Detailed emissions data for these industrial and commercial sources are provided by the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI). In Oxford, notable point sources include the BMW Group plant, University of Oxford facilities, and the Churchill and John Radcliffe Hospitals.

[21] Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) refers to a broad category of mobile equipment and transportable industrial machinery powered by internal combustion engines. Examples include equipment such as diesel generators and/or construction/agricultural machinery.

The results of this comparison indicate that the transport sector's contribution to total NO_x emissions in Oxford has declined by 31% by weight since 2013. This significant reduction is largely attributed to fleets with successively cleaner engines, many of which were driven by recent local government initiatives - particularly those aimed at reducing emissions from buses.

The comparison in Table 2 also highlights that as NO_x emissions[22] from the transport sector continue to decline, the relative share of emissions from domestic, industrial, and services - related sources are becoming increasingly prominent. Combustion now plays the most significant role in the city's overall NOx emissions profile[23].

3.2 Road emission sources by vehicle type

Figure 12 below illustrates the contribution of each vehicle type to total road transport emissions of NOx, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ in Oxford. As highlighted in the previous paragraph, road transport is responsible for approximately 32% of total NOx emissions, 15% of PM_{10}, and 17% of $PM_{2.5}$.

Figure 12– Share of total road emissions of NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ by vehicle type in Oxford

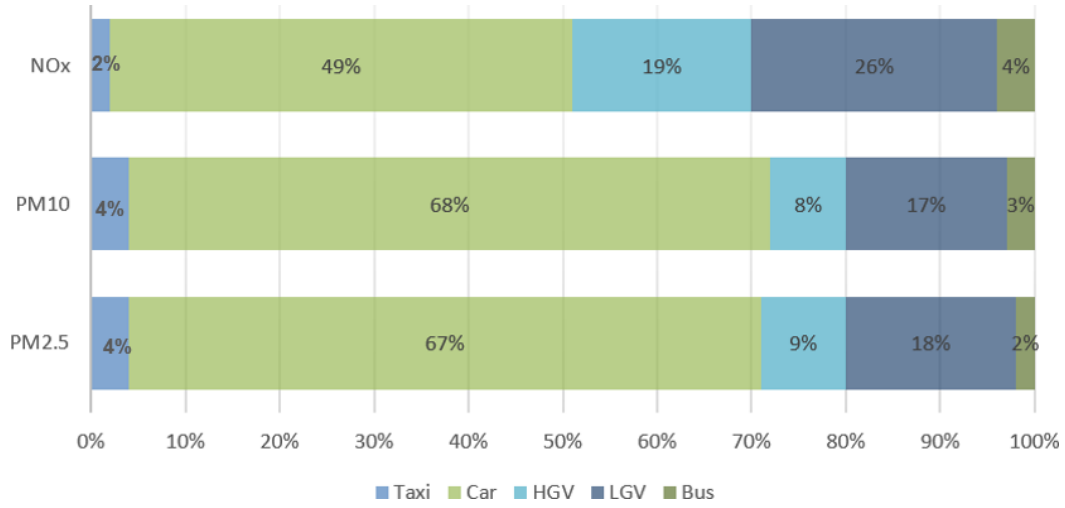


Figure 12 illustrates that cars are now by far the largest contributors to total NO_x Road transport emissions in the city, accounting for nearly half (49%) of this sector's total emissions. Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) are the second-largest source at 26%, followed by Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) at 19%. Buses contribute 4%, while

[22] A similar comparison was not possible for Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), as the 2013 source apportionment study did not include Particulate Matter.

[23] On Table 2, the observed increase in the percentage contribution of certain sectors to overall NO_x emissions over time does not reflect a rise in emissions from those sectors. Instead, it is primarily a result of the relative redistribution of sectoral shares following a significant and sustained reduction in transport-related emissions in recent years. Monitoring data from Oxford shows a consistent decline in average NO_2 levels across the city, with a 50% reduction recorded between 2014 and 2024. This trend is corroborated by data from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI), which indicates that NO_x emissions have been steadily decreasing across all major sectors since 2013.

taxis - including both Hackney carriages and Private Hire Vehicles - make up the remaining 2%.

Figure 12 also shows that the contribution of different vehicle types to total PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from road transport shows a similar pattern. Cars are the dominant source, accounting for 68% of PM_{10} and 67% of $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. They are followed by Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), which contribute 17% and 18% respectively. Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) account for 8% of PM_{10} and 9% of $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. Taxis (including Hackney carriages and Private Hire Vehicles) contribute 4% to both pollutants, while buses are responsible for 3% of PM_{10} and 2% of $PM_{2.5}$ emissions.

3.2.1 A Changing Fleet: How vehicle types have shaped road emissions in Oxford over a decade

As urban vehicle fleets evolve, the nature of emissions from road transport is also changing. While advancements in engine technology, the growing adoption of electric vehicles and targeted local authority interventions have overall led to important reductions in tailpipe emissions in the city in the past 12 years.

Table 3 - Different vehicle types and their historic weight to NO_x Emissions in Oxford

Vehicle types	2013	2019	2025
Taxis (Hackneys and Private Hire)	3%	<1%	2%
Cars	15%	37%	49%
Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs)	6%	16%	26%
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs)	12%	15%	19%
Buses	64%	32%	4%

The results presented in Table 3 show that, since 2013, the contribution of buses to total road NO_x emissions in Oxford has decreased by 60%. This substantial reduction demonstrates the effectiveness of several key measures implemented over the past decade:

- ✓ The introduction of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for buses in 2014 in Oxford.
- ✓ Securing grant funding in 2019 through the Clean Bus Technology Fund, which enabled the upgrade of 115 city bus engines from Euro V to the significantly cleaner Euro VI standard.
- ✓ The full electrification of 69% of the city's bus fleet (159 buses) in 2024, supported by the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme.

As the contribution of buses to total road NO_x emissions has significantly declined, the relative share of other vehicle types has become more prominent[24].

For example, the contribution of cars to total road NO_x emissions has increased significantly - from 15% in 2013 to 49% in 2025, representing a 34-percentage point rise. This shift is partly due to updated emissions data for cars following the Volkswagen emissions scandal, with post-2019 figures beginning to reflect more accurate real-world driving emissions. However, the primary factor behind this

[24] See footnote 22 for explanation regarding percentage shifts due to declining transport emissions.

change is the substantial reduction in emissions from the bus fleet, which has shifted the focus toward cars now emerging as the dominant source of NO_x emissions on Oxford's roads.

While air pollution has markedly improved in recent years, it remains crucial to sustain and accelerate this progress. Ensuring that all residents and visitors can enjoy cleaner, healthier air requires ongoing commitment. To that end, the city must continue modernising its transport infrastructure and championing sustainable mobility. Maintaining this positive trajectory is essential for further enhancing air quality and safeguarding public health.

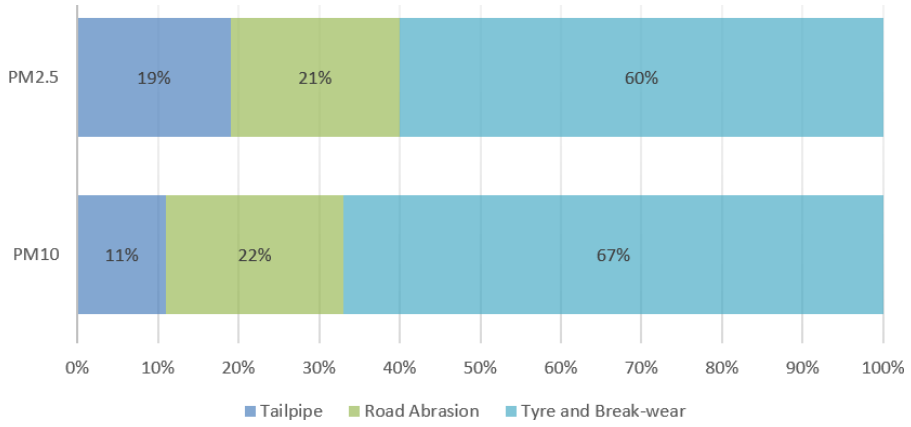
3.3 Understanding road-based sources of Particulate Pollution

As previously shown in paragraph 3.1, road transport is not the largest contributor to total particulate matter (PM) emissions in the city - accounting only for 17% of $PM_{2.5}$ and 15% of PM_{10} emissions.

However, it's important to note that these figures do not solely reflect tailpipe emissions. A significant portion of PM emissions from road transport also arises from non-exhaust sources such as road surface abrasion, brake wear, and tyre wear.

Figure 13 below provides a more detailed breakdown of the contribution of all these emission sources for PM in Oxford.

Figure 13 - Breakdown of particulate matter emissions from road transport in Oxford



As the vehicle fleet continues to modernise, older models are gradually being replaced by newer, cleaner, and more efficient engines. Many of these, particularly diesel vehicles, are now equipped with diesel particulate filters (DPFs), which significantly reduce tailpipe particulate emissions. In parallel, the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) is steadily increasing.

While EVs produce no tailpipe emissions, their typically greater weight compared to internal combustion engine vehicles can lead to increased road surface abrasion and tyre wear. Consequently, the relative contribution of these non-

exhaust sources to total particulate matter (PM) emissions from road transport is becoming more pronounced.

Figure 13 highlights this shift, showing that brake and tyre wear are now the dominant sources of PM emissions from road transport in Oxford - accounting for 60% of $PM_{2.5}$ and 67% of PM_{10} emissions. Road surface abrasion follows as the second - largest contributor, responsible for 21% of $PM_{2.5}$ and 22% of PM_{10} emissions. Traditional tailpipe emissions now represent the smallest share, contributing just 19% to $PM_{2.5}$ and 11% to PM_{10}.

3.4 The Impact of residential heating on $PM_{2.5}$ emissions

Air pollution is not solely driven by emissions from the transport sector. Residential heating also plays a significant role in urban air quality degradation, particularly through the release of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$).

These microscopic particles are primarily generated by the combustion of solid fuels. In Oxford, as in many other urban and rural areas in the UK, domestic heating becomes a dominant source of $PM_{2.5}$ during the colder months. This seasonal increase in emissions intensifies air quality challenges for this pollutant.

As highlighted in Section 3.1, domestic heating accounts for approximately 35% of the city's total $PM_{2.5}$ emissions, making it the single largest source. Figure 14 below offers a more detailed breakdown, illustrating the various origins and types of contributors within this sector. This granular view is essential for identifying targeted mitigation strategies and informing policy decisions.

Figure 14 - Breakdown of $PM_{2.5}$ Emissions from Residential Heating Sources

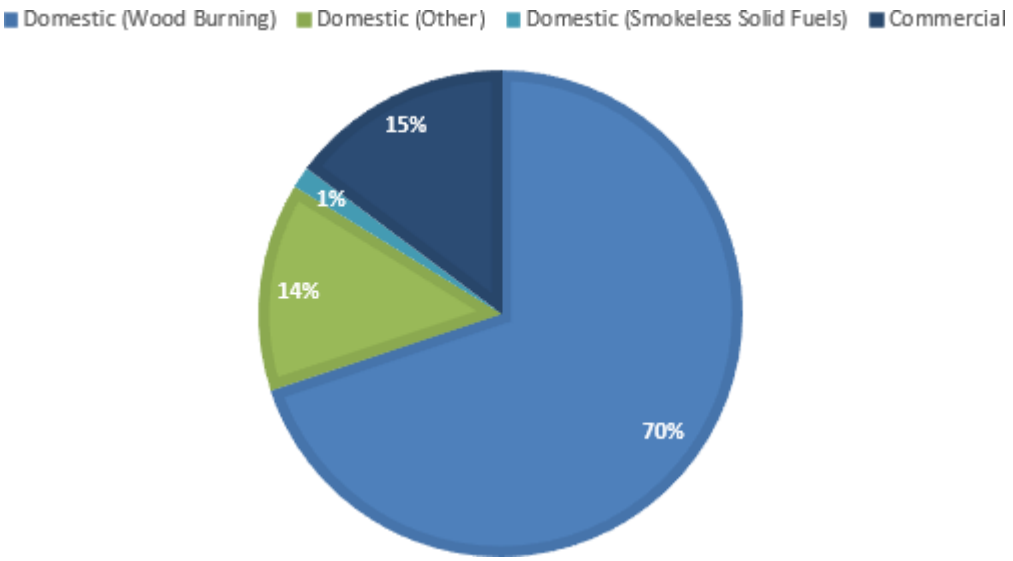


Figure 14 clearly illustrates that within the residential heating sector, wood burning is by far the largest contributor to local $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in Oxford. It accounts for

approximately 70% of $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from this sector, which translates to 24.6% of the city's total $PM_{2.5}$ emissions across all sources.

The figure also highlights the very positive impact of using smokeless fuels, which contribute only a residual 1% to $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from residential heating, especially when compared to the significantly higher emissions from wood burning.

The category "Domestic (Other)" includes fuels such as natural gas, LPG, biogas, oil, and coal. However, coal use is now virtually negligible due to recent national regulatory restrictions and the widespread availability of gas and electricity infrastructure in urban areas like Oxford.

4. Vision and aims of this AQAP

This chapter outlines the overarching vision and strategic aims that guide the development and implementation of this Air Quality Action Plan.

The purpose of this Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is to outline a series of targeted actions aimed at reducing air pollution across various activity sectors within the city. This plan responds to:

- ✓ **the declaration of an Oxford city-wide Air Quality Management Area** (AQMA) in 2010, due to exceedances of the annual mean objective for NO_2.
- ✓ **the World Health Organisation's updated air quality guidelines** published in 2021, which recommend significantly stricter limits for several key pollutants, and which reflect growing scientific consensus that there is no safe level of exposure to air pollution.
- ✓ **the findings from Oxford's latest Source Apportionment Study** - outlined in Chapter 3 of this plan – and which offer the most up-to-date insights into the city's pollution sources and their respective contributions to overall air quality levels

Our Action Plan sets out defined clear objectives and priorities which provide the foundation for targeted actions that address key sources of air pollution and are a testament of the city's long-term commitment to protecting public health and enhancing environmental sustainability.

4.1 Oxford's Commitment to Clean Air

Oxford has long demonstrated leadership in addressing air pollution, with its previous Air Quality Action Plan delivering measurable improvements in local air quality. As a result:

- **The city achieved compliance** with the UK's legal annual mean limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) of 40 µg/m³.
- **The city is on track** to meet, by the end of 2025, the World Health Organisation's Interim Target II for NO_2 (30 µg/m³), which also serves as Oxford's 2021 local annual mean target.

However, despite these commendable achievements, the journey toward truly clean air is far from over. As shown in Figure 15, the UK's legal limit values for key pollutants remain significantly less stringent than the WHO's updated air quality guidelines. Even Oxford's more ambitious local target of 30 µg/m³ for NO_2 falls short of what is considered a safe level of exposure.

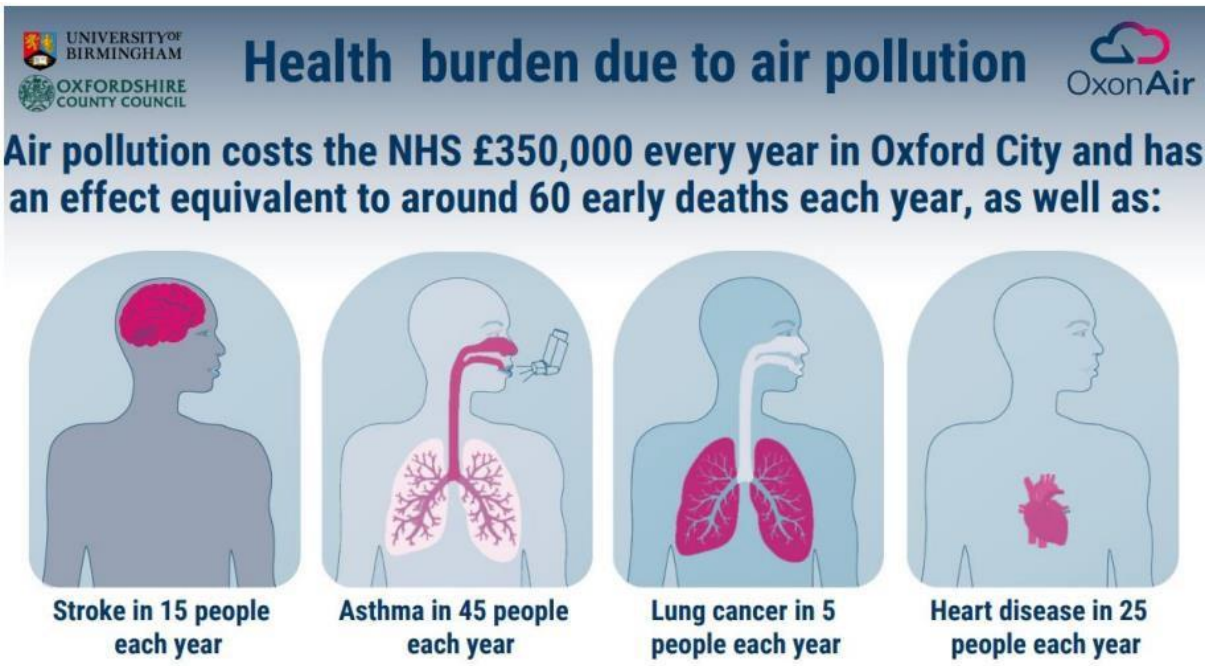
The WHO guidelines, grounded in the latest scientific evidence, make it clear that there is no safe threshold for exposure to air pollution. Consequently, although air pollution levels in Oxford have declined in recent years, they continue to pose a serious risk to public health - a reality clearly illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 15 - Legal Air Quality Objectives (UK) and WHO Air Quality Guidelines

Pollutant	Averaging time	UK Air Quality Objective (µg/m^3)	Interim WHO targets (µg/m^3)				WHO Air Quality Guideline (µg/m^3)
			I	II	III	IV	
NO_2	Hourly mean	200 a)	-	-	-	-	200
	Daily mean	-	120	50	-	-	25
	Annual mean	**40**	40	30	20	-	**10**
$PM_{2.5}$	Daily mean	-	75	50	37.5	25	15 c)
	Annual mean	**10**	35	25	15	10	**5**
PM_{10}	Daily mean	50 b)	150	100	75	50	45 c)
	Annual mean	**40**	70	50	30	20	**15**

a) Not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year**, b)** Not to be exceeded more than 35 times per year**, c)** 99th percentile (i.e.3-4 exceedance days per year).

Figure 16 - How dirty air continues to affect Oxford's Health[25]



This stark reality underscores the need for continued and intensified action. Oxford's commitment will therefore continue to evolve beyond compliance, following the path already initiated in the previous action plan, which is to reduce pollution to the lowest achievable levels (in alignment with WHO's recommendations).

[25] In 2025, Oxfordshire County Council acquired the Air Quality Life Course Assessment Tool (AQLAT) from the University of Birmingham. This initiative - jointly funded by the five district councils and the county council - integrates county-wide air quality modelling with the AQLAT tool to provide detailed estimates of the health and economic benefits of reducing air pollution, down to the ward level. Figure 16 presents results from the beta version of the tool, which uses modelled air pollution data from Defra's background maps. The outputs indicate the annual health burden attributable to air pollution in Oxford.

Our vision for this Air Quality Action Plan is therefore to:

Deliver Cleaner Air for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford

This vision is anchored in three important premises:

- ✓ **Air pollution affects everyone** throughout the different life stages and can harm all organs of the body.
- ✓ **There is no safe level of exposure to air pollution** - even low, long-term exposure can impact future health.
- ✓ **Air pollution contributes to health inequalities**, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups.

The core aims that we have set up in this action plan to help us deliver it are:

- ✓ **Alignment with the World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines**. These guidelines will serve as the city's reference standard and long-term target. This AQAP commits to pursuing WHO's Interim Target III for NO_2.
- ✓ **To raise public awareness of the health impacts of air pollution**, empowering residents with information and encouraging behavioural change.
- ✓ **To influence change and lead by example through local action and policy,** demonstrating the Council's commitment to cleaner air and healthier communities

4.2 Oxford's Local Target

Now that Oxford has achieved compliance with the UK's legal annual mean limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) of 40 µg/m³ - and is firmly on track to meet the WHO's Interim Target II (30 µg/m³) by the end of 2025 - the city reaffirms its commitment, under this Air Quality Action Plan, to continue the journey it began in January 2021: closing the gap between current air pollution levels in the city and the WHO's recommended thresholds for safer exposure.

In line with this ambition, **this AQAP sets a new local target**: to pursue an annual mean NO_2 concentration of 20 µg/m³ across all areas of relevant public exposure in Oxford by the end of 2030.

The overarching objective of this AQAP for the entire Oxford city area is therefore to:

Pursue a local annual mean NO_2 target of 20 µg/m³ by 2030

"20 by 30"

In doing so, the city will continue to safeguard public health and serve as a model of ambition and leadership for communities across the UK and beyond.

4.2.1 Rationale for Oxford's New Local NO_2 Target of 20 µg/m³

Oxford's proposed new air quality target for NO_2 is in full conformity with the following established standards:

- **The World Health Organisation's Interim Target III for NO_2**, published in September 2021, which sets a recommended annual mean concentration limit of 20 µg/m³.

- **The European Union's revised legal annual mean limit for NO_2**, as defined in the Ambient Air Quality Directive (EU) 2024/2881, effective from December 2024, which also sets the NO_2 limit at 20 µg/m³ and is to be achieved across the EU by 2030.

By setting an ambitious target, the city not only strengthens its commitment to cleaner air but also positions itself to attract further investment in innovative solutions - particularly in areas where Oxford has demonstrated leadership and success.

The City Council aims to leverage this momentum to secure substantial funding that will accelerate efforts to improve air quality, protect public health, and reduce premature deaths. At the same time, these actions will contribute to addressing the climate crisis and support local businesses, job creation, and inclusive economic growth.

As with the analysis conducted in January 2021 - when Oxford first established its historic local annual mean NO_2 target - the decision to adopt the new, more ambitious target of 20 µg/m³ has been guided by a comprehensive, evidence-led approach.

This decision is supported by a comprehensive review of the following evidence:

- ✓ **Historical air quality monitoring data** collected across the city from 2002 to 2024.
- ✓ **DEFRA's roadside projection factors**, providing future pollutant concentration trends.
- ✓ **Expected air quality improvements** associated with the full range of measures proposed in this Action Plan - particularly those substantiated by robust air quality modelling.

A comparative analysis of these sources concluded that a target NO_2 value of 20 µg/m³ is both ambitious and at the edge of achievability within the specified timeframe.

Setting clear and realistic targets is essential for building trust and inspiring confidence among citizens and partners. When people understand the goals and their potential role in achieving them, they are more likely to engage in our shared efforts.

Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime, Oxford City Council is required to review and assess air quality within its jurisdiction on an annual basis. As in previous years, the Council will continue to rely on its established air quality monitoring programme to track progress toward the new local NO_2 target. Compliance will be assessed throughout the 2026–2030 period, with findings reported annually through the city's Air Quality Annual Status Report, published each June.

4.3 Required reduction in emissions

Air quality measurements from 2024 indicate that the most significant pollution hotspots in Oxford are located at St Clements, St Aldates/High Street (representing Oxford city centre), and Cutteslowe Roundabout.

Appendix A provides detailed information on these three locations. Table 4 below presents the required[26] reductions in road NOx emissions at each of these historic NO_2 hotspots to meet the WHO's Interim Target III of 20 µg/m³, which also serves as Oxford's new local annual mean NO_2 objective.

Table 4 - Road NOx reductions required to achieve compliance with Oxford's proposed NO_2 annual mean target at Oxford's main air pollution hotspots (µg/m³).

Diffusion Tube Code	DT55	DT39 and DT56	DT26
Location	St Clements-The Plain[27]	St Aldates/High Street[28]	Cutteslowe Roundabout[29]
NO_2 measured in 2024	34	25	26
NO_2 background [30]	9	9	9
Roadside NO_x from NO_2 calculator (A)	63.2	37.0	39.7
Roadside NO_x to achieve compliance with new local target of 20 µg/m³ (B)	23.9	23.9	23.9
Roadside NO_x required reduction to achieve compliance with new local target (A-B)	39.3	13.1	15.8
Roadside NO_x required reduction for new local target (A-B) %	62%	21%	25%

[26] The required emission reductions have been calculated in accordance with Chapter 7 of DEFRA's statutory Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22), ensuring consistency with nationally recognised methodologies.
[27] This location remains Oxford's most significant NO_2 hotspot and was the only site with relevant public exposure to report an annual mean concentration exceeding the city's local target of 30 µg/m³ in 2024.
[28] Both sites are located within Oxford City Centre, in areas equipped with automatic monitoring stations. As such, they are considered representative of air quality levels across the central urban area. Other monitoring locations reporting similar annual mean concentrations in 2024 (using diffusion tubes) include Worcester Street, George Street, and Long Wall Street.
[29] This site is situated in a more peripheral area of Oxford, away from the city centre and close to the ring road. As such, it is representative of air quality levels typically observed in these outer urban zones. A comparable annual mean NO_2 concentration in 2024 was recorded at the Oxford Road/Newman Road junction monitoring site.
[30] The NO_2 background levels used in these calculations are measured values obtained from Oxford's AURN Urban Background site of Oxford St Ebbes for the year 2024.

Table 4 highlights St Clements as the location with the highest risk of non-compliance with Oxford's NO_2 target, requiring a substantial roadside NOx reduction of 62%.

Nonetheless, the city anticipates further improvements in air quality throughout 2025 and remains confident that full implementation of the measures outlined in this Air Quality Action Plan will enable compliance with the proposed target by 2030.

For context, in 2021, the majority of Oxford's key NO_2 hotspots required roadside NOx reductions exceeding 54% to meet the previous local city target of 30 µg/m³.

This highlights not only the scale of progress already achieved, but also the feasibility of achieving similar reductions again - provided the right air quality measures are put in place.

5. Oxford's air quality priorities for 2026-2030

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) sets out a framework to continue existing efforts in reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) emissions - and, indirectly, fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) - across the city. Now that we have achieved full compliance with the UK legal limit values for NO_2, the plan outlines new actions aimed at going beyond compliance to pursue the council's ambitious local target of 20 µg/m³ annual mean for NO_2.

Our source apportionment analysis highlights the significant contribution of both the transport sector and domestic heating to overall NO_x emissions in the city. Notably, domestic heating also plays a major role in influencing local $PM_{2.5}$ levels.

The analysis further reveals a shift in the sources of road transport-related NO_x emissions. With the recent electrification of most of Oxford's bus fleet, the relative contribution from buses has decreased substantially. Smaller vehicles - particularly private cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) - now represent a larger share of these emissions.

5.1 Strategic Air Quality Interventions Planned for Oxford

In March 2025, a Citizens' Assembly on Travel and Transport[31] made up of 40 randomly selected Oxfordshire residents overwhelmingly voted in favour of bold changes to the city's transport system - including making Oxford's city centre car-free.

Over the course of six weeks and 11 sessions, participants learned from transport experts, community groups, and local stakeholders. Their discussions led to strong support for a range of transformative ideas:

- ✓ 88% supported a car-free city centre, with designated roads for buses, cyclists, emergency vehicles, taxis, and Blue Badge holders.
- ✓ 97% backed improved Park & Ride services
- ✓ 91% supported better local medical facilities to reduce car travel to hospitals
- ✓ 88% endorsed 15-minute neighbourhoods, where key services are within walking distance
- ✓ 88% supported using existing roads for dedicated bus and cycle lanes, rather than building new ones.

The Assembly was facilitated by Mutual Gain and commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, following cross-party support, and reflects a

growing public appetite for cleaner, more accessible, and people-friendly streets

[31] The full Citizens' Assembly report—detailing the discussions, key outcomes, and conclusions reached by participants - is available for download/consultation here

This new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been developed in response to this growing demand from our residents for cleaner air and healthier communities.

Vehicle Emissions Reduction
Three major transport initiatives which aim to reduce private car usage, congestion and emissions, are currently being advanced by the Local Transport Authority. More detailed information on each of these transport schemes is outlined below:

- **Traffic Filters** are specific points on roads where private cars are restricted from passing through at certain times, unless they have a permit. Other vehicles - such as buses, taxis, vans, mopeds, motorbikes, HGVs, and emergency services - can always pass through freely. Six traffic filters are planned across key routes in Oxford. They are designed to reduce through-traffic in the city centre, giving priority to buses, cyclists, and pedestrians, and helping to create safer, more accessible streets.

- **The Workplace Parking Levy** is a local policy tool that charges employers for the number of parking spaces they provide for their staff. The goal of this measure is to reduce car use, encourage sustainable travel, and generate funding for public transport and active travel infrastructure improvements.

- **The expansion of Oxford's Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ)** should significantly reduce air pollution and accelerate the transition to cleaner, more sustainable transport. Building on the successful launch of the ZEZ Pilot in February 2022, the expansion will significantly widen the area covered - targeting more of the city centre and, eventually, other parts of Oxford. The primary aim of the ZEZ is to restrict access for the most polluting vehicles, encouraging a shift to zero-emission alternatives and improving air quality in the areas most affected by traffic-related emissions.

Rail Improvements
In parallel with these initiatives, Oxford City Council and its partners are seeking to reinstate a rail line for passenger services between Oxford and Cowley, the Cowley Branch Rail Line, by 2030. This multi-million-pound project is expected to introduce two new rail stations: **Oxford Littlemore**, serving Littlemore and The Oxford Science Park, and **Oxford Cowley**, serving the communities of Blackbird Leys and ARC Oxford.

By connecting key residential and employment areas to the city centre in under 10 minutes, the line is expected to support over one million passenger journeys annually. This shift from car to rail will help ease congestion on some major city routes, particularly during peak hours, and reduce the number of commuters driving into the city centre.

These transport schemes are designed to enhance connectivity and reduce congestion (by removing unnecessary traffic from our streets and creating more space for active travel). They are expected to serve as the primary drivers of reductions in road transport - related air pollution across Oxford during the lifetime of this Action Plan (2026–2030).

Buildings and Energy Systems
The Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership will also play a pivotal role in driving Oxford's air pollution reductions over the next five years. By bringing together key stakeholders from across the public, private, and academic sectors, ZCOP fosters collaboration and coordinated action to accelerate decarbonisation of the city's buildings and energy systems (one of the city's biggest contributors to air pollution), through initiatives like the electrification of heating, promotion of renewable energy, and support for low-carbon technologies in the industrial and commercial sectors.

5.2 Priorities and actions

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of the measures, interventions, and key priorities developed in response to Oxford's source apportionment findings.

These actions will be delivered in partnership with various stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council, which, as the local transport authority, plays a central role in implementing transport-related initiatives to support modal shift.

Priority A – Promoting Active Travel and reducing the need to drive

Promoting active travel and reducing reliance on private vehicles is especially important in a historic city like Oxford. With its medieval layout, narrow streets, and a city centre largely unsuited to modern car traffic, Oxford faces significant congestion and associated air quality challenges. Most of the central areas were never designed with motor vehicles in mind, making them ideal for walking, cycling, and other forms of sustainable transport.

Reducing the overall number of cars operating in Oxford's city centre is a key priority of this Action Plan. Fewer cars mean lower levels of air pollution, but the benefits extend well beyond cleaner air. A reduction in car traffic also leads to fewer road accidents, improved safety for all road users and pedestrians, lower noise levels, and a more pleasant and accessible urban environment.

Reclaiming space from cars allows for a more vibrant public realm. These changes not only enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors but also bring direct health benefits through increased physical activity and reduced exposure to harmful pollutants.

<u>Core actions expected to be delivered under this key priority area include:</u>

- Introduction of trial Traffic Filters
- Introduction of Workplace Parking Levy
- Expand and improve Oxford's footways and cycleways[a)]
- Encouraging Low Car Developments and the provision of car club parking[b)]
- Enhancement of urban rail infrastructure in Oxford[c)]
- Delivery of Oxfordshire Railway Strategy and Supporting Measures
- Delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan[d)]

Footnotes:

a) With the aims to increase cycling in the city by 50% by 2031.
b) This measure is anticipated to be implemented through Oxford's emerging Local Plan 2042, with formal public consultation, formal examination and public hearings taking place in throughout 2025 and 2026, and final adoption expected by spring 2027.
c) Focusing on the delivery of infrastructure improvements in Oxford's central station and the reopening of Cowley branch line to passengers.
d) Looking at a wide range of improvements such as faster and more reliable services, simplified fares and integrated ticketing, improved passenger experience, support for new and enhanced routes.

Priority B – Accelerating the Transition to Low and Zero Emission Transport

Accelerating the shift to low and zero-emission transport is essential for improving air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating healthier urban environments.

While the overarching goal remains to reduce the overall number of vehicles on Oxford's streets - particularly in the historic city centre - it is also recognised that not all car journeys can be eliminated. For those vehicles that must remain, it is vital that they are as clean as possible in terms of emissions.

This priority area focuses on delivering air quality measures that align with the County's plans for expanding the city's current Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) to a much wider city centre area. The actions developed under this priority area are expected to play a significant role in further reducing transport-related emissions across Oxford.

According to the city's latest source apportionment, the transport sector is still responsible for 44% of total NOx emissions in Oxford.

<u>Core actions expected to be delivered under this key priority area include:</u>

- All new and renewal Hackney Carriage vehicle applications to meet the City Council's most up-to-date low emission standard
- Delivery of Zero Emission Zone expansion
- Increase the amount of EV infrastructure in the city[a)]
- Deliver Bus emission requirements under the Bus Enhancement Partnership Plan and Scheme[b)]
- Continue transitioning City operated fleets toward zero and low-emission vehicles
- Investigate strategic options for implementing freight consolidation hubs
- Promote the integration of sustainable logistics into Oxford's business ecosystem

Footnotes:

a) In particular the delivery of a 300+ charging network (secured via the government's Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund) that provides access to easy to use, reliable and affordable EV charging to the estimated 46% of households in the city who don't have access to private off-street parking.
b) The plan includes the commitment to continue to accelerate the transition to zero-emission buses, particularly in areas affected by the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ), the expectation that operators will have to prioritise the deployment of zero-emission buses on routes that pass through the ZEZ and other air quality hotspots, and supports the phased replacement of older diesel buses with battery-electric or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, in line with national targets and funding availability.

Priority C – Reducing Emissions from Domestic Heating, Industry, and Services

The latest source apportionment results show a notable shift in Oxford's air pollution profile: as transport-related emissions decline, the contribution of emissions from domestic heating, industry, and services becomes more prominent. Domestic heating alone now accounts for 26% of total NO_x emissions and 35% of total $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in Oxford.

To address this, most measures under this priority area will focus on reducing combustion emissions by improving energy efficiency. This includes replacing combustion systems for zero emission ones and renewables, shifting to low emission appliances, exploring the implementation of heat networks. These actions will help reduce both NO_x and PM emissions, supporting Oxford's commitment to cleaner air and a net zero carbon future.

<u>Core actions expected to be delivered under this key priority area include:</u>

- Prevent installation of all fossil fuel burning heating systems in all new development
- Support the development of district heat networks across the city[a)]
- Examine the feasibility of introducing a Non-Road Mobile Machinery Emissions Policy[b)]
- Deliver actions for housing for a net zero carbon future as part of the city council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy[c)]
- Deliver Oxford City Council's target of getting 95% of its housing stock to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or above
- Review strategies for improving air quality for boating communities around Oxford's inland waterways
- Update Oxford City Council's Air Quality Planning Guidance[d)]
- Facilitate electrification of industrial processes within the ZCOP Industrial cluster[e)]

Footnotes:

a) A district heating network is a way of providing heat to multiple buildings from a central source. Instead of each building having its own heating system, hot water or steam is produced at a central location and then piped through underground insulated pipes to homes, offices, and other buildings. This system is usually more efficient and environmentally friendly, especially when it uses renewable energy.
b) Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) refers to machines and equipment that are not used on public roads but are powered by engines (usually diesel) and are commonly found on construction sites. Examples include excavators, bulldozers, cranes, generators, and loaders. These machines can produce significant air pollution, especially NO_x and PM.
c) This measure touches on all the work that is already being developed by the city council and which relates with: building new low-emission homes, retrofitting existing homes with emission free heating systems (like heat pumps), supporting private landlords and homeowners encouraging and enabling energy efficiency improvements, developing zero-carbon housing policies, promoting renewable energy, and tackling fuel poverty.
d) So that what the city requires from developments is more aligned with the city's ambitious health-based standards. Updating the guidance ensures that planning policy is consistent with these commitments, particularly when the city decided to commit to a lower NO_2 threshold than the national legal limit.
e) Helping industries in the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) industrial cluster switch from fossil fuels (like gas or diesel) to electricity to power their operations.

Priority D – Facilitating behaviour change by enhancing public awareness and collaborative partnerships

This area constitutes a cornerstone of effective air quality management.

While the direct impact of most of the measures under this area on pollution levels are inherently difficult to quantify - given their focus on influencing individual and collective behaviours, which are often subjective and variable - this area remains critically important.

Raising awareness, empowering communities, and fostering cooperation across sectors can drive long-term cultural shifts toward cleaner, healthier choices.

By enhancing public awareness, we begin to understand that everyone has a role to play - each of us is part of the solution. Our everyday choices, no matter how small, can directly influence the quality of the air we all share.

For Oxford, continued investment in this area is essential to support and amplify the effectiveness of technical and regulatory interventions, ensuring a more sustainable and engaged path toward cleaner air.

<u>Core actions expected to be delivered under this key priority area include:</u>

- Make use of the city's electronic road signage to regularly share air quality messages with the public.
- Strengthen links with NHS and local health services, with the eventual goal of embedding air quality awareness into patient engagement and care pathways.
- Collaborate with communities and businesses to explore green infrastructure solutions that reduce exposure to air pollution and support climate adaptation.
- Collaborate with District and County Councils to deliver a coordinated and consistent approach in raising awareness of air pollution and its health effects.
- Enhance the content, usability, and visibility of the OXONAIR[a)] website to better inform and engage residents on local air quality issues
- Support initiatives that strengthen the evidence base on air quality and public health in Oxford.
- Explore opportunities to develop an Air Quality Literacy Programme in collaboration with the County Council and neighbouring Districts.
- Support school-wide initiatives that emphasize the importance of clean air.

Footnotes:

a) OXONAIR is Oxfordshire's central platform for air quality information, designed to help residents, policymakers, and organisations understand and improve the air they breathe. It provides real-time and forecasted air pollution data, interactive maps, educational resources, and practical advice on reducing exposure and emissions. It was delivered through a collaborative effort involving Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, and all the Oxfordshire district councils, using DEFRA's Air Quality Grant funding.

5.3 Policy Integration

This action plan is a key component of the city's broader environmental and public health agenda, aligning closely with local transport, climate, and planning strategies.

Developed in response to the city's air quality statutory requirements under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework, this plan is designed to complement and reinforce the complete list of existing policies that are presented on table 5 below.

Table 5 - Complete list of all the local policies and strategies that are relevant to Oxford's AQAP.

Policy Document	Ownership	Launch Date	Covering Period	Air Quality Relevance
Air Quality Strategy	Oxfordshire County Council	Jun 23	2023 2030	Sets out a strategic framework to accelerate improvements in air quality across the county.
Local Transport and Connectivity Plan	Oxfordshire County Council	Jul 23	2022 2050	Serves as the county's statutory transport strategy. It plays a vital role in improving air quality by aiming to reduce car dependency, promote active and public transport, and deliver a net-zero transport system by 2040.
Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan	Oxfordshire County Council	Sep 23	2023 2032	Promotes a shift towards sustainable transport modes, reducing reliance on private vehicles, and supporting the delivery of infrastructure that lowers transport-related emissions
Carbon Management Plan	Oxfordshire County Council	Jun 23	2022 2030	Outlines the council's roadmap to become carbon neutral by 2030, focusing on reducing emissions from its own operations, including buildings, street lighting, fleet, and staff travel.
Oxford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Oxfordshire County Council	Mar 20	2020 2030	Outlines how to significantly improve walking and cycling infrastructure across Oxford. It aims to increase cycling by 50% by 2031.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Oxfordshire County Council	Dec 23	2024 2030	Sets out a unified vision to improve health outcomes across the county by focusing on prevention, reducing health inequalities, and fostering closer collaboration between health services, local government, and community organisations. It adopts a life-course approach - *"Start Well, Live Well, Age Well"* - and recognises the importance of wider determinants of health such as housing, employment, climate resilience, and clean air.
Active Travel Strategy	Oxfordshire County Council	Jul 22	2022 2032	Aims at promoting walking, cycling, and wheeling as alternatives to car use, helping reduce vehicle emissions and improve public health.

Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Partnership (EP)	Oxfordshire County Council + Local Bus Operators	Oct 21	2021 2030	Support air quality by encouraging a shift from private cars to cleaner, more efficient bus travel. They promote low- and zero-emission buses, reduce congestion through bus priority measures, and improve service reliability - helping to cut transport-related emissions and improve urban air quality.
Oxford Local Plan[32]	Oxford City Council	Jun 20	2016 2036	Plays a key role in improving air quality by guiding sustainable development, prioritising low-emission transport, and ensuring that land use planning supports climate and public health objectives.
Oxford Urban Forest Strategy	Oxford City Council	Sep 21	2021 2050	Long-term master plan that aims to protect, manage, and expand Oxford's urban tree canopy. It recognises the role of trees in filtering airborne pollutants, reducing emissions, and mitigating the urban heat island effect, all of which contribute to healthier air and improved public wellbeing.
Green Spaces Strategy	Oxford City Council	Jul 13	2013 2027	Sets out how the city's parks and open spaces will be preserved, enhanced, and made more accessible, and recognises green spaces as the "lungs of the city", playing a vital role in filtering pollutants, supporting biodiversity, and encouraging active travel such as walking and cycling.
Air Quality Planning Guidance	Oxford City Council	Mar 19	2019 onwards	Provides a comprehensive framework to ensure that air quality is considered at every stage of the development process - from design and construction to operation.
Our Council Strategy	Oxford City Council	Jul 24	2024 2028	Outlines the council's priorities for the next four years. It embeds environmental sustainability into all council operations, prioritising clean transport, green infrastructure, and climate action as part of its commitment to a fairer, greener, and healthier city.
Electric Vehicle Strategy	Oxford City Council	Jul 22	2022 2040	Aimed at accelerating the shift to zero-emission transport through equitable, accessible, and future-ready EV charging infrastructure, directly reducing road traffic emissions across the city.
Zero Carbon Oxford Action Plan	Oxford City Council + Partners	Jul 21	2018 2040	Developed by the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP)[33] this plan is Oxford's roadmap to becoming a net-zero carbon city by 2040, outlining practical steps across key sectors (like transport, buildings, and energy) to drastically cut emissions. The plan

[32] A new plan (Oxford Local Plan 2042) is currently in preparation, with formal consultations taking place in 2025, and it will eventually replace the existing plan to guide development through to 2042. This new plan is expected to strengthen Oxford's air quality commitments further.

[33] In March 2025, the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) expanded its scope to cover the entire county of Oxfordshire, reflecting a growing commitment to collaborative climate action across the region. The expanded partnership now includes Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Enterprise Oxfordshire (formerly the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership), Abingdon and Witney College, and Oxfordshire Greentech. Together, these organisations will work towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions across Oxfordshire by 2050, while also pursuing their own local or organisational decarbonisation goals. This collective effort is expected to significantly reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality throughout the county.

				sets five-year targets, encourages collaboration among major city stakeholders, and focuses on clean energy, sustainable travel, and greener buildings.
Climate Emergency Declaration	Oxford City Council	Jan 19	Not applicable	Reinforces the city's commitment to improving air quality by accelerating the transition to zero-emission transport, reducing fossil fuel use, and embedding clean air objectives into climate, planning, and transport policies.
Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Oxford City Council	Apr 23	2023 2028	Promoting low-carbon housing development, improving energy efficiency, and reducing rough sleeping - actions that contribute to healthier living environments and lower emissions.
Carbon Management Plan	Oxford City Council		2021 2030	Supports air quality by phasing out fossil fuels in council operations, transitioning to zero-emission vehicles, and improving energy efficiency in buildings - actions that reduce both carbon and air pollutant emissions, contributing to healthier local environments.
Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire	All 6 Oxfordshire local authorities + Other Stakeholders	Jun 21	2020 2050	Promotes transport electrification, building retrofit, and behavioural change to reduce fossil fuel use and emissions. These actions help lower nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution, contributing to healthier indoor and outdoor environments across the county.

By aligning this plan with all these strategic documents, the AQAP ensures a coordinated approach to reducing emissions, promoting sustainable mobility, and improving public health outcomes across the city.

This integration enables more effective delivery of measures, maximises co-benefits, and supports long-term environmental resilience

5.4 AQAP Proposed Measures

Table 6 presents the full list of AQAP measures aligned with the four key areas of intervention identified on sub-chapter 5.2 above. It includes:

- A detailed list of actions that form part of the plan.[34]
- The individuals and departments or organisations responsible for delivering each action.
- Where possible, the detailed anticipated benefits in terms of pollutant emission and/or concentration reductions.
- The expected implementation timescales.

While analysing the information presented in Table 6, it is important to highlight five key aspects:

a) Funding status of measures
Not all measures listed in Table 6 currently have secured funding. However, Oxford City Council, in collaboration with its delivery partners, remains committed to securing the necessary resources to implement the plan. Given the strong track record of both the City and County Councils in attracting external funding - such as DEFRA's Air Quality Grant, Innovate UK programmes, OLEV schemes, and the LEVI fund - we are confident in our ability to deliver the actions outlined.

b) Interdependencies between measures
Several measures are interlinked and dependent on the successful implementation of others. For example, the delivery of additional cycle lanes and expanded footpaths - key to prioritising active travel - will only be feasible once measures such as the traffic filters, the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) expansion, and (to some extent) the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) are in place. These dependencies should be carefully considered when interpreting the feasibility and sequencing of the proposed actions.

c) Assumptions behind impact estimates
The estimated impacts on air quality and other indicators are a mandatory requirement under DEFRA's guidance for Air Quality Action Plans. These estimates have been developed using the best available data at the time of writing and are based on a number of assumptions. However, many of the proposed schemes are still subject to public consultation and may evolve in terms of scope or geographic coverage. Any such changes will directly affect the projected air quality outcomes. Therefore, these estimates should be viewed as indicative and subject to refinement as the measures progress.

[34] This Air Quality Action Plan sets out 30 actions, presented without prioritisation. Each measure is considered equally important, and it is only through the full and coordinated implementation of all actions that the anticipated reductions in air pollution levels across Oxford can be achieved.

d) Formal decision and associated uncertainties

While these transport schemes are being actively developed, it's important to note that many of them will still be subject to public consultation and formal decision making by local authority. This process ensures transparency and democratic oversight, but it also means that the schemes may evolve significantly in scope and design. In some cases, proposals could be substantially altered or even withdrawn altogether. As such, there remains an inherent level of uncertainty until final decisions are made, which needs to be accounted for.

e) Local Government Reorganisation

Air quality improvements in Oxfordshire are currently delivered within a two-tier governance framework, with Oxfordshire County Council serving as the Local Transport Authority and Oxford City Council as the Lead for the city's statutory duties on Air Quality. This division of responsibilities has enabled collaborative progress on several key measures. However, this structure may be subject to significant change as part of the central government's broader ambition[35] to simplify local government arrangements across England. Final decisions on the proposed reorganisation are expected in late 2026, with new councils[36] likely to be established by 2028.

While the proposed reorganisation presents opportunities for more cohesive and locally responsive governance, it also introduces a degree of uncertainty that may affect the ownership, pace and consistency of air quality improvements in Oxford during the coverage period of this AQAP.

Example: Existing initiatives and measures may need to be re-evaluated or re-approved under new governance structures, potentially altering their scope or design. Finally, the redistribution of responsibilities and budgets could also impact the prioritisation and funding of some of the air quality measures contained in this document.

[35] Link to Central Government's English Devolution White Paper here

[36] Three reorganisation proposals are currently under consideration:

a) Three unitary councils, including a proposed Greater Oxford Council covering Oxford and its Green Belt.
b) Two unitary councils, combining Oxford City with surrounding districts.
c) A single unitary council covering the entire Oxfordshire County Council area.

Table 6 - Complete list of measures included in AQAP 2026-2030

Key Priority Area	Measure	Ownership	KPIs	Estimated Air Pollution Reduction	Timescale for Implementation	Other Co-benefits	Cost[37]
A) Promoting Active Travel and reducing the need to drive	Introduction of Trial Traffic Filters	Oxfordshire County Council	Traffic Counts, Number of people travelling by bus, NO_2 levels measured in affected areas	Ricardo EE's AQ modelling report shows an 8% average reduction of NO_2 levels across the city, and of 1% of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$	Start of trial August 2026 (subject to reopening of Botley Road)	Reductions of Traffic, Noise Pollution, Increased road safety	~~£££££~~
	Introduction of Workplace Parking Levy	Oxfordshire County Council	Number of businesses enrolled, WPL revenue generated, % reduction in total vehicle kilometres travelled	Nottingham's AQ monitoring results show that NO_2 concentrations in key areas affected by WPL declined by 13 - 20% over the first 5 years of the WPL, though this also reflects broader transport and fleet changes	Late 2027 (subject to consultation and DfT approval)	According to Transport Action Network, The WPL in Nottingham also led to 33% fall in carbon emissions and more than 40% of journeys into the city centre being made by public transport.	~~£££££~~
	Expand and Improve Oxford's Footways and cycleways	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	Cycle and Walking counts, km of improved/new footpaths/cycleways completed	NO_2 reductions of 10-20% in certain key corridors are realistic. London Cycle Superhighways Study shows that roadside NO_2 concentrations dropped by up to 20% where roads were redesigned to include segregated cycle lanes and reduce motor traffic exposure.	2026-2030 (annually)	County-wide goal to reach 1 million cycle trips per week by 2031, up from 600,000 per week currently. The Goal is to increase cycling in Oxford by 50% by 2031	~~£££££~~
	Enhancement of urban rail infrastructure	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council + Network Rail + DfT	Annual Rail passenger numbers, % modal shift from car to rail, annual vehicle-km reductions, NO_2 concentrations measured in affected areas	Based on the forecasted passenger numbers and modal shift assumptions from the Cowley Branch Line Full Business Case, the estimated annual air quality benefits from the project are: 27.5 million km of car travel avoided per year, NOx savings of 11 tonnes/year and of 386 kg/year for $PM_{2.5}$	2030	3,630 tonnes of CO_2 per year saved (based on 27.5 million car km avoided annually and at an average car emission factor of 132 g CO2/km (Dft 2023)	~~£££££~~
	Encouraging Low Car Developments and the provision of car club parking[38]	Oxford City Council	Number of major developments per year with low, free or with net decrease (in case of a redevelopment) car parking provision; number of major	A Scottish Government commissioned review found out that: a) car free housing developments and off site non-adjacent parking are associated with reduced car kms travelled, lower car ownership and	2026-2030 (via Local Plan and planning system, every year)	Expected reduction in traffic volumes of 10-20% in areas with low car parking - Studies of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and School Streets report these level of traffic reductions	~~£££~~

[37] Legend: £ <10k; ~~£~~£ 10k-50k; ~~£~~£~~£~~ 50k-100k; ~~£~~£~~£~~£ 100k-500k; ~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~ 500k-1 million; ~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£ 1million – 10 million; ~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~ > 10 million.

[38] This measure is anticipated to be implemented through Oxford's emerging Local Plan 2042, with formal public consultation, formal examination and public hearings taking place in throughout 2025 and 2026, and final adoption expected by spring 2027.

			developments per year that provide parking for car clubs	positive modal shift (towards walking, cycling and public transport). b) Car-free developments had car use levels less than half of city-wide averages While this study focused on car use, the implications for NO_2 are clear: reduced vehicle kilometres directly correlate with lower NO_2 emissions, especially in urban areas.		ex: London City Hall -school streets impacts study 2021	
	Delivery of Oxfordshire Railway Strategy and Supporting Measures	Oxfordshire County Council + Railway operators	% of Electrification progress, % of train punctuality and service reliability, % of modal shift from road to rail	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, railways contribute to up to 3% of total NOx emissions and to 0.6% of total PM2.5 emissions in the city	Strategy expected to be launched in 2026 with supporting measures delivered throughout 2026-2030	Rail as a place shaper, Improving connectivity, decarbonisation of the railway	~~£££££££~~
	Delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan	Oxfordshire County Council + Bus Operators	Average bus journey time on key corridors, bus punctuality improvement, total bus ridership, passenger satisfaction score	Between 3.6 and 7.3 tonnes of NOx saved per year (18.2 to 36.5 tonnes in 5 years) (Assumptions: 5-10% modal shift car to bus, 100,000 daily car trips, average trip length 5Km, average NOx emissions of 0.4g/km[39] per car)	2026-2030 (annually)	Several studies seem to indicate that multiple interventions such as integrated ticketing, service reliability, and pricing can lead to a 5-10% modal shift from car to bus in urban areas	~~£££££~~
	All new and renewal Hackney Carriage Vehicle applications to meet the City Council's most up-to-date low emission standard	Oxford City Council	Total amount of annual applications made that meet the low emission criteria	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, Hackneys contribute to up to 2% of total NOx emissions and to 0.6% of total PM2.5 emissions in the city	2026-2030 (annually)	Reduced Noise Pollution, Less Carbon emissions	~~££££~~

[39] The fleet-weighted NOx emission factor for UK urban roads (excluding London) is provided by the Emission Factor Toolkit (EFT v12.0). For the year 2025, typical NOx emission factors by vehicle type are as follows: Petrol cars: approximately 0.02–0.05 g/km; Diesel cars: approximately 0.2–0.4 g/km. To ensure a conservative approach in our calculations, we have opted to use the upper bound of these ranges, specifically the emission factor for diesel cars, which represents the highest value among the most common vehicle types.

B) Accelerating the Transition to Low and Zero Emission Transport	Delivery of Zero Emission Zone expansion	Oxfordshire County Council	% of zero-emission vehicles and ICE entering the ZEZ, traffic volume changes, average vehicle speed (as proxy for congestion)	Data from ZEZ Pilot[40] evaluation report: Overall vehicle movements in the ZEZ Pilot have reduced by 28%, reduction of NO2 in the affected streets between 12-18%, followed by a 29% increase in cycle movements	2027-2030 (likely to be delivered in 2027 - subject to consultation)	Reduced noise pollution, Less carbon emissions, more active travel, more attractive public spaces,	~~£££££~~
	Increase the amount of EV infrastructure in the city	Oxford City Council	Number of EV charging points installed in the city, % of cars registered in Oxford being EV	Key target in Oxford's EV strategy: 50% of all cars in Oxford to be electric by 2030 Estimated total NOx Annual savings: 128.6 tonnes/year (Assumptions: Total amount of registered cars in Oxford:52,753, average UK annual car mileage 12186km, NOx emission factor of 0.4 g/km	2026-2030 (annually)	Reduced Noise Pollution and Green House Gas emissions	~~£££££~~
	Deliver Bus emission requirements under the Bus Enhancement Partnership Plan and Scheme	Oxfordshire County Council + Bus Operators	% of city buses that are electric or of higher emissions standard	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, buses in Oxford now contribute to 4% of total road transport NOx emissions in the city – a significant reduction from 32% in 2020	By the end of 2030	Reduced Noise Pollution, Less Carbon Emissions	~~£££££~~
	Continue transitioning City operated fleets toward zero and low-emission vehicles	Oxford City Council	% of ODS Fleet being EV	Oxford Direct Services added 159 vehicles to its fleet between 2021 and 2025, - 35% of the total fleet is now EV The estimated total NOx emissions savings from the electrification of the ODS fleet between 2021 and mid-2025 is approximately 6.7 tonnes. Based on current trends and assuming a similar pace of fleet transition, we anticipate that NOx savings over the subsequent period (2026–2030) could be of a comparable magnitude.	2026-2030 (via procurement, every year)	Reduced Noise Pollution, Less Carbon Emissions	~~£££££~~

[40] The full modelling results for the potential expansion of the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) are currently under development and are not yet available for review. However, the results from the ZEZ Pilot implemented in Oxford city centre are included here and provide valuable insight into the potential positive impacts of a wider ZEZ rollout. The full modelling results are expected to be shared as part of the public consultation on the ZEZ expansion in early 2026.

				(Assumptions: 40 miles/day of average usage per vehicle, a NOx emission factor of 0.4 g/km)			
	Investigate strategic options for implementing smart hubs for last mile delivery	Oxfordshire County Council + Oxford City Council	Number of participating businesses, Number of deliveries made by cargo bike Total distance travelled by cargo bikes (km) Vehicle kilometres avoided (km) Average delivery time per trip, Operational cost per delivery	The Brixton last mile logistics trial project aimed to identify the possibilities and opportunities for last mile logistics hubs in urban centres Operating between April 2022 and June 2023, the project offered Brixton businesses to trial free cargo bike deliveries from two last mile consolidation hubs Using a NOx emission factor of 0.7g/km and the 277km of motor vehicle travel avoided, we calculate total NOx emission savings of this trial at 0.19 kg of NOx Scaling it up to 30 or more businesses in Oxford City Centre would result in a much higher NOx emission saving	2026-2030 (annually)	Overall, there were 8 Brixton businesses participating in the trial, 194 trips made by cargo bike as part of the trial, between April 2022 and February 2023, with 277 vehicle-km saved. The trial generated 109 kg of CO2 savings, the equivalent to 2 football-pitch sized forest fires, heating 12 homes for one day, or the amount of CO2 that 136 people exhale in one day	£
	Promote the integration of sustainable logistics into Oxford's business ecosystem	Oxford City Council	Number of deliveries made by cargo bike, distance covered by cargo bike, number of participating businesses	Oxford City Council's 12-month cargo bike trial in partnership with Velocity replaced approximately 6,259.8 car and van miles with cargo bike deliveries. Based on a NO_x emission factor of 0.7 g/km, this equates to an estimated saving of 7.1 kilograms of nitrogen oxides (NO_x). This previous trial highlights the significant potential of cargo bike logistics to reduce air pollution. If scaled over the next five years - and with increased participation from local businesses - the environmental benefits could be even greater	2026-2030 (annually)	Oxford City Council's 12-month cargo bike trial in partnership with Velocity engaged 25 city centre businesses, facilitated between 148 and 431 deliveries per month, and resulted in an estimated 1.65 tonnes of CO_2 savings Reduced Noise Pollution, Less Carbon Emissions, Improved road safety, less congestion, enhanced walkability and liveability	~~£~~£
	Prevent installation of all fossil fuel burning heating systems in all new development	Oxford City Council	% of new major planning applications approved with fossil-fuel-free heating systems	Estimated NOx reduction per year: 365 kg (1.5 tonnes cumulative impact over 4 years) Assumptions: 567 new dwellings built per year in Oxford, each home would use 11,500 kWh/year for space and water heating if fitted with gas boiler,	2027-2030 (via Local Plan and planning system, every year)	If 2268 new houses (four times 567) are to be installed with a zero-carbon heating system, the estimated annual carbon savings would be approximately 5,321 tonnes of CO_2	~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£~~£

C) Reducing Emissions from Domestic Heating, Industry, and Services				emission factor for new gas boilers used of 56 mg NOx per KWh		Emission factor used: 204 grams of CO_2 per kWh	
	Update Oxford City Council's Air Quality Planning Guidance	Oxford City Council	Number of planning applications referencing the updated guidance, Number of Air Quality Assessments improved or rejected due to non-compliance with the guidance	It is not possible to quantify the reduction in NO_2 levels resulting specifically from the update of this guidance. However, this document supports and complements the NO_x reduction measures outlined above, as it is closely integrated with the planning system.	2027	Reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ and other pollutants due to better design and mitigation	£
	Support the development of district heat networks across the city[41]	Oxford City Council + Partners	% of pipework and energy centre infrastructure completed, % of target buildings or households connected, NOx emissions saved mg/kWh (or total tonnes/year compared to conventional systems	Internal estimates (made for a hypothetical district heat network in the city centre) would equate to approximately 84,000,000 kWh of natural gas removed per year from the grid in Oxford City Centre, the equivalent to 8.4 tonnes NOx of emissions saved per year	2026-2030 (as and when, via planning system, every year)	annual carbon savings would be approximately of 17,136 tonnes CO2 Emission factor used: 204 grams of CO_2 per kWh	~~£££££~~
	Examine the feasibility of introducing a Non-Road Mobile Machinery Emissions Policy	Oxford City Council	% of compliant machinery	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, NRMM is responsible for 7.1% of Oxford's total NOx emissions and to 3.1% of total PM2.5 emissions. A study by King's College found that Stage IV generator engines emit approx. 78% less NOx than older Stage III-A engines.	2026-2030 (exact timeline not yet defined)	Reduced Noise Pollution, Less Carbon Emissions	~~£££~~
	Deliver Oxford City Council's target of getting 95% of its housing stock to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or above	Oxford City Council	Number of Homes upgraded to EPC C or above	This target applies to approximately 2,515 (worst case scenario) out of 7,626 council homes. If Oxford City Council upgrades 95% of its 2515 council homes to EPC C by 2030, and each home reduces gas use by 20%, the estimated NO_x emission savings would be: 549.5 kg NOx per year	By 2030	Reduced fuel poverty, Enhanced housing quality, Increases Community resilience, Less Carbon Emissions, better indoor air quality, improved energy efficiency	~~£££££~~

[41] Support of District Heat network will only be made in the cases where there is a valid argument for increased sustainability and emissions reduction.

				Assumptions: Average gas use: 11,500 kWh/year per home, NO_x emission factor: 100 mg/kWh (old boilers), and 20% gas reduction per upgraded home			
	Deliver actions for housing for a net zero carbon future as part of the city council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Oxford City Council	Number of homes retrofitted with energy efficiency measures; Number of new all-electric homes completed	Based on the commitments outlined in Oxford City Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan (accounting for 600 homes to receive energy efficiency upgrades, and 31 homes switch from gas to ASHP), the estimated annual NO_x emission savings from housing decarbonisation actions are of 174 kg NOx per year (522 kg NOx over the 3-year period) Assumptions used: Gas use per home 11,500 kWh/year, a gas reduction of 20% as a result of energy efficiency upgrades, and a NOx emission factor for boilers of 100 mg NOx/kWh (equivalent to an old boiler)	2026-2028	Reduced fuel poverty, Enhanced housing quality, Increases Community resilience, Less Carbon Emissions, better indoor air quality, improved energy efficiency	~~£££££££~~
	Review strategies for improving air quality for boating communities around Oxford's inland waterways	Oxford City Council	Number of boats using cleaner fuel, number of boats retrofitted, % of boaters aware of air quality impacts, Number of smoke nuisance complaints	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, inland Waterways (together with military aircraft) are responsible for most of 8.9% of Oxford's total NOx emissions and to 6.8% of total $PM_{2.5}$ emissions Inland waterways emissions contemplate emissions from: Motorboats / workboats (e.g. canal boats, dredgers, service boats, tourist boats, river boats)	2026-2030 (annually)	Reduced Water and Noise Pollution, Less Carbon Emissions, Improved biodiversity	~~£££~~
	Facilitate electrification of industrial processes within the ZCOP Industrial cluster	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council + ZCOP Partners	% of industrial processes electrified, number of industrial sites transitioned to electric technologies, reduction in fossil fuel consumption	According to the city's latest source apportionment study, Industry combustion accounts for 3.4% and 1.9% of total NOx and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in the city	2026-2030 (annually)	Currently 17% of the city's carbon emissions are related with industry and 66% of the city's industrial processes run on gas	~~£££££~~
	Make use of the city's electronic road signage network to regularly share air quality	Oxfordshire County Council	Number of messages displayed	Unable to estimate reduction in NO2 levels. A study in Kent found that carefully crafted road signs reduced vehicle idling by 27.2% on average, suggesting	2026 - 2030	Reduction in CO2 emissions from anticipated behavioural change due to increased awareness, particularly from road transport.	£

D) Facilitating behaviour change by enhancing public awareness and collaborative partnerships[42]	messages with the public.			strong potential for behaviour change through targeted messaging.			
	Strengthen links with the NHS and local health services, with the eventual goal of embedding air quality awareness into patient engagement and care pathways	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council + DCs +NHS	Number of health organisations engaged, number of health services incorporating air quality related patient engagement	Unable to estimate reduction in NO2 levels. Research published by University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust highlights the potential for health professionals to act as trusted messengers, particularly in respiratory care, and recommends embedding air quality messaging into patient pathways & staff training. In 2023/2024 Oxford Health saw 1,542,172 attended contacts delivered by Oxford Health staff, with an estimated 84,000 people in Oxford – a significant number of residents to engage with.	2026 – 2030	Reduction in CO_2 emissions through behaviour change (e.g. active travel, cleaner heating choice, improved cardiovascular and respiratory health, greater public trust in air quality messaging via healthcare professionals.	£
	Collaborate with communities and businesses to explore green infrastructure solutions that reduce exposure to air pollution and support climate adaptation	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council	Number of organisations engaged, number of green infrastructure projects delivered, reduction in pollution from monitoring at those sites	NO2 reductions: 12% in project areas A study in the Netherlands attributes up to a 12% reduction in NO_2 pollution concentrations from green infrastructure areas with nature-based solutions.	2026 – 2030	The same study shows a maximum of 6% decrease in temperature. Other studies show how green infrastructure can support flood mitigation, biodiversity, mental and physical wellbeing, carbon sequestration.	~~££££~~
	Collaborate with District and County Councils to deliver a coordinated and consistent approach in raising awareness of	Oxford City Council + County + Districts	Number of joint campaigns delivered (social media, workshops, community projects).	Unable to estimate reduction in NO_2 levels. A Royal College of Physicians report emphasises the need for consistent, coordinated messaging on air quality in order to influence behaviour change.	2026 – 2030	Increased public trust through unified messaging, greater participation in local clean air initiatives, behaviour change leading to reduced carbon emissions (e.g. through active travel, reduced idling, cleaner heating choices)	£

[42] All the measures outlined under this key priority area are considered *'soft measures'*, focusing primarily on raising awareness and fostering public engagement. As such, these actions are expected to be implemented on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of this action plan. Given their intangible nature, it is also generally not possible to directly quantify their impact on air pollution reduction. However, some of these measures include references to relevant scientific studies and related projects that highlight the value of such initiatives. Some available behavioural change indicators also offer insight into their potential to contribute indirectly to improved air quality outcomes.

	air pollution and its health effects						
	Explore opportunities to develop an Air Quality Literacy Programme in collaboration with County Council and neighbouring Districts	Oxfordshire County Council + City Council + Districts	Delivery of Air Quality Literacy programme, and once delivered, number of enrolments	The Air Quality Literacy Programme will aim to emulate the successful Climate Literacy programme to raise air quality across Oxfordshire. A study across five Nordic countries concluded that individuals with high climate concern had 1.5-2 tonnes lower carbon footprints than those with low concern. Similarly, increasing air quality awareness is expected to drive lower-emission behaviours and reduce exposure.	2026 - 2030	Behaviour changes leading to reduced pollution and carbon emissions, greater public support for air quality policies and initiatives, improved individual and community health outcomes through informed decision-making.	£
	Enhance the content, usability and visibility of the OXONAIR website to better inform and engage residents on local air quality issues	Oxford City Council + County + Districts	Number of visits to OXONAIR website	Unable to estimate reduction in NO_2 levels. Research shows that personalising and making air quality data accessible empowers individuals to take action, both to reduce their exposure and to adopt cleaner behaviours. Improved usability ensures broader reach and engagement.	2026 – 2030	Behaviour changes leading to reduced carbon emissions (e.g. less car use, cleaner heating choices), greater public trust in local and county air quality policies, increased digital engagement with environmental data and tools.	£
	Support initiatives that strengthen the evidence base on air quality and public health in Oxford	Oxford City Council	Number of studies or reports supported	Unable to estimate reduction in NO2 levels. Strengthening the evidence base with trusted, robust research enables the development of effective, targeted policies and supports behavioural change by providing credible information to the public and stakeholders.	2026 – 2030	Improved health outcomes by using targeted interventions based on evidence, more effective local policies, greater community awareness.	£
	Support school-wide initiatives that emphasize the importance of clean air	Oxford City Council + Oxfordshire County Council	Number of schools engaged; number of initiatives supported	A DEFRA report highlights the importance of education in raising public awareness, especially among young people. Schools serve as a powerful platform to reach both students and parents. A study from Barcelona found that traffic pollution negatively affects children's working memory, underlining the urgency of reducing exposure in school environments.	2026 – 2030	Behaviour changes around schools (e.g. anti-idling, school streets, active travel), reduced exposure to air pollution for children and staff, improved learning outcomes and health, increased family and community engagement in clean air initiatives	£

6. Development and Implementation of Oxford's AQAP

6.1 Establishment of the AQAP Steering Group

A Local Authority Officer Steering Group was established in January 2025 to lead the development of this Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

The group convened three times between February and July to review the findings of Oxford's source apportionment study, agree on a new local annual mean air quality target, and identify the key areas for intervention within the plan.

Following these group meetings, a series of one-to-one discussions were then held with individual steering group members, as well as with other relevant officers from internal teams at both City and County, whose work intersects with air quality.

These meetings were essential to negotiate and finalise some of the specific measures to be included in the AQAP. A final steering group interaction took place in late July to review the complete set of proposed measures and gather final comments and suggestions.

The AQAP steering group included representatives from:

- ✓ Oxford City Council Environmental Quality Team
- ✓ Oxford City Council Carbon Reduction Team
- ✓ Oxford City Council Planning Policy Team
- ✓ Oxfordshire County Council Central Locality Team
- ✓ Oxfordshire County Council Transport Policy and Strategy Team
- ✓ Oxfordshire County Council Healthy Place Shaping team

Other local authority teams have also been consulted during this period. Members of:

- ✓ Oxfordshire County Council Innovation Team
- ✓ Oxford City Council Regeneration and Economic Development Team
- ✓ Oxford City Council Business Regulation Team
- ✓ Oxford Direct Services

6.2 Consultation Process and Community Involvement

The **Environment Act 1995**, as amended by the **Environment Act 2021**, provides the statutory basis for consultation and engagement in the preparation or revision of a local authority's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

6.2.1 Joint Air Quality Workshop

On 29 April 2025, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council jointly hosted an Air Quality Engagement Workshop at the Oxford Westgate Library, from 10:30 to 14:30.

The event brought together a total of 25 residents and representatives from Community Action Groups (CAGs) to share their views on air quality in Oxford, explore current challenges, and engage in meaningful group discussions around potential solutions.

This workshop marked the first phase of public engagement to inform the development of this draft Air Quality Action Plan. The session included a series of presentations to provide context on the city's air quality status and the work undertaken so far. Participants also took part in interactive activities, including hands-on demonstrations with air quality sensors and an introduction to the new OXONAIR website, designed to improve public access to local air quality data.

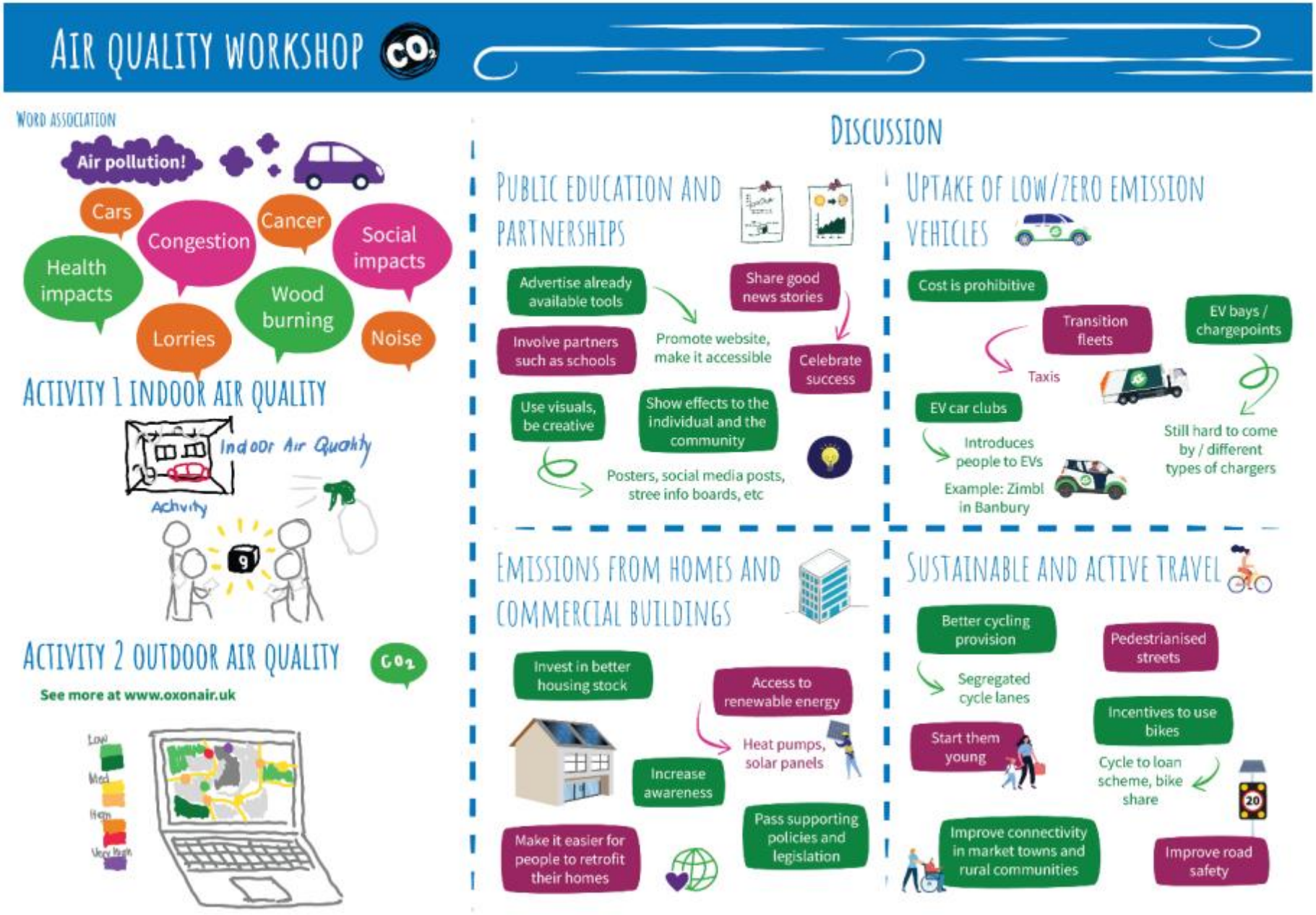
Figure 17 below provides a clear and engaging summary of the workshop activities and discussions, which focused on four key areas: Public Education and Partnerships, Uptake of Low/Zero Emission Vehicles, Emissions from Homes and Commercial Buildings, and Sustainable and Active Travel.

6.2.2 Public Consultation

In accordance with the legal framework outlined above and the relevant policy guidance (LAQM.PG22), Oxford City Council is required to carry out a full public consultation on this draft Air Quality Action Plan.

This section of the AQAP will be updated upon completion of the consultation process and analysis of the feedback received, ensuring that the final plan reflects, as far as practicable, the views and priorities of local residents and stakeholders.

Figure 17 - Infographic showing the insights of the collaborative Air Quality workshop



7. Appendix

7.1 Oxford's air pollution hotspots

This section of the AQAP provides further detail on Oxford's three historic air quality hotspots. Figures 18-20 present the contour maps that were generated from both modelled and measured air quality data for the year 2022[43]. Shaded areas represent modelled NO_2 concentrations, while the data points correspond to diffusion tube monitoring results. Both modelled and monitored data was used to inform Oxford's most recent Source Apportionment Study.

7.1.1 St Clements

St Clements has historically recorded the highest NO_2 concentrations in Oxford. Located within the commercial centre of the city and under the jurisdiction of Oxford City Council, this road link plays a critical role in the local transport network. It serves as a key city centre corridor, connecting East and West Oxford via The Plain Roundabout. St Clements Street is also the most direct route linking the eastern parts of the city with the central area.

Figure 18 – Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 at St Clements/ The Plain

[43] During the development of Oxford's latest Source Apportionment Study, which informed this AQAP, it was decided to use 2022 as the baseline year for air quality modelling to assess the transport sector's contribution to emissions. This decision was based on the fact that 2022 was the most recent full year in which traffic conditions in Oxford reflected a *'business as usual'* scenario. In contrast, 2023 monitoring data was significantly affected by atypical traffic patterns resulting from the closure of Botley Road near Oxford Station - a disruption that is still ongoing, with the road not expected to reopen until August 2026.

Traffic frequently builds up along St Clements heading toward The Plain Roundabout, with queues often extending beyond 125 metres. The road serves as a key corridor for local bus services, with several bus stops located along the route. It also accommodates 24-hour coach services to London and major airports, with stops in both eastbound and westbound directions. In addition, a significant number of delivery and service vehicles use this road, as it provides a primary access route to the city centre from the east. The area hosts a high concentration of businesses that rely on daily deliveries, further contributing to traffic volumes and emissions.

The relatively poor air quality at this location is primarily due to the narrow street layout and frequent obstructions to traffic flow. The street's configuration creates a canyon effect, which traps pollutants and limits their dispersion.

Nitrogen dioxide levels at St Clements decreased by 36% between 2019 and 2024.

In 2019 - the last full year before the pandemic - the annual mean concentration was 53 µg/m³, compared to 34 µg/m³ in 2024. As a key corridor for local bus services, this substantial improvement is largely attributed to some bus lane adjustments which were introduced to improve bus flow and reduce congestion, and to the recent electrification of Oxford's bus fleet.

7.1.2 Oxford City Centre Area - St Aldates and High Street

High Street and St Aldates areas are a vibrant city centre thoroughfare lined with shops on both sides. It features pavements along its entire length, supporting high volumes of pedestrian activity, and is frequently used by cyclists. Several bus stops are located along these streets.

High Street is also subject to a bus gate that restricts access to most vehicle types between 07:30 AM and 6:30 PM. Only local buses, licensed taxis and private hire vehicles (excluding private rentals), and exempt emergency vehicles are permitted during these hours.

However, although vehicles are prohibited from passing through the bus gate, access is still permitted for deliveries, servicing, and other access-related purposes - provided the route is not used as a through road.

Eastbound bus access to High Street is via St Aldates and Queen Street, while westbound services enter from The Plain Roundabout. The presence of intensively used bus stops, combined with frequent stopping by delivery and service vehicles, contributes to congestion throughout the day, affecting traffic flow in both directions.

Nitrogen dioxide levels on High Street and St Aldates decreased by an average of 46% between 2019 and 2024.

In 2019, the average annual mean NO_2 concentration across these two monitoring sites was 41 µg/m³, compared to 22 µg/m³ in 2024.

Like St Clements, this area serves as a key corridor for local bus services. The substantial improvement in air quality is largely attributed to the recent electrification

of Oxford's bus fleet, alongside broader behavioural and operational changes following the pandemic - such as increased remote working, reduced commuting demand, and the growth of electric vehicle usage, accelerated by the introduction of the Zero Emission Zone Pilot in the city centre, and which also contributed (together with cargo bikes) to a rise in sustainable delivery methods in this area of the city centre.

Figure 19 - Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 on the High Street and St Aldates city centre areas

7.1.3 Cutteslowe Roundabout

Of Oxford's three historic NO_2 air pollution hotspots, this is the only one located outside the city centre. This distinction is important, as areas beyond the city centre typically experience much lower footfall due to the absence of shops and services. Consequently, human exposure to air pollution in these locations tends to be less frequent and of shorter duration compared to central areas.

The Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts are situated on the northern boundary of the city. These junctions serve as major gateways, providing direct links to the city centre via Banbury Road, as well as to the A40 - connecting eastward to Cheltenham and Swindon, and westward toward the John Radcliffe Hospital. They also offer direct access to the A34, linking Oxford to Bicester in the north and Abingdon in the south. This strategic positioning makes the area one of the city's busiest traffic arteries.

Nitrogen dioxide levels at Cutteslowe roundabout decreased by an average of 34% between 2019 and 2024.

In 2019, the average annual mean NO_2 concentration across the two monitoring sites at the roundabout was 38 µg/m³, compared to 25 µg/m³ in 2024.

The significant reduction in NO_2 levels at this location can be attributed to several key factors. While the electrification of local bus services has contributed, its impact here is likely smaller compared to city centre routes, as many buses operating in this area remain hybrid or Euro VI standard.

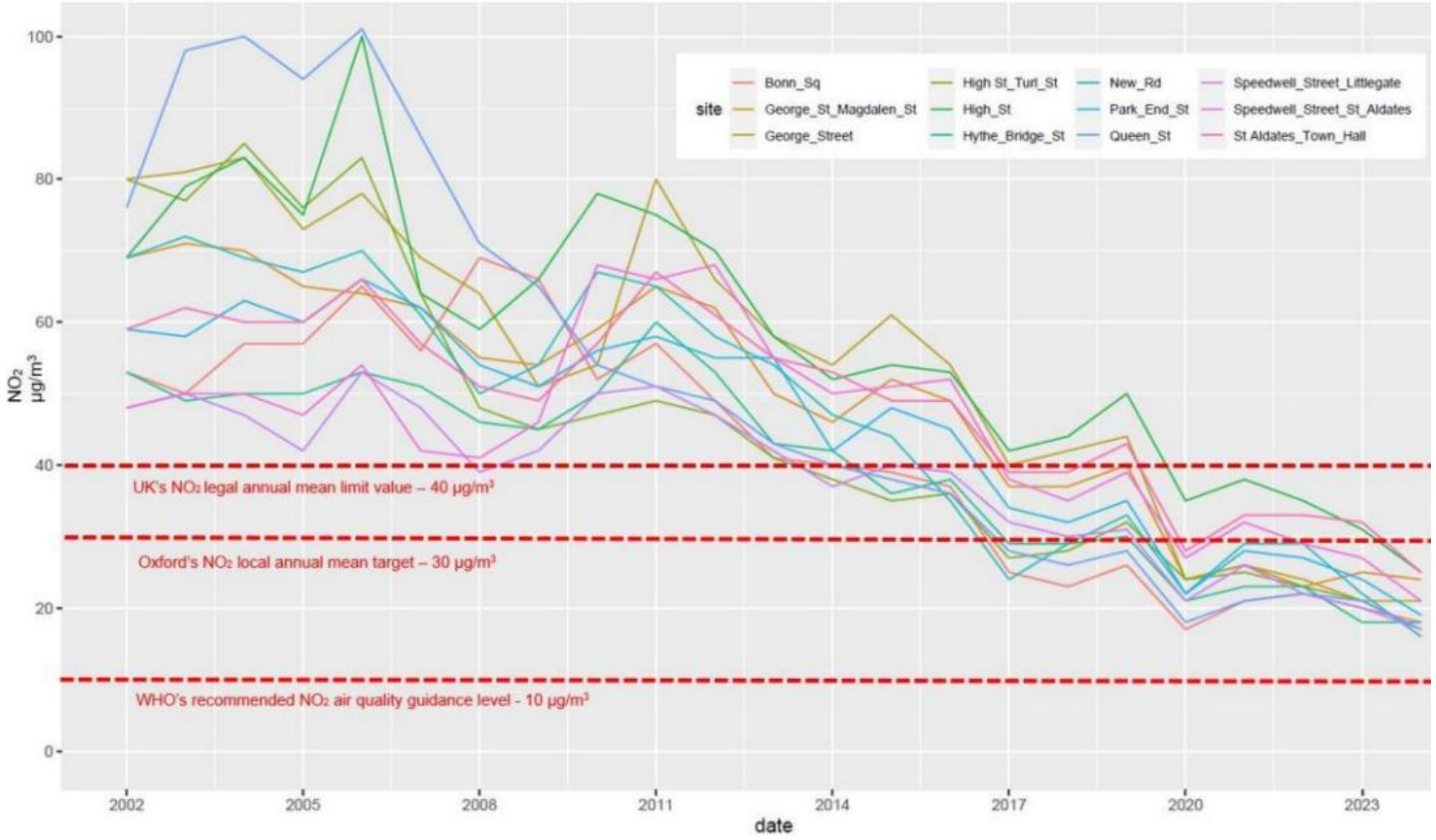
Cutteslowe Roundabout, located on the outskirts of Oxford, is heavily influenced by commuter traffic to and from the city and London due to its proximity to the ring road. Therefore, the primary driver of air quality improvements is likely the long-term shift in commuting patterns - particularly the rise in remote working and the sustained reduction in peak-hour traffic. These behavioural changes, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, appear to have had a lasting effect.

Figure 20 - Baseline model results and measured NO_2 in 2022 near Cutteslowe Roundabout

In addition, broader trends have undoubtedly contributed to improvements across all three hotspots in recent years, including:

- The introduction of stricter vehicle emissions standards (e.g. Euro 6)
- The gradual phasing out of older, more polluting diesel vehicles
- The increasing uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles

Figure 21 - Historic diffusion tube trends of annual mean NO_2 in Oxford city centre.



Appendix 2: Risk Assessment

							Gross		Current		Residual			Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	I	P	I	P	I	P	Comments	Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Council Reputation	Customer or stakeholder dissatisfied with scope/objectives of AQAP	T	Poor planning/poor consultation.	Damage to City Council standing. Need for revisions to AQAP.	01/09/2025	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive public consulation to be undertaken				
Council Reputation	Customer or stakeholder disatisfaction with delivery of Action Plan	T	Poor planning/poor consultation.	Damage to City Council standing. Need for revisions to AQAP.	01/09/2025	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive public consulation to be undertaken				
Council Reputation	Failure to achieve targets /objectives set out in the AQAP	T	Poor planning. Weak corporate functioning	Damage to City Council standing. Need for corrective action.	01/09/2025	PA	3	3	2	3	2	3		Extensive development has taken place in forming AQAP which secures its delivery				
Council Reputation	The AQAP fails to achieve compliance with regulators requirements	T	Poor planning / inadequate delivery	Intervention / penalty by regulator. Unbudgeted cost of corrective action. Reputatonal damage.	01/09/2025	PA	3	2	2	2	2	2	Some levers outside council control such as national legislative changes	Signifcant planning has taken place to ensure delivery + Oxford's current air quality levels are already meeting compliance with regulatory requirements on all pollutants				
Council Reputation	Introduction of new savings that threaten delivery of the AQAP, in particular as a result of the new government re-organisation	O/T	Future unforeseen budgetary cuts, potential re-evaluation of some of the measures due to new local government structures being created	Impaired delivery of AQAP Failure to achieve targets /objectives. Reputational damage.	01/09/2025	PA	3	3	3	2	3	2	While the proposed reorganisation presents opportunities for more cohesive and locally responsive governance, it also introduces a degree of uncertainty that may affect the ownership, pace and consistency of air quality improvements in Oxford during the coverage period of this AQAP	Accept risk, however, we anticipate that the new local authority formed as a result of the reorganisation will be well-positioned to take forward the aims of this AQAP				
Council Reputation	Lack of external funding required to deliver some of the measures in this AQAP	T	The level of funding provided by the UK Government to local authorities in England for improving air quality at the local level has declined significantly in recent years	Impaired delivery of AQAP Failure to achieve targets /objectives. Reputational damage.	01/09/2025	PA	3	3	3	2	3	2	Although this remains outside the Council's direct control, we are hopeful that the current Government will reinstate DEFRA's annual air quality grant scheme for local authorities at the earliest opportunity, enabling continued support for the delivery of local air quality initiatives	Accept risk				

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Air Quality Action Plan (Draft) - Cabinet Report 22nd October 2025

The following Equalities Analysis has informed the development of Oxford's proposed Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and considers impact and likely impact in relation to the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty that is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Title of Activity	Air Quality Action Plan (2026-2030)
Type of Activity	Action Plan
Scope of Activity	The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2026-2030 sets out the complete list of actions that Oxford City Council and its partners intend to implement between 2026 and 2030 to reduce air pollutant concentrations and limit public exposure to air pollution. These actions aim to improve the health and quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford. for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the city of Oxford. The plan has been developed in accordance with the Council's statutory duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), and in line with the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework. The core aims that we have set up in this action plan to help us deliver it are: ✓ Alignment with the World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines. These guidelines will serve as the city's reference standard and long-term target. This AQAP commits to pursuing WHO's Interim Target III for NO_2. ✓ To raise public awareness of the health impacts of air pollution, empowering residents with information and encouraging behavioural change. ✓ To influence change and lead by example through local action and policy, demonstrating the Council's commitment to cleaner air and healthier communities
Is the Activity New or Changing?	New
Is the Activity likely to have an impact on individuals or groups?	Yes
If you Answered Yes:	Equalities Impact Assessment completed
Completed by:	Pedro Abreu Principal Air Quality Officer
Date:	22/09/2025

Equality Group Protected Characteristics	Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Overall Impact	Evidence
Age	Positive	Those most likely to be affected by air pollution are people with asthma, lung disease, COPD or a cardiovascular disease. Those who are more susceptible to air pollution in certain life stages are unborn babies (pregnant women), children (some children are particularly vulnerable i.e. those with an underlying chronic lung condition and cystic fibrosis) and older adults. Taking this into consideration, if the Air Quality Action Plan was implemented it would have the most positive impact on children aged 0 – 13 and adults aged 50+ (which represent approximately 40% of Oxford's population).	Oxford's 2021 Census
Disability	Positive	Air pollution appears to increase the risk of several chronic diseases that contribute to the progression of disability. In multivariable-adjusted analyses, higher long-term NOx exposure was associated with significantly faster progression in disability. This data joins a growing body of evidence which suggests that exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution may accelerate aging-related declines in health	Exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution in Relation to Progression in Physical Disability among Older Adults - PubMed
Sex	Positive	A positive impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of sex / gender Ambient air pollutions were more evident in males without an allergic predisposition and more associations were detected in females with allergic predisposition PM10 and SO2 emissions were associated with mortality from respiratory diseases, which had a stronger association in women, especially among the elderly, and showed a later effect on the outcome in men as compared to women. The risk of deaths tended to increase in men as time after exposure increased, whilst the opposite was observed in women from the same age bracket.	Gender Differences and Effect of Air Pollution on Asthma in Children with and without Allergic Predisposition: Northeast Chinese Children Health Study Differential Susceptibility According to Gender in the Association Between Air Pollution and Mortality from Respiratory diseases
Ethnicity/Race	Positive	A positive impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of ethnicity / race. Air pollution has a disproportionate impact on low-income and ethnic minority groups. The most deprived 10% of areas in England are subject to	Toxic Air and Social Justice: The Unequal Burden of Air Pollution

		41% high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide from transport and industry than average. The average black-British African person in the UK is exposed to 28% high levels of the pollutant PM10 than the average urban white person. Research into the impact of the London Congestion Charge shows that more deprived areas experienced greater air pollution reductions and mortality benefits compared to the least deprived areas.	
Religion/Faith	Neutral	No differential impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of religion / faith	Not applicable
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No differential impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of sexual orientation	Not applicable
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Neutral	No differential impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of marriage / civil partnership.	Not applicable
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	No differential impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of gender reassignment	Not applicable
Pregnancy, maternity and paternity	Positive	A positive impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of pregnancy, maternity and paternity. Studies suggest that pre-natal exposure to air pollution might be associated with high respiratory need and airway inflammation in newborns. Such alterations during early lung development may be important regarding long term respiratory morbidity	Air Pollution During Pregnancy and Lung Function in Newborns: A Birth Cohort Study
Socio-economic status	Positive	A positive impact has been identified on the grounds of this protected characteristic. The Air Quality Action Plan applies equally to all residents of Oxford irrespective of socio-economic status. A study showed the worst of air pollution is found overwhelmingly in the most deprived wards. Low-income households are more likely to suffer from poor indoor air quality due to small rooms, non-working/unused kitchen extract and MVHR fans, location of home – ventilating a home by opening windows and doors in areas of high-level outdoor pollution and overcrowding. Homes made more 'air-tight' to save energy can result in higher indoor temperatures during the summer months. For those residents in polluted areas, if they try to dissipate the heat by opening windows, this will increase their exposure to external particulate matter	Lower socio-economic status individuals and communities are exposed to higher concentrations of criteria air pollutants Impacts of Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Measures on Indoor PM2.5 Concentrations across different income groups in England: A Modeling Study.

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22 October 2025
Report of:	Director of Housing
Title of Report:	HRA Property Services Policies

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To approve the following policies: fire safety, damp and mould, asbestos and disrepair 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 Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the Damp and Mould Policy
2. Approve the Fire Safety Policy
3. Approve the Asbestos Policy
4. Approve the Disrepair Policy

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Damp and Mould Policy	No
Appendix 2	Fire Safety Policy	No
Appendix 3	Asbestos Policy	No
Appendix 4	Disrepair Policy	No

Introduction and background:

1.1 Making sure residents have a safe, affordable and decent place to call home is the core purpose of this work. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak from damp and mould in 2020, successive Governments has been working to strengthen the voice of residents and introduce legislation to ensure the quality of homes.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 Technical policies are therefore required to adhere to this regulatory regime. They are also key to ensure the effective operation of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) property service as it ensures that asset management services and the development of the social housing programme are set within a sound operating framework such as meeting key performance criteria, as well as achieving sustainability objectives are met and monitored.

1.7 The ability to refresh policies ensures key KPIs can be refined to meet the contemporary needs of tenants and of the wider city in respect of the role of housing in attaining economic growth.

1.8 At the same time, the need to ensure high standards are maintained, such as guaranteeing that fire safety standards are met and damp and mould is eradicated from the housing stock, can be attained by clear technical policies which ensures consistent follow through with operational work in addressing health and safety objectives.

1.9 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.

1.10 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 for approval.

Damp and Mould

2.1 As part of this compliance structure, there are new requirements for the Council to address damp and mould in properties following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in a Rochdale social housing property in 2020. The coroner concluded that Awaab had died due to exposure to damp and mould.

2.2 Awaab's Law was introduced in July 2023 as part of Social Housing (Regulation) Act. This legislation effectively inserts into social housing tenancy agreements the need for landlords, including Oxford City Council, to comply with new standards.

2.3 Landlords must act quickly on damp and mould, inspecting urgent cases within 24 hours and fixing problems within set legal deadlines, so no one is left living in unsafe conditions. This means all registered providers of social housing will have to meet these requirements and if they fail to do so, tenants will be able to hold their landlords to account by taking legal action through the courts for breach of contract.

2.4 The requirements for landlords coming into force on 27 October 2025 are as follows:

Emergency Hazards

- 24 hours to investigate emergencies
- Property must be made safe within 5 working days of the investigation (by carrying our emergency works or by providing suitable alternative accommodation)

Significant Hazards (serious but not immediate risk)

- 10 working days to investigate significant cases of damp and mould
- 3 working days to give tenants written summary of the investigation findings
- 5 working days to start safety work if hazards are found
- 12 weeks maximum to begin longer works
- Alternative accommodation if deadlines cannot be met

2.5 Landlords must keep clear records of attempts to comply with these requirements, including records of all correspondence with the resident(s) and any contractors. If the landlord is unable to meet these requirements for reasons

beyond their control, they will be expected to provide a record of the reasons that prevented them from doing so.

2.6 In 2026, requirements will expand to a wider range of hazards beyond damp and mould. This will include excess cold and excess heat, falls, structural collapse and explosions, fire and electrical hazards, and domestic and personal hygiene and food safety.

2.7 Then in 2027, the requirements of Awaab's Law will expand to apply to the remaining hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), where they present a significant risk of harm, but excluding overcrowding.

2.8 The policy outlines the key responses of the Council towards incidences of damp and mould as well as the responsibility of tenants to prevent damp and mould.

2.9 Further details as to the Council's response times to low and medium incidents of damp and mould and how this is defined is detailed in the attached policy.

2.10 The Residents Policy Review Group have amended this policy in order for the policy to reflect the lived experiences and perspectives of our residents. The changes which have been incorporated within the policy are:

- Amending the tone of the wording of the policy which was perceived as a negative attitude towards residents. The wording has been amended to neutrally state the responsibility of residents and the Council to address damp and mould;
- To make it clearer in the policy how residents can report damp and mould and how the Council will share information with residents on damp and mould.

2.11 The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the HRA Damp and Mould policy.

Fire Safety

3.1 The need for the Council to have a Fire Safety Policy was given greater significance following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in Kensington, London in 2017. A public inquiry was held which led to a series of recommendations, many of which have been implemented in law.

3.2 The Grenfell Inquiry recommendations were given effect on 23 January 2023, when the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 came into force. The Regulations apply to all buildings in England that comprise two or more domestic premises. The Regulations also cover buildings that have mixed use, but contain more than two residential properties, and they also cover student accommodation. The Regulations do not, however, cover maisonettes, where flats exist within a converted house and there are no common parts.

3.3 The Regulations are in relation to the buildings themselves, not individual flats within those buildings.

3.4 The Regulations place a requirement on the responsible person(s) for that building to provide certain information to Fire and Rescue Services and to residents of the building in relation to fire safety and procedures for that building.

3.5 The ‘responsible person’ for buildings is the person who is responsible for the safety of themselves and others who use the premises. Therefore, the Council has a Fire Safety Manager who is designated as the responsible person.

3.6 The responsible person will keep up to date with any further changes to these Regulations, or any new Regulations that come into force.

3.7 The Fire Safety policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors.

3.8 Oxford City Council is committed to reducing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the foreseeable risks of fire, and the risk to the safety of residents and other building users through a series of measures which include:

- Ensuring compliance with legal and statutory requirements, including carrying out, updating, and regularly reviewing fire risk assessments of all relevant accommodations in line with the level of risk.
- Ensuring that all new build accommodation and refurbishment work meets the requirements of the Building Safety Regulations and other statutory requirements.
- Ensuring as far as is reasonably possible that the risk of fires igniting and spreading in properties is minimised.
- Working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that residents and staff know what to do when a fire does occur.
- Ensuring that an investigation is undertaken in the event of any fire or fire safety incident to review the causes and explore opportunities to implement improved control measures, to minimise any potential re-occurrence.
- Ensuring that all fire safety, electrical, and mechanical equipment on the council's estate is regularly maintained, and kept in a good state of repair, and that records are kept in line with legal and best practice requirements. This includes cyclical servicing and inspections of gas and electrical installations.
- Defining key fire safety roles and responsibilities within the Oxford City Council.
- Working collaboratively with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Maintaining accurate record keeping and sharing with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, as appropriate.

3.9 The policy goes beyond the minimum legal requirements so that, for instance, there are clear guidance to residents beyond the minimum stipulations as stated in legislation.

3.10 The Residents Policy Review Group amended this policy as follows:

- The policy now includes text that on communal notice boards, residents are advised who to contact if they are concerned flammable materials are being stored in neighbouring properties;
- The list of vulnerable residents has been extended to include residents being supported by the Community Safety team.

3.11 The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the HRA Fire Safety policy.

Asbestos

4.1 The Council has a legal duty, under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, to manage asbestos in the common areas of residential buildings like halls, stairs, and lifts. This duty involves identifying asbestos, assessing risks, and creating and implementing a management plan. The Council must also provide tenants with information about asbestos in their building. Failure to comply can result in legal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

4.2 It has been assessed that the majority of the housing stock, due to its age, has asbestos. This asbestos has been assessed as safe due to the procedures of the Council's Property Services division. The policy which has been presented for approval details these processes and the steps that are followed regularly to maintain the safety of our residents.

4.3 The policy goes beyond the legal minimum standards and ensures all properties are inspected over time for asbestos. The policy stipulates that:

- The Council would undertake on site post inspections of asbestos work for 5% of completed works.
- Clear advice as to how residents can report asbestos concerns
- Amending the text to read that staff must know the asbestos policy rather than "should" know the policy.

4.4 Further details as to the Council's response to asbestos incidents and how this is defined is detailed in the attached policy.

4.5 The Residents Policy Review Group successfully amended this policy with the following changes:

- The Council would undertake on site post inspections of asbestos work for 5% of completed works.
- Clearer text as to how residents can report asbestos concerns
- Amending the text to read that staff must know the asbestos policy rather than "should" know the policy.

4.6 The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve HRA Asbestos policy.

Disrepair

5.1 The Council needs a disrepair policy to ensure it fulfils the statutory obligations to maintain safe and suitable housing for tenants under legislation such as the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

5.2 The policy provides a clear framework for managing claims, protecting tenants from health risks associated with disrepair, and ensuring appropriate repairs are carried out promptly and efficiently.

5.3 The specific aims of the policy are to:

- work to get things right at the earliest point to prevent residents feeling the need to make disrepair claims against the Council
- ensure disrepair claims are managed appropriately and on time
- ensure the Council can successfully contest disrepair claims

5.4 As a landlord, the Council is legally obliged to repair and maintain its property portfolio in line with the requirements of the repairs policy.

5.5 When a landlord fails to keep the structure, exterior and installations for water, gas, electricity, heating, and sanitation of a property to the requisite standard; and has failed upon receipt of repairs requests to adequately address the issues in the home, and the property is deemed to be uninhabitable, this is referred to as a disrepair.

5.6 The Council will instruct a dedicated disrepair surveyor, or where required, an external expert/single joint expert in conjunction with the customer or their third-party legal advisor to inspect the property for evidence of disrepair.

5.7 The policy sets out how disrepair claims are processed. In such circumstances the policy sets out how the Council will undertake an agreed schedule of works to remedy disrepair within a reasonable period of time.

5.8 This policy applies to all residential properties owned and managed by the Council. However, it should be read in conjunction with individual occupancy agreements as the Council's repair obligations can vary – for example, between tenanted and leased properties.

5.9 The Residents Policy Review Group did not offer any recommendations to amend this policy.

5.10 The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the HRA Disrepair Policy.

Financial implications

6.1 There are no financial implications for these policies which adheres to best practice and regulatory requirements with property requirements.

Legal issues

7.1 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

8.1 The failure of the Council to have these asset management 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

9.1 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.

9.2 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 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

9.3 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

10.1 Adoption of these policies will contribute towards the good maintenance of properties and would contribute towards reducing carbon emissions, in particular with the damp and mould policy where the procedures, if approved by the Cabinet, will also contribute towards the insulation of properties.

Conclusion

11.1 By approving the asbestos, disrepair, damp and mould and fire safety 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 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	01865 xxxxxx
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
3	Awaab's Law - Awaab's Law: Draft guidance for social landlords - GOV.UK
4	Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 - Fact sheet: Overview - GOV.UK
	Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 - Managing and working with asbestos - HSE

This page is intentionally left blank

Damp and Mould Policy

BACKGROUND & COVERAGE

Introduction

1.1 Studies show that between 10% and 50% of all homes in the UK are affected by damp and mould (The Burden of Respiratory Disease from Formaldehyde, Damp and Mould in English Housing - UK Health Security Agency)

1.2 People living in social housing and low-income communities often experience a higher proportion of dampness and mould than the national average. High energy costs and relatively low incomes can prevent the adequate heating of many homes during winter (fuel poverty), leading to increased condensation and mould. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge of how damp and mould is created in a home, and how to reduce the likelihood of it occurring. This can be related to the building type, structure and age.

1.3 Damp and Mould can cause the following issues:

- Exposure to indoor mould has been linked with increased upper respiratory tract symptoms, including coughing and wheezing in otherwise healthy people (Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK)
- Underlining the profound health implications of damp and mould.
- Damp indoor environments elevate dust mites; dust mites affect allergies and asthma.
- Studies have shown that dampness and mould are associated with approximately 30-50% increases in respiratory and asthma-related health outcomes (Health effects associated with dampness and mould - WHO Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality - NCBI Bookshelf)
- People living in homes with dampness and mould may also experience depression and anxiety due to the conditions.

1.4 Damp and mould-related health outcomes affect people regardless of age or current health, but the elderly and children are most at risk and with people with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

1.5 Poor housing conditions result in children frequently being absent from school due to ill health, underachievement, and lower earning power (Press release: Poor housing is a major barrier to school attendance for young people in England)

Key Principles of the Damp and Mould Policy

2.1 The key principles of the Damp and Mould policy are:

- To ensure we provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our residents in compliance with the Decent Homes Standard
- To ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from dampness and mould.

2.2 The Council will achieve these aims by:

- Addressing damp issues within residents' homes quickly and professionally by identifying and acting to eliminate the root cause
- Publicising the damp remediation work that we can do.
- Inform residents about the changes they can make to reduce condensation and provide advice and guidance in reducing condensation build up in the home such as opening windows when cooking or showering, using extractor fans, and not drying clothes indoors.
- Informing residents and staff about the health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes to be supplied in different languages and in braille.

2.3 Training staff and our contracting partners to:

- Our training will focus on spotting signs of condensation, dampness, and mould, understanding the causes and remedies, and carrying out maintenance to reduce the occurrence of dampness and mould. This will include ongoing support and guidance.
- Carry out maintenance to reduce the occurrence of dampness and mould and to identify and eliminate the root cause
- Knowing our stock and the archetypes of properties likely to suffer from wetness and mould. Understanding the components in our properties that may cause dampness is essential.
- Investing in both preventative and reactive measures.
- Planning resources, i.e., to respond to higher demand in winter
- Ensure appropriate budget levels are assigned to reduce the cause of dampness and moulding.
- We will provide our officers with the correct equipment to assess damp in properties and find a resolution to the problem.
- Complying with all statutory and regulatory requirements and with best practices relating to the provision of this service
- Treating residents non-discriminatively under the Equality Act 2010.

2.4 We actively engage with other Social Housing Landlords, Environmental Health, and energy Advice agencies to ensure we learn from good practice and contribute to the collective effort against damp and mould.

2.5 We will regularly seek best practices from organisations that deliver damp and mould services. For example, we may learn about innovative ventilation systems, insulation methods, or successful community engagement strategies, and adopt any that will help us tackle the issue.

Damp and Mould Trends and Locations

3.1 Damp and mould can have severe impacts on residents' health, particularly children, the elderly, the infirm and those with respiratory conditions like asthma, COPD, lung disease or pulmonary hypertension.

3.2 Damp is the build-up of moisture in a property which affects building structure such as walls, floors and ceilings and can lead to the growth of mould and other microorganisms. Mould spores are released into the air in an effort to continue to spread and grow as with all living things. It is the spores that create respiratory issues.

3.3 Mould is a type of fungus which grows in moist environments and can cause adverse health effects as well as damage to buildings.

Figure 1. Mould

<u>Causes of Damp and Mould</u>

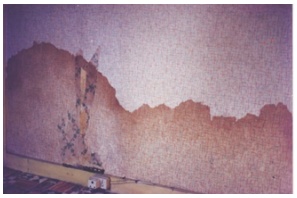
3.4 Penetrating damp: Caused by water coming through the external structure of the building due to damage, age, or defects in design. Examples may include:

- Broken pointing to external walls
- Old or damaged roof coverings
- Broken or blocked gutters, downpipes, or external wastewater systems.

Figure 2 *a: Leaking Gutter* *b: Damaged Roof* *c: Damaged pointing*

3.5 Rising damp: Ground moisture or underground leaks rising through floors and walls into the property's structure.

Figure 3: Rising Damp



3.6 Leaks: From internal pipes in the kitchen, bathroom, heating and drainage.

3.7 Condensation: Water vapour in the air meeting a colder surface and turning into water droplets. Most common in homes where heating is only occasionally used, or the home is not ventilated enough.

Figure 4: Condensation

3.8 The risk of condensation can be increased by:

- Insufficient ventilation from not opening windows, doors or trickle vents or not operating mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens
- The most common cause is humidity caused by showering, cooking and drying clothes in areas where the moisture cannot escape.
- Inadequate heating or draught proofing, undersized boilers or radiators
- Inadequate insulation such as missing or defective wall and loft insulation
- High humidity due to the presence of rising and penetrating damp
- Poor building design and construction in older buildings that predate building regulations and cold bridging
- Overcrowding - too many occupants in a property designed for fewer people

3.9 Conditions which can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation such as a lack of vents installed, not opening windows or doors regularly or when needed, blocking vents, not turning on extractor fans when washing or cooking or extractors fans being absent from a property or not working, not enough space for air to circulate around furniture
- Insufficient heating which could be the result of fuel poverty
- Defective insulation such as dislodged insulation in lofts or incorrectly installed insulation. The Council has ensured that such problems have, to date, not occurred within its housing stock
- High humidity caused by penetrating damp or lack of ventilation which can become worse when steam is being created such as, for example, during washing or cooking

3.10 The most common causes of damp and mould in properties are: -

<u>Cold Bridging</u>

3.11 This can occur in many areas, including difficult to insulate loft areas, raking eaves, concrete mullions and lintels, cavity wall insulation failing over time, and many others.

<u>Blocked vents</u>

3.12 On many occasions, ventilation is provided, either mechanical or background ventilation, which is blocked off, broken, or covered.

<u>Type and location of radiators</u>

3.13 Heating systems are not always up to the performance standard to prevent condensation. Far too often, radiators are located on the internal walls, creating colder external walls, and may be undersized for the room volume.

3.14 No extractor fans in kitchens, bathrooms, and utility rooms. Unvented and condensing tumble dryers.

3.15 These produce a significant amount of water vapour in the space, encouraging condensation.

Bridging Damp

3.16 There are many cases of bridging dampness from render systems going below the damp proof course to ground level, concrete paving and ground levels being increased, and entrance canopy roofs and wall tie snots not cleared.

Leaking/insufficient guttering

3.17 There are many cases of guttering overflowing, leaking joints, a lack of maintenance for clearing gutters, and, in some cases, particularly outbuildings without guttering.

Lack of pointing on brickwork

3.18 For various reasons, parts of brick walls have poor or broken-away points, which may have created cold spots for condensation and opportunities for penetrating dampness.

Penetrating Damp from render systems

3.19 This could be because they have exceeded their lifespan, and the mix is too dense.

Tenant and residents

3.20 Lack of adequate ventilation is the primary cause, but drying clothes on radiators, cooking with lids off pans, and even tropical fish tanks all add to the moisture levels within a property.

Fuel Poverty

3.21 It is recognised that fuel poverty is becoming a significant factor in the increase in damp and mould problems.

3.22 Residents who cannot afford to heat their homes effectively or evenly, which creates conditions for mould to thrive. This should be referred to the tenant management officers for financial advice and signposting to relevant sources of help for residents.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Tenants' responsibilities

4.1 Condensation can cause mould, which can adversely affect health and property. Tenants are to work with the Council for any inspection or remedial works within a reasonable time frame when combatting issues with damp and mould.

4.2 Condensation is caused by:

1 Humidity of indoor air unable to escape
2 Low temperature
3 No air flow
4 Cold surface meets warm surface creating water droplets (condensation)

Poor ventilation

4.3 Mould caused by condensation is usually black and typically grows in bathrooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. This is because steam is created in bathrooms and kitchens and we exhale warm humid air when we sleep, none of which is able to escape.

Support available to help residents: -

5.1 Advice about how to prevent or reduce condensation is available in our document "Preventing damp in your home," which is available via the website (How to get help dealing with damp and mould | Oxford City Council and Preventing damp and mould – Oxford City Council) Residents can contact the Council's call centre for assistance. The Council's surveyors will also provide first hand help and advice with the occupants, on inspecting the property. Residents can contact the Council's call centre for assistance. Telephone **01865 249811** Tenants can also use the on-line service Report a housing repair | Oxford City Council

5.2 As of 1 September 2025 when reporting damp and mould, tenants will be invited to send images to the Council. This will form part of the triage process at the point of reporting. The images would be used to assess prior to visiting the property and also to identify if the severity is higher than described. The Council will investigate whether images could be uploaded via the tenants' portal.

Oxford City Council Housing responsibilities

6.1 The Council is responsible for insulating homes according to the Decent Homes Standard as applied in England to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.

6.2 We are responsible for maintaining homes to avoid penetrating and rising dampness or for carrying out remedial action if these do occur.

6.3 The Council's Damp and Mould team will communicate with the tenant on three occasions. If no contact is made then it will be referred to the Tenant Management Officers to support the Damp and Mould team with access arrangements.

6.4 Penetrating and rising damp is typically misdiagnosed, but can sometimes be caused by:

- Lateral Rain Penetration.
- Condensation or entrapped moisture.
- High Ground levels.
- Bridging of the damp proof course.
- Defective rainwater goods.
- Salt contamination (Hygroscopic salts can absorb moisture from the air and cause staining).
- Water leaks from windows, roof, overflow pipes, gutters or drainpipes, and internal plumbing.
- Defective or non-existent damp proof course.
- Inadequate cleaning and drying after major leaks, bursts, or floods.

6.5 Penetrating or rising damp usually leaves a tide mark.

Training

7.1 The Council will ensure that all staff and contractors have the training to raise awareness and create a good understanding of this policy.

7.2 The Council will ensure that all our staff and other relevant Oxford City Council Housing staff have the training to raise awareness of and create a good understanding of damp and mould issues, related issues (i.e., health), causes and measures to combat these.

Preventative Work

8.1 To reduce the occurrence of condensation, dampness, and Mould in our homes, we will:

- Promote information about how to reduce condensation. We will supply each household visited for reported issues of damp and mould with an information leaflet on dealing and reducing damp and mould. We comply with the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for residents with disabilities or communication needs – including providing information in large print, braille, or alternative languages (offering home visits or extended appointment times as required).This information will be provided in a number of languages and braille.
- Identify a list of components most likely to cause damp
- The Council will commission contractors to monitor these items. When officers conduct repair visits, the Council will arrange to replace any components whose condition has deteriorated and may result in dampness.
- Highlight any areas of concern during each stock condition survey.
- Carry out work to fix any problems that are found and introducing newer methods of improving air flow and reducing cold areas by fitting better extractor fans, PIV units and improving thermal quality where required
- Tackle fuel poverty through advice services that are signposted by the Council. It includes replacing inefficient heating with traditional or renewable heating, insulation programmes, and whole property ‘retrofit works’, which address all areas that affect a property's warmth.
- Investigate the possibility of providing secure drying areas in communal flat blocks to reduce the need to dry washing on radiators or inside flats. Tenant Management Officers can be contacted by residents if humidifiers are required.

8.2 We aim to conduct a stock condition survey for each property at least every 5 years.

8.3 We will ensure our planned maintenance work addresses fuel poverty issues by increasing properties’ energy efficiency after 6 weeks as mould will grow back in 4 weeks if it reoccurs.

8.4 All maintenance teams are to follow the damp and mould policy to prevent wetness and mould by tackling issues when involved with work on the property.

Reactive Work

9.1 When residents contact the Council if there is Damp and Mould the Council will:

- Investigate any potential emergency hazards and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable, both within 24 hours of becoming aware of them
- Investigate any potential significant hazards within 10 working days of becoming aware of them

- Produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the named tenant within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation
- Undertake relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard
- Begin, or take steps to begin, any further required works within working 5 days of theinvestigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard. If steps cannot be taken to begin work in working 5 days this must be done as soon as possible, and work must be physically started within 12 weeks
- When mould is reported we will send a technician to perform a mould wash down will be undertaken 5 working days of the report being made to the Council
-
- When you report a problem, please complete a property and diagnostics questionnaire by telephone to ensure we have enough information and can keep records.
- If the outcome shows that condensation is likely to be causing the problem, we will discuss how residents can make changes to improve the situation.
- If the outcome shows that dampness is likely to be present in the home, we will fix the problem and advise residents on resolving it if it is not a problem with the building.
- Carry out a damp and mould survey, which reviews things like heating, pipes, rainwater goods, damp proof course and loft insulation where the problem is not easy to identify.
- Conduct a damp and mould survey, inspecting cavity wall insulation and thermal imaging. Take damp and humidity measurements. Conduct an underground survey via CCTV on any potential cracked drainage areas if appropriate. We initially do a visual check which is normally adequate, and then instruct the contractor to do more intrusive investigation if the cause is less easy to spot.
- We will evaluate the survey results within 48 hours to establish the cause of the problem and advise residents of the remedial action we will take, steps they should take, and any further work required in the future, together with a timeframe for this.
- Secure the provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household, at the Council's expense, if relevant safety work cannot be completed within 24 hours and the damp and mould is an emergency hazard
- Provide a damp and Mould leaflet during each visit arranged in connection with these issues.

9.2 All cases of damp and mould will be assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Any hazard determined to be Category 1 or a significant/emergency hazard requiring urgent action, will be addressed in line with Awaab's Law timeframes. We will triage cases of damp and mould based on the following priorities:

High: Traumatic water leakage likely to pose an Immediate and significant risk to the building structure or harm to the occupants, extensive mould growth in multiple commonly used rooms (bedroom/living room). The presence of vulnerable residents living in the affected property and mould could cause a potential significant health risk. The response of remedial action in these instances is within 24 hours of the report of the damp and mould having been made. The initial visit would be to remove any potential health risks immediately and make safe and consider the need for the occupants to be decanted whilst further works are addressed, if the mould cannot be removed instantly and the home made safe.

- Medium: Multiple areas of extensive condensation and mould growth in rooms. This would represent a moderate and significant health risk to the occupants. Response of inspection investigation will be 10 days and remedial work and commence within 5

working days of the investigation report of damp and mould having been made. Remedial work should commence withing 5 days of inspection and should be completed within 12 weeks.

- Low: Areas of mould growth limited in coverage and location such as in cupboards, corners of rooms and around windows. This would not be deemed as holding a significant risk to the occupants but as a rule we would try to respond as follows;. Response of inspection within 14 working days and remedial work within 14 working days or reasonable timeframe of inspection the report of damp and mould having been made. Remedial work should be completed within 12 weeks or within a reasonable timeframe

9.3 The triage process will ensure residents with vulnerabilities receive urgent attention whatever the state of damp and mould in the property which can be defined as:

- People with pre-exisitng health conditions such as allergies, asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, other lung and cardiovascular diseases;
- People with weakened immune systems, people who have had a transplant or residents taking medication which suppress the immune system
- People with end-of-life conditions
- Residents living with a mental health condition
- Children and young people
- Older people
- Residents who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems

9.4 There will be four types of investigations for this triage process to take place:

- Standard investigations
- Renewed investigations
- Further investigations
- Emergency investigations

i) Standard investigations

The Council will conduct a standard investigation within 10 working days of becoming aware of a potential hazard. This must confirm whether or not there is a significant or emergency hazard and must also, if possible, identify the required work to make a property safe and prevent the hazard from recurring. Day one of the 10 working days timeline is the day after the landlord becomes aware of the potential hazard.

Standard investigations can be conducted remotely unless the named tenant specifically requests an in-person investigation. If a tenant later reports a material change relating to the hazard, or the Council becomes aware of a material change through other routes it must investigate again to the same timeframes. A material change could include a change to the severity of the hazard or a change to the effect it is having on the tenant's health. For example, if a tenant reports new symptoms or worsening symptoms that may be associated with the hazard, or if they report that the hazard has worsened since the time of investigating.

If during a standard investigation the Council has reasonable grounds to believe there is an emergency hazard, then the Council will complete the investigation as an emergency

investigation. Emergency timeframes will start from the point at which the potential for an emergency hazard is uncovered

ii) Renewed investigations

If a tenant specifically requests an in-person inspection after an investigation has been done remotely, a ‘renewed’ in-person investigation must be carried out. For potential significant hazards, the Council will complete the renewed investigation within 10 working days of the request.

For potential emergency hazards, the tenant may request an in-person investigation within 10 working days if an initial remote investigation concludes there is not an emergency hazard or if the initial investigation finds an emergency hazard but does not identify any relevant safety work to address the emergency hazard.

iii) Emergency investigations

Emergency investigations are required if the Council has reasonable grounds to believe that there is an emergency hazard affecting the home. The investigation must confirm whether or not there is a significant or emergency hazard and must also, if possible, identify the required work to make a property safe and prevent the hazard from recurring. In these circumstances the Council will investigate within 24 hours of the Council forming that belief.

If, during a standard or renewed investigation, the Council believes that there may be an emergency hazard, the emergency action requirements begin to apply, and the investigation must be completed as an emergency investigation within 24 hours of the completion of the investigation that identified the emergency hazard.

iv) Further investigations

There may be circumstances where the standard, emergency or renewed investigation is unable to determine the extent of, or underlying cause of, a significant or emergency hazard. In this circumstance a further investigation must be completed as soon as reasonably practicable to determine what work is required to make the property safe and prevent the hazard from reoccurring.

For example, if a property is affected by a damp and mould hazard, the standard investigation may conclude that a structural survey is needed to diagnose the underlying cause of damp. The Council will undertake relevant safety work while further investigations are underway, such as providing a dehumidifier and specialist mould wash.

The further investigation must include an in-person inspection if the tenant so requests it (and an in-person inspection has not already been carried out).

If an investigation has identified relevant safety work, the Council will undertake the relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation that concludes there is a significant hazard or 24 hours of an investigation that concludes there is an emergency hazard, even if a further investigation is pending.

9.5 Affected residents are to be kept up to date with the progress of damp and mould works and the outcome of inspections. A written report on what was found, what the risks are to the occupants, what needs to be done and when it will be done will be sent to the residents within 3 working days of the inspection Following the inspection,

the Council or the contractor will contact the affected residents to convey the action which needs to be taken and how long the work will take.

9.6 Data loggers are to be installed in properties where surveyors deem it necessary where there is evidence of surface condensation and mould not caused by a building related effect

9.7 The Council will supply AICO homelink systems where surveyors deem necessary for monitoring levels of humidity heat and cold in properties that have persistent mould growth. This will also provide residents of the information to help keep the property mould free.

9.8 In addition to providing advice and support to eradicate damp and mould where residents are experiencing difficulties paying energy bills then, with the residents' permission, the residents will be passed to appropriate debt advice support services.

9.9 The Council will adopt a lessons learned exercise from each damp and mould case which will be considered at the regular meetings between the Council and the contractor when we will also involve tenant representatives in reviewing this policy and monitoring performance, This will include an annual summary of damp and mould reports, response times, and outcomes be shared via consultation groups which will be published on our website to ensure transparency and accountability

9.10 In carrying out investigations and remedial actions, we comply with the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments as set out in 8.1 above)

VALUE FOR MONEY

10.1.1 Fixing damp and Mould once they have taken hold of a property can be extremely costly. By enhancing stock condition surveys to include a complete property surveys and monitoring any potential causes of dampness and mould during day-to-day visits, the cost to Property Services and Oxford City Council Housing should be reduced:

- Complete property surveys may also reduce reactive repairs unrelated to damp and mould issues.
- Oxford City Council Housing could have a financial implication because the Council may accrue more repair items that residents may not be aware of.
- The cost of other public services, such as health services, will be reduced by improving living conditions

Appendix 1

Legislation & Regulations

- Housing Act 2004 (Part 1 - HHSRS)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Decent Homes Standard
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Social Housing and Regulation Act 2023 (Awaab's Law)
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) (Amendment) Regulations 1994
- Housing Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Building Regulations 2010
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Building Safety Act 2022
- The Building (Higher-Risk Buildings Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023
- Regulator of Social Housing – Safety and Quality Standard 2024

Appendix 2

Oxford City Council Guidance, Procedures and Policies

- Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy
- Oxford City Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the OCC Strategy 2024-2028:

Appendix 3

Oxford City Council Objectives

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the OCC Strategy 2024-2028:

- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Meet the Housing Needs of Vulnerable Groups
- Support Sustainable Communities
- Good Quality Homes For All
- Thriving Communities

Fire Safety Policy

Oxford City Council Property Services

- **Definition of Fire Safety,** Fire safety is a *group of equipment and/or behaviours designed to reduce the risk of a fire starting and reduce the risk of injury in the event of a fire.*

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the policy....3
2. Scope of the policy....3
3. Relevant legislation, regulation, and guidance....4
4. Sanctions....4
5. Strategic context....5
6. Objectives....5
7. Key roles and responsibilities....6
8. Approach to managing fire safety....10
9. New build and developments....12
10. Empty properties and changes of occupancy....12
11. Fire evacuation (communal buildings)....12
12. Managed use of communal areas....15
13. Identifying and removing potential hazards....15
14. Communal lounges and community centres....16
15. Smoking....16
16. Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide detection....17
17. Civic and commercial buildings....17
18. Equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability (including most at risk groups)....20
19. Communication of the policy....21
20. Resident communication....21
21. Resident engagement....22
22. Policy review....22
Version Control Table – Fire Safety Policy – Created 01/03/2025....23
Appx 1.1 Legislation & Regulations....26
Appx 1.2 OCC Guidance, Procedures and Policies....26
Appx 1.3. OCC Objectives....26

1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 The health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, residents, visitors, staff, and contractors is of paramount importance to Oxford City Council. The risk of fire presents a significant hazard to the safety of HRA buildings and their occupants, and statistics show that this risk increases considerably in social housing. It is imperative therefore, that there are robust management systems in place to reduce these risks.

1.2 This policy outlines the approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating the risks associated with fire in Oxford City Council housing properties, also known as HRA stock.

1.3 This policy aims to demonstrate that the Council has appropriate measures in place to comply with relevant legislation, regulation, and other relevant codes of practice, and good practice guidance.

1.4 There is an agreement between the council and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) which is intended to provide a framework to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the two organisations are effectively translated into practical working arrangements. The agreement lays out the partnership approach to making Oxford a safer place, in which to live, work, and visit. This policy underpins the agreement and aligns with the actions agreed within.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1 The policy covers housing assets. The policy does not apply to the management of fire risks within non-council-owned dwellings or other non-council housing assets such as schools, care homes, offices, or many commercial properties.

2.2 This policy does not apply directly to buildings and homes under private management. However, in these service areas, Oxford City Council Housing has a responsibility to ensure that the minimum standards set out in this policy are in place and are sufficiently robust across all council-managed homes.

2.3 All employees of the council, who are involved with the management and maintenance, including contractors or all persons visiting the buildings for the purpose of carrying out their work duties on behalf of the council, are required to adhere to the standards set out within this policy.

3. Relevant legislation, regulation, and guidance

3.1 The legislation, regulation, and guidance listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 2004

- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Building Regulations 2024 Approved Document B (Fire Safety)
- Housing Act 2004: Part 1
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Equalities Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2024
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2024
- Building Safety Act 2024
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2024 (Consumer Standards)
- RSH Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Social Housing Regulation Consumer Standards:
    - The Safety and Quality Homes Consumer Standard
    - The Transparency, Influence, and Accountability of Consumer Standard
    - The Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard
    - The Tenancy Consumer Standard
- The Decent Homes Standard
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

4. Sanctions

4.1 Oxford City Council accepts its responsibilities in accordance with the regulatory standards and legislation relating to fire safety.

4.2 Failure to comply with these statutory obligations may result in:

- Enforcement by the Building Safety Regulator
- Receipt of statutory Enforcement Notice from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS)
- Receipt of statutory Prohibition notice by OFRS
- Prosecution by OFRS
- Prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Receipt of regulatory notice from the Regulator of Social Housing
- Loss of confidence by stakeholders in the organisation

5. Strategic context

5.1 This policy supports the Oxford City Council's Corporate Strategy by providing good affordable homes, thriving communities as well as a strong and inclusive economy.

5.2 This policy also contributes to the key themes of the Asset Management Strategy and in particular:

- Improving housing quality
- Child and age-friendly housing
- Safe and strong communities
- Health and housing

5.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Oxford City Council's Tenancy Agreement - Your tenancy agreement | Oxford City Council

6. Objectives

6.1 As a landlord, we must meet the legal obligations that require us to deal with the risks associated with fire safety within the properties we own or manage.

6.2 This policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors.

6.3 Oxford City Council is committed to reducing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the foreseeable risks of fire, and the risk to the safety of residents and other building users through a series of measures which include:

- Ensuring compliance with legal and statutory requirements, including carrying out, updating, and regularly reviewing fire risk assessments of all relevant accommodations in line with the level of risk.
- Ensuring that all new build accommodation and refurbishment work meets the requirements of the Building Safety Regulations and other statutory requirements.
- Ensuring as far as is reasonably possible that the risk of fires igniting and spreading in properties is minimised.
- Working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that residents and staff know what to do when a fire does occur.
- Ensuring that an investigation is undertaken in the event of any fire or fire safety incident to review the causes and explore opportunities to implement improved control measures, to minimise any potential re-occurrence.
- Ensuring that all fire safety, electrical, and mechanical equipment on the council's estate is regularly maintained, and kept in a good state of repair, and that records are kept in line with legal and best practice requirements. This includes cyclical servicing and inspections of gas and electrical installations.
- Defining key fire safety roles and responsibilities within the Oxford City Council.
- Working collaboratively with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Maintaining accurate record keeping and sharing with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, as appropriate.

All staff receive training appropriate to their duties under the Fire Safety Order, and all those with delegated responsibility for fire safety complete specific training to assure and demonstrate competency to undertake their required duties.

7. Key roles and responsibilities

7.1 Corporate Fire Safety Manager is responsible for:

- Providing monthly Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and FRA Action statistics for the compliance report that is scrutinized by Property Service Manager, Director of Housing, followed by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- Ensuring the effective planning and management of fire safety across the council-owned portfolio which includes:
- Supporting the Property Services Manager, Director of Housing in setting the strategic direction and effective planning and management of fire safety activity within the council-owned portfolio.
- Ensuring that adequate resources are in place across the service to enable the effective delivery of these policy requirements.
- Ensuring that a culture of strong governance arrangements is in place concerning fire safety management, including reporting progress against key compliance activity and the escalation of significant risks to the directorate risk register.
- Encouraging a strong fire safety culture across Oxford City Council housing service, which includes good communication and engagement with residents, staff, and Trade Unions.
- Ensuring a strong and effective partnership is in place with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Developing and keeping this policy under review.
- Providing expert specialist fire safety support and advice regarding fire risk assessment, fire prevention and general fire safety management across the Housing Service.
- Ensuring that the service remains up to date with developments to fire safety legislation and that the Oxford City Council Corporate Leadership Team is appraised of change requirements.
- Ensuring sufficient information to ensure fire safety performance is shared with staff, contractors, and residents through an effective communications strategy.
- Ensuring that a program of training for staff with designated fire safety duties is adequate and kept up to date.
- Ensuring an effective resident engagement and communication strategy linked to fire safety, jointly with communication and housing managers.
- Ensuring up-to-date fire risk assessments are in place for all relevant assets and maintaining an up-to-date register of fire risk assessments and the remedial actions.

7.2 Senior Fire Risk Assessor is responsible for:

- Leading fire safety activity within the Oxford City Council housing portfolio, taking a lead role in delivering fire-related compliance activity which includes:
- Managing a team of Fire Risk Assessors to deliver the following:
- Ensuring the planning, and delivery of fire risk assessments for all relevant assets and monitoring the completion of significant findings and remediation works.
- Conducting audits to ensure that the provisions within the fire safety policy are being enforced to the standard required.
- Ensuring sufficient information, instruction, and training is carried out to demonstrate knowledgeable and competent teams.
- Ensuring that fire precautions are maintained effectively.
- Organising the investigation of fires and introducing controls to reduce the risk of such incidents recurring.
- Undertaking quality assurance checks of works to ensure standards are being achieved.
- Producing bespoke Fire Safety Management Strategies for all relevant buildings and blocks with clear evacuation plans and improvement plans.
- Developing and maintaining a fire risk register on all HRA buildings and blocks requiring fire risk assessments, recording, and reporting findings following fire safety legislation.
- Undertaking desktop reviews of fire risk assessments at planned intervals as per policy requirements.

7.3 Director of Property and Assets and Director of Housing have responsibility for:

- Appointing a designated Corporate Fire Safety Manager and Fire Safety Team to lead Fire Safety activity and day-to-day delivery across the Oxford City Council portfolio.
- Assuring effective governance and risk management, that the controls in this policy are working and that the approach complies with legislation.
- Ensuring an effective programme of activity is in place to meet the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2024, and Building Safety Act 2024.
- Working collaboratively with other Directors and Service Managers to ensure that adequate operational processes and procedures are in place to manage fire risk pertinent to their areas of service.
- Ensuring that an adequate capital improvement programme is in place to deliver fire safety improvements to the council's housing stock.
- Ensuring that works being undertaken are designed and constructed competently and safely.
- Ensuring that cyclical maintenance and servicing arrangements are in place, as well as an effective repairs service for responding to repair reports.
- Ensuring that fire safety is appropriately considered as part of all procurement and commissioning activity.

- Ensuring that emergency procedures are in place to respond to damage caused by fire to the council housing stock.

7.4 Service Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that actions from fire risk assessments for their service areas are completed within the timescale, and completions recorded in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the effective delivery and monitoring of fire safety-related activity within the service area, including the effective contract management of service providers.
- Ensuring the appointment of competent persons and organisations to complete design and construction works (inclusive of repairs, maintenance, service, and inspection).
- Ensuring that all staff complete fire safety training appropriate to their roles.
- Ensuring that risks relating to fire safety are appropriately recorded, managed, and escalated where appropriate.
- Ensuring that all activity within the service area is given due consideration to fire safety and contributes to a strong fire safety culture.
- Appraising the impact of changes to fire safety legislation on the service and developing business cases for change.
- Ensuring the effective contract management of service providers in relation to fire safety requirements.

7.5 Managers within the Housing Service are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective delivery of the detailed arrangements necessary to manage fire risk within their areas of control.
- Ensuring that staff under their control have adequate training and are kept aware of their responsibilities under the fire safety policy.
- Ensuring an effective resident engagement and communication strategy linked to fire safety.

7.6 All staff. All employees have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and Safety and that of others.
- Report immediately any concerns they may have relating to Fire Safety or other safety hazards.
- Complete fire safety training.
- Co-operate with managers to enable compliance with this policy and the legal duties to Oxford City Council.

7.7 Contractors and Oxford Direct Services (ODS)

Work to fire safety performance standards as set out in their respective agreements with the council.

- Ensuring that their staff and sub-contractors have received appropriate information, induction, and training.
- Employ competent, suitably qualified staff and sub-contractors, ensuring they are able to demonstrate their ability to meet all statutory requirements.
- Ensure that all works relating to fire safety are adequately monitored, controlled, and quality checked.
- Complete works in a timely manner in line with the urgency timescales agreed with the council.
- Maintain and make available records with the details of all completed fire safety works.
- Work collaboratively with Oxford City Council to identify fire safety risks and jointly agree solutions.

7.8. Tenants, leaseholders, residents, and visitors.

All residents must take responsibility for their own household's safety and ensure that they do not do anything that might cause a fire within their home, or shared areas, or impede or endanger the emergency services when tackling fires or carrying out rescues.

This responsibility extends to other householders and visitors of tenants and leaseholders. The Tenancy Agreement sets out specific terms and conditions which are in place to prevent potential fire risks and ensure that fire evacuation routes are not obstructed. Non-conformance with these conditions amounts to a breach of the tenancy agreement which will be dealt with through appropriate tenancy action:

- Bonfires. You can have a bonfire or barbecue at a reasonable time as long as you do not cause a nuisance with the smoke or the smell of the smoke and the frequency, only dry and suitable waste is burnt, and it does not cause any risk to the property, people or other buildings. Barbecues are not permitted on balconies. Any fireworks must be used safely and in line with manufacturer's instructions. Fire pits, barbeques, chimineas and braziers must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Flammable material. You or any member of your household or visitors are only permitted to keep bottled gas, paraffin, petrol, LPG, acid, or any other hazardous material in a contained, safe, and secure storage area that is dry, ventilated, away from direct sunlight and heat sources. You can only keep a limited amount of such material which is reasonable for domestic use. You must not keep such materials in any common areas.
- Gas and electricity safety. You or any member of your household or visitors must not tamper with gas or electricity supplies or with utility meters.
- You or any member of your household must allow access to your home for annual gas safety checks, fire door inspections and periodic electrical safety checks.

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. You are responsible for testing any battery-operated smoke detector and ensuring it is always in good working order. You must not tamper with or damage any detectors in your home.
- Emergency services access. You or any member of your household or visitors must not obstruct access to emergency service vehicles in any way in your property, common areas or the locality of your property. You must not park your car in any way that obstructs access for the emergency services, your vehicle may be removed if it is blocking such access.
- Fire safety in communal properties. You or any member of your household or visitors must cooperate with the council and your neighbours to keep any common areas clear, and the council may remove and dispose of any objects found in common areas. You may be required to pay for the cost of the removal and disposal of such items. You must not keep any lithium battery motor bikes/mobility scooters in the communal areas or fire exit routes. You must not charge any lithium batteries overnight or without supervision, as these could cause a catastrophic fire whilst being charged. Please do not obstruct any fire exit route with any lithium batteries due to their explosive nature.
- Due to the increased risk of fires starting caused by the charging of lithium-ion batteries, the council will not support residents to charge or store e-bikes or scooters in council blocks or within individual homes.

In addition, residents and their visitors must:

- Not keep or charge mobility aids such as mobility scooters or motorised wheelchairs, electric scooters, or electric bikes in any common area.
- Not interfere with security or safety equipment in any council property or communal area.
- Dispose of rubbish responsibly and not leave any rubbish in communal areas.
- Report repairs straight away and allow access for their completion.
- Not smoke or use e-cigarettes in the common areas of the building.

Leaseholders are also required to comply with the terms and conditions set by the council as stated in their Lease Agreement.

8. Approach to managing fire safety

8.1 A range of measures are in place to prevent the risk of fire and to ensure that any potential fire hazards are dealt with in a timely manner.

8.2 Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)

8.2.1 Fire Risk Assessments are regularly undertaken within buildings with communal areas to identify potential risks and implement measures to mitigate/remove them. However, Fire Risk Assessments are not undertaken within domestic homes, including flats with their own separate entrance, maisonettes, houses, or bungalows.

8.2.2 The fire risk assessments take into consideration the effect a fire may have on anyone in or around the premises, plus neighbouring property and are kept under regular review. The building fire risk assessment concentrates on the following areas:

- Elimination or reduction of risks (ignition sources).
- Suitable means of detecting and raising the alarm in the event of a fire.
- Adequate emergency escape routes and exits.
- Adequate fire compartmentation (fire and smoke spread and the protection of escape routes).
- The appropriate type, and sufficient number, of fire extinguishers.
- Correct type, and sufficient number, of fire signs and notices. A standard specification has been developed for safe condition signage which meets legislative requirements.
- Provisions for the correct maintenance of installed fire equipment.
- Suitable provisions for the protection of fire service personnel.
- Ensuring that occupants receive the appropriate instructions.

8.2.3 The fire risk assessments will assess for fire hazards, evaluate the risk of the hazards, and advise on action that should be taken to remove, reduce, or manage the risk. Each hazard identified will be categorised as follows:

- Low - work or action to be carried out within a reasonable time frame as soon as resources allow.
- Medium - maintenance action or new works required to be initiated as soon as reasonably practicable, depending upon budget and staff resources, within 3-6 months.
- High - items that should be resolved immediately, or work initiated within 7-14 days.

8.2.4 The assessor will task actions to relevant officers, and track and monitor progress to ensure completion within the required timescale.

8.2.5 The frequency and type of inspection depends upon the level of risk. Smaller blocks under 11 metres are considered as lower risk and will have an annual desktop review and a fire risk assessment in person in the block at least once every four years. Higher-risk blocks which are above 11 metres or have higher occupancy levels will have a fire risk assessment in person, in the block at least once every twelve months.

8.2.6 In addition, a physical inspection fire risk assessment will be undertaken no matter what the risk category is:

- Following a fire, near miss, or threat of arson.
- Whenever there has been any structural or material change to the building or its use.

8.2.7 Employees undertaking fire risk assessments will be confirmed by the Corporate Fire Safety Manager as being "competent" to do so and will be able to evidence they have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience as required for 3rd party accredited membership of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers.

9. New build and developments

9.1 Where a new asset is being developed by or on behalf of Oxford City Council, the responsible Service Manager or Business Lead will ensure that the requirements of the Fire Safety Order and Building Safety Act 2022 have been addressed within the design and that the building maintenance, health and safety file, and Regulation 38 (the Building Regulations) information is provided at handover of the building. This is achieved by commissioning approved, and suitably qualified consultants.

10. Empty properties and changes of occupancy

10.1 Gas and electricity services to empty homes will be isolated, and the premise will be made secure following an assessment made to determine the need to provide any additional security measures to the property whilst empty to prevent unlawful entry and occupation.

10.2 Prior to re-occupancy of empty homes, checks will be undertaken to ensure that homes meet minimum fire safety standards.

10.3 Where change of occupancy occurs, a check will be made before exchange to identify any fire safety defects. Conditional Approvals may be applied where defects and unauthorised alterations have been carried out which compromise fire safety.

10.4 Gas and Electric inspections or installations will be carried out before change of occupancy.

11. Fire evacuation (communal buildings)

11.1 Each residential building with a communal area has a defined evacuation procedure which has been determined by a fire risk assessment. If a fire occurs in a property, residents will follow the instructions as stated within the fire action notice as displayed in the communal areas of blocks.

11.2 All tenants will be notified on commencement of occupancy, and thereafter on a regular basis, of the fire safety guidance for their block, how to report a fire, a reminder of what the evacuation strategy is for that building. As well as any other instructions which are required to inform residents what they must do if a fire has occurred, based on the building's evacuation strategy.

11.3 We will regularly remind residents of the fire evacuation procedure for their block through letters to residents, newsletters, resident emails, and through our dedicated Fire safety web page for council tenants - Fire safety for council housing tenants | Oxford City Council

11.4 In our blocks of flats a fire action notice will also be displayed in communal areas (such as the building's lobby or any visible part of the building). These are already in place for the majority of blocks with the exception of our smallest low-rise blocks. We are currently working towards installing fire action notices in all our blocks of flats with communal areas. Additional information, such as contact details, for residents to raise concerns will be displayed on community notice boards.

11.5 Fire prevention measures are in place to prevent the spread of fire in-line with the fire risk assessment.

11.6 Regular checks are undertaken to maintain equipment that has been provided for the purpose of firefighting, and to ensure that the equipment is functioning correctly. The checks undertaken and frequency are as follows:

Fire prevention measure	Checks undertaken and frequency
Fire doors (in all council and leaseholder flats with a communal area)	If the top storey of the building is above 11 metres in height (typically, a building of more than four storeys) or has high occupancy levels, we will: • inspect all flat entrance fire doors at least once every 12 months*; and • inspect fire doors in communal areas at least once every 3 months. For blocks under 11 metres high we will: • inspect all flat entrance fire doors externally and a minimum of 10% of flats to the internal face at least once every 24 months. • inspect fire doors in communal areas at least once every 24 months.

	*We will inspect the external face of every flat entrance door, and we will make "Best Endeavours" to gain access to inspect the internal face of these doors.
Gas boilers, Carbon Monoxide alarms, and flues are inspected through the Landlord Gas Safety Register (LGSR) certification	Serviced and maintained annually.
Sprinkler systems and smoke detection systems.	Serviced and maintained annually.
Emergency escape lighting	Serviced and maintained monthly operational checks and annual 3 hour drain down.
Fire alarm systems - BS5839 Pt1	Serviced and maintained quarterly.
Firefighting equipment (Fire extinguishers, fire blankets, etc in the community centres) in communal areas.	Serviced and maintained annually.
Lifts (in high rise blocks and complexes only)	Serviced and maintained monthly with 6 monthly LOLER inspections.
Dry and wet risers	Serviced and maintained every six months and after operational use.

12. Managed use of communal areas

12.1 To minimise the potential fire safety risk, a 'managed use' approach is operated where residents are not permitted to personalise communal areas that may present a fire risk or cause an obstruction to the means of escape in the event of a fire or emergency.

12.2 Residents are informed regularly through posters and leaflets of the restrictions on storage within communal areas.

12.5 The following items are not permitted and where identified, residents will be provided with appropriate advice and the reasons for refusal, or requests to remove items:

- Rugs, door mats, carpets (potential tripping hazard and non-fire-retardant materials).
- Christmas decorations (potential fire risk).
- Bicycles, prams, and scooters in communal hallways (obstruction).
- Storing flammable items including gas, petrol, barbeques, and any electrical items (fire risk and obstruction).
- Disposing or storing refuse (fire risk, health risk, and obstruction).
- Charging electrical items from the landlord electric supply (Lithium Battery explosion, fire risk, and abuse of 'landlord only' facilities/installations).
- Leaving footwear outside the door (potential tripping hazard and obstruction).

13. Identifying and removing potential hazards

13.1 Proactive measures are in place to identify and remove any potential hazards which create a risk of starting a fire and impeding escape routes to communal areas. This approach includes carrying out:

- Stage 1 - Fire and Safety Checks undertaken by cleaning teams, such as ODS – carried out daily in High Rise blocks, twice weekly in Low Rise blocks, five times a week in Housing for older people complexes, and three times a week in Community Centres.
- Stage 2 - Fire and Safety Checks undertaken by Housing Officers/Area Improvement Officers – on a scheduled basis, the frequency which is determined by the housing manager's assessment of risk based on several risk factors, as stipulated within this policy.
- Stage 3 – High Rise Block Fire and Safety Checks in high-rise residential buildings with communal areas which are 18 metres tall or higher, or at least seven storeys, with two or more residential units. These are carried out quarterly during the fire risk assessment by the Fire Safety Team and the Building Safety Team.
- Annual Tenancy Check In (ATCI) visits allow hazards inside the home to be identified, as well as checks carried out that smoke detection is in place, and that any vulnerability factors that may increase the risk of fire starting, or impede an evacuation from the home, are identified and recorded, (PCFRA)
- 13.2 Housing Officers, Area Improvement Officers work with the estate officers, caretaking teams and cleaners, on an 'eyes and ears' basis, to identify and arrange immediate removal of any fire hazards identified within communal areas and around the general estate environment.

13.3 If a non-permitted item is left in a communal area, officers will attempt to identify the owner to notify them to remove it promptly. Dependent upon the level of risk, officers will

arrange removal or disposal if the owner cannot be located or is not able to remove the item within an acceptable timescale, depending on the level of risk that it poses.

13.4 Permission will not be given for the installation of security gates/grilles to the entrance doors of flats in blocks that have shared communal areas as these may prevent persons from evacuating, and/or impede the emergency services, in the event of a fire. Where other high-risk factors are present, then a suitable risk assessment must be undertaken to determine the highest risk.

13.5 Charging of mobility scooters and e-bikes/scooters within communal areas is not allowed. This practice is not in line with our policy to maintain clear communal areas as it increases the risk of an emergency evacuation route becoming blocked, can result in trailing wires causing trip hazards, and increases the risk of fire starting because of charging batteries. Where other safe alternatives exist, and this can be achieved, then we will work with residents to try and find safer alternatives for the storage and charging of mobility scooters.

14. Communal lounges

14.1 The majority of furniture and furnishings within communal lounges that are provided by the council will meet appropriate fire safety standards.

14.2 Residents may place items within the communal lounge, subject to them meeting the following requirements:

- All furnishing in communal areas and rooms should satisfy the flammability requirements for classification as Type B or C when tested in accordance with BS 5867: Part 2.
- All furniture should comply with the medium hazard resistance to ignition classification of BS 7176: 1995.
- Any soft furnishing such as carpets, mats, curtains, chairs, etc. will be manufactured to the above standard and have fire labels indicating as such.

15. Smoking

- 15.1 Smoking is not permitted in any communal areas, entrances, and refuse areas of HRA buildings. Signage is displayed informing residents and other building users.

16. Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide detection

16.1 Smoke detection is provided to individual homes to provide a means of alerting residents to the presence of fire and facilitating safe escape.

16.2 Interlinked smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in accordance with British Standard 5389 part 6 as part of electrical rewires and refurbishment work.

16.3 Where it is identified that there is no detection, temporary battery detection will be installed as a matter of urgency until mains detectors can be installed through upgrade.

16.4 The minimum standard for temporary smoke detection is one detector per storey level.

16.5 Residents are regularly reminded to test detection weekly and report any defects immediately.

16.6 As a landlord, we will test smoke detection before re-occupation of homes and also during annual gas safety checks and periodic electrical inspections. In high-rise properties, the Fire Safety team will test domestic smoke alarms whilst carrying out annual front door inspections inside the home.

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

17.1 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.

17.2 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 from fire. 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

17.2 This policy aims to reduce the risks to these groups of people through proactively identifying these risk factors, raising awareness and education, agreeing evacuation plans, and making Safe and Well referrals to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service where appropriate. Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council

17.3 Fire safety advice will be made available in braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages upon request to Oxford City Council.

17.4 We will assess the needs of residents who inform us they have a disability such as a hearing impairment, visual impairment, and mobility issue, and will provide appropriate equipment or support to ensure that they are alerted in the event of a fire.

17.5 Where an individual is identified with a vulnerability issue that may put them at a higher risk of causing a fire within their home, a referral will be made to the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for an assessment for fire enhanced protection items such as fire- retardant night wear, blankets, and personal misting units. Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council

17.6 We recognise that residents with some protected characteristics are over-represented in certain blocks that are higher risk in terms of fire safety, for example older people or those with disability or long-term health conditions in retirement schemes. In these blocks we will ensure that the communal areas are appropriately equipped with fire protection equipment such as emergency lighting, fire doors, and safety signs, as advised by a fire risk assessment.

17.7 The Housing Officers will carry out A Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) with the support of the Fire Safety Team for any resident within the High-Rise blocks, older people housing, and who has been identified as having issues with fire risks within their homes (hoarding), or with self-evacuation. For instance, for a person with impaired mobility, to evacuate a building or reach a place of safety in the event of an emergency. Persons requiring PCFRA's will be updated and recorded on the QL following identification through tenancy contact.

17.8 Fire Risk Assessors will check the PCFRA before assessments of the building so that they may adjust the significant findings to take into consideration any issues identified within these PCFRA reports.

17.9 Information relating to residents who have a PCFRA is kept on a secured website so that this information can be shared with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in the event of an incident.

17.10 For older people housing, information regarding any person who has been identified as having issues with self-evacuation, a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) is kept within a secure on-site fire information box accessible by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and the Fire Safety Team.

17.11 Where staff and contractors identify fire safety concerns within residents' accommodation, they can, with the resident's permission, refer to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for a safe and well visit to be arranged by a fire brigade person where safety advice will be provided if any hazards are identified. Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council.

18. Communication of the policy

18.1 This policy will be communicated internally to Oxford City Council staff and key stakeholders.

19. Resident communication

19.1 We regularly share information with customers so that they understand their responsibilities in relation to fire safety, know what they can do to minimise fire risks, and know how to raise any fire safety concerns with us. This is done through our resident community strategy which includes sharing regular fire safety messages through resident emails, letters, leaflets, and social media.

19.2 Our dedicated Fire safety for council housing tenants | Oxford City Council contains important fire safety information.

19.3 Key content from this policy will be included in the Oxford City Council Welcome Pack and Oxford City Council webpage.

19.4 A full copy of this policy will be made available upon request via the Oxford City Council Fire Safety Team: firesafetyteam@oxford.gov.uk

20. Resident engagement

20.1 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 fire safety and fire safety risks, advise them of how they can manage the risks within their properties, and encourage them to report any concerns about fire safety.

20.2 Further monitoring of feedback will take place through resident surveys and this intelligence will be used to inform future reviews of this policy.

20.3 Periodic engagement with residents will take place to ensure that this policy, along with other policies, remain customer facing.

20.4 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

20.5 All emergency and urgent fire safety reports should be made to 01865 249811.

21. Policy review

21.1 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.

Fire Safety Policy

Appendix 1

Further related Legislation, Policies and Guidance

Oxford City Council Property Services

Appx 1.1 Legislation & Regulations

- Housing Act 2004 (Part 1 - HHSRS)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Decent Homes Standard
- Awaab's Law - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

The Legislation above can be found on the .Gov website

Appx 1.2 OCC Guidance, Procedures and Policies

- **Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy**
- **Oxford City Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the OCC Strategy 2024-2028:

Appx 1.3. OCC Objectives

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the OCC Corporate Strategy 2024-2028:

- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Meet the Housing Needs of Vulnerable Groups
- Support Sustainable Communities
- Good Quality Homes For All
- Thriving Communities Strategy

Oxford City Council

Asbestos Policy

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the Policy

2. Policy Objectives and Scope

3. Legal/Regulatory Framework

4. Responsibilities

5. Obligations

6. Statement of Intent

7. Risk Assessment/Inspection Programmes

8. Compliance and reporting

9. Training

11. Performance Reporting

12. Quality Assurance

13. Non-Compliance/Escalation Process

14 Equality and Diversity

Appendix A - Contingency policy for Absent Responsible persons
Appendix B - Emergency Response Procedures

1. Purpose of the Policy

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Council discharges its duty to manage asbestos in all HRA properties, where there is responsibility for the management of asbestos and that this is done in accordance with The Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012.

1.2 Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to asbestos-related diseases, mainly cancer of the lungs and chest lining. Asbestos is only a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in.

1.3 There is usually a long delay between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of the disease (15-60 years). Only by preventing or minimising these exposures now can asbestos-related disease eventually be reduced.

1.4 Any building built before the year 2000 may contain asbestos. As long as the asbestos-containing material (ACM) is in good condition and is not going to be disturbed or damaged, there is negligible risk. However, if it is disturbed or damaged it can become a danger to health.

1.5 People who occupy or visit premises could be at risk should the asbestos not be managed properly or if it is in poor condition or has the potential to be disturbed. The Council is responsible for managing asbestos in all of its properties and buildings.

2. Policy Objectives and Scope

2.1 The Council must have a policy which meets the requirements of The Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012. The policy must provide assurance to the Council that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with asbestos.

2.2 The Council must establish an Asbestos Management Plan (AMP), which outlines key information on roles and responsibilities, and the management of information and works.

2.3 The Council must also ensure that it remains compliant and that the Council Executive appoints appropriate responsible and competent persons to undertake the management of asbestos along with appropriate reporting and monitoring processes.

2.4 The policy is relevant to all Council employees, residents, contractors and other persons or other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its HRA properties, or who may be affected by its activities or services.

2.5 It should be used to ensure that all persons effected understand and are aware of the duty placed on them and the Council to maintain a safe environment for HRA buildings.

3. Legal/Regulatory Framework

3.1 The principal legislation applicable to this policy is the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012. The Council has a legal obligation to manage asbestos appropriately and is the Duty Holder for this purpose.

3.2 This policy also ensures compliance with the regulatory framework and consumer standards (Home Standard) for social housing in England, which was introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

3.3 The principal approved codes of practice and guidance (as updated) applicable to this policy are:

- ACoP L143 - 'Managing and working with Asbestos' (Second edition December 2013)
- HSG264 - 'Asbestos: The survey guide' (Second edition 2012, this holds ACoP status)
- HSG248 – 'Asbestos: The analysts guide for sampling, analysis and clearance procedures'
- HSG247 - 'Asbestos: The licensed contractors' guide'
- HSG227 - 'A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises'
  HSG210 - 'Asbestos Essentials – A task manual for building, maintenance and allied trades and non-licensed asbestos work'

3.5 The Council acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities in accordance with the regulatory standards, legislation, and approved codes of practice, and that failure to discharge these responsibilities properly could lead to a range of sanctions including prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and/or prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

3.6 In addition, the Regulator of Social Housing has powers to proactively intervene where landlords are performing badly on consumer issues (including non-compliance with building safety measures) and may conduct routine inspections to investigate systematic issues in regard to its Social Housing properties

3.7 This asbestos policy also operates in the context of the following additional legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 (Amendment 2009)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (as amended) 2002
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Defective Premises Act 1972

• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
• Data Protection Act 2018
• Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
• Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
• The Asbestos (Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 1998

3.8 The Council will use the legal remedies available to it to enforce its management of asbestos.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Council's Cabinet will formally approve this policy and review it every three years (or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation or codes of practice).

4.2 The Council's Corporate Leadership Team has responsibility for ensuring the asbestos policy is implemented and that the asbestos policy is adhered to in full

4.3 The Council's Director of Housing has strategic responsibility for the management of asbestos and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained within the Councils Housing stock and The Director of Corporate Property & Assets the same responsibility for all Corporate property

4.4 The Council's Asbestos Manager (Appointed Person) will be responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed every three years, and will notify the Council's Corporate Leadership Team of the upcoming review.

4.5 Competent Persons

4.5.1 The Council will ensure that the Appointed Person is competent and suitably qualified, holding one of the following as a minimum:

• BOHS (Management of Asbestos in Buildings including removal) P405 qualification

• Level 6 NEBOSH National Diploma in health and safety

4.5.2 The Council will ensure that competent contractors are procured and appointed to deliver asbestos management surveys. The Council will ensure that competent licensed asbestos removal contractors are appointed for all notifiable non-licensed work or licensed works.

4.5.3 The operational team with responsibility for the delivery of any works will only instruct a suitably qualified and competent contractor approved by the Property Services appointed person. The Appointed person will check the relevant qualifications of employees working for these contractors on an annual basis and evidence this appropriately.

5. Obligations

5.1 The Council must identify the location of any asbestos-containing material (ACM) and identify what condition it is in. If the building was built prior to the year 2000 the Council will assume asbestos is present. If the building was built after the year 2000 asbestos is unlikely to be present and an initial inspection of the building to confirm the absence of asbestos is required.

5.2 The Council must establish and keep an up-to-date record (referred to as the 'asbestos register') of the location and condition of the asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) or presumed asbestos-containing materials in the homes and buildings it owns and manages, in order to:
• Assess the risk from the asbestos-containing materials found;
• Prepare an Asbestos Management Plan that sets out in detail how the Council is going to manage the risk from the asbestos-containing materials and taking steps to put the asbestos management plan into action.

5.3 Anyone who has information on the whereabouts of asbestos in buildings is required to make this available to the Council as the 'duty holder', and the Council then has to assess its reliability.

5.4 The Council must have a suitable asbestos management plan for each building where asbestos is identified. The Management plan should be available upon request and should be reviewed at relevant intervals as outlined within the plan.

5.5 The Building operator must set up a system for providing information on the location and condition of the asbestos-containing materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb these materials.

6. Statement of Intent

6.1 The Council recognises that the main hazard in relation to asbestos is the nonidentification of ACMs, and as such will protect those persons potentially exposed to asbestos as far as is reasonably practical by minimising the exposure through the use of appropriate control measures and working methods.

6.2 The Council accepts that asbestos is likely to be present in the majority of its properties built prior to the year 2000 and will therefore manage these properties accordingly.

6.3 The Council will employ suitably competent persons to undertake asbestos reinspections and the removal of non-licensed asbestos.

6.4 The Council will also employ suitably competent persons to undertake an intrusive refurbishment and demolition (R&D) survey to domestic and non-domestic properties if required.

6.5 The Council will ensure there are effective arrangements in place for managing Asbestos contractors, in the form of client-led meetings taking place regularly, with

standard agendas and minutes produced, key performance indicators analysed and programmes and performance scrutinised.

6.6 The Council will provide leaseholders and tenants with an asbestos survey report and register where available, on request.

6.7 The Council will not use asbestos in any form when undertaking works or refurbishments.

6.8 The Council will implement a robust process to deal with all changes to stock, including new property acquisitions to ensure that the Asbestos register remains up to date at all times.

6.9 The Council will ensure that there is a robust process in place for the management of immediately dangerous situations identified from any asbestos related works undertaken on the Council's properties.

6.10 Within Communal Areas or Corporate Buildings – The Council will refer any contractor to the Asbestos Register as required and prior to, carrying out any repairs or planned maintenance works which may involve working on, or adjacent to, any asbestos-containing materials.

7. Asbestos Risk Assessment/Inspection Programmes

7.1 The Council will ensure that all HRA properties will have an appropriate asbestos management survey carried out.

7.2 The Councils Asbestos register will be updated following the completion of a survey and the subsequent inspection or survey date identified.

7.3 The Council will not need to re-inspect any built after the year 2000 where the initial asbestos management survey confirms that there are no asbestos-containing materials present.

7.4 All contractors undertaking intrusive works shall carryout a relevant survey or risk assessment to confirm the presence or absence of asbestos prior to undertaking any works

7.5 Contractors will review existing asbestos register information prior to carrying out any void or vacant unit repairs, day to day repairs, or planned maintenance works which may involve working on or adjacent to any asbestos-containing materials .

8. Compliance and Asbestos Surveys

8.1 The Council will establish and maintain a programme of surveys and re-inspections of all asbestos assets, and maintain an Asbestos Register of all the asbestos-containing materials by type, address, location and condition.

8.2 The Council will ensure there is a robust process in place for the management of any follow-up works required following the completion of an asbestos management survey.

8.3 Where asbestos is positively identified and, as a result of a risk assessment (conducted in accordance with published guidance), removal, sealing or encapsulation is recommended, this will be carried out as follows:

• Non-licensed works – as defined in regulation 2 of CAR 2012 – by specifically trained contractors with appropriate equipment and working procedures in place which are sufficient to comply with the CAR 2012;
• Notifiable non-licensed works – as defined in regulation 2 of the CAR 2012 – by a licensed asbestos removal contractor (LARC) licensed by the Health and Safety Executive in compliance with the CAR 2012; or
• Licensed works - as defined in regulation 2 of the CAR 2012 – by a LARC, licensed by the Health and Safety Executive in compliance with the CAR 2012. Key controls and reporting

8.4 A cloud based web system will be used to record the details of all asbestos surveys undertaken on HRA properties. This will include the date and type of the most recent survey and/or re-inspection where applicable.

8.5 The findings from the asbestos survey, including any ACMs and remediation works identified and subsequently completed (including evidence of removal and encapsulation) should also be recorded on the system

9. Training

9.1 The Council will ensure that all employees working in our properties have appropriate training relevant to their function/duty. As a minimum, everyone should have basic asbestos awareness training.

9.2 Contractor staff working for, or on behalf of, the organisation must have the relevant training required for their role. This will be managed via periodic review of accreditations.

10. Performance Reporting

10.1 Robust performance indicator measures will be maintained to ensure the Council is able to report on performance in relation to asbestos.

10.2 Performance measures will be produced and provided at Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Cabinet as part of the reporting cycle, as required. As a minimum these measures will include reporting on:

Relevant properties with a valid asbestos management survey where required. This is the level of compliance expressed as a number and/or as a percentage;

11. Quality Assurance

11.1 The Council will require external contractors to provide the results of their own assurance audit checks of management survey programmes, on a minimum of 5% of inspections (or a percentage determined through agreed contractual arrangements). The Council will undertake on site post inspections of asbestos work for 5% of completed works.

11.2 The Council will commission an independent audit of asbestos at least once every 5 years. This audit will specifically test for compliance with the regulation, legislation and codes of practice and identify any non-compliance issues for correction.

12. Non-Compliance/Escalation Process

12.1 The definition of non-compliance in relation to this policy refers to any incident which results in a breach of legislation.

12.2 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Council's Director of Corporate Property and Assets, and/or, Director of Housing.

12.3 Where necessary, the relevant Director will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the relevant operational teams in order to address any non-compliance issue.

12.4 The relevant Director will ensure the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) is/are made aware of any non-compliance issue.

13 Resident Engagement

13.1 Residents who are concerned about asbestos in their property can contact the Council's call centre for assistance. The Council's surveyors will also provide first hand help and advice with the occupants, on inspecting the property. Residents can contact the Council's call centre for assistance. Telephone **01865 249811** Tenants can also use the on-line service Report a housing repair | Oxford City Council

13.2 There will be communications with residents on the detail of this policy with residents using a range of communication mechanisms.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment 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. Adherence to the policy provides the same level of protection for all building users and no impacts have been identified that would adversely affect one group more than any other.

14.2 In relation to social housing properties, provision has been made to record any tenant vulnerability issues that are known or identified, and therefore taken account of, when gaining access to properties to undertake necessary safety checks. However, ensuring we can gain timely access to any property in order to be compliant with this policy and safeguard the wellbeing of the tenant and/or other building occupants, is the Council's primary concern

Appendix A

Contingency Policy for Absent Responsible Persons (Asbestos)

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the responsibilities for managing asbestos remain effective during the absence of the designated Appointed Person (AP). This policy applies to all City Council owned or occupied properties where OCC have responsibility for asbestos management.

2. Appointed Person (AP)

The AP is responsible for ensuring that the asbestos management plan (AMP) is implemented, monitored, and updated as required. The AP's duties include conducting risk assessments, liaising with contractors, ensuring compliance with regulations, and maintaining asbestos records.

3. Contingency Arrangements for Absence

In the event that the AP is absent for any reason (e.g., holiday, sickness, personal leave), the following contingency measures will be activated to ensure that compliance management continues without disruption.

4. Designated Alternate Responsible Person

A **Designated Alternate responsible Person (DARP)** will be nominated and trained to take over the AP's duties during their absence. The DARP should be familiar with the asbestos management plan, the latest asbestos survey, and the procedures to follow in case of asbestos-related incidents.

Key individuals are designated to take over the AP's duties in their absence.

All designated persons must be familiar with the asbestos management plan, the asbestos policy, the latest asbestos survey, and procedures to follow in case of asbestos-related incidents.

5. Delegated Responsibilities

The following key responsibilities will be delegated to the DAAP or other designated individuals during the absence of the AP:

- **Monitor and Review Asbestos Management Plan (AMP):** Ensure that the AMP remains up to date and that regular inspections are carried out.
- **Ensure continuation of the Asbestos re-**inspection programme

- **Incident Response:** In case of accidental disturbance or damage to asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), the DAAP will act as the point of contact for emergency procedures, including:
    - Stopping any activities that may disturb ACMs.
    - Contacting licensed asbestos contractors for urgent remediation if required.
    - Notifying relevant authorities, such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- **Liaison with Contractors:** Ensure that any contractors working on the premises are made aware of the asbestos survey and are provided with the necessary information regarding the location of ACMs.
- **Training and Awareness:** Ensure that any personnel (e.g., volunteers, maintenance staff) are reminded of their asbestos awareness responsibilities and have the appropriate resources and training to deal with potential asbestos risks.

6. Emergency Contact Details

The following details must be available to all relevant parties during the absence of the RP:

- **List of accredited asbestos removal contractors**

  DCUK Ltd:0330124 5671

- **HSE emergency contact details** in case of a major asbestos incident.

  0345 300 9923

7. Communication Protocol

- **Notification of Absence:** The AP must inform the relevant stakeholders (e.g., management, volunteers, contractors) of their planned absence in advance, ensuring that a handover to the DAAP is done seamlessly.
- **Regular Updates:** During the absence, the DAAP must provide regular updates to the AP (or management if the absence is extended) regarding the status of asbestos management, including inspections, maintenance, or incident reports.

8. Documentation and Record-Keeping

All actions taken by the DARP in relation to asbestos management during the absence of the AP must be properly documented. This includes:

- **Inspection reports, contractor communication, and training records.**
- **Any asbestos incidents and the response taken.**
- **Any updates or changes made to the asbestos management plan.**

9. Return of the Responsible Person

Upon the return of the AP, a debriefing should take place to update the AP on any changes, incidents, or important activities that took place during their absence. The AP should review all records and ensure that the management of asbestos has been carried out in line with regulatory requirements.

10. Review of Contingency Plan

The contingency plan should be reviewed annually or following any significant changes, such as a new AP or DAAP, changes in property management, or changes in the regulations governing asbestos.

Appendix B

Emergency Procedure for the Disturbance of Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACMs)

1. Immediate Action

- **Stop Work Immediately**: Any activity that disturbs asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) must be halted at once.
- **Evacuate the Area**: Clear all personnel from the affected area. Only trained asbestos personnel should remain.
- **Prevent Further Exposure**: Secure the area to prevent further disturbance of the ACMs. This may involve cordoning off the area, closing doors, and putting up warning signs (such as 'Asbestos Hazard').

2. Assess the Situation

- **Visual Inspection**: The appointed asbestos person should carry out a visual assessment of the situation to determine the extent of the disturbance.
- **Identify the Type of Material**: If possible, identify whether the material is ACM (e.g., insulation, tiles, sprayed coatings). Do not attempt to handle the material without proper protective equipment and procedures in place.
- **Check Airborne Fibre Levels**: In the event of a suspected disturbance, the air quality may need to be monitored for asbestos fibres, with the appropriate testing equipment or by calling in an external asbestos surveyor for immediate testing.

3. Notify Authorities and Relevant Parties

- **Contact the HSE**: In the event of significant disturbance or potential exposure to asbestos, contact the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** immediately. A notifiable incident, such as the uncontrolled release of asbestos fibres, must be reported under the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)**.
- **Inform the Council Asbestos Team**: Notify the council's safety team and management to ensure that a coordinated response can be made, including organising the necessary resources for decontamination and investigation.
- **Notify Contractors or Work Teams**: If the disturbance was caused by contractors or external workers, they must be informed immediately, and the nature of the disturbance should be reported.

4. Implement Control Measures

- **Seal the Area**: Use plastic sheeting, barriers, and tape to prevent the spread of asbestos fibres beyond the immediate vicinity of the disturbance.

- **Use PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)**: Ensure that all personnel entering the area wear the appropriate PPE, such as **disposable coveralls**, **P3 respirators**, **protective gloves**, and **footwear**.
- **Decontamination Procedures**: If personal contamination is suspected, ensure all personnel follow appropriate decontamination procedures, including using a **boot wash**, **decontamination units**, and ensuring any contaminated clothing is disposed of safely.

5. Establish Air Monitoring

- **Air Sampling**: If not already done, arrange for immediate air sampling to determine the level of airborne asbestos fibres.
- **Stop Work Until Safe**: Work should not resume until air monitoring has been conducted, and the results indicate that the air is safe (fibre levels must be below the exposure limits).

6. Arrange for Asbestos Removal or Repair

- **Licensed Asbestos Removal**: If the disturbance involves significant damage to ACMs or if removal is necessary, ensure that licensed asbestos removal contractors are contacted and instructed to deal with the situation as per **CAR 2012** regulations.
- **Emergency Repair**: If the disturbance is minimal and repair is appropriate (e.g., sealing a crack in asbestos insulation), ensure that work is conducted by a competent person, following approved emergency procedures and the correct methodology.

7. Post-Incident Investigation and Reporting

- **Incident Investigation**: Conduct a thorough investigation of the cause of the disturbance. Review the risk assessments and safe systems of work that were in place before the disturbance occurred to identify gaps or failings.
- **Review Control Measures**: Review and update the emergency procedures, training, and monitoring systems to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- **Documentation**: Ensure that all steps taken during the emergency procedure are documented, including the initial assessment, actions taken, air quality monitoring results, and any investigations conducted.

8. Reopening the Area

- **Air Clearance Certificate**: Once air monitoring confirms that fibre levels are below the action limit, an independent asbestos air clearance certificate should be obtained before the area is reopened for work.
- **Restore the Work Area**: Once clearance is granted, the area may be re-entered by workers. Ensure that the area remains secure and that safe working practices are followed going forward.

Key Considerations:

- **Emergency Planning**: It's essential that emergency procedures for asbestos disturbance are included in the **site-specific asbestos management plan** and that staff are trained to follow them.
- **Record Keeping**: All incidents of asbestos disturbance must be documented and the relevant regulatory authorities (including the HSE) notified within required timeframes.
- **Compliance**: This procedure must be aligned with **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012** and the advice provided by the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**, ensuring that both local authority responsibilities and the safety of employees are met.

Emergency Equipment Required:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Disposable coveralls, P3 respirators, gloves, footwear, etc.
- Air monitoring and sampling equipment.
- Warning signs and barriers for site containment.
- Asbestos waste bags and containers for disposal.

Disrepair Policy

Introduction

1.1 The Council has statutory and contractual obligations regarding the repair and maintenance of its properties to ensure they meet the required standards. Disrepair refers to instances where the Council has breached it repair obligations.

1.2 This policy outlines the Council's approach to meeting those obligations, highlights the preventative measures it takes to mitigate against disrepair and the measures it takes to manage disrepair cases, where they do arise.

Purpose

2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a clear framework for staff, tenants, our residents and wider stakeholders dealing with housing disrepair and injury claims arising from allegations of disrepair and defective premises claims (working in partnership with the Council's insurers).

2.2 The policy is based on complying with the Housing Disrepair Protocol (see Appendix A).

2.3 The specific aims of the policy are to:

- work to get things right at the earliest point to prevent residents feeling the need to make disrepair claims against the Council
- ensure disrepair claims are managed appropriately and on time
- ensure the Council can successfully contest disrepair claims

Scope

3.1 As a landlord, the Council is legally obliged to repair and maintain its property portfolio in line with the requirements of the repairs policy.

3.2 When a landlord fails to keep the structure, exterior and installations for water, gas, electricity, heating, and sanitation of a property to the requisite standard; and has failed upon receipt of repairs requests to adequately address the issues in the home, and the property is deemed to be uninhabitable, this is referred to as a disrepair.

3.3 The implications of serious housing disrepair include respiratory illnesses, fatal accidents from structural failures, fire-related deaths, cardiovascular problems, and psychological harm, all stemming from issues such as damp and mould, faulty heating and electrics, structural damage and fire hazards. Serious disrepair issues can lead to health conditions such as asthma, heart attacks, strokes and, in severe cases, they can be life-threatening.

3.4 This policy applies to all residential properties owned and managed by the Council, however it should be read in conjunction with individual occupancy

agreements as the Council's repair obligations can vary – for example, between tenanted and leased properties.

3.5 While a housing condition claim is broader than the defined definition of a disrepair claim, this policy had been designed to address both housing condition claims and disrepair claims.

Definitions

4.1 The Council has maintenance duties under Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. These place the council under a duty to maintain properties to a required standard allowing the tenant to exercise quiet enjoyment of their property.

Council's (landlord's) responsibilities

5.1 Under Section 11, the Council is responsible for the exterior, the structure and all major interior repairs in tenanted properties. This is a non-delegable duty, although the carrying out of the duty can be delegated to another body, person or organisation.

5.2 Section 11 requires the Council to:

- keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling house (including drains, gutters and external pipes)
- keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for the sanitation (including basins, sinks, baths and sanitary conveniences but not other fixtures and fittings and appliances for making use of the supply of water, gas or electricity)
- keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling house for space heating and heating water

5.3 Section 9A of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, as amended by the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, imposes a legal obligation on landlords in England to ensure that their properties are fit for human habitation at the start of the tenancy and throughout its duration. This means the property must be safe, healthy, and free from hazards that could affect the wellbeing of the tenant. If the Council fails to maintain this standard, a tenant can pursue a claim for breach of contract.

5.4 Under section 4 of the Defective Premises Act 1972, the Council has a duty to take such care as is reasonable in all the circumstances to see that persons owed a duty (i.e. tenants, members of their household, and or their visitors) are reasonably safe from personal injury or property damage caused by a defect that the Council is bound to repair or maintain.

5.5 The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 further clarifies the Council's repairs responsibilities by noting that a property will be unfit for habitation if there are serious defects in any of the following:

- Repair
- Stability
- Freedom from damp
- Internal arrangement
- Natural lighting
- Ventilation
- Water supply
- Drainage and sanitary conveniences; and
- Facilities for preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste water

5.6 Decent Homes Standard - A Government programme aimed at improving social housing homes to bring them all up to a minimum standard.

5.7 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) - Places a legal duty on landlords to assess and regularly review the condition of their homes to ensure that they are safe and free from hazards.

5.8 Housing Disrepair Claim - A civil claim arising from the condition of residential homes and may include a related personal injury claim.

5.9 Pre-action Protocol - Procedural framework to be used by parties in the pre-action stages of a disrepair / poor housing conditions claim, intended to assist parties in a housing condition claim to resolve the issues early and appropriately.

5.10 Expert / Single Joint Expert - A suitably qualified expert who acts as an independent witness for the benefit of court, and who prepares a report addressing the allegations of disrepair and/or poor housing conditions. Survey - An inspection or assessment of the structure, exterior, or related installations of a home.

Tenants' Responsibilities

6.1 Tenants are responsible for minor interior repairs including, but not limited to:

- tightening of screws in door handles on a cupboard door or similar
- re-hanging a shower curtain
- replacing a light bulb in a pendant light fitting
- bleeding a radiator
- replacing bath and sink plugs and chains
- changing the time on boiler controls/timer controls
- replacing batteries in door bells
- replacing door numbers (except fire doors)
- painting and decoration of walls, ceilings and woodwork
- clearing gardens of rubbish, weeding, cutting grass and hedges

- maintaining own personal belongings, furniture, fixtures and fittings

6.2 Furthermore, tenants must:

- report any repairs needed to the landlord as soon as possible
- properly ventilate their homes
- dispose of rubbish properly
- maintain internal decorations, furniture and equipment. Damage to these may need to be paid for by the tenant

6.3 Tenants are also responsible for any damage arising because they or someone living with or visiting them, have not taken adequate care of the property.

Investigating a repair

7.1 When investigating the validity of a disrepair claim the below points will be considered:

- whether the defect falls within the statutory and express provisions of the repairing obligations, and that the landlord has failed to remedy the defect within a 'reasonable period' (the length of time depends upon the nature of the problem)
- that the landlord is aware of the problem (i.e., on notice from the tenant that a defect has arisen) and the resident has exhausted the landlord's internal complaints procedure

Risks to health

8.1 The Council is bound by the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Section 82 of this legislation enables a tenant aggrieved by a Statutory Nuisance pursuant to Section 79(1) EPA 1990 if the disrepair is injurious to health and/or a nuisance, to bring proceedings in a Magistrates' Court against the responsible landlord.

8.2 This standard means that the disrepair has to be likely to cause injury; no injury has to have occurred for a successful claim to be brought against the Council. The risk to health does not only apply to the tenant - injury to anyone that might reasonably be on the property can give rise to a disrepair claim.

Notice and time frames for repair

9.1 Repairs can be identified, and notice given, by numerous stakeholders including tenants, staff, contractors, a surveyor, local authority health and safety professional or other third parties.

9.2 Full repairs in a property defined as being in disrepair must be remedied within 56 days following receipt of notice of the defect from the tenant.

9.3 Repair of or within the common parts of the buildings, for example, lifts, stairwells and entrance halls to blocks of flats remain the landlord's responsibility.

Preventing disrepair claims

10.1 The Council invests in, and manages, its properties in line with its Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year Investment Programme to ensure all properties meet regulatory and contractual obligations outlined.

10.2 The Council operates a rolling programme of stock and block condition surveys to evaluate the state and condition of its properties. These surveys form the basis of investment in planned maintenance to reduce the likelihood of disrepair.

10.3 The Council maintains an asset investment database which contains comprehensive information regarding its stock, enabling it to determine which types of property in which areas require investment to prevent disrepair. This data is supplemented by a referral process which enables properties requiring investment to be prioritised for improvement works.

10.4 The Council operates a responsive repairs and maintenance service to mitigate against the potential for disrepair. Tenants need to promptly report any repairs needed that the Council is responsible for. The Council will record all contact with tenants where a repair is requested by the tenants or identified by surveyors.

10.5 Details of the maintenance or repair works undertaken to a specific property or scheme should be recorded to help inform the Council of the condition of its properties.

10.6 Thorough inspections should be carried out during the voids process to identify potential disrepair issues and deploy resources to remedy any defect before the property is re-let.

10.7 Council staff and contractors will report back to the relevant property and maintenance team immediately where they become aware of repair issues while visiting a property or estate.

Managing Disrepair Claims

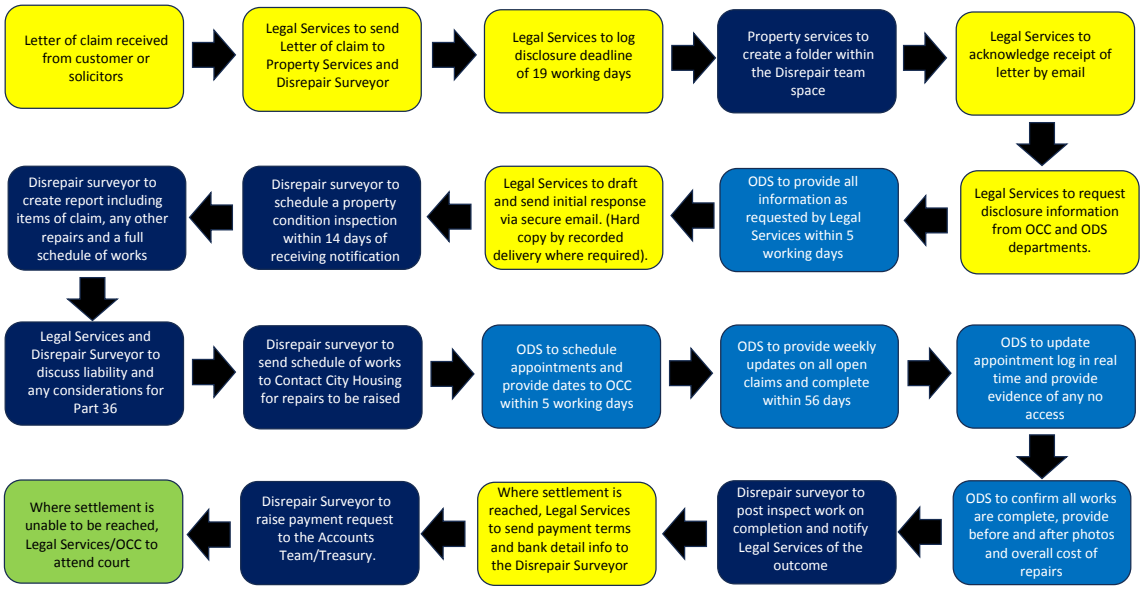
11.1 The Council adheres to the Pre-Action Protocol when responding to all reports of disrepair. Where a customer issues a disrepair claim, the Council may instruct a solicitor to act on its behalf.

11.2 Where appropriate, the Council will consider using alternative dispute resolution methods to resolve the matter with the resident at the earliest opportunity and avoid legal action. Such methods include financial settlements.

11.3 The Council will instruct a dedicated disrepair surveyor, or where required, an external expert/single joint expert in conjunction with the customer or their third-party legal advisor to inspect the property for evidence of disrepair.

11.4 The Council will undertake an agreed schedule of works to remedy disrepair within a reasonable period of time. This may sometimes mean that parts of the property will be inaccessible for a period whilst works are undertaken. Where the property is uninhabitable as a result of the works (for example if the kitchen or bathroom is inaccessible), the Council will provide temporary alternative accommodation. The property will be inspected upon completion of the remedial works.

11.5 To progress disrepair claims, the Council exchanges information with its Legal Services or other agencies requests in line with the Pre-Action Protocol and its Data Protection policy:



Appendix A

Pre Action Protocol

This Protocol was previously the Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Disrepair Cases. It has been revised to embrace claims based on the new section 9A in Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (implied term as to fitness for human habitation) which applies only in England. Accordingly, the Protocol itself now applies only to claims made in England.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Protocol applies to residential property. It relates to claims by tenants and others in respect of poor housing conditions. Before using the Protocol, tenants should ensure that their landlord is aware of those conditions. The Protocol is intended for those cases where, despite the landlord's knowledge of the poor conditions, matters remain unresolved.

1.2 This Protocol describes the conduct that the court will normally expect prospective parties in a housing conditions claim to engage in, prior to the start of proceedings. It is intended to encourage the exchange of information between parties at an early stage and to provide a clear framework within which parties in a housing conditions claim can attempt to achieve an early and appropriate resolution of the issues.

1.3 If a claim proceeds to litigation, the court will expect all parties to have complied with the Protocol as far as possible. The court has power to order parties who have unreasonably failed to comply with the Protocol to pay costs or to be subject to other sanctions.

2 AIMS

2.1 The aims of this Protocol are to—

(a) avoid unnecessary litigation;
(b) promote the speedy and appropriate carrying out of any remedial works which are the landlord's responsibility;
(c) ensure that tenants receive any compensation to which they are entitled as speedily as possible;
(d) promote good pre-litigation practice, including the early exchange of information;
(e) give guidance about the instruction of experts; and
(f) keep the costs of resolving disputes down.

3 THE SCOPE OF THE PROTOCOL

3.1 A housing conditions claim is a civil claim arising from the condition of residential premises and may include a related personal injury claim (see 3.5 below). Although most claims are brought by a tenant against their landlord, this Protocol is not limited to such claims. It covers claims by any person with a housing conditions claim including tenants, lessees and members of the tenant's family. The use of the word "tenant" in this Protocol is intended to cover all such people.

3.2 The types of claim which this Protocol is intended to cover include those brought under sections 9A and/or 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, section 4 of the Defective Premises Act 1972, common law nuisance and negligence, and those brought under the express or implied terms of a tenancy agreement or lease. It does not cover claims brought under section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (which are heard in the Magistrates' Court).

3.3 This Protocol does not cover housing conditions claims which originate as counterclaims or set-offs in other proceedings i.e. where the tenant is seeking to have the compensation due for adverse housing conditions set against money claimed by the landlord (typically in a possession claim for rent arrears). In such cases, the landlord and tenant will still be expected to act reasonably in exchanging information and trying to settle the case at an early stage.

3.4 The Protocol should be followed in all cases, whatever the value of the damages claim.

3.5 Housing conditions claims may contain a personal injury element. If the personal injury claim requires expert evidence other than a General Practitioner's letter, the Personal Injury Pre-Action Protocol should be followed for that element of the housing conditions claim. If the personal injury claim is of a minor nature, and will only be evidenced by a General Practitioner's letter, it is not necessary to follow the Personal Injury Pre-Action Protocol. If the situation is urgent, it would be reasonable to pursue separate housing conditions and personal injury claims, which could then be case managed together or consolidated at a later date.

THE PROTOCOL

4 Alternative dispute resolution

4.1The parties should consider whether some form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) procedure would be more suitable than litigation and if so, try to agree which form of ADR to use. Both the landlord and the tenant may be required by the court to provide evidence that alternative means of resolving their dispute were considered.The courts take the view that litigation should be a last resort, and that claims should not be issued while a settlement is still actively being explored. Parties should be aware that the court will take into account the extent of the parties' compliance with this Protocol when making orders about who should pay costs.

4.2 Options for resolving a dispute include the following—
(a) mediation: information about mediation can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-civil-mediation

(b) for council tenants—
*The council's own complaints and/or arbitration procedures.
*The Right to Repair Scheme. The scheme is only suitable for small, urgent repairs of less than £250 in value. Information about the scheme in England can be obtained from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government https://www.gov.uk/repair-council-property
*The Housing Ombudsman Service deals with complaints from council tenants in England about housing conditions http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/

5 Tenant's Letter of Claim

5.1 It is recognised that cases about housing conditions can range from straightforward to highly complex, and that it is not always possible to obtain detailed information at an early stage. In order to avoid unnecessary delay and to ensure that notice of the claim is given to the landlord at the earliest possible opportunity, particularly where the situation is urgent, it may be appropriate for the tenant to send a letter notifying the landlord of the claim before a detailed Letter of Claim is sent.

5.2 The tenant should send to the landlord a Letter of Claim at the earliest reasonable opportunity. A specimen Letter of Claim is at Annex A. The letter may be suitably adapted as appropriate. The Letter of Claim should contain the following details:

(a) the tenant's name, the address of the property, the tenant's address if different, the tenant's telephone number and when access is available;
(b) details of the defects, including any defects outstanding, in the form of a schedule, if appropriate (See Annex C for a specimen schedule of conditions which can be used to inform the landlord of the defects);
(c) history of the defects, including any attempts to rectify them;
(d) details of any notification previously given to the landlord of the poor housing conditions or information as to why the tenant believes that the landlord has knowledge of those conditions;
(e) the effect of the defects on the tenant (including any personal injury claim by the tenant);
(f) the identities of all other persons who plan to make a personal injury claim and brief details of their personal injury claims;
(g) the details of any special damages;
(h) the proposed expert (see paragraph 7);
(i) the proposed letter of instruction to the expert; and
(j) relevant documents disclosed by the tenant.

5.3 The Letter of Claim should also request disclosure from the landlord of all documents relevant to the poor housing conditions including:

(a) a copy of the tenancy agreement including the tenancy conditions;
(b) the tenancy file;
(c) any documents relating to notice of poor housing conditions given, including copies of any notes of meetings and oral discussions;

(d) any inspection reports or documents relating to works required to the property; and
(e) any computerised records.

5.4 Documents relating to rent arrears or other tenancy issues will not normally be relevant. Nothing in the Protocol restricts the right of the tenant to look personally at their file or to request a copy of the whole file. Neither is the landlord prevented from sending to the tenant a copy of the whole file.

5.5 A copy of the Protocol should be sent to the landlord if the tenant has reason to believe that the landlord will not have access to the Protocol. If in doubt, a copy should be sent.

6 Landlord's Response

6.1 A person should be designated to act as a point of contact for the tenant (and their solicitor, if one is involved). The designated person's name and contact details should be sent to the tenant and their solicitor as soon as possible after the landlord receives the Letter of Claim from the tenant.

6.2 The landlord should normally reply to the Letter of Claim within 20 working days of receipt. Receipt is deemed to have taken place two days after the date of the letter. The landlord's response should include at least the following:

(a) copies of all relevant records or documents requested by the tenant; and
(b) a response to the tenant's proposals for instructing an expert including—
i. whether or not the proposed single joint expert is agreed;
ii. whether the letter of instruction is agreed;
iii. if the single joint expert is agreed but with separate instructions, a copy of the letter of instruction; and
iv. if the appointment of a single joint expert is not agreed, whether the landlord agrees to a joint inspection.

6.3 The landlord must also provide a response dealing with the issues set out below, as appropriate. This can be provided either within the response to the Letter of Claim or within 20 working days of receipt of the report of the single joint expert or receipt of the experts' agreed schedule following a joint inspection:

(a) whether liability is admitted and, if so, in respect of which defects;
(b) if liability is disputed in respect of some or all of the defects, the reasons for this;
(c) any point which the landlord wishes to make regarding lack of notice of the defects or any difficulty in gaining access;
(d) a full schedule of intended works, including anticipated start and completion dates and a timetable for the works;
(e) any offer of compensation; and
(f) any offer in respect of costs.

6.4 Failure to respond within 20 working days of receipt of the Letter of Claim or at all, is a breach of the Protocol (see paragraph 1.3) and the tenant is then free to issue proceedings.

6.5 The Letter of Claim and the landlord's response are not intended to have the same status as a statement of case in court proceedings. Matters may come to light subsequently which mean that the case of one or both parties may be presented differently in court proceedings. Parties should not seek to take advantage of such discrepancies, provided that there was no intention to mislead.

7 Experts

7.1 (a) Parties are reminded that the Civil Procedure Rules provide that expert evidence should be restricted to that which is necessary and that the court's permission is required to use an expert's report. The court may limit the amount of experts' fees and expenses recoverable from another party.
(b) When instructing an expert, the parties must have regard to CPR 35, CPR Practice Direction 35 and the Guidance for the Instruction of Experts in Civil Claims (2014) https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/experts-guidance-cjc-aug-2014-amended-dec-8.pdf
(c) In some cases, it might not be necessary to instruct an expert to provide evidence of the housing conditions, for example, if the only issue relates to the level of any damages claimed. It may be advisable for tenants to take photographs or video footage of any defects before and after works.
(d) The expert should be instructed to report on all adverse housing conditions which the landlord ought reasonably to know about, or which the expert ought reasonably to report on. The expert should be asked to provide a schedule of works, an estimate of the costs of those works, and to list any urgent works.

Single Joint Expert

7.2 (a) If the landlord does not raise an objection to the proposed expert or letter of instruction within 20 working days of receipt of the Letter of Claim, the expert should be instructed as a single joint expert, using the tenant's proposed letter of instruction.

(b) Alternatively, if the parties cannot agree joint instructions, the landlord and tenant should send their own separate instructions to the single joint expert. If sending separate instructions, the landlord should send the tenant a copy of the landlord's letter of instruction with their response to the Letter of Claim.

Joint Inspection

7.3 (a) If it is not possible to reach agreement to instruct a single joint expert, even with separate instructions, the parties should attempt to arrange a joint inspection, meaning an inspection by different experts instructed by each party to take place at the same time. If the landlord wishes their own expert to attend a joint inspection, they should inform both the tenant's expert and the tenant's solicitor.

(b) Should a case come before the court, it will be for the court to decide whether the parties have acted reasonably in instructing separate experts and whether the costs of more than one expert should be recoverable.

Time Limits

7.4 (a) Whether a single joint expert or a joint inspection is used, the property should be inspected within 20 working days of the date that the landlord responds to the tenant's Letter of Claim.
(b) If a single joint expert is instructed, a copy of the expert's report should be sent to both the landlord and the tenant within 10 working days of the inspection. Either party can ask relevant questions of the expert who should send the answers to both parties.
(c) If there is a joint inspection, the experts should produce an agreed schedule of works detailing–
i. the defects and required works which are agreed and a timetable for the agreed works; and
ii. the areas of disagreement and the reasons for disagreement.
(d) The agreed schedule should be sent to both the landlord and the tenant within 10 working days of the joint inspection.

Urgent Cases

7.5 The Protocol does not prevent a tenant from instructing an expert at an earlier stage if this is considered necessary for reasons of urgency. Appropriate cases may include–
(a) where the tenant reasonably considers that there is a significant risk to health and safety;
(b) where the tenant is seeking an interim injunction; or
(c) where it is necessary to preserve evidence.

Access

7.6 Tenants must allow the landlord reasonable access for inspection and the carrying out of works in accordance with the tenancy agreement. The landlord should give reasonable notice of the need for access, except in the case of an emergency. The landlord must give access to common parts as appropriate, for example, for the inspection of a shared heating system. If the tenant is no longer in occupation of the premises, the landlord should take all reasonable steps to give access to the tenant for the purpose of an inspection.

Expert's fees

7.7 (a) Experts' terms of appointment should be agreed at the outset, including the basis of charging and time for delivery of the report.
(b) If a single joint expert is instructed, each party will pay one half of the cost of their inspection and report.
(c) If separate experts are instructed, each party will pay the full cost of the inspection and report by their own expert.

7.8 Information about independent experts can be obtained from—
(a) The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Consultants Directory http://www.ehn-online.com/consultantsdirectory/consultants.aspx?cdid=5548
(b) The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Find a Surveyor https://www.ricsfirms.com/
(c) The Expert Witness Directory https://www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk/our-businesses/directories.aspx

Taking stock

8 Where the procedure set out in this Protocol has not resolved the dispute between the landlord and the tenant, they should undertake a review of their respective positions to see if proceedings can be avoided and, at the least, to narrow the issues between them.

Time limits

9 (a) The time scales given in the Protocol are long stops and every attempt should be made to comply with the Protocol as soon as possible. If parties are able to comply earlier than the time scales provided, they should do so.
(b) Time limits in the Protocol may be changed by agreement. However, it should always be borne in mind that the court will expect an explanation as to why the Protocol has not been followed or has been varied and breaches of the Protocol may lead to costs or other orders being made by the court.

Limitation period

10 (a) There are statutory time limits for starting proceedings ('the limitation period'). If a tenant starts a claim after the limitation period applicable to that type of claim has expired, the landlord will be entitled to use that as a defence to the claim. In cases where the limitation period is about to expire, the tenant should ask the landlord to agree not to rely on a limitation defence, so that the parties can comply with the Protocol.
(b) If proceedings have to be started before the parties have complied with the Protocol, they should apply to the court for an order to stay (i.e. suspend) the proceedings until the steps under the Protocol have been completed.

Costs

11 If the tenant's claim is settled without litigation on terms which justify bringing it, the landlord will pay the tenant's reasonable costs. The Statement of Costs Form N260 can be used to inform the landlord of the costs of the claim. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-n260-statement-of-costs-summary-assessment

This page is intentionally left blank

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22 October 2025
Report of:	David Butler, Director of Planning and Regulation
Title of Report:	Review of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Seeking approval from members to conduct a statutory consultation to renew the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in 2026.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Priority:	Good, Affordable Homes
Policy Framework:	Housing and Homeless Strategy 2023-28

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Agree to proceed with a statutory 10-week consultation on the basis that it is necessary to renew the licensing scheme in its entirety for a further 5 years

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Risk Register	No
Appendix 2	Equalities Impact Assessment	No

Introduction and background

1. The Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities the power to introduce additional licensing schemes for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where evidence shows that a significant proportion are being poorly managed, resulting in problems for occupiers or the wider community.
2. Mandatory HMO licensing, set out in the Housing Act 2004, applies to every local authority and regulates larger HMOS occupied by five or more people. Councils also have the discretionary power to introduce additional licensing which extends the licensing requirement to smaller HMOs not covered by the mandatory scheme. Oxford City Council has operated a citywide Additional HMO Licensing Scheme since 2011, renewed in 2016 and again in 2021. The current scheme is due to expire in June 2026.
3. In order to maintain continuity of regulation and to ensure that the Council can continue to address issues associated with poorly managed HMOs, it is necessary to seek Cabinet approval to consult on renewing the scheme. Evidence collected under the existing scheme indicates that licensing has supported improvements in housing standards, compliance, and management practices. However, challenges remain in areas such as property condition, overcrowding, and unlicensed properties.

Current Scheme Findings

4. Oxford currently has approximately 3,000 active HMO licences. In the first four years of the current scheme, the Council issued over 8,000 licences, with around 45 per cent relating to additional HMO licences. This shows that smaller HMOs remain a significant part of the market. This represents a sustained regulatory workload of around 2,000 licences per year, and most landlords continue to renew their licences, demonstrating acceptance of the scheme.

5. Licensing has helped improve housing standards, but many properties still need targeted requirements. Every HMO license must include certain mandatory conditions set out in the Housing Act 2004, covering requirements such as gas and electrical safety, smoke alarms and maximum occupancy. In addition, councils can require additional license conditions where inspections identify further risks. Additional conditions may require landlords to carry out fire safety improvements, address maintenance issues or take steps to prevent overcrowding. At present, 714 licences carry additional conditions, amounting to 1,109 individual requirements, most of which relate to fire safety (865 conditions). This shows that a substantial number of properties still require targeted conditions to protect tenants. These requirements are spread across both mandatory and additional licences, confirming that issues are not confined to one part of the market.

6. Conditions in HMOs remain a concern despite the progress made through licensing. Each year the Council receives over 1,500 complaints and inquiries related to private rented or housing association homes. Around 35% of these relate specifically to HMOs even though HMOs make up only around 3,000 of the city's 14,500 licensed properties. The majority of the licences fall under the selective licensing scheme, yet HMOs generate a disproportionately high level of complaints. These complaints underline the continuing challenges in this part of the sector and show that tenants and neighbours continue to raise issues about property

standards. HHSRS inspections reinforce this picture. Category 1 hazards have risen from 44 in 2020/21 to 188 in 2024/25. The most frequent issues are fire safety risks, overcrowding, and poor maintenance.

7. Over the first four years of the scheme, the Council undertook 1,474 proactive compliance visits. Of these, 407 (37 %) identified non-compliance, including 214 cases within additional HMOs. This demonstrates both the proactive inspection approach and the ongoing presence of poorly managed HMOs, particularly within the additional licensing category.

8. Alongside compliance visits, the Council investigated 842 reports of poor housing conditions over the first four years of the scheme. Outcomes varied: some cases were resolved through advice (269) or works completed following written requests (59), while others led to additional licence conditions being imposed (157). More serious non-compliance resulted in 265 landlords being charged the higher Category D renewal fee, five Part 1 Notices being served, and 18 financial penalties issued. These figures show that informal routes are often successful, but formal interventions remain necessary.

9. Unlicensed HMOs continue to form a significant part of the Council's workload. Between 2021 and 2025, 870 reports were received relating to 861 unique addresses. A total of 474 site visits were undertaken, with 265 licence applications secured through informal engagement. In addition, 123 properties were charged the higher Category A fee for operating without a licence. A smaller number of cases progressed to prohibition orders, financial penalties, or prosecution. This demonstrates that informal approaches are effective in many cases, but enforcement is still required for persistent breaches.

10. Enforcement remains a vital part of the scheme. Since 2021 the Council has issued 25 financial penalties totalling £211,387, with over half of this value imposed in the last year alone. Enforcement has also included prohibition orders and prosecutions, as well as the use of higher fees for non-compliance. These measures show that enforcement remains an essential part of the regulatory toolkit.

11. Persistent problems of this kind show that, although licensing has improved standards and secured greater compliance, poor housing conditions, non-compliance and risks to tenant safety remain and continue to justify proactive regulation and enforcement. These findings confirm that continued regulation is beneficial, and the next step is to carry out the statutory consultation required by the Housing Act 2004 before any decision on renewal can be made.

Consultation

12. The Housing Act 2004 requires that before introducing or renewing an additional licensing scheme the Council must consult for not less than ten weeks. The consultation will seek views from landlords, letting and managing agents, tenants, residents, community groups, and statutory partners such as the Fire and Rescue Service and Police. Universities and student organisations will also be engaged given the significant student presence in the HMO sector.

13. The consultation will set out the reasons for the proposed renewal, the evidence base supporting it, and the alternative options considered. Responses will be invited through an online survey, written submissions, and engagement with stakeholder groups. All responses will be carefully considered and published in a summary report. Cabinet will then receive a further report following the close of consultation with recommendations on whether to proceed with a new scheme.

Alternative Options Considered and to be Consulted on

14. If the current scheme were allowed to lapse in 2026, licensing requirements for smaller HMOs would fall away. This would remove the Council's ability to proactively regulate a significant proportion of the sector. The evidence from the existing scheme shows that serious hazards and poor management practices remain common, particularly in relation to fire safety, overcrowding and poor property maintenance. Ending the scheme would undermine the progress achieved since 2011 and would also cut across the objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which relies on licensing to improve standards in the private rented sector and prevent homelessness. This option is therefore not recommended.
15. Another option would be to renew the scheme only in limited areas, for example by only designating certain wards. However, HMOs are spread throughout the city and complaints and hazards are not confined to particular neighbourhoods. A partial scheme would risk displacing problems into non-designated areas and would create inconsistency in enforcement powers. Such an approach would also weaken the Council's ability to deliver on its corporate priorities, particularly around building safe neighbourhoods and ensuring fair housing standards and is therefore not recommended.
16. The preferred option is to renew the scheme across the whole city for a further five years. This approach ensures consistent regulation wherever poor conditions occur, protects vulnerable tenants and families for whom HMOs are often the only affordable option, and supports fair competition by holding all landlords to the same standards. Renewal would also maintain alignment with the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and the Corporate Plan commitment to provide good and affordable homes. In a city with high housing costs and a large student population, the continued operation of a citywide scheme provides the clearest and most proportionate framework for tackling poor housing conditions and ineffective management.

Financial implications

17. The consultation exercise will have associated costs, which will be met from existing service budgets. Should Cabinet ultimately agree to designate a new scheme, it is intended that it will continue to operate on a cost-recovery basis, funded through licensing fees.
18. Since 2016 Oxford has operated a charging structure designed to reflect levels of compliance and ensure that compliant landlords are not subsidising non-compliant ones. Following case law, a two-part fee structure was introduced in 2019. The first part of the fee is charged on application and covers processing and inspection

costs. The second part is charged when the Council is in a position to grant the licence and covers operational and enforcement costs. This approach ensures that the scheme remains cost neutral and does not require subsidy from general revenue funding.

19. As part of the upcoming consultation the Council will also seek views on the proposed fee levels for the next scheme period. A new costing exercise has been undertaken, and draft fees have been calculated to cover the current costs of delivering the licensing function. The overall fee format is not proposed to change, but the revised levels will be consulted upon to ensure transparency and to allow stakeholders to comment.

Legal issues

20. The legal framework for Additional HMO Licensing is established under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, which grants Local Authorities discretionary powers to designate areas for additional licensing where they consider that a significant proportion of HMOs are being managed sufficiently ineffectively as to give rise to problems for occupants or members of the public. Section 56 of the Act sets out the conditions that must be satisfied before a designation can be made, requiring the authority to consider the extent of ineffective management and take reasonable steps to consult with affected persons.

21. Section 57 further requires the authority to ensure that any designation is consistent with their overall housing strategy, adopts a coordinated approach with other housing enforcement activities, considers alternative courses of action, and will significantly assist in dealing with identified problems.

22. Pursuant to the general approval issued by the Secretary of State on 1 April 2010, the Council must consult persons who are likely to be affected by the designation under Section 56(3) for not less than 10 weeks.. Following any decision to renew the scheme, Section 59 requires a minimum of 3 months' notice before the designation comes into force, during which time the Council must publish the designation and notify affected persons. The proposed fees must be set in accordance with the statutory guidance and recent case law, ensuring they reflect the costs incurred in operating the scheme and do not exceed the reasonable costs of the licensing function.

Level of risk

23. The risk register is attached at Appendix 1. There are no abnormal risks associated with this stage of the renewal process. The principal risks relate to potential legal challenge or insufficient engagement during consultation, both of which will be mitigated through adherence to statutory requirements and a clear communications plan.

Equalities impact

24. An initial Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 2. The assessment recognises that HMOs provide housing for a wide range of residents, including students, young professionals, low-income households and families with children,

as well as people from minority ethnic backgrounds and other groups who may be more reliant on the private rented sector. Poorly managed HMOs can have a disproportionate impact on these groups, particularly in relation to health, safety and financial vulnerability. Renewing the licensing scheme has the potential to deliver positive equalities outcomes by improving standards and protecting tenants in a part of the housing market where disadvantage is more prevalent. The full impact will be reviewed following consultation, and the assessment will be updated to reflect any issues raised.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

25. At this stage there are no direct carbon or environmental implications arising from the decision to consult. However, HMOs can have an impact on environmental sustainability. Poorly managed properties are more likely to have low energy efficiency standards, which in turn contribute to higher carbon emissions. HMOs also generate waste management challenges where household systems are not adequate or properly used, which can create wider environmental issues for neighbourhoods. These considerations will be kept under review and assessed more fully in the final report following consultation.

Conclusion

26. Cabinet approval is required to begin the statutory consultation on the renewal of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme. The evidence base indicates ongoing issues with housing conditions and management of HMOs. Renewing the scheme is the most effective way to ensure continued improvement. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet after consultation with recommendations for designation.

Report author	Courtney Bennett
Job title	Regulatory Services Manager
Service area or department	Planning and Regulation
Telephone	01865 252455
e-mail	Cbennett@oxford.gov.uk

Risk Register

Additional HMO Licensing Consultation

As at: 08 September, 2025

									Gross		Current			Target							
Ref	Title	Risk Description	Opp / Threat	Cause	Consequence	Risk Treatment	Date Raised	Owner	P	I	P	I	Score	P	I	Comments	Control / Mitigation Description	Date Due	Action Status	% Progress	Action Owner
1	Insufficient evidence base	The consultation project does not provide sufficient evidence to support an approach for the future of the scheme or is undertaken in an unrealistic timeframe.	Opp and Threat	Lack of interest; insufficient marketing, promotion, inaccurate targeting of audience.	Consultation uneven, incomplete, insufficient for decision making process, suspend decision/ outcome	Reduce	01/09/25	Courtney Bennet	3	3	2	3	6	2	2		Deliver consultation through a clear plan with multiple engagement methods to reach a representative audience. Schedule within realistic timeframes, ensuring statutory periods are met. Monitor responses during consultation and adjust promotion to strengthen the evidence base.				
2	Recommendations not approved	The recommendation of the cabinet report to move forward with consultation are not approved.	Threat	Insufficient support from members to proceed with statutory consultation	The scheme will expire which will result in a reduction in resource to tackle HMOs in the city. This will then require funding from the Council base-budget	Reduce	01/09/25	Courtney Bennet	2	3	2	3	6	2	2		Review and implement appropriate consultation project and ensure requirements of legislation fulfilled.				
3	Legal challenge	A legal challenge to the proposals is put forward as a judicial review	Opp and Threat	Statutory requirements not met. Insufficient resources provided to fulfil requirements. Insufficient evidence base. Lack of wider consultation	Scheme will expire and result in a reduced service to tackle issues across the city as a whole	Accept	01/09/25	Courtney Bennet	3	3	2	2	4	2	2		Ensure that statutory requirements for proving the case for licensing of HMOs is robust and are met and that sufficient resources provided to undertake comprehensive consultation.				
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								
													0								

THE RISK REGISTER IS FORMATTED AS A TABLE. PRESS TAB ON THE LAST TABLE CELL TO INSERT A NEW ROW.

This page is intentionally left blank

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.**	Consultation on the renewal of Additional HMO licensing Scheme	**2.**	**The implementation date of the activity under consideration:**	Consultation will run for 11 weeks from 23 October
3.	**Directorate/Department(s):**	Planning and Regulation	**4.**	**Service Area(s):**	Regulatory Services
5.	**Who is (are) the assessment lead(s):** **Please provide:** -Name -Email address	Courtney Bennett cbennett@oxford.gov.uk	**6.**	**Contact details, in case there are queries:** **Please provide:** -Name -Email address	Courtney Bennett cbennett@oxford.gov.uk
7.	**Is this a new or ongoing EqIA?**	New ☐ ☐	**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.	
9.	**Date this EqIA started:**	01/09/2025			
10.	**Will this EqIA be attached to** Corporate Management Team (CMT) **reports/updates, which will be published online?**	No	**11.**	**Give a date (tentative or otherwise) when this assessment will be taken to the** CMT.	

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFO
CIT
COUN

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

12.	**Type of activity being considered:** Check the most appropriate.	☐	☐ Decommissioning	☐ Commissioning	☐
		X ☐	☐ x Others. Please specify: Consultation		
13.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	X Good, affordable homes	☐ Strong, fair economy	☐ Thriving Communities	☐ Zero Carbon Oxford	☐ Well run council
14.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	X Responsive services and customer care.	☐ Diverse and engaged workforce.	☐ Leadership & organisational commitment.	X Understanding and working with our communities.
15.	**Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.**	The licensing of all HMOs in Oxford has been in operation since 2011. The aim is to consult on the proposal to renew the scheme for a further 5 years. The scheme ensures that all HMOs meet required standards for safety and management, protecting tenants (including vulnerable residents and students) and promoting responsible management by landlords.			

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

16.	**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.	The current designation expires in June 2026. Failure to renew would result in only a portion of the sector being regulated, leaving some tenants without the protection of licensing. This would increase risks to health and safety, reduce housing standards, and undermine the Council's strategic objectives on housing, community wellbeing, and equity.

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

17.	**Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?** **Please provide details—** -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.	The proposed statutory consultation will run for 11 weeks from October 2025, and will include tenants, landlords, residents, universities, community organisations, and advice services.
18.	**List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.** **These could be-** -third-party research, -census data, -legislation, -articles, -reports, -briefs.	Licensed HMOs record information Census and ONS housing tenure data Local affordability data showing reliance on HMOs as a housing option Reports on housing and community resilience in Oxford

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY

19.	**If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?** **Please list the details –** -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data.	Yes – the statutory consultation (October–January) will gather quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of licensing proposals across equalities groups.

Section 4: Impact analysis.

20.	**Who does the activity impact?** **Check as needed.** The impact may be positive, negative or unknown.	**Service Users**	Yes	X	**No**	Don't Know ☐
		Members of staff	**Yes**	X	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		General public	**Yes**	X	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Partner / Community Organisation	Yes	X	**No** ☐	Don't Know ☐
		City Councillors	Yes	X	**No** ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Council suppliers and contractors	Yes	X	No	Don't Know ☐

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	X	☐		☐	High proportion of young adults & students rely on HMOs	Positive impact: licensing protects younger tenants' housing conditions. Consultation will target students and youth groups.
Disability **(Visible and invisible)**	X	☐	☐	☐	Residents with disabilities may live in HMOs	Licensing can ensure safe, suitable housing. Ensure accessibility requirements considered in enforcement.
Gender re-assignment		☐	X	☐	No direct evidence	Neutral
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☐	☐	X	☐	No direct evidence	Neutral

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Race, Ethnicity and/or Citizenship	X	☐	☐	☐	HMO	Licensing may affect BME landlords disproportionately, tenants from migrant backgrounds often in HMOs. Inclusive consultation, multi-language materials, monitoring landlord impacts
Pregnancy & Maternity	X	☐		☐	Families with young children may reside inHMOs	Licensing can protect family health & safety Consultation with family support services
Religion or Belief	OBJ	☐	X	☐	No direct evidence	Neutral
Sex	Yes			☐		Licensing improves standards. Target information

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

						via women's community networks
Sexual Orientation	☐	☐	Yes	☐	No direct evidence	Neutral
Socio-economic inequalities such as: -income and factors that impact income. -access to jobs This was voluntarily adopted by Oxford City Council on the 13th of March 2024.	Yes	☐		☐	HMOs are often the only viable option due to Oxford housing affordability	Licensing addresses inequality by ensuring affordable housing is safe Fees structured to be proportionate and cost-neutral

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Full Impact Assessment

22.		**Conclusions.**						
	☐	Stop and reconsider the activity.	☐		Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.	**X**	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.	☐	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with the activity. No need to monitor in the future.
23.	**Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.**		**Benefits of Implementation**: **Promotes Equity**: Ensures everyone has equal opportunities. **Enhances Diversity**: **Improves Representation**: The scheme renewal is necessary to maintain minimum housing standards and ensure equitable protection for residents. Impacts are generally positive across equalities groups, especially for tenants from younger, migrant, low-income, and vulnerable backgrounds. Potential adverse effects on BME landlords will be monitored and mitigated through inclusive consultation and proportional fee structures.					

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

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.

24.	**Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact?** **For example-** - team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group,etc.		Residential Regulation Team, Regulatory Services		
25.	**Who (individual, team, or service area) will be responsible for carrying out the EqIA review?**		Regulatory Services Management team		
26.	**How often will the equality impact be reviewed for this activity?** **For example-** -quarterly, -yearly, etc.		Will review after consultation	**27.** **Date when the EqIA will be reviewed again.**	February 2026

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Section 7: Sign-off

Name: Courtney Bennett

Job Title: Regulatory Services Manager

Signature:
Cbennett

Name:

Job Title:

Signature:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

Signature:

Name: Gail Malkin

Job Title: Head of People

Signature:
G Malkin

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

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:

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 EqIA.
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/managers.

This is not an exhaustive list.

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22nd October 2025
Report of:	Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability
Title of Report:	Endorsement of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Publication

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Agree that approval be given to the Oxfordshire County Council to publish the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford
Corporate Priority:	Zero carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	That Cabinet agrees to give approval to the Oxfordshire County Council to publish the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy by.

Information Exempt From Publication	
None.	None.

Appendix No.	**Appendix Title**	**Exempt from Publication**
Appendix 1	1. Description of Strategy Area for SA approval process v8	No

Appendix 2	2. Final LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorities 26AUG2025	No
Appendix 3	3. Final LNRS Species Priorities List v2.2 28AUG25	No
Appendix 4	Link: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ea43e0bc07c044ef8ca4b16803c5e59c	No

Introduction and background

1. The Environment Act 2021 establishes the requirement for upper tier Local Authorities to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) as Responsible Authorities (RA). Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is the designated RA for Oxfordshire and each of the Oxfordshire districts (including Oxford City Council) and Natural England are Supporting Authorities (SA's). Supporting Authorities are required to confirm in writing whether they agree that the RA should proceed to publication within 28 days of the RA providing them with the final publication draft of the LNRS.

2. The Council has worked closely with the RA throughout the preparation of the LNRS and it was agreed that the SA's would be given time to take the LNRS through their full democratic process. As a result, the final LNRS was received by the Council on 22nd July 2025, and Oxfordshire County Council has asked for responses before 21st October 2025. Due to the City Council's Cabinet meeting falling on 22nd October, Oxfordshire County Council are aware that our approval will fall after the 21st October.

3. OCC intends, subject to approval by the supporting authorities, to publish the final LNRS on its website in early November 2025, therefore, all the Oxfordshire Supporting Authorities are taking it through their internal decision-making processes between July and October 2025.

4. Once the final LNRS has been approved by the supporting authorities, Oxfordshire County Council must then notify the Secretary of State of its intention to publish the strategy; and can proceed to publish once the Secretary of State has given approval. Thereafter there will be duty for the responsible authority to undertake a review of the final LNRS following notification from the Secretary of State there is a need to do so.

5. Officers from the Council's Environmental Quality and Planning Policy Teams have been involved in the preparation and drafting of the LNRS, attending both the LNRS Steering Group and Supporting Authority meetings.

6. Public consultation on the Draft LNRS ran for six weeks between 18th October and 1st December 2024. The Council's response was developed with input from officers from several service teams, including Planning Policy and Environmental Quality. Portfolio holders for Climate/Net Zero and Planning were briefed prior to the response being submitted, and a presentation was given to the Climate and Environment Scrutiny Panel in November 2024.

7. The Oxfordshire County Council's consultation generated over 2100 comments; seventy five percent of these were supportive of the LNRS.

LNRS Overview

8. The main purpose of the LNRS is to identify locations where the creation and/or enhancement of specific habitats would provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment, and in particular reconnecting habitats as part of an ecological network. The inclusion of measures within the LNRS does not mean that landowners/managers will be required to implement them. Instead, the Government is encouraging the delivery of targeted actions for nature recovery as opportunities for funding and investment arise and as part of other projects and plans.

9. It should also be noted that the LNRS does not preclude or prevent any other type of land use or development, but it is part of a wider policy framework that helps plan development in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment. Local Authorities have a legal duty to consider the LNRS when creating or updating their local plans, which guide where and how building and development happens.

10. The final publication version of the LNRS comprises of four key parts:

    1) A description of the strategy area - an explanation of what the LNRS is and how it has been prepared, and a written description of biodiversity in the county, opportunities, and the pressures it faces.

    2) A statement of biodiversity priorities - a written list of the most important outcomes (priorities) to achieve nature recovery in the area and a list of actions (potential measures) that would need to be carried out to achieve these.

    3) A species priorities list - a written list of species that require additional, specific, actions beyond the general habitat improvements contained in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, and which outlines the specific actions needed to recover the species populations within the county.

    4) A local habitat map - an online interactive map tool that identifies the existing areas that are particularly important for biodiversity and areas that could become important for biodiversity in the future. These are priority locations for creating a nature recovery network where habitat creation or enhancement is most likely to result in the greatest benefits for nature, certain species and the wider environment. The mapped measures come from the actions listed in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the Species Priority List.

11. The publication version (subject to minor tweaks and formatting) of the LNRS was submitted to the SAs on 22nd July 2025. Officers have worked closely with the RA and other partners to ensure that the final documents and maps have addressed the comments that were submitted during the public consultation – including those submitted by the SAs.

12. Officers from the Council's Environmental Quality and Planning Policy Teams have been actively engaged in developing the LNRS and have been represented on the LNRS Steering Group by the Environmental Quality Team.

13. The Council's officers believe that the final LNRS is a comprehensive strategy that will help to drive the recovery of nature in Oxfordshire, and that it has addressed concerns raised internally during the process.

14. All SAs must confirm that they are happy for the Oxfordshire LNRS to be published.

15. Whilst the LNRS is not an Oxford City Council document and does not have significant direct implications for the Council. Approval from Cabinet is sought due to the strategic nature of the proposed LNRS.

Alternative Options Considered

16. There are two options:

    a) To confirm that the Council is happy for the Oxfordshire LNRS to be published, or

    b) To issue a 'publication advisory notice' to the RA and the Secretary of State stating why the publication cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation and explaining why the LNRS is materially deficient.

17. Officers recommend option a), as the Council has worked very closely with the RA and other partners in preparing this LNRS and believe it will have significant long-term benefits for the habitats and species in the Oxfordshire districts.

Other implications

18. Consultation and communications – minor, a press release will be issued upon publication of the LNRS.

19. Sustainability and Environmental – the LNRS will contribute to delivery of the Council's environmental and sustainability goals, through enhancement of biodiversity and ecology.

20. Planning - Concerns were raised as to the implications of the LNRS for development sites, specifically those allocated in the existing/emerging Oxford Local Plans, where they were identified as target areas in the LNRS mapping. As previously stated, the LNRS will not preclude or limit any other land uses in mapped areas, nor will landowners or managers be required to implement recommendations.

21. With regards to this, the statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide issued by the Department for Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) gives guidance on how the LNRS should be used with regards to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Where land is within the LNRS mapped target areas, if BNG is delivered utilising the specific recommended measures in that area, then the biodiversity metric calculations will receive an uplift of 15%, by way of a Strategic Significance Multiplier. This is to guide strategic delivery of habitat creation and enhancement and ensure that the most effective measures are delivered in the most appropriate areas.

22. Planning – Local authorities have a legal duty to consider the LNRS when creating or updating local plans. The Council's Planning Policy Team is aware of this and has participated in the LNRS development process.

Financial implications

23. The LNRS is generally a high-level strategic document, which seeks to identify opportunities. The Council is unlikely to be in a position to fund any initiatives. Any future funding will be assessed as required.

24. Aspects of the LNRS, including BNG aspects, will feed into planning work undertaken by Council. However, this falls under business as usual and requires no additional resource and subsequent cost.

Legal issues

25. In accordance with The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 district councils have two options when considering how to respond to a proposed LNRS, which are set out above at paragraph 16.

26. All public authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and must have 'regard' to the relevant LNRS in this process. Government guidance is clear that LNRSs should be used by Local Authorities preparing local plans to inform the way those plans address the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity. It is expected that a future update to the NPPF will include how LNRSs should be given weight in the plan making process. The Government will also provide separate guidance on how local authorities will be expected to comply with their duty to have regard to LNRSs through their planning functions.

Level of risk

27. There are no direct risks to Oxford City Council arising from the publication of the LNRS.

28. The progress of local government reorganisation and devolution may impact the delivery phase of the LNRS following publication. It is however, highly likely that responsibility for the delivery of the LNRS will fall to the successor authority.

Equalities impact

29. An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken as the LNRS is a high-level strategic document with no direct delivery implications for the Council.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

30. N/A -not a key decision.

Conclusion

31. The Oxfordshire LNRS should be approved for publication.

Report author	Dr James Barlow
Job title	Environmental Quality Manager & Flood Lead
Service area or department	Regeneration, Economy, Sustainability
Telephone	01865 252792
e-mail	jbarlow@oxford.gov.uk

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Final version November 2025

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Statement
by Oxfordshire County Council

In August 2023, Oxfordshire County Council was appointed as the 'Responsible Authority' to lead the preparation of our Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Councillor Judy Roberts

Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council developed a partnership approach to this, working closely with our supporting authorities (Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Natural England) and a partnership of local nature recovery organisations. This partnership, led by Oxfordshire County Council, engaged widely with local communities, environmental bodies, and other stakeholders to ensure that the strategy was shaped by local insights, expertise, and knowledge.

Local contributions have been invaluable in identifying priority areas for nature recovery, important species that need bespoke actions, and recommending which practical actions could have the greatest impact.

In addition, this strategy directly contributes to the national effort by the UK government to deliver the 25 year environment plan and the Environment Act 2021.

Our vision is clear: to achieve a well-connected, biodiversity-rich, network of nature that is resilient into the future, restored for the health and wellbeing of future generations, and for nature's own sake.

The council has long recognised that the health of our natural environment is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of people and communities within the county. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is not just important for the environment itself but also for the benefits and resilience it can bring for people, communities, businesses, and the wider economy.

In alignment with this vision, Oxfordshire County Council, the supporting authorities, and the partnership of organisations who contributed to the LNRS have committed significant resources and effort to ensuring that our strategy is robust, evidence-based, and responds to the priorities identified by local people.

Statement
by Oxfordshire County Council

It is now crucial that people and organisations across Oxfordshire work together to produce tangible improvements for nature in the county. Actions may include creating or enhancing habitats, improving connectivity between habitats and green spaces, and undertaking projects focused on species recovery.

This strategy aligns with key county council policies and initiatives including our nationally-recognised programme of climate action work, our flood risk mitigation work, and contributes towards wider objectives in our county.

In future, the strategy will be reviewed and republished to adapt its recommendations to changes in the local environment. Over time, we and other organisations and individuals will be delivering meaningful changes on the ground in Oxfordshire and this county council is committed to leading by example.

As we all move forwards into collaborative delivery of this strategy, it will be crucial to continue working closely with our communities, farmers, land managers, local businesses, and nature recovery organisations.

Together, we can achieve a resilient network of nature in Oxfordshire that supports wildlife, reverses the loss of local biodiversity, contributes towards national and global commitments, and produces tangible improvements for nature and for the quality of life of people in Oxfordshire. We know what needs to be done, let us not miss this opportunity to invest in nature, restore biodiversity, and meaningfully benefit all future generations to come.

Councillor Judy Roberts

Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, Oxfordshire County Council

Foreword

Chalk and limestone grasslands, extensive open wetlands, and scrubby wet woodland are some of the many fragile, fantastic habitats found in Oxfordshire. Brush through a flower-packed grassland on a sunny summer's day and you might be lucky enough to see an Adonis Blue or a Duke of Burgundy butterfly rise into the air.

Restoring, linking and expanding these now-rare habitats are just some of the priorities in this Local Nature Recovery Strategy. If we're successful, Oxfordshire will have more wonderful wildflower meadows, clean freshwater habitats, and other habitats which, with luck, will enable the wildlife that depend on them to thrive across our county.

Successfully restoring populations of species, like these butterflies and the habitats that support them can be our butterfly effect — a series of actions, that together, add up to significant worldwide change.

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is part of an LNRS latticework across England, which aims to halt the decline of wildlife in this country by 2030. That target, in turn, is Westminster's contribution towards a global mission to stop biodiversity loss. The worldwide decline of biodiversity is the story of a billion local losses every day. Turning round the fate of our animals, plants, and fungi, including the 800-900 species which are known to be at risk from local extinction here in Oxfordshire is our responsibility to the world.

To improve the state of nature in Oxfordshire, the county needs to restore thousands of hectares of priority habitat and create tens of thousands of hectares of semi natural habitat by 2030. The types of habitat and their suitable locations are driven by the priorities set by those who have engaged with the LNRS, overseen by ecologists, and using evidence from an understanding of soil data and geology.

Richard Benwell is chair of Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and chief executive of Wildlife and Countryside Link. Previously he has been policy adviser to the Secretary of State at DEFRA, and worked on policy and advocacy at WWT and RSPB.

Matt Whitney is the Manager of Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and has worked closely with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy whilst developing initiatives across Oxfordshire focusing on delivering nature's recovery.

Back to contents

Foreword

This combination of knowledge has helped the LNRS to create a focused set of priorities and, where particularly suitable, a map of focused opportunity areas showing a county-wide route that could create resilient, connected ecosystems and save threatened wildlife. It is also driven by common sense and pragmatism, identifying priorities that work for communities, businesses, and local people as well as nature.

After the final version of the strategy is published in 2025, delivering that much environmental change in Oxfordshire by 2030 will be a huge challenge.

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership has identified a funding gap of at least £800million to recover nature in Oxfordshire. Closing that gap will need much more public investment in nature recovery as well as private investment. The ONLP and the LNRS hope that the government will see the overwhelming case for investment in those who are delivering Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities as a great way to rebuild natural infrastructure with the support of local communities. There's also a huge need for more government support to develop people and groups who can provide green skills and nature-positive planning, so that areas across England can plan ahead intelligently and make space for nature alongside the need for development and wildlife-friendly food production.

Even with the most ambitious government action, delivering the LNRS priorities will need collaborative action from individuals, communities, and businesses across Oxfordshire. Nature's recovery simply cannot succeed without farmers being supported to lead the charge towards regenerative, nature-friendly land management. Similarly, recovery will never get there without investment from local businesses or without action by local communities and individuals engaging with and doing their bit for nature where they live and work.

Whether you're reading this as a homeowner wondering whether to rewild your garden, as a landowner considering the shift to regenerative management, or as a business owner considering how to create a legacy, we must all work together to deliver the LNRS's biodiversity priorities.

It's called a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, but that's really just the beginning. If we deliver the priorities in these pages, the results won't just be for nature, they'll strengthen our economy, help mitigate and improve Oxfordshire's resilience to climate change, boost public health, and secure an improved, healthy, and functioning environment to support future generations. If we succeed, the benefits won't just be local, they'll be Oxfordshire's answer to international environmental action. Please join us in taking rapid, decisive action for nature in Oxfordshire. Let's bring our county to life.

Richard Benwell,
Chair of Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP)

Matt Whitney,
Manager of Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP)

Executive summary

The truth is: the natural world is changing. And we are totally dependent on that world. It provides our food, water and air. It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it – Sir David Attenborough.

Oxfordshire's LNRS identifies local areas that need targeted resource driven towards them in order to create a resilient network of nature. Currently, the most important habitats are fragmented and are negatively impacted by pollution, agricultural intensification, and development, leading to a decline in the local environment and species. Additionally, many habitats are falling out of management which will worsen the situation for local biodiversity. This LNRS proposes that Oxfordshire needs to target local resources towards the delivery of a well-connected, biodiversity-rich network of nature that is resilient to benefit future generations and for nature's own sake. The LNRS identifies key locations to deliver various nature recovery actions on a map of Oxfordshire and also lists countywide actions that need to be delivered all across the county. There are actions for everyone to contribute towards, whether you have a house, garden, local park, or farm.

What's in this document?

This document gives context to the strategy, describes biodiversity in Oxfordshire, introduces what LNRSs are and why they are needed. The document then describes key pressures that threaten biodiversity, actions needed to recover nature and wildlife, and points to the full list of LNRS-recommended actions. Please read this document alongside the other three parts of the LNRS which, together, make up the strategy. The other three parts of the LNRS are the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, the Species Priorities List, and the Local Habitat Map.

Executive summary

A healthy natural environment provides the air, water, food and shelter that humans are dependent on. It also mitigates the impacts of extreme weather events, stores carbon, pollinates crops, regulates pests, and offers space for people to enjoy nature and exercise. Many of these benefits have been lost and are still being lost as the environment continues to degrade. To halt and reverse these declines, we must work together to create a more connected, resilient mosaic of quality habitats. Those who deliver these actions are not only helping the environment and wildlife for nature's own sake. They are also providing fundamental public goods that benefit the health and wellbeing of us all.

Oxfordshire is fortunate to have many people and organisations who care deeply for nature and understand the wider benefits of a healthy environment. Over 200 nature recovery groups and organisations, as well as many landowners and farmers, are already making a difference daily and have been leading the way to recover species populations and to improve habitats for wildlife. The LNRS is designed to empower those who are already taking action as well as to help inform project creation and funding opportunities for those who are getting ready to take action.

Use this LNRS to identify which actions you can take, and together through collaborative action, Oxfordshire can create a resilient, connected, and functioning network of nature, restoring biodiversity for the health of nature, people, and future generations.

Acknowledgements

This page shows the LNRS partnership who, led by Oxfordshire County Council, prepared the LNRS for Oxfordshire. Since 2023, these organisations have consistently contributed their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to develop Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Collectively referred to as the LNRS partnership within this document, this refers to all the authorities and organisations represented on this page. **The LNRS could not have been created without them and their support.**

Oxfordshire County Council would also like to thank the thousands of additional people and organisations across Oxfordshire, not displayed here, who also contributed significant time and energy into the LNRS through engagement, contributions to the project, data-sharing, and more.

Contents

This page aims to help you navigate this document to find the key information that is relevant for you. You can either scroll to the relevant page(s) or you can click directly on these headings and the document should take you to that section.

Introduction

- Statement by Oxfordshire County Council 2
- Foreword by OLNP 4
- Executive summary 6
- Acknowledgements 8

Where are we now?

- Biodiversity in the UK and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) 11
- Biodiversity in Oxfordshire 15
- Benefits of nature 37
- Nature and people 38
- Pressures on Oxfordshire's environment and wildlife 41

LNRS vision - where are we trying to get to?

- The LNRS vision and principles 46
- LNRS Nature recovery actions – how to achieve the vision 49
- LNRS Nature recovery locations – where to deliver the LNRS 51
- How was the Local Habitat Map made? 53

How to deliver the LNRS

- Who is expected to deliver 57
- Monitoring delivery of the LNRS 60
- Influencing Planning Policy 62
- National Objectives 63
- What you can do now 66

Glossary 67

Appendices 68

Where are we now?

Biodiversity in the UK and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

Introduction

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life forms, including plants, animals, fungi, and micro-organisms. A landscape that is rich in healthy biodiversity provides the essential necessities for the survival of humans and wildlife, from fresh water, clean air and climate regulation to food, medicines and more. These benefits do not come from individual species but from a rich variety of species and functioning habitats working together.

Global biodiversity status

On average, countries across the world only have an average of 75% of their biodiversity remaining since recording began. Unfortunately, the UK ranks in the bottom 10% of countries meaning that we are among the world's most nature depleted countries.

UK biodiversity decline

According to the State of Nature 2023 report, nearly one in six of the UK's species are at risk of extinction (of those which are sufficiently well recorded) and since 1970, the UK has experienced a 19% decline in the abundance of species. England itself has experienced a 32% decline in species numbers. This decline in biodiversity is primarily due to habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from human land use competing with nature including intensive agriculture and development. The report recognises the need for a different approach, one that enables people and nature to live well together.

Terrestrial and freshwater

The abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 19% across the UK since 1970.

Within this average figure, 290 species have declined in abundance (38%) and 205 species have increased (27%).

The UK distributions of 4,979 invertebrate species have on average decreased by 13% since 1970.

Stronger declines were seen in some insect groups which provide key ecosystem functions such as pollination (average 18% decrease in species' distributions) and pest control (34% decrease). By contrast, insect groups providing freshwater nutrient cycling initially declined before recovering to above the 1970 value (average 64% increase in species' distributions).

Since 1970, the distributions of 54% of flowering plant species and 59% of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) have decreased across Great Britain.

By comparison, only 15% and 26% of flowering plants and bryophytes, respectively, have increased. In Northern Ireland, since 1970, 42% of flowering plant species and 62% of bryophytes have decreased in distribution, compared to 43% and 34%, respectively, that have increased.

Turtle dove, Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com); Forester moth, Mike Read (rspb-images.com); Heath Spotted-Orchid, Andy Hay (rspb-images.com); Ladybird Spider, Ian Hughes (rspb-images.com); Kittiwake, Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com); Grey Seal, Ben Hall (rspb-images.com); Atlantic Yellow Nosed Albatross, Steffen Oppel (rspb-images.com)

10,008 species were assessed using Red List criteria.

2% (151 species) are extinct in Great Britain and a further 16% (almost 1,500 species) are now threatened with extinction here. In Northern Ireland, 281 (12%) of 2,508 species assessed are threatened with extinction from the island of Ireland.

Marine

The abundance of 13 species of seabird has fallen by an average of 24% since 1986.

The situation is worse in Scotland, where the abundance of 11 seabird species has fallen by an average of 49% since 1986. These results pre-date the potentially major impact of the ongoing outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

State of Nature 2023, p4. A description of trends in biodiversity over time

19%

Across the UK, species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970.

16%

Nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction from Great Britain.

Government initiatives

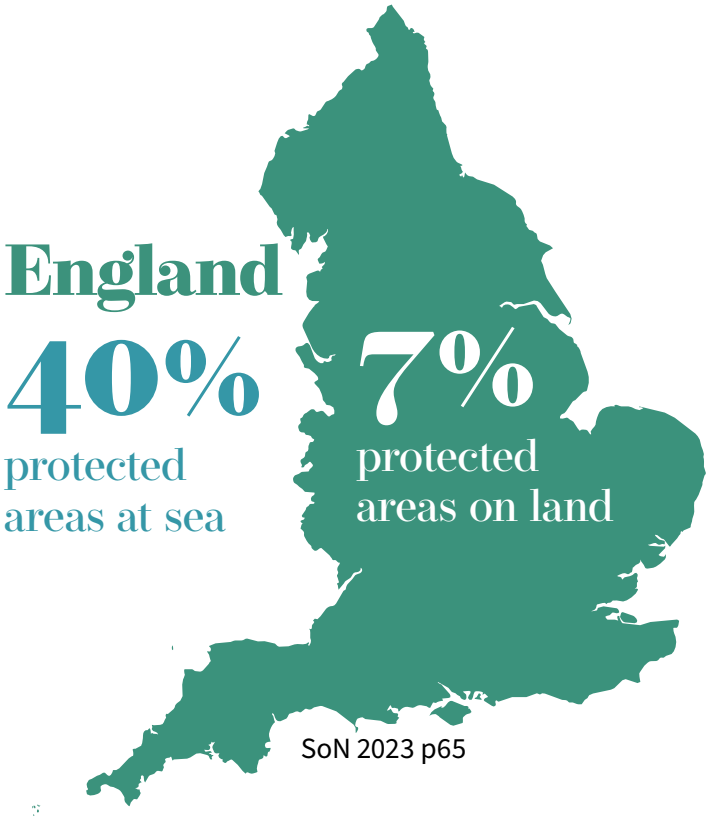
The government's message is becoming louder, that the UK must act to reverse biodiversity losses. This means that the LNRSs are being created across England at an exciting time, a time where policy and funding are beginning to come together at a national level in recognition of the biodiversity crisis, alongside commitments and targets for positive change. This presents an exciting opportunity for nature and wildlife in the UK.

For example, projects in England have recently been funded by DEFRA and Natural England to deliver landscape-scale change including restoring biodiversity across 99,000 hectares of landscape including the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire, the Peak District, Norfolk, and Somerset. Projects in Oxfordshire have also had two recent successes in their bids for funding to deliver landscape recovery projects.

The two landscape recovery projects in Oxfordshire include the Evenlode landscape recovery project along the Evenlode river, and the second is the Ock and Thame landscape recovery project. These projects will focus on a range of benefits including delivering high quality habitat networks with high carbon storage on low productivity land helping to create financially and environmentally sustainable farming systems and local environment. The projects will be delivered by local farmers and land managers in partnership with local people and conservation organisations to focus on outcomes such as clean and plentiful water, healthy soils, and thriving plants and wildlife.

Legislation and implementation

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) were introduced by the UK government through the Environment Act 2021. Authorities in England were asked to start developing these in June 2023 and to publish these online in 2025. The legislation requires authorities all across England to create a list of priorities to achieve in each area which will be developed through engagement and consultation activities with local people and organisations. Alongside the list of priorities to achieve for both habitats and species, LNRSs are asked to create a map of their area to highlight areas of particular importance where habitats should be prioritised for creation or improvement work to benefit local biodiversity.



SoN 2023 p65

Nature recovery

The term nature recovery can be interpreted in a range of ways. For the LNRS, nature recovery refers to the process of enhancing or creating habitats through actions on the ground. These actions, if delivered, would enable wildlife to recover in number and abundance and would deliver benefits for local people like helping to mitigate flood risk. This is what the LNRS means by nature recovery work. The LNRS has a certain level of scope (things that it has the legal power to achieve) and LNRSs are expected to contribute towards nature recovery by creating a list of focused priorities and actions to achieve in the local area, and to map where those actions should be taken in the county to provide the greatest benefits for biodiversity and the wider environment.

Oxfordshire County Council's role

In June 2023, Oxfordshire County Council was appointed by DEFRA as the responsible authority for leading the production of the first LNRS for Oxfordshire and tasked with leading the preparation of the strategy. Oxfordshire County Council then set up the LNRS Partnership, a set of organisations shown on page 8 who closely supported and shaped the development of the strategy and gave oversight throughout its preparation. DEFRA and Natural England provided statutory guidance to responsible authorities showing the steps that they expect LNRS production to follow (see figure 1).

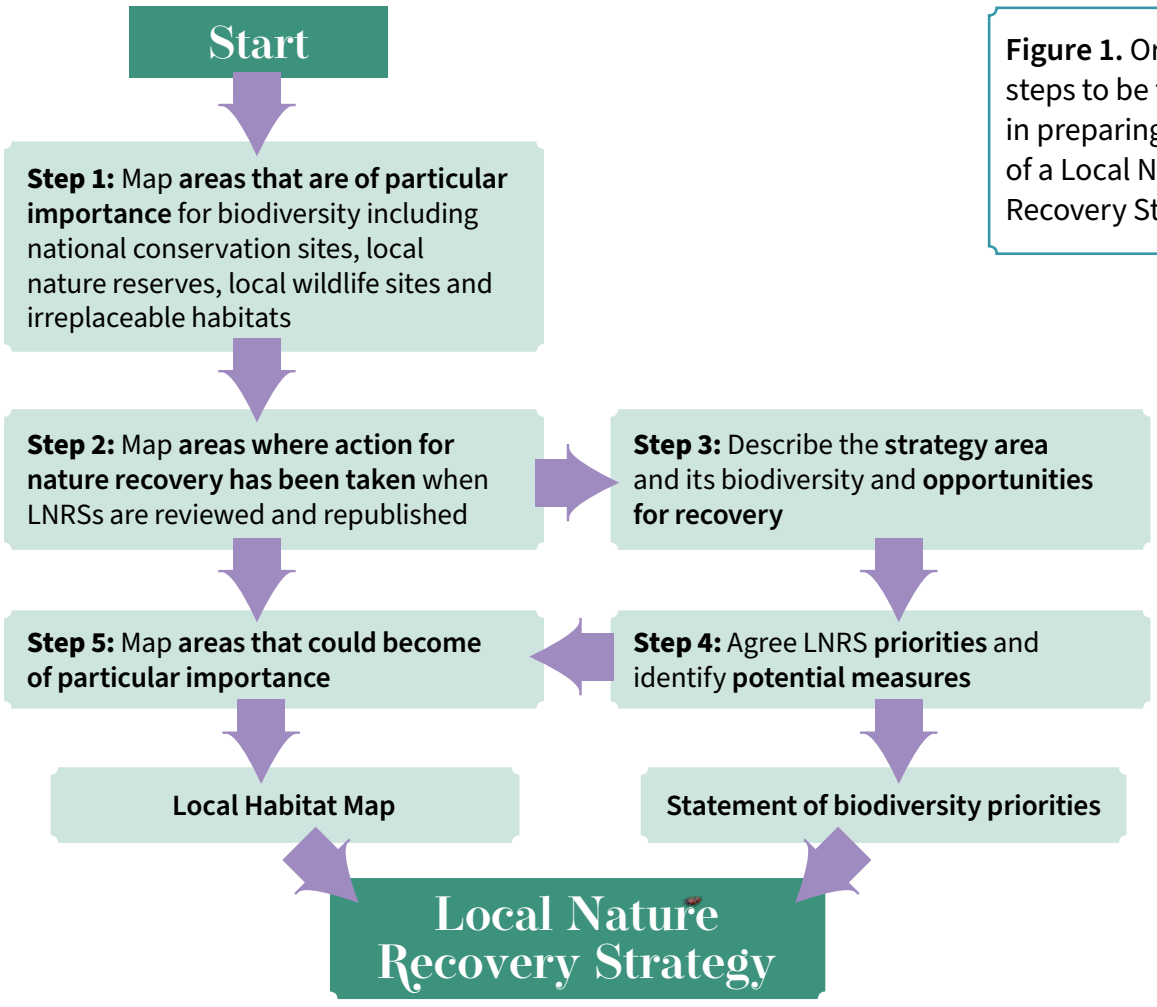


Figure 1. Order of steps to be followed in preparing contents of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy

What is the difference between the draft LNRS and the final LNRS?

The LNRS is expected to help people and organisations across the county to co-ordinate nature recovery efforts and funding opportunities. The purpose of the LNRS is to indicate which areas of the county need which targeted actions to create a create a bigger, better, and more joined up network for biodiversity to recover. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has created four key elements which, together, make up the strategy. These are:

A description of the strategy area (this document)

- A written description of biodiversity in Oxfordshire, the opportunities, and the pressures on biodiversity with a summary of what needs to be done.

A Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

- A written list of the most important outcomes (priorities) to achieve for biodiversity in Oxfordshire and a list of actions (potential measures) that would need be taken to achieve the priorities.

A Species Priorities List

- A written list of species that need additional, bespoke actions above and beyond the general habitat improvements on the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities (above). This Species Priorities List states the specific actions needed to recover particular individual species or groups of species.

A Local Habitat Map – an online and interactive map tool which shows:

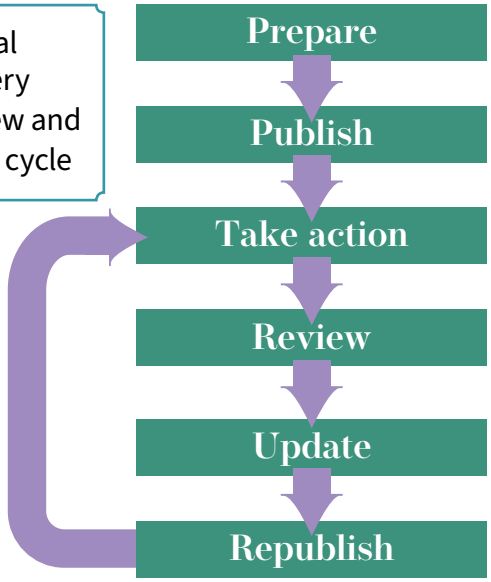
- The existing areas of Oxfordshire that are particularly important for biodiversity.
- Areas that could become particularly important for biodiversity. These are priority locations for creating a nature recovery network in Oxfordshire and the LNRS has mapped a range of habitat creation and enhancement priorities as well as some species-specific actions to deliver in these locations.
- Some select, wider biodiversity information about Oxfordshire to support people and organisations to develop nature recovery projects that can maximise wider benefits too, such as natural flood management.

The LNRS is expected to help people and organisations across the county co-ordinate effort and funding opportunities towards the delivery of a bigger, better, and more joined up network for nature. Some actions will be spatially targeted to key areas in the county whereas other actions will be important for as many people as possible to deliver across the county to improve the landscape and environment as a whole.

Can LNRSs be changed in future?

DEFRA has outlined a process of preparation and publication for Local Nature Recovery Strategies. They have also outlined a review and republication process to update these strategies in the future (see figure 2). Once a strategy is published, the authority has a period of between 3 – 10 years before the Secretary of State is expected to ask all authorities to review and republish the strategy as part of a national review and update. During the 3 – 10 year interim period, the maps and documents are not typically allowed to be changed.

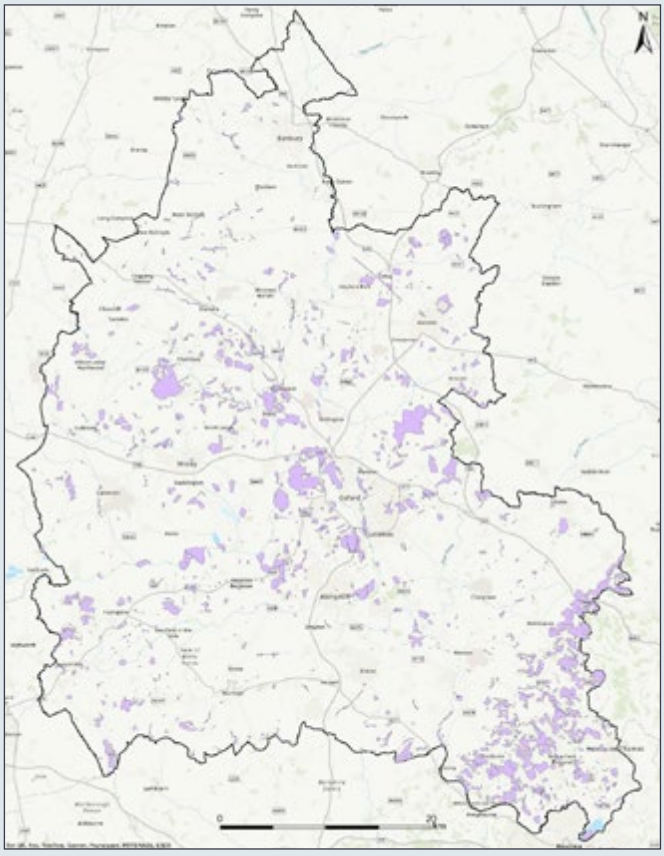
Figure 2. Local nature recovery strategy review and republication cycle



Biodiversity in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire's biodiversity: a summary

Oxfordshire covers 260,595 hectares of southern England and is the most rural county in the south east (Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023). The State of Nature in Oxfordshire report (2017) describes the county as having **"a diverse and interesting geology, criss-crossed by eight river systems, that create a gentle yet complex landscape. As such, it supports a variety of habitats, from fragrant chalk grasslands scented with wild thyme, to fungi-strewn beech woods; from pockets of damp, reedy fen and acid grassland to marshy meadows full of birds."** Throughout the document this variety of habitats, species and the landscape in which they are found is referred to as nature and the collective variety of our animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms is often referred to as biodiversity.



However, when we map out the locations in Oxfordshire that government consider to be 'of particular importance for biodiversity' a fragmented picture can be seen. The existing habitats in the county are small, separated, not necessarily in good condition, and show that some areas contain far more space dedicated to nature and biodiversity than others. In total, only 6.5% of Oxfordshire (16,866 hectares) currently meets the criteria for areas of particular importance to biodiversity. Please see the map on the next page and see Appendix A for more detail about how this map was made.

You can read full details about how the areas of particular importance were mapped by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) on the LNRS webpage. Sites which could be mapped included National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and areas of irreplaceable habitat (defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) including lowland fen, ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees. Some of these types of sites overlap with each other (i.e. there may be ancient woodland or fen sites within Local Wildlife Sites or SSSIs).

View large map

Of the total areas mapped, the table below shows that 4.3% (11,197.4 hectares) of the county consists of local and national conservation sites (NNRs, SACs, SSSIs, LNRs, and LWSs). 3.7% (9,624.3 hectares) classifies as irreplaceable ancient woodland and lowland fen habitat, much of which is contained within existing local or national conservation sites. In addition, 0.3% (894.5 hectares) of the county is covered by patches of wood pasture and parkland which contain ancient or veteran trees and there are also an additional 1,700 ancient and veteran trees recorded outside of wood pasture and parkland which cover a further 0.06% (148.4 hectares) of the county, However ancient and veteran tree records are not yet comprehensive across the country and are regularly being updated across England as more trees are being recorded.

Site type	Area (ha)	% Oxfordshire
Local and national conservation sites	11,197.4	4.3%
Irreplaceable habitat: Ancient woodland and lowland fen	9,624.3	3.7%
Irreplaceable habitat: Ancient and veteran trees	148.4	0.06%
Irreplaceable habitat: Wood pasture and parkland with ancient and veteran trees	894.5	0.34%
Total area (accounting for overlaps)	**16,866.1**	**6.5%**

Table 1. The values in this table represent the total area of each site or habitat type, and the total area is presented accounting for any overlaps

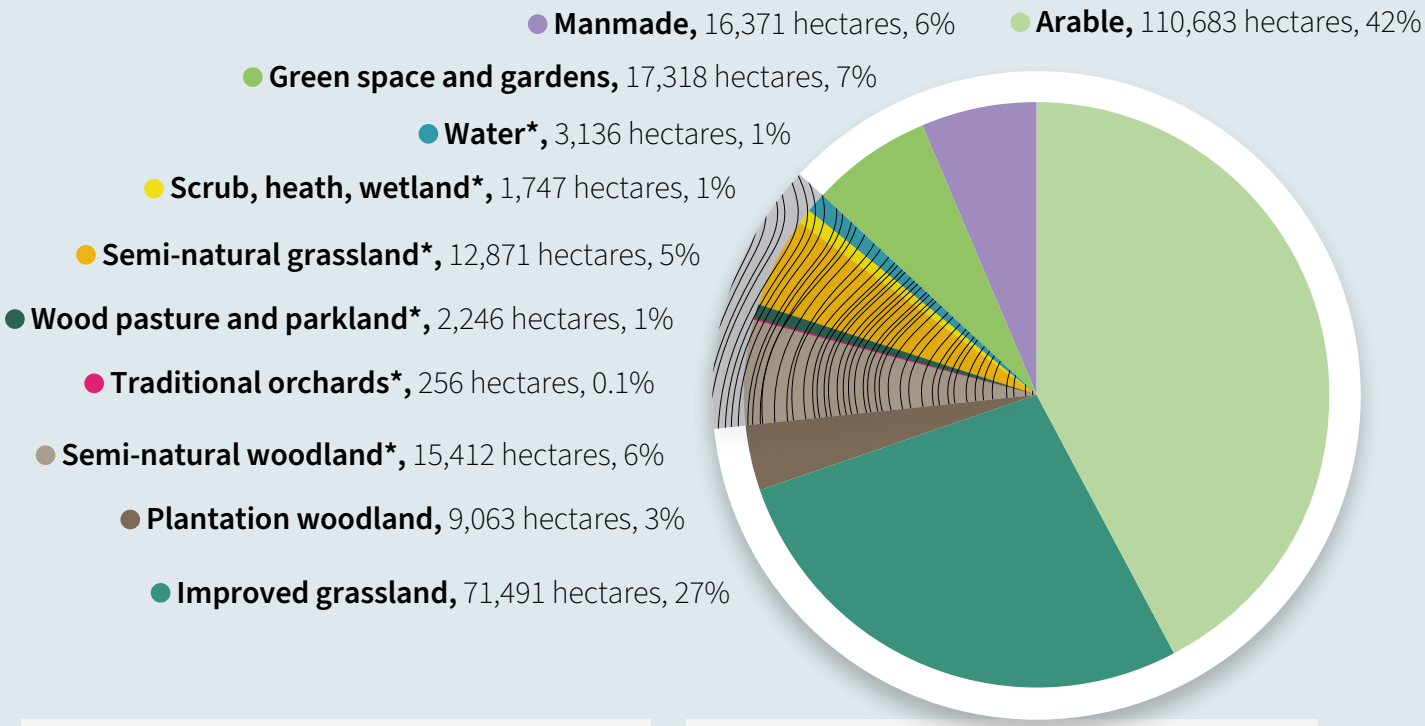
Of all of the 6.5% of mapped areas that are particularly important for biodiversity, a third of the total area (5,693 hectares) is currently not protected by any national or local designation and exists outside of a conservation reserve or area. The above map presents an updated view of the core biodiversity-rich locations in Oxfordshire and was specifically requested by DEFRA to act as a starting point from which LNRSs were expected to plan a bigger, better, and more joined up network of nature in Oxfordshire.

There are many further areas across Oxfordshire which experts also consider to be important or irreplaceable which don't currently meet government criteria to be mapped as an area of particular importance for biodiversity, and experts were invited to share their knowledge to be incorporated into the LNRS's vision for the bigger, better, more joined-up network.

Oxfordshire's land use and natural resources

The map on the previous page describes a very small percentage of the county and there are many habitats and types of land cover (farms, buildings, golf courses etc) which cover the rest of the county. This section describes the types of habitats and land use (land cover) which can be found across Oxfordshire's 260,595 hectares.

(Source: Agile Nature Recovery Map of Oxfordshire, University of Oxford)



Sub-total of area that is *semi-natural, 35,668.29 hectares, 14%

Oxfordshire total area, all landcover types 260,595 hectares, 100%

Agricultural land

The majority of Oxfordshire's land (73%) is used for agriculture and much of that area is, and has been, intensively farmed using a significant amount of chemical inputs to produce crops and food. Of the 73%, 43% is arable, 27% as improved grassland, with 3% under other classifications. However, both arable and grassland fields can make space for nature - arable by creating margins, buffer strips, or permanent areas that are set-aside for nature, and grassland by managing grazing and creating areas of habitat like in-field trees and ponds in addition to enhancing the species diversity of the grassland. In this way, farmland can contain space for nature that complements their main purpose of food production, and there have been changes in farming practices with large numbers of farmers moving towards schemes that benefit nature alongside food production as part of their business.

Managed sensitively, productive farmland can support a wide range of wildlife and offer corridors that connect habitats across the county. Agricultural practices to improve soil organic matter can both increase the biodiversity of the soil and store additional carbon. Additionally, having wildlife and habitats on farms can provide pollinators, integrated pest control options, wind-breaks, and shade which can all benefit the production of food.

Urban and settlements

About 6% of Oxfordshire is covered by manmade built development including houses, buildings, bridges, roads, railways, sealed surfaces and so on. A further 7% is domestic gardens and urban greenspace such as playing fields and allotments. Together this means 13% of the county is currently used as homes, gardens, places of work, and other buildings and infrastructure.

The area used for homes is expected to grow in Oxfordshire. Growth has already been underway here in recent years. In the six years between 2014 and 2020, 2,710 hectares of sealed surfaces (e.g. paved areas, car parks, driveways) were created. In comparison, in the six years between 2017 and 2023, just 0.4 hectares of lowland heathland were restored, 2.3 additional hectares of reedbed were created, 7.4 hectares of traditional orchards were created, and woodland cover increased by 0.2% (about 520 hectares).

Semi-natural habitats

Semi-natural habitats are those which have most of their ecological processes and biodiversity intact, although many of these have still been altered by human activity and may be dependent on ongoing management. 14% (about 36,500 hectares) of Oxfordshire is classified as semi-natural habitat. Of that 14%, 6% (about 15,500 hectares) is semi-natural woodland, and 8% (about 20,800 hectares) is other semi-natural habitats including flood plain meadows, chalk grassland, parkland with scattered trees, wetland, scrub, heath, and a tiny area of traditional orchards (see a more detailed chart on the next pages). There are also around 17,000km of hedgerows and lines of trees along field boundaries.

Woodland

As of 2020, woodland covered 9.2% (about 24,000 hectares) of Oxfordshire, just under the average 9.9% woodland cover for England (data from TVERC). Approximately one third of Oxfordshire's woodland is plantation (woods which have been planted to grow timber and so are not 'semi-natural habitat').

Many of Oxfordshire's woodlands are small – 38% are less than 10 hectares in size, indicating a scattered and fragmented habitat type. 3.4% of all woodland in Oxfordshire is ancient (about 11,500 hectares). Of that ancient woodland area, just over 2,500 hectares are plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Carbon storage

It is estimated that 23 million tonnes of carbon is stored in Oxfordshire's soils and vegetation, and that in addition 115,000 tonnes of carbon is sequestered each year by healthy soils and vegetation. A further 3.5 million tonnes of carbon would be sequestered between 2020 and 2050 if there was no further change in land-use or ecosystem condition (Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire). By creating more habitat, there is opportunity to store even more carbon.

Minerals

The geology of the county has enabled a thriving minerals industry to develop, providing sand and gravel from the river valleys, soft sand in the south west of the county, and limestone and ironstone in the north and west. A survey in 2009 found that 78% of sand and gravel and 51% of crushed rock produced in the county is used in Oxfordshire. Many large areas of habitat creation have or will be delivered through the restoration of minerals sites in the county, including through the Lower Windrush Valley Project.

Definitions relevant to pie-chart and the above section:

- **Arable:** land used for growing and producing crops, also includes intensive orchards.
- **Improved grassland:** grasslands for pasture that have been highly modified through reseeding and frequent fertiliser application. Typically over 50% perennial ryegrass, white clover and other high-productivity agricultural species. Also includes unidentified natural surface.
- **Plantation woodland:** coniferous, mixed and broadleaved plantations, unknown woodland and felled woodland.
- **Semi-natural grassland:** acid, calcareous and neutral grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures, unidentified semi-improved grassland (including rough grassland from OS Mastermap), marshy grassland (some of which is just improved grassland on the floodplain), poor semi-improved grassland, tall herb and fern, bracken, and ephemeral vegetation.
- **Scrub, heath and wetland** also includes a few hedgerows which are on the TVERC habitat map (typically because this has been provided by a restoration project; most hedgerows are not included).
- **Water:** rivers, streams, canals, drainage ditches, lakes, ponds and reservoirs.
- **Greenspace and gardens:** domestic gardens, parks, cemeteries, churchyards, playing fields, allotments, amenity grass, grassed roundabouts and verges.
- **Man-made:** buildings, sealed surfaces, roads, rail, tracks, bare ground, landfill, quarry, Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (a priority habitat comprised of a mosaic of early successional habitats), sand, and new development.

Important habitats, species and designated sites in Oxfordshire

The value of some habitats in Oxfordshire are recognised with a range of statutory and non-statutory designations which aim to protect the county's best and exemplar spaces for nature.

National landscapes

Oxfordshire contains parts of three National Landscapes which cover about 25% of the county and are designated to conserve and enhance their outstanding natural beauty. Oxfordshire's three National Landscapes are:

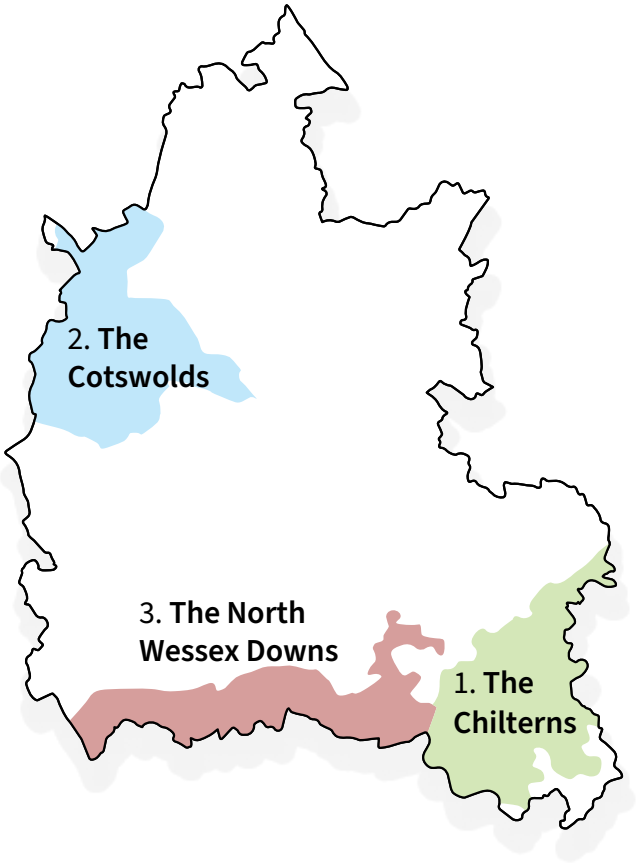
1. **The Chilterns** National Landscape. Oxfordshire is home to 28% of the Chilterns National Landscape (233km^2 which covers 8.9% of Oxfordshire). This area is well known for its ancient woodlands, chalk downland, chalk streams and scrub communities (including important juniper scrub).

2. **The Cotswolds** National Landscape. Oxfordshire is home to 12% of the Cotswolds National Landscape (248km^2 which covers 9.5% of Oxfordshire). This area is well known for areas of open High Wold, the Evenlode and Windrush river valleys, the Wychwood Forest, areas of unimproved limestone grassland and floodplain meadows. A good population of farmland birds still exists on arable land in this area.

3. **The North Wessex Downs** National Landscape. Oxfordshire is home to 186km^2 of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (covering 7.2% of Oxfordshire). This area is well known for chalk grassland, chalk streams, populations of farmland birds and veteran trees.

World heritage sites

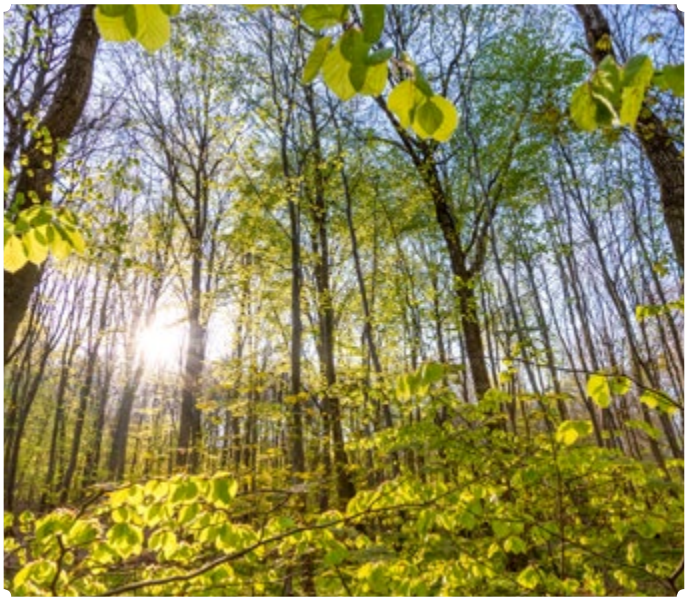
Blenheim Palace and Park was awarded World Heritage Site status in 1987 and is one of only 17 registered sites in England (one of 30 in the UK). Blenheim Park also contains an important SSSI, containing one of the finest areas of ancient oak-dominated pasture woodland in the country with lakes of regional importance for breeding and wintering birds.



Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Oxfordshire has seven internationally designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) which fall partly or entirely within the county. SACs are designated where they support internationally important habitats and/or species and the sites receive strict legal protection.

- **Aston Rowant:** One of the best remaining examples in the UK of lowland juniper scrub on chalk.
- **Chilterns Beechwoods:** Beech forests on neutral to rich soils, stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, dry grassland and scrublands on chalk.
- **Cothill Fen:** Largest surviving example of alkaline fen in central England, alder woodland on floodplains.
- **Hackpen Hill:** Dry grasslands and scrubland on chalk with a significant population of early gentian *Gentianella anglica*.
- **Hartslock Wood:** Yew woodland and chalk grassland supporting one of only three UK populations of monkey orchid *Orchis simia*.
- **Little Wittenham:** One of the best studied great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* sites in the UK.
- **Oxford Meadows:** Lowland hay meadows including the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Helosciadium repens*.



Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are 113 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Oxfordshire that cover a total of 4,475.7 hectares (which is 1.17% of Oxfordshire). These SSSI sites are designated as important nationally for their wildlife or geology.

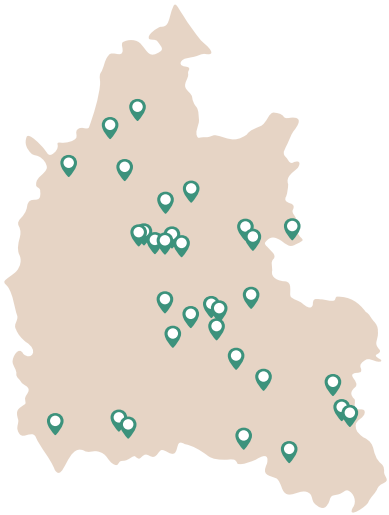
- 50.5% of Oxfordshire's SSSIs are in favourable condition (by area).
- 47.5% are in favourable recovering condition.
- 0.99% SSSIs by area are considered to show no change.
- 0.76% are declining and 0.19% destroyed (Natural England 2024).

A list of the 113 SSSIs can be viewed in the TVERC reports on the county council LNRS webpage.

add link

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are sites identified at a countywide level for their wildlife-rich habitats, or particularly important species. All Local Wildlife Sites that meet the necessary criteria are designated; this differs significantly from the process of identifying SSSIs, as the latter are a representative sample of sites. Local Wildlife Sites don't receive legal protection but are identified and protected through the planning process. Like SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites are surveyed on a rolling programme, with most sites being reassessed approximately every 10 years.



Between 2005 and November 2024, 36 sites were removed and 94 sites were added to the total number of Local Wildlife Sites. At the latest update in 2024, Oxfordshire had 399 Local Wildlife Sites (6670.4 hectares which is 2.5% of Oxfordshire) with a further 71 proposed new or proposed extensions to Local Wildlife Sites (1195.8 hectares in total) under assessment (TVERC, 2023). Currently the percentage of the county covered by Local Wildlife Sites is 2.5%, much lower than in some neighbouring counties such as Berkshire (8%), and much lower than the English average (5%) (The Wildlife Trusts, 2016).

In Oxfordshire, 45% of Local Wildlife Sites were recorded to be in positive conservation management in 2023 - 2024. For context, the equivalent figure across England in 2023 -2024 was 35%. There has been a gradual improvement in the proportion of Local Wildlife Sites in positive management in the county from 34% in 2016- 2017.

Road Verge Nature Reserves (RVNRs)

Road Verge Nature Reserves (RVNRs) are verges rich in biodiversity, often including a number of scarce and threatened plants and habitats. RVNRs provide connectivity between wildlife areas, helping to maintain and restore a green network through which wildlife can move and survive. Green verges provide a vital link between what can otherwise be inhospitable landscapes, providing benefits for both wildlife and people. There are currently 52 RVNRs located across the county, including examples of limestone and chalk grassland, acid grassland and neutral grassland.

Habitats of Principal Importance

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 identifies 56 types of habitat in England that it calls habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The list is intended to help public bodies be aware of biodiversity conservation in their policy or decision making, to inform landowners planning nature recovery and to help funding bodies support suitable nature recovery. Oxfordshire is home to 20 types of habitats of principal importance, which are described in the table on next page:

Lowland Meadows:	A key habitat in Oxfordshire, dependent on low fertility soils and traditional management methods. Flower rich, important for invertebrates and ground nesting birds such as skylark. The county holds 25% of all UK floodplain lowland meadows (a rare community of the NVC 'MG4' plant assemblage).
Lowland calcareous grassland:	A key habitat in Oxfordshire, associated with areas of chalk and limestone geology, found particularly in the North Wessex Downs, Chilterns and Cotswolds. Flower rich, important for invertebrates (particularly butterflies).
Acid grassland:	Of restricted distribution in Oxfordshire, associated with sandy soils such as those on the Mid-vale Ridge. Generally, not flower rich but important for rare plants and invertebrates.
Floodplain Grazing Marsh:	A key habitat in Oxfordshire, associated with river floodplains. Sometimes flower rich, important for wading birds.
Lowland Fens:	A key habitat in Oxfordshire, particularly in the Cothill area. Important for rare invertebrates and plants. May support water vole and safe resting sites for otter.
Eutrophic Standing Waters:	Likely to be found in old gravel pits and reservoirs, often important for waterfowl.
Mesotrophic Lakes:	These have lower levels of nutrients than Eutrophic Standing Waters, and can be particularly rich in plant and invertebrate species. There are only a few examples in Oxfordshire, to be found mainly amongst the old gravel pits of the Lower Windrush Valley.
Ponds:	Found throughout Oxfordshire, may be rich in plants and invertebrates. Likely to be the most important breeding sites for amphibians, including great crested newt, as well as many dragonfly species.
Reedbeds:	Of restricted distribution in Oxfordshire, important for birds including the Bittern, may support water voles or rare plants.
Rivers:	Found throughout Oxfordshire, provide important wildlife corridors. Likely to support water vole, otter, and a variety of invertebrates. All of Oxfordshire's river catchments fall into a number of catchment partnerships, set up by the Environment Agency and hosted and run by local groups to oversee the implementation of actions to address pressures on the water environment. Chalk streams in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs are a local and special habitat type which is rare globally with the majority of all the world's chalk streams found within England.

Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures:	These wet pastures are of restricted distribution in Oxfordshire, found mainly around Otmoor and the Shill Brook in West Oxfordshire.
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland:	Important for veteran trees, invertebrates and bats. Found mainly on Oxfordshire's old estates.
Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland:	A key habitat in Oxfordshire, found mainly in the Chilterns.
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland:	Found across Oxfordshire, those with rich ground flora are of particular biodiversity interest. Also important for bats, woodland birds and butterflies, occasionally support dormice.
Wet woodland:	Of restricted distribution in Oxfordshire, likely to be adjacent to waterbodies or part of a mosaic of wetland habitats. Supports birds and rare invertebrates.
Traditional orchards:	Of restricted distribution in Oxfordshire, dependent on traditional management methods. Important for bats, rare invertebrates, mosses, lichens.
Arable Field Margins:	Strips around field edges managed to provide benefits for wildlife – can provide important food sources for birds and invertebrates.
Hedgerows:	An important linking habitat found throughout Oxfordshire, of particular biodiversity value when they consist of a large proportion of native woody species. Used by foraging birds and bats, dormice and a range of invertebrates.
Lowland Heathland:	Of restricted distribution, important for reptiles and invertebrates
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL):	Examples in Oxfordshire include former quarries and ash lagoons – can be particularly important for birds, invertebrates and specialist plants.

Wildlife rich habitats that do not meet the current criteria for priority habitats

In addition to the above list of Habitats of Principal Importance, there are numerous other habitats that are wildlife-rich but do not meet the strict criteria to become a Habitat of Principal Importance. These habitats include scrub; wildflower grassland that is species-rich but that does not meet the criteria of the three grassland priority habitats; and mosaics of habitats made up of a mixture of any or all of scrub, grassland, woodland, and ponds and other wetland habitats. The importance of these other habitats is reflected in the LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, which includes numerous measures dedicated to the enhancement and creation of these habitats.

Species trends in Oxfordshire

Species trends in Oxfordshire generally reflect patterns seen across England. For some species we have local data sets and can understand local trends in more detail. The following trends mostly come from the State of Nature in Oxfordshire Report (2017).

Species 'on the brink' (at risk of being lost) in Oxfordshire

Whilst there have been significant historical losses of a wide range of species, the species below represent some of the species that have been declining particularly fast in recent years (many since 1998) to the point that species are now considered extinct or near extinct in Oxfordshire. This is not an exhaustive or definitive list, there may be other species which meet this categorisation which we do not yet have sufficient information about.

Wall butterflies, grassland specialists. Previously widespread, now considered extinct in the county having not been recorded since 2009.

The **marsh fritillary** which was rapidly declining in 1998 is now considered near extinct in Oxfordshire.

Nightingale had disappeared from Oxfordshire with the last confirmed breeding records in the county from 1998 and only two sightings in 2020 and in 2021. However, a land manager has recently recorded the first breeding pairs in the county in the past four years after dedicated habitat management work and their range is expected to expand with the creation of suitable habitat.

We have recently lost the **wood white butterfly** which was last recorded in 2008.

Hazel dormouse: there are very few records for dormice in the county. It is unclear whether this is partially due to under-recording of this species.

Following recent significant declines, the only native crayfish, the **white clawed crayfish** is now extremely rare in Oxfordshire and has been particularly damaged by the introduction of American signal crayfish.

The **adder** is typically found in heathland habitats but is now very rare (all but extinct) in Oxfordshire. Whilst it was considered to have a stable population in 1998, there are only a handful of records in the county since 2010.

In 2017 Otmoor was the only reliable site in Oxfordshire where **turtle doves** still bred, they have not been recorded breeding there since 2020. Through the work of **Operation Turtle Dove** there is potential for this species to recover.

Declining species

Apart from at the RSPB's Otmoor reserve, **curlew** numbers decreased by 51%, **lapwing** by 21%, **snipe** by 88% and **redshank** by 50% in Oxfordshire between 2005 and 2015. These declines are attributed to loss of wet grassland habitat and predation. More recently, the Curlew Recovery Project estimates that there is currently a total population of 60 pairs of curlew in the Upper Thames (including a few in Buckinghamshire), with strong recovery continuing at Otmoor, but there is also evidence of declines in many of the smaller populations.

The Upper Thames Butterfly Atlas 2016 data (Asher et al., 2016) shows declining trends of the wider countryside butterfly species, which are now experiencing the same sort of drop in abundance that the habitat specialists suffered 30 years ago. The black **hairstreak butterfly**, found only in hedgerows and thickets of blackthorn in woodlands on the heavy clay soils between Oxford and Peterborough, has suffered a dramatic decline nationally (losing 43% of its population since the 1970's) but the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire colonies seem stable due to targeted conservation efforts to maintain habitats for these species in certain locations.

Willow tits, which like scrub and wet woodland, are the most rapidly declining woodland bird species locally. Several other woodland bird species in Oxfordshire have been in long term decline and on the Red List for Birds for some time (BoCC4, 2015) include **lesser spotted woodpecker**, **marsh tit** and **hawfinch**.

Banbury Ornithological Society (BOS) Winter Random Square Survey has shown that several **resident farmland birds**, including **yellowhammer** and **linnet**, declined greatly in the 70s and 80s, before stabilising somewhat in the late 90s and 2000s. For a few, the declines are continuing, notably **corn bunting** and **tree sparrow** (ed. Easterbrook, 2013).

Increasing species

Between 1900 and 1998, **water voles** *(Arvicola amphibius)* suffered a 95% reduction in their range in the UK. During the period 2009 to 2024, against the backdrop of a national decline, the total spatial coverage of water vole 'Local Key Areas' in Oxfordshire increased by 85% as a result of co-ordinated water vole conservation and mink control activities. This can be can be interpreted as an overall improvement in the fortunes of this species in the county.

In the first three national otter surveys of England (late 1970s to early 1990s), **otters** were just starting to recover from their extensive national declines and were almost entirely absent from the Thames catchment and Oxfordshire. However, the banning of toxic chemicals, improvements in water quality and legal protection have all helped to bring otters back to the Thames catchment, augmented by a small independent re-introduction of captive-bred animals by the Otter Trust in 1999. The first few positive sites in Oxfordshire came in the 1991-94 survey and now otters are widespread across the county both in urban and rural areas, reflecting their gradual but continued national recovery.

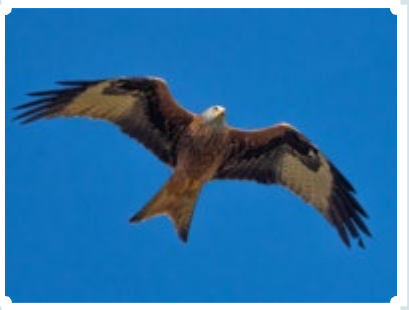
After an absence from the county of about 200 years, **bittern**, **marsh harrier** and **common crane** have returned to breed in the new reedbed at RSPB's Otmoor reserve.

The **adonis blue**, **silver washed fritillary**, **purple emperor** and **brown argus** are all butterfly species which have expanded in range, if not abundance (Upper Thames Butterfly Conservation, 2016).

Re-introductions

This section focuses on some key species which have either been introduced to Oxfordshire, or could, in future be reintroduced to Oxfordshire.

Natterjack toad. With its specialist habitat requirements, the natterjack toad has always been rare in the county. This species went extinct from the county in the twentieth century but was more recently re-introduced to a sandy-heathland site on a farm in Oxfordshire where a breeding population has become established.



Red kites became extinct in England as a result of persecution. In 1990 they were successfully re-introduced at a site on the Oxfordshire/ Buckinghamshire border in the Chilterns, establishing a self-sustaining and expanding population.

Photo © Tony Hisgett

Eurasian beavers have begun to be reintroduced in England. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are asked to consider species which could be suitable for reintroduction to their relevant counties and people and organisations across Oxfordshire have repeatedly mentioned the opportunity to reintroduce beavers. It would be crucial to plan this reintroduction carefully with the support from relevant landowners and with management plans for future populations.

Nationally important populations of species and their habitats which can be found within Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is home to a number of species and habitats which are important at a national level. This is often because they are found in few (or no) other locations in the country.

Plants

- Oxfordshire's calcareous grasslands support nationally important rare plants, including the bulk of the UK populations of downy woundwort, meadow clary, early gentian and Chiltern gentian and all of these species are in decline. Downy woundwort is found nowhere else in the UK but the Oxfordshire population has been struggling and would benefit from targeted recovery work.
- Oxfordshire has one of the largest UK populations of the nationally rare downy-fruited sedge *Carex filiformis*. Our wet grasslands and fens support the vast majority of the UK's population of creeping marshwort *Helosciadium repens* and fen violet *Viola persicifolia*.
- The River Ray floodplain is a stronghold for the rare true foxsedge *Carex vulpina* (Feber, 2013).
- One of only three UK populations of monkey orchid is found at Hartslock nature reserve.
- Bluebells *Hyacinthoides nonscripta* are widespread in Oxfordshire woodlands but under threat globally.
- One of Britain's rarest trees, the native black poplar is a tree of wet woodland and forested floodplain. Thought to be declining over the long-term in Oxfordshire, more information is needed about this species using DNA-testing to confirm the identity of the true native trees. Planting projects could enable recovery.
- Box woodland is extremely limited in the UK, localised to only about 10 sites in the country. There is a location in Chinnor where an example of mature box woodland can still be found.

Breeding curlew

- The eurasian curlew is identified as near threatened at a global scale by the IUCN. With 58,000 pairs reported in the UK in 2020, the UK holds 40% of the European curlew population and 25% of the global population. With an estimated 60 breeding pairs, the Upper Thames is one of the important lowland breeding sites with an active partnership working on The Curlew Recovery Project.

Lowland meadows

- Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is considered to be one of the best lowland hay meadow areas in the UK, with vegetation communities that are perhaps entirely unique which reflects the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. Other good examples of this habitat are found in the floodplains of the Thames, Cherwell and Ray. One example includes the Thames at Swinford, landscape-scale community restoration plans are well underway led by the Nature Recovery Network to restore over 210 hectares of ancient, restored, and recreated meadow. This area includes the internationally rare ancient floodplain meadows (MG4). There are only 1,200 hectares of MG4 lowland floodplain meadows remaining in the UK, 25% is in Oxfordshire and reconnecting these will support their survival.

Calcareous fens

- Oxfordshire hosts a complex of calcareous species-rich fens that form the largest remaining group of such habitats outside East Anglia and North Wales. Cothill Fen SAC (JNCC, 2016) is the largest surviving example of alkaline fen in central England, which supports the clubbed general soldierfly, southern damselfly, rare horseflies as well as endangered black bog rush and broad-leaved cotton grass (indicative of the rare M13 plant assemblage).

Chalk streams

- Streams arising from chalk aquifers such as the Letcombe Brook, Chalgrove Brook and Ewelme Stream support characteristic species such as brown trout, bullhead and other species dependant on clear, fast flowing water and gravel substrates. Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat, with only 224 in England (TVERC data).

Veteran trees and wood pasture

- Blenheim Palace in Woodstock hosts one of the greatest collections of ancient oak trees in Europe, including one that is 1,000 years old. There are a range of other sites of importance for veteran trees and wood pasture; an English Nature report of 2005 concluded that the many parklands and long history of wood pasture management in the Thames & Chilterns region highlights its national and international importance for habitats and species associated with veteran trees.

Research sites

- Wytham Wood, owned by the University of Oxford, is one of the most well-studied woodlands in the world.
- Oxford has a long-standing cultural and scientific association with swifts – the colony at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History has been the subject of the Oxford Swift Research Project, started by David and Elizabeth Lack in 1947. This is one of the longest running studies of any species of bird and has contributed greatly to our knowledge of the species.
- Little Wittenham Special Area of Conservation is one of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK.

Water environment

- Oxfordshire is home to several rivers and river catchment areas. The county contains freshwater features like chalk streams, ponds, temporary pools, fens, and is classified as one of Freshwater Habitat Trust's (FHT) Important Freshwater Areas which you can read more about in their Freshwater Network brochure. FHT state that these areas, including a large part of Oxfordshire have "nationally significant concentrations of freshwater biodiversity, rich in threatened plants and animals. These places, from upland river landscapes to lush lowland pondscapes, are under threat, but they are also our biggest hope for freshwater biodiversity recovery."
- As one of the 24 important freshwater areas in England, Oxfordshire has a significant opportunity as one of the most important areas in the UK for freshwater life, to target action to recognise and restore all freshwater habitat types across the county at a landscape scale. In the long-term, Oxfordshire could restore naturally functioning, self-sustaining populations of freshwater plant and animal species.

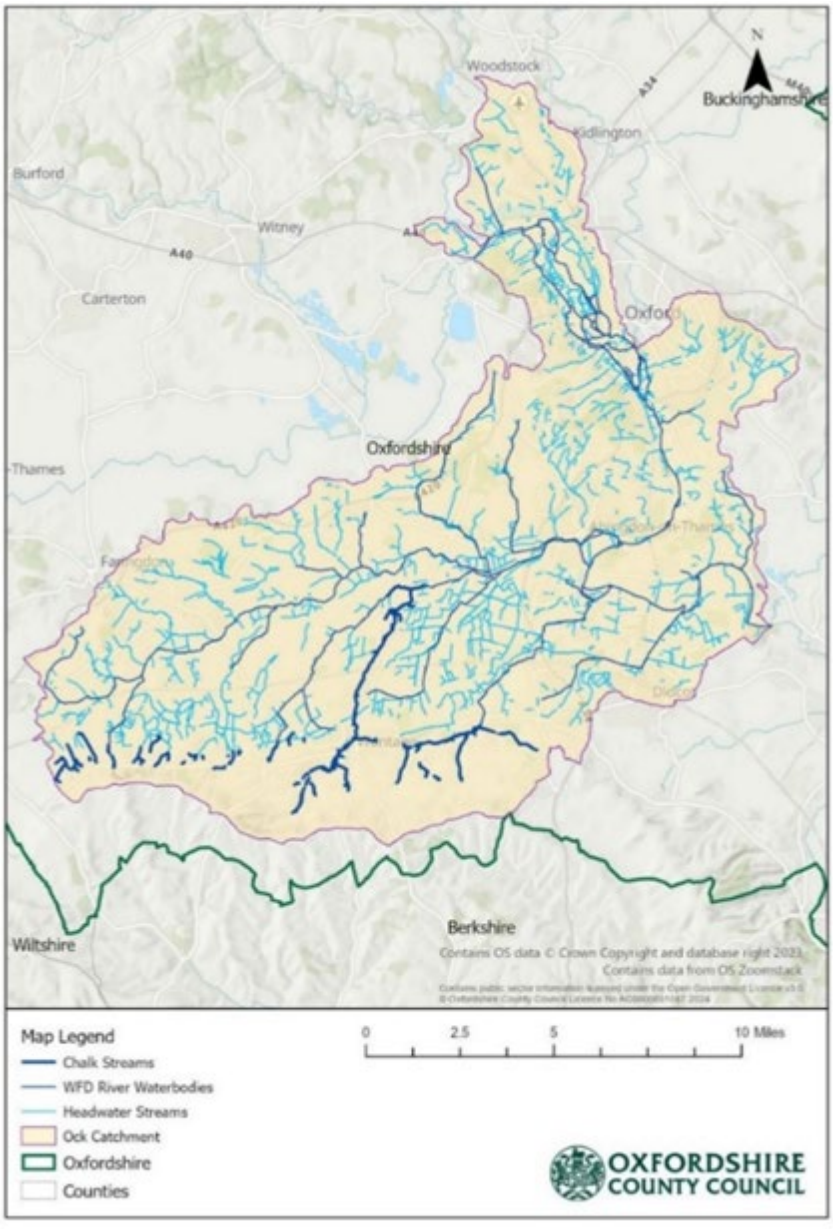
Rivers and river catchments in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is largely situated in the Thames River basin, with just small parts of the county draining to the Warwickshire Avon and the Great Ouse. The county contains over 3,670 kilometres of watercouse including the designated main rivers (1,015km) and their smaller tributary streams and headwaters (2,660km).

Through the LNRS engagement process with people and organisations across Oxfordshire it has been clear that improving the quality of freshwater habitats such as rivers, streams, and their catchments is a top priority. Watercourses act as opportunities to connect people and nature in a continuous pathway even amidst densely populated urban areas and intensively farmed landscapes. However, barriers such as weirs and locks do block natural fish migration. Rivers and their connected environments have key roles as crucial habitats for wildlife and provide an array of eco-system services, and therefore warrant a high level of focus for restoration.

For those looking for more detail about the history, character, and biodiversity recovery opportunities of each river and catchment in Oxfordshire, Appendix B gives a comprehensive overview of the key challenges and opportunities for biodiversity in each catchment and provides information about each Catchment Partnership (groups of organisations working together to improve water quality and habitats in the catchment area of each river). Appendix B is organised by catchment and river, and readers can navigate to the page or pages that relate to the specific catchment/river they are most interested in. The order of the document starts with an introduction to Oxfordshire's rivers and catchments, followed by sections on the River Thames, River Windrush, River Evenlode, River Cherwell (including the River Ray), River Ock, and River Thame. Each section discusses the unique characteristics, ecological importance, challenges, and opportunities for biodiversity within that catchment.

Rivers in the Ock operational catchment



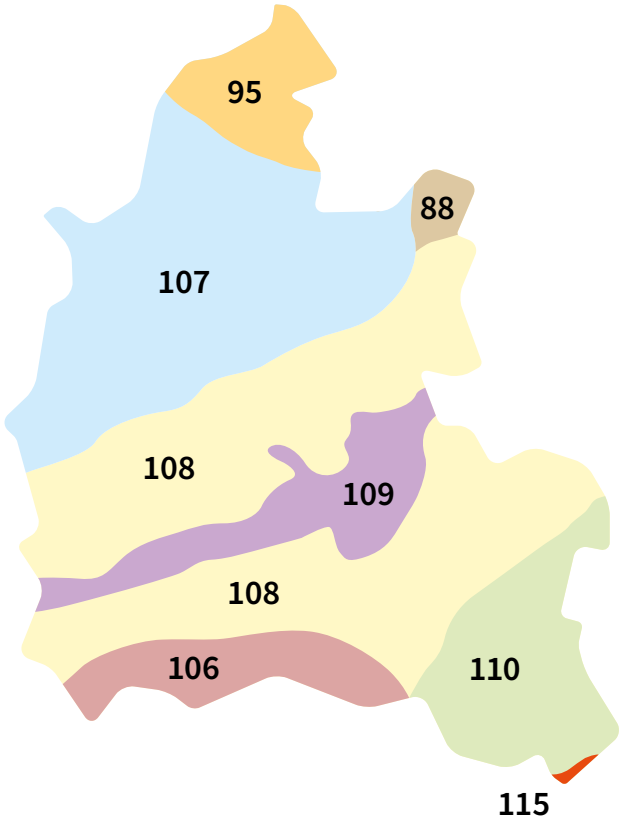
Oxfordshire's opportunities for nature recovery by National Character Area

Oxfordshire's national and landscape character types

Biodiversity varies across the UK and variations in the type of landscape, geology, and how people have used the land does influence the type of wildlife and habitats found in different parts of the country. The government's environmental advisory body Natural England categorizes England into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs), each with distinct geological, cultural, and biodiversity characteristics. Eight of these NCAs are present in Oxfordshire and each area is associated with a particular set of landscapes, geology, and recreational or cultural associations with the area including heritage sites and certain types of businesses.

The map illustrates the National Character Areas which run across Oxfordshire's landscape. Each coloured area represents a unique type of landscape distinguished by different geology, soil types, biodiversity, history, or land use. These differences give rise to different types of habitats, wildlife, and features in the landscape that also shape our sense of place within Oxfordshire. Historic towns, open farm fields, and woodlands, are all integral parts of the character of these areas.

Appendix C provides an overview of the distinct NCAs in Oxfordshire, detailing their geology, biodiversity, cultural land-use, and notable species in the area. Each section emphasises what could be done to maintain and enhance habitats relevant to that area and describes how nature benefits both wildlife and people in the NCA. If you'd like to delve into further detail for any of the particular National Character Areas of Oxfordshire and see which nature recovery actions might be most suitable for the specific landscapes local to you, you can find a 1-3 page description of each area within Appendix C. Many of the details in Appendix C have been collated from Natural England's National Character Area profiles, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study and Wild Oxfordshire's website.

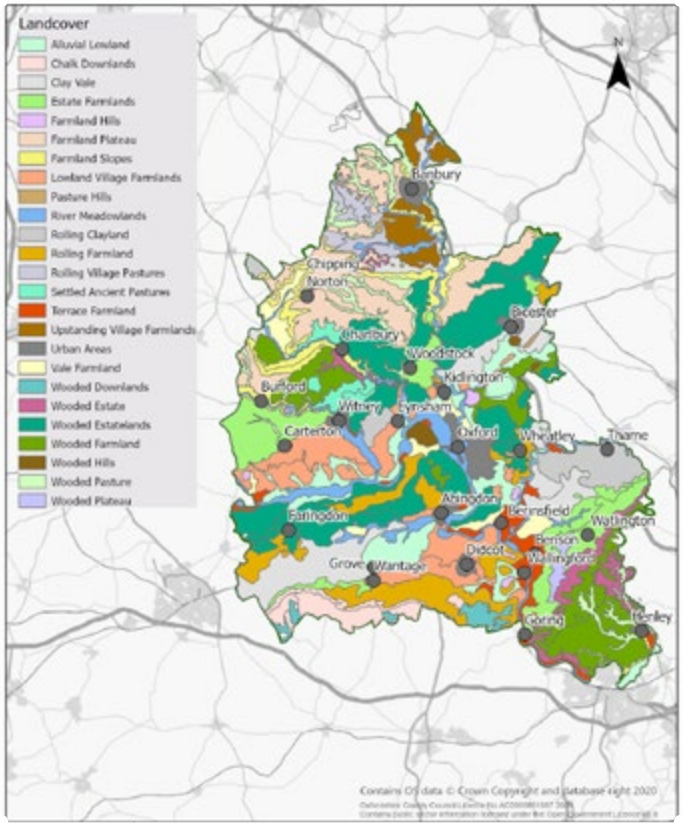


Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

In addition to the NCA areas a previous initiative in Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004), created a breakdown of the county showing 25 different types of further, more detailed Landscape Character Types (LCAs) which cover Oxfordshire. Each Landscape Character Area shows the typical habitats and biodiversity for different areas of the county. To use a more interactive version of the OWLS Landscape Character Types and read about other landscape character assessments, please view the website.

These varied landscape character types can help guide biodiversity actions in each area to ensure that actions are complementary to the relevant landscape type.

OWLS Landscape character types in Oxfordshire



View large map

The different landscapes, habitats, and soil types found in Oxfordshire shaped which nature recovery actions the LNRS's Local Habitat Map has mapped into different locations. Recent 2023/2024 data on soil types were used as well as recent data on the location and types of habitats in Oxfordshire. Despite using the latest available data, it is still important for people who are looking to take action to check their sites and consider how their nature recovery projects or actions can complement the various landscape types found across Oxfordshire. You can find more information about the OWLS Landscape Character Types in your area of Oxfordshire by looking at Appendix C which contains more detail and describes the characteristics of the different parts of Oxfordshire.

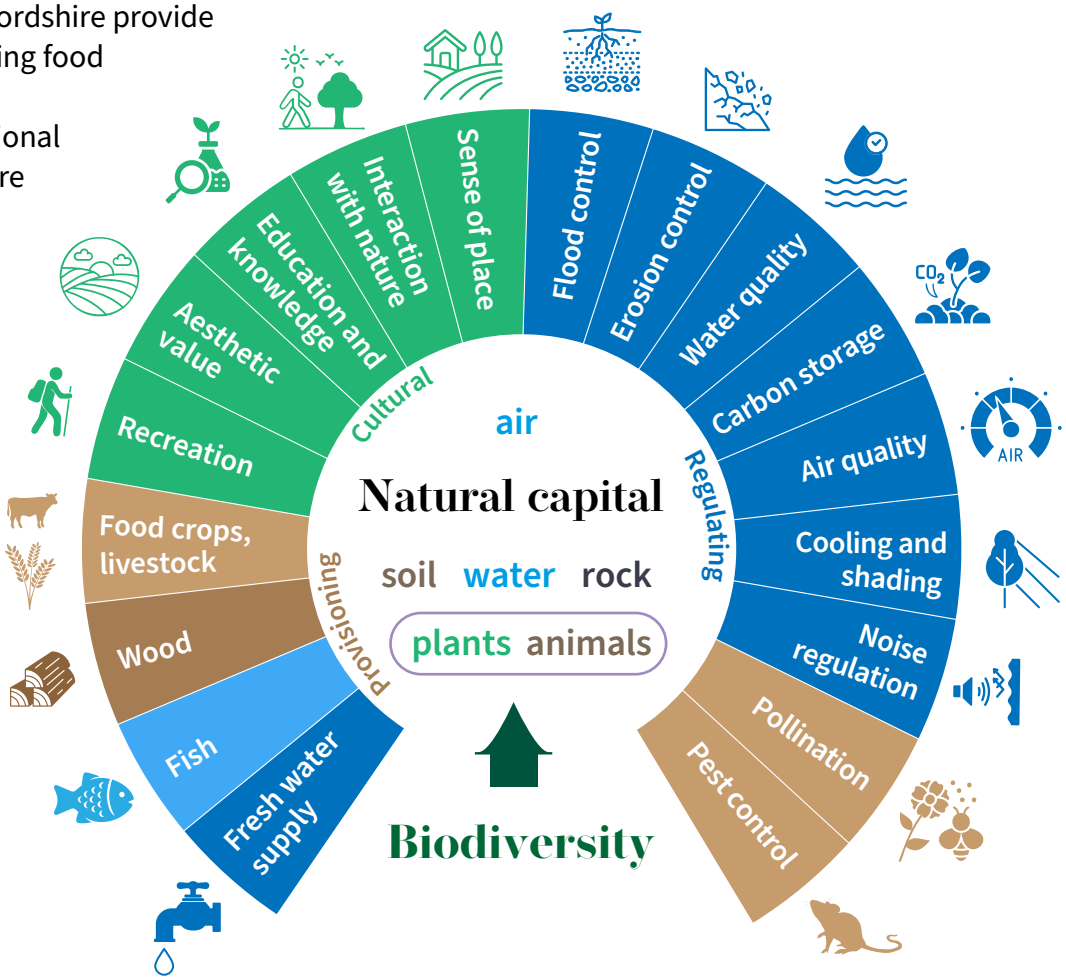
Benefits of nature

As well as being vital to human survival, by providing air, water, food and shelter, nature provides numerous other gifts which are described in this section. Natural habitats provide an essential range of services as shown on the image below, including water purification, flood regulation, and carbon sequestration. Accessible, outdoor spaces also offer opportunities for people to connect with nature and enjoy the outdoors, promoting both physical and mental wellbeing and offering key educational opportunities for people to learn about nature and biodiversity. In addition, some parts of the county have geology that has been identified as having key resources that we rely on to live well and provide building materials to produce homes and infrastructure.

Without effort to restore nature, the county should expect to continue to lose these gifts that nature provides. Many people in the county have already experienced challenges with growing food, managing water, a decline of species, difficulty cooling down, poorer air qualiy and other impacts.

Nature recovery actions described in the LNRS not only help our wildlife and species to thrive, but if well-coordinated across the UK, could significantly improve human health and wellbeing into the future and enhance local resilience to climate change. The image on this page illustrates the range of services that a healthy landscape can provide and reminds us all of the importance of nature to our day-to-day wellbeing.

Healthy ecosystems in Oxfordshire provide numerous benefits, including food production, water quality improvement, and recreational opportunities. If Oxfordshire can maintain a healthy natural environment, then the county will be in a better position to ensure the long-term provision of these services and benefits described on this page.



Source: Natural Capital in Oxfordshire Short report, Alison Smith

Nature and people

Thriving natural systems and ways for people to connect with nature are fundamental to wellbeing. The benefits or gifts that we receive from nature, such as the food we eat, outdoor spaces for physical and social activities, and mitigation of floods and heat, all rely on actions from people that enable a healthy natural environment. Undertaking environmentally positive actions help us maintain a positive relationship with the natural world.

Oxfordshire is a relatively wealthy county, but there are significant socioeconomic and health inequalities. Ten areas of Oxfordshire are ranked among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with 1 in 5 children living in poverty. The impact is profound, people in more affluent areas are expected to live around 11-12 years longer than those in poorer areas of the county. Oxfordshire also has higher than average levels of social isolation and loneliness, with a quarter of adults not meeting physical activity recommendations. Rates of depression and other types of poor mental health are also rising, especially in deprived areas, influenced by a complex range of behavioural, socioeconomic, structural, and environmental factors which all impact people's health and wellbeing.

The positive impacts of access to greenspace and connection with nature on wellbeing are well established. **Physical** and **mental health** are boosted through:

- Increased physical activity in nature-rich outdoor spaces, social contact, community connectedness, skills enhancement, and nature connection.
- Mitigation of environmental harms such as extreme heat, increased risk of flooding, and the impacts of air pollution.
- Other environmental benefits like natural flood management, soil health, food security, education, and employment.

Nature not only helps keep individuals fit and well but access to areas of nature can also help reduce inequality, e.g. by reducing common health problems that are often worse in places with lower access to nature. Improving access to areas of nature can **improve health** and quality of life for people in the local community by offering:

- High-quality green infrastructure to enable people to get around, exercise, and be outdoors.
- Community engagement initiatives that bring people together and offer ways to boost wellbeing and reduce loneliness.
- Opportunities for new types of healthcare, such as green social prescribing (which supports people to engage in nature-based activities to improve their mental and physical health).

Since the typical approach to healthcare requires a lot of resources (and is responsible for 4% of carbon emissions nationally), improving the environment and access to nature offers effective, nature-friendly ways to treat and prevent conditions and boost the quality of life amongst local communities. The evidence for incorporating nature recovery into a strategic approach to inclusive and sustainable economies is growing.

However, opportunities to connect with nature and experience its benefits are not equally distributed in Oxfordshire. Groups that consistently miss out include those from lower-income households, minoritised ethnic groups, people who have been forcibly displaced (such as refugees and people seeing asylum), and people with disabilities or long-term conditions. These groups are also disproportionately affected by the climate and nature crises and are currently underrepresented in the UK environment sector.

In recent years, Oxfordshire has developed a strong commitment to environmental equity and Healthy Place Shaping, in line with the Environment Improvement Plan 2023. Our understanding of local environmental inequalities is expanding, as evidenced in the 2024 Director of Public Health Annual Report and research from the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, which highlights 16 priority areas where inadequate accessible greenspace collides with social deprivation in Oxfordshire. You can find these 16 priority areas on the LNRS Local Habitat Map too, showing where nature recovery efforts could also offer great benefits to local communities.

These issues are now recognised in national and local health and environmental policy, with increasing attention to high-quality green infrastructure that offers regular opportunities to connect with nature as part of your daily life, and targeted initiatives to support vulnerable groups. This includes funds through allocated towards the national Green Social Prescribing programme.

How are urban areas represented within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

Within this LNRS you will find actions to deliver in urban areas. These actions help to increase biodiversity and areas of nature in villages, towns, and cities in Oxfordshire and these actions can be referenced to enable local communities to make a case for nature recovery projects including projects that harness the power of nature to help mitigate heat and manage water and flood risk in urban areas. Actions that are recommended include increasing the number of street trees, creating innovative spaces for nature like green roofs, producing wildlife friendly gardens and parks, or adding spaces for nature such as bird boxes, swift bricks, hedgehog houses and more.

Gardens and greenspaces make up 7% of Oxfordshire's land, buildings make up a further 6%. This 13% of the county represents a very real opportunity for local people, parishes, and community groups to make space for nature. You will find some corridors and locations mapped out on the LNRS Local Habitat Map as being opportunity areas that could particularly contribute towards the creation of a joined-up network of nature. However, urban actions are important to deliver across the county, anywhere that people live, work, and go to school. The LNRS aims to bring greater recognition to the importance of actions in villages, towns, and cities across Oxfordshire where many people, groups, and parishes are already delivering impressive nature recovery projects and initiatives.

Pressures on Oxfordshire's environment and wildlife

What is a 'pressure'?

In the context of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), a pressure is considered to be something that threatens Oxfordshire's biodiversity (animals, plants, fungi, and soil microorganisms) and puts it at significant risk of long-term harm (for example, something that may hinder or prevent a species or type of habitat from being able to survive) or prevents its recovery. In other words, the pressures listed below are listed because they may cause (or be causing) significant damage to nature and wildlife locally. In addition to the creation and enhancement of future habitats, pressures must be managed to prevent harm to the remaining areas of nature. The current pressures in Oxfordshire include:

Climate change

Climate change is accelerating at a rapid pace and significantly quicker than many climate models had previously anticipated. Changes in weather events because of this climate change threaten biodiversity in a number of ways including:

- More regular and prolonged heatwaves of increasing intensity,
- Increasingly dry summers periods with minimal rainfall, resulting in drought conditions,
- More intense periods of rainfall during winter leading to increased flooding,
- Increasing number of storms and high winds.
- Changes in phenology (seasonal changes in plants and animals from year to year e.g. emergence of insects and flowering of plants).

These changes are taking place at such a rapid pace and at sufficient magnitude that many species and habitats will increasingly find themselves exposed to environmental conditions that do not support their survival. Spring is now advancing by 2.5 days per decade, plants are flowering and fruiting earlier and leaf fall is delayed; this can affect food chains with some species that rely on one another falling out of sync. High genetic and species diversity in natural populations are essential to enable successful adaptation to climate change in the long term. However, it is expected that species will struggle to adapt quickly enough to climate change therefore their best chances of survival will be to have the chance to move and migrate in order to find new locations with suitable environmental conditions.

This requires a joined-up network of varied habitats to enable species to move. Changes to weather patterns are expected to be a catalyst that pushes many species to need to move from their current locations into new cooler, drier, more sheltered areas. It is predicted that many species may need to move northwards to survive these changes in weather and conditions. In addition, climate change is contributing to the increasing prevalence of a range of invasive species, pests and disease that have already created a significant burden on native species and will continue to threaten biodiversity.

Creating new habitats and improving existing habitats to create a larger network for nature which is bigger, better, and more joined up offers opportunities to improve nature's resilience to climate change, whilst offering a range of co-benefits including carbon sequestration, urban cooling, and natural flood management.

Insufficient resource, support, and trained professionals

A key pressure is the lack of investment in the enablers of nature recovery. Delivery of the actions needed won't be possible without financial investment, trained and willing people, and resources and equipment suitable to improve and create habitats. For example, the delivery of nature recovery actions will rely on the availability of suitably trained professionals including (but not limited to) ecologists, foresters, arboriculturists, hydrologists, entomologists, species recorders, and many more. Without these people, we cannot expect knowledge and skills to be shared more widely with the public.

Managing growth (housing and infrastructure development)

Growth and development are significant pressures on nature in Oxfordshire. There is a growing requirement for development sites, mineral extraction sites, and landfill sites. This growth negatively impacts nature when habitats are damaged or destroyed, but also when they are disturbed, fragmented, and/or when development results in pollution such as light, noise or sewage. Between 2011 and 2020, an average of 3,154 houses were built each year in Oxfordshire (Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire, p.29). The county's resident population is predicted to expand from the current 725,000 to 853,000 by 2030 so Oxfordshire must carefully consider how to safeguard wildlife, nature, and people. To help nature recover, growth should be carefully planned to avoid harming existing biodiversity-rich spaces and should deliver net gains in biodiversity which support local nature recovery, as well as providing space for nature within developments, including planting native species of local provenance, providing roosting and nesting features within buildings and enhancing genuine public access to nature in a way that supports local wildlife. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment should be a key consideration for new developments and infrastructure and designs should prioritise the creation of corridors that enable wildlife to move through the county unhindered. Housing and infrastructure developers, and mineral and waste operators must make space for nature and must limit damage to existing habitats and species. Managing this pressure must include timely improvements to sewage treatment infrastructure to limit pollution entering the environment as a result of development, as well as the development of sustainable supplies of natural resources that minimise the adverse impacts on the natural world. Whilst the LNRS is not intended to be used to prevent development, it recognises the clear historical impact on nature from development and supports the principle of sustainability and planning positively to support local nature recovery through future growth.

Recreational pressure

While Oxfordshire does have publicly accessible greenspace, the majority of the county's greenspace is not publicly accessible and there is no single accessible site larger than 500 hectares that meets the ANGST criteria of being close to residents (Oxfordshire's green space deprived neighbourhoods, Martha Crockatt 2024). Habitats and green spaces in Oxfordshire are used by people and pets, which can impact adversely on wildlife in sensitive sites. Access to these spaces is an important asset for people's health and wellbeing, but it needs to be managed and respected to avoid damaging sensitive habitats or causing declines in species that are more sensitive to disturbance. Increased provision of multi-functional greenspaces which provide for both wildlife and people could reduce the pressure on sensitive wildlife areas, whilst also contributing towards the priorities in the LNRS by creating more habitats across the county that are bigger, better, and more connected.

Dogs and cats

Pets are known to cause damage to wildlife. Cats can harm birds and mammals, while dogs that are not under close, effective control can either directly harm wildlife if chased or caught, or indirectly damage populations by disturbing nests and preventing ground-nesting birds from breeding (Countryside Code). This may mean that dogs should be kept on leads in certain places or at certain times of year to support wildlife. If domestic animal waste (such as dog waste) is not collected it can pollute the area and impact other animals especially if bags of waste are left in the environment. Tick and flea treatments also pollute the environment when animals are washed and water enters the environment or when they swim in ponds and rivers which builds up toxins in the water and damages a range of wildlife. Pet owners must be willing to engage responsibly with the environment and understand their responsibilities throughout the lifespan of their pets to minimise damage to nature.

Pollution

A number of pollutants are described within the pressures section already but there are a range of other pollutants from various sources, including industry, agriculture, transportation, traffic and congestion, wastewater, sewage, and household activities that contaminate the air, soil, water and impact the health of wildlife and people. Reducing the diverse range of pollutants that enter the environment was a repeated, clear request from people and organisations across the county we engaged with when developing the LNRS and this action sits with every person, business, and organisation. The greatest impacts come from the largest polluters but cumulative actions by individuals also create significant change.

Air quality

In Oxfordshire there have been significant improvements in air quality in recent decades, primarily due to reductions in coal burning (Director of Health Annual Report 2023/24), with reductions in nitrogen dioxides, and particulate matter between 2010 and 2021, however ammonia emissions have remained largely the same. Ammonia and nitrogen dioxide pollution result in increased nitrogen deposition which can affect many sensitive habitats and species which cannot tolerate raised levels of pollution. High risk areas for nitrogen deposition include habitats close to urban areas and major roads, combustion plants and intensive livestock units (apis.co.uk).

Agricultural intensification

Intensive, conventional farming practices, such as the heavy use of pesticides and fertilisers, degrade soil quality, reduce biodiversity, and harm fungi and soil life. This in turn damages the soil and soil life until the land is no longer able to support food production, wildlife, or habitats. Since more than 70% of Oxfordshire's land is farmed to produce food, there is a significant opportunity within the county to offer more space for nature if farmers can be supported to integrate sustainable farming practices, and space for habitats, into their businesses. Many farmers in the county are already taking action to increase tree cover, change cultivation practices, use cover crops and leys, and allocate more land to support biodiversity. However, without financial support, these positive steps (and the public services they provide) are at risk. Farmers who manage their land to support nature while producing food offer very real opportunities to tackle the biodiversity crisis and create a more resilient network of nature throughout Oxfordshire.

Pests and disease

Diseases and pests change over time and we are currently experiencing significant impacts on wildlife due to disease and pest damage. It is expected that warmer average temperatures and wetter environments could further increase the prevalence of pests and diseases in the UK. Within the past 100 years, the UK has lost around 30 million elm trees due to Dutch Elm Disease. The elm used to be one of the common English tree species, alongside ash and oak. Now, ash faces a current threat of extinction from Ash Dieback, a relatively new disease to the UK. Around 90% of ash trees are predicted to be lost; however, research continues. These are just two examples of many other pests and diseases that are increasing the vulnerability of Oxfordshire's wildlife and habitats. Because of the increasing prevalence of pests and diseases, it is more important than ever to be ambitious in our efforts to enable nature to adapt and build resilience to pests by increasing the area of biodiverse habitat, improving management, and connecting habitats up.

Invasive non-native species and unsustainably high populations of species

Introducing non-native species can threaten native flora and fauna and disrupt ecological balances (Great Britain Invasive Species Strategy). The Woodland Trust states that non-native species alone cost the UK economy a startling £4 billion per year, whilst also causing steep declines in certain native species like white-clawed crayfish, red squirrels, and water voles. In Oxfordshire, species such as the white-clawed crayfish have already been pushed to the brink of survival due to the introduction of the American signal crayfish. Currently, there are a number of invasive and/or non-native species present in Oxfordshire, as well as native species that have reached unsustainably large population sizes, causing excessive damage to habitats and other species. Invasive/non-native species include American signal crayfish, american mink, himalayan balsam, grey squirrels, and some deer. Some native deer species have also reached such large population sizes that they present a key challenge for biodiversity by causing excessive levels of damage to other species.

Not all non-native species carry the same risks or threats to biodiversity but those that do can exterminate local populations of species or cause significant damage to habitats across the country. This pressure from invasive species is expected to change over time as weather patterns and species compositions change. Local actions will need to adapt quickly in response to these pressures.

Pressures on Oxfordshire's rivers and waterways

Habitat degradation

Historic alterations have been carried out on most of Oxfordshire's watercourses such as dredging, embanking, straightening channels, building obstruction in the river channels such as weirs, and drainage of the adjacent floodplains, as well as building on these floodplains which puts these developments at risk. The cumulative effect of these actions across the landscape disrupts natural in-river and floodplain processes, diminish habitat diversity, and impede the movement of freshwater species, degrading rivers and freshwater habitats across the county. Although much has been done to restore our rivers and remove or bypass barriers in the last few decades, there is still much more to do to restore habitat quality and properly reconnect rivers with their floodplains.

Water abstraction

The high demand for water for conventional agriculture, industry, and domestic use (which will increase as more homes are built) means that a significant amount of water has to be abstracted from our groundwaters and watercourses to meet this need. This water is taken partly from groundwater sources such as the Cotswold limestone aquifer that feeds some of the headwaters of the rivers that flow into Oxfordshire, and also the major surface water abstraction at Farmoor, west of Oxford, from the River Thames. Abstraction from groundwater and surface waters can result in low water levels and reduced flows in our rivers, changing and degrading the habitat that aquatic species rely on.

Much has been done to alleviate these impacts in the county and wider Thames catchment as far as possible without jeopardising supply, but further reductions in abstraction pressure (particularly from the Thames at Farmoor during the summer) will require the development of new sustainable water resources. Careful water management, including reducing personal consumption, re-use of grey water and installing water butts to capture rainwater for garden use, and improved leakage control and demand management by water companies are all important in reducing future abstraction need.

Pollution

Pollution from various sources, including agricultural runoff, urban runoff, and untreated sewage storm discharges, contaminates water bodies with nutrients, chemicals, and pathogens, degrading water quality and threatening freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity. Across the county rivers will be expected to take on the increased wastewater from any new housing developments and this should be carefully considered around areas that are already pushed to their limit, highly polluted, or are upstream of others who are already liable to flooding. Within the Thames there are 31 major sewage treatment works in the catchment area and the pressure to develop new homes is placing increased pressure on these sewage works, especially in the light of the infrastructure replacement which is needed to combat the growing problem of the ingress of groundwater and flood waters into sewerage systems. Continued investment into improving the quality of treated effluent, and an upsurge in funding to address storm discharges, are expected to have positive benefit for biodiversity river health, freshwater habitats, and people, but it also important that measures continue to be taken to address diffuse pollution from agriculture and urban areas.

Summary of pressures

The LNRS identifies some specific measures to reduce some of these pressures and overall aims for a biodiversity-rich network for nature which is bigger, better, and more joined up; achievement of such a network will help increase nature's resilience to many of the pressures mentioned. However, many of the pressures above relate to wider issues including how people treat the environment, the perceived value of nature, practical problems that need improvements such as infrastructure and sewage systems, and the influence of climate change.

The Oxfordshire LNRS vision

A well-connected, biodiversity-rich, network of nature that is resilient into the future, restored for the health and wellbeing of future generations, and for nature's own sake.

It's clear that Oxfordshire is home to a diverse array of habitats and wildlife, but that many of these are decling rapidly due to pressures such as development, pollution, and agricultural intensification. It is important that Oxfordshire restores the local environment both for nature's own sake, and for the health and wellbeing of people and wildlife. The LNRS is based on three following principles that guide the species actions, habitat actions, and the locations that the LNRS has mapped out as focused areas for nature recovery work.

LNRS Principles

1 Enhance what we have	Take action to enhance and manage the areas that are already important for biodiversity in Oxfordshire. This must be the foundation of nature recovery efforts so that wildlife does not further decline and has biodiversity-rich core sites to disperse out from.
2 Create more habitats to achieve a connected network of nature	Focus local efforts and resources towards the creation of a strategic network of habitats that prioritises connectivity. Ensure that environmental improvement considers nature as a connected set of habitats and species. Create and enhance habitats to achieve a wide range of biodiversity-rich habitat types that are joined by corridors and together, create a resilient network of nature that will be resilient to pressures such as climate change.
3 Make space for nature everywhere	Take action to create spaces for wildlife across the county through individual or group actions at home, at work, in local community spaces, and in schools to make nature part of daily life for everyone helping both biodiversity and addressing unequal access to nature across Oxfordshire. Take actions to support species to survive and spread across the county in all areas, both urban and rural. Across the rural landscape, managers of agricultural land must be supported and incentivised to deliver sustainable agricultural practices to help wildlife flourish across the wider landscape of Oxfordshire. Focus on healthy soils, low/no chemical inputs, setting aside space for wildlife to help with pests and pollintion, improve water quality, create space for water to be held across the landscape, minmise soil erosion, and create high nature-value food and fibre production systems.

This image was produced during one of the early LNRS workshops with local community members. It tells a story that was repeated by groups and people throughout Oxfordshire and represents the local ambition for ecological recovery.

It displays core ambitions, actions, and priorities that have shaped the LNRS and acts as a call-to-action for both individual and community involvement in environmental stewardship.

Shaping the vision for nature

Throughout its preparation, the strategy was shaped by input from local people and organisations. We heard from people through surveys, workshops, in-person meetings, and map data shared by more than 3,000 people and organisations in Oxfordshire. Throughout this process, the decisions made were overseen by the LNRS Partnership, a group of authorities and representatives for Oxfordshire's environment (see page 8).

Outline of the engagement process

1. Early 2024

Asking people what the biodiversity priorites Oxfordshire's LNRS should be. The LNRS held 14 workshops with around 400 people and held an online survey with around 650 responses.

2. Mid 2024

Inviting people to tell us about locations where they are recovering nature using a map tool with around 200 responses.

3. Late 2024

Presenting a first draft version of the strategy to local people and inviting the public to suggest changes to the draft LNRS through a formal public consultation. We had around 2,100 responses showing strong, positive engagement with the strategy.

4. 2025

Publishing what we heard from the consultation responses, making changes to the strategy based on public responses, and finalising the strategy to invite local authorities to approve its publication.

In addition to the farmers, landowners, businesses, schools, local community groups, nature recovery orgnaistions and many other who were part of shaping the strategy, the LNRS also held regular meetings with neighbouring auhtorities to ensure that our six neighbouring LNRS authorities were informed of our progress, and vice-versa. This enabled us to modify the LNRS map at our boundaries to create smooth, continuous corridors for nature across bureaucratic borders.

A summary of the full engagement process, demographics of those who engaged, and the data we captured from the different steps is available to download and view on our LNRS webpage.

Whilst preparing the LNRS, local people said/asked for:

"Cleaner rivers, clean water to swim, clean air, seeing the stars at night"

school age students

"Preserve soil for future generations - companion crop, plant cover crops, not monocultures"

landowner/farmer

"Landscape scale connectivity."

Nature recovery organisations

"Practical support for people to attract nature to their gardens, especially plants and ponds"

Community group

LNRS nature recovery actions – How to achieve the LNRS vision

Habitat actions

Having reviewed habitats that are important for biodiversity in the county and hearing the priorities held by local people and organisations in Oxfordshire, this LNRS created a list of important biodiversity actions to deliver in Oxfordshire. These are listed in the LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorites which states an agreed set of **84 important actions** to deliver in the county.

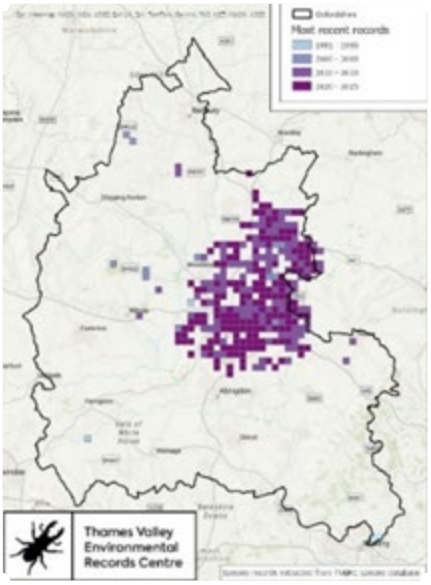
These actions could achieve improved water quality, improved connectivity between habitats, improving the condition of our existing habtiats of importance, creating new habitats, and enhancing areas for nature in both the urban and agricultural environments across the county. You can view the full list of actions here.

By delivering any of the actions on this list, you can be confident that your project is contributing towards a widely agreed set of local nature recovery priorities. A diverse range of projects will be required to achieve nature recovery and achieve all of the priorities.

Species-specific actions

Many species in the county will benefit from the broad habitat improvements described in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorites (left). However, some species in Oxfordshire will need more bespoke actions to recover. For example, some species may need to be introduced into the county (like the beaver), some certain ground-nesting birds may require fencing or help to protect their nests whilst their chicks hatch and fledge (like the curlew), and fish across the county need suitable fish passes to be created to enable them to move throughout rivers and streams to breed and disperse. In cases like these, creating a broadly good habitat is not, by itself sufficient to recover those species who need an additional bespoke action. The LNRS has therefore identified **63 bespoke species** actions on the LNRS Species Priorities List. You can view the full list of species actions here.

Blackthorn butterflies records 1990-2025
(Black hairstreak, brown hairstreak)



View large map

All these actions are needed to help recover species that need more bespoke actions in addition to the general enhancement of habitats across the wider environment. The 63 actions focus on species such as hedgehogs, swifts and house martins, bats, juniper, and many more. By taking these actions you can be confident that you are helping to halt the loss of biodiversity in Oxfordshire. The list also shows you where those species have recently been recorded in the county help if you're not sure whether you're in the right area to support those species (see image).

Some of the species you can find on the Species Priorities List

Great-crested newt
Triturus cristatus

Bittern
Botaurus stellaris

Corn bunting
Emberiza calandra

Yellowhammer
Emberiza citrinella

Tawny owl
Strix aluco

Willow tit
Poecile montanus

Dark green fritillary
Speyeria aglaja

Silver-spotted skipper
Hesperia comma

Brown trout
Salmo trutta

Bird's nest orchid
Neottia nidus-avis

Violet dor beetle
Geotrupes mutator

Noble chafer
Gnorimus nobilis

Southern damselfly
Coenagrion mercuriale

Bats

Beaver
Castor fiber

Devil's-bit scabious
Succisa pratensis

Meadow clary
Salvia pratensis

Monkey orchid
Orchis simia

Adder
Vipera berus

Common lizard
Zootoca vivipara

LNRS Nature recovery locations – where to deliver the LNRS

View large map

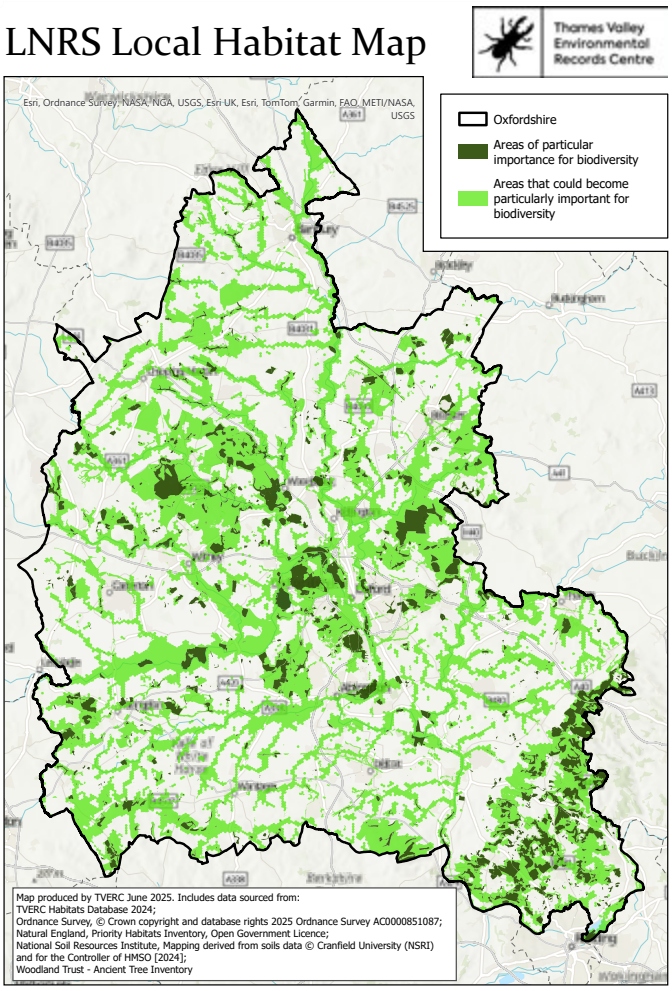
In the case of both species and habitats, many people and organisations in the county told us that they are willing and able to take action to support nature but many people reported to the LNRS that they were unsure where to act or what to do. The LNRS supports you through the Local Habitat Map.

The Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map sets out a collaboratively created vision for which areas of the county could become of particular importance for biodiversity in the future. This map offers a blueprint that organisations, landowners, and individuals across the county can contribute towards and can deliver, together. Together these areas show where the vision of the LNRS could be achieved. If Oxfordshire can deliver nature recovery actions in the majority of these areas we would all have achieved a bigger, better, more connected and resilient network of nature to share with future generations.

The dark green areas show the existing areas that are particularly important for biodiversity. The light green areas are the areas that the LNRS recommends for targeted nature recovery actions. They are areas that could become important for biodiversity if nature recovery actions can be delivered in those locations. Together, the green areas cover 40% of Oxfordshire and show the overall network that could be achieved.

Within that overall area, the LNRS has picked out which different actions are recommended in which locations of the county (e.g. where to create woodland, restore fens, manage scrub, or create ponds). See the multicoloured image on the following page to get a sense of this variety. The map is designed to be viewed and used online as an interactive tool to enable you to view which actions to take in your local area. Please click here to view the online map.

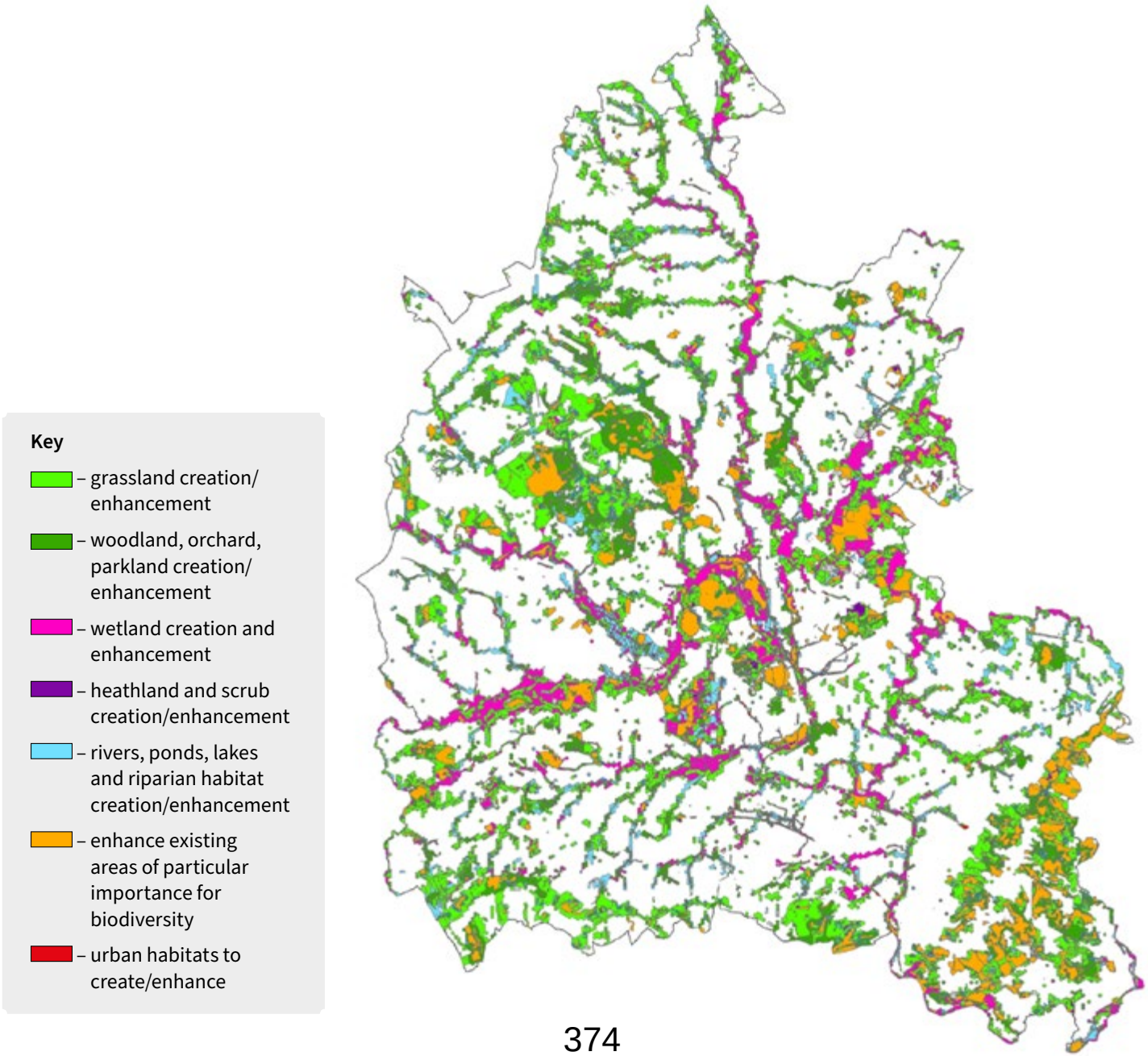


Even if you're not in the green network, there are still countywide (unmapped) actions that you can take to support nature recovery in any part of Oxfordshire.

Users of the strategy can use the LNRS's interactive Local Habitat Map tool to see which areas of the county have been recommended for which nature recovery actions (e.g. woodland creation, fen restoration, pond creation or any of the other mapped actions for habitats or species).

This image is designed to a give a sense of the range of actions being recommended in various areas of the county but it does not exactly prescribe what must be done in those locations.

There are further actions that overlap in various areas, or which are too small-scale to see at this county-view (e.g. actions for particular species). All sites must undergo 'on the ground' assessments to ensure that they are suitably ground-truthed before taking actions. To best view these, please zoom into areas using the Local Habitat Map and read the LNRS Before you Start guide on the webpage.



How was the Local Habitat Map made?

The mapped areas were informed by local ambition, guidance, and data from more than 3,000 local people and organisations in Oxfordshire during workshops, surveys, meetings, and more. These mapped areas create a targeted set of locations where focused habitat creation or enhancement actions are recommended.

This is a high-level summary of an in-depth process. For the full technical detail of how the map was created, please see the report in Appendix E.

Start

Step 1

Ask people to tell us about important habitats and priorities that the LNRS map should focus on

- We heard a huge amount including the priority to create connectivity, and particular features that should be mapped like chalk streams, fens, scrub, rivers, and areas to enhance urban biodiversity.

Step 2

Collect data to understand where the important features are, or where they could be in future

- The LNRS used 62 different datasets that helped us to map different, important features in the county. See the full list in Appendix D.
- For example, we had map data that told us where Oxfordshire's existing habitats are (orchards, woodlands, ponds and so on) and others that told us where the urban greenspaces are, where the high productivity farmland is, and so on.
- Some datasets, like the Cranfield Soil data helped inform our mapping of where future habitats could be created.

Step 3

Agree which important features we could include in the map, which we may need to avoid, and how much of them we could include

- For example, it was agreed to include 100% of all the chalk streams and fens in Oxfordshire. Some habitats that were less rare had lower targets. This is the process of prioritising, we could not select every area of every habitat otherwise we would not be prioritising.
- We set some areas of the county to be more suitable for nature recovery action (like the National Landscapes), we set other areas of the county, like the best and most productive farmland to be less suitable for habitat creation actions, and we also set a goal to spread nature recovery actions across the county, to ensure that each district had a certain amount to deliver.
- These targets and settings were tweaked based on engagement with local people and organisations and the decisions were made by the LNRS Partnership including nature recovery organisations and authorities from across Oxfordshire.

Step 4

A draft version of the map was presented to the public for oversight and we had strong participation from people across the county

- We received nearly 2,000 comments across the map with agreement, ideas, and suggestions for changes from individuals, developers, farmers, local authorities, and more.

Step 5

We made changes to the mapping to produce the final version of the Local Habitat Map

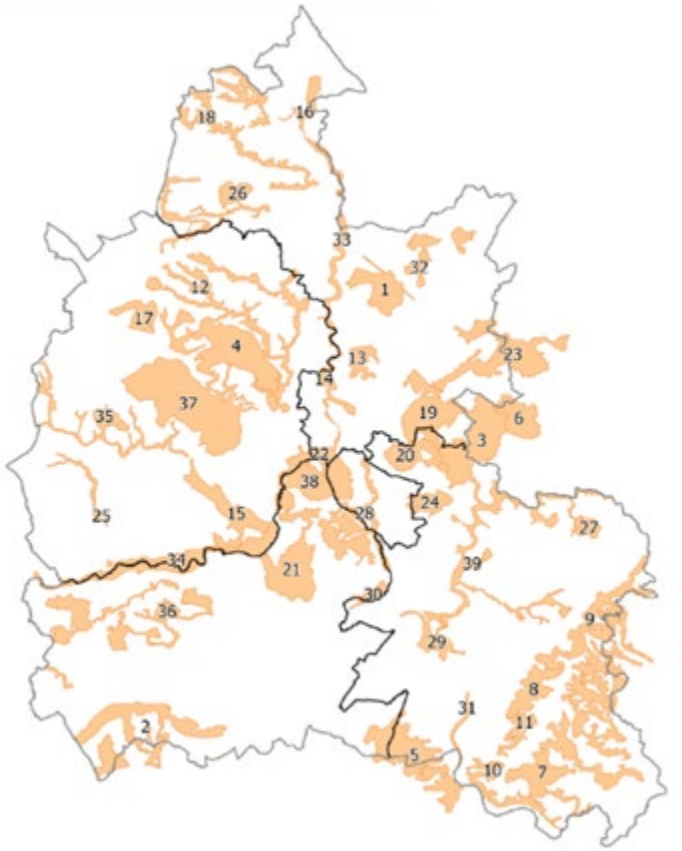
- Where we heard requests for minor changes we made these (e.g. adjusting the boundaries of the mapping slightly).
- Where we heard about any errors, these were corrected.
- Where we received evidence of nature recovery projects underway, these were built into the mapping.

Building on previous work in the county

Identifying target areas for nature recovery is not new for Oxfordshire. Groups across the county had worked on a number of previous initiatives to prioritise where habitat creation and enhancement work should be targeted. Local people and organisations made a clear case that the LNRS should build on this previous work, using the areas as a foundation for the LNRS map to amplify the previous work whilst also bringing in wider audiences and the latest local information and knowledge. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy builds upon a rich history of conservation efforts within the county, leveraging past initiatives such as the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and the draft Nature Recovery Network (NRN).

The Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) began in 2006 and were a pivotal tool for mapping out which areas of the county hold significant ecological value. As of 2025, there are now 39 such CTA areas in Oxfordshire that cover about 20% of the county. Their purpose has been to identify which areas of the county should be prioritised for nature recovery actions. This targeted mapping aimed to preserve existing habitats, enhance their quality, and create better connections between them to help wildlife thrive. See more about CTAs on Wild Oxfordshire's webpage **here**. These areas continue to be managed and the areas are evolving over time.

Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas

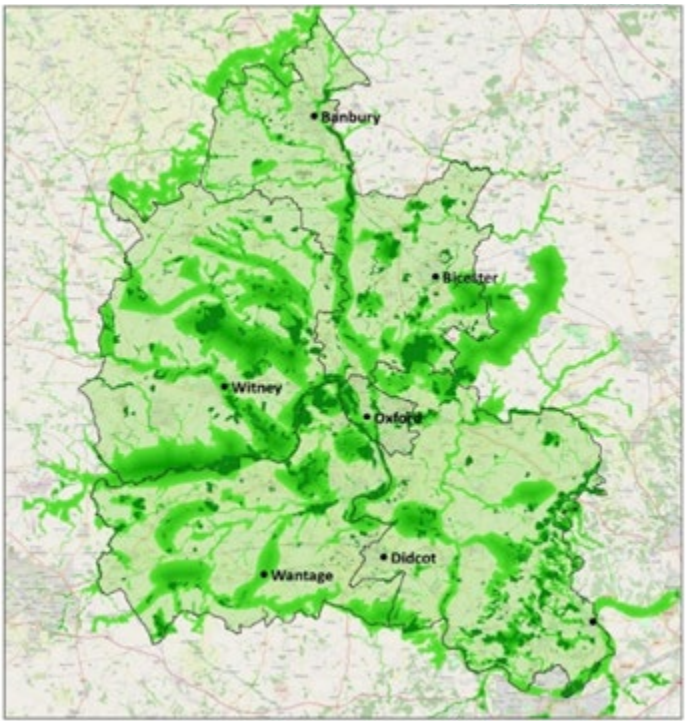


After the momentum of the CTAs, ecologists and environmental organisations came together in Oxfordshire to develop local mapping further. They produced a draft Nature Recovery Network (NRN) - read more here on Wild Oxfordshire's website. The draft NRN aimed to identify which places are 'core' habitats that should be enhanced, and which areas could be 'recovery' areas where habitats could be created to link up the 'core' sites. It aimed to expand conservation efforts, seeking to create a more extensive and interconnected system of natural spaces, promoting the idea that nature recovery needs to be a county wide endeavour. The NRN emphasised the importance of spatial targeting.

In essence, the LNRS Local Habitat Map represents an evolution of past conservation efforts, combining the targeted approach of the CTAs with the expansive, interconnected vision of the NRN, whilst ensuring that there are opportunities a wide range of people and organisations across the county to input into the creation of the strategy. The LNRS incorporated both the CTAs and the NRN areas into the LNRS Local Habitat Map. It mapped the CTA areas to ensure that conservation efforts would still be targeted towards these locations and it covers the majority of the draft NRN area but with further corridors and connections shaped by local input.

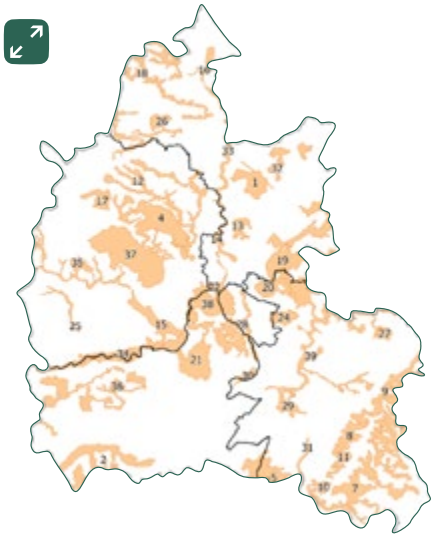
The LNRS is not expected to map every nature recovery action that could happen in every part of the county. The government guidance tasked LNRSs to prioritise and consider trade offs understanding that there are a range of pressures and expectations on Oxfordshire's land, from food production to space for housing and the LNRS aimed to identify the most beneficial areas to target nature recovery whilst balancing other needs e.g. by choosing land with lower agricultural value.

Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network

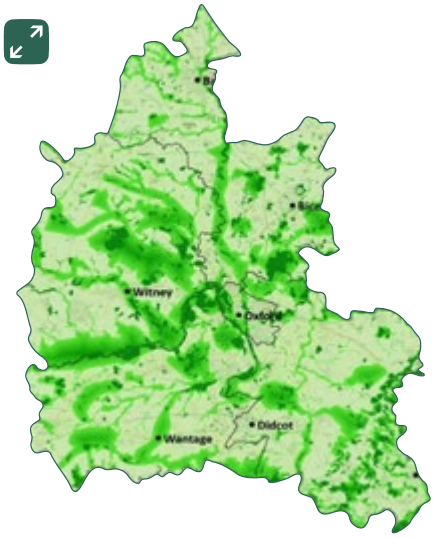


This shows the evolution from the CTAs, the draft NRN, through to the LNRS Local Habitat Map.

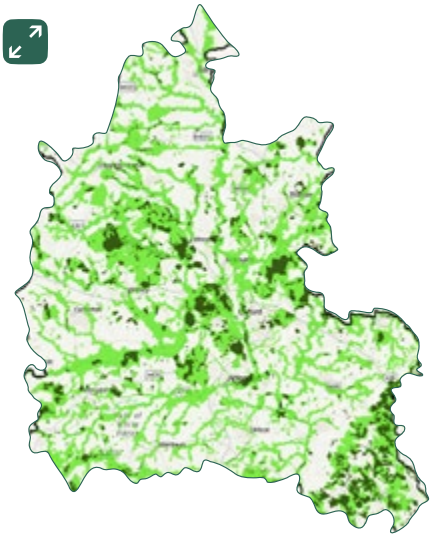
Conservation target areas began in 2006 and covers about **20%** of the county.



Draft NRN areas developed in 2020 and covers about **30%** of the county.



The LNRS areas developed in 2025 and covers about **40%** of the county.



What are the key differences in the LNRS Local Habitat Map compared with previous spatial strategies?

- A wide range of around 3,000 responses went into shaping the strategy from people and organisations across Oxfordshire. These contributions of local knowledge and data helped to create the actions, species, and locations recommended for recovery. This is the largest audience contributing to a countywide biodiversity strategy in Oxfordshire to date.
- Greater focus was put into freshwater habitats and using the watercourses as natural opportunities to enhance connectivity and prioritise freshwater habitat improvements.
- Within the LNRS Local Habitat Map network, there are specific actions mapped to each of those locations. This has not been done in previous mapping.
- Map users can interact with the map and click on any area of the map to see which nature recovery actions are recommended in that area.
- There are still actions to take in the wider landscape outside the network for habitats, farmland, rural areas, and the urban environment.
- There are actions to take for both habitats and for specific species to promote their recovery with a particular process followed to identify the species that would benefit most from bespoke actions.
- More urban habitats and community land are included for specific biodiversity enhancements in the LNRS. The LNRS not only aims to reverse the decline of biodiversity but also to foster a sense of pride and stewardship among the community, empowering everyone to do their bit in their local area to contribute towards a joined-up, healthy, environment in Oxfordshire.
- The Responsible Authorities will have a requirement to monitor nature recovery actions taken in the future, to report on these, and to review and republish this strategy (including the map) during the next 3 – 10 years.

How to deliver the LNRS?

How can nature recovery actions be rolled out across Oxfordshire

If Oxfordshire delivers the majority of the LNRS's mapped actions, the total area of nature-rich habitats would more than double, benefitting future generations and for nature's own sake. This will:

- Enhance biodiversity, halting the loss of species
- Boost resilience against climate change
- Provide public benefits, helping to alleviate flooding and extreme heat, and providing clean water, recreation spaces, and improving health and wellbeing.

The mission of the LNRS is to empower everyone in Oxfordshire to do something for nature recovery and contribute towards the creation of a more resilient network of nature. With this strategy, Oxfordshire is in a better position to know what needs to happen, and where those actions could be delivered.

Who is expected to deliver the LNRS?

All of us. All people and organisations across Oxfordshire are the delivery partners of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and many are already delivering brilliant work to help nature recover. The LNRS helps us to build on this. Some people may contribute through direct actions on the ground, others may be enabling actions by offering funding or providing the land to take action on.

These are actions that individuals, communities, nature recovery organisations, landowners, farmers, businesses, utilities companies, developers, minerals and waste teams, and authorities can be taking and enabling to enhance the local environment to benefit both people and wildlife. Some people may be able to enable others through funding, or volunteering for example, others may have land or areas of land that they wish to dedicate towards biodiversity, others may be writing policies that help these priorities and actions to be delivered or building visitor centres and preparing educational materials to help people access and learn about the environment. There is no single person or organisation who is expected to deliver the LNRS alone, everyone has something they can do to support biodiversity to recover.

Delivery of actions is expected to happen by a large range of people including local communities, landscape partnerships, owners of local wildlife sites, managers of other designated sites, local authorities, nature-friendly farmers, and by project teams working across county borders. Actions in the LNRS are expected to be delivered and enabled by the following people (including but not limited to):

Regional and national bodies	Local organisations/groups/ authorities	Communities/individuals
Government, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, health and social services, utilities companies, minerals operators, developers, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association, land and business advisors, national businesses, the three National Landscapes, Canal and River Trust, neighbouring counties and authorities, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, RSPB.	Local authorities (county, district, and city councils), Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership, BBOWT, Wild Oxfordshire, CAG Oxfordshire, farm cluster groups, catchment partnerships, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Thames 21, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, Earth Trust, partnership projects for nature recovery.	You and other individuals at home/work/university/school/ community spaces, farmers, landowners, land managers, parish and town councils, local community action groups, local businesses.

Cross-border working and delivery projects

Some projects will need to be particularly large scale to ensure that England's future environment is fit to support wildlife. These include cross-border, regional, and national projects. Often these regional and cross-border projects will contain a programme of activity working across varied landscapes and will bring together a range of partners, seeking to enhance ecological networks. Projects may also look for opportunities to support the northward movement of species in response to changing climates, and since Oxfordshire is situated between a large number of counties, it has a key strategic role to allow species to move, into, across, and up through the county.

Landscape scale projects should aim to

- Unite partners across political and institutional boundaries
- Set clear priorities that guide funders and policymakers
- Plan to enable species to move and adapt in response to climate change over the next 10, 50 and 100 years

The LNRS encourages people to consider delivering projects of scale and there are regional projects that cross into Oxfordshire that are proposing landscape-scale benefits for biodiversity. See the State of Nature in Oxfordshire 2017 for a more detailed description of a range of ongoing projects in Oxfordshire. Some of the larger scale proposals include Big Chalk, initiatives underway in the Bernwood, Otmoor Ray area, and landscape recovery work being delivered in partnership often with support from farm clusters, and catchment partnerships. For a sense of the scale of these projects, Big Chalk aims to create a robust ecological network of all habitats found on calcareous landscapes across 19% of England (24,000 kilometres squared) a scale hitherto unimagined. There has also been a bold proposal

to create a 100 square mile regional nature park across Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire which can be read about here. This LNRS has also been shared with neighbouring counties to foster cross-border opportunities for nature recovery. Collaborative efforts are crucial for ensuring a cohesive approach to habitat restoration and wildlife conservation.

Monitoring the delivery of the LNRS

As actions are delivered across the county, the LNRS will need to record what has happened, and where. This will help us monitor the delivery and effectiveness of the strategy.

- **Cyclical monitoring:** Every 3-10 years DEFRA will instruct authorites to review and republish their LNRSs in a repeating cyle.
- **Reporting:** Authorities will be asked to report which nature recovery actions have been delivered for habitats and species and to map out the delivery locations.

Further guidance from DEFRA is expected to be shared with authorities to enable them to prepare their monitoring process in accordance with national plans. We expect that we will be asked to monitor and report on the actions that are delivered for habitats and for species across Oxfordshire.

Once we have received guidance on monitoring expectations from DEFRA, we plan to develop monitoring processes and create local targets during the delivery phase. The targets will be SMART Oxfordshire targets created in collaboration with Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership and will link to national objectives.

Funding and support

For some actions such as making your garden hedgehog friendly, creating a small orchard, making a pond, or putting up bird boxes on farms or at home, some people will be able to deliver these without additional funding. Some others may have enough resources themselves to start surveying their sites, talking to the relevant organisations, and getting the okay to deliver those actions. However, for the majority of larger-scale nature recovery projects, community projects, and landscape-scale actions significant financial investment (grants and payments) will be required to enable people in Oxfordshire to deliver landscape scale changes. Typically, such funding and payments currently comes from local authority schemes, national charities, Biodiversity Net Gain developments, agri-environment and land management schemes, government grants, and local or regional funding bodies.

The LNRS webpage has a section called how to help nature now, with a range of links to organisations and support to help you take action. A range of organisations already offer funding and investment to support nature recovery efforts and you can make a case to these funders and highlight how your project will deliver LNRS actions.

Whilst LNRSs do lay out a clear blueprint for action, plans alone won't stop biodiversity loss. The recommended actions must be funded and supported by a diverse range of people, organisations, and partnerships. LNRSs are intended to guide national, regional and local funders (via mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain, green finance and future agri environment schemes) to channel resources into creating larger, better connected networks for nature, though government has yet to clarify exactly how LNRSs will link with agri environment payments.

Advice and engagement

After the publication of the LNRS, it is expected that many local people and organisations will need some help to understand, use, and deliver the LNRS. Many local nature recovery organisations and authorities are already helping lcoal people take actions that align with the LNRS and they will continue to provide support.

Additionally, those working on the LNRS intend to engage and meet directly with people who want to deliver nature recovery actions. This may include creating opportunities such as a forum for local people to access advice on how to deliver LNRS actions and how to report any actions they have taken. This is particularly relevant to farmers since agricultural land accounts for more than 70% of the county. However there needs to be a range of advice for all audiences across Oxfordshire such as parish and town councils, catchment partnerships, community groups, and businesses to enable them to understand and deliver actions for species and habitats in appropriate locations using LNRS recommendations combined with professional advice.

Influencing planning policy

All public authorities will have a duty to have regard to the LNRS which will be another way that the LNRS helps to deliver nature recovery actions and influences planning policy. The recent update to the Planning Practice Guidance contains a new legislative requirement for all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to 'have regard' to LNRSs. A meeting was held between the responsible authority (Oxfordshire County Council), Natural England and representatives from Oxfordshire's Local Planning Authorities (Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, and Vale of White Horse, and Oxfordshire County Council).

The authorities agreed that:

It is important to recognise that some of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire were at an advanced stage in plan preparation when this LNRS was being developed. For Local Plans being prepared whilst the LNRS was still in draft form (before November 2025), it was clearly not possible for the individual LPAs to fully consider and describe how their plans should 'have regard' to this final version of the LNRS.

Local Planning Authorities in the early stages of plan preparation should be able to fully consider how their plans and policies interact with the LNRS and should seek to take a positive approach, where possible identifying opportunities to help delivery of the LNRS. It may not always be possible to avoid situations where allocations for alternative uses overlap with the mapped extent of the LNRS, particularly where land suitable for development is in very short supply. In these circumstances, LPAs should seek to plan positively for the delivery of the potential measures identified in the LNRS within the proposed development and use this as a driver for the delivery of on-site BNG and green infrastructure networks.

Where existing or proposed allocations within more advanced Local Plans overlap with the mapped extent of the LNRS, this can be viewed as a positive opportunity for the potential measures identified for that part of the network to be delivered. This could include targeting on-site BNG at delivery of the potential habitat measures identified in the LNRS and integrating appropriate habitats into green-infrastructure networks and landscaping for the proposed development. It may not always be possible to accommodate the exact mapped extent of the LNRS within the developments but opportunities to link and connect habitats within the sites green infrastructure should be taken.

National objectives

How would the delivery of the LNRS contribute towards national objectives and targets?

There are some national obejctives and targets that we know the LNRS is expected to contribute to and these are laid out below along with information about how the Oxfordshire LNRS contributes towards these. The overarching ambition of DEFRA's 25 Year Environment Plan is to 'leave our environment in a better state than we found it and to pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future'. The plan highlights six key areas for action, one being to establish a Nature Recovery Network. The LNRS's Local Habitat Map is one of the 48 local habitat maps that will be joined together across England to produce the national Nature Recovery Network. It is expected that the national Nature Recovery Network will offer a tool to drive the strategic protection and restoration of nature and wildlife, as well as providing greater public enjoyment of the countryside; increased carbon capture; and improvements in water quality and flood management. This section summarises the relevant national environmental objectives (NEOs) that Local Nature Recovery Strategies seek to contribute towards.

ENVIRONMENT ACT (2021)

The Environment Act sets new legally binding targets for nature, water, air quality and waste reduction in England.

National objectives	How the strategy contributes
Biodiversity on land - Restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels	Oxfordshire's LNRS identifies locations where potential measures (actions) could be taken to create or enhance habitats. Oxfordshire's share of the national target is to deliver at least 10,000 hectares.
Biodiversity on land – Halt the decline of species abundance by 2030. Ensure that species abundance in 2042 is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than 2030	All habitat actions proposed in Oxfordshire's LNRS are designed to make a positive contribution for a huge number of species. Additionally, targeted measures have been created to address species needing bespoke support.
Biodiversity on land - Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022	The strategy recommends and identifies targeted habitat creation and enhancement actions to support the recovery of threatened and near threatened local species.
Woodland cover - Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050	The strategy identifies where new woodland and trees can be planted, where existing woodlands can be expanded, and where to create or enhance areas of trees outside of woodlands to benefit nature and deliver other environmental outcomes. This includes recommended actions to plant trees in urban environments to people and biodiversity.
Improve water quality and availability - Reduce nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline	Actions suggested by the strategy can help improve the water environment. For example, by creating riparian buffers along water courses it is possible to reduce the surface water input of pollution to watercourses whilst also creating wildlife corridors.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2023)

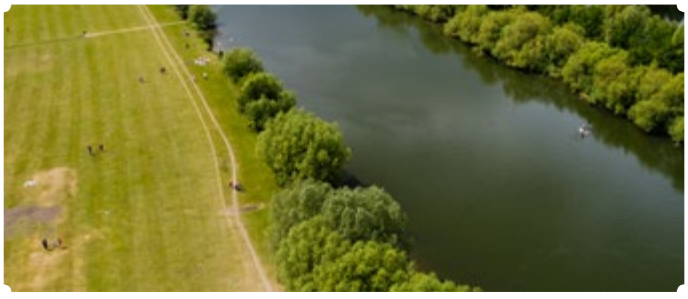
The Environmental Improvement Plan introduced several additional commitments in addition to the aims and objectives in the Environment Act to guide government's approach to restoring the environment.

Objective	How this LNRS can contribute
Work to ensure that everyone in England lives within 15 minutes walk of a green or blue space	Oxfordshire's LNRS identifies opportunities to create and enhance habitats and greenspaces near to homes to support access, biodiversity, and wellbeing as well as a range of other benefits.
Restore 75% of our water bodies to good ecological status	Oxfordshire's LNRS establishes county priorities to improve water quality and the structural diversity of rivers with some additional measures focused on particular species such as beavers, fish, and water voles. These habitat and specie actions would make a significant, positive contribution to the water environment.
Protect 30% of land and of sea in the UK for nature's recovery by 2030	Oxfordshire's LNRS identifies opportunities to create and enhance wildlife-rich habitat across 40% of the county including National Landscapes and new habitat areas that could meet 30by30.
Support farmers to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows by 2037 and 45,000 miles of hedgerows by 2050	Oxfordshire's LNRS establishes a priority to enhance and create hedgerows, recommending countywide delivery of hedgerow planting as well as the sensitive management of all existing hedgerows. This LNRS supports this action wherever it is possible. The map does have some species locations identified where certain species may particularly benefit from hedgerow creation or management.
Manage our woodlands for biodiversity, climate and sustainable forestry.	Oxfordshire's LNRS identifies sites for woodland management to enhance woodland condition and offer benefits for nature as well as wider benefits.
Restore 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest to favourable condition by 2042. By 31 January 2028 50% of SSSIs will have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.	Oxfordshire's LNRS targets habitat creation and enhancement near to SSSIs and recommends appropriate management to enhance the condition of all designated sites.
Ensure delivery & management of actions & policies that contribute towards our 25YEP goals are suitable & adaptive to a changing climate	Oxfordshire's LNRS focuses on creating more, larger, better-connected habitat areas to support climate resilience and to enable species to move and respond to climate change. Creating a resilient network of good quality habitats is our best opportunity to defend nature.

Objective	How this LNRS can contribute
Make sure LNRSs include proposals for Nature-based Solutions which improve flood risk management where appropriate	Oxfordshire's LNRS has mapped and prioritised habitat measures in flood-prone areas and provided information about natural flood management actions across the county as well as specific locations. The LNRS also incentivises sustainable drainage systems in settlements in Oxfordshire to manage rainwater. The LNRS Local Habitat Map recommends many potential measures near to waterbodies and within flood risk zones to reduce the impacts of flooding.
Reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73% and ammonia by 16% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels	Oxfordshire's LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorities promotes the creation of buffers around habitats and sensitive sites to support emission reduction indirectly through land use changes. Whilst we have done this to try to support sensitive habitats, the LNRS itself has a limited ability to influence nitrogen oxide emissions.
Reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species by at least 50%, by 2030	Restoration of habitats may sometimes involve the removal of invasive non-native species and this LNRS has recommended management of such species where necessary as a priority and an unmapped, countywide potential measure.

30by30

The UK has committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30) and government recognise that this vision will require significant investment to deliver. This LNRS has been prepared to help contribute towards 30by30, acting as a strategic tool that could be used to drive investment towards nature recovery actions in key locations in Oxfordshire to contribute towards the national and international 30by30 target to protect and manage 30% of land and water for nature by 2030.



Projects in the LNRS delivery phase could deliver part of the 30by30 vision if their project sites meet the following three criteria:

- the purpose or management objectives include positive conservation outcomes for nature
- there are long term commitments to biodiversity and protections against loss or damage to biodiversity
- management and monitoring are in place to deliver and evaluate the intended benefits for nature.

To support the creation of such sites, the LNRS Local Habitat Map has mapped a range of locations totalling an area greater than 30% that could be suitable for these criteria although sites will need to be assessed on an individual basis.

What you can do now

Throughout the process of preparing this Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), it was clear that people are excited and motivated to help nature to recover. When our first survey asked 650 people whether they would like to do more to increase nature in Oxfordshire, 97% (626 people) either agreed or said they were already doing the most that they can. You can see a further breakdown of responses to our survey on the LNRS webpage.

97%
of respondents said they would like to do more to increase nature in Oxfordshire

To decide on what to do next, you could:

- View the Local Habitat Map, find recommended actions near you.
- Read the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, a list of countywide actions that need to be taken to recover the local environment.
- Check the Species Priorities List, target your project to support species that need extra actions.
- Visit how to help nature now on the LNRS website for toolkits, before you start guidance, local contacts (BBOWT, Wild Oxfordshire, NFU), and funding links.
- Don't forget your site assessment. Before you begin creating or changing habitats, remember that all sites must be assessed in person to first ensure the planned actions are appropriate.

  You will need to contact relevant professionals, survey habitats, check for species, check for any archaeological features, and verify whether the soil type is suitable for the intended actions. The LNRS has created a short before you start guide to support you with these site assessment checks and help you plan your project with confidence. You can find this on our website.

Together, people and organisations can turn this strategy into reality and secure Oxfordshire's nature for generations to come.

Glossary

Whilst we aim to explain most terms as they are used throughout the strategic documents a number of acronyms are regularly used and this page explains what each acronym stands for.

- **APIB** – areas of particular importance for biodiversity, these are existing sites that meet certain criteria assigned by DEFRA
- **ACB** – areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity, these areas are targeted for habitat creation and enhancement work by LNRSs
- **BBOWT** – Berks, Bucks, and Oxon Wildlife Trust
- **CTA** – Conservation Target Area, locations in Oxfordshire that have been identified as target areas for conservation action
- **draft NRN** – draft Nature Recovery Network, a previous spatial plan for recovering nature in Oxfordshire produced in 2020
- **LCT** – Landscape Character Types, an area in Oxfordshire that has is given a name to describe common shared biodiversity, natural, cultural, or historic features found in that geographical area
- **LNR** – Local Nature Reserve
- **LNRS** – Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is made up from this document, the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, the Species Priorities List, and the Local Habitat Map
- **LNRS Partnership** – a number of organisations and authorities who all regularly and consistently contributed to the development of the LNRS since 2023
- **LWS** – Local Wildlife Site
- **NCA** – National Character Area. These areas each have distinct geological, cultural, and biodiversity characteristics and have unique names
- **NNR** – National Nature Reserve
- **OCC** – Oxfordshire County Council
- **OLNP** – Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, a partnership made up of representatives from the public, private, third, and health sectors. Its purpose is to radically enhance nature, its positive impact on the climate and the priority its given, helping to make Oxfordshire a place where people and nature thrive
- **OWLS** – Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004), created 25 different types of Landscape Character Types which cover Oxfordshire
- **PM** – Potential measure. An LNRS-recommended action that could be taken to create/enhance habitats or to benefit particular species
- **RA** – Responsible Authority, the authority appointed by government to lead the preparation of the strategy
- **SA** – Supporting Authority, the local planning authorities and Natural England who have a key role in developing and approving the strategy
- **SAC** – Special Areas of Conservation
- **SBP** – Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, one of the core LNRS documents that lists important actions to deliver to enhance and create habitats in Oxfordshire
- **SPL** – Species Priorities List, a list of bespoke actions needed by certain species in Oxfordshire to enable their recovery
- **SSSI** – Site of Special Scientific Interest
- **TVERC** – Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, the Local Environmental Records Centre for Oxfordshire

Appendices

- **Appendix A** (here) **– Report on designated sites, irreplaceable habitats and areas of particular importance for biodiversity.** A detailed report listing the county's designated sites and irreplaceable habitats in Oxfordshire showing how 6.5% of Oxfordshire meets criteria to be an area of particular importance for biodiversity. Produced by TVERC, find it here on the LNRS webpage.

- **Appendix B** (here) **– Description of the biodiversity features and recovery opportunities associated with each river and catchment in Oxfordshire.** Each river and its catchment has a 1-2 page description of the river's history, modifications, pressures, biodiversity of note, and key opportunities for recovery including maps of each river, headwater streams, any chalk streams, and the boundary of the catchment.

- **Appendix C** (here) **– Description of the biodiversity features and recovery opportunities associated with each National Character Area (NCA) in Oxfordshire.** Each NCA has a 1-2 page description of the areas geology, landscape character type, biodiversity, cultural land-use, and notable species in the area. Each description gives examples of actions that could be taken in those areas to benefit local species or to create, manage, or enhance habitats. There are maps of the OWLS landscape character types found within each NCA area.

- **Appendix D** (here) **– A table of over 60 datasets used to inform the LNRS mapping.**

- **Appendix E** (here) **– The technical report describing how the LNRS Local Habitat Map was created.**

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Final version October 2025

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

Introduction 3
What is the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities? 3
Is every potential measure mapped onto the Local Habitat Map? 4
How to navigate this document? 4
A note on climate change 5
How was this list made? 5
Statement of Biodiversity Priorities 6
Existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity (APIBs) 6
Connectivity and boundaries 8
Grassland (including scrub) and road verges 11
Heathland 21
Mixed habitats including wood pasture, parkland, orchards and open mosaic habitats 23
Woodlands 30
Rivers, streams, ponds, standing water and wetland habitats 36
Deadwood 48
Hedgerows and hedgerow trees 49
Invasive species 51
Wider environment – agricultural (improved grassland and arable) and rural landholdings. 52
Wider environment – Archaeological and heritage assets 56
Wider environment – village, towns, cities and green spaces 57
Appendix A – Wider benefits from nature recovery 66
Appendix B - The strategies and plans reviewed during the LNRS preparation. 72
Appendix C 74
Appendix D – How was this list made? 75

Introduction

'Biodiversity' is a term that refers to the variety of all life forms or 'species' including plants, animals, fungi, and micro-organisms.

A stable and healthy variety of species provides a wide range of benefits that enable people to survive, from fresh water, clean air, and climate regulation to food, medicines, mental and physical wellbeing and more.

These benefits do not typically come from individual species but from a rich variety of species working together and interacting with each other in their natural habitats (ecosystems).

What is the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities?

In 2023, authorities across England were asked by Government to start developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) to publish in 2025. This was a requirement from the Environment Act 2021. The Act also explained that the written statement of biodiversity priorities must include:

- a description of the strategy area and its biodiversity (which can be found as one of our key LNRS documents called the 'Description of Strategy Area')
- a description of the opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity in the strategy area
- the priorities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity (found within this document, taking into account the contribution that this can also make to other environmental benefits)
- proposals for potential measures relating to those priorities (found within this document. The potential measures which are specific to particular species can be found on the LNRS 'Species Priorities List').

This Statement of Biodiversity Priorities sets out priorities for biodiversity that are of great importance to achieve locally and indicates which wider benefits could be achieved (See Appendix A). The 'priorities' are the outcomes that collectively, would result in the recovery of nature across Oxfordshire. Each priority, listed below, has a set of 'potential measures' with them which are the actions that need to be taken to achieve the priority outcome.

The types of actions which could be included as LNRS 'potential measures' are:

- Actions to create, improve, or restore habitats (expanding and/or enhancing habitat or changing management practices to better support biodiversity)
- Actions needed to benefit specific local species*

Actions to connect up habitat areas to improve the resilience of nature and enable species to move through the landscape.

* Local species in this document means those that are already present in (or near) an area, and those that could become local or present in or near that area (considering those species that may migrate or move, and species that may be translocated or introduced to suitable habitats).

Is every potential measure mapped onto the Local Habitat Map?

Not all the measures have a specific location mapped for their delivery.

The table in this document indicates whether a 'potential measure' (an action) could be undertaken "countywide" or whether the measure is "mapped" to specific locations.

If a measure is labelled "mapped", then this means that specific areas have been identified on the LNRS Local Habitat Map as priority locations to deliver the measure.

These locations are prioritised because they are expected to provide the greatest benefits for biodiversity and help to focus delivery in a way that would create a more resilient, connected network of nature in Oxfordshire.

Typically, the mapping helps to expand existing areas that are important for biodiversity, buffer areas, and join up existing areas of importance to biodiversity. Whilst some measures are mapped to such locations, the measures could also be delivered in other suitable locations within the county.

The measures do not have to be restricted to the mapped locations since actions outside of the mapped areas would still support the recovery of nature, just perhaps not to the same extent as the mapped network.

Although care has been taken to map actions which are expected to be suitable for the soil type and location, all sites must still be assessed on-the-ground to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed actions, including compliance with regulations such as those related to heritage.

At present, it has been feasible to map prioritised locations for about half of the listed measures. Some are not mapped, and this is usually because they could be delivered, to great benefit, in many different locations across the county, or because we do not currently have sufficient data to map them.

This does not mean they are of less importance than mapped measures. These unmapped, countywide measures should also be supported and delivered in suitable locations.

How to navigate this document?

On the next page, you will see the table which contains 40 biodiversity 'priorities' and 85 'potential measures'. The measures are actions that could be taken to achieve their relevant priorities.

The priorities are grouped into sections, mostly by habitat type e.g. 'Grasslands (including scrub) and road verges'.

Each priority and each potential measure also has an identification code which increases in numerical order (e.g. 'PM01', 'PM02' and so on) so that you can more easily look up codes for measures shown on the Local Habitat Map to find further information.

Links are included throughout this document to help readers find useful guidance on how to create or improve habitats but you can search for alternative guides, for example here and we recommend you seek expert advice before planning a nature recovery project.

A note on climate change

At the time of writing, the below actions were expected to be the most suitable ways to support the recovery of these habitats.

However, there are expected changes to climate patterns with warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers predicted, as well as increasing extremes in weather events and storms, although the exact nature of the changing patterns may be unpredictable.

The LNRS recommends that the actions listed below should be adapted, if necessary, based on the latest understanding of climate change in order to best support the recovery of these habitats in Oxfordshire.

How was this list made?

This ‘Statement of Biodiversity Priorities’ was produced by first collecting the actions and priorities from local people and organisations, grouping them into themes e.g. ‘create meadows’, ‘improve river condition’, and filtering out those which didn’t relate to habitat creation or enhancement.

These were then refined into the priorities and measures by local experts from a range of organisations.

For more information on the process, Appendix D, and the Oxfordshire County Council’s LNRS website.

The next pages list the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and the potential measures in a table.

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

Existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity (APIBs)

You can see these areas identified on the LNRS Local Habitat Map [LINK added at launch].

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P1396	**Enhance the ecological condition of Oxfordshire's existing designated sites and irreplaceable habitats. Aim to achieve good ecological condition.** Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Water supply, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction, Pollination, Pest control.	PM01 (mapped)	**Enhance and maintain existing areas that are particularly important for biodiversity in Oxfordshire.** Enhance (and maintain in good condition) the sites in Oxfordshire that are designated for biodiversity or considered to be irreplaceable. Also look for ways to enhance/maintain the land that buffers these sites. For Oxfordshire, this includes designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), and Oxfordshire's irreplaceable habitats including ancient and veteran trees, ancient woodland, and lowland fens. The 'sites' are mapped for their importance to biodiversity either as designated, locally important, or irreplaceable habitats. Within the sites themselves, aim to enhance the area to either achieve, or maintain a good ecological condition and benefit local species. It is important for SACs and SSSIs that advice is sought from Natural England regarding appropriate management. For Local Wildlife Sites, advice may be available from the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. Contact the Thames Valley Environmental Records

397			Centre for more detail about the importance of a particular site within the APIBs, including citations for designated sites which identify the habitats and species for which the site is important. On the land around/adjacent to the existing sites, it would be important and beneficial to provide a suitable buffer area of appropriate, complementary habitat to benefit the site and the wildlife around it. Actions in the buffer area could aim to enhance any existing habitats, create new complementary habitat areas, or reduce disturbance or pollution in that area including reduced run off or chemical inputs. Ultimately, these actions should aim to benefit the ecological health of the neighbouring irreplaceable or designated site. Different sites will need different types/sizes of buffer habitat to offer the greatest benefits to wildlife in the area. Typically, it will be of benefit to create areas of low intervention land use in the land that buffers existing areas of importance for biodiversity, or to create mosaic habitat areas at these buffer edges that complement the adjacent site.

Connectivity and boundaries

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P2	**Improve the connectivity of habitats and reduce fragmentation. Create and enhance habitats to create more areas of nature that are bigger, better, and more joined up.** Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction Pollination, Pest control.	PM02 (countywide)	**Prioritise connectivity when creating and maintaining habitats to join up areas of nature and habitats more effectively** Strengthen and maintain ecological corridors, prioritise the creation of new habitats that can enable wildlife to move, feed, reproduce, and disperse across the landscape. This is particularly important between existing wildlife-rich areas. The creation of new habitats should be prioritised in locations where they could make existing areas of habitat bigger and more joined up across Oxfordshire. This would contribute towards creating a large, functioning ecological network of diverse habitats that are fit for purpose, and which allow wildlife to move though landscapes, expand their range, and respond and adapt to climate change. Connectivity requirements should be factored into long term site management objectives. Large, connected spaces could be achieved through ambitious projects with a long-term vision (likely to involve multiple partners) and could create nationally important large nature areas, perhaps thousands of hectares in size, if possible, in one or more areas of Oxfordshire. Connectivity can be achieved or enhanced in different ways, including (1) by creating new habitat to join existing habitats, or maintaining and enhancing existing wildlife-friendly corridors such as watercourses, canals, railway embankments, road verges, cycle ways, hedgerows, and other linear features, (2) by creating and maintaining ‘stepping stones’, distinct wildlife rich areas between existing, larger

399			sites to allow species to move and disperse across the landscape, and (3) by creating, enhancing, or maintaining habitats near to existing wildlife-rich habitats to produce larger blocks of habitat. To achieve the best outcomes, newly created habitats should look to complement the local wildlife-rich habitats and species that already exist. Habitat creation should seek to connect “like with like” and consider how species move through the landscape. New habitats could include (but are not limited to), grassland, woodlands, wetlands, open and mosaic habitats, orchards, parkland, and wood pasture. If existing sites are made bigger and better with more links like corridors and stepping stones to enable species to move across the county, Oxfordshire will be able to pass on to future generations a network of healthier more functional ecosystems. This would benefit wildlife as the climate changes and will improve opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife. Improving connectivity and reducing fragmentation is likely to be best achieved through co-ordination with neighbouring land managers. Some areas of the County have farmer clusters, Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and catchment partnerships which help facilitate this approach. Whilst this measure isn’t directly mapped, the Local Habitat Map has been created with this priority built in and most of the mapped areas offer strategic places to create habitats to contribute towards this priority. Read more about the importance of connecting England’s wildlife sites, managing them, and creating more, bigger, better, joined up ecological network here.
		PM03 (mapped)	**Create, maintain, or enhance wildlife passages to reduce habitat fragmentation by roads, rail, and other infrastructure.** Wildlife passages include ‘green bridges’ as well as other creative solutions that are designed to enable wildlife to move between areas of habitats such as tunnels, viaducts, underpasses, overpasses, stream and river crossings and culverts.

			Create crossings through new or existing infrastructure that can join up habitats, help wildlife to move across the landscape, stop species from becoming isolated, and also reducing the number of traffic accidents. This handbook describes a range of options like canopy bridges, bat crossings, viaducts and wildlife underpasses, as well as overpasses, adapted culverts, and more. Specific examples of wildlife passages include the Scotney Castle Land Bridge, adder tunnel, and a range of 33 multi-species crossing points including otter ledges in Cornwall. Priority locations for these wildlife passages may change over time as wildlife moves and infrastructure changes. Whilst this version of the LNRS has mapped some key locations of the strategic road network where National Highways could take this action in Oxfordshire, the creation of passages would also be suitable for other road, rail, and infrastructure networks across the county to reduce the fragmentation of habitats and should be supported accordingly.
R3 400	**Enhance and create wildlife-friendly boundaries that act as habitats to support species to spread through the county.** Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature.	PM04 (countywide)	**Create or improve boundaries using natural products that support biodiversity.** Where possible, improve the biodiversity value of boundaries. Where appropriate, consider replacing or enhancing existing boundaries like post and wire or rail fences with hedges, untreated wood fencing, and/or dry-stone walls. Where possible use local businesses and sustainably sourced local materials. This may not be suitable in cases where the boundaries are historic features e.g. park railings or in protected landscapes where openness is a special quality and where species such as ground-nesting birds require open conditions. Target habitats: UK Hab Species-rich native hedgerow h2a5, or habitats with additional secondary code 114 (dry stone wall), 117 (laid hedgerow).

Grassland (including scrub) and road verges			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P4 401	**Create new areas of species-rich grassland (including scrub and mosaic habitats) in Oxfordshire that are managed to support biodiversity and to achieve a good ecological condition.** Wider benefits: Food production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Pollination, Pest control.	PM05 (mapped)	**Create areas of calcareous species-rich grasslands in suitable locations, particularly slopes.** Semi-improved or modified grasslands can be diversified by preparing low nutrient ground and over seeding. Where appropriate, arable areas can be reverted to wildflower grassland through seeding, following site preparation. Plants grown as plugs can be used for species that do not spread well as seed. Use seed or plug sources of local provenance and similar soil conditions as far as possible. Green hay from similar wildflower grasslands can be spread as an alternative to seed. See creation and management guidance to create new areas of calcareous grassland. They include further details about ground preparation and suitable soils. Some locations were regularly mentioned by people and organisations for this action to occur, however this is not an exhaustive list: White Horse Hill and Hackpen Hill, steep calcareous banks and slopes, Berkshire Downs border. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland calcareous grassland (g2a including g2a5 and g2a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) CG1-CG7
		PM06 (mapped)	**Create areas of neutral species-rich grasslands in suitable locations** Existing semi-improved or modified grasslands can be diversified by over seeding following site preparation. Where appropriate, arable areas can also be reverted to wildflower grassland through seeding, following site preparation. Plants grown as

402			plugs can be used for species that do not spread well as seed. Use seed or plug sources of local provenance and similar soil conditions. Green hay from similar wildflower meadows can be spread as an alternative to seed. See management guidance and handbooks for further details. Follow management guidance and handbooks to create new areas of neutral grassland habitat including ground preparation on suitable soils. Test soils to determine if conditions would be suitable for lowland meadow creation, otherwise aim for species-rich neutral grasslands. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows (g3a including g3a5 and g3a6) and other neutral grassland (g3c, only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG4, MG8, and MG5 and species-rich examples of MG1, MG6, MG9 and MG10.
		PM07 (mapped)	**Create areas of species-rich acid grasslands in suitable locations** Acid grasslands can be created on suitably sandy and acidic soils. These grasslands are characterised by short fine grasses and patches of bare soil which support a particular range of insects, spiders, and reptiles. Acid grassland is also strongly associated with heathland and these two habitat types are rare in Oxfordshire. See management guidance and handbooks for further details. Some examples of acid grassland in Oxfordshire can be found in areas including Boars Hill, Frilford Heath, and Shotover. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland dry acid grassland (g1a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) U1-U4
		PM08 (mapped)	**Create varied physical ground structure when creating new grassland habitats.** Whilst creating new grasslands, consider using techniques to create a varied physical ground structure similar to the lumps and bumps of historic delves. Seek opportunities to keep areas of thin skeletal soils as well as areas of rocky, bare, and disturbed ground with a variety of aspects and gradients. Aim to support varieties of sward heights suitable to the location and local species. These actions can be taken whilst creating new grassland habitat (including quarry restoration). This

403			guide gives some examples of the varied features that may be found in grassland habitats.
		PM09 (mapped)	**Create new areas of lowland meadow by creating and restoring meadows in suitable locations (particularly on floodplains).** This action is suitable for both floodplain areas and areas of lowland meadow on drier soils. Within floodplains, appropriate actions should be taken to allow water to easily come both onto, and off lowland meadow to help reconnect floodplain meadows with rivers. This can include embanking or deepening of the watercourse to ensure adequate discharge of water after flood events. In suitable locations, meadows could be restored through a range of techniques including by spreading green or dry hay, or brush harvested seed, into the floodplain soils. This can be done by sourcing hay or seed from existing floodplain meadows (as long as this doesn't compromise the condition of those meadows). See the Floodplain Meadows Partnership for advice on meadow creation and funding for farmers. This is a particularly important action for suitable arable fields and in other locations where existing hydrological conditions are appropriate. Floodplain meadows are amongst the UK's rarest and most biodiverse habitats whilst drier meadows are less rare. In the UK, only 1,200 hectares of MG4 floodplain meadow remains. More than 25% of this area is within Oxfordshire meaning that Oxfordshire has a strategically important role in supporting the recovery and expansion of MG4 floodplain lowland hay meadows. In addition, these floodplain habitats have particularly good capacity to store carbon and can improve the soil's ability to hold and capture water to help manage the flow of water and improve water quality. A technical handbook on floodplain meadows can be found here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows (**g3a5 and g3a6)**, National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG4, MG8, and MG5

P5 404	**Enhance and manage existing grasslands to achieve and maintain species-rich grasslands that are in good ecological condition (long-term).** Wider benefits: Food production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Pollination, Pest control	PM10 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing calcareous grassland.** Use land management techniques to improve or support grassland biodiversity, especially in ancient and unimproved grassland. Plan to maintain low nutrient levels by undertake cutting, collecting, and/or grazing of vegetation according to the broad habitat requirements whilst working to meet the specialist needs of species in the area. Where appropriate, continue hay-making practices and manage grazing of sites flexibly in response to seasonal variations in vegetation growth. See guidance on management or a detailed handbook here. Ensure that a thick thatch of grassy matter doesn't develop to increase nutrients, suppress wildflowers, or create a fire risk. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland calcareous grassland (g2a, including g2a5 and g2a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) CG1-CG7
		PM11 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing neutral species-rich grasslands** Use land management techniques to improve or support grassland biodiversity, especially in ancient and unimproved grasslands. Plan to maintain low nutrient levels by undertaking cutting, collecting, and/or grazing of vegetation according to the broad habitat requirements whilst working to meet the specialist needs of species in the area. Ensure that grazing or cutting includes the removal of the cuttings (arisings). Where appropriate, continue hay-making practices and manage the grazing of sites flexibly in response to seasonal variations in vegetation growth. Ensure that a thick thatch of grassy matter doesn't develop to increase nutrients, suppress wildflowers, or create a fire risk. Further information about meadows can be found from Plantlife. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows g3a (including g3a5 and g3a6) and other neutral grassland g3c only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG4, MG8, and MG5 and species-rich examples of MG1, MG6, MG9 and MG10.

405		PM12 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing acid grasslands** Use suitable techniques like grazing, or cutting if grazing cannot be arranged, to enhance the condition and diversity of acid grassland. On acid grassland, aim to create and manage a variety of sward heights including areas of short sward with bare ground and soil disturbance. See more detailed management guides to better understand what might be suitable on a given site. Ensure that grazing or cutting includes the removal of the cuttings to prevent nutrient levels from building up. Ensure that a thick thatch of grassy matter doesn't develop to increase nutrients, suppress wildflowers, or create a fire risk. There are some examples of these types of habitats found across Boars Hill, Frilford Heath, Shotover and other areas in Oxfordshire. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland dry acid grassland (g1a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) U1-U4
		PM13 (countywide)	**Maintain or introduce grazing or cutting techniques that enhance the structural diversity of grasslands and support local species.** On grasslands, including ancient and species-rich grasslands, introduce or maintain management techniques and grazing regimes that are site-appropriate using breeds that achieve a variety of sward heights and structures to benefit local species. Consider utilising traditional and rare breeds which are hardy and well suited to conservation grazing. Aim, where possible, to create patches of bare ground via periodic disturbance of the soil and turf which encourages the dispersal of many flowering plant species. Where species require short turf, cut & graze, some areas of grassland vegetation across calcareous, acid, and sandy sites to maintain a short sward and a low nutrient grassland. A similar result can be achieved by the presence of rabbits and on some sites it may be appropriate to encourage them by providing suitable cover, see more details here. Grazing is often a good way to maintain grassland sward and to disturb the soil, typically in spring, autumn, and winter but grazing and cutting times may change

406			based on seasonal weather patterns or particular species that you may be working to conserve. Sometimes summer grazing may be appropriate on sites that require extensive grazing.
		PM14 (mapped)	**Enhance existing lowland meadows through grazing, cutting, or a combination to increase and support species diversity (particularly for floodplain and MG4 habitats).** This action is suitable for both floodplain lowland meadow, and for lowland meadow on drier soils. Manage these lowland meadows by introducing or maintaining appropriate management techniques like hay-cutting, grazing, and/or mowing regimes which are most appropriate to the site conditions, grassland type, species present, and any hay-making activities. Ensure that arisings are removed. For grazing regimes, manage stocking densities and the timing of any grazing flexibly, aiming to respond to seasonal conditions and variation as well as preventing either under-grazing or over-grazing. Consider using traditional and/or rare breeds that are hardy and well suited to conservation grazing. See further advice and guidance on managing floodplain meadows from the Floodplain Meadows Partnership. For hay cuts, the timing of the hay-cut is critical to the long-term sustainability of species-rich meadows. There will be a need for increased flexibility in both the date and extent of management options in response to long-term seasonal variability in growing conditions and climates. Lowland meadow will need an adequate supply, temporal variation, and quality of water to adapt to changes in climate. Floodplain meadows are amongst the UK's rarest and most species-rich (biodiverse) habitats whilst drier meadows are less rare. In the UK, only 1,200 hectares of MG4 floodplain meadow remains. More than 25% of this area is within Oxfordshire meaning that Oxfordshire has a strategically important role in supporting the recovery and expansion of MG4 floodplain lowland meadows. This is particularly true around Pixey, Yarton, and Osney Meads where work has been underway to connect 210 hectares of rare floodplain in a connected network with opportunity to expand this further in future. It should be noted that these floodplain

407			habitats have particularly good capacity to store carbon, hold and capture water, manage the flow of water, and improve water quality. See the technical handbook for floodplain meadows here. See further Natural England handbooks, guidance, and advice for detailed management. Additionally, organisations like Plantlife, and Buglife have resources and information that may be of interest. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows (g3a5 and g3a6), National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG4, MG8, and MG5
		PM15 (countywide)	**Implement conservation grazing techniques that minimise or reduce the need for permanent physical fencing** Within pasture and grasslands or other appropriate habitats, consider approaches like regularly moving livestock through grazed areas by creating 'cells' within field parcels that you move regularly using, for example, electric wire fencing. Collar-based virtual fencing and other technology is also rapidly developing and could enable grazing animals to be focussed on particular locations and moved as needed to achieve the best conservation outcomes. A particular location within Oxfordshire where you can see this being practiced is FAI farm in Wytham.
P6	**Create and retain more area of scrub and pockets of 'messier, less tidy' habitat for their importance to biodiversity.** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Carbon storage, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.	PM16 (countywide)	**Create and maintain pockets of diverse scrub on grasslands as appropriate**. Continue management that prevents excessive amounts of scrub from taking over species-rich wildflower grasslands but, where appropriate, integrate scrub creation into the site to increase structural variety to benefit biodiversity. This can be achieved through allowing occasional areas of scrub to grow as habitats within or around grasslands, to provide shade for animals, livestock, people, and to offer food, nectar, and shelter to invertebrates, birds, and wider species. Scrub habitats on floodplains can provide a refuge for invertebrates and reptiles during prolonged flooding. Aim to allow different pockets of scrub to grow up at different points in time

408			to create a variety of ages including the development of old scrub which supports particular invertebrate communities. Also aim for diversity of tree and shrub species, various shapes, and sizes of scrub pockets. This could be achieved through low intervention techniques (e.g. fencing an area off from browsing and/or allowing natural regeneration). Accept changes to community composition (the types and amounts of different species within your scrub growth) when driven by climate change. It is not expected to integrate the development of scrub into ancient meadows including floodplain meadows where hay has to be taken. A large number of locations were mentioned by people and organisations for this action to occur and this should be applied to all appropriate grasslands including parish nature reserves and local projects where suitable land has been acquired to allow nature to recover itself. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Dense scrub (h3 - except for h3c and h3g), grassland (g) with secondary code – 10 (scattered scrub). National Vegetation Classification W21, W22
		PM17 (mapped)	**Manage existing areas of scrub to create a varied age and physical structure including glades and scalloped edges**. Unless the scrub has encroached excessively, avoid damaging or removing existing scrub habitat for fear of untidiness. Scrub habitat is dynamic (changes quickly) and is a complex mix of grassland and woody habitats that offer great value to biodiversity. Manage the area to allow different pockets of scrub to grow up at different points in time to create a variety of ages and encourage and aim to keep any older or old scrub which supports particular invertebrate communities. See Natural England's guide on scrub management. or see here for some examples of managing scrub on chalk grassland. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Dense scrub (h3 - except for h3c and h3g), grassland (g) with secondary code – 10 (scattered scrub). National Vegetation Classification W21, W22

P7	**Create and enhance more road verges that are managed to allow wildflowers to grow in safe locations across Oxfordshire**. Wider benefits: Aesthetic value, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Carbon storage, Pollination, Pest control.	PM18 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing grassland around roads and infrastructure including road verge nature reserves (RVNR) to increase biodiversity.** This measure can apply to embankments, road verges, roundabouts and other suitable areas of grassland in both urban and rural settings. Manage the cutting regime flexibly for these grassland areas based on the species that are present or that could become present to allow them to grow, flower, and set seed. Over time, this management helps to make the verge less grass-dominant, and will create a lower growing, more diverse verge/habitat which should require fewer cuts. Reducing cutting patterns can help to support a greater range of wildlife including insects. Where road verges and other areas are already being managed in this way, continue to do so in safe and suitable locations where vegetation and any cuttings do not reduce the safety of road or path users (i.e. they do not block paths, roads, or lines of sight). After cutting, the best practice is to collect any arisings and remove them to reduce nutrient levels and promote floristic diversity. Ensure that enough management is undertaken to avoid any unintended scrub encroachment. You can access further urban grassland and road verge guidance here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows (g3a6) and other neutral grassland (g3c) only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18. National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG5, and lowland calcareous grassland (g2a) and other calcareous grassland (g2c) only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18 National Vegetation Classification (NVC) CG1-CG7, and Lowland dry acid grassland (g1a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) U1-U4
		PM19 (countywide)	**Create new road verge nature reserves (RVNR) to allow wildflowers to grow, flower, and set seed by changing their management**. Creating new RVNRs should be completed in safe and suitable locations where vegetation and cuttings would not block paths, roads, or lines of sight. Avoid using topsoil to create new verges, consider laying out cuttings from existing local road verge nature reserves to spread local seeds and increase biodiversity. Plan for long-term changes to the cutting pattern to reduce the number of cuts, this allows existing seeds from those places to flower and set seeds again. Ensure that

410			enough management is undertaken to avoid any unintended scrub encroachment. You can access urban grassland and verge guidance here, find information about building community support here, and if you have an area that could become a road verge nature reserve you can propose that it becomes one here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland meadows (g3a6) and other neutral grassland (g3c) only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18. National Vegetation Classification (NVC) MG5. Lowland calcareous grassland (g2a) and other calcareous grassland (g2c) only where it qualifies as species-rich grassland – secondary code 18 National Vegetation Classification (NVC) CG1-CG7. Lowland dry acid grassland (g1a6) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) U1-U4
		PM20 (countywide)	**Where new roads are created assess the opportunity for new road verge nature reserves**. Create and manage road verges, roundabouts, and other suitable spaces to promote biodiversity. The use of subsoil can create opportunities for new wildflower grasslands along new roads, while using species such as yellow rattle can potentially reduce frequency of cutting (and collecting). New grasslands need to be managed through well-timed cutting and collection of arisings. You can access urban grassland and verge guidance here.
P8	**Improve the abundance and range of grassland and scrub species that need specific additional potential measures** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pollination, Pest control.	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' [LINK added at launch] to see the potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from habitats within this type of environment. Some of these measures are mapped.

Heathland

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P9 411	**Enhance the condition of Oxfordshire's existing pockets of lowland heathland** Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Pollination, Pest control.	PM21 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing heathland.** Manage heathland areas to enhance their condition and structural diversity in Oxfordshire. Aim to retain or create a mosaic of vegetation types and prevent rapid colonisation of the heathland by excessive amounts of scrub, bracken, or woodland (through creating or retaining some pockets of scrub can be beneficial to structural diversity). There is more detail on how to achieve this kind of balance in a manner that is suitable to your site here. Grazing is the preferred management tool for maintaining a heathland mosaic, but other techniques may be required. Incorporate actions to support any specialist species that are, or could become, present in the area. Preventing nutrient enrichment is important in this habitat type and it can be important to prevent some activities that present particular challenges to heathland success (trampling and disturbance). An overview of heathland management techniques can be found here by Buglife. Detailed heathland management guides from Natural England can be found here. The government outline how to manage lowland heathland for those using Countryside Stewardship. There are some examples of these types of habitats including Boars Hill, Frilford Heath, and Shotover. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland heathland (h1a) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) H1 and H2 including any m16 wet heath if present.

P10	**Create (or restore) areas of lowland heathland in Oxfordshire**. Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Erosion protection, Carbon storage, Pollination, Pest control.	PM22 (mapped)	**Create new areas of heathland on suitable soil types**. Create new areas of heathland with a commitment to long term management. The opportunities in Oxfordshire are very limited for this habitat creation because the type of soil and site requirements are very specific. Aim to create a diversity of vegetation structure with a variety of habitat niches including patches of bare soil. This guide includes information from Natural England about heathland creation for wildlife. Check government websites for payments for farmers e.g. to create heathland here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland heathland (h1a) National Vegetation Classification (NVC) H1 and H2
P11 412	**Improve the abundance and range of species that need specific additional potential measures within heathland habitats.** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pollination, Pest control.	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see actions that could be taken to support specific species in Oxfordshire that are threatened or near-threatened with extinction. Some of these species actions are mapped to particular locations.

Mixed habitats including wood pasture, parkland, orchards and open mosaic habitats			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P12 413	**Enhance and manage existing habitats to support biodiversity and to enhance their ecological condition. This includes wood pasture, parkland, orchards, open mosaic habitats, and mosaic habitats, which have a mixture of habitat types within a given area.** Wider benefits: Food production, Wood production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Education and knowledge, Sense of place, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.	PM23 (mapped)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing wood pasture and parkland to support local species and future climates.** Within wood pasture and parkland, manage the habitats and trees to maximise the longevity of site-appropriate species and retain mature and large trees (including dead, dying, and decaying trees and wood in a manner that is considerate of public safety). Where trees are coming to maturity or end of life, ensure the emergence (or planting) of new, site-suitable trees within the existing habitat. This practice is designed to diversify the ages of trees present in the habitat and to ensure the possibility of future generations of veteran and ancient trees. Preferably, start allowing the growth of (or planting of) new generations before the existing mature trees are lost. Trees should be suited to the conditions of the particular location and, if planted, should prioritise diversity and resilience to future climates. Maintain the grassland within wood pasture and parkland areas using suitable, extensive grazing or cutting regimes. Where appropriate the grassland component of this habitat can be floristically improved by overseeding and/or plug planting. In appropriate locations consider the creation of cover to encourage habitat variety through rabbit grazing and disturbance. Within these habitats, scrub can play an important role as part of an overall mosaic and supports certain stages of lifecycles for different species. Look for opportunities to create and manage scrub if appropriate to the site conditions.

			Many locations were regularly mentioned by people and organisations for this action to occur however this is not an exhaustive list of existing parks and estates: Ashdown Park, Ditchley Park, Blenheim Park, Broughton Castle, Glympton Park, Kiddington Park, Heythrop Park, Middle Barton and Sandford St. Martin Park, Watlington Park, Kirtlington Park, Bletchingdon Park, Tusmore and Shelswell Parks, Coleshill Park and Buscot Park, Faringdon, Barcote and Pusey, Cornbury Park, Eynsham Hall, Shotover House. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): grassland, woodland, heath or wetland with secondary code 26
414		PM24 (countywide)	**Enhance (or maintain a good condition of) existing ancient and veteran trees and the species that they support**. Veteran and ancient trees (including those that are dying or dead) should be managed to achieve a good ecological condition, respective to their age. These trees should be managed to support important varieties of species based on the age, species, and local context of the trees. Prioritise actions that can increase the longevity of existing mature and veteran trees implementing whole life-cycle management to ensure a provision of dead and decaying wood where safe and possible, and either use natural regeneration techniques or plant new trees (of suitable species) close to existing veteran and ancient trees to provide an ecological continuity of veteran trees. Oxfordshire is home to some exemplar ancient and veteran trees and groups of trees including at Blenheim (which is believed to have the largest collection of ancient oaks in Europe) and Ashdown Park. Many ancient trees like oaks can also be seen within hedgerows across the county and the action applies for all ancient or veteran trees.
		PM25 (countywide)	**Selectively create more veteran features in mature non-veteran trees where appropriate.** Veteranisation techniques create veteran features in suitable, non-veteran trees. Identify locations and trees that may be suitable for veteranisation. Apply these techniques selectively to trees in locations where species are particularly expected to benefit from more veteran features. See more information about veteranisation

415			here. Using these veteranisation techniques, aim to create habitat niches in established trees that mimic the features that would normally be found in ancient and veteran trees. This can include the creation of crevices and cavities in trees, or creating canopy deadwood by selective ringbarking to mimic and produce valuable habitats that are typically found on older trees and which support a range of rare and declining species. The use of these techniques should not be seen as a replacement for veteran trees. You can download guidance manuals about veteran trees and future veteran trees here.
		PM26 (mapped)	**Improve (or maintain a good condition of) existing orchards for biodiversity.** Manage orchard trees to maintain health and longevity of the trees. Allow dead, decaying, dying wood, and fungi to be present in the orchard in a manner that doesn't significantly compromise the health of the trees. For example, retain cushion bracket fungus on Prunus fruit trees and try to avoid removing or burning deadwood unless necessary (e.g. taking into account public safety if the site is open access). Retain and encourage mature and over-mature standing trees, and keep some standing deadwood and deadwood on living orchard trees. Plant successionally to maintain a strong overlap of younger, mature, and veteran fruit trees, and gap up where trees have died. Ideally, the age structure should allow for an overlap of 50 years which is how long it takes for a fruit tree to develop veteran features. When restocking existing orchards, consider including rootstocks, varieties, or species of tree with a view to future-proofing the orchards from changing weather patterns. Control scrub within orchards (allowing for small pockets to develop or remain where possible) and manage invasive species which cause significant damage to orchards. Target habitats: UK Habs codes grassland or woodland with secondary code 27

416		PM27 (countywide)	**Enhance, create, or maintain a good condition of existing 'open mosaic habitat on previously developed land' (OMHPDL) to conserve and enhance biodiversity on these open, dynamic areas.** Conserve and enhance land where open habitats of mixed scrub, grassland, and wetlands with areas of bare ground have developed on brownfield sites. Manage these sites to support species that may be present and maintain an open, dynamic nature to these areas including patches of bare ground where suitable to support invertebrates (including beetles, bees, and wasps). The creation of bare substrate as a result of minerals extraction can present an opportunity to create the mosaic of early successional communities that are characteristic of this habitat as part of the restoration of quarries. Further management guidance from Natural England can be found here. Target habitats (Uk Habs codes): grassland, woodland, wetland, heathland, urban, sparsely vegetated land or rivers and lakes with secondary code 80
		PM28 (countywide)	**Improve habitat condition and biodiversity by introducing or maintaining flexible grazing regimes where appropriate (and/or cutting and collecting).** Where grazing or cutting is suitable and possible, maintain flexible options to be able to respond to increased variation in weather patterns, floods, and drought. Consider using traditional and rare breeds which are hardy and well suited to conservation grazing. Where necessary, protect trees from possible long-term damage that can be caused by grazing animals.
P13	**Create more areas of mixed habitat in Oxfordshire including wood pasture, parkland, orchard, and open mosaic habitats to support biodiversity**.	PM29 (mapped)	**Create (and manage) areas of new parkland and wood pasture, planning to produce future ancient and veteran trees.** Plant (or facilitate the growth of) new trees to create new wood pasture and parkland, using appropriate tree species that are adapted for the location and future climates and/or could support local wildlife. It should be noted that oaks are particularly important within such habitat settings. New trees could be established

417	Wider benefits: Food production, Wood production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Sense of place, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Flood regulation, Erosion regulation, Water quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.		by fencing off suitable areas and allowing trees to grow up naturally, by planting seeds, or by planting and managing suitable young trees. Expanding existing areas of mature parkland and wood pasture can be particularly beneficial. Local seed sourcing should be supported as one option for expanding parkland and wood pasture. If planting trees or seeds, consider using local species where possible and consider sourcing some trees or seed from a provenance that can tolerate various climate conditions where necessary. Diverse tree selection may better enable newly planted trees to be able to survive and become ancient and veterans in a warmer future climate although these decisions should be based on the latest climate prediction and the specific planting site. The Forestry Commission has an Ecological Site Classification tool that can help determine which species could be suitable. Where appropriate, the species richness of the grassland components within wood pasture/parkland can be created or enhanced using species-rich grassland creation techniques such as overseeding, spreading green hay, and/or planting plug plants. Plan for suitable, future grazing or cutting regimes and where appropriate. In appropriate locations, consider the creation of scrub cover to encourage habitat variety through opportunities for e.g. rabbit grazing and disturbance. Within these habitats, scrub can also play an important role as part of an overall mosaic and supports certain stages of lifecycles for different species. Look for opportunities to create and manage scrub if appropriate to the site conditions and local species. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): grassland, woodland, heathland or wetland with secondary code 26
		PM30 (mapped)	**Create new areas of habitat that contain a matrix of habitat types including small woodland patches, scattered trees, scrub, and grassland.** Create new areas of habitat that include (but are not limited to) a mix of trees, scrub, and grassland. This could be achieved through tree planting, natural

418			regeneration techniques, or other options that achieve the end result. This action is often suitable near woodland edges to create a transition habitat between woodland and grassland. Creating these areas can support both woodland and grassland species. New large areas of this kind of mosaic habitat can also be created by practicing light grazing across a large area and allowing natural processes to take place. The species richness of the grassland components can be increased using species-rich grassland creation techniques such as overseeding, spreading green hay, and/or plug planting. Create and manage scrub in a manner that complements the site and local species. Where appropriate, allow varied pockets of scrub to grow up at different points in time to create a variety of ages, retaining any older or old scrub which supports particular invertebrate communities. See this guide on scrub management.
		PM31 (countywide)	**Create new orchards or restore orchards in areas where there used to be traditional orchards, using a diverse range of trees.** Create orchards by planting and growing fruiting trees and plan for their management. This can be done in both urban and rural areas. Choose tree types that are well suited to the site's conditions including local or heritage varieties if possible and consider varieties that could tolerate future climates. Orchard trees can vary by rootstock, fruit type, and variety. Where possible, aim to create a diverse orchard habitat with varieties that differ from, but complement, neighbouring orchards. Orchards should have a management plan for the long-term care of the trees as well as any species like birds or insects that are found in or near to the orchard. Additionally, outline the purpose of fruit that is produced, whether for people, biodiversity, or both. There are examples of projects that support people to create community orchards and this page contains further details. The species richness of the grassland components can also be created or enhanced using species-rich grassland creation techniques such as overseeding, spreading green hay, and/or plug planting. See a guide from Natural England about orchard creation here. Target habitats: UK Habs codes grassland or woodland with secondary code 27

P14 419	**Create more, large, connected, functioning areas of ecosystems that contain a matrix of diverse habitat types within them to create rich, biodiverse natural spaces**. Wider benefits: Food production (wild), Wood production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction, Pollination, Pest control.	PM32 (countywide)	**Create new areas that contain a mix of habitats suitable to the site to benefit wildlife.** In suitable spaces, use natural processes of succession and techniques that mimic this to produce complex mosaic habitat types. These, ideally large, areas are encouraged to include a variety of suitable habitat types for the area, possibly including but not limited to: grazed grassland, scrub, trees, open water, wetland, rivers, and/or woodland. Consider allowing natural processes like natural colonisation of trees to create a complex mosaic of new habitats that are encouraged to be wild, diverse, and connected. Consider reducing intensive human management of habitats in these spaces and consider utilising traditional breeds and species which are hardy and well suited to conservation grazing or creating dynamic habitats that support biodiversity. The species richness of the grassland components can be increased using species-rich grassland creation techniques such as overseeding, spreading green hay, and/or plug planting. This action could be delivered at a range of scales across a range of locations, not all locations can fit on this list. Some examples were regularly mentioned by people and organisations including: Gibbets Close Hill, Witney and the Bernwood Otmoor Ray area where proposals are underway to create a strategic landscape-scale project to connect the Otmoor, Bernwood, and Ray Nature Recovery Area across county borders.
P15	**Improve the abundance and range of species that need specific additional potential measures within mixed habitats including wood pasture, parkland, orchards, and open mosaic habitats.** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pollination, Pest control.	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see the potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from these habitat types. Some of these measures are mapped.

Woodlands			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P16 420	**Enhance and manage existing woodlands to achieve structural diversity and good ecological condition enabling woodlands to act as a rich source of biodiversity for wildlife to disperse across the landscape.** Wider benefits: Food production (wild), Wood production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction, Pollination, Pest control.	PM33 (mapped)	**Enhance existing woodlands to achieve a diverse structure and good ecological condition, suitable for the woodland type, age, and nearby species**. Create and implement a management plan for existing woodlands that include strategies to enhance biodiversity and ecological condition. Include plans for managing older trees, planning for succession by younger trees, enhancing genetic diversity within trees and shrubs to combat pests and disease, specific actions to support local wildlife, and actions to manage unsustainable populations of invasive species. Enhancement work should aim to achieve healthy woodlands that have a diversity of tree ages, woodland structure, woodland edges, rides, glades, and ground flora. Aim to have shrub and scrub species planted or growing around the edges of the woodland perimeter and in open areas within the woodland (if appropriate to the site's flora and fauna). Create and manage rides and glades within woodlands to increase light penetration to the ground in suitable locations and achieve wide, open areas with zones that achieve a variety of shade and ground cover. Avoid overshading the ground flora and allow periodic disturbance along rides to support ground flora to set seeds (can be achieved through time-limited, controlled grazing by cattle/horses). Position rides and glades to encourage greater continuity and connectivity of grassland and grassland edge habitats. Avoid compacting or waterlogging the soil to retain

421			important fungal networks. Along woodland edges, create buffer areas of grassland margins with scrub transition areas where suitable for the area. Consider using areas affected by significant diseases to create glades and open spaces within woodlands. Create, retain, and mange ponds and areas of water within woodlands aiming to achieve greater continuity and connectivity of water corridors across habitats. Consider rewetting woodlands, where appropriate by blocking drainage which can support invertebrate populations and provide more food for insectivorous birds. See woodland management toolkits, advice, and the UK Forestry Standard to better understand specific requirements that may apply to your woodland. This action is suitable for all woodlands. Diverse woodlands can be found across Oxfordshire with particular examples in Wychwood Forest, Waterperry, Shabbington Woods, Shotover, and Brasenose Wood but there are many more. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland beech and yew woodland (w1c), wet woodland (w1d), lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f), other broad-leaved woodland (w1g). National Vegetation Classification W1, W5, W6, W7, W8, W10, W12, W13, W14, W15, W16
		PM34 (countywide)	**Manage populations of species that reach unsustainable levels so that existing woodlands can achieve good ecological condition to support a diverse range of species**. This includes managing grey squirrels, deer populations, rhododendron and any invasive species or species that reach unsustainable numbers. Where possible, collaborate across land ownership boundaries to undertake effective management techniques that could control such species at a scale that could help to support the natural regrowth of woodlands and regeneration of new young trees. Consider the use of fencing, tree protection, sustainable population control, and emerging new techniques using relevant professionals or organisations.
		PM35 (mapped)	**Enhance existing ancient woodland to improve structural diversity, woodland condition, and benefit local species**.

422			Create management plans specific to the particular ancient woodland. Aim to enhance structural diversity where appropriate by creating or maintaining rides, glades, and edges in suitable locations (use the UK Forestry Standard to best understand what's appropriate for your site). Periodically thin 'high forest' type woodlands where/when necessary. These are woodlands with mostly tall trees and little to no understory (a lower growing set of trees, shrubs and plants). Prioritise techniques that minimise soil compaction to help safeguard the ancient soil communities, structures, and floristic diversity that are unique to ancient woodlands. In addition, undertake best practice woodland management techniques that support local species. Apply this measure sensitively, aiming for an outcome that reflects the local context and which complements the history and character of the particular woodland (as well as historical features or structures). Whilst some are mapped for particular focus, this was also felt to be an important, beneficial action for all existing ancient woodlands which currently cover 3.4% of Oxfordshire. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): woodland habitats with secondary code 28
		PM36 (mapped)	**Enhance the biodiversity value of existing ancient woodlands that are 'plantations on ancient woodland sites' (PAWS).** Create a management plan specific for the site to steadily remove plantation trees from 'plantations on ancient woodland sites' (PAWS) and restore the woodland ecosystem back towards native woodland trees where possible. A sudden removal of all plantation trees could damage relict ancient woodland features like any remaining veteran trees and/or ground flora. Selective felling of plantation trees around any such remaining, relict features can support the survival of veteran trees, encourage natural regeneration and floristic diversity, and/or prevent overshading within the woodlands depending on the species present. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): woodland habitats with secondary codes 28
		PM37	**Enhance and/or create areas of active, worked coppice in Oxfordshire**.

423		(countywide)	Various tree species can be coppiced on a rotation. Coppices offer important nesting and foraging sites within woodlands and can support unique and rare species. Manage existing coppices to retain flowering trees and shrubs within worked coppice compartments to benefit woodland species. Reintroduce coppicing particularly to suitable areas of historic, derelict sites where coppicing was previously practiced. Create new areas of coppice by planting (or enabling the growth of) a variety of new trees with a plan to manage these on a specified coppice rotation e.g. long, short, or a specific cycle (usually defined by a number of years). This can take into account the need of particular species as/when they emerge. For new and existing coppices, plan the management around any local species to best accommodate a range of species. For example, some wildlife particularly depend upon young, dense, coppices of willow, aspen, and poplar with areas that are allowed to build up deadwood and become less 'tidy' to support those species. Other coppice species include but are not limited to; lime, ash, oak, sweet chestnut, hazel and many more. Plant or retain flowering trees and dense shrub layers within worked coppice compartments to support invertebrates. All remaining derelict coppice or existing coppice areas could be important locations to deliver this action and there are a few exemplar coppice habitats in Oxfordshire including on MOD sites near Bicester. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): woodlands with secondary code 210 or 211
P17	**Create new, diverse woodlands in Oxfordshire that mature into good ecological condition and are managed to support biodiversity.** Wider benefits: Food production (wild), Wood production, Recreation and leisure,	PM38 (mapped)	**Create new woodland by planting trees (or enabling their natural regeneration) using species that are suited to the soil type and site conditions**. Create and manage new woodland that complements the landscape across a range of habitats and contains a variety of tree species. Produce a long-term plan to manage the habitat with the aim to achieve a good ecological condition, this should include any relevant management in the early years as the woodland

424	Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction, Pollination, Pest control		establishes. To establish new woodland, trees may be planted but particularly near existing and ancient woodlands, consider using natural regeneration/colonisation or directly drilling locally sourced seeds to establish young trees. All techniques will still require suitable forms of protection (guards or fencing) as appropriate to the site. Protection should aim to allow the new woodland to successfully establish whilst minimising damage from grazing and disturbance. If the new woodland is isolated from other woodlands, consider introducing locally sourced field-layer flora appropriate to the site conditions (this must be legally obtained and appropriate to the woodland). Prior to creation, design new woodland planting plans to achieve structural diversity in the future woodland. Plan to create a variety of possible components including rides, glades, open areas, dense shrubs, scrub components, and irregular edges. Aim for shrubs and scrub to grow within, and at the edges of woodland. Create a management plan to maintain a variety of these components as habitat niches within the woodland, including a plan for succession by younger trees over time to create a variety of tree ages within the woodland. Trees could be planted or allowed to grow naturally using protection from browsing animals over a number of years. If planting trees, consider tree species that suit the soil type for that area and which are likely to survive in a changing climate, with decision being made using the latest climatic predictions. The creation of new woodland is particularly beneficial in areas that adjoin existing woodland and especially adjoining ancient woodland to make existing woodlands larger, or to join up existing areas of woodland. See this woodland creation guide from the Woodland Trust. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland beech and yew woodland (w1c), wet woodland (w1d), lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f), other broad-leaved woodland (w1g). National Vegetation Classification W1, W5, W6, W7, W8, W10, W12, W13, W14, W15, W16
		PM39 (countywide)	**Use low intervention woodland creation techniques including natural regeneration where appropriate, especially near existing ancient woodland**.

425			Consider, and where appropriate opt for natural regeneration techniques as a method for the creation of new woodland habitats or mosaic habitats that include trees and wooded areas. If the site is isolated from existing woodlands and seed sources, then direct seeding could be an alternative option to establish new trees instead of planting young trees. Whilst waiting for the seeds/young trees to grow and establish, ensure they have sufficient levels of protection from grazing and disturbance to allow the woodland area to establish. If tree guards are necessary, consider effective degradable or reusable tree protection options over non-biodegradable, single-use options.
		PM40 (mapped)	**Create new areas of wet woodland along rivers, river corridors, and riparian land as appropriate.** In suitable wet areas such as river corridors, spring lines, and riparian land, plant (or allow the growth of) a variety of wet woodland trees along river corridors or as areas of wet woodland. Plan to create and manage open areas within the woodland and consider planting willow and alder species. If water flows have previously been diverted away from the woodland, or if water levels were artificially lowered, seek advice about opportunities to restore water flows or groundwater levels to rewet suitable woodlands and/or allow wet woodland to develop. Wet woodland creation can offer benefits to help 'slow the flow' of water during high rainfall flood events (helping to mitigate flooding) and can regulate and improve water quality across the landscape. If the new woodland is isolated from other woodlands, consider introducing locally sourced field-layer flora appropriate to the site conditions (this must be legally obtained and appropriate to the woodland). Some locations were mentioned by people and organisations thought this is not an exhaustive list. Areas included; around flooded gravel pits, Kirtlington Park, Gallos Brook, Priory Mill, Chipping Norton, areas adjoining Radley Pits Local Wildlife Site, Burcot, Little Wittenham, and Shillingford. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): wet woodland w1d (w1d5) National Vegetation Classification W1, W5, W6, W7.

P18	**Improve the abundance and range of woodland species that need specific additional potential measures** Wider benefits: Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pest control.	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see the potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from habitats within this type of environment. Some of these measures are mapped.
Rivers, streams, ponds, standing water and wetland habitats			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P19	**Improve water quality within freshwater habitats across the county to support biodiversity by making clean, healthy, and plentiful water more available in Oxfordshire (rivers, canals, lakes, ponds, ditches, reedbeds, and more).** Wider benefits: Fish production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Water quality regulation.	PM41 (countywide)	**Improve water quality through action(s) that help to reduce or stop pollution of freshwater habitats** This includes but is not limited to: 1. Timely and appropriate upgrades to the sewerage network and sewage treatment, 2. Nature based solutions like constructed wetlands, 3. Working in catchment partnerships and with authorities such as Natural England and the Environment Agency to reduce surface water pollution from agricultural runoff. This action is also of great importance in areas where people live (in both urban and rural areas) where water corridors often act as key corridors that connect areas of the environment. Water courses, lakes, and other freshwater habitats are culturally and recreationally significant to people in Oxfordshire.

			To achieve widespread, good water quality, actions need to happen across the whole landscape (across catchments) anywhere where rainwater falls or where water moves on its way into the local rivers. This measure can be delivered by a range of partners and is where local Catchment Partnerships and their projects play a key role in delivering improved water quality across the county. Work with planning authorities, landowners and the water company (Thames Water) to increase the number of waterbodies in good ecological status via improving water quality. This may be through targeted, evidence-based upgrades to sewage treatment works, nature-based solutions like constructed wetlands, or encouraging landowners to adopt water friendly farming practices which minimise run-off.
P20 427	**Enhance and manage existing freshwater habitats in Oxfordshire to achieve good ecological condition and support biodiversity through clean, healthy, and plentiful water (rivers, canals, lakes, ponds, ditches, and reedbeds).** Improving the condition of rivers and freshwater habitats emerged as the top priority for people across Oxfordshire. Wider benefits: Fish production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Cooling and shading.	PM42 (mapped)	**Restore river diversity and manage rivers and their riparian (riverside) habitats to achieve good ecological condition that supports species**. This refers to the restoration of river habitat diversity to support a wide range of species. Undertake restoration work to restore structurally diverse rivers and riverside habitats (including banks and marginal vegetation) which support a wide range of species. Techniques to enhance and restore river physical habitat condition and biodiversity will be site-specific and will depend on the degree of modification and the ecological context, as well as river typology. Expert advice should be sought (e.g. from the Environment Agency and local catchment partnerships), and appropriate permits obtained if required Techniques to enhance river condition and biodiversity vary and will be site-specific. The techniques may include raising channel beds of rivers to reconnect with their floodplain and to form a habitat matrix of wetlands, riparian woodlands and wet meadow wildflower grasslands, all of which can buffer and reduce the impact of pollution into rivers. This may be achieved through a variety of interventions which could range in intensity from the use of machinery and import of gravels, through to establishing ecosystem engineer species, in this case beavers, which if re-established in the county have a unique ability to manipulate riparian habitats. Consider de-culverting, removing artificial banks, and techniques to naturalise

428			modified watercourse channels. Within rivers, improve connectivity especially for fish, by the removal of barriers to fish passage (and thereby improving instream habitat), or where this is not possible provide fish bypass channels or other fish pass solutions to allow fish to migrate and utilise upstream habitats. Seek expert advice on the most appropriate fish passage solutions. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Rivers - priority habitat (r2a)
		PM43 (countywide)	**Restore, create and enhance marginal habitats** Marginal habitats on rivers are vital ecological features which can be important for much of the wildlife associated with them; ensure appropriate management of these habitats so that they are retained (often requiring no management at all), and seek to create/restore them where they are absent due to artificial vertical bank structures and steep-sided profiles, taking expert advice as to what is appropriate on a site-specific basis.
		PM44 (countywide)	**Manage operational canals to enhance (or maintain good condition of) habitats or wildlife corridors through Oxfordshire**. Identify opportunities to support more species to live, forage, or move alongside canals. This could include creating or dedicating areas that are not disturbed and maintaining or restoring marginal vegetation, bank-side scrub, and/or woodland in suitable locations that don't interfere with the navigation. This will support the species that use canals as habitats and as wildlife corridors. Guidance for supporting biodiversity along canals can be found through the Canal & River Trust. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Canals (r1e)
		PM45 (mapped)	**Enhance the condition (or maintain a good condition) of lakes in Oxfordshire**. Implement good management techniques across lakes in Oxfordshire to support local species. Across lakes in Oxfordshire, take actions to minimise the input of

429			polluted and nutrient-rich water to the lake from surrounding land-uses, establish and protect marginal habitats, establish quiet zones for wildlife on multiple-use lakes, and if relevant consider how fish-stocking and angling activities can be undertaken in a way which is compatible with the wildlife interest. This measure would contribute significantly towards the priority if taken in 'mesotrophic lakes' which are lakes with lower levels of nutrients than 'Eutrophic Standing Waters' and can therefore be particularly rich in plant and invertebrate life but the measure is relevant for all lakes. There are only a few examples of mesotrophic lakes in Oxfordshire found mainly amongst the old gravel pits of the Lower Windrush Valley. Typically, lakes are equal to, or larger than 2 hectares, whilst ponds are typically smaller than 2 hectares (Uk Habs). Therefore, this action has been mapped to standing waterbodies that are 2 hectares or more in size. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): eutrophic lakes (r1a), mesotrophic lakes (r1b)
		PM46 (mapped)	**Enhance existing ponds by undertaking sensitive management and restoration of ponds and pond complexes to improve biodiversity and water quality.** Manage ponds through low intervention techniques that cause minimal damage to local species and where possible, incorporate grazing to manage vegetation. Pond management and restoration is very individual to the type, age, and structure of existing ponds. Through management, aim to retain and enhance existing positive features of the particular pond. Further management techniques should aim to create diversity in the pond structure, depths, edges, shape, vegetation growth, and areas of shade, often keeping the south side more open and sunny. Techniques also depend on any local species that rely on the pond. It is helpful to biodiversity to create habitat buffers around suitable existing ponds. The buffer areas can contain varied vegetation to offer cover for species. Additionally, consider incorporating deadwood into and around existing ponds to support biodiversity. Aim to maintain or create a buffer of low-intensity land use around the pond as large as possible/appropriate aiming to balance the buffer size with other land-use in the

430			area. For 'priority ponds', Freshwater Habitats Trust advise a buffer of 50 metres (or more) where possible. See guidance about how to manage existing ponds here. Target habitats: (UK Habs codes) Standing open water (r1) with secondary code 40, ponds (priority habitat)
		PM47 (countywide)	**Enhance (or maintain a good quality of) existing reedbeds to create a varied vegetation structure that supports reedbed species**. Well-functioning reedbeds can clean water before it enters rivers and streams and are a rare habitat type that supports reedbed-specialist species. Most reedbeds require cutting, grazing, or management of different parts of the reedbed over a cycle of e.g. 4 – 7 years to create a variety of ages and structures that support the health of the habitat and species. Normally no more than 5% of the area is recommended to be scrub or young trees to avoid losing the reedbed to ecological succession. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): reedbeds (f2e). National Vegetation Classification (NVC) S4
P21	**Enhance and manage Oxfordshire's chalk rivers and streams to achieve ecologically healthy examples of this special and globally rare habitat type.** Wider benefits: Fish production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Water quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.	PM48 (mapped)	**Enhance, restore, or manage chalk rivers and streams to achieve (or maintain a good condition of) physical habitat and water quality.** Undertake appropriate physical habitat restoration of damaged chalk stream habitat seeking expert assessments and advice on the most appropriate techniques, including relevant species actions such as the removal of barriers to fish passage wherever possible. Establish buffer zones of un-intensive land-use and aim to establish diverse wildlife habitat running along the banks of the chalk stream corridors (preferably extending out a minimum of 10 metres either side of the bank) and seek to reduce pressures from agricultural management particularly in chalk stream headwaters. Advice can be sought from the Environment Agency, local catchment partnerships, the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project and from the CaBa chalk stream hub.

			In Oxfordshire there are a number of chalk streams and action should be taken across them all, some examples of chalk streams include (but are not limited to) Letcombe Brook, Holton Brook, Chalgrove Brook, Lewknor Brook, Cuttle Brook, Hendred Brook, Ginge Brook and Lockinge Brook. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): rivers (priority habitat) (r2a) with secondary code 51. National Vegetation Classification A17.
P22 431	**Enhance and manage ditches in Oxfordshire more sensitively to create wildlife-rich habitats that support biodiversity**. Wider benefits: Water supply, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Cooling and shading.	PM49 (countywide)	**Create, improve, and manage the variety of ditches across Oxfordshire to benefit biodiversity in appropriate locations**. Ditches vary from dry to wet and creating and maintaining ditches that hold water throughout the year holds greater value for biodiversity. For existing ditch systems, adopt best practice management measures to maximise their ecological diversity. Create new ditch habitats in appropriate locations e.g. in conjunction with the restoration of floodplain grazing marsh, and buffer ditch habitats with low-intensity land use or buffer strips in order to benefit water quality and maximise opportunities for biodiversity. See management guides and advice which recommend restoring ditch profiles (including on farms) and rotationally (not annually) managing ditches with vegetation buffers that are managed sensitively. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): habitats with secondary code 50
P23	**Enhance and manage fen habitats in Oxfordshire through appropriate management techniques to achieve good ecological condition of fens and support a wide range of (often rare) species in this irreplaceable habitat.** Wider benefits: Water supply, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge,	PM50 (mapped)	**Enhance existing fens through appropriate management and restoration to achieve good ecological condition.** Fens are an irreplaceable type of habitat and they are only possible on unique geology types that happen to be found across Oxfordshire making this county a national hotspot for fen habitats. However, many fens have been lost as land use changed, management stopped, and scrub and woodlands took over. Most of the known remaining fens are in poor condition and require focused effort to recover their condition. Oxfordshire's fens support a range of particularly rare species which are at risk of becoming extinct from the UK.

432	Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Cooling and shading.		Additionally, fens are a type of freshwater peat-forming wetland and the production of new peat is extremely efficient at pulling carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, converting it into living plants and their dead remains into carbon-rich deposits in the soil. Restoring and maintaining habitats, particularly fens is essential if we are to maintain the effectiveness of these carbon sinks (Wildlife and Wetland Trust). There are two types of fen habitats and they have different management needs. The two types are (1) surface water-fed fens and (2) groundwater fens (sometimes called spring- or seepage fens). Before starting management, assess the fen type to distinguish which type it is and then plan and deliver management based on this. (1) **Surface water-fed fens** typically benefit from cutting and collecting a third of the vegetation annually and cutting the next third in the following year, and so on. In this way, you manage a third of the site each year on rotation. Graze, cut, and/or rake pond marginal vegetation to ensure light, low nutrient, shallow pools and wet runnels. Additionally, scrub tends to require management to allow some but avoid taking over the fen pools. Scattered bushes and trees such as sallows can provide a valuable resource for invertebrates. This is the more common type of fen often found in floodplains with mixed, tall wetland vegetation, see detailed guidance here. (2) **Groundwater fed (seepage) fens** rely on very low nutrient, high calcium, alkaline water from underground limestone or chalk water (aquifers). This base-rich spring-fen type is extremely rare (see UK map here) and a special habitat in Oxfordshire, found especially in the South, Vale, and Oxford City. These fens benefit from grazing or cutting (and removing the vegetation) every year to maintain a short structure that mimics historic grazing. Expert hydrological advice will benefit the management plan of these fen types, as nearby land use within the ground and surface water catchments has significant impacts on the health and condition of the fen. Groundwater fens have much rarer and at-risk plant and invertebrate species which will simply disappear if not cut every year. A detailed management and restoration guide for these fens can be found here. Freshwater Habitats Trust have an

433			Oxfordshire Fens Project to work with communities and landowners across the county, get in touch for advice and support. See some of Oxfordshire fen locations and read more about fens here. For all fens, aim to allow the production of a continuous supply of deadwood (of various sizes) to benefit a range of species (invertebrates and fungal species). Consider which time of year management will be undertaken on fens based on any rare species (invertebrates, plants, and others) that are present to allow them to emerge and reproduce. Whilst the LNRS has mapped this action onto the currently known fen locations, these measures are still a priority to deliver on any fens that are identified in the future if data changes after the publication of the LNRS (including ghost fens which occur where fens have been 'lost' to tree and scrub growth). Oxfordshire has a number of fens that are being worked on by local people and organisations to create exemplar habitats. This includes (but is not limited to) Cothill Fen, Lye Valley Fen, and Hinksey Heights Fen. You can see more about Oxfordshire's Fen Project here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): lowland fens (f2a). National Vegetation Classification: Swamp: S3,S5,S6,S7,S8,S12,S13,S14,S19,S22,S23,S28,Tall-herb fen: S25 Fen Mire and Fen Meadow M13,M22,M24
		PM51 (mapped)	**Manage fen buffer areas to create and enhance areas of rough vegetation that help to enhance the condition of the fen habitat** Around fens, aim to achieve a 10-metre buffer zone of rough vegetation or low earth bunds to help enhance the health of the fen habitat and/or in this buffer area, aim to achieve low/no applications of nutrients. Many fens may benefit from wider buffer areas if possible and achievable. Whilst the first 5 to 10 metres of the buffer zone has been reported as being the most important for nutrient removal, the optimum width of the buffer depends on the slope of the area, the size of the catchment, the type of soil, and the degree of enrichment. More details can be found here in the fen management handbook.

434			
		PM52 (countywide)	**Where appropriate, retain and/or create 'fen carr', a wet woodland fen habitat that tends to be made up from 'sallow' willow species and alder.** In appropriate locations create, maintain, or enhance fen carr habitats. Within fen carr habitats, maintain or create an open structure by utilising grazing or other suitable techniques to ensure the existence of open areas within wet woodlands. Fen carr habitats can be suitable on floodplains which have historically held fen carr and which don't hold strong potential to become biodiverse floodplain meadows. There are situations where the retention/creation of fen carr may not be suitable, for example if the fen carr is, instead, a tree-colonised ghost spring (groundwater) seepage fen that could benefit from restoration. The initial step is to accurately identify the fen type in order to understand whether to retain/create/remove fen carr. For assistance or advice about fen carr, contact Freshwater Habitats Trust who can support with fen identification. Target habitats (UK Habs Codes): Alder woodland on floodplains (w1d5). National Vegetation Classification W1, W5.
		PM53 (countywide)	**Ensure that fens in Oxfordshire retain continued, appropriate flow rates of clean water into fen habitats to support their ecological condition** Fens are some of the most botanically diverse habitats in England and are mainly irrigated by groundwater discharge from springs and seepages, with the water table close to the surface all year round. Without clean and consistent flows of water, fens cannot survive. Prioritise, maintain, and enhance the ecological condition of fens by ensuring a consistent flow of clean water into fen habitats. The groundwater catchment of any fen should not be contaminated with nutrient-rich water. This is particularly important for the rarer spring fens. Catchment sizes can vary for each fen and can spread hundreds of metres out from fens. The best management of the fen groundwater catchment to help clean the water supply to the spring fen by creating, maintaining, or enhancing areas of permanent grasslands like hay meadows or grazed pasture with no-inputs. You can read about fen catchment mapping in Oxfordshire here.

P24	**Create more, new (or restored) high quality freshwater habitats in Oxfordshire including ponds, lakes, reedbeds, and marsh.** Wider benefits: Fish production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Cooling and shading, Pest control.	PM54 (mapped)	**Create wetland habitats that contain a matrix of various habitat types suitable for the site (e.g. wet grassland, ponds, ditches, hedgerows, trees, or wet woodland)** Restore and enhance degraded or lost floodplain wetland habitats by restoring rivers to improve hydrological connectivity with floodplains, managing water levels where appropriate, and creating new habitats and features such as ponds, ditches, wet woodland, trees, hedges and more habitats suitable as part of a wetland matrix. Connect existing floodplain wetlands by the creation of new wetlands to act as stepping stones for wildlife and increase the overall habitat available for key wetland species. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Fen, marsh, swamp, grassland, rivers, lakes and wet woodland with floodplain wetland mosaic secondary code 55
435		PM55 (mapped)	**Create new, varied ponds in suitable locations across all habitat types to increase biodiversity and create more clean water habitats**. Creating ponds in areas away from pollution offers one of the quickest ways to bring clean water back into the landscape (FHT). Create ponds that are varied in structure, sun exposure, locations, and shape. Within each pond, create a variety of depths and types of pond edges including a gradual, shallow bank to allow animals into and out of the pond. Allow plants to grow naturally at pond edges with piles of stone, deadwood, and/or areas of longer vegetation near to ponds. When creating multiple ponds, create them at different points in time so that landscapes have older ponds, younger ponds, and ponds that are allowed to dry/die out. Prevent ponds becoming overgrown by tall, dominant reeds and sedges. Maintain these ponds to allow a variety of sun exposure with areas of no shade (especially on the southern side of the pond) and include deadwood within ponds. See further guidance here. FHT recommend creating 10 new 'priority ponds' per every 100 hectares of habitat creation. Across Oxfordshire, ponds offer great value to biodiversity including exemplar habitats at gravel pits sites and sites like Otmoor. Pond and wetland

436			creation can also be designed to aid the management of water through the county offering wider benefits to people and farm businesses (preventing flooding and storing water). Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Standing water (r1) with secondary code 40 ponds (priority habitat), other temporary ponds and scrapes (r1f6)
		PM56 (countywide)	**Create more reedbed habitat at suitable locations to provide habitat for reedbed specialists (often as part of larger wetland mosaics)** Create new reedbeds in suitable locations. Reedbeds are wetland areas where common reed is dominant; looking at areas where reeds already grow is a good indicator of a suitable location. Reedbeds can filter potentially polluted water from settlements before it is discharged to rivers. This habitat type is typically found in river floodplains and can exist as reed swamp (flooded all year) or reed fen (flooded periodically). Reeds are often used to supply thatch. Often created within floodplain grazing marsh to complement the overall wetland habitat mosaic. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): reedbeds (f2e). National Vegetation Classification (NVC) S4
		PM57 (countywide)	**Enhance any existing fen, marsh and swamp wetland habitat areas.** Enhance and maintain wetland habitat areas to achieve a variety of appropriate vegetation types and habitat elements that are suitable to both the area and to the source, supply, and flow of freshwater. Aim to achieve a diversity of edges, structures, and include areas of open water where suitable for the site. More information on the management of fen, marsh, and swamp habitats can be found here. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Fen, marsh, swamp, rivers, lakes with floodplain wetland mosaic secondary code 55
P25	**Create, enhance and manage habitats within Oxfordshire's**	PM58 (mapped)	**Create areas of new good quality grazing marsh and enhance (or maintain a good condition) of existing floodplain grazing marsh.**

437	**floodplains including wet grasslands and wetland habitats to achieve biodiverse habitats that support a rich array of species. Link and connect these habitats by creating and managing wildlife corridors along rivers and streams, providing natural flood management services and improved water quality.** Wider benefits: Food production, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Pollination.		Floodplain grazing marsh benefits from management that allows it to be periodically covered by shallow standing water. These habitats can often be found within, around, or near to a mix of other wetland habitat types. Found close to water, floodplain grazing marsh habitats have ditches running through them which require sensitive, rotational management to support species. Within the management plan for grazing marsh, aim to achieve a varied vegetational structure with appropriate levels of rush cover to support breeding waders and a diversity of ground cover including patches of bare ground and pockets of scrub to provide a broad range of niches for invertebrates and other species. These sites require light grazing (not overgrazing) to maintain plant diversity and cattle are typically a particularly good option. Avoid draining these habitats and instead aim to maintain water levels so that they are close to the field level throughout the year with natural and steady variation above and below that level throughout the year. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): grassland, wetland or rivers and lakes with secondary code 19.
P26	**Enhance and manage 'riparian land' (the land running along the sides of our rivers and streams) to achieve good ecological condition to benefit wildlife, enhance freshwater habitats, and create joined-up corridors of connectivity through Oxfordshire.** Wider benefits: Fish production, Recreation and leisure, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.	PM59 (countywide)	**Create and manage biodiverse habitat alongside riverbanks to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and offer a corridor to enable wildlife to move along rivers, banks, and watercourses.** Enhance habitats and biodiversity along riverbanks by creating vegetative buffers and, where suitable, plant (or allow the growth of) new trees that are well suited to the soils alongside the river (this can include but is not limited to willow, alder, birch, and poplar). Consider and plan for the future management of these trees and vegetation. This action has the ability to create a corridor of connected habitats and can often be appropriate along towpaths and pathways. This action can be undertaken in both urban and rural settings to improve the condition and diversity of land alongside rivers and streams benefitting both people and wildlife.

P27	**Improve the abundance and range of freshwater species that rely on rivers, streams, standing water, and wetland habitats and need specific additional potential measures.** Wider benefits: Fish production, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pest control	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see the potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from habitats within this type of environment. Some of these measures are mapped.
Deadwood			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P28	**Retain more deadwood across all habitat types in Oxfordshire to support a wide range of species.** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Carbon storage, Pollination, Pest control.	PM60 (countywide)	**Across all habitat types that have trees, retain dead, decaying, and/or dying wood in the environment where it is safe to do so (including deadwood in water).** Aim to retain and add new deadwood (in a range of sizes and ages) into all habitat types and expose the deadwood to a range of conditions (submerged in water, wet, dry, damp, heavily shaded, partial shade, and sunny open areas). Retain deadwood in a variety of structures; standing deadwood (upright trees, trunks, or stumps that are dead or dying), fallen deadwood (wood on the floor), and deadwood branches on alive trees. Hollows within standing trees support a wide range of species. Avoid using fungicides around these trees to allow and encourage fungal growth on this deadwood. Manage trees and branches using techniques that can enable you to regularly add new deadwood to the environment. Where

			necessary, reduce dead and dying tree height in stages to make the tree safe & prolong the presence of dead and dying wood in this location. Manage deadwood in accordance with any species priorities for the site. Where safe to do so, leave dead and dying ash trees in situ. Where ash trees have to be removed, look for opportunities to retain standing deadwood and/or stumps. Implement measures to introduce veteran tree characteristics to a range of tree ages and species.
Hedgerows and hedgerow trees			
Code 439	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P29	**Enhance and sympathetically manage hedgerows and hedgerow trees to achieve good ecological condition and support biodiversity.** Wider benefits: Food production, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Pollination, Pest control.	PM61 (countywide)	**Manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees to enhance their condition and longevity to benefit biodiversity.** Refer to hedgerow guidance and organisations like Hedgelink. Allow hedgerows to grow to a thick and tall condition or to be laid into appropriate or traditional 'profiles' (shapes and designs). Instead of cutting all hedges annually, consider moving to a two- or three-year management regime for suitable hedgerows, or longer where possible. Where possible (on sites with lots of hedges) ensure that the 2–3-year management regime is not undertaken on all the hedges on a holding at the same time. Retain hedgerow trees for as long as is safe to do so and, where suitable, manage tree-less hedgerows in a way that allows new hedgerow trees to emerge at suitable intervals. Lay or coppice suitable hedgerows on a long rotation to regenerate them when they show signs of becoming gappy. Aim to trim hedges after berries have been taken by wintering birds and avoid hedge cutting or

			trimming during bird nesting periods. Retain dead, dying, and decaying wood where safe and practicable in hedges and hedgerow trees. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5)
P30 440	**Create more hedgerows across Oxfordshire to support biodiversity**. Wider benefits: Food production, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Carbon storage, Air quality regulation, Cooling and shading, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Pollination, Pest control.	PM62 (countywide)	**Plant, or allow the growth of, new and diverse hedgerows.** Establish a diverse range of hedgerow species, particularly native species and those adapted to the particular location or range of climatic conditions. Plan to grow and manage hedgerow trees within the hedgerow at suitable intervals to increase the connectivity of these habitats for species. Consider planting native fruiting hedgerow species that provide nectar in spring and fruit in summer and autumn; for example, hawthorn, blackthorn, and grey willow would support a wide range of rare species and establishing Wild Pear (Pyrus pyraster) could help to re-establish this rare species in the county. Plan for maintenance and management whilst the young hedgerow establishes. Aim to enhance connectivity by planting and establishing new hedgerows so that they join up to existing habitats, especially any existing hedgerows or patches of semi-natural habitat to promote the movement of species through the landscape and offer a corridor. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5)

Invasive species

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P31 441	**Reduce damage to local species and habitats from invasive species or unsustainably high populations of species. Reduce the spread of invasive or problematic species across all necessary habitat types.** Wider benefits: Wood production.	PM63 (countywide)	**Slow, stop, and/or reverse the spread of invasive species that compromise the health of habitats in Oxfordshire.** Support or develop initiatives and actions to control or eradicate unsustainably high levels of invasive non-native species throughout all habitat types (including but not limited to, woodlands and freshwater habitats like rivers). If eradication is not possible or appropriate, actions to reduce, slow, or stop the spread of invasive, non-native species should be supported. Actions must be in alignment with the legislation about moving/handling/disposing of species. There is a UK Government list of invasive species which can be seen here. At the time of writing, some of the invasive species that are particularly relevant to Oxfordshire include, but are not limited to: Freshwater-associated species - American Mink, American Signal Crayfish, New Zealand Pygmyweed, and Himalayan Balsam. Woodland-associated species – Grey squirrel, Muntjac deer. Problematic and invasive species are expected to change with future climatic variation and this action should be adapted to the specific, relevant, invasive, or problematic species at the time. More information about what to do and how to record invasive species can be seen here with research and evidence available to read here.

Wider environment – agricultural (improved grassland and arable) and rural landholdings.

Please note, you may wish to refer to priorities for other habitats in the above sections if they are present on your landholdings (e.g. grasslands and scrub, woodlands, rivers, floodplain grazing marsh, orchards, and others).

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P32 442	**Support farm businesses, rural landholdings, and tenant farmers to make more space for nature within the farmed landscape, regenerate healthy soils, incorporate wildlife-rich habitats, include agroforestry, and improve water quality. This would create excellent food/fibre production systems that offer valuable, connected spaces for biodiversity too, enabling species to spread through Oxfordshire's fields, edges, and corridors.** Wider benefits: Food production, Wood production, Water supply, Recreation and leisure, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation,	PM64 (countywide)	**Create and manage graded margins up to hedgerows and dry-stone walls to support birds and other farmland species**. Within fields that have hedges, provide margins that are graded in height (shortest near the field, longest grass at the hedgerow). These graded margins next to a thick hedgerow offer important nesting sites for birds including who seek long grass at hedgerow bases. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): arable field margins (c1a)
		PM65 (countywide)	**Create and manage wide arable field margins and in-field strips as wildflower grassland.** Methods vary and could include rotational mowing regimes to create wide in-field strips or margins (e.g. 3 – 18 metres) which offer cover for small mammals and refuge over winter for invertebrates. Remove arisings as needed to avoid enriching the soils and to avoid losing wildflowers to vigorous grasses. Manage arable fields, their margins, and in-field strips to encourage and retain populations of arable flowers and avoid spraying these areas. Alongside increasing biodiversity in those places, field margins and in-field strips can be positioned to connect to each other within farm holdings or between neighbouring holdings to help species to move

443	Carbon storage, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.		through the landscape. Wide margins are particularly important alongside water courses and ditches to reduce diffuse pollution, erosion and enhance the biodiversity of the water course. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): arable field margins (c1a)
		PM66 (countywide)	**Create and manage field margins to improve and increase biodiversity around fields**. Maximise the diversity of field margins to provide a range of habitats within margins. Aim to vary management of margins to increase diversity. For example, annual cutting of the strip nearest the crop but with less frequent cutting nearer the field boundary. Variety could also be introduced by managing blocks, strips or whole margins at different intervals. In planted margins, tailor the seed mix diversity to include a variety of flowering plants that could provide continued options for pollen and nectar throughout an extended season. Include species in planted margins that are able to tolerate and flower under hotter and drier summers. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): arable field margins (c1a)
		PM67 (countywide)	**Create and improve areas that support rare arable plants on farmland.** If species of arable plants are present, and if it is appropriate for those species, you can support arable plant species on any relevant soil types by disturbing or cultivating some areas of suitable soil (typically each year in autumn) and allowing arable plant seeds to grow in the following years. Minimise or stop the use of herbicides within this area. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): arable fields – cultivated for annual flora (c1c9)
		PM68 (countywide)	**Support farmland birds over winter**. Implement measures to assist farmland birds survive across the hungry gap (mid-February to Mid-April): overwinter stubble, seed-rich winter cover crops using wild bird seed mixtures, unsprayed and unharvested arable headlands, and/or supplementary feeding.

			Target habitats (UK Habs codes): winter stubble (c1c5), arable fields - wild bird mix (c1c6), arable field margins (c1a)
		PM69 (countywide)	**Take action to improve farmland bird nesting success.** Offer and retain nesting and roosting sites for birds including; bird boxes, trees with hollows, standing deadwood, areas of scrub, dense hedges, suitable buildings and barns (including those derelict).
		PM70 (countywide)	**Retain, improve, or create habitat to increase the opportunity for wildlife to move through the landscape (e.g. wildlife corridors).** Improve the connectivity of habitats or of any permanent areas of uncultivated land that support species to move through the landscape. Aim to join up areas of habitat within farms and between neighbouring farms.
P33 444	**Increase biodiversity within farmland soils.** Wider benefits: Food production, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Pest control.	PM71 (countywide)	**Across Oxfordshire's farmland, increase the biodiversity in soils by choosing cultivation practices that can regenerate species and produce healthy soils**. Take actions and use techniques that are suitable to the farm type and location to improve the abundance and health of species that produce good quality soils (e.g. minimum cultivation, cover crops, leys, grazing techniques, and crop rotations). Measure, and aim to improve the health, abundance, and diversity of soil species. Improving soil biodiversity will enhance the structure and quality of the soil enhancing productivity, building carbon content, and improving water retention and infiltration to help reduce runoff and leaving of soil nutrients. The actions to enhance grassland health and condition are described in the grassland section at the top of this document. Target habitats (UK Habs codes): temporary grass and clover leys (c1b), rye-grass and clover ley (c1b5), Legume-rich ley (c1b6), herb-rich ley (c1b7)
P34	**Increase the number, diversity and health of trees on farmland**	PM72 (countywide)	**Plant (or allow the growth of) diverse trees of various ages and types on farmland**.

445	Wider benefits: Wood production, Food production, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Cooling and shading, Pollination, Pest control.		Plant trees, or allow trees to grow up, across different years (successional planting/successional growth) to broaden the age diversity of trees. This could include agroforestry, woodland, standard trees in hedgerows, scrub growth, shelterbelts, silvopasture, individual trees and/or orchards. You could create shelterbelts (windbreaks) made up of trees to protect livestock and crops from inclement weather (see the benefits of trees on arable farms here). Alternatively/additionally, you could incorporate trees or agroforestry into agricultural systems, particularly livestock grazing systems (silvopasture), or alongside crop production (silvoarable systems). This could include trees that can produce a fruit or nut crop (see agroforestry handbook).
		PM73 (countywide)	**Retain and/or plant in-field trees with suitable buffer zones to ensure continuity of open grown trees (live, dead, or dying) that support species across the landscape.** Retain existing trees within the farmed landscape, particularly veteran and ancient trees, and fence off ancient and veteran trees if necessary to protect them and their root zones from soil compaction and/or to enable new trees to grow nearby (see guidance on managing such trees).
P35	**Farm with nature by creating and implementing integrated pest management plans that reduce the need for chemical control of on plants, insects, and/or fungi**. Wider benefits: Food production, Interaction with nature, Pollination, Pest Control.	PM74 (countywide)	**Create a tailored integrated pest management plan to reduce the use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides**. When thinking about how to manage crop pests, plants, and diseases within farmland, implement measures that can support and work with biodiversity to work with nature to produce food (for example, NFU integrated pest management plans)
P36	**Improve the abundance and range of species that need specific additional potential measures within agricultural land.**	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see the potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from habitats within this type of environment. Some of these measures are mapped.

	Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pollination, Pest Control		
Wider environment – Archaeological and heritage assets			
Code	**Priority** In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	**The code of each measure** (and whether they are mapped)	**Potential Measure (PM)** In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P37 446	**Restore and enhance biodiversity across the landscape in a manner that complements the landscape and historical and cultural features.** Wider benefits: Flood protection, Erosion protection, Water quality regulation, Carbon storage, Pollination, Recreation and leisure, Aesthetic value, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place	PM75 (mapped)	**Restore biodiversity around heritage assets and scheduled monuments in a complementary manner.** If appropriate and suitable, take action to create, enhance, or maintain habitats around heritage assets and scheduled monuments. Actions should aim to achieve a good ecological condition to benefit biodiversity and should be undertaken in a manner that is complementary to the heritage feature(s), and not in a way that would cause them damage. Often, but not always, grassland actions are likely to be possible, sometimes other actions may be suitable too. However, this must be checked before plans can be agreed or formalised. Before planning habitat actions on sites with heritage assets, consult with the relevant authorities like the County Council Archaeology team (archaeologydc@oxfordshire.gov.uk) and Historic England.

Wider environment – village, towns, cities and green spaces

Please note, in addition to the measures below, you may also wish to deliver other measures that might be present in your local area (e.g. grasslands, scrub, road verges and road verge nature reserves, woodlands, rivers, orchards, and others). The relevant measures for those habitat types can be found in the above sections of this list.

Code	Priority In bold you will find the priority. A priority is a key outcome to achieve for Oxfordshire. Underneath the priority, you will see wider benefits which could be delivered by achieving each priority.	The code of each measure (and whether they are mapped)	Potential Measure (PM) In bold you will find the potential measure (action) that, if taken, would be expected to contribute towards achieving the priority (left). Underneath the potential measure you will find further information.
P38 447	**Enhance and create more, connected, habitats and spaces for nature in Oxfordshire's villages, towns, and cities to make biodiversity and a connection with nature part of daily life (at home, at work, and in parks and gardens) and to realise the wider benefits of nature in urban areas such as urban cooling, reduce surface water run-off and cleaner air.** Wider benefits: Recreation, Aesthetic value, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Flood regulation, Air quality regulation, Carbon storage, Cooling and shading, Noise reduction, Pollination, Pest control	PM76 (mapped)	**Create and/or manage greenspaces and habitats in urban areas to enhance their condition to benefit wildlife, improve connectivity, and provide wider benefits.** Consider opportunities to create, enhance, or manage habitats and wildlife-friendly features. In and around settlements, various actions can be taken to create and/or enhance greenspaces, and habitats like those listed within this document (above), including but not limited to; grasslands, scrub, road verge nature reserves, orchards, parkland, woodland, mosaic habitats, wetlands, freshwater habitats, and rivers. Many of the sections above have further advice and guidance to help with these actions. Vary the action to be suitable to the scale, size, and type of habitat or greenspace in question as well as any species present or nearby. Any actions taken should also be compatible with the current land-use and should respect community preferences. See Wild Oxfordshire's guidance here for supporting nature on your local patch. In urban environments, prioritise connectivity so that wildlife can more easily move between neighbouring land, and aim to establish a robust ecological network that supports wildlife movement through urban areas, making nature a part of daily life.

448			Actions to benefit biodiversity can also be tailored to deliver important benefits for local communities, including addressing inequitable distribution of environmental determinants of health and wellbeing', and improving climate resilience. Such actions could include innovative solutions like green (or brown) roofs, biodiverse swales, or rainwater gardens to mitigate the impacts of flooding. Other actions could include the use of vegetation cover to provide shade to mitigate excess heat and to filter particulate air pollution. The advice sheet offers guidance on managing parks and green spaces for pollinators but you can refer up to other sections in this list for guidance about e.g. creating orchards, enhancing woodlands, creating ponds, and more.
		PM77 (countywide)	**Integrate wildlife-friendly measures into homes, gardens, greenspaces and developments.** Take action to enhance these spaces for wildlife and consider key species that you could support in gardens and greenspaces. These may include birds, bats, hedgehogs, frogs, toads, bees, butterflies, and more. Consider installing bird boxes, bat boxes, swift bricks and other options that support wildlife in and around buildings where appropriate. For new homes being built, see this Wildlife Trust guide on 'Homes and wildlife - How to build housing in a nature friendly way'. In existing gardens and greenspaces follow suggestions for 'Wildlife gardening' e.g. how to build wildlife ponds, attract pollinators, plant native shrubs, trees, and hedges. Ensure any fences or walls have 13 by 13cm holes to create 'Hedgehog Highways' that allow hedgehogs to move through gardens. See a list of hedgehog friendly fencing suppliers here. Avoid using pesticides or peat-based compost in gardens and avoid introducing potentially invasive non-native species into gardens and other outdoor spaces. Remove existing invasive species where possible. See a list of invasive plant species here. Retrofit wildlife kerbs to existing gullies, particularly near existing nature sites, and install wildlife kerbs on new gullies as standard. This will provide safer passage for amphibians and small mammals around road gullies and drainage openings.

449			Reduce recreational pressure on wildlife and habitats in urban areas by maintaining clear paths, keeping dogs under close, effective control, reducing the impact of cats on wildlife, and aiming to create or enhance some areas for wildlife in areas in places where there is little-to-no disturbance. Whilst these are important actions to take across the county, the impact of providing nature-rich spaces is likely to be highest near/within public infrastructure such as schools and hospitals where the health and social benefits of nature connection are particularly marked.
		PM78 (mapped)	**Create or enhance a mosaic of habitats in a manner and size that complements the current use of the land by the local community.** This action is suitable to take in and around community-use areas like playing fields, play spaces, cemeteries, golf courses, allotments, public parks, religious grounds and other community spaces or gardens. On land used by local communities, look for complementary opportunities to enhance the area to support wildlife and create space for biodiversity. This can be done in edges and patches and doesn't have to be the whole space. Consider opportunities like planting trees, hedges, orchards, creating ponds, enhancing grassland, allowing corners of scrub to develop, and keeping deadwood in the area. Actions should complement the needs of the local community for safety and access. Think about what species are present or nearby that this space might be able to support through, for example; hedgehog highways, bird boxes, bat boxes, beetle banks, bug hotels, and more. There are a range of organisations that can support you with this (BBOWT, CAG Oxfordshire, Wild Oxfordshire, TOE, Caring for God's Acre, and Sports England to name a few). Sports England have an action plan supported by committed funding that could be applied to local pitches (see case studies here). Whilst this is an important action across the county, actions that produce nature-rich spaces can be particularly beneficial near-to, or within, areas of public infrastructure like school, hospitals, and accessible green/blue spaces. In these spaces, the

450			health and social benefits of nature connection can be great. Additionally, there are particularly deprived areas of Oxfordshire (see this report, page 22) that could be a focus for these actions.
		PM79 (countywide)	**Create and enhance wildlife-rich corridors of suitable habitat between, through, or near settlements in Oxfordshire.** Create new corridors or enhance existing corridors that offer room for nature and wildlife to move through towns, cities, gardens, parks, and villages and which include habitat for foraging and for resting/nesting. Consider the importance of dark corridors with minimal artificial lighting to benefit wildlife (read more about lighting and guidance here). Corridors should ideally join up habitats and may be possible through, between, or near to settlements and could be created alongside active travel corridors, providing benefits for both people and wildlife. Such corridors may include Public Rights of Way, permissive paths, accessible walking/wheeling routes, watercourses, footpaths, hedgerows, greenways and others.
		PM80 (countywide)	**Ensure that actions in urban areas offer wider benefits and meet relevant green space standards.** Whilst benefitting biodiversity, actions can also be tailored to deliver benefits for local communities, including addressing inequitable distribution of environmental determinants of health and wellbeing', and improving climate resilience. This could include innovative solutions like green (or brown) rooves, biodiverse swales, or rainwater gardens to mitigate flooding or actions such as increasing vegetation cover to mitigate excess heat through shading or to filter particulate air pollution. The Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool can be used to understand the wider benefits that might be gained or lost from changes in land use. Where relevant and appropriate, create or enhance multifunctional parks and green spaces to ensure that residents of new (and existing) housing have sufficient access to larger green spaces (meeting Natural England Access to Green Space Standards). This should be prioritised in areas with the least local access to

451			greenspaces, where significant housing development is expected, where local habitats and species are under pressure from high levels of use by local communities, and/or where people and homes are highly vulnerable to negative impacts such as air pollution, urban heat island effects, flood risk, and others. See guidance in the Green Infrastructure Framework and read about the public health benefits of accessible greenspaces here. Consider opportunities to create and enhance greenways in cities to improve people's access to rivers and provide nature-rich corridors. Design and deliver new housing developments with sufficient accessible, nature-rich spaces for residents (meeting Building with Nature Standards). Whilst this is an important action across the county, actions that produce nature-rich spaces can be particularly beneficial near-to, or within, areas of public infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and accessible green/blue spaces. In these spaces, the health and social benefits of nature connection can be great. Additionally, 16 priority neighbourhoods have been identified in Oxfordshire(see this report, page 22) that could be prioritised for efforts to improve access to greenspace and could be a focus for these actions.
		PM81 (countywide)	**Increase tree canopy cover in Oxfordshire by planting and managing trees and woodlands in built up areas.** Plant trees and/or woodlands that can cool and shade the local environment and improve air quality. These trees could also create or maintain corridors for wildlife to support species to cross the county (in both rural and urban environments). This action offers particular benefits to human health by mitigating the impact of excessive heat and filtering particulate pollutants from the air. Planting trees and creating canopy cover in warmer areas of the county (especially urban environments) helps to reduce temperatures and increase the resilience of urban areas in the face of climate change. Planting trees between sources of particulate pollution (such as road traffic) and particularly sensitive areas such as schools, active travel corridors, and residential areas will have the most benefits for human health from improvements in air quality.

452			Suitable locations could include green space, gardens, parks, schools, or as street trees. When planting new trees, plan for their long-term management, and plant them strategically, aiming to create corridors of trees that connect up urban greenspaces, gardens, or other habitats. Corridors could connect either to each other and/or to the wider countryside where possible. These corridors of canopies help local species to move and join-up their populations. Whilst this is an important action to take all across the county, this would be particularly important action to support and incentivise in built-up areas that have low tree cover, and in locations that experience particularly high vulnerability to heat or particulate air pollution. See this guide on how to select and plant urban trees, and see this new 'Trees outside woodland map' to see extent and location of woodlands and trees in England. Some of Oxfordshire's neighbourhoods have particularly low tree cover or access to green space and actions could be focused on these locations to maximise the benefits for people, health, and nature.
		PM82 (countywide)	**Carry out wildlife-friendly actions that also reduce flood-risk and the impact of heat in built-up areas.** Areas of Oxfordshire are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of changing climate patterns (including flooding, drought and excess heat). There are solutions that can reduce these impacts which also benefit nature, these are called nature-based solutions. Install more green walls, green roofs, or innovative surfaces on new or existing buildings that help to cool urban areas, catch water, and provide more space for nature. Link to further guidance. Increase vegetation cover to mitigate excess heat through shading and intercept rainfall. Keep gardens instead of creating more impermeable hard surfaces, and where possible, remove hard-standing surfaces in favour of permeable surfaces (ideally natural, green options that also benefit wildlife). These options to retain and create more permeable space helps to soak up water, reducing the risk of surface

453			water flooding. Read about the impact of hard surfaces and the problem with paved gardens here. Integrate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to capture, hold, and manage the flow of water near built up areas and developments. SuDS are designed to manage rainfall and stormwater runoff in ways that mimic natural drainage processes and can also enhance the local ecosystem. Examples include rain gardens, mini ponds, orchards, wetlands, and balancing ponds. These SuDS features not only contribute to flood risk management but also serve to support biodiversity by creating habitats for plants, animals, and insects. Oxford City has published a Design and Evaluation Guide to help navigate sustainable drainage options and there are national standards for SuDS here.
		PM83 (countywide)	**Create and/or enhance community and local growing spaces, community farms, and allotments to improve soil health and benefit biodiversity.** Take actions to increase biodiversity and improve the health of soils in local growing spaces (farms, orchards, allotments) to enable long-term healthy food production that benefits local people and wildlife. Actions should be supported by local communities and suitable to the type of growing space. Look at guides which offer detail about growing food in community settings, permaculture principles, using water more sustainably and reducing the need for chemicals during food production. The National Allotment Society have lots of supportive information. Options will vary based on the type of site and could include the creation of ponds, hedges, hibernaculum, compost sites, and managing the area in a different or regenerative ways. Actions could also be taken for particular species like birds, bats, frogs, newts, snakes, and toads by creating areas of imperfection, nesting spaces, breeding spaces, and habitats or areas that benefit them.

454		PM84 (countywide)	**Reduce pollution and damage to the environment by changing products, behaviours, and actions.** Support initiatives that could help to prevent damage to the environment and which contribute towards enhancing the condition of the environment (by reducing pollution into the environment across Oxfordshire, including in places where people live and work). There are a large range of actions that could be supported like preventing run-off, preventing littering, or cleaning up litter from local areas. Additionally, damage and pollution could be limited by changing commonplace habits, for example, reducing the use of chemical controls in the environment (such as herbicides), helping people to purchase products that are less harmful to the environment when put down drains, or to change sources of fuel. Some actions may focus on changes to diets or enabling people to buy more local produce. Other actions could include increasing healthcare options: for instance, offering more green social prescribing treatments to people, which can reduce the amount of pharmaceutical pollution in our waterways from medications taken by people. Oxfordshire Community Action Groups is a network of over 100 community action groups working in local communities across Oxfordshire to make it a safer, fairer, greener, more sustainable place to live, work and visit.
P39	**Build more awareness of biodiversity and enable more people to join and engage with habitat enhancement, creation, and education initiatives so that more people in Oxfordshire are connected with nature and feel more able to act as stewards for Oxfordshire's current and future environment.** Wider benefits: Recreation and leisure, Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place	PM85 (countywide)	**Offer courses, spaces, and opportunities for people of all ages to connect with nature and learn about nature recovery and practice environmental stewardship.** In order to deliver this kind of action, a variety of landowner and land manager projects would need to be enabled and supported in partnership with a range of organisations (where suitable). For example, the creation of visitor centres, of more areas of nature with accessible routes, and more accessible education opportunities for adults and young people that relate to nature recovery (including nature-friendly farming). Aim to improve awareness of the biodiversity crisis and efforts to address this, and address barriers to involvement so that more people from across all communities are taking action for nature. This can include opportunities around the identification

			and recording of species and habitats to contribute towards our understanding of local biodiversity.
P40	**Improve the abundance and range of species that need specific additional potential measures within, and around, settlements, people, and buildings.** Wider benefits: Education and knowledge, Interaction with nature, Sense of place, Pollination, Pest Control	N/a	See the 'Species Priorities List' to see the additional potential measures that could be taken to support species that use and benefit from habitats within this type of environment. Some of these measures are mapped.

You have reached the end of the LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

455

Appendix A – Wider benefits from nature recovery

The benefits that nature provides to people are often known as ‘ecosystem services’. In developing the LNRS we considered how nature recovery priorities could contribute towards delivering 18 ecosystem services.

Healthy ecosystems, including plants, animals, soil and water (our ‘natural capital) deliver a range of services (Figure A1). These include the provision of food, water, timber and fish, as well as cultural services such as nature-rich green spaces for recreation, beauty, education and interaction with nature.

Nature also provides a range of regulating services including the control of floods, erosion, air and water quality, noise and climate, as well as pollination and natural pest control.

All these services are described in Table A1.

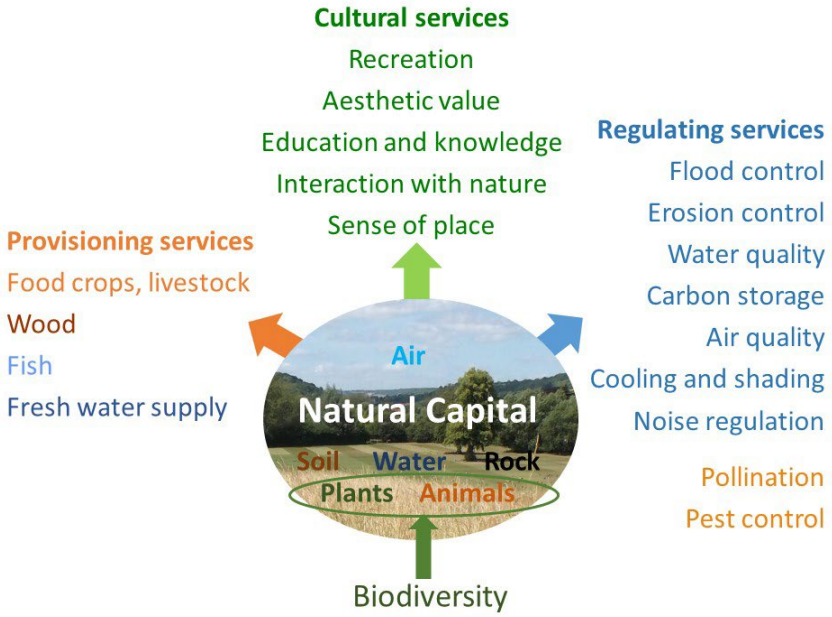


Figure A1. Healthy ecosystems can contribute to 18 ecosystem services.
Source: Alison Smith (2021) ‘Natural Capital in Oxfordshire Short report’, page 3. Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford.

Table A1: The 18 ecosystem services that were considered when identifying wider benefits for people from the LNRS. Source: Alison Smith (2021) 'Natural Capital in Oxfordshire Short report', page 4. Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford.

Provisioning	**Food production**	Arable crops, horticulture, livestock, orchards, allotments, urban food, wild food (e.g. gathering berries or mushrooms).
	Wood production	Timber, wood production for paper, woody biofuel crops, coppice wood or wood waste used for biofuel.
	Fish production	Aquaculture, commercial fishing, recreational fishing (recreational fishing is also a cultural service, but the habitat conditions match those for fish production).
	Water supply	Impact of soil and vegetation on rainwater runoff and infiltration, and thus on groundwater recharge or surface water flow.
Regulating	**Flood protection**	Reduction of surface runoff, peak flow, flood extent and flood depth through canopy interception, evapotranspiration, soil infiltration and physical slowing of water flow.
	Erosion protection	The ability of vegetation to stabilise soil against erosion and mass wastage by protecting the soil from the erosive power of rainfall and overland flow, trapping sediment, and binding soil particles together with roots.
	Water quality regulation	Direct uptake of pollutants by terrestrial or aquatic vegetation; interception of overland flow and trapping / filtration of pollutants and sediment by vegetation before it reaches watercourses; breakdown of pollutants into harmless forms e.g. by denitrifying bacteria that convert nitrates into nitrogen gas. Also infiltration into the ground, allowing pollutants to be filtered out by the soil and preventing pollution of watercourses – though pollutants could enter groundwater supplies.
	Carbon storage	Carbon stored in vegetation and soil. In the context of land use change (with complete loss of habitats and often major soil disturbance), this is more relevant than carbon sequestered annually. The 'time to reach target condition' reflects the time taken for a new habitat to reach a typical carbon sequestration rate for a mature habitat.
	Air quality regulation	Removal of air pollutants by deposition, absorption and/or breakdown by vegetation. Fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$) are the most damaging type of pollution, but vegetation can also remove ozone and nitrogen oxides (by absorption into pores).
	Cooling and shading	Shade, shelter and cooling effect of vegetation and water, especially urban trees close to buildings, green roofs and green walls, which can reduce heating and cooling costs, or trees in urban parks which can provide shade on hot days.
	Noise reduction	Attenuation of noise by vegetation.
	Pollination	Pollination of crops (and wild plants, supporting other ES) by wild insects (mainly bees and hoverflies). Excludes pollination by managed honeybees.
	Pest control	Predation of crop or tree pests by invertebrates (e.g. beetles, spiders, wasps), birds and bats.

Cultural	**Recreation and leisure**	Provision of green and blue spaces that can be used for any leisure activity, e.g. walking, cycling, running, picnicking, camping, boating, playing or just relaxing.
	Aesthetic value	Provision of attractive views, beautiful surroundings, and pleasing, calming or inspiring sights, sounds and smells of nature.
	Education and knowledge	Opportunities for formal education (e.g. school trips), scientific research, local knowledge and informal learning (e.g. from information boards or experiences).
	Interaction with nature	Provision of opportunities for formal or informal nature-related activities, e.g. bird watching, botany, random encounters with wildlife, or feeling 'connected to nature'. There is some overlap with biodiversity, but access by people can have negative impacts on some wildlife habitats. Excludes recreational fishing; hunting / shooting (not covered); the intrinsic value of nature (covered by the biodiversity metric); existence value (from just knowing that nature exists).
	Sense of place	The aspects of a place that make it special and distinctive – this could include locally characteristic species, habitats, landscapes or features; places related to historic and cultural events, or places important to people for spiritual or emotional reasons.

Within this set of LNRS priorities and measures you will see 'wider benefits' associated with each priority. These are examples of the main benefits that each group of actions could provide alongside achieving the biodiversity priorities.

This shows how nature recovery can play a key role in other priorities for the county, including climate resilience, health and well-being, air and water quality, and wider socio-economic benefits. Detailed examples are provided in the sections below.

It is important to understand that the actual benefits delivered will depend on the type of nature recovery action, the type and age of habitat, the location, public accessibility, and a range of other factors.

This means that nature recovery actions can be optimised to deliver wider benefits and minimise trade-offs between goals. For example, in urban areas, trees or hedgerows can be positioned to act as air pollution barriers between busy roads and houses or schools. To help protect water quality, buffer strips of tussocky grass, trees and shrubs can be created alongside watercourses to intercept polluted run-off from farmland. Trees can be planted on steep slopes and erodible soils to help reduce soil erosion.

Actions such as creating or improving parks, planting street trees, and creating wildflower meadows or community orchards can be targeted in urban areas that currently don't have much green space (see Oxfordshire's greenspace-deprived neighbourhoods).

Back to contents page

There can also be trade-offs for some services. For example, planting woodland on farmland will produce benefits for carbon storage and flood protection but also means it can no longer be used for food production.

We have taken account of this when mapping the best locations for each measure. For example, we made it harder for the most productive farmland being selected for habitat creation actions (although some is still included).

There are also limits to what nature can do. For example, while nature recovery can help to absorb carbon dioxide and reduce air and water pollution, this must not distract from the urgent need to reduce emissions and pollution at source, which will have a far greater impact. Indeed, habitats used as a 'buffer' to soak up noise or pollution may have less value for wildlife.

Below are some more detailed examples of how measures in the LNRS can deliver wider benefits for people.

Climate change mitigation

It is estimated that Oxfordshire's soils and vegetation currently store about 85 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. That is equivalent to over 20 times the amount we produce every year by burning fossil fuels (four million tonnes).

Oxfordshire's habitats also soak up about 316,000 tonnes of CO2 every year – about 8% of our annual emissions. So, while the most urgent priority is to reduce emissions from fossil fuels and other sources, it is also vital to protect and enhance the great amounts of carbon stored in Oxfordshire's habitats.

The LNRS can support this priority by prioritising areas to keep existing habitats in good condition and by recommending the creation of new areas of woodland, scrub, grassland, and wetland in places where they offer the greatest benefits for biodiversity too.

On farmland, measures such as PM73 (increasing biodiversity in farmland soils) can also help to store a lot more carbon in the soil, and in urban areas measure PM78 (increase tree canopy cover) can also store large amounts of carbon in urban trees.

Climate change adaptation

The LNRS measures can play a key role in helping the county adapt to climate change. One of the main benefits can come from natural flood management, such as by planting trees in upper catchments to intercept and soak up rainwater, reducing flooding downstream (PM35, PM39). Also, rivers can be reconnected to their floodplains (PM40) to allow floodwater to gradually seep into the ground or slowly back into the river, reducing flood peaks in settlements downstream.

In urban areas, creating more nature-rich green space (PM77) and tree canopy cover (PM78) can help to cool urban areas and provide shade in heatwaves, as well as soaking up heavy rain and reducing urban flooding. On farmland, measures such as PM73 (increasing biodiversity in farmland soils) can improve the infiltration in the soil, so that heavy rain is

absorbed rather than running off the surface, eroding the soil and polluting nearby watercourses.

Many of the actions in PM73 also add more organic matter to the soil, which helps it to store more moisture, meaning the soils are more resilient to droughts as well as enabling the land to hold more water and increase infiltration rates into bedrock helping to reduce flooding. Planting and maintaining trees on appropriate areas within the farmland landscape (PM74 and 75) are very important for providing shade and shelter for livestock in very hot or stormy weather.

Hedgerows (PM62 and PM63) also play a valuable role in reducing soil erosion and flooding during extreme weather events. All these farmland measures for reducing the impact of floods, droughts and heatwaves can reduce the economic cost of crop and livestock yield losses for farmers.

Pollination and natural pest control

There has been a dramatic decline in insect populations in the UK over the last few decades, including beneficial insects such as pollinating bees and hoverflies, and pest predators such as beetles, spiders and wasps. This has had a knock-on effect on other species that depend on insects for food, including birds, bats, reptiles and amphibians (frogs, toads and newts) – and these are also natural pest predators.

Supporting pollinators and natural pest predators can increase crop yield and reduce the need for farmers to use expensive and dangerous agro chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides.

Many of the LNRS measures can help to support our struggling pollinators and pest predators by providing habitat and food resources. Measures that create and maintain scrub, wildflowers and dead wood are particularly important, because insects need nectar from flowers as well as structurally diverse (‘messy’) habitats to use for nesting and over-wintering sites.

Habitats including tussocky grass, dead hollow stems, leaf litter, different ages of scrub, dead wood, old trees with hollows, flaking bark and crevices, and patches of bare ground are all really valuable. The Oxfordshire LNRS consultation revealed strong support for more of these naturally diverse mosaic habitats.

Examples of key measures include PM03 (creating grasslands with a bumpy ground structure and different sward heights), PM05 and PM06 (creating and maintaining flower-rich grasslands), PM07 and PM08 (creating and maintaining varied scrub patches on grasslands), PM17 to PM27 (creating and maintaining mosaic habitats including wood pasture and parkland with veteran trees), PM37 (creating dense shrubby habitat in woodlands), PM60 (creating dead wood habitat), PM61 to PM64 (creating and maintaining hedgerows and walls), PM66 to PM69 (creating flower-rich field margins) and PM76 (integrated pest management to reduce use of agrochemicals).

Human health and wellbeing

There is now strong evidence that nature-rich green spaces can improve human physical and mental health and well-

being and can have wider socio-economic benefits. For example, interaction with nature can improve a range of health conditions including heart and lung health, high blood pressure, diabetes, immune function, depression and anxiety.

Nature-rich green spaces in and around urban areas can make them a better place to live, work and invest, helping to attract visitors and businesses to the area and improving local economies.

Urban trees (PM78) and hedgerows (PM61 to 63) can also help to trap air pollution and act as a noise barrier in urban areas.

Water quality

Improving water quality and improving the health of rivers and freshwater habitats emerged as most people's top priority from earlier workshops and surveys which were held in 2024 to inform the LNRS.

The main route for tackling poor water quality is by reducing discharges of untreated sewage however this particular action is beyond the control of the LNRS. Reducing untreated sewage discharges is an action that needs to be enforced by the relevant organisations within industry and by national government which is why it is out of scope of the LNRS. However, some of the LNRS 'potential measures' in the table above can help to reduce water pollution including another source of water pollution – runoff from agricultural fields.

Key measures include creating riparian buffers of trees, shrubs and tall, tussocky grassland on the edge of watercourses (PM40), chalk streams (PM45) and ponds (PM43), creating wet woodland in riparian areas (PM38), and creating reedbeds (PM44 and PM53) and wetland mosaics (PM51 and PM54).

Measures to reduce soil erosion can also help to stop polluted soil being washed into watercourses: this could include ensuring that new woodlands (PM35), woodland/scrub/grassland mosaics (PM24), tussocky grasslands (PM03) and hedgerows (PM61 to 63) are created on steep slopes, especially where there are soils that are vulnerable to erosion.

Finally, there are a number of habitat measures around the freshwater environment that will improve the structure, condition, and diversity of rivers, ponds and wetland habitats although these alone will not directly improve water quality.

Appendix B - The strategies and plans reviewed during the LNRS preparation.

During the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy 'priorities' and 'potential measures' you will see that, after we listed priorities and potential measures from workshops and the survey, we then reviewed these against local plans and strategies to add in, or add detail to priorities and measures.

When reviewing strategies or documents, those reviewing them were asked to look for whether any potential priorities, potential measures, particular locations, or particular targets were mentioned that needed to be considered when we finalised our list of priorities, potential measures, and targets for this LNRS. The strategies reviewed included:

National

- National Environmental Objectives
- Environmental Improvement Plan Objectives
- River Catchment management plans
- Water framework directive

Regional, local, and county projects

- Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan
- Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan
- Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan
- North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan
- Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan
- National Landscape Target 8
- North Wessex Downs Nature Recovery Plan
- Conservation Target Areas

County council

- Oxfordshire County Council - Oxfordshire Environmental Principles
- Oxfordshire County Council - Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- Tree Policy for Oxfordshire
- Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan 2023-2050

District and city council Local Plans and Green Infrastructure Strategies

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 Preferred Options (January 2024).
- Oxford Local Plan 2036
- Oxford Local Plan 2040 (submission draft)
- Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Cherwell Local Plans available to view: Local Plans | Cherwell District Council
- Salt Cross Area Action Plan - yet to be adopted
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Green Infrastructure Strategy (Chris Blandford Associates, October 2017).
- South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (adopted December 2020)
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (adopted December 2016)
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (adopted October 2019)
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 Pre-submission publication version (October 2024). This is available to view online: https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/jlp/.
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Space Study (LUC, September 2024). This is available to view online:

https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/joint-local-plan-2041-supporting-documents/

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, new evidence on lowland fens to inform the new Joint Local Plan: Lowland Fens: Identifying sites and mapping hydrological risk zones in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Freshwater Habitats Trust, 2024). The report is available to view online: https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/joint-local-plan-2041-supporting-documents/
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 – adopted
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041. Focused Consultation: Ideas and Objectives. Aug 2023
- West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan 2024 – 2030
- Oxford Urban Forest Strategy A Master Plan to 2050 SEPTEMBER 2021.

It is important to recognise that emerging local plans across the county have progressed in parallel to the production of the LNRS.

Whilst there was limited resource to review the neighbourhood plans at this stage, Oxfordshire's LNRS has run specific activities and events to engage with the 300+ parish and town councils within Oxfordshire through the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils. Parish and town councils were encouraged to participate in our surveys and workshops as well as other in-person events so that we could incorporate their priorities and potential measures.

In addition to written strategy documents, many organisations provided the LNRS with further information and data about locations where key activities are being undertaken or could be undertaken including information from Forestry Commission, Freshwater Habitats Trust, BBOWT, and many more. This has been used within our mapping process to create the Local Habitat Map.

Appendix C – project partner representatives who oversaw the priority setting for Oxfordshire.

The priorities and potential measures decision-making was overseen by a group of representatives from each and all of:

- Oxfordshire County Council
- The District and City Councils, biodiversity and planning representatives
- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Environment Agency
- Cotswolds National Landscape (representing protected landscapes in Oxfordshire)
- BBOWT - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
- Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership
- Wild Oxfordshire
- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)
- Director of the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE)
- University of Oxford, Environmental Change Institute, Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery

Appendix D – How was this list made?

This ‘Statement of Biodiversity Priorities’ was produced by first collecting actions and priorities that were recommended to support biodiversity by local people and organisations who joined our workshops and used our survey in February and March 2024.

We received 7,959 mentions of priorities and actions that people wanted to see be achieved in Oxfordshire and these were grouped into themes e.g. ‘create meadows’, ‘improve river condition’. The LNRS was able to include the 4,667 comments that mentioned creating or improving habitats for biodiversity.

We were unable to include actions that didn’t relate to habitat creation or enhancement LNRSs are expected to focus mostly on actions to create and/or enhance habitats.

The other requests mostly included requests to:

- Stop or reduce house building, developments, and infrastructure
- Regulate, fine, or punish, for poor practice
- Stop the creation of pollution
- Reduce traffic, or pets

Whilst it is beyond the scope of the LNRS to resolve those requests, it is of key importance to nature recovery that each of these issues are addressed by their relevant authorities and organisations.

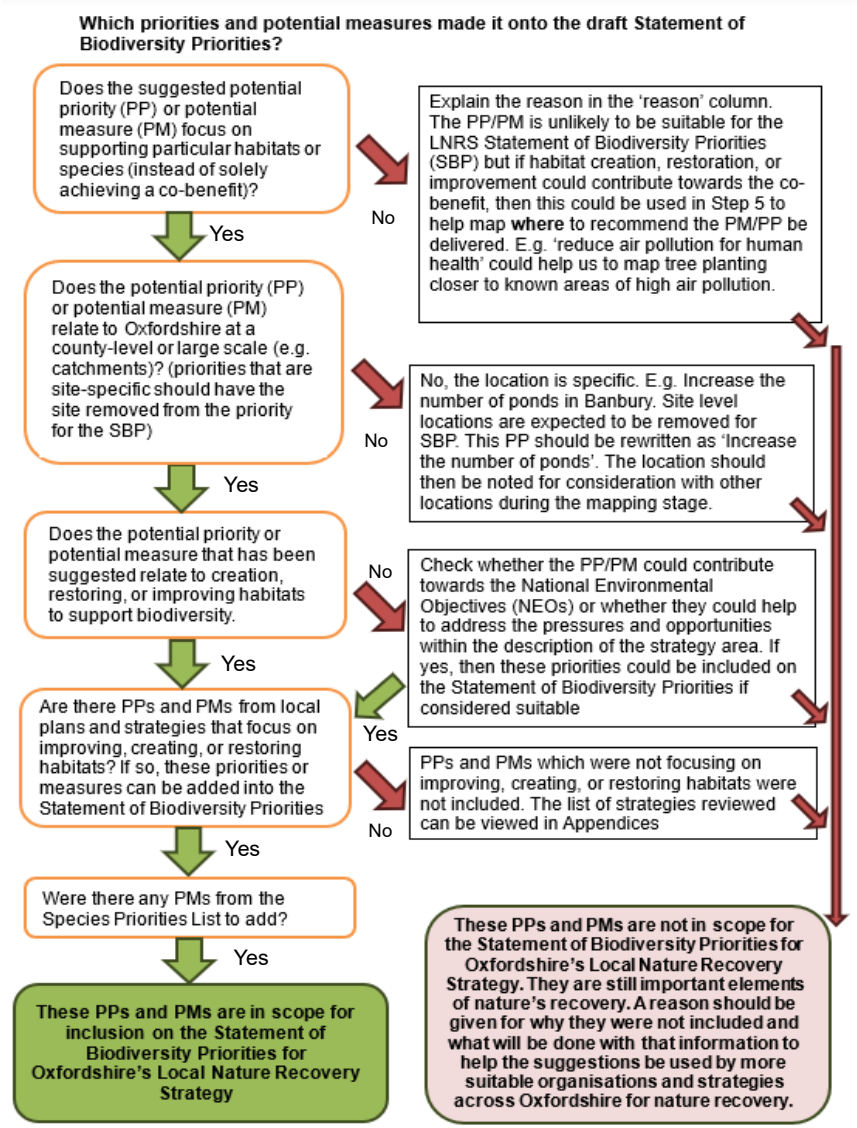
The image of the flowchart in this document shows the process that was taken to decide whether proposed priorities and potential measures could be included on this list.

The full process and further information about the 7,959 comments we received can be viewed on the LNRS website. The strategies that contributed to this process can be found in Appendix B.

In Oxfordshire, the process of agreeing the priorities and potential measures that are included in this document was overseen by representatives from a range of organisations (see Appendix C).

These representatives helped to shape and refine priorities and potential measures and helped to sense-check the process whilst reviewing the priorities of local people and organisations from our workshop and survey results.

To view further documents and spreadsheets that show how the statement of biodiversity priorities was made in more detail, please view the documents on Oxfordshire County Council’s LNRS website.



Back to contents page

Species Priorities List

Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Final version: October 2025

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

Introduction 3
What is the Species Priorities List? 3
How was this list made? 4
How will LNRS 'Species Priorities Lists' contribute towards the government's species ambitions? 6
A note on climate change 6
How to navigate this document? 7
Amphibians 9
Birds 10
Butterflies and moths 22
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs 32
Fungi and lichens 37
Insects and spiders 39
Mammals 46
Plants, flowers and trees 55
Reptiles 66
Summary 68
Acknowledgements 69
Images and credits 70
Appendix A 72
Appendix B 73

Introduction

'Species' are the types of animals, plants, fungi, and other living things that exist as part of nature. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are designed to help to recover populations of species, especially those who are at risk of extinction from the local area.

Many species are expected to benefit from general habitat improvement and creation actions (e.g. enhancing woodlands and creating ponds).

The LNRS already recommends these general habitat actions on the LNRS's 'Statement of Biodiversity Priorities' document and this should benefit a wide range of species. However, some species need more specific actions that aren't part of general habitat creation or enhancements.

To ensure that the LNRS also supports those species with more specific needs, this document identifies those species in Oxfordshire which are believed to need more targeted recovery actions.

This list is expected to be reviewed and republished every 3 – 10 years along with all other LNRS documents. The exact timing of the review is decided by the Secretary of State.

What is the Species Priorities List?

The 'LNRS Species Priorities List' is one of four parts of the LNRS (there are three written documents and one map tool). The Species Priorities List is a table of species that need very specific actions to support them to survive, recover, or spread further in Oxfordshire. The Government asked for these LNRS Species Priorities Lists to contain a manageable number of deliverable actions to help focus local resources towards halting the loss of biodiversity. LNRSs were advised to include the species that are most likely to benefit from specific, targeted actions as well as species which the local area has a particular national stronghold of.

In brief, the species on this list are all species that require specific actions over and above the general good management and creation of diverse habitats.

Examples of such specific actions that could be suitable for this list include bespoke habitats being created or managed in a particular way for certain species, reintroductions and translocations of species, or taking practical actions to stop the negative impacts of a particular threat or pressure on a species. These actions must be above and beyond the actions we have already listed on the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.

How was this list made?

This 'Species Priorities List' was produced in steps following a methodology created by Natural England and Defra which can be viewed on the LNRS website.

First, the LNRS asked Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to identify which species in Oxfordshire are considered to be 'threatened' or 'near threatened' with extinction. This list was 879 species long.

We then invited local species experts to review the list and add any species that they thought we had missed, the number of species on this list rose to 883.

Next, the list of 883 species were reviewed, one-by-one to work out what action they would need to recover. Some may need bigger woodlands, others may need particular grazing patterns, and some may need more research. Based on the type of action that the species needed, the LNRS assigned them into a certain category (seen in the table below.

For a full description of the process, see the LNRS website.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Needs more / bigger / better / more connected habitats	Needs targeted habitat management	Needs improvements in environmental quality	Needs bespoke conservation action(s)	Needs better evidence base / on-the-ground action isn't the priority	Needs action outside of England	Vagrant species / occasional visitors / invasive species
These species are likely to benefit from the LNRS measures (actions) listed on the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and do not need to be singled out for specific LNRS Species actions.	Yes, these species are likely to be suitable for LNRS species priorities	Yes, likely to be suitable for LNRS species priorities	Yes, likely to be suitable for LNRS species priorities. (Species which have no/poor data about their locations should be assigned to Category E.)	Not suitable for LNRS species priorities list	Not suitable for LNRS species priorities list	Not suitable for LNRS species priorities list

The categories (A – G) in the table were created by Natural England to support LNRSs to separate species out. We categorised each and all of the 883 species into the categories A – G with support from Thames Valley Environmental Centre and local species experts.

Experts helped to add and remove species from categories, sense-check the process, inform the LNRS about which species needed which actions, which locations are important for which species, and the types of habitats that these species rely on for survival.

During the process of separating species into categories and working out which actions they needed, there were many species that were expected to benefit from widespread, broad, habitat-level actions (e.g. enhancing grasslands, leaving deadwood in woodlands, creating ponds).

These widespread habitat actions are already recommended in the LNRS's 'Statement of Biodiversity Priorities' which means that the LNRS has already listed the actions which should support the recovery of those species. They haven't therefore been listed again here. In comparison, there were some species that need a more specific action (e.g. create electric fencing around nests to prevent predators from getting to them).

Since the actions are quite specific, they would likely be missed out of general habitat creation or management techniques but listing them individually here allows the LNRS to focus effort towards their more specific recovery needs.

To halt the loss of biodiversity in Oxfordshire, it is of key importance to support both sets of priorities (the specific species actions on this list, and the habitat-level actions on the 'Statement of Biodiversity Priorities').

How will LNRS 'Species Priorities Lists' contribute towards the government's species ambitions?

The government has set legally binding targets to:

- Halt the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030
- Increase species abundance by the end of 2042 so that is greater than in 2022 and at least 10 per cent greater than in 2030
- Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022

LNRSs were advised by the government's Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that the "LNRS is a critical new tool for driving the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinctions… the LNRS system forms a coordinated spatial approach for planning a nationwide network of more, bigger, better, better-connected habitat to support species recovery and resilience.

Each strategy contributes to this national picture by planning coherent ecological networks at the local level to help local species populations thrive."

To support species, LNRSs are advised to follow particular processes to create a written list of local priority species and to propose specific measures (actions) which would help to recover and enhance local populations.

In some suitable cases, actions have been mapped onto the LNRSs 'Local Habitat Map' to show where those actions could produce the greatest benefits for the species. This may be particularly important where isolated populations of rare species remain.

A note on climate change

At the time of writing, the below actions were expected to be the most suitable ways to support the recovery of these species.

However, there are expected changes to climate patterns with warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers predicted, as well as increasing extremes in weather events and storms, although these changing patterns may be unpredictable.

The LNRS recommends that the actions listed on the following pages should be adapted based on the latest understanding of changing climates in order to best support the recovery of these species

How to navigate this document?

The target species in this document are organised into broad categories shown in bold below. The categories are organised in alphabetical order.

You can click on any of the headings on the page below to navigate to the relevant species.

For species in the groupings below, most will have a picture, their name, and a map which you can see through the link at the end of the document.

Next to their name is a column that tells you:

- the recommended action (potential measure) to support their recovery
- a column that tells you particular locations where focused effort could be beneficial (if known)
- a column with names of other threatened and near threatened species that would also benefit from the action.

You can view a list of these species in alphabetic order in Appendix A at the end of this document.

Key

Settlements and buildings	
Agricultural land	
Semi-natural grasslands	
Freshwater and wetlands	
Woodlands and trees	

- **Amphibians**
  - Great Crested Newt.
- **Birds**
  - Bittern (and Marsh Harrier), Breeding Waders, Curlew, Farmland Birds, Montagu's Harrier, Nightingale, Stone Curlew, Swifts and House Martins, Tawny Owl, Turtle Dove, Willow Tit.
- **Butterflies and moths**
  - Barberry Carpet Moth, Blackthorn butterflies, Dark Green Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy Butterfly, Liquorice Piercer Moth, Moths of Dyer's Greenweed, Silver Spotted Skipper, Small Blue butterfly, Striped Lychnis Moth, White Admiral, White Letter Hairstreak, Wood White butterfly.
- **Fish, crustaceans, and snails**
  - Fish, White Clawed Crayfish, Desmoulin's Whorl Snail, Mountain Bulin Snail.
- **Fungi and Lichens**
  - Fungi and fungi-associated plants found with woodland, Lichens (on veteran trees).
- **Insects and spiders**
  - Beetle of Autumn Gentian, Cigarello Gall-Fly, Clubbed general soldierly, Dung specialists and dung beetles, Ellipteroides alboscutellatus, Lousewort flea beetle, Meadow Ant Hoverfly, Noble chafer, Snail killing fly, Southern Damselfly, Spider (Tuberta maerens).
- **Mammals**
  - Bats, Beaver, Hazel Dormouse, Hedgehog, Otter, Water Vole.
- **Plants, flowers, and trees**
  - Black Poplar, Creeping Marshwort, Devil's bit scabious (and Marsh fritillary), Downy Woundwort, Fen violet, Juniper, Limestone fern.
- **Reptiles**
  - Adder, Common Lizard.

The next pages contain the Species Priorities List for Oxfordshire.

Amphibians

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Great-Crested Newt Link to map	**Create or maintain fish free ponds, which ideally are within 1km of other ponds that could support Great Crested Newts.** Aim to have diversity within pond structure, depth, shape, and edge vegetation. Include a gently sloping entrance to suitable pond edges. Within suitable range of breeding ponds, ensure the existence of foraging habitats and undisturbed areas of deadwood or stones for hibernation which can include creating hibernacula. New development/infrastructure could include amphibian-friendly landscaping e.g. dropped kerbs, wildlife-friendly gully pots, SuDS ponds, and large amphibian tunnels. Varied pond sizes and shapes are beneficial to a range of species, the most suitable size for Great Crested Newts is considered to be between 450m2 to 500m2. Ideal pond criteria is set out in this Habitat Suitability Index. Great Crested Newts have suffered significant declines and as a result are listed as species of principle importance under legislation offering them a high degree of protection as a European protected species. Creating ponds to support this species would also support a wide range of species. Support Great Crested Newts by managing habitats to meet relevant requirements with organisations who can support this or following habitat guidance. See this example pond at Bicester Garrison.	Nature Space pond-creation priority locations.	Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus), Common Toad (Bufo Bufo)	

Birds

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Bittern Link to map	**Create or manage large reedbeds in wetland habitats to recover Bittern populations.** Within wetlands, create, extend, and manage large reedbeds (ideally of 20 hectares or more) for Bitterns. Re-wet reedbeds that are at risk from drying out and manage the reed structure to achieve diversity within the reedbed. Aim for no more than 30 per cent being older than 7 years and no more than 5 per cent of the area being scrub. Manage the reedbed through cyclical cutting of different sections of reed over time and regularly remove willow. Bitterns breed in the UK's largest and least disturbed reedbeds which are typically within a mosaic of wetland habitats. Habitat loss and disturbance has been a major challenge for the success of these birds and Bittern numbers previously declined to the point where this bird became extinct from the UK. However, they returned and are now present in the UK again with some populations showing recent signs of recovery as a result of large-scale reedbed creation and targeted habitat management techniques. Bitterns are found in Oxfordshire but breeding is currently restricted to one locality (Otmoor). They are a bird which is expected to improve in number and breeding success if more large reedbed complexes can be created with the right habitat management.	Otmoor, Lower Windrush Valley	**Birds** Eurasian Bittern (Botaurus stellaris), Marsh Harrier, (Circus aeruginosus)	

	The numbers above (20 hectares, 30 per cent, and 5 per cent) are based on ideal guidelines but management should be tailored to what is working for Bitterns in Oxfordshire. You can re-wet reedbeds that are at risk of drying out either by raising the water-level, or by lowering the ground level.			
Breeding waders Link to map	**Create (and maintain) areas of grassland with extensive, shallow, water during breeding months including reeds and greater pond sedges for nesting. Manage habitats with grazing (ideally) and exclude and manage predators.** This guide describes how to manage grazing land for waders. Also see this RSPB land management sheet for Snipe. Typical ideal breeding wader sites have moist soils that hold surface water on approximately 10 – 30 per cent of the site from April/May with water levels reducing in June and covering only a small area of the site in July – August. Seasonal grazing on these sites helps to create an optimal sward. Avoid agricultural activities or activities of high disturbance on breeding sites during breeding season and consider reducing the shooting of any species considered to be 'game' species within this group to support populations to recover. Alongside those more specific measures, this LNRS will support these species and others by recommending that Oxfordshire improve existing wetland sites and create new wetland mosaic habitats. Within Oxfordshire, we are lucky to have 485 hectares of Otmoor, an expansive floodplain grazing marsh area which is a reliable hotspot and home for many species including wading birds where particular care is taken to manage this area of Oxfordshire for these birds.	Otmoor, Lower Windrush Valley	**Breeding wader birds:** Common Snipe (Gallinago gallinago), Common Redshank (Tringa tetanus), Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) **Other birds** Common crane (Grus grus)	

	This national asset means that Oxfordshire is a particularly important location within the UK for breeding waders and other species.			
Curlew Link to map	**Manage nesting fields for Curlews and protect their nests from predation using predator control, electric fencing and/or other techniques which increase Curlew breeding success to hatch, rear, and fledge chicks**. Curlew breeding populations in the UK are recorded as having declined by 48 per cent between 1995-2020 and Curlews are one of Britain's most endangered birds. They rely on grassland habitats (particularly lowland wet grassland and hay meadows) but many of these habitats have been lost through land use change and drainage of land. Alongside extensive creation and expansion of well-managed grasslands, especially lowland wet grassland, predator control techniques need to be implemented to prevent the loss of nesting adults, eggs, and chicks to predators (predators can be both mammals and birds). Temporary electric fencing is one tool with a good success rate in Oxfordshire that can prevent mammal predation but other techniques across the wider landscape are important to prevent other forms of predation on these birds to enable them to recover their populations. Many people, including Oxfordshire's farmers, nature recovery organisations, and volunteers are already supporting curlew recovery efforts and should continue to be supported to take these actions.	Otmoor, Upper Thames Curlew Recovery Project areas, upper Cherwell areas.	Eurasian Curlew (Numenius Arquata)	

Farmland birds Link to map	**Support farmland birds in fields, field margins, and hedges by providing nesting sites, chick rearing food, adult food, and overwinter food for the target bird species.** A good population of farmland birds are present in Oxfordshire, with strong populations noted in farmland across the county, particularly in the Cotswolds National Landscape and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Since more than 70 per cent of Oxfordshire's land is used for agriculture, it is of key importance to focus on supporting those species which can benefit from good sustainable farmland management to achieve population recovery and Oxfordshire's farmland birds are a great example of species which, have been recovering and can continue to do so in future with support like that already ongoing by Farmland Bird Aid projects in Oxfordshire. All three elements (chick food, adult food, and nesting space) need to be appropriate to the species and available in the specific area to suitably support these birds. This can be achieved by providing plants, seeds, and habitat areas that meet the needs of both the adult farmland birds and their chicks, within the same location. The different species have the following, specific needs: **Hedge-nesting birds** Hedges, trees or scrub are needed for nesting. Also offer these additional food sources for adult hedge-nesting birds; seeds, chickweed, cereals or spring-sown crops. Offer these additional food sources for the chicks of hedge-nesting birds; insects, larvae, worms (often provided by having nearby areas of field margins/buffer strips/grassland/pasture). **Linnet –** require a plentiful supply of seeds all year and a thick hedgerow, scrub, gorse or bramble for nesting. Advice for farmers here.	All across the county's farmland, with a specific 4-mile stretch of the River Thames already under management for the Yellow Wagtail Partnership.	**Farmland birds**: Corn bunting (Emberiza calandra), Grey Partridge (Perdix perdix), Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus), Linnet (Linaria cannabina), Skylark (Alauda arvensis arvensis), Tree sparrow (Passer montanus), Yellowhammer (Emberiza citrinella), Yellow wagtail (Motacilla flava flavissima)	

	Tree Sparrows – also need overwintering stubble to find food, and good nearby scrub, thick and tall hedgerows, and/or young woodland cover for nesting. Advice for farmers here. **Yellowhammers** – also need thick hedges or scrub (cut late in the year), often alongside ditch vegetation or margins at the foot of the hedge. Advice for farmers here. **Ground nesting birds** Offer suitable, species-specific nesting sites and also offer these additional food sources for adult ground nesting birds; seeds, chickweed, cereals, overwinter stubble, or spring-sown crops. Offer the following additional food sources for the chicks of ground nesting birds; insects, larvae, worms (needs field margins or buffer strips or grassland or pasture). **Corn Buntings** – need patches of double-drilled crop that is not harvested, to nest. Advice for farmers here. **Skylarks** - need skylark plots (unsown squares in the field) of bare earth to nest. Advice for farmers here. **Lapwings** – need lapwing plots (large stony areas) to nest in, near pasture. Do not plant trees or hedges here. Advice for farmers here. **Grey Partridge** – also needs safe nesting cover in hedge bottoms, grass margins, and dead tussocky grass left from the previous year (RSPB). Adults require a food source of seeds and shoots throughout the year (typically found in winter stubble, harvested root crops, newly sown crops, and arable weeds in the crop margins).			

	Also, to enable species recovery, chicks require access to a range of insects close to their nesting sites like beetles, ants, caterpillars, aphids mostly found in crop margins. Advice for farmers here. **Yellow wagtails** – also need an open, sparse sward to nest in on the fringes of wetland habitats with arable crops nearby. They are expected to respond particularly well in Oxfordshire if habitat management can meet their needs, and local projects are already working to achieve this. Advice for farmers here. At some sites, recovery may also require additional lethal control of foxes, carrion crows, and mink in conjunction with the actions above.			
Montagu's Harrier Link to map	**Locate and protect the nesting sites of breeding Montagu's Harriers on farmland fields. Landowners and local organisations can work together to monitor nesting birds and secure their breeding success.** Montagu's Harriers visit the UK in early summer and only very few (8 pairs) breed in the UK each year. Oxfordshire has 137 records of Montagu's Harrier in in the past 30 years and Oxfordshire is one of the counties where this species is known to be found breeding. Typically the birds breed on the ground in arable fields of maturing crops. This bird feeds on small mammals, birds, and other small animals. When nesting birds are observed, contact local organisations which support bird conservation for support and advice.		Montagu's Harrier (Circus pygargus)	

Nightingale Link to map	**Manage woodlands and scrub for Nightingales. Coppice on rotation and encourage dense layers of shrub in woodlands with scrub at the edges.** Introduce coppicing to woodlands and manage it so that all stages of the coppice lifecycle are always present in the woodland. To do this, coppice coupes (groups of trees) that are cut on rotation. Within woodlands, encourage dense layers of shrub to develop (including bramble) and control deer where necessary to prevent them from eating the shrub layer. On woodland edges allow dense scrub and shrubs to develop to offer feeding and nesting habitat and create woodland rides and glades that have space for a scrub zone. Re-wet woodlands to improve invertebrate presence and food supply for these birds. Connect existing suitable habitats with tall, thick hedges. Nightingales fly from West Africa to the UK in April for about 3 months to breed before flying back. Numbers of breeding birds are thought to have reduced by over 90 per cent since the 1960s. In Oxfordshire, breeding Nightingales had been lost from the county for 2-3 decades but around 2020 after dedicated habitat work by MOD Bicester, nightingales returned once again, to breed in Oxfordshire. Habitat actions should be focused towards areas where Nightingale records emerge in Oxfordshire and Nightingales are also expected to benefit from countywide creation of large scrub and woodland mosaic habitats. Nightingales prefer to nest in the medium growth stage of coppiced trees (aged 4 – 10 years since they were coppiced). It takes about 7 years for scrub to be sufficiently dense for nightingale breeding. View conservation advice guide here.	Southeast of Bicester, between Bicester and Brill	Common Nightingale (Luscinia megarhynchos)	

Stone Curlew Link to map	**Create and manage protected, undisturbed plots to encourage Stone Curlews to nest. Create and manage areas of open, sparsely vegetated grassland with stony ground, grazed short (typically by rabbits or sheep).** In suitable arable fields, create specially prepared plots of open, stony ground with buffer zones that are managed to protect nesting birds and chicks from predation, machinery, and disturbance. These plots offer suitable, less disturbed nesting spaces and can be supported by organisations who can also ring and monitor the birds. Stone Curlew numbers have been in decline in the UK until the 1980s where dedicated conservation efforts more than doubled the breeding numbers and these birds are increasingly present in the UK when habitats are managed to meet their needs. These birds do appear to favour locations where suitable habitat plots are created and managed for them. Typically, they fly from Spain and Northern Africa to the UK in early summer to breed here on open, stony ground (typically farmland) and farmers can work with organisations to organise this, see an example here. The success of these birds relies on suitable support being available to enable farmers to recover Stone Curlew populations. See information about Defra incentives here and recent, successful RSPB projects with farmers here.		Stone-Curlew (Burhinus oedicnemus)	

Swifts and house martins Link to map	**Provide new nesting spaces that are suitable for Common Swifts and House Martins and do not disturb, remove nests, or try to limit these birds from nesting**. Common swift numbers are estimated to have declined by 60 per cent between 1995 – 2020. Similarly the House Martin is present throughout the county but numbers notably declined by 37 per cent between 1995-2020. Each year, these birds migrate from Africa to the UK for summer to breed and Oxfordshire is a particular national stronghold for these birds with projects that you can get involved across the county (e.g. Oxford, Cherwell, and Harwell). Both species offer real opportunities for people to support and enjoy nature on (or above) their doorsteps. They nest in and around houses, buildings, and structures but many nest sites have been lost to building renovations. Buildings act as a habitat for a variety of species but the nest sites of Swifts and House Martins are often lost during the renovation or redevelopment of existing buildings and other structures like bridges. The loss of these nesting sites has contributed to a decline in the populations of both species but these birds are expected to be able to recover significant numbers if additional nesting spaces are provided (boxes, swift bricks, spaces in buildings and structures), and if existing nesting sites are retained for these birds. Existing nest sites for building-dependent species such as swifts and house martins (endangered red-listed species) should be protected as far as possible. These species are known to return annually to their traditional nest sites and mitigation should be provided if these nest sites cannot be protected.	Swifts; across Oxfordshire, including Oxford City, all the towns in the county, and a majority of villages as well (Harwell, Bodicote, Shilton and Tetsworth for example). House Martins; less widespread but still breed throughout the county.	Common Swift (Apus apus), House Martin (Delichon urbicum).	

	New development and extensions provide an opportunity to includes measures such as swift bricks. Swift bricks are a universal nest brick that can support a variety of small bird species (like house sparrows and starlings) and should be installed in new developments including extensions, in accordance with best-practice guidance such as BS 42021, NHBC NF89 Biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities, or CIEEM which require at least one swift brick per home on average for each development. Artificial nest cups for house martins may be proposed instead of swift bricks where recommended (e.g. by an ecologist). In addition to nesting spaces, they require good foraging habitats, particularly along rivers, to capture insects. Habitat improvement is being addressed in the LNRS through actions recommended on the LNRS Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.			
Tawny Owl Link to map	**Provide nesting holes and/or boxes for Tawny Owls.** Tawny owls and other owl species have experienced declines across England and whilst they require habitat improvements. Whilst they would benefit from general habitat improvements, especially to woodlands, it is also believed that their range and numbers could be significantly supported by offering more, suitable nesting boxes/holes. Tawny owls can live for over 20 years and often return to their territories and nest holes/boxes throughout their life. This could be in areas where these owls are present or could be present including; woodlands, large urban parks, and suburban or rural gardens (see further information here).		Tawny Owl (Strix aluco)	

	Learn how to build or position boxes for Tawny owls (here) In addition to nest boxes, these species are expected to benefit from the wider creation of a more connected set of habitats, especially woodlands, and have been noted to avoid major roads. This means that the creation of new infrastructure could further fragment Tawny Owl habitats and should be carefully considered within decision making. The creation or provision of green bridges could be an opportunity to better connect habitats across major infrastructure (new or existing) which may benefit this species (and others).			
Turtle Dove Link to map	**In appropriate areas on, or near to farmland, create and manage scrub with trees and habitats that support Turtle Doves.** The UK numbers of breeding Turtle Doves has dropped by 99 per cent between 1967 and 2020 which shows how perilous the situation is for Turtle Doves in the UK. This species used to be common across farmland and certain farmland practices could greatly benefit the Turtle Doves which fly to the UK from Africa to breed in summer. See how you can help Turtle Doves here. Turtle Dove advice for land managers can be found here. Turtle Doves typically need 3 key things within close proximity (RSPB recommend within 300m) of each other. These are: 1. Lots of small seeds to be provided as a food source - either as seeds or by planting strips of plants which are left to go to seed. 2. Thick scrub, hedgerows, and trees to be created or managed as nesting sites	Otmoor	Turtle Dove (Streptopelia turtur)	

	3. Nearby accessible freshwater like ponds or streams to be created or enhanced offering shallow edges.			
Willow tit Link to map	**Support Willow Tits by linking up wet woodland, dense scrub, and hedgerow habitats along river corridors with lots of deadwood and stumps.** Retain and create a successive supply of deadwood, such as tall stumps, within and around wet woodland and scrub. Create structural diversity and promote dense scrub growth near Willow Tit nesting sites through selective felling or the reintroduction of coppicing within damp woodlands. Restore wet woodlands by reversing drainage where suitable. To improve the stability of Willow Tit populations, link up suitable habitats by creating or retaining scrub lined river corridors and mature hedgerows. Willow Tits are found throughout the UK but are less common in the South East of England but they are present in Oxfordshire. The measures above should be considered in addition to the need for good woodland management and the creation of new wet woodlands. When creating tall deadwood stumps, the ideal trees are willow and alder with stumps at least 1.5 metres tall. Scrub growth around wet woodland should aim to achieve height of 2-4 metres and it may be necessary to control browsing animals to achieve this. Where coppicing is practiced, willow is preferable over alder. For more information, see the Willow Tit habitat guide.		Willow tit (Poecile montanus)	

Butterflies and moths

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Barberry Carpet Moth Link to map	**Plant new Barberry plants in suitable locations to support the Barberry Carpet Moth. Aim to connect up existing areas of Common Barberry and increase the spread of this plant.** The Barberry Carpet Moth is a rare and declining species in the UK, and is a local priority since one of its largest remaining UK colonies is in Oxfordshire. The only other known sites are in Wiltshire, with single sites left in Dorset and Gloucestershire. Read more about bringing this species back here, see their habitat requirements here, and see this guide that explains what a recently funded project did to support this species.	West Oxfordshire where a small population is established	Barberry Carpet Moth (Pareulype berberata)	
Blackthorn butterflies Link to map	**Retain, manage, plant, and connect up Blackthorn hedgerows, trees, and scrub for Black and Brown Hairstreak butterflies** Retain existing thickets of blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) and mature blackthorn within hedgerows. Plant new thickets and hedgerows containing blackthorn, especially where they connect to existing blackthorn hedgerows or stands of blackthorn trees or scrub. Carry out management and coppicing routines for these blackthorn hedgerows, trees, and scrub areas in a manner that suits the Black Hairstreak and Brown Hairstreak.	Oxford City. MOD Bicester. Hotspot record sites for Black Hairstreak. Otmoor for Brown Hairstreak	Black Hairstreak (Satyrium pruni), Brown Hairstreak (Thecla betulae)	

	Encourage blackthorn in and around woodlands where suitable, create wide rides, glades, and scrub edges in and around those woodlands. In the UK, most black hairstreak butterflies are only found in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire making them a priority species for Oxfordshire to support. The brown hairstreak is also present in Oxfordshire with a strong population in Otmoor that is spreading into Oxford city. The main threat to the success of these species is the damage, poor management, or removal of mature blackthorn habitats. These rare butterflies would benefit from long-term habitat restoration and creation to maintain and create sheltered (but unshaded) stands of blackthorn which are allowed to spread and grow to about 5 metres in height. These butterflies don't typically spread far from the blackthorn so the creation of connected blackthorn stands/hedges/trees is key to expanding their populations. Before winter hedge-cutting or coppicing, try to check blackthorn for eggs. These eggs are particularly vulnerable to hedge-trimming since they are laid on the youngest tips of blackthorn growth. Consider the importance of Ash trees and retain these trees as long as possible and safe to do so, particularly around known Brown Hairstreak locations. Male and female butterflies congregate on these tall ash trees to mate before then laying their eggs on blackthorn (read more here).			

Dark green Fritillary Link to map	**Create or enhance suitable flower-rich grassland habitats with plentiful populations of violets and light patches of scrub for the Dark Green Fritillary.** These butterflies can benefit from a few grassland habitats which you can read about here. These include: 1. Chalk and limestone grassland. 2. Grassland with bracken 3. Damp grassland, flushes and moorland. In all cases, aim to create a plentiful population of violets growing amongst light scrub (if appropriate to the site). Manage scrub and woodland rides to promote violet abundance. The Dark Green Fritillary breeds in lightly scrubbed grassland. After a long period of decline in Oxon it has been spreading a little in recent years but remains very localised to suitable habitat. Habitat recovery could see it become more widespread here, see information about its lifecycle and habitat requirements here.		Dark green Fritillary (Speyeria aglaja)	
Duke of Burgundy butterfly Link to map	**Create (or maintain existing areas of) scrubby calcareous grassland slopes which face East, North, or West and have strongly growing populations of cowslip and primrose to encourage Duke of Burgundy butterflies.** The Duke of Burgundy butterfly has declined by over 50 per cent in recent decades in the UK and remains in only very small and restricted areas on scrubby chalk grasslands and clearings of ancient woodlands.	One tiny population known to remain in Oxfordshire with some records adjacent to West Berkshire and in West Oxfordshire.	Duke of Burgundy (Hamearis lucina)	

	In Oxfordshire, one small grassland population is known to remain but woodland populations of this butterfly have been extinct in the county since the 1990s. See habitat creation and management suggestions here. On grasslands, light grazing (not by sheep) can create open, sunny conditions which support this species. Within the grassland, aim for 10 per cent - 20 per cent of the area to be scrub of varying ages, types, and structures cut on rotation to avoid overshading the grassland. Allow new scrub areas to emerge. Cut or bruise dense bracken areas. In woodland near or on these slopes, enhance or create woodland rides and keep or create bare patches of ground. The butterflies typically breed in vegetation at woodland edges 2 – 5 years after the vegetation was last cut so rotational coppicing of trees at edges or rides over a 3 – 10 year cycle would support these butterflies.			
Liquorice Piercer Moth Link to map	**Maintain and increase Wild Liquorice plants and their seed pods on suitable rough, unimproved calcareous grassland, lanes and scrub margins for the Liquorice Piercer Moth. Introduce suitable grazing regimes.** Time-limited, light cattle grazing is a beneficial regime to manage the foodplant (Wild Liquorice - Astralagus glycophyllos) for the Liquorice Piercer Moth and support seeds to set where cattle disturb the ground. Where grazing is not possible small-scale management should aim to reduce competing vegetation in and around wild liquorice. Ideally this should be undertaken in late autumn/winter on a	Chilswell	Liquorice Piercer (Grapholita pallifrontana)	

	rotation so that not all the site is managed in any one year. Remove arisings from the site (detailed guidance here). Read about a project site being managed for wild liquorice, and other species here. This Liquorice Piercer Moth is very local to sites in a few southern counties in England and their numbers are declining. However, there are a number of strong colonies in Oxfordshire, particularly in the Chilswell area. The caterpillar of this moth feeds only on the seedpods of the wild Liquorice plant during July, August and September. As this species has an annual lifecycle, it requires the foodplant to flower and set seed on an annual basis to survive.			
Moths of Dyer's Greenweed No mapped records	**Manage meadows to increase populations of Dyer's Greenweed for moths by preventing scrub and grasses outcompeting this plant.** Manage meadows (particularly older, uncut calcareous meadows and rough pastures) to increase Dyer's Greenweed plant populations to benefit the Greenweed Flatbody moth. Grazing and cutting should be managed flexibly according to habitat requirements to support the moths that rely on this plant for survival. This moth is now rare after significant recent declines in its populations but it is present in and around Bicester and Otmoor MOD meaning that Oxfordshire is still home to a strong population which is regularly monitored by Butterfly Conservation and it may be present at other sites in the area (Arncott MOD, Wendlebury Meads).	Otmoor, MOD Bicester, Cotswolds, Chilterns, Banbury.	**Plant:** Dyer's Greenweed (Genista tinctoria) **Moth**: Greenweed flatbody (Agonopterix atomella),moth (Mirificarma lentigosella)	

	Carry out surveys and monitoring in suitable locations to monitor and report moth sightings at sites with Dyer's Greenweed.			
Silver-spotted skipper Link to map	**Create and manage south-facing calcareous grassland, grazed to extremely short turf with Sheep's Fescue growing, to benefit the Silver Spotted Skipper.** The Silver Spotted Skipper is only found in chalk downs in southern England but has good potential to expand its range over the coming years. However, they need sustained habitat management to maintain short turf conditions. Sometimes this short turf can be achieved through rabbit grazing but, in the absence of sufficient rabbit grazing, recommendations are to implement a rotational grazing regime with sheep or cattle in a manner that doesn't overgraze the foodplant (sheep's fescue). See this guide for more information. In Oxfordshire, there is one critically endangered small population remaining where management can be targeted. Additionally, if suitable conditions are created elsewhere in the county, consider translocating the Silver-spotted skipper into those suitable sites since natural colonisation is unlikely.	Aston Rowant NNR	Silver-spotted skipper (Hesperia comma)	
Small blue butterfly 	**Create and manage wide field margins and sheltered grasslands to contain Kidney Vetch (Anthyllis vulneraria) on low nutrient soils which get disturbed, to support Small Blue butterflies.** The Small Blue is England's smallest resident butterfly and requires habitat management to recover their numbers in Oxfordshire.		Small blue (Cupido minimus)	

Link to map	Oxfordshire is reported to have local populations which are declining but this species is expected to be able to recover if suitable habitats are created and maintained. See this guide about creating bare ground for butterflies.			
Striped Lychnis moth Link to map	**Plant (and manage) Dark Mullein on grassland in and around the Chilterns to support the Striped Lychnis Moth.** The Striped Lychnis Moth has been declining since the 1970s in Britain but has a stronghold across the Chilterns National Landscape and appears to be doing well here. The caterpillars of this moth feed on the plant Dark Mullein (Verbascum nigrum) and some cases have been reported on White Mullein (Verbascum lychnitis) and ornamental mulleins in gardens. The priority action is to plant and establish Dark Mullein plants on open, sunny grassland habitats like downland, field margins, verges and even in gardens within the Chilterns. This can be done from seed or from plug plants as needed. Dark Mullein establishes most successfully where there has been ground disturbance but persists for up to 7 years (possibly more) in open grassland. The crucial thing is that the grassland must not be mown during the egg-laying and larval periods, which are typically June to August. Management will be needed to limit scrub and to maintain the verges/grassland habitats/gardens that contain Dark Mullein to stay open and sunny to remain successful for Striped Lychnis Moths.	Open, sunny, grasslands (and gardens) in the Chilterns National Landscape	Striped Lychnis moth (Shargacucullia lychnitis)	

	There is a recent report of Moth records here by the Butterfly Conservation (Upper Thames Branch). This action builds on previous projects to spread and manage Dark Mullein which you can read about here.			
White Admiral Link to map	**Manage woodlands for White Admiral butterflies achieving partial shade with honeysuckle, brambles, and areas of bare ground.** Local White Admiral populations have declined and some have been lost in the past 30 years but the creation of suitable woodland conditions is expected to support populations to re-establish. See this guide to see what actions to take in existing woodlands and how to create new woodlands where the new habitat could mature into a suitable woodland to support these butterflies to spread in future. Create and manage woodlands to achieve partially-shaded conditions (not dark) with honey suckle growing in sheltered conditions for White Admirals to lay eggs on. Manage and enhance woodland rides and glades to have zones with bare ground present and allow brambles to grow and flower in large patches to offer nectar. Consider management through coppicing woodlands on 12 – 30-year rotations, retaining trees which support honeysuckle. Control browsing by deer to promote coppice regrowth and seek to create and connect open areas within the woodland.		White Admiral (Limenitis camilla)	

White-letter Hairstreak Link to map	**Retain Elm trees for White Letter Hairstreaks and plant or grow new disease- resistant Elms, especially within 2km of existing Elm woodlands.** The White-Letter Hairstreak still remains in small populations where elms are present including large, isolated elm trees and hedgerows, scrub, and woodland rides or edges which contain elm. Many butterflies have been lost over recent decades during the period where many Elms were lost to Dutch Elm Disease. Elm is now a relatively rare tree species and these butterflies need targeted action around remaining or newly planted Elm sites in Oxfordshire to expand and/or connect butterfly populations. Do not fell mature, healthy Elm trees as a precaution against Dutch Elm disease. Allow Elm suckers to grow where they appear. In areas where scrub or woods show evidence of Dutch Elm disease, introduce coppicing on a 10-year cycle. Manage hedgerow shelterbelts that contain elm and avoid cutting edges where new elm suckers appear. Enhance rides and glades and create extensive ride and glade networks within woodlands. Connect habitats with hedgerows containing Wych Elm (Ulmus glabra) as a hedging plant and disease-resistant elms as hedgerow trees.	Elm sites in Oxfordshire	**Butterfly:** White-letter hairstreak (Satyrium w-album) **Lichen:** Orange fruited elm lichen (Caloplaca luteoalba)	
Wood White Butterfly	**Manage woodlands for the Wood White butterfly and then consider reintroductions of the butterfly to suitable woodlands.** The Wood White species is reported to no longer be present in Oxfordshire and it is not well understood why. The species is still	Woodlands in Northeast Oxfordshire close to Buckinghamshire populations	Wood white butterfly (Leptidea sinapis)	

 Link to map	present on the Buckinghamshire side of the Oxfordshire's North-Eastern border meaning that Wood White populations could be recoverable and re-established if woodlands can be managed to achieve suitable conditions. See a management guide here. Reintroduce the Wood White butterfly to suitable woodlands and manage woodland ride sides to provide shelter and a tapered edge between tracks and maturing timber. Consider management through coppice techniques on rotations of fewer than 12 years and create connections between open areas in woodlands. Supplemental seeding of primary larval foodplants may be necessary eg. Bitter-vetch (Lathyrus linifolius), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus pedunculatus), Meadow Vetchling (Lathyrus pratensis) and Tufted Vetch (Vicia cracca).			

Fish, crustaceans and molluscs

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Desmoulin's Whorl Snail Link to map	**Manage sites that have, or could have, Desmoulin's Whorl Snail to maintain an appropriate vegetation structure.** The Desmoulin's Whorl Snail is a tiny snail with a very limited international and national range. The Oxfordshire populations represent a key proportion of the national records and bespoke management is required to support this species. They are typically found in tall wetland grasses, sedges, and reeds in fens, swamps, and marshes that border rivers and lakes. Where this snail is already present, it is important not to significantly change the habitat management at the sites. Instead, the priority aim is to safeguard and maintain the existing vegetation structure through the continuation of previous low-intervention management practices to prevent loss of this species. They rely on tall wetland grasses, sedges and reeds in consistently damp or wet ground (not dry and not deeply flooded). Aim to retain consistent, high, groundwater levels at the site to provide humid conditions. Also keep the site open and sunny by preventing scrub growth and limit or prevent livestock grazing, mowing, and cutting since heavy trampling or loss of vegetation would eradicate the snail populations.	Cothill, Cholsey Marsh.	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (Vertigo moulinsiana)	

	If possible, consider extending this management out from sites where the snail is present out to adjacent locations to expand the footprint of habitat to support this species. For more detail, see this guide from Natural England about managing habitats for this species.			
Fish Link to map	**Create and maintain fish passes or remove structures within rivers to enable fish to migrate and reproduce.** Remove physical structures that blockade the river (if the blockade is currently redundant and serves no essential purpose). For structures which cannot be removed, provide bespoke fish passes at these structures along rivers to enable fish to migrate and move between river sections and to access spawning ground (to lay eggs to reproduce). Fish passages are essential in addition to the more general restoration along more areas of modified river channels to reduce excess siltation by e.g. narrowing over-wide channels and replacing gravel beds, which will provide habitat diversity and improve spawning habitat for a greater diversity of fish species. Eels are a migratory species which spawn at sea but grow on in freshwaters and are experiencing a major global decline in numbers including within Oxfordshire rivers in the past 30 years. Local declines are also noted for Brown Trout and Grayling. Alongside overall improvement to river quality and river habitat, all fish also need to be able to move through river systems to access good habitat for breeding and growing, but the legacy of the numerous	Across the county's rivers.	Brown trout (Salmo trutta), European Eel (Anguilla Anguilla), Grayling (Thymallus thymallus)	

	structures built on rivers for milling, navigation and amenity has created numerous barriers to fish movement. Creating fish passes (multi-species passes for trout and coarse fish, and eel passes for eels) would help fish to move between sections of river to access places to reproduce and leave their eggs. Contact the Environment Agency's Fisheries and Biodiversity teams who can advise on key locations to provide fish passages and river restoration. Oxfordshire's local catchment partnerships are also a valuable point of contact.			
Mountain Bulin snail Link to map	**Develop a dense, undisturbed litter layer in woodlands, particularly ancient beech woods, and manage them to achieve partial shade for the Mountain Bulin Snail** Manage suitable woodlands to achieve shaded conditions particularly in ancient beech native woodland. Light thinning or selective felling may be appropriate when regeneration of trees or the shrub layer is required. Minimise the disturbance of the ground, leaflitter, and wet areas within woodland as much as possible. Control grazing to minimise disturbance, some light grazing may be suitable to control coarse vegetation but can also be achieved through small-scale mechanical means. Maintain graded woodland margins with site-native trees on external wood-edges. Where appropriate, introduce management through rotational coppice in small coupes, on rotations of more than 12 years which can be highly beneficial to developing the dense litter layer required. Land snails like the Mountain Bulin Snail are highly sensitive to local disturbance.	Cotswolds and Chilterns	Mountain Bulin (Ena montana)	

	Good woodland management is important whilst following the actions above and generally, longer coppice rotations seem to be more beneficial to invertebrate communities living in the woodland litter.			
White clawed crayfish Link to map	**Conserve remaining White Clawed Crayfish populations by managing the river habitat and improving water quality. Also look for suitable sites to expand their range.** The UK is thought to support a quarter of the world's population of White Clawed Crayfish - the UK's only native crayfish species. It is under threat due to the spread of American Signal Crayfish (an invasive species) and the disease they carry which quickly exterminates native white clawed crayfish populations. White Clawed Crayfish numbers dropped dramatically in recent years. In Oxfordshire, this species remains in 1 or 2 watercourses as isolated populations. Without action and support, it is expected that this species will be lost from Oxfordshire and, potentially, from the UK. If future, effective techniques emerge that can exclude American Signal Crayfish, this will be an important action to take but there are no clear methods to achieve this at present. Oxfordshire should try to conserve the very restricted remaining populations of white-clawed crayfish in the county by ensuring sensitive watercourse management, retention of refuge features for crayfish (cobbles, tree roots), and maintaining and improving water quality. Oxfordshire should use targeted surveys (potentially using eDNA techniques) on suitable watercourses to monitor whether there are/could be any other remaining populations of white clawed crayfish in the county.	Chalk and limestone streams in Oxfordshire.	White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes)	

	Suitable watercourses are those without American signal crayfish and which have barriers to colonisation by American signal crayfish. Some survey methods for white-clawed crayfish require a protected species licence. Any remaining Oxfordshire populations of white clawed crayfish that are deemed to be 'at-risk' could be carefully considered for relocation. Consider introducing or translocating White Clawed Crayfish into suitable 'offline' sites (waterbodies which are not connected to a river) which are identified as suitable sites away from the risk of competitive American signal crayfish (such safe sites are known as Ark sites). See habitat management guidance for White Clawed Crayfish here and details about Ark sites and mineral extraction guidance for this species here.			

Fungi and lichens

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Fungi and fungi-associated plants found with woodland Link to map	**Ensure the long-term continuity of suitable tree species with careful management to support rare woodland fungi and plants.** Retain trees where these plants and fungi are found. Ensure the long-term continuity of suitable tree species in these locations (saplings through to veterans) through planting or encouraging regeneration. In hotspot areas of these species protect soils by avoiding felling or coppicing trees and avoid fires, fertilisers, and using heavy machinery. Avoid mowing during peak fruiting/flowering periods and control vegetation competing with the target species. Control deer and limit scrub and bramble encroachment. Consider fencing off populations of these species where necessary. To increase the population of these species, create new areas of suitable tree species adjacent to the sites where these species are currently found. These plants and fungi may be found in a range of habitats including woodlands, parkland, hedgerows. Oxfordshire is a particular stronghold for these species found amongst the ancient and veteran trees which have been retained and well-managed (sites like Blenheim, Aston Rowant, and Headington).	Various records exist around the county including for fungi at Blenheim, Aston Rowant & Headington.	**Flowering plants:** Bird's-nest Orchid (Neottia nidus-avis), Narrow-lipped Helleborine (Epipactis leptochila), Yellow Bird's-Nest (Hypopitys monotropa) and its subspecies (Hypopitys monotropa subsp. Hypophegea), White Helleborine (Cephalanthera damasonium), Ghost orchid (Epipogium aphyllum). **Fungi:** (Boletus aereus), Devil's	

	These ancient and veteran trees have long-established soils that still support populations of these now rare species and expansion needs to start from sites where these species are present.		bolete (Boletus satanus),	
Lichens (on veteran trees) Link to map	**Retain veteran trees which host rare lichens and manage woodlands and trees to increase future lichen populations.** Selectively thin trees around veteran trees that host lichens to open overstocked woods and create structural variety. In lichen hotspots, control the regeneration of young trees to maintain an open wood structure through actions such as reintroducing grazing where historically lost, paying consideration to grazing pressure from wild herbivores. Consider creating glades around the woodland that vary in age and size. Reduce local air pollution levels to as low as possible, including reducing intensive agricultural practices locally to enable lichens to survive. This action is important alongside broader good woodland management (including the control of invasive species like rhododendron and to create and retain deadwood). Look for opportunities to reconnect existing populations of lichens through pasture, tree, woodland, or hedgerow creation. Lichens are an excellent indicator of good quality, clean air so measures taken to support this species are also measures which can improve air quality for people and the wider environment (e.g. reducing local air pollution levels). To best support these lichens, Forestry Commission advise creating glades through approximately a third of the woodland area.	Usnea articulata (only in Nettlebed common)	**Lichens;** (Bacidia incompta), (Buellia hyperbolica), (Lecanora quercicola), (Lecanora sublivescens), (Usnea articulata)	

Insects and spiders

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Beetle of Autumn Gentian Link to map	**Manage existing populations of Autumn Gentian and where suitable, create new areas of Autumn Gentian, allowing the range and population of the Autumn Gentain beetle to expand.** This beetle reproduces by producing larvae in the roots of Autumn Gentian (Gentianella amarella), a late flowering plant which favours dry, chalk grassland. The plant itself is relatively common across southern England but the populations of this beetle are rare and populations do exist in Oxfordshire including Aston Rowant NNR.	Aston Rowant NNR	**Beetle**: (Smicronyx reichi) **Flowering plant**: Autumn Gentian (Gentianella amarella)	
Cigarello Gall-fly Link to map	**Manage and cut reedbeds on long rotation and prevent scrub and trees from invading, to support the Cigarello Gall-fly.** After being absent from records in Oxfordshire for at least 30 years, the Cigarello Gall-fly was recently found and recorded in Oxfordshire's Chilswell Valley. They need targeted and tailored habitat management of reedbeds to support the species to survive.	Chilswell Valley	Cigarello gall-fly (Lipara similis)	

Clubbed general soldierfly Link to map	**Ensure that alkaline tufa spring-fed fens in Oxfordshire have a flow of clean calcareous spring flow into the fen and graze, or cut and rake vegetation to keep open, short, sunny pools to support Clubbed General Soldierflies.** The only records of this soldierfly in England are in Oxfordshire meaning we have a key role in preventing the loss of this species through targeted habitat management including ensuring that clean aquifer water continues to feed the habitats which are found to support these species. If population size and health allow, consider reintroductions of the soldierfly to suitable fen sites.	Cothill fen SSSI and Dry Sandford pit SSSI, potential for reintroduction to suitable fen sites like Lye Valley	Clubbed general soldierfly (Stratiomys chamaeleon)	
Dung specialists and dung beetles Link to map	**Graze pastures with unmedicated animals to supply unmedicated dung to support rare dung specialist species and dung beetles.** Ensure the continuation of this unmedicated grazing and management on sites where unmedicated animal grazing has been long-established and introduce it to adjacent sites. Additionally, introduce this grazing management to new sites across the county. This action particularly applies to horses and cattle not treated with anthelmintics, to produce dung that enables rare species to survive and spread including the Hornet Robberfly and dung beetles like the Violet D'Or beetle. A paper about Hornet Robberflies and habitat management to support them can be found here with a detailed resource here. See information here about helping 'Dung Beetles for Farmers'. Many beetles like dung beetles are threatened by the loss of permanent pasture (being disturbed or converted to another use), the		Hornet Robberfly (Asilus crabroniformis), and dung beetles including the Violet Dor Beetle (Geotrupes mutator).	

	cessation or change in routine of grazing animals, a lack or change of dung supply, and the use of parasite medications (endectocides) as a routine treatment for livestock (Natural England report) found here. Many medications are used to keep livestock healthy. However, there is rising evidence about the negative impact of Avermectins on wildlife and the environment. The toxins build up in the dung, soil, and water with negative effects on plants and soil invertebrates like dung beetles. The dung itself also contains significant amounts of the toxin which impacts dung-dependant species. However, there are non-chemical and reduced-chemical options available to farmers, read more here.			
Ellipteroides alboscutellatus No mapped records	**Increase the presence of the moss (palustriella commutate) in tufa springs with open woodland. Moss growth could be encouraged by managing woodland to achieve consistent, partially shaded seepages along tufa springs.** This fly relies on the presence of this moss for survival and the fly itself is a very rare species with fewer than 20 records in England at the time of writing with a recent record in Worton Wood, Oxfordshire. If the woodland is suitable for coppicing, this could be introduced to achieve partial shade conditions.	Worton Wood	True fly (Ellipteroides alboscutellatus)	

Lousewort flea beetle Link to map	**Conserve, manage, and enhance suitable areas to increase populations of Marsh Lousewort for the Lousewort Flea Beetle.** Marsh Lousewort is a rare plant which can be found in alkaline fens. The Lousewort Flea Beetle requires this plant to be able to breed. In Oxfordshire this beetle is only known to be present in Cothill Fen SSSI. See information about the plant here.	Cothill fen SSSI	Lousewort flea beetle (Longitarsus holsaticus)	
Meadow ant hoverfly Link to map	**Manage grasslands that are good quality, warm, sunny, and open to encourage and retain yellow meadow anthills (mounds). Graze to a short sward using suitable species like sheep to support the Meadow Ant Hoverfly.** This hoverfly lives in the ant nests (mounds) of 'Lasius flavus' (yellow ants) which need good quality grassland. In sites that already have the yellow ant mounds, mange the site through grazing and avoid damaging the anthill (mounds) with machinery. In suitable grassland reversion projects, consider the reintroduction of yellow ants if they have not, or are not likely to, naturally colonise the area.	Aston Rowant NNR, Barracks lane meadow.	Meadow ant hoverfly (Microdon devius)	

Noble Chafer Link to map	**Manage and create orchards with deadwood to support Noble Chafer beetles.** A rare metallic-green beetle which can be found in traditional orchards. Support Noble Chafer populations by keeping mature, large, dead, dying, and decaying wood within traditional orchards where this species is present or could become present. Avoid removing or burning deadwood from these areas and keep mature, suitable tree species in and around the orchard. Introduce Chafer boxes to create temporary habitat for Noble Chafers whilst an orchard establishes and/or sufficient deadwood is supplied. Plan to grow a future succession of trees that will become mature. For orchard creation, consider using early-maturing varieties of fruit trees. See this set of facts, survey tips, and management advice specific to Noble Chafers and orchards. There are six records of Noble Chafers in Oxfordshire in the past 30 years showing that this is a species right on the brink of being lost from the county (and the country). The Noble Chafer relies on dead and dying wood for it's young (larvae) to survive in, particularly on orchard trees. The larvae feed on deadwood for up to three years before the adults emerge as a beetles for six weeks in summer to reproduce. Adult beetles are known to choose the nectar of hogweed and meadowsweet which can be encouraged or grown around the edge of orchards to provide nectar sources to attract or support noble chafers beetles. Use techniques to retain, increase, and prompt new deadwood each year in orchards where noble chafers are known to be present or could be present in future (e.g. through translocation).	Very restricted to traditional orchards and gardens with mature and declining fruit trees.	Noble chafer (Gnorimus nobilis)	

	Ensure the longevity and presence of large, mature, veteran, and dying trees within the orchard and alongside orchard trees consider planting nearby oak and beech which can also support Noble Chafers.			
Snail killing fly Link to map	**Continue extensive grazing management (or cutting and raking) over suitable large areas to keep wetlands short and open throughout the year. Retain or create pools in open wetlands to host snails for this fly.** This fly is found in very few locations in England, one of which is Oxfordshire's Port Meadow. It is of key importance to extensively graze these open wetlands and to create areas on the site which can host snails (which this fly relies on to survive). Other species are also expected to benefit from this open wetland with nutrient rich mud and pools.	Port Meadow	Snail killing fly (Sciomyza dryomyzina), Marsh Dock (Rumex palustris)	
Southern Damselfly Link to map	**Create unpolluted, shallow streams to support Southern Damselflies.** Manage sites where Southern Damselflies are known to be present or could become present to create unpolluted, base-rich shallow streams with a constant moderate flow rate of water and relatively high-water temperatures. Maintain open banksides with unshaded streams. Endangered in England and at risk of extinction globally, Southern Damselflies remain in the UK in approximately ten areas including one location in Oxfordshire, Dry Sandford Pit. This species requires channels with a permanent flow of water which does not dry out or freeze. They occur in heathland streams, water meadow ditches on chalk habitats, and fen habitat.	Dry Sandford Pit	Southern Damselfly (Coenagrion mercuriale)	

	See the management handbook for Southern Damselfly for further, detailed action.			
Spider (Tuberta maerens) Link to map	**Create new areas of connected coppice with standard trees including oaks (Quercus robur) especially in and around Brasenose Wood, to support the spider (Tuberta maerens).** This spider is reported to be highly specialised to managed habitats and its range is greatly limited to Oxfordshire, Dorset, Berkshire and Wiltshire. Whilst the exact, ideal management actions aren't fully clear, the greatest abundance of this species was associated with oak trees (Quercus robur) in a coppice-with-standards woodland 12 years after coppicing. The spiders were particularly found on the South and West facing areas of the tree trunks.	Brasenose Wood	Spider (Tuberta maerens)	

Mammals

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Bats Link to map	**Design, create, and enhance wildlife corridors to support bats (in both urban and rural areas).** Survey areas for bats in urban and rural areas to identify bat corridors. Bats use corridors through the natural environment to move (commute), feed (forage), and get to their roosts. Often, they use tree-lined corridors, hedgerows, woodland, and trees in gardens and greenspaces to move through both rural and urban areas. Ponds, rivers, and watercourses also help to attract insects that bats feed on and can be a key part of the foraging corridors. Minimise loss or damage to existing bat corridors, and enhance existing wildlife corridors and features that support bats. Where possible, create new corridors, habitats, and features in suitable locations that better support bats to forage, commute, or roost. New corridors could aim to connect to existing hedgerows, woodlands, lines of trees, trees in gardens and greenspaces. New corridors can act as stepping stones to help mobile species move through urban and rural areas However, these species are known to be negatively impacted by lighting. Read more about the impacts of lighting and what you can do	Horspath Tunnel		

	to help bats here. Care should be taken to minimise or shield lights to benefit bats (and other species) in rural and urban areas. Get in touch with Bat Conservation to get help with bat-friendly gardens, monitoring bats, and more. For local advice, information, and support, get in touch with Oxfordshire Bat Group. When designing changes to the environment to create or enhance urban areas and buildings – see this detailed guide, by Bat Conservation to create an urban environment that can support bats and biodiversity.			
Bats (woodland specialists) Link to map	**Manage woodlands for bats. Typically, retain deadwood and mature trees with dark, humid conditions with well-connected foraging/commuting corridors nearby.** There are 18 bat species in the UK, 14 of which were recorded in Oxfordshire between 2019 – 2023. In 2024, a very rare, almost extinct species of bat was also found in Oxfordshire's woodlands – Bechstein's bat. This bat, and the others listed (right) are strongly associated with woodlands and need particular types of woodland management to support them. See this link by Bat Conservation Trust to see the bat woodland specialists. Survey bats in rural areas and identify woodlands where bats are present or roosting and report sightings to the Environmental Records Centre TVERC. Maintain the woodland and surrounding area to support any bat species that are already present (see the needs of different species here).	Bernwood, Tackley Woods, Begbrooke Woods		

	Generally, in woodlands aim to retain mature, dead, damaged, and dying standing trees, especially trees with cracks, loose bark, ivy, and holes (or hollows). Maintain dark, humid conditions around these trees through management such as growing out understory layers, creating woodland ponds or blocking or slowing the flow of drainage ditches. Create foraging corridors across the county (particularly if there are known bat roosts nearby) by planting trees, hedgerow, or woodland. For detailed information about bat actions in woodlands, see this guide.			
Beaver Link to map No mapped records	**Reintroduce beavers into suitable locations where they are given space and time to naturally restore river diversity and wetland ecosystems.** Beavers are a native UK species but they have been extinct from England for several centuries. In recent decades, some were allowed to come to England in enclosures but there have been no confirmed beavers in Oxfordshire for approximately 400 years. However, as of 2025, wild releases became legal in England and Natural England will now consider applications for the wild release of beavers. They will require sufficient evidence of the suitability of the location and the reintroductions are subject to national policy and licensing. The focus of reintroductions should be to promote biodiversity as well as wider benefits that beavers can bring. For example, beavers can create resilient wetland habitats which can store and hold water. These wider benefits include mitigating damage during flood events and drought events because they can create resilient wetlands that store and hold water benefitting both people and biodiversity.			

	Beaver habitats have also been shown to improve water quality in areas where they live. Since beavers are now starting to be released into the wild, a plan for their management will be important to ensure that they live well, maximise benefits, and limit conflicts with people.			
Hazel dormouse Link to map	**Create, manage, and enhance connected corridors of coppice, woodland, and hedgerows to support Hazel Dormice.** Hazel dormice are unable to spread far from their current locations or from reintroduction sites without directly connecting habitats. Within 1km of sites where Hazel Dormice have been recorded or could become present, create and/or enhance a suitable network of connecting habitats e.g. coppice, woodland, and/or thick hedgerows (these should connect to the original site where the Hazel Dormouse was recorded). Retain trees which have cracks, crevices, and deadwood and retain woody species like blackthorn and hazel in sunny, open areas. Ensure that there are arboreal connections across woodland rides at least every 50-100m and erect dormouse boxes and/or tubes to encourage nesting opportunities. Retain woodland understories in winter and avoid clear felling in known dormouse locations. Consider managing woodland through traditional coppice of non-adjacent coupes. of sites where Hazel Dormice have been recorded or could become present, create and/or enhance a suitable network of connecting habitats e.g. coppice, woodland, and/or thick hedgerows (these should connect to the original site where the Hazel Dormouse was recorded).			

	Retain trees which have cracks, crevices, and deadwood and retain woody species like blackthorn and hazel in sunny, open areas. Ensure that there are arboreal connections across woodland rides at least every 50-100m and erect dormouse boxes and/or tubes to encourage nesting opportunities. Retain woodland understories in winter and avoid clear felling in known dormouse locations. Consider managing woodland through traditional coppice of non-adjacent coupes. Hazel Dormouse populations are estimated to have fallen by 52 per cent since 1995 and are a species that are at risk of extinction in the UK. It requires the above specific measures as well as good woodland management techniques (see this management guide) to improve the structure and diversity of woodlands. Within conifer plantations, maintain the margins of deciduous trees and shrubs beside rides, glades and edges. For more detailed woodland management information, please see the English Nature management handbook for dormice conservation.			
Hedgehog Link to map	**Manage gardens, parks, urban environments, and new developments for hedgehogs.** In gardens, parks, urban greenspaces, and new developments, reduce or stop the use of slug pellets and pesticides, create 13cm x 13cm holes through fences and walls to create 'hedgehog highways' to help hedgehogs move through gardens and greenspaces to forage and mate. Create or install 'hedgehog houses' that provide undisturbed, safe space for them.	Hedgehog roadkill hotspots, new developments		

	Sweep fallen leaves into permanent leaf stores where they may take shelter, and manage grass in gardens and parks to create a mosaic of long grass, short turf, open soil, and tussocks where they may search for food like beetles, caterpillars and earthworms. Hedgehog numbers have declined greatly. They used to be a common sight in both rural and urban areas. In addition to the more urban actions above, the rural hedgehog populations are expected to benefit from broader, general habitat improvements including the creation and good management of hedges, scrub, woodlands, deadwood, and grasslands as well as increasing regenerative farming practices. Wider actions to support hedgehogs can be read about here which would also support a range of other species.			

Otter Link to map	**Prevent otters from drowning in traps by ensuring that any fish and crayfish traps being used are legally compliant and have properly-fixed otter guards.** Otters are still considered 'near threatened' with extinction globally, and their population numbers are impacted by human-caused mortality (e.g. being caught in traps). Although the use of nets and traps is a regulated activity by the Environment Agency, it is important that the numerous fishing clubs and syndicates ensure that all use of such traps on their waters are compliant with the law to avoid otter mortalities.	Countywide		
	In locations where there are regular otter roadkills, consider adapting infrastructure to improve their chances of survival as they move across land and watercourses. Otter populations have been recovering in Oxfordshire in recent decades but their populations can be vulnerable to the impacts of human-caused mortality (e.g. roadkill). Developers, local authorities and National Highways are best placed to implement measures (such as the provision of ledges and underpasses and the use of barrier fencing) to reduce the risk of otter roadkill at hotspots, and the Environment Agency can advise on where the several Oxfordshire hotspots are. In addition to the actions above, Otters and other species require safe and secure breeding and resting sites, which can be provided by the protection and general improvements to riverside habitats which are already measures that the LNRS is promoting. There is information for landowners and woodland owners for otter habitat management. Developments and planners should also use available information to support otters.	Otter roadkill hotspots (information can be requested from the Environment Agency)		

Water vole Link to map	**Manage (or enhance) riverside banks, ditches, and watercourses for Water Voles.** This action can be to support existing Water voles, or to create suitable habitat for new water voles to colonise. Manage riverside banks, ditches, and watercourses to create or maintain areas of sunny shallow water margins with marginal and bankside vegetation and avoid excess or extensive overshadowing of the water by scrub or trees (especially if water vole colonies are already present). Avoid trampling or intensive grazing along the watercourse edge which can damage water vole burrows. Ensure that American Mink are being controlled with the aim to achieve their exclusion where water voles are present. Water voles have experienced drastic declines in the UK. Their numbers dropped by almost 90 per cent between 1989 - 1998 but water voles can still be found in the banks and waters of Oxfordshire's fens, rivers, streams, and ditches. They are most commonly found in areas of slower flowing water with abundant vegetation and steep sided banks (for burrowing into) that have small ledges at their base. Effort should be made to improve habitats where the remaining populations could be joined up with each other. Alongside improved bank and ditch management, it is key to control the (invasive species) American mink which predate on water voles in an unsustainable manner and cause local extinctions which have driven the decline of this species. Water vole recovery is primarily based on whether the efforts to control American Mink are successful. Mink were introduced to the country and are the primary cause of the decline of water voles. Water vole projects, like that of BBOWT, bring	Areas that bridge a gap between existing populations		

	together habitat restoration and mink management and have played a major role in safeguarding Oxfordshire populations. Improved monitoring and trap-alarm systems now provide an opportunity to create a mink-free Oxfordshire if sufficient resource and support can be found. To support Water Voles, see management factsheets, handbooks, conservation handbooks for water voles, advice for landowners, and advice for planning decisions.			

Plants, flowers and trees

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Black poplar trees Link to map	**Plant or enable Black Poplars to grow in Oxfordshire and retain dead and dying poplars where they have been growing. Retain deadwood where possible.** Black poplar trees used to be commonplace across England but are now few and far between. The black poplar is considered to be Britain's rarest tree species associated with wet woodland and forested floodplain. One cause of the decline for this wetland tree was the extensive draining of agricultural land across the country. Now that there are so few black poplars left, it is unlikely that they can pollinate each other due to the distance between the trees. Careful propagation and planting should be undertaken to grow male and female black poplars close to each other where their seeds can land on damp ground. In this way, population numbers may start to recover. Oxfordshire used to have strong populations of this tree since it grows particularly well in wetlands, floodplains, and near ditches. The tree itself supports a wide range of other rare species. Efforts to plant new black poplars could be targeted near to the remaining black poplar trees in Oxfordshire as well as other wetland sites in the county that are suitable to support the growth of new black poplars. See a Black Poplar action plan here. Avoid removing or burning the deadwood of any remaining black	River Thame catchment	**Fly:** True fly (Solva marginata) **Tree:** Black Poplar (Populus nigra)	

	poplars where practicable and possible (accounting for public safety and access). This deadwood itself offers a very rare habitat to other species which are at risk of extinction like the true fly (*Solva marginata*) which breeds under the bark of live, dead, and dying poplars. It requires dead, dying, and rotting poplar trees to be kept in the environment, not removed or burned. For this species it would be particularly beneficial to plant new suitable poplar species in locations near to mature, dead, and dying poplars to ensure a local new source of aging poplars. A local initiative to restore black poplar populations would greatly support the recovery of these trees. Examples include projects for native Black Poplars in Herefordshire and Dorset often offering free trees to expand the UK's populations.			
Creeping Marshwort Link to map	**Within appropriate floodplain habitats, recover Creeping Marshwort by maintaining and creating damp grassland on the margins of ponds that flood in winter. Maintain consistently short, sparse vegetation through regular, extensive grazing**. Local information about Creeping Marshwort can be found here with a description of the plant here. This plant grows in wet, heavily grazed, grassland that floods in winter. Suitable sites are typically by rivers however Creeping Marshwort is now very rare with the UK's main population found only in Oxfordshire. Plantlife and Freshwater Habitats Trust suggest that there are only 2 other smaller populations in the UK. On sites with Creeping Marshwort, it is essential to mimic or implement heavy year-round grazing by cows or horses. If, in Oxfordshire, the grazing pattern is lost, if the land use changes significantly, or if the habitats are damaged or under-managed, the species is at great risk of being lost from the UK.	Oxford Meadows SAC (Port Meadow), and a recent reintroductions to Willow Walk Meadow (Oxford), Lye Valley, North Hinksey, Mill Meadow, Henley, Cutteslowe (Cherwell floodplains).	Creeping marshwort (Helosciadium repens)	

	Oxfordshire's sites represent key, national populations of this endangered plant and maintaining a bespoke management regime is a necessary requirement to recover populations of this species. This is also true for sites where Creeping Marshwort is (re)introduced.			
Devil's bit scabious Link to map (showing Marsh fritillary locations to target Devil's bit scabious actions)	**Enhance existing areas of Devil's bit scabious and create new large areas in suitable, large habitats. In suitable sites, reintroduce Marsh Fritillary butterflies.** Propagate, plant, and establish Devil's-bit Scabious to create extensive patches of this plant (throughout the year, including winter) and introduce or maintain appropriate grazing or other suitable techniques that support this plant species. Where suitable, reintroduce Marsh Fritillary butterflies to areas which have very large populations of Devil's-bit Scabious. The Marsh Fritillary butterfly has become locally extinct due to habitat loss. It relies on well-managed, very large areas of grassland (e.g. wet meadows and calcareous grasslands) which contain Devil's-bit scabious and are appropriately grazed. Guidance suggests that good habitat should exceed 70 hectares with at least 20 per cent of the area containing three or more Devil's bit scabious plants per square metre. To support this butterfly, Devil's-bit Scabious needs to be retained on large sites including adequate areas retained throughout winter. Extensive grazing regimes are ideal to support this. Devil's-bit Scabious creates no seedbank which is why it requires regular, consistent management to maintain its populations and avoid losing both the species mentioned here.	Existing sites of Devil's bit Scabious Otmoor, Cothill Fen NNR, Lye Valley SSSI, Yarton Mead, Long Mead.	Devil's-Bit Scabious (Succisa pratensis), Marsh Fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia). **Moths**: Narrow-Bordered Bee Hawk Moth (Hemaris Tityus), **Fungi** Devil's bit Wart, (Synchytrium succisae), Devil's bit anther smut, (Microbotryum succisae)	

Downy Woundwort Link to map	**Undertake management to increase the presence of Downy Woundwort.** Support existing populations of Downy Woundwort and previously populated areas by managing woodland edges, rides, glades, roadside verges, and hedgerows to limit competitive vegetation growth and create suitable soil disturbance to help this species to spread. Clear scrub on sites where this species has previously grown. Perhaps England's most endangered native wildflower, this species of flowering plant has only been recorded in four sites in England since 1930, all in West Oxfordshire meaning that Oxfordshire has a particular responsibility to try to recover this species. It has been noted to grow along tracks, ancient pathways, and woodland and hedgerow edges on thin disturbed soil above oolitic limestone. In one of those four sites, the most recent survey found one plant. The species relies on its long-lived seed which can survive in the soil for many years. Therefore, the actions to help recover this species include causing soil disturbance to places where there may have previously been downy woundwort populations. Habitat management suggestions can be found here (p67) and here.	Burford and Charlbury. See Distribution map and page 62 of Wats17p59.pdf (bsbi.org.uk)	Downy Woundwort (Stachys germanica)	
Fen violet	**Maintain populations of, or (re)introduce, Fen Violets at suitable sites.** There are only three known sites where the Fen Violet remains in England. One is Otmoor in Oxfordshire (described here). There is a high threat of national extinction to this species and there is ongoing work by local people and Freshwater Habitats Trust to recover the populations of rare plants including Fen Violet.	Otmoor, and sites where this species has previously been present	Fen violet (Viola stagnina)	

 Link to map	Existing sites should be managed to the benefit of this species and to appropriately expose any historic seedbanks. Suitable fen or marsh sites should be considered for (re)introduction of this species to increase its distribution. Possible sites could include areas where the plant was historically present, or they may be new sites. Consider contacting Freshwater Habitats Trust and Oxfordshire Flora Group to request advice about this species including management or (re)introduction. Winter inundation with waters down in spring, flowering and setting seed before vegetation gets too tall for it in summer. Careful grazing management is key to enable it to succeed. Focusing on existing sites to then increase population sites and abundance outward from these sites (particularly around Otmoor).			

Greater Water-Parsnip Link to map	**Propagate and translocate Greater Water Parsnip out to locations to restore its historic distribution in Oxfordshire.** Greater Water Parsnip was once abundant in Oxfordshire's rivers and floodplains. However the abundance of this plant has declined rapidly in the past 200 years as a result of water pollution (eutrophication), wetland drainage, and inappropriate ditch management. The plant requires enough disturbance and grazing to avoid the area scrubbing over but not so much that the plants are all eaten and the habitat trampled. Propagate this plant and support translocation efforts into suitable wetland and riparian sites with a suitable balance of management or grazing for this species. Get in touch with Freshwater Habitats Trust to find out more about what's best for this species. Suitable habitats for translocation are: fens, and emergent and fringing vegetation by rivers, streams, canals, ditches, lakes and ponds. This guide can give you more information about identifying the plant and understanding its range and habitat requirements.		Greater Water-parsnip (Sium latifolium)	

Juniper Link to map	**Regenerate Juniper and manage sites to recover Juniper populations.** Regenerate and increase the presence of Juniper by creating scrapes down to bare soil to establish the seeds and then manage the area for Juniper (and associated species). Where necessary to benefit Juniper regeneration, exclude rabbits, deer, and sheep from these areas. Mature Juniper colonies have been dying out in lowland England and have not, by themselves been naturally regenerating any new young Juniper with any success in the past 60 years. Without Juniper regeneration projects this plant is expected to go extinct within the next 50 years from lowland England. Oxfordshire is one of a few counties which have key suitable areas of southern chalk grassland where Juniper could be re-established, and work is being undertaken to better understand and develop natural regeneration methods to prevent the loss of Juniper and dependent species form Oxfordshire. Bare earth, ruderal plants (plants which colonise bare ground), and invertebrates are a particularly important components of chalk and limestone grasslands which will also benefit from juniper scrapes. Species which are likely to benefit from Juniper projects include rock-rose, wild thyme, horseshoe and kidney vetch along with several species of blue and skipper butterfly.	Aston Upthorpe and Aston Rowant NNR	Juniper (Juniperus communis), Moth (Argyresthia praecocella)	

Limestone fern Link to map	**Create new areas of bare limestone in woodlands, along rivers, in walls, built structures, and gardens to encourage Limestone Ferns.** The creation of limestone structures like dry stone walls, buildings, bridges can support this species as can techniques to expose patches of limestone soils and rock in areas of suitable habitat. The creation of bare patches should not aim to eradicate large areas of other existing habitats but should be conducted in a complementary manner to add biodiversity value to sites where this species could colonise the cracks or scree in limestone rock and exposed areas of limestone-rich soils. The creation of new areas of exposed limestone will be required over time to maintain a population of this species.	West Oxfordshire, the Cotswolds, North of Bicester, and East of Watlington.	Limestone Fern (Gymnocarpium robertianum)	
Long-Leaved Helleborine Link to map No recent records	**Maintain permanent areas of suitable glades, rides, or open spaces within woodlands where long-leaved helleborine are present.** Create and/or enhance glades and open spaces (like wide rides) within suitable woodlands to create permanently light areas within the woodland. Retain a few trees or shrubs in open areas to avoid exposing these plants to too much light as they can be prone to drying out. Manage and control competing vegetation (particularly in the permanently open areas). Vegetation control with occasional soil disturbance in open areas can be achieved through time-limited grazing by suitable animals or other suitable methods. This helleborine is associated with ancient or mature calcareous woodlands where the plant has been found. This plant does not enjoy changing conditions and benefits from permanent open, sunny		Long-Leaved Helleborine (Cephalanthera longifolia)	

	areas in woodlands with enough shade to avoid drying out. Similarly, the land should be moist and not waterlogged or dried out. Typically, cattle or horses are used for grazing in a time-limited manner to thin competing vegetation and cause slight soil disturbance without compacting the soil or overgrazing. Avoid herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides.			
Meadow Clary Link to map	**Maintain low soil nutrient levels, prevent scrub encroachment, and graze at key times to reduce coarse, dominant grasses in suitable sites where Meadow Clary is present or has been present.** The removal of sward by hay cutting or grazing after plants have flowered and set seed is advised, in addition to maintaining a degree of disturbance to provide bare patches of soil for seedling recruitment. It would be important to maintain or introduce careful grazing regimes on grasslands and meadows where this species has been present, practice low-input sustainable farming methods to enhance and achieve greater areas of unimproved grassland. Meadow Clary declined rapidly when agricultural practices began to increase the fertility of grassland by ploughing, applying fertiliser, and re-seeding with 'more productive' grassland species. Now this plant is very restricted in its national range, down to about 20-30 known sites in the UK (mostly in the Cotswolds) of which about half are reported to be in Oxfordshire. As such, Oxfordshire has a particularly important role for the national recovery of this species. Do consider the climate predictions for Meadow Clary's range over time by the Met Office.	Cotswolds sites where the species is, or has been present.	Meadow Clary (Salvia pratensis)	

Military Orchid Link to map	**Manage woodlands for Military Orchids and create open conditions in glades. Exclude and control deer and rabbits and clear moss cover as necessary around the orchids.** Open conditions can be achieved through selective felling to expand glades, controlled time-limited grazing, seasonal mowing, or raking vegetation to control encroaching scrub near existing orchid populations. Oxfordshire has 6 records of Military Orchids in the past 30 years. This orchid takes four years to grow from seed but can live for 15 years. Because they take such a long time to grow, management of sites where they already exist is of key importance to their survival in Oxfordshire.	Woodlands south of Lower Assendon and south of Christmas Common	Military orchid (Orchis militaris)	
Monkey Orchid Link to map	**Manage chalk grassland to retain moisture and increase populations of the Monkey Orchid. Identify suitable sites (without Lady Orchids) to reintroduce and manage Monkey Orchids to expand their range and prevent extinction.** There are three known populations of Monkey Orchid in the UK and Oxfordshire has one of these remaining populations present at Hartslock nature reserve. Here the chalk grassland supports a range of rare species including one of the UK's three populations of Monkey Orchid. This orchid typically flowers earlier than others (around May) and care should be taken to manage the area according to its flowering period. A potential major risk to the Hartslock population is their hybridisation with Lady Orchids which are present at the same site. Targeted reintroduction of Monkey orchids to suitable sites where Lady Orchids are absent offers a way to secure the future for this species.	Hartslock nature reserve	Monkey Orchid (Orchis simia)	

Reptiles

Species by Common Name (ordered A – Z)	Potential measure (the action needed to help the relevant species to recover). Potential measures are in bold with additional detail about the species added below.	Particularly important locations for the action(s)	Which species are intended to benefit most?	Habitat
Adder Link to map	**Create new Adder habitats with mosaic areas of heathland, scrub, grassland, and woodland. Or manage and enhance existing mosaics to reintroduce adders.** Find detailed advice about managing habitat for adders here. Create or manage habitats that have a diverse vegetation structure (a mixture of different heights) with open, sunny areas for basking. Rides and glades at woodland edges can be important and the ground topography should be varied to create features for basking, shelter, and safe hibernation. Limit disturbance within these mosaic habitats and follow advice about game bird releases and management to limit impacts on flora and fauna. Adders used to be widespread in Oxfordshire before the year 2000 but recent evidence shows strong declines across northern Europe. Oxfordshire itself may have one remaining population of adders which were previously reintroduced back into the county. Small and fragmented populations are highly vulnerable to extinction. Major threats to adders include predation by game birds, disturbance and persecution by people. There is potential for expanding existing habitats where adders remain, and for carefully targeted re-introduction of adders into suitable locations following IUCN guidelines and working with authorities and local reptile organisations across borders to restore habitat connectivity with populations in neighbouring counties.	The final Oxfordshire adder population in the Chilterns. Most likely to be suitable in the Chilterns or Cotswolds.	Adder (Vipera berus)	

Common lizard Link to map	**Carefully manage habitat near known lizard colonies to create open, sunny places in dry, exposed sites with areas of dense cover nearby where they can feed on spiders and insects.** Common lizards have been widespread across Oxfordshire but their current numbers and range are not as well-known besides some protected sites like Otmoor and Wychwood. Where they are known to be present, and where habitat management is appropriate, they are doing well. The greatest threats to their success include the fragmentation and disturbance of their habitats and predation by birds. If common lizards are lost from a site, there is little to no opportunity that they will naturally recolonise the location so additional survey and monitoring work is also needed to understand where populations are present locally.	Otmoor, Wychwood, Banbury County Park	Common lizard (Zootoca vivipara)	

You have now reached the end of Oxfordshire's LNRS Species Priorities List. Please report any sightings of these (and other) species to TVERC to help inform future biodiversity recovery work.

Summary

The list above contains **63 specific actions** which support **61 key species** e.g. ‘Monkey orchid’ (or groups of species e.g. ‘Bats’).

Whilst those actions are targeted towards 61 key species and species-groups, the actions are expected to benefit a total of 105 species which are considered to be threatened or near threatened with extinction. You can find each and all of these 105 species listed in the right-hand column of the above table.

In addition, these species-specific actions would also have knock-on wider benefits to a further, non-exhaustive list of species which cannot all be mentioned here. The column of ‘particularly important locations’ were noted to add context for readers but those locations should not limit people from taking actions in other places.

How will other threatened and near-threatened species be supported in the LNRS?

There are approximately 800 other threatened and near threatened species in Oxfordshire in addition to the listed above. You can view the full list of over 800 species on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy webpage.

Whilst those additional 800 species are also important species to recover, it is expected that they will benefit through the large-scale habitat improvement(s) which are listed on the LNRS’s Statement of Biodiversity.

These actions involve enhancing existing habitats, improving landscape-scale connectivity between habitats, and the creation of new habitats to help the population numbers of many of those species to recover and spread.

In some cases, some of the other 800 species require more evidence to better understand what actions they need to help them recover.

Acknowledgements

The LNRS would like to acknowledge the support given by the LNRS partners as well as species experts and county recorders (nationally and locally) who have helped to create this Species Priorities List. Collecting the specific actions needed by nearly 900 threatened and near-threatened species is a significant undertaking and we have only been able to create this with the support from individuals and organisations who have collaborated with this project.

During the longlisting and shortlisting processes, Oxfordshire received support for the LNRS partner organisations (see logos below) as well as contact with over 70 species experts. Alongside the LNRS partner organisations we also heard responses from species representatives from:

- Banbury Ornithological Society
- Banbury Town Council
- Butterfly Conservation Upper Thames Group
- Centre for Hydrology and Ecology
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- Oxfordshire Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Oxfordshire Bat Group
- Oxfordshire Ornithological Society (OOS)
- Plant Life
- RSPB Otmoor
- Species Recovery Trust
- The Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire (ANHSO)
- The Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire
- The River Thame Conservation Trust
- Over 20 further county recorders and individuals with expertise in habitat management for a variety of species.
- Representatives from each of the LNRS project partner organisations (see image)

Images and credits

The images used within this document are not those owned by Oxfordshire County Council and were made available by the following for the purposes of illustration, their inclusion does not indicate that the photographers endorse this strategy.

1. Adder: Adder | Adder Vipera berus Credit: © Natural England/Allan D… | Flickr
2. Barberry Carpet Moth: Barberry Carpet Moth | Barberry Carpet Moth (Pareulype berbe… | Flickr
3. Bats: Myotis bechsteinii | Netopier Bechsteinov Bechstein's Bat | Ján Svetlík | Flickr
4. Bats (woodland specialists): Myotis bechsteinii | Gilles San Martin | Flickr
5. Beaver: (explored) Beaver in the neighbourhood, Almere, May 2021 | Flickr
6. Beetle of Autumn Gentian: Smicronyx reichi | Mark Gurney | Flickr
7. Bittern: Bittern | Richard Towell | Flickr
8. Black Poplar trees: Black Poplar Trees - Worcestershire | Pool / Berrow Down / C… | Flickr and true fly: Wood soldier fly (Solva marginata, Xylomyidae), Parc de Wo… | Flickr
9. Blackthorn butterflies: Black Hairstreak - butterfly | Black Hairstreak, Glapthorn C… | Flickr
10. Breeding waders: Common snipe 2016-08-05_07 | Thomas Landgren | Flickr
11. Common lizard: Common Lizard | Common Lizard (Zootoca vivipara) © Natural E… | Flickr
12. Cigarello Gall-Fly: no image
13. Clubbed general soldierfly: Stratiomys chamaeleon (Diptera: Stratiomyidae), ♀ | Stratiom… | Flickr
14. Creeping Marshwort: photo provided, courtesy of Judy Webb
15. Curlew: Curlew | Scotland | caroline legg | Flickr
16. Dark Green Fritillary: Speyeria aglaja | dark green fritillary Großer Perlmuttfalte… | xulescu_g | Flickr
17. Desmoulin's Whorl Snail: Vertigo moulinsiana | This very small snail (3-4mm) is one o… | Flickr
18. Devil's-bit Scabious Devil's-bit Scabious (Succisa pratensis) Dipsacaceae | Flickr and Marsh Fritillary: Marsh Fritillary | Etienne Gosse | Flickr
19. Downy Woundwort: Stachys germanica, Saltway | Sam Thomas | Flickr
20. Duke of Burgundy Butterfly: Hamearis lucina | Duke of Burgundy Schlüsselblumen-Würfelfal… | xulescu_g | Flickr
21. Dung specialists and dung beetles: Asilus crabroniformis | Hornet Robberfly female Finistère, F… | Flickr
22. Ellipteroides alboscutellatus: no image
23. Farmland Birds: Alvéola-amarela, Yellow Wagtail | Motacilla flava, Leziria g… | Flickr
24. Fen violet: Fen violet | Fen violet Viola stagnina Cambridgeshire Copyri… | Flickr
25. Fish: Brown Trout at Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge | Flickr and European Eel (Anguilla anguilla) | Aquarium du Val-de-Loire,… | Flickr
26. Fungi and fungi-associated plants found with woodland: Yellow Bird's-nest, Hypopitis monotropa, Brierley Wood SK3… | Flickr and Satan's Bolete, Devil's Bolete (Rubroboletus satanus) (Bol… | Flickr
27. Great Crested Newt: Great-crested newt | Streatham Common, The Rookery | Carron Brown | Flickr
28. Greater Water-Parsnip: Greater Water-parsnip | At Upton Marshes Nature Reserve, Nor… | Flickr
29. Hazel dormouse: Hazel dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius), Skole, Lviv Obl… | Flickr
30. Hedgehog: Twinklehog comes to say hi | Beautiful mature Hedgehog trund… | Flickr

31. Juniper: Juniperus communis | Juniperus communis | Joan Simon | Flickr
32. Lichens (on veteran trees): Usnea articulata on dead hawthorn twigs | Usnea articulata (… | Flickr
33. Limestone fern: Gymnocarpium robertianum, Nr. Killour, Mayo | Sam Thomas | Flickr
34. Liquorice Piercer Moth: Grapholita pallifrontana | Exemplar found: Russia, Moscow Ob… | Flickr
35. Long-Leaved Helleborine: Miekkavalkku, narrow-leaved helleborine (Cephalanthera lon… | Flickr
36. Lousewort flea beetle: no image
37. Meadow Ant Hoverfly: Microdon devius, North Wales, June 2016 | Janet Graham | Flickr
38. Meadow Clary: Meadow sage - Salvia pratensis | Björn S... | Flickr
39. Military Orchid: Military orchid - Orchis militaris | Björn S... | Flickr
40. Monkey Orchid: Monkey Orchid Orchis simia | Parkgate Kent | Len Worthington | Flickr
41. Montagu's Harrier (cropped image): A Montagu's Harrier in flight | A migratory raptor from Cent… | Flickr
42. Moths of Dyer's Greenweed: no image
43. Mountain Bulin snail (cropped image and rotated): Ena montana | gastropods.wordpress.com/2017/07/07/photo-of-t… | Flickr
44. Nightingale: Nightingale | Mathijs van Lisdonk Photography | Flickr
45. Noble chafer: Noble Chafer - Gnorimus nobilis on Meadowsweet | WWT Grafton… | Flickr
46. Otter: old world otter eating a fish | A picture of an otter | Flickr
47. Silver Spotted Skipper: silver spotted skipper - Hesperia comma | Thanks to Hippobos… | Flickr
48. Small Blue butterfly - Small Blue | Cupido minimus - Pitstone, Buckinghamshire, UK,… | Flickr
49. Snail killing fly: Sciomyza dryomyzina male - Brook Meadow, Warwickshire 2009… | Flickr
50. Southern Damselfly: Southern Damselfy at rest | At a location in the New Forest | Flickr
51. Spider (Tuberta maerens): no image
52. Stone Curlew: Alcaravão | Alcaravão Burhinus oedicnemus Eurasian Thick-kne… | Flickr
53. Striped Lychnis Moth: Striped lychnis caterpillar 2a - Shargacucullia lychnitis | Flickr
54. Swifts and House martins: Gierzwaluw - Apus apus | Gierzwaluw - Apus apus | Flickr and House Martin | An archive shot from the Romney Marsh, during… | Flickr and Tornseglare i holk | Fem dagar efter uppsättning sitter en t… | Flickr and House Martin (Delichon urbicum) | The photos contained in th… | Flickr
55. Turtle Dove: Turtle Dove (Streptopelia turtur) ... Sutton Bank , York… | Flickr
56. Water Vole: Water Vole | Seen at the British Wildlife Centre, Newchapel,… | Flickr
57. White Admiral: Väikelumik; Limenitis camilla; White Admiral | Tirbiku, Lään… | Flickr
58. White Clawed Crayfish: White-footed Crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) | Aquarium… | Flickr
59. White letter hairstreak: White-Letter Hairstreak | At Brockholes | HELEN M BUSHE | Flickr
60. Willow Tit: Willow Tit | Willow Tit - Parus montanus - Пухляк Russia, Mo… | Flickr
61. Wood White butterfly: Leptidea sinapis-reali 170717 116.jpg | Jürgen Mangelsdorf | Flickr

Appendix A

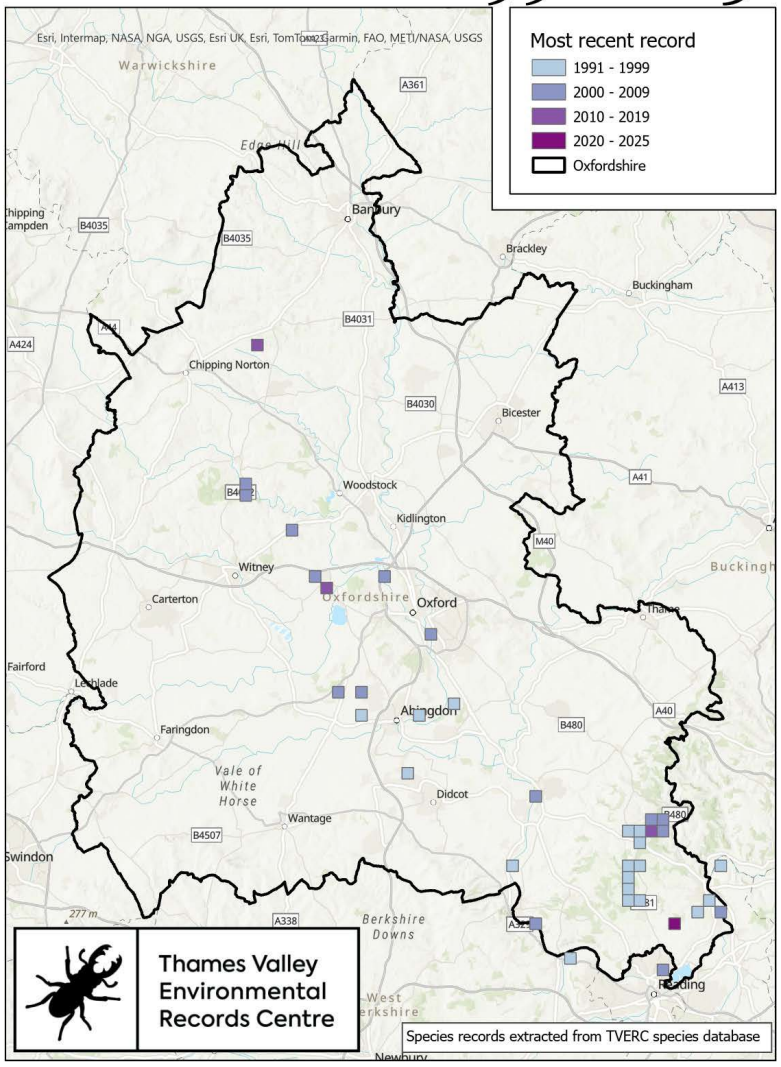
This list shows all the species from Oxfordshire's LNRS Species Priorities List in alphabetical order by their common or group name

- Adder
- Barberry Carpet Moth
- Bats
- Beaver
- Beetle of Autumn Gentian
- Bittern (and Marsh Harrier)
- Black Poplar trees
- Blackthorn butterflies
- Breeding waders
- Cigarello Gall-Fly
- Clubbed general soldierfly
- Common lizard
- Creeping Marshwort
- Curlew
- Dark Green Fritillary
- Desmoulin's Whorl Snail
- Devil's bit scabious (and Marsh fritillary)
- Downy Woundwort
- Duke of Burgundy Butterfly
- Dung specialists and dung beetles
- Ellipteroides alboscutellatus
- Farmland Birds
- Fen violet
- Fish
- Fungi and fungi-associated plants found with woodland
- Great Crested Newt
- Greater Water-Parsnip
- Hazel dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Juniper
- Lichens (on veteran trees)
- Limestone fern
- Liquorice Piercer Moth
- Lousewort flea beetle
- Long-Leaved Helleborine
- Meadow Ant Hoverfly
- Meadow Clary
- Military Orchid
- Monkey Orchid
- Montagu's Harrier
- Moths of Dyer's Greenweed
- Mountain Bulin snail
- Nightingale
- Noble chafer
- Otter
- Silver Spotted Skipper
- Small Blue butterfly
- Snail killing fly
- Southern Damselfly
- Spider (Tuberta maerens)
- Stone Curlew
- Striped Lychnis Moth
- Swifts and House martins
- Tawny Owl
- Turtle Dove
- Water Vole
- White Admiral
- White Clawed Crayfish
- White Letter Hairstreak
- Willow Tit
- Wood White butterfly

Appendix B

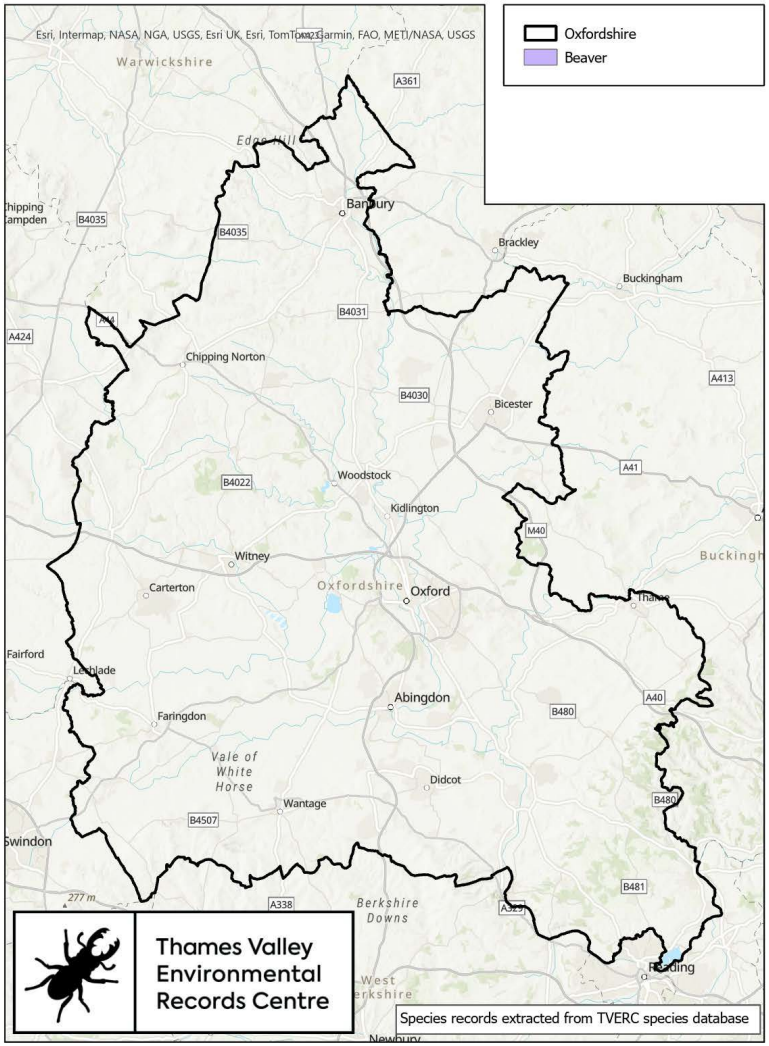
The full set of distribution maps for each and all the species on this Species Priority List. On the following pages you can see the maps that are linked to from the list of species above. The maps indicate where each species or group of species has previously been recorded in the county. It does not mean that actions to support species has to be taken only in those locations. Instead the purpose of these maps is to enable people to get a sense of whether the action is likely to be relevant in their area of the county. If these species are found in other areas of the county in future, the LNRS supports you to take the relevant species-specific actions in those locations too.

Adder records 1990-2025



Return to list

Beaver records

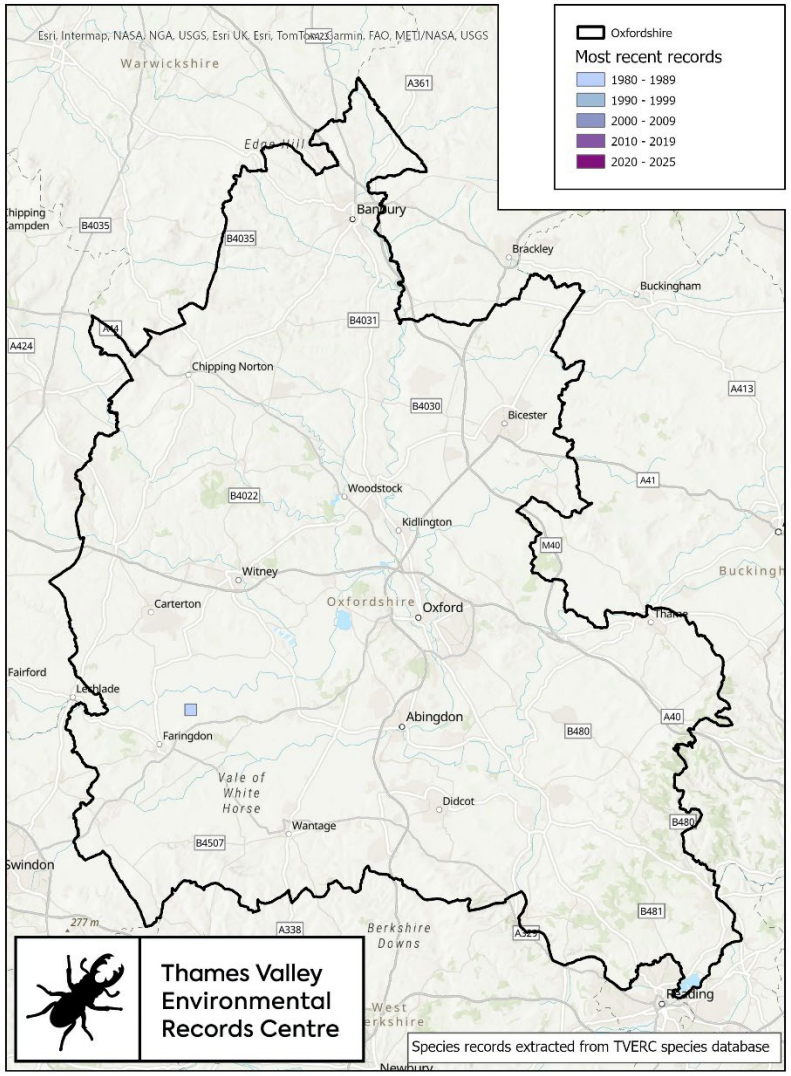


Return to list

No recent records

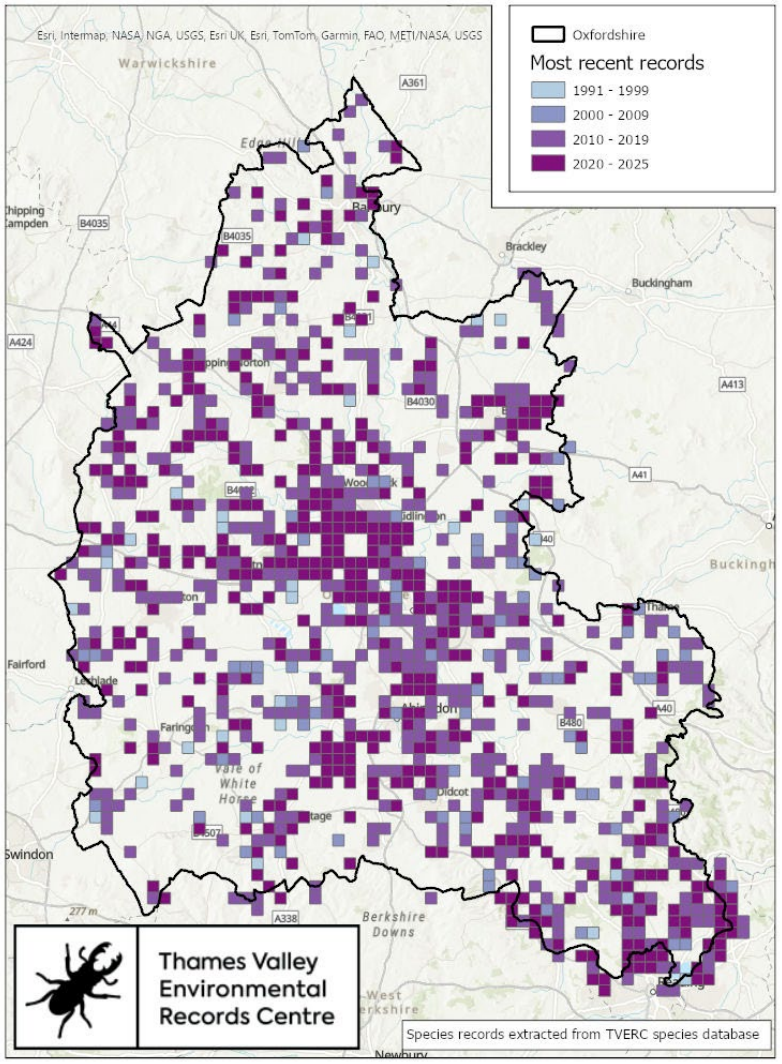
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Barberry Carpet Moth records 1980-2025



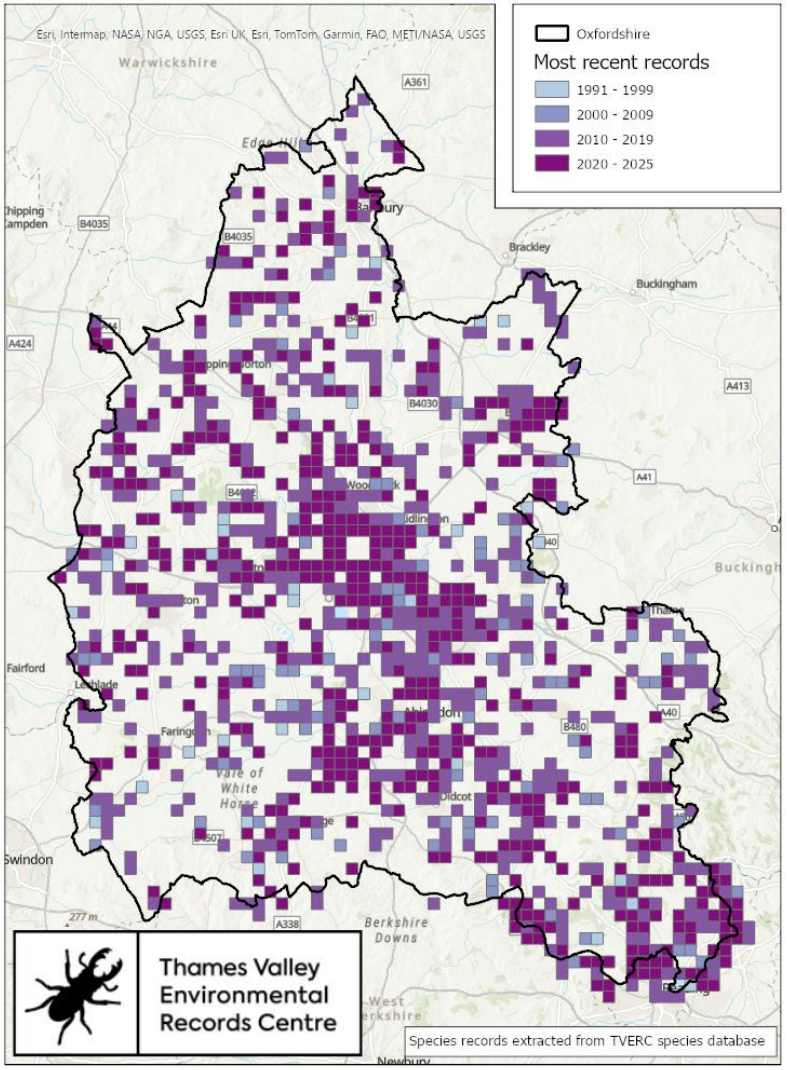
Return to list

Bat (woodland specialists) records 1990-2025



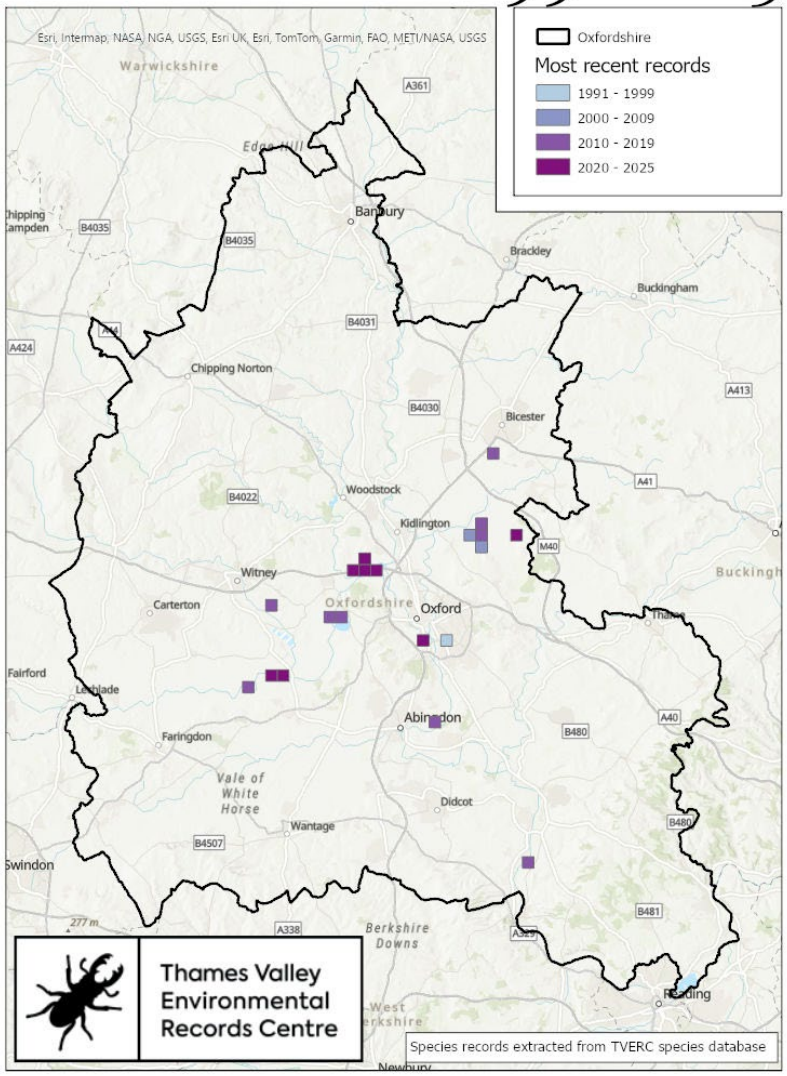
Return to list

Bats (general) records 1990-2025



Return to list

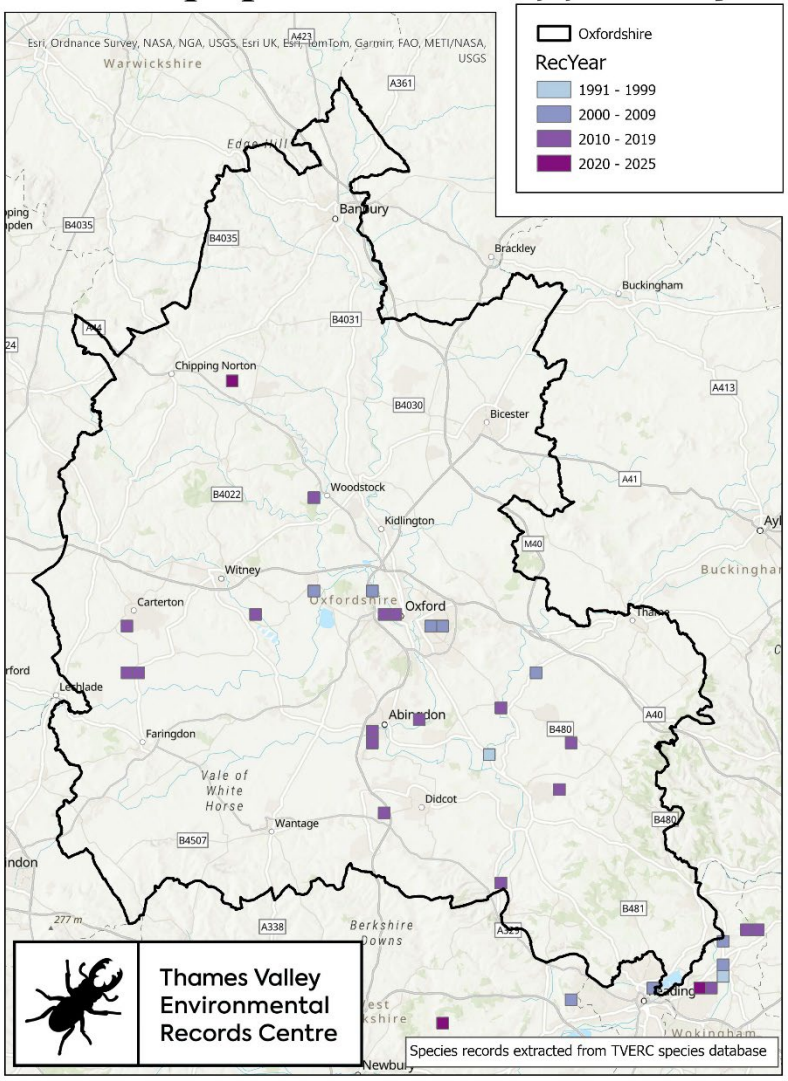
Bittern records 1990-2025



Return to list

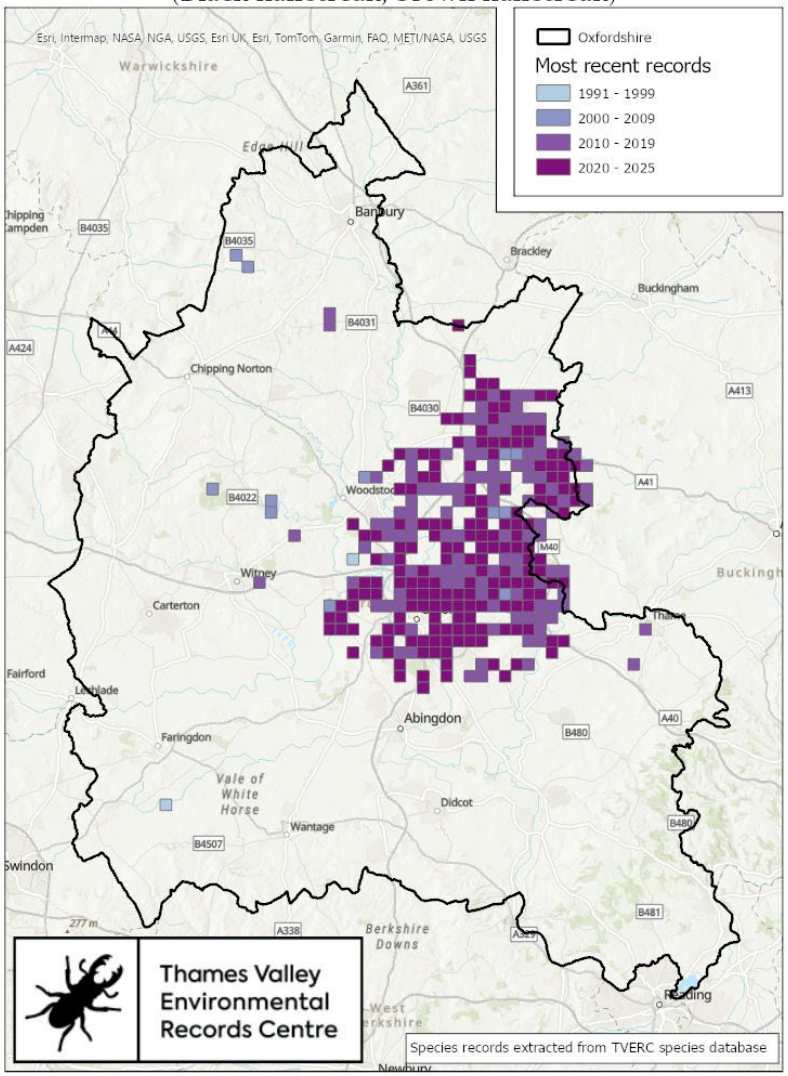
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Black poplar records 1990-2025



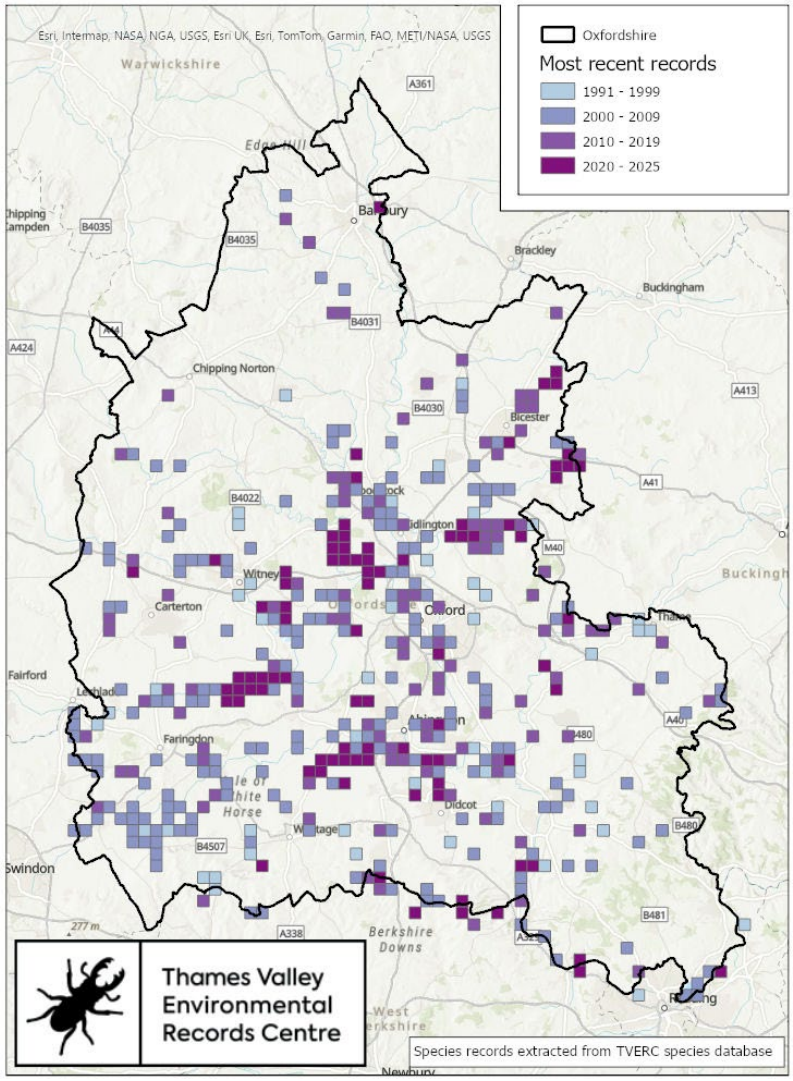
Return to list

Blackthorn butterflies records 1990-2025
(Black hairstreak, brown hairstreak)



Return to list

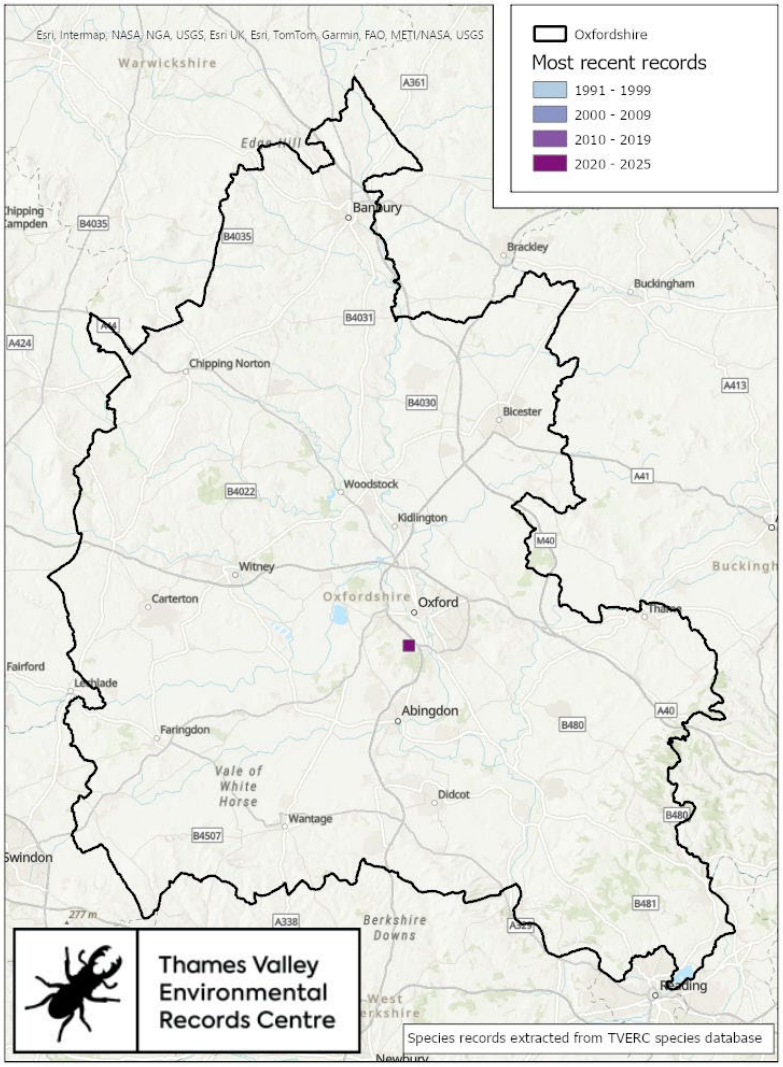
Breeding Waders records 1990-2025
(Lapwing, crane, snipe, redshank)



Return to list

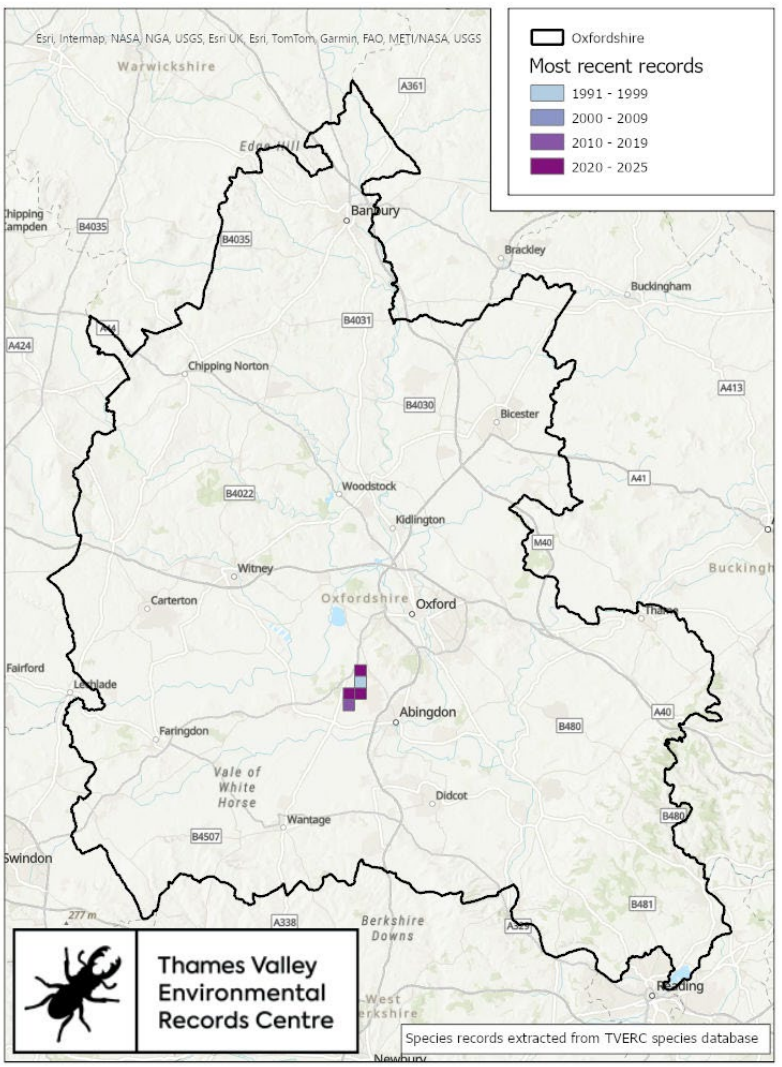
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Cigarillo gall-fly records 1990-2025



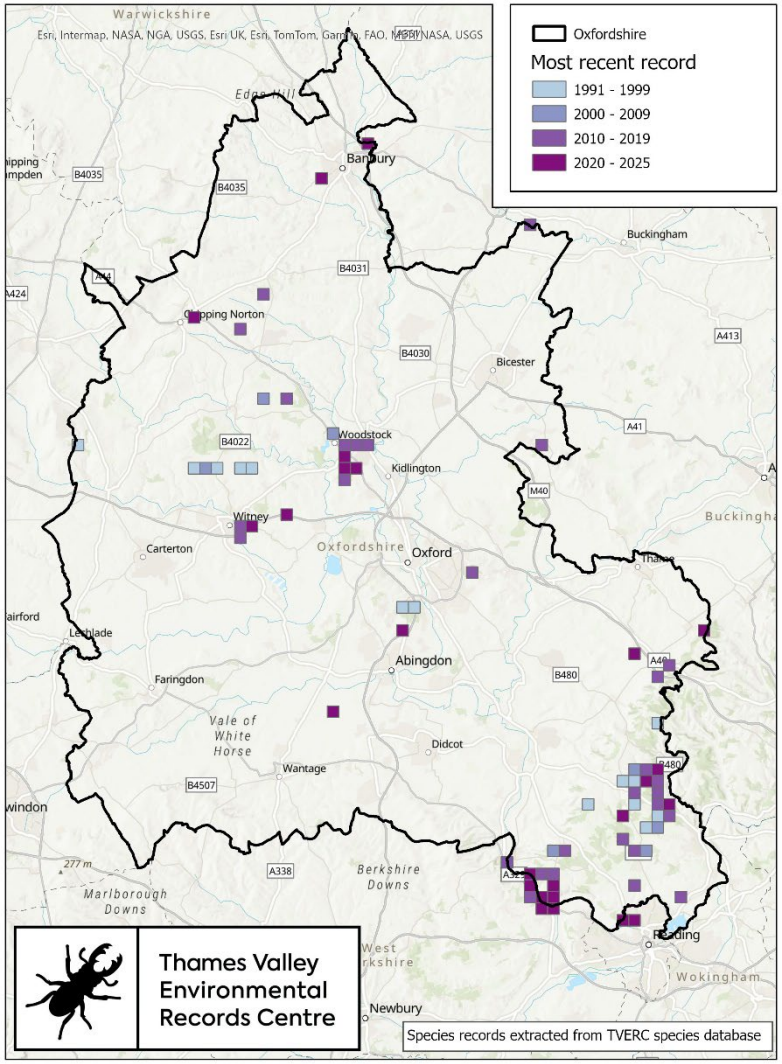
Return to list

Clubbed general soldierfly records 1990-2025



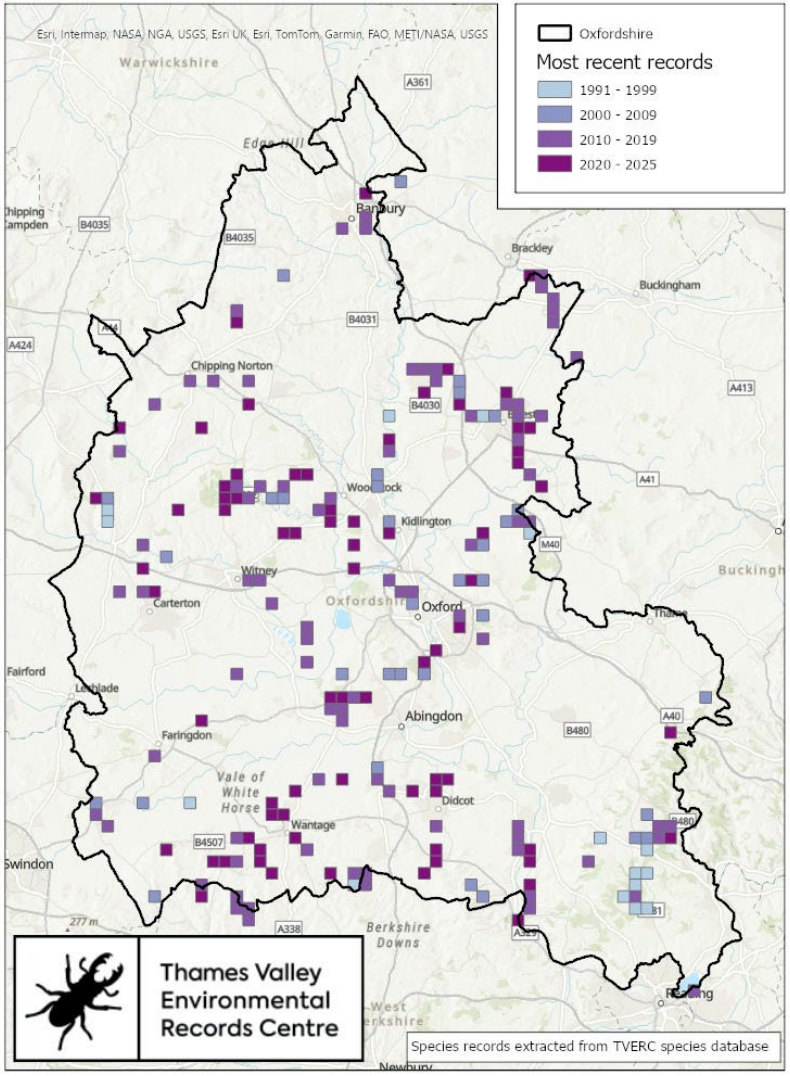
Return to list

Hazel dormouse records 1990-2025



Return to list

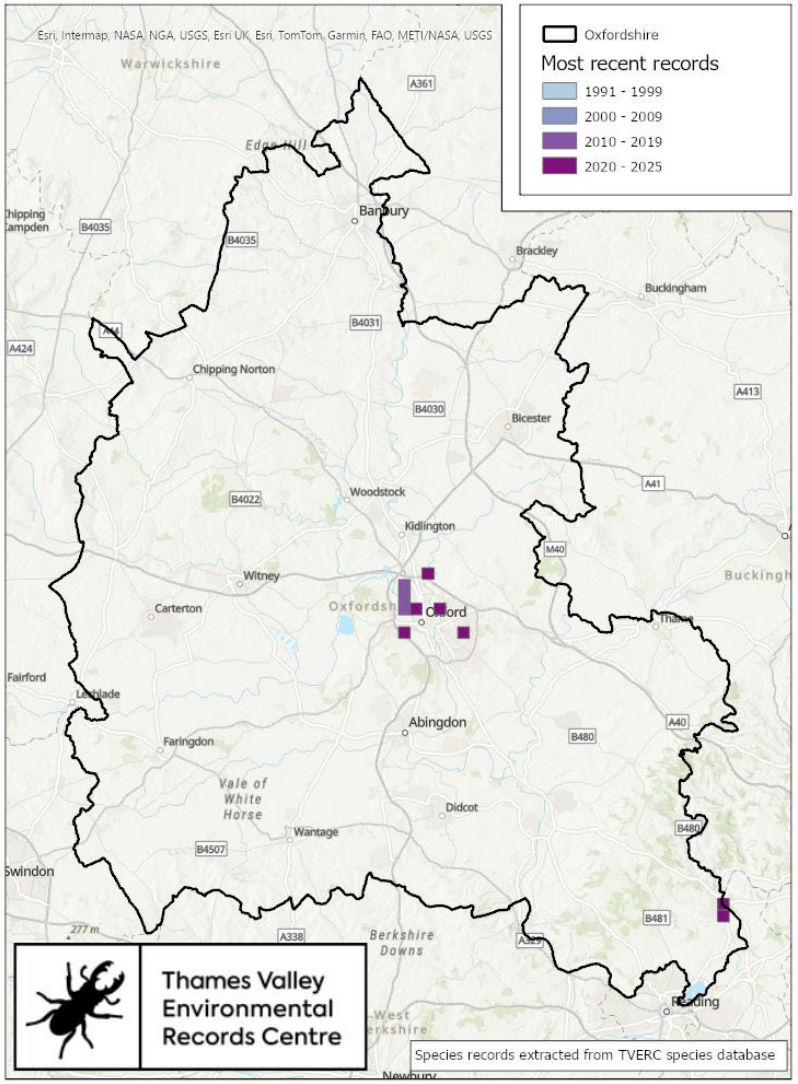
Common lizard records 1990-2025



Return to list

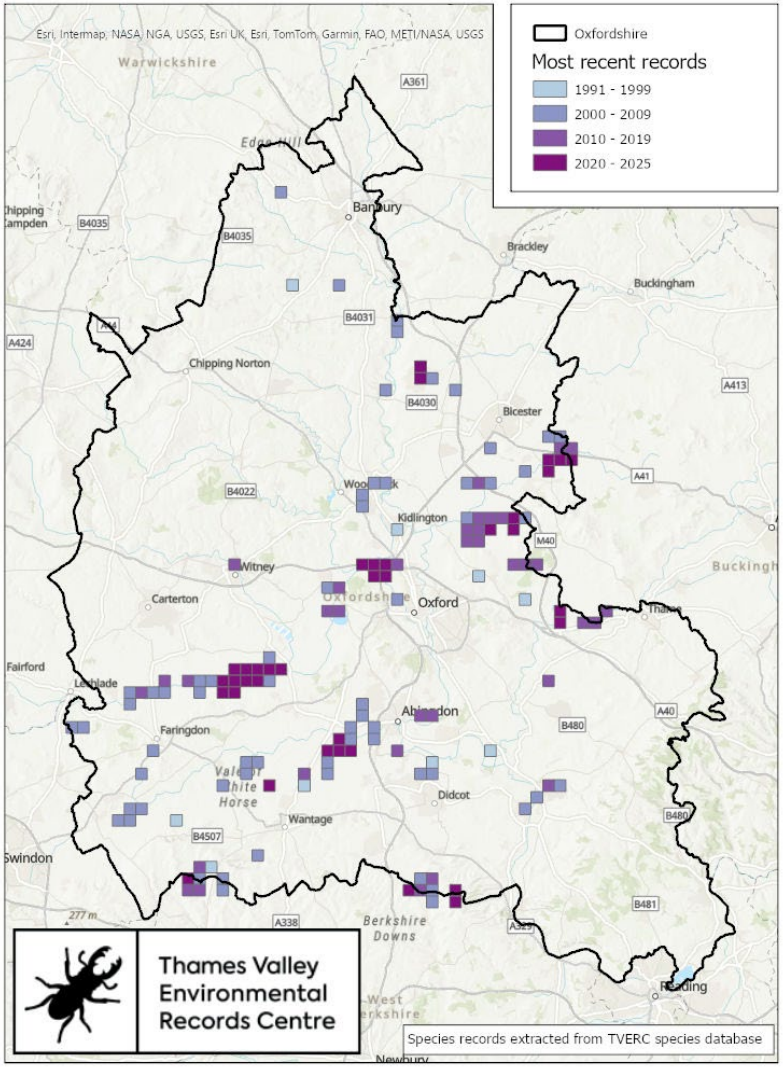
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Creeping Marshwort records 1990-2025



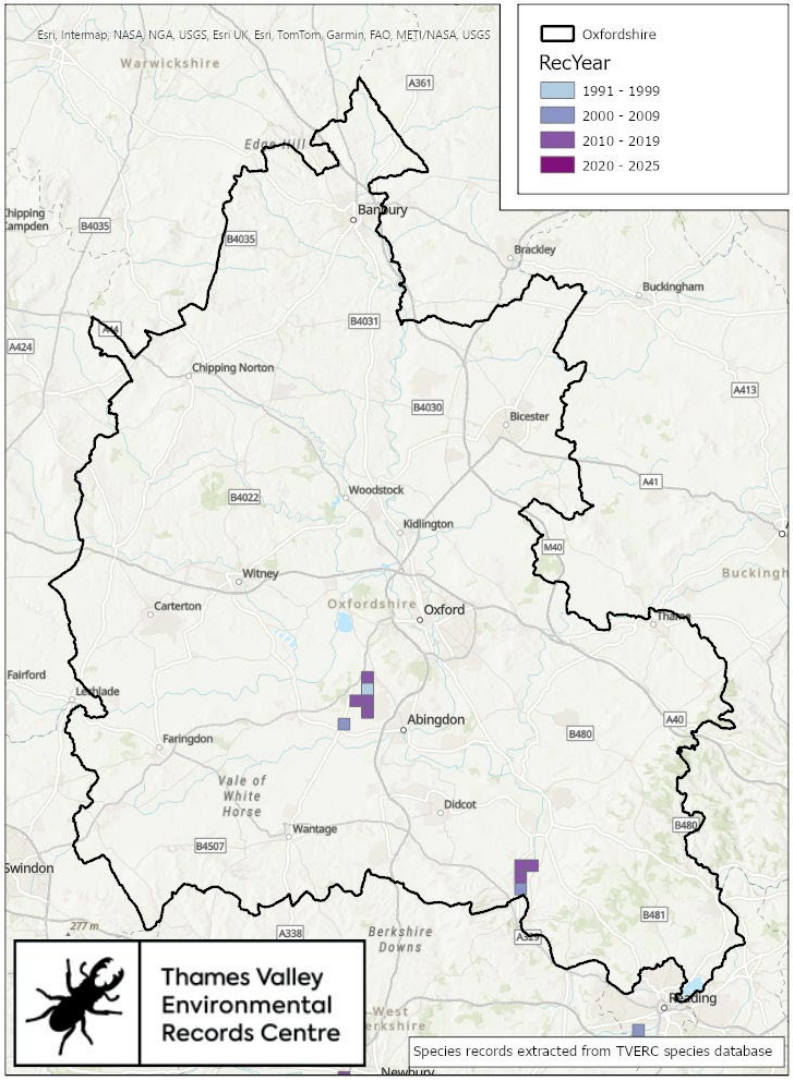
Return to list

Curlew records 1990-2025



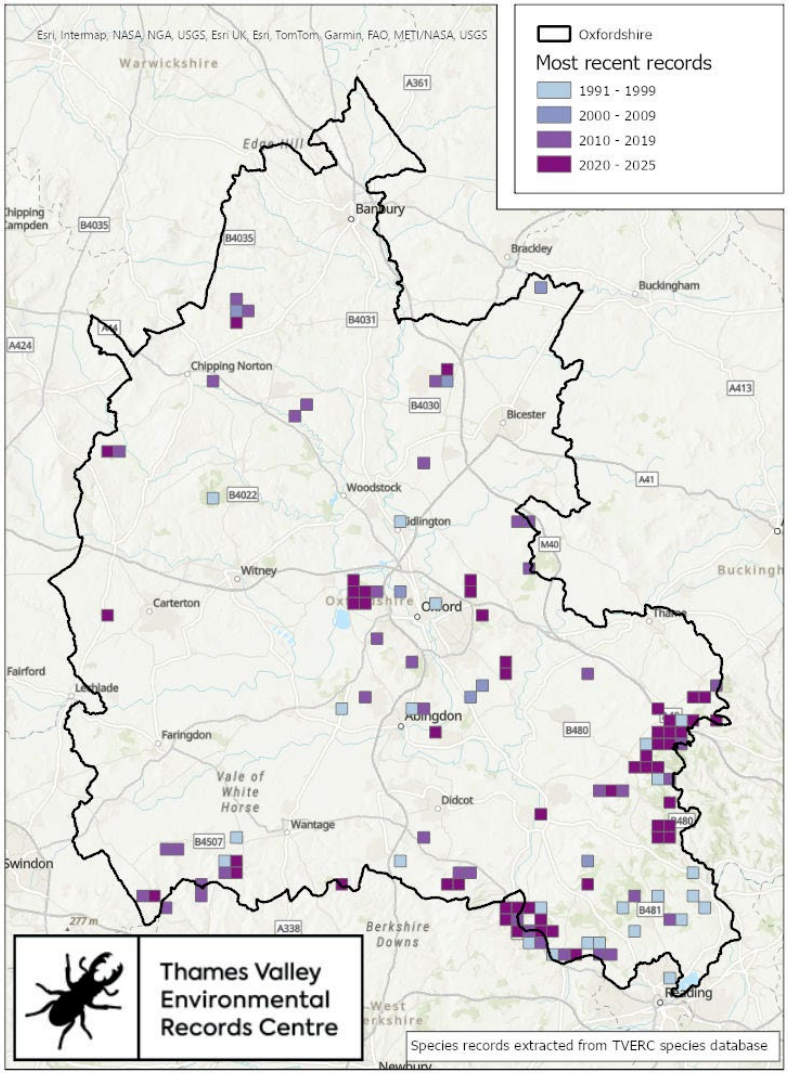
Return to list

Desmoulin's Whorl Snail records 1990-2025



Return to list

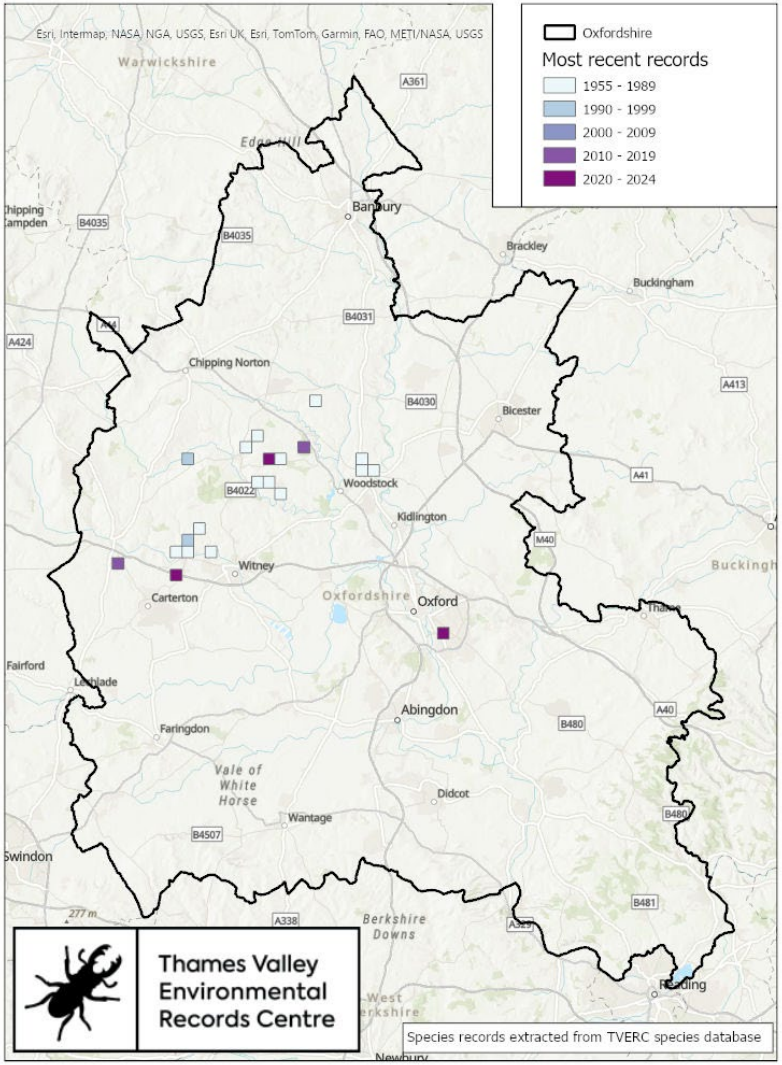
Dark Green Fritillary records 1990-2025



Return to list

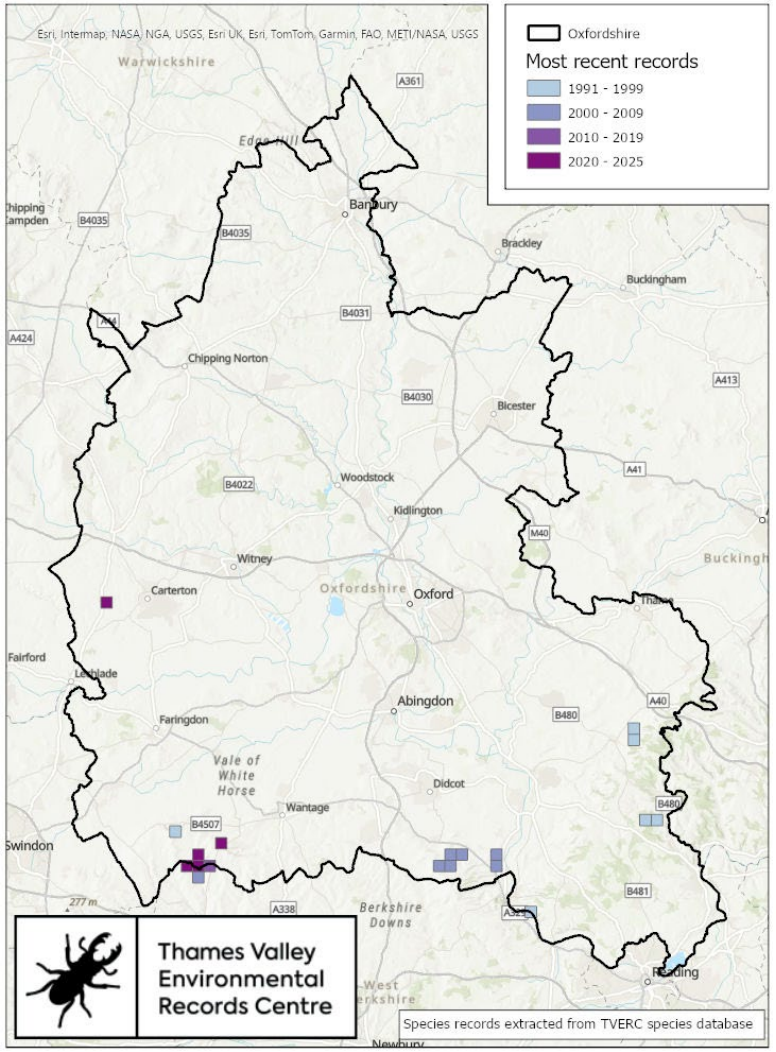
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Downy Woundwort records 1950-2025



Return to list

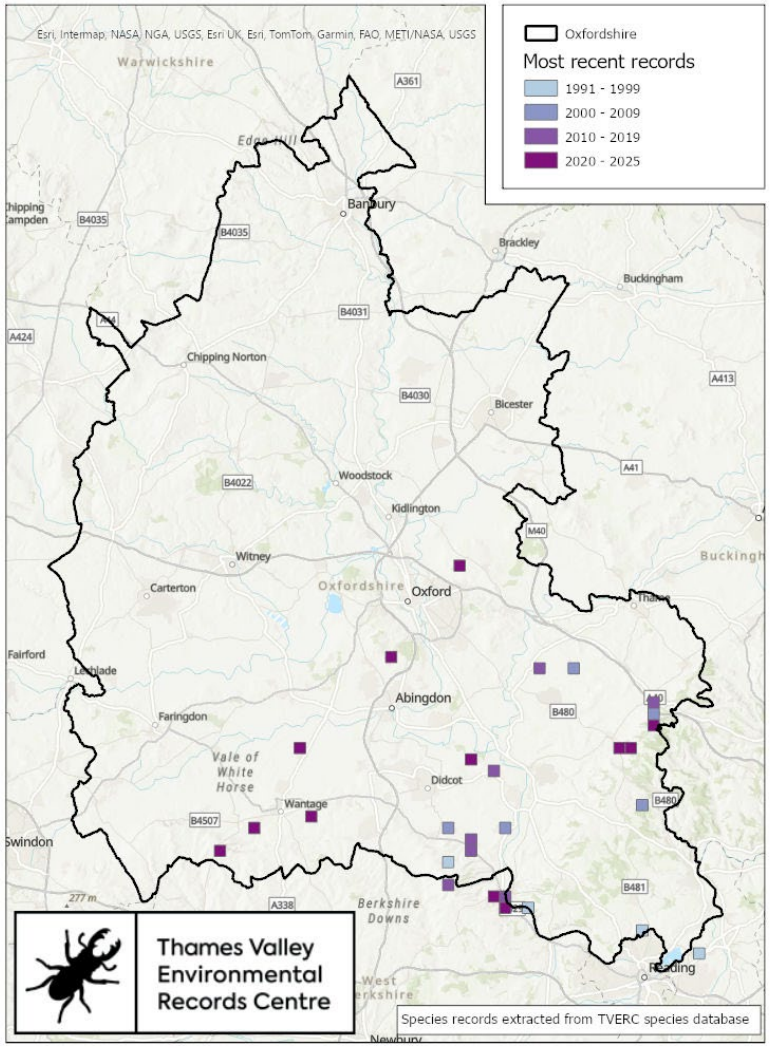
Duke of Burgundy records 1990-2025



Return to list

Dung specialists records 1990-2025

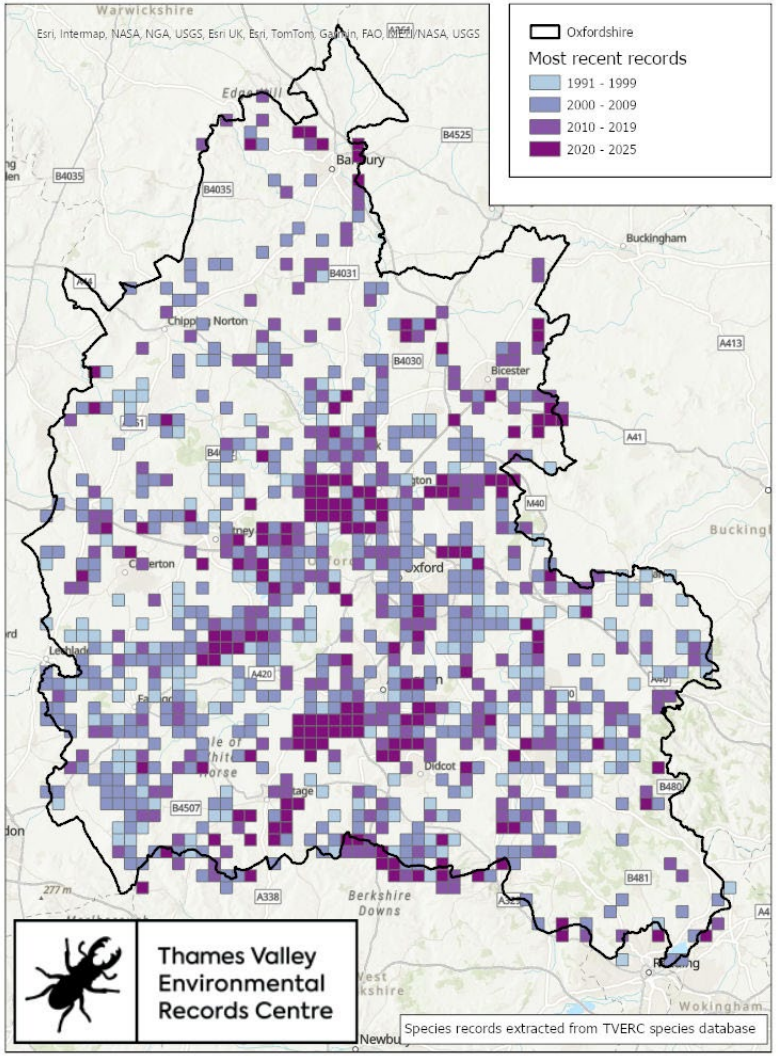
(Hornet robberfly, violet dor beetle)



Return to list

Farmland bird records 1990-2025

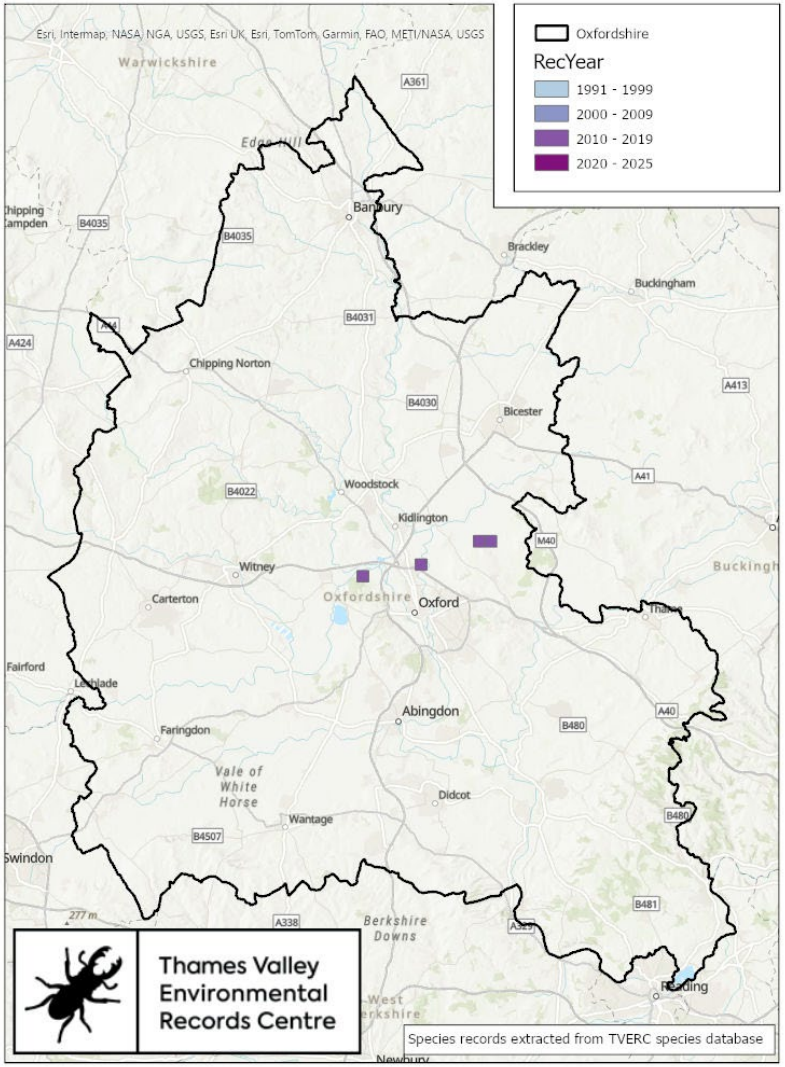
(Corn bunting, grey partridge, lapwing, linnet, tree sparrow, yellow wagtail, yellowhammer)



Return to list

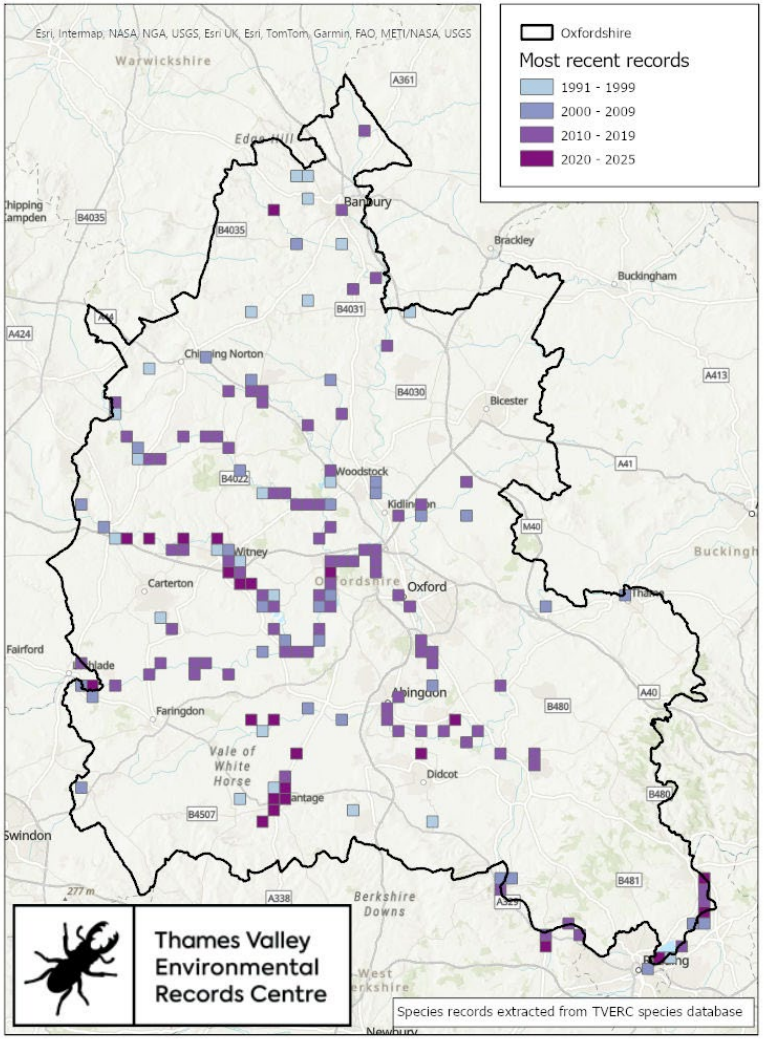
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Fen Violet records 1990-2025



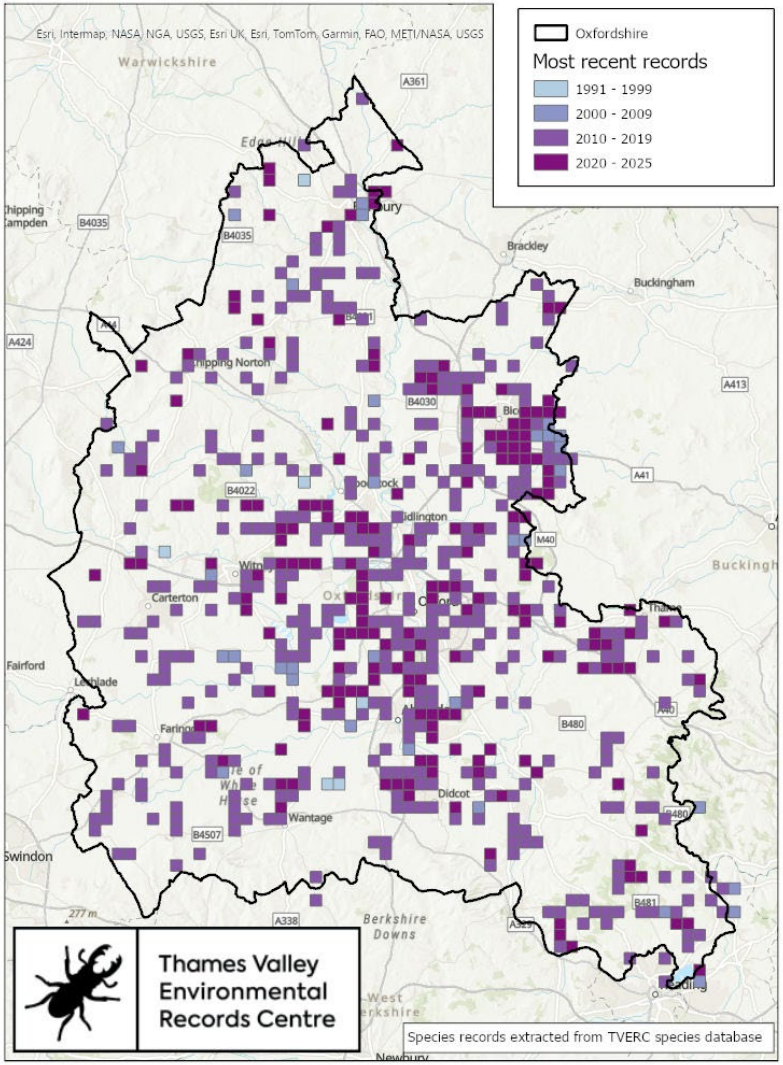
Return to list

Fish records 1990-2025
(Brown trout, eel, grayling)



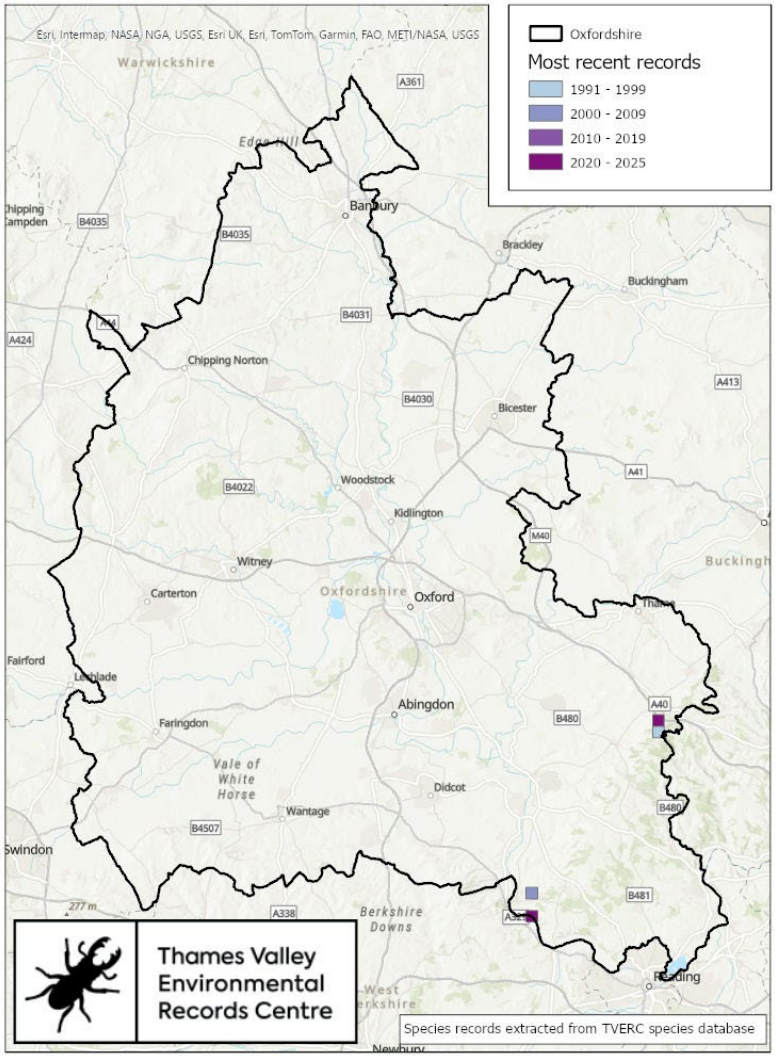
Return to list

Great crested newt records 1990-2025



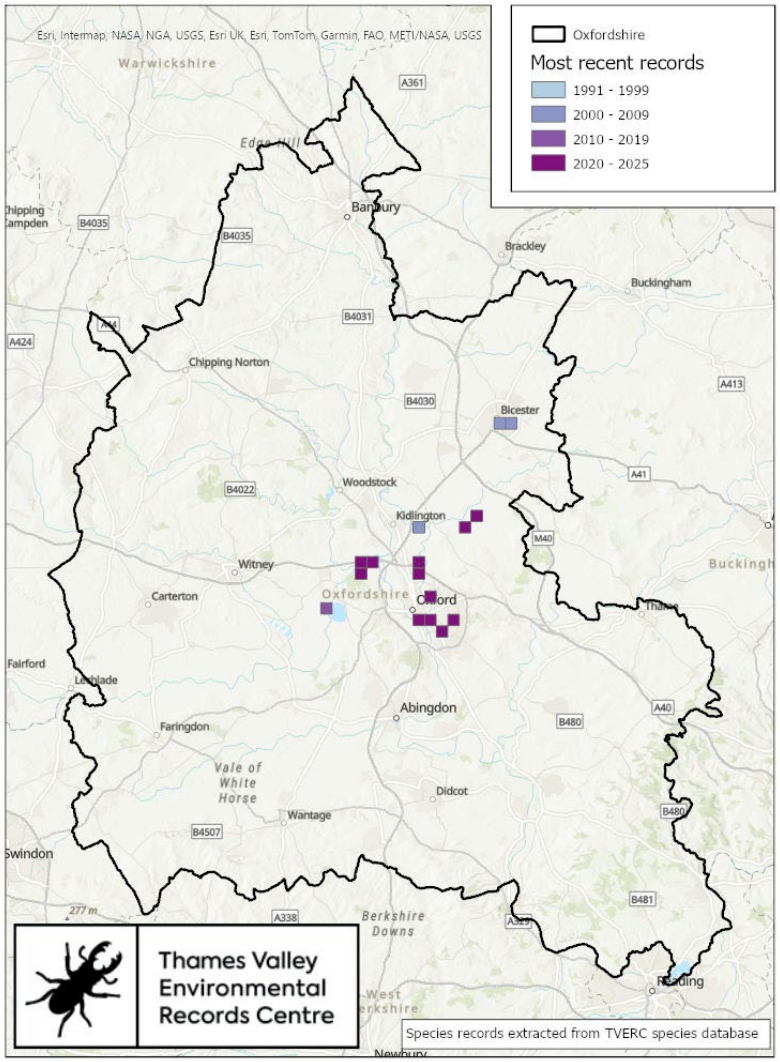
Return to list

Gentian Beetle records 1990-2025



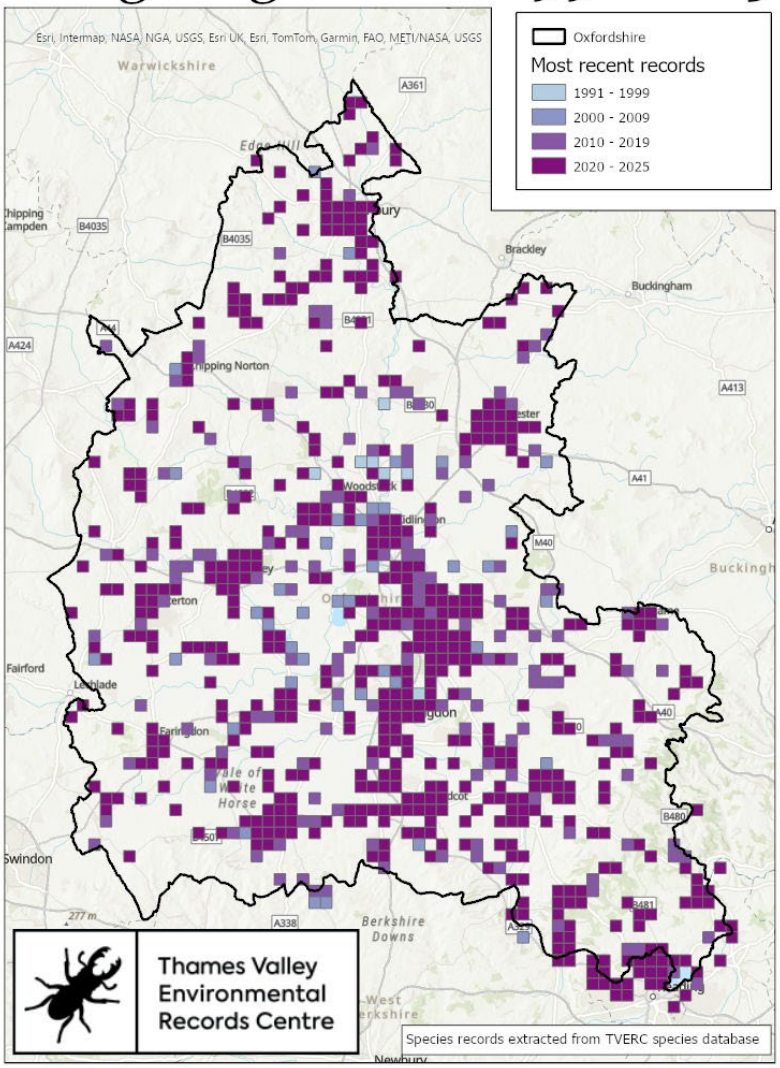
Return to list

Greater Water-Parsnip records 1990-2025



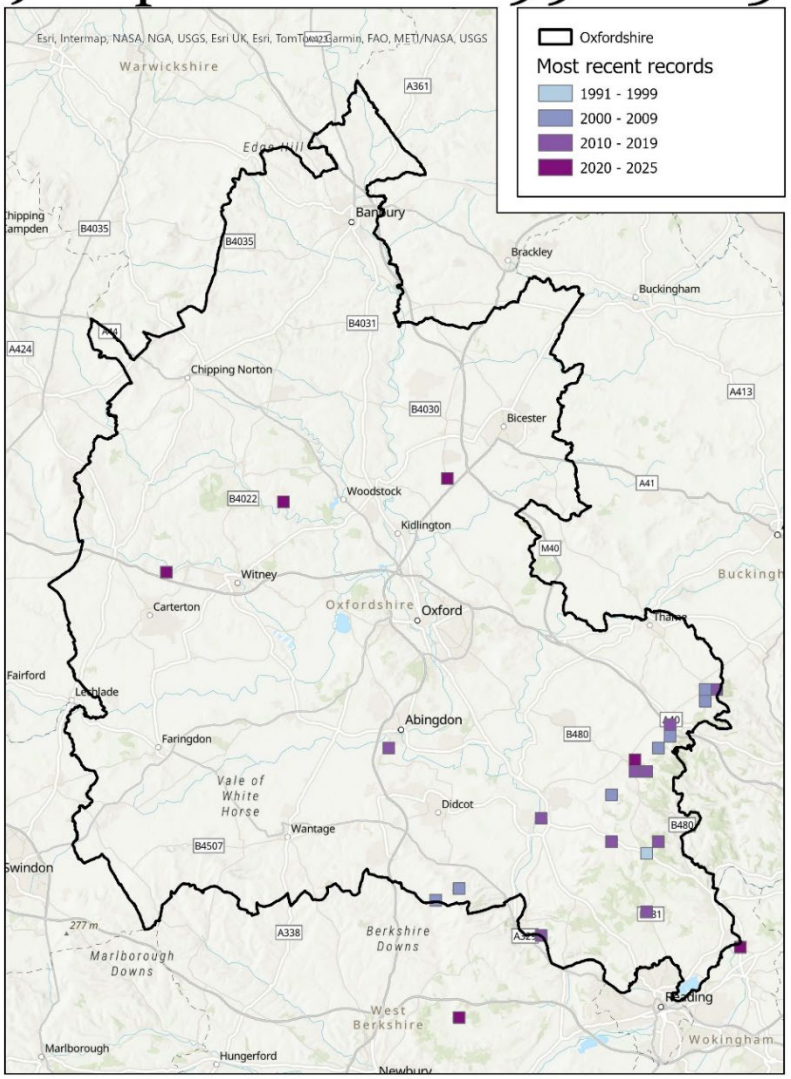
Return to list

Hedgehog records 1990-2025



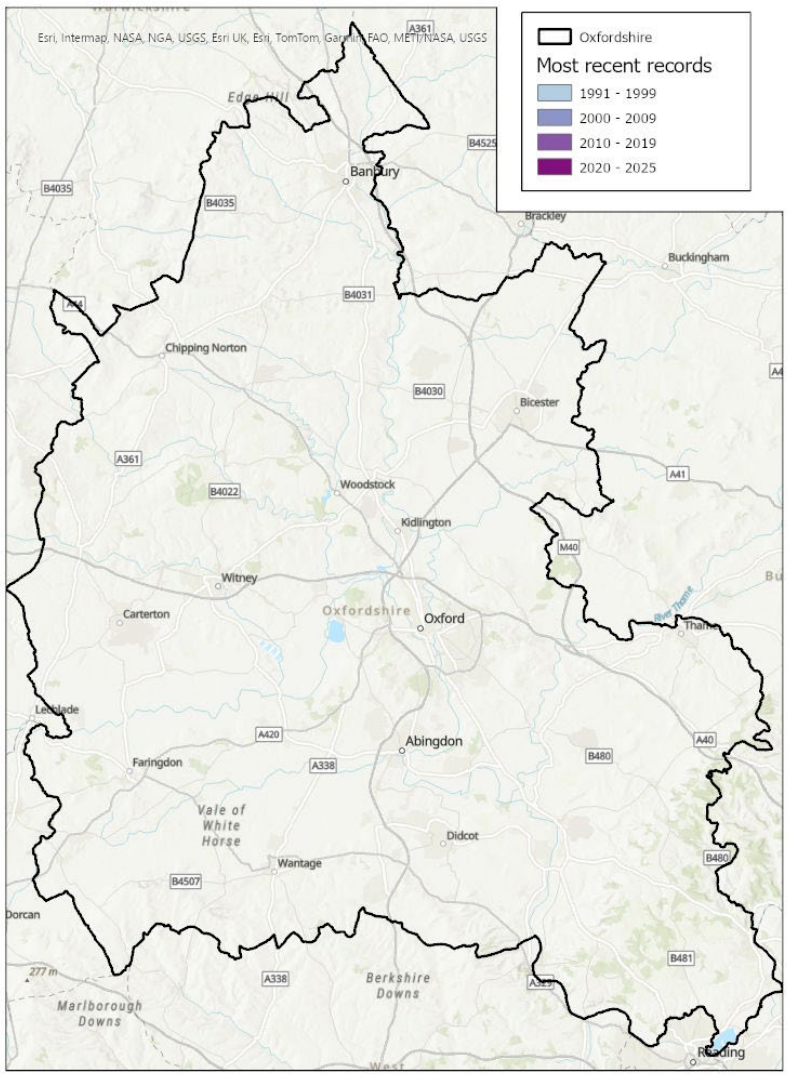
Return to list

Juniper records 1990-2025



Return to list

Long-Leaved Helleborine records 1990-2025

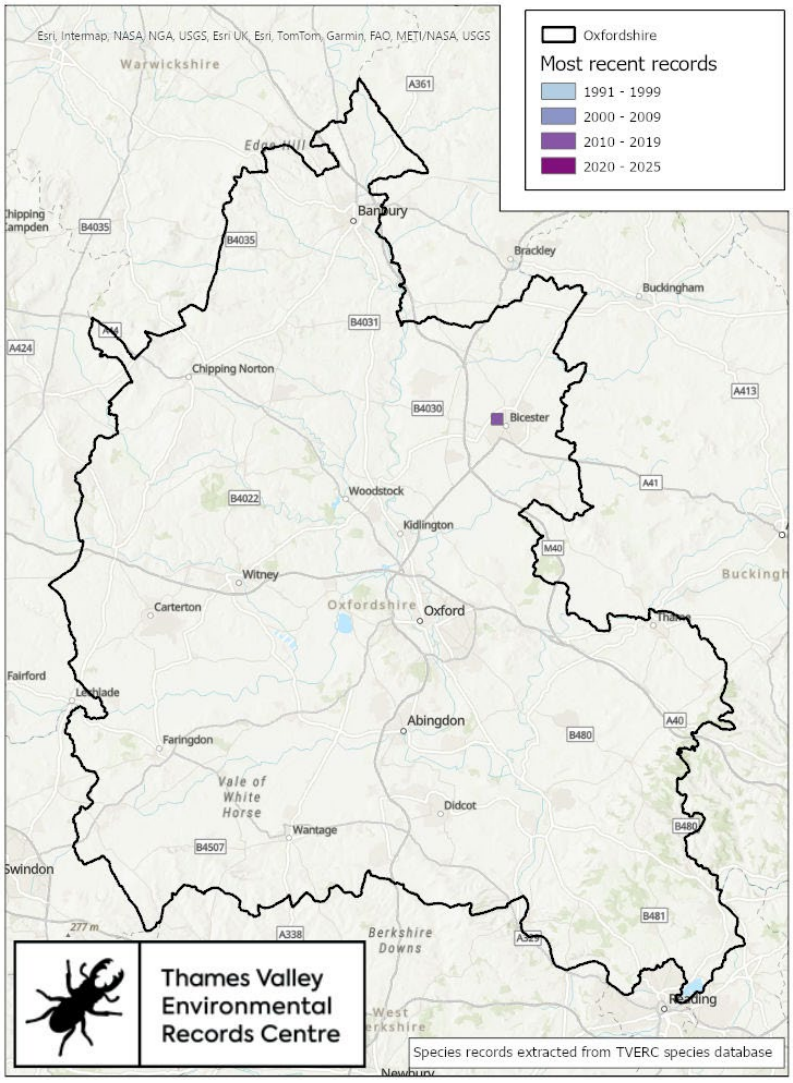


Return to list

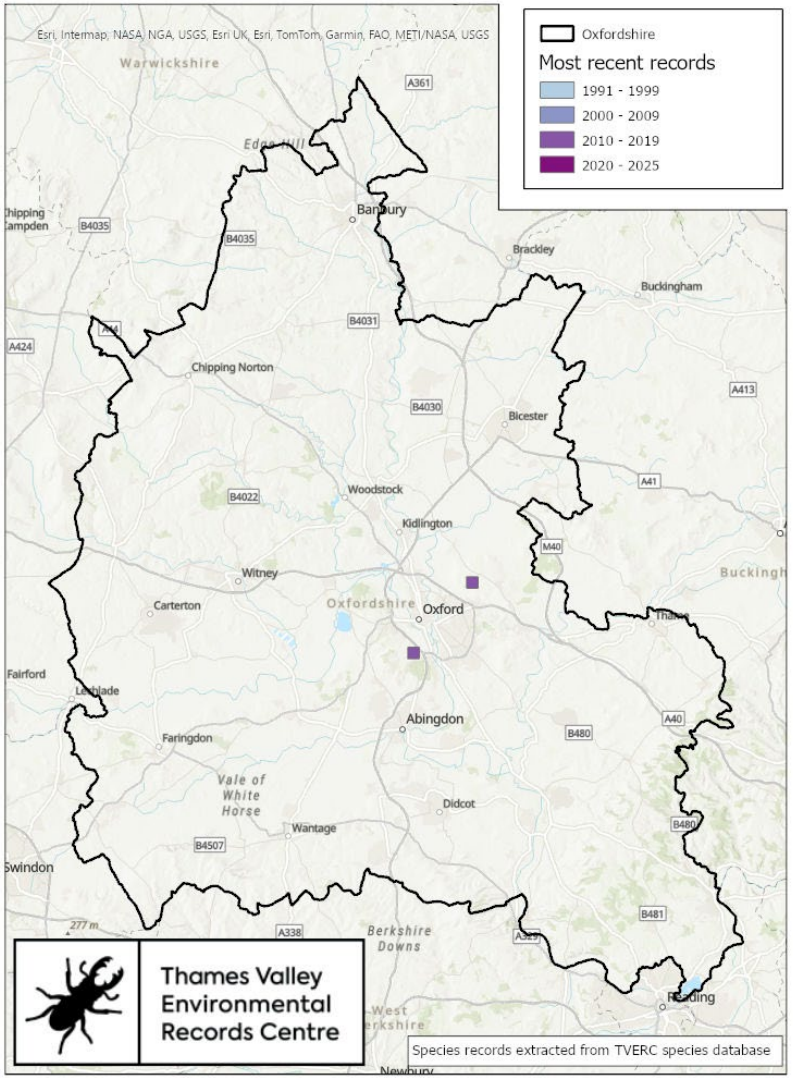
No recent records

Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Limestone fern records 1990-2025



Liquorice piercer records 1990-2025

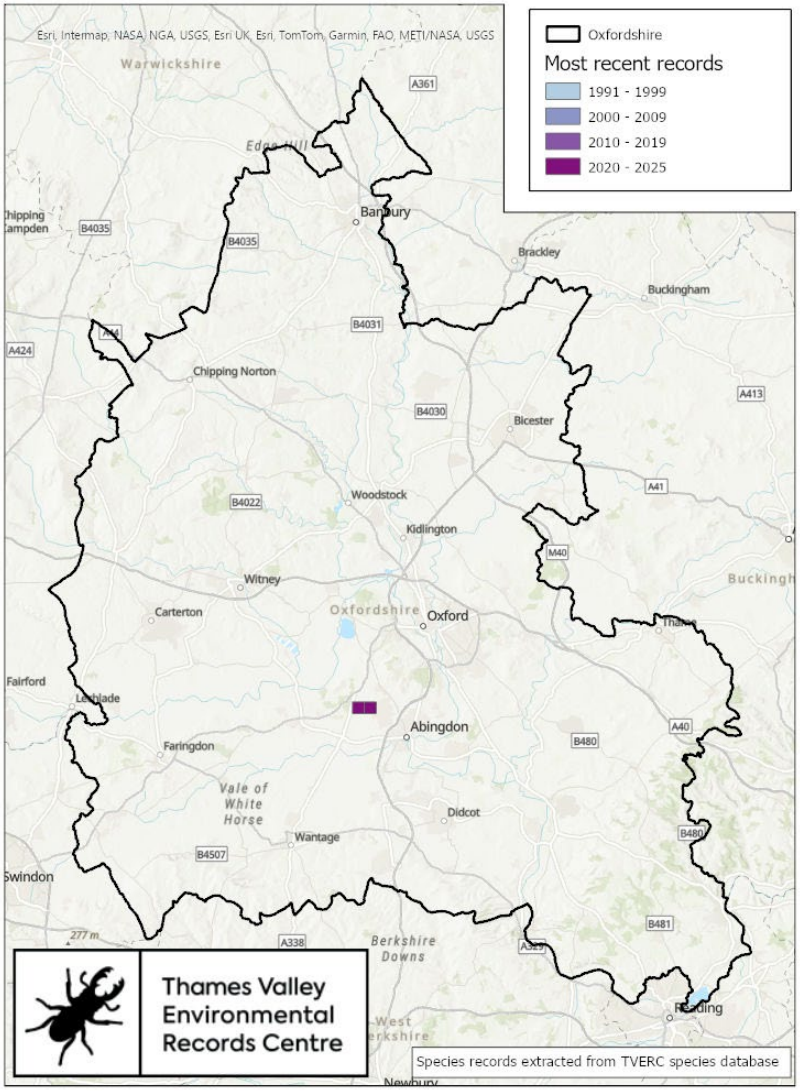


Return to list

Return to list

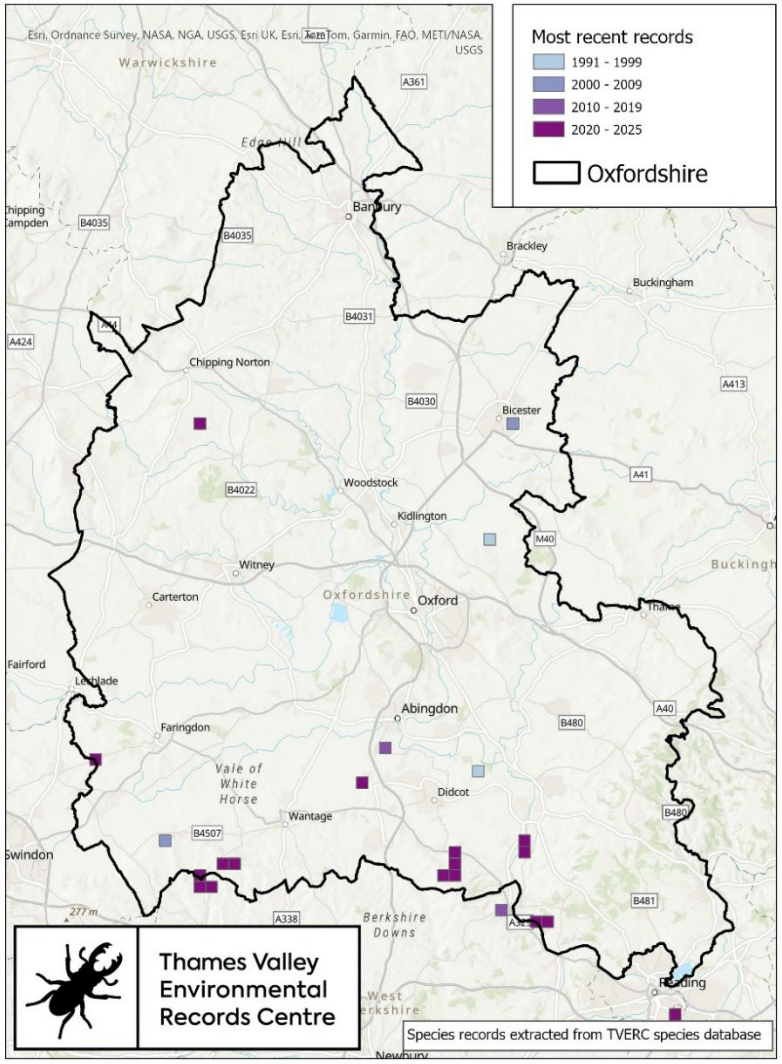
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Lousewort Flea Beetle records 1990-2025



Return to list

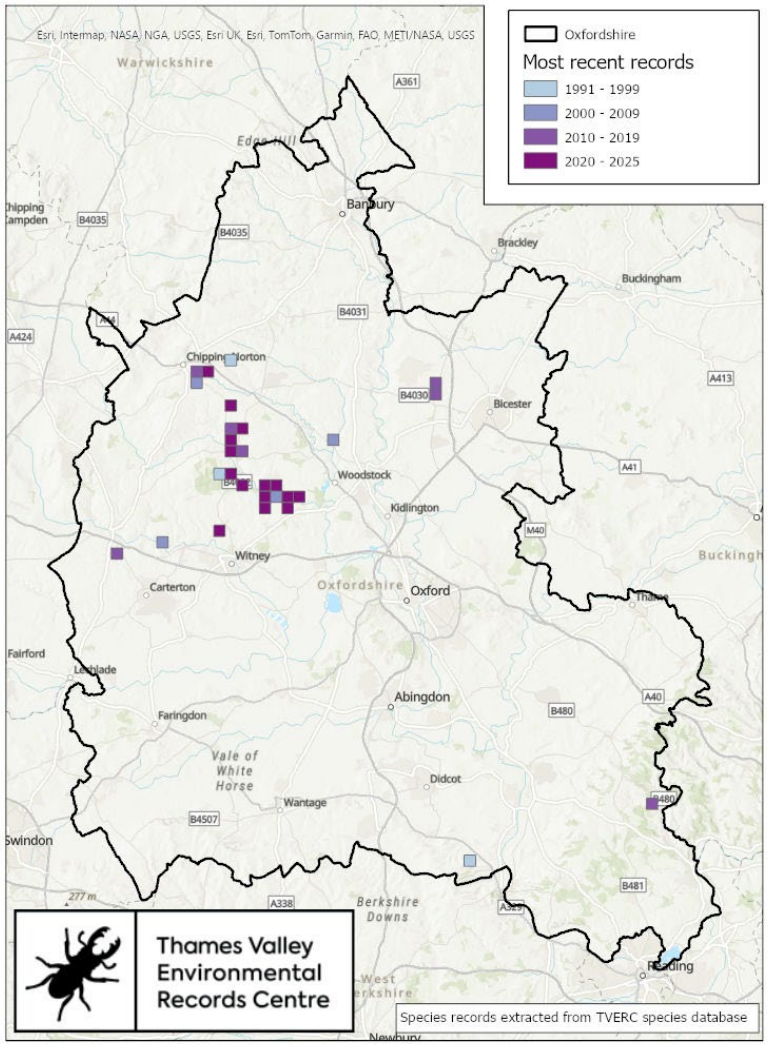
Marsh Fritillary records 1990-2025



Return to list

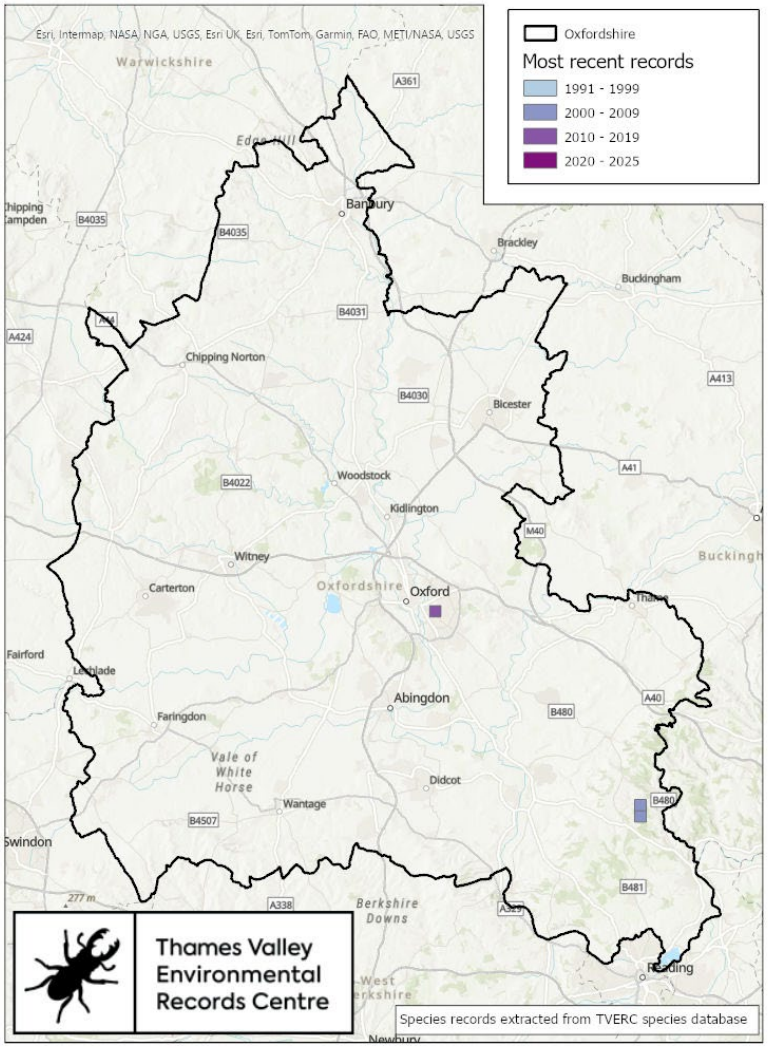
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Meadow Clary records 1990-2025



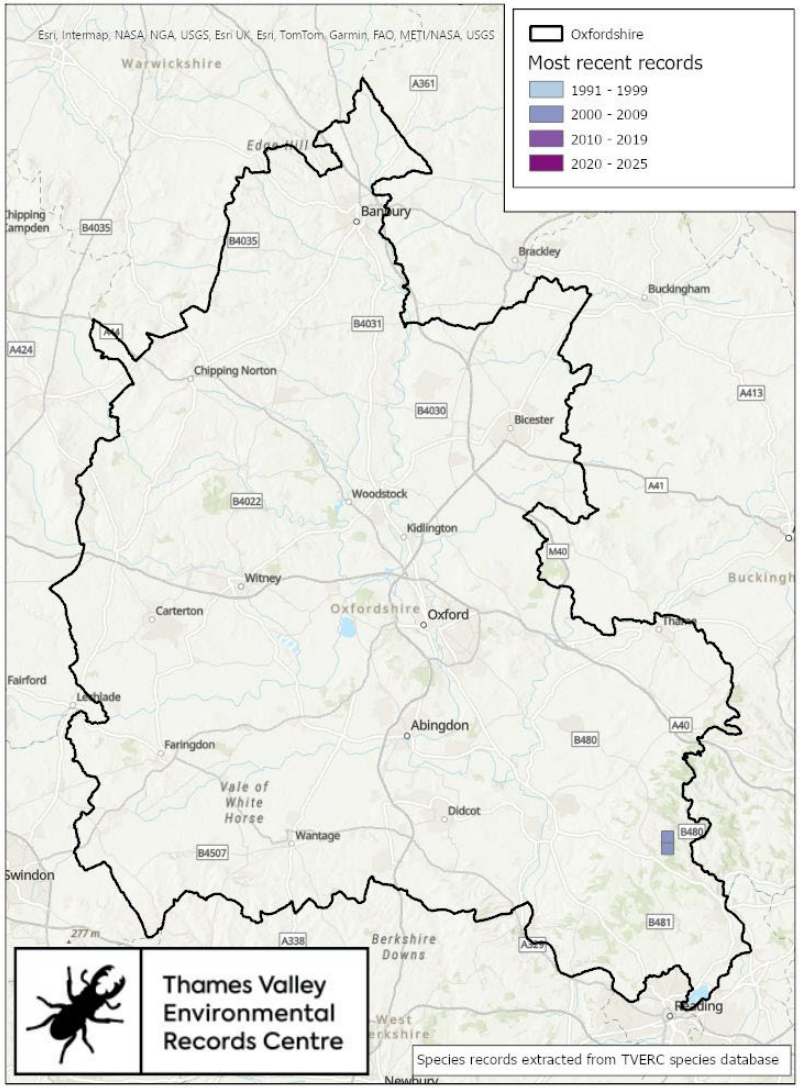
Return to list

Yellow meadow ant hoverfly records 1990-2025

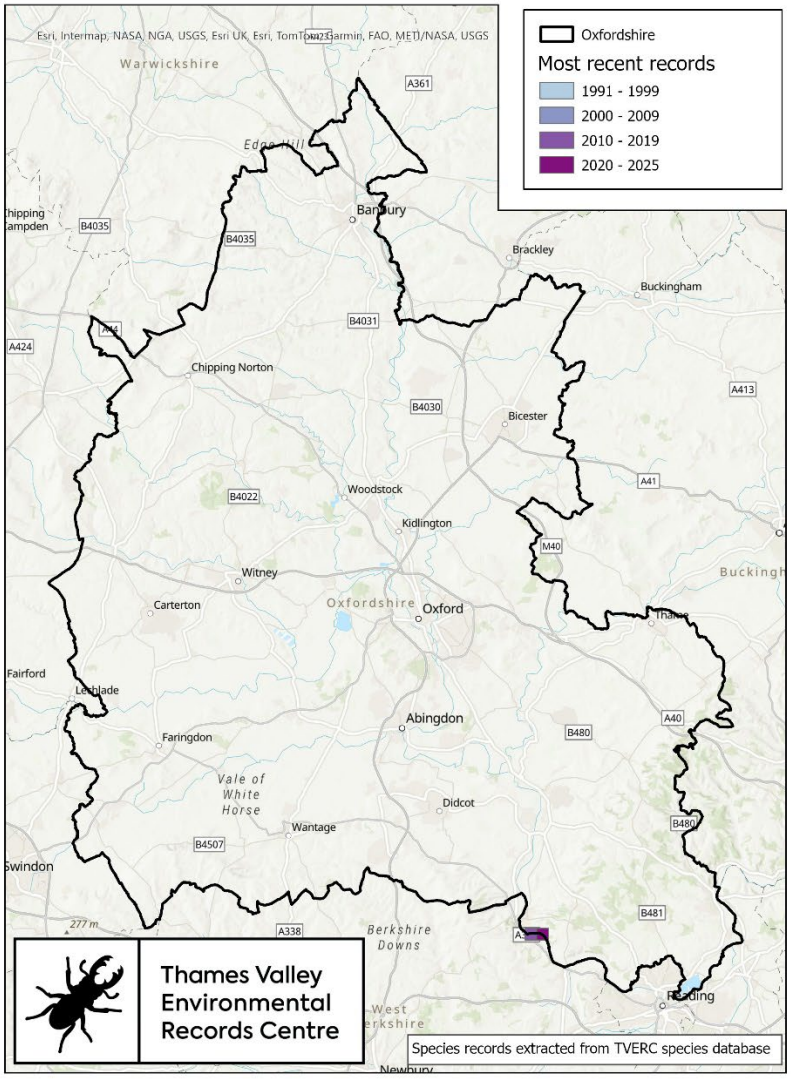


Return to list

Military Orchid records 1990-2025



Monkey Orchid records 1990-2025

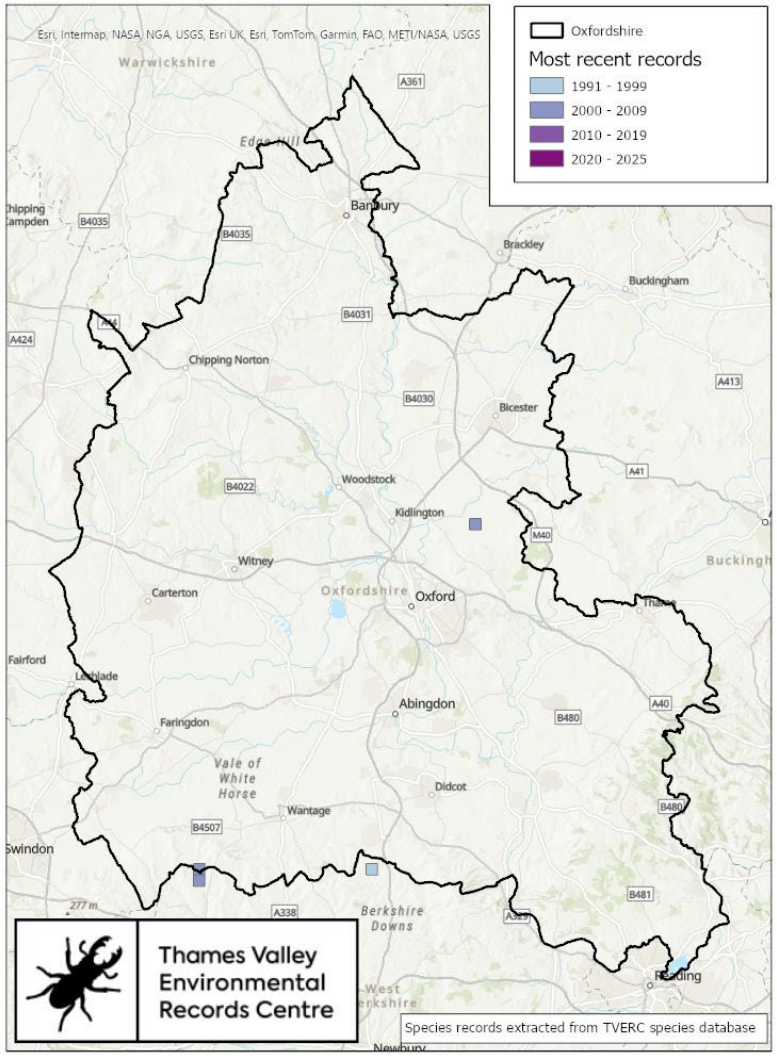


Return to list

Return to list

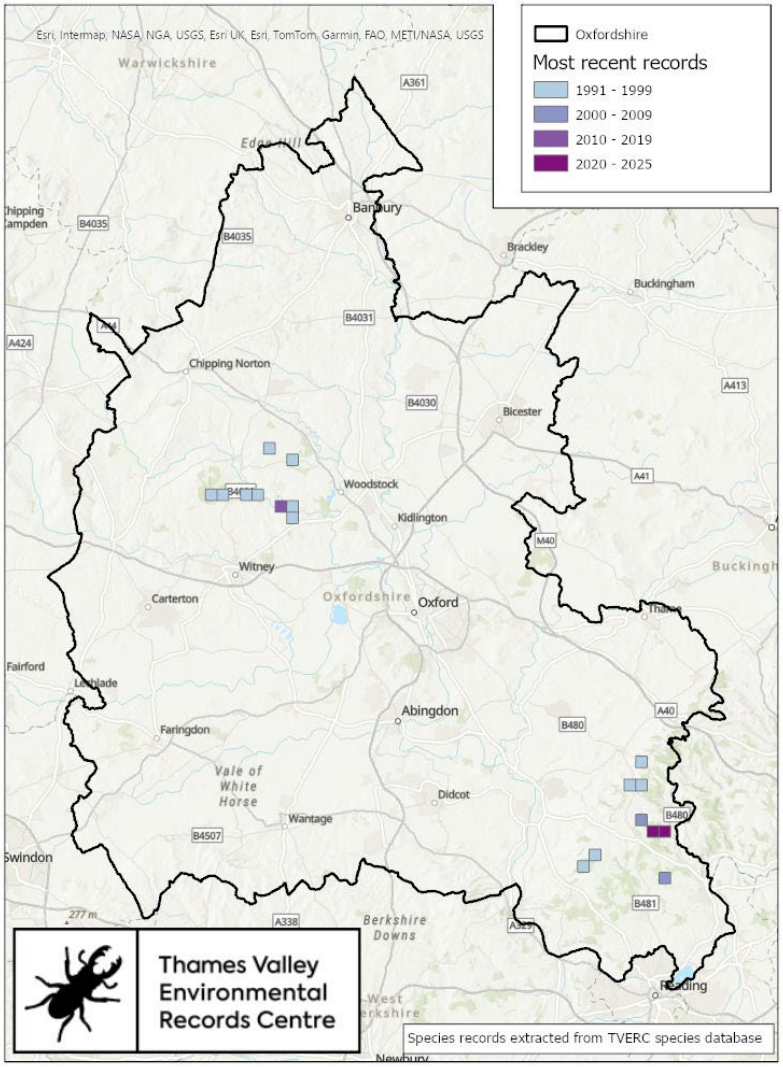
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Montagu's Harrier records 1990-2025



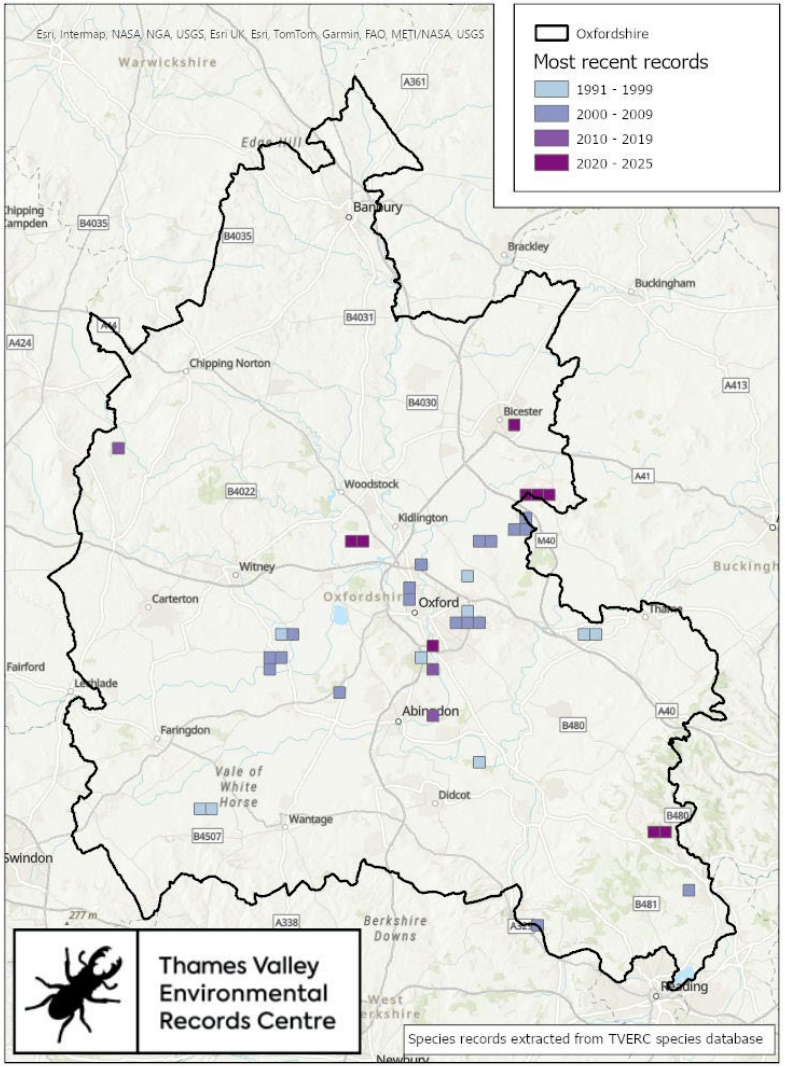
Return to list

Mountain Bulin records 1990-2025



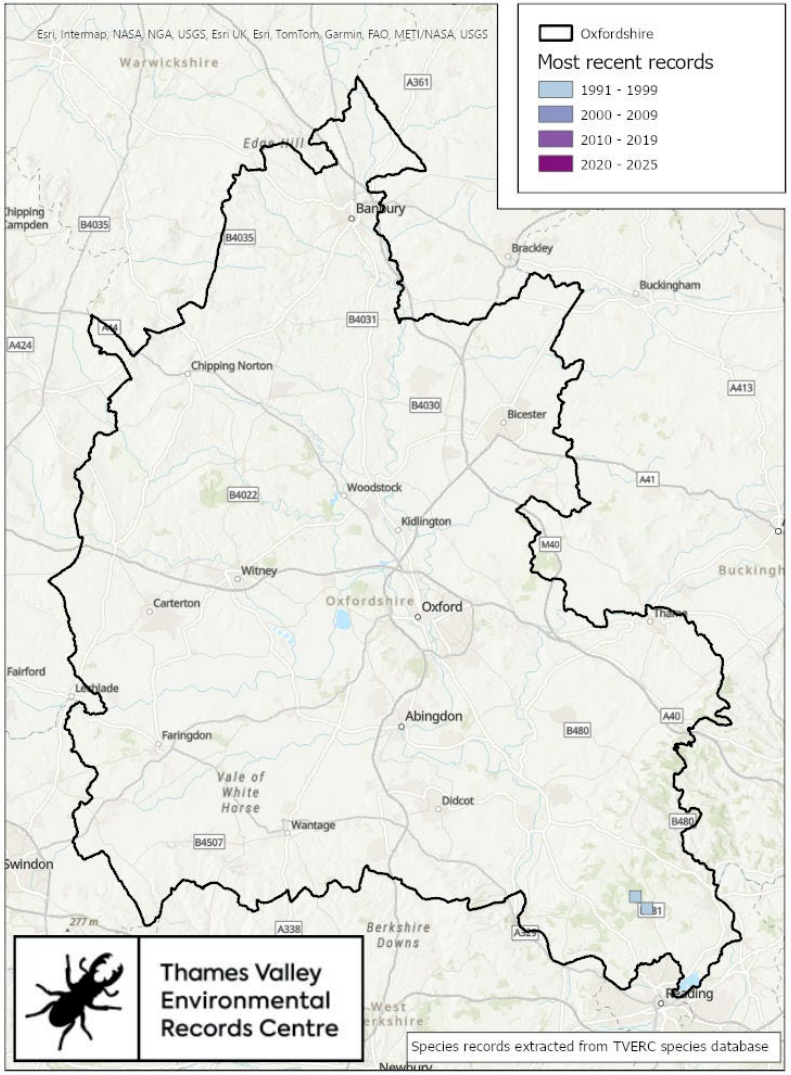
Return to list

Nightingale records 1990-2025



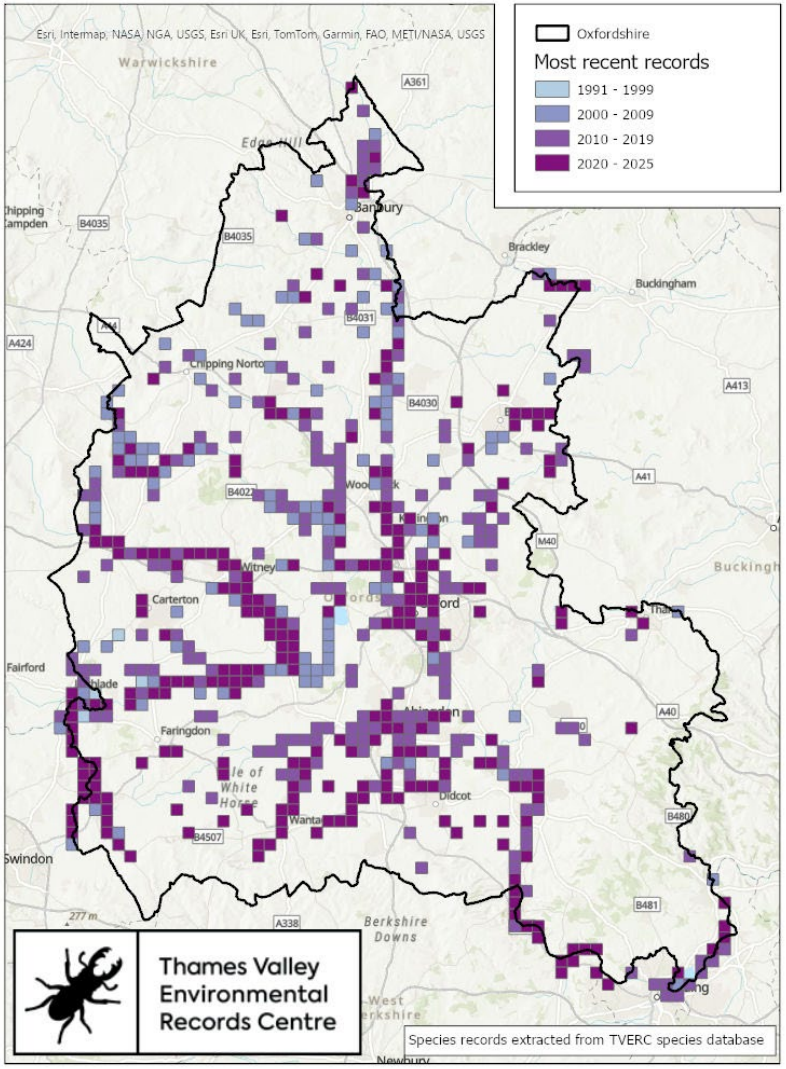
Return to list

Noble chafer records 1990-2025



Return to list

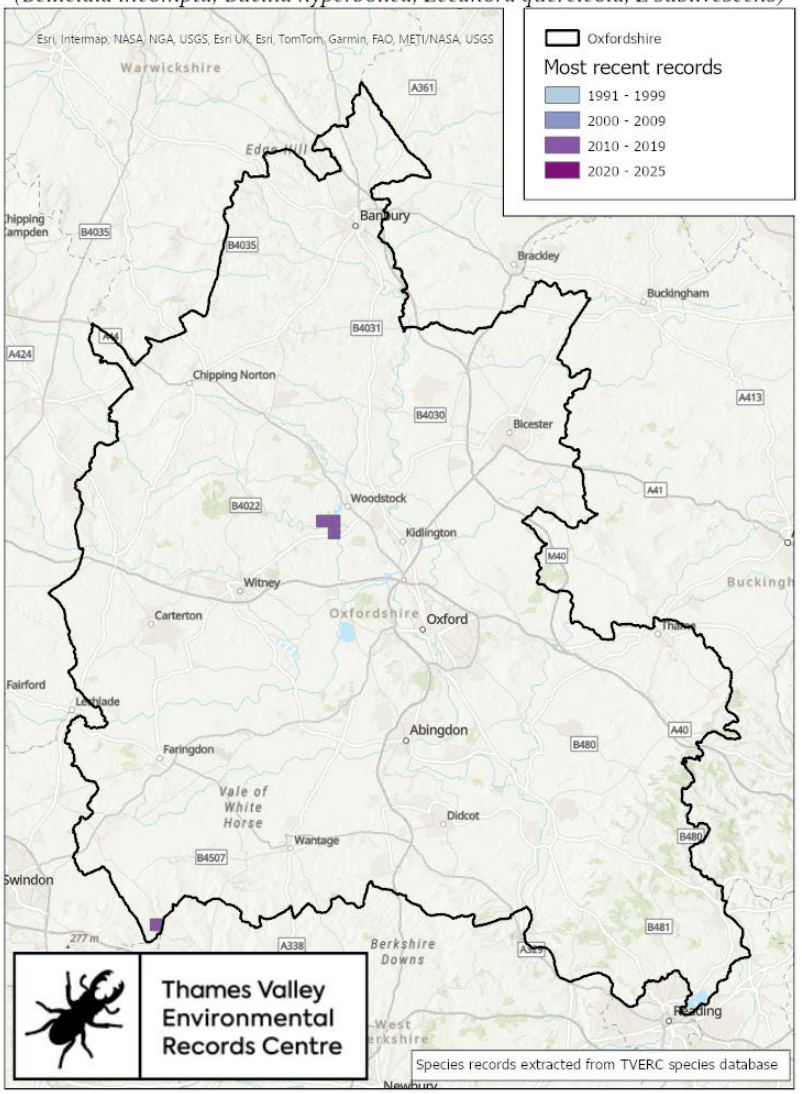
Otter records 1990-2025



Return to list

Parkland lichens records 1990-2025

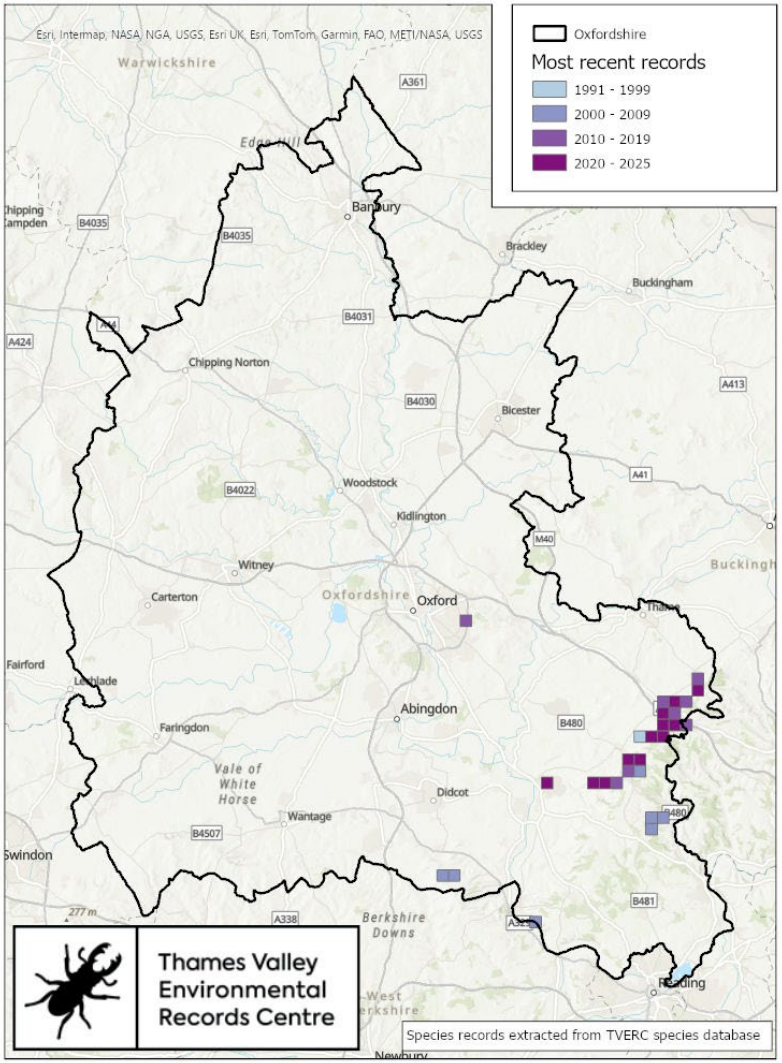
(Bellicidia incompta, Buellia hyperbolica, Lecanora quercicola, L sublivescens)



Return to list

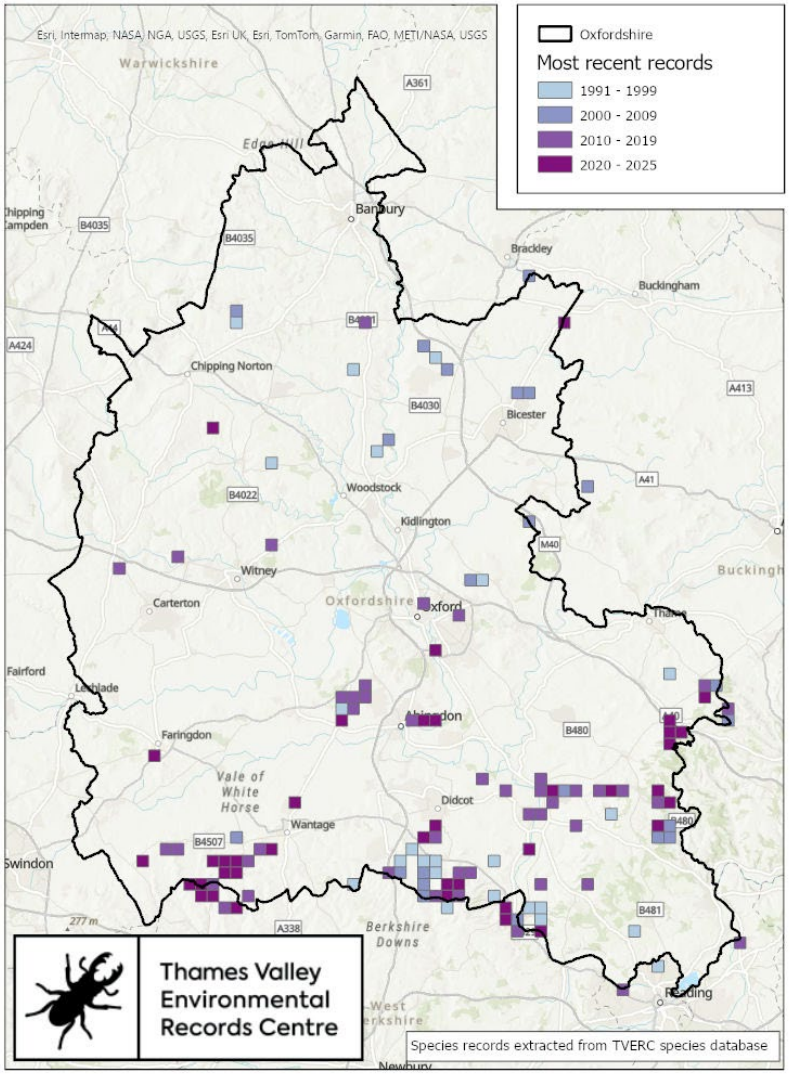
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Silver-spotted skipper records 1990-2025



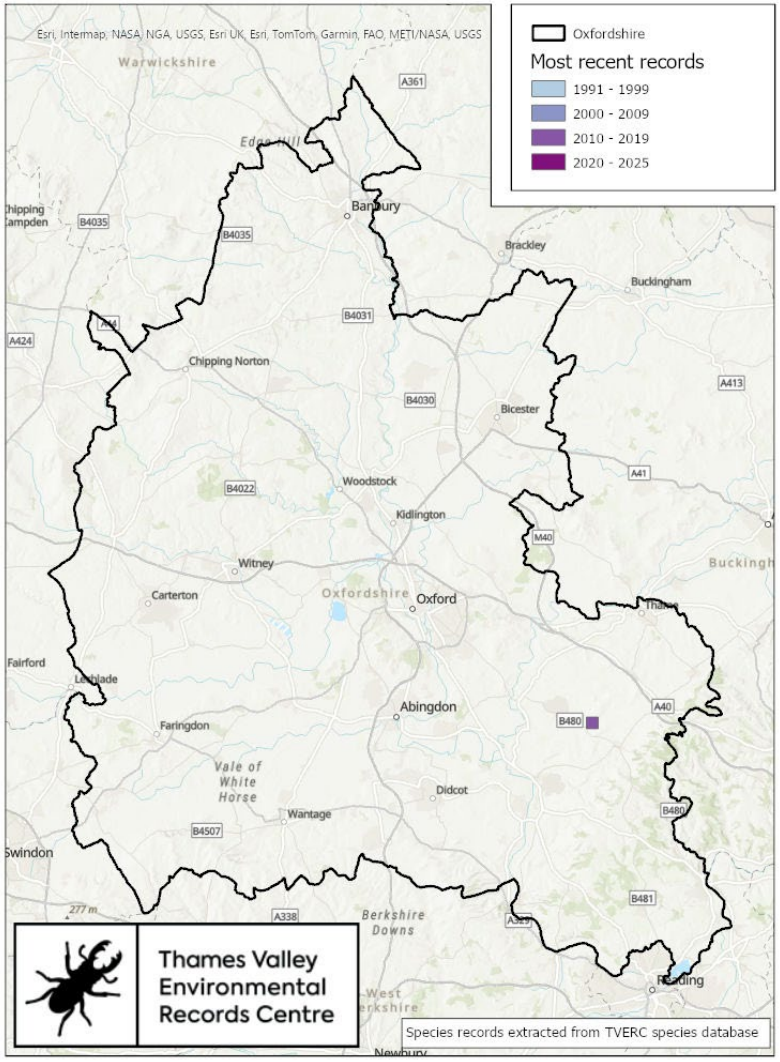
Return to list

Small blue records 1990-2025

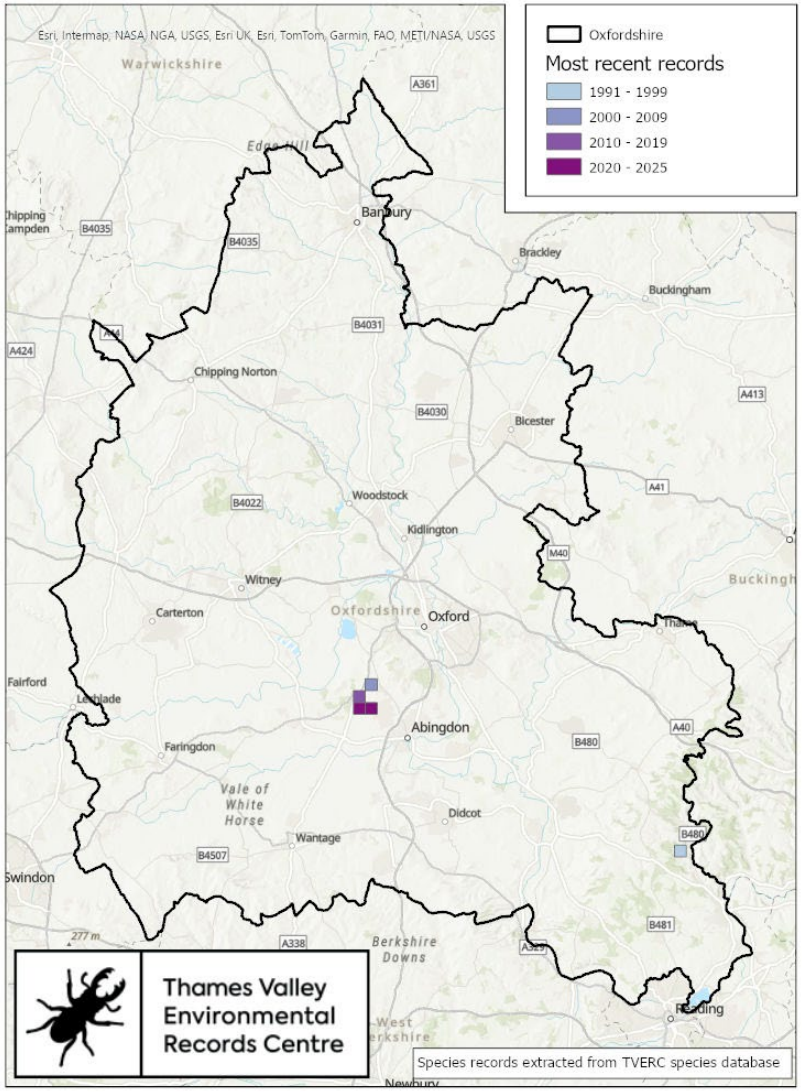


Return to list

Snail-killing fly records 1990-2025



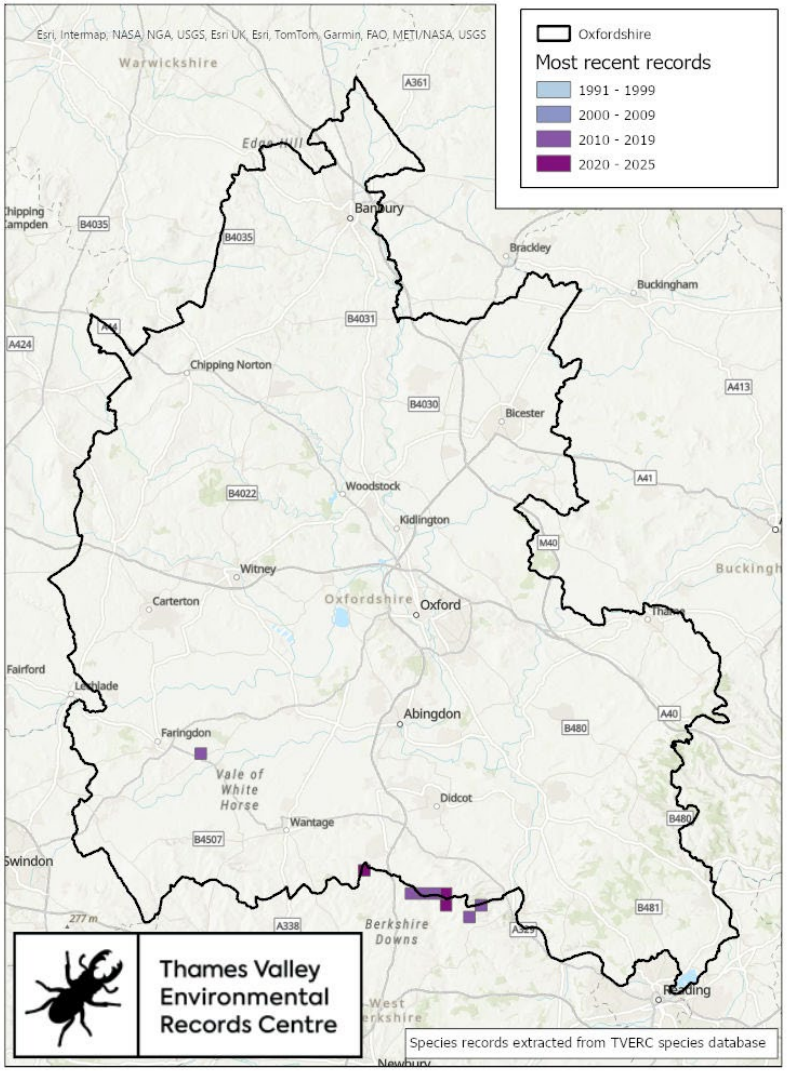
Southern damselfly records 1990-2025



Return to list

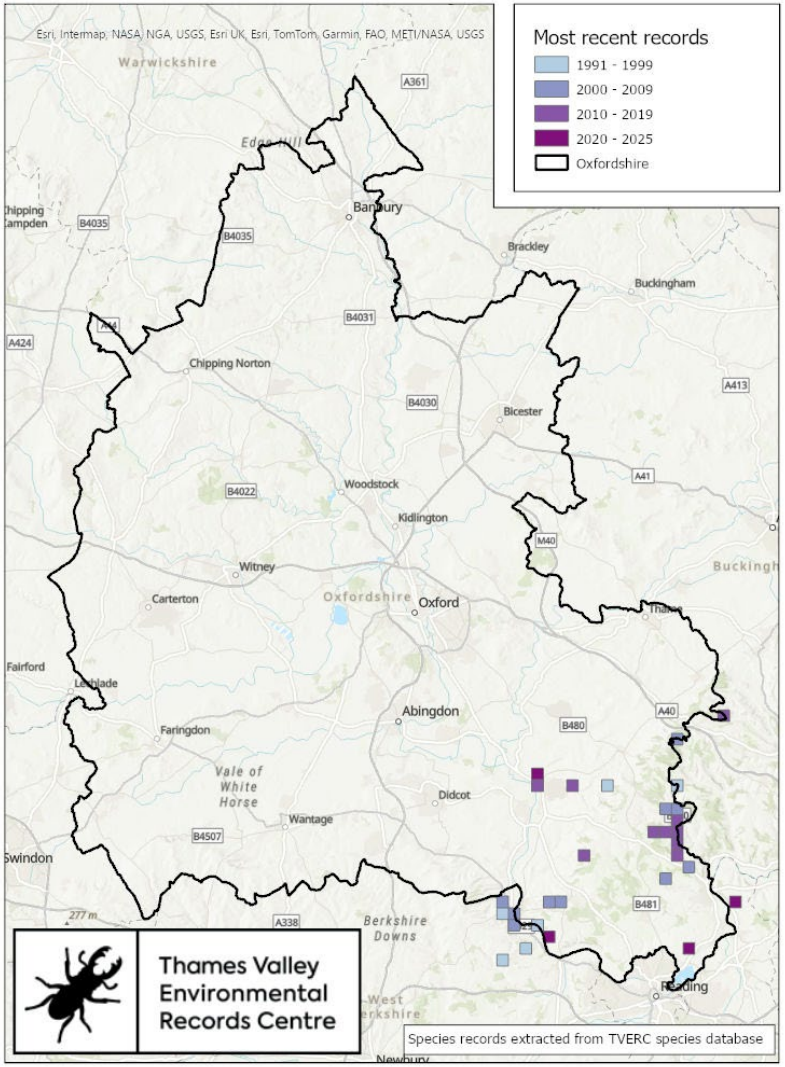
Return to list

Stone Curlew records 1990-2025



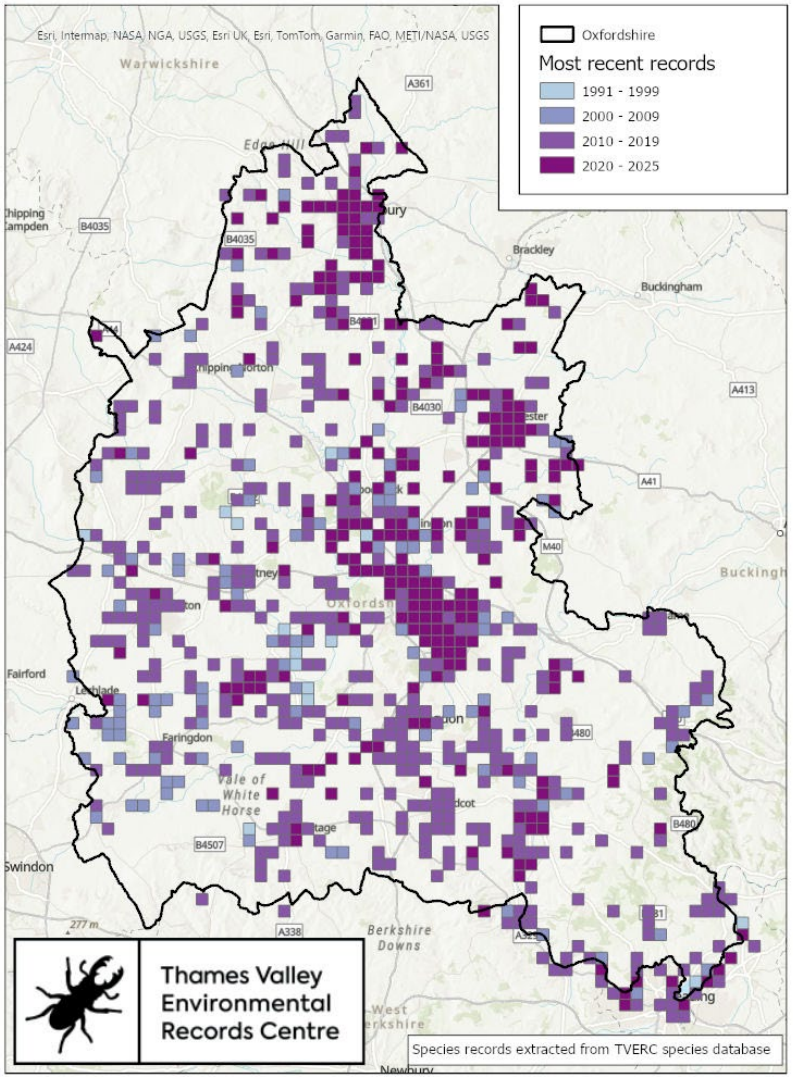
Return to list

Striped Lychnis Moth records 1990-2025



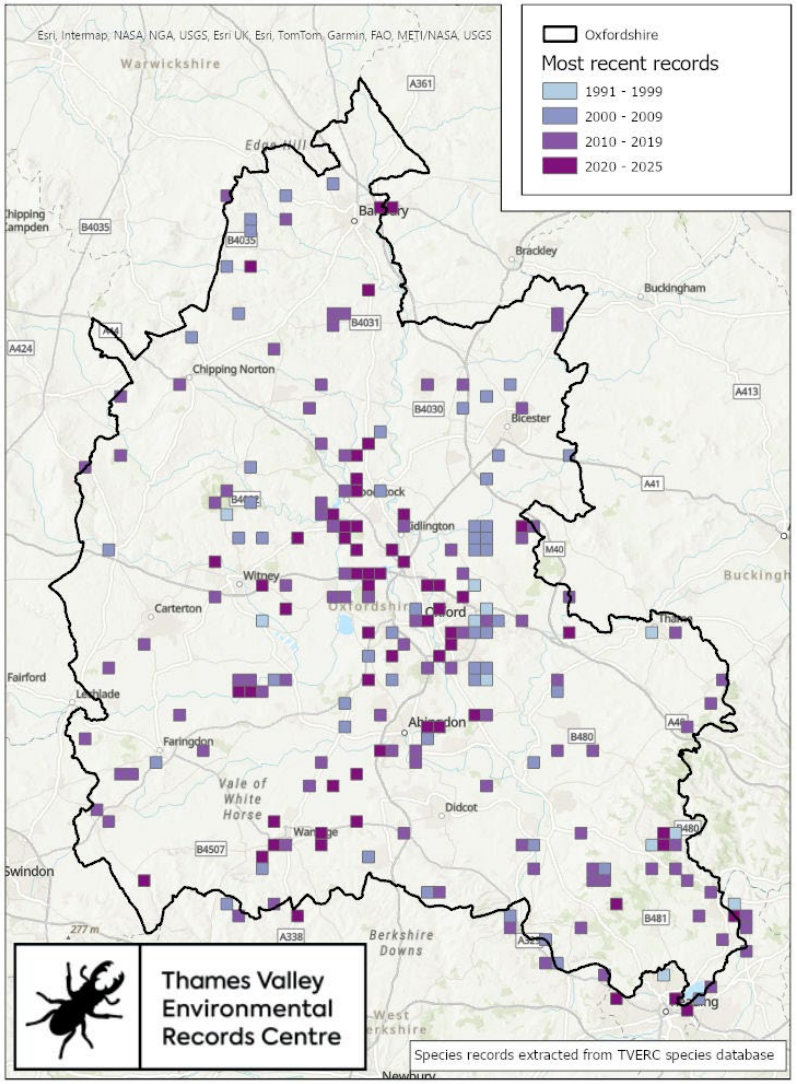
Return to list

Swift and house martin records 1990-2025



Return to list

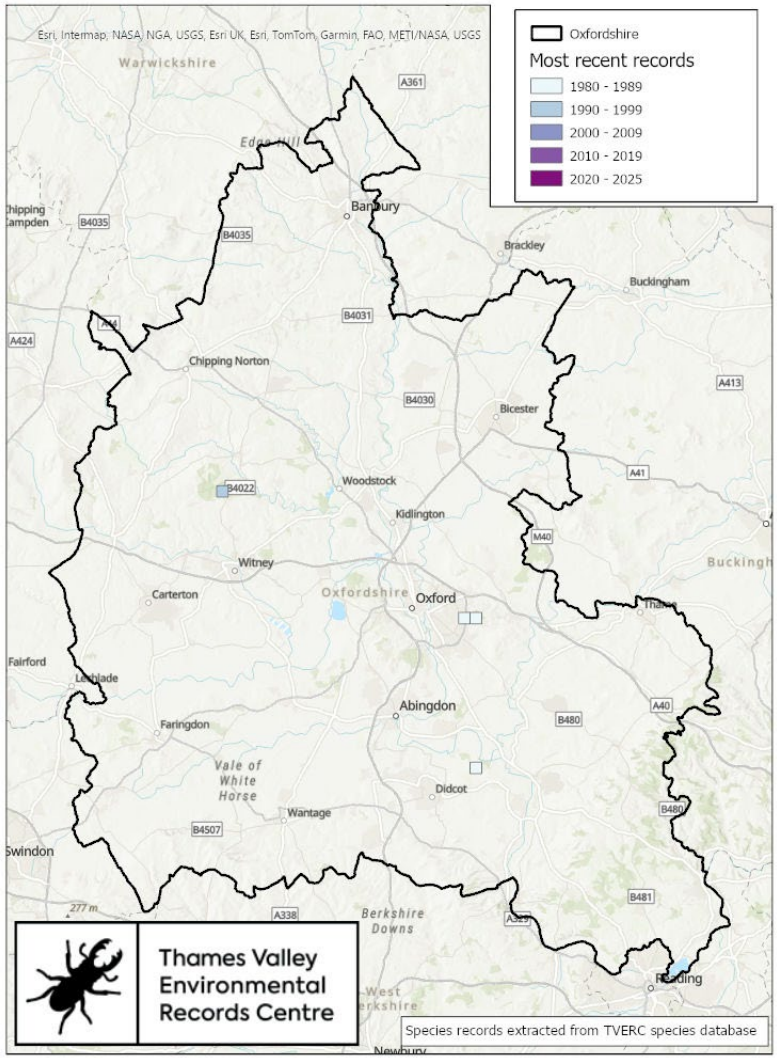
Tawny Owl records 1990-2025



Return to list

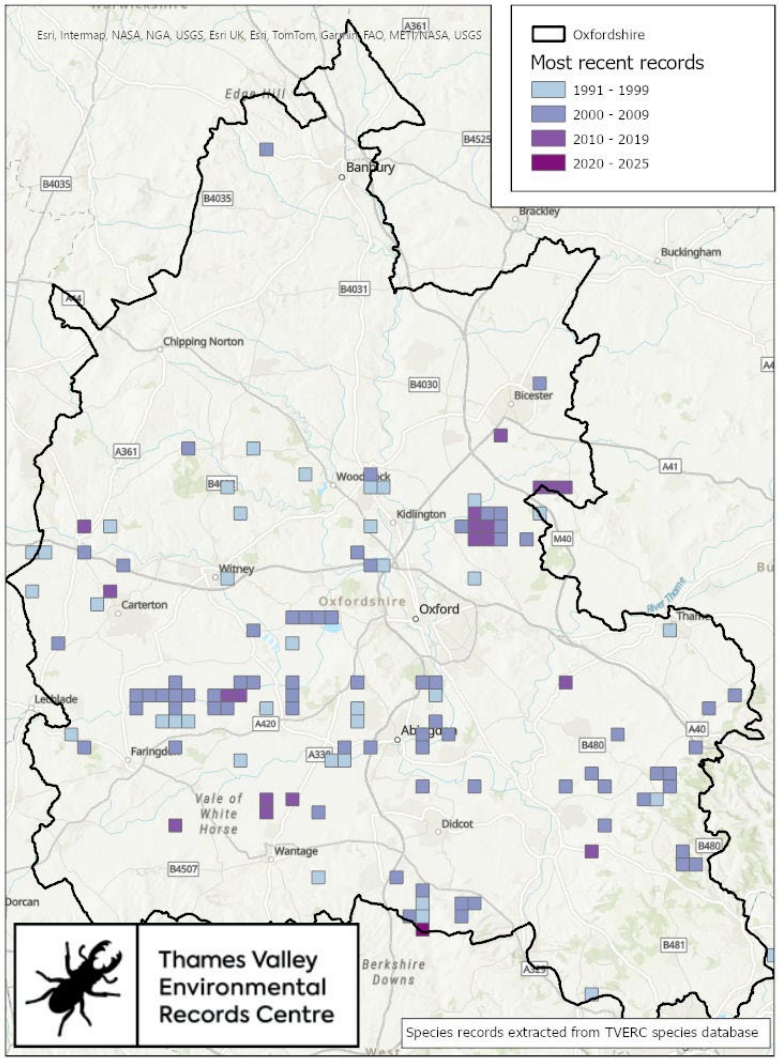
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

Tuberta maerens records 1990-2025



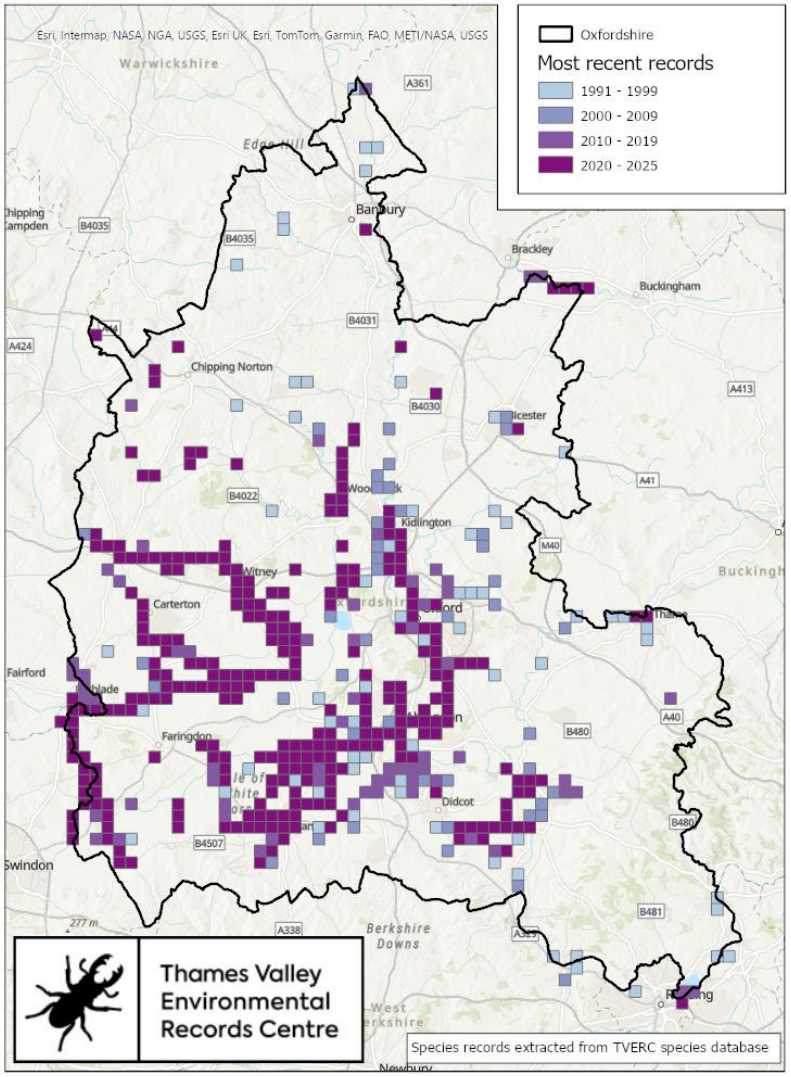
Return to list

Turtle Dove records 1990-2025



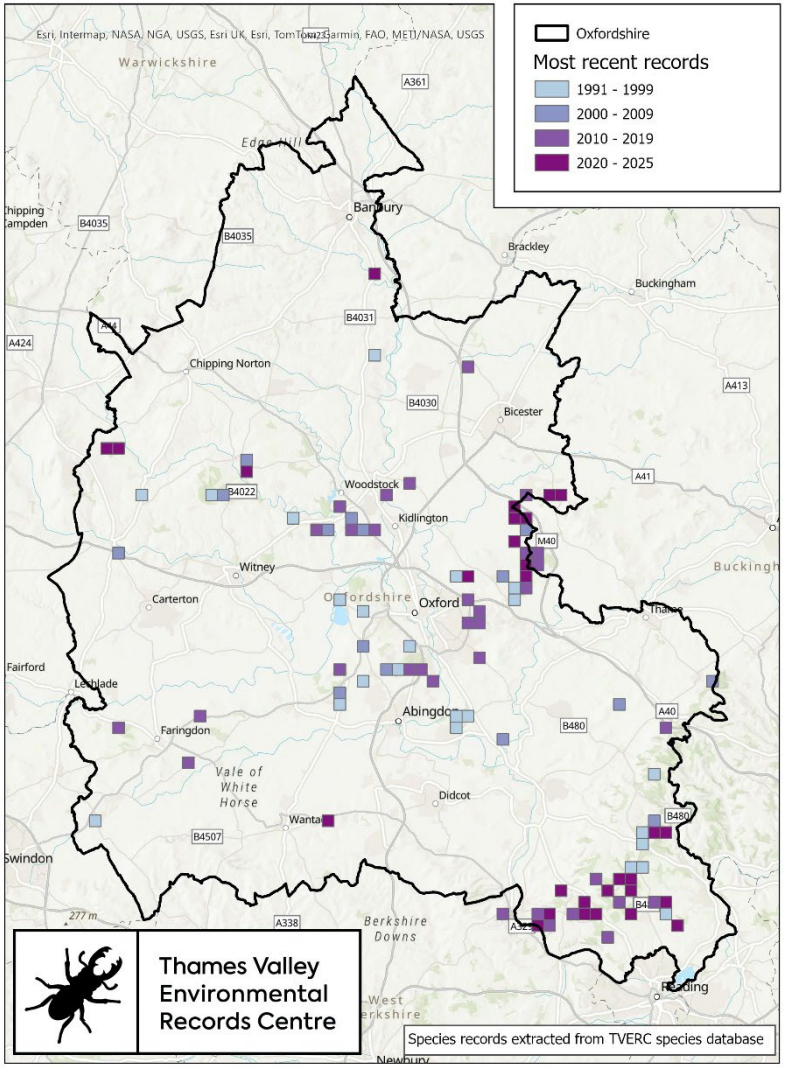
Return to list

Water Vole records 1990-2025



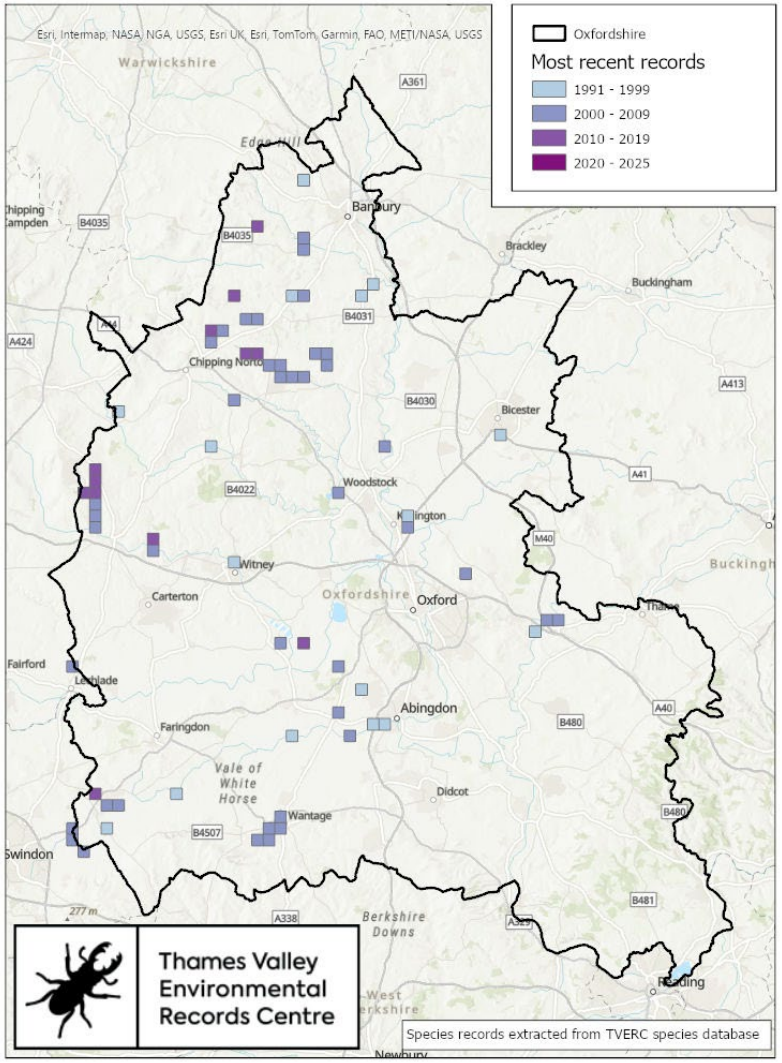
Return to list

White Admiral records 1990-2025



Return to list

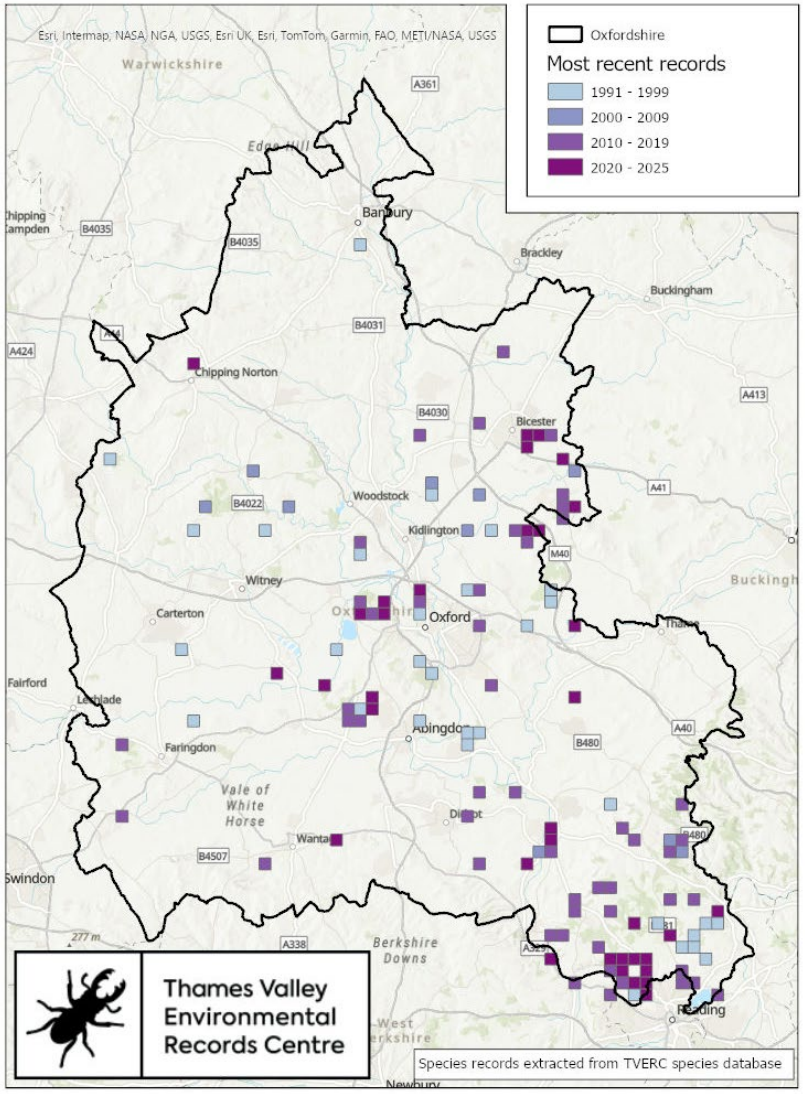
White-clawed Crayfish records 1990-2025



Return to list

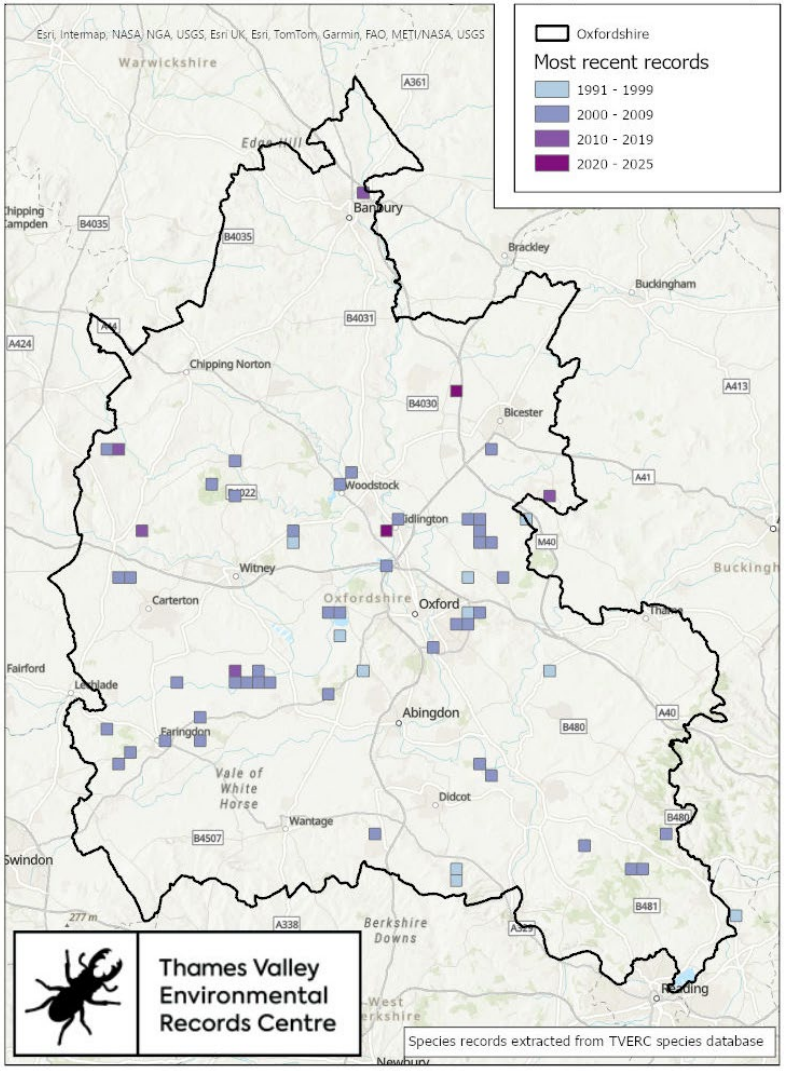
Please report sightings of these species to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to inform future work

White-letter Hairstreak records 1990-2025



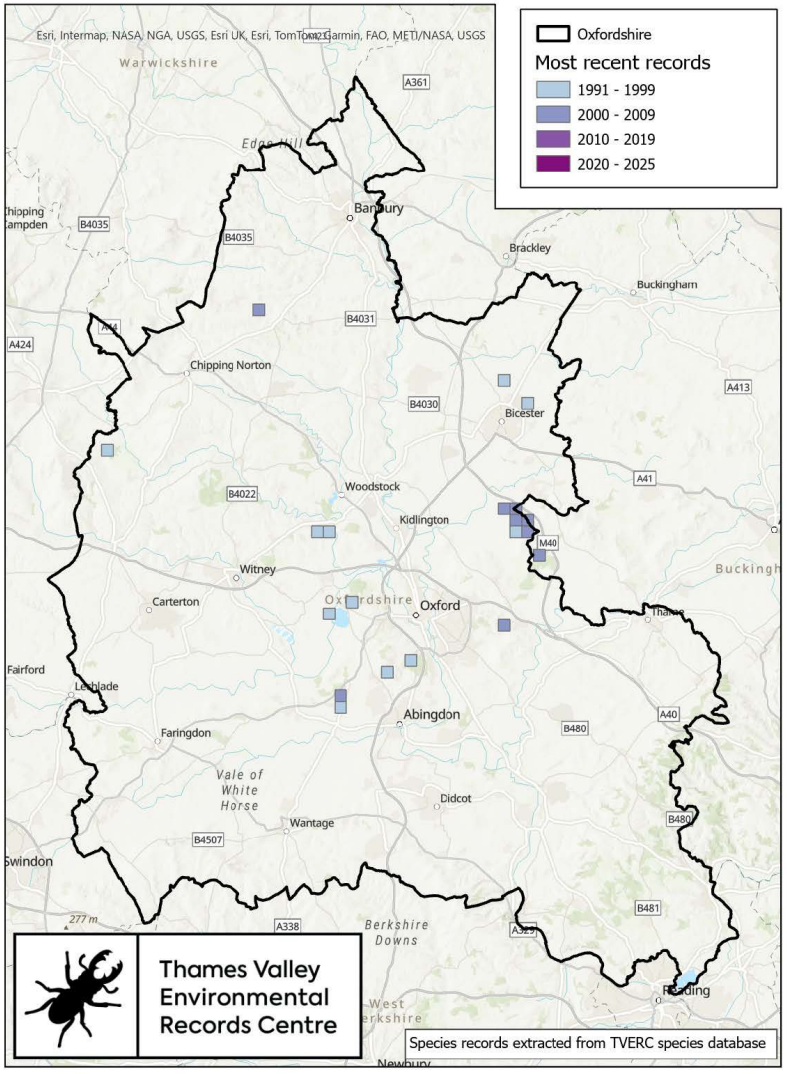
Return to list

Willow Tit records 1990-2025



Return to list

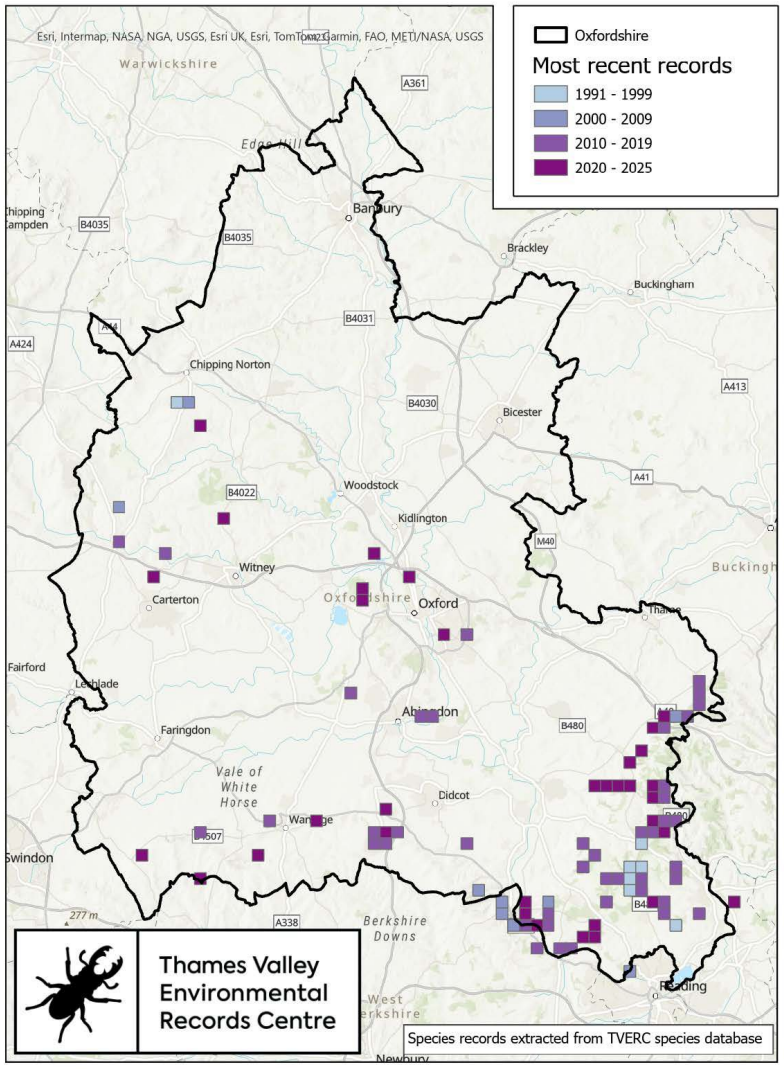
Wood White records 1990-2025



Return to list

Woodland fungi and fungus-associated plant records 1990-2025

(Bronze bolete, Devil's bolete, bird's-nest orchid, yellow bird's nest, white helleborine, narrow-leaved helleborine, ghost orchid)



Return to list

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 4:

Interactive Map Link: LNRS Strategy Area Map
(https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ea43e0bc07c044ef8ca4b16803c5e59c)

This page is intentionally left blank

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22 October 2025
Report of:	Liz Jones, ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead
Title of Report:	Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	The Cabinet to approve the Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lubna Arshad, Safer Communities
Corporate Priority:	Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	No

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff (Appendix 1)
2. Delegate authority to the Domestic Abuse Lead, to make minor changes in the future to reflect any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff	No
Appendix 2	Equality Impact Assessment	No

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council (the Council) is working towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, which is a set of standards and process that helps housing providers respond to domestic abuse. It is the UK's benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse.
2. The purpose of the DAHA accreditation is to improve the response to domestic abuse by spotting the signs and intervening early to keep survivors safe and hold reported abusers to account, including members of staff.

3. The main benefit of achieving DAHA accreditation is enabling housing providers to deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse and reduce the human, social and economic costs of domestic abuse.

4. The Council employs 970 people with about 60% being female. Research states that at any one time 10% of females will be experience abuse by a partner or family member. It is plausible that there are around 60 females currently working for the Council who are affected by domestic abuse, therefore it is imperative that the Council is a safe space to disclose and access appropriate support. Males can also be victims, but women are disproportionately impacted.

5. A requirement to achieve accreditation is for the Council to have two separate domestic abuse policies; one for service users and one for staff. The Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users was approved by Cabinet on 9 July 2025.

Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff

6. The Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff sets out the Council's commitment to support employee health and wellbeing at work, which includes those affected by domestic abuse. The Policy outlines:
    - the roles and responsibilities for Council staff to create a safe space for disclosure, support and safety.
    - how concerns can be raised and reported so appropriate support can be provided for staff affected by domestic abuse.
    - How perpetrators who are employees can be held accountable for their actions and be offered support to change their behaviour.

Policy development

7. The policy has been developed with input from
    - Survivors of domestic abuse
    - Domestic Abuse Champions
    - Unison
    - The People's Team

Communication and training

8. The policy will be available to employees in the Policy section on the Intranet. This will provide information to survivors so they can feel confident that they will be supported and be believed if they disclose the abuse to their line managers or colleagues.
    - The policy will be shared with relevant staff and managers and training undertaken.
    - The policy is owned by the Domestic Abuse Lead for the Council.

Other policy implications

9. The policy does not replace any other policy.

10. Disclosures requiring a safeguarding response will be dealt with under the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

Alternative Options Considered

11. No policy adopted. The Council would be unable to fulfil its DAHA and legal obligations listed below.

Financial implications

12. There are no financial implications.

Legal issues

13. This policy is in response to the Council's obligations under the:

- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Part V1 and Part VII Housing Act 1996
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2021
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

14. Specifically, following the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Council has a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse and their children. The policy reflects the Council's commitment to providing a holistic approach to employees who are fleeing domestic abuse and require a place of safety. It gives confidence to victims/survivors to come forward and seek help knowing that their disclosure will be taken seriously and that they have choices.

15. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) is responsible for commissioning DHRs following a domestic abuse related homicide or suicide. The OSCP is Chaired and managed by the Community Safety Service within the Council. The policy outlines the commitment of the Council to ensure their employees are kept safe from further harm.

Level of risk

16. If the policy is not approved the Council will not achieve DAHA accreditation.

17. Employees impacted by domestic abuse may not feel safe or confident to disclose which will lead to further harm from abuse and/or violence.

18. Employees impacted by domestic abuse may not receive the appropriate internal support following a disclosure, which may lead to further harm from abuse and/or violence.

www.oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Equalities impact

19. Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed (Appendix 2)

Report author	Liz Jones
Job Title:	ASBIT Manager and DA Lead
Service Area or department	Community Safety Service
Telephone	01865 252754
E-mail	Ljones3@oxford.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse Policy

1 Contents

1 Introduction 2
2 Who this policy covers 2
3 What this policy covers 2
4 Roles and responsibilities 2
5 Definition of domestic abuse 3
6 Confidentiality 4
7 How to raise concerns 5
8 Available support 6
9 Perpetrators who are employees 6
10 External support and guidance 7
11 Monitoring and review 7
12 Relationship with other policies and procedures 7

1 Introduction

1.1 Oxford City Council (the 'Council') recognises that anyone can be affected by domestic abuse as a victim, survivor, witness, or perpetrator, regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, race, or religion.

1.2 The Council acknowledges that all forms of domestic abuse are unacceptable, and that for some employees the workplace may be one of the few places which offers routes to safety.

1.3 This policy forms part of the Council's commitment to support employee health and wellbeing at work, including those affected by domestic abuse. In addition to reducing physical risks, this means taking all reasonable steps to minimise harm to employees' mental health.

1.4 This policy is not contractual and may be amended.

2 Who this policy covers

2.1 This policy applies to all employees.

2.2 The Council will offer support to agency workers, contractors, volunteers and consultants as far as reasonably possible.

3 What this policy covers

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that anyone experiencing domestic abuse knows how to access appropriate advice and guidance without fear of stigmatisation or victimisation.

3.2 This policy also sets out the steps to be taken when domestic abuse disclosures are made, ensuring all concerns are taken seriously and responded to appropriately. This includes where there are concerns that an employee may be a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Domestic Abuse Lead is responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers and employees on the application of this policy and related procedures.

4.2 Domestic Abuse Champions are a point of contact for colleagues who require support and guidance.

4.3 Safeguarding Champions are responsible for providing specialist safeguarding support to employees impacted by domestic abuse.

4.4 The Head of People is the Council's senior manager to whom any allegations against employees relating to children and/ or vulnerable adults should be reported.

4.5 The People Team will work with managers to provide advice and guidance on the practical steps to be taken in relation to anyone affected by domestic abuse.

4.6 All employees are responsible for:

- undertaking domestic abuse training appropriate to their role
- ensuring they are familiar with this policy and the related procedures in place
- treating all disclosures in relation to domestic abuse seriously and with appropriate confidentiality
- responding to disclosures using a sensitive, supportive and non-judgmental approach
- reporting any concerns about colleagues who they become aware are perpetrators of domestic abuse
- signposting employees to the available internal and external support resources
- seeking advice from Domestic Abuse Champions, Safeguarding Champions and/ or the People Team as appropriate

4.7 Managers are responsible for:

- providing support to team members impacted by domestic abuse whilst also recognising the limitations of their role
- taking reasonable steps to enable affected employees to remain productive and at work
- undertaking Risk Assessments to minimise any potential risks following a disclosure of domestic abuse

5 Definition of domestic abuse

5.1 The Council adopts the statutory definition of domestic abuse from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 -

Domestic abuse is any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.

Personally connected means two people who:

- are, or have been, married to each other
- are, or have been, civil partners to each other
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been ended)
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- have, or there has been a time when they have each had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- are relatives

Children as victims of domestic abuse:

- seeing or hearing, or experiencing the effect of, the abuse and is related to either person
- the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child

- the child and person are related
- child means a person under the age of 18 years
- experiencing psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse

5.2 Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

This includes incidences where the abusive party directs their behaviour at another person (e.g., a child).

5.3 Economic abuse is: any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on someone's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

5.4 Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

5.5 Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition incorporates harmful traditional practices including, but not limited to, so called 'honour' based violence, 'honour' killings, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

5.6 The Council recognises 'honour-based' abuse as: an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse) which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour.

6 Confidentiality

6.1 The Council promotes a culture of respect where disclosures in relation to domestic abuse are held in the strictest of confidence and employee privacy is protected.

6.2 However, there may be occasions when the Council has a duty to disclose information to:

- protect the person experiencing abuse
- prevent harm to someone else (including other employees), or
- prevent or detect a crime.

6.3 If an employee is experiencing domestic abuse or is a perpetrator of domestic abuse and has children or there is an adult involved who may be at risk, the Council has a safeguarding duty to protect the child and/ or vulnerable adult.

6.4 In these circumstances the Head of People must be notified immediately in line with the Safeguarding Allegations Against Employees Policy.

7 How to raise concerns

If you are affected by domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse Champions

7.1 Employees who are experiencing, or have experienced or witnessed, domestic abuse are encouraged to reach out to a Domestic Abuse Champion to discuss any concerns or worries they may have.

7.2 Domestic Abuse Champions are frontline staff who receive extensive training and have expert knowledge of the dynamics of domestic abuse and understand the impact.

7.3 Domestic Abuse Champions will work with employees to talk through the available options, and provide information and support in a sensitive, non-judgmental manner.

7.4 Find the names and contact information for the Council's Domestic Abuse Champions.

Safeguarding Champions

7.5 Employees can also contact a Safeguarding Champion in relation to any domestic abuse concern and they will work with them to provide specialist safeguarding support and advice.

7.6 Find the names and contact information for the Council's Safeguarding Champions.

Colleagues, Line Managers and the People Team

7.7 Employees impacted by domestic abuse may also choose to speak to a trusted colleague, line manager or a member of the People Team at the most appropriate time for them.

7.8 The role of anyone receiving a disclosure in relation to domestic abuse is not to advise but to outline the assistance available and signpost to available support resources.

Reporting a concern about a colleague

7.9 Any employee who becomes aware that a colleague is a victim of domestic abuse should contact a Domestic Abuse Champion and/ or Safeguarding Champion to discuss how they can provide support.

7.10 Anyone who becomes aware that a colleague may be a perpetrator of domestic abuse should follow the procedures for reporting concerns set out in the

Safeguarding Allegations Against Employees Policy.

7.11 The confidentiality of anyone seeking support or guidance will be maintained unless they or anyone else is at risk of significant harm.

8 Available support

Reasonable adjustments

8.1 Reasonable adjustments may be considered and put in place to manage the impact from domestic abuse at work. Adjustments may include flexible working arrangements, working from home, amending responsibilities and/ or workload, etc.

8.2 Line managers should discuss and agree any adjustments with the affected employee.

Employee Assistance Programme

8.3 Anyone who raises concerns about their wellbeing or discloses that they are affected by domestic abuse should be provided with the details of the Employee Assistance Programme ('EAP').

8.4 The Employee Assistance Programme is a free, confidential service available to employees and their families providing access to support 24 hours a day, any day of the year.

Occupational Health

8.5 Occupational Health can provide managers with advice and guidance on supporting employees who are struggling with their physical and/ or mental wellbeing to remain in work or following a period of absence.

8.6 Managers must seek consent from the affected employee before making a referral to Occupational Health.

9 Perpetrators who are employees

9.1 The Employee Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of all members of staff. Employees should be aware that their conduct outside work may have an impact on their ability to carry out their duties or continued employment.

9.2 Action may be taken under the Council's Disciplinary Policy if an employee is convicted of an offence of domestic abuse during their employment or uses Council resources to carry out domestic abuse.

9.3 If an employee has concerns about their own behaviour, they are encouraged to seek support and help as soon as possible. If they tell someone at work this will be treated sensitively with the aim of reducing any risks to others, and to assist them to make positive change.

9.4 Managers should be supportive if an employee identifies themselves as a perpetrator, seeking advice immediately from the People Team, and carry out a Risk Assessment to mitigate any associated risks.

9.5 Where both the perpetrator and victim/ survivor of domestic abuse are employees, changes may be made to their working arrangements. These measures are to protect and provide support to both parties and are not intended to pass judgment.

10 External support and guidance

10.1 If employees don't feel ready or able to speak to someone at work about domestic abuse, they can access help and support from a range of external agencies. including:

- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service on 0800 731 0055
- 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247
- Reducing the Risk
- Mensadviceline.org.uk on 0808 8010327

10.2 Employees who are concerned about their own actions or behaviour can contact the Respect Phoneline on 0808 8024040.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 This document will be reviewed regularly and updated if there are significant changes required in light of best practice or legislation and government guidance.

12 Relationship with other policies and procedures

12.1 The Council will regularly review and update policies, procedures and practices that are linked to domestic abuse, and this document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Safeguarding Allegations Against Employees Policy and Guide
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Attendance Management Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

This page is intentionally left blank

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.

For questions, queries, and a chat about how to do your EqIA, please email your EDI officers:

1. Sobia Afridi- safridi@oxford.gov.uk

Please do refer to our SharePoint Page for support such as FAQs and Examples, etc.

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**	

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.** **For example:** -New policy, -Review of existing policy, -Changes in service(s), -New project(s), etc.	Insert: New policy	**2.**	**The implementation date of the activity under consideration:**	
3.	**Directorate/Department(s):**	Community Safety	**4.**	**Service Area(s):**	All
5.	**Who is (are) the assessment lead(s):** **Please provide:** -Name -Email address	Liz Jones Domestic Abuse Lead Dawn Thompson Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Project Manager	**6.**	**Contact details, in case there are queries:** **Please provide:** -Name -Email address	Liz Jones LJones3@oxford.gov.uk Dawn Thompson dathompson@oxford.gov.uk
7.	**Is this a new or ongoing EqIA?**	New x☐ Extension to existing EqIA ☐	**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.**	
9.	**Date this EqIA started:**	02/12/2024			
10.	**Will this EqIA 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.	

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

12.	**Type of activity being considered:** Check the most appropriate.	☐ Budget	☐ Decommissioning	☐ Commissioning	x☐ Change to an existing activity.
		x☐ New Activity	☐ Others. Please		
13.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	☐ Good, affordable homes	x☐ Strong, fair economy	x☐ Thriving Communities	☐ Zero Carbon Oxford	x☐ Well run council
14.	**Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022) does this activity fulfil?** Please check as needed.	x☐ Responsive services and customer care.	x☐ Diverse and engaged workforce.	x☐ Leadership & organisational commitment.	x☐ Understanding and working with our communities.
15.	**Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.**	Aims: The Council has obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to	Objectives: Improve the quality of the Councils workforce by providing training, and a raised understanding of the	Priorities To ensure all Council's staff across all service areas understand the impact of domestic abuse. This includes Oxford Direct	

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

[redacted]		reducing physical risks, this means operating in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health. The Council is committed to ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of its employees. Any employee or worker who has been impacted by domestic abuse should be able to raise the issue at work, without fear of stigmatisation or victimisation. Employees and workers should be appropriately supported within the workplace and have access to advice and specialist services. For some employees and workers, the workplace will be a safe haven and may be the only place that offers routes to safety. The Council's commitment extends to employees and workers who may be providing support to a family member, close friend or colleague who is experiencing domestic abuse. The Council acknowledges that all forms of domestic abuse are unacceptable.	dynamics and impact of domestic abuse Have a pool of domestic abuse specialists who can provide guidance and listening support Provide a safe haven for employees and workers who have been impacted by domestic abuse by ensuring they have access to appropriate specialist support and risk management Provide confidence to Council employees and workers who ask for support that they will be taken seriously and receive a believing response. Ensure all line managers have access to training and guidance on how to effectively support Council staff who choose to disclose abuse and staff who may recognise they are being abusive to their partner or family member.	Services (ODS) and Ox Place All line managers will receive training to recognise the signs of DA, and how they can support staff. To ensure all Council staff experiencing DA will know where and how to seek support internally and externally. DA victims will feel assured confidentiality will be maintained, and for domestic abuse victims/survivors their employment status will not be compromised.

		This policy represents a commitment by the Council to take all reasonable steps possible to combat the reality and impact of domestic abuse on those being abused and to challenge the behaviour of those causing harm. This policy ensures that both victims/survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse are aware of the support that is available within the Council and externally. It is important to note however that domestic abuse is not condoned under any circumstances by the Council.		
16.	**Please outline the consequences of not implementing this activity.** **For example,** -Existing activity does not fulfill Corporate Objectives, -existing activity is discriminatory	• The Policy sets out how domestic abuse will be responded to by the Council when staff choose to disclose. Without this policy staff may not feel safe or confident to disclose as they do not know whether they will be believed or supported, and if their disclosure will be confidential. • Line managers may not feel confident to respond to allegation of DA and/or to support a member of Council staff who has disclosed they are affected by domestic abuse or where to signpost or access more specialist support. The policy informs them of the Council's expectation on how to respond and what will be in place to assist the line managers		

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

	and not fulfilling Council's PSED, … to name a few.	

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

17.	**Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?** **Please provide details—** -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.	The policy was shared with internal Domestic Abuse Champions who are members of staff, service users and those with lived experience to provide feedback. It has also been shared with the Unison Representatives, and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance southeast representative. This was to ensure the policy met with accreditation criteria, under DAHA, a national set of standards. To help develop and shape the document, the DA policy was also taken and discussed with the Council's internal Corporate Policy Officers group (17 December 2024).
18.	**List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.** **These could be-** -third-party research, -census data, -legislation, -articles, -reports, -briefs.	All data used for this Equality Impact assessment has been taken from the **Workforce Equalities Report 2021-2023**, which is currently the latest data on staff. This report is internally focused on the Oxford City Council as an employer, providing a picture of our workforce profile, data trend analysis for a three-year period (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023) for some of the key protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Not every employee chooses to share their personal data, so reporting is based on that data that has been reported. https://www.oxford.gov.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/annual-workforce-equalities-report
19.	**If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?**	N/A

	Please list the details – -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data.	

Section 4: Impact analysis.

20.	**Who does the activity impact?** **Check as needed.** The impact may be positive, negative or unknown.	**Service Users**	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Members of staff	Yes x☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		General public	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Partner / Community Organisation	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		City Councillors	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐
		Council suppliers and contractors	Yes ☐	No ☐	Don't Know ☐

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

21.	**Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any protected characteristics as stated within Equality (Act 2010)?** Check as needed and provide evidence-driven conclusions.

[redacted]

Good Practice is to keep it simple and list your, evidence, insights, and mitigations.

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Don't know	Data/information/evidence supporting your assessment	Analysis & insight Mitigations
Age 592	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence The average employee age of 45 is in line with the local population where, at 34% of the total population, the 35-49 age band of Oxford residents is the largest. The largest employee group is the 51-60 age band. A higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of domestic abuse (8.0%) compared with those aged 45 to 54 years (4.2%), and those aged 60 years and over (3.2% domestic abuse statistics male vs female - Google Search	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? The largest employee group is the 51-60 age band. How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Line managers briefing to ensure they recognise the signs of domestic a support services contact information is provided. Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion

Disability **(Visible and invisible)**	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence A review by Public Health England in 2015 confirmed that people with disabilities are more vulnerable to domestic violence, experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and experience more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? 10.4% of workforce has declared a disability, How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Continuing awareness raising of disability in the workforce and the impac Home > Events > Disability and Neurodiversity Staff Network All managers/staff have access to our Peoples department for advice on disability will be able to access and digest the DA Policy. All managers have been offered Domestic abuse briefings to recognise t Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) service is open to everyon Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion
Gender re-assignment	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence This data is not collected	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? No data available How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)?
Marriage & Civil Partnership	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence This data is not collected	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Race, Ethnicity and/or Citizenship	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? The Workforce Equalities Plan Developing this strategy | Oxford Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) S He Councils Workforce Equalities Plan covers all protected characteristi ODAS service is open to everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, religi Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion
Pregnancy & Maternity	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence Pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic abuse, and existing abuse may get worse during pregnancy or after giving birth Domestic abuse in pregnancy - NHS	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? Employment data is not collected for this group. How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Councils Safeguarding policies and procedures will be followed.
					Evidence	What is the data telling us about impact on this group?

Religion or Belief	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Honour based abuse, including forced marriage.	35.4% of the workforce have declared as Christian 3.7% of the workforce is 'other', 1.9% is Muslim and 0.4% Sikh How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Encouraging all staff and managers to undertake specific training in term Karma Nirvana provide specialist support for victims/survivors of Honour Sundial https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=& vVaw0r9vJmmHnVTNd40CkTbIzG&opi=89978449 Get Help For Safeguarding Professionals – Karma Nirvana ODAS service is open to everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, religio Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion
Sex	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence Women statistically are more likely to experience domestic abuse than men. In the year ending March 2023, 1.4 million women and 751,000 men aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse. This is a prevalence rate of 5.7% for women and 3.2% for men	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? Over half of the workforce are women (59.7%) How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? The below strategy also recognises the gender equality pay gap, and is Developing this strategy | Oxford Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) S ODAS service is open to everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, religio Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

					domestic abuse statistics male vs female - Google Search	
Sexual Orientation 596	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence In 2018, Galop's national research showed that 11% of LGBT people had faced domestic abuse from a partner in the last year. This increased to 17% of black, Asian and minority ethnic LGBT people. LGBTQIA+ Domestic Abuse - Reducing the Risk	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? 4.0% of the Council workforce identifies as bisexual, lesbian or gay. How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and procedure Safeguarding Policy Health and Wellbeing Policy Early identification via internal mandatory domestic abuse training

Other (voluntary consideration) **For example:** Migrant, refugee, or asylum seekers	x☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Oxford City Council has been awarded, Local Authority of Sanctuary OCC have a specific team specialising in Exploitation. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service provides support to DA victims/surv Domestic abuse services | A2Dominion
Other (voluntary consideration) **For example:** Socio-economic status (income, wealth, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	Evidence	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? There is a fairly good representation of women in roles up to Grade 9. Th • Almost quarter of the Council's workforce is part time – the majority wo How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? Domestic abuse victims/survivors' employment status will not be compro Every effort will be taken to ensure the victim/survivor can work flexibility identified/recognised on OCC flexible working policy and Leave policy ar
Other **For example:** - Unpaid carers - Prison population - Homeless population	☐	☐	☐	☐	List the other groups Homeless applications Evidence HCLiC data suggests a significant increase in	What is the data telling us about impact on this group? How will you mitigate disporportinate impact (positive or negative)? The DA Policy will provide reassurance for staff to disclose, with confide Early identification Risk assessment and referral/signposting to specialist service by identifie

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

-Council suppliers & contractors -Cabinet Members					domestic abuse victims/survivors and their families fleeing and applying to OCC for housing, this does include OCC staff who have fled domestic abuse.	All staff who disclose DA and are wanting to flee will be able to access s and senior managers, who have all undertaken training on Domestic Abu

Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Full Impact Assessment

22.		**Conclusions.** Check as needed.						
	☐	Stop and reconsider the activity.	☐	Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.	x ☐	No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.	☐	

23.	**Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.**	This policy has been written developed in line with national best practice to provide clear guidance to the Council's line Managers, inform staff about the Council's response to reports of DA, and outline the support available to those affected. Our commitment to work towards accreditation through the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and work completed so far, s consider how we can work and adapt our response appropriately to meet the needs of staff with protected characteristics. I The Council's commitment to work towards accreditation through the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and work completed so far, shows that the Council is working to improve their services for all staff, who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse. The Council regularly considers how they can work and adapt their response appropriately to meet the needs of

staff with protected characteristics.

In conducting this assessment, Council officers have found no evidence that any group will be adversely affected by the introduction of the new policy.

The Council do not tolerate domestic abuse and the Council we will strive to ensure all staff can live free from abuse and harm.

The Council will work to create an environment where healthy relationships are the norm and where victims/ survivors and their children have access to the right support at the right time.

The Council, will not tolerate domestic abuse and we will strive to ensure all staff can live free from abuse and harm. We wi right support at the right time. Domestic abuse is everybody's business, we will work collaboratively to create lasting chang

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

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.

24.	**Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact**? **For example-** - team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group,etc.	Community Safety • Domestic Abuse Lead • Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Project Manager
25.	**Who (individual, team, or service area) will be responsible for carrying out the EqIA review?**	Community Safety • Domestic Abuse Lead • Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Project Manager
26.	**How often will the equality impact be reviewed for this activity?**	**27.** **Date when the EqIA will be reviewed again.**

www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

[redacted]	**For example-** -quarterly, -yearly, etc.		[redacted]	

Section 7: Sign-off

601

Name: [redacted]

Job Title: [redacted]

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:

Name: Full Name

Job Title: Type here

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:

---

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

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.
6) For joint projects, please consider the following:
    1. Other project leads
    2. Other service area and/or team lead/managers.

This is not an exhaustive list.

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

⚠ **Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.**

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

www.oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	22 October 2025
Report of:	Clive Tritton, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability
Title of Report:	Project approvals and delegations for the Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill affordable housing development

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	This report seeks project approval and delegations to progress the development of affordable homes at Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill. This includes delegated authority to enter into build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs, and the virement of capital funds in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
Corporate Priority:	More Affordable Housing
Policy Framework:	Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2028

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Grant project approval** to finalise agreement to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;
2. **Delegate authority to the Director of Housing,** in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts to facilitate the development within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing;
3. **Grant approval** for a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs of £5,693,000. The virement will be from the "Properties purchased from OCHL" (Oxford City Housing Limited) purchase line into a new scheme line to be

profiled to match the build programme across the four years from 2025/26 to 2028/29;

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Financial Information Westlands Drive/ Halliday Hill	This information is exempted from publication under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 on the following basis: **Commercial Sensitivity**

Introduction and background

1. The Council continues to develop a supply programme to deliver more affordable housing through multiple delivery routes. These include direct delivery schemes; partnerships and joint ventures; regeneration projects; acquisitions and advance purchase agreements; and enabling work with Registered Providers, community-led Housing groups, and other partners. Direct delivery schemes can comprise of development delivered directly by the Council (in the HRA) and also developments brought forward by Oxford City Homes Limited (OCHL) – trading as OX Place.
2. Across the four-year period from April 2025 to March 2029, the Council's Affordable Housing Supply Programme aims to deliver over 1,600 new affordable tenure homes with at least 850 of these at the most affordable Social Rent level.
3. This report relates specifically to the Halliday Hill/Westlands Drive scheme (also referred to as Land at Elizabeth Place and Westlands Drive). It seeks to secure Cabinet approval to progress the scheme as direct delivery by the Council (funded by the HRA), employing OCHL as its development agent, as the most appropriate development model for this scheme.

Development programme

4. The site is owned by the Council in the HRA, and the development will be directly delivered by the Council, with OCHL acting as a management consultant. The site has secured planning consent, and a tender exercise completed with regards to the procurement of a build contractor.
5. The scheme had previously been in OCHL pipeline programme as one of their development sites (where the Council would commit to selling and buying back the land and affordable homes). On review, the scheme is now considered to be better brought forward directly by the Council. This due to the nature of the scheme, being 100% affordable housing and on Council (HRA) owned land. It provides better value for money for the HRA and better ensures that development appraisal financial parameters are met.
6. The Council has allocated sufficient budget in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the HRA business plan, to deliver the scheme but funds will require virement from within approved HRA cost centres to create a new scheme under the HRA capital programme within the existing budget envelope.
7. The scheme is detailed below, with additional information relating to the financial appraisal provided in Appendix 1 (commercially sensitive) to this report.

8. The proposed development programme milestones are outlined in the table below.

Project milestone	Target Date	comment
Tender Results & Evaluation	Sept 2025	
Legal Review & Contract Award	October / November 2025	
Contractual Start	November 2025	
Mobilisation/ Pre-commencement condition discharges/ Road closure	February 2026	12 weeks
Start on Site	April 2026	
Practical Completion	April 2027	
End of defects period	April 2028	

Halliday Hill/Westlands Drive

9. This is a 100 per cent affordable housing scheme of 15 much needed affordable homes for general needs. These are a mix of unit types with flats ranging from 1-bedroom to 4-bed and 2- and 3-bedroom houses. Six of the homes are for Social Rent, five are for Affordable Rent (capped at Local Housing Allowance) and four houses are to be developed at Shared Ownership tenure. Table 1 details the tenure and unit types to be delivered. One social rent flat is a 4-bed (6-person) flat which supports delivery to meet a limited but acute housing need for larger family homes. One of the 2-bed flats at affordable rent will be built to the accessible M4(3) standard (formerly wheelchair standard).

Table 1:

Size	SR	AR	SO	Totals
1b2pF		1		**1**
2b3pF		3		**3**
2b4pF		1		**1**
2b4pH			4	**4**
3b5pF	1			**1**
3b5pH	4			**4**
4b6pF	1			**1**
Totals	**6**	**5**	**4**	**15**

10. The mix across tenures and between houses and flats accommodates a balanced approach which seeks to prioritise the affordability of the larger family homes whilst ensuring the financial viability of the scheme and the preference for the accessways to be managed within the Council (in the rented tenures).

11. The Council currently own the land detailed in the red line plan below, including the road, in the HRA. The land will remain in ownership of the Council.

12. OCHL will be engaged by the Council to act as Development Agent under a Services Agreement, with all development risks and costs to be covered by the Council within the HRA.

13. This is a challenging site which is located partly on a road (Elizabeth Place) that involves a road stopping-up order. The new homes will be built partially on the green at Northway, with the design incorporating some of the green space into the plan. 75 per cent of the green space will be retained and improved. The red line plan and scheme/ plot plan are provided below.

14. As the land is currently held in the HRA it is not designated as statutory green space. The site will be used to benefit tenants. As it is already held within the HRA there is no need to appropriate this land.

Red line plan:

Plot plan:

15. The scheme was granted planning consent subject to s106 at planning committee in June 2023 (22/01554/FUL). The s106 agreement is now signed.

16. The homes are designed to a high quality, exceeding a 40 per cent reduction in carbon emissions (against 2022 building standards). The scheme uses a fabric-first approach to minimise energy consumption and cost, with a target of zero carbon for regulated energy. An all-electric scheme is expected to achieve this, with air-source heat pumps and PV panels on roofs. An EPC rating of B or above is expected.

17. This is a low car development as it is close to public transport services and located in a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)

Alternative Options Considered

18. There are no further alternatives to the proposed options, other than to not progress with the scheme.

Financial implications

19. This report seeks the required delegations to further develop this scheme within the programme of affordable housing supply. The Council's Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP), approved at Council on 13 February 2025, supports the 40-year HRA Business Plan, and makes provision for purchases of affordable housing from OCHL's 10-year development programme within an overall budget envelope of £332m (before grant and shared ownership sales). The budget includes a further £100m for direct delivery by the Council (in the HRA).

20. The decision to proceed with any development or buy-back will be supported by a development scheme appraisal/ financial modelling to ensure that financial parameters and requirements are met for OCHL and the HRA. These parameters have been previously agreed and for the HRA are as follows for each scheme:

    - a payback period of up to 70 years; and
    - a positive Net Present Value (NPV) over this period; and
    - an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of at least 3%.

21. Meeting these parameters ensures that the HRA business plan remains financially robust. Conversely, not meeting these parameters will impact this position.

Legal issues

22. Under Parts, (9), (10) and (11) of the Constitution, Cabinet is responsible for the decisions set out in the recommendation. Cabinet is empowered to agree transfers between cost centres of over £250,000 provided that they are consistent with the policy framework, give project approval for projects of £750,000 or over and award contracts over £750,000. Under section 9E (3) (c) of the Local Government Act 2000 Cabinet is empowered to delegate its functions to officers and therefore is permitted to delegate authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with relevant officers to enter into build contracts and any ancillary legal documents to facilitate the development.

23. In accordance with Part 4.4 of the Constitution, a delegated officer is empowered to award a contract with a value in excess of £10,000 but less than £750,000 when the Council is the buyer.

24. In accordance with Part 19.12 of the Constitution the council may commission it's Teckal companies for one off capital schemes or services The Teckal company benefit from the "Teckal" exemption to the procurement legislation. This means that the council may award contracts to a teckel company without the need to comply with procurement law but it must comply with the Council's contract rules, specifically Part19 Appendix 2 of the Constitution

25. Procurement of goods and services for the purpose of developing homes must be carried out in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Contract Rules, procurement procedures and in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 (or any successor legislation), including adherence to transparency, fairness and best value principles.

26. The proposals set out in this report fall within Council's statutory powers including the power to provide and manage housing through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 enables the Council to develop land it already owns. These powers support both direct delivery by the Council or acquisition from its wholly owned company (OCHL).

27. The Council will need to enter into construction and consultancy contracts directly for this development, as well as agreeing a Development Services Agreement with OCHL. Such agreements must be carefully structured to comply with procurement law, avoid unlawful subsidy, and protect the Council's financial and delivery interests.

Level of risk

28. Any risks inherent in this programme are already identified elsewhere, with actions to mitigate these detailed in the OCHL and HRA Business Plans and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

29. The risks include potential cost overruns or visibility, and legal exposure if contracts are not appropriately structured. These risks will be mitigated through detailed financial appraisals, use of established governance delegations, and legal oversight throughout procurement and contracting stages.

Equalities impact

30. There are no adverse impacts in undertaking this activity, with the potential to improve provision for persons in housing need, through the provision of more affordable and accessible housing to better meet client needs.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

31. All development schemes delivered by the Council / OCHL are subject to high sustainability standards with the expectation that they exceed statutory (building) standards.

Report author	Dave Scholes
Job title	Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead
Service area or department	Regeneration, Economy and Sustainability
Telephone	01865 252636

e-mail	dscholes@oxford.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

www.oxford.gov.uk
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	**22 October 2025**
Report of:	Nigel Kennedy – Group Finance Director
Title of Report:	Contract in relation to Real Estate Asset Valuations

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Giving Project Approval and delegating authority to officers to enter into a new contract or contracts with suitably qualified firms to undertake real estate valuations.
Key decision:	Yes – see link
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Ed Turner – Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Well Run Council
Policy Framework:	Procurement Strategy

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Give Project Approval** to approve the procurement of a suitably qualified firm of real estate valuers to undertake valuations of council-owned properties recorded within the General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts
2. **Delegate** authority to the Deputy Chief Executive – Place in consultation with the Group Director of Finance, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Assets to determine the form of the procurement, contract, and award and enter into the final contract with the preferred supplier

Information Exempt From Publication	
State in here what information is to be exempt from publication	None

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Risk Assessment	No

Introduction and background

1. Local Authorities in the UK are required by statute to produce accounts in accordance with the "proper accounting practice" specified in the *Code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom*, (the "Code"). The Code is published annually by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The Code is prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards, which have been adopted as the basis for public sector accounting in the UK.
2. Audits of Local Authorities are undertaken in-line with the International Standards on Auditing (UK) under *Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom.*
3. Real estate assets are required to be valued in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation – Global Standards as updated and amended. It should be noted that Public Sector Valuer Rotation Working Group recommended that the requirement for valuer rotation does not apply to the public sector; this has been approved by the RICS Standards and Regulation Board. This decision was reached on the following basis:
    - Public sector valuations of investment properties are distinct from the private sector in terms of both actual risk and public perception.
    - Public sector valuations are not relied on by third party investors, public sector debt is considered in total and not relative to individual property values.
    - The existing oversight mechanics of other bodies, such as the government, along with annual external audits of the valuations are robust and ensure that all investment valuations are reviewed.

Current Practice

4. The real estate assets owned by OCC are reviewed on desktop basis annually with at least 20% of the portfolio being inspected and formally valued annually. These valuations form part of the annual accounts that are prepared by the finance team. OCC outsource the valuation of their real estate assets to firms that are suitably qualified to undertake valuations in accordance with relevant guidance.

Proposal

5. The contracts for the existing valuers have now expired and OCC are undertaking a tender to find a new firm or firms of valuers to undertake the valuations.
6. We are asking firms to submit proposals to undertake valuations of the properties within both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account in accordance with the relevant guidance from both the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting. Firms will have the option to submit proposals to cover both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account or just one of the funds.
7. We are proposing to enter into a new contract of up to six years with a suitable firm or firms of qualified valuers to undertake the valuations. In line with our standard requirements the contract will require the successful contractor to pay, at a minimum, the Oxford Living Wage. In addition the successful contractor will need to be able to demonstrate that they will be able to help meet the Council's priorities.

8. The intention is for the new contracts to start in late 2025. This will enable the valuers to have sufficient time to review the portfolio in more detail and undertake all necessary inspections of the properties in advance of preparing the valuations as at 31 March 2026.
9. It is likely the cost of the contract will be £220,000 per year (excluding VAT). The total contract value including VAT will be approximately £1,584,000. The indicative split of the cost is as follows, General Fund: £140,000; Housing Revenue Account: £80,000. The costs are covered within the budget.

Alternative Options Considered

10. We have considered undertaking the valuations in-house, this is permitted by the various regulations that govern the public sector. However, it is difficult to recruit suitably qualified valuation surveyors, and given the size of the portfolios we would need to recruit a large number of valuers. The cost of directly employing a new team along with the costs of procuring the appropriate software and ongoing training would be greater than the cost of outsourcing the work. It would also take a considerable amount of time to create a new team and to make them familiar with the various portfolios leading to an increased pressure on existing resources.

Other implications

11. As real estate assets form the majority of the Council's balance sheet this is a material area, and one of increased audit focus. Failure to gain suitable valuations will lead to materially incorrect financial statements. This will, in turn lead to the inability of our auditors to sign-off the financial statements. This will lease to reputational damage, and additional increased future audit scrutiny.

Financial implications

12. The cost of the annual valuation work will be classed as a revenue expenditure as it is an operational cost of the authority. As it is a statutory requirement to prepare materially correct financial statements, there is no alternative to procuring year end valuations, either in-house or externally.

Legal issues

13. In accordance with 18.12 of the Constitution, Cabinet is empowered to give Project Approval for all capital or revenue projects over £750,000

14. In accordance with 4.5 (10) and (11) Cabinet is empowered to give project approval for projects of £750,000 or over and award contracts over £750,000

15. In accordance with 19.17

16. Procurement of goods and services must be carried out in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Contract Rules, procurement procedures and in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 (or any successor legislation), including adherence to transparency, fairness and best value principles.

Level of risk

17. Please see attached risk register in Appendix 1.

Equalities impact

The decision does not have an impact on anyone with protected characteristics, on this basis an Equalities Impact Assessment is not necessary.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

18. For key decisions only

Report author	Ted Bowler & Robert Dude
Job title	Corporate Asset Manager & Senior Financial Accountant
Service area or department	Property and Assets & Group Finance
Telephone	01865 602774 & 01865 529405
e-mail	Tbowler@oxford.gov.uk & rdude@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:
None.

Risk Register

Contract in relation to Real Estate Asset Valuations

As at: 24 September 2025

									Gross		Current			Target						
Ref	Title	Risk Description	Opp / Threat	Cause	Consequence	Risk Treatment	Date Raised	Owner	P	I	P	I	Score	P	I	Comments	Control / Mitigation Description	Date Due	Action Status	% Progress	Action Owner
1.00	No bidders	Despite publishing an open tender no bidders submit a tender return.	Threat	Bidders not aware of the upcoming opportunity.	Delays to the appointment of a new firm/firms of valuers could have an impact on the preperation of the year end accounts	Reduce	24-Sep-25	Ted Bowler/Robert Dude	2	4	2	2	4	2	1		Ensure that potential bidders are advised in advance of the upcoming tender and are further notified when the tender	Ongoing			
2.00	Delay in tender	The tender start is delayed	Threat	Delay in drafting and agreeing the form of specification to be used during the tender	Delays to the appointment of a new firm/firms of valuers could have an impact on the preperation of the year end accounts	Reduce	24-Sep-25	Ted Bowler/Robert Dude	3	4	2	2	4	2	1		Work closely with colleagues in procurement and legal to ensure everyone is aware of the project timeline.	Ongoing			
3.00	Delay in tender	The tender start is delayed	Threat	Delay in drafting the form of contract to be used	Delays to the appointment of a new firm/firms of valuers could have an impact on the preperation of the year end accounts	Reduce	24-Sep-25	Ted Bowler/Robert Dude	2	4	2	2	4	2	1		Work closely with legal to ensure that they are aware of the timeline for the tender and respond to any queries quickly.	Ongoing			
4.00	Delay in tender	The tender start is delayed	Threat	Delay due to officer holidays	Delays to the appointment of a new firm/firms of valuers could have an impact on the preperation of the year end accounts	Contingency Plans	24-Sep-25	Ted Bowler/Robert Dude	2	4	2	1	2	2	1		Ensure that there is sufficient officer cover within the tender team	Ongoing			
5.00	Value of bids	The prices returned with tender submissions are far greater than expected and budgeted for.	Threat	Changes to the required work or increased legislation leads to prices being higher than envisaged.	Delays to the appointment of a new firm/firms of valuers could have an impact on the preperation of the year end accounts	Accept	24-Sep-25	Ted Bowler/Robert Dude	3	4	2	2	4	2	1		Review rate cards on existing framework agreements, discuss a potential range of prices with the external consultant	Ongoing			

THE RISK REGISTER IS FORMATTED AS A TABLE. PRESS TAB ON THE LAST TABLE CELL TO INSERT A NEW ROW.

This page is intentionally left blank