

Agenda

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Audit and Governance Committee

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 28 January 2026**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

For further information please contact:

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Committee Services Officer

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Committee Membership

Councillors: Membership 7: Quorum 3: substitutes are permitted.

Councillor James Fry (Chair)

Councillor Roz Smith (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Judith Harley

Councillor Simon Ottino

Councillor Tiago Corais

Councillor Theodore Jupp

Councillor Dr Dianne Regisford

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

Agenda

		Pages
1	Apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of Interest	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve as a true and accurate record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2025.	9 - 20
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 22 January 2026.	
5	Councillor addresses on any item for discussion 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 22 January 2026.	
6	Housing Benefit Audit Report 2024/2025 Report of: The Group Finance Director Purpose of the report: To present the outcome of the 2024/2025 KPMG external review of Housing Benefit Expenditure. Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to: Note the report.	21 - 38

7 Setting of the Council Tax Base 2026-27

39 - 60

Report of: The Group Finance Director

Purpose of the report: To set the “Council Tax Base” for 2026-27 as required by section 33 of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to:

1. **Agree** that the 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the City Council's area as a whole is set at **48,724.9** (as shown in Appendix 1)
2. **Agree** that the projected level of collection is set at **98%**
3. **Agree** that the tax bases for the Parishes, and for the Unparished Area of the City (as shown in Appendix 2) be set as follows:

Unparished Area of the City	40,729.2
Littlemore Parish	2,138.8
Old Marston Parish	1,319.8
Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish	1,604.0
Blackbird Leys Parish	2,933.4
City Council Total	48,725.2

8 Risk Management Reporting at 31st December 2025

61 - 144

Report of: The Group Finance Director

Purpose of the report: To update the Audit and Governance Committee on corporate and service risks as of 31 December 2025.

Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to:

1. **Review** the Risk Management report and **note** its contents.

9 Internal Audit Progress Report

145 -
154

Report of: The Internal Auditor, BDO

Purpose of report: To update the Audit and Governance Committee.

Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to

1. **Note** and discuss the report.

10	Internal Audit Follow Up of Recommendations	155 174	-
	Report of: The Internal Auditor, BDO Purpose of report: To update the Audit and Governance Committee. Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to: Note and discuss the report.		
11	Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2025	175 358	-
	Report of: The Group Finance Director Purpose of the report: To submit the Council's draft Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representations to the Committee to obtain delegated authority for approval and authorisation. Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to: Approve the latest 2024/25 Statement of Accounts as agreed by the Group Finance Director and authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the Accounts incorporating any further changes arising from the ongoing audit. Agree that a Letter of Representations for 2024/25 incorporating any statements required by the external auditor arising from the ongoing audit be signed and issued by the Group Finance Director and the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee to enable the external auditor's opinion to be issued (paragraphs 14 to 15).		
12	Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025	359 468	-
	Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) Purpose of the report: To present the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement for approval and to present the refreshed Code of Corporate Governance for approval. Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to: Approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025; Note the action plan appended to the Annual Governance Statement and that progress will be reported on in 2026; and; Delegate authority to the Director of Law, Governance & Strategy to make any typographical changes to the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 that may be required before publication on the Council's website.		

13	External Audit Progress Report (Year ended 31 March 2025)	469 484	-
	Report of: The External Auditor, Ernst & Young Purpose of report: To update the Audit and Governance Committee. Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to: 1. Note and discuss the report.		
14	Dates of future meetings		
	The next meeting will be held on 9 April 2026 at 6.00pm.		

Information for those attending

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General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

Declaring an interest

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

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

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Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee on Tuesday 21 October 2025

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Committee members present:

Councillor Fry (Chair)

Councillor Harley

Councillor Corais

Councillor Regisford

Councillor Roz Smith (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Ottino

Councillor Jupp

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director

Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager

Rachel McKoy, Interim Monitoring Officer

Roger Martin, Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer

Phil McGaskill, Revenues Service Delivery Manager

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager

Sobia Afridi, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist

Kieran Edmunds, Rapid Rehousing Manager

Preeti Malik, External Auditor (Ernst & Young)

Gurpreet Dulay, Internal Auditor (BDO)

Joe Taylor, Internal Auditor (BDO)

Apologies:

None.

57. Declarations of Interest

None.

58. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2025 as a true and accurate record.

59. Addresses by members of the public

None.

60. Councillor addresses on any item for discussion.

None.

61. Risk Management Update

A report had been submitted to update the Audit and Governance Committee on the corporate and service risks as of 30 September 2025.

Roger Martin, the Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer, Nigel Kennedy, the Group Finance Director, and Rachel McKoy, the Interim Monitoring Officer, were present to respond to questions.

The Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer presented a comprehensive summary of the report and noted that the presentation of register data had been updated to ensure improved readability for the Committee. Members understood that the report before them was a quarterly update as of September 2025 and the process through which this had been compiled and approved. The Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer summarised that the number of risks on the corporate risk register had remained unchanged and there had been some movement with scoring to produce six red and eight amber risks. Context relating to work ongoing in relation to the most notable risks was provided.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Smith thanked the Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer for a recent training session.

The Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer and Councillor Smith discussed the increase to the overall risk profile in the service risk register in comparison to the previous quarter.

Councillor Smith queried why 'quality of data and property knowledge' had been classed as a red risk, to which the Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer provided context in relation to current insurance information requirements and systems. The Committee heard that this risk is being handled by the department and the Council's insurers are being updated on this.

In relation to risk 96, Councillor Smith queried whether the rating had been caused by a lack of legal support and requested further explanation in relation to risk 126.

In regard risk number 126, The Group Finance Director clarified that any related issues would be picked up in the next iteration of the Council budget. The Committee heard of his confidence that the position would be mitigated, and any adjustments required in response to savings would be made.

In response to queries regarding lack of legal support, the Interim Monitoring Officer confirmed that a restructure is ongoing to assess capacity and expertise within the legal services team. Councillor Smith queried whether efforts are ongoing to employ in-house legal apprentices instead of more expensive locum options. The Interim Monitoring Officer outlined issues with legal services capacity across local authorities and supported the need for more in-house services to be organised.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the report.

The Insurance, Risk Management and Business Continuity Officer left the meeting and did not return.

62. Internal Audit Progress Report - October 2025

The Chair welcomed the Gurpreet Dulay and Joe Taylor, Internal Auditors from BDO.

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager, and Sobia Afridi, the Diversity and Inclusion Specialist were also present to respond to questions.

The Internal Auditor (GD) presented a comprehensive summary, outlining the reports that the Committee were required to consider and a summary of the progress made since the previous meeting. A detailed summary was provided on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity report, including the relevant legislation and guidance local authorities must follow, alongside an overview of the mostly positive progress being made by the Council. A brief summary of the Treasury Management report was also provided, for which The Internal Auditor (GD) noted that a substantial opinion had been determined and some small areas for improvement were noted as being in progress.

The Chair thanked The Group Finance Director and the Financial Accounting Manager for their consistently high treasury management standards.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

In relation to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity report, the Chair noted that many implementation dates had been determined for 2026 and asked whether these are on track. The Organisational Development Manager explained that the report presented is new, and officers have already begun to pick up on the actions required, with one

already being achieved. The audit results contained no surprises, and therefore the plans for implementation next year are on track.

Councillor Smith queried whether there are any resourcing issues with the 18 areas yet to be picked up and prioritised, to which the Organisational Development Manager noted that the relevant team is small, however the implementation dates set have been agreed as realistic and reasonable given the spread and assessment of officer workloads. The Committee heard that the most challenging aspect would be the training, and a detailed account of the EDI training structure used by the council was outlined, including inclusive recruitment training for hiring managers and equity and intersectionality training for all staff. The staged approach taken to these training programmes was also explained.

The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist outlined how the Council would be taking a more proactive approach by reaching out to directorates to organise training events.

The Chair queried how much of the training is delivered on a hybrid basis, to which the Organisational Development Manager explained that a mixed approach is used to support inclusivity. The Committee heard that training is also delivered flexibly to the requirements of any directorates which have requested it.

Councillor Regisford requested thoughts from the officers on how training around equality, diversity and inclusion can be translated into lived practice. This was specifically asked in relation to the 18 areas listed in the report for consideration.

The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist noted that it is challenging, however efforts are made to ensure that a consistent and regular training offering is available to cater to the needs of the council. The Committee also heard that efforts are being made to access the staff community and talk to recipients of training after completion to gain feedback and assess needs. The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist emphasised the value of feedback from EDI training and the time taken to consider this, noting that conversations relating to EDI training must be two-way in order to be meaningful and personal. The Committee heard of her pride in the training offered and feedback systems utilised.

The Organisational Development Manager provided further examples of training sessions which have been conducted within the wider community and emphasised the focus paid to unconscious bias and intersectionality within these; several examples were provided to the Committee.

Councillor Corais joined the meeting.

Councillor Regisford thanked the officers for their comments and recommended that they continue to be progressive in exploring how training translates into lived practice.

She welcomed the ongoing engagement with training feedback and emphasised that qualitative measures must be used to highlight nuances in experiences.

The Organisational Development Manager also provided information on the staff networks and how these offer opportunities for people to meet on a regular basis and share ideas and lived experiences.

The Chair thanked The Organisational Development Manager and the Diversity and Inclusion Specialist for their responses.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the report.

63. Purchase Cards Internal Audit Report - October 2025

The Internal Auditor (GD) provided a summary of the report, including a detailed outline of the payment card processes for the Committee's benefit. The Committee understood that this audit report had concluded a limited opinion, however, were also informed of the ongoing work to improve the matter. The Internal Auditor (GD) informed the Committee of his confidence that the matter is being taken seriously and committed to providing a robust follow up report in the future to assess the progress made.

Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Service Delivery Manager, and Kieran Edmunds, Rapid Rehousing Manager, were also present to respond to questions.

The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager noted that the audit findings were expected, and improvements were already underway with all recommendations being acknowledged. The Committee were informed that an assessment to identify possible fraud had been undertaken and returned no evidence of any incidents; it was emphasised that all transactions investigated had been legitimate and are now recorded. The main issue identified was lack of management approval on transactions, for which the Committee heard the details of work ongoing to improve this. The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager also explained that a revised policy is now in place which outlines the responsibilities and consequences for non-compliance, and a full review of all credit cards has taken place. Furthermore, a reminder system is now in place for authorising officers. Since the changes have been implemented, the Committee understood that the outstanding value of unapproved spend has reduced considerably to £9000 and is continually declining. Any delays to this have resulted from technical difficulties with Barclay Card.

The Group Finance Director recognised the concerns raised in the audit report and emphasised his confidence in the Revenues and Service Delivery Manager for handling the matter. The Committee heard that action has already been taken to suspend cards for users who do not comply with the requirements, and this will continue as required.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Ottino queried whether the matter would translate into a performance management target for all officers who hold a card and asked what impacts the removal of a card has on council functions. The date of the next follow-up report was also requested.

Councillor Smith queried whether there are any other sanctions apart from card removal, emphasising the risk of possible fraud.

The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager clarified that to date, all checks made relating to fraud have returned no evidence of any examples; it was also explained that the issue relates more to a breakdown in process and how managers approve payments. In response to queries regarding the impact of card removal, it the Committee heard that most service areas have more than one card, therefore in the case of emergencies, a card should still be accessible. If a colleague with a card cannot be found within a service area, the register of all those holding payment cards can be utilised to track down an alternative.

Councillor Jupp sought to clarify whether the outstanding value of £9000 mentioned previously as the amount to which the backlog had been reduced to was accurate. The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager confirmed this, noting that the backlog had been reduced to £9000 since the report was published. Councillor Jupp also asked whether there is a target amount of money or number of transactions that the Council expects to never reconcile as a result of this issue. The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager noted that it is currently expected that all transactions on the list will be able to be concluded over time.

Councillor Jupp, in reference to page 78, noted the breakdown of the amounts of money the Council has reconciled by year, and asked how much of the remaining balance needs to be reconciled from 2022 against the whole. The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager committed to reporting back on this number.

The Internal Auditor (GD) clarified that that the audit reports agrees that no fraud has been identified, however it is not possible to conclusively say that none has occurred. The Committee also heard that a follow up report will be delivered at the next meeting in January 2026.

Councillor Smith expressed concern in relation to page 78 and the exclusion of payment card information relating to ODS and OX Place from the report. Councillor Smith recommended that BDO conduct a separate purchase card governance review for ODS and OX Place. The Group Finance Director confirmed that this would be possible as BDO cover audits for ODS and OX Place but explained that these are delivered and managed separately to that of Oxford City Council.

Councillor Corais firstly asked how much confidence there is that no fraudulent activity has occurred given the lack of documentation. Secondly, Councillor Corais queried how the council ensure that leavers are promptly identified, and cards deactivated when required, and lastly, information on the training available to support card holders and approvers was requested.

The Internal Auditor (GD) reiterated his earlier comments which confirmed that no fraud has been identified, however it is not possible to conclusively say that none has occurred.

In response to Councillor Corais, the Revenues and Service Delivery Manager explained that documentation regarding officers leaving the council with payment cards is now incorporated into HR processes and should this occur, the card is recovered and destroyed. It was also confirmed that monthly transaction checks occur. In relation to training, the Committee heard details of the new procedure note which has been circulated to all cardholders detailing how they should use the card; they are required to sign this to ensure they are aware of consequences for non-compliance or misuse.

Councillor Ottino requested clarification on the purchase limit noted in the report and asked how this impacts emergency situations.

The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager clarified that payment limits do not restrict responses to emergencies as usually there is more than one card holder within a given service area. If a larger spend is required in an emergency situation, this can be authorised centrally.

Councillor Smith suggested that the lack of a spend plan or payment card access in an emergency situation could constitute a major risk for the Council and suggested this be considered within the corporate risk register. The Group Finance Director clarified that the Council does plan as far as possible for such risks and explained how the use of multiple payment cards facilitates quick responses.

The Rapid Rehousing Manager provided an insight into the new procurement framework developed within housing services, noting that it may respond to some of the risks posed by payment cards gaps. The Committee heard a summary of the alternative payment methods, such as invoicing, to be used for block contracts with temporary accommodation providers.

The Chair thanked the Internal Auditors for the report and noted his anticipation of the update report in January 2026.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the report.

64. Internal Audit Follow Up of Recommendations Report - October 2025

The Internal Auditor (JT) provided a comprehensive summary of the report and explanation of the scoring process used to monitor the progress of recommendations. The Council's progress towards its outstanding recommendations was summarised and those of concern were emphasised, with a description provided for any delayed deadlines.

The Interim Monitoring Officer, the Rapid Rehousing Manager, the Organisational Development Manager, and the Diversity and Inclusion Specialist were also present to respond to questions.

The Group Finance Director echoed the comments from the Internal Auditors and the improvements needed on some recommendations from within the Council. Specific mention was made to delays to several recommendations from the Law, Governance and Strategy directorate and the requirement for managers to comment and report back to the Committee was noted.

The Interim Monitoring Officer relayed an update from the Law, Governance and Strategy directorate, noting that the permanent Monitoring Officer would be returning soon, at which time the delays would be addressed. Updates relating to BDO's ability to access shared documents following the cyber-attack were noted as reason for some miscommunication on delayed recommendations. The Interim Monitoring Officer recognised the legitimate concerns of Members in relation to these delays and echoed that responses should be timely.

The Chair recommended that the matters be brought to the Monitoring Officer's attention on her return. The Internal Auditor (JT) supported this and welcomed a direct meeting to discuss the delayed recommendations.

The Internal Auditor (GD) noted the verbal update of the Interim Monitoring Officer and recognised that sharing of information could have been limited by recent internal server issues. The Internal Auditor (GD) committed to following up with the Monitoring Officer through a direct meeting.

The Chair requested that members be informed if there is a long-term technology issue.

Councillor Smith expressed concerns around the delayed recommendation relating to income generation and asked if this could be a result of issues with new IT systems.

The Group Finance Director provided an update on the procurement process relating to the IT system and explained that the delays resulted from the procurement failing to

comply with new regulations. As a result, the procurement was pulled and the process restarted. The Committee heard that the tendering process was expected to be completed within the first three months of 2026.

The Organisational Development Manager commented in relation to recruitment and retention and clarified that recommendation 1A is now in progress, with the final steps being taken to CLT for approval; it was confirmed that this was on track. In relation to recommendations 2A and 2B, it was explained that the recommendation cannot be achieved as the capability does not currently exist until the system is changed; it is on the re-procurement list. The Committee heard that the contract with the current IT provider has been extended until a new system could be purchased and implemented.

The Chair noted the delayed recommendations 3A, 3B, and 3C relating to homelessness, to which Rapid Rehousing Manager explained that progress is on track. The Committee were informed that a new framework is being established with new suppliers, and this information has been shared with the Internal Auditors. The Rapid Rehousing Manager outlined the challenges relating to the council's terms and conditions and the impacts this has had on the ability to procure larger suppliers of emergency housing and temporary accommodation; negotiations are ongoing. The Committee were informed that with more suppliers, comes more competitiveness and value for money for the Council and the framework will be launched once it is deemed that there are enough suppliers to respond to demand. Finally, in relation to the recommendation for systems integration between QL and housing benefits systems, the Rapid Rehousing Manager explained that the possibility does not currently exist but that it could be discussed with IT colleagues for the future.

Councillor Regisford left and rejoined the meeting during this discussion.

The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist left the meeting and did not return.

Councillor Ottino queried the problems with suppliers which were referred to, and the Rapid Rehousing Manager summarised complexities relating to terms and conditions, indemnities, and the size and scale of suppliers.

The Chair thanked the Internal Auditors and officers and recommended that a meeting with the Monitoring Officer be scheduled soon after her return.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the report.

The Organisational Development Manager left the meeting and did not return.

65. Internal Audit Annual Report - October 2025

The Internal Auditor (GD) provided a comprehensive summary of the report which provided an overall assessment of the Council's governance of risk and controls. The Committee were informed that a moderate opinion had been concluded which was consistent to the previous year.

Councillor Regisford rejoined the meeting.

The Group Finance Director echoed the consistency of this report across previous years.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

The Chair raised concern in relation to the outstanding matters linked to accounts payable and asked why this has consistently been flagged since 2022.

The Group Finance Director noted repeated issues relating to the finance area across this duration, including the lack of a team manager. The Committee heard that the Revenues and Service Delivery Manager is now in post, and the Group Finance Director has confidence in his abilities to tackle the issues outstanding.

The Revenues and Service Delivery Manager provided the Committee further assurance that the matter is in hand and provided detail relating to the tracking of KPIs and improvements to reporting. The Committee also heard of his plans for developing further solutions and automations in the future to support additional improvements.

Councillor Smith noted concern regarding fire risk assessments and specialist advice which had not been adequately delivered. The Internal Auditor (GD) assured the Committee that a specialist will be reviewing this matter and providing an update in January.

The Chair and Councillor Smith recommended that this matter be highlighted to the relevant Cabinet member.

The Chair thanked the Internal Auditors for their attendance and reports.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the report.

66. External Audit - Verbal Update

The Chair welcomed the External Auditor.

The External Auditor informed the Committee that the audit and accounts had been delayed due to the Council's cyber incident earlier in the year. The Committee understood that work was ongoing to complete this and sign off is expected by the backstop date in February 2026. The External Auditor explained that cyber security specialists have been engaged to complete the necessary procedures, and work is ongoing to obtain an understanding of what occurred, and the arrangements the Council put in place following the cyber incident. The Committee understood that the key audit risks remain the same, and no further update was required at this stage. Ongoing audit topics were also summarised for the Committee's benefit.

The Chair asked whether property valuation for insurance purposes is included within the risk register, and whether this is an issue. The Financial Accounting Manager explained that property valuations for insurance purposes are being organised, and officers are in close contact with the insurers to track progress. The Committee heard that if there are delays in the programme, there may be issues with cover; whether this should be included on the register will continue to be considered. The Financial Accounting Manager explained that valuations for insurance purposes and those for the financial statements are different. In respect of the statements of accounts, the Council operates a 5-year rolling plan which is worked on with the external auditors to ensure their confidence in the balances.

The Rapid Rehousing Manager left the meeting and did not return.

Given the scope of the Council's assets, the Chair queried whether other councils experience the same issue, to which the Financial Accounting Manager explained that the assets held by Oxford City Council are in excess of most other district councils and more comparable to that of a County Council.

The Chair thanked the External Auditor for the update and noted his anticipation of the report next year. An update in January 2026 was requested.

The Committee reviewed and **noted** the verbal update.

67. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.05 pm

Chair
January 2026

Date: Wednesday 28

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.

To: Audit & Governance Committee
Date: 28 January 2026
Report of: Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)
Title of Report: 2024/2025 Housing Benefit Audit Report

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of Report	To present the outcome of the 2024/2025 KPMG external review of Housing Benefit Expenditure.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Chapman - Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Corporate Priority:	A Well-run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That the Audit and Governance Committee:
1. Note the report.

Information Exempt from Publication
Not Applicable

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	KPMG Auditors Report	No

Introduction and Background

1. Housing Benefit is a devolved responsibility under the Social Security Admin Act 1992 from the Secretary of State. As part of the devolved process the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) expects the Local Authority to appoint an external auditor to undertake a process known as the Housing Benefit Assurance Process (HBAP). The Council has a contract with KPMG which has a three-year period expiring March 2026. The Council's Benefit Service is now going to procure a new HBAP contract for 3 years to take the service through the Local Government Reorganisation period.
2. The annual assurance process commences each April by the external auditors to review the prior year's housing benefit expenditure and subsidy claim. A series of checks are made to specific claim types, known as CAKE testing. If through these reviews an error is found on a claim where the adjustment identified is £50 higher or lower than the claim was paying, then further checks are made. These additional checks are known as 40+ workbook checking.
3. At the end of the process, a formal report is written by the external auditor (KPMG) and sent to the DWP. This reporting informs the DWP of the performance of the Council to give assurance that the public purse is correctly administered. The report will provide recommendations to the Council to improve its claim management in specific areas, thus reducing risk and loss to the Council for this expenditure.

Findings and Report Recommendations

4. As of 31st March 2025, the 2024-25 Housing Benefit Claim was made up of the following.

Type Of Housing Benefit Claim	Expenditure
Housing Revenue Account (Rent Rebate)	£13,181,484
Private Tenancies (Rent Allowance)	£22,789,019
Subsidy Additions	£382,612
Total	£36,350,115

5. The submission also included a value of overpayment error which is known as LA Error. These are claims where an overpayment has been created in the year due to the Council's Benefit Service making a mistake on a claim assessment or there was a delay in the application of a change being applied to the claim before the next payment of HB award.
6. The DWP stipulates in legalisation the values of the errors that are allowed within the Housing Benefit Claim, based upon the total expenditure levels. Where a local authority exceeds the total value of error by the upper threshold, the whole value of this cell is not paid by the DWP. This is an incentive to encourage Local Authorities to make correct decisions and to apply changes in a timely manner.

7. In the case where the lower threshold has been exceeded by not more than the upper threshold, then the Local Authority will receive 40% of the overpayment value. This is still a loss to the Council expenditure and relies on the collection of overpayments to minimise the loss.
8. In the case where the lower threshold has not been exceeded, then these payments are paid in full by the DWP at 100% rate.
9. In the case of the claim for 2024-25, this was;

Upper Threshold (0% subsidy)	Lower Threshold (40% subsidy)	OCC Performance
£182,833.00	£162,518.00	£158,110.00

10. The table shows that the Council's Benefit Service performance was under the lower threshold and there was a buffer of £4,408 before the DWP claim would be amended to the lower threshold and a difference of £24,723 before the claim would attract 0% subsidy of overpayments created in error by staff.
11. Of the initial testing, minor errors were found. As these were of a de-minimus level of less than £50, this resulted in no additional sample checking. These are reported as observations in the KPMG report.
12. There was only one area for which a recommendation was made, relating to data retention. A single claim was sample checked where the rent details showed that the rent has not increased for the last 5 years.
13. The Council's data retention approach for the migration of the benefit data between Capita Academy and Civica OPEN Revenues systems, meant that a decision was made to restrict the volume of data that was migrated to Civica OPEN Revenues. The result was that when this case was identified for a sample check, there was no evidence of the rental charge in relation to it. A recommendation was made to the Council to undertake a review of all HB claims in respect of privately rented properties and to have evidence of the rental charge in respect of each claim recorded for audit evidence. The Council's Benefit Service has already undertaken this process and sent 235 letters (out of a caseload of 3,963 or 6%) to those addresses which have not had a rent increase since the system migration and are missing evidence of rent in the claim data.
14. This recommendation has not had a financial implication to the Housing Benefit Claim. It will result in the Council having a specific 40+ workbook in the 2025/26 expenditure in next year's HBAP to ensure that the recommendation made has been applied and data retention issue resolved.
15. The Housing Benefit expenditure claim form for 2024/25, known as MPF720A, needed to have a minimal change applied as part of the reporting review. This change was for £24.86 in respect of the Council's Housing Benefit claim's expenditure of £36,350,115 i.e. 0.00007%.
16. As a result of the value of the change that had to be applied to the claim, the Council maintained the 100% subsidy rate for the overpayments created within 2024/25.

2025/2026 Current Position

17. The trend of this reported performance is also being maintained in the current year's Housing Benefit Claim expenditure of 2025/26. It is expected that the same reporting result will be achieved with the next HBAP audit review.
18. The Council proactively works with benefit claimants (through caseload claim reviews) and encourages correct reporting of changes. The staff, with the use of robotics apply changes to claims in a timely manner ensuring that loss to the council through Administrative Delay is significantly reduced. This is an area where the Council has made huge improvements over the last 5 years. By reducing the creation of overpayments, it supports both the public and the Council finances.
19. Training staff is embedded as part of the Council's Local Tax and Benefit Service. This has improved morale and technical knowledge of the staff.
20. Data cleansing is being undertaken in this year. The Council is currently migrating to a Civica Cloud platform for its Revenues and Benefits services. This will enable the staff to use the latest technology for claim management and data cleansing will form part of the migration.

Financial implications

21. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
22. The Council's Benefit Service is mindful of the expenditure loss to the Council through Temporary Accommodation and Supported Accommodation housing benefit claims where the full rental charge cannot be claimed back from the DWP. In the case of housing benefit paid out in respect of supported accommodation, subsidy can only be claimed where the accommodation provider is a Registered Housing Provider (RP). Unfortunately, in Oxford there are several providers who are not RPs resulting in a substantial annual loss to the Council.
23. The Council's Benefit Service in conjunction with other Local Authorities is working with the DWP and the Treasury to support changes to be made to current legislation. These rules impose a financial capping restriction on these claim types. Whilst the Government remains firm on its current subsidy legislation the current position of loss will remain and will place a financial burden on the Council.
24. The Council's Benefit Service is working with commissioning organisations, such as the County, NHS, Home Office and the Council's own housing department to ensure that any future or renewal of schemes in the city are minimising loss to the council finances.
25. The value of the loss to the Council in respect of these claims for 2024/25 was;

Claim Type	Annual Expenditure	Loss to OCC
Temporary Accommodation	£1,368,033	£24,519
Supported Accommodation	£8,895,150	£2,577,955

Legal issues

26. The External audit process forms part of the process to ensure that Housing Benefit claim management and awards are in line with the current Social Security Administration Acts, Welfare Reform Act 2012 and secondary legislation as in force at the time of a HBAP review.
27. The most recent HBAP process will ensure that the Council correctly claims the value of £36m Benefit Expenditure from the DWP, reduces the risk of challenge to the Council's decision-making processes related to Housing Benefit and reduces the associated costs of the Council's Benefit Service. (EG 15 Jan 2026 13715)

Level of risk

28. This HBAP report is presented for information only and a risk assessment is not needed.

Equalities impact

29. This HBAP is presented for information only and an equalities impact assessment is not needed.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

30. The HBAP is presented for information only and does not raise any environmental considerations.

Conclusion

31. This report is for information only and the HBAP does not pose a risk to the Council.

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Background Papers: None

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20 November 2025

To: Subsidy Payments Team, Local Authority Partnership Engagement and Delivery Division, lawelfare.lapaymentsandsubsidy@dwp.gov.uk

Attn: Section 151 Officer

Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process 2025 Module 6 DWP Reporting Framework Instruction (Applicable to England only) Reporting accountants' report for the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim form MPF720A, year ended 31 March 2025

Purpose of this Agreed-upon Procedures Report and Restriction on Use and Distribution

This report is produced in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter with Oxford City Council dated 01 July 2025 and the standardised engagement terms in Appendix 2 of Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process ("HBAP") Module 1 issued by the Department for Work and Pensions ("DWP") for the purpose of reporting to the Section 151 Officer of Oxford City Council (the "**Local Authority**") and the DWP.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of the Local Authority and the DWP and solely for the purpose of facilitating the claim for the Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A dated 28 April 2025 for the year ended 31 March 2025 and may not be suitable for another purpose.

This report should not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole (save as otherwise permitted by the standardised engagement terms) or in part, without our prior written consent. Without assuming or accepting any responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any party other than the Local Authority and the DWP, we acknowledge that the Local Authority and/or the DWP may be required to disclose this report to parties demonstrating a statutory right to see it.

This report is designed to meet the agreed requirements of the Local Authority and the DWP as described in the DWP HBAP reporting framework instruction for the financial year ending March 2025 (the “HBAP reporting framework instruction”).

This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party for any purpose or in any context. Any party other than the Local Authority and the DWP which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on this report (or any part of it) will do so entirely at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we accept no responsibility or liability in respect of our work or this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by the reliance of anyone other than the addressees on our work or this report.

Local Authority's Responsibilities

The Section 151 Officer of the Local Authority has responsibilities under the Income-related Benefits (Subsidy to Authorities) Order 1998. The Section 151 Officer is also responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority maintains accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Local Authority. It is also the Section 151 Officer's responsibility to extract relevant financial information from the Local Authority's accounting records, obtain relevant information held by any officer of the Local Authority and complete the attached form MPF720A in accordance with the relevant framework set out by the DWP: Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process for financial year ending March 2025 Module 1: DWP reporting framework instruction.

The Section 151 Officer of the Local Authority and the DWP have acknowledged that the agreed-upon procedures are appropriate for the purpose of the engagement.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the completion of the MPF720A and is the signatory on the Local Authority's certificate on claim form MPF720A.

Our Responsibilities

For the purpose of the HBAP engagement we have been provided with a signed copy of form MPF720A for the year ended 31 March 2025 dated 28 April 2025 by the Section 151 Officer.

We conducted our engagement in accordance with HBAP Modules 1 and 6 for the financial year ending March 2025 issued by the DWP, which highlight the terms under which DWP has agreed to engage with reporting accountants.

Our engagement was carried out in accordance with the DWP's HBAP reporting framework instruction and in accordance with International Standard on Related Services 4400 (Revised), *Agreed-upon Procedures Engagements* (“ISRS 4400”) issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. The purpose of the engagement is to perform the specific test requirements determined by the DWP on the defined sample basis, as set out in the HBAP Modules of the HBAP reporting framework instruction, on the Local Authority's form MPF720A dated 28 April 2025, and to report the factual findings, which are the factual results of those procedures, to the Local Authority and the DWP. We make no representation regarding the appropriateness of the agreed-upon procedures.

The results of the agreed-upon procedures are reported in Appendices A, B, C and D, which form an integral part of this report.

The procedures specified in DWP's HBAP reporting framework instruction do not constitute an examination made in accordance with generally accepted auditing or review standards or an assurance engagement performed in accordance with any standards applicable to assurance, the objective of which would be the expression of assurance on the contents of the Local Authority's claim for Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion or an assurance conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, or had we performed an audit or review of the Local Authority's claim for Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A in accordance with generally accepted auditing or review standards or an assurance engagement performed in accordance with any standards applicable to assurance, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported. This report relates only to the Local Authority's claim for Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A and does not extend to any financial statements of the Local Authority, taken as a whole.

Professional Ethics and Quality Control

We have complied with the ethical requirements in the ICAEW Code of Ethics issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. For the purpose of this engagement, there are no independence requirements with which we are obliged to comply.

The firm applies International Standard on Quality Management 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements* which requires the firm to design, implement and operate a system of quality management including policies or procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

Summary of HBAP report

Summary of Initial sample selection

We selected an initial sample of items for testing as described in HBAP Module 6 Approach and Testing Strategy, Step 2 – Initial testing – Module 3 workbook testing ("Step 2") and Step 3 – Prior year errors Module 3 ("Step 3"), using the banding table in Appendix 2 of HBAP Module 6 Approach and Testing Strategy.

The HBAP band for the Local Authority per Appendix 2 of HBAP Module 6 Approach and Testing Strategy is Band 2.

The prior year HBAP Agreed-upon-procedures report on the Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A for the year ended 31 March 2024 outlined that there were errors above the de-minimis in value or volume. Therefore, we applied the larger sample size of prior year errors set out in Step 2 for Band 2.

We apportioned and stratified the total sample of 40 cases as follows:

Headline cell	Number of Temporary accommodation and Supported accommodation cases	Number of passported cases	Number of non-passported caseload	Number of cases with prior year error characteristics	Total number of cases selected in initial sample
Non HRA Rent Rebate (Cell 011)	4	2	7	1	13
HRA Rent Rebate (Cell 055)	0	2	11	11	13
Rent Allowance (Cell 094)	4	2	8	14	14

Summary of Initial Testing

In accordance with HBAP modules, an initial sample of cases were selected and tested for all general expenditure cells. We have re-performed a sample of the Local Authority's testing and confirm the tests we have carried out concur with the Local Authority's results. The findings are detailed below:

We found errors that do not exceed the thresholds for additional testing set out in HBAP Module 6 Approach and Testing Strategy, Step 4 – Evaluating the results of initial testing.

Cell 011 Non HRA Rent Rebate:

- One case where the incorrect eligible rent was used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 014 by £0.10. As this error was below the de-minimis amount of £50, no further testing is required. Please see Appendix B for further details.

Cell 055 HRA Rent Rebate:

- One case where an amount for Carer's Allowance was left in the Housing Benefit calculation when there was only an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance. This error had no impact on the amount of Housing Benefit awarded. This error will either have no impact, or it will result in an understatement of Housing Benefit. Please see Appendix B for further details.
- One case where an incorrect amount of Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit was used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 061 by £0.01. As this error was below the de-minimis amount of £50, no further testing is required. Please see Appendix B for further details.

Cell 094 Rent Allowance:

- One case where incorrect amounts for Assessed Income Figure and Savings Credit were used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 102 by £3.36. As this error was below the de-minimis amount of £50, no further testing is required. Please see Appendix B for further details.
- One case (same case as above) where an incorrect amount of earned income for a non-dependant was used in the Housing Benefit calculation. This error had no

impact on the amount of Housing Benefit awarded. As this error was below the de-minimis amount of £50, no further testing is required. Please see Appendix B for further details.

- One case where an overpayment had been incorrectly classified as Eligible rather than as Administrative Delay. The impact of this error was to overstate cell 114 by £24.86, with a corresponding understatement of cell 113. As this error was below the de-minimis amount of £50, no further testing is required. Please see Appendix B for further details.
- One case (same case as above) where the eligible rent cannot be verified. The customer's rent has not been increased for at least 5 years (system conversion in 2020 means information prior to this date is unavailable) and evidence to support the last increase has been archived and is no longer available. All other documentation and evidence in relation to this claim is available. In this instance, the customer was housed in a registered social landlord property, however benefit was paid direct to the customer rather than the housing association, therefore this information cannot be obtained directly from the housing association. In addition, this claim has been subsequently terminated due to the customer moving home, therefore the Local Authority has been unable to write out to the customer to request this information directly. The Local Authority has provided details of the eligible rent for a similar property in the same area which is much higher than the eligible rent on this claim. The impact of this error, therefore, is an assumed underpayment of Housing Benefit. Further guidance was sought from DWP however, and they have confirmed that as evidence cannot be retrieved from any source, additional testing has been triggered. Please see Appendix B for further details.

Completion of Modules

The Specific Test Requirements set out in Module 1 Appendix 3 have been completed, the results from testing required are detailed below.

We found no errors from performing the testing set out in HBAP Modules 1, 2 and 5.

Summary of errors identified to be considered in the stratified sample selection in the next audit period.

In line with the requirements of HBAP Modules we have identified 1 error that is required to be considered in the following year:

- Cell 102 Evidence of Rent Liability.

Procedures and Factual Findings

For the Local Authority's claim for Housing Benefit Subsidy on form MPF720A dated 28 April 2025 for the year ended 31 March 2025 we have completed the specific test requirements detailed in the DWP's HBAP reporting framework instruction and have identified the results set out in Appendices A, B, C and D.

KPMG LLP

Chartered Accountants

Snowhill
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B4 6GH

[Date]

Name for enquiries: Andrew Bostock

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Attachments:

Appendix A Exceptions/errors found

Appendix B Observations

Appendix C Amendments

Appendix D Other Matters

Appendix A Exceptions/errors found

No exceptions/errors to report in 2024/25.

Appendix B Observations

Cell 011 Non-HRA Rent Rebate: Incorrect eligible rent

Cell Total: £1,381,850

Cell Population: 465

Initial testing of 14 Non-HRA Rent Rebate cases identified 1 case where an incorrect amount of eligible rent had been used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 014 by £0.10.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment that has been identified does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as errors for subsidy extrapolation purposes.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 055 Rent Rebate: Carer's Allowance

Cell Total: £12,285,571

Cell Population: 2,367

Initial testing of 13 Rent Rebate cases identified 1 case where an amount for Carer's Allowance was left in the Housing Benefit calculation, where the customer only had an underlying entitlement to it. This error had no impact on the amount of Housing Benefit awarded.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the nil impact that has been identified does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as an error for subsidy extrapolation purposes.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 055 Rent Rebate: Working and Child Tax Credits

Cell Total: £12,285,571

Cell Population: 2,367

Initial testing of 13 Rent Rebate cases identified 1 case where an incorrect amount of Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit were used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 061 by £0.01.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment that has been identified does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as an error for subsidy extrapolation purposes.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 094 Rent Allowance: Assessed Income Figure and Savings Credit**Cell Total: £26,865,490****Cell Population: 3,076**

Initial Testing of 14 Rent Allowance cases identified 1 case where incorrect amounts of Assessed Income Figure and Savings Credit were used in the Housing Benefit calculation. The impact of this error was to understate cell 102 by £3.36.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment that has been identified does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as an error for subsidy extrapolation purposes.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 094 Rent Allowance: Non-Dependant's Earned Income**Cell Total: £26,865,490****Cell Population: 3,076**

Initial Testing of 14 Rent Allowance cases identified 1 case where an incorrect amount of earned income for a Non-Dependant was used in the Housing Benefit calculation. This error had no impact on the amount of Housing Benefit awarded.

As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, the underpayment that has been identified does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as an error for subsidy extrapolation purposes.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 094 Rent Allowance: Classification of Eligible Errors**Cell Total: £26,865,490****Cell Population: 3,076**

Initial Testing of 14 Rent Allowance cases identified 1 case where an overpayment had been misclassified as eligible instead of administrative delay. The impact of this error was to overstate cell 114 by £24.86 with a corresponding understatement of cell 113.

This error is below the de-minimis amount of £50 and therefore does not trigger any additional testing.

Cell 102 Rent Allowance: Evidence of Rental Liability**Cell Total: £13,678,600****Cell Population: 1,771**

Initial Testing of 14 Rent Allowance cases identified 1 case where the Local Authority did not hold evidence of the customer's rental liability.

The customer's rent has not been increased for at least 5 years (system conversion in 2020 means information prior to this date is unavailable) and evidence to support the last increase has been archived and is no longer available. All other documentation and evidence in relation to this claim is available. In this instance, the customer was housed in

a registered social landlord property, however benefit was paid direct to the customer rather than the housing association, therefore this information cannot be obtained directly from the housing association. In addition, this claim has been subsequently terminated due to the customer moving home, therefore the Local Authority has been unable to write out to the customer to request this information directly. The Local Authority has provided details of the eligible rent for a similar property in the same area which is much higher than the eligible rent on this claim. The impact of this error, therefore, is an assumed underpayment of Housing Benefit. Further guidance was sought from DWP however, and they have confirmed that as evidence cannot be retrieved from any source, additional testing has been triggered.

Following the advice from the DWP, an additional random sample of 40 cases were selected from cell 102 to confirm if evidence of rental liabilities were held by the Local Authority. The additional testing identified no further cases no evidence of rental liability was held.

The impact of the error identified in the initial testing is an assumed underpayment and no further errors were identified in the additional testing. As there is no eligibility to subsidy for benefit which has not been paid, this case does not affect subsidy and has not, therefore, been classified as an error for subsidy purposes. This matter is reported for transparency and completeness.

Appendix C Amendments

Not Applicable.

Appendix D Other Matters

Not Applicable.

To: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 28 January 2026
Report of: Group Finance Director
Title of Report: Setting of the Council Tax Base 2026-27

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To set the "Council Tax Base" for 2026-27 as required by section 33 of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Turner - Deputy Leader (Statutory), and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	A Well Run Council.
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): that the Audit and Governance Committee:	
Agree that the 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the City Council's area as a whole is set at 48,724.9 (as shown in Appendix 1) Agree that the projected level of collection is set at 98% Agree that the tax bases for the Parishes, and for the Unparished Area of the City (as shown in Appendix 2) be set as follows:	
Unparished Area of the City	40,729.2
Littlemore Parish	2,138.8
Old Marston Parish	1,319.8
Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish	1,604.0
Blackbird Leys Parish	2,933.4
City Council Total	48,725.2

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council Tax Base 2026-27	No

Appendix 2	Parish Councils' Tax Bases 2026-27	No
Appendix 3	Dwellings by valuation band as at 30 November 2025	No
Appendix 4	Risk Register	No

Introduction and background

1. Responsibility for setting the Council Tax Base for the Council's area as a whole and for the individual parishes is delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee.
2. The Tax Base is the estimate of the taxable capacity of the area for the period. The number of dwellings in each valuation band are converted to Band D equivalents. The starting point is the current number of dwellings, exemptions and discounts as at 30 November 2025 and projections are then made for expected movements over the period 1 December 2025 - 31 March 2027. Separate calculations are required for a) the whole of the Authority's area and b) the individual Parishes and the Unparished area of the city.
3. The Tax Base is used by the Council to calculate the yield from Council Tax for 2026/27, and by Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner (Thames Valley) to apportion their precepts from 1 April 2026.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

4. The Council's share of the cost of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme arising from reduced council tax income is currently estimated at £1.9 million (based on a band D equivalent number of properties of 5,295.3 [the actual number of properties is 6,136.0] receiving support and a 2.99% Council Tax increase on the city band D charge [including Parishes] recommended for 2026/27). This has the effect of reducing the Council Tax precept income that the Council can receive.
5. The caseload estimate included in the 2026/27 Tax Base calculation is an average level of the actual 2025/26 caseload. An average of the 2025/26 caseload can be used to estimate the caseload for 2026/27 as the Council's Revenues Team continually monitors the caseload in line with the eligibility criteria and as such, it is felt a prudent approach of using the 2025/26 average caseload is accurate for the 2026/27 Tax Base calculation.

Factors taken into account in the calculation of the Tax Base

6. The following factors are taken into account when calculating the Tax Base:
 - **Dwellings:** The number of dwellings in each valuation band as at 30 November 2025, totalling 63,942 (Appendix 3 attached shows the bands as per the Valuation Office Agency as at 27 November 2025. This is the closest issued report to 30 November 2025 from the Valuation Office Agency, with the base report from the Council's revenues system being run at the end of 30 November 2025).

- **Exemptions and Discounts:** Not all dwellings are liable for the full Council Tax charge, some are exempt. Others can attract a discount, either at 25%, 50% or 100% dependent on the number of adults who are resident. The level of exemptions and discounts reduces the Tax Base.
 - The estimate of the number of dwellings that will be eligible for a 25% discount (primarily dwellings occupied by one adult only) is 19,099. This figure is shown in line 7 of Appendix 1 and is based on data as at 30 November 2025.
 - The estimate of the number of dwellings that will be eligible for a 50% discount (primarily dwellings where all the occupiers are disregarded) is 172. This figure is shown in line 8 of Appendix 1 and is based on data as at 30 November 2025.
 - The estimate of the number of dwellings that will be eligible for a 25% discount in 2026/27 (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings) is 85. This figure is shown in line 9 of Appendix 1 and is based on data as at 30 November 2025.
- **Disability Reductions:** Where there is a disabled occupant, and adaptations have been undertaken for their benefit, the dwelling is treated as being in the band below the one in which it was actually valued (lines 4 and 5 of Appendix 1).
- **Council Tax Reduction Scheme:** The estimate of the total number of dwellings that will be eligible for discounts under the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2026/27 is 6,136.0 compared to 6,754.2 dwellings which was used for setting the Tax Base for 2025/26 (detailed in paragraph 12 below). The breakdown per band is detailed in line 15 of Appendix 1. Please also see the Risk Register (Appendix 4).
- **Second Home Premium:** This charge is a 100% premium i.e. a 200% council tax charge to those dwellings that have been identified as second homes and came into effect from 1 April 2025.

Second homes are defined as a furnished property where the owner has a main home elsewhere.

The estimate of the total dwellings that will pay a total 200% council tax charge is 852 which is shown in line 12 of Appendix 1.

- **Long Term Empty Premium:** This charge applies to dwellings that have been empty for more than 1 year and came into effect from 1 April 2024.

The premium applicable compared to the total council tax charge payable is detailed below:

Empty period	Premium	Council Tax Charge
Between 1yr and 5yrs	100%	200%
Between 5yrs and 10yrs	200%	300%
Over 10yrs	300%	400%

The total estimate of the number of dwellings that will incur a long term empty premium is 591. This figure is broken down to 543 dwellings that have been empty for more than 1 year, 36 dwellings that have been empty for more than 5 years and 12 that have been empty for more than 10 years. These figures are shown in lines 11a, 11b and 11c of Appendix 1.

- **Discretionary elements:** The Council has discretion in the following areas when calculating its Council Tax Base:

(i) **Number of new properties built:** Appendix 3 is the statement issued by the Valuation Office Agency showing the Council's dwelling numbers for each Council Tax band as close to 30 November 2025 as possible. This data is shown in line 1 of Appendix 1 and is the starting point for the calculation of the Tax Base. The Council's overall total of dwellings has increased from 63,603 on 30 November 2024 to 63,942 one year later, an increase of 0.53%.

In addition to the report issued by the Valuation Office Agency, there is an estimate of new dwellings that are due to become chargeable. A figure of 18 new builds has been included for the remainder of 2025/26 (line 1a of Appendix 1). This number is net of the fact that some of those dwellings will be exempt or liable for a discount.

For 2026/27 an estimate of 210 new dwellings has been built into the calculation (line 1b) based on planning applications and an assessment from the Council's Revenues Team - a 50% discount has been assumed (line 10) which allows for dwellings not being in the Valuation List for the entire period.

(ii) **Allowance for non-collection** – The Council is required to make an allowance for non-collection of Council Tax. Collection of Council Tax in 2025/26 has remained consistent with the collection performance of 2024/25. It is critical that the Tax Base is maintained to an optimum level to ensure Council Tax income is maximised. Consequently, the Group Finance Director has recommended that the allowance for 2026/27 remains at 2%.

Calculation method

7. The method used to calculate the Tax Base is prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2914). The basic calculation is as follows:

- Number of dwellings in each of the valuation bands
- Less:
 - Exempt dwellings
 - Disabled reductions
 - Discounts (25% and 50%)
 - Dwellings eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Plus:
 - Long Term Empty Property Premiums
 - Second Home Property Premiums
- Convert to Band D equivalents
- Adjust for projected collection rate of 98%

8. Appendices 1 and 2 attached set out the requisite calculations for the Authority as a whole as well as for the Parished and Unparished areas of the City. Table 1 below shows the total number of chargeable Council Tax Dwellings by Parish. This is after exemptions have been removed.

Table 1 : Total Chargeable Council Tax				
	2026/27	2025/26	Change	
	Nos	Nos	Nos	%
Unparished Area	46,492.0	46,370.0	+ 122.0	+ 0.26
Littlemore	3,005.0	2,978.0	+ 27.0	+ 0.91
Old Marston	1,501.0	1,505.0	- 4.0	- 0.27
Risinghurst & Sandhills	1,909.0	1,912.0	- 3.0	- 0.16
Blackbird Leys	5,015.0	5,020.0	- 5.0	- 0.10
City Council Total	57,922.0	57,785.0	+ 137.0	+ 0.24

9. Table 2 below illustrates the calculation of the Tax Base broken down into discount and premium categories, arriving at the proposed 2026/27 Tax Base.

Table 2 : Analysis of Chargeable Dwellings converted to the Tax Base					
	Dwellings	Expressed as Band D	At the 98% Collection Rate	Discount / Premium Applicable	2026/27 Tax Base
Dwellings Eligible for 25% Single Person Discount	19,099.0	18,061.1	17,699.9	-4,425.0	13,274.9
Dwellings Eligible for 25% Uninhabitable Dwellings discount	85.0	89.8	88.0	-22.0	66.0
Dwellings Eligible for 50% All Residents Disregard Discount	172.0	200.7	196.7	-98.4	98.3
Dwellings Eligible for 50% New Dwellings discount	210.0	212.2	208.0	-104.0	104.0
Long Term Empty Property Premium (100%)	543.0	570.2	558.8	558.8	1,117.6
Long Term Empty Property Premium (200%)	36.0	37.2	36.5	73.0	109.5
Long Term Empty Property Premium (300%)	12.0	12.8	12.5	37.5	50.0
Second Home Premium (100%)	852.0	841.1	824.3	824.3	1,648.6
Number of dwellings assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium	36,913.0	38,223.0	37,458.5	-5,202.2	32,256.3
Estimated Chargeable Dwellings	57,922.0	58,248.1	57,083.2	-8,358.0	48,725.2

10. Table 3 below then compares the discounts and premium for the proposed 2026/27 Tax Base calculation with the 2025/26 Tax Base to show the individual category movements.

Table 3 : Movement between Chargeable Dwellings and the Tax Base				
Numbers (Band D equivalents after applying the 98% Collection Rate)	2026/27	2025/26	Change	
	Nos	Nos	Nos	%
Estimated Chargeable Dwellings expressed as Dwelling Numbers	57,083.2	56,974.8	+ 108.4	+ 0.19
Reduction in Chargeable Band D equivalents as a result of				
Dwellings Eligible for 25% Single Person Discount	-4,425.0	-4,353.1	- 71.9	+ 1.65
Dwellings Eligible for 25% Uninhabitable Dwellings discount	-22.0	-11.7	- 10.3	+ 88.03
Dwellings Eligible for 50% All Residents Disregard Discount	-98.4	-92.7	- 5.7	+ 6.15
Dwellings Eligible for 50% New Dwellings discount	-104.0	-68.2	- 35.8	+ 52.49
Additional Chargeable Band D equivalents as a result of				
Long Term Empty Property Premium (100%)	558.8	170.9	+ 387.9	+ 226.97
Long Term Empty Property Premium (200%)	73.0	71.6	+ 1.4	+ 1.96
Long Term Empty Property Premium (300%)	37.5	30.6	+ 6.9	+ 22.55
Second Home Premium (100%)	824.3	686.0	+ 138.3	+ 20.16
Reduction in Chargeable Band D equivalents as a result of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme	-5,202.2	-5,770.4	+ 568.2	- 9.85
Estimated Tax Base expressed as Band D Equivalents after applying the 98% Collection Rate	48,725.2	47,637.8	+ 1,087.4	+ 2.28

11. Table 4 below shows the principal changes between the actual Tax Base for 2025/26 and that proposed Tax Base for 2026/27, with the movement broken down by properties receiving discounts, premiums and paying the full charge.

Table 4 : Estimated change in Tax Base	
Numbers (Band D equivalents after applying the 98% Collection Rate)	
Prior Year Tax Base	47,637.8
Movements	
Reduction of properties eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme	+ 568.2
Increase of properties eligible for Discounts	- 123.6
Increase in properties subject to a Premium Charge	+ 534.5
Increase in properties paying a full Council Tax Charge	+ 108.3
New Year Tax Base	48,725.2
Net Change (Nos)	+ 1,087.4
Net Change (%)	+ 2.28

Reasons for the overall increases in the Council Tax Base

12. The reasons for the 2.28% overall increase in the Council Tax Base compared to the 2025/26 Tax Base are due to:

- a. Increase in properties subject to the Second Home Premium

The Second Home Premium is now fully embedded within the Council's Council Tax charging system. This has improved the accuracy of identifying and reporting genuine second homes across the city. Initial forecasts at the time of the premium's introduction assumed a phased implementation, and the full effect is now being realised in the Tax Base.

- b. Reduction in properties eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

All properties receiving Council Tax reduction have been reviewed in line with the Council's revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme, approved by the Council in February 2025. As a result of this review, a significant number of claimants have been reassessed and deemed no longer eligible, increasing the overall Tax Base.

- c. Increase in properties subject to Long Term Empty Property charges

The long term empty property charging regime was expanded to include properties vacant for over one year, with effect from 1 April 2024. The full financial impact of this policy change is now being reflected, resulting in an increased number of properties attracting empty property premiums.

13. Table 5 below then summarises the Tax Bases by Parishes.

Table 5 : Council Tax Bases				
	2026/27	2025/26	Change	
	Nos	Nos	Nos	%
Unparished Area	40,729.2	39,882.6	+ 846.6	+ 2.12
Littlemore	2,138.8	2,029.9	+ 108.9	+ 5.36
Old Marston	1,319.8	1,311.6	+ 8.2	+ 0.63
Risinghurst & Sandhills	1,604.0	1,579.8	+ 24.2	+ 1.53
Blackbird Leys	2,933.4	2,833.9	+ 99.5	+ 3.51
City Council Total	48,725.2	47,637.8	+ 1,087.4	+ 2.28

14. Tax Bases in the Parishes.

The changes in the Parish Tax Bases are consistent with the changes described for the overall Council Tax Base changes and relate to the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the continued embedding of the Second Homes and Long Term Empty Property Premiums.

Risk Implications

15. A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached at Appendix 4.

Equalities Impact Assessment

16. There are no specific Equalities implications relating to the setting of the Tax Base as detailed in this report.

Financial Implications

17. These are all included within the main body of the report.

Legal implications

18. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 states that Billing Authorities are to calculate their Council Tax Base figures as at 30 November preceding the financial year to which the Tax Base applies. These figures must be notified to the major precepting authorities by the following 31 January.

19. The method used to calculate the Tax Base is prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2914). (EG 20/1//26 13715)

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Background Papers: None.

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APPENDIX 1
SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27
TOTAL FOR OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		2,960.0	9,923.0	19,853.0	16,321.0	7,720.0	3,182.0	3,371.0	612.0	63,942.0	64,533.44	63,242.80
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		1.0	3.0	6.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	18.0	17.88	17.50
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		9.0	33.0	65.0	54.0	25.0	11.0	11.0	2.0	210.0	212.23	208.00
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		813.0	773.0	1,078.0	1,551.0	1,257.0	320.0	252.0	204.0	6,248.0	6,478.99	6,349.40
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		2,157.0	9,186.0	18,846.0	14,828.0	6,490.0	2,874.0	3,131.0	410.0	57,922.0	58,284.56	57,118.90
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		2.0	14.0	87.0	67.0	37.0	21.0	15.0	4.0	247.0	265.10	259.80
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	2.0	14.0	87.0	67.0	37.0	21.0	15.0	4.0		247.0	228.68	224.10
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	2.0	2,169.0	9,259.0	18,826.0	14,798.0	6,474.0	2,868.0	3,120.0	406.0	57,922.0	58,248.14	57,083.20
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	1,184.0	4,808.0	5,990.0	4,140.0	1,695.0	679.0	572.0	31.0	19,099.0	18,061.10	17,699.90
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	5.0	10.0	51.0	40.0	19.0	12.0	19.0	16.0	172.0	200.67	196.70
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	3.0	38.0	17.0	17.0	5.0	4.0	1.0	85.0	89.78	88.00
10 Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	9.0	33.0	65.0	54.0	25.0	11.0	11.0	2.0	210.0	212.23	208.00
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	31.0	76.0	147.0	127.0	72.0	37.0	44.0	9.0	543.0	570.22	558.80
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	2.0	10.0	8.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	36.0	37.22	36.50
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	12.0	12.78	12.50
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	59.0	158.0	213.0	237.0	115.0	39.0	19.0	12.0	852.0	841.11	824.30
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	2.0	879.0	4,160.0	12,310.0	10,174.0	4,525.0	2,081.0	2,449.0	333.0	36,913.0	38,223.03	37,458.50
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	10.6	3.9	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.5	13.14	12.90
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	466.7	2,233.4	2,351.9	814.1	227.0	29.4	13.5	0.0	6,136.0	5,295.31	5,189.40
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief ((line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15)	2.0	1,482.7	6,054.5	15,295.6	13,283.2	5,997.0	2,740.1	3,014.5	415.0	48,284.5	49,719.60	48,725.20
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	1.11	988.45	4,709.04	13,596.09	13,283.15	7,329.67	3,957.92	5,024.17	830.00	49,719.60		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (In respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										49,719.60		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										48,725.20		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

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APPENDIX 2

SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27

TOTAL FOR LITTLEMORE PARISH COUNCIL

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		261.0	508.0	1,593.0	346.0	239.0	78.0	10.0	6.0	3,041.0	2,764.56	2,709.30
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	8.00	7.80
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		4.0	9.0	20.0	7.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	44.0	39.55	38.80
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		257.0	501.0	1,575.0	341.0	237.0	78.0	10.0	6.0	3,005.0	2,733.01	2,678.30
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		1.0	0.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	21.0	21.22	20.80
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	1.0	0.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0		21.0	18.32	18.00
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	1.0	256.0	513.0	1,567.0	339.0	236.0	77.0	11.0	5.0	3,005.0	2,730.11	2,675.50
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	112.0	284.0	488.0	89.0	54.0	17.0	1.0	0.0	1,045.0	910.55	892.40
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	1.0	3.0	14.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	21.0	19.55	19.20
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.89	0.90
10. Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	8.00	7.80
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	0.0	4.0	8.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	11.22	11.00
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.89	0.90
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	1.0	4.0	8.0	5.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	22.0	21.00	20.60
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	1.0	142.0	216.0	1,045.0	241.0	178.0	57.0	9.0	5.0	1,894.0	1,758.01	1,722.70
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	88.6	123.8	148.5	26.0	21.1	1.2	0.0	0.0	409.2	340.88	334.10
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief ((line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15)	1.0	139.9	323.7	1,307.3	295.3	203.9	71.6	10.3	5.0	2,357.8	2,182.49	2,138.80
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	0.56	93.27	251.77	1,162.00	295.25	249.21	103.35	17.08	10.00	2,182.49		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										2,182.49		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										2,138.80		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

APPENDIX 2
**SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27
TOTAL FOR OLD MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		85.0	45.0	359.0	787.0	161.0	26.0	75.0	3.0	1,541.0	1,563.12	1,531.90
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		5.0	1.0	5.0	22.0	5.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	40.0	40.00	39.20
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		80.0	44.0	354.0	765.0	156.0	26.0	73.0	3.0	1,501.0	1,523.12	1,492.70
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		1.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	10.0	11.55	11.40
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	1.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0		10.0	10.11	9.90
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	1.0	79.0	45.0	358.0	760.0	156.0	29.0	70.0	3.0	1,501.0	1,521.68	1,491.20
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	45.0	17.0	148.0	204.0	52.0	6.0	9.0	0.0	481.0	465.98	456.70
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.00	1.00
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.00	2.00
10 Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	12.56	12.30
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.89	0.90
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	5.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	12.11	11.90
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	1.0	32.0	25.0	205.0	538.0	102.0	23.0	61.0	3.0	990.0	1,027.14	1,006.40
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.39	0.40
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	8.1	2.3	48.2	25.1	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	91.3	84.42	82.70
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief [(line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15]	1.0	61.7	41.0	279.8	697.9	137.4	27.5	67.8	3.0	1,317.0	1,346.72	1,319.80
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	0.56	41.10	31.85	248.71	697.90	167.93	39.72	112.92	6.00	1,346.69		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										1,346.69		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										1,319.80		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

APPENDIX 2

**SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27
TOTAL FOR RISINGHURST AND SANDHILLS PARISH COUNCIL**

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		19.0	376.0	306.0	1,029.0	103.0	93.0	25.0	0.0	1,951.0	1,908.00	1,869.80
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.89	1.90
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		2.0	11.0	9.0	17.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.0	41.00	40.20
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		17.0	365.0	298.0	1,013.0	98.0	93.0	25.0	0.0	1,909.0	1,868.89	1,831.50
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		0.0	0.0	5.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.34	10.10
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	0.0	0.0	5.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0		10.0	9.00	8.80
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	0.0	17.0	370.0	296.0	1,010.0	100.0	91.0	25.0	0.0	1,909.0	1,867.55	1,830.20
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	14.0	189.0	111.0	209.0	20.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	570.0	528.09	517.50
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.89	1.90
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.22	1.20
10 Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.89	1.90
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	12.11	11.90
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	0.0	3.0	2.0	7.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.0	13.55	13.30
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	0.0	3.0	177.0	175.0	786.0	77.0	67.0	22.0	0.0	1,307.0	1,308.80	1,282.50
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.33	0.30
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	0.0	73.3	28.0	33.7	2.8	2.0	0.0	0.0	139.8	121.91	119.50
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief ((line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15)	0.0	13.0	253.5	247.3	936.1	94.0	83.0	24.3	0.0	1,651.0	1,636.77	1,604.00
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	0.00	8.67	197.13	219.78	936.05	114.83	119.89	40.42	0.00	1,636.77		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										1,636.77		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										1,604.00		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

APPENDIX 2
**SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27
TOTAL FOR BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL**

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		289.0	1,308.0	2,989.0	426.0	45.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	5,060.0	4,353.33	4,266.30
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		7.0	13.0	20.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	37.56	36.80
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		282.0	1,295.0	2,969.0	421.0	45.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	5,015.0	4,315.77	4,229.50
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		0.0	1.0	18.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	30.0	29.88	29.40
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	0.0	1.0	18.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.0		30.0	25.78	25.30
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	0.0	283.0	1,312.0	2,956.0	421.0	40.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5,015.0	4,311.67	4,225.40
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	203.0	744.0	796.0	115.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,863.0	1,542.66	1,511.80
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	7.0	8.01	7.80
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.78	1.70
10. Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	3.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.0	18.67	18.30
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.89	0.90
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	3.0	9.0	7.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	16.22	15.90
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	0.0	74.0	548.0	2,136.0	305.0	35.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	3,099.0	2,723.44	2,669.00
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	128.6	469.7	468.3	79.0	14.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	1,160.8	964.99	945.70
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief ((line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15)	0.0	109.7	674.8	2,305.2	314.3	24.0	0.6	0.5	0.5	3,429.5	2,993.25	2,933.40
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	0.00	73.10	524.84	2,049.07	314.25	29.27	0.87	0.83	1.00	2,993.23		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										2,993.23		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										2,933.40		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

APPENDIX 2

SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2026/27
TOTAL FOR THE UNPARISHED AREA OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

(A- are Band A dwellings with disabled reduction)	Band A-	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total	As Band D	@ 98%
1. Total number of dwellings as at Nov 30 2025		2,306.0	7,686.0	14,606.0	13,733.0	7,172.0	2,984.0	3,261.0	601.0	52,349.0	53,944.44	52,865.60
1a. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts for Dec 01 2025 - Mar 31 2026		1.0	3.0	6.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	18.0	17.90	17.50
1b. Estimated new dwellings net of exemptions and discounts 2026/27		9.0	31.0	62.0	51.0	24.0	10.0	11.0	2.0	200.0	202.32	198.30
2. Number of dwellings exempt 2026/27		795.0	739.0	1,024.0	1,500.0	1,244.0	319.0	250.0	204.0	6,075.0	6,320.89	6,194.50
3. Number of chargeable dwellings for 2026/27 (lines 1+1a+1b -2)		1,521.0	6,981.0	13,650.0	12,288.0	5,954.0	2,676.0	3,023.0	399.0	46,492.0	47,843.77	46,886.90
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (line 3) subject to disabled reduction on 30 November 2025		0.0	13.0	51.0	50.0	30.0	18.0	12.0	2.0	176.0	192.10	188.20
5. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 4 after reduction)	0.0	13.0	51.0	50.0	30.0	18.0	12.0	2.0		176.0	165.44	162.10
6. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 4 and 5 (lines 3-4+5) which is broken down by discounts and premiums in lines 7 to 13 below.	0.0	1,534.0	7,019.0	13,649.0	12,268.0	5,942.0	2,670.0	3,013.0	397.0	46,492.0	47,817.11	46,860.80
7. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (Single Person or Disregards) on 30 November 2025	0.0	810.0	3,574.0	4,447.0	3,523.0	1,564.0	632.0	559.0	31.0	15,140.0	14,613.77	14,321.50
8. Number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 50% discount (All residents disregarded) on 30 November 2025	0.0	4.0	6.0	32.0	37.0	19.0	11.0	17.0	15.0	141.0	170.21	166.80
9. Estimated number of dwellings in line 6 entitled to a 25% discount (recently built or uninhabitable dwellings)	0.0	0.0	3.0	35.0	15.0	16.0	5.0	4.0	1.0	79.0	83.89	82.20
10. Additional 50% discounts for 2026/27 estimated new dwellings	0.0	9.0	31.0	62.0	51.0	24.0	10.0	11.0	2.0	200.0	202.32	198.30
11a. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between one and five years (100%)	0.0	28.0	60.0	121.0	110.0	72.0	37.0	44.0	9.0	481.0	515.67	505.40
11b. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium between five and ten years (200%)	0.0	2.0	10.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	35.0	36.33	35.60
11c. Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium over 10 years (300%)	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	10.0	11.00	10.80
12. Dwellings subject to Second Home Premium (100%)	0.0	53.0	140.0	194.0	219.0	108.0	38.0	19.0	12.0	783.0	778.22	762.70
13. Number of dwellings in line 6 assumed to be entitled to no discounts / premium (lines 6-7-8-9-10-11a-11b-11c-12)	0.0	628.0	3,194.0	8,749.0	8,304.0	4,133.0	1,933.0	2,357.0	325.0	29,623.0	31,405.70	30,777.50
14. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount	0.0	10.1	3.4	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.5	12.43	12.20
15. Estimated number of dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme during 2026/27	0.0	241.4	1,564.3	1,658.9	650.3	180.7	25.8	13.5	0.0	4,334.9	3,783.12	3,707.50
16. Total equivalent number of dwellings after discounts, exemptions and disabled relief ((line 7 x 0.75) + (line 8 x 0.5) + (line 9 x 0.75) + (line 10 x 0.5) + (line 11a x 2.0) + (line 11b x 3.0) + (line 11c x 4.0) + (line 12 x 2.0) + line 13 - line 14 - line 15)	0.0	1,158.5	4,761.6	11,156.1	11,039.7	5,537.8	2,557.5	2,911.8	406.5	39,529.4	41,560.44	40,729.20
17. Ratio to band D	519	619	719	819	919	1119	1319	1519	1819			
18. Number of band D equivalents (line 16 x line 17)	0.00	772.32	3,703.45	9,916.53	11,039.70	6,768.42	3,694.09	4,852.92	813.00	41,560.43		
19. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2026/27										0.00		
20. Tax Base for Oxford City Council Billing Authority (line 18 + line 19)										41,560.43		
21. At projected collection rate of 98%										40,729.20		

Notes

Line 2 - The Exempt Dwellings data comes from the CivicaOpenRevenues Council Tax system and includes empty and unfurnished dwellings with 100% discount

Line 7 - The recently built or uninhabitable dwellings data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 10 - Additional 50% discounts for new dwellings - the estimated number of building completions in 2026/27 comes from Planning's Housing Trajectory plan

Lines 11a & 11b & 11c - Dwellings subject to Long Term Empty Premium - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

Line 15 - Dwellings eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme - this data comes from the Civica OpenRevenues Council Tax system as at November 30 2025

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**Statement of Numbers and Bands
of all Properties shown in the
1993 Valuation List for the
Billing Authority Area of Oxford
BA Code 3110
As at 27-NOV-2025**

Band	Numbers
A	2960
B	9923
C	19853
D	16321
E	7720
F	3182
G	3371
H	612
Grand Total of All Properties In Valuation List	63942

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Risk Register

Setting of the Council Tax Base 2026/27

As at: 28 January 2026
Risk Score (Impact Score): 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic
Probability Score: 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 = Almost Certain

Risk						Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Target		Comments	Controls				
Ref	Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress	Action Owner
Council Tax Base																			
1	Incorrect property numbers	A different level of Council Tax debit to the estimate could be raised.	O / T	An increase in the number of new properties or a reduction in the number of current properties than estimated in the remainder of 2025/26 and in 2026/27.	Unexpected surpluses or deficits in the Collection Fund. If there is a surplus, there will be an increased level of cash flow for the Council, resulting in increased investment opportunities. If there is a deficit, the City Council may have to take out borrowing to cover cash flow fluctuations.	12/01/2026	Ryan Taylor	4	3	3	2	3	2		Assumptions used in the number of new builds are conservative. The estimate is reduced by 50% to allow for possible delays in these new properties being built and occupied in 2026/27.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Ryan Taylor
2	Changes to exemptions, discounts and Council Tax Reduction Scheme	A different level of collectable Council Tax to the estimate.	O / T	An increase or reduction in the number of exemptions, discounts and tax payers eligible for Council Tax Reduction Scheme applied than estimated in 2026/27.	Unexpected surpluses or deficits in the Collection Fund. If there is a surplus, there will be an increased level of cash flow for the Council, resulting in increased investment opportunities. If there is a deficit, the City Council may have to take out borrowing to cover cash flow fluctuations.	12/01/2026	Ryan Taylor	4	3	3	2	3	2		Council Tax Officers in Financial Services continually review existing exemption, discounts and Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimant cases to ensure these should still be granted. Assumptions are based on prior years/historical trends and take account of external impacts.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Ryan Taylor
3	Incorrect Council Tax Collection Rate	An incorrect collection rate could result in a shortfall or surplus of cash received by the City Council and future Collection Fund surpluses or deficits.	O / T	Council Tax collection rate being higher or lower than anticipated.	Unexpected surpluses or deficits in the Collection Fund. If there is a surplus, there will be an increased level of cash flow for the Council, resulting in increased investment opportunities. If there is a deficit, the City Council may have to take out borrowing to cover cash flow fluctuations.	12/01/2026	Ryan Taylor	4	3	3	2	3	2		We eventually collect over 98% of the collectable debit for each period. Council Tax officers in Financial Services carry out regular reminder runs in cases of non-payment followed by Magistrates Court proceedings (if necessary).	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Ryan Taylor
4	A change in the number homes marked as long term empty or second homes	If the number of homes marked as long term empty or second home is incorrect, the overall tax base would be affected.	O / T	If the number long term empty homes or second homes is reduced, the overall tax base would also reduce.	Unexpected surpluses or deficits in the Collection Fund. If there is a surplus, there will be an increased level of cash flow for the Council, resulting in increased investment opportunities. If there is a deficit, the City Council may have to take out borrowing to cover cash flow fluctuations.	12/01/2026	Ryan Taylor	4	3	3	2	3	2		A review of long term empty properties and second homes is constantly in review to ensure the correct number of properties is being reported.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Ryan Taylor

Current Risk Score
This is the risk score at the time that the risk is reviewed. When the risk is first identified it will be the same as the gross risk score. The current risk score is tracked to ensure that progress is being made to manage the risk

Residual Risk Score
This is the risk score after mitigating actions have taken place. The residual risk score shows how effective your action plans are at managing the risk.

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To: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 28th January 2026
Report of: Group Finance Director
Title of Report: Risk Management Reporting at 31st December 2025

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To update the Audit and Governance Committee on corporate and service risks as of 31 December 2025.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	A Well-run Council
Policy Framework:	None.

Recommendation(s): That the Audit and Governance Committee:
1. Review the Risk Management report and note its contents.

Information Exempt from Publication
Not applicable

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
1	Corporate Risk Register – Risks and Controls	No
2	Corporate Risk Register – Risks Only	No
3	Service Risk Register – Risks and Controls	No
4	Service Risk Register – Risks Only	No

1. The council undertakes quarterly reviews of risk registers. This report informs the Audit and Governance Committee of the outcome of the review that was completed at the end of December.

Risk Scoring Matrix

2. The Council employs a 'five-by-five' risk scoring matrix, assessing risks based on probability and impact.
3. An identical score can give different results in the matrix. If an event has a high probability but a low impact, it will receive a lower rating. However, the greater the potential impact score, the more likely the event will be categorised as an amber risk on the matrix.
4. The risk prioritisation matrix is below, showing scores for red, amber, and green risks.

Probability

Almost Certain	5	5	10	15	20	25
Likely	4	4	8	12	16	20
Possible	3	3	6	9	12	15
Unlikely	2	2	4	6	8	10
Rare	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
		Impact				

Risk Identification

5. **Corporate Risks** – The Corporate Leadership Team reviews the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) quarterly. Any new risks are incorporated into a revised version of the CRR. The Corporate Leadership Team reviewed the CRR on 18 December 2025.
6. **Service Risks** – Service level risks are subject to periodic review by Directors and Service Managers. The Risk Management Group maintains oversight of all service risks and, during its meetings, assesses whether any should be escalated for inclusion in the CRR. On 9 December 2025, the Group reviewed the Information and Technology and Financial Services risk registers. The next meeting of the Risk Management Group will take place in March 2026, at which the People and Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability service risk registers will be presented and reviewed.

Corporate Risk Register

7. The Audit and Governance Committee most recently reviewed the CRR on 21 October 2025. The CRR for 2025/26 is attached as Appendix 1, including controls, and Appendix 2 showing risks only.
8. The table below shows the number of corporate risks on 31 December 2025 compared with the previous reported quarter.

Current Risk	Q2 2025/26	Q3 2025/26
Red	6	6
Amber	8	8
Green	0	0
Total risks	14	14
New risks in the quarter	0	0
Closed	0	0

CRR Red Risks

- **00001 - Financial Stability**

This risk concerns the Council's ability to implement its plans and corporate priorities amid increasing financial pressure. Key contributing factors include a lack of knowledge on the implications of fairer funding, fluctuations in income and expenditure, inflation-driven cost escalation affecting materials for capital projects, rising service demands, such as temporary accommodation, and broader economic weaknesses, which may depress income streams such as commercial rents and business rates.

- **00099 – A utilities infrastructure that does not meet the needs of the city**

This risk identifies that without further investment and partnership working, the city's utility infrastructure will come under increasing strain, adversely impacting citizens' wellbeing and the city's prosperity.

- **00100 – Cybersecurity and IT infrastructure resilience**

The risk addresses the failure to prevent and respond to cyber-attacks and ensure that IT infrastructure is fit for purpose and adaptable to future needs.

- **00102 – Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change**

This risk identifies the factors that could prevent the Council from prioritising efforts to tackle the causes of climate change and mitigate its effects. Failure to do so would harm both residents and the environment.

- **00106 – A failure to deliver Temporary Accommodation strategies to meet demand and increases in homelessness**

This risk assesses the potential consequences if the Council fails to implement effective mitigation measures to control temporary accommodation costs or develop contingency plans to meet the increasing demand for homelessness prevention. It also considers the challenges of securing an adequate housing supply through the private rented sector and the Council's development programme.

- **00107 – A failure to meet Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer/consumer standards**

This risk evaluates the potential impact if the Council, in its capacity as a landlord, fails to fully comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard. Such a failure could result in a major incident that compromises tenant safety, leading to sanctions, regulatory intervention, and severe reputational damage.

CRR Amber Risks

- **00003 – Workforce stability**

This risk relates to the Council's ability to achieve its future ambitions, which may be undermined by challenges in recruiting and retaining staff in key strategic corporate support areas such as Legal and IT. It highlights the greater challenge of recruiting staff when there is uncertainty about Local Government Reorganisation.

- **00006 – Failure to comply with governance requirements**

This risk addresses the possibility that the Council may fail to comply with the Constitution and governance requirements as set out in law.

- **00009 – Political and partnership landscape – Local and national**

This risk concerns uncertainty about the future political landscape at both a national, regional, and local level, as Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution are progressed.

- **00011 – Increased demand for services**

There is a growing demand for Council services. This is driven by sustained cost-of-living pressures, rising accommodation costs, diminishing disposable income, and increasing levels of personal debt.

- **00097 – Flood**

This risk highlights concerns over the Council's ability to respond effectively to a major flooding incident. An inadequate response could significantly compromise the Council's capacity to manage the situation.

- **00098 – Adverse weather, terrorism, and utility outage**

This addresses the risks of adverse weather, terrorism, and utility outages, highlighting issues that would impact the Council’s ability to respond effectively to a major incident.

- **00104 – The workforce and public are healthy and safe**

This risk concerns the Council’s ability to manage health and safety effectively. Failure to do so could put both employees and the public at risk, potentially resulting in injury, illness, or loss of life.

- **00105 – A failure to deliver housing priorities and business plans**

This risk relates to the Council’s ability to mitigate financial pressures within the Housing Revenue Account. These pressures will intensify if the Council, as the local housing authority, fails to meet its housing prevention priorities for homelessness or deliver its Housing Revenue Account business plan and Asset Strategy priorities.

CRR Green Risks

There are no green risks in the CRR.

Service Risk Register

As part of the service planning process, all service risks are reviewed. Those no longer relevant are deleted, and any new ones are added. The service risk register is attached as Appendix 3, showing risks and controls, and at Appendix 4, showing risks only.

9. The table below shows the number of service risks at 31 December 2025 compared with the previous reported quarters.

Current Risk	Q4 2024/25	Q1 2025/26	Q2 2025/26	Q3 2025/26
Red	11	10	12	10
Amber	42	52	56	61
Green	26	32	24	25
Total Risks	79	94	92	96
New Risks in the Quarter	0	25	0	4
Closed	2	10	2	0

10. Details of the red service risks are as follows:

- **00033 – Property and Assets**

Quality of data and property knowledge – Failure to implement an asset management system capable of storing and analysing data may hinder the Council's ability to effectively plan and schedule work. This could result in delays to property lettings, difficulties in providing timely insurance information, and increased risk of non-compliance.

- **00034 – Law, Governance and Strategy**

Resilience of service – An inability to effectively deliver services required by the Council and to deliver critical projects and support statutory and non-statutory functions will have a direct impact on risk, compliance, expenditure, and income to the Council. Furthermore, inadequate staffing and the requirement for expertise in response to major incidents may necessitate increased reliance on external support or lead to operational delays.

- **00035 – Planning**

If Government legislation requiring substantial changes in the planning system results in a need for redesigned processes, then there will be a lack of capacity to meet the changes, and the delivery of local policy objectives will be undermined.

- **00055 – Law, Governance and Strategy**

Income target not achieved – If the income target is not achieved, additional pressure will be placed on the overall legal services budget, leading to an overspend.

- **00065 - Law and Governance**

If the Council's departments and suppliers do not safeguard data, there is a risk of a data protection breach and non-compliance.

- **00096 – Property Assets**

If there is a lack of legal support, the Council will be unable to meet income, capital receipt, and project targets. Alternatively, external legal spend will be more costly and will result in an increase in financial pressure.

- **00109 – Failure To Meet Homeless Temporary Accommodation Demand**

If, because of changes in Government policy, the Council's homeless prevention activities are unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness, there will be a failure in service delivery and an increase in temporary accommodation costs.

- **00112 – Housing**

A failure in resident involvement activities and compliance with the Social Housing Act consumer standards might result in an increase in complaints, inefficient service delivery and regulator intervention.

- **00113 – Housing**

A failure to evidence the implementation of and adherence to the Social Housing Regulator's consumer standards may result in a loss of reputation to the Council and increased financial pressures as issues are dealt with reactively.

- **00125 – Committees and Citizen Services**

A contract management and partnership approach to the external leisure provision contract will help ensure the stability of financial performance and quality of service.

Alternative Options Considered

11. None.

Other implications

12. None.

Financial implications

13. There are no financial implications directly associated with the risk registers, although the management of risk is essential to the operation of the Council, the pursuit of its priorities, and its financial integrity.

Legal issues

14. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report, but having proper arrangements to manage risk throughout the organisation is an important component of good corporate governance and good business management.

Level of risk

15. There is no further risk associated with this report.

Equalities impact

16. There are no equality impacts arising directly from this report.

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Background Papers: None.

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Ref	Risk description	Consequence	Owner	Current Probability	Current Impact	Risk Score	Control description	Progress
1	Financial Services - Financial Stability - Pressure on income and increased demand for services means that the Council will not be able to deliver its plans and corporate priorities.Causes are a lack of knowledge on the implications of fairer funding in respect of business rates and revenue support grant. Fluctuations in the Council's income and expenditure. Increased costs due to inflation impacting the capital programme. Increased demand, including for temporary accommodation. Pressures on the Oxford Model caused by a more challenging client and inflationary increases incurred by Oxford Direct Services, and a need for OX Place to refresh the business plan for developments once the current plan expires in 2033. These pressures could result in anticipated returns not being delivered. A poorly performing wider economy results in a reduction in income including commercial rents and business rates. Insufficient governance leads to overspends, and a failure to deliver savings.	This might result in a reduction in services, including to vulnerable people with complex needs. Difficult decisions must be taken by Members and senior offices about resource allocation. Fees and charges have to increase. The Council is exposed to a higher risk exposure outside of its risk appetite. Staff morale and the reputation of the Council is reduced. Unresolvable pressures ultimately lead to government intervention.	Nigel Kennedy	4	4	16		
1							Business Planning process links resources to priorities	The business plan priorities for the Council are being considered by CLT
1							Agree a balance four-year MTFP , with no unidentified savings within	The budget will be submitted to Cabinet for consultation on 10 December 2025.
1							Ensure companies are on schedule to deliver returns to Council through quarterly monitoring of business plans and by challenging them to deliver annual efficiencies	Company Business Plans have been updated in December 2025. Work on clienting and commissioning, ODS budget changes, risk profile of schemes within the OX place, HRA 5 year business plan will all impact on the returns the Council has from its companies. Monitoring of the BP's is ongoing. National policy changes re waste may impact ODS.
1							Rigorous review of plans with service directors who are required to confirm that savings proposals are realistic and are being delivered over the life of the MTFS	
1							Scrutiny of the revenue budget and the MTFP by the finance team, Directors, the Chief Executive, Executive Members and the Scrutiny Committees financial panel over the life of the MTFS and ensuring savings and increased income are on target	
1							Robust scrutiny and monitoring of the capital programme, with the Project Management Office overseeing the management of projects with regular reporting to the Development Board	
1							Consider the implications to the Council's budget of the fairer funding announcement in relation to business rates and the revenue support grant. Make any appropriate alterations in the next budget submission to Cabinet and Council in Feb 2026.	The Council will comment on the implications between 15th and 18th December
1							Ensure Senior Officers and Members are aware of the financial position and of their responsibility to contribute to a balanced budget	
3	People - Workforce sustainability - Delivery of future ambitions - Recruitment and retention of staff in keys areas such as Legal, ICT and Environmental Health. Affordability, skills shortage, can't compete on pay, increased demand / ambition from OCC, limitations on capacity and ability to change. The position is exacerbated by increased uncertainty caused by the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation being unknown.	This could result in increased workload putting pressure on capacity, resulting in poor morale, impact on wellbeing, high staff turnover, increased sickness, poorer outcomes and an impact on service delivery, reputation, legal challenge, union disputes, resilience, skills.	Gail Malkin	3	3	9		
3							Delivery of an agreed local pay deal with Unions	The current OCC and ODS pay deal runs until the end of March 2026. Negotiations are underway with Unison and Unite on a deal for 2026/2027 onwards. An agreement was been reached in principle on 1 December 25.
3							Development and implementation of a pay and grading review to enhance pay in areas where the Council struggles to recruit and where it needs to improve retention.	Implemented new market allowances on 1 May.

3					Continued implementation of Leadership Development to improve manager capabilities and develop future managers and leaders to support succession planning and retain talent. Timeline = ongoing	Aspiring manager third programme launched in November 2025. Bitesize manager training programme is ongoing. Will be considering development for middle managers in 2025/26. Manager induction training is being piloted in December. Group coaching for managers will be delivered in Housing Services. Planned work with senior leaders to clarify roles and expectations and improve strategic leadership. Currently developing ideas for development to prepare managers for change - LGR.
3					Continue workshops on People policies and procedures for managers	plan in place with programme of dates
3					Digital skills training programme for all staff	Next stage is roll out of AI bitesize training starting in November 2025. Have delivered leadership workshop too.
3					Continued delivery of occupational health and Employee Assistance Programme provision to support employees and help people back to work, demonstratng our commitment to employee well-being. Timeline = ongoing	Service continues and will be supplemented by interventions to help manage stressfull work demands that are currently being developed and will be trialled in Housing.
3					Continued delivery of comprehensive internal communications campaign for the People Programme	completed, this is now business as usual.
3					Continued development of inclusive recruitment practices to improve the diversity of the workforce to better represent the communities we serve, reaching the target of 16.5% of the workforce from minority ethnic groups by 2028.	The Positive Action policy was agreed at Council on 14 July 2025. The Recruitment policy has been updated to support inclusive recruitment practices. The Council has reached the 16.5% target. EDI audit has been completed by Internal Audit team with positive outcomes and some areas for improvement.
3					Development of "Grow our Own" apprenticeships	6 apprentices have now started. Career progression schemes also running in Legal and Planning.
3					Develop succession planning to prepare for gaps created if employee turnover increases and recruitment proves even more challenging because of the uncertainty from LGR. Support employees in preparing for future change and potential selection processes.	Work on succession planning being planned and support for employees to follow in 2026. Currently looking at options for change management training and employee development to prepare managers for supporting change and support employees in readiness for change and selection processes.
6	Law, Governance & Strategy - Failure to comply with governance requirements - Failure to comply with the Council's Constitution and governance requirements as set out in law. Insufficient resources impact on the Council's ability to ensure correct processes are followed. Confusion about roles and responsibilities. Poorly implemented policies. Inexperienced staff lack the knowledge and skills they need. Workplace culture results in insufficient planning taking place leading to time pressures on delivery and corners being cut. Staff workload results in mistakes being made. Pressure of timelines imposed by third parties e.g. grant expenditure deadlines, lead to significantly truncated timelines and competing requirements meaning governance is sometimes overlooked.	This might result in a loss of public trust and confidence in the Council's ability to govern effectively. Negative media attention will harm the Council's reputation and image. Elected Members and senior officers face criticism. The Council's ability to deliver services is undermined as important decisions are made incorrectly. Disputes among Members and staff. Exposure to financial mismanagement and loss of grants and funding. Legal challenge and claims and procurement challenges. Decisions being found to be invalid. Delays to projects whilst legal challenges / failure to follow governance processes are concluded and addressed.	Emma Jackman	3	4	12
6					Clarity about roles and responsibilities for decision making within the constitution	Constitutional changes are made as they occur and there will be a light touch review in the coming municipal year.
6					Correct corporate documentation and guidance in place to ensure that policy is translated to processes; governance around these being there and properly applied	These are in place and available on the intranet however work is also in progress with the procurement team to review forms following development of a flow process chart. There is the intention to introduce property rules and grant rules in due course
6					Internal and external audit	Both are engaged, the annual assurance letter goes to the external auditors each year flagging issues and there is senior oversight of the audit plan for internal audit.
6					Appropriate level of resources;	There are ongoing issues with the resources in legal department. These will be addressed as far as possible in the restruture subject to overall Council funding. However they continue to increase in terms of reduction in capacity and risk with staff leaving due to competitive pay offers at less busy authorities. This is resulting in a projected overspend for 25/26. Committee Services is staffed appropriately at present, as is Elections though there will be some recruitment in the coming year.
6					Training of staff as changes are made, on a refresher basis and as part of an induction	The new Human Resources training system has been procured, once live we will ensure the whole organisation retake mandatory training and then new training will be developed for targeted information governance training and also council governance and decision making.
6					Ensure culture allows for whistleblowing / challenge and that an up to date policy and process are in place for the management of whistleblowing and challenge	Requirement to review the policy in 2026.
6					Clarity and oversight of companies and specifically ensuring decisions are taken correctly, in a timely manner and by the correct decision making body	Terms of reference for SHJVG have been updated. The new Shareholder agreement and articles for ODS and ODSTL have been approved and adopted. With the new Managing Director and proposals for a Company Secretary, work will then need to be undertaken with OCHL. There is also a need to ensure that decisions required of shareholder are properly following the pathways and requirements (such as key decisions), and plans are in progress for enabling this.
6					Ability to disseminate lessons learnt	They are fed back to CLT, reported to Cabinet and Scurtyny have been considering a number of governance issues that have arisen

6					Ensure that systems are in place to monitor and control compliance and updates	This is manually done via legal input in to reports and clearance with them for agendas however there is an urgent need to review and enforce the sign off process as often reports are arriving late or are amended once signed off. There are reps at boards also. This will need a more detailed review once all rules have been refreshed
6					Establish a corporate approach to project management that ensures governance requirements and timelines are factored in and understood from the outset	There needs to be some corporate consideration of this as at present there is no corporate approach to contract management embedded, though it happens, it is managed and designed on a service by service basis.
9	Chief Executive - Political and Partnership landscape - local and national - The Government devolution agenda, the universal requirement to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities and the introduction of unitary councils may lead to increased uncertainty, significant additional work to shape new governance, a challenge to partnership and relationship management, dilution of budgetary control, and the assumption of significant new service responsibilities.	This may result in the potential loss of focus on city-level inclusive growth and community identity, distraction from BAU work, increased budgetary risk, and negative impact on partnership working.	Caroline Green	4	3	12
9					Agreed approach using CEX and Oxfordshire Leaders Meeting for LGR - and the equivalent bodies for wider group of councils considering devolution - as main governance bodies for raising and seeking resolution to issues that arise	All six Oxfordshire Councils continue to work collaboratively through sharing data and this has enabled parallel LGR proposals to be created. At the regional level Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Swindon Councils also continue to cooperate on the development of Devolution proposals. Discussions among LGR leads have started for the creation of a new joint governance model involving Leaders and Chief Executives to take Councils through to the Government decision in July 2026.
9					Use partnerships, stakeholder networks and relationships with Government to build a compelling case for a Greater Oxford Unitary Council, and unitaries to its north and south, each of which would also have a place on a Thames Valley MSA board.	Large stakeholder engagement programme now completed involving Oxfordshire and Berkshire MPs, PCC, universities and others. The Cathedral cities group is working collaboratively to share LGR knowledge among Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter, Norwich and other similar cities. Took part in Case for Cities lobbying event in Parliament on the 9th September, and at the Labour Party Conference on 28th September. Engagement programme throughout the Government consultation period is in development.
9					Agree protocol on approach to public engagement on LGR and Devolution with other councils to ensue the Gunning Principles are upheld.	Protocol in place and used by all councils to guide public engagement approach
9					Ensure staff engagement on LGR as required by Statutory Invitation	
9					Flexible and robust constitution; processes to facilitate decision making	This will be dealt with as the requirement to formally consult arises
9					Use cross party working groups for major decisions	Arranged for workstreams and will continue as needed, including use of Group Leaders
11	Communities & Citizen Services - Increased demand on services - There is increased demand for services provided by the Council, particularly Customer Services, Council Tax and Benefits. Several factors are driving the growing demand for City Council services, including the persistent high cost of living, high costs of accommodation reducing disposable income and driving debt. This is compounded by rising health inequalities, an ageing population, significant deprivation in certain areas of the city, and the increasing complexity of the challenges residents face. These issues are further exacerbated when the Council fails to fully leverage technology, when residents are unable to access digital services due to digital poverty, and when partner organizations reduce or eliminate preventative services.	The increasing pressure on services and staff, can lead to lower staff morale and a failure to meet statutory obligations. As a result, the Council's reputation may suffer as customer expectations go unmet, and relationships with delivery partners may become strained. Delivering services within budgets and achieving savings targets will become more challenging.	Helen Bishop	3	3	9
11					Launch of phase 1 of OCC new website. This has already been done	complete

11		Launch phase 2 of OCC website	Phase 2 work ongoing. Working on 'Parking and Travel' section with OCC/ODS colleagues. Continuing to work on inaccessible documents in 'Planning' section. Hiring a Website Content Officer to support the project.
11		Ensure strong understanding of factors driving demand through the BIU	Locality plans updated using local insight to ensure need properly understood. This is being used to ensure locality action plans are focused on the right actions.
11		Corporate business planning process to ensure prioritisation within service areas	Corporate Business Plan 2024/25 tracking to April Cabinet. Service Planning under way across all service areas.
11		Increase services available online followed by digital comms campaign: Revenues and benefits forms	Promotion of the web functionality was made in Annual Billing. Further website support is now being designed by civica. This has resulted in a demonstrable upturn in web enquiries especially for Council Tax. Housing portal has also been launched and take up is gradually increasing.
11		Ensure contact centre maximises use of technology	40 webforms completed, 6 in progress, 4 waiting for Service response/capacity, 3 flagged for future development (part of HMO process review), 3 to be part of Uniform suite and 33 closed. Citizen contact data cleaning in progress, with report expected to OCB in February. Low Income Family Tracker software deployed and Pension Credit campaign target take-up in progress.
11		Embed behavioural insight work into Change Team procedures, train change agents and raise awareness with organisation	
11		Community Services Review	New community centre rent policy for tenants implemented. Implement new room booking software Fees and charges reviewed for each centre and proposed changes in budget papers for 2026/27.
11		Review criteria for grant funding	Report agreed at Cabinet in February. Increased communications to ensure greater awareness and support for community groups to make applications.
11		Deployment of digital skills training programmes in community	Activate learning course developed and deployed in Blackbird Leys. Digital café in Westgate Library continues.
11		Work with partners and agencies to deploy collaborative solutions	Youth Hub in Leys Leisure Centre went live in July. Working with community groups and partners to deliver collaborative youth activities. Actively working with health partners to find co-location opportunities.
11		Corporate organisational structure redesign	
11		Delivery of cost of living activities	Locality action plans shaped following refresh of customer insight for each locality. Food Larders supported and in operation across the City, Customer Service Officers attending to provide citizens with access to council and related services. Promotion, award and administration of Household Support Fund to communities and citizens. Implementation of Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) technology, using data sharing technology to identify need in the community at a household level. Identification and promotion of leisure subsidy opportunities for citizens. Cost of living communication campaign to ensure communities and citizens understand what is available.

97	Community Safety - Flood - The Council's ability to respond to a serious flooding incident would be jeopardised if there was an inadequate response due to inexperience of leaders, or dependence on individuals who become unavailable, and are a single point of failure. Budgets could mean that there are insufficient resources of people and materials to deal with the needs of the affected people, including preparing for the event before it happens. Communication failures within the Council and between partner organisations lead to inadequate coordination in the response.	If the Council does not effectively manage the risk of flood there will be disruption to the life of residents, damage to homes, damage to business premises and they will lose trade and profitability and a failure to comply with our Category 1 responder duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Vulnerable people will be affected, strain will be placed on emergency services and Council services, with greater demands on staff, the reputation of the city as a great place to visit will suffer. Political difficulties arising out of disagreements about accountability for the response including budget and use of resources.	Tom Hook	4	3	12		
97							Flood Protocol setting out the roles of internal teams and the connections with multi-agency responses.	Flood Protocol updated.
97							Internal Incident Management Framework in place that governs internal decision making and communications.	CLT and Service Directors trained in the Council's Incident Management Framework
97							TVLRF Emergency Response Arrangements are in place.	CLT and Service Directors training in Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) emergency response arrangements relevant for their role: SCG and TCG.
97							Out of hours Teams site.	Out of hours Teams site training has been provided.
97							Community resilience plans.	Community Resilience Plans in place for Osney Island and Duke/Earl Street areas. Developed by the community in partnership with the Council, the plans contain how the community will support themselves and liaise with statutory partners before and during an event. Flood warden training run by the County Council will be offered to these communities.
97							Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme provides bunds and a flood plain channel to direct fluvial flood waters away from residential areas.	In May 2025 the Secretary of State confirmed the schemes Compulsory Purchase Order. Construction is due to start late in 2026 and completion will take 5 years
98	Community Safety - Adverse weather, terrorism and utility outage - The Council's ability to respond to a significant emergency event. The Council's ability to respond to an emergency incident would be jeopardised if there was an inadequate response due to inexperience of leaders, or dependence on individuals who become unavailable, and are a single point of failure. Budgets could mean that there are insufficient resources of people and materials to deal with the needs of the affected people, including preparing for the event before it happens. Communication failures within the Council and between partner organisations lead to inadequate coordination in the response.	If the Council does not effectively manage an emergency response there will be disruption to the life of residents, damage to homes, damage to business premises and they will lose trade and profitability, and a failure to comply with our Category 1 responder duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Vulnerable people will be affected, strain will be placed on emergency services and Council services, with greater demands on staff, the reputation of the city as a great place to visit will suffer. Political difficulties arising out of disagreements about accountability for the response including budget and use of resources.	Tom Hook	4	3	12		
98							Plans in place for adverse weather, utility outage and Publicly Accessible Places, setting out the roles of internal teams and the connections with multi-agency responses.	Publicly Accessible Locations Plan (PALP) revision drafted. Reconfigured to focus on the national strategy of People, Places and Sectors. Weighted towards Prevention activities as response will be led by the emergency services. Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 requires the Council and other partners to undertake standard and enhanced security measures in Publicly Accessible Locations. For the Council these are the Town Hall and community centre. Hostile Vehicle Mitigation progress with the County Council, lead officer identified. Conversations will be taking place with the universities and other relevant partners with a role in protecting streets and public spaces. Utility Outage Countywide plan in place - Oxford will revert to this plan with it's own Action Card. Adverse Weather Plan completed.
98							Internal Incident Management Framework in place that governs internal decision making and communications.	CLT and Service Directors trained in the Council's Incident Management Framework
98							Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Emergency Response Arrangements are in place.	CLT and Service Directors training in Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) Emergency Response Arrangements relevant for their role: Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and Tactical Coordination Group (TCG).
98							Out of hours Teams site.	Out of hours Teams site training has been provided.

99	Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability - A utilities infrastructure that does not meet the needs of the city - Without further investment and partnership working the city's utility infrastructure will come under increasing strain and have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of citizens and the prosperity of the city.The city's utility infrastructure is struggling because the city's population has been growing, with a corresponding rise in demand for housing and new commercial developments, whilst at the same time there has been historic under investment meaning that aging systems are not designed for today's demand. Lack of capacity of both energy and sewage treatment supply have been identified by developers as risks to growth in both the short and long term.	A lack of utilities infrastructure can lead to restrictive conditions on planning preventing occupation of residential and commercial properties which will put development at risk, as has been seen with the recent concerns around the capacity of the sewage treatment works. A lack of energy supply may mean that new developments do not receive the level of supply needed to enable occupation. New housing and commercial developments may not receive planning permission or become stalled or be scaled back. Businesses may be unable to expand and take on new premises resulting in lost employment opportunities and reduced profitability. The green agenda may be harmed as new infrastructure can not be connected. Old sewage systems may not be able to cope with high rainfall events resulting in more flooding. Under pressure aging systems may fail leading to complaints and a reduction in the perception that Oxford is a great place to live and work.	Clive Tritton	4	4	16		
99							There is a challenge because mitigation is out of the Council's control. However, recent action on the sewage treatment works has shown that the council can reduce the likelihood and impact by bringing pressure to bear, and it needs to continue to do this. Minimum 6 monthly discussions with appropriate utilities providers to understand future modelling and to ensure utilities providers understand the impact of a failure to deliver capacity. Successful discussions with utilities providers across both sewage and energy means that mitigation is in place. These need to be monitored to ensure they stay on track.	On energy - Working with the Distribution Network Organisation, SSEN, to profile future growth. Also, not active with the new National Energy Systems Operator (NESO) to help them profile both future growth and strategic sites held up by lack of capacity. We continue to engage with key developers in the city to get their input into this process. On waste water - Have established quarterly meetings with all the Oxon LPAs within the Oxford Sewage Treatment Work catchment area for Thames Water and the EA to feed back on progress on planned capacity improvement works. Also a quarterly developer meeting to do the same. the EA and OFWAT are the regulator responsible for ensuring this work and they will report back at these meeting. The EA has confirmed that the Oxford Sewage Treatment Work is one of 20 projects receiving regular oversight at ministerial level.
99							Direct access to Government through the Oxford Growth Commission	The Oxford Growth Commission has this as a priority and will be engaging on this issue
100	ICT - Cyber security and IT infrastructure resilience - Failure to prevent and respond to cyber attacks and ensure IT infrastructure is fit for purpose and adaptable to future needs.This might be caused by human error, deliberate targeting, because the Council is a high profile organisation with financial information. Exposure through third party partners. Inability to invest in security improvements. Lack of skilled staff and recruitment challenges. Inadequate funding and prioritisation of IT infrastructure. Complexity of infrastructure and connectivity issues. Readiness and capacity for change.	This might result in an inability to provide key public services. Financial losses, fines and reputational damage. Staff wellbeing and morale impacted. Reduced productivity and operational inefficiencies. Increased IT inequality, limited service accessibility. Failure to deliver savings and modernisation.	Rocco Labellarte	4	4	16		
100							Over 100 cyber security improvements have been identified and ICT are working through these. The challenge remains that of having to deliver BAU services, projects, and the cyber improvements with the same resources. The addition of 2 further interim resources has allowed a degree of acceleration of the improvements, though the competing challenges remain the biggest cause of delays in implementing the security changes. The institutional knowledge of existing staff is needed to implement many of the changes required.	Details are shown in the subsequent line items.
100							Prioritising the Town Hall server room fix to provide infrastructure upgrades	Being progressed as part of the wider Town Hall project.
100							Enhancing cyber security monitoring to adapt to evolving threats	Upgrades funded in the budget are implemented on-going, with no effective due date as threats continuously evolve.
100							Security upgrades as a result of the cyber incident in June 2025.	Various immediate improvements actioned in the response to events. Wider project on security enhancements is being worked through.

100					Cyber security training for all staff	New training offer has been rolled out and is mandatory for all staff. Periodic test emails are used to check the awareness of staff to the threat of phishing attacks. As of December 2025, approximately 75% of staff had completed all modules. Cyber security training will resume in April 2026 with the implementation of Microsoft cyber security training built into the Microsoft platform.
100					Full security review being undertaken by independent experts in July 2025.	
100					Lessons learnt report after Cyber Incident in June 2025	
100					Building redundancy in infrastructure and network teams to reduce single points of failure	
100					Focusing IT efforts on core resilience measures.	Core resilience measures will complete in the first half of the financial year 26-27, once the council is fully migrated out of the SCC data centre into the cloud as only then can the final core resilience measures be implemented.
100					Reviewing and reinforcing cloud security controls before full migration	Ongoing as part of migration programme from the SCC Data Centre to cloud-hosted services for ICT business applications, and scheduled to complete once the council is fully migrated out of the data centre at the end of March 2026.
102	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change - If the Council does not prioritise addressing the drivers of climate change and reducing its effects, both residents and the environment will suffer detrimental harm. This might be caused by funding that is insufficient to invest in infrastructure, resources and technology. Conflicting priorities divert resources and slow delivery. Changes in government policy can create uncertainty. Staff skills gap to manage projects and work with partners.	Carbon emissions fail to meet the required targets. Detrimental impact on biodiversity. An escalation in heat, flooding and storms. This might result in increasing damage to infrastructure, homes and business. Increased energy costs. Increased deaths and reduced health and wellbeing for the population. These consequences have a financial impact and damage the reputation of the Council.	Clive Tritton	5315		
102					Retention of Zero Carbon Oxford as a Corporate Priority & inclusion of annual actions in the Business Plan, that target and support delivery of the 2030 (Council) and 2040 (City) Net Zero targets. Retention of £132,000 annual green gas payment and Net Zero Transition Fund reserve to support fund decarbonisation work.	Good progress is being made. A paper laying out actions for the Council to take forward is due to be received by CLT in September 2025.
102					Council has set a 2030 Net Zero target.	Draft paper recommends renewed focus on buildings and fleet decarbonisation. Creation of working groups with ODS and Property to produce programme and fully costed plans for delivery, to enable Council to make decisions on level of support and resourcing to achieve targets. Council Net Zero Tracker (created in 2019) needs to be updated to align with these outputs.
102					Finance - use of revolving loans and ES reserves (including annual contribution of £132k to Net Zero Transition Fund) - to provide funding for feasibility and focused projects that support council Net Zero targets	Plan for use of reserves and funds established for 25/26 as per Tina Mould
102					Programme of Carbon Literacy across the Council to increase awareness	First target numbers achieved. Feedback recommends - course needs to be shortened, updated and relevancy improved to support engagement.
102					Energy efficiency target for Social Housing (95% EPC-C by 2030) is on target to be achieved.	A programme is in place to assess all below EPC-C properties, following these surveys a full programme of works will be developed using the existing agreed MTFP funding. Depending on measures needed to meet EPC C the 2030 target of EPC C in 95% of Council Owned HRA properties should be achievable, provided the changes to EPC assessments in coming years are not drastic.
102					City has a 2040 NZ target	The Council continues to host and support the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership. Which delivers joint projects that support 2040 target. Risk of achieving 2040 target needs to be reviewed in 25/26.
102					District Heat Network project being led by Oxford City Council - if viable will deliver 5% CO2 reduction by 2030. Buildings emissions are the highest and most difficult sector to decarbonise in Oxford.	Decision due July 2026. Connection due 2030
102					Council has an Electric Vehicle Strategy and Implementation Plan .	Behind. 300 chargers due to be installed across Oxford in the next 2 years. Installation is behind, due to LEVI programme delays, needs to be continued at pace and be maintained after initial funds.
102					Protect manage and enhance Oxford's urban forest	The strategy emphasizes the importance of maintaining, improving and increasing tree canopy cover which will become increasingly important for climate adaption to mitigate flood and heatwaves. The Council does not currently have tree canopy cover targets but subject to the approval process wishes to bring them in.
102					Develop a delivery plan to determine if the target to deliver EPC B rating for commercial property is deliverable and the resources required to deliver the target.	Budget has requested in the MTFP for surveys to start from March 26.

104	Chief Executive - The workforce and public are healthy and safe - If the Council fails to effectively manage health and safety, both employees and the public could be at risk of harm, leading to injury, illness, death financial loss and regulatory intervention. Insufficient resources and funding can limit investment in equipment, technology and systems. Weak enforcement of policies. Lack of regular and comprehensive training leads to a lack of knowledge and skills. Turnover of staff impacts continuity. Employees and managers may not be fully aware of their responsibilities. A workplace culture where there are not shared values and behaviors, and where health and safety is not embedded, with safety being part of every decision and task.	Injury, ill health or death of employees or members of the public. Increased sickness absence of staff . Interrupted service delivery including to vulnerable people. Criminal prosecution of the Council and/or staff by enforcement bodies such as the HSE and the Police. Sanctions including fines, imprisonment and disqualification from office. Responding appropriately to Investigations will take considerable time and resources. Increased budgetary pressures from liability claims and premiums. Increased costs from fines, legal costs and damage to equipment and premises. Media scrutiny and reputational damage.	Caroline Green	3	4	12
104				Ensuring governance is in place to monitor health and safety performance	The Health and Safety Compliance Board meets quarterly during CLT. The Health and Safety Manager attends. The meeting is chaired by the Chief Executive. The People Safety Board meets quarterly and reports to the Health, Safety and Compliance Board within CLT. Each Quarter the People Health and Safety Board send collated information from all the service areas. The board reviews health and safety performance; health and Safety risks within service areas; it monitors audits, and discusses changes to legislation. Any concerns raised will be escalated to the Health, Safety and Compliance Board at CLT when required. The Property Health, Safety Compliance Board provides assurance that risks related to property health, safety and compliance are effectively managed. The Board meets each quarter and is attended by Director of Development (Chair), Head of Property Services, and the Building Safety and Compliance Manager. A summary report including the decisions and actions from the Property Board will be sent to the Health, Safety and Compliance Board at CLT for oversight. The Board will establish and maintain standards of Property health, safety and compliance in the council that aligns with legal requirements and in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and Standards.	
104				Ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements	Monitor accident and incident report and review accident investigations. Reporting any accidents, dangerous occurrences or disease that are required to be notified to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). Corporate Guidance and Standards are published on the Intranet. Monitoring risk assessments completed for each service area. Monitoring eLearning training for each service area. Personal Safety Audits completed for Communities & Citizens and Housing.	
104				Proper governance of compliance with health and safety policy	People Board and CLT Board is the method of governance.	
104				Promoting a health and safety culture, through training, learning lessons and facilitating whistleblowing	Monitoring health and safety training and development. Providing technical/legal advice and information. Health and Safety staff attending Teams meetings as requested to support Managers.Meeting and working with Managers	
104				Collaborating with the enforcing authorities. Liaising closely with the HSE and other relevant enforcing authorities, such as the Police and Fire and Rescue Authority, and cooperating with their inspections and investigations	As required. The proactive role for meetings with outside bodies is within the remit of the Safety Advisory Group.	
105	Housing - A failure to deliver housing priorities and business plans - If the council, as the local housing authority, fails to deliver its housing prevention priorities for homelessness and fails to deliver its HRA business plan and Asset Strategy priorities, then its ability to rebalance HRA financial pressures will be reduced. This can be caused by service delivery failure, the cost of living crisis and other external factors (most outside of the Council's control), meaning homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford and HRA business/asset management activities cost more than forecast.	Reputational Impact - If the Council fails to meet its homelessness duties and landlord obligations, it could result in severely impacting its preparedness for Social Housing Regulator inspection. Financial Impact - The Council is unable to effectively manage Temporary Accommodation demand and supply in the General Fund and its ability to secure value for money for the HRA. Legal Impact - The Council's inability to fulfil its duty to develop and set out its housing homelessness prevention strategy and HRA business plan priorities. Overall Impact: This risk, if realised, would be a systemic risk to the Council's statutory obligations and would lead to negative financial implications	Nerys Parry	3	4	12

105					A suite of Housing strategies are in place with clear priorities and mitigations for effectively arresting the increasing homelessness pressures in the GF. Improved corporate governance arrangements are in place on oversight RSH/HRA improvement plans to ensure progress and viability	Control in place and work is on-going in embedding actions from the strategies.	
106	Housing - A failure to deliver Temporary Accommodation strategies to meet demand/increases in homelessness. The Council does not/cannot effectively meet or implement the mitigation priorities for controlling temporary accommodation costs, nor the contingency measures required to address the growing demand for homelessness prevention. Additionally, it falls short in ensuring the adequate supply of housing through the private rented sector and the Council's housing development programme. Service demand and supply failure - the cost of living crisis and other external factors (most outside of the Council's control e.g. changes in Government Policy, increased interest rates, a higher demand for housing etc) mean homeless prevention activities are unable to stop enough households from becoming homeless and requiring temporary accommodation. OCC is unable to move on enough homeless households from Temporary Accommodation to suitable housing, due to not enough new or existing social housing becoming available and a shortage of affordable private rented sector homes.	Reputational Impact - Council fails to meet its homelessness housing duties due to its inability to secure sufficient PRS supply and delayed delivery of its housing supply targets. Financial Impact - 1) Increasing financial pressures on General Fund due to increasing placements in temporary accommodation and costs. 2) Government changes to metrics and formula within the Homelessness Prevention Grant are expected later in the year. This could impact OCC's allocation going forward Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its legal requirement to ensure accommodation offered to discharge its housing duties is affordable and suitable, and as a result, may see an increase in reviews, legal action being taken against the council. Overall Impact - Is limited due to the internal control measures that have been adopted. However, an increase in homelessness due to economic or legislative changes could put this service under strain and lead to a heightened risk level than is currently envisaged under the current regulatory and economic circumstances	Nerys Parry	3	5	15	
106					Housing Services have now either delivered or on track to deliver all original Temporary Accommodation mitigations. revised Year 3 Actions in the Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping support work in this area Corporately. The Temporary Accommodation stock has grown from 100, to over 200 now, and on track to reach 300 by Dec 26, through leasing , HRA transfers, RP transfers, and over 55 decants. A new set of mitigations were agreed May 25, and now funded through the MTFP. This includes 260 further units, 150 to be bought, a new FIF assessment centre, and new move on mitigations.	Control in place and work is on-going in embedding the range of Temporary Accommodation mitigation actions. The	
107	Housing - Failure to meet Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer/consumer standards - The Council, in its role as a landlord, fails to fully meet the Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Consumer standard. A failure could lead to a major incident jeopardising tenant safety, resulting in sanctions, regulatory intervention, and significant reputational damage. Regulatory compliance failure - OCC activities and processes fail to comply with consumer standards within the Social Housing (Regulation) Act.	Reputational Impact - The Social Housing (Regulation) Act has been provided with greater powers to "name and shame" underperforming local housing authorities as well as through its new inspection regime it will have the authority to issue unlimited fines to landlords. Financial Impact - Increasing financial pressures on the HRA as a result of its inability to secure value for money through the commissioning of works and services. Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its landlord housing duties - in particular those relating to tenant safety, providing tenants with a platform to raise concerns and fails to maintain properties to the required decent home standard. Overall Impact: This risk would have a knock on impact on the efficacy of the HRA budget with impacts on the reliability and standard of services to tenants	Nerys Parry	4	4	16	
107					Following a recent self-assessment, a refreshed and prioritised action plan is in place oversighted by a new corporate Task Group, along with resident and Member oversight to ensure progress is made across all 4 areas of the Consumer Standards	Control in place and work is underway to embed actions from the strategies. Additional work is underway to certain elements of the consumer standards.	

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Ref	Risk Description	Consequence	Owner	Current Probability	Current Impact	Risk Score
1	Financial Services - Financial Stability - Pressure on income and increased demand for services means that the Council will not be able to deliver its plans and corporate priorities. Causes are a lack of knowledge on the implications of fairer funding in respect of business rates and revenue support grant. Fluctuations in the Council's income and expenditure. Increased costs due to inflation impacting the capital programme. Increased demand, including for temporary accommodation. Pressures on the Oxford Model caused by a more challenging client and inflationary increases incurred by Oxford Direct Services, and a need for OX Place to refresh the business plan for developments once the current plan expires in 2033. These pressures could result in anticipated returns not being delivered. A poorly performing wider economy results in a reduction in income including commercial rents and business rates. Insufficient governance leads to overspends, and a failure to deliver savings.	This might result in a reduction in services, including to vulnerable people with complex needs. Difficult decisions must be taken by Members and senior offices about resource allocation. Fees and charges have to increase. The Council is exposed to a higher risk exposure outside of its risk appetite. Staff morale and the reputation of the Council is reduced. Unresolvable pressures ultimately lead to government intervention.	Nigel Kennedy	4	4	16
3	People - Workforce sustainability - Delivery of future ambitions - Recruitment and retention of staff in key areas such as Legal, ICT and Environmental Health. Affordability, skills shortage, can't compete on pay, increased demand / ambition from OCC, limitations on capacity and ability to change. The position is exacerbated by increased uncertainty caused by the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation being unknown.	This could result in increased workload putting pressure on capacity, resulting in poor morale, impact on wellbeing, high staff turnover, increased sickness, poorer outcomes and an impact on service delivery, reputation, legal challenge, union disputes, resilience, skills.	Gail Malkin	3	3	9

6	Law, Governance & Strategy - Failure to comply with governance requirements - Failure to comply with the Council's Constitution and governance requirements as set out in law. Insufficient resources impact on the Council's ability to ensure correct processes are followed. Confusion about roles and responsibilities. Poorly implemented policies. Inexperienced staff lack the knowledge and skills they need. Workplace culture results in insufficient planning taking place leading to time pressures on delivery and corners being cut. Staff workload results in mistakes being made. Pressure of timelines imposed by third parties e.g. grant expenditure deadlines, lead to significantly truncated timelines and competing requirements meaning governance is sometimes overlooked.	This might result in a loss of public trust and confidence in the Council's ability to govern effectively. Negative media attention will harm the Council's reputation and image. Elected Members and senior officers face criticism. The Council's ability to deliver services is undermined as important decisions are made incorrectly. Disputes among Members and staff. Exposure to financial mismanagement and loss of grants and funding. Legal challenge and claims and procurement challenges. Decisions being found to be invalid. Delays to projects whilst legal challenges / failure to follow governance processes are concluded and addressed.	Emma Jackman	3	4	12
9	Chief Executive - Political and Partnership landscape - local and national - The Government devolution agenda, the universal requirement to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities and the introduction of unitary councils may lead to increased uncertainty, significant additional work to shape new governance, a challenge to partnership and relationship management, dilution of budgetary control, and the assumption of significant new service responsibilities.	This may result in the potential loss of focus on city-level inclusive growth and community identity, distraction from BAU work, increased budgetary risk, and negative impact on partnership working.	Caroline Green	4	3	12

11	Communities & Citizen Services - Increased demand on services - There is increased demand for services provided by the Council, particularly Customer Services, Council Tax and Benefits. Several factors are driving the growing demand for City Council services, including the persistent high cost of living, high costs of accommodation reducing disposable income and driving debt. This is compounded by rising health inequalities, an ageing population, significant deprivation in certain areas of the city, and the increasing complexity of the challenges residents face. These issues are further exacerbated when the Council fails to fully leverage technology, when residents are unable to access digital services due to digital poverty, and when partner organizations reduce or eliminate preventative services.	The increasing pressure on services and staff, can lead to lower staff morale and a failure to meet statutory obligations. As a result, the Council's reputation may suffer as customer expectations go unmet, and relationships with delivery partners may become strained. Delivering services within budgets and achieving savings targets will become more challenging.	Helen Bishop	3	3	9
97	Community Safety - Flood - The Council's ability to respond to a serious flooding incident would be jeopardised if there was an inadequate response due to inexperience of leaders, or dependence on individuals who become unavailable, and are a single point of failure. Budgets could mean that there are insufficient resources of people and materials to deal with the needs of the affected people, including preparing for the event before it happens. Communication failures within the Council and between partner organisations lead to inadequate coordination in the response.	If the Council does not effectively manage the risk of flood there will be disruption to the life of residents, damage to homes, damage to business premises and they will lose trade and profitability and a failure to comply with our Category 1 responder duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Vulnerable people will be affected, strain will be placed on emergency services and Council services, with greater demands on staff, the reputation of the city as a great place to visit will suffer. Political difficulties arising out of disagreements about accountability for the response including budget and use of resources.	Tom Hook	4	3	12

- 98** Community Safety - Adverse weather, terrorism and utility outage - The Council's ability to respond to a significant emergency event. The Council's ability to respond to an emergency incident would be jeopardised if there was an inadequate response due to inexperience of leaders, or dependence on individuals who become unavailable, and are a single point of failure. Budgets could mean that there are insufficient resources of people and materials to deal with the needs of the affected people, including preparing for the event before it happens. Communication failures within the Council and between partner organisations lead to inadequate coordination in the response.
- If the Council does not effectively manage an emergency response there will be disruption to the life of residents, damage to homes, damage to business premises and they will lose trade and profitability, and a failure to comply with our Category 1 responder duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Vulnerable people will be affected, strain will be placed on emergency services and Council services, with greater demands on staff, the reputation of the city as a great place to visit will suffer. Political difficulties arising out of disagreements about accountability for the response including budget and use of resources.
- Tom Hook
- 99** Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability - A utilities infrastructure that does not meet the needs of the city - Without further investment and partnership working the city's utility infrastructure will come under increasing strain and have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of citizens and the prosperity of the city. The city's utility infrastructure is struggling because the city's population has been growing, with a corresponding rise in demand for housing and new commercial developments, whilst at the same time there has been historic under investment meaning that aging systems are not designed for today's demand. Lack of capacity of both energy and sewage treatment supply have been identified by developers as risks to growth in both the short and long term.
- A lack of utilities infrastructure can lead to restrictive conditions on planning preventing occupation of residential and commercial properties which will put development at risk, as has been seen with the recent concerns around the capacity of the sewage treatment works. A lack of energy supply may mean that new developments do not receive the level of supply needed to enable occupation. New housing and commercial developments may not receive planning permission or become stalled or be scaled back. Businesses may be unable to expand and take on new premises resulting in lost employment opportunities and reduced profitability. The green agenda may be harmed as new infrastructure can not be connected. Old sewage systems may not be able to cope with high rainfall events resulting in more flooding. Under pressure aging systems may fail leading to complaints and a reduction in the perception that Oxford is a great place to live and work.
- Clive Tritton

4	3	12
4	4	16

- 100** ICT - Cyber security and IT infrastructure resilience - This might result in an inability to provide key public services. Financial losses, fines and reputational damage. Staff wellbeing and morale impacted. Reduced productivity and operational inefficiencies. Increased IT inequality, limited service accessibility. Failure to deliver savings and modernisation. Rocco Labellarte
- 102** Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change - If the Council does not prioritise addressing the drivers of climate change and reducing its effects, both residents and the environment will suffer detrimental harm. This might be caused by funding that is insufficient to invest in infrastructure, resources and technology. Conflicting priorities divert resources and slow delivery. Changes in government policy can create uncertainty. Staff skills gap to manage projects and work with partners. Carbon emissions fail to meet the required targets. Detrimental impact on biodiversity. An escalation in heat, flooding and storms. This might result in increasing damage to infrastructure, homes and business. Increased energy costs. Increased deaths and reduced health and wellbeing for the population. These consequences have a financial impact and damage the reputation of the Council. Clive Tritton

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104 Chief Executive - The workforce and public are healthy and safe - If the Council fails to effectively manage health and safety, both employees and the public could be at risk of harm, leading to injury, illness, death financial loss and regulatory intervention. Insufficient resources and funding can limit investment in equipment, technology and systems. Weak enforcement of policies. Lack of regular and comprehensive training leads to a lack of knowledge and skills. Turnover of staff impacts continuity. Employees and managers may not be fully aware of their responsibilities. A workplace culture where there are not shared values and behaviors, and where health and safety is not embedded, with safety being part of every decision and task.	Injury, ill health or death of employees or members of the public. Increased sickness absence of staff . Interrupted service delivery including to vulnerable people. Criminal prosecution of the Council and/or staff by enforcement bodies such as the HSE and the Police. Sanctions including fines, imprisonment and disqualification from office. Responding appropriately to Investigations will take considerable time and resources. Increased budgetary pressures from liability claims and premiums. Increased costs from fines, legal costs and damage to equipment and premises. Media scrutiny and reputational damage.	Caroline Green	3 4 12
105 Housing - A failure to deliver housing priorities and business plans - If the council, as the local housing authority, fails to deliver its housing prevention priorities for homelessness and fails to deliver its HRA business plan and Asset Strategy priorities, then its ability to rebalance HRA financial pressures will be reduced. This can be caused by service delivery failure, the cost of living crisis and other external factors (most outside of the Council's control), meaning homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford and HRA business/asset management activities cost more than forecast.	Reputational Impact - If the Council fails to meet its homelessness duties and landlord obligations, it could result in severely impacting its preparedness for Social Housing Regulator inspection. Financial Impact - The Council is unable to effectively manage Temporary Accommodation demand and supply in the General Fund and its ability to secure value for money for the HRA. Legal Impact - The Council's inability to fulfil its duty to develop and set out its housing homelessness prevention strategy and HRA business plan priorities. Overall Impact: This risk, if realised, would be a systemic risk to the Council's statutory obligations and would lead to negative financial implications	Nerys Parry	3 4 12

106 Housing - A failure to deliver Temporary Accommodation strategies to meet demand/increases in homelessness. The Council does not/cannot effectively meet or implement the mitigation priorities for controlling temporary accommodation costs, nor the contingency measures required to address the growing demand for homelessness prevention. Additionally, it falls short in ensuring the adequate supply of housing through the private rented sector and the Council's housing development programme. Service demand and supply failure - the cost of living crisis and other external factors (most outside of the Council's control e.g. changes in Government Policy, increased interest rates, a higher demand for housing etc) mean homeless prevention activities are unable to stop enough households from becoming homeless and requiring temporary accommodation. OCC is unable to move on enough homeless households from Temporary Accommodation to suitable housing, due to not enough new or existing social housing becoming available and a shortage of affordable private rented sector homes.

Reputational Impact - Council fails to meet its homelessness housing duties due to its inability to secure sufficient PRS supply and delayed delivery of its housing supply targets.
 Financial Impact - 1) Increasing financial pressures on General Fund due to increasing placements in temporary accommodation and costs.
 2) Government changes to metrics and formula within the Homelessness Prevention Grant are expected later in the year. This could impact OCC's allocation going forward
 Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its legal requirement to ensure accommodation offered to discharge its housing duties is affordable and suitable, and as a result, may see an increase in reviews, legal action being taken against the council.
 Overall Impact - Is limited due to the internal control measures that have been adopted. However, an increase in homelessness due to economic or legislative changes could put this service under strain and lead to a heightened risk level than is currently envisaged under the current regulatory and economic circumstances

Nerys Parry

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107 Housing - Failure to meet Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer/consumer standards - The Council, in its role as a landlord, fails to fully meet the Social Housing (Regulation) Act customer standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Consumer standard. A failure could lead to a major incident jeopardising tenant safety, resulting in sanctions, regulatory intervention, and significant reputational damage. Regulatory compliance failure - OCC activities and processes fail to comply with consumer standards within the Social Housing (Regulation) Act.	Reputational Impact - The Social Housing (Regulation) Act has been provided with greater powers to "name and shame" underperforming local housing authorities as well as through its new inspection regime it will have the authority to issue unlimited fines to landlords. Financial Impact - Increasing financial pressures on the HRA as a result of its inability to secure value for money through the commissioning of works and services. Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its landlord housing duties - in particular those relating to tenant safety, providing tenants with a platform to raise concerns and fails to maintain properties to the required decent home standard. Overall Impact: This risk would have a knock on impact on the efficacy of the HRA budget with impacts on the reliability and standard of services to tenants	Nerys Parry

4	4	16

Ref	Risk Description	Consequence	Owner	Current Probability	Current Impact	Risk Score	Control description	Progress
12	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Increased costs and complexity for waste. Increased costs and complexity in the delivery of the Council's domestic collection service, and ODS commercial waste operations. Changes in statutory obligations in the waste and recycling system and in funding mechanisms for domestic waste services. Competition in commercial waste services.	If higher costs are not sufficiently matched with increased revenues to support the delivery of the new obligations, this may impact on the funding of other service areas - as domestic waste collections are a statutory requirement. If the net income ODS derives from commercial waste operations reduces this could also impact on dividend payments to the Council which underpin other service delivery.	Clive Tritton	3	4	12		
12							Lobbying for new funding	The Council is lobbying through the Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership over the structure of new funding to cover new obligations. Council and ODS are also in discussions with WODC and Cherwell to look at potential areas of joint delivery to reduce costs.
14	Chief Executive - Partnership working. Devolution governance debate disrupts partnership work. County and Districts pursuing different options for Unitary Government.	Negative impacts on services and projects delivered in partnership with County and partners.	Mish Tullar	3	3	9		
14							Collaborative working and data sharing agreements are in place among Oxfordshire Councils - re LGR. Similar agreements also in place with Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon Councils for devolution.	
14							Maintain BAU partnership working within Oxon system alongside LGR process	No negative impacts on partnership working more generally across the Oxfordshire system.
14							Joint working with Ox-Cam Growth Corridor and Oxford Growth Commission	Oxford Growth Commission, which involves both Council Leader and CEO, is already having a significant positive impact. Positive progress with Cowley Branch Line.
15	Property Assets - Staff recruitment and retention. Inability to recruit and/or retain staff on proposed terms and conditions in Property Services (particularly in respect of HRA and compliance). Terms and conditions of employment are not sufficiently attractive to attract permanent staff. Most other Councils are trying to attract similar staff from a small pool of available candidates	Required skills and capacity are not available to deliver required work programmes.	Malcolm PEEK	2	3	6		
15							Short term the option is being explored to look at a different way of holding resource with a commissioning model as well as direct delivery by in-house staff. Backfill with temporary staff & contractors where necessary. Use market supplements as necessary. Longer term restructure and recruitment campaign to permanent positions	60%
15							Ongoing monitoring of skill needs aligned to changes in legislation. Flexibility in recruitment - use of agency workers and head hunters etc.	Ongoing
16	Planning & Regulation - Service Failure. Major service failure due to significant loss of ICT, staff etc. Major systems failure - major health pandemic etc	Reduction in staff or premises availability means a reduced service to customers and or a backlog of work to be cleared.	David Butler	3	3	9		
16							A single Business Continuity plan is in place. The business plan work is ongoing as part of the service plan. Loss of staff has been managed in a sustainable manner	85%
17	Planning & Regulation - Regulation of the Private Rented Sector. Opportunity to embed HMO licensing across the City and to regulate the private rented sector. Systems failure/ poor delivery of service; inadequate engagement; non-compliance with regulation/ legislation	Damage to Council reputation and potentially finances; risks to occupiers and neighbours	David Butler	2	2	4		
17							Ensure that the HMO Business Plan is robust and up to date	100%

18	Financial Services - Reputation Management. Failure to deliver an efficient and timely year end process for annual Council Tax and NDR bills, Rents, Garage and leaseholder statements. Lack of resources (staff/finance) Upgrades of software not carried out Single points of failure CTR will be administered through Revenues not Benefits Knowledge of requirements Ability to design templates Legislative requirements not addressed	The biggest risk to the Council is reputational. If the bills and notices are not delivered on time the Council cannot collect income due to it and would suffer reputational damage as a consequence. This risk is low until the process starts again in October	Laura Bessell	3	4	12		
18							Budget is due on the 26th November and it will inform the regulation changes for Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits from April 2026	Budget is due on the 26th Nov and it will inform the regulation changes for Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits from April 2026.
18							Commence the move to the cloud based Cvica OPEN Revenues system in September 2025 and undertake testing for annual billing on the new system. Go live for new system in January 2026. There is a need ensure that the on premises open revenue system is retained until annual billing is complete.	Migration has commenced and movement of the Civica OPEN Revenues system to Civica Cloud is currently in test phase. We are on target for migration to be concluded by the end of January, this will be before the annual billing process starts in February.
20	Planning & Regulation - Unplanned workload leading to reactive response and delay or omission of proactive work. Complaints, added to complexities to existing work, unplanned work demands corporate or external	Delay or omission of programmed work, impact on quality of work if it is rushed or not checked. Reduction in quality of service to customers	David Butler	3	3	9		
20							Improved communications about role and priorities to temper expectations	75%
20							Review with line manager over priorities (saying no or re prioritise)	75%
20							Ensure time allowed for such work in performance agreements. Reviewed through regular 1.2.1 meetings	95%
21	Financial Services - ICT. OCC not able to deliver the improvements to ICT systems in a timely and manageable manner; Inability to deliver ICT Systems that operate in a controlled and robust manner on a timely basis. ICT workplan not adhered to and delayed; System implementation ineffectual leading to delays and / or poor system design and implementation	Increased inefficiencies in work flow leading to increased manual working and worsening collection rates; controls around the system not robust leading to an increased level of reconciliation or data control issues Project plans overlapping so that there is excessive work for staff over a shortened time period Non-compliance with contractual agreements and non-compliance with external standards such as PCN and PCI-DSS	Clare Paterson	3	4	12		
21							Active attendance at project board meetings, planning ahead for projects and being aware of interdependencies	Key systems such as QL and Open Revenues are being moved to the cloud. QL migrated in November, Open Revenues slight slippage with completion essential in January 2026. Re-procured Agresso system under a transfer of licensing arrangement and support services with new supplier from 01/01/26 for a 1+1 year term
21							Involvement of key staff within Financial Services to identify any issues and feed back to the project team	Key systems such as QL and Open Revenues are being moved to the cloud. QL migrated in November, Open Revenues slight slippage with completion essential in January 2026. Agresso license review and changes to be implemented in December 2025.
23	Property Assets - Income generation from property portfolio is threatened, due to Covid-19 backlog, which is almost cleared, and market forces and cost of living issues. Portfolio is biased towards retail/food and beverage. Market currently patchy and backlog of lease events. Particularly on estate shop portfolio.	Reduced rent leading to budget pressure	Emma Gubbins	3	3	9		
23							Better monitoring system in place and AMS will aid profiling . Constant review of portfolio for regeneration opportunities	Currently on target in Q2

24	Planning & Regulation - Project delays (service specific). Poor project management of projects such as Local Plan, major Development management case, change projects	Reduced performance, missed targets, ultimately delay to delivery of needed housing on the ground.	David Butler	3	3	9		
24							Clarity of role of project manager in project initiation document	100%
24							Regular reports to Board	100%
24							Tight project management and good reporting from project manager	100%
25	Property Assets - Income reduction due to condition of properties. Inability / delay in letting or increased incentives. Stock returned in poor condition, increased forfeiture. Failure of landlord repairing liabilities	Reduced or delayed rent or capital receipt leading to budget pressure	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9		
25							Stock condition surveys, AMS, regular and improved inspection regime,Void property process	
25							Asset management system. Regular vacant unit meetings and regular inspections. Condition surveys and budget. Implementing timely repairs as required.	Ongoing
26	Financial Services - Failure to recruit and retain key staff. Insufficient quality of applicants to vacancies, current key staff leave to better opportunities. Current pay scales not attractive; reputation of Council will not attract new recruits; Local Government Reorganisation adds too much uncertainty for potential recruits	Vacant posts remain vacant, and existing posts become vacant. Further pressure is put onto remaining staff to fulfil extra tasks	Nigel Kennedy	2	4	8		
26							Development of staff internally, providing development opportunities to existing staff, and providing suitable training to all	Engagement with pay and award project. Responding to staff survey. 50% complete.
26							Ensure Team Leaders and Managers communicate with staff on a regular basis in the current remote working set-up	Ensuring 1:1s take place. Appropriate training. Monitoring by Financial Services Management Team
26							For recruitment to all vacancies, review the job content, specification and pay, exploring different markets to advertise	100%
27	Planning & Regulation - Delays to Council projects caused by outside agencies such as County Council, Consultees, National and Regional Government and other agencies	Reduced performance, missed targets	David Butler	3	3	9		
27							High level intervention if necessary. Greater collaboration is in place on key projects and a proactive approach to intervention/communications	75%
27							Monitoring of applications/ processes/ programmed projects in hand and delays	75%
28	Property Assets - Property non-compliance. Assets becoming non-compliant resulting in Health & Safety failure. (includes trees, green spaces and the like). Lack of monitoring and management	Risk of hazard to people or property, unable to let properties so reduced income. Risk to the reputation of the council and action against the council and officers. Increased insurance costs.	Malcolm PEEK	2	4	8		
28							Additional recruitment of team members and development plan in place to review all areas of building related items	Complete team in place
28							New AMS module - ongoing review of compliance data and processes	AMS and alternative being reviewed but now part of Central H&S not only PS
28							Monthly reporting and monitoring of compliance. Asset management system and staff recruitment. Contractor management.	
30	Financial Services - Treasury Management. Safety of investments. Current economic climate and prolonged volatility in financial markets; banks and other investment institutions not being robust enough to survive future economic changes; key staffing changes at firms cause uncertainty in the market	Loss of principal investments placed	Bill Lewis	2	5	10		
30							Ensure a robust process of monitoring counterparty changes is carried out	100%

30				Ensure that the Treasury Management Strategy is robust and reduces the risk of principal investments being put at risk	100%
30				Financial provision set aside for movement in property fund price	100%
30				Management information provided to the Group Finance Director on a monthly basis	100%
30				The investment policy and counterparty list ensures all our investments have a financial limit and have a maximum investment period per counterparty	100%
31	Communities & Citizen Services - Service not delivering quality services. Lack of resources and employee deployment. Fragile procedures, process and delivery mechanisms. Internal and external monitoring and auditing principles not robust	Failure to achieve industry recognised accreditation (i.e. Quest, Green Flag, ISO). Increased costs. Corporate and service objectives fail to be delivered. Reputational damage. Reduced ability to draw down external funding	Hagan Lewisman	236	
31				Monitor through service delivery, quality assurance and stakeholder meetings	Stakeholder meeting in place next planned for February 2026
31				Timely action through systematic methodology, procedures and internal and external audits	Internal audit planned for January 2026
31				Workforce planning and employee development and training regimes	New staff being inducted at East Oxford Community centre
32	Planning & Regulation - Income Targets. Non achievement of income targets. Impact of macro-economic issues - falling number of planning applications, visitor spend etc	Not meet budget estimates, Deficit in corporate budget. Ultimately impact on resources available to the council to provide services	David Butler	339	
32				Review of Building Control service over 2018/19	100%
32				Promoting services, raise fees and charges, secure planning performance agreements to achieve income and meet targets	100%
33	Property Assets - Lack of asset management system. Data Management processes improvement. No asset management system in place to store and analyse data.	Unable to plan or programme work in a timely fashion, delays in letting of properties and potential non-compliance. Risk of decreased insurance cover or increased premium costs. Lack of active management of portfolio reduces performance.	Malcolm PEEK	4416	
33				Implementation of Asset Management system enabling programming of works arising from Stock condition survey. Enables compliance and works programmes	Team structure and systems improvements
33				More efficient data management	System procurement in process.
34	Law, Governance & Strategy - Resilience of service. Inability to effectively deliver services required by the Council to deliver critical projects and support statutory and non-statutory functions with a direct impact on risk, compliance, expenditure and income to the Council. Inability to react as required in the event of a major incident leading to more outsourcing or delays. Inability to retain and recruit lawyers to permanent posts, leaving the service dependent on locum resources and therefore exceeding salary budget. Capacity and resource issues delaying restructure. Hope to progress by the end of 2025.	Reputational damage; adverse costs; greater reliance on external services and therefore increased costs. Ability to meet Council's own requirements prejudiced.	Emma Jackman	4416	
34				Focused recruitment processes, reviewing posts which the Council struggles to recruit to and taking steps to address and targeted use of locums.	A quicker route to market for locums has been agreed with Human Resources which has assisted in filling vacancies quicker. Salaries were reviewed across the teams in line with the corporate review. This has led to the successful appointment to a planning lawyer post following a recent recruitment however in that time neighbouring authorities have increased their pay offer in line with ours and have been successful in recruiting one of our staff to work for them. A review is being undertaken of legal services with a view to secure a structure that will further enable recruitment and move away from reliance on locums.

34

Trainee Solicitor apprentice to be recruited to in the new structure once current postholders leave thier post

The current trainees have qualified but they have a permanent post in the organisation. To replace them with new graduates will require them to leave or a restructure, this will be considered as part of the restructure.

34

Succession plan in place to ensure continuity of service provision given potential retirements amongst senior staff

There is a need to ensure succession planning is undertaken in relation to Electoral Services however LGR will have an impact upon this and what that looks like.

34

Level of service to be provided to Council companies agreed and monitored; demand managed and workloads monitored

There is to be a deep dive with OCHL on services provided by Committee Services and Legal Services. SLA meetings will be held monthly once OCHL have permanent staff in place and work in progress meetings are held once a month with the legal team. There is some need to query the requirement of ODS also on committee services, which seems to be producing more work than the SLA foresaw. This will be picked up and clarified/changes made as needed.

34

Continuous professional development legal training programme maintained and team participation encouraged

This is against a limited budget of approx. £3,000 for 40 staff each financial year. There is a CPD requirement for the qualified lawyers which takes precedent, along with the cost of training for trainee qualification and training needs for new starters. Free training is utilised as much as possible

34

Regular service and Directorate briefings. Meetings held.

34

AEA Forum monitoring by senior colleagues around the country. Replies to queries swift. AEA consultancy arm accessible.

34

Future review of Election Team in line with succession planning

With retirement likely from some key members of staff following the next election cycle, this will need to be picked up depending on developments with Local Government Reorganisation

34

Undertake a legal structural services review

This is in progress and subject to the Council's overall budget

34

Electoral Services has good relationships with neighbouring and country wide authorities to whom they could turn for advice. Contacts and numbers are on the board in the elections office and maintained in a central record

34

Reviewing and monitoring the impact of Local Government Reorganisation work across the Strategy Team

Regular one to ones, on going review of workstreams and cross support in place from other teams in the directorate. There will be a need for additional resources within Legal Services to accommodate the work required and potentially Information Governance.

34						Written procedures, shadowing and cross-skilling in Committee Services team to ensure that there is cross capacity in the team	Written procedures in progress, cross skilling and shadowing well developed. Catch up processes are in place for staff, very strong progress in ensuring cross working in the team
35	Planning & Regulation - Government legislation, Democracy and Localism Bill. Substantial changes to the planning system. Relaxation of Change of Use, Prior Approval regime extended Impact of expectations of politicians and the local community impacting on resources and priorities. Government legislation leading to need to redesign processes	Lack of capacity to meet changes coming from government, undermining of the delivery of local policy objectives (e.g. protection of key employment sites). Neighbourhood Plans put pressure on resources and/or seek to challenge City Council	David Butler	4	4	16	
35						Maintain responsiveness and plan for change. Make robust representations to Government where appropriate. Maintain a dialogue with groups wishing to bring forward Neighbourhood Plans.	100%
36	Communities & Citizen Services - Insufficient revenue and capital for each proposed development. Insufficient revenue and capital for each proposed development. Current economic climate/Comprehensive spending review	Developments do not take place	Hagan Lewisman	3	3	9	
36						Development board overview	East Oxford Community Centre soft launched on 25 Nov 2025
36						Solid business case developed for each development	All completed
36						Project Board overview	All completed
37	Property Assets - Income Targets / high costs. Non achievement of Town Hall income targets. Impact of economic circumstances; delays in building maintenance, major disruption to business e.g. fire, major repairs.	Reduction in income and revenue	Malcolm PEEK	2	2	4	
37						Implement sales & marketing plans including on-going review of the product offered and quality of the facilities available for this	On target to achieve income targets
37						Monthly finance review and forecasting, adjust business plan accordingly.	On target to achieve income
37						Full review of town hall income and expenditure model.	On track to achieve income target
38	Planning & Regulation - Opposition to emerging statutory plans, and to planning applications and decisions; A) vocal and organised local opposition before decision; B) opposition at Examination or committee stage; C) Legal Challenge after Adoption or planning decision. Local public, groups, organisations or political parties object to policies in emerging documents and choose to use many and all avenues to express objection, including some outside normal procedures and all drawing a lot of media attention . Or opposition to planning applications at, pre- application, after validation. Committee and post decision stages	Delay, extra costs, reputational risk, possibly amendments to policies.	David Butler	3	3	9	
38						Raise quality of community engagement as far as possible within available resources to flush out and address community concerns at an early stage in the process	100%
38						Communication strategy to be developed for all key planning & regulatory projects/consultations/communications particularly Local Plan. Work collaboratively on objections raised & provide additional evidence.	100%
40	Communities & Citizen Services - Budget and Income. Trading Income from event hire. Changes to Broad Street, COVID-19, the cost of living impact on the events sector and targeted campaigns against event organisers	Budgeted target not met	Paula Redway	3	2	6	

40					Proactive advertising of the space and managing stakeholders	30%
40					Create and communicate Outdoor Venue Guide	100%
40					Fees & charges amended as part of the budget process	100%
40					Recruited an Events Officer	100%
40					Implement Corporate Debt policy - not needed as the target has already been met no longer necessary	0%
42	Communities & Citizen Services - Breach in H&S leading to fatality/closure of building. Breach in H&S leading to incident/ injury/ fatality/ closure of leisure facility and/ or service disruption. Failure of health and safety management and monitoring	Risk of injury or death to persons. Reputational risk. Financial claims. Risk of facility closure or service disruption	Hagan Lewisman	248		
42					Health and Safety procedures and risk assessments are being implemented for East Oxford Community Centre	
42					Monitoring through both internal and external audits and regular governance meetings	Internal audit planned for January 2026
42					Lead Officer with experience, knowledge and understanding of compliance. Monitor through service delivery meetings. Performance and pay mechanisms for the leisure provider. Timely action through systematic methodology and procedures. Review ODS governance.	Regular client audits in place
45	Communities & Citizen Services - Loss of key staff members. Prolonged absence or badly planned leave may result in the service area not delivering on its objectives. Staffing structure quite tight, meaning that there can be resource issues	Non delivery of service objectives	Helen Bishop	339		
45					Regular governance and team meetings effective attendance management	Quarterly absence management meetings at a case level.
45					Monitor through service delivery meetings	Programme delivery monitored monthly via Org Change and Communities Board. Regular one to ones and service delivery meetings.
46	Law, Governance & Strategy - External Legal Resources. The use of the budget is reactive and therefore, as unexpected corporate issues arise, external legal costs increase, which will lead to an overspend on the legal services budget, and potentially pressure on other service area budgets as they may need to fund work. Unpredictability of costs which may arise. Due to increase demand in client departments for legal support, capacity issues continue which has an impact on external legal advice requirements. Inability to use usual procurement route of EM Lawshare Framework meaning using higher priced frameworks as an alternative.	Budgetary pressure	Emma Griffiths	4312		
46					Identification and use of framework arrangement enables more robust budgeting	EM lawshare has closed due to overspend but the Council is using others available with fixed fees. Some firms honour the EM Lawshare rates but we are finding we are utilising a wider range of firms due to the increase in the sector relying on external advice and the bids for opportunities by firms reducing based on their capacity issues.
46					Close liaison with internal clients to secure appropriate budget for projects requiring external legal services	This will be considered as part of the restructure and has been in part addressed by budget bids by Property Services.
46					Use of external legal advisors limited & controlled (prior approval of Head of Service/Legal Services Manager required); presumption - internal legal team to be relied upon unless no expertise/resource	This has been very tightly controlled within legal services and, in addition, there has been reallocation of spend against budgets such as capital and the HRA where there are specific budgets for the work. This will continue but relies upon staffing in legal being sufficient.

46					Active management of budget & issues of concern flagged at budget monitoring meetings	At present there are budget pressures in legal services due to inability to recruit and retain staff and insufficient resources to meet demand, resulting in a reliance on locums. To the extent possible this will be addressed in the restrucure. In addition there is no finalised budget for Policy & Strategy following the Senior Manager restructure.
47	Communities & Citizen Services - Insufficient resource and market demand to deliver financial plan. A stringent focus is on this work, although the macro env continues to increase the challenges. There is a risk of there not being enough resource (staff time), and/or market demand to deliver the level required. Not enough staff time / insufficient demand for additional activities	Reduced delivery of efficiencies	Helen Bishop	339		
47					Regular governance and team meetings effective attendance management	Monthly budget moniotring to ensure on track with budget predictions. Weekly review of KPIs in Customer Contact, monthly programme monitoring and regular service delivery meetings.
47					Undertake feasibility works and monitor through SPM	90%
48	Planning & Regulation - Public Health Protection. Threats to public health eg., from food borne communicable disease. Uncontrolled spread of diseases; illness and possible deaths; damage to Council reputation.	Failure to adequately control/respond to outbreaks.	David Butler	339		
48					Competent and experienced specialist staff; effective links with Public Health & the UKHSA; protocols for outbreak and control.	90%
51	Financial Services - Budget Management. Inability to forecast outturn effectively due to limited or incorrect information. There are significant efficiency savings and service reductions across the board as a result of budget process, and these may be difficult to deliver, or to understand if they will be delivered timely.	Increased use of reserve balances or further reductions to be identified	Clare Paterson	236		
51					Regular capital and revenue forecast updates better enables the Council to stay on track and within budget	Forecast outturn updates are part of the monthly monitoring by service area for capital and revenue
51					Robust challenges by Management Accounting Team during the budget monitoring process	Monthly monitoring, reporting and engagement with service areas continues, highlighting variances and actions required to address
52	Communities & Citizen Services - Safeguarding vulnerable groups including children.Poor training of and recognition of safeguarding principals. Poor monitoring and compliance regimes	Risk to Council reputation. Risk of allegation. Risk to public safety	Hagan Lewisman	248		
52					Staff training	95%
52					Effective training, induction and team meetings in place	90%
52					Lead Officer with experience, knowledge and understanding of compliance requirements.	100%
52					Relevant and timely processing of criminal record checks	100%
52					Timely action and monitoring through systematic methodology and procedures	100%
53	Law, Governance & Strategy - ICT. System failure without cloud based systems will significantly impact on the Council being able to meet staturoty obligations and will impact on the delivery of corporate prioroties and decision making. Risks genreated from unauthored access from outside actors, ICT issues such as server failure and failure of third party systems and devices	Failure to meet statutory obligations, inability to take decisions and protect the interests of the Council	Emma Jackman	339		

53					Electoral Services are developing contingency plans in the event of ICT failures	This worked to a degree during the current cyber event, however it has become clear that a plan for being cut off from government systems and documented process for reconnecting is needed. In addition there needs to be a more robust data cleansing carried out of data held historically
53					Committee Services have contingency plans in place for ICT failures	These were tested and worked during the recent cyber issue, one thing that was identified is the need for access to old minutes, with readily accessible templates outside of the system should Mod.gov go down and also should there be no ability print
53					Legal Services have contingency plans in place for ICT failure	Iken is cloud based which means it is more robust in terms of access however printing does need to be considered and alternatives to email in the event of a total ICT failure, including access to postage
53					Strategy & Policy have contingency plans in place for ICT failure	
53					Moving to cloud based solutions for each of the ICT systems – Elections, legal services and Information Governance are now cloud based. Committee Services will be done in the coming financial year.	Elections and Committee Services are in progress moving to cloud based solutions, with systems procured, Legal is on a cloud based platform. EAs and Policy and Strategy do not have specific systems beyond corporate ones
53					Encouraging regular attendance at ICT sessions when rolled out such as One Drive, Sharepoint etc	Attended as arise - some of the service is yet to migrate to sharepoint therefore this will be done as they are migrated
54	Financial Services - Corporate Fraud. Suppliers set up on payment system that are not genuine or requests to change bank account details that are not genuine. Third parties attempt to defraud the council	Payments being misappropriated, loss of public monies	Annette Osborne	2	3	6
54					All new suppliers are fully checked and vetted	100%
54					Bank details are checked by an online checking system	100%
54					Monthly exception reporting of any changes made	100%
55	Law, Governance & Strategy - Legal Income. Income target not achieved placing pressure on the overall budget of legal services leading to overspend. Inability to manage or control demand of work which generates income	Budgetary Pressure	Emma Jackman	4	4	16
55					Mapping and review of work coming from clients who generate income, for example Planning, Fraud, Regulatory functions and capital projects	
55					Proper time reocrding in the Legal Services team is being implemented, with a full review of the process and system used. This includes a review of capital projects in the corporate list vs those we have in legal to ensure we are capturing all capital. This is monitored and reported upon monthly	
55					Active management of budget & issues of concern flagged at budget monitoring meetings on a monthly basis	
55					Looking at base budgets and undertaking a review of "under the line" funding vs demand, as budgets are based on capacity and demand approximately 15 years ago	This has been done with regards to HRA property based work but needs to be undertaken accross the board and within the HRA for development based work and litigation - needs input from finance which is not possible due to capacity at present
55					Regular review of the suspense account for unallocated payments	This will be raised with finance and looked at on a monthly / quarterly basis as thier capacity dictates
55					Keep fees and charges under review to ensure in line with other Councils and cost recovery – annually	Reviewed each year at budget setting

56	Financial Services - Management effectiveness and employee ability to deliver services. Excessive pressure placed on staff and managers. Increased workloads and increased volumes of emails and online meetings in addition to increasing demands arising from the "day job"	Staff burnout; increased incidence of stress; lack of capacity to deliver work demands	Nigel Kennedy	3	4	12		
56							Manage corporate expectation of timescales and delivery	Ongoing process
56							Prioritise and manage performance and workloads to ensure that the work is manageable and identify early problems	Ongoing process
56							Staff away day sessions and staff interaction	Staff away day held on 7th October
56							Team meetings and fortnightly on to ones.	
57	Communities & Citizen Services - Complaints Handling. Failure of corporate complaints process resulting in Ombudsman intervention. Reliance on limited number of officers	Reputational risk. Additional complaints and/or ombudsmen intervention.	Helen Bishop	4	3	12		
57							Alternative officers identified by Chief Executive; Access Head of Law and Governance to complaint records possible via M drive.	Additional resources identified to support reduction of backlog, approach to clearance agreed
58	Financial Services - Health & Safety. Staff are subject to volatile situations in the course of their duties and possible harm. Robust & challenging conversations held with subjects of investigation during interviews and visits leading to escalation tension and possible physical assault.	Staff subject to harm and subsequent short or long-term sickness, reduced resources.	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	2	2	4		
58							All customer-facing staff trained in conflict resolution & comply with team processes on ensuring personal safety, including use of personal attack alarms, smartphone location app, lone worker devices, providing whereabouts information in advance of visits taking place. Body Worn Video devices are also now being used by officers. Sometimes whatsapp live location is also used. Monthly monitoring at staff meetings.	These controls are in place
59	Communities & Citizen Services - Community Cohesion Erodes. The risk that social and community cohesion will be negatively affected, detracting from our aims to encourage strong and active communities. Britain's exit from the EU, shifts in national politics, and subsequent shifts in society's perceptions.	1.Uncertainty and instability in political climate leads to social and political polarisation - this in turn could lead to political fallout/shifts in management and risk of the council developing a bad reputation 2.Political instability means social instability / unrest, leading to higher rates of hate crime. Deepening cleavages in society divides communities, with settled communities feeling neglected by local authorities in favour of new/emerging communities - diversity is seen as a threat for some. 3. Social unrest can have negative effects on health, which carries risk of widening existing health inequalities across the city.	Helen Bishop	3	3	9		
59							Encourage dialogue between communities (existing and new / emerging) through development of existing and potential community and health & wellbeing partnerships with clear area priorities. Re-energise and maintain clear communication and community / stakeholder engagement strategies. Consider how strategy matches public perceptions / political agenda and refresh council values to reflect these.	Development of Locality plans using up to date insight to show need. Sharing plans with local members and partners. Working with community groups to support delivery of planning engagement, supporting economic development and giving practical support to residents and communities too through household support fund etc- to alleviate the impact of the cost of living crisis. Supporting local boards, eg Interfaith Forum.
59							This is a central theme to the Thriving Communities Strategy that has been agreed by Council in January 2023.	70%

60	Financial Services - Budget and Income. Failure to deliver profiled trading income due to external factors. Reduced appetites for external clients and partners to spend on counter-fraud services due to cost of living crisis, dwindling council finances, politics or competing priorities	Trading income targets not achieved, medium term financial plan compromised, budgetary overspend.	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	1	2	2		
60							Mitigated through enhanced business development activity, exhibiting at relevant conferences and delivery of the Oxford Annual Fraud Conference in the Town Hall. Business Plan and Marketing Strategy in place.	These risk controls are in place
61	Financial Services - Performance. Failure to achieve service plan targets and objectives due to unplanned staff absence or turnover including sickness. Some fixed term contracts in the team increase risk of staff looking to alternative roles with other organisations.	Targets not achieved, trading income compromised, inability to service external contractual commitments	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	1	1	1		
61							Resilience contract in place with Reigate and Banstead Council for assistance when needed. Use of master vend recruitment agency where required.	Risk controls are in place
62	Law, Governance & Strategy - Budgetary issue. Increase in the cost of postage by Royal Mail causing budget pressures. The rise in the cost of postage has increased in recent years (with another in-year rise of 15% due)	Pressure on budgets beyond what is funded	Martin John	3	3	9		
62							A further price increase from Royal Mail places additional strain on the elections budget in future years. This is 10% and therefore will be monitored this year and if required a budget bid will be submitted.	
64	Law, Governance & Strategy - FOIA and DPA compliance. Failure to comply with statutory deadlines in terms of information Requests and Data Subject Access Requests. Failure to properly manage personal data. Failure of other council departments and officers to contribute and approve in timescales required	Reputation risk, ICO action could result.	Emma Jackman	3	3	9		
64							The new management system is in place with reports to senior officers once a week on new and outstanding FOIAs. KPIs are reported on monthly.	This will need to be reviewed in 2027 with the retendering of the system
64							Corporate training (compulsory) to be pushed to ensure that the council has maximum take up	This is contingent on a new corporate training system which is in the process of being procured. In the mean time monitoring of take up of training is not accurate but mandatory training remains in place. CLT are aware of this issue
64							Undertake departmental audits of data retention and tie in with migration to One Drive and SharePoint	This has been undertaken and work was substantially complete however due to the cyber incident there is a need to revisit it and also the internal audit, which will be considered in July. Once all completed it needs to be reported back to CLT and since the cyber incident there is a need to deep dive in to some areas.
64							Review of all DPA documentation and registers has been undertaken and new ones will be finalised, for annual review thereafter, in the coming financial year.	This has been done but due to issues identified in the cyber incident it needs to be revisited - there will be a knock on impact on other areas of programmed work in the team. It will in any case be repeated annually and reported to CLT. There is a need to ensure a review is undertaken of some areas. This is a priority subsequent to the recent cyber issue
65	Law, Governance & Strategy - Data Protection Breach and Non-Compliance with Data Protection Law. Failure of the organisation to adhere to data protection law would cause capacity and work implications issues for the team. Outside actors having unauthorised access to data. Failure of the Council's departments and suppliers to properly safeguard data	Increased workload on a small team. Organisation could suffer reputational damage and/or have fines levied against them by ICO. Reputational risk for the service and Council. Financial penalties for Council and employees. Potential litigation against the Council with damages and adverse costs	Emma Jackman	4	5	20		
65							Review incoming potential changes under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and amend practices and processes as necessary	We will map the progress of its implementation and coming force following royal assent on the 19 June 2025 and report to CLT on any changes required

65					Embed actions following the internal audit review of data protection in 2025 and review in light of recent cyber issues	This is in progress, initial actions have been substantially met however it needs a review following the cyber issues, and this is in progress
65					Prepare and regularly review guidance; policies and procedures	
65					Provide data protection and legal support as required to the organisation	
65					Ensure that the Legal and Governance service complies with corporate policies and guidelines on data protection and ICT security	
65					Review and set corporate training requirements in line with audit recommendations	This will be done once the HR system has been procured with regular compulsory refresher training
65					Properly respond to data subject access requests	
65					Ensure through advising and monitoring on an annual basis that departments are properly and regularly cleansing data within them to assist with compliance with data retention schedules	This will be picked up in regular reviews of the retention and data protection audits conducted this year
66	Communities & Citizen Services - Failure to achieve sponsorship income targetsBusiness climate	Difficult to sustain city events and cultural activity on an annual basis.	Paula Redway	3	2	6
66					Seek additional resource to focus on this	25%
66					All members of the team engage in sponsorship - £4K has been raised recently for the Festive lighting in Gloucester Green over a 3 year period.	100%
66					Target met for this year	100%
66					Following up on leads from recent campaign	
67	Financial Services - Procurement. If there is a failure to follow best procurement practice, then there is an increased risk of challenge. The reputation of the Council will suffer, and there may be financial loss because of challenges and re-running procurements, as well as delays in delivering priorities.	Reputation of Council. Financial penalty. Poor decision making and financial loss due to potentially awarding a contract to the wrong supplier. Potential delays in achieving organisational objectives as a result of challenge and if decision set aside	Annette Osborne	3	4	12
67					Clear and unambiguous best practice guidance and templates readily available, providing an advisory service for procurements at all values	100%
67					Development and monitoring of a forward plan to identify potential high risk areas (early intervention)	100%
67					Evaluation panels include a cross selection of officers and professional staff, proportionate to the value and risk of the contract being tendered	100%
67					Providing up to date and relevant training to commissioners	100%
67					Regular monitoring of spend and contracts that need to be re tendered and are not allowed to be rolled on	100%
67					Procurement lead on all above threshold procurements	100%

67					The business partner team is fully staffed following recruitment	Recruitments made in June 2025
67					Develop succession planning to prepare for gaps created if employee turnover increases and recruitment proves even more challenging because of the uncertainty from LGR. Support employees in preparing for future change and potential selection processes.	Work on succession planning being planned and support for employees to follow in 2026.
68	People - Corporate Management. Managers not equipped to meet the changing needs of the organisation. Development of Fit for the Future Programme, gives new accountabilities and responsibilities for Leaders	If not addressed service improvements and efficiencies not delivered	Gail Malkin	224		
68					HR Support & Business Partners review processes to support organisation and deliver revised service supported by SLA	100%
68					Leadership development programme	100%
68					Review key policies and deliver relevant training	100%
69	People - People team. Resources insufficient to meet the growing demands of service. The work demands over which we have no control, such as new starters, pension queries, employee turnover and increasing numbers of payroll transactions, is putting additional pressure on the operations work of the team. Additional temporary resource is coming to an end without efficiency savings having been met, partly due to the ASM platform not leading to time savings.	Service quality is dropping and team is reporting workload pressures and work-related stress. Will need to cut back on service offered and extend service standard delivery times.	Gail Malkin	339		
69					We have improved resource levels in the operations team and have moved some workflows to iTrent and away from ASM.	10%
70	PeoplePeople team. Loss of key talent. Reliance on individual contributors with no cover as team is small. Example - one recruitment consultant - if she left - we would have a limited and reduced recruitment service until replaced	difficulty filling hard-to-recruit roles and longer time to recruit times more generally	Gail Malkin	339		
70					Maintain People Team as a "great place to work" where individuals are respected, trusted, have meaningful work and are well supported.	90%. Ongoing team development and support, with positive and inclusive work environment being maintained.
71	People - People team. Data protection legal compliance. Historical poor administration practices and pressures of work have meant that data has not been managed in line with data retention schedules.	non-compliance with data protection law	Gail Malkin	326		
71					Plan in place to tackle data cleansing of records including electronic and paper.	50% Team involved in scanning project and continue with housekeeping activity.
71					Plan in place to tackle data cleansing of records including electronic and paper. Electronic complete. Still working on paper records held in basement and M Drive records. Progress is slow because of the volume and having to fit this in around other commitments.	70%. High work demand impeding progress.
00072	Communities & Citizen Services - Budget pressures. Budget pressures in Customer Services, including Customer Contact and Corporate Support teams. Increased workload Improvements not delivered to improve services and reduce resource requirement Insufficient funding for workforce	Service savings not achieved	Helen Bishop	224		

0007 2						Tight establishment control in conjunction with Finance	Customer service restructure delivered and CSo savings made to meet budget targets. Other pressures have put pressure on performance. Ensuring swift recruitment following vacancies, staff training and reviewing approach to notice periods when staff successful in securing other roles in OCC.
0007 2						Corporate governance of CEX programme to include regular monitoring and escalation where appropriate	
74	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Staff Recruitment. Difficulty in recruiting on proposed terms and conditions - often FTC roles in the service. Terms and conditions of employment are not sufficiently attractive to attract and retain staff	Required skills and capacity are not available to deliver required work programmes or staff turnover results in the loss of skills from the team.	Clive Tritton	2	2	4	
74						Identifying project resource needs in early stages to identify resource needs and commence recruitment early before projects or strategies are committed or pausing projects while resource is secured. New priorities emerging from the Oxford Growth Commission are bringing forward new opportunities but these need additional resources and skills sets.	75%
75	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Managing staff capacity. Little capacity in team to allow cover for other team members if required. Internal and external projects and programme are running to very similar timescales across economic development, City Centre, Green Transport, Housing Delivery and Regeneration.	Staff resource and work needs to be carefully prioritised to handle demand. Some programmes are outside our control particularly in Green Transport and Economic Development. Difficulty to provide project cover if regeneration manager or housing supply officer is off work or leaves at short notice.	Clive Tritton	3	3	9	
75						Teams to implement team work plans or programme of projects and make sure it is updated and discussed at team meetings so service managers can monitor pressure points	80%
75						Ensure all staff are using using OneDrive or sharepoint for file storage and the file structure agreed for the team	100%
75						Maintain links with wider services on staffing demand issues, utilise external funds, and recruitment agencies where needed	80%
75						Business continuity plans to be reviewed. Ensure all project managers are keeping a risk and issues log up to date and these are reported to project boards. Move to sharepoint being used to ensure consistency of filing of key documents should a project need to be handed over.	80%
76	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Good governance. Development board and associated groups within the governance process not utilised effectively as it could be across the council. Lack of knowledge of how and when to utilise development review group and development board.	Board is reactive or not utilised leading to project problems.	Clive Tritton	2	2	4	
76						Project management training for project managers has been delivered and run by the PMO. Use of Boards is now established for DRG and ARG. Housing Review Group is now being incorporated into the system.	
76						Guidance on intranet/Sharepoint regarding development review group, Asset review group and development board. New Intranet site will include a new page for the Project Management Office (PMO).	
76						Advertise the development board review group to all project managers across the organisation	
76						Ensure consistent and appropriate personnel in PMO to enable the development process to be embedded across the organisation	

77	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Poor health and safety compliance due to inconsistent levels of experience and training. Inconsistent levels of experience and training in project managers. Lack of corporate resource and training in H&S protocols.	Health and safety incidents and non compliance during projects which may cause significant project delays, fines or legal action and more widely causes risk to staff.	Clive Tritton	3	3	9		
77							Health and Safety Team & CDM team have developed training standard for project managers and implemented and then are maintaining records.	
77							Update and implement risk assessments for service teams	50%
78	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Support Team Capacity. Lack of specialist advice or delays to projects caused by support team capacity. Commitments to projects and resourcing of support services (procurement, legal, finance, communities, planning) have not been considered in tandem and therefore resourcing in support areas cannot meet requirements of capital projects	Project delays and potentially inaccurate information reported through governance process through lack of specialist advice	Clive Tritton	3	3	9		
78							Raise awareness early with the support services on requirements during projects but also needing to build additional time into projects to reflect delays that occur	70%
78							Ensure support services are liaised with at stage one in the project and that support requirements are discussed and agreed	80%
79	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Staff Budget. Lack of budget to maintain staffing levels across service. Regen team due to failure to capitalise on the regeneration managers time and lack of funding to maintain current levels for city centre management and economic development teams. Staff budget relies capitalising time and external funding sources	Not being able to maintain staffing level of teams which would mean reduced resource to bring forward projects and programmes and loss of good staff that have often been difficult to recruit	Clive Tritton	2	2	4		
79							Proactively review funding opportunities to sustain staff levels	80%
79							If funding lost look at whether other teams in service or wider require the skills of affected staff whilst funding is secured.	80%
79							Ensure that Project Managers time is built into the Capital budgets on future projects	95%
80	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Housing supply funding. Reduction in funding available impacting housing delivery targets. Limits to HRA borrowing capacity/ Change to HRA Business Plan, Borrowing cost rises making schemes unviable, Lack of Homes England Funding rounds, Poor outcome from RSH inspection rates (RP) landlord service any of the compliance criteria/ Annual HE Investment Partner compliance return not considered satisfactory, loss of awarded funding due to not meeting grant terms	Reduced delivery results in increasing further the backlog of housing need if we do not secure additional affordable housing stock and risk of grant including RRTBRs being returned with punitive interest	Dave Scholes	3	3	9		
80							Ensure appropriate resource from across the council is supporting the housing delivery programme (see support services risk)	80%
80							Prioritise funding across the programme to manage risk based on funding sources	90%
80							Work closely with finance on the programme budgets to minimise risk of loss of funding	80%

80					Work closely with Housing on HRA Business Plan review and other factors that may affect ability to secure funding	80%
80					Maintain regular liaison and relationships with key contacts at Homes England.	80%
80					Maintain regular liaison with RPs to ensure enabling opportunities are maximised.	80%
80					DRG, HRG, Senior Housing Mant Team and OX Place Clienting meetings to ensure programme risks affecting funding closely monitored and managed.	50%
81	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Housing project delays. Programme slippage puts housing delivery targets at risk. Issues could be wide ranging for example risks relating to meeting planning policies, SSEN grid capacity to 2028/2032; and also water and sewage capacity concerns, site specific issues	Either projects are lost from programme or are delayed which adds further cost risk or funding is lost as grant terms not met risk of needing to return Right to Buy receipts if not spent with punitive interest	Dave Scholes	3	3	9
81					Improve processes with OX Place to streamline and give more certainty - Collaboration Agreement (or equivalent - i.e. Joint SOPs)	80%
81					Each project to follow established governance process including those relating to managing risks and issues with escalation to the responsible sponsor of the project or programme.	80%
81					Ensure the programme of work of each project is fully scoped and thorough feasibility is conducted	80%
81					Good project management with all risks managed and mitigated suitably. Ensure good reporting is conducted by project managers, escalating issues to development board	80%
81					Ensure the programme of work of each project is fully scoped and thorough feasibility is conducted with appropriately qualified professional teams	80%
81					Good project management with all risks managed and mitigated suitably. Ensure good reporting is conducted by project managers, escalating issues to development board THIS ONE SEEMS TO BE DUPLICATE	80%
81					Ensure financial checks on contractors as part of procurement	100%
81					Ensure that client rquirements re. consultation with council and external stakeholders is happening on projects including with relevant members	100%
81					Internal meetings e.g.OX Place Programme meetings, OX Place Client Meetings, Development Board and its review groups to discuss strategic programme issues and identify actions to unblock engaging with relevant stakeholders where necessary.	80%
82	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Lack of key partner engagement. Lack of engagement from partners to deliver our priorities in Economic Development and City Centre. Third party decision making or capacity issues result in lack of support financially or in kind for key initiatives/projects	Unable to deliver on strategy actions or priorities or fund associated projects/staff or creates unplanned financial pressure	Rupert Waters	3	3	9
82					Ensure formal established partnership forums e.g. Economic Growth Steering Board and City Centre Delivery Board with key stakeholders established and regular horizon scanning	80%
82					Regular more informal engagement with key local and national bodies to maintain relationships and horizon scan	80%
83	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Resource pressure from partners or stakholders. Key stakehodlers or partners' projects and priorities create council resource implications. Third party decision making result in pressure for officer or member support financially or in kind for their initiatives/projects	Unable to resource either the partner priority or our own priorities or creates unplanned financial pressure	Rupert Waters	3	3	9

83					Ensure formal established partnership forums e.g. Economic Growth Steering Board and City Centre Delivery Board with key stakeholders established and regular horizon scanning	80%
83					Regular more informal engagement with key local and national bodies to maintain relationships and horizon scan	80%
84	Property Assets - Investment into stock and existing properties. Under investment or lack of funding to invest into properties to maintain condition. Budgets not sufficient to match property needs	Properties become poor condition to let, reduction in income and potential non-compliant or dangerous.	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9
84					Robust input into the Council's budget process	
84					Understanding of stock condition , developing robust programmes of work to secure budgets are adequate	
85	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Applications Team KPIs may be unable to be met due to taxi licensing not resourced appropriately. Taxi licensing is not resourced appropriately by the service due to them not agreeing funding	Performance affected and KPIs unable to be achieved	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
85					Currently temp in place funded by taxi licensing up until end of September, discussions ongoing with Finance and Richard Adams to source this resource permanently	Meeting on 8/10 scheduled to review and agree longer term budget for this post Funding has been agreed by Nigel and Richard Adams to extend this post up until the end of March25, Funding will need to be reviewed and agreed post March25 Discussions to take place in February about funding for taxi licensing post 31/3/25
86	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Customer behaviour in the Westgate library or larders putting our staff at risk either through physical or mental abuse. Unacceptable behaviour either verbally or physically from customers who visit the Westgate library	Staff are physically or verbally abused	Mark Chandler	2	3	6
86					Mobile phones in place to call library security for assistance as and when required, security guard on site throughout opening times, procedure in place to report and ban customers from the library who are physically or verbally abusive towards our staff, looking to develop training for staff on handling these difficult situations	
87	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Wellbeing of staff working from home and being able to access support as and when required. Majority of staff working from home regularly without face to face contact	Staff feeling isolated, struggling mentally and not getting the support they need	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
87					Duty Manager available for staff to phone at all times to gain access to support, Teams channels set up to communicate with colleagues, monthly 1-1s held with Managers, bi-monthly face to face team meetings take place	
88	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Staff not following data protection processes resulting in breaches. Staff not following data protection guidelines or having the appropriate up to date training and awareness of procedures	Data protection breaches resulting in unhappy customers	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
88					All staff ensuring data protection training is completed as per mandatory requirements, breaches reported to Managers and plans put in place to take actions to prevent further re-occurrences including re-taking training where necessary	
89	ICT - Retaining skilled ICT professionals. Uncompetitive salaries in some areas.	Staff leave.	Rocco Labellarte	1	3	3

89					Review carried out of grades and salaries for key roles.	Grades have been reviewed and salaries adjusted.
89					Provide flexibility - output based working versus presenteeism. Review grades and salaries for key roles.	
89					Staff recognition initiatives implemented in April 2025 were intended to consolidate low probability.	
90	ICT - Addressing ICT staff skills gaps. Single points of failure, in particular with the absence of Business Owners and super-users within the services.	Delays in resolving issues for individuals and services.	Rocco Labellarte	133		
90					Management action to ensure permanent and interim staff are able to cover for one another.	Most vacancies filled, two remain, one being filled shortly.
90					Considerable work has gone into work on systems and processes across the Council. Including work on super users, user support groups and additional training. Waiting times for support have come down significantly year-on-year.	Further work remains to do and the cyber incident has increased demand.
91	ICT - Resources insufficient to meet demands of service. Competing priorities (BAU, Projects, non-ICT issues passed to ICT).	Demand exceeds capacity, and staff work long hours, struggling mentally (as evidenced by the H&S Survey)	Rocco Labellarte	339		
91					Management action to ensure permanent and interim staff are able to cover for one another.	Additional interim resources have been brought on board following the cyber incident.
91					Appropriate management action ensuring leave, toil, employee assistant are appropriately utilised.	Leave has been taken over August and a thank you session held by the Chief Executive following the cyber incident. Vacant management post has been filled and process improvements implemented helping to manage workflow. High workloads remain, but new projects come with associated resources which need to be appropriately managed. The cyber incident has mean additional work, dedicated resource is being worked through based on the need identified in the subsequent reports.
93	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Capital Project Delays. Significant delays of capital projects. Unforeseen consequences e.g. planning risks, external factors, competing asks on resources, contractor insolvency or supply chain issues	Reduced performance and missed targets on capital projects which affect overall expenditure, MTFP spend or grant stipulations	Clive Tritton	339		
93					Ensure the programme of work of each project is fully scoped and thorough feasibility is conducted with appropriately qualified professional teams	80%
93					Good project management with all risks managed and mitigated suitably. Ensure good reporting is conducted by project managers, escalating issues to development board.	80%
93					Undertake financial checks on contractors as part of procurement.	80%
93					Internal meetings e.g. project boards and Development Board including its review groups to discuss strategic programme issues and identify actions to unblock engaging with relevant stakeholders where necessary.	80%
93					Undertake consultation internal and external on projects including with members	80%
94	Financial Services - Property Insurance. If the Council is unable to provide adequate information about the construction of existing buildings in its ownership and their valuations, its Insurers may continue to provide insurance that does not meet the full needs of the Council and exposes it to uninsured risks and financial loss.The Council has been unable to provide sufficient information to Insurers about the construction of properties and the cost of their reinstatement.	Only one Insurer quoted at the last tender and the insurance cover provided has significant weaknesses. The property valuations that the Council has may be wrong, resulting in properties being under or over insured. The Council's properties are insured on a declared value basis, they might be underinsured because of inflation. Unoccupied properties are uninsured. The Council is unable to go to tender before it improves the information that it has.	Nigel Kennedy	248		

94					The Council has secured a commitment from its Insurer that they will offer renewal terms for the 12 month period from 1 July 2025	
94					The Council has appointed a consultant that specialises in rebuild cost assessment. These will be undertaken over a three year rolling programme.	The consultant has been appointed
94					66% of HRA housing stock has been surveyed.	The progress with gathering the survey information continues
94					Housing losses, other than named tower blocks, are limited to £5,000,000	This remains the same.
94					Clarification on the exact requirements that Insurers have is being obtained.	Clarification of the Insurers requirements has been established.
95	Property Assets - Capital Receipts. Inability to reach capital receipts budget. Market forces, dependant on engagement of 3rd parties. Selling from investment portfolio reduction in income	Reduced capital causes increased borrowing or reduction in capital programme	Emma Gubbins	236		
95					Constant review of lease re-gear opportunities and special purchasers	On going target - ahead of budget
96		Reduced income, reduced capital receipt, risk of legal challenge, reputational damage, increased complaints.	Emma Gubbins	4416		
96					Increased base budget (finance/legal). Ongoing review of legal requirements. Short term more external support.	
96					Legal team to have early understanding of workloads	
103	Planning & Regulation - Regulatory compliance. Failure to comply with regulations and statutory compliance. Insufficient resources impacting on ability to ensure compliance. A culture that fails to enforce policies; a lack of knowledge exacerbated by staff turnover; changes in legislation; increased demand leading to mistakes by staff.	A loss of public trust and confidence in the Council's ability to govern effectively. Negative media attention will harm the Council's reputation. Elected Members and senior officers face criticism. The Council's ability to deliver services is undermined as important decisions are made incorrectly. Disputes among Members and staff. Fines and penalties and loss of grants and funding.	David Butler, Richard Adams	248		
103					Clarity about roles and responsibilities.	Building Control job descriptions are in place. Being taken to HR for approval. All other teams job descriptions are appropriate and in place. Training and CPD ongoing.
103					Correct corporate processes in place to ensure that policy is translated to process	Work procedures and policies are in place.
103					Internal and external audit conduct audits and reviews of Council processes	LABC internal audit being submitted

103					Appropriate level of physical, technological (including new base system), and human resources	There is reliance on contractors. Building Control job descriptions are going through Job Evaluation. Current Building Contral role is part of market allowance scheme.
103					Ongoing training for staff on regulatory frameworks	Regular staff training with training plans
103					Ensure culture allows whistleblowing/challenge	The Council has a whistle blowing policy.
103					Ability to disseminate lessons learnt	Sharepoint sites are used as tools to spread information. Staff meetings. Tools are in place. H&S discussed at team meetings. Case reviews in place.
103					Ensure that systems are in place to monitor and control compliance and updates	Document control is in place for policy and procedures with review dates.
108	Housing - Failure of Homeless Prevention Activities. Temporary Accommodation - Failure to effectively manage the financial burden and demand for temporary accommodation in accordance with the individual needs of clients. Service delivery failure - homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford leading to increased homeless placements/TA costs.	Reputational Impact - Increase in reviews - client's taking legal action/ appealing against their housing decisions, clients approaching media to highlight their case and shame council. Financial Impact - Increase in temporary accommodation costs adding pressure to general fund. Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. Overall Impact - If this risk was realised, this would hinder the operation of this service as the financial viability of this service would be called into question and related issues impacting to regulatory compliance would impact on OCC.	Nerys Parry	248		
108					Enhancing the prevention offer - including sourcing and negotiating the right type of accommodation required that meets the varying client groups	The team continue to focus on Homeless prevention activities and to minimise homeless placements in Temporary Accommodation. .
108					Maintaining efforts and focus on early intervention and homelessness prevention	The team continue to work closely with residents and partners to prevent homelessness where possible
108					Regular budget monitoring to scrutinise budget expenditure and taking opportunities to bid for external funding where available	Budgets continue to be closely monitored
109	Housing - Failure to meet Homeless Temporary Accommodation Demand. Inability to keep up with increasing demand as a result of government changes in eligibility assistance criteria, including those who are eligible as a result of their immigration status, resettlement, changes in priority. This also includes the wider contextual imbalances, within council's own stock and private housing. Service delivery failure - homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford leading to increased homeless placements / temporary accommodation costs due to changes in Government legislation/policy.	Reputational Impact - Use of social media by clients to amplify their issues - these could also result in loss of trust and support from key stakeholders and wider local government community. Financial Impact - Inability to secure sufficient homelessness grant funding that meets the increasing demand. Legal Impact - The council is not obliged to house everyone who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness. However, it is required to take action depending on the circumstances of each case. It must comply with relevant legislation and have regard to the statutory code of guidance. Overall Impact - Limited impact when variables such as current Government welfare and immigration policy is considered but this is subject to review if there were Government policy changes.	Richard Wood	3515		
109					Offer of early intervention and prevention that seeks to address the holistic needs of people at risk of losing their home	Homeless prevention work continues to be a prioritised.

109						Establishment of clear pathways for service users to access so they can get the assistance they need	Work continues to seek the best outcomes for service users.
109						Offer of on-going housing support to more vulnerable clients focused on clear outcome based plans that foster independence	Work continues to support vulnerable clients and positive outcomes.
109						Annual Lettings Plan Targets for the Homelessness/Review of the Allocations Scheme	Performance against the Annual Lettings Plan targerts continues to be closely monitored to house those in the highest need. A review of the Allocations Scheme has been completed and a consultation is underway with residents/other key stakeholders on the proposals.
109						Planned temporary accommodation mitigations to increase supply including decants of blocks to be re-developed and more PSL units. Now 260 further units agreed, including 150 purchased.	Work on temporary accommodation mitigations is continuing to progress.
110	Housing - Delayed new build developments/acquisitions. Supply - failure to secure pipeline of affordable supply arising from council's housing development programme, sourcing of PRS acquisitions and maximising on supply opportunities including downsizing, securing nomination rights, empty properties and fast void turnarounds. Service delivery failure - new build completions of social housing are delayed to due to developers failing to complete on time. Planned acquisitions slow down to a lack of supply of suitable properties in Oxford. Changes to the PRS Housing Markets including the Renters Rights Bill reduces the supply of affordable PRS available. Improvements to the Void process fail to reduce Void Re-let Times.	Reputational Impact - Inability to deliver on council housing programme targets will impact on housing waiting list, but will also impact negatively, loss of trust from key stakeholders and funding partners. Financial Impact - Delays or non-delivery of council housing programme will severely impact and add further financial pressures on HRA Business Plan as well as add further pressures on General Fund as families will need to remain in Temporary Accommodation. Legal Impact - It is a legal requirement to ensure that TA is suitable and families with children do not spend over 6 weeks in B&B, households believing they have been offered unsuitable accommodation make take legal action against council. Overall Impact - TA provision appears on target but this is subject to review in the light of regular and updated data	Dave Scholes, Nerys Parry	2	4	8	
110						Progress against the housing development programme and targets are regularly monitored and tracked. See also the related risk "Housing Supply Funding" which is also monitored under Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability area.	80%
110						Building stronger relationships with private sector landlords, keeping under review the offer to PRS landlords to maximise supply.	80%
110						Maximising funding and supply opportunities - including the LAHF programmes and working with Homes England to bring in more funding for Brownfield sites.	80%

111	Housing - Implementation of the Landlord Services Re-Organisation. Risk of not delivering the re-organisation of landlord service in a timely manner and as a consequence it does not deliver the changes required including service improvements, culture change and achieve better outcomes for tenants. Service Delivery Failure - the landlord services re-organisation is not completed within the expected timelines due to delays in new staffing structures and processes being put in place.	Reputational Impact - inability to establish a service structure that is more fit for purpose, responsive to new regulatory requirements and changing needs of tenants and homes. Financial Impact - Inability to realise reorganization benefits such as improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and achieving better outcomes for the HRA. Legal Impact - New SHR regulatory requirements means the council as a landlord has a duty to comply and meet required standards, failing to do so it will breach and face sanctions imposed by the SHR Overall Impact - Limited impact as the initial work for the re-organisation has begun and good progress has been made.	Nerys Parry	2	4	8		
111							Re-organisation of Landlord services is complete. Transitional arrangements in place, recruitment needed. Significant training and development plan as part of transformation to deliver compliant service that meet tenant needs.	Update 15/12/25 - Majority of new posts recruited to with new starters undertaking training. Two new Area Housing Managers to start in January 2026. Area Based Working model to be implemented in January 2026. Broad communication to tenants, members and staff groups mid December. Intensive training in December and January with launch of increased visibility. Update 01/10/25 - Formal consultation process closed. Transition period in place from 01/09/25 with many new roles being recruited to and staff moving into new roles/JD requirements. Decision of go-live on area based working to be taken when recruitment is more advanced and more new staff are in post. Significant training and development plan developed to support the on-going transformation of the service to ensure compliance.
112	Housing - Failure in resident involvement activities/compliance with the Social Housing Act /Consumer Standards. Tenant voice - failure to improve tenant involvement activities/implement the reset programme to help deliver tenant led recommendations and priorities and organisation objectives to comply with the Transparency, influence and accountability standard. Service Failure - Tenant Involvement governance arrangements and activities are not fit for purpose and do not allow the tenants voice to be heard/meaningful involvement in line with responsibilities under the SHA/Consumer Standards	Reputational Impact - A poor service offer/lack of tenant involvement risks an increase in complaints as it fails to provide tenants with the platform and opportunity to help shape and add value to service improvements (and could also result in Regulator/Ombudsman intervention). Financial Impact – failure to establish efficient routes/platforms for tenants to raise their voice/concerns can be costly and also fails to capture financial efficiencies. Inefficient service delivery can be costly and lead to adding financial pressure on HRA. Legal Impact - New SHR regulatory requirements means the council as a landlord has a duty to comply and meet required standards, failing to do so it will breach and face sanctions imposed by the SHR. Overall Impact - There are currently no systemic arrangements to consult with tenants so this is a tangible risk in terms of SHR deciding infringements have taken place. However, to mitigate this risk, evidence can be presented to the SHR that work has begun to address this core issue. In respect of service delivery, involvement with tenants on a systematic basis, as envisaged in the Cabinet report of December 2024 on Tenant Management, would help drive up customer satisfaction levels.	Nerys Parry	5	4	20		

112						Re-organisation of landlord services complete. Specific reset work underway to develop a new approach to resident involvement that will lead to a new strategy and structure for involvement.	Update 15/12/25 - Restructure of Landlord Services complete. The majority of posts have been recruited to or are awaiting new staff to start in post. Area Based working for Tenancy Management to begin in January 2026. RI strategy approved by Cabinet in Dec 2025
							1/10 Building on steps to embed the new landlord services structure with training and development, as well as strategy and structure now in draft and due to go to Cabinet in Dec, to improve service delivery to residents.
112						To ensure that data gathered is being used to reflect tenants' changing needs and therefore the service offer.	Update 15/12/25 - Building on the current work to "know our tenant, know their needs" to improve data and information, and ensure info used to better design services. The Data Team are now in place will lead in progressing this work going forward.
113	Housing - Social Housing Regulator Inspection readiness - failure to evidence the implementation/ adherence to Social Housing Regulator's consumer standards across housing - and this resulting in a [C3] grading following inspection. Service Failure - OCC current/planned activities fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - A low grade will impact negatively on council's overall reputation and loss of trust from tenants who will perceive they are not getting the services they need and value for money for their rent Financial Impact - A C3 grading will indicate serious failings that may affect housing services quality, such as delayed repairs or inadequate safety measures - a reactive approach to addressing these issues will add financial pressure on HRA Legal Impact - A low grade judgement from SHR will impact negatively on council's reputation - reflecting that it does not meet SHR governance requirements. These would be issues of serious regulatory concern where urgent action will be required to improve its position. Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented.	Nerys Parry	4	4	16	
113						Self - assessment undertaken to ensure clarity on position, with a clear, prioritised improvement plan over seen by Task Force.	Update 15/12/25 - Creation of the new Task Force to oversee the progress of improvement plans to ensure compliance with standards. Housing Board continues to track a number of workstreams focused on delivery of strategies and alignment with the consumer standards. Further work is underway to assess progress.
114	Housing - Leaseholder Services fail to comply with the Social Housing Act / Consumer Standards. Leasehold - failure to deliver a fair, transparent and compliant leasehold service to leaseholders that meets their needs and is reflective and demonstrates value for money of their management fee. Service failure - improvements to leaseholder compliance activities are delayed and OCC is unable to comply with the SHA/Consumer Standards for leaseholders	Reputational Impact - A failure to provide a fair and compliant service to leaseholders will negatively impact on council's reputation and perception that it is not delivering compliant services to leaseholders Financial Impact - A poor leasehold service offer, reduces council's ability to collect service charges and recover works expenditure and secure funding back to the HRA Legal Impact - Leaseholders have the right to get information about service charges, and be consulted maintenance and running costs. The inability for council to comply with these function can lead to leaseholders challenging these through the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented	Nerys Parry	3	3	9	
114						A review of leasehold service offer is being drawn up to help understand the gaps and issues of the service	Work is now underway between the service and legal to ensure compliance. A new leasehold management policy is being developed, Cabinet report on S20 due in January 2026

115	Housing - Implementation of the Development plans for HRA Asset Management. Risk of not changing policies, processes and procedures for HRA property service functions in a timely manner and as a consequence it does not deliver the changes desired including a fit for purpose client team to effectively commission and oversee delivery of works and services, establish the service improvements required incl around repairs, safety and compliance. Service Delivery Failure - the HRA Asset Management re-organisation is not completed within the expected timelines due to delays in new staffing structures and processes being put in place.	Reputational Impact - inability to establish an HRA service structure that is more fit for purpose, responsive to new regulatory requirements and changing needs of tenants and homes. Financial Impact - Inability to realise reorganisation benefits such as improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and achieving better outcomes for the HRA Legal Impact - Inability to establish a service structure that is responsive to meeting new regulatory regime - social housing regulator consumer standards Overall Impact - This risk would, if realised, have a significant impact on the operation and viability of HRA services	Nerys Parry	3	4	12	
115							Review service offer to ensure there is sufficient capacity and capability to commission and client all HRA asset work Consultancy work delivered and being considered. Interim capacity in place to support current delivery.
116	Housing - HRA Investment and Management Controls fail to comply with the Social Housing Act/Consumer Standards. 5 year investment programme - risks the need for council as a landlord to set out the strategic direction for OCC's HRA capital management and investment plans, which must also form part of medium to long term financial and service planning and budget setting process. It also risks complying with Social Housing Regulator expectations in relation to council having the investment management and controls in place. Service Failure - OCC current/planned investment activities fail to comply with the Social Housing Act /Regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - Failure to plan and develop short/medium/long term investment will prove difficult to evidence compliance and satisfy Social Housing Regulator regulatory requirements relating to effectively planning maintenance and delivering good outcomes and value for money to the HRA. Financial Impact - Risk of not being able to adopt investment planning risks the council in continuing to commission works in a reactive manner which can be costly and add further financial pressure to the HRA. It also risks in the Social Housing Regulator highlighting this as failure for delivering good outcomes to tenants and effective management and governance of HRA . Legal Impact - Risk of council as a landlord not meeting SHR Consumer standards - in particular Safety and Quality Homes standard where efficient knowledge, planning of assets and maintenance must be evidenced. Overall Impact - Would be a significant if this risk was realised in meeting social housing targets in terms of overall delivery of the programme.	Nerys Parry	3	3	9	
116							Whilst a 5 year capital programme is established - ongoing risk due to further stock condition work needed. Work procured and underway. Transitional arrangements are taking place with the supply chain. Transitional first year underway, work progressing well for the development of the next year of the 5 year rolling programme. Interim support in place to ensure work stays on track and is robust and delivered on time to the supply chain.
116							Consultancy and interim support has been applied to assist on this to ensure the council's first 5Y programme is developed and agreed Work is ongoing

117	Housing - HRA Asset Management Safety and Compliance. Safety and compliance - risks inability to comply with legislation and on-going changes relating to safety which form part of the new regulatory regime that bring increased scrutiny of council's approach to meeting all applicable fire, health and safety obligations to ensure the safety of all tenants. Service Failure - OCC current/safety and compliance activities fail to comply with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - Failure to evidence and satisfy the Social Housing Regulator that OCC is complying with its Safety requirements will bring the council into disrepute, result in a loss of confidence and concerns from tenants about their safety Financial Impact - Failure to meet safety and compliance requirements will question council's role as a landlord and its ability to effectively govern and have efficient management of its HRA and maintenance plans - as well as its requirements to meet decent home standards Legal Impact - Bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from the Social Housing Regulator. Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented. There are yet to be fully approved technical policies, such as in damp and mould or asbestos, to take just two examples, which ensure there is standard compliance practices to meet safety standards. A mitigating factor is the institutional memory within OCC on such matters but if there was a staff turnover, this risk may be accentuated accordingly.	Nerys Parry	3	4	12		
117							Development of an audit programme to ensure data accuracy	Resource in place to commence the audit imminently.
118	Housing - Repairs Maintenance. Repairs - risks inability for council as a landlord to comply with Social Housing Regulator consumer standard (Safety and Quality) to provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which the council is responsible for. Service Failure - OCC current/planned activities on property maintenance and repairs take longer than expected/fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - OCC's inability to effectively manage repairs can lead to increase in complaints and escalating costs, loss of rent and spend on HRA. This in turn will bring Ombudsman / Social Housing Regulator involvement and bring the council into disrepute. Financial Impact - OCC's inability to demonstrate effective governance and management of its HRA finances. Inability to manage repairs expenditure. Legal Impact - bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from the Social Housing Regulator . Overall Impact - while this risk, if realised, would be significant - steps have been made to mitigate this risk. The decision of the Cabinet to approve the HRA Business Plan, Asset Management and 5-Year Investment Programme and the Tenancy Management and Involvement programme has led to governance structures being introduced and a work programme being developed to include the issue of repairs	Nerys Parry	2	4	8		
118							External consultants commissioned to review the end to end repairs process to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.	Work is pending delivery (1/10) and will contain an action plan to implement to cover efficiency, effectiveness and tenant communication.

119	Housing - Voids - risks inability for council as a landlord to comply with the Social Housing Regulator consumer standard (Safety and Quality) to provide an effective, efficient and timely voids service procedure for the homes which the council is responsible for. Service Failure - OCC void works take longer than expected/fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - OCC's inability to effectively manage voids can lead to increase in complaints and escalating costs, loss of rent and spend on HRA. This in turn will bring Ombudsman / Social Housing Regulator involvement and bring council into disrepute. Financial Impact - OCC's inability to demonstrate effective governance and management of its HRA finances. Inability to manage void expenditure and rent loss as a result of long term void turnarounds can impact on income to HRA. Legal Impact - bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from SHR . Overall Impact - while this risk, if realised, would be significant - steps have been made to mitigate this risk. The decision of the Cabinet to approve the HRA Business Plan, Asset Management and 5-Year Investment Programme and the Tenancy Management and Involvement programme has led to governance structures being introduced and a work programme being developed to include the issue of voids	Nerys Parry	2	4	8		
119							External consultant commissioned to review the end to end voids process to provide recommendations to OCC to implement to improve performance in this area as soon as possible	Consultant report recieved, action plan being pulled together
120	Housing - Workforce, skills and capacity for service delivery. Workforce, skills and capacity - risks and challenges across a range of service areas within the housing service including recruitment, retention of staff, and skilled workforce. Experienced staff leaving OCC, moving to new posts and/or existing and new staff requiring training on existing/new processes, best practice and changes in legislation including the Social Housing Act, Renters Rights Act and Awaabs Law.	Reputational Impact - Inability to have the right, skilled resources can impact on service delivery as well as affect the well-being of employees. In addition, restructuring may require employees to adapt to new roles, learn new skills, and cope with job loss or job hunting. Financial Impact - Inability to have the right workforce in place can lead to substantial financial burdens added to the HRA and reduce resilience of services. This can heighten the over-reliance on interim workforce which can be disruptive to service due to the instability of service, loss of skills/knowledge . Legal Impact - The council as the local housing authority has the regulatory requirement to provide free housing advice and support - ensuring that services are adequately resourced and skilled Overall Impact - Significant impact to the operation of the HRA and wider social housing programme	Nerys Parry	3	3	9		
120							Work underway to review the new structure required.	Update 15/12/25 - Re-organisation delivered and the training and development plan scoped - to apply to all staff working across landlord services
120							Training, development and upskilling will form part of ensuring staff have the tools and support to carry out roles.	Work on this is ongoing

121	Housing - Housing IT and Systems. Housing IT and Systems - the ineffectiveness and transition of new and legacy systems can significantly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery across housing and ultimately tenant customer satisfaction. Housing IT systems fail to support the business needs of the service and this impacts on service delivery times and customer satisfaction levels	Reputational Impact - Inefficient systems, software, and hardware can slow down daily tasks, leading to a decrease in staff productivity and impact on service delivery overall to tenants Financial Impact - Increased Costs as a result of inefficient systems that do not talk to each other - consequently leading to higher operational costs. Maintaining outdated systems often requires more resources and specialised support, which can be expensive and add financial pressures to HRA Legal Impact - Council as a landlord has the obligation to ensure the integrity and security of systems it has in place Overall Impact - delays in service delivery, increased customer complaints and staff dissatisfaction/lower morale	Nerys Parry	3	3	9		
121							On-going development of the use of the current housing QL system/Versaa forms is continuing to support service delivery. Re-procurement is being considered for parts of the housing system relating to Homeless and Allocations to improve functionality available to staff/customers in this area.	Progress towards procurement will commence ahead of the contract end date for the existing Housing & Asset Management systems in February 2028. Optimisation of the use of the existing Housing Needs system continues and procurement of a new housing needs system for areas of Homeless and Allocations is underway and moving forward.
122	Housing - Data and performance. Data and performance - Failure to have effective data and performance management systems in place - as these are critical for making informed business decisions - strategically and operationally. Service failure - existing processes and procedures fail to accurately record all data required on tenants (and housing applicants) - incl. protected characteristics, property/building information - incl. component data, to ensure activities and priorities for compliance, performance management/service improvement/risk management are all data led.	Reputational Impact - As the local housing authority, the council is required and responsible for ensuring the integrity of data, how it uses these for making decisions and reporting on performance to tenants, Regulator - including government returns. Failure to do this will result in loss of confidence and greater scrutiny from the Social Housing Regulator Financial Impact - Poor data and performance management impacts on the council's ability to deliver its HRA Business Plan priorities and reduce pressures on GF. For e.g.; unplanned cost increases, revenue reduction and poor client management functions - including ODS/contractors. This could also impact on council's ability to demonstrate its value for money duty across both HRA and GF Legal Impact - OCC as a landlord has the obligation to ensure the integrity and security of systems it has in place. It has duty to ensure the integrity of any data returns it submits to govt or social housing regulator Overall Impact - This is a significant risk as while the data function exists, the QL system needs to be fully operational. The need for reliable and up to the minute data is critical for all aspects of the HRA programme and therefore the need for data to be of consistently high quality remains paramount to the good functioning of the HRA service.	Nerys Parry	3	4	12		
122							Significant amount of work is being applied to ensure the integrity and efficient management of asset data is in place. Resource deployed to capture outstanding tenant information.	Additional capacity in place to support efficient management and improvement of data. Ongoing stock condition work procured. Resources identified to capture remaining tenant information
122							Improvement in performance management systems and mechanisms across housing are being reviewed to ensure that resources and financial spend are targeted to address service issues	The new Data Team are now in place to support the further development of performance management systems and mechanisms

123	Housing - Financial management of the Housing Revenue Account. Housing Revenue Account [HRA] - risk that the council with responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the HRA fails to account and evidence the expenditure and income against the running of its housing stock which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants. OCC fails to provide sufficient evidence to the Social Housing Regulator of effective and efficient financial management of the HRA for OCC tenants and compliance with expectations as a social landlord.	Reputational Impact - Failure to sufficiently evidence the efficient and transparent use of HRA can negatively impact on council's reputation and intervention from regulator. This can also lead to loss of trust from tenants - and raising concerns / complaints Financial Impact - Failure to evidence and satisfy the SHR regulator inspection criteria "financial resilience" - which covers the extent on how HRA funds generated from tenants rent collection is invested back into the HRA for asset and service improvements and secure good tenant outcomes Legal Impact - The HRA is a ring-fenced account within the General Fund - with income and expenditure being prescribed by statute with no general discretion to breach the ring-fence Overall Impact - This is a significant risk as there is data to suggest cost overruns have occurred that is not in line with budgetary expectations. The risk has been mitigated, to a limited extent, by internal cost control mechanisms.	Nerys Parry	3	4	12	
123							Council has a clear understanding of government's policy that the HRA remains a ring-fenced account within the General Fund; and within this it should still be primarily a landlord account containing the income and expenditure arising from the council's landlord functions. Work streams including repairs and voids seek to address elements of this work
124	Housing - Inadequate controls to manage HRA financial spend. Inadequate financials controls in place - resulting in an overspend, programme targets not being met and impacting on the ability to deliver services within the HRA. Service failure - controls and clienting arrangements inadequate to meet service needs.	Reputational Impact - failure to ensure effective joint working between OCC and service suppliers would impair the reliability of the maintenance and upkeep of the housing stock. This could lead to tenants expressing dissatisfaction which would damage the reputation of the OCC with tenants. If tenants decided to express concern on social media or to specific media outlets this would damage the reputation of OCC amongst the wider public and with key stakeholder groups as well as damage the relationship between OCC and Social Housing Regulator which could lead to infringement actions taken by the regulator. Financial Impact - is significant as it could lead to unsustainable budget overspends due to, amongst other factors, a lack of a joined up approach towards budgetary and programme works between OCC and ODS. This could undermine the HRA Budget and add financial pressures to the HRA business plan. The efficiency of effective financial controls would be brought into question as a direct consequence of the realisation of this risk profile. Legal Impact - disruptions in the working relationship between OCC and service suppliers that led to issues with maintenance and issues with budgetary controls would mean that this could lead to systemic failure with customer standards and economic governance that could necessitate Social Housing Regulator action against OCC. Tenants could potentially take legal action via a class action in reference to various housing statutes in such an extreme scenario. Overall Impact - disruptions in the working relationship between OCC and service suppliers that led to issues with maintenance and issues with	Nerys Parry	2	4	8	
124							New client management arrangements will tighten and add improvements in the commissioning of works - coupled with performance management measures to ensure commissioned works are delivered to timescales and within budget. These should lead also to improving and building good working relationships with clear lines of responsibility and accountability Arrangements of client management in place.

125	Communities & Citizen Services - Leisure contract financial performance. Ongoing contract management and partnership approach to the external leisure provision contract, to ensure stability with its financial performance. External factors such as pandemics, utility pricing or a bid that was unrealistic.	Financial impact to OCC and/or service reduction to cut costs that impact service quality	Hagan Lewisman	4	4	16		
125							Ensure robust contract in place	
125						0	Explore other options for income generation within the contract, such as agency model, fees and charges, and improved commercial options. Regular client and governance meetings.	
125							Strong, well skilled client team	
125							Work with Serco leisure to ensure options are presented to reduce/remove any pressure to the Council	80%
125							Quarterly monitoring	
125							Open book accounting	60%
125							Internal officers meeting	85%
126	Communities & Citizen Services - Financial savings against community centres. Desired savings may not be achieved. Savings were developed without the input of the service area	Financial impact to OCC and or service reduction to cut costs. Service quality would be impacted.	Hagan Lewisman	3	4	12		
126							Work ongoing to drive up revenue including induction of staff at east Oxford Community Centre	
126							Community Centres Review Board set up	100%
126							PID going to Development Board	100%
126							Plan of action in place for year 1 including business case review, lettings, charges and other areas of revenue	100%
127	Property Assets - Property Non Compliance - Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. If a Council commercial property does not achieve an EPC B rating by 2030 the Council will be unable to let the property to a commercial tenant. The current minimum UK legal energy efficiency rating is E, but the UK Government has set a target of B by 2030 in order to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050	A considerable investment in properties is required. If this does not take place the Council will be unable to let properties and income to the Council will be reduced. Businesses must find alternative property causing considerable disruption.	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9		
127							Audit property portfolio and review EPC ratings.	50%
127							Plan retrofit strategies. Upgrading of insulation in walls, roofs and floors, replacing lighting with efficient LED systems, smart controls for heating and cooling, improved glazing and low carbon heating systems	10%
127							Explore funding options and Government support	
127							Communicate and collaborate with tenants to raise awareness of Retrofit and encourage take up.	20%

164	Financial Services - Succession planning. Loss of statutory financial leadership (Section 151 Officer). Retirement of Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)	The retirement of the Group Finance Director creates financial governance and leadership risks including 1) Increased likelihood of delays in closing and signing off the annual accounts, risking breach of statutory duties 2) Reduced capacity to provide a clear financial strategy, and direction for the Council 3) Lower probability of achieving planned savings targets 4) Potential loss of Member confidence in the robustness of the Council's financial management and reporting 5) Diminished scrutiny of major financial decisions	Caroline Green	1 2 3		
164					The appointment of a fully qualified and experienced Section 151 Officer	An appointment has been made
164					Knowledge transfer between the current Section 151 Officer and his replacement.	
164					Second tier empowerment so that they have the authority to ensure that day to day operations continue effectively	The Council has an effective second tier team and an experienced Deputy Section 151 Officer
165	Planning & Regulation - Software renewal (IDOX/Uniform). Service failure. Major software renewal, risks to deliver services if migration fails	Inability to receive or process applications related to Uniform (including planning, business regulation and licensing applications) due to failed migration. Potential loss of data or inability to retrieve historic data.	David Butler	2 4 8		
165					Ensure project board set up	Project board in place and meeting regularly
165					Robust procurement exercise	Procurement exercises completed
165					Regular supplier meetings	Weekly meetings
165					Extensive User Acceptance Testing	UAT now complete
165					Project risk register created and regularly reviewed	
165					Ensure back up systems secure in event of migration failure	

Ref	Risk Description	Consequence	Owner	Current Probability	Current Impact	Risk Score
12	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Increased costs and complexity for waste. Increased costs and complexity in the delivery of the Council's domestic collection service, and ODS commercial waste operations. Changes in statutory obligations in the waste and recycling system and in funding mechanisms for domestic waste services. Competition in commercial waste services.	If higher costs are not sufficiently matched with increased revenues to support the delivery of the new obligations, this may impact on the funding of other service areas - as domestic waste collections are a statutory requirement. If the net income ODS derives from commercial waste operations reduces this could also impact on dividend payments to the Council which underpin other service delivery.	Clive Tritton	3	4	12
14	Chief Executive - Partnership working. Devolution governance debate disrupts partnership work. County and Districts pursuing different options for Unitary Government.	Negative impacts on services and projects delivered in partnership with County and partners.	Mish Tullar	3	3	9
15	Property Assets - Staff recruitment and retention. Inability to recruit and/or retain staff on proposed terms and conditions in Property Services (particularly in respect of HRA and compliance). Terms and conditions of employment are not sufficiently attractive to attract permanent staff. Most other Councils are trying to attract similar staff from a small pool of available candidates	Required skills and capacity are not available to deliver required work programmes.	Malcolm PEEK	2	3	6
16	Planning & Regulation - Service Failure. Major service failure due to significant loss of ICT, staff etc. Major systems failure - major health pandemic etc	Reduction in staff or premises availability means a reduced service to customers and or a backlog of work to be cleared.	David Butler	3	3	9
17	Planning & Regulation - Regulation of the Private Rented Sector. Opportunity to embed HMO licensing across the City and to regulate the private rented sector. Systems failure/ poor delivery of service; inadequate engagement; non-compliance with regulation/ legislation	Damage to Council reputation and potentially finances; risks to occupiers and neighbours	David Butler	2	2	4

18	Financial Services - Reputation Management. Failure to deliver an efficient and timely year end process for annual Council Tax and NDR bills, Rents, Garage and leaseholder statements. Lack of resources (staff/finance) Upgrades of software not carried out Single points of failure CTR will be administered through Revenues not Benefits Knowledge of requirements Ability to design templates Legislative requirements not addressed	The biggest risk to the Council is reputational. If the bills and notices are not delivered on time the Council cannot collect income due to it and would suffer reputational damage as a consequence. This risk is low until the process starts again in October	Laura Bessell	3	4	12
20	Planning & Regulation - Unplanned workload leading to reactive response and delay or omission of proactive work. Complaints, added to complexities to existing work, unplanned work demands corporate or external	Delay or omission of programmed work, impact on quality of work if it is rushed or not checked. Reduction in quality of service to customers	David Butler	3	3	9
21	Financial Services - ICT. OCC not able to deliver the improvements to ICT systems in a timely and manageable manner; Inability to deliver ICT Systems that operate in a controlled and robust manner on a timely basis. ICT workplan not adhered to and delayed; System implementation ineffectual leading to delays and / or poor system design and implementation	Increased inefficiencies in work flow leading to increased manual working and worsening collection rates; controls around the system not robust leading to an increased level of reconciliation or data control issues Project plans overlapping so that there is excessive work for staff over a shortened time period Non-compliance with contractual agreements and non-compliance with external standards such as PCN and PCI-DSS	Clare Paterson	3	4	12
23	Property Assets - Income generation from property portfolio is threatened, due to Covid-19 backlog, which is almost cleared, and market forces and cost of living issues. Portfolio is biased towards retail/food and beverage. Market currently patchy and backlog of lease events. Particularly on estate shop portfolio.	Reduced rent leading to budget pressure	Emma Gubbins	3	3	9

24	Planning & Regulation - Project delays (service specific). Poor project management of projects such as Local Plan, major Development management case, change projects	Reduced performance, missed targets, ultimately delay to delivery of needed housing on the ground.	David Butler	3	3	9
25	Property Assets - Income reduction due to condition of properties. Inability / delay in letting or increased incentives. Stock returned in poor condition, increased forfeiture. Failure of landlord repairing liabilities	Reduced or delayed rent or capital receipt leading to budget pressure	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9
26	Financial Services - Failure to recruit and retain key staff. Insufficient quality of applicants to vacancies, current key staff leave to better opportunities. Current pay scales not attractive; reputation of Council will not attract new recruits; Local Government Reorganisation adds too much uncertainty for potential recruits	Vacant posts remain vacant, and existing posts become vacant. Further pressure is put onto remaining staff to fulfil extra tasks	Nigel Kennedy	2	4	8
27	Planning & Regulation - Delays to Council projects caused by outside agencies such as County Council, Consultees, National and Regional Government and other agencies	Reduced performance, missed targets	David Butler	3	3	9
28	Property Assets - Property non-compliance. Assets becoming non-compliant resulting in Health & Safety failure. (includes trees, green spaces and the like). Lack of monitoring and management	Risk of hazard to people or property, unable to let properties so reduced income. Risk to the reputation of the council and action against the council and officers. Increased insurance costs.	Malcolm PEEK	2	4	8
30	Financial Services - Treasury Management. Safety of investments. Current economic climate and prolonged volatility in financial markets; banks and other investment institutions not being robust enough to survive future economic changes; key staffing changes at firms cause uncertainty in the market	Loss of principal investments placed	Bill Lewis	2	5	10
31	Communities & Citizen Services - Service not delivering quality services. Lack of resources and employee deployment. Fragile procedures, process and delivery mechanisms. Internal and external monitoring and auditing principles not robust	Failure to achieve industry recognised accreditation (i.e. Quest, Green Flag, ISO). Increased costs. Corporate and service objectives fail to be delivered. Reputational damage. Reduced ability to draw down external funding	Hagan Lewisman	2	3	6

32	Planning & Regulation - Income Targets. Non achievement of income targets. Impact of macro-economic issues - falling number of planning applications, visitor spend etc	Not meet budget estimates, Deficit in corporate budget. Ultimately impact on resources available to the council to provide services	David Butler	3	3	9
33	Property Assets - Lack of asset management system. Data Management processes improvement. No asset management system in place to store and analyse data.	Unable to plan or programme work in a timely fashion, delays in letting of properties and potential non-compliance. Risk of decreased insurance cover or increased premium costs. Lack of active management of portfolio reduces performance.	Malcolm PEEK	4	4	16
34	Law, Governance & Strategy - Resilience of service. Inability to effectively deliver services required by the Council to deliver critical projects and support statutory and non-statutory functions with a direct impact on risk, compliance, expenditure and income to the Council. Inability to react as required in the event of a major incident leading to more outsourcing or delays. Inability to retain and recruit lawyers to permanent posts, leaving the service dependent on locum resources and therefore exceeding salary budget. Capacity and resource issues delaying restructure. Hope to progress by the end of 2025.	Reputational damage; adverse costs; greater reliance on external services and therefore increased costs. Ability to meet Council's own requirements prejudiced.	Emma Jackman	4	4	16
35	Planning & Regulation - Government legislation, Democracy and Localism Bill. Substantial changes to the planning system. Relaxation of Change of Use, Prior Approval regime extended Impact of expectations of politicians and the local community impacting on resources and priorities. Government legislation leading to need to redesign processes	Lack of capacity to meet changes coming from government, undermining of the delivery of local policy objectives (e.g. protection of key employment sites). Neighbourhood Plans put pressure on resources and/or seek to challenge City Council	David Butler	4	4	16
36	Communities & Citizen Services - Insufficient revenue and capital for each proposed development. Insufficient revenue and capital for each proposed development. Current economic climate/Comprehensive spending review	Developments do not take place	Hagan Lewisman	3	3	9

37	Property Assets - Income Targets / high costs. Non achievement of Town Hall income targets. Impact of economic circumstances; delays in building maintenance, major disruption to business e.g. fire, major repairs.	Reduction in income and revenue	Malcolm PEEK	2	2	4
38	Planning & Regulation - Opposition to emerging statutory plans, and to planning applications and decisions; A) vocal and organised local opposition before decision; B) opposition at Examination or committee stage; C) Legal Challenge after Adoption or planning decision. Local public, groups, organisations or political parties object to policies in emerging documents and choose to use many and all avenues to express objection, including some outside normal procedures and all drawing a lot of media attention . Or opposition to planning applications at, pre- application, after validation. Committee and post decision stages	Delay, extra costs, reputational risk, possibly amendments to policies.	David Butler	3	3	9
40	Communities & Citizen Services - Budget and Income. Trading Income from event hire. Changes to Broad Street, COVID-19, the cost of living impact on the events sector and targeted campaigns against event organisers	Budgeted target not met	Paula Redway	3	2	6
42	Communities & Citizen Services - Breach in H&S leading to fatality/closure of building. Breach in H&S leading to incident/ injury/ fatality/ closure of leisure facility and/ or service disruption. Failure of health and safety management and monitoring	Risk of injury or death to persons. Reputational risk. Financial claims. Risk of facility closure or service disruption	Hagan Lewisman	2	4	8
45	Communities & Citizen Services - Loss of key staff members. Prolonged absence or badly planned leave may result in the service area not delivering on its objectives. Staffing structure quite tight, meaning that there can be resource issues	Non delivery of service objectives	Helen Bishop	3	3	9

46	Law, Governance & Strategy - External Legal Resources. The use of the budget is reactive and therefore, as unexpected corporate issues arise, external legal costs increase, which will lead to an overspend on the legal services budget, and potentially pressure on other service area budgets as they may need to fund work. Unpredictability of costs which may arise. Due to increase demand in client departments for legal support, capacity issues continue which has an impact on external legal advice requirements. Inability to use usual procurement route of EM Lawshare Framework meaning using higher priced frameworks as an alternative.	Budgetary pressure	Emma Griffiths	4	3	12
47	Communities & Citizen Services - Insufficient resource and market demand to deliver financial plan. A stringent focus is on this work, although the macro env continues to increase the challenges. There is a risk of there not being enough resource (staff time), and/or market demand to deliver the level required. Not enough staff time / insufficient demand for additional activities	Reduced delivery of efficiencies	Helen Bishop	3	3	9
48	Planning & Regulation - Public Health Protection. Threats to public health eg., from food borne communicable disease. Uncontrolled spread of diseases; illness and possible deaths; damage to Council reputation.	Failure to adequately control/respond to outbreaks.	David Butler	3	3	9
51	Financial Services - Budget Management. Inability to forecast outturn effectively due to limited or incorrect information. There are significant efficiency savings and service reductions across the board as a result of budget process, and these may be difficult to deliver, or to understand if they will be delivered timely.	Increased use of reserve balances or further reductions to be identified	Clare Paterson	2	3	6

52	Communities & Citizen Services - Safeguarding vulnerable groups including children. Poor training of and recognition of safeguarding principals. Poor monitoring and compliance regimes	Risk to Council reputation. Risk of allegation. Risk to public safety	Hagan Lewisman	2	4	8
53	Law, Governance & Strategy - ICT. System failure without cloud based systems will significantly impact on the Council being able to meet statutory obligations and will impact on the delivery of corporate priorities and decision making. Risks generated from unauthorised access from outside actors, ICT issues such as server failure and failure of third party systems and devices	Failure to meet statutory obligations, inability to take decisions and protect the interests of the Council	Emma Jackman	3	3	9
54	Financial Services - Corporate Fraud. Suppliers set up on payment system that are not genuine or requests to change bank account details that are not genuine. Third parties attempt to defraud the council	Payments being misappropriated, loss of public monies	Annette Osborne	2	3	6
55	Law, Governance & Strategy - Legal Income. Income target not achieved placing pressure on the overall budget of legal services leading to overspend. Inability to manage or control demand of work which generates income	Budgetary Pressure	Emma Jackman	4	4	16
56	Financial Services - Management effectiveness and employee ability to deliver services. Excessive pressure placed on staff and managers. Increased workloads and increased volumes of emails and online meetings in addition to increasing demands arising from the "day job"	Staff burnout; increased incidence of stress; lack of capacity to deliver work demands	Nigel Kennedy	3	4	12
57	Communities & Citizen Services - Complaints Handling. Failure of corporate complaints process resulting in Ombudsman intervention. Reliance on limited number of officers	Reputational risk. Additional complaints and/or ombudsmen intervention.	Helen Bishop	4	3	12

58	Financial Services - Health & Safety. Staff are subject to volatile situations in the course of their duties and possible harm. Robust & challenging conversations held with subjects of investigation during interviews and visits leading to escalation tension and possible physical assault.	Staff subject to harm and subsequent short or long-term sickness, reduced resources.	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	2	2	4
59	Communities & Citizen Services - Community Cohesion Erodes. The risk that social and community cohesion will be negatively affected, detracting from our aims to encourage strong and active communities. Britain's exit from the EU, shifts in national politics, and subsequent shifts in society's perceptions.	1.Uncertainty and instability in political climate leads to social and political polarisation - this in turn could lead to political fallout/shifts in management and risk of the council developing a bad reputation 2.Political instability means social instability / unrest, leading to higher rates of hate crime. Deepening cleavages in society divides communities, with settled communities feeling neglected by local authorities in favour of new/emerging communities - diversity is seen as a threat for some. 3. Social unrest can have negative effects on health, which carries risk of widening existing health inequalities across the city.	Helen Bishop	3	3	9
60	Financial Services - Budget and Income. Failure to deliver profiled trading income due to external factors. Reduced appetites for external clients and partners to spend on counter-fraud services due to cost of living crisis, dwindling council finances, politics or competing priorities	Trading income targets not achieved, medium term financial plan compromised, budgetary overspend.	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	1	2	2
61	Financial Services - Performance. Failure to achieve service plan targets and objectives due to unplanned staff absence or turnover including sickness. Some fixed term contracts in the team increase risk of staff looking to alternative roles with other organisations.	Targets not achieved, trading income compromised, inability to service external contractual commitments	swarner2@oxford.gov.uk	1	1	1
62	Law, Governance & Strategy - Budgetary issue. Increase in the cost of postage by Royal Mail causing budget pressures. The rise in the cost of postage has increased in recent years (with another in-year rise of 15% due)	Pressure on budgets beyond what is funded	Martin John	3	3	9

64	Law, Governance & Strategy - FOIA and DPA compliance. Failure to comply with statutory deadlines in terms of information Requests and Data Subject Access Requests. Failure to properly manage personal data. Failure of other council departments and officers to contribute and approve in timescales required	Reputation risk, ICO action could result.	Emma Jackman	3	3	9
65	Law, Governance & Strategy - Data Protection Breach and Non-Compliance with Data Protection Law. Failure of the organisation to adhere to data protection law would cause capacity and work implications issues for the team. Outside actors having unauthorised access to data. Failure of the Council's departments and suppliers to properly safeguard data	Increased workload on a small team. Organisation could suffer reputational damage and/or have fines levied against them by ICO. Reputational risk for the service and Council. Financial penalties for Council and employees. Potential litigation against the Council with damages and adverse costs	Emma Jackman	4	5	20
66	Communities & Citizen Services - Failure to achieve sponsorship income targetsBusiness climate	Difficult to sustain city events and cultural activity on an annual basis.	Paula Redway	3	2	6
67	Financial Services - Procurement. If there is a failure to follow best procurement practice, then there is an increased risk of challenge. The reputation of the Council will suffer, and there may be financial loss because of challenges and re-running procurements, as well as delays in delivering priorities.	Reputation of Council. Financial penalty. Poor decision making and financial loss due to potentially awarding a contract to the wrong supplier. Potential delays in achieving organisational objectives as a result of challenge and if decision set aside	Annette Osborne	3	4	12
68	People - Corporate Management. Managers not equipped to meet the changing needs of the organisation. Development of Fit for the Future Programme, gives new accountabilities and responsibilities for Leaders	If not addressed service improvements and efficiencies not delivered	Gail Malkin	2	2	4

69	People - People team. Resources insufficient to meet the growing demands of service. The work demands over which we have no control, such as new starters, pension queries, employee turnover and increasing numbers of payroll transactions, is putting additional pressure on the operations work of the team. Additional temporary resource is coming to an end without efficiency savings having been met, partly due to the ASM platform not leading to time savings.	Service quality is dropping and team is reporting workload pressures and work-related stress. Will need to cut back on service offered and extend service standard delivery times.	Gail Malkin	3	3	9
70	PeoplePeople team. Loss of key talent. Reliance on individual contributors with no cover as team is small. Example - one recruitment consultant - if she left - we would have a limited and reduced recruitment service until replaced	difficulty filling hard-to-recruit roles and longer time to recruit times more generally	Gail Malkin	3	3	9
71	People - People team. Data protection legal compliance. Historical poor administration practices and pressures of work have meant that data has not been managed in line with data retention schedules.	non-compliance with data protection law	Gail Malkin	3	2	6
0007 2	Communities & Citizen Services - Budget pressures. Budget pressures in Customer Services, including Customer Contact and Corporate Support teams. Increased workload Improvements not delivered to improve services and reduce resource requirement Insufficient funding for workforce	Service savings not achieved	Helen Bishop	2	2	4
74	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Staff Recruitment. Difficulty in recruiting on proposed terms and conditions - often FTC roles in the service. Terms and conditions of employment are not sufficiently attractive to attract and retain staff	Required skills and capacity are not available to deliver required work programmes or staff turnover results in the loss of skills from the team.	Clive Tritton	2	2	4

75	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Managing staff capacity. Little capacity in team to allow cover for other team members if required. Internal and external projects and programme are running to very similar timescales across economic development, City Centre, Green Transport, Housing Delivery and Regeneration.	Staff resource and work needs to be carefully prioritised to handle demand. Some programmes are outside our control particularly in Green Transport and Economic Development. Difficulty to provide project cover if regeneration manager or housing supply officer is off work or leaves at short notice.	Clive Tritton	3	3	9
76	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Good governance. Development board and associated groups within the governance process not utilised effectively as it could be across the council. Lack of knowledge of how and when to utilise development review group and development board.	Board is reactive or not utilised leading to project problems.	Clive Tritton	2	2	4
77	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Poor health and safety compliance due to inconsistent levels of experience and training. Inconsistent levels of experience and training in project managers. Lack of corporate resource and training in H&S protocols.	Health and safety incidents and non compliance during projects which may cause significant project delays, fines or legal action and more widely causes risk to staff.	Clive Tritton	3	3	9
78	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Support Team Capacity. Lack of specialist advice or delays to projects caused by support team capacity. Commitments to projects and resourcing of support services (procurement, legal, finance, communities, planning) have not been considered in tandem and therefore resourcing in support areas cannot meet requirements of capital projects	Project delays and potentially inaccurate information reported through governance process through lack of specialist advice	Clive Tritton	3	3	9
79	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Staff Budget. Lack of budget to maintain staffing levels across service. Regen team due to failure to capitalise on the regeneration managers time and lack of funding to maintain current levels for city centre management and economic development teams. Staff budget relies capitalising time and external funding sources	Not being able to maintain staffing level of teams which would mean reduced resource to bring forward projects and programmes and loss of good staff that have often been difficult to recruit	Clive Tritton	2	2	4

80	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Housing supply funding. Reduction in funding available impacting housing delivery targets. Limits to HRA borrowing capacity/ Change to HRA Business Plan, Borrowing cost rises making schemes unviable, Lack of Homes England Funding rounds, Poor outcome from RSH inspection rates (RP) landlord service any of the compliance criteria/ Annual HE Investment Partner compliance return not considered satisfactory, loss of awarded funding due to not meeting grant terms	Reduced delivery results in increasing further the backlog of housing need if we do not secure additional affordable housing stock and risk of grant including RRTBRs being returned with punitive interest	Dave Scholes	3	3	9
81	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Housing project delays. Programme slippage puts housing delivery targets at risk. Issues could be wide ranging for example risks relating to meeting planning policies, SSEN grid capacity to 2028/ 2032; and also water and sewage capacity concerns, site specific issues	Either projects are lost from programme or are delayed which adds further cost risk or funding is lost as grant terms not met risk of needing to return Right to Buy receipts if not spent with punitive interest	Dave Scholes	3	3	9
82	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Lack of key partner engagement. Lack of engagement from partners to deliver our priorities in Economic Development and City Centre. Third party decision making or capacity issues result in lack of support financially or in kind for key initiatives/projects	Unable to deliver on strategy actions or priorities or fund associated projects/staff or creates unplanned financial pressure	Rupert Waters	3	3	9
83	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Resource pressure from partners or stakeholders. Key stakeholders or partners' projects and priorities create council resource implications. Third party decision making result in pressure for officer or member support financially or in kind for their initiatives/projects	Unable to resource either the partner priority or our own priorities or creates unplanned financial pressure	Rupert Waters	3	3	9
84	Property Assets - Investment into stock and existing properties. Under investment or lack of funding to invest into properties to maintain condition. Budgets not sufficient to match property needs	Properties become poor condition to let, reduction in income and potential non-compliant or dangerous.	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9

85	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Applications Team KPIs may be unable to be met due to taxi licensing not resourced appropriately. Taxi licensing is not resourced appropriately by the service due to them not agreeing funding	Performance affected and KPIs unable to be achieved	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
86	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Customer behaviour in the Westgate library or larders putting our staff at risk either through physical or mental abuse. Unacceptable behaviour either verbally or physically from customers who visit the Westgate library	Staff are physically or verbally abused	Mark Chandler	2	3	6
87	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Wellbeing of staff working from home and being able to access support as and when required. Majority of staff working from home regularly without face to face contact	Staff feeling isolated, struggling mentally and not getting the support they need	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
88	Communities & Citizen Services - Customer Services. Staff not following data protection processes resulting in breaches. Staff not following data protection guidelines or having the appropriate up to date training and awareness of procedures	Data protection breaches resulting in unhappy customers	Mark Chandler	2	2	4
89	ICT - Retaining skilled ICT professionals. Uncompetitive salaries in some areas.	Staff leave.	Rocco Labellarte	1	3	3
90	ICT - Addressing ICT staff skills gaps. Single points of failure, in particular with the absence of Business Owners and super-users within the services.	Delays in resolving issues for individuals and services.	Rocco Labellarte	1	3	3
91	ICT - Resources insufficient to meet demands of service. Competing priorities (BAU, Projects, non-ICT issues passed to ICT).	Demand exceeds capacity, and staff work long hours, struggling mentally (as evidenced by the H&S Survey)	Rocco Labellarte	3	3	9
93	Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability - Capital Project Delays. Significant delays of capital projects. Unforeseen consequences e.g. planning risks, external factors, competing asks on resources, contractor insolvency or supply chain issues	Reduced performance and missed targets on capital projects which affect overall expenditure, MTFP spend or grant stipulations	Clive Tritton	3	3	9

94	Financial Services - Property Insurance. If the Council is unable to provide adequate information about the construction of existing buildings in its ownership and their valuations, its Insurers may continue to provide insurance that does not meet the full needs of the Council and exposes it to uninsured risks and financial loss. The Council has been unable to provide sufficient information to Insurers about the construction of properties and the cost of their reinstatement.	Only one Insurer quoted at the last tender and the insurance cover provided has significant weaknesses. The property valuations that the Council has may be wrong, resulting in properties being under or over insured. The Council's properties are insured on a declared value basis, they might be underinsured because of inflation. Unoccupied properties are uninsured. The Council is unable to go to tender before it improves the information that it has.	Nigel Kennedy	2	4	8
95	Property Assets - Capital Receipts. Inability to reach capital receipts budget. Market forces, dependant on engagement of 3rd parties. Selling from investment portfolio reduction in income	Reduced capital causes increased borrowing or reduction in capital programme	Emma Gubbins	2	3	6
96		Reduced income, reduced capital receipt, risk of legal challenge, reputational damage, increased complaints.	Emma Gubbins	4	4	16
103	Planning & Regulation - Regulatory compliance. Failure to comply with regulations and statutory compliance. Insufficient resources impacting on ability to ensure compliance. A culture that fails to enforce policies; a lack of knowledge exacerbated by staff turnover; changes in legislation; increased demand leading to mistakes by staff.	A loss of public trust and confidence in the Council's ability to govern effectively. Negative media attention will harm the Council's reputation. Elected Members and senior officers face criticism. The Council's ability to deliver services is undermined as important decisions are made incorrectly. Disputes among Members and staff. Fines and penalties and loss of grants and funding.	David Butler, Richard Adams	2	4	8

- 108** Housing - Failure of Homeless Prevention Activities. Temporary Accommodation - Failure to effectively manage the financial burden and demand for temporary accommodation in accordance with the individual needs of clients. Service delivery failure - homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford leading to increased homeless placements/TA costs.
- Reputational Impact - Increase in reviews - client's taking legal action/ appealing against their housing decisions, clients approaching media to highlight their case and shame council.
Financial Impact - Increase in temporary accommodation costs adding pressure to general fund.
Legal Impact - Council's inability to fulfil its duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.
Overall Impact - If this risk was realised, this would hinder the operation of this service as the financial viability of this service would be called into question and related issues impacting to regulatory compliance would impact on OCC.
- Nerys Parry
- 109** Housing - Failure to meet Homeless Temporary Accommodation Demand. Inability to keep up with increasing demand as a result of government changes in eligibility assistance criteria, including those who are eligible as a result of their immigration status, resettlement, changes in priority. This also includes the wider contextual imbalances, within council's own stock and private housing. Service delivery failure - homeless prevention activities become unable to meet a sustained increase in homelessness in Oxford leading to increased homeless placements / temporary accommodation costs due to changes in Government legislation/policy.
- Reputational Impact - Use of social media by clients to amplify their issues - these could also result in loss of trust and support from key stakeholders and wider local government community.
Financial Impact - Inability to secure sufficient homelessness grant funding that meets the increasing demand.
Legal Impact - The council is not obliged to house everyone who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness. However, it is required to take action depending on the circumstances of each case. It must comply with relevant legislation and have regard to the statutory code of guidance.
Overall Impact - Limited impact when variables such as current Government welfare and immigration policy is considered but this is subject to review if there were Government policy changes.
- Richard Wood

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3	5	15

110 Housing - Delayed new build developments/acquisitions. Supply - failure to secure pipeline of affordable supply arising from council's housing development programme, sourcing of PRS acquisitions and maximising on supply opportunities including downsizing, securing nomination rights, empty properties and fast void turnarounds. Service delivery failure - new build completions of social housing are delayed due to developers failing to complete on time. Planned acquisitions slow down to a lack of supply of suitable properties in Oxford. Changes to the PRS Housing Markets including the Renters Rights Bill reduces the supply of affordable PRS available. Improvements to the Void process fail to reduce Void Re-let Times.	Reputational Impact - Inability to deliver on council housing programme targets will impact on housing waiting list, but will also impact negatively, loss of trust from key stakeholders and funding partners. Financial Impact - Delays or non-delivery of council housing programme will severely impact and add further financial pressures on HRA Business Plan as well as add further pressures on General Fund as families will need to remain in Temporary Accommodation. Legal Impact - It is a legal requirement to ensure that TA is suitable and families with children do not spend over 6 weeks in B&B, households believing they have been offered unsuitable accommodation make take legal action against council. Overall Impact - TA provision appears on target but this is subject to review in the light of regular and updated data	Dave Scholes, Nerys Parry	2 4 8
111 Housing - Implementation of the Landlord Services Re-Organisation. Risk of not delivering the re-organisation of landlord service in a timely manner and as a consequence it does not deliver the changes required including service improvements, culture change and achieve better outcomes for tenants. Service Delivery Failure - the landlord services re-organisation is not completed within the expected timelines due to delays in new staffing structures and processes being put in place.	Reputational Impact - inability to establish a service structure that is more fit for purpose, responsive to new regulatory requirements and changing needs of tenants and homes. Financial Impact - Inability to realise reorganization benefits such as improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and achieving better outcomes for the HRA. Legal Impact - New SHR regulatory requirements means the council as a landlord has a duty to comply and meet required standards, failing to do so it will breach and face sanctions imposed by the SHR Overall Impact - Limited impact as the initial work for the re-organisation has begun and good progress has been made.	Nerys Parry	2 4 8

112 Housing - Failure in resident involvement activities/compliance with the Social Housing Act /Consumer Standards. Tenant voice - failure to improve tenant involvement activities/implement the reset programme to help deliver tenant led recommendations and priorities and organisation objectives to comply with the Transparency, influence and accountability standard. Service Failure - Tenant Involvement governance arrangements and activities are not fit for purpose and do not allow the tenants voice to be heard/meaningful involvement in line with responsibilities under the SHA/Consumer Standards

Reputational Impact - A poor service offer/lack of tenant involvement risks an increase in complaints as it fails to provide tenants with the platform and opportunity to help shape and add value to service improvements (and could also result in Regulator/Ombudsman intervention).
Financial Impact – failure to establish efficient routes/platforms for tenants to raise their voice/concerns can be costly and also fails to capture financial efficiencies.
Inefficient service delivery can be costly and lead to adding financial pressure on HRA.
Legal Impact - New SHR regulatory requirements means the council as a landlord has a duty to comply and meet required standards, failing to do so it will breach and face sanctions imposed by the SHR.
Overall Impact - There are currently no systemic arrangements to consult with tenants so this is a tangible risk in terms of SHR deciding infringements have taken place. However, to mitigate this risk, evidence can be presented to the SHR that work has begun to address this core issue. In respect of service delivery, involvement with tenants on a systematic basis, as envisaged in the Cabinet report of December 2024 on Tenant Management, would help drive up customer satisfaction levels.

Nerys Parry

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113 Housing - Social Housing Regulator Inspection readiness - failure to evidence the implementation/ adherence to Social Housing Regulator's consumer standards across housing - and this resulting in a [C3] grading following inspection. Service Failure - OCC current/planned activities fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - A low grade will impact negatively on council's overall reputation and loss of trust from tenants who will perceive they are not getting the services they need and value for money for their rent Financial Impact - A C3 grading will indicate serious failings that may affect housing services quality, such as delayed repairs or inadequate safety measures - a reactive approach to addressing these issues will add financial pressure on HRA Legal Impact - A low grade judgement from SHR will impact negatively on council's reputation - reflecting that it does not meet SHR governance requirements. These would be issues of serious regulatory concern where urgent action will be required to improve its position. Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented. Nerys Parry

4	4	16

- 114** Housing - Leaseholder Services fail to comply with the Social Housing Act / Consumer Standards. Leasehold - failure to deliver a fair, transparent and compliant leasehold service to leaseholders that meets their needs and is reflective and demonstrates value for money of their management fee. Service failure - improvements to leaseholder compliance activities are delayed and OCC is unable to comply with the SHA/Consumer Standards for leaseholders
- Reputational Impact - A failure to provide a fair and compliant service to leaseholders will negatively impact on council's reputation and perception that it is not delivering compliant services to leaseholders
Financial Impact - A poor leasehold service offer, reduces council's ability to collect service charges and recover works expenditure and secure funding back to the HRA
Legal Impact - Leaseholders have the right to get information about service charges, and be consulted maintenance and running costs. The inability for council to comply with these function can lead to leaseholders challenging these through the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)
Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented
- Nerys Parry
- 115** Housing - Implementation of the Development plans for HRA Asset Management. Risk of not changing policies, processes and procedures for HRA property service functions in a timely manner and as a consequence it does not deliver the changes desired including a fit for purpose client team to effectively commission and oversee delivery of works and services, establish the service improvements required incl around repairs, safety and compliance. Service Delivery Failure - the HRA Asset Management re-organisation is not completed within the expected timelines due to delays in new staffing structures and processes being put in place.
- Reputational Impact - inability to establish an HRA service structure that is more fit for purpose, responsive to new regulatory requirements and changing needs of tenants and homes.
Financial Impact - Inability to realise reorganisation benefits such as improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and achieving better outcomes for the HRA
Legal Impact - Inability to establish a service structure that is responsive to meeting new regulatory regime - social housing regulator consumer standards
Overall Impact - This risk would, if realised, have a significant impact on the operation and viability of HRA services
- Nerys Parry

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116 Housing - HRA Investment and Management Controls fail to comply with the Social Housing Act/Consumer Standards. 5 year investment programme - risks the need for council as a landlord to set out the strategic direction for OCC's HRA capital management and investment plans, which must also form part of medium to long term financial and service planning and budget setting process. It also risks complying with Social Housing Regulator expectations in relation to council having the investment management and controls in place. Service Failure - OCC current/planned investment activities fail to comply with the Social Housing Act /Regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - Failure to plan and develop short/medium/long term investment will prove difficult to evidence compliance and satisfy Social Housing Regulator regulatory requirements relating to effectively planning maintenance and delivering good outcomes and value for money to the HRA. Financial Impact - Risk of not being able to adopt investment planning risks the council in continuing to commission works in a reactive manner which can be costly and add further financial pressure to the HRA. It also risks in the Social Housing Regulator highlighting this as failure for delivering good outcomes to tenants and effective management and governance of HRA . Legal Impact - Risk of council as a landlord not meeting SHR Consumer standards - in particular Safety and Quality Homes standard where efficient knowledge, planning of assets and maintenance must be evidenced. Overall Impact - Would be a significant if this risk was realised in meeting social housing targets in terms of overall delivery of the programme.	Nerys Parry

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117 Housing - HRA Asset Management Safety and Compliance. Safety and compliance - risks inability to comply with legislation and on-going changes relating to safety which form part of the new regulatory regime that bring increased scrutiny of council's approach to meeting all applicable fire, health and safety obligations to ensure the safety of all tenants. Service Failure - OCC current/safety and compliance activities fail to comply with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - Failure to evidence and satisfy the Social Housing Regulator that OCC is complying with its Safety requirements will bring the council into disrepute, result in a loss of confidence and concerns from tenants about their safety Financial Impact - Failure to meet safety and compliance requirements will question council's role as a landlord and its ability to effectively govern and have efficient management of its HRA and maintenance plans - as well as its requirements to meet decent home standards Legal Impact - Bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from the Social Housing Regulator. Overall Impact - This is a tangible risk as while there is a body of work to ensure compliance requirements are met, the full programme of work is yet to be implemented. There are yet to be fully approved technical policies, such as in damp and mould or asbestos, to take just two examples, which ensure there is standard compliance practices to meet safety standards. A mitigating factor is the institutional memory within OCC on such matters but if there was a staff turnover, this risk may be accentuated accordingly.	Nerys Parry

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118 Housing - Repairs Maintenance. Repairs - risks inability for council as a landlord to comply with Social Housing Regulator consumer standard (Safety and Quality) to provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which the council is responsible for. Service Failure - OCC current/planned activities on property maintenance and repairs take longer than expected/fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.	Reputational Impact - OCC's inability to effectively manage repairs can lead to increase in complaints and escalating costs, loss of rent and spend on HRA. This in turn will bring Ombudsman / Social Housing Regulator involvement and bring the council into disrepute. Financial Impact - OCC's inability to demonstrate effective governance and management of its HRA finances. Inability to manage repairs expenditure. Legal Impact - bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from the Social Housing Regulator . Overall Impact - while this risk, if realised, would be significant - steps have been made to mitigate this risk. The decision of the Cabinet to approve the HRA Business Plan, Asset Management and 5-Year Investment Programme and the Tenancy Management and Involvement programme has led to governance structures being introduced and a work programme being developed to include the issue of repairs	Nerys Parry	2 4 8

119 Housing - Voids - risks inability for council as a landlord to comply with the Social Housing Regulator consumer standard (Safety and Quality) to provide an effective, efficient and timely voids service procedure for the homes which the council is responsible for. Service Failure - OCC void works take longer than expected/fail an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing that as a social landlord OCC is complying with the Social Housing Act / regulator consumer standards.

Reputational Impact - OCC's inability to effectively manage voids can lead to increase in complaints and escalating costs, loss of rent and spend on HRA. This in turn will bring Ombudsman / Social Housing Regulator involvement and bring council into disrepute.

Financial Impact - OCC's inability to demonstrate effective governance and management of its HRA finances. Inability to manage void expenditure and rent loss as a result of long term void turnarounds can impact on income to HRA.

Legal Impact - bringing the council into disrepute and lack confidence in council's ability to meet its landlord legislative obligations and intervention from SHR .

Overall Impact - while this risk, if realised, would be significant - steps have been made to mitigate this risk. The decision of the Cabinet to approve the HRA Business Plan, Asset Management and 5-Year Investment Programme and the Tenancy Management and Involvement programme has led to governance structures being introduced and a work programme being developed to include the issue of voids

Nerys Parry

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120 Housing - Workforce, skills and capacity for service delivery. Workforce, skills and capacity - risks and challenges across a range of service areas within the housing service including recruitment, retention of staff, and skilled workforce. Experienced staff leaving OCC, moving to new posts and/or existing and new staff requiring training on existing/new processes, best practice and changes in legislation including the Social Housing Act, Renters Rights Act and Awaabs Law.	Reputational Impact - Inability to have the right, skilled resources can impact on service delivery as well as affect the well-being of employees. In addition, restructuring may require employees to adapt to new roles, learn new skills, and cope with job loss or job hunting. Financial Impact - Inability to have the right workforce in place can lead to substantial financial burdens added to the HRA and reduce resilience of services. This can heighten the over-reliance on interim workforce which can be disruptive to service due to the instability of service, loss of skills/knowledge . Legal Impact - The council as the local housing authority has the regulatory requirement to provide free housing advice and support - ensuring that services are adequately resourced and skilled Overall Impact - Significant impact to the operation of the HRA and wider social housing programme	Nerys Parry	3 3 9
121 Housing - Housing IT and Systems. Housing IT and Systems - the ineffectiveness and transition of new and legacy systems can significantly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery across housing and ultimately tenant customer satisfaction. Housing IT systems fail to support the business needs of the service and this impacts on service delivery times and customer satisfaction levels	Reputational Impact - Inefficient systems, software, and hardware can slow down daily tasks, leading to a decrease in staff productivity and impact on service delivery overall to tenants Financial Impact - Increased Costs as a result of inefficient systems that do not talk to each other - consequently leading to higher operational costs. Maintaining outdated systems often requires more resources and specialised support, which can be expensive and add financial pressures to HRA Legal Impact - Council as a landlord has the obligation to ensure the integrity and security of systems it has in place Overall Impact - delays in service delivery, increased customer complaints and staff dissatisfaction/lower morale	Nerys Parry	3 3 9

122 Housing - Data and performance. Data and performance - Failure to have effective data and performance management systems in place - as these are critical for making informed business decisions - strategically and operationally. Service failure - existing processes and procedures fail to accurately record all data required on tenants (and housing applicants) - incl. protected characteristics, property/building information - incl. component data, to ensure activities and priorities for compliance, performance management/service improvement/risk management are all data led.

Reputational Impact - As the local housing authority, the council is required and responsible for ensuring the integrity of data, how it uses these for making decisions and reporting on performance to tenants, Regulator - including government returns. Failure to do this will result in loss of confidence and greater scrutiny from the Social Housing Regulator

Financial Impact - Poor data and performance management impacts on the council's ability to deliver its HRA Business Plan priorities and reduce pressures on GF. For e.g.; unplanned cost increases, revenue reduction and poor client management functions - including ODS/contractors. This could also impact on council's ability to demonstrate its value for money duty across both HRA and GF

Legal Impact - OCC as a landlord has the obligation to ensure the integrity and security of systems it has in place. It has duty to ensure the integrity of any data returns it submits to govt or social housing regulator

Overall Impact - This is a significant risk as while the data function exists, the QL system needs to be fully operational. The need for reliable and up to the minute data is critical for all aspects of the HRA programme and therefore the need for data to be of consistently high quality remains paramount to the good functioning of the HRA service.

Nerys Parry

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123 Housing - Financial management of the Housing Revenue Account. Housing Revenue Account [HRA] - risk that the council with responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the HRA fails to account and evidence the expenditure and income against the running of its housing stock which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants. OCC fails to provide sufficient evidence to the Social Housing Regulator of effective and efficient financial management of the HRA for OCC tenants and compliance with expectations as a social landlord.

Reputational Impact - Failure to sufficiently evidence the efficient and transparent use of HRA can negatively impact on council's reputation and intervention from regulator. This can also lead to loss of trust from tenants - and raising concerns / complaints
Financial Impact - Failure to evidence and satisfy the SHR regulator inspection criteria "financial resilience" - which covers the extent on how HRA funds generated from tenants rent collection is invested back into the HRA for asset and service improvements and secure good tenant outcomes
Legal Impact - The HRA is a ring-fenced account within the General Fund - with income and expenditure being prescribed by statute with no general discretion to breach the ring-fence
Overall Impact - This is a significant risk as there is data to suggest cost overruns have occurred that is not in line with budgetary expectations. The risk has been mitigated, to a limited extent, by internal cost control mechanisms.

Nerys Parry

3	4	12

124 Housing - Inadequate controls to manage HRA financial spend. Inadequate financials controls in place - resulting in an overspend, programme targets not being met and impacting on the ability to deliver services within the HRA. Service failure - controls and clienting arrangements inadequate to meet service needs.	Reputational Impact - failure to ensure effective joint working between OCC and service suppliers would impair the reliability of the maintenance and upkeep of the housing stock. This could lead to tenants expressing dissatisfaction which would damage the reputation of the OCC with tenants. If tenants decided to express concern on social media or to specific media outlets this would damage the reputation of OCC amongst the wider public and with key stakeholder groups as well as damage the relationship between OCC and Social Housing Regulator which could lead to infringement actions taken by the regulator. Financial Impact - is significant as it could lead to unsustainable budget overspends due to, amongst other factors, a lack of a joined up approach towards budgetary and programme works between OCC and ODS. This could undermine the HRA Budget and add financial pressures to the HRA business plan. The efficiency of effective financial controls would be brought into question as a direct consequence of the realisation of this risk profile. Legal Impact - disruptions in the working relationship between OCC and service suppliers that led to issues with maintenance and issues with budgetary controls would mean that this could lead to systemic failure with customer standards and economic governance that could necessitate Social Housing Regulator action against OCC. Tenants could potentially take legal action via a class action in reference to various housing statutes in such an extreme scenario. Overall Impact - disruptions in the working relationship between OCC and service suppliers that led to issues with maintenance and issues with	Nerys Parry	2 4 8
125 Communities & Citizen Services - Leisure contract financial performance. Ongoing contract management and partnership approach to the external leisure provision contract, to ensure stability with its financial performance. External factors such as pandemics, utility pricing or a bid that was unrealistic.	Financial impact to OCC and/or service reduction to cut costs that impact service quality	Hagan Lewisman	4 4 16

126	Communities & Citizen Services - Financial savings against community centres. Desired savings may not be achieved. Savings were developed without the input of the service area	Financial impact to OCC and or service reduction to cut costs. Service quality would be impacted.	Hagan Lewisman	3	4	12
127	Property Assets - Property Non Compliance - Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. If a Council commercial property does not achieve an EPC B rating by 2030 the Council will be unable to let the property to a commercial tenant. The current minimum UK legal energy efficiency rating is E, but the UK Government has set a target of B by 2030 in order to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050	A considerable investment in properties is required. If this does not take place the Council will be unable to let properties and income to the Council will be reduced. Businesses must find alternative property causing considerable disruption.	Malcolm PEEK	3	3	9
164	Financial Services - Succession planning. Loss of statutory financial leadership (Section 151 Officer). Retirement of Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)	The retirement of the Group Finance Director creates financial governance and leadership risks including 1) Increased likelihood of delays in closing and signing off the annual accounts, risking breach of statutory duties 2) Reduced capacity to provide a clear financial strategy, and direction for the Council 3) Lower probability of achieving planned savings targets 4) Potential loss of Member confidence in the robustness of the Council's financial management and reporting 5) Diminished scrutiny of major financial decisions	Caroline Green	1	4	4
165	Planning & Regulation - Software renewal (IDOX/Uniform). Service failure. Major software renewal, risks to deliver services if migration fails	Inability to receive or process applications related to Uniform (including planning, business regulation and licensing applications) due to failed migration. Potential loss of data or inability to retrieve historic data.	David Butler	2	4	8

Oxford City Council

Internal Audit Progress Report

January 2026



Summary of work

Internal Audit

This report is intended to inform the Audit and Governance Committee of progress made against the 2025/26 internal audit plans. It summarises the work we have done, together with our assessment of the systems reviewed and the recommendations we have raised. Our work complies with Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector. As part of our audit approach, we have agreed terms of reference for each piece of work with the risk owner, identifying the headline and sub-risks, which have been covered as part of the assignment. This approach is designed to enable us to give assurance on the risk management and internal control processes in place to mitigate the risks identified.

Internal audit methodology

Our methodology is based on four assurance levels in respect of our overall conclusion as to the design and operational effectiveness of controls within the system reviewed. The assurance levels are set out in Appendix 1 of this report and are based on us giving either 'substantial', 'moderate', 'limited' or 'no' opinion. The four assurance levels are designed to ensure that the opinion given does not gravitate to a 'satisfactory' or middle band grading. Under any system we are required to make a judgement when making our overall assessment.



Internal audit plan 2025/26

The following reports have been issued in draft and are waiting on management responses:

- ▶ Fire Safety Follow-Up.

Audit fieldwork is underway for the following audits:

- ▶ Medium Term Financial Strategy
- ▶ Leisure Centre Contracts
- ▶ Data Analytics.

Planning has commenced on the following audits:

- ▶ Cyber Security
- ▶ ODS Client and Commissioning - Thematic Review.

Review of 2025/26 work

AUDIT	EXEC LEAD	AUDIT COMMITTEE	PLANNING	FIELD WORK	REPORTING	DESIGN	EFFECTIVENESS
Audit 1: Medium Term Financial Strategy	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Apr 26	✓	✓			
Audit 2: Fire Safety Follow-Up	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Jan 26	✓	✓	✓	M (Draft)	M (Draft)
Audit 3: Leisure Centre Contracts	Director of Communities and Citizens	Apr 26	✓	✓			
Audit 4: Data Analytics	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Apr 26	✓	✓			
Audit 5: Purchase Cards	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Oct 25	✓	✓	✓	L	L
Audit 6: Treasury Management	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Oct 25	✓	✓	✓	S	S
Audit 7: Cyber Security	Chief Technology and Information Officer	Apr 26	✓				
Audit 8: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Maturity	Head of People	Oct 25	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A ¹
Audit 9: ODS Client and Commissioning - Thematic Review	Head of Financial Services/ Section 151 Officer	Apr 26	✓				

¹ Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Maturity - This was an advisory review and does not generate an internal audit opinion.

Sector update

Our quarterly Local Government briefing summarises recent publication and emerging issues relevant to local authorities that may be of interest to your organisation. It is intended to provide a snapshot of current issues for Elected Members and Executive Directors.

LOCAL AUDIT RECOVERY SLOWER THAN HOPED

The recovery plan to get external audits published on time after years of delays is going “slower than we’d hoped”, a senior civil servant revealed.

Deputy director for local audit reform in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Rosie Seymour, provided an update on the “build back” plans at the Local Government Association’s local government finance conference on the 8 January 2026.

The audit backstop timeline was established to address a significant backlog in local government audits. The first deadline, 13 December 2024, required the publication of all outstanding external audits up to and including the financial year 2022-23.

On the 8 January 2026, Ms Seymour told the conference: “When we set out the backstops, we were hopeful that most disclaimers would be gone after the backstop in this coming February, so that by next January, there would be a significant reduction in the numbers of the disclaimed accounts... now we do not expect that aspiration to be met.”

“We remain committed to doing what we can to make sure that we keep to the overall five-year timeline for the programme, in terms of building assurance over the series of backstops that we set out, but we are clear that that progress is slower than we’d hoped.”

She added that “we don’t really feel like all of the levers are in the right place to be able to manage this process as well as we would like” because the Local Audit Office has not yet been set up so MHCLG is working with “others within the constraints of the current system”.

Despite this, Ms Seymour acknowledged that “we are in a remarkably better position than we were in terms of numbers of accounts not being there” and her “enormous gratitude” for the work of those in the sector.

She said: “The backstops themselves have helped you to bring the discipline back where that has been missing, and they’ve put an emphasis alongside the auditors to work with you to meet the backstops.

“And we are very much aware that draft accounts have been published much earlier than they had been previously, we are at a very mere handful of councils where drafted accounts aren’t ready for the auditors to look at.”

However, Ms Seymour warned there is still a lot of information “missing” and “we have quite limited information about what is going on in individual local bodies, and that means that we don’t know enough about what’s going wrong and what more needs to change in order to support you, to make them work better than we’re currently managing to achieve.”

Ms Seymour added that the whole of the government accounts is set to be disclaimed for a third consecutive year not just due to the increase in unaudited and disclaimed opinions from local audits but also “missing information”.

However, she understands that asking for more information considering the backstops is an “extra burden” but “it is a necessary part of us being able to work to support and improve guidance and support for all of the system, to try and make sure that meet the five-year aspiration”.

Local audit recovery 'slower than hoped' | Local Government Chronicle (LGC)

FOR INFORMATION

Audit and Governance Committee and Executive Directors

23 COUNCILS VOTE TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO FOCUS ON REORGANISATION

More than a third of councils set to undergo local government reorganisation have requested to postpone their local elections this year, according to research from the BBC

Deputy director for local audit reform in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Rosie Seymour provided an update on the “build back” plans at the Local Government Association’s local government finance conference yesterday.

The Government asked 63 local authorities late last year if they would like to delay the 2026 May elections in order to “release capacity” and help the councils focus on local government reorganisation.

Whitehall said the proposal came in response to representations from some councils that expressed concerns about their ability to smoothly deliver reorganisation and local elections at the same time.

The Government set a deadline of 15 January for councils to make their decisions.

Twenty-three councils have now asked to postpone their ballots ahead of the deadline, while 33 will not, and seven are yet to confirm their position, according to the BBC.

The report said East and West Sussex County Councils, Suffolk County Council, Exeter City Council, Preston City Council, Norwich City Council and Peterborough City Council are among those to ask for delays.

Other smaller councils to request a delay include Cheltenham, Hastings, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Ipswich, and Redditch Borough Councils.

Plans to push elections back have proven controversial in some areas, with police called to a meeting last week at Redditch Borough Council after a member of the public clashed with a councillor over the issue.

A recording shows that the extraordinary meeting was delayed for around 30 minutes after the councillor became embroiled in the argument. Members ultimately voted to postpone elections once the meeting readjusted.

The Government has also issued a defence of its proposals in response to a petition that called for a change in the law to remove the power of the Secretary of State to cancel local elections.

More than 135,000 members of the public signed the petition, which described the right to vote as “sacred and inalienable”, adding: “2025 Elections in some areas were cancelled this year. We believe any further cancellations would be voter suppression and undemocratic.”

In a written response to the petition, the Government said that the powers in this area are set out in legislation made by Parliament and “used only with strong justification”.

Twenty-three councils vote to postpone elections to focus on reorganisation

FOR INFORMATION

Audit and Governance Committee and Executive Directors

MAJOR £300M FRAUD INVESTIGATION INTO SOCIAL HOUSING SECTOR LAUNCHED

The UK's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has launched an inquiry into the past management of a social housing company amid allegations of fraud and bribery with an estimated value of £300m

The SFO operation included arrests of six individuals and searches of seven sites across the UK, including in Altrincham, Maidenhead, London and Manchester, with support from the National Crime Agency. Investigators also carried out a search in Venice with Italian authorities as part of the probe.

Home REIT, listed on the London Stock Exchange in 2020, raised more than £850m by marketing investments into thousands of homes intended to be leased to charities housing vulnerable groups. The company suspended trading in January 2023 after concerns emerged over property valuations and tenant rent liabilities.

Emma Luxton, director of operations at the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), said: 'This company had a meteoric rise, spending millions on properties that were supposed to house the most vulnerable in society and provide returns for investors.

'Its chaotic downfall has left many with unanswered questions. Today we conducted a major operation to advance our inquiries into suspected bribery and fraud.'

Major £300m fraud investigation into social housing sector launched | LocalGov

FOR INFORMATION

Audit and Governance Committee and Executive Directors

Key performance indicators

QUALITY ASSURANCE	KPI	RAG RATING
The auditor attends the necessary, meetings as agreed between the parties at the start of the contract	All meetings attended including Audit and Governance Committee meetings, pre-meetings, individual audit meetings and contract reviews have been attended by either the Partner or Audit Assistant Manager.	
Positive result from any external review	Following an External Quality Assessment by the Institute of Internal Auditors in May 2021, BDO was found to 'generally conform' (the highest rating) to the International Professional Practice Framework and Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.	
Information is presented in the format requested by the customer.	No requests to change the BDO format.	
Customer satisfaction reports - overall score at average at least 3.5 / 5 for surveys issued at the end of each audit.	This KPI will be updated once customer satisfaction responses are received for 2025-26.	
REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS	KPI	RAG RATING
Draft report to be produced 3 weeks after the end of the fieldwork. We have issued draft reports within 3 weeks of fieldwork 'closing' meeting and finalised internal audit reports within 1 week after receiving management responses.	We issued the draft copy of the Fire Safety Follow-Up report within three weeks (considering the Christmas break) of fieldwork 'closing' meeting.	
Management to respond to internal audit reports within 2 weeks	We cannot comment on this KPI as two weeks have not yet elapsed for responses of management to the Fire Safety Follow-Up report.	
Final report to be produced 1 week after management responses	We cannot comment on this KPI as we have not received management responses for the Fire Safety Follow-Up report.	
90% recommendations to be accepted by management	All our recommendations made were accepted by management and we worked with the Auditees to present information in the format requested.	
DELIVERY	KPI	RAG RATING
Annual Audit Plan delivered in line with timetable and Actual days are in accordance with Annual Audit Plan	We are currently on track to deliver the Annual Audit Plan in line with timetable and Actual days are in accordance with Annual Audit Plan	

Appendix 1

OPINION SIGNIFICANCE DEFINITION

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	DESIGN OPINION	FINDINGS FROM REVIEW	EFFECTIVENESS OPINION	FINDINGS FROM REVIEW
Substantial 	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
Moderate 	In the main, there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally, a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non-compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited 	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
No 	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non-compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.

RECOMMENDATION SIGNIFICANCE DEFINITION

RECOMMENDATION SIGNIFICANCE	
High 	A weakness where there is substantial risk of loss, fraud, impropriety, poor value for money, or failure to achieve organisational objectives. Such risk could lead to an adverse impact on the business. Remedial action must be taken urgently.
Medium 	A weakness in control which, although not fundamental, relates to shortcomings which expose individual business systems to a less immediate level of threatening risk or poor value for money. Such a risk could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management and requires prompt specific action.
Low 	Areas that individually have no significant impact, but where management would benefit from improved controls and/or have the opportunity to achieve greater effectiveness and/or efficiency.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. The report has been prepared solely for the management of the organisation and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. BDO LLP neither owes nor accepts any duty to any third party whether in contract or in tort and shall not be liable, in respect of any loss, damage or expense which is caused by their reliance on this report.

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Internal Audit Follow Up of Recommendations Report

155 **Oxford City Council**

January 2026



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SUMMARY

2023/24

	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up
Income Generation	1	1	-	-	1
Building Control	4	-	3	1	3
Recruitment and Retention	6	-	5	1	5
Selective Licensing	3	-	3	-	3
Data Analytics	4	1	1	2	2
Total	18	2	12	4	14

Previously complete		Complete		In progress		Overdue		Not Due	
H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M
-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	10	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-

2024/25	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Previously complete		Complete		In progress		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M
Accounts Payable	7	-	4	3	4	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Risk Management	5	-	4	1	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire Risk Assessment ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information	5	1	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-
Homelessness Prevention	4	-	3	1	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Data Analytics	3	-	3	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Affordable Housing	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
QL Optimisation	3	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Income Generation	2	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	31	1	20	10	21	-	9	-	5	-	2	1	4	-	-

¹ Fire Risk Assessment - This was an advisory review, with the Fire Safety Follow-Up review being undertaken in 2025-26 to provide detailed follow up of noted recommendations.

2025/26	Total Recs	H	M	L	To follow up	Previously complete		Complete		In progress		Overdue		Not Due	
						H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	M
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Maturity Assessment ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Treasury Management	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Purchase Cards	4	2	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Total	5	2	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-

¹ Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Maturity Assessment - This was an advisory review and does not generate an internal audit opinion. RAG rated recommendations are not produced as part of this review, rather areas for consideration by the Council.

SUMMARY

2023/24

Please find below a summary of the status of implementation of recommendations arising from reports issued in 2023/24.

- ▶ Delays have been noted in the implementation of the recommendation resulting from the Income Generation audit. This is noted as being delayed by over three years which is of concern given the high priority level of this recommendation.
- ▶ Progress has been made towards the completion of recommendations of the Recruitment and Retention audit, but these are not fully complete, with two of the three recommendations still outstanding. We have not received a response for an update with regards to the Recruitment and Retention Policy despite multiple chasers and internal escalation. The implementation of recruitment reporting through Power BI is expected to come into place for the end of March 2026.
- ▶ There has been action taken towards implementing the recommendations resulting from the Selective Licensing audit, however, there has been an extension in the implementation date agreed to allow for evidence to be received to demonstrate said implementation of actions in place by the Council.

2024/25

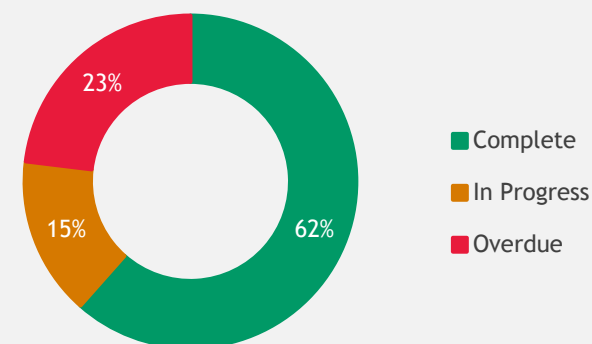
Please find below a summary of the status of implementation of recommendations arising from reports issued in 2024/25.

- ▶ There has been completion of the remaining recommendations noted for the Accounts Payable, Homelessness Prevention and Income Generation audits.
- ▶ We received responses to the recommendations for the GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information audit. Progression has been made against actions, but a revised implementation date has been agreed to ensure appropriate time for approval and publication of an organisational Record of Processing Activities (RoPA) and retention schedule, the go-live of the new data protection training modules and to ensure data sharing has been recorded appropriately and in line with the RoPA.
- ▶ Revised implementation dates have been agreed for recommendations raised from the Data Analytics audit. Reasoning behind this corresponds to exploring the best approach to reviewing and sharing spending patterns information to ensure it delivers meaningful value and easement debts being yet to be reviewed due to the low assigned risk by the Corporate Assets Team.
- ▶ The recommendations stemming from the QL Optimisation audit have also been highlighted as part of a review conducted by ARK. As such these are being implemented by the Council in consultation with ARK and so an update will be provided in line with the revised implementation date.

REQUIRED AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION:

We ask the Audit Committee to note the progress against the recommendations.

Implementation of recommendations since 2023/24



2025/26

Please find below a summary of the status of implementation of recommendations arising from reports issued in 2025/26.

- ▶ We conclude progress has been taken towards implementing the recommendations resulting from the Purchase Cards audit, however, extensions in the due dates for actions have been agreed to allow for evidence to be received to demonstrate the effectiveness of controls regarding the new Council specific Card Application Form as well as recording and analysis of transactions by Merchant.

RECOMMENDATIONS: COMPLETE

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2024-25 Accounts Payable	3a. Spot checks of new suppliers set up should be conducted to ensure the correct approval has been followed. 3b. A clear process for ODS requested new suppliers should be established to ensure all are subject to Council procurement oversight or all are approved by ODS procurement and submitted with evidence of credit checks. 3c. The new supplier form should include a rationale for approval by the management accountant for approvals of medium or high-risk suppliers.	M	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Manager Gaynor Didcock, Acting Team Leader	30/11/2025	Management Comments The Payments Team check bank details, VAT and Company Registration number for new suppliers, with corresponding checks that the new supplier form is completed and subsequently signed off by the Procurement Team. As part of the checks provided by the Payments Team a new supplier sheet excel is maintained which details whether relevant checks have been performed. ODS requested new supplier set up forms include a credit check and detail of the ODS Procurement Team's approval with contact in place from the Council's Payments Team as a second level of review and to confirm details as noted above as part of the onboarding process. For both ODS and the Council's new supplier set up forms there is an included section for completion of Credit Checks with noting of the score undertaken as well as definitions of what constitutes an unacceptable score as for Medium and High-Risk Suppliers with corresponding requirements for approval from the management accountant in these cases. Internal Audit Comments Evidence (such as ODS and the Council's new supplier set up forms) was reviewed and deemed sufficient to support the completion of the recommendations.
	1d. Head of Housing should investigate options for system integration solutions between the Housing QL system and Housing Benefits Civica system.		Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager Laura Bessell, Local Tax & Benefit Service Delivery Manager	30/06/2025 31/12/2025	Management Comments It is felt by management in the Council's Benefit Services Team there is already have a robust process in place: • A report is generated weekly from QL. • This is automatically sent via ICT to a designated folder in Civica OPEN Revenues. • Civica then picks up and loads the full rent file without requiring any manual intervention.

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
					This existing functionality has been used reliably for annual rent increases across both Oxford City Council and Housing Associations. Given this, there view is that there appears to be no need to develop a new API, as the current system already meets the intended objectives. Internal Audit Comments A walkthrough performed of the functionality between the two systems was deemed as sufficient to support the completion of the recommendation.
2024-25 Homelessness Prevention	3b. Hotel providers which have proceeded to be on the new Temporary Accommodation Framework, block bookings should be agreed for more than one month to establish competitive room rates for the Council. 3c. The Rapid Rehousing Manager should develop a structured approach to price benchmarking across their provider base. This should include regular review of local market rates, documented criteria for accepting peak pricing, and clear thresholds for when alternative providers should be sought. This will help ensure consistency in pricing decisions and demonstrate value for money, while procurement framework is still work in progress.	M	Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager	30/06/2025 31/12/2025	Management Comments The Temporary Accommodation Framework enables the approach for block booking for longer than one month as required. It will be utilised when possible and financially viable to do so, with suppliers on LOT 4 actively responding to block contract orders. Welcome Break has agreed to the Council's terms and conditions and joined the framework in the week commencing 24 November 2025. This will enable the full launch of the framework, allowing all placements to be made either through block or spot purchase The Temporary Accommodation Framework has been formally awarded to the first tranche of suppliers and commenced on Lot 4. It includes structured price benchmarking through mini-competitions, market rate reviews, and clear criteria for pricing and provider selection, as set out in the framework documents. The Council have successfully launched LOT 3 & 4 through direct awards or mini competitions, ensuring value for money. Internal Audit Comments Evidence provided alongside management comments was reviewed and sufficient to support the completion of the recommendations.
2024-25 Income Generation	1a. The Council should investigate and rectify all exceptions to sample testing as identified in the finding this will be reviewed as part of our quarterly follow up process. 1b. The HIA undercharge should be rectified in the July 2025 processing of funds, the HIA	M	Clare Paterson, Strategic Finance Manager	01/10/2025	Management Comments The Strategic Finance Manager has confirmed that the recommendations 1a and 1b from the Income Generation Audit have been actioned with corrective journal entries processed in the financial system to address any actions raised.

AUDIT	ACTIONS AGREED	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
	Manager should recalculate all costing and charge calculations and be provided with sufficient detail.				Internal Audit Comments Evidence provided alongside management comments (including review of corrective journals) was deemed sufficient to support the completion of the recommendations.
2024-25 QL Optimisation	2a. For the Incomes Team to investigate all outstanding cases identified above and provide satisfactory evidence that these cases have been investigated and resolved. 2b. In situations where a repayment arrangement has been agreed with the tenant, this should be updated within QL and the payment schedule amended to ensure that the system accurately reflects whether a tenant is behind with a payment schedule or up to date with payments. 2c. When rent collection is under debt management by the Incomes Team QL should be updated to reflect this along with what actions are agreed with the tenant to recover overdue payments.	M	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Service Delivery Manager Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager	31/12/2025	Management Comments All outstanding cases have been investigated, and appropriate resolutions have been implemented as required. The missing copy of the tenancy agreement (signed by the tenant as of 9 February 2024) has been located and provided. Where repayments have been agreed with tenants, QL has been updated and the system accurately reflects whether the tenant is behind or up to date with payments. As per QL, agreement has been noted between the Council and respective tenant for the recovery of overdue payments, as well as the QL system being updated to reflect rent collection is under debt management. Internal Audit Comments Evidence relating to management comments was reviewed, including investigation and resolving of outstanding cases raised as per the QL Optimisation Audit and required amendments and updates to the QL system. Evidence provided was noted as sufficient to support the completion of the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: IN PROGRESS

These recommendations have been marked as In Progress as they have not been implemented by their original date; a revised date has been provided.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2024-25 Data Analytics	3a. The Council should develop a mechanism to identify customers who have breached, or who are likely to breach, the due diligence threshold. This could include an analysis of customer spending patterns to identify customers that regularly make a high volume of small value orders. Once these customers are identified, due diligence procedures must commence in line with the Sundry Debtors guide.	M	Neil Markham, Incomes Team Leader	01/10/2025 30/04/2026	Management Comments The Council have created a report (which can be run out of Agresso) that looks at Sundry Debt groups customers. The report shows all invoices raised over the period of a year and totals the amount by customer. This will enable the review of spending patterns and pass this information on to the originating departments. The Council are currently exploring the best approach to reviewing and sharing this information to ensure it delivers meaningful value. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on this action in accordance with the revised due date.
2024-25 QL Optimisation	1a. The Council should identify and agree a process to ensure Pos are available for review and verification by the Council prior to payment being made to ODS. PO verification should then form part of the checks carried out by the Council prior to making payment to ODS. 1b. The Council should develop and implement a process for verifying that repair and maintenance jobs are being completed to a satisfactory standard prior to making payment to ODS. This could involve reviewing photographic evidence of completed repairs, carrying out pre and/or post work inspections or engaging with tenants to confirm their satisfaction with the work carried out. The Council should also agree the level of verification required	M	Malcolm Peek, Property Services Manager	30/11/2025 30/04/2026	Management Comments The Property Services Manager has looked at the actions, and these have been highlighted in the Consultants (ARK) review and as a part of their recommendations. As such these are being implemented by the Council in consultation with ARK. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on these actions in accordance with the revised due date.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
	for different sized jobs. Once agreed, all aspects of the verification requirements should be documented in policy and guidance documents to ensure all parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities for verifying satisfactory completion of work.				
2025-26 Purchase Cards	1a. To prevent further instances of transactions not being approved on BCOS, a policy should be produced to clearly stipulate the consequences of not recording and approving transactions in a timely manner. The policy should be presented at Senior Management meetings and then circulated to all card holders and approvers to raise awareness and ensure the support of Senior Management if the consequences need to be actioned. 1b. All transactions should be supported by the relevant documentation and submitted on BCOS before the next monthly reconciliation is due. This should be reiterated to cardholders and approvers including the consequences of non-compliance. Details of any VAT paid on each purchase should be evidenced by the supporting documentation where relevant. This allows timely and accurate approval to be granted, including the appropriate VAT reclaim, and will help to prevent a backlog in transactions without approval. 1c. Following the review of the backlog of previously unapproved transactions, an assessment should be performed of spend which is deemed inappropriate and a list of ineligible items should be included in the purchase card policy.	H	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Service Delivery Manager	31/12/2025 28/02/2026	Management Comments The Purchase Card Scheme Policy has been revised on 3 July 2025), with circulation to Card Holders on 21 July 2025 (with required approval and signature from the cardholder with details held on the OCC Mastercard Cardholder Data excel). There is reference within the Policy that all transactions must be notified to approvers by the 8th working day of the month and be reviewed by the 14th working day of the month. If the card has not been timely reconciled through the BCOS system and receipts and VAT invoices obtained and retained where applicable for all transactions made, the card will be suspended or cancelled. As per the Purchase Card Scheme Policy, for VAT purposes the card holder must attach copies of all invoices and receipts to the transaction within the card transaction management system (BCOS). Emails are sent from the Barclaycard Admin Team at the Council, that all Barclaycard spend must be actioned by the end of the 8th working day of the month, otherwise the card will be suspended until all spends are actioned and the card holder manager has approved them. There has been a review of previously unapproved transactions. As per the Purchase Card Scheme Policy, there is reference to the fact cardholders must only use the card for work related purchases, must not use the card for the purchase of anything that could bring the Council's reputation into disrepute or in the case a corporate contract is in place, with a list provided for all contracts held by the Council. Further reference is made that the card should not be used to withdraw cash, to pay for items or services from any suppliers of Financial Services, to pay for standard travel and subsistence which should be reclaimed via Payroll and to make personal purchases.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
					Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 1a in accordance with the revised due date (to ensure the Council can demonstrate evidence of the presentation and approval at a Senior Management level). Evidence to support the management comments was received to support the completion of recommendations 1b and 1c.
2025-26 Purchase Cards	2a. An application form for requesting a purchasing card should be produced by the Payments Team to ensure they are consistently receiving the required information for each request. This is in addition to the Barclaycard application form but should not be a duplicate of it. The information from the form should be recorded on the card holder record and should be used to perform regular reviews of the use and distribution of cards across the Council. The Council application form should be attached to the Barclaycard form and submitted to the Head of Financial Services for oversight and information to consider prior to his approval. The Council application form should be approved by the Line Manager and card holder. The Barclaycard application form should be signed by the cardholder; employee authorised to nominate cardholders and the Group Finance Director. 2b. A full review of the list of cardholders and approvers should be performed to remove any who no longer work at the Council and to cancel their card and/or approval permissions with immediate effect. 2c. Following the review and update of card holders, the record should be reformatted to allow clarity and ease of use and should be kept up to date. The record should include (but not limited to):	H	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Service Delivery Manager	31/12/2025 28/02/2026	Management Comments A new Council-specific Application Form has been produced by the Council that runs alongside the Purchasing Card Procedures Policy. As part of the Council's application process, details must be provided on the cardholder's job title, service, line manager, reason for requiring a card, the card limit, single transaction limit, date card ordered as well as the noting by the Payments Team for dates of review for the use of the card as well as the date of review for the limits of the card. A full review of the list of the cardholders has been performed by the Council, with all outdated records removed. As part of the termination process for any cardholder at the Council, the Payments Team will receive an email from the ICT Service Desk that notes that the leaver holds a purchase card as such it can be cancelled. Within the Mastercard Cardholder Data excel, there is a tab included which provides details of employees which have left the Council, with evidence provided as per BCOS that cards have been cancelled in line with finalisation of employment. As per the Mastercard Cardholder Data excel there are columns detailing full name of cardholder, service, job description, approving manager, card limit, individual transaction purchase limit, date for review of card, date of card order and date of agreement form and policy sent and received to card user. As part of the Council's specific card application process, details must be provided on job title, service, line manager, reason for requiring a card, the card limit, single transaction limit, date card ordered as well as the noting by the Payments Team for dates of review for the use of the card as well as the date of review for the limits of the card.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
	• Full name • Job title • Department • Line manager/Approving manager • Reason for requiring a card • Date purchasing card issued • Date for review of future requirement for card • Card limit • Individual purchase limit.				Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 2a in accordance with the revised due date (given that the new Council Application Form has only been introduced recently, we have revised the implementation data accordingly to judge the effectiveness of the controls in place). Evidence to support the management comments was received to support the completion of recommendations 2b and 2c.
2025-26 Purchase Cards	3a. A review should be performed of purchasing card limits to ensure that where they can be reduced, action is taken, and limits are set at a reasonable level. Having only the required limit on purchasing cards reduces the risk of potential fraudulent payments being made. 3b. A review of suppliers who are paid regularly should be performed by the Management Accounting Team, to determine where it would be advantageous to establish business accounts and invoicing for future transactions. This strategy will help reduce the volume of purchasing card transactions, ease the workload for approvers, and decrease the time the Payments Team spends monitoring transactions. Implementing this recommendation will contribute to more efficient financial management within the Council.	M	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Service Delivery Manager	31/12/2025 28/02/2026	Management Comments As per the Purchase Card Scheme Policy, details are made that cardholders are not permitted to amend spending limits or categories. A review was undertaken by Payments Team Manager who contacted each of the card approvers to ensure that limits for cardholders were reasonable and going forward there will be a yearly review of individual cardholder limits in line with the yearly review of suitability of cardholders, with dates for review included as per the OCC MasterCard Cardholder Data excel. It is noted from the OCC MasterCard Cardholder Data excel that several cardholders have had their limits amended to reflect their purchasing needs. The process for uploading the monthly Purchasing Card transactions from BCOS to the Council's financial system has been reviewed and enhanced to include an analysis of transactions by Merchant. This analysis will be reviewed by a Finance Business Partner and/or the Strategic Finance Manager who will recommend to the Procurement and Payments Teams any Merchants for which a business account with the Council should be sought to enable future transactions to be invoiced with their approval and payment captured through the P2P processes.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
					Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 3b in accordance with the revised due date (given that we have not received any evidence to demonstrate the processes in place). Evidence to support the management comments was received to support the completion of recommendation 3a.
2025-26 Purchase Cards	4a. Purchasing cards should only be used by the named card holder and card details should not be shared. If there are changes to structure and/or roles within teams, and the card holder is no longer the correct person, it should be changed following a defined process via discussions with the Payments Team, the Head of Financial Services and Barclaycard. The process should be documented including the approval required and all evidence of the change retained.	M	Phil McGaskill, Revenues and Payments Service Delivery Manager	31/12/2025 28/02/2026	Management Comments As per the Purchase Card Scheme Policy, details are made that the cardholder must not disclose their card details to anyone when conducting a transaction. It is noted that the Council would not change a card from one person to another, rather the card would be cancelled, and a new card would be requested. On termination of employment or in the case of changing role or the card is no longer required by the cardholder, the cardholder must surrender their card immediately. As part of the termination process for cardholders at the Council, the Payments Team will receive an email from the ICT Service Desk that notes that the leaver holds a purchase card as such it can be cancelled, with the leaver form having a question in place to notify if the individual holds a Council card. For any changes for an individual's required role or requirement for a new purchase card, the prospective cardholder must fill in a Council specific Application Form (process only just bought into place), which must include the reason for requiring the card as well as relevant approval from the card approver and from the Group Finance Director. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 4a in accordance with the revised due date (given that the new Council Application Form has only been introduced recently, we have revised the implementation data accordingly to judge the effectiveness of the controls in place).

RECOMMENDATIONS: OVERDUE

These recommendations have been marked as overdue as they have previously revised their implementation date. Therefore, they have now missed at least two implementation dates.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2023-24 Income Generation	1d. We understand that the Council are considering procuring a new asset management system therefore, it should be investigated whether a new system could interface directly with Agresso to reconcile the rent billed to tenants with the property management database.	H	Emma Gubbins, Corporate Asset Lead Malcolm Peek, Property Services Manager	01/01/2023	Management Comments
				31/03/2024	The procurement of the system has been delayed. The Council now anticipate placing a contract in the early part of next financial year. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on this action in accordance with the revised due date.
				31/03/2025	
2023-24 Recruitment and Retention	1a. To review and update the Recruitment and Selection Policy to clearly outline roles and responsibilities of all officers and service areas involved in the recruitment process and share the Policy with Heads of Services & Hiring Managers including uploading the policies onto the intranet.	M	Gail Malkin, Head of People	30/06/2025	
				31/05/2026	
2023-24 Recruitment and Retention	2a. To review the system functionality to producing recruitment monitoring data such as time to hire, agency spend and vacancy data.	M	Gail Malkin, Head of People	31/12/2024	Management Comments
				28/02/2025	The Council has consulted trade unions on the updated Recruitment and Selection Policy, and the Policy was expected to be presented to the Council Leadership Team with aims to publish on the Council Intranet by mid-October 2025. The Hiring Managers' Network have been briefed on the Policy. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to this recommendation in accordance with the revised due date ahead of the next Audit and Governance Committee as no updated response has been received regarding this recommendation from requests on 19 November, 9 and 18 December and 8 January with further escalation from the Group Finance Director on the 15 January.
				30/09/2025	
2023-24 Recruitment and Retention				31/10/2025	
				31/03/2026	

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2023-24 Selective Licensing	1a. The Council should conduct inspections based on their risk/priority level which is reviewed and a rating applied on receipt of application. 1b. There should be a clear focus on the number of target inspections to be undertaken annually and subsequently monthly to meet the 12% annual inspections target and the 60% inspection target at the end of the scheme.	M	Courtney Bennet, Building Control Team Manager David Butler, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services	31/01/2025 30/04/2025 30/09/2025 01/03/2026	Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 2a in accordance with the revised due date.
					Management Comments A risk-based priority rating system is now fully operational. Each license is assigned a priority rating on receipt of application, and inspections are conducted according to this risk-based approach. Priority 1 (higher risk) properties are inspected by Oxford City Council staff, and Priority 2 properties are inspected by contracted officers. All inspections are now recorded and monitored through MetaStreet, providing a single, consistent source of data. The manual reconciliation of historic Uniform records has been completed, establishing an accurate baseline inspection list. A Power BI report is now in use, providing management with real-time oversight of inspections against risk ratings and targets. With the application backlog now cleared and license issuance on target, inspections are the program priority. The Council has secured a multi-year contract with Buckingham Futures to provide over 1,300 inspections annually, ensuring adequate resourcing. The improved Power BI reporting is now operational and provides regular oversight of inspection volumes, with annual and monthly figures tracked against the required targets.
					Internal Audit Comments We will follow up to ensure appropriate evidence has been received to demonstrate completion of the noted recommendations in accordance with the revised due date.
2024-25 GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information	1a. Management, in conjunction with each business unit or department, should carry out a full and comprehensive review of all the Council's RoPAs to ensure that these are consistent, complete, and up to date and that they capture, as a minimum, the information identified as missing by this review. The updated RoPAs should be presented to and approved by Senior Management and subject to review on an	H	Emma Jackman, Head of Law & Governance, Council Monitoring Officer and Data Protection Officer	30/04/2025 30/08/2025 31/12/2025 20/03/2026	Management Comments Information from specific teams have been collated into an organisational level RoPA and retention schedule which was sent out to Heads of Services on 14 January 2026. Each service had until the 23 January 2026 to note any areas of omission and to feed back on the documents ahead of presentation to the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 January, after which if approval is provided, the documents will be published both externally and internally.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
	ongoing basis to ensure that these remain current and appropriate. 1b. As part of the RoPA review, the Council should continue to review existing privacy notices and updating them in case of any changes to data processing activities to ensure continued transparency of data processing with data subjects and consistency across all data privacy notices that exist.				Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on these actions in accordance with the revised due date.
2024-25 GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information	2a. Management should review the Council's retention schedules and ensure that these are fit for purpose. The retention schedules should be subject to review on a regular basis. This should be done in line with the RoPA review as per finding 1.	M	Emma Jackman, Head of Law & Governance, Council Monitoring Officer and Data Protection Officer	30/04/2025 30/08/2025 31/12/2025 20/03/2026	Management Comments Information from specific teams have been collated into an organisational level RoPA and retention schedule which was sent out to Heads of Services on 14 January 2026. Each service had until the 23 January 2026 to note any areas of omission and to feed back on the documents ahead of presentation to the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 January, after which if approval is provided, the documents will be published both externally and internally. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on this action in accordance with the revised due date.
2024-25 GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information	3a. Directors should ensure that the Data Protection training modules are completed by all staff on an annual basis. 3b. Directors, in conjunction with the Information Governance Team, should ensure that training completion is accurately recorded and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is completed by all members of staff and arrangements should be put in place for the effectiveness of the training to be actively assessed and reported to Senior Management.	M	Grace Wigham, Senior Information Governance Officer	30/09/2025 31/12/2025 20/03/2026	Management Comments A training system has been procured, and access has now been provided, with the system being customisable and the Council in process of narrowing down the required modules for use. The system is expected to go-live towards the end of February to early March 2026, but there are some uncertainties regarding processes due to Council not having defined control with regards to implementation. It has been agreed that for all mandatory training modules, these should be completed for all on the new system, even it was the case they had been completed on the old system. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on these actions in accordance with the revised due date.

AUDIT	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	PRIORITY LEVEL	MANAGER RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT PROGRESS
2024-25 GDPR and High-Level Freedom of Information	4a. For any third-party data transfers, the Council should ensure that these are being recorded within the RoPAs and any other applicable documentation, for example the information sharing log, and that appropriate safeguards, such as Data Sharing Agreements, are in place.	M	Emma Jackman, Head of Law and Governance, Council Monitoring Officer and Data Protection Officer	30/09/2025	Management Comments
	4b. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the information sharing log is subject to review on a regular basis.			31/12/2025 20/03/2026	The current RoPAs do not currently align with data sharing arrangements. For data sharing registers, procedures involve pulling together all data sharing arrangements in place (including those which had not previously been captured), to be checked internally. The tracking of any use of AI is also being done in the same document, with consideration of Local Government Reform (LGR) resulting in requirement of sharing of data with further organisations. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on these actions in accordance with the revised due date.
2024-25 Data Analytics	2a. The Council should either resume and expedite its investigation of easement related aged debts and ensure that they are adequately chased up in accordance with the Corporate Debt and Income and Collection policies, or if this is not deemed economically viable, the balances should be written off to maintain the accuracy of the aged debt listing and the council's receivables balances.	M	Neil Markham, Incomes Team Leader	01/10/2025 25/12/2025 31/03/2026	Management Comments The easement portfolio is still due to be reviewed, but there is prioritisation of workloads based on risk to the Council. The easements debt is categorised as a low risk by the Corporate Assets Team. The work stream will result in negotiations on each easement to convert to a premium rather than an annual payment. Internal Audit Comments We will follow up on the action to recommendation 2a in accordance with the revised due date (we have requested a revised due date for this action but did not receive a response and as such will revise to ensure follow up ahead of the next Audit and Governance Committee).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our audit and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. The report has been prepared solely for the management of the organisation and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. BDO LLP neither owes nor accepts any duty to any third party whether in contract or in tort and shall not be liable, in respect of any loss, damage or expense which is caused by their reliance on this report.

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To: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 28 January 2026
Report of: Group Finance Director, Corporate Services
Title of Report: Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2025

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To submit the Council's draft Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representations to the Committee to obtain delegated authority for approval and authorisation.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Well Run Council.
Policy Framework:	No

Recommendation(s): That the Audit and Governance Committee:	
1.	Approve the latest 2024/25 Statement of Accounts as agreed by the Group Finance Director and authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the Accounts incorporating any further changes arising from the ongoing audit.
2	Agree that a Letter of Representations for 2024/25 incorporating any statements required by the external auditor arising from the ongoing audit be signed and issued by the Group Finance Director and the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee to enable the external auditor's opinion to be issued (paragraphs 14 to 15).

Information Exempt from Publication
None.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Statement of Accounts 2024/25	No
Appendix 2	Letter of Representation 2023/24 - Example	No

Introduction and background

1. The Local Authority sector nationally has had a widespread backlog in finalising audits which have, in most cases, built up over time. Often this is because of an issue in a particular year which has then had a knock-on effect to future audits. For some audits the backlog has built up due to a lack of capacity in a combination of the local authorities themselves and also the auditors operating in the market. The deadlines for completion of draft Statements of Accounts and for the audit have been shortened over the years leading to limited or no contingency in the timescale. At the same time, the requirements placed on auditors, and therefore on the teams providing information to support the audit, have increased and are continuing to increase with even more stringent requirements for the 2025/26 audit expected in line with the latest International Standards on Auditing (ISA). ISAs are professional standards for the auditing of financial information issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB). Whilst the audit requirements and the level of work needed to support audits has increased massively over the years, capacity in the Financial Accounting Team has not. This is being highlighted as an issue by the external auditors.
2. For Oxford City Council the backlog started with the delay in the finalisation of the audit of the 2020/21 statements of accounts for various reasons with the key one being the evidence around grants; this was the Covid period and grants were issued by Government with little or no documentation to support the grant at audit. The administration of the grants also led to capacity issues within the Council's Finance Team. There were then further delays in 2021/22 caused by some data issues arising from a computer system implementation. The delays in this audit had a knock-on effect on the 2022/23 accounts closedown and then the audit was halted due to the national drive to implement an audit reset.

Audit Trajectory

3. The accounts, having been disclaimed, have to be audited at a more detailed level than previously due to the auditors having to rebuild their assurance over historical figures. The process to achieve this rebuilding is largely in the hands of the auditor, however the Council must be able to support the auditor requirements in order to progress the rebuilding of assurance. Consequently, the process is very much a collaborative approach between the auditors and the Council.
4. The actual progress along this path depends on the amount of work that the auditors can complete, their internal assurance methodologies, the capacity of a local authority to manage the workload required for the audit, and the availability of audit evidence.
5. The start of the audit for 2024/25 was delayed due to the impact of the cyber-attack which resulted in the Council missing the completion date which resulted in audit resources having to be redeployed and then rearranged. In order to maintain momentum on areas which the Council and the auditors believe can be moved closer to getting a clean opinion and to free up capacity, a decision was taken to halt the work on the fixed assets for the 2024/25 accounts due to this area continuing to be problematic from the perspective of audit sign-off.
6. The expectation is that the 2024/25 accounts will be disclaimed and that a disclaimed position will continue until the auditors have rebuilt assurance in all areas of the Council's accounts. The Council's external auditors are expecting to be able to identify the progress towards an unmodified (also known as unqualified) opinion using a traffic light system of red, amber and green with an unmodified opinion being where everything is green.

7. The process of rebuilding assurance will stretch over multiple years with assurance being built over different areas on a gradual basis. Clearly this takes planning and the focussing of resources from both the external auditors and the Council which spans a number of years. The Financial Reporting Council has said that “Auditors and audited bodies should work together to agree jointly owned delivery plans for each year’s audit to enable this.”

Fixed Assets

8. In order to move the audit of the fixed asset area forward it is believed that the Council will need to undertake a full revaluation and to ensure that all required audit evidence can be provided by the Council. Since the valuations for the 2025/26 accounts have already been procured, the earliest opportunity for a full valuation would be for the 2026/27 accounts. Prior to this, the Council will be asking the external auditors for details of their evidence requirements so that compiling these can be built in the process in the same timeframe as the 2026/27 valuation.
9. It should be noted that a full valuation will be an increased cost in the one year and that additional budget will be required to facilitate this. There may also be further costs depending on the audit evidence requirements.

Changes to the Statements and Uncorrected Misstatements

10. Often during an audit there will be a number of transactions which have not been made correctly; this is inevitable given the level of transactions the Council makes per year. Where appropriate and where the changes are agreed by Council finance staff these changes will be made to correct such entries. “Uncorrected Misstatements” is a term used by the external auditor to describe items which they believe have not been represented properly in the accounts and the council concerned has decided not to make a change. There are a number of reasons why a change may not be made including: the council does not agree with the auditor’s opinion; the change would be costly to implement (i.e. would involve external advice), or the change cannot be made within the timescale needed. Additionally in the current position where accounts are expected to be disclaimed or qualified, changes may not be made because pragmatically it is not appropriate i.e. because additional work won’t change an opinion or in order to focus resources on clearing other areas of the accounts.
11. After the production of the original draft statements which were published on the Council’s website and which were subject to public inspection, there have been some changes made to the draft accounts as follows:
 - A miscoding of some temporary staff costs was identified by Council staff. This resulted in a movement of £773k from the General Fund to the HRA. This has been reflected in the statements at Appendix 1 to this report;
 - The Council Tax Court Cost bad debt provision and the Rent Deposit Scheme bad debt provision have been reclassified from provisions to debtors;
 - Mis-classification of £4.5 million loss on disposal of fixed assets to the income column in the presentation of the group accounts thus understating income and expenditure on that line; there was no impact to the bottom line; and
 - There have also been some minor narrative and presentational changes.

12. There may be other changes required as the audit progresses and these will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee in the external auditor's Audit Results Report. The Council has, to date, not been made aware of any further mis-statements and no uncorrected mis-statements.

The Statement of Accounts

13. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. It should be noted that where page numbers are referenced in the document, they are coloured in red. This is to ensure that once the accounts have finished changing, the page numbers will be checked and updated and turned black. The Statement of Accounts consists of the following:

- The Statement of Responsibilities, setting out the general responsibilities of both the Council, and the Section 151 Officer (The Group Finance Director). The Group Finance Director has to sign a statement that the Accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for that year then ended (page 6 and page 26).
- The Core Financial Statements and Expenditure and Funding Analysis (pages 21 to 27) and supplementary statements (pages 93 to 102) and group accounts (pages 103 to 130) incorporating:
 - a. A Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) - a statement used to adjust International Financial Reporting Standard accounting practice to Local Government proper practice to ensure the accounting changes do not impact on Council Tax and create any additional burden to the tax payer.
 - b. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - a statement which incorporates all revenue income and expenditure relating to the year.
 - c. Expenditure and Funding Analysis - a statement that supports and provides more information on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - d. A Balance Sheet – a statement which records all the assets and liabilities at the Balance Sheet date of 31 March.
 - e. A Cashflow Statement - a statement that shows the inflows and outflows of cash during the year reconciled to the year end cash position.
 - f. The Housing Revenue Account - a statement which brings together all transactions during the year in relation to the management and maintenance of the Council's 8,077 unit dwelling stock.
 - g. Collection Fund - a statement which brings together all transactions during the year relating to the collection of Business Rates and Council Tax income together with payments and receipts from Government and payments made to the preceptors; the Oxfordshire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner (Thames Valley) and Parish Councils.
 - h. Group Accounts - statements which reflect the Council's 50% interest with Grosvenor Developments Limited in a joint venture for the construction of dwellings at Barton (Barton LLP), a 50% interest with Nuffield College in a joint venture for the regeneration of the West End area of Oxford, (Oxwed LLP) and the Council's wholly owned companies, the Housing Company Group, Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL), Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL). The Council's share of the assets and liabilities of these entities are required to be incorporated into the Council's accounts.
 - i. The Statement of Accounting Policies, setting out the detailed rules under which the Council accounts for its assets, liabilities, income and expenditure (pages 133 to 151).

Letter of Representation

14. Every year the Council's external auditor requires a Letter of Representations to be signed alongside the Statement of Accounts. This is a standard process, and the letter just provides confirmation to the external auditor of various matters to assure the auditor that they have been presented with full information and that there aren't any matters not brought to their attention that could adversely affect the audit opinion.
15. Attached at Appendix 2 is the Letter of Representation from 2023/24 as an example of the contents of a Letter of Representation to put the contents into perspective. The Committee is asked to approve in principle the signing of a similar letter for 2024/25. This letter is from the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Chair of Audit and Governance Committee setting out the processes and procedures the Council adopts to ensure that it is in compliance with its statutory requirements and that it has a sufficiently robust control framework to prevent and detect fraud and irregularities. The Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young, require this letter before issuing their opinion but should be signed and dated on the day that the external auditors issue their opinion.

Communication

16. The Council's accounts for 2024/25 were published on the Council's website in July 2024 and were made available for public inspection. Details of how a local government elector for the area of the Council or their representative may make an appointment to ask the external auditor questions about the accounts have been published. In addition an elector or representative may object to the Council's accounts, and can ask the auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest (a 'public interest report') under section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Written notice of a proposed objection and the grounds on which it is made must be sent to the external auditor at the address provided on the Council's website.
17. There were no objections lodged.
18. The Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 will be published on the Council's website after approval along with a notice confirming the conclusion of the audit and alongside the Annual Governance Statement for the year.

Financial Implications

19. These are covered within the main body of the report.

Legal Implications

20. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2024, the accounts for 2024/25 must be audited, approved and published by 27th February 2026. (EG 15 Jan 2026 13715).

Risk Implications

21. If the accounts for 2024/25 and associated Letter of Representation are not approved and delegations provided for signing, the Council will not be able to comply with the backstop date for that financial year and would risk being named as a non-compliant council.

22. There could potentially be an impact on the Council's companies if they have to rely on the parent for any assurance on contracts. The reasons for disclaimers being issued in the local government sector have been well documented and publicised so it would be expected that an explanation of the position and the demonstration that this is a sector-wide issue which is not due to the specific failings of individual authorities would mitigate the risk to an extent.

Equalities Impact

23. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Report author	Bill Lewis
Job title	Financial Accounting Manager
Service area or department	Financial Services
Telephone	01865 252607
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Background Papers: None

Draft

Statement of Accounts

2024-25

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FOREWORD

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025.

The Statement of Accounts is a statutory document providing information on the cost of services provided by Oxford City Council to the council tax payer and the council house tenant and detailing how those services were financed. In addition, it provides information, within the Balance Sheet on page 26 of the value of the assets the Council owns and the liabilities that it owes. It is in essence, a statement of how well it has managed your money over the last twelve months.

The Statement provides, in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the CIPFA code of practice and relevant statutory guidance, the accounts for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Collection Fund and all other accounts for which the Council is responsible. The Council's Balance Sheet provides details of its Assets and Liabilities as at the balance sheet date. Other supporting statements are provided to help explain the figures in the accounts. In addition, a glossary can be found on pages 151 to 157 to help explain some of the technical terms.

On pages 101 to 128 the main Accounting Statements are replicated to incorporate the Group Accounts of the Council. These Group Accounts reflect the Council's financial position inclusive of its 50% share in Barton Oxford LLP, the Council's Joint Venture with Grosvenor Developments Limited; its 50% share in Oxwed LLP, the Council's joint venture with Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Nuffield College, its 100% share of Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL), its 100% share in Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL); and its 100% share in Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL).

The Accounts and all relevant documents are subject to review by the Council's External Auditors, Ernst & Young, who will provide their opinion on the Council's Accounts.

Should you have any comments or wish to discuss this Statement in further detail then please contact the Council's Financial Accounting Manager, Bill Lewis at blewis@oxford.gov.uk.

I hope you find the Statement of interest and may I take the opportunity of thanking you for taking time to read it.

Nigel Kennedy
Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)

Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St. Aldates
Oxford
OX1 1BX

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and ensure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council, that officer is the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer).
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets, and
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Responsibilities of the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing the Statement of Accounts, the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- complied with the Local Authority Code.
- kept proper accounting records which are up to date, and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Statement of Accounts as set out on pages **21 to 149** presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Oxford City Council as at 31 March 2025 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The unaudited Accounts were issued on 23 July 2025 and the audited accounts have been authorised for issue on (**Date to be inserted**).

Signed

Nigel Kennedy

Group Finance Director (Section 151
Officer)

Date

Signed

Councillor

Chair of Audit & Governance Committee

Date

NARRATIVE REPORT

Purpose of the Narrative Report

The purpose of the narrative report is to provide an explanation of the Council's financial position, and assist in the interpretation of the financial statements. It contains commentary on the major influences affecting the Council's income and expenditure, cash flows and information on the financial needs and resources of the Council.

1. The Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts consists of the following:

- The Statement of Responsibilities, setting out the general responsibilities of both the City Council, and the Section 151 Officer (The Group Finance Director). The Group Finance Director has to sign a statement that the Accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for that year then ended and to sign the balance sheet (page 6 and page 26).
- The Core Financial Statements and the Expenditure and Funding Analysis (pages 21 to 27), the supplementary statements (pages 91 to 100) and group accounts (pages 101 to 128) incorporating:
 - a. A Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) - a statement used to adjust International Financial Reporting Standard accounting practice to Local Government proper practice to ensure the accounting changes do not impact on Council Tax and create any additional burden to the tax payer.
 - b. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - a statement which incorporates all revenue income and expenditure relating to the year.
 - c. Expenditure and Funding Analysis - a statement that supports and provides more information on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - d. A Balance Sheet - which records all the assets and liabilities at the Balance Sheet date of 31 March.
 - e. A Cashflow Statement - a statement that shows the inflows and outflows of cash during the year reconciled to the year end cash position.
 - f. The Housing Revenue Account - a statement which brings together all transactions during the year in relation to the management and maintenance of the Council's 7,884 dwelling stock.
 - g. Collection Fund - a statement which brings together all transactions during the year relating to the collection of Business Rates and Council Tax income together with payments and receipts from Government and payments made to the preceptors; the County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner (Thames Valley) and Parish Councils.
 - h. Group Accounts - statements which reflect the Council's 50% interest with Grosvenor Developments Limited in a joint venture for the construction of dwellings at Barton, a 50% interest with Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited in a joint venture for the regeneration of the West End area of Oxford, (Oxwed LLP) and the Council's wholly owned companies: Housing Company Group, Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL), Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL). The Council's share of the assets and liabilities of these entities are required to be incorporated into the Council's accounts.
- The Statement of Accounting Policies, setting out the detailed rules under which we account for assets, liabilities, income and expenditure (pages 131 to 149).

NARRATIVE REPORT

Details Of The Core Financial Statements

The Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS)

The MIRS shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into Usable Reserves (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) totalling around £135.0 million as at the balance sheet date and Unusable Reserves which are not 'cash backed' totalling £1,088.4 million.

The surplus or (deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 23). These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance and Housing Revenue Account for Council Tax setting and dwellings rent setting purposes.

The Net Increase / Decrease Before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance and Housing Revenue Account Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from Earmarked Reserves undertaken by the Council.

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This Statement (page 23) shows the net cost in the year of providing services, which is £36.7 million, in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this is different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Expenditure and Financing Analysis and the supporting note 6 (pages 24 and 38), provide further information on the income and expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement reconciles back to the management accounts reported quarterly to the City Executive Board; further details and the outturn are discussed below.

The Balance Sheet

This statement (page 26) shows the value as at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council which are £1,223.4 million net. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. The Cash Investments, Assets Held For Sale and Stock has decreased due to the reductions in short term investments following cash balances being used to for capital financing in lieu of external borrowing. Amounts owed by the Council has increased, primarily an increase in creditors, and money the Council is owed has increased primarily due to an increase in the pensions asset. The value of land and property owned by the Council has increased between 2023/24 and 2024/25 predominantly through revaluation.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	Variation £'000
Value of Land and Property Owned	1,311,257	1,161,775	149,482
Cash Investments, Assets Held For Sale and Stock	18,071	20,976	(2,905)
Money the Council Owes	(399,523)	(314,711)	(84,812)
Money the Council is Owed	293,589	229,686	63,903
Net Worth of Council at 31st March	1,223,394	1,097,726	125,668

Reserves are reported in two categories:

- Usable Reserves - £135.0 million - those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves to meet unforeseen circumstances and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt and the earmarked reserves of £68.0 million which are set aside to fund future expenditure).

NARRATIVE REPORT

- Unusable Reserves - £1,088.4 million - those reserves that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes those that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold; and reserves that reflect timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line "Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations".

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement ([page 27](#)) shows the changes in Cash and Cash Equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The Statement shows how the Council generates and uses Cash and Cash Equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.

The amount of 'Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities' is £16.6 million and is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for the purchase of resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery.

The overall increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents between 2023/24 and 2024/25 is approximately £2.3 million due predominantly to an increase in money market funds and cash held at the bank following external borrowing to cover capital financing costs; money market funds are instant access and are classified as a cash equivalent. Cash has reduced due to the internal financing of capital expenditure and short term transfers of cash between companies to maintain bank balances in line with banking agreements.

The Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement

The HRA Income and Expenditure Statement ([page 93](#)) shows the economic cost in the year of providing housing services in accordance with the accounting rules, rather than the amount to be funded from rents and government grants. Authorities charge rents to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost.

The Collection Fund

The Collection Fund ([page 99](#)) is the statement reflecting the Council's statutory obligation as a Billing Authority to maintain a separate Collection Fund. The Statement shows the transactions the Council as a Billing Authority has undertaken in relation to the collection of council tax and business rates and distribution of resources to local authorities and Government.

The Collection Fund Balance at the end of the year was a £4.9 million net deficit (£2.4 million prior year). This represents a £3.5 million deficit on Business Rates and a £1.5 million deficit on the Council Tax element respectively. The Council Tax balance is shared between Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and the Police and Crime Commissioner (Thames Valley) in proportion to their precept. The Business Rates balance is shared between Central Government, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council in the percentages 50% / 40% / 10% respectively.

	Business Rates	Council Tax	Total
	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Oxford City Council	1,393	207	1,600
Oxfordshire County Council	348	1,091	1,439
Police and Crime Commissioner (Thames Valley)	-	162	162
Central Government	1,740	-	1,740
Total (Surplus)/Deficit c/f	3,481	1,460	4,941

NARRATIVE REPORT

2. General Fund Outturn Position

The Council set a budget for spending on General Fund services of £30.324 million, to be financed by Council Tax of £16.014 million (net of parish precepts), retained business rates of £11.175 million, contributions from earmarked reserves of £1.367 million, and grant of £1.768 million.

The Council Tax for a Band D property was set at £352.07 (including parish precepts which are precepted on the Council), a 2.91% increase for the City Council Tax on the previous year. The basic amount of Council Tax (excluding the parish elements) was £346.36, a rise of 2.99% on the previous year.

The table below shows the Council's outturn position at service level against the latest budget: an adverse position of £1.053 million against the balanced budget agreed in February 2024. The variance to budget is after the budgeted transfer of £1.367 million from earmarked reserves. The £1.053 million deficit was transferred from earmarked reserves. In summary the position is as follows:

	Net Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Net Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Net Expenditure 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000
Companies	12,933	11,821	9,059	(2,762)
Companies Client	12,933	11,821	9,059	(2,762)
Communities & Citizen Services	6,556	7,162	6,095	(1,067)
Information & Technology	3,946	4,322	5,216	894
Housing Services	4,908	5,944	7,834	1,890
Community Safety	814	878	827	(51)
City and Citizens' Services	16,224	18,306	19,972	1,666
Corporate Strategy	471	519	478	(41)
Financial Services	3,958	4,857	5,987	1,130
Chief Executive	742	916	928	12
Law and Governance	3,402	3,759	3,696	(63)
People	1,733	1,844	1,678	(166)
Corporate Services	10,306	11,895	12,767	872
Corporate Property	(7,916)	(7,476)	(7,559)	(83)
Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability	1,786	2,337	2,349	12
Planning & Regulatory Services	308	885	937	52
Place	(5,822)	(4,254)	(4,273)	(19)
Total Service Expenditure	33,641	37,768	37,525	(243)
Service Level Agreements	(6,550)	(6,550)	(6,304)	246
Corporate Accounts and Contingencies	2,881	(452)	598	1,050
Net General Fund Expenditure	29,972	30,766	31,819	1,053
Transfers To/From Earmarked Reserves	(1,367)	46	46	-
Net Budget Required	28,605	30,812	31,865	1,053
Total Funding Available	28,605	30,812	30,812	-
Net (Surplus) / Deficit for the Year	-	-	1,053	1,053
Working Balance	(3,622)	(3,622)	(3,622)	-

The main variances making up the overall £1.053 million general fund adverse variance are as follows:

Housing Services had an overspend of £1.89 million due to the high demand for Temporary Accommodation. Demand continues to fluctuate whilst supply of housing is being increased via a variety of routes such as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Private Rented Sector. This level of demand for temporary accommodation continues to align with the national trend and the cost of living is a major factor driving this ongoing pattern.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Community & Citizen's Services recorded an actual underspend of £1.067 million against budget for 2024/25. This arose mainly from a £0.14 million underspend for Community Centres, due to the East Oxford and Blackbird Leys community centres being closed for redevelopment thereby reducing running costs, and a Leisure services underspend of £0.8 million comprising:

- ♦ a one-off £0.387 million favourable variance for the concluded Fusion leisure contract as a result of the debt position and proposed repayment plan compared to actual repayment progress in 2024/25.
- ♦ an underspend of £0.543 million compared to the budget for the in-year procured SERCO leisure contract relating to savings for utilities of £0.38 million and contingency of £0.16 million offset by leisure central management costs mainly due to insurance.

Information & Technology Services had an actual adverse variance of £0.9 million for 2024/25 due to:

- ♦ £1.183 million adverse pressure resulting from SCC server hosting costs, the costs of migrating individual systems to an Azure cloud-based platform and IT absorbing unbudgeted running costs arising from the introduction of new systems commissioned by different service areas. A new SCC contract was agreed in October 2024 which provides mitigation against recurring expenditure at this level.
- ♦ £0.26 million one-off contractual payments regarding telephony services, incurred during the delivery of the new contract.
- ♦ £0.5 million favourable variance from the recharge of ICT salaries to other revenue service areas and capital schemes

In **Corporate Property** there was an underspend of £0.083 million for 2024/25 due to unbudgeted savings on staff costs of £0.25 million from vacant posts during the year and an overspend on Business Rates of £0.56 million. Refunds relating to the latter may be obtainable in due course. More savings were achieved from underspends of £0.22 million on maintenance and minor repairs together with unbudgeted income from Pitch and Site Rents of £0.16 million.

The Council Companies' Client had an overall favourable variance of £2.761 million on budget due to:

- ♦ an additional £0.925 million of dividend income compared to budget
- ♦ additional unbudgeted income of £1.54 million in the Parking Management area relating to all car parks but most notably from Oxpens, Worcester Street, St Clements
- ♦ an underspend of £0.34 million across the Street Cleansing and Motor Transport areas arising from lower costs for statutory services provision, Council Tax / Business Rates costs and a budget for Consultant's Fees that was not utilised.

People Services recorded an adverse variance of £0.166 million driven by savings related to the reduction in FTE for business partnering resource and apprentice intake being lower than budgeted.

Corporate Accounts, Service Level Agreements and Contingencies had an overall adverse variance of £1.297 million for 2024/25 resulting from a number of variances including:

Net cost of housing benefit payments – the adverse variance of £1.491m for 2024/25 is the overspend on costs related to benefit paid to non-registered provider organisations in respect of supported accommodation. The number of such providers in the city is limited and the service is commissioned largely by bodies outside the City Council i.e. NHS/ Oxfordshire County Council and other District Councils. Whilst the Council will try to mitigate this issue, the extent to which it can do so is limited. There will be an increased impact from 1 April 2025 as a result of working age housing benefit claimants being transferred to Universal Credit. The Council will monitor the position closely and continue to lobby government and the LGA, within its ability, with regards to changing the housing benefit regulations to mitigate the impact of this issue.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Interest Payable, Interest Receivable and Investment Income – a net £2.037 million favourable year-end position (excluding the year end adjustment of £1.8 million relating to finance lease accounting) due to:

- lower anticipated general fund borrowing costs than anticipated as a result of slippages in the capital programme
- lower interest income from companies than anticipated, largely as a result of the redemption of housing investment company loans during the year
- income from HRA internal borrowing related to HRA capital programme prudential borrowing finance. The Council is currently maximising the use of internal cash balances before borrowing externally and making the statutory interest change from the General Fund to the HRA.

Charges to revenue for capital borrowing – the statutory charge to revenue in relation to the principal element of capital borrowing was lower by £0.590 million due to lower amount of General Fund capital spend needing to be financed from borrowing.

Company Financial positions

The Council has three wholly owned companies: Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODSL), Oxford Direct Services Trading Ltd (ODSTL), and Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL). The OCHL holding company has two wholly owned subsidiaries: Oxford City Housing Development Ltd (OCH(D)L) and Oxford City Housing Investment Ltd (OCH(I)L). The Council also has two joint ventures: Oxwed LLP and Barton Oxford LLP.

ODSL made a surplus of £3.115 million in 2024/25 (£2.652 million in 2023/24). ODSTL made a surplus of £1.027 million in 2024/25 (£0.7 million in 2023/24). From 2021/22 onwards, ODSL performed work only for the Council and work for any entities other than the Council was performed by ODSTL.

OCHL group made a profit of £0.511 million for the 2024/25 financial year (£3.581 million for 2023/24).

Oxwed LLP made a loss of £2.627 million for 2024/25 (£2.987 million in 2023/24) mainly due to financing costs from servicing the loans from the partners (which mainly relate to the costs of land assembly) and the costs of the preparation for development. The company is currently working on bringing the site forward for development

Due to the nature of the arrangement, the operation of Barton Oxford LLP does not have a financial impact on the Council

NARRATIVE REPORT

3. Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position

	Net Approved Budget 2024/25 £000	Net Revised Budget 2024/25 £000	Net Expenditure 2024/25 £000	Variance 2024/25 £000
Dwelling Rent	(53,249)	(53,309)	(53,980)	(671)
Service Charges	(2,897)	(2,837)	(3,113)	(276)
Garage Income	(228)	(228)	(298)	(70)
Miscellaneous Income	(806)	(806)	(1,184)	(378)
Right to Buy (RAF)	-	-	(31)	(31)
Income	(57,180)	(57,180)	(58,606)	(1,426)
Management & Services (Stock Related)	13,975	14,050	13,296	(754)
Other Revenue Spend (Stock Related)	972	897	694	(203)
Misc Expenditure (Not Stock Related)	826	826	122	(704)
Bad Debt Provision	931	931	773	(158)
Responsive and Cyclical Repairs	12,735	12,735	19,583	6,848
Interest Paid	12,191	12,191	10,223	(1,968)
Depreciation	9,706	9,706	11,122	1,416
Expenditure	51,336	51,336	55,813	4,477
Net Operating Expenditure / (Income)	(5,844)	(5,844)	(2,793)	3,051
Investment Income	(42)	(42)	(495)	(453)
Reserve Movements	-	-	3,549	3,549
(Gain) / Loss on sale of fixed assets	-	-	(6,882)	(6,882)
Capital expenditure funded by the HRA	12,367	12,367	3,677	(8,690)
	12,325	12,325	(151)	(12,476)
Net (surplus)/deficit	6,481	6,481	(2,944)	(9,425)
Working Balance	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	-

HRA Summary

At the end of 2024/25 the HRA outturn was a favourable position of £2.944 million, compared to the 2024/25 budget deficit of £6.481 million. This favourable variance of £9.43 million is mostly due to a change in the mix of appropriations for which there is a favourable variance of £12.6 million compared to budget, including a lower than budgeted revenue contribution to capital by £8.69 million and £6.88 million gain on the sale of fixed assets; this is offset by reduced net operating income of £2.79 million.

Major variations include:

Income

Net Income

Dwelling Rents and Service Charges exceeded the budget by £0.67 million due to the transfer of OX Place properties during the year. Also, since the budget was set, 428 properties have been re-let and moved to formula rent.

An increase to Service Charges income of £0.276 million arose from additional income from Leaseholders; unbudgeted Major Works income; actual bills compared to estimated charges; plus, additional income from OX Place transfer properties.

An increase to Misc Income of £0.378 million arose from Furnished Tenancies, leased properties and grant funding for Tenant Satisfaction Measures New Burdens Payments.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Expenditure

Management and Services (Stock related)

There was an overall underspend of £0.754 million arising from £0.415 million saving on salaries, namely from Landlord Services, new budget bid of £0.86 million added in, new posts to be filled and some existing vacant posts from prior year with recruitment on hold pending Landlord Services Transformation.

Additional savings of £0.68 million on utilities and £0.55 million on SLA charges were offset by overspend of Council Tax payments on void properties, furniture purchases in the Furnished Tenancy Scheme, Supplies and Services including Housing Consultants and an increased insurance premium.

Other Revenue spend (stock related)

There was a favourable variance of £0.203 million as a result of underspends including on purchase card spend in relation to decants and B&B's, compensation payments to tenants. These were offset by £0.2 million of costs on new developments of which £0.28 million relates to abortive costs.

Misc. Expenditure (not stock related)

An underspend of £0.704 million arose through a number of budgets not being utilised, namely £0.46 million unspent of new developments and £0.21 million on general contracted services.

Responsive and Cyclical Repairs

There has been a significant overspend in repair costs of £7.024 million in 2024-25. This overspend is due to an exceptional year of demand led General Minor Works and day to day jobs raised and the introduction of significant changes to the compliance standards set by the Housing Regulator. The latter has required a rapid response by the Council resulting in an increase to the number of specialist surveys carried out, as well as any remedial works required. Notable areas in respect of this are Fire Safety, Asbestos and Electrical Upgrades/ Inspections.

To address the overspend, the proposed budgets included in the 2025/26 MTFP have been increased to accommodate the expected ongoing planned compliance works which should be at a more managed level going forward. The Council has also undertaken a significant amount of work in Business and Asset Management Planning to compile a comprehensive programme of capital investment that over the longer term will reduce the ad-hoc demand for repairs and maintenance.

Gain on Sale of Fixed Assets

The 2024/25 actual gain of £6.882m relates to the realisation of the increase in values of properties sold. Every year the HRA properties are valued and any increases / decreases in valuation are recorded on the balance sheet. However, when a property is sold, this increase in value is "realised" as the difference between the historic cost of the property (the original cost plus any subsequent capital investment) and the sales value. As most of the stock is over 50 years old, the base asset values will have increased significantly over the lifetime of the properties.

Interest Paid & Depreciation

The actual interest charged for the year on external debt came in under budget at £10.22 million giving a favourable variance of £1.97 million due to lower capital expenditure than expected over the last and previous few years.

Investment income

There is a favourable variance of £0.495 million on investment income due to slippage in the capital programme leading to higher cash balances and an increase in interest rates.

NARRATIVE REPORT

4. Capital Outturn Position

The latest revised budget in February 2025 was £164.884 million with a final outturn in March of £145.349 million i.e. 88.2% spend against latest budget and 61.7% against the original budget of £235.719 million set in February 2024.

	Latest Budget 2024/25 £'000	Spend to 31 March 2024/25 £'000	Outturn Variance to Latest Budget 2024/25 £'000	Outturn Variance due to Slippage 2024/25 £'000	Outturn Variance due to Over / (Under) spend 2024/25 £'000
General Fund	48,903	39,671	(9,232)	(7,354)	(1,878)
Housing Revenue Account	115,981	105,678	(10,303)	(1,967)	(8,336)
Grand Total	164,884	145,349	(19,535)	(9,321)	(10,214)

Of the unspent budget of £19.535 million, slippage of £9.32 million is being carried forward into future years, although not all will remain in the 2025-26 financial year but will be phased over the years that spend is expected to occur. The variance of £10.21 million due to underspend on budgeted capital projects is mainly associated with the HRA demand driven spend on communal, internal and external works on council houses and underspent budget relating to housing company loans.

As part of the variance there are notable projects which have slipped compared to budget including:

General Fund

Housing Services - £1.813 million

Housing Company loans - £1.50 million – the full value budgeted in 2024-25 related to housing projects delivery was not drawn down as planned due to the receipts the company received in year.

Old Gas Works Bridge – £0.313 million – the variance relates to retention payments which will become due in 2025-26.

Regeneration & Economy - £2.624 million

Osney Bridge and Path works – £1.758 million. These related projects are delayed due to Judicial Review; a decision was received on 10 March 2025 however an appeal process can occur. Funding remains in place despite the delays.

Go Ultra Low Oxford - On Street - £0.495 million – the project and payment to Oxfordshire County Council is delayed into 2025-26

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan - £0.372 million – this is unspent and to be vired to the Covered Market Masterplan programme in 2025/26.

Corporate Property - £2.263 million

Salary Costs - £1.572 million – this is a rolling programme of work to support a variety of projects and the variance is due to a reduced level of capitalizable staff costs in 2024-25

Gloucester Green Car Park (H&S) - £0.319 million - unspent budget, the project is complete with all costs incurred.

Planned Building Improvements - £0.372 million – this is due to a reduced level of capitalisable maintenance costs in 2024-25 compared to budget. This is a rolling programme of work and the costs will be incurred in future years

Information & Technology - £0.255 million

Information@Work system – £0.255 million – This project is for the renewal or replacement of the software application and the full budget will not be needed as expected due to the re-tendering of the service which was awarded to the incumbent supplier.

NARRATIVE REPORT

HRA

The HRA overall variance is £10.303 million underspent on the latest budget. £7.214 million of this 2024/25 underspend relates to the HRA Capital Maintenance programme being under-utilised with the consequential overspend in revenue expenditure on HRA repairs and maintenance as highlighted above. Any works not completed will be addressed within the new planned maintenance programme that commenced in 2025/26. £1.967 million is slippage is being carried forward into future years.

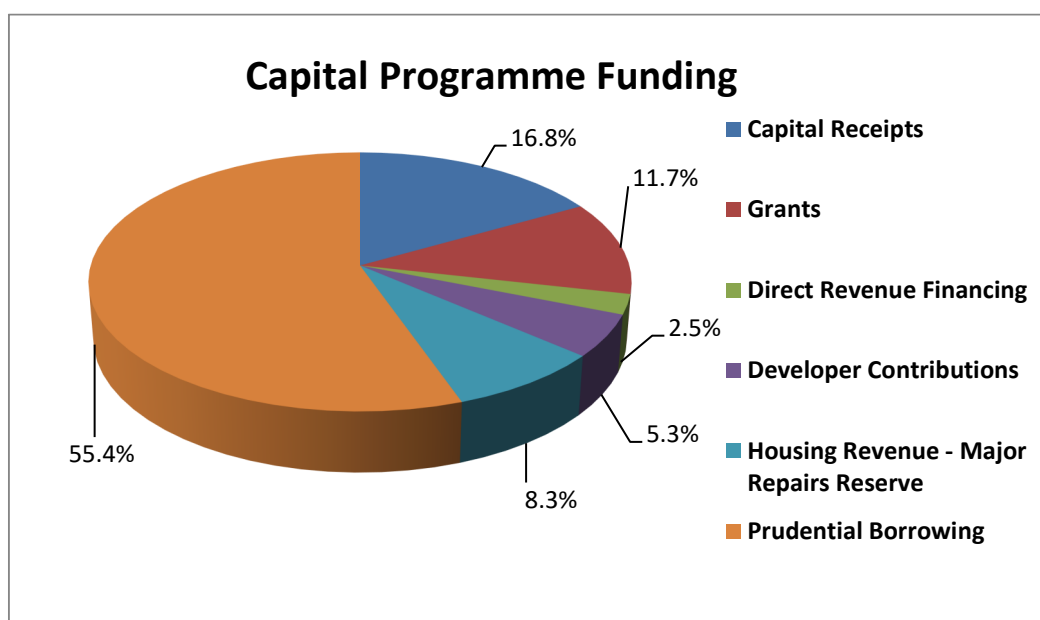
Of the remaining schemes, those with the largest variances are as follows:

- **Properties Purchased From OCHL** - £0.995 million underspend due to slippage on a number of schemes
- **East Oxford development** - £809k slippage into 2025/26
- **HRA Barton Acquisitions and Regeneration** - £524k slippage into 2025/26
- **Next Steps Accommodation Programme** – £582k slippage into 2025/26
- **Juniper** - £385k unspent; this scheme has been removed from the programme
- **Oxford North Development** - £0.602 million overspend at 31 March 2025 although the overall programme cost remains on track.

Funding the Capital Programme

The General Fund Capital Programme spend totalled £39.671 million and was funded through a combination of Capital Receipts (£15.466 million), Grants (£11.149 million), Developer Contributions (£7.505 million), and borrowing (£5.551 million).

The Housing Capital Programme spend totalled £105.678 million and was funded through a combination of Direct Revenue Finance (£3.677 million), Grants (£5.825 million), Capital Receipts (£9.018 million), Major Repairs Reserve (£12.030 million), Developer Contributions (£0.128 million), and Borrowing (£75.000 million).



5. Material Items of Income and Expenditure

The Council's accounting policies are set out on [pages 131 to 149](#) of the Statement of Accounts. These policies are largely unchanged from last year. However, there are some key events that have taken place over the year which have a material impact on the understanding of the Accounts. They are detailed as follows:

NARRATIVE REPORT

• Pension Fund

The Council's asset to provide for the cost of past employment benefits to staff has increased in the year ended 31 March 2025. The asset reported as at 31 March 2024 was £24.02 million. This has now increased as at 31 March 2025 to £82.79 million. The increase in asset of £58.78 million is due to a number of factors but primarily:

- ♦ A change in the discount rate used within the calculations. The corporate bond yield (upon which the discount rate is derived) has risen over the period, which has led to a 0.95% increase in this assumption. This serves to reduce the employer's obligations and led to a gain of around £63.15 million;
- ♦ The actual Pensions Increase Order for April 2025 was 1.7% which is lower than the pension increase rate assumption built into the obligations at the start of the accounting period. This increases pensions in payment, deferred pensions and CARE pots by less than expected, which has served to reduce the Employer's obligations and led to a gain of £3.60 million on the balance sheet
- ♦ The total investment return achieved by the Fund over the accounting period was 2.6%, compared to an expected accounting return of 4.85%, which led to a £9.19 million loss on the balance sheet.

More information regarding the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme can be found in [Note 39](#) of the Statement of Accounts ([pages 84 to 87](#)).

6. Contingencies and Provisions

As at the balance sheet date the Council had made provision for £5.53 million of expenditure likely to be incurred sometime in the future. Included in this figure are the following amounts:

- **Rent Deposit Scheme** - £1.597 million - this provision covers deposits paid on behalf of tenants placed in private rented properties by the Council.
- **Council Tax Court Costs** - £0.434 million - this provision is against outstanding court costs that have been raised against Council Tax arrears.
- **Provision for NNDR Appeals** - £3.241 million - following the reform of Business Rates, the risk of appeals is shared between Central Government, the Council and Oxfordshire County Council. This relates to the Council's potential liability for the cost of appeals. The Council's share of the overall Collection Fund Balance has been transferred to Earmarked Reserves.
- **Insurance Provision** - £0.258 million - reflecting an actuarial estimate of the cost of insurance claims received but not yet paid.

7. Current Borrowing Levels

The Council currently has external borrowing of £288.50 million with Public Works Loan Board. £198.50 million was taken out in 2012 to facilitate the self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account and the repayments of this borrowing have then been replaced by other loans of the same amount from the Public Works Loans Board. The remainder of the balance also relates to the Housing Revenue Account and was taken out to finance capital expenditure.

8. Group Accounts

Barton Oxford LLP

The Council entered into a partnership with Grosvenor Developments Limited to form a joint venture company to develop housing on land owned by the Council at Barton. The Council provided Group Accounts for the first time in 2011/12 to record the Council's share in the joint venture.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Oxwed LLP

The Council is a 50% owner of Oxwed LLP, a Joint Venture, with Nuffield College Developments 1 Ltd. The purpose of the company is to develop and regenerate the West End area of Oxford and produce a mixed use development including commercial and domestic properties for sale and rent. The assets and liabilities of the Oxford West End Developments Limited were transferred to Oxwed LLP.

Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL)

ODSL and ODSTL are 100% owned group subsidiaries of the Council. The purpose of the companies is to provide construction and maintenance services to the Council and to external customers respectively.

Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL)

OCHL is a 100% owned group subsidiary of the Council. The purpose of the company is to secure more housing and more affordable housing in the city and to improve housing supply, quality and delivery.

The Council's Group Balance Sheet records the Council's share of the Oxwed and the Barton Oxford LLPs Net Assets using the Equity method of group accounting due to these being joint ventures. ODSL, ODSTL and OCHL are consolidated on a line by line basis because they are wholly owned by the Council. The net figure for all five entities as at the balance sheet date is a net asset of £8.493 million.

Wholly Owned Entities: -

	ODSL 2024/25 £'000	ODSTL 2024/25 £'000	OCHL 2024/25 £'000	Sub-Total 2024/25 £'000
Council's share of Net Assets	15,804	2,851	15,928	34,583
Capital classified as a liability	(11,766)	-	(10,152)	(21,918)
Council's Share shown in the Group Accounts	4,038	2,851	5,776	12,665
	ODSL 2023/24 £'000	ODSTL 2023/24 £'000	OCHL 2023/24 £'000	Sub-Total 2023/24 £'000
Council's share of Net Assets	15,928	1,824	48,924	66,676
Capital classified as a liability	(13,105)	-	(40,659)	(53,764)
Council's Share shown in the Group Accounts	2,823	1,824	8,265	12,912

Joint Ventures and Total: -

	OxWED LLP 2024/25 £'000	Barton LLP 2024/25 £'000	Sub-Total 2024/25 £'000	Total 2024/25 £'000
Council's share of Net Assets	16,948	-	16,948	51,531
Capital classified as a liability	(21,120)	-	(21,120)	(43,038)
Council's Share shown in the Group Accounts	(4,172)	-	(4,172)	8,493
	OxWED LLP 2023/24 £'000	Barton LLP 2023/24 £'000	Sub-Total 2023/24 £'000	Total 2023/24 £'000
Council's share of Net Assets	16,758	-	16,758	83,434
Capital classified as a liability	(19,615)	-	(19,615)	(73,379)
Council's Share shown in the Group Accounts	(2,857)	-	(2,857)	10,055

The overall net assets of the entities shown on the Balance Sheets of the entities are split in proportion to the ownership of the entities. The amount shown in the Council's Group Accounts is the Council's share of net assets adjusted for entries that are already included in the Council's accounts to avoid double counting.

See [pages 101 to 128](#) for more details on the Group Accounts.

9. Financial Prospects Looking Forward

General Fund

The financial backdrop for Local authorities continues to be difficult. A number of local authorities continue to issue Section 114 notices, effectively declaring bankruptcy and others continue to threaten similar action. The Provisional Finance Settlement for 2025-26 has not been good for district council's with most if not all receiving no increase in core spending power which only exacerbates existing financial pressures. Oxford City Council continues to experience financial pressures around temporary accommodation and although the increase in Homelessness Preventative Grant of £600k was welcome this has only been confirmed for one year and only partially mitigates the £1.8 million of ongoing financial cost which we are currently suffering.

The prudent level of reserves that the Council should maintain is a matter of judgement. Generally, the higher the risk of the council's financial plans, the higher the level of reserves and balances that should prudently be held. The Oxford Model's reliance on income streams from its wholly owned companies and other sources of income such as commercial rents to cover General Fund expenditure is a higher risk approach than simply reducing spend. In such situations it is prudent and advisable to hold an adequate amount of reserves and balances to deal with any volatility in these areas. The consequence of not keeping a prudent level of reserves can be significant.

As in previous years and despite the difficult financial environment in which the council operates, the Council has undertaken a prudent and robust approach in developing its Medium Term Financial Strategy ("MTFS") including Service Heads being required to review the plans they put forward in previous years and confirm delivery of the proposals over the life of the MTFS. The Council approved a balanced 4-year MTFS at its meeting in February 2025 which is planned to be realised through a combination of efficiencies, additional fees and charges and returns from our wholly owned companies with the balance of £7.5 million over the 4-year period being funded from council reserves. Reluctantly there are some minimal budget cuts in Community Services, the council tax reduction scheme and service provided by ODS in order to stay within the budget envelope.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Key assumptions in the HRA budget include:

- ♦ **Rental and Service Charges Income**
The HRA is reliant on income raised from council house rents and service charges to cover its day to day activities and to finance borrowing which will escalate from its current level of around £270 million to £896 million over the next 4-year period. The level of borrowing has to be affordable and is controlled by reference to the Interest Cover Ratio, which is maintained at or above 1.25. At this level expenditure in the HRA both capital and revenue based on the estimates is affordable over the next 5 years although there is no room for any further spend over that period. Beyond this period should the council continue to be allowed to increase rents by CPI +1% there is more scope to spend on priorities such as decent homes, new housing and climate change mitigations.
- ♦ **New Dwellings**
The HRA will continue to purchase the affordable housing from OCHL's 10 year development programme 1,051 properties within a gross overall budget envelope for all years of £452m before grant and shared ownership sales.
- ♦ **Debt Management Strategy**
An increase in the level of HRA debt for the new build acquisitions by £200 million to cover all capital commitments over the next 4-year period. Debt is controlled by reference to the Interest Cover Ratio (ICR) i.e. how many times surpluses cover the debt interest charges.
- ♦ **Inflation and pay assumptions**
All the assumptions for pay inflation are the same as for the Council's General Fund.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Local Authority Trading Companies

OCHL

Oxford City Housing Company Group is developing sites within Oxford producing affordable dwellings to the HRA and is currently making annual surpluses, primarily arising from the development schemes. The property holding arm of the group is currently not trading having passed all of its housing stock to the Council in 2024/25 for £33.2 million and settling all of its loan debt with the Council at the same time..

ODS

The Council has two wholly owned Companies which were set up to deliver the work of the Council's Direct Services Department. One of these companies (Oxford Direct Services Limited) undertakes work relating to the Council's statutory responsibilities in respect of refuse and recycling, street cleaning, highways and building maintenance and as such has received Teckal exemptions in respect of the procurement of such services. The other company (Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited) pursues a more commercial approach commencing with trade waste without the legislative limitations that were placed on the Direct Services Department as part of the Council's organisational structure. The companies commenced trading on 1 April 2018.

Oxwed LLP

The Council set up Oxford West End Developments Limited as a joint venture with Nuffield College. During 2021/22 the work of the Company was transferred into a Limited Liability Partnership, Oxwed LLP whose partners are Oxford City Council and Nuffield College Developments 1 Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Nuffield College. Oxwed LLP is now tasked with formulating the development plans and seeking planning permission for the site, following which strategic infrastructure will be installed, and onward sale of plots for development of housing and commercial properties will be made, with dividends in respect of these sales forecast to be returned to the shareholders over the next 4 to 5 years.

Future Borrowing

The Council is planning to undertake significant borrowing over the next four year period to finance loans to Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL) and also other capital spend, with the Capital Financing Requirement estimated to increase to around £904 million at the end of 2028/29 from £343 million at the end of 2024/25. The level of additional external borrowing is currently estimated at £542 million up to the end of 2028/29 of which £335 million is expected to be in respect of HRA capital expenditure. The balance of borrowing used to finance capital expenditure will be funded from internal resources. External borrowing is expected to be taken from the Public Works Loans Board. All capital loans will be secured against property and land purchased by the entities or will have the option to place a charge on property. Interest rates on the loans have been calculated by the Council to be subsidy control compliant.

10. Conclusion

I would like to thank Finance staff for their work in preparing these Statements. I hope the information is helpful in allowing you to have a clear understanding of how the Council's money has been spent in 2024/25. We've tried hard to present information as clearly as possible, but if you want to find out more about these accounts you can:

- ♦ visit our website at www.oxford.gov.uk
- ♦ send an e-mail to either:
Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) (Nigel Kennedy at nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk) or
Financial Accounting Manager (Bill Lewis at blewis@oxford.gov.uk)
- ♦ write to us at:
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1BX
- ♦ or, contact our auditors Ernst & Young LLP via the Audit Manager, Preeti Malik at pmalik@uk.ey.com

CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

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COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

This statement shows the accounting cost in year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement (page 25).

		2024/25			2023/24		
	Note	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
ODS Development Director		28,784	(14,824)	13,960	26,436	(11,332)	15,104
City and Citizens' Services		36,188	(16,193)	19,995	32,326	(14,817)	17,509
Corporate Services		15,100	(2,357)	12,743	13,121	(2,928)	10,193
Place		16,826	(12,607)	4,219	15,185	(11,588)	3,597
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)		88,666	(58,316)	30,350	47,149	(52,569)	(5,420)
Service Level Agreements and Capital Charges		18,314	(3,344)	14,970	7,076	(3,425)	3,651
Corporate and Democratic Core		42,052	(37,067)	4,985	43,234	(37,350)	5,884
Cost of Services		245,930	(144,708)	101,222	184,527	(134,009)	50,518
Other Operating Expenditure	9	4,782	(37)	4,745	277	(1,996)	(1,719)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	10	23,150	(22,387)	763	8,677	(40,412)	(31,735)
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	11	-	(70,051)	(70,051)	-	(40,751)	(40,751)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services		273,862	(237,183)	36,679	193,481	(217,168)	(23,687)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment Assets				(103,916)			(22,653)
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses on Pension Assets and Liabilities				(58,431)			(38,298)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(162,347)			(60,951)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(125,668)			(84,638)

EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis is a note to the financial statements that requires due prominence is given to it, and is not a core statement.

It shows all income and expenditure incurred by the Council throughout the year under statutory funding provisions and the adjustments that are required to these figures to produce the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under generally accepted accounting practices. The relevant adjustments are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	2024/25			2023/24		
	Net Expenditure GF & HRA	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure CI&E	Net Expenditure GF & HRA	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure CI&E
Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
ODS Development Director	13,960	-	13,960	15,104	-	15,104
Communities & People	19,995	-	19,995	17,509	-	17,509
Corporate Resources	12,743	-	12,743	10,193	-	10,193
Development	4,414	195	4,219	3,543	(54)	3,597
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	(13,021)	(43,371)	30,350	(10,148)	(4,728)	(5,420)
Service Level Agreements and Capital Charges	(19,470)	(34,440)	14,970	7,651	4,000	3,651
Corporate and Democratic Core	5,439	454	4,985	6,314	430	5,884
Cost of Services	24,060	(77,162)	101,222	50,166	(352)	50,518
Other Income and Expenditure	(22,827)	41,716	(64,543)	(63,469)	10,736	(74,205)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	1,233	(35,446)	36,679	(13,303)	10,384	(23,687)
Opening Balance (General Fund and HRA)	76,926			63,623		
Surplus/(Deficit) on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year	(1,233)			13,303		
Closing Balance (General Fund and HRA)	75,693			76,926		

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MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Statement shows how the movements in year of the authority's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax (or rents) for the year. The Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance and Housing Revenue Account Balance movements in the year following those adjustments

	Note	General Fund Balance £'000	GF Reserves £'000	Earmarked Reserves £'000	Housing Revenue Account Balance £'000	Earmarked HRA Reserves £'000	Major Repairs Reserves £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Total Unusable Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward		3,622	45,436	4,000	10,565	6,036	13,582	24,388	107,629	905,459	
Movement in Reserves during 2023/24											
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		24,900	-	(1,213)	-	-	-	-	-	23,687	-
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60,951
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		24,900	-	(1,213)	-	-	-	-	-	23,687	60,951
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations	7	(11,864)	-	1,480	-	(4,333)	(2,060)	3,067	(13,710)	13,710	
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		13,036	-	267	-	(4,333)	(2,060)	3,067	9,977	74,661	-
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	8	(13,036)	13,036	(267)	267	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in 2023/24		-	13,036	-	267	(4,333)	(2,060)	3,067	9,977	74,661	-
Balance at 31 March 2024 carried forward		3,622	58,472	4,000	10,832	1,703	11,522	27,455	117,606	980,120	
Movement in Reserves during 2024/25											
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		2,019	-	(38,698)	-	-	-	-	-	(36,679)	-
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	162,347
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		2,019	-	(38,698)	-	-	-	-	-	(36,679)	162,347
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations	7	(2,868)	-	38,314	-	(938)	4,874	14,692	54,074	(54,074)	
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(849)	-	(384)	-	(938)	4,874	14,692	17,395	108,273	-
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	8	849	(849)	384	(384)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in 2024/25		-	(849)	-	(384)	(938)	4,874	14,692	17,395	108,273	-
Balance at 31 March 2025 carried forward		3,622	57,623	4,000	10,448	765	16,396	42,147	135,001	1,088,393	

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are Usable Reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves to deal with unforeseen events and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves is those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold; as well as reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments Between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations'.

		2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Property, Plant & Equipment	12	1,158,631	1,008,139
Heritage Assets	13	3,688	3,688
Investment Properties	15	145,810	146,300
Intangible Assets	16	3,128	3,648
Long Term Investments	17	14,620	19,691
Long Term Debtors	17	118,027	142,790
Other Long Term Assets	39	82,791	24,015
Long Term Assets		1,526,695	1,348,271
Short Term Investments	17	-	-
Assets Held for Sale	22	2,214	1,263
Inventories		12	22
Short Term Debtors	19	90,545	62,881
Cash and Cash Equivalents	17 & 21	1,225	-
Contract Assets		195	-
Current Assets		94,191	64,166
Short Term Borrowing	17	(20,000)	(10,000)
Short Term Creditors	23	(57,712)	(45,196)
Contract Liabilities	23	(3,301)	(2,982)
Cash and Cash Equivalents	17 & 21	-	(1,088)
Current Liabilities		(81,013)	(59,266)
Long Term Creditors	17	(3,493)	(1,584)
Provisions	24	(3,498)	(5,850)
Long Term Borrowing	17	(268,528)	(218,528)
Other Long Term Liabilities	17	(26,561)	(743)
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	34	(14,399)	(28,740)
Long Term Liabilities		(316,479)	(255,445)
Net Assets		1,223,394	1,097,726
Usable Reserves	MIRS	(135,001)	(117,606)
Unusable Reserves	26	(1,088,393)	(980,120)
Total Reserves		(1,223,394)	(1,097,726)

The unaudited Accounts were issued on 23 July 2025 and the audited accounts were authorised for issue on XXX.

Signed

Nigel Kennedy

Date

XXXX

Nigel Kennedy

Group Finance Director (Section 151
Officer)

CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in the Cash and Cash Equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses Cash and Cash Equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

	Note	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Net Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		(36,679)	23,687
Adjustments to Net Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements		51,725	(32,141)
Net cash in/(out) flows from Operating Activities		15,046	(8,454)
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets		(136,940)	(55,263)
(Purchase)/Proceeds of Short-Term and Long-Term Investments		34,092	55,717
Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets		26,742	9,930
Other Capital Cash Receipts in Advance		(14,341)	192
Total cash in/(out) flows from Investing Activities		(90,447)	10,576
Purchase of Short and Long Term Borrowing		70,000	30,000
Repayment of Borrowing		(10,000)	(11,000)
Other (payments)/receipts from Financing Activities		17,714	(16,379)
Payments for the reduction of a Finance Lease Liability		-	-
Total cash in/(out) flows from Financing Activities		77,714	2,621
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		2,313	4,743
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		(1,088)	(5,831)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	21	1,225	(1,088)

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NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Accounting Standards issued, but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice 2024/25

The following disclosure provides information relating to the impact of accounting changes that will be required by new accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted.

The International Financial Reporting Standards introduced or amended in the 2025-26 code are applicable from the 1 April 2025. The following disclosure provides information relating to the impact of accounting changes that will be required by the new accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted. The impact that initial application of the IFRS as adopted by the code is expected to be immaterial and have minimum effect on the Oxford City's financial statements, except for The changes to the measurement of non-investment assets within the 2025/26 Code including adaptations and interpretations of IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment and IAS 38 Intangible Assets.

The standards introduced by the 2025/26 Code where disclosures are required in the 2024/25 financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 3.3.4.3 of the Code, are:

- a) **IAS 21 The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rate (Lack of Exchangeability)** issued in August 2023. The amendments to IAS 21 clarify how an entity should assess whether a currency is exchangeable and how it should determine a spot exchange rate when exchangeability is lacking, as well as require the disclosure of information that enables users of financial statements to understand the impact of a currency not being exchangeable.
- b) **IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts** issued in May 2017. IFRS 17 replaces IFRS 4 and sets out principles for recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of insurance contracts
- c) **IAS 16 Measurement of non-investment assets.**

The changes to the measurement of non-investment assets within the 2025/26 Code include adaptations and interpretations of IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment and IAS 38 Intangible Assets. These include setting out three revaluation processes for operational property, plant and equipment, requiring indexation for tangible non-investment assets and a requirement to value intangible assets using the historical cost approach. These have the same effect as requiring a change in accounting policy due to an amendment to standards, which would normally be disclosed under IAS 8. However, the adaptations also include a relief from the requirements of IAS 8 following a change in accounting policy as confirmed in paragraph 3.3.1.4. of the code. :

IAS 16 represents a substantial and significant accounting change in the 2025-26 Code due to CIPFA / LASAAC having regard to HM Treasury's Thematic Review on Non-investment Assets.

The main changes included in the Code are:

- ♦ A revaluation expedient for property, plant and equipment, requiring valuations once every five years or on a five-year rolling basis and supported by indexation in intervening years. Alternatively, a desktop valuation in year three in rare cases where no index is available.
- ♦ Intangible assets to be held at historical cost only.
- ♦ Transitional arrangements when applying these changes so they will be applied prospectively, with no restatement of prior year figures.
- ♦ existing adaptations has been removed to allow both options permitted by IAS 16 for the treatment of accumulated depreciation when assets are revalued.
- ♦ A clarification to ensure that undertaking a full revaluation should not be a default process to demonstrate there has not been a material impairment of an asset and to comply with IAS 36.

These changes will have a significant effect on administering the revaluation process and should make the Valuation of assets closer to the 31 March valuations

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

Changes to Levels of Funding for Local Government

There remains a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of Grant funding for local government. A proportion of this funding is derived from retained Business Rates, which is subject to an index linked tariff payable to Central Government. Whilst the Council can benefit to a limited degree from increased Business Rates from new businesses, it can also lose (subject to a safety net) if Business Rates income starts to decline. The Council has determined the level of uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

Componentisation of Fixed Assets

Where assets had been found to have significant components which would materially affect the depreciation charge, components have been identified and the depreciation of individual components applied. The Council's housing stock is subject to componentisation. The policy treats the components with a short life such as kitchens and heating systems as cost items only affected by additions and disposals and de-recognition. The land and structure of the building are the elements that benefit from any Revaluation Gain.

Pension Fund Transactions

The Council has entered into an agreement with Oxford Direct Services Limited and Oxfordshire Pension Fund to the effect that the Council will bear the costs of all risks and uncertainties in relation to the LGPS pension fund operated for Oxford Direct Services Limited. Oxford Direct Services Limited will therefore account for its pension costs as if the fund is defined by contribution. All IAS19 pension transactions in relation to Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services Limited will therefore be accounted for in the Council's single entity accounts, excepting the contributions made by Oxford Direct Services Limited which will be accounted for in the accounts of that entity.

Investment Property Classification

The Council has made judgements on whether assets are classified as Investment Property or Property Plant and Equipment. These judgements are based on the main reason that the Council is holding the asset. If the asset is used in the delivery of services or is occupied by third parties who are subsidised by the Council, they are deemed to be Property, Plant and Equipment assets. If there is no subsidy and/or full market rent is being charged this would indicate that the asset is an Investment Property. The classification determines the valuation method to be used.

3. Assumptions Made about the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future, or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2025 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Pensions Asset / Liability	Estimation of the net pension's liability depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement age, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries (Hymans Robertson) is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. In June 2023, the UK High Court, in the case <i>Virgin Media Limited v NTL Pension Trustees II Limited</i>, ruled that certain historical amendments for contracted-out defined benefit schemes were invalid if they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation. The judgement has now been upheld by the Court of Appeal. No additional allowance has been made for this within the accounting balance sheet. This is because: • the ruling only applies to the above-named private sector pension scheme • it is unknown whether Section 37 certificates exist for prior LGPS scheme amendments • it is unknown whether there would be any potential remedy required to public service schemes (including the LGPS) • it is unknown what the impact of any potential remedy would be • DWP are being asked by pension bodies to look at pragmatic solutions where schemes are unable to evidence historic section 37 confirmation (eg introduce legislation that would allow retrospective section 37 certificates to be produced now to validate historic changes). There are two court cases which may also impact LGPS benefits in the future, however the current understanding is that these are unlikely to be significant judgements in terms of impact on the pension obligations of a typical employer. As a result, and until further guidance is released from the relevant governing bodies in the LGPS, no allowance has been made for any potential remedies to these judgements.	The effects on the net pension's liability of changes in individual assumptions cannot be measured accurately. During 2024/25, the Council's actuaries advised that the net pension's liability had decreased by £58.776 million. The total Pension deficit has moved to a surplus of £82.791 million as at 31 March 2025

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	General Fund and HRA Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will occur in relation to individual assets. HRA capital spending on housing stock was £105.68 million in 2024/25, while approved budgets have been established in subsequent years to undertake major repairs and maintenance which underpin the assumptions made regarding the useful lives assigned to the assets.	If the useful lives of assets are reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls. It is estimated that if the annual depreciation charge for assets were to increase by 1% the extra charge would amount to £177,680.
Business Rates Appeals	The Council is required to estimate the value of successful Business Rates appeals, and make a provision for possible successful appeals. The Council have taken a prudent approach and the level for the 31 March 2025 has been estimated in the Statement of Accounts. The total appeals provision for business rates as at 31 March 2025 is £8.10 million of which the Oxford City share is £3.24 million. The Council has carried out sensitivity analysis on the data received from the Valuation Office to ensure that the provision is robust and evidence supports the level of this provision and has adjusted the data for known local factors.	If the assumption is incorrect, there would be an impact on the collection fund balance. A 1% increase in the provision would lead to an increased charge of £81,015. This would be split between the Council and Preceptors with 40% (£32,406) impacting the Council
Rent Deposit Provision	The Council operates a rent deposit scheme which provides the deposit necessary for an eligible resident to occupy private rented accommodation. The deposit is repayable. The certainty of repayment is very difficult to estimate. The Council has continued to make a provision during 2024/25 and the total provision now stands at £1.597 million. The accumulated provision represents 85% of the outstanding deposits.	If the Council's provision were found to be inaccurate, providing for an additional 1% provision would amount to £15,971
Arrears	At 31 March 2025, the Council had a balance of short term debtors of £100.8 million. A review of these suggested that an impairment of doubtful debts of £10.3 million was appropriate. The net balance of debtors is therefore £90.5 million.	The economic climate uncertain meaning that the recoverability of debt is uncertain and therefore the doubtful debt allowance may be insufficient. An increase of 1% of doubtful debts would require an additional £103,255 to be set aside as an allowance

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Fair Value Measurements	When the fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (i.e. Level 1 inputs), their fair value is measured using valuation techniques (e.g. quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets or the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) model). Where possible, the inputs to these valuation techniques are based on observable data, but where this is not possible judgement is required in establishing fair values. These judgements typically include considerations such as uncertainty and risk. However, changes in the assumptions used could affect the fair value of the Council's assets and liabilities. Where Level 1 inputs are not available, the Council employs relevant experts to identify the most appropriate valuation techniques to determine fair value (for example for investment properties, the Council's chief valuation officer and external valuer). Information about the valuation techniques and inputs used in determining the fair value of the Council's assets and liabilities is disclosed in notes 15 and 17 below	The authority may use the discounted cash flow (DCF) model to measure the fair value of some of its investment properties. This has not been required in 2024/25. If DCF were to be applied, the significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement will include management assumptions regarding rent growth, demand and vacancy levels and discount rates – adjusted for regional factors. Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties. Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties. Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties. Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The bad debt provision has been calculated on the following basis:

General Debtors		Rent Debtors			Overpaid Housing Benefit Ongoing No Ongoing Deductions Deductions			Court Costs	
Age of Debt	Provision	Level of Debt		Provision	Year Debt Raised	Provision	Provision	Year Debt Raised	Provision
Up to 1 Year	0%	< 4	Weeks	0%	2024/25	0%	45%	2024/25	40%
Over 1 Year	100%	4 - 13	Weeks	10%	2023/24	0%	70%	2023/24	45%
		13 - 26	Weeks	25%	2022/23	0%	75%	2022/23	65%
		26 - 39	Weeks	50%	2021/22	0%	85%	2021/22	65%
		39 - 52	Weeks	75%	2020/21 &	0%	90%	2020/21	85%
		> 52	Weeks	95%	prior years			2019/20	85%
		Former Tenants		95%				2018/19	85%
								2017/18	85%
								2016/17	85%
								2015/16	85%
								2014/15	90%
								2013/14	96%
								2012/13 &	100%
								prior years	

Debt under 12 months does not normally attract a bad debt provision, however where there are specific concerns about a customer's likelihood to pay debts, a bad debt provision is made based on an assessment of the risk of non-payment of the outstanding debt held by that customer. In general no provision is made on debt between the Council and its companies.

The bad debt provision for housing rents is made on the basis of the level of debt outstanding. The oldest debt is assumed to be repaid first and so the age of debt can be calculated by dividing the arrears by the weekly debit. The percentages in the table above are then applied to the arrears outstanding on each account.

For Council Tax a provision is calculated as the lower of 1% of the gross collectible debit for the year or the total arrears. The NNDR provision is calculated as the lower of 0.5% of the gross collectible debit for the year or the total arrears.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

4. Material Items of Income and Expenditure

Pension Fund Actuarial Gain

The Pension Fund Actuary has reported an actuarial gain on financial assumptions for 2024/25 of £63.156 million. This is reported as a gain in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and therefore has no General Fund Balance implications.

5. Post Balance Sheet Events

Events taking place after 31 March 2025 are not reflected in the financial statements or notes, unless they are of such importance that non-disclosure would affect the ability of users to make proper evaluations and decisions. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2025, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

There is one non-adjusting post balance sheet event:

Oxford City Council was subject to a cyber security incident over a weekend in June 2025. An unauthorised presence was detected within the network and the automated security systems kicked in, removed the presence and minimised the access the attackers had to systems and databases. The Council then rapidly deployed external cyber security specialists and proactively took down each of the Council's main systems to carry out full security checks and investigate the incident. These precautionary measures resulted in disruption to some services but systems were brought back online after full checks over the period of a couple of weeks. The attackers were able to access some historic data on legacy systems but there is no evidence of a mass download or extraction of data.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

6. Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	2024/25				2023/24			
	Adjustment for Capital Purpose £'000	Net Change for Pensions Adjustment £'000	Other Differences £'000	Total Adjustment £'000	Adjustment for Capital Purpose £'000	Net Change for Pensions Adjustment £'000	Other Differences £'000	Total Adjustment £'000
ODS Development Director	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
City and Citizens' Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Place	195	-	-	195	(54)	-	-	(54)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	(43,287)	(71)	(13)	(43,371)	(5,070)	322	20	(4,728)
Service Level Agreements and Capital Charges	(33,037)	(1,182)	(221)	(34,440)	1,393	2,434	173	4,000
Corporate and Democratic Core	-	454	-	454	-	430	-	430
Cost of Services	(76,129)	(799)	(234)	(77,162)	(3,731)	3,186	193	(352)
Other Income and Expenditure	40,306	1,144	266	41,716	17,104	(833)	(5,535)	10,736
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	(35,823)	345	32	(35,446)	13,373	2,353	(5,342)	10,384

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account recognised by the Council in year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

The following sets out a description of the reserves the adjustments are made against:

General Fund Balance

The General Fund is the statutory fund into which all the receipts of an authority are required to be paid and out of which all liabilities are to be met, except to the extent that statute provides otherwise. These rules can specify the financial year in which liabilities and payments should impact the General Fund Balance, which is not necessarily in accordance with proper accounting practice. The General Fund Balance therefore summarises the resources that the Council is statutorily empowered to spend on its services or on capital investment (or the deficit of resources that the Council is required to recover) in future years.

Housing Revenue Account Balance

The Housing Revenue Account Balance reflects the statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority council housing provision in accordance with Part VI of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It contains the balance of income and expenditure as defined by the 1989 Act that is available to fund future expenditure in connection with the Council's landlord function or (where in deficit) that is required to be recovered from tenants in future years.

Major Repairs Reserve

The Council is required to maintain the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR), which was created to control the application of the "notional" Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) calculated having regard to MHCLG's self-financing valuation for Oxford City Council. From 2017/18 the MRR is credited with the equivalent of the total in-year depreciation of Council Houses. The MRR is restricted to being applied to new capital investment on HRA assets, the repayment of HRA debt, or meeting liabilities under credit arrangements. The MRR is used to record a balance of usable capital resources.

Capital Receipts Reserve

The Capital Receipts Reserve holds the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets, which are restricted by statute from being used other than to fund new capital expenditure or to be set aside to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied for these purposes at the year-end.

Capital Grants Unapplied

The Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Council have yet to incur or apply the expenditure. The grant terms restrict the application of expenditure and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations 2024/25

2024/25	Usable Reserves					Unusable
	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:						
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:						
Charges for depreciation of Non-Current Assets	5,756	-	-	-	-	(5,756)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	891	-	-	-	-	(891)
Revaluation and Impairment charged to revenue	18,006	42,727	-	-	-	(60,733)
Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	8,384	560	-	-	-	(8,944)
Non-Current Assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	25,358	5,502	-	-	-	(30,860)
Impairments of Deferred Capital Receipts	(574)	-	-	-	-	574
Repayment of debtors from capital receipt	-	-	(31,712)	-	-	31,712
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:						
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(1,227)	-	-	-	-	1,227
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	-	(3,677)	-	-	-	3,677
Capital grants and contributions unapplied	(39,300)	-	-	-	39,300	-
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:						
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	(24,608)	24,608
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:						
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(19,860)	(6,882)	26,742	-	-	-
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	(24,509)	-	-	24,509
Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance the payments to the Government capital receipts pool	(37)	-	37	-	-	-
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	-	-	34,316	-	-	(34,316)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations 2024/25 – cont.

2024/25	Usable Reserves					Unusable
	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustment primarily involving the Major Repairs Reserve:						
Reversal of Major Repairs Allowance credited to the HRA	-	-	-	11,092	-	(11,092)
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	-	(12,030)	-	12,030
Adjustments primarily involving the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve (England and Wales):						
Transfer of deferred sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	391	-	-	-	-	(391)
Movements in the market value of Rent-to-mortgage properties	(195)	-	-	-	-	195
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:						
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(416)	71	-	-	-	(4,400)
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:						
Amount by which Council Tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Council Tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	844	-	-	-	-	(844)
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:						
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	221	13	-	-	-	(234)
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account:						
Upward revaluation on investments	(365)	-	-	-	-	365
Downward revaluation on investments	(745)	-	-	-	-	745
Total Adjustments	(2,868)	38,314	4,874	(938)	14,692	(54,074)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations 2023/24

2023/24	Usable Reserves					Unusable
	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:						
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:						
Charges for depreciation of Non-Current Assets	6,175	-	-	-	-	(6,175)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	775	-	-	-	-	(775)
Revaluation and Impairment charged to revenue	(14,360)	4,600	-	-	-	9,760
Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	6,017	470	-	-	-	(6,487)
Non-Current Assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,282	4,652	-	-	-	(7,934)
Impairments of Deferred Capital Receipts	769	-	-	-	-	(769)
Repayment of debtors from capital receipt	-	-	(11,640)	-	-	11,640
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:						
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(182)	-	-	-	-	182
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	(279)	(1,302)	-	-	-	1,581
Capital grants and contributions unapplied	(14,114)	-	-	-	14,114	-
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:						
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	(11,047)	11,047
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:						
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(3,332)	(6,598)	9,930	-	-	-
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	(13,086)	-	-	13,086
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	-	-	12,736	-	-	(12,736)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations 2023/24 – cont.

2023/24	Usable Reserves					Unusable
	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustment primarily involving the Major Repairs Reserve:						
Reversal of Major Repairs Allowance credited to the HRA	-	-	-	11,106	-	(11,106)
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	-	(15,439)	-	15,439
Adjustments primarily involving the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve (England and Wales):						
Movements in the market value of Rent-to-mortgage properties	54	-	-	-	-	(54)
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:						
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,239	261	-	-	-	(3,500)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(5,270)	(583)	-	-	-	5,853
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:						
Amount by which Council Tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Council Tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	5,079	-	-	-	-	(5,079)
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:						
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(173)	(20)	-	-	-	193
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account:						
Upward revaluation on investments	(554)	-	-	-	-	554
Downward revaluation on investments	1,010	-	-	-	-	(1,010)
Total Adjustments	(11,864)	1,480	(2,060)	(4,333)	3,067	13,710

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

8. Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund and HRA balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund and HRA expenditure in 2024/25.

	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000	Transfers In 2024/25 £'000	Transfers Out 2024/25 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2024 £'000	Transfers In 2023/24 £'000	Transfers Out 2023/24 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2023 £'000
General Fund:							
NNDR Retention Reserve	(16,711)	(2,207)	-	(14,504)	(11,191)	5,437	(8,750)
Direct Revenue Funding of Capital	(10,406)	(9)	111	(10,508)	(1,625)	198	(9,081)
Grants Reserve	(8,974)	(1,477)	1,673	(9,170)	(9,958)	8,439	(7,651)
Risk Reserve	(7,463)	(999)	2,626	(9,090)	(4,760)	520	(4,850)
Property Fund Guarantee Reserve	(2,960)	-	-	(2,960)	-	-	(2,960)
Employee Cost Reserve	(2,943)	-	-	(2,943)	-	-	(2,943)
Committed Projects Reserve	(1,573)	(194)	27	(1,406)	(125)	90	(1,371)
IT Infrastructure and Equipment Reserve	(1,199)	-	-	(1,199)	-	-	(1,199)
Net Zero Transition Fund	(564)	(41)	-	(523)	(174)	-	(349)
Housing Benefit Reserve	(504)	-	-	(504)	-	-	(504)
OxFutures Reserve	(476)	(32)	-	(444)	(387)	144	(201)
Northway and Marston Flood Alleviation	(475)	-	18	(493)	-	17	(510)
Private Sector Safety Financial Penalties	(470)	(70)	60	(460)	(80)	-	(380)
Apprentices Reserve	(358)	-	-	(358)	-	-	(358)
Local Plan Costs	(325)	(99)	-	(226)	(34)	-	(192)
Flood Reserve	(247)	(29)	48	(266)	-	91	(357)
Homelessness	(200)	-	-	(200)	(22)	-	(178)
S106 Monitoring Income	(198)	(40)	-	(158)	-	-	(158)
City Council Elections Reserve	(190)	-	-	(190)	-	-	(190)
Commuted Sums (Parks)	(175)	-	-	(175)	-	-	(175)
SALIX Management Fee	(167)	(19)	50	(198)	(17)	-	(181)
Taxi Licensing Reserve	(164)	(157)	76	(83)	(101)	58	(40)
Community Services Carry Forward Reserve	(115)	-	-	(115)	-	26	(141)
Growth Deal - JSSP	(111)	-	-	(111)	-	-	(111)
Section 106 Commuted Sums Reserve	(82)	-	-	(82)	-	100	(182)
EV Projects Income	(78)	-	-	(78)	-	-	(78)
Blue Bin League Reserve	(72)	-	-	(72)	-	-	(72)
Lord Mayors Deposit	(52)	-	-	(52)	-	-	(52)
HMO Licensing Reserve	(9)	-	109	(118)	(25)	-	(93)
Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and							
Milton Keynes Planning Fund	(6)	-	-	(6)	-	4	(10)
Museum Development Reserve	(4)	-	-	(4)	-	-	(4)
SALIX Energy Projects Reserve	-	(125)	389	(264)	(76)	108	(296)
Grenoble Road Reserve	-	(226)	452	(226)	-	89	(315)
Selective Licensing Income Reserve	-	-	122	(122)	(107)	-	(15)
ESO Electricity Budget Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	295	(295)
Life Chances	-	-	-	-	-	30	(30)
Total General Fund	(57,271)	(5,724)	5,761	(57,308)	(28,682)	15,646	(44,272)

Continued overleaf...

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

General Fund Reserve	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000	Description
NNDR Retention Reserve	(16,711)	This reserve is to cover the deficit in NNDR Collection Fund that will be charged to the General Fund in future years.
Direct Revenue Funding of Capital Grants Reserve	(10,406) (8,974)	Created to fund future rolling programme capital requirements. This reserve was initially set up to hold various grant monies received by the City Council and or unused in-year budgetary provision for various community/non-HRA housing based activities. As the utilisation of these grants spreads across several years the release of those resources will be undertaken gradually as well as new grant monies being added.
Risk Reserve	(7,463)	This reserve has been set up to mitigate against the risks inherent in balancing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and in order to balance the surpluses and deficits between years.
Property Fund Guarantee Reserve	(2,960)	The Council has investments in Property Funds. This reserve is held against the risk future investment losses.
Employee Cost Reserve	(2,943)	Created to cover the severance and associated payments relating to employees, following organisational development reviews.
Committed Projects Reserve	(1,573)	Created to cover carry-forward requests from service areas, and fund expenditure commitments
IT Infrastructure and Equipment Reserve	(1,199)	Used to fund the purchase of new IT infrastructure equipment and IT projects across the Council.
Net Zero Transition Fund	(564)	Net Zero Transition Fund
Housing Benefit Reserve	(504)	This reserve is to mitigate against future fluctuations in residual local cost of benefits costs following the transition to universal credit
OxFutures Reserve	(476)	This reserve is linked to the EU funded Oxfordshire Total Refit (OTR / OxFutures) project to fund potential future project pressures.
Northway and Marston Flood Alleviation	(475)	Used to fund the 25 year repairs and maintenance programme for Northway and Marston Flood Alleviation scheme
Private Sector Safety Financial Penalties	(470)	Created for potential penalties payable
Apprentices Reserve	(358)	For the Apprentice scheme which runs over 2 years
Local Plan Costs	(325)	Local Plan Costs
Flood Reserve	(247)	Reserve created to fund flood maintenance work not eligible for Government re-imbursement under the Belwin scheme.
Homelessness	(200)	The Council as part of its 2011/12 budget committed to annually setting aside resources to assist in the anticipated increased cost of Homelessness activity predicted to occur for the City as a result of welfare reforms. This reserve holds the balance of the resources so far provided.
S106 Monitoring Income	(198)	S106 and CIL money that has been earmarked for administration and monitoring of the schemes
City Council Elections Reserve	(190)	Created from the budget surplus/(deficit) on the City Council Elections activity. City elections are held every 2 years and this reserve is used to fund additional costs in election year.
Commuted Sums (Parks)	(175)	This is S106 income from Ashurst LLP which is ring-fenced to fund the maintenance costs at Barton Park Sports Pavilion and pitches
SALIX Management Fee	(167)	Reserve represents contributions received to fund future energy assistant post activities.
Taxi Licensing Reserve	(164)	Created to support future taxi licensing activities. Year-end taxi licensing surpluses are transferred to this reserve that funds future service improvements within the Taxi Licensing area.
Community Services Carry Forward Reserve	(115)	Reserve reflects additional Directorate's expenditure commitments including funding of future cultural Community and Neighbourhood initiatives and community safety/educational activities
Growth Deal - JSSP	(111)	To cover future costs associated with Growth Deal - JSSP
Section 106 Commuted Sums Reserve	(82)	Created to hold Commuted Sums monies established via planning agreements.
EV Projects Income	(78)	Represents income received for consultancy work which is ring-fenced to fund the costs of the Go Ultra Low Oxford on Street (GULO-O) project
Blue Bin League Reserve	(72)	This represents a DCLG grant received to fund the Blue Bin League, a waste and recycling initiative to increase the amount of recycling across the City of Oxford.
Lord Mayors Deposit	(52)	Reserve represents resources held for assisting homeless applicants with rent deposit and/or bonds.
HMO Licensing Reserve	(9)	Reserve to ensure the ring-fencing of HMO Licensing income to fund future service area expenditure.
Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Planning Fund	(6)	Planning Fund ring fenced between Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Councils. Oxford City Council administers this fund.
Museum Development Reserve	(4)	Funding to support the future development of the museum.
SALIX Energy Projects Reserve		- Created from an initial grant made available via Salix. The reserve is used to implement energy efficient schemes within the City.
Grenoble Road Reserve		- Reserve to cover costs relating to action on Grenoble Road
Selective Licensing Income Reserve		- A reserve to ring fence surplus Selective Licensing income in order to operate the service going forwards.
ESO Electricity Budget Reserve		- A reserve to mitigate against the risk of additional energy capacity payments at Redbridge Park & Ride EV Hub.
Life Chances		- Life Chances

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000	Transfers In 2024/25 £'000	Transfers Out 2024/25 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2024 £'000	Transfers In 2023/24 £'000	Transfers Out 2023/24 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2023 £'000
HRA:							
HRA Capital Projects	(8,316)	(4,561)	5,113	(8,868)	(1,569)	1,302	(8,601)
Committed Projects Reserve	(1,444)	-	-	(1,444)	-	-	(1,444)
Feasibility Studies Reserve	(316)	-	-	(316)	-	-	(316)
HRA - CRM Work	(120)	-	-	(120)	-	-	(120)
Total HRA	(10,196)	(4,561)	5,113	(10,748)	(1,569)	1,302	(10,481)
Insurance Funds:							
Self Insurance Fund	(604)	(604)	1,248	(1,248)	-	-	(1,248)
Total Insurance Funds	(604)	(604)	1,248	(1,248)	-	-	(1,248)
Grand Total	(68,071)	(10,889)	12,122	(69,304)	(30,251)	16,948	(56,001)

	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000	Description
HRA Reserve		
HRA Capital Projects	(8,316)	Created to provide the resources for both the slipped capital projects that were to be initially funded from revenue contributions and other miscellaneous revenue projects.
Committed Projects Reserve	(1,444)	Created to cover carry-forward requests from service areas, and fund expenditure commitments
Feasibility Studies Reserve	(316)	For investigation work on HRA sites to check their suitability for future development site
HRA - CRM Work	(120)	This reserve was created to fund IT work projects.
Insurance Funds		
Self Insurance Fund	(604)	The Self Insurance Fund reserve is used to cover the actuarially assessed value of costs of claims that, based on historical data, have happened but not yet been notified.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

9. Other Operating Expenditure

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Parish Council Precepts	274	277
Payments to the Housing Capital Receipts Pool	(37)	-
(Gains)/Losses on the Disposal of Non-Current Assets	4,508	(1,996)
Total	4,745	(1,719)

10. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	10,016	7,844
Pensions Interest Costs and Expected Return on Pensions Assets	(1,144)	833
Finance Charges	(3,455)	(3,448)
Interest Receivable and Similar Income	(4,565)	(5,880)
Impairment / (Revaluation) of National Homelessness Property Fund	(574)	769
Income & Expenditure in Relation to Investment Properties and Changes in their Fair Value	5,385	(24,453)
Dividends	(4,900)	(7,400)
Other Investment Income	-	-
Total	763	(31,735)

11. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Council Tax Income	(16,142)	(15,571)
Non Domestic Rates	(12,684)	(9,595)
Non-Ringfenced Government Grants	(1,767)	(1,471)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(39,458)	(14,114)
Donated Assets	-	-
Total	(70,051)	(40,751)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

12. Property, Plant and Equipment - Movements in 2024/25

Movements in 2024/25

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation								
At 1 April 2024	806,448	179,285	5,902	2,697	1,122	202	18,229	1,013,885
Additions	64,145	8,890	1,399	1	404	-	51,719	126,558
Assets recognised / derecognised under finance lease	105	13,905	-	-	375	-	-	14,385
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	44,891	48,871	-	-	22	24	-	93,808
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(44,103)	(20,494)	-	-	-	-	-	(64,597)
Derecognition - disposals	(303)	(11,336)	-	-	(1)	-	-	(11,640)
Derecognition - other	(2,084)	-	(1,013)	-	-	-	-	(3,097)
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(4,052)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(4,052)
Other movements in cost or valuation	1,715	(720)	(741)	-	-	-	(995)	(741)
At 31 March 2025	866,762	218,401	5,547	2,698	1,922	226	68,953	1,164,509
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2024	(1,060)	-	(3,987)	(699)	-	-	-	(5,746)
Depreciation charge	(10,376)	(5,275)	(595)	(68)	(3)	-	-	(16,317)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	7,707	2,398	-	-	3	-	-	10,108
Depreciation written out to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,091	2,873	1,013	-	-	-	-	5,977
Derecognition - disposals	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Derecognition - other	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
At 31 March 2025	(1,542)	-	(3,569)	(767)	-	-	-	(5,878)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2025	865,220	218,401	1,978	1,931	1,922	226	68,953	1,158,631
At 31 March 2024	805,388	179,285	1,915	1,998	1,122	202	18,229	1,008,139
Movement in NBV	59,832	39,116	63	(67)	800	24	50,724	150,492

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

12. Property, Plant and Equipment - Comparative Movements in 2023/24

Movements in 2023/24

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation								
At 1 April 2023	775,596	186,630	5,752	2,689	1,043	172	15,959	987,841
Additions	24,678	5,115	1,985	8	79	-	14,512	46,377
Assets recognised / derecognised under finance lease	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	5,265	6,319	-	-	-	30	-	11,614
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(6,225)	(7,095)	-	-	-	-	-	(13,320)
Derecognition - disposals	(1,109)	(3,282)	(1,782)	-	-	-	-	(6,173)
Derecognition - other	(1,289)	-	(53)	-	-	-	-	(1,342)
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(2,756)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,756)
Other movements in cost or valuation	12,288	(8,402)	-	-	-	-	(12,242)	(8,356)
At 31 March 2024	806,448	179,285	5,902	2,697	1,122	202	18,229	1,013,885
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2023	(614)	-	(3,482)	(628)	-	-	-	(4,724)
Depreciation charge	(10,300)	(6,016)	(558)	(71)	(4)	-	-	(16,949)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	7,949	3,086	-	-	4	-	-	11,039
Depreciation written out to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,862	2,792	53	-	-	-	-	4,707
Derecognition - disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - other	43	138	-	-	-	-	-	181
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	(1,060)	-	(3,987)	(699)	-	-	-	(5,746)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2024	805,388	179,285	1,915	1,998	1,122	202	18,229	1,008,139
At 31 March 2023	774,982	186,630	2,270	2,061	1,043	172	15,959	983,117
Movement in NBV	30,406	(7,345)	(355)	(63)	79	30	2,270	25,022

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Carried at Historical Cost			1,978	1,931	507		68,953	73,369
Valued at Fair Value as at:								
31 March 2024	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 March 2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 March 2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
De-minimis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Valued at Current Value as at:								
31 March 2025	865,220	218,400			565	226	-	1,084,411
31 March 2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 March 2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
De-minimis	-	1	-	-	850	-	-	851
Total Cost or Valuation	865,220	218,401	1,978	1,931	1,922	226	68,953	1,158,631

a) Capital Commitments

At 31 March 2025, the Council had entered into a number of contracts for the construction of or enhancement to Property, Plant and Equipment for completion in 2025/26 and future years, estimated at £38.9 million. Similar commitments at 31 March 2024 were £62.2 million. The major commitments are:

	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Oxford North Development - Affordable Housing	16,979	20,370
Construction of 26 flats at Princes Street and Collins Street	4,347	7,602
Development Agreement relating to land and buildings situated	3,818	13,272
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1	3,139	4,178
Refurbishment and New Build of East Oxford Community	2,413	5,900
6x Refuse Collection Vehicles DE 26T RCV	1,507	-
Revenues and Benefits System	1,318	1,318
Leys Leisure Centre, Development of Youth Hub	747	-
Architectural Services for the refurbishment and improvement of Oxford Covered Market	653	-
Fixed Line Telephony	638	669
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1	590	-
2x Refuse Collection Vehicles DE 18T RCV	450	-
Cowley Branch Line	399	2,510
St Michael's Street Public Realm Improvements	323	-
Construction at Northfield Hostel	272	273
Deed of Professional Appointment relating to the Barton Regeneration Project	266	270
Project management consultancy to deliver the Oxford	255	-
Microsoft Licences	190	720
1-3 George Street - Main Contract Works	180	510
Principal and sub-consultants for the planning and delivery of		
Concrete and plaster repairs to soffits in the Town Hall	173	-
Long Bridges Nature Park – Riverside Wall	167	-
Architect Led Consultancy Team for Blackbird Leys	52	108
Town Hall – Repairs to Concrete Soffits including Plaster	13	262
Project Manager / Contract Manager	5	256
Housing Site - Former Council Depot, Lanham Way	-	2,708
Gaswork Pipe Bridge Refurbishment	-	449
Cowley Branch Line Infrastructure Place Study	-	423
PCSA for Oxpens River Bridge	-	409
	38,894	62,207

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

b) Asset Lives

The table below shows the range of asset lives in years for depreciation purposes at the point of recognition. Assets under construction are not depreciated until after completion. Land has an indefinite life and is excluded from the figures in the table.

	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure	Community Assets	Surplus Assets
Maximum Life	90 years	90 years	20 years	69 years	125 years	N/a
Minimum Life	15 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	125 years	N/a
Average	42 years	47 years	9 years	22 years	125 years	N/a

c) Revaluations

Valuations and desktop reviews were undertaken by external registered valuers. The effective date for all valuations and reviews was 31st March 2025. The firms engaged were Savills (UK) Limited, Carter Jonas LLP and Marshalls Chartered Surveyors. Summary of external valuation work undertaken:

- **Investment Property**
A desktop review and revaluation programme was undertaken by an external firm of valuers, Carter Jonas. This exercise identified 35 properties requiring further inspection. The valuations were conducted or reviewed by, Cecilia Fellows MRICS, Christopher Rhodes MRICS, Jamie Young MRICS, Abhinav Shally MRICS and Anna Kwiatkowski of Carter Jonas.
- **Council Dwellings**
A full review and revaluation process of all beacon properties was undertaken by Andy Garrett FRICS, Gabby Picker MRICS and Catherine Wilson MRICS of Savills. This exercise will ensure the entire portfolio reflects accurate values at the reporting date based on the valuation methodology set out by the Royal Institute of Charter Surveyors and the guidance published in Stock Valuation for Resource Accounting: Guidance for valuers – 2016 published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in November 2016.
- **Other Land and Buildings**
A desktop review and revaluation programme was undertaken by an external firm of valuers, Carter Jonas. This exercise identified 46 properties requiring further inspection. The valuations were conducted or reviewed by, Cecilia Fellows MRICS, Christopher Rhodes MRICS, Jamie Young MRICS, Abhinav Shally MRICS and Anna Kwiatkowski of Carter Jonas.

Additionally, Houses in Multiple Occupation were reviewed and valued by Ben Nield MRICS and Andy Garrett FRICS of Savills. Rent to Mortgage properties were valued by Mark Shirley FRICS of Marshalls Chartered Surveyors.

The significant assumptions applied in estimating the current values are:

Existing Use Value (EUV) is defined as the estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of valuation between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's-length transaction, after proper marketing. The parties are taken to have acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion. The valuation will disregard potential alternative uses and any other characteristics of the property which would cause its market value to differ from that needed to replace the existing service.

Where insufficient market-based evidence of Current Value is available because an asset is specialised and/or rarely sold, the CIPFA Code permits the use of Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC).

Existing Use Value Social Housing (EUV-SH) is the estimated amount for which a social housing property should exchange on the date of valuation, between a willing buyer and a willing seller, in an arm's-length

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

transaction. There is presumption of proper marketing, that the parties are acting knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion, and that the property will continue to be used for social housing purposes.

Market Value (MV)

Market Value is defined as 'The estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of valuation between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's-length transaction after proper marketing wherein the parties had each acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion.'

13. Heritage Assets

This Statement discloses the major transactions that have taken place on Heritage Assets. The Assets were shown in 2010/11 for the first time and were introduced mainly at Market Value. The assets were revalued as at 25 November 2020 and are now showing in our accounts as at that date; the next valuation is due in 2025 for the 2025/26 financial year. The majority of Heritage Assets including Non-Operational Property were valued by Coram James, specialist Art and Antique valuers - Robert Coram James BA MRICS MNAVA undertook the valuation work.

An assessment of impairment was undertaken as part of the revaluation and all impairment that was recognised was due to downward valuation rather than deterioration in the assets.

All of the heritage assets are subject to a five year cycle of valuation where appropriate.

	The Great Mace	Furniture	Civic Regalia	Fire Arms	Pictures and Drawings	Non Operational Property Fountain & Sculpture	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Reconciliation of the Carrying Value of Heritage Assets Held by the Authority							
1 April 2023	1,684	55	412	42	458	1,037	3,688
Movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 March 2024	1,684	55	412	42	458	1,037	3,688
1 April 2024	1,684	55	412	42	458	1,037	3,688
Movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31 March 2025	1,684	55	412	42	458	1,037	3,688

14. Heritage Assets - Further Information

The Great Mace, Plate Room Silver Plaques and Cutlery and the Willis Organ

This collection includes a number of maces and silver cups of historic interest and importance. The Great Mace dating to circa 1660 was made to coincide with the restoration of Charles II, with the previous Commonwealth mace being used in the making of the Great Mace.

The Plate Room includes many cups and trophies, while many other silver items of cutlery, badges, tankards are retained in the collection held by the Council.

Other historic cups are displayed and these include the Coronation Cup given by Charles II to the City of Oxford.

A late 19th Century Organ built by Henry Willis and Sons in 1896/97 is sited in the Main Hall of the Town Hall. The Organ is rococo style case with three towers and two flats. For the purpose of grouping assets into categories the value has been placed in with the Civic Regalia.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Furniture

The Furniture recorded as heritage assets includes four notable mahogany sets of furniture. The Council considers that due to a combination of the diverse nature and immaterial values, obtaining valuations for any less significant furniture would involve a disproportionate cost in relation to the benefit to the users of financial statements and therefore they are not included on the Balance Sheet.

Civic Regalia and Chains of Office

The Chains of Office include those belonging to the Lord Mayor and Mayoress, the Sheriff and Sheriff's lady, and Deputy Lord Mayor. These are very ornate and valuable items mainly of gold and enamel. The Mayoral chain dates back to 1883, and includes a badge relief decorated and enamelled with the City Arms.

Firearms

The Firearms date back to the 17th Century, and include a collection of English Lock Muskets. The Firearms are displayed in the Town Hall in glass fronted cases.

Pictures and Drawings

The Art Collection includes paintings (both oil and watercolour) and sketches and is reported on the Balance Sheet at Insurance Value.

A large number of Portraits are to be found in the collection, as well as oils on canvass such as "The rape of the Sabines" presented to the Council by the Duke of Marlborough in 1901.

Memorial Gardens and City Walls

The Council has identified War Memorials and a Garden in St Giles, and the War Memorial in Marston Road, which along with the ancient City walls and Bastion (inside New College, and Hall Street) and the Rewley Abbey Wall meet the criteria of Heritage assets. However, due to their diverse nature these assets lack any comparable market values and cost records do not exist. The cost of providing a Balance Sheet valuation on these assets would be disproportionate to any benefit to the user of the Authorities financial statements and therefore are excluded from the Balance Sheet.

Heritage Non Operational Property

A number of Properties owned by Oxford City are of historic interest but these are operational assets and therefore held within Property, Plant and Equipment.

The Council has identified the Plain Fountain, comprising an ornate stone fountain covered by an octagonal plate roofed open sided structure with stone columns. A clock with four faces is sited on top of the roof with a decorative metal weather vane installed above. This is a significant Asset in terms of its cultural and Heritage presence and the Asset is included in the Balance Sheet at its Depreciated Replacement Cost.

In the 2015/16 revaluation of heritage assets, the Council's valuer identified a number of sculptures which are predominantly situated in public outdoor spaces and recognized these as heritage assets. These have been included in the balance sheet at market value.

Oxford City First Registration number Plate

The Mayoral Car carries the first registration plate issued in Oxford, and the plate is valued at market value.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15. Investment Properties

The following items of income and expenditure have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Rental Income from Investment Property	10,717	10,950
Direct Operating Expenses arising from Investment Property	(2,224)	(1,710)
Net Gain/(Loss)	8,493	9,240

Investment Property valuations were reviewed to identify assets that could have experienced a significant change in value. All such assets identified were valued as at 31st March 2025. Consideration was given to subsequent movements and nothing identified which merited further adjustments

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its Investment Property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. The Council has no contractual obligations to purchase, construct or develop investment property.

The following table summarises the movement in the Fair Value of Investment Properties over the year:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at start of the year	146,300	117,688
Additions:		
Purchases	-	-
Subsequent expenditure	1,107	1,830
Net gain / (loss) from Fair Value adjustments	(10,623)	18,380
Less:		
Disposals	(7,780)	-
Net balance prior to transfers	129,004	137,898
Transfers:		
(To)/from Property Plant and Equipment	-	8,402
Other Changes (net revaluation)	16,806	-
Balance at the end of the year	145,810	146,300

Fair Value Hierarchies

The table below summarises the use of the three fair value hierarchies used during 2024/25. The market approach using current market conditions, recent sales prices, and other relevant information for similar assets in the local area was used for all assets valued using a level 2 valuation approach.

	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1) £'000	Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2) £'000	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3) £'000	Fair Value as at 31 March 2024 £'000
Fair Value Measurement	-	145,810	-	145,810
Total	-	145,810	-	145,810

	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1) £'000	Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2) £'000	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3) £'000	Fair Value as at 31 March 2023 £'000
Fair Value Measurement	-	146,300	-	146,300
Total	-	146,300	-	146,300

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between the Fair Value Hierarchy Levels during the year.

Valuation Techniques used to Determine Level 2 Fair Values for Investment Properties

Significant Observable Inputs – Level 2

The fair value for investment properties has primarily been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the local authority area. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy.

Highest and Best Use of Investment Properties

In estimating the fair value of the Council's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use.

Valuation Techniques

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for investment properties and therefore no transfers to or from measurement using the Level 3 methodology.

Valuation Process for Investment Properties

The fair value of the Council's investment property is measured annually at each reporting date. All valuations are carried out externally by Carter Jonas LLP, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The Council's Corporate Property team work closely with the external valuers and finance officers reporting directly to the chief financial officer on a regular basis regarding all valuation matters.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

16. Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for its software as an Intangible Asset, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware or Equipment. Intangible Assets includes both purchased licenses and software.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Council. The Council amortises Intangible Assets according to the expected economic useful life on a straight line basis.

The average amortisation period is 5 years.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April		
- Gross Carrying Amounts	6,718	6,415
- Accumulated Amortisation	(3,070)	(2,260)
Net Carrying Amount at Start of Year	3,648	4,155
Additions:		
- Purchases	931	737
- Amortisation for the period	(1,451)	(1,244)
	(520)	(507)
Disposals:		
- Derecognition	(204)	(434)
- Amortisation write back	204	434
Net Carrying Amount at End of Year	3,128	3,648
Comprising:		
- Gross Carrying Amounts	7,445	6,718
- Accumulated Amortisation	(4,317)	(3,070)
	3,128	3,648

The amortisation of £1.5 million is shown in the Service Level Agreements and Capital Charges section within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

17. Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet (page 26).

Financial Assets	Non Current				Current			
	Investments		Debtors		Investments & Cash at Bank		Debtors	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Fair Value through Profit or Loss	14,620	19,691	118,027	142,790	-	-	75,313	55,611
Amortised Cost	-	-	(1)	-	1,225	-	-	-
Total Financial Assets	14,620	19,691	118,026	142,790	1,225	-	75,313	55,611

Financial Liabilities	Non Current				Current			
	Borrowings		Creditors & Other Liabilities		Borrowings & Overdrafts		Creditors	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Amortised Cost	(268,528)	(218,528)	(30,054)	(2,327)	(20,000)	(11,088)	(31,355)	(28,011)
Total Financial Liabilities	(268,528)	(218,528)	(30,054)	(2,327)	(20,000)	(11,088)	(31,355)	(28,011)

The figures in the table above have been adjusted to only reflect non statutory creditors and debtors.

a) Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

	2024/25		2023/24	
	Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services £'000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £'000	Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services £'000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £'000
Net gains/(losses) on:				
Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value	930	-	(1,225)	-
	930	-	(1,225)	-
Interest Revenue				
Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value	1,050	-	1,264	-
Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost	3,160	-	5,243	-
	4,210	-	6,507	-
Interest Expense	(10,016)	-	(7,844)	-

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

b) Fair Values of Financial Assets

		Valuation Techniques used to measure Fair Value	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Property and Multi-Asset Funds				
Property Fund Investments with CCLA	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	3,540	3,474
Property Fund Investments with Lothbury	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	719	6,068
Multi-Asset Fund Investments with Artemis	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	5,678	5,379
Multi-Asset Fund Investments with Fidelity	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	4,003	4,089
Total			13,940	19,010

Investments in Property and Multi Asset Funds

The Council has invested £3 million in the CCLA Property Fund, £5 million in the Artemis Multi-Asset Fund and £5 million in the Fidelity Multi-Asset Fund. The Council had £7 million invested in the Lothbury Property Fund but requested return of these funds on the fund encountering financial troubles; it has now gone into liquidation. Funds are being returned to the Council as properties are sold. As at 31st March 88.3% of the fund had been distributed with any losses being charged to the revenue account. The remaining investment, based on the value of the original investment, is £0.816 million out of the £7 million.

The units in all of these funds are valued based on the overall valuation of the funds. The Council is generally free to divest itself of its investments at any time and would receive a payment based on the number of units held multiplied by the quoted redemption price per unit. These investments are treated as available for sale financial instruments and have therefore been revalued as at the balance sheet date based on the redemption value as at that date. The change in valuation has then been credited or debited to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and is currently reversed out through the MiRS. When the Council redeems these investments, the excess over the original investment will be charged to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and credited to Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between Fair Value Hierarchy Levels during the year.

Changes in the Valuation Technique

There has been no change in the valuation technique used during the year for the financial instruments.

18. Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

The Council's overall risk management programme focuses on minimising the Council's exposure to the unpredictability of financial markets and to protect the financial resources available to fund services. The Council has fully adopted CIPFA's Code of Treasury Management Practice and has written principles for overall risk management as well as policies and procedures covering specific areas such as credit, liquidity, refinancing and market risk.

a) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from short-term lending of surplus funds to banks, building societies and other Local Authorities as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. It is the Council's policy to place funds only with a limited number of high quality banks, building societies and other Local Authorities whose credit rating is independently assessed as sufficiently secure by the Council's Treasury Advisors and to restrict lending to a prudent maximum amount for each financial institution. In addition the Council has invested in Property Funds, which has been assessed by the Council and their Treasury Advisors. The Council also maintains a formal counterparty policy in respect of those financial institutions and other bodies from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing arrangements.

The Council does not generally allow credit for customers, such that all creditors are due within 3 months.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in banks and building societies was £0.0 million as at 31 March 2025 and in case cannot be assessed generally because the risk of any institution failing to make interest payment or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. Recent experience has shown that it is rare for such entities to be unable to meet their commitments. A risk of un-recoverability applies to all of the Council's deposits, but there was no evidence at the 31 March 2025 that this was likely to crystallise.

The Council has increased risk with its investment in CCLA (Charities, The Church of England and Local Authorities) and Lothbury Property Funds and the Artemis and Fidelity Multi-Asset Funds, however this is mitigated by an Earmarked Reserve.

b) Liquidity Risk

The Council has ready access to borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. As a result, there is no significant risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments. The Council has safeguards in place to ensure that a significant proportion of its borrowing does not mature for repayment at any one time to mitigate the impact of re-borrowing at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council has specific percentage limits for debt maturing in different periods to ensure an excessive amount of loans do not fall due for repayment at the same time. This ensures prudent planning of new loans taken out and, where it is economic to do so, making early repayments.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

c) Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The Council maintains a significant investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures cover the short and medium term cash needs, the risk in the longer term relates to the danger of having to replace a maturing long term investment at disadvantageous rates.

The approved prudential indicator limiting the amount of funds placed in investments for terms exceeding one year is a key factor limiting this risk, as is a medium term financial policy on reducing the Council's reliance on interest earnings to fund its core activities.

The Council's Treasury and Investment Strategy addresses the main risks and the Council's treasury team address the operational risks within the approved parameters. These include:

- Monitoring the maturity profile of financial liabilities and amending the profile through either new borrowing or the rescheduling of existing debt or ensuring sufficient funds to make repayments on due dates; and
- Monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Council's day-to-day cash flow needs, and the spread of longer-term investments providing stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer-term cash flow needs.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£'000	£'000
Up to 1 year	55,660	40,517
Between 1 and 5 years	80,000	20,000
Between 5 and 10 years	50,000	60,000
Over 10 years	138,528	138,528
	324,188	259,045

Financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- no early repayment or impairment is recognised
- where an instrument will mature in the next 12 months, the fair value is assumed to be equal to the carrying amount.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

d) Analysis of Financial Liabilities

The analysis of financial liabilities is included in the table below. The amortised cost is an accumulation of the principal and accrued interest. The fair value is as per the notification received from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The fair value of the liabilities is higher than the amortised cost due to the premiums that would become payable if the loans were to be repaid.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Short Term Borrowing	20,000	11,088
Long Term Borrowing - Public Works Loan Board	268,528	218,528
Local Bonds	-	-
Finance Lease Liability	27,164	291
Cash	4,305	1,418
Creditors	31,355	28,011
	351,352	259,336
Amortised Cost	351,352	259,336
Fair Value	316,726	226,008

e) Analysis of Financial Assets

The analysis of Financial Assets is shown in the table below. The amortised cost is an accumulation of the principal and the accrued interest. The majority of investments are at a fixed rate and for a fixed term therefore the accrued interest is based on the agreed rates at the inception date of the investment, and therefore a fair value has not been used as a comparator.

The Council also has £3 million invested in CCLA Property Fund, £0.819 million in Lothbury Property Fund, £5 million in Artemis Multi-Asset Fund and £5 million in Fidelity Multi-Asset Fund. A fair value for these investments has been included.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Short Term Investments	5,530	-
Long Term Investments	14,162	20,543
Cash	-	-
Debtors	74,080	55,611
Long Term Debtors	121,291	142,790
Amortised Cost	215,063	218,944
Fair Value	215,521	218,092

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year. The figures in sections c, d and e have been amended to only reflect the non statutory creditors and debtors.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

f) Market Risk

Interest rate risk – The Council is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Income and Expenditure Account will rise
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing liability will fall
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Income and Expenditure Account will rise
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the Balance Sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Income and Expenditure Account. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Income and Expenditure Account and affect the General Fund Balance, subject to influences from Government grants. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments will be reflected in the movement in reserves, unless the investments have been designated as Fair Value through the Income and Expenditure Account.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together the Council's prudential indicators and its expected treasury options, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy a prudential indicator is set which provides maximum and minimum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The Council's treasury team monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately, for instance, during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns.

The risk of interest rate loss is partially mitigated by Government grant payable on financing costs.

The Council does not have any variable rate borrowings, therefore the impact of a 1% increase or decrease in interest rates would have a nil financial impact. However it does have deposits in Money Market Funds (MMF), which are at a variable rate. These funds fluctuate daily but normally within a range of approximately 0.01% unless there is a general change to interest rates.

Price Risk – The Council has investments in Property Funds. The unit price can fluctuate both up and down and is monitored closely by the Council. Potential impact is also mitigated by an Earmarked Reserve.

Foreign Exchange Risk – The Council does not partake in any financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies.

g) Financial Instruments Gains and Losses

There is a net gain of £0.179 million recognised in the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to the ongoing property and multi asset fund investments. These are held as Financial Instruments Available for Sale and the appropriate accounting treatment is applied. There is also a loss of £0.754 million recognised in the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to the redeemed element of the Lothbury Property Fund investment.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

h) Fair value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables are carried on the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- For loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and other loans payable, premature repayment rates from the PWLB have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- For Property Fund investments, the unit price has been used to provide the fair value;
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the principal outstanding or the billed amount;
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

The fair values calculated are as follows:

Fair Value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost	2024/25		2023/24	
	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000
PWLB Debt	268,528	258,207	218,528	197,706
Non - PWLB Debt	20,000	20,000	11,088	11,088
Total Debt	288,528	278,207	229,616	208,794
Trade Creditors	31,355	31,355	28,011	28,011
Total Financial Liabilities	319,883	309,562	257,627	236,805
Investments < 1 year	1,325	1,325	-	-
Investments > 1 year	14,520	14,520	19,691	19,691
Long Term Debtors	121,291	121,291	142,790	142,790
Trade Debtors	74,080	74,080	55,611	55,611
Total Loans and Receivables	211,216	211,216	218,092	218,092

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

19. Short Term Debtors

The table below shows the amount that the Council was owed at balance sheet date by third parties, together with amounts paid by the Council in advance of receipt of goods or services.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Trade Receivables	24,515	31,323
Other Receivables	66,030	31,558
Total	90,545	62,881

20. Debtors for Local Taxation

The past due but not impaired amount for local taxation (council tax and non-domestic rates) can be analysed by age as follows:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Less than one year	9,185	6,179
More than one year	10,769	11,603
Total	19,954	17,782

The past due but not impaired amount for local taxation (for the Council only removing the agency debt figures) is as follows:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Less than one year	2,461	1,431
More than one year	2,599	2,887
Total	5,060	4,318

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

21. Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of Cash and Cash Equivalents is made up of the following elements:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Cash Held by the Council	5,530	330
Bank Current Accounts	(4,305)	(1,418)
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,225	(1,088)

22. Assets Held for Sale

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance Outstanding at Start of Year	1,263	761
Assets newly classified as Held for Sale:		
Property Plant and Equipment	-	-
Council Dwellings	4,052	2,756
Assets declassified as Held for Sale:		
Council Dwellings	-	-
Property, Plant & Equipment	-	-
Assets sold	(3,182)	(2,285)
Other Movements	81	31
Balance Outstanding at Year End	2,214	1,263

23. Short Term Creditors and Contract Liabilities

The table below shows the amount that the Council owed as at balance sheet date to third parties, together with amounts received by the Council in advance of supply of goods or services.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Trade Payables	(19,903)	(20,946)
Other Payables	(37,809)	(24,250)
Total	(57,712)	(45,196)

The table below shows the movement in contract liabilities between balance sheet dates.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Expenditure recognised that was included in the as a Contract Liability in the prior year accounts as a Contract Liability	(2,982)	(2,682)
Decreases due to cash paid	2,961	2,507
Increase to continuing Contract Liabilities	(29)	(219)
New Contract Liabilities as at 31 March	(3,251)	(2,588)
Total	(3,301)	(2,982)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

24. Provisions

Provisions for doubtful debts are separately treated against debtors on the Balance Sheet. The total value of Provisions held as at the balance sheet date are:

	Other Provisions		Total
	Current £'000	Non Current £'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2023	-	(4,695)	(4,695)
Additional Provisions Made in Year	-	(9,396)	(9,396)
Amounts Used in Year	-	8,205	8,205
Unused Amounts Reversed in Year	-	36	36
Total Provisions as at 31 March 2024	-	(5,850)	(5,850)
Balance at 1 April 2024	-	(5,850)	(5,850)
Additional Provisions Made in Year	-	(7,010)	(7,010)
Amounts Used in Year	-	6,803	6,803
Unused Amounts Reversed in Year	-	2,559	2,559
Total Provisions as at 31 March 2025	-	(3,498)	(3,498)

Note: There are no outstanding legal cases or injury and damage compensation provisions (current or non-current).

Other Provisions

NNDR Appeals - There is a requirement for the Council to provide for potential future obligations arising from appeals made to NNDR valuations - £3.240 million. The NNDR provision is set aside to cover the estimated costs of NNDR appeals that have been lodged with the VOA for which the timing of appeals is uncertain and there is no information available on which to base an estimate. Whereas the Council expects some appeals to be settled in the following financial year, the Council expects that the majority of these appeals will be settled later than the following financial year. Consequently the whole of the provision has been classified as long term in the accounts.

Insurance - There are insurance claims that the Council has received that have not yet been settled. This is an actuarial estimate of the cost of these insurance claims received but not yet paid and the provision stands at £0.257 million.

25. Usable Reserves

Movements in the Council's Usable Reserves are detailed in the Movement of Reserves Statement (page 25), Note 7 (pages 39 to 43), and Note 8 (pages 44 to 46).

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

26. Unusable Reserves

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Revaluation Reserve	(520,484)	(431,694)
Capital Adjustment Account	(374,702)	(388,593)
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	(113,191)	(138,625)
Pensions Reserve	(82,791)	(24,015)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	1,615	771
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	(258)	852
Accumulated Absences Account and Employee Reserve	1,418	1,184
Total Unusable Reserves	(1,088,393)	(980,120)

a) Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment (and Intangible Assets). The balance is reduced when assets are:

- revalued downwards or impaired
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of

The Reserve contains only revaluation gains/losses accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

	2024/25 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(431,694)	(421,613)
Upward revaluation of assets	(161,472)	(87,080)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services (Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	57,556	64,427
	(535,610)	(444,266)
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	1,484	-
Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	13,642	12,572
Balance at 31 March	(520,484)	(431,694)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

b) Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement and depreciation. Impairment losses and amortisation are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert Fair Value figures to a Historical Cost basis). The Account is credited with amounts set aside by the Council to finance the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created.

Note 7 (pages 39 to 43) provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

	2024/25		2023/24	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April		(388,593)		(350,842)
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:				
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	5,756		6,175	
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment charged to CI&E	60,733		(9,760)	
Amount written off from the Revaluation Reserve	(13,642)		(12,575)	
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	891		776	
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	8,944		6,487	
HRA Depreciation made available for capital financing	11,092		11,105	
Adjustments to Deferred Capital Receipts	8,504		5,081	
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	29,375		7,934	
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year		111,653		15,223
Capital financing applied in the year:				
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(24,509)		(13,086)	
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(12,030)		(15,439)	
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(24,608)		(11,046)	
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	(1,226)		(182)	
Repayment of debt on repaid debtor from capital receipts	(31,712)		(11,640)	
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	(3,677)		(1,581)	
		(97,762)		(52,974)
Movements in the market value of Investment properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		-		-
Balance at 31 March		(374,702)		(388,593)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

c) Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

The Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which cash settlement has yet to take place. Under statutory arrangements, the Council does not treat these gains as available for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash. When the deferred cash settlement eventually takes place, amounts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(138,625)	(147,103)
Adjustment for capital loans and leases	(8,113)	(5,081)
Transfer of deferred sale proceeds credited as part of the (gain)/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(195)	54
Impairment of deferred capital receipts	(574)	769
Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	34,316	12,736
Balance at 31 March	(113,191)	(138,625)

d) Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service; updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to the Pension Fund or pays pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the resources the Council has set aside compared to the benefits earned by past and current employees. The statutory arrangements ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(24,015)	16,635
Actuarial (gains) or losses on pensions assets and liabilities	(58,431)	(38,297)
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	4,400	3,500
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(4,745)	(5,853)
Balance at 31 March	(82,791)	(24,015)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

e) Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of Council Tax income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as it falls due from Council Tax payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	771	(4,308)
Amount by which Council Tax Income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Council Tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	844	5,079
Balance at 31 March	1,615	771

f) Financial Instruments Adjustment Account

The Financial Instruments Adjustment Account was created on 1st April 2019 in response to changes in accounting standards applied and any balance on the previous Available for Sale Financial Instruments Reserve was transferred into here on that date. The Financial Instruments Adjustment Account contains the statutory over-ride reversal for unrealised gains and losses on Financial Instruments and Financial Instruments Impairments

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	852	396
Upward revaluation of investments	(365)	(554)
Downward revaluation of investments	(745)	1,010
Balance at 31 March	(258)	852

g) Accumulated Absences Account and Employment Reserve Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

The Employment Reserve accounts for the Termination Payments that have been accrued but not paid as at 31 March. These accruals are reversed and therefore mitigated through the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	1,184	1,377
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	(1,184)	(1,377)
Additional accrual during the year	1,418	1,184
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	234	(193)
Balance at 31 March	1,418	1,184

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. Operating Activities

Operating activities within the Cashflow Statement include the following cashflows relating to Interest

Interest Received
Interest Paid
Dividends received

2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
9,088	7,725
(10,016)	(7,844)
4,900	7,400

28. Reconciliation of Liabilities Arising from Financing Activities

	01 Apr 2024 £'000	Financing cash flows £'000	Other non financing cash flows £'000	31 Mar 2025 £'000
Long term borrowings	(218,528)	(50,000)	-	(268,528)
Short term borrowings	(10,000)	(10,000)	-	(20,000)
Other payments/(receipts) from Financing Activities	(45,196)	(16,658)	(5,198)	(57,712)
Lease Liabilities	-	(1,056)	-	(1,056)
Total Liabilities from Financing Activities	(273,724)	(77,714)	(5,198)	(347,296)

	01 Apr 2023 £'000	Financing cash flows £'000	Other non financing cash flows £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Long term borrowings	(198,528)	(20,000)	-	(218,528)
Short term borrowings	(11,000)	1,000	-	(10,000)
Other payments/(receipts) from Financing Activities	(86,948)	16,379	(25,373)	(45,196)
Lease Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities from Financing Activities	(296,476)	(2,621)	(25,373)	(273,724)

29. Acquired and Discontinued Operations

There were no acquired or discontinued operations in 2024/25.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30. Agency Services

For a number of years, Oxford City Council have exercised their right under Section 42 of the Highways Act to maintain the unclassified roads in Oxford using funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council including routine and other maintenance.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Routine Maintenance Expenditure	1,063	567
Section 42 Agreement	1,623	1,220
Net Expenditure Recharged through the Agency Arrangement	2,686	1,787

With effect from 1st April 2018, under an agreement with the County Council, Oxford City Council has been appointed as agent of Oxfordshire County Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 to carry out the specified work. A back-to-back contract has then been made between Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODSL) for delivery of the services. In practice this forms part of the wider services contract that the council has with ODSL. Existing Oxfordshire County Council staff have transferred under TUPE to ODSL as the entity carrying out the activities.

The Section 101 Agreement funds ODSL back office staff for managing this contract on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. Part of the agreement was that 4 posts were TUPE to ODSL and these cost plus a % of ODSL Existing Management Team can be claimed back.

This agency work covers areas such as pothole maintenance, footpath maintenance, road improvement schemes, carriageway surface dressing, grass verge cutting and road and path side tree maintenance. Also included are winter maintenance, white lining and drainage maintenance.

ODSL on behalf of Oxford City Council carry out most of the maintenance operations under the agreement. This work is split into three; Highways engineering (carriageway and pavement maintenance), and grass cutting which are undertaken by the Engineering teams and Grounds Maintenance teams respectively, both of which are managed by Oxford Direct Services Limited. The final area of work is tree maintenance, which is carried out by the Leisure & Parks Tree team.

31. Members' Allowances

The Council paid the following amounts to Members of the Council during the year:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Members' Allowances		
Allowances	408	389
Expenses	2	4
Total Payments	410	393

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

32. Officers Remuneration - Senior Employees

Name/Title		Salary, Fees and Allowances £	Pension Contributions £	Total £	Note
Chief Executive, Caroline Green	2024/25	168,847	23,957	192,804	32.1
	2023/24	168,847	22,626	191,472	
Deputy Chief Executive - Place	2024/25	133,971	17,905	151,875	32.2
	2023/24	124,593	16,651	141,244	
Deputy Chief Executive - City & Citizens' Services	2024/25	133,617	17,905	151,521	32.2
	2023/24	124,262	16,651	140,913	
Executive Director - Communities and People	2023/24	26,872	3,284	30,156	32.3
Director Law, Governance & Strategy/Monitoring Officer	2024/25	109,238	14,638	123,876	32.1
	2023/24	70,886	9,475	80,361	32.4
Group Finance Director/Section 151 Officer	2024/25	109,558	14,638	124,196	32.2
	2023/24	101,494	13,549	115,043	
Head of People	2024/25	84,798	11,363	96,161	32.5

32.1 - The position of Chief Executive is named, in accordance with regulations, due to the salary level

32.2 - The Title of the role changed as a result of the new council senior management structure from 1st February 2025

32.3 - The disclosure relates to an employee who last day of service was on the 11 June 2023, being replaced by contractor that is not disclosed under the guidance

32.4 - Two officers held the post in 2023-24. The original post holder departed on the 16 April 2023 and the new post holder started on the 7 August 2023

32.5 - The Role of Head of People became a senior employee role as a result of the senior management restructure of 1st February 2025 following which the post reports directly to the Chief Executive

The Council's other employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer's pension contributions) were paid the following amounts:

Other Employees Receiving more than £50,000	Number of employees 2024/25	Number of employees 2023/24
£50,000 - £54,999	40	19
£55,000 - £59,999	26	13
£60,000 - £64,999	9	20
£65,000 - £69,999	18	6
£70,000 - £74,999	6	6
£75,000 - £79,999	14	5
£80,000 - £84,999	4	2
£85,000 - £89,999	-	6
£90,000 - £94,999	2	1
£95,000 - £99,999	3	-
£100,000 - £104,999	-	2
£105,000 - £109,999	3	-
£125,000 - £129,999	1	1
£165,000 - £169,999	1	-
Total Number of Employees	127	81

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Exit Package cost band including special payments

	Number of other agreed departures		Total number of packages		Total cost of exit packages	
	2024/25 Nos	2023/24 Nos	2024/25 Nos	2023/24 Nos	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
£0- £20,000	3	2	3	2	17	23
£20,001- £40,000	-	1	-	1	-	25
£40,001- £60,000	1	1	1	1	44	44
Total	4	4	4	4	61	92

33. External Audit Costs

The Council has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts by the Council's external auditors:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
External Audit	247	228
Grant Claims	27	81
Grant Income	(32)	-
Total	242	309

34. Grant Income

The Council has credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2024/25:

Grants Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Oxford Growth Deal - General HRA Funding (MHCLG)	6,443	-
Blackbird Leys - HRA (Homes England)	6,250	-
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (Homes England)	5,923	295
Oxford Growth Deal - Osney Bridge (MHCLG / Oxfordshire County Council)	5,252	2,700
Housing Infrastructure Fund (Homes England)	4,552	80
Cowley Branch Line (Various)	3,280	-
Disabled Facilities Grant (Department of Health & Social Care)	1,764	1,545
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (DESNZ)	1,277	1,027
Local Authority Housing Fund (MHCLG)	1,189	1,569
Funding Guarantee (MHCLG)	1,161	214
Oxford Growth Deal - City Cycle Schemes (MHCLG)	1,015	8
Clean Bus Tech Grant (Department of Transport)	653	-
Go Ultra Low Oxford (Office for Zero Emissions)	572	-
Youth Investment Fund (Social Investment Business Foundation)	473	34
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (MHCLG)	416	120
New Homes Bonus (MHCLG)	352	663
Green Homes Grant (BEIS)	307	-
Revenue Support Grant (RSG) (MHCLG)	211	198
Section 106 (Various)	128	-
Communities Foundation (FCC)	100	-
Swimming Pool Swimming Fund (Sports England)	99	-
Market St Contributions (Oxfordshire County Council)	50	-
Services Grant (MHCLG)	44	250
Blackbird Leys - GF (Homes England)	40	-
Upgrade Existing Tennis Courts	39	-
Changing Places Grant (MHCLG)	(40)	-
Community Infrastructure Levy (Various)	(325)	4,307
Oxford Station Funding (Various)	-	1,046
Affordable Housing Programme (Homes England)	-	949
Brownfield Land Release Fund (MHCLG)	-	340
New Burdens (BEIS)	-	148
Tennis Funding (Lawn Tennis Association)	-	92
Total	41,225	15,585

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Grants Credited to Services

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Housing Benefit Subsidy (DWP)	36,349	36,647
Out of Hospital Care (NHS Oxfordshire)	1,915	1,285
Rough Sleeping Initiative (MHCLG)	1,773	2,413
Homelessness Prevention Grant (MHCLG)	1,511	1,508
Afghan Resettlement Scheme (Home Office)	863	411
Homes for Ukraine (MHCLG via Oxfordshire County Council)	776	1,281
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (MHCLG)	592	782
Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures (MHCLG)	363	113
Shared Prosperity Fund (MHCLG)	307	65
United Kingdom's Resettlement Scheme (Home Office)	274	-
Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP)	260	83
Discretionary Housing Payment (DWP)	254	423
Asylum Dispersal Grant (Home Office)	226	196
Elections Grant (MHCLG)	183	155
Community Health Development Officers funding (Oxfordshire County Council)	176	144
Community Profiles (Oxfordshire County Council)	176	2
Youth Investment Fund (Social Investment Business Foundation)	158	-
Safer Streets Fund (PCC)	151	35
Household Support Fund (Oxfordshire County Council)	143	260
Community Safety Fund (PCC)	129	119
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (Homes England)	129	29
Story Exchange Project (Paul Hamlyn Foundation)	113	52
Community Vaccine Champion (MHCLG)	113	68
Whole Systems Approach to Physical Education (Active Oxfordshire)	108	-
Future Fit Area Based Insetting (Innovate)	104	-
New Burdens (MHCLG)	102	303
CHS Officer (Samsung)	95	34
Accommodation for Ex Offenders (MHCLG)	75	84
Museum Funding (MOX Development Trust)	72	92
Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (Oxfordshire County Council)	70	-
50 Years & Beyond: Embedding Community Voices (National Lottery Heritage Fund)	68	-
Youth Ambition Fund (DWP)	63	53
Dancin' Oxford (Arts Council England)	61	50
Oxfordshire Food Strategy Action Plan Development (Oxfordshire County Council)	61	-
You Move (Active Oxfordshire)	57	61
Domestic Abuse Funding (MHCLG)	54	5
New Burdens (DWP)	41	-
Paradise Square (Developer contributions)	39	-
Additional New Burdens Funding (DWP)	36	-
Museum NPO Associate Award (Oxford University)	35	-
Move together (Active Oxfordshire)	33	46
Financial Reporting Support (MHCLG)	32	-
Healthy Place Shaping (Oxfordshire County Council)	30	-
PJA consultant commission (PO 9005229774) (Oxfordshire County Council)	30	-
Gas Safe Fund (FILTSSE)	29	10
Bellwin Flooding Grant (MHCLG)	27	-
Chewing Gum Cleanup (Keep Britain Tidy)	27	25
Housing Benefit Accuracy Award Initiative (DWP)	27	-
Biodiversity Net Gain (DEFRA)	27	27
Play Area Contributions (Developer contributions)	24	5
Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (PO 9005130069) (Oxfordshire County Council)	22	-
PJA consultant commission (PO 9005403586) (Oxfordshire County Council)	20	-
Windrush Day Grant (MHCLG)	19	-
Project LEO (Innovate)	17	23
Out of Hours Service (Oxford Brookes University)	16	-
Community Connector Mapping (Oxfordshire County Council)	15	-
Museum of Oxfordshire Contributions (Various)	13	57
Sub Total	48,483	46,946

Continued overleaf...

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Grants Credited to Services - Continued

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Air Quality Grant (DEFRA)	12	12
Valuing the Everyday (University of Oxford)	12	-
Cost of Living Support: Hospital Discharge (Oxfordshire County Council)	10	-
West End Programme (Oxfordshire County Council)	10	-
Marketing and communications consultancy (PO 40007775) (South Oxfordshire District Council)	10	-
Bathing Place Project (National Lottery Heritage Fund)	10	-
Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (DESNZ)	10	-
ACE Place Partnership (Cherwell District Council)	8	-
VERP DMP Project (OxLEP)	8	-
District Contributions (Cherwell District Council)	7	-
District Contributions (South Oxfordshire District Council)	7	-
District Contributions (Vale of White Horse District Council)	7	-
District Contributions (West Oxfordshire District Council)	7	-
Culture Recovery Fund (Arts Council England)	7	-
Museum Resilience Fund (Arts Council England)	7	-
Community Health Development Officers Development (NHS England)	6	-
Lighting Design services for the City Council (Michael Grubb Studio)	6	-
Funding for the Verify Earnings and Pensions Service (DWP)	6	-
Neighbourhood Planning Grant (BBL) (MHCLG)	5	-
Cowley Road CCTV (Littlemore Parish Council)	5	-
Connected Communities Fund (OCVA)	5	-
Littlemore Community Profiles Grant (Arts Council England)	5	-
Going Green Grant (South East Museum Development)	4	-
CEP Project Manager Support (Cherwell District Council)	3	-
Lighting Design services for the City Council (Oxfordshire County Council)	3	-
Dance 4 Parkinsons Contributions (Public Donations)	3	10
Museum Funding (University of Oxford)	3	-
Cultural Education Partnership (Cherwell District Council)	3	-
Storm Henk - Business Rate Relief Reimbursement (MHCLG)	2	19
Windrush Project (University of Oxford)	2	-
Oxford Lottery (Oxford Community Fund)	1	1
Skills Builder Individual Grant (South East Museum Development)	-	-
Council Tax Hardship Fund (County)	-	322
Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme (Home Office)	-	214
Homelessness Contributions (Various)	-	86
Council Tax - Care Leavers (County)	-	65
Oxfordshire Cultural Educational Partnership (OXCEP)	-	52
Museum NPO Associate Award (Oxford Uni)	-	43
Leisure for All (Sports England)	-	35
County Contributions (County)	-	33
Building Better Opportunities (ESF)	-	26
District Contributions (District Councils)	-	24
Low Carbon Skills Fund (Salix)	-	19
Families Affected by Imprisonment (Innovate)	-	17
Youth Ambition Project (Thames Valley Police)	-	15
Torch Funding (Torch)	-	15
Museum Funding (National Heritage)	-	12
Homes England (Homes England)	-	11
COMF (County)	-	11
General Contributions (Various)	-	10
West End Project (BGO Spires II Propco)	-	5
Voter ID (DLUHC)	-	3
Go Active (County)	-	2
Access to Work (DWP)	-	2
Active Oxfordshire (Various)	-	1
Grand Total	48,677	48,011

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Capital Grants Receipts in Advance

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Section 106 Contributions (Various)	13,976	14,165
Youth Investment Fund (Social Investment Business Foundation)	423	-
Oxford Growth Deal - Osney Bridge (Growth Deal)	-	5,522
Growth Deal (HRA) (DLUHC)	-	3,760
Oxford Growth Deal - General (DLUHC)	-	2,066
Oxford Growth Deal - Cycle Schemes (DLUHC)	-	1,015
Clean Bus Tech Grant (Department of Transport)	-	653
GULO Grants (Office for Zero Emissions)	-	572
Oxford Growth Deal - William Morris Close (DLUHC)	-	347
Local Authority Housing Fund (HRA) (DLUHC)	-	333
Green Homes Grant (HRA) (BEIS)	-	307
Total	14,399	28,740

The Council has received a number of grants and contributions that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the money to be returned to the provider if they are not used for the purpose specified. The balances at the year end are as follows:

Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Kickstart (DWP)	254	254
Test & Trace (BEIS)	227	227
CT Hardship Fund (Oxfordshire County Council)	167	167
Council Tax Rebate (MHCLG)	75	75
Restart 21/22 (BEIS)	61	61
Revenue Support Grant	23	-
Other BEIS (Unidentified)	14	14
Community Profile Grants (County)	-	126
Community Vaccine Champion (DLUHC)	-	113
Other Arts Grants (Arts Council)	-	96
Active Oxfordshire (Sports Council)	-	90
Museum of Oxford (MOX Dev. Trust)	-	60
Safer Streets Funding (Oxfordshire County Council)	-	32
Gas Safe Fund (FILTSSE)	-	17
Domestic Abuse Fund (DLUHC)	-	15
Culture Recovery Fund (Arts Council)	-	5
Total	821	1,352

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Council has received a number of grants and contributions that have not been matched against related expenditure and therefore are held in a usable reserve rather than credited to the General Fund balance. Some of these amounts also appear in the previous table if they were received in year. The balances at the year end are as follows:

Capital Grants Unapplied Account

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Community Infrastructure Levy (Various)	11,961	19,792
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (Homes England)	6,638	-
Blackbird Leys - HRA (Homes England)	6,250	-
Housing Infrastructure Fund (Homes England)	5,710	1,154
Oxford Growth Deal - Osney Bridge (MHCLG / Oxfordshire County Council)	4,748	1,664
Oxford Growth Deal - General HRA Funding (MHCLG)	1,761	-
Disabled Facilities Grant (Department of Health & Social Care)	1,530	1,597
Youth Investment Fund (Social Investment Business Foundation)	473	-
Go Ultra Low Oxford (Office for Zero Emissions)	443	105
Oxford Growth Deal - City Cycle Schemes (MHCLG)	411	-
Brownfield Land Release Fund (MHCLG)	340	23
Oxford Growth Deal - RP Funding (MHCLG)	272	-
Clean Bus Tech Grant (Department of Transport)	263	-
Rough Sleepers Accommodation Project (MHCLG)	238	317
Affordable Housing Programme (Homes England)	234	949
Non Decarb Projects (Salix)	162	162
Decarbonisation Fund (Salix)	147	147
Cowley Branch Line (Various)	137	-
Swimming Pool Swimming Fund (Sports England)	99	-
Meanwhile in Oxford (OXLEP)	62	64
Market St Contributions (Oxfordshire County Council)	50	-
Blackbird Leys - GF (Homes England)	40	-
Upgrade Existing Tennis Courts	39	-
Museum Funding (National Heritage)	-	417
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (MHCLG)	-	415
Local Authority Housing Fund (MHCLG)	-	283
Ward Member Community Infrastructure Levy (Various)	-	158
Greenways Project Contribution (University of Oxford)	-	33
Greenways Project Contribution (NHS)	-	26
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (MHCLG)	-	10
Total	42,008	27,316

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

35. Related Parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties i.e. bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council or to be controlled or influenced by the Council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another parties ability to bargain freely with it.

Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council - it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. Council Tax bills, Housing Benefits). Grant receipts outstanding at balance sheet date are shown in Note 34 (pages 74 to 78).

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. A number of members and senior officers are members of voluntary organisations which may receive small grants and funding from the Council. The grants and funding were made with proper consideration of declarations of interest. The Register of Members' Interest is held at the Town Hall and published online, and is open for public inspection. There are loans held of £3.768 million with the Low Carbon Hub on which a senior officer is a board member. A number of Members serve on both the City Council and Oxfordshire County Council for which there are a number of transactions including grants and payments for services. A councillor is a trustee of an organisation that was paid £0.016 million for project support and is on the controlling body of a youth organisation that received funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and funds for building improvements totalling £0.031 million; these are not material to the Council but are to the receiving bodies. A number of Members are also members of parish councils who receive precepts from the Council. A number of Members sit on associations or charities which received payments from the Council in the year in respect of hall hire for election purposes. One Member sits on Littlemore Parish Council which received £0.122 million CIL and £0.082 million section 106 money which is not material to the City Council but is to the parish. A community association for which a councillor is a council appointed member received funding from CIL and hall hire to the value of £0.009 million. The total of members allowances is shown in Note 31 (page 72).

Members represent the Council on various organisations. Appointments are reviewed annually, unless a specific termination date for the term of office applies. None of these appointments places the Members concerned in a position to exert undue influence or control. One member is a Council appointed member of the Management Committee for West Oxford Community Association which received income from CIL and hall hire from the Council to a total value of £0.009 million which is not material to the City Council but is to the association.

There are a number of senior officer appointments to other entities:

- ♦ Barton Oxford LLP, an arms length partnership set up between the Council and Grosvenor Developments Limited to facilitate new housing in Barton;
- ♦ Oxwed LLP, a joint venture with Nuffield College Developments 1 Ltd set up to facilitate regeneration of the Oxpens area of Oxford;
- ♦ Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL), a wholly owned company set up to deliver housing within Oxford; and
- ♦ Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL), two wholly owned companies set up to deliver services to the Council and to outside bodies.

The Oxwed LLP holds loans from the Council which were agreed through the Council's normal governance processes. At balance sheet date the amount due from Oxwed LLP was £21.120 million. The OCHL Group has been advanced loans of £10.151 million, including accrued interest, which were agreed through the Council's normal governance processes, to finance property developments. Oxford Direct Services Limited holds assets leased from the Council to the value of £5.475 million as at balance sheet date. ODSTL and ODSL undertakes a significant level of work for the Council.

The Council has the following relationships; all of the material relationships under the Accounting Code of Practice are declared above.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- Central Government – Central Government provide a number of grants to local authorities.
- Housing Associations – the Council is a partner with various Housing Associations for the purpose of providing Social Housing.
- Oxfordshire County Council – the Council undertakes agency work on behalf of the County Council. The County Council also administers the Council's local government pension scheme.
- Serco / More Leisure Limited - The Council had a contract during 2024/25 with Serco and More Leisure Limited to manage and develop the Council's seven public leisure facilities.
- Oxford City Housing Limited - a wholly owned company set up to deliver housing within Oxford.
- Oxford Direct Services Limited - a wholly owned company set up to deliver work to the Council and other bodies.

36. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance leases), together with associated financing. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is explained and analysed in the second part of this note.

The Council is required to make a charge to its revenue account to reflect debt repayment, this is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	342,752	336,953
Capital Investment		
Property Plant and Equipment	126,558	46,377
Assets Held for Sale	81	44
Investment Properties	1,107	1,830
Intangible Assets	931	737
Long Term Capital Debtors	7,729	3,298
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	8,944	6,487
Finance Leases brought in on adoption of IFRS16	27,946	-
Total Capital Spend	173,296	58,773
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	(24,509)	(13,086)
Government Grants and other Contributions	(24,608)	(11,046)
Sums Set Aside from Revenue	(3,677)	(1,581)
Major Repairs Reserve	(12,030)	(15,439)
Capital Debtor Repayment	(31,712)	(11,640)
General Minimum Revenue Provision	(154)	(182)
Leases Minimum Revenue Provision	(1,073)	-
Sources of Finance Total	(97,763)	(52,974)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	418,285	342,752
Explanation of Movements in Year		
(Increase) in Underlying Need to Borrow (unsupported by Government Financial Assistance)	(134,272)	(17,621)
Decrease in Underlying Need to Borrow (unsupported by Government Financial Assistance)	31,866	11,822
Assets Acquired under Finance Leases	26,873	-
(Increase)/Decrease in Capital Financing Requirement	(75,533)	(5,799)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

37. Leases

a) Authority as Lessee

Operating Lease IFRS16 Conversion - Transitional Accounting Adjustments

The accounting policy on Leases at AP17 has been amended this year to reflect the requirements of IFRS16. No restatement of the prior period comparator information is required. Instead, the balance at the date of initial application of IFRS16 has been restated for the cumulative effect of the initial application of the standard.

In 2024/25, the authority applied IFRS 16 Leases as required by the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. The main impact of the new requirements is that for arrangements previously accounted for as operating leases (i.e. without recognising the leased property as an asset and future rents as a liability) a right-of-use asset and a lease liability are to be brought into the Balance Sheet at 1 April 2024. Leases for items of low value and leases that expire on or before 31 March 2025 are exempt from the new arrangements.

IFRS 16 has been applied retrospectively, but with the cumulative effect recognised at 1 April 2024. This means that right-of-use assets and lease liabilities have been calculated as if IFRS 16 had always applied but recognised in 2024/25 and not by adjusting prior year figures. However, some practical expedients have been applied as required or permitted by the Code:

- lease liabilities are measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments at 1 April 2024, discounted by the authority's incremental borrowing rate at that date
- a single discount rate has been applied to portfolios of leases with reasonably similar characteristics
- the weighted average of the incremental borrowing rates used to discount liabilities was 5.86%
- right-of-use assets are measured at the amount of the lease liability, adjusted for any prepaid or accrued lease payments that were in the balance sheet on 31 March 2024 – any initial direct costs have been excluded
- leases with a peppercorn rent previously included in the operating lease note have been recognised as donated assets with no lease liability
- all leases were assessed as to whether they were onerous at 31 March 2024, so right-of-use assets have not been subject to an impairment review – carrying amounts have been reduced by any provisions for onerous contracts that were in the 31 March 2024 Balance Sheet.

This has resulted in the following additions to the Balance Sheet:

- £0.880 million Property, Plant and Equipment – land and buildings (right-of-use assets)
- £0.415 million Non-current creditors (lease liabilities)
- £0.146 million Current creditors (lease liabilities)
- £0.319 million Capital Adjustment Account (for donated assets)

The newly recognised lease liabilities of £0.561 million compare with the operating lease commitments of £1.678 million at 31 March 2024 disclosed in the notes to the 2023/24 financial statements. When these are discounted to their present value of £1.061 million (using the incremental borrowing rate at 1 April 2024), there is a difference of £0.500 million from the newly recognised lease liabilities. This is explained by the fact that the lease liabilities exclude amounts for leases of low value items and leases that will expire before 31 March 2025.

The addition of £0.880 million Property, Plant and Equipment shown above is included in the £19.121 million in the following table.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Right-of-use assets

The table below shows the movements in the value of right-of-use assets held by the authority under leases

	Land and buildings £'000	Vehicles, plant and equipment £'000	Total £'000
Opening Balance	10,971	-	10,971
Assets recognised on conversion to IFRS16	19,121	34	19,155
Balance at 1 April 2024	30,092	34	30,126
Additions	23,002	-	23,002
Revaluations	1,498	-	1,498
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,509)	(17)	(1,526)
Total	53,083	17	53,100

Material Leases

Oxford City Council lease contracts comprise leases of Land and Buildings, and vehicles. Many are immaterial, however there are a number of material leases which are included within these notes. A summary of these is as follows:

- ♦ An Administrative building which is leased for 125 years from March 2015, on which a premium was paid of £7.2million, and where the resultant annual rental related to the land is £250 per annum. The value of the asset as at 01.04.2024 was £6.6m.
- ♦ Two blocks of flats leased for 150 years from October 2017, on which a premium was paid of £4.6 million, and where the resultant annual rental related to the land is £5,000 per annum. The value of the asset as at 01.04.2024 was £4.4m. One block is used for housing rented accommodation the other for temporary accommodation.
- ♦ A Car Park which is leased for 1.5 years from December 1998, and is being held over, and where the resultant annual rental related to the land is £988K per annum. The value of the asset as at 01.04.2024 was £4.3m.
- ♦ A Leisure Centre which is leased for 30 years from July 2006, and where the rental is a peppercorn. The value of the asset as at 01.04.2024 was £2.4m.
- ♦ A Park and Ride site which is leased for 999 years from September 1990, and where the rental is a peppercorn. The value of the asset as at 01.04.2024 was £3.4m.
- ♦ A Housing Development of 47 properties leased for 99 years from March 1971 on a peppercorn. The value as at 1.04.2024 was £3.4m.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Expenditure charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Interest expense on lease liability	1,239	-
Expenses related to short term leases	269	-
Expenses relating to exempt leases of low value	-	-
Minimum lease payments	2,293	353
Contingent rents variable lease payments	86	66
Income from subletting right of use assets[Sublease payments receivable]	(20)	(20)

Maturity analysis of Lease liabilities

The lease payments will be payable over the following periods:

	Land and buildings 2024/25 £'000	Vehicles, plant and equipment 2024/25 £'000	Total 2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Not later than one year	1,042	14	1,056	358
Later than one year and not later than five years	3,448		3,448	229
Later than five years	22,660		22,660	1,968
Total	27,150	14	27,164	2,555

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

b) Authority as Lessor

FINANCE LEASES

The Council leases out many properties, and an assessment has been undertaken to establish those that are considered to have transferred the risks of ownership to the lessee. From 2018/19, the Council is leasing vehicles to its wholly owned company, Oxford Direct Services Limited.

	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Finance Lease debtor (net present value of minimum lease payments)		
- Current	1,624	1,598
- Non Current	67,013	66,680
Unguaranteed Residual Value of Property*	4,069	4,073
Gross Investment in the Lease	72,706	72,351

* Detail required by paragraph 4.2.4.2(11) of the code.

The gross investment in the lease and the minimum lease payments will be received over the following periods:

	Gross Investment In The Lease		Minimum Lease Payments	
	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Not later than one year	1,624	1,598	1,624	1,598
Later than one year and not later than five years	3,354	3,983	3,354	3,983
Later than five years	67,728	66,770	63,659	62,697
Total	72,706	72,351	68,637	68,278

The minimum lease payments do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews.

In 2024/25 £0.534 million contingent rents were receivable by the Authority (£0.517 million in 2023/24)

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OPERATIONAL LEASES

The Council leases out property and equipment as Operational Leases. These include shorter term leases, where the risks and rewards are retained by the Council. The future sums receivable under non cancellable leases in future years are:

Operating Leases	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Not later than one year	7,299	6,055
Later than one year and not later than five years	25,068	19,526
Later than five years	90,978	67,078
Total	123,345	92,658

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews. In 2024/25 £1.25 million contingent rents were received by the Authority (£1.10 million in 2023/24.)

38. Termination Benefits and Exit Payments

Termination benefits are payable as a result of either:

- An employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or
- An employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for termination benefits.

There were no curtailment costs during 2024/25 included in the IAS19 report (There were none in 2023/24). These costs would be accounted for through the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as part of the IAS19 accounting, and therefore would not be recorded as termination costs which avoids double counting.

Exit Payments

Exit payments are required to be disclosed in bands of £20,000 up to £100,000 and bands of £50,000 thereafter, shown on Note 32 (pages 73 to 74). The exit payment includes Pension Strain costs on termination as well as redundancy and other payments. However, Pension Strain costs represent a future liability rather than a current year payment. The termination costs and IAS 19 Curtailment costs do not include redundancy payments which are included in the disclosure note for exit payments.

The Council terminated the contracts of a number of employees in 2024/25, incurring total costs of £0.061 million (£0.092 million in 2023/24).

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

39. Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

a) Participation in the Pension Scheme

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its Officers, the Council makes contributions towards the costs of Scheme Member Employment Benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until an employee retires, the Council has a commitment to make the payments at the time that the employee earns their future entitlements. Due to arrangements with Oxford Direct Services Limited and Oxfordshire Pension Fund all IAS19 pension transactions in relation to Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services Limited are accounted for in the Council's single entity accounts, excepting the contributions made by Oxford Direct Services Limited which will be accounted for in the accounts of that entity.

b) Transactions Relating to Post Employment Benefits

The costs of retirement are recognised and reported in the Cost of Service when they are earned by the employees, rather than when the benefits are paid. However, the charge required to be made to the Council Tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real costs of post employment retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

		Local Government Pension Scheme	
		2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Cost of Services			
Current Service Cost		5,542	5,971
Past Service Costs		2	29
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure			
Interest Cost		(1,144)	833
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		4,400	6,833
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement			
Remeasurement of the Net Benefit Liability Comprising			
Return on Plan Assets (excluding amount included in the net interest expense)		9,192	(25,096)
Other actuarial (gains) / losses on assets		(3,783)	12,705
Changes in Financial Assumptions		(63,156)	(23,452)
Actuarial gains and losses arising on the change of demographic assumptions		(684)	(2,454)
Total Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(58,431)	(38,297)
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(54,031)	(31,464)
		2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Movement in Reserves Statement			
Reversal of Net Charges made to the Surplus/(Deficit) for the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in accordance with the Code		(4,400)	(6,833)
Actual amount charges against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year			
Employers' Contributions Payable to Scheme		4,745	9,186

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

c) Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and discretionary benefit liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson, an independent firm of actuaries. In order to assess the value of the Employer's liabilities in the Fund as at balance sheet date, the actuary has rolled forward the value of the Employer's liabilities calculated at the latest formal valuation date, allowing for the different financial assumptions required under the Accounting Standard at the reporting date. The liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of around 5.8%. The discount rate used is based on the Hymans Robertson corporate bond yield

curve constructed based on the constituents of the iBoxx AA corporate bond index. In calculating the current service cost the actuary has allowed for changes in the Employer's pensionable payroll as estimated from contribution information provided. In calculating the asset share, the actuary has rolled forward the Employer's share of the assets calculated at the latest formal valuation date, the effect of contributions paid into, and estimated benefits paid from, the Fund by the Employer and its employees.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary are:

	2024/25	2023/24
Mortality Assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for Current Pensioners		
Men	21.5	21.5
Women	24.2	24.2
Longevity at 65 for Future Pensioners		
Men	22.1	22.2
Women	25.8	25.8
Rate of Inflation		
CPI	2.75%	2.75%
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities	5.80%	4.85%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.75%	2.75%
Rate of increase in Salaries	2.75%	2.75%
Take up option to convert annual pension to lump sum	50.00%	50.00%

Members Assumption

It is assumed members will exchange half of their commutable pension for cash at retirement. Active members will retire one year later than they are first able to without reduction.

d) Prepayment

During 2023/24, the Council made a prepayment of pension payments of £5.0 million which serves to reduce the employers pension contribution percentage charged to the Council for the 2023/24 financial year and the subsequent two financial years.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

d) Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Balance 1 April	369,564	370,323
Current Service Cost	5,542	5,971
Interest Cost	18,920	18,370
Actuarial (Gains) and Losses from Changes in Financial Assumptions	(63,156)	(23,452)
Changes in demographic assumptions	(684)	(2,454)
Experience (Gain) / Loss on Defined Benefit Obligation	(3,783)	12,705
Benefits Paid	(13,605)	(14,597)
Past Service Cost Including Curtailments	2	29
Contributions by Scheme Participants	3,583	3,157
Unfunded Pension Payments	(518)	(488)
Closing Balance 31 March	315,865	369,564

Reconciliation of movement in the Fair Value of the Schemes (Plan) Assets

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets 1 April	393,579	353,688
Interest Income	20,064	17,537
Return on Plan Assets Less Interest	(9,192)	25,096
Employers Contributions	4,227	8,698
Contributions by Scheme Participants	3,583	3,157
Settlements	(13,605)	(14,597)
Closing Balance 31 March	398,656	393,579

Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Present Value of Liabilities		
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(310,385)	(363,495)
Fair Value of Assets in the Local Government Pension Scheme	398,656	393,579
Present Value of Unfunded Obligation	(5,480)	(6,069)
Surplus/(Deficit) in the Scheme	82,791	24,015

Sensitivity Analysis

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme

The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme liabilities are set out below:

Changes in assumptions at 31 March 2025	Approximate % Increase to Employers Liability	Approximate Monetary amount £000's
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	6,155
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	13,649
0.1% Increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	244
0.1% Increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2%	6,084

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The principal demographic assumption is the longevity assumption (i.e. member life expectancy). For sensitivity purposes, it is estimated that a one year increase in life expectancy would approximately increase the Employer's Defined Benefit Obligation by around 3-5%. In practice the actual cost of a one year increase in life expectancy will depend on the structure of the revised assumption (i.e. if improvements to survival rates predominantly apply to younger or older ages).

Notes:

In order to quantify the impact of a change in the financial assumptions used, the change has been calculated and compared the value of the scheme liabilities at the accounting date on varying bases. The approach taken is consistent with that adopted to derive the IAS19 figures. The above figures have been derived based on the membership profile of the Council as at the date of the most recent actuarial valuation.

The approach taken in preparing the sensitivity analysis shown is consistent with that adopted in the previous year.

The Local Government Pension Scheme Assets Comprised:

	Fair Value of Scheme	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8,280.8	5,946.0
Debt Securities		
By Sector		
UK Govt	-	5,071.6
Other	-	2,071.6
Private Equity	21,845.7	18,474.6
Investment Funds and Unit Trusts		
Equities	220,701.1	219,677.4
Bonds	37,519.5	25,183.2
Infrastructure	-	13,568.6
Others	110,309.6	103,568.9
Derivatives		
Foreign Exchange	-	16.8
Other	-	0.3
Total	398,656.7	393,579.0

40. Contingent Liabilities

There are no contingent liabilities for 2024/25.

41. Contingent Assets

There are no contingent assets for 2024/25.

42. Exceptional items

There are no exceptional items in 2024/25.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

43. Going Concern

The Council has set a balanced budget for the financial years to 2028/29 and in doing so carried out a detailed assessment of pressures on its financial position and performance. This work has included consideration of the following: -

- ♦ Review of income on a service by service basis, due to reduction in demand and increased collection losses.
- ♦ Additional expenditure on a service by service basis
- ♦ Changes to government policy, e.g. changes to business rate reliefs, guidance on supplier relief, additional funding for local authorities, and additional responsibilities which sit alongside this.
- ♦ The progress on delivery of the Council's capital programme including the revenue impacts of any changes
- ♦ The projected returns from the Council's subsidiaries and joint ventures.
- ♦ The impact of all of the above on the Council's cash flow and treasury management, including availability of liquid cash, investment returns, and availability of external borrowing if required.
- ♦ The estimated overall position on the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account reserves.
- ♦ The Council's reported and projected balances, are as follows:

Date	General Fund Balance	General Fund Earmarked Reserves	Housing Revenue Account Balance	Housing Revenue Account Earmarked Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
31 March 2024	3,622	58,472	4,000	10,832
31 March 2025	3,622	56,850	4,000	11,221
31 March 2026	3,622	58,929	4,000	12,418
31 March 2027	3,622	56,283	4,000	11,966
31 March 2028	3,622	53,440	4,000	10,149
31 March 2029	3,622	49,859	4,000	10,866

The Council manages its cashflow to ensure that it has a reasonable amount of liquid cash that can be accessed readily. The Council normally aims to have at least £5m invested in overnight money market funds and instant access deposit accounts during the majority of the year. The Council is able to borrow short term from other Local authorities if required and has access to longer term borrowing from the PWLB within two working days, borrowing against its internal borrowing within the Council's Capital Financing Requirement; the Council is significantly under-borrowed compared to its Capital Financing Requirement and would therefore be able to borrow should any cashflow issues arise.

The main service pressure for the Council at the moment is in the homelessness service relating to the costs of temporary accommodation. The currently forecast overspend on temporary accommodation for 2025/26 is estimated at £3 million for the year. This is an area which is currently receiving focus from all levels within the organisation in order to mitigate the current pressures.

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The budgets for 2025/26 and the future plans were scrutinised by the Finance Team, Directors and the Chief Executive, Executive Members and the Scrutiny Committee's Finance Panel, and the figures presented within the budget were a sound estimate of the position. Uncertainty was highlighted around key income streams, such as car parking and rents, however the section 25 report concluded that the budgets for 2024/25 were robust and that the level of reserves were adequate to support the Council over the following four years.

The Council recognises that there remains a large degree of uncertainty over the future and the key risk areas have been assessed and the impacts reflected in financial projections. Where there are changes, this will clearly have an impact on the assumptions that sit behind the financial modelling and this will therefore be monitored on an ongoing basis and revised as appropriate. The Council therefore has formed its plans using prudent estimates and included mitigations and contingencies.

In terms of the Council's Group Accounts, there are potential pressures arising from the delays in developments being undertaken by Oxford City Housing (Development) Limited which are currently being closely monitored and potential mitigations identified and analysed.

There is enough headroom within the General Fund to absorb estimated financial impacts in the short to medium-term with financial planning in place through to 12 months from the authorization of these accounts. Furthermore, the Code requires that local authorities prepare their accounts on a going concern basis as they can only be discontinued under statutory prescription. For these reasons, the Council considers that the financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis.

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SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Note		
Expenditure		
Repairs & Maintenance	19,416	18,034
Supervision & Management	13,605	11,907
Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	485	302
Depreciation and Impairment of Non-Current Assets	54,379	16,175
Movement in the Allowance for Bad Debts (not specified by the Code)	773	522
Sums directed by the Secretary of State that are expenditure in accordance with the code	-	-
Total Expenditure	88,658	46,940
Income		
Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(53,980)	(48,404)
Non Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(458)	(492)
Charges for Services & Facilities	(3,878)	(3,673)
Total Income	(58,316)	(52,569)
Net Cost of HRA Services as included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	30,342	(5,629)
HRA Services' share of Corporate and Democratic Core	8	209
Net Income for HRA Services	30,350	(5,420)
HRA share of the Operating Income and Expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
(Gain)/Loss on Sale of HRA Fixed Assets	(1,380)	(1,946)
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	10,223	9,569
Interest and Investment Income	(495)	(991)
Capital Grants and Contributions Receivable	-	-
(Surplus)/Deficit for the year on HRA Services	38,698	1,212

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Movement on the Housing Revenue Income & Expenditure Account

The HRA Income and Expenditure Account shows the actual financial performance for the year, measured in terms of the resources consumed and generated over the last twelve months. However, the Council is required to account for its statutory housing activity on a different accounting basis, the main differences being that:

- the gain or loss on the disposal of HRA assets has to be reversed before a final balance is calculated; and
- any impairment on HRA assets, either due to economic consumption or valuation, has to be reversed from the account before a statutory balance can be finalised.

The reconciliation statement below summarises the differences between the outturn on the Income and Expenditure Account and the Housing Revenue Account Balance.

MOVEMENT ON THE HRA STATEMENT

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance on the HRA at the end of the Previous Year	(4,000)	(4,000)
(Surplus)/Deficit for the Year on the HRA Income and Expenditure Account	38,698	1,212
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Statute		
- Difference between any other item of income and expenditure	(13)	20
- Gain or loss on sale of HRA non-current assets	1,380	1,946
- HRA share of contributions to or from the Pensions Reserve	(71)	322
- Capital expenditure funded by the HRA	3,677	1,302
- Transfer to/from the Major Repairs Reserve	(560)	(470)
- Transfer to/from the Capital Adjustment Account	(42,727)	(4,600)
- Transfer to/from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	-	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to or from Reserves	384	(268)
Transfer (to)/from Reserves	(384)	268
Increase/(Decrease) in Year on the HRA	-	-
Balance on the HRA at the end of the Current Year	(4,000)	(4,000)

NOTES TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

H1. Housing Stock Numbers

	2024/25	2023/24
Houses		
1 bedroom	273	272
2 bedrooms	841	834
3 bedrooms	2,843	2,789
More than 3 bedrooms	332	297
Flats		
1 bedroom	1,756	1,723
2 bedrooms	1,863	1,800
3 bedrooms	163	162
More than 3 bedrooms	6	7
Overall Total	8,077	7,884

	2024/25	2023/24
Summary of Changes in Stock		
Stock at 1 April	7,884	7,833
Sales	(27)	(18)
Other Disposals	-	(3)
Additions	220	72
Stock at 31 March	8,077	7,884

NOTES TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Following revaluation on 31st March 2025, the vacant possession value (EUV) of the Council's housing stock (Council Dwellings) amounted to £2,546 million. Application of the social housing factor of 33% (EUV-SH) to the general housing stock, representing the economic cost to government of providing council housing, resulted in a Balance Sheet value of £840 million. At 31 March 2025, application of the social housing factor to the general housing stock resulted in a total value of £865.2 million.

The table below shows the HRA property values at appropriate measures of Fair Value as at 31 March 2025 along with comparatives for the previous year:

	2024/25			2023/24		
	Cost or Valuation £'000	Depreciation £'000	Net Book Value £'000	Cost or Valuation £'000	Depreciation £'000	Net Book Value £'000
Council Dwellings	866,762	(1,542)	865,220	806,448	(1,060)	774,982
Other Land and Buildings	3,901	-	3,901	3,870	-	4,521
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture and Equipment	19	(8)	11	19	(8)	12
Assets Under Construction	30,029	-	30,029	7,673	-	13,334
Surplus Assets not Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment Properties	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets Held for Sale	2,214	-	2,214	1,263	-	761
As at 31 March	902,925	(1,550)	901,375	819,273	(1,068)	793,610

H2. Movement on the Major Repairs Reserve

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Balance	(1,703)	(6,036)
Transfer from Capital Adjustment Account	(11,092)	(11,105)
Financing of Capital Expenditure (MRA Applied)	12,030	15,439
Closing Balance	(765)	(1,702)

H3. Capital Expenditure and Financing

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Property, Plant and Equipment	105,118	37,765
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	560	470
Total Spend	105,678	38,235
Sources of Finance		
Major Repairs Reserve	12,030	15,439
Grants and Contributions	5,953	5,386
Capital Receipts	9,018	4,108
Borrowing	75,000	12,000
Revenue Contributions to Capital	3,677	1,302
Total Financing	105,678	38,235

NOTES TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

H4. Capital Receipts Received

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Land & Buildings	(12,368)	(9,920)
Less Administrative Costs	31	23
Total	(12,337)	(9,897)

H5. Interest Received

The Housing Revenue Account is credited with interest on cash balances and interest on loans granted to enable tenants to purchase council dwellings.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Interest on Cash Balances	(495)	(991)
Total	(495)	(991)

The Housing Revenue Account was debited with Item 8 interest of £10.223 million in 2024/25 which relates to the borrowing interest chargeable to the Housing Revenue Account.

H6. Financial Reporting Standard (IAS) 19 – Pensions

Included within the Net Cost of Service is the HRA share of contributions from the Pension Reserve. The pension contributions have been calculated in accordance with IAS 19. An adjustment is made within the adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under statute, so that there is no effect on the HRA surplus for the year.

NOTES TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

H7. Rent Arrears

Arrears Details	2024/25		2023/24	
	£'000	% of total rents due	£'000	% of total rents due
Current Tenants	1,909	3.42%	1,562	3.08%
Former Tenants	1,310	2.34%	1,084	2.13%
Overall	3,219	5.76%	2,646	5.21%
Total Rents due in Year	55,867		50,785	

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Doubtful Debt provision		
Opening Balance	1,404	1,151
Write-offs in Year	(397)	(212)
Additional Provision	729	465
Closing Balance	1,736	1,404

H8. Capital Commitments

Description	Contractor	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Oxford North Development - Affordable Housing	Hill Residential Ltd	16,979	20,370
Construction of 26 flats at Princes Street and Collins Street	Life Build Solutions Ltd	4,347	7,602
Development Agreement relating to land and buildings situated at Blackbird Leys Est	Peabody Trust	3,818	13,272
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1	Vinci Construction Uk Ltd	3,139	4,178
Refurbishment and New Build of East Oxford Community Centre	Oxford Direct Services Ltd	2,413	5,900
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1	Oxford Direct Services Ltd	590	-
Construction at Northfield Hostel	Equans Regeneration Ltd	272	273
Deed of Professional Appointment relating to the Barton Regeneration Project	Arcadis LLP	266	270
Housing Site - Former Council Depot, Lanham Way	Feltham Construction Ltd	-	2,708
Total HRA Capital Commitments		31,824	54,573

COLLECTION FUND

The Collection Fund is the Council's statement reflecting its statutory obligation as a Billing Authority to maintain a separate Fund showing the transactions it undertaken in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

The Collection Fund is a separate statutory fund under the provision of the Local Government Act 1988. Its assets and liabilities are included in the General Fund Balance Sheet and its income and expenditure is shown below:

	Note	Business Rates 2024/25 £'000	Council Tax 2024/25 £'000	Total 2024/25 £'000	Business Rates 2023/24 £'000	Council Tax 2023/24 £'000	Total 2023/24 £'000
Income							
Council Tax Receivable	CF1	-	(112,963)	(112,963)	-	(106,786)	(106,786)
Council Tax Discounts funded by the General Fund		-	(169)	(169)	-	(205)	(205)
Business Rate Receivable	CF2	(95,079)	-	(95,079)	(81,299)	-	(81,299)
Business Rate Transitional Protection Payments		(1,251)	-	(1,251)	(8,770)	-	(8,770)
Sub Total		(96,330)	(113,132)	(209,462)	(90,069)	(106,991)	(197,060)
Expenditure							
Central Government share of PY (Deficit)/Surplus		(127)	-	(127)	1,237	-	1,237
Oxford City share of PY (Deficit)/Surplus		(101)	(36)	(137)	990	151	1,141
Oxfordshire County share of PY (Deficit)/Surplus		(25)	(181)	(206)	247	763	1,010
Police & Crime Commissioner share of PY (Deficit)/Surplus		-	(27)	(27)	-	113	113
Sub Total		(253)	(244)	(497)	2,474	1,027	3,501
Precepts, Demands and Shares							
Central Government Share		48,758	-	48,758	47,566	-	47,566
Oxford City Share		39,006	16,278	55,284	38,052	15,682	53,734
Oxfordshire County Precept Share		9,752	84,173	93,925	9,513	79,485	88,998
Police & Crime Commissioner share of PY Precepts Share		-	12,450	12,450	-	11,747	11,747
Sub Total		97,516	112,901	210,417	95,131	106,914	202,045
Disregarded Amounts							
Renewable Energy		-	-	-	21	-	21
Sub Total		-	-	-	21	-	21
Charges							
Write Offs		598	723	1,321	900	631	1,531
Increase/(Decrease) in Bad Debt Provision		(468)	471	3	713	211	924
Increase/(Decrease) in Provision for Appeals		7,319	-	7,319	10,822	-	10,822
Appeals charged to the Collection Fund		(6,803)	-	(6,803)	(8,157)	-	(8,157)
Cost of Collection		232	-	232	234	-	234
Sub Total		878	1,194	2,072	4,512	842	5,354
(Surplus)/Deficit arising during year		1,811	719	2,530	12,069	1,792	13,861
(Surplus)/Deficit brought forward 1st April		1,670	741	2,411	(10,399)	(1,051)	(11,450)
(Surplus)/Deficit Carry forward		3,481	1,460	4,941	1,670	741	2,411

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

CF1. Council Tax

The Council Tax Base is a measurement of the taxable capacity of the area. Dwellings are converted into Band D equivalents, taking into account exemptions and discounts. Dwellings are classified into eight valuation bands (A to H) based on 1991 capital valuations. The Council Tax is set for Band D dwellings and the tax for the other bands is calculated as a proportion of the Band D charge.

For 2024/25 Council Tax including precepts was set at £352.07 for a Band D property (£342.13 for 2023/24). The Council Tax Base was calculated as follows:

Valuation Band	Total no. Dwellings on Valuation List	Total Equivalent Dwellings (after discounts, etc)	Ratio to Band D	Band D equivalents
A-	-	2.00	5/9	1.11
A	3,068.0	1,452.80	6/9	968.53
B	9,929.0	5,668.50	7/9	4,408.83
C	19,685.0	14,408.40	8/9	12,807.47
D	16,247.0	12,650.35	9/9	12,650.35
E	7,563.0	5,645.85	11/9	6,900.48
F	3,106.0	2,606.40	13/9	3,764.80
G	3,350.0	2,935.45	15/9	4,892.42
H	609.0	392.25	18/9	784.50
	63,557.0	45,762.00		47,178.49
Crown Properties				-
Allowance of 2% for non-collection				(943.57)
Total				46,234.9

The amount due during the year based on actual properties and exemptions and discounts that occurred during the year was £112.963 million. Precepts for the year are calculated using the council tax base estimate which resulted in an overall precepted value of £112.901 million of which the amount for Oxford City Council is £16.278 million (46,234.9 multiplied by £352.07).

CF2. Non-Domestic Rates

Under the arrangements for Business Rates, the Council collects Non-Domestic Rates for its area, based on local rateable values, multiplied by a uniform business rate. From April 2013 the Business Rates Retention Scheme has replaced the former scheme. The Council's "Total retained income" figure for 2024/25 was assessed at £11.342 million but the Council must pay a 50% Levy on income above the funding baseline of £6.849 million. The Council was required to pay to Central Government both the Central Share of £48.758 million plus the tariff figure of £32.033 million. In addition the Council was required to pay £9.752 million to Oxfordshire County Council.

The local rateable value (2023 Rating List) as at 31 March 2025 was £290.0 million (£289.1 million at 31 March 2024). The multiplier for 2024/25 was set at 54.6 pence in the pound (51.2 pence for 2023/24). The current rating list came into force from April 1st 2023 and will remain in force until March 31st 2026.

Our initial estimated rates income for 2024/25 was £97.516 million (£95.131 million for 2023/24). Due to Transitional Protection Payments, this was reduced to £95.079 million (£90.070 million for 2023/24).

GROUP ACCOUNTS

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INTRODUCTION

Group Accounts are required by the Accounting Code of Practice where an authority has interests in subsidiaries, associates and/or jointly controlled entities, subject to consideration of materiality.

The Council has interests in a number of companies that are classified as a subsidiary, associate or joint venture, all of which have been considered for consolidation. Details of the companies considered for consolidation are shown below.

The Group Accounts contain the core statements similar in presentation to the Council's single entity accounts but consolidating the figures of the Council with the entities in scope.

The following pages include:

- Details of Subsidiaries
- Details of Joint Ventures
- Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Group Balance Sheet
- Group Movement in Reserves Statement
- Group Cash Flow Statement
- Notes to the Group Accounts

Basis of Identification of the Group Boundary

In its preparation of these Group Accounts, the Council has considered its relationship with entities that fall into the following categories:

- ♦ Subsidiaries – where the Council exercises control and gains benefits or has exposures to risks arising from this control. These entities are included in the group on a line by line basis.
- ♦ Associates – where the Council exercises a significant influence and has a participating interest. These are included in the group.
- ♦ Jointly Controlled Entities – where the Council exercises joint control with one or more organisations. These are included in the group using the equity method.
- ♦ No group relationship – where the body is not an entity in its own right or the Council has an insufficient interest in the entity to justify inclusion in the group financial statements. These entities are not included in the group.

In accordance with this requirement, the Council has determined its Group relationships as follows:

Entity	Category	Interest	Treatment
Oxford Direct Services Limited	Subsidiary	100%	Consolidated on a line by line basis
Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited	Subsidiary	100%	Consolidated on a line by line basis
Oxford City Housing Limited	Subsidiary	100%	Consolidated on a line by line basis
Barton Oxford LLP	Jointly Controlled Entity	50%	Consolidated using the Equity Method
Oxwed LLP	Jointly Controlled Entity	50%	Consolidated using the Equity Method

INTRODUCTION

Group Accounts have therefore been prepared to incorporate within the Statement of Accounts two Joint Venture (JV) activities within which the Council holds a 50% share of the operations of the ventures and three subsidiary companies of which the Council is the sole owner.

The two ventures are as follows:

- ♦ Barton Oxford LLP
- ♦ Oxwed LLP

The accounting requirements in “IFRS 11 Joint Arrangements” state the presentation requirements basis for these joint ventures as the Equity method, and this means that a disclosure note is provided showing Oxford City Council’s share of the net assets and liabilities of these entities as at 31 March 2025. In addition “Disclosure of interests in Other Entities IFRS 12” requires disclosure of summary information for the joint venture as a whole and not just the Council’s share. The Council’s Group accounts show the long term investment in the Balance Sheet, and profits and losses in the Council’s Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

The wholly owned subsidiaries are:

- ♦ Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL)
- ♦ Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL)
- ♦ Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL)

The accounting requirements in “IFRS 10 Consolidated Financial Statements” state the presentation requirements for wholly owned subsidiaries as line-by-line consolidation.

SUBSIDIARIES

G1. Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL)

ODSL was established during 2017/18 by the Council as a wholly owned company and became active on 1st April 2018. The Council has a 100% interest in the Company and bears the risks and benefits of all profits and losses.

The Company has been formed to provide services to the Council alone. The objectives of the Company are closely aligned to those of the Council. All of the non-current assets of the Company are leased to the company by the Council with interest rates which are state aid compliant so as not to distort the market. The company has applied for and received "Teckal" tax exemptions from HMRC allowing services performed for the Council to be outside the corporation tax regime.

The Company operates a pension scheme within the Oxfordshire Pension Fund which is underwritten by the Council. All risks and liabilities of the scheme are borne by the Council. As such the Company accounts for the pension scheme as a defined contribution pension scheme and all actuarial assessed risks and liabilities are accounted for within the Council's single entity accounts.

The Group Statements in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet reflect the line by line consolidation required under IFRS 10. The consolidation excludes the leases from the Council and the debtors and creditors with the Council.

The Company made a surplus for the year of £3.115 million (£2.652 million in 2023/24) and declared a dividend of £1.900 million in 2024/25 (£5.400 million in 2023/24).

Financial Information on ODSL

Profit & Loss Account	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Revenue	(74,443)	(61,094)
Cost of Sales	51,458	39,857
Gross (Profit) / Loss	(22,985)	(21,237)
Administrative Expenses	19,033	17,746
Operating (Profit) / Loss	(3,952)	(3,491)
Interest Charges / (Income)	796	807
(Profit) / Loss Before Taxation	(3,156)	(2,684)
Tax on Profit	41	32
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Profit) / Loss	(3,115)	(2,652)

SUBSIDIARIES

Balance Sheet	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Property Plant and Equipment	13,960	15,281
Non-current Assets	13,960	15,281
Inventories	295	286
Debtors	7,366	11,597
Contract Assets	3,209	3,501
Cash and Cash Equivalents	487	-
Current Assets	11,357	15,384
Long Term Creditors	(132)	(117)
Non-current Liabilities	(132)	(117)
Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	(3,205)
Creditors	(9,381)	(11,415)
Current Liabilities	(9,381)	(14,620)
Net Assets	15,804	15,928
Financed By:		
Finance Lease Liabilities	11,766	13,105
Equity	4,038	2,823
Total Equity and liabilities	15,804	15,928

Members' interests	Oxford City Share 2024/25 £'000	Oxford City Share 2023/24 £'000
Finance Leases	11,766	13,105
Equity	4,038	2,823
Oxford City Council Interests as at 31 March	15,804	15,928

Oxford City Council Commitment to ODSL

The City Council has allocated budgets to purchase vehicles for lease to the Company. The Council has underwritten the pension scheme and as such all risks and liabilities of the pension scheme are retained by the Council.

SUBSIDIARIES

G2. Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL)

ODSTL was established during 2017/18 by the Council as a wholly owned company and became active on 1st April 2018. The Council has a 100% interest in the Company and bears the risks and benefits of all profits and losses.

The Company has been formed to provide services to the customers other than the Council. The objectives of the Company are closely aligned to those of the Council and are to provide a commercial return to pay to the Council via dividend.

The Group Statements in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet reflect the line by line consolidation required under IFRS 10. The consolidation excludes the leases from the Council and the debtors and creditors with the Council.

The Company made a surplus for the year of £1.027 million (£0.700 million in 2023/24) and did not declare a dividend. There have been no Investing activities for the year ended 31 March 2025 and none in 2023/24.

Financial Information on ODSTL

Profit & Loss Account	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Revenue	(16,313)	(13,799)
Cost of Sales	11,177	9,644
Gross (Profit) / Loss	(5,136)	(4,155)
Administrative Expenses	3,875	3,271
Operating (Profit) / Loss	(1,261)	(884)
Interest Charges / (Income)	(108)	(49)
Profit Before Taxation	(1,369)	(933)
Tax on Profit	342	233
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Profit) / Loss	(1,027)	(700)

SUBSIDIARIES

Balance Sheet	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Property Plant and Equipment	208	-
Non-current Assets	208	-
Debtors	2,503	4,820
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,131	2,008
Contract Assets	721	513
Current Assets	7,355	7,341
Long Term Creditors	(73)	(17)
Non-current Liabilities	(73)	(17)
Creditors	(4,639)	(5,500)
Current Liabilities	(4,639)	(5,500)
Net Assets	2,851	1,824
Financed By:		
Equity	2,851	1,824
Total Equity and liabilities	2,851	1,824

Members' interests	Oxford City Share 2024/25 £'000	Oxford City Share 2023/24 £'000
Equity	2,851	1,824
Oxford City Council Interests as at 31 March	2,851	1,824

Oxford City Council Commitment to ODSTL

The City Council has made no commitments which would give rise to a future outflow of cash or other resources.

SUBSIDIARIES

G3. Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL)

OCHL was established during 2016/17 by the Council as a wholly owned company. The Council has a 100% interest in the company and bears the risks and benefits of all profits and losses. OCHL has two wholly owned subsidiaries, Oxford City Housing (Investment) Limited and Oxford City Housing (Development) Limited) OCHDL whose financial transactions have been consolidated into the Group Accounts for OCHL. In 2024/25, management decided to discontinue its property rental business undertaken by Oxford City Housing (Investment) Limited and sold its existing properties to Oxford City Council, its ultimate parent.

As part of the City Council's strategy to secure more housing and more affordable housing in the city and to improve housing supply, quality and delivery the Council established a Local Authority Housing Company to procure and develop new homes. The City Council approved the establishment of a Local Authority housing company in March 2016 and OCHL was incorporated in June 2016. The objectives of the Company are closely aligned to those of the Council. The loans to the Company are made available solely by the Council which charges the Company interest at rates which are state aid compliant so as not to distort the market.

The Group Statements in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet reflect the line by line consolidation required under IFRS 10. The consolidation excludes the loan from the Council and the debtors and creditors with the Council.

The Company made a surplus for the year of £0.511 million (surplus of £3.581 million in 2023/24) and paid a dividend in the year of £3.000 million (£2.000 million in 2023/24).

Financial Information on OCHL

Profit & Loss Account

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Rental Income	-	-
Sale of Properties	(20,217)	(11,531)
Other Income	(1,258)	(1,871)
Expenses	20,010	9,876
Operating (Profit) / Loss	(1,465)	(3,526)
Interest Charges	498	922
(Profit) / Loss Before Taxation	(967)	(2,604)
Tax on Profit	241	594
Other Comprehensive Expenditure	-	-
(Profit) / Loss for the year from Discontinued Operations	215	(1,567)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Profit) / Loss	(511)	(3,577)

SUBSIDIARIES

Balance Sheet	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Operational Property	-	27,316
Non-current Assets	-	27,316
Inventories	11,684	12,093
Debtors	2,045	705
Cash and cash equivalents	6,660	14,685
Current Assets	20,389	27,483
Deferred tax	-	(1,697)
Non-current Liabilities	-	(1,697)
Amounts falling due within one year	(4,461)	(4,178)
Current Liabilities	(4,461)	(4,178)
Net Assets	15,928	48,924
Financed By:		
Long term loans	6,032	29,984
Short term loans	4,120	10,675
	10,152	40,659
Equity	5,776	8,265
Total Equity and liabilities	15,928	48,924

Members' interests	Oxford City Share 2024/25 £'000	Oxford City Share 2023/24 £'000
Loans to OCHL	10,152	40,659
Equity	5,776	8,265
Oxford City Council Interests as at 31 March	15,928	48,924

Oxford City Council Commitment to OCHL

The City Council has allocated budgets to make loans to the investing and developing arms of the company, however each loan has to be approved individually. As such the Council has made no firm commitments which would give rise to a future outflow of cash or other resources.

JOINT VENTURES

G4. Barton Oxford LLP

The Barton Oxford LLP is a legally committed body contracted to develop homes on land at Barton. Strategic financial and operating decisions relating to the Joint Venture requires the unanimous consent of the parties sharing control. The Barton Oxford LLP controls the assets of the joint venture, incurs liabilities and expenses and earns income.

The Barton Oxford LLP was established on 23 September 2011. The Council entered into a partnership with Grosvenor Developments Limited to form the Barton Oxford LLP, a joint venture vehicle to develop social and affordable housing on land owned by the Council at Barton. The Council has a 50% interest in the partnership but has no share in profits and losses.

The Council transferred land to the LLP on 31 October 2011. Based on the Members' Agreement and the financial projections of the development it is no longer anticipated that the payment for the land will now be received. The land debt has therefore been fully impaired in both the Council's accounts and in the accounts of the LLP. Due to the Council no longer anticipating any return from the LLP, the LLP has been consolidated into the Council's Group Accounts at nil value.

Barton Oxford LLP accounts are completed on a UK GAAP basis under FRS 102 and the Council's accounts are completed on an IFRS basis, however all accounting policies are compatible.

Financial Information on Barton LLP

Profit & Loss Account

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Sales	(250)	(167)
Cost of Sales	(231)	182
Gross (Profit) / Loss	(481)	15
Expenses	15	18
Operating (Profit) / Loss	(466)	33
Interest receivable	(266)	(695)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Profit) / Loss	(732)	(662)

Balance Sheet

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Development Properties	-	-
Debtors	4,235	13,340
Cash and cash equivalents	100	101
Current Assets	4,335	13,441
Amounts falling due within one year	(3,942)	(7,039)
Current Liabilities	(3,942)	(7,039)
Net Assets attributable to members	393	6,402

JOINT VENTURES

Members' interests

Capital classified as a liability

Other reserves classified as equity

Members' Interests as at 31 March

Barton Oxford LLP as at 31 March 2025		
Oxford City Share £'000	Grosvenor D L Share £'000	Total £'000
-	-	-
-	393	393
-	393	393

Barton Oxford LLP as at 31 March 2024		
Oxford City Share £'000	Grosvenor D L Share £'000	Total £'000
-	6,742	6,742
-	(340)	(340)
-	6,402	6,402

Oxford City Council Commitment to Barton LLP

The City Council has made no commitments which would give rise to a future outflow of cash or other resources

JOINT VENTURES

G5. Oxwed LLP

Oxford West End Development Limited was established during 2015/16. The Council entered into a partnership with Nuffield College to form the Oxford West End Development Limited, a joint venture vehicle to develop The Oxford West End area. The Council had a 50% interest in the partnership and shares profits and losses.

The Oxwed LLP scheme involves the acquisition of railway lands jointly with Nuffield College and combines the site with the Council's adjoining holdings and promotes mixed-use development. Nuffield College has entered into a JV partnership with the Council through an investment vehicle on a 50:50 basis and has invested half the cost of the acquisition of the LCR land. The adjoining Council land was transferred to Oxford West End Development Limited during 2018/19 at a value of £8.4 million which was funded by loans to the same value, split 50:50 between the Council and Nuffield College. During 2020/21, the Council's share in the limited company was sold to Nuffield and the company was subsequently renamed Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited. At the same time, a Limited Liability Partnership (Oxwed LLP) was formed with two 50:50 owners, Oxford City Council and Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited and the loan debt and the land was transferred from the Limited Company to the Oxwed LLP.

Oxwed LLP is in the process of deciding on a development plan and selecting a partner to take the scheme through planning and the build stage. The development will proceed with planning permission sought, strategic infrastructure being installed, and onward sale of plots for development of housing and commercial properties.

Oxwed LLP made a loss for the year of £2.627 million (£2.987 million in 2023/24) of which the Council is responsible for half.

Profit & Loss Account

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Revenue	(1)	(13)
Cost of Sales	-	-
Gross Profit	(1)	(13)
Other Income	(598)	(574)
Expenses	717	1,254
Operating (Profit) / Loss	118	667
Interest charges	2,509	2,320
Loss from Continuing Operations	2,627	2,987
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Profit) / Loss	2,627	2,987

Balance Sheet

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Non Current Assets	397	-
Inventories	33,169	33,169
Debtors	246	187
Cash and cash equivalents	209	351
Current Assets	33,624	33,707
Creditors	(125)	(191)
Current Liabilities	(125)	(191)
Net Assets attributable to members	33,896	33,516

JOINT VENTURES

Members' interest

Capital classified as a liability

Other reserves classified as equity

Members' Interests as at 31 March

Members' interest

Capital classified as a liability

Other reserves classified as equity

Members' Interests as at 31 March

Oxwed Limited Liability Partnership as at 31 March 2025		
Oxford City Share £'000	Nuffield College Share £'000	Total £'000
21,120	21,120	42,240
(4,172)	(4,172)	(8,344)
16,948	16,948	33,896

Oxwed Limited Liability Partnership as at 31 March 2024		
Oxford City Share £'000	Nuffield College Share £'000	Total £'000
19,615	19,615	39,230
(2,857)	(2,857)	(5,714)
16,758	16,758	33,516

Oxford City Council Commitment to Oxwed LLP

The City Council has made no commitments which would give rise to a future outflow of cash or other resources.

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

Oxford City Council Statement of Accounts are prepared on an IFRS basis, as modified for public sector application, which include revaluation of assets when and where appropriate. The Group Accounts of Oxford City Council incorporate the financial statements of Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL), Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited, Barton Oxford LLP, Oxwed LLP and Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL). Oxford City Council are joint members of the LLP with Grosvenor Development Limited, are joint owners of Oxwed with Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited and are sole owners of OCHL, ODSL and ODSTL.

Accounting Policies

Accounting Policies of Oxford City Council, the LLPs and the Companies have been considered to ensure the underlying accounting standards are compatible for the Group. In all respects the standards are compatible for the reporting and comparative years. Cash and cash equivalents, debtors and creditors are all provided on the same basis. The development expenditure of the LLP is recorded at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Cost includes the cost of acquisition, professional fees and construction costs but excludes overheads. This is compatible with Oxford City Council accounting policies in that the assets are under construction and therefore recorded at cost under IFRS. Therefore in all material respects for the reporting and comparative years the accounting policies are materially aligned.

Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL)

The OCHL financial statements have been prepared under IFRS rules and include the Group Accounts for Oxford City Housing (Investment) Limited (OCHIL) and Oxford City Housing (Development) Limited (OCHDL). The Group Accounts for OCHL have been used to consolidate in to the Council's Group Accounts. Where there are options for accounting treatment, the option chosen has been compatible with the Public Sector adaptation in the Code as published by CIPFA. The accounts are therefore directly compatible with the Oxford City Council accounts.

Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL)

The ODSL financial statements have been prepared under IFRS rules. The accounts of ODSL have been used to consolidate in to the Council's Group Accounts. Where there are options for accounting treatment, the option chosen has been compatible with the Public Sector adaptation in the Code as published by CIPFA. The accounts are therefore directly compatible with the Oxford City Council accounts.

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL)

The ODSTL financial statements have been prepared under IFRS rules. The accounts of ODSTL have been used to consolidate in to the Council's Group Accounts. Where there are options for accounting treatment, the option chosen has been compatible with the Public Sector adaptation in the Code as published by CIPFA. The accounts are therefore directly compatible with the Oxford City Council accounts.

Barton Oxford LLP

The Barton Oxford LLP financial statements have been prepared under UKGAAP applying FRS102 which is broadly equivalent to IFRS. For previous years the LLP applied the historical cost convention in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law, accounting standards and the Limited Liability Partnerships Statement of Recommended Practice. The change to reporting under FRS102 has not had a material effect on the comparable figures from the previous period. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the current and preceding year on a going concern basis, except in respect of the equity accounting replacement.

Oxwed LLP

The Oxwed LLP financial statements have been prepared under IFRS rules. Where there are options for accounting treatment, the option chosen has been compatible with the Public Sector adaptation in the Code as published by CIPFA. The accounts are therefore directly compatible with the Oxford City Council accounts. The LLP was incorporated in December 2020.

METHOD OF CONSOLIDATION

The method of consolidation adopted in the financial statements is to provide separate core financial statements consolidated on an Equity basis in the case of the Oxwed LLP and the Barton LLP (at nil value) and on a line by line basis for OCHL, ODSL and ODSTL.

Significant transactions with the entities:

Oxford City Council has provided £26.939 million capital loans to OCHIL of which £21.094 million was in previous years and £5.845 million was in 2024/25. All loan and outstanding interest due was repaid by OCHIL in 2024/25. Oxford City Council has also provided capital loans to OCHDL for property development of which £8.442 million is still outstanding; no loans were provided in 2024/25 and no repayments were made. The loans are expected to be repaid in accordance with the cash flow of the Companies and repayment of £3.309 million is expected within the year. The loans have been recorded in the Oxford City Council accounts long and short term debtors as appropriate. There are also a number of debtors and creditors with the Council. These creditors and debtors are expected to be settled during the next financial year and are recorded as short term debtors and creditors in the Company and Council accounts.

Oxford City Council leases vehicles and property to ODSL. The vehicles are held as finance leases and therefore appear as debtors in the Council's accounts and as assets and a creditor in the Company accounts; the overall value of these is the same in both entities. The total value of the vehicle leases at the balance sheet date is £5.475 million. The vehicles are held as operational leases within the Council's accounts and these therefore appear as assets in the Council and as expenditure and income in the ODSL and Council accounts respectively. There are also a number of trade debtors and creditors with the Council. These creditors and debtors are expected to be settled during the next financial year and are recorded as short term debtors and creditors in the Company and Council accounts.

Oxford City Council does not have any significant transactions with ODSTL.

Oxford City Council has provided land with an initial transfer value of £850,000 to the Barton Oxford LLP. Interest on the transfer value had been accrued at a fixed rate of 5% compounded monthly. This loan and interest has been fully impaired in the LLP and Council accounts.

Oxford City Council has provided loans to Oxwed of £13.540 million for capital and working capital loans plus equity of £0.681 million. Loans of £0.250 million were advanced in 2024/25. The loans are expected to be repaid when development on the site has been completed and are therefore recorded in the Oxford City Council accounts as long term debtors.

**GROUP COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

This statement shows the accounting cost in year, of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement (page 119).

	2024/25			2023/24		
	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
ODS Development Director	6,221	(12,787)	(6,566)	5,791	(10,234)	(4,443)
City and Citizens' Services	35,964	(16,100)	19,864	31,949	(14,786)	17,163
Corporate Services	15,073	(2,024)	13,049	13,100	(2,686)	10,414
Place	16,041	(11,601)	4,440	14,201	(10,631)	3,570
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	70,143	(58,254)	11,889	29,133	(52,488)	(23,355)
Oxford Direct Services Ltd	64,307	(23,909)	40,398	51,828	(13,743)	38,085
Oxford City Housing Group	18,126	(21,961)	(3,835)	9,673	(14,031)	(4,358)
Service Level Agreements and Capital Charges	18,314	(195)	18,119	7,076	-	7,076
Corporate and Democratic Core	42,056	(37,067)	4,989	43,234	(37,350)	5,884
Cost of Services	286,245	(183,898)	102,347	205,985	(155,949)	50,036
Other Operating Expenditure	4,782	(37)	4,745	277	(1,996)	(1,719)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	30,359	(31,100)	(741)	13,417	(43,333)	(29,916)
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	-	(70,051)	(70,051)	-	(40,751)	(40,751)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	321,386	(285,086)	36,300	219,679	(242,029)	(22,350)
Share of (Surplus)/Deficit of Joint Ventures			1,315			1,493
Tax Expenses			625			858
Group (Surplus)/Deficit			1,940			2,351
(Surplus)/Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment Assets			(103,916)			(24,380)
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses on Pension Assets and Liabilities			(58,431)			(38,298)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(162,347)			(62,678)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(124,107)			(82,677)

GROUP MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

This statement shows the total Movement in Reserves for the whole group.

	Council's Usable Reserves £'000	Subsidiary Usable Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Council's Unusable Reserves £'000	Subsidiary Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Group Reserves £'000
Balance at 31st March 2023 carried forward	394,037	(278,355)	115,682	905,458	3,968	909,426	1,025,108
Movement in Reserves during 2023/24							
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	16,287	3,712	19,999	60,951	1,727	62,678	82,677
Adjustments between Group Accounts and Council Accounts	82,848	(82,848)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	99,135	(79,136)	19,999	60,951	1,727	62,678	82,677
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations	(13,710)	-	(13,710)	13,710	-	13,710	-
Annual Retained Earnings Transfers	-	102	102	-	(102)	(102)	-
Consolidation adjustments to profit	-	(4)	(4)	-	-	-	(4)
Increase/(Decrease) in 2023/24	85,425	(79,038)	6,387	74,661	1,625	76,286	82,673
Balance at 31st March 2024 carried forward	479,462	(357,393)	122,069	980,119	5,593	985,712	1,107,781
Movement in Reserves during 2024/25							
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(41,578)	3,338	(38,240)	162,347	-	162,347	124,107
Adjustments between Group Accounts and Council Accounts	50,867	(50,867)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	9,289	(47,529)	(38,240)	162,347	-	162,347	124,107
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations	54,074	-	54,074	(54,074)	-	(54,074)	-
Annual Retained Earnings Transfers	-	5,593	5,593	-	(5,593)	(5,593)	-
Consolidation adjustments to profit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in 2024/25	63,363	(41,936)	21,427	108,273	(5,593)	102,680	124,107
Balance at 31st March 2025 carried forward	542,825	(399,329)	143,496	1,088,392	-	1,088,392	1,231,888

GROUP BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Group. The net assets of the Group (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Group. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are Usable Reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Group may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves to deal with unforeseen events and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves is those that the Group is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold; as well as reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

	Note	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Property, Plant & Equipment	2	1,164,396	1,041,894
Heritage Assets		3,688	3,688
Investment Properties		145,810	146,300
Intangible Assets		3,128	3,648
Long Term Investments	11	31,568	36,449
Long Term Debtors	11	87,013	86,784
Other Long Term Assets		82,791	24,015
Long Term Assets		1,518,394	1,342,778
Assets Held for Sale		2,214	1,263
Inventories	3	11,992	12,401
Short Term Debtors	5	83,978	53,029
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4 & 11	12,503	12,399
Contract Assets		700	884
Current Assets		111,387	79,976
Short Term Borrowing	11	(20,000)	(10,000)
Short Term Creditors	6	(61,118)	(47,696)
Contract Liabilities		(91)	-
Current Liabilities		(81,209)	(57,696)
Long Term Creditors	11	(3,698)	(3,416)
Provisions		(3,498)	(5,850)
Long Term Borrowing	11	(268,528)	(218,528)
Other Long Term Liabilities	11	(26,561)	(743)
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance		(14,399)	(28,740)
Long Term Liabilities		(316,684)	(257,277)
Net Assets		1,231,888	1,107,781
Usable Reserves	MIRS	(143,496)	(122,069)
Unusable Reserves		(1,088,392)	(985,712)
Total Reserves		(1,231,888)	(1,107,781)

GROUP CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

This statement shows the total Cashflow for the whole group.

	Note	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Net Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		(38,240)	19,999
Adjustments to Net Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements		53,369	(37,058)
Net cash in/(out) flows from Operating Activities		15,129	(17,059)
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets		(108,703)	(54,070)
Purchase of Short-Term and Long-Term Investments		3,563	42,829
Proceeds from the sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets		26,742	9,930
Other Capital Cash Receipts in Advance		(14,341)	192
Total cash in/(out) flows from Investing Activities		(92,739)	(1,119)
Purchase of Long Term Borrowing		70,000	30,000
Repayment of Borrowing		(10,000)	(11,000)
Other receipts from Financing Activities		17,714	1,178
Payments for the reduction of a Finance Lease Liability		-	-
Total cash in/(out) flows from Financing Activities		77,714	20,178
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		104	2,000
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		12,399	10,399
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	4	12,503	12,399

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	10,016	7,081
Pensions Interest Costs and Expected Return on Pensions Assets	(1,144)	833
Finance Charges	(2,977)	(2,985)
Interest Receivable and Similar Income	(3,590)	(3,850)
Impairment of National Homelessness Property Fund	(574)	769
Income & Expenditure in Relation to Investment Properties and Changes in their Fair Value	4,948	(24,905)
Other Investment Income	(7,420)	(6,859)
Total	(741)	(29,916)

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2 Property, Plant and Equipment Movements in 2024/25

Movements in 2024/25

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation								
At 1 April 2024	806,448	206,602	26,803	2,697	1,122	202	18,229	1,062,103
Additions	64,145	14,735	1,607	1	404	-	51,719	132,611
Assets recognised / derecognised under finance lease	105	13,905	-	-	375	-	-	14,385
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	44,891	48,871	-	-	22	24	-	93,808
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(44,103)	(20,494)	-	-	-	-	-	(64,597)
Derecognition - disposals	(303)	(44,497)	(868)	-	(1)	-	-	(45,669)
Derecognition - other	(2,084)	-	(1,013)	-	-	-	-	(3,097)
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(4,052)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(4,052)
Other movements in cost or valuation	1,715	(720)	34	-	-	-	(995)	34
At 31 March 2025	866,762	218,402	26,563	2,698	1,922	226	68,953	1,185,526
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2024	(1,060)	-	(18,450)	(699)	-	-	-	(20,209)
Depreciation charge	(10,376)	(5,489)	(2,212)	(68)	(3)	-	-	(18,148)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	7,707	2,612	-	-	3	-	-	10,322
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,091	2,873	1,013	-	-	-	-	5,977
Derecognition - disposals	-	4	828	-	-	-	-	832
Derecognition - other	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
At 31 March 2025	(1,542)	-	(18,821)	(767)	-	-	-	(21,130)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2025	865,220	218,402	7,742	1,931	1,922	226	68,953	1,164,396
At 31 March 2024	805,388	206,602	8,353	1,998	1,122	202	18,229	1,041,894
Movement in NBV	59,832	11,800	(611)	(67)	800	24	50,724	122,502

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2. Property, Plant and Equipment—cont.—Comparative Movements in 2023/24

Movements in 2023/24

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation								
At 1 April 2023	775,596	208,312	24,761	2,689	1,043	172	15,959	1,028,532
Additions	24,678	8,514	2,095	8	79	-	14,512	49,886
Assets recognised / derecognised under finance lease	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	5,265	8,760	-	-	-	30	-	14,055
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(6,225)	(7,095)	-	-	-	-	-	(13,320)
Derecognition - disposals	(1,109)	(3,487)	-	-	-	-	-	(4,596)
Derecognition - other	(1,289)	-	(53)	-	-	-	-	(1,342)
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(2,756)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,756)
Other movements in cost or valuation	12,288	(8,402)	-	-	-	-	(12,242)	(8,356)
At 31 March 2024	806,448	206,602	26,803	2,697	1,122	202	18,229	1,062,103
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2023	(614)	-	(16,363)	(628)	-	-	-	(17,605)
Depreciation charge	(10,300)	(6,205)	(2,140)	(71)	(4)	-	-	(18,720)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	7,949	3,273	-	-	4	-	-	11,226
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,862	2,794	53	-	-	-	-	4,709
Derecognition - disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - other	43	138	-	-	-	-	-	181
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	(1,060)	-	(18,450)	(699)	-	-	-	(20,209)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2024	805,388	206,602	8,353	1,998	1,122	202	18,229	1,041,894
At 31 March 2023	774,982	208,312	8,398	2,061	1,043	172	15,959	1,010,927
Movement in NBV	30,406	(1,710)	(45)	(63)	79	30	2,270	30,967

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

3. Inventories

	Consumable Inventories		Maintenance Inventories		Construction Work in Progress		Total	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance Outstanding at Start of Year	22	23	286	144	12,093	14,978	12,401	15,145
Purchases / Additions	22	59	2,953	2,423	24,752	6,261	27,727	8,743
Recognised as an Expense in the Year	(31)	(60)	(2,943)	(2,281)	(25,162)	(9,146)	(28,136)	(11,487)
Inventory balances sold	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Outstanding at Year End	13	22	296	286	11,683	12,093	11,992	12,401

4. Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of cash and cash equivalents is made up of the following elements:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Cash Held by the Council	5,530	330
Bank Current Accounts	(4,305)	(1,418)
Cash Held by Subsidiaries	11,278	13,487
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	12,503	12,399

5. Short Term Debtors

The table below shows the amount that the group was owed at 31 March 2025 by third parties, together with amounts paid by the group in advance of the receipt of goods or services.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Trade Receivables	24,240	32,285
Other Receivables	59,738	20,744
Total	83,978	53,029

6. Short Term Creditors

The table below shows the amount that the group owed as at 31 March 2025 to third parties, together with amounts received by the group in advance of supply of goods or services.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Trade Payables	(21,033)	(22,543)
Other Payables	(40,085)	(25,153)
Total	(61,118)	(47,696)

7. External Audit Costs

The group has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and statutory inspections and non-audit services provided by the external auditors:

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
External Audit	396	443
Total	396	443

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

8. Finance Leases as a Lessor

The group leases out many properties and an assessment has been undertaken to establish those that are considered to have transferred the risks of ownership to the lessee from the group. This note excludes the vehicles leased within the group from the Council to its wholly owned company, Oxford Direct Services Limited.

	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Finance Lease debtor (net present value of minimum lease payments)		
- Current	11	10
- Non Current	61,538	61,940
Unguaranteed Residual Value of Property*	4,069	4,073
Gross Investment in the Lease	65,618	66,023

* Detail required by paragraph 4.2.4.2(11) of the code

The gross investment in the lease and the minimum lease payments will be received over the following periods:

	Gross Investment In The Lease		Minimum Lease Payments	
	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Not later than one year	11	825	11	825
Later than one year and not later than five years	51	1,403	51	1,403
Later than five years	65,556	63,795	61,487	59,722
Total	65,618	66,023	61,549	61,950

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews. In 2024-25 £534 were receivable by the Group.

9. Operational Leases as a Lessor

The group leases out Property and Equipment under Operational Leases. These include shorter term leases where the risks and rewards are retained by the group. This note excludes the depot property leases which are leased by the Council to Oxford Direct Services Limited.

The future sums receivable under non -cancellable lease in future years are:

Operating Leases	31 Mar 2025 £'000	31 Mar 2024 £'000
Not later than one year	6,643	5,754
Later than one year and not later than five years	22,444	18,322
Later than five years	85,730	102,667
Total	114,817	126,743

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews. In 2024/25 £1.114 Million contingent rents were receivable by the Group.

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

10. Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the group arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment (and Intangible Assets). The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- ♦ revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- ♦ used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- ♦ disposed of and the gains are realised

The Reserve contains revaluation gains accumulated by the Council and the Oxford City Housing Limited Group in their Revaluation Reserves.

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(437,287)	(425,581)
Upward revaluation of assets	(161,472)	(88,807)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services (Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	57,556	64,427
	(541,203)	(449,961)
Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	13,642	12,572
Annual Retained Earnings Transfers	5,593	102
Balance at 31 March	(520,484)	(437,287)

11. Financial Instruments

Financial Assets	Non Current				Current			
	Investments		Debtors		Investments & Cash at Bank		Debtors	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Fair Value through Profit or Loss	31,568	36,449	87,013	86,784	-	-	70,198	51,580
Amortised Cost	-	-	-	-	12,503	12,399	-	-
Total Financial Assets	31,568	36,449	87,013	86,784	12,503	12,399	70,198	51,580

Financial Liabilities	Non Current				Current			
	Borrowings		Creditors & Other Liabilities		Borrowings & Overdrafts		Creditors	
	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Amortised Cost	(268,528)	(218,528)	(30,259)	(4,159)	(20,000)	(10,000)	(35,719)	(35,580)
Total Financial Assets	(268,528)	(218,528)	(30,259)	(4,159)	(20,000)	(10,000)	(35,719)	(35,580)

NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2024/25 Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services £'000	2023/24 Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services £'000
Net gains/losses on:		
Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value	930	(1,225)
	930	(1,225)
Interest Revenue		
Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value	1,050	1,264
Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost	942	3,042
	1,992	4,306
Interest Expense	(10,016)	(7,081)

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ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting Policies**AP1. General Principles**

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's financial transactions for the 2024/25 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2025. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and this requires the preparation to be in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices under Section 21 of the 2003 Act primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance, issued under Section 12 of the 2003 Act.

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historic cost modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

Going Concern

The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts which summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year and its position as at the year-end of 31 March of that year. The Statement of Accounts must be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices as per the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis, assuming that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future from the date that the accounts are approved.

AP2. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

All transactions of the Council are accounted for in the year in which they take place, not simply when the cash payments are made or received:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Fees, charges and rents due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the Council provides the relevant goods or services; revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council
- supplies and services are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed; where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption they are carried as Stock on the Balance Sheet. This also applies where the Council acts as agent, most significantly for Council Tax and NNDR collection. The Council collects all precepts on behalf of the major preceptors and the deficit or surplus held will be shown as a debtor or creditor balance respectively
- expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received, rather than when payments are made.
- interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract
- where revenue and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected
- income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant service or other revenue accounts, unless they properly represent capital receipts or capital expenditure.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Exceptions to this principle are:

- i. the Council does not have control over when a utility company re-estimates a prior period. Amendments to bills that relate to prior periods are accounted for in the year in which that re-estimation is billed to the Council and are not adjusted back into prior periods in line with any other change to accounting estimates
- ii. individual accruals of less than £500 are not adjusted for within the accounts due to the level of materiality of the transactions
- iii. commercial property rentals that are charged on traditional quarter days will be accounted for in accordance with the modern quarter days i.e. an invoice raised for the quarter day commencing June 24th will be accounted for in the month of July.

AP3 Acquisitions and Discontinued Operations

Discontinued Operations

The staff and services provided by the Council's Direct Services department were transferred at 1st April 2018 to two new companies wholly owned by the Council:

- Oxford Direct Services Limited
- Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited

The staff were transferred under TUPE arrangements. Accounting treatment of the pension arrangements is included in the Employee Benefits accounting policy. Further details of the transfer are included in a separate note to the accounts.

On 15th December 2021, the Council disposed of its shares in Oxford West End Developments Limited and set up Oxwed LLP, a Limited Liability Partnership, as a 50% partner in the LLP alongside Nuffield College Developments Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Nuffield College. Oxwed LLP took ownership of the land previously owned by Oxford West End Developments Limited along with the loan debt and will continue with facilitating development of the site. This process was undertaken in order to change the type of joint venture rather than strictly disposing of or acquiring operations but is included here for completeness.

AP4. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and demand deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of no more than 24 hours. Cash Equivalents are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. The Council regards overnight funds to represent a Cash Equivalent. Cash also includes bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and that are integral to a Council's cash management. In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the authority's cash management.

AP5. Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Material Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is generally applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise or unless the change is just a clarification of the accounting previously applied) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

AP6. Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Services, Support Services and Trading Accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off
- amortisation of Intangible Fixed Assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from Revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are replaced by the contribution (Minimum Revenue Provision) in the General Fund Balance by way of adjusting transactions within the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The principles of capital accounting are applicable to all non-current assets. However, the Council is able to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the concept of materiality; capitalisation of expenditure on fixed assets is not necessary where the amounts involved are not material to the fair presentation of the financial position and which would not affect the understanding of the users of the accounts. The Council has a general de-minimis level of £5,000 for capital expenditure purposes. Therefore, the Council will capitalise new assets that are greater than the following limits:

- Individually have a cost of at least £5,000 (£1,500 for residential properties); or
- Collectively have a cost of at least £5,000 (£1,500 for residential properties) and individually have a cost of more than £250, where the assets are functionally interdependent, have broadly simultaneous purchase dates, are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates and are under single managerial control.

Or where they form part of the initial equipping and setting-up cost of a new building, or significant refurbishment, irrespective of their individual or collective cost.

Where an asset has been acquired for less than £5,000 but has been funded by ring fenced capital funding, this will be treated as capital.

AP7. Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates-Principal and Agent Accounting Policy

Oxford City Council is a Billing Authority and acts as an agent, collecting Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) on behalf of the major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principal, collecting Council tax and NDR for themselves. Billing Authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of Council Tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, Billing Authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

The Council Tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of Council Tax and NDR that must be included in the Council's General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of the end of year balances in respect of Council Tax and

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line in the CIES. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

AP8. Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits (those falling due within 12 months of the year end) such as wages, salaries, paid annual leave, sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits for current employees, are considered as an expense in the year in which the employee renders the service to the Council.

An accrual is made against services in the surplus or deficit on the provision of service, (where considered material) for the cost of holiday entitlement and other forms of leave earned by employees but not taken before the year end and which may be carried forward into the next financial year based on following years' salary. Accruals are not made for immaterial costs in respect of outstanding car mileage claims. The accrual is charged to surplus or deficit on the provision of services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the accumulated absences account so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring. Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the yearend.

Post-employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of the Local Government pension fund administered by the Oxfordshire County Council.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- Oxford City Council includes the output of the actuary IAS 19 report within the accounts which provides an actuarial valuation of the pension costs of staff of the Council and the staff of the Oxford Direct Services Limited. This is because any burden of pension costs above the LATC set contribution rate are guaranteed to be met by the Council. Pension costs are therefore accounted for with the Oxford Direct Services Limited accounts at the contribution rate since their element of the scheme is defined by contribution rather than benefit (as per the pension pooling agreement between the Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford Direct Services Limited)
- The liabilities of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund attributable to the Council, and Oxford

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Direct Services Limited are therefore included in the Oxford City Council Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to-date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of projected earnings for current employees.

- The liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on a suitable index which is detailed in the notes to the accounts at Note 39c).
- the assets of Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value

The change in the net pension's liability is analysed into the following components:

- Service cost comprising:
 - Current Service Cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year is allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
 - Past Service Cost – the increase or reduction in liabilities arising from current year decisions or as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years is debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs
 - Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) i.e. net interest expense for the Council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
- Re-measurements comprising:
 - The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
 - Actuarial Gains and Losses – changes in the net pension liability that arises because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions. These are charged to the Pension Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Charge comprising:
 - Contributions paid to Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund – cash paid as employer's contribution to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the Pension Fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

AP9 Events After the Reporting Period

Events after the Balance Sheet date that are reported are those material events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events except where it is a matter that will involve future expenditure in which case the circumstances and an estimate of the cost will be reported.
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

AP10. Financial Instruments

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effected rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

This means that, for most of the borrowings that the Council has, the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest) and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cashflow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e. where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of a financial asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

Lease receivables are based on the rental on the leased assets which in turn is based on the value of those assets. On cessation of a lease, the asset will revert to being accounted for in non current assets so it is therefore not considered appropriate to make an impairment charge to revenue.

The Council has provided capital loans to its wholly owned Housing Company. These are assessed for impairment based on the business plans of the company and if there is an assessed impairment then these loans will be impaired in line with the Council's MRP policy.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss (FVPL)

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

The fair value of an asset is the price that would be received to sell an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:

- instruments with quoted market prices – the market price
- other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the Council can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs for the asset.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI)

The Council is able to designate Equity held in its own companies as FVOCI – the default is FVPL – since they are not held for trading. The designation is irrevocable & must be made at initial recognition. The Council has not designated any investments in equity instruments to FVOCI; its shares in its own companies are held at cost.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Reclassifications, modifications or derecognition or transfer of financial assets

There are no reclassifications, modifications or derecognitions or transfers of financial assets.

AP11. Government Grants and Contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify the way in which the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are to be consumed by the recipient, or the future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Council has elected to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The levy will be charged on new builds (chargeable developments for the Council) with appropriate planning consent. The Council charges for and collects the levy, which is a planning charge. The income from the levy will be used to fund a number of infrastructure projects (these include transport and flood defences) to support the development of the area.

CIL is received without outstanding conditions; it is therefore recognised at the commencement date of the chargeable development in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with the accounting policy for government grants and contributions set out above. CIL charges will be largely used to fund capital expenditure. However, a small proportion of the charges may be used to fund revenue expenditure. CIL recognised in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will be earmarked where appropriate through the MIRS.

AP12. Tangible Heritage Assets

A tangible Heritage Asset is a tangible asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture. An intangible Heritage Asset is an intangible asset with cultural, environmental or historical significance. Examples of intangible Heritage Assets include records of significant historical events. Heritage Assets are revalued every 5 years. The next valuation date due is disclosed at note 14 to the accounts.

Property Heritage Assets that are operational are not separately identified, and are included in the appropriate Property Plant and Equipment, or Investment property category of the Council's Balance Sheet.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Property Heritage Assets that are not operational will be identified separately on the face of the Balance Sheet in the Category of Heritage Assets and will follow the accounting treatment appropriate to the asset.

Measurement Rules in relation to other Heritage assets

The Council's Heritage Assets can be categorised as follows:

- The Great Mace and Plate Room Silver Plaques and Cutlery
- Furniture
- Civic Regalia and Chains of Office (including number Plate)
- Firearms
- Pictures and Drawings

These assets are deemed to have an indeterminate life and high residual values, and the Council does not consider it necessary to provide for depreciation. The assets movements are relatively static with very little acquisitions or disposals. However, acquisitions are initially recognised at cost. These assets are valued at market value in the Statement of Accounts. Valuations are undertaken every five years where a material change in value is anticipated. New acquisitions will only be recognised where the cost is greater than £5,000.

- Heritage Non Operational Property

The Council has identified the Plain Fountain, Martyrs' Memorial, and surviving fragments of the City walls and accompanying bastions, which are significant assets in terms of their cultural and heritage presence. These assets are included in the Balance Sheet their depreciated replacement cost. Their values will be reviewed every five years to ensure any potential material changes can be reflected.

- Rewley Abbey Wall

The Council has identified Rewley Abbey Wall as meeting the criteria of Heritage Assets. However, this asset lacks any comparable market values and cost records do not exist. The cost of providing a Balance Sheet valuation would be disproportionate to any benefit to the user of the Council's financial statements and therefore is excluded from the Balance Sheet.

- Oxford City First Registration number plate

The Council's Mayor's Car carries the first registration plate issued in Oxford, and the plate is valued at market value. The value will be reviewed every five years to ensure any potential material changes can be reflected.

These assets are deemed to have an indeterminate life and high residual values, and the Council does not consider it necessary to provide for depreciation. The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets, e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment - see note AP.18. The Council may occasionally dispose of heritage assets which have a doubtful provenance or are unsuitable for public display. The proceeds of such items are accounted for in accordance with the Council's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with the statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts where any receipt is greater than £10,000.

AP13.Intangible Assets

Expenditure on non monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of a past event (e.g. software licences and system development expenditure) is capitalised when it is

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expected that future benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council and are amortised to the relevant service revenue account over the economic life of the investment to reflect the pattern of consumption of benefits.

Internally Generated Assets are capitalised when it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and it is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and restricted to that incurred during the development phase. Research expenditure is not capitalised.

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is primarily intended to promote or advertise the Councils goods or services. Website development for a business purpose would be capitalised.

Intangible Assets are initially measured at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an Intangible Asset is amortised over the asset's useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an Intangible Asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on Intangible Assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of General Fund Balance in the Movement of Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

AP14. Interest in Companies and Other Entities

The Council has material interest in the Barton Oxford LLP. The LLP is a joint venture developing Land which will be sold for Housing development. The Council has a 50% interest in the Company and shares the profit and losses.

The Council has material interest in the Oxwed LLP. The LLP is a joint venture developing Land which will be sold for Housing or commercial development or retained for rental. The Council has a 50% interest in the LLP and shares the profit and losses.

The Council has a wholly owned Housing Company Group, Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL). The Group will hold Housing for rent, predominantly at social rent rates, and will develop land to produce additional housing within Oxford. The Council has a 100% interest in the Holding Company and owns any profits and losses.

The Council has two wholly owned companies to undertake work previously undertaken by the Direct Services department, Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL). The Pension arrangements in respect of the IAS19 calculations will be included in the single entity accounts.

The Council therefore has material interests in Barton Oxford LLP, Oxwed LLP, ODSL, ODSTL and OCHL which require it to prepare group accounts. In the Council's own single-entity accounts, the interests in

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companies and other entities are recorded as Long term Debtors and Investments and these are removed on consolidation into the Group Accounts to prevent double counting. Where the Council holds shares in these entities, they are held on the balance sheet at cost.

AP15. Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are normally valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value where practical. However, for small value stocks current purchase price or average cost may be used. This is a departure from the Code, but the effect is not material to the Council's accounts.

Where the Council has entered into contracts that run for longer than one year, they are disclosed as a note to the accounts. Entries are only realised in the Balance Sheet if the contracts become onerous, in which case the Council would recognise the difference between the fair value of the contract and the actual payments due to be made, effectively creating a Provision.

AP16. Investment Property

Investment Properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods, or is held for sale.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use subject to data availability from Tenants and materiality considerations. Properties are not depreciated but are re-valued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. This involves an assessment of properties where material changes could have occurred and valuation to all those cases. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to Investment Property are credited to the Financing and Investment line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. Revaluation and Disposal Gains and Losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and the Capital Receipts Reserve (for any sale cash received, where greater than £10,000).

AP17. Leases

Arrangements will not be accounted for as leases where the value is less than £5,000; this is in line with the Council's general de-minimis level of £5,000 for capital expenditure purposes.

a) The Authority as Lessee

The Council classifies contracts as leases based on their substance. Contracts and parts of contracts, including those described as contracts for services, are analysed to determine whether they convey the right to control the use of an identified asset, through rights both to obtain substantially all the economic benefits or service potential from that asset and to direct its use. The Code expands the scope of IFRS 16 Leases to include arrangements with nil consideration, peppercorn or nominal payments.

Initial measurement

Leases are recognised as right-of-use assets with a corresponding liability at the date from which the leased asset is available for use (or the IFRS 16 transition date, if later). The leases are typically for fixed periods in excess of one year but may have extension options. The Council initially recognises lease liabilities measured at the present value of lease payments, discounting by applying the Council's incremental borrowing rate wherever the interest rate implicit in the lease cannot be determined. Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability include:

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- ♦ fixed payments, including in-substance fixed payments
- ♦ variable lease payments that depend on an index or rate, initially measured using the prevailing index or rate as at the adoption date
- ♦ amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee
- ♦ the exercise price under a purchase option that the Council is reasonably certain to exercise
- ♦ lease payments in an optional renewal period if the Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option
- ♦ penalties for early termination of a lease, unless the Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

The right-of-use asset is measured at the amount of the lease liability, adjusted for any prepayments made, plus any direct costs incurred to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or restore the underlying asset on the site on which it is located, less any lease incentives received. However, for peppercorn, nominal payments or nil consideration leases, the asset is measured at fair value.

Subsequent measurement

The right-of-use asset is subsequently measured using the fair value model. The Council considers the cost model to be a reasonable proxy except for:

- ♦ assets held under non-commercial leases
- ♦ leases where rent reviews do not necessarily reflect market conditions
- ♦ leases with terms of more than five years that do not have any provision for rent reviews
- ♦ leases where rent reviews will be at periods of more than five years.

For these leases, the asset is carried at a revalued amount. In these financial statements, right-of-use assets held under index-linked leases have been adjusted for changes in the relevant index, while assets held under peppercorn or nil consideration leases have been valued using market prices or rentals for equivalent land and properties. The right-of-use asset is depreciated straight-line over the shorter period of remaining lease term and useful life of the underlying asset as at the date of adoption. The lease liability is subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest method.

The liability is re-measured when:

- ♦ there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in index or rate
- ♦ there is a change in the group's estimate of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee
- ♦ the Council changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option, or
- ♦ there is a revised in-substance fixed lease payment.

When such a re-measurement occurs, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, with any further adjustment required from re-measurement being recorded in the income statement.

Low value and short lease exemption

As permitted by the Code, the Council excludes leases:

- ♦ for low-value items that cost less than £5,000 when new, provided they are not highly dependent on or integrated with other items; this is in line with the Council's general de-minimis level of £5,000 for capital expenditure purposes., and
- ♦ with a term shorter than 12 months (comprising the non-cancellable period plus any extension options that the Council is reasonably certain to exercise and any termination options that the Council is reasonably certain not to exercise).

Lease expenditure

Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement includes interest, straight line depreciation, any asset impairments and changes in variable lease payments not included in the measurement of the liability during the period in which the triggering event occurred. Lease payments are debited against the liability. Rentals for leases of low-value items or shorter than 12 months are expensed.

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Depreciation and impairments are not charges against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

b) The Authority as Lessor

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. In 2010/11 the Council adopted IFRS accounting for leases. At that time an assessment was made of all lease arrangements and, where there was deemed to be a finance lease present, a standard 60% / 40% split was used for buildings / land which was therefore also the split of the arrangement between finance and operational leases; this was a generally accepted split across local authorities for this process. For all leases with a finance lease element this split is retained through the whole life of the lease for the purposes of lease accounting for all leases with an inception date prior to 1st April 2023. After this date a percentage split of land and buildings will be obtained from a valuer and this split provided at inception will be retained through the whole life of the lease. Consequently, the value of the land element of finance leases held under an operational lease will be use the same split of land and buildings used at the inception of the lease.

Finance Leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (ie netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease (long-term debtor) asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- ♦ a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- ♦ finance income (credited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to the capital receipts reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to the deferred capital receipts reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the capital receipts reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating Leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease or where this is initiated by a service to the individual service, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

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AP18.Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to service segments in accordance with the Oxford City Council's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

AP19.Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation and replacement of components is capitalised on an accruals basis. The cost of components replaced are added to the asset carrying value, and an assessment of the carrying value of the component replaced is made, and then derecognised. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction. The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase are deemed to be at fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure, community assets, vehicles, plant & equipment and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- dwellings – fair value, determined using the basis of Existing Use Value for Social Housing (EUV-SH) surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective
- all other assets – fair value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its Existing Use Value (EUV)

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of fair value. For non-property assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for fair value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum they are re-valued every five years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. (Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service).

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains).
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive

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Income and Expenditure Statement

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end to determine whether there is any indication that they may be impaired. Where indications exist and differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall. Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, and where material, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction). Assets are not depreciated in their year of acquisition but are depreciated in full in the year of disposal.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – straight-line allocation over the useful life, as advised by a suitably qualified officer
- infrastructure – straight-line

Where an asset comprises major components whose costs are significant in relation to the total cost of the asset, the components are depreciated separately.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less sales costs. Where there is a subsequent decrease in the net fair value, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any losses previously recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as Held for Sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

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Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

The Revaluation Reserve on Assets Held for Sale (AHFS) is frozen in the previous asset category as the identification of an AHFS removes the capital accounting requirement. It is only when the asset disposal takes place that the revaluation reserve is moved to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Disposals

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) asset disposals (75% for Right to Buy (RTB), 50% for land and other assets, net of statutory deductions and allowances) is payable to the Government. In the case of pooling of HRA land and other asset receipts the Council can apply the sums to capital regeneration, and social housing investment. Furthermore, the Council entered into an agreement in 2012/13 with the Secretary of State in which capital receipts in relation to RTB disposals over and above the number specified for the year in Communities and Local Governments (CLG) self-financing valuation for Oxford City Council will not be subject to pooling, as long as the Council re-cycles the non-pooled receipts into new affordable housing within 3 years.

The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against Council Tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

AP20.Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council an obligation that probably requires settlement by the transfer of economic benefit, but where the timing of the transfer is uncertain. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or payment of compensation.

The Council maintains a Provision for the funding of the self-financed element of known insurance claims. This Provision is funded through contributions from the relevant Service Revenue Accounts.

Provisions for bad or doubtful debts are separately disclosed against debtors on the Balance Sheet and are not included in the Provisions figure. Known uncollectible debts have been written off.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate Revenue Account and when payments for expenditure are incurred to which the Provision relates they are charged direct to the Provision. Provisions are reviewed at each Balance Sheet date and if no longer required are reversed. In addition, Provisions for bad debts have been made within the accounts for expected losses of income in respect of sums due but not received from debtors.

With effect from 1 April 2013 onwards, under the Local Government Finance act 2013, where the Council is acting as an agent under the Business Rates retention scheme on behalf of the major preceptors, Central

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Government, and the Council itself (as principal), the Council makes provisions for ratepayer appeals against the rateable value of business properties in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation, taking account of the risks and uncertainties that surround many events and circumstances.

Contingent Liabilities

Contingent Liabilities are not recognised as liabilities in the Balance Sheet; however, all contingent liabilities are disclosed if there is a possibility of an outflow of economic benefit.

A Contingent Liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation and whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent Liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent Assets

A Contingent Asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

Contingent Assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a Note to the Accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefit or service potential.

The Council does not make provisions for unequal pay because the risk of claims continues to reduce, and the sums are not regarded as material.

AP21. Reserves

Useable Reserves

A reserve is money that the Council has set aside to cover expenditure that will be incurred in a future period, and this can be created from excess income over expenditure resulting in a balance on the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts from the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account Balance through the Movement in Reserves Statement, and are held voluntarily to meet future activity costs. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate Service Revenue Account in that year to count against the Net cost of Services in the Income and Expenditure Account. The Reserve is then appropriated back to the General Fund balance so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

Useable reserves can also be created from a capital source such as capital grants. These can also be earmarked or held in a general unapplied reserve, but capital reserves can only be used for expenditure of a capital nature or in special cases where statute provides an exception.

The Major Repairs Reserve is required by statutory provision in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Council also has other specific Earmarked Reserves set out in more detail in the Notes to the Core Statements. These are set aside for purposes falling outside the definition of provisions. They are earmarked specifically to meet future requirements of revenue or capital expenditure.

Unusable Reserves

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for tangible fixed assets and retirement benefits. They do not represent usable resources for the Council.

The main unusable reserves are:

- the Capital Adjustment Account which represents the balance of the surpluses or deficits arising from

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

the periodic revaluations of fixed assets and the amounts set aside from revenue or capital receipts to finance expenditure on fixed assets and certain other capital financing transactions;

- the Revaluation Reserve which contains valuation gains recognised since 1 April 2007; and
- the Pension Reserve which reflects the Council's liability to the pension fund.

AP22. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of Council Tax. An example of such expenditure would include Disabled Facilities Grants.

AP23. VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

AP24. Fair Value Measurement

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties and some of its financial instruments such as equity shareholdings [other financial instruments as applicable] at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

- a) in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- b) in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs. Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date
- Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability

AP25. Exceptional Items

When items of income and expenditure are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

AP26. Dividends from Owned Companies

The Council will accrue dividends from its wholly owned or part owned companies into its single entity accounts in the year that a dividend has been approved by Directors and agreed by shareholders.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE

Arts Council England.

Accounting Period

The period of time covered by the accounts, normally a period of 12 months commencing on 1 April. The end of the accounting period is the Balance Sheet date.

Accruals

Sums included in the final accounts of the Council to cover income or expenditure attributable to the accounting period for which payment has not been received/made in the financial year. Local authorities accrue for both revenue and capital expenditure.

Amortisation

The term used to refer to the charging of the value of a transaction or asset (usually related to intangible assets) to the Income and Expenditure Account over a period of time, reflecting the value to the Council; similar to the depreciation charge for tangible fixed assets.

Asset

An asset is an economic resource which can be tangible or intangible. An asset is owned or controlled to produce positive economic value.

Asset Held for Sale

Assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount is going to be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continued use. This excludes from consideration any assets that are going to be abandoned or scrapped at the end of their useful lives.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet is the summary of the financial balances of the Council.

Beacon Dwelling

A generic property type representative of other assets held in the Council dwelling portfolio.

Billing Authority

A local authority responsible for collecting Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

Capital Expenditure

Spending which produces or enhances an asset, like land, buildings, roads, vehicles, plant and machinery, and intangible assets such as computer software. Definitions are set out in Section 40 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Any expenditure which does not fall within the definition must be charged to a revenue account.

Capital Adjustment Account

A reserve that reflects financing of capital from revenue and capital receipts together with the adjustment of the minimum revenue provision.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds from the sale of fixed assets such as land and buildings. Capital receipts can be used to repay any outstanding debt on fixed assets or to finance new capital expenditure, within rules set down by government. Capital receipts cannot, however, be used to finance revenue expenditure.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

The professional accountancy body concerned with local authorities and the public sector.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CO

Cabinet Office.

Code of Practice (The Code)

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. The Code specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts which 'presents fairly' the financial position and transactions of a local authority. It prescribes the accounting treatments and disclosures for all normal transactions of an authority and involves interpretations of accounting standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board.

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is a statutory fund set up under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It includes the transactions of the charging Authority in relation to Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax, and illustrates the way in which the fund balance is distributed to preceptors and the General Fund.

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

A reserve account that reconciles differences between statutory requirements as a Billing Authority and proper accounting practice.

Contingent Assets/Liabilities

Potential gains and losses for which a future event will establish whether a liability exists and for which it is inappropriate to set up a debtor or provision in the accounts.

Contingent Rent

A contingent rent is the difference between the inception rent and the current rent, and can relate to both rental income and rental expenditure on leased properties. A contingent rent on a leased property is the increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising from rent reviews during the contract, and these are debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. A contingent rent on leased out property is where the contingent rental increases due to rent reviews are recognised in income as they are received as an addition to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Current Asset

A current asset is any asset which can reasonably be expected to be sold, consumed, or exhausted within a year. Typical current assets include cash, cash equivalents, short-term investments, accounts receivable, inventory and the portion of prepaid liabilities which will be paid within a year.

DCMS

Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

DECC

Department of Energy and Climate Change.

Deferred Credits

This is the term applied to deferred capital receipts. These transactions arise when fixed assets are sold and the amounts owed by the purchasers are repaid over a number of years, e.g. mortgages. The balance is reduced by the amount repayable in any financial year.

Deferred Grants

Amounts received or receivable which have been used to finance capital expenditure within the year. Under the capital accounting arrangements these amounts will be written off over the same period as the assets to which they relate.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEFRA

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Depreciation

The measure of the wearing out, consumption or other reduction in the useful life of a fixed asset.

DFT

Department for Transport.

DWP

Department of Work and Pensions.

Earmarked Reserves

These are funds set aside for a specific purpose, or a particular service, or type of expenditure.

Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside from the General Fund and HRA Balances to provide financing for future expenditure plans. These amounts can be moved to and from the revenue account in accordance with the rules in the Council's constitution. During the year there are usually numerous transfers to and from earmarked reserves and the net effect of this is shown in a note to the accounts.

Finance Lease

Arrangement whereby the lessee is treated as the owner of the leased asset, and is required to include such assets within fixed assets on the balance sheet.

GAAP

Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

General Fund

The General Fund is the Council's main account which contains all of its revenue expenditure.

General Fund Balance

Balance at Year End not earmarked for any specific purpose.

Group Accounts

Are the collective financial statements of a group, plus the investments in associates and interests in joint ventures, presented as a single economic entity.

HCA

Homes Communities Agency.

Heritage Assets

Are assets with historic, cultural, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.

HIA

Home Improvement Agency.

HMO

House in Multiple Occupation.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue account is a ring fenced account within the Council's General Fund which can only be used for expenditure (mainly management and maintenance) and income (mainly rent from tenants) relating to the council-owned housing stock and cannot be used for funding any other council expenditure.

IAS

International Accounting Standard.

Intangible Asset

An intangible asset is an asset that lacks physical substance (unlike physical assets such as machinery, software and buildings) and usually is very hard to evaluate. It includes patents, copyrights, franchises, goodwill, trademarks, trade names and computer software.

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

International Financial Reporting Standards are approved by the International Accounting Standards Board and are designed as a common global language for business affairs so that company accounts are understandable and comparable across international boundaries. Oxford City Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with IFRS modified for use in the public sector by CIPFA.

Impairment

An accounting adjustment made to the value of the asset when its carrying amount (the amount at which an asset is recognised in the Balance Sheet after deducting accumulated depreciation and impairment losses) exceeds its recoverable amount (the higher of assets fair value less cost of sale and its value in use).

Investments

Deposits for less than one year with approved institutions.

Infrastructure Assets

Expenditure on works of construction or improvement but which have no tangible value, such as construction of, or improvement to highways.

Inventory

Inventory or stock refers to the goods and materials that are held for the ultimate purpose of use, resale or repair.

Investment Property

Investment property is (land or a building, or part of a building, or both) held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both, rather than for use in the production or supply of goods or services or for administrative purposes, or for sale in the ordinary course of operations.

Joint Venture

Contractual or binding agreement whereby two or more parties are committed to undertake an activity that is subject to joint control.

LGA

Local Government Association.

Liability

A liability is the measure of future payments or other economic settlement that the Council is obliged to make to other entities as a result of past transactions or other past events.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Long Term Assets - Tangible

Tangible assets (i.e. land and buildings) that yield benefits to the Council and the services it provides for a period of more than one year.

Long Term Assets – Intangible

Assets which are of benefit to the organisation but have no physical presence such as software licences.

Long Term Debtors

Amounts due to the Council more than one year after the Balance Sheet date.

MHCLG

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Under the arrangements for uniform business rates, which came into effect on 1 April 1990, the Council collects Non-Domestic Rates for its area based on local rateable values, multiplied by nationally set rates. The total amount, less certain relief and deductions, is paid to a central pool managed by the Government, which in turn, pays back to Councils their share of the pool based on a standard amount per head of the local adult population

Non-Current Asset

This is the same as a Long Term Asset.

Non operational Assets

Fixed assets held by an organisation but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the delivery of services. An example of a non operational asset is an investment property or an asset being held pending its sale.

Operational Asset

Fixed assets held by the Council and used or consumed in the delivery of its services.

Operating Lease

An arrangement whereby the risks and rewards of ownership of the leased asset remain with the leasing company.

Pension Fund

An employees' pension fund maintained by an authority, or a group of authorities, in order primarily to make pension payments on retirement of participants. It is financed from contributions from the employing authority, the employee and investment income.

Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts

Pooling is the term given to the requirement to pay Central Government a proportion of certain types of capital receipt. From 1 April 2004 Housing capital receipts have been subject to pooling at a rate of 75% for Right To Buy (RTB) dwellings and 50% for other Housing land and assets, net of statutory deductions and allowances. Furthermore, the Council in June 2012, entered into an agreement with the Secretary of State to exclude "additional" RTB capital receipts from the pooling mechanism as long as the Council recycled the retained resources into the provision of replacement social housing properties (1-4-1) within 3 years and in accordance with an agreed funding formula.

Precept

The amount by which a Precepting Authority (e.g. a County Council) requires from a Billing Authority (e.g. District Councils) to meet its expenditure requirements.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Provisions

Sums set aside to meet future expenditure where a specific liability is known to exist but is of uncertain timing or amount.

PWLB

Public Works Loans Board - part of Central Government from which the Council can obtain borrowing.

Revenue

Cost and income relating to the day-to-day running of services e.g. salaries and wages, supplies and services, transport and service relating income.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (Refcus)

Capital expenditure which is allowable by statute to be funded from capital resources but which does not fall within the Code's definition of fixed assets. Examples include grants and similar advances made to other parties to finance capital investment.

Reserves – Unusable

Funds set aside to adjust for accounting transactions. These funds cannot be used to pay for future Council expenditure and can only be adjusted in accordance with the Code.

Reserves – Usable

Funds set aside or saved for future use to pay for future Council expenditure.

Revenue Support Grant

This funding is the Government Grant provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which is based on the Government's assessment as to what should be spent on local services. The amount provided by the MHCLG is fixed at the beginning of each financial year.

Surplus Asset

Where assets are not in use but do not meet the criteria of Assets Held for Sale they will be considered surplus and will be accommodated in the class of Property, Plant and Equipment.

Surplus or Loss on the Sale of Fixed Assets

This is an accounting requirement which requires the book value of the asset sold to be compared to the net proceeds to calculate the surplus or deficit on the transaction.

Teckal Exemption

This refers to procurement exemptions that can apply to companies, over which the authority has control, providing statutory local authority services in lieu of the local authority. The exemption removes the requirement for these companies to go through a full procurement process in order to be awarded with the work. This is based on the case of *Teckal Srl v Comune di Viano (1999)*.

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL AND GROUP

Disclaimer of Opinion

We were engaged to audit the financial statements of Oxford City Council and Group ('the Council') and its subsidiaries (the 'Group') for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements comprise the:

- Oxford City Council and Group Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Oxford City Council and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Oxford City Council and Group Balance Sheet,
- Oxford City Council and Group Cash Flow Statement,
- the related notes 1 to 43 and related Group notes 1 to 11, including material accounting policy information and including the Expenditure and Funding Analysis,
- Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, and the related notes H1 to H8
- Collection Fund and the related notes CF1 to CF2

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/ LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.

We do not express an opinion on the accompanying financial statements of the Council. Because of the significance of the matter described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we have not been able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Basis for disclaimer of opinion

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (Statutory Instrument 2024/907) which came into force on 30 September 2024 required any outstanding accountability statements for years ended 31 March 2015 to 31 March 2023 to be approved not later than 13 December 2024 and the accountability statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 to be approved not later than 28 February 2025 ('the backstop date').

The audits of the financial statements for the years ended 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023 for Oxford City Council and Group were not completed for the reasons set out in our disclaimers of opinion on those financial statements dated 26 November 2024.

Our planned audit work in the current year was focused on transactions in the year and the current year balance sheet.

Due to delays in receiving audit evidence in sufficient time before the backstop date, have been unable to complete our audit procedures on Investment Properties (23/24 £146m, 22/23 £118m), Property, Plant & Equipment (23/24 £1,008m, 22/23 £983m), Capital Grants Receipts in Advance (23/24 £29m, 22/23 £28m) and Short Term Debtors (23/24 £63m, 22/23 £51m).

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE

As a result of the disclaimers of opinion in the prior years and the scope of our audit work which was impacted by the backstop date, we do not have sufficient appropriate audit evidence over the following:

- in the Group and Authority balance sheet and accompanying notes: the opening balances, closing reserves position and the valuation of property assets held at valuation included in 'other land and buildings' and heritage assets that were not revalued in year.
- in the Group and Authority comprehensive income and expenditure account and accompanying notes: comparatives and income and expenditure transactions that are impacted by the opening balances shown in the prior year balance sheet
- in the Group and Authority cash flow statement and accompanying notes: opening balances, comparatives and in-year cash flow movements that are calculated as a movement between the opening and closing balance sheet
- in the collection fund and accompanying notes: opening balances, comparatives and in-year movements that are calculated as a movement between the opening and closing balance
- in the housing revenue account and accompanying notes: opening balances, comparatives and in-year movements that are calculated as a movement between the opening and closing balance

Therefore, we are disclaiming our opinion on the financial statements.

Matters on which we report by exception

Notwithstanding our disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements we have nothing to report in respect of whether the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit, performed subject to the pervasive limitation described above, or our knowledge of the Group and the Council

We report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we are not satisfied that the Group and the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE

Responsibility of the Group Finance Director

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Group Finance Director Responsibilities set out on page 6, the Group Finance Director is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Authority financial statements and the Group financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, 2023/24, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Group Finance Director determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Group Finance Director is responsible for assessing the Group and the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Group and the Council either intends to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit of the Group and the Council's financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and to issue an auditor's report.

However, because of the matter described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we were not able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on these financial statements.

We are independent of the Group and the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Code of Audit Practice 2024 and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2024, having regard to the guidance on the specified reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024, as to whether the Oxford City Council had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the Oxford City Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether the Oxford City Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until the NAO, as group auditor, has confirmed that no further assurances will be required from us as component auditors of Oxford City Council.

Until we have completed these procedures, we are unable to certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of Oxford City Council, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 85 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Group and the Council's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Andrew Brittain (Key Audit Partner)

Date

28 February 2025

Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)

Reading

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Statement of Accounts

2024-25

Financial Services
Group Finance Director

www.oxford.gov.uk

To contact us
Quote this reference:
OxCity Letter of Rep 23 24
E-mail: nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk
Direct Line: 01865 252708



Ernst & Young LLP
R+ Building
2 Blagrove Street,
Reading,
RG1 1AZ

27 February 2025

Dear Sir / Madam,

Letter of Representations 2023/24

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements of Oxford City Council and Group ("the Group and Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2024. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements give a true and fair view of (or 'present fairly, in all material respects,') the Group and Authority financial position of Oxford City Council and Group as of 31 March 2024 and of its financial performance (or operations) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with, for the Group and the Authority, CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our consolidated and parent Authority financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with, for the Group and the parent Authority, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Group and Authority, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements. We believe the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Group and parent Authority in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of



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Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.

3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the Group and Authority financial statements are appropriately described in the Group and Authority financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Group and Authority, we believe that the Group and Authority have a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 for the Group and the Authority that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences for the reasons we have identified in the Commentary on the Schedule of Uncorrected Audit differences.
6. We confirm the Group and Authority does not have securities (debt or equity) listed on a recognised exchange.

B. Non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Group and Authority's business activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws or regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of a system of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and that we believe we have appropriately fulfilled those responsibilities.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud, that may have affected the Group or Authority (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:

- Involving financial improprieties
- Related to laws or regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements
- Related to laws or regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Group and Authority's business, its ability to continue in business, or to avoid material penalties
- Involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal control, or others



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- In relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:

- Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements

3. We have disclosed to you the use of all applications or tools using artificial intelligence, including generative artificial intelligence, that are reasonably likely to have a direct or indirect material effect in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements.

4. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Group and Authority, and committees (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 13th February 2025.

5. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Group and Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the period end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements.

6. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.

7. We have disclosed to you, and the Group and Authority has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

8. From the date of our last management representation letter through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you, to the extent that we are aware, any (1) unauthorised access to our information technology systems that either occurred or is reasonably likely to have occurred, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorised access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material effect on the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate, and



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(2) ransomware attacks when we paid or are contemplating paying a ransom, regardless of the amount.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 44 to the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Group and Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than described in Note 5 to the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements, there have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Group audits

1. There are no significant restrictions on our ability to distribute the retained profits of the Group because of statutory, contractual, exchange control or other restrictions other than those indicated in the Group financial statements.
2. Necessary adjustments have been made to eliminate all material intra-group unrealised profits on transactions amongst parent Authority, subsidiary undertakings and associated undertakings.

H. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Statement included within the financial statements and also the Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.
3. We confirm that the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 is a true reflection, in all material respects, of the governance arrangements and the effectiveness of those arrangements in 2023/24 and includes disclosure of all significant governance issues and findings relating to that financial year, through to the date of this letter.

I. Climate-related matters



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1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matters has been considered and reflected in the consolidated and parent financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

J. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the consolidated and Authority financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

K. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties, provisions and pension liabilities and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

L. Estimates

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties, provisions and pension liability have taken into account all relevant information of which we are aware.
2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties, provisions and pension liability.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties, provisions and pension liability appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out valuations on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty are complete and are reasonable in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialised skills or expertise has been applied in making the valuation of property, plant and equipment, investment properties, provisions and pension liability estimate.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the consolidated and parent Authority financial statements.

M. Retirement benefits



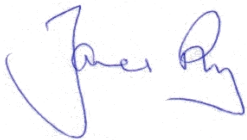
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1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,



Nigel Kennedy – Group Finance Director (Chief Financial Officer)



Councillor James Fry – Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee



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Commentary on the Schedule of Uncorrected Audit differences

£370k overstatement of the Broad Street 23-25 asset

This was not corrected because the calculation made by and provided to us by the external auditor assumed a lease break clause would not be exercised. However our specialist, a professional valuer, confirmed that the correct methodology, which they adopted in the valuation, and which is standard in the valuation industry, is to assume a break option will be exercised. We have scrutinised the valuation provided by our specialist and we are comfortable with using the valuation provided by them.

£1,866k overstatement of land value relating to Ramsay House. This is a judgemental difference.

All evidence on this was provided in Autumn 2024 but we were not told that it was still an issue until February 2025. We have not received sufficient evidence of the calculation by the auditor's real estates team to show where this judgemental difference has arisen and we therefore do not consider it appropriate to make an adjustment.

Overstatement of income in FY 23/24 for Garden waste service contracts straddle two FYs and apportioned amount relating to FY24/25 has not been accrued for and included in FY23/24. The projected misstatement amounted to £578k.

Garden Waste has never been apportioned between years and consequently a full 12 month's income is shown in the 2023/24 accounts. For 2024/25 an apportionment will be calculated at a detail level rather than using an estimated figure and an accrual between 2024/25 and 2025/26 processed. This will then be done each year. The £578k is an extrapolation of this item and in our view it would not be appropriate to process an extrapolated figure through the accounts.

Overstatement of 23/24 expenditure as some of the expenditure recorded related to previous financial years. The projected misstatement amounted to £308k.

This amount could not be adjusted because the adjustment would have been to the 2022/23 financial year which has been closed and (disclaimed) audit opinion issued.

Projected misstatement amounting to £572k due to accrual has been entered for the wrong value and incorrectly as a debtor.

The difference in value of the identified item is £30k on a value of £130k. The £572k is an extrapolation of this item and in our view it would not be appropriate to process an extrapolated figure through the accounts.



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To: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 28 January 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)
Title of Report: 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To present the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement for approval. To present the refreshed Code of Corporate Governance for approval.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	A Well Run Council.
Policy Framework:	None.

Recommendation(s): That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to:
Approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025; Note the action plan appended to the Annual Governance Statement and that progress will reported on in 2026; and; Delegate authority to the Director of Law, Governance & Strategy to make any typographical changes to the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 that may be required before publication on the Council's website.

Information Exempt From Publication
N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025	No
Appendix 2	Code of Corporate Governance	No

Appendix 3	The LGA's Councillors Guide: Improvement and Assurance Framework for Local Government	No
Appendix 4	The LGA's Improvement and Assurance Framework	No

Introduction and background

1. Each year the Council must produce a statement evaluating its governance and effectiveness. This is done considering the year against the Code of Corporate Governance.
2. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance has also not been reviewed for some time and therefore a review has been undertaken.
3. There is a stronger focus on the governance of Local Authorities following on from high profile failings which have been underpinned by poor governance arrangements and practices elsewhere in the Country. This has resulted in the LGA producing a new Assurance Framework, and associated guidance (see appendices 3 and 4).

Code of Corporate Governance Refresh

4. The Council's current Code of Corporate Governance ("the Code") was not based around the principles defined by CIPFA and SOLACE in the "Delivering Good Governance Local Government Framework". As such the refresh has been based on bringing it in line with the best practice for codes aligning with the principles.
5. The refreshed Code has been designed around the principles and also sets out the key policies, procedures and bodies that form part of the system of ensuring the Council has strong, robust and effective governance arrangements.
6. The Council governance is set out in many documents (policies, procedures, protocols, the constitution, schemes of delegation etc). The Code of Governance pulls them together and explains what the Council will do to ensure good governance is practiced throughout the Council and in all it does.
7. Governance is defined by CIPFA and SOLACE as 'the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved'. Good governance helps deliver the outcomes desired by an organisation.
8. The refreshed Code of Corporate Governance is in line with good practice guidance, including the principles that underpin it.
9. It will, subject to approval, form part of the Council's control environment assurance arrangements.
10. The revised Code brings together an underlying set of values, legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes that enable effective outcomes, setting the framework for the Council to ensure that it operates in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

11. The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive are accountable for ensuring good governance in their authority and sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Council.
12. All services are responsible for maintaining proportionate but sound operational procedures and processes that adequately mitigate risks that may result in a service failure or the failure to deliver service objectives. Application of the framework outlined should put the Council in a strong position to successfully deliver whatever services it chooses to.

Annual Governance Statement Refresh

13. The Annual Governance Statement (“the AGS”) is a statutory requirement (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) for local authorities.
14. As an annual report it is published with the Council's financial statements and its purpose is to describe the effectiveness of the council's overall governance arrangements. It should also provide an action plan to improve them.
15. The AGS needs to consider whether there is sufficient evidence to show that the Corporate Code of Governance is appropriately and consistently implemented. Where it is not, the AGS needs to propose actions to address this in the coming year. Improvements are not a suggestion that the Council is doing things incorrectly but a signal of good self-reflection and challenge, to strive to do better in its governance and assurance.
16. It is a corporate document. Though typically produced by the Monitoring Officer it reflects the corporate approach to governance by all departments considering the Code of Corporate Governance.
17. In the LGA Assurance Framework at Appendix 3 the roles of the Organisation around good governance and the AGS sets out the following as best practice:
 - **Operational directors** ensure that directorate assurance statements to inform the annual governance statement are comprehensive and accurate, informed by an assessment of compliance with all relevant policies and procedures.
 - **The strategic management team** effectively oversees operational and strategic delivery, including contributing to the review of the effectiveness of the authority's governance arrangements to inform the Annual Governance Statement.
 - **The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive)** ensures that an appropriate person leads the review of the effectiveness of the authority's governance arrangements to inform the Annual Governance Statement.
 - **Audit and Governance Committee** (as the relevant committee of OCC):
 - reviews the draft Annual Governance Statement.
 - reviews, challenges, and approves the annual governance statement and holds management (via the chief executive and lead member as signatories) to account for implementation of improvement actions identified.

- **A whole-council approach:** assurance isn't just the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer or the Head of Internal Audit. All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance. Everyone should understand their contribution – and this may include partners and other stakeholders. The opportunity provided by the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement to step back and consider how well the authority's systems and controls are working as a whole, is a crucial one: depending on the scale of challenges and risks the authority is facing, the corporate statutory officers and/or audit committee may need to find other opportunities to do so at intervals during the year.

Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

18. The preparation of the Annual Governance Statement ("the AGS"), to support the Annual Statement of Accounts, is a statutory requirement (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) for local authorities. Its purpose is to demonstrate and evidence that there is a continuous review of the control environment - the effectiveness of the Council's internal control, performance, and risk management systems. This allows an assurance on their effectiveness to be provided so that users of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts can be satisfied that proper arrangements are in place to govern spending and safeguard assets. The process also enables the production of a corporate action plan to address any identified weaknesses.
19. The AGS also explains what governance challenges the Council is facing and how it is addressing those challenges and seeking improvement in how its functions are exercised. As part of the process of identifying issues self-assessment information is collated for all Service Areas through annual governance questionnaires. The responses to the questionnaires are analysed to identify recurring governance challenges.
20. Overall, the Annual Report from the Council's internal auditors provides that moderate assurance can be given that there is a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives and controls are being applied consistently.
21. The Committee is required to consider and, if satisfied, approve the AGS. The AGS forms part of the Council's Statement of Accounts and is attached to the report as Appendix 1.

Financial implications

22. There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

Legal issues

23. Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires an authority to conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with any published Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement explains how Oxford City Council meets this requirement.

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Background Papers: None

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OXFORD
CITY COUNCIL

Annual Governance Statement

2024 – 2025

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Executive Summary

Oxford City Council is committed to making Oxford a great place in which to live and work, supporting our communities. Our policies will address the climate emergency, and build a fairer, greener city in which everyone can thrive. These commitments are set out in the Council Strategy that establishes four interconnected priorities and how we will work to achieve them in a joined-up way.

The fifth priority and commitment in our Council Strategy is to be a “well-run council” reflecting our understanding that the foundation for the success of the Council is in good governance and sound financial management. The Annual Governance Statement is one of the key documents that ensures we are doing things in the right way and in line with our values.

This Statement incorporates the continuous review of the effectiveness of our governance arrangements throughout 2024/25, and due to the timing of the Annual Governance Statement it contains some reflections on significant events in 2025/2026. It set outs those areas where the Council has identified opportunities for improvement and it will make certain that we have the proper governance arrangements to ensure that the Council delivers on its commitments in its Council Strategy.

Throughout the year, the Council’s governance framework is continuously reviewed to ensure that the arrangements remain effective and to improve and streamline as needed. In reviewing the effectiveness of the Council’s governance framework, the commitments detailed within the Corporate Code of Corporate Governance (Appendix 1) are assessed, which is consistent with the principles of the 2016 CIPFA/Solace document, ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’. This Annual Governance Statement has been prepared with reference to both.

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive both recognise the importance of having good governance and sound financial management and provide their support and endorsement to the matters set out in this Statement, to further enhance and ensure the delivery of our Council Strategy.

The Leader and Chief Executive confirm they have been advised of the implications of the review by the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, other senior management as well as the Audit & Governance Committee and are satisfied that the steps outlined in this document will ensure the governance arrangements in place are robust and fit for the future.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Review of the Effectiveness of the Council's Governance Framework

1. Introduction

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") require that:

- the Council must conduct a review, at least once a year, of the effectiveness of its system of internal control;
- findings of this review should be considered by the Council;
- the Council must approve an Annual Governance Statement; and
- the Annual Governance Statement must accompany the Statement of Accounts.

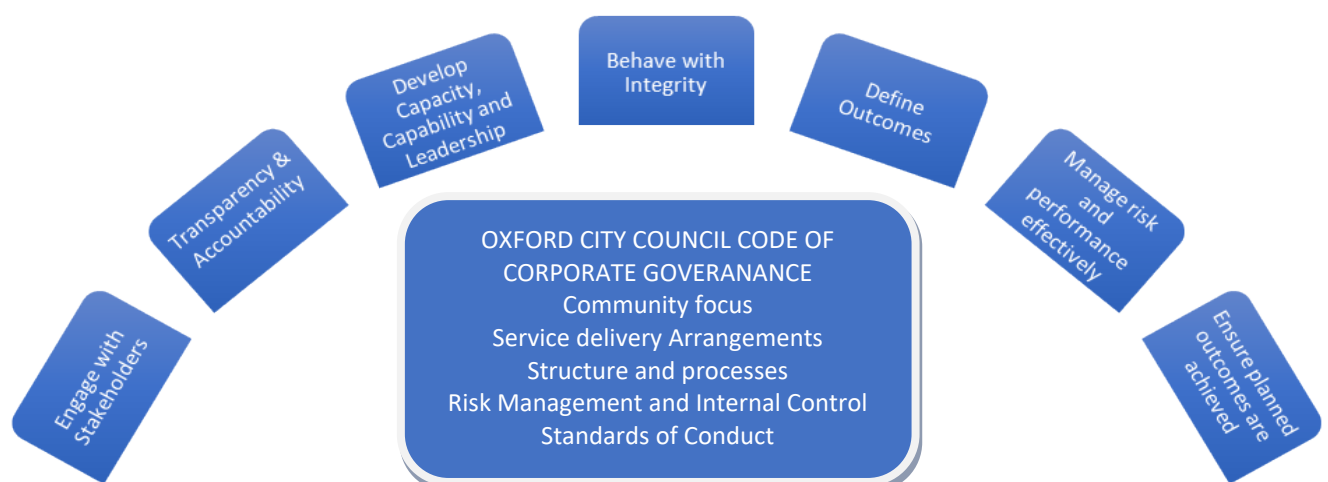
This statement is guided by CIPFA Bulletin 06 Application of the Good Governance Framework and describes the Council's governance framework, the steps taken to ensure that it is effective and establishes key actions that will be put in place to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of its arrangements.

Governance arrangements are reviewed and informed by senior officers, management, internal and external audit and review agencies. There is also strong corporate and political ownership and oversight, including through the Council's Statutory Officers.

Similar and proportionate oversight and governance arrangements apply to the Council's outsourced services, trading partnerships, shared service arrangements and arm's length bodies.

2. Governance Framework

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance sets out the principles the Council commits itself to in terms of its corporate governance arrangements and the steps it will take to enact them. They reflect the CIPFA/SoLACE Delivering Good Governance publication (2016) which defined the 7 core principles of good governance in the public sector:



The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is delivered via the Council's governance framework. The governance framework comprises the rules, systems, processes, cultures and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and various routes through which it accounts.

3. LGA Peer Review 2023

The Council invited in a Local Government Association (LGA) team to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in July 2023. This was the first peer review the Council has had for eight years, and its purpose was to assess the work of the Council, ODSL and Oxford City Housing Investment Ltd, trading as OX Place, and gather an independent view from those running other councils on where the Council is doing well and where and how it might be able to improve.

A Progress Review was conducted in April 2024 to update LGA Peers on progress made against the action plan and the LGA Peer Review's recommendations.

In October 2024, the then Head of Corporate Strategy submitted a report to update the Cabinet on the Council's Action Plan based on feedback and recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge feedback report of April 2024.

The Cabinet agreed to:

- note the progress and updates in the Council's Action Plan update.
- note the Local Government Peer Challenge feedback report of April 2024; and
- incorporate the remaining tasks in the Council's Action Plan and the Council's ongoing work, which was to be monitored by the Corporate Management team.

Local Government Association – Corporate Peer Challenge: [The Council's Action Plan update](#) (following the 9 April progress review).

4. Cyber Security

Steps were taken in 2024/2025 to strengthen the Council's cyber security, with mandatory training rolled out for staff on a range of topics such as password security, fishing emails and reporting suspicious activity. The Council invested in its cyber security software following audit recommendations and Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) was deployed.

Notwithstanding this, the Council was the victim of a cyber-attack in 2025/2026. A multi-disciplinary Cyber Incident Response Team was stood up, supported by external technical, communication and legal support. The Council implemented business continuity plans, with the immediate incident lasting a number of weeks before all systems were fully restored. A thorough post incident review has been completed resulting in a work programme of further improvements being instigated and along with additional resources as will be detailed in the AGS for the next financial year.

zHousing – Role as Social Housing Landlord

Oxford City Council, along with other local housing authorities, has faced a number of major challenges that stem from being the local housing authority and needing to respond to increases in housing demand and supply, as well as the obligations that it also has as a social housing landlord. This includes new challenges brought by the Regulator for Social Housing and its Consumer Standards all of which represent a significant shift towards proactive regulation, demanding greater accountability, tenant satisfaction, safety and transparency.

Following a pilot inspection by the Regulator in early 2024, significant improvement work was undertaken starting with a fundamental strategic review of the HRA Business Plan, the development of a new Asset Management Strategy alongside a comprehensive reset of our tenant involvement work to ensure the development of both formal and informal structures through which tenants are able to influence and scrutinise the landlord function. A comprehensive set of reports were approved by the Council's Cabinet in December 2024 which set out a clear direction of travel and further improvements to be made.

A Housing Board was established with senior and statutory officer representation to govern this ongoing work. The Board was established to:

- maintain key strategic overview of the Housing Programme that involves management of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business and associated strategies and policies, including quality & performance.
- oversee and steer the implementation and delivery of the overall Housing Delivery plan; and
- act as an advisory group and escalate key issues and decisions as appropriate

Reporting to the board are individual work streams which manage specific aspects of housing's work e.g. capital programmes, data quality, resident involvement are oversighted. As the Board embeds, its role will be reviewed and refined.

The [Annual Housing Complaint Performance](#) was the second report since the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code.

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, we handled the following number of complaints at Stage 1:

- Stage 1 Complaints Handled by the Council - 226 (134 in 2023-24)
- Stage 1 Complaints Handled by ODS - 188 (431 in 2023-24)
- Stage 1 Complaints Total - 414 (565 in 2023-24)

And the following at Stage 2:

- Stage 2 Complaints Handled by the Council - 38 (19 in 2023-24)
- Stage 2 Complaints Handled by ODS - 13 (11 in 2023-24)
- Stage 2 Complaints Total - 51 (30 in 2023-24)

Whilst complaints handled by the Council have risen by 68.7%, the overall number of complaints is lower than last year due to the considerable drop in complaints handled by ODS. This is as a result of realigning responsibility for complaints.

48.6% of Stage 1 complaints handled by the Council and 100% of Stage 1 complaints handled by ODS were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

83.8% of Stage 2 complaints handled by the Council and 100% of Stage 2 cases handled by ODS were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales

In 2024/25, we received 7 decisions from the Housing Ombudsman, made up of 5 determinations, 1 finding that it was outside of jurisdiction, and 1 case resolved with Ombudsman intervention prior to investigation.

Overall, on the points investigated within the determinations they found:

- 6 instances of service failure
- 3 instances of maladministration
- 1 instance of no maladministration
- 2 instances of reasonable redress

Across the Housing sector, there has been an increase in complaints received over the last few years, with the Housing Ombudsman reporting accepting more than double the number of cases for investigation in 2023/24 than they did in 2021/22.

5. Corporate Complaints

The Corporate complaints and housing complaints functions were separated out in April 2024 in line with guidance and best practice and reflective of the fact that each regime has its own ombudsman.

Corporate Complaints in 2024/2025 were subject to a refresh with a session being held for all staff which outlined what a complaint was and the process and requirements.

The introduction of recording and responding to complaints using our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has provided great benefits, and we are continuing to make modifications to our systems and processes to gain better insight into the types of complaints we receive and the residents we serve, as well as monitoring learning and outcomes. This should enable us to provide greater insight moving forward, and we already have much more data available to us than we have previously.

The Corporate complaints process was updated and adopted in August 2024 to reflect the Ombudsman guidance. A policy is in development for complaints to supplement this which will be adopted in 2006/2027.

A Vexatious Citizen Policy was introduced in line with the Local Government Ombudsman and Information Commissioners Officer guidance to ensure a clear and robust process for dealing with citizens who meet the thresholds set out therein and setting out clear expectations of the Council as to unacceptable treatment of Staff and Councillors.

There has been some delay in responses to corporate complaints which is currently being addressed. An action plan is in place to deal with the backlog and also to ensure that new complaints are dealt with in a timely manner. The issue has arisen primarily due to staff absences. A focused review of the service is planned to improve overall process and resilience.

6. Information Governance

Our FOI Team (“the Team”) has been built on a comprehensive transformation initiative which had the primary goal of enhancing the efficiency of processes within the FOI function. The overarching objective was to elevate our on-time response rate by addressing inefficiencies that had previously hindered our performance.

The transformation initiative focused on process improvement, enhanced documentation, and the introduction of new technology to centralise our case management system. Notable changes included the introduction of new email and document templates, expediting response creation times. Workbasket filters were implemented to facilitate team workload prioritisation, while automatic reminders were introduced to minimise the need for manual follow-ups on contribution requests.

Additionally, a new disclosure log aimed at enhancing citizen experience and reducing FOI requests was implemented. The performance of the Team in terms of the timeliness of responses to FOI requests is published on the Council’s website.

As a result of these changes, significant improvements were achieved.

- Timeliness rates surged as a result and were maintained over the course of the year despite an increase in the volume of requests received over the course of the year.
- Time spent on sending out contribution requests to colleagues was halved.
- The volume of contributions requiring follow-up further decreased.

The Team also rolled out and promoted a new FOI training module to everyone in the organisation and implemented a refreshed Freedom of Information Policy.

Data Protection Audits by the team and the Internal Auditor have been conducted in 2024/2025 going into 2025/2026, which have identified concerns over corporate record keeping in relation to retention schedules, Records of Processing Activity and data sharing logs. These have been reviewed, updated and also challenged in the various service areas as a result of the cyber incident in 2025. They will be finalised early in 2026 with a programme of regular review being established.

In terms of corporate performance on Information Governance In 2023/2024:

FOIA/EIR

- we received 954 FOIA/EIR requests, an average of 80 a month;
- 44 of the requests were subject to an internal review;

- 13 of the requests were referred to the Information Commissioners Officer, though 5 of those pertained to one individual and one topic.

There is a small increase in requests, but overall the work remains static and compliance with the statutory deadlines for responses are well met.

Data Protection

- There were 81 data incidents/breaches (two of which were serious enough to be referred to the ICO).
- The Council had 138 Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR).
- Only one Data Subject Access Request was subject to an internal review.

This is an increase on the previous years in terms of DSAR and also breaches, though the number reported to the ICO remains unchanged. In the coming year there will be a refresh of training, with all staff required to attend, and then a development of new targeted training modules to address common issues arising and specific areas of the council with additional risks and responsibilities.

7. Health and Safety

New governance arrangements for the Council's Health and Safety Management were introduced and are now in place with oversight by specific boards with the relevant senior managers and operational staff in attendance to challenge and monitor.

Governance arrangements are currently under review for the Council's wholly owned companies to improve oversight and monitoring of health and safety management and key performance indicators and address any gaps.

The Health and Safety Policy has been recently updated, and a new health and safety system has been procured to better support managers and reporting.

Quarterly reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team ("the CLT") is working well and has led to improved engagement with health and safety across the organisation.

There has been a focus on rolling out targeted staff training and ensuring mandatory training is undertaken by all staff through the new health and safety system and this continues to be reviewed, with refresher training required at appropriate intervals.

8. Homelessness and Housing Needs including Temporary Accommodation

In response to the need to respond to increases in housing demand and supply the Council has developed and is delivering a comprehensive temporary accommodation mitigation strategy to manage the demand, supply and financial implications linked to the provision of temporary accommodation.

This has included building up an increased supply of private sector leases to manage the demand, developing a comprehensive framework for procuring additional accommodation as well as investing in prevention services and rapid move-on services.

Over the coming year, a refreshed mitigation plan will be implemented which goes even further to meet the increasing demand.

9. Procurement

The Council has established a Procurement Board (“the Board”), attended by key senior officers and specialist, as a platform/forum for sharing, learning, and collaborating amongst procurement, commercial and commissioning professionals who are subject to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and who are also now subject to the new procurement regime – Public Procurement Act 2023 (Public Procurement Regulations 2024).

The Board’s purpose is to enhance procurement capability through peer support, by ensuring that new best practice is created and shared, challenges are discussed, and trends and risks are identified and addressed.

The Procurement Team adopted a Business Partnering Model during 2025 with the aim of supporting the Council in the transition to the Public Procurement Act 2023 (the Act), and the many requirements of the Act (17 Notices) giving regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement, pipeline identification, contract management, social value, transparency requirements to name but a few.

A new draft procurement Strategy has been developed which will be presented to Cabinet in December 2025.

10. Council Owned Companies

The Council has three wholly owned companies, Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL), Oxford Direct Trading Services Limited (ODSTL) and Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL).

OCHL has two wholly owned subsidiaries, Oxford City Housing Development Limited (OCH(D)L) and Oxford City Housing Investment Limited (OCH(I)L), trading as OX Place although following the transfer of all properties held in OCH(I)L to the Council, this subsidiary is currently dormant.

In addition, the Council has a 50% share in the joint venture entities, Oxford West End Development Limited in partnership with Nuffield College for the development of land at Oxpens and Barton LLP in partnership with Grosvenor Developments for the development of social and market housing on land previously held by the Council at Barton.

Governance arrangements are in place for the companies and partnerships with the Council as Shareholder, with a dedicated part of the Finance and Performance Working Group (or the Scrutiny Committee) and feedback taken to the shareholder meetings (SHJVG). Non-Executive Directors were for each company, appointed against a job description which sought to secure board members with appropriate skill sets for the nature of the particular entity. The Shareholder role is performed by some members of the Cabinet collectively appointed to the relevant Shareholder Committee.

In light of the Local Partnerships Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023 a review was undertaken in relation to the Articles and Shareholder Agreement of ODS and ODSTL, a review of Ox Place's governance documentation will commence in this coming municipal year (2026/2027).

Other areas of practice, whilst adequate, have been identified for improvement with a work plan in draft for the financial year 2024/2025. The areas of focus are as follows.

	At present	Improvements planned / in progress 2024/2025
Scrutiny Function	The Scrutiny Committee is now involved in the process for shareholder decision making (via the Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)) and matters proceed to the Scrutiny Committee prior to the SHJVG for consideration as the Committee determine.	The Scrutiny function will continue as it has this last municipal year. Work is required with the companies to ensure that decisions and update reports are on the forward plan in a timeframe to allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider the matters it may want to have before it.
Intelligent Client	The Council has had a light touch approach to clienting, which is historic from when the entities were established. This has presented some questions this year in terms of issues that have arisen in the services provided to the Council. The Council has recognised the need to review this to strengthen clienting of services commissioned by the council. Arrangements have been strengthened this year in relation to works contracts that the Council has with ODSL to ensure robust oversight of the CDM compliance by the Council and ODSL.	A clienting review and, in time, review of the contractual arrangements is underway. This will establish a framework for intelligent clienting, specifically, to enable challenge of the entity, holding it to account using performance data to ensure there is clarity about what is being provided for the Council and whether it meets expectations. Reviews of specifications of services and KPIs will take place to ensure that they adequately describe the service being provided to the Council. Client managers have been appointed for all service areas and monthly meetings are held between client and ODSL managers to discuss operational matters with highlight reports being reported

	At present	Improvements planned / in progress 2024/2025
		to a monthly Strategic Companies Board.
Company Governance Documentation	The Council has in place shareholder agreements with each entity that set out matters reserved to the Council as shareholder, including things such as Non-Executive Director (NED) appointments. The companies have adopted articles which are broadly the same across the entities. As part of the company governance review these have been amended for ODSTL and ODSL.	OCHL governance documents review will take place during the coming municipal year (2026/2027) and thereafter there will be regular reviews of each. This will include consideration against those of ODSTL/ODSL and the best practice guidance issued by Local Partnerships.
Statutory Officers	The Council's Statutory Officers, or their representative, attend the SHJVG meetings. The Monitoring Officer and S151 (or their deputy) advise the SHJVG at the meetings as required. The S151 and Monitoring Officer have pre-publication sight of reports via the Corporate Leadership Team. The S151 and Monitoring Officer provide commentary to the SHJVG on reports as part of the agenda pack. In line with best practice the Chief Executive meets with the Managing Director (or equivalent) and Chair of the Board of the companies on a regular basis.	There is a need to refine the pathways for shareholder decision making to ensure that the Council officers are in receipt of the papers in advance of them being sent for decision so that there can be a proper consideration of them.
Business Case	When creating an entity, a business case is produced and presented to the Cabinet.	Best practice suggests that the business cases of each entity should be reviewed

	At present	Improvements planned / in progress 2024/2025
	This will include detail on all the implications, responsibilities, risks and benefits of establishing the entity. No entity will be considered without a business case. Through the business case the Council has a clear understanding of what it wants to achieve by establishing an entity and is able to articulate clearly what success looks like in terms of achieving social outcomes and a return on investment.	periodically. This has not been undertaken since the entities were established. It is proposed to review the business case for the entities, but this will tie in with other connected areas of work, such as the consideration of the structure of the housing group of companies. There will then need to be agreement on a regular basis for reviewing them moving forward.
Conflict Management	The Council ensures that no Statutory Officers are on the board of any entity. The Council and each entity has a code of conduct and policy on conflicts of interest. The selection of NEDs from officers in the Council will be made regarding their responsibilities in post and the possibility of a conflict arising.	Training should be arranged on a regular basis for all NEDs on directors' duties and conflicts of interest. Guidance should be produced for council officers specifically in relation to interaction with the Council's companies and conflicts of interest. This should be mirrored in the entities.
Board performance	The Council has an updated Job Description for its NEDs as of 2024. This has been used in the latest round of recruitment. It reflects the skills and qualities needed for an effective NED of the Council's companies. There are regular 121's and performance reviews with the chair of the relevant board.	The boards of ODSTL and ODSL have been refreshed in 2025 and composition addressed so that there is a minimum of 50% NEDs. The Board of OCHL will be refreshed in Early 2026 when the currently serving NEDs' terms come to an end.

The current business plan for OCHL expires in 2034 due to a declining development programme on existing planned sites and a lack of further pipeline. The Council and the company have jointly procured external consultants to consider the best future options for the company including what changes may need to be instigated to secure the way forward.

Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive, as the Head of Paid Service, is responsible for the overall corporate and operational management of the Council. These responsibilities have been considered within the context of this Statement and the Chief Executive can confirm that proper arrangements have been put in place for the overall operation and management of the Council.

The Chief Executive has no significant concerns to report and continues to evolve the senior management structure and organisational strategy to align responsibilities and resources to deliver the Council's ambitions and priorities.

S151 Officer

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Council's financial, risk, and control framework, ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making and the administration of financial affairs, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

These responsibilities have been considered within the context of this Statement and the Chief Finance Officer can confirm that the Council's arrangements conform to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the Council complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government (2016).

A significant part of the conformity review relates to financial control the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Council's Statement of Accounts. Financial controls are monitored and maintained by the Management Accounts Team acting in a business partnering role with service directors and operational managers. Other staff in the Financial Services Team ensure there are appropriate controls in place that are adhered to for processes such as procurement, ordering and payment for goods and services, collection of income and the security of assets terms. Assessment of the design of the control framework and the effectiveness of these controls is subject to continuance assessment by the Council's internal auditors BDO, more detail on which is given below. Reports from the auditors are regularly presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on areas subject to audit and recommendations from these reports tracked until they have been implemented in full.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan set for 2024-25 in February 2024 provided a balanced budget for the year as well as the following 3 years. General Fund revenue outturn for the year is shown as a £2.3 million deficit around £1.2 million adverse to budget. The forecast General Fund revenue outturn for 2025-26 currently indicates an adverse variance of around £700k. The Council's balanced MTFP for the four-year period commencing 1-4-2026 is about to be submitted to Cabinet in December 2025, although in reality the Council's future beyond April 2028 is uncertain, given the upcoming Local Government Review. Notwithstanding this, the Council's level of reserves in the opinion of the Section 151 Officer are adequate for foreseeable future.

The Statement of Accounts for 2024-25, accompanying this statement, will continue to be disclaimed by the Council's auditors. In 2022-23 and 2021-22 the auditors did not have sufficient time to complete the audit and consequently were unable to express an opinion to comply with the Government backstop dates for reporting of December 2024. The accounts for 2023-24 were finalised and audited by the backstop date of February 2025 albeit with a disclaimed opinion. It is expected that Ernst and Young, in order to meet the February 2026 backstop date will once again issue a disclaimed opinion for the 2024-25 Statements, given the balances brought forward from prior years have been disclaimed. This process is likely to continue for the next few years.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer is required to report to the council in any case where it appears that any proposal, decision, or omission by the authority has given rise to or is likely to or would give rise to any contravention of any enactment, rule of law or code of practice or maladministration or injustice in accordance with Sections 5 and 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; (LGHA 89).

These responsibilities have been considered within the context of this Statement and the Monitoring Officer has no significant concerns to report for the period 2024/2025.

The Monitoring Officer has reported to the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) on two occasions a data breach, against which no further action has been taken by the ICO. Suggested courses of actions from the ICO together with learning and improvements have been implemented as a consequence of each, within the relevant department and corporately.

Because of the cyber-attack that the Council was victim to in 2025, a report to the ICO was made and this is still in progress in terms of ICO consideration. This will be reported in the 2025/2026 Annual Governance Statement, along with resulting actions, but is of note at this stage.

The Monitoring Officer also has no significant concerns regarding overall Member conduct however there have been three complaints this year that have proceeded to a hearing and with a finding of breach. Training sessions have been held during the year for Members of the council and were updated to be more interactive, with positive feedback. Overall, however, there has continued to be a relatively low number of complaints alleging a breach of the Member Code of Conduct during the past year which have all been dealt with in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures for handling such complaints.

The Monitoring Officer also considers that the Council has an effective Standards Committee which reviews a regular report at each of their meetings on the progress of the code of conduct complaints. That said the procedures for dealing with standards complaints are due a review to address some issues that have arisen in light of the three matters that proceeded to hearings.

The refresh of the governance around the forward plan and report pathways and templates has been positive in terms of improving decision making however there remains work to be done. We have seen a reduction in urgent decisions, which was a concern of the Scrutiny Committee and Leader, and we continue to ensure this is the case.

The constitution has had an annual review and been updated also on a responsive basis as needs arise. It will have its annual review in 2026/2027, including a review of the member standards procedures.

There was an increase in urgent and urgent key decisions during 2024/2025 which were subject to a report to the Council's Scrutiny Committee. These are reported to Council as taken, and taken in line with the Constitution. Work has been undertaken to ensure that urgent decisions are kept to a minimum and the Forward Plan was refreshed to be clearer and easier to use, with automated forms for submission. It is reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), in order to ensure senior oversight and capture any that may be missing. This has seen a reduction in urgent decisions and removal of call in.

Report templates were reviewed and refreshed to ensure that they were capturing all the information required in decision making, including bringing in a link to the Forward Plan and ensuring exempt papers are individually exempted and explained. This includes the introduction of a Delegated Decision template for publication of key decisions and those delegated to officers other than in the constitution. This has increased clarity around who is taking decisions and why.

Opinion of Internal Audit

In July 2025 the Council's internal auditors, BDO, presented their Internal Audit Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2024-25 to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee. In their report the auditor provided

'Moderate assurance that there is a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives, that controls are being applied consistently across various services, with some levels of non-compliance'.

This opinion is in line with previous opinion from the internal auditor.

12. Review of Effectiveness

The Council has a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the systems of internal control. After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its governance arrangements and systems of control are robust and reflect the principles of the Code of Corporate Governance.

There is a clear separation of powers within the Council between the Leader and the Cabinet (the Executive) and the full Council. Both entities have a number of sub-groups and committees which have tailored rules and delegations in the Constitution relating to their governance.

Overall the Council is satisfied it has robust internal controls in place, good governance practices and is assured that the Code of Corporate Governance is working effectively.

Overall rating*	Strengths	What needs attention
Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
	• Demonstrable consistent implementation and use of the Code of Conduct for members • Code of Conduct training undertaken by councillors post May elections in a revised format which increased engagement and participation and was well received. • Parish Councils invited to attend the Code of Conduct training. • 6 Independent Persons were appointed in 2025, compared to the previous two.	• Guidance and clarity provided within the organisation on who can seal and sign documents with the introduction of electronic signature solutions due in 2026. • With the amendment to the Council's Contract Rules there is a need to develop a section specifically outlining property and grants rules and these will be removed from the Contract Rules as it is not the right place for them. • The Governance review of OCHL will need to be undertaken upon the appointment of a Company Secretary. • The process for officer declaration of gifts, hospitality and conflicts of interests needs to be reviewed in terms of where and how matters are registered by staff and how this connects to requirements under the Procurement Act 2023. • A review of the arrangements for dealing with Member Code of Conduct complaints will be carried out in 2026 • Governance Training to be introduced and made mandatory with the introduction of a new e-learning system in 2026.

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

	- Residents Survey Results demonstrate improved satisfaction with area as a place to live, with how the council runs things and how the council keeps residents informed. - We have engaged public and stakeholders extensively this year in the development of proposals for future unitary councils under local government reorganization. - We have reset our relationship with tenants and leaseholders, co-designing a new Resident Involvement Strategy that sets out a wide range of actions to further ensure transparency and accountability of services to residents. This includes the establishment of a new Tenant and Leaseholder Board. - Utilisation of the Council's online Residents' Panel - a group of c1000 residents providing feedback on various topics, including the Council's current work, services, and broader issues. The independently managed panel is broadly representative of the population to ensure diverse voices are heard. - The Council is involved in a number of active strategic partnerships working together at all levels – from large anchor institutions to small community groups. Including: - Oxford Strategic Partnership - Oxfordshire Joint Leaders Committee (previously Future Oxfordshire Partnership) - Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing and Health Improvement Boards - Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board	- Embedding formal arrangements for tenant involvement in governance of the HRA and landlord services via the Tenant and Leaseholder Board. - There will be extensive stakeholder and public engagement in development of proposals for LGR. - Joint work with other councils to liaise and manage data exchange will be required to develop the LGR proposals. This will be overseen collectively by the Chief Executives.

	• Oxford Youth Partnership Board • Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership • Oxford Localities Forum Meetings • Oxford Community Safety Partnership • Fast Growth Cities Group • Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership • Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership • Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership • Oxford Economic Growth Steering Group • University and Innovation Partnerships • Councillor representation on community groups • District Councils Network • Local Government Association • Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership • Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board	
Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefit		
	• The Council's Strategy sets out objectives and outcomes and outlines the planned work against five priorities: ◦ Good, affordable homes ◦ Strong, fair economy ◦ Thriving Communities ◦ Zero Carbon Oxford City Council. ◦ Well Run Council • A review and refinement of the existing policy and strategy development toolkit was undertaken and implemented. • The Council has a suite of 18 quantifiable corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure delivery of the Council Strategy.	• There will be a review and refinement of the role and membership of the Policy Officers group in 2026/2027. The People Strategy has been reviewed and updated for 2024- 2026. One of its objectives remains to support local communities by working with local schools and promote apprenticeship opportunities. This supports delivery of the Council's social value commitments. In addition, we have procured local suppliers to deliver training programmes. • Procurement processes support the securing of social value on appropriate

	• In addition to these corporate KPIs, the Council sets 105 operational KPIs that are reviewed regularly by the Corporate Management Team. Many of these tracking operational metrics are reported as part of regular performance updates to Finance & Performance Scrutiny, the annual Business Plan and the budget process. • The Council's People Strategy 2024 reinforces the corporate aims of putting the citizen at the heart of what we do as an entity. • The Council has voluntarily adopted the Socio-Economic Duty to help: ○ Reduce inequality ○ Promote fairness Enhance inclusive decision making	procurements and Match My Project platform is being used to match needs with offers of support.
	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	
		• LGR will require new programmes of work to prepare for mobilisation and implementation, these need leadership and resourcing and will be carefully planned to minimise disruption to delivery of BAU, service improvements and planned projects.

	Developing the entity's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	
	• Clear standards are in place for managers and leaders across the organisation • Management development for 150 managers at all levels has been delivered to build a culture where high performance is both motivated and managed • The annual staff survey measures employee satisfaction with their immediate manager and the leadership of the authority • Opportunities for development through secondment is supported • An aspiring manager programme is designed to develop future leaders and is a positive action initiative to improve the diversity of colleagues in management and leadership roles • The Councillor Induction Programme was updated and expanded to include additional support on key issues affecting the Councillor role, as well as providing clarification on the expected standards of behaviour of councillors. • Our People Strategy was refreshed in 2024 and takes into account the current challenges facing the Council, and sets objectives designed to build a high performing organisation that meets the needs of the community it serves. The People Strategy also aims to support the Council's planned work against its five priorities. • Mandatory training for Councillors reviewed and refreshed, with format of delivery being reviewed	• Following the Senior Management Restructure further leadership development work with CLT and senior managers will take place to support greater delegation of operational decision making and create opportunities for progression. • Leading through change will need to be a focus of leadership development to ensure we are prepared for LGR and that staff are in the best possible position to benefit from opportunities that arise. • Introductory workshops for new managers will be implemented, with an opportunity for existing managers to attend for a refresh • A review is ongoing of councillor development and training non-mandatory. This will focus on providing councillors with the training needed to undertake their role and targeted where required particularly in relation to regulatory, corporate, wellbeing and safety priorities. It will also focus on encouraging engagement with sessions by councillors.
	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	

• A balanced four-year medium term financial plan with robust scrutiny from Corporate Leadership Team and Scrutiny members • Regular financial reporting to CLT and Members • Regular risk monitoring, supported by a Risk Management Group and reporting of risks to Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet • Oversight of the financial performance of companies and regular catch up with Company Finance Directors • Independent commentary by Statutory Officers on reports from Companies and joint entities presented to shareholders • Operational and corporate KPIs dashboard regularly reviewed by CMT • Regular review by Audit and Governance Committee of internal audit reports and the implementation of recommendations • Moderate internal audit assurance opinion from internal auditors i.e. no major weaknesses in the internal control systems • Compliance with the Government backstop dates for the presentation of audit opinions on the Statement of Accounts and this Annual Governance Statement alongside that • The Corporate Leadership team undertook a piece of work to fundamentally review our corporate risk register to ensure it is strategic and cross-cutting. Some which were considered to be service-related measures were placed in service risk registers and KPIs were reviewed and updated.	• There will be continued adherence to policies and procedures in order to ensure good financial management and internal control across the authority. • Review and refresh of cost centre management guidance and training including the use of key financial systems • Review of Corporate Credit Card use and embed approval process in organisation. • The Corporate Dashboard will be refreshed to improve CLT oversight of performance, risk and escalation.

Implementing good practices in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

	• Legislative requirements for meeting papers adhered to for all committees • Clear policies on access to information for members • FOIA and DSAR response times remain consistently within the statutory limits • Good practice in publishing officer / delegated decisions, with all delegated decisions being published correctly and any key decisions being added to the Forward Plan in good time with an improvement in the year on reduction in urgent decisions which were avoidable. • Disclosure log now in place and updated with FOIA releases • Forward plan now included SHJVG matters • Scrutiny by members to ensure management are held to account to its electorate for the financial stewardship of funds and operation of processes. This includes a monthly committee and three specialised working groups to provide scrutiny of three strategic areas for the Council • Implemented processes and templates to ensure that the exemption of documents from published decision making is properly done and justified.	• Work is continuing to review and publish internally departmental schemes of delegation • Earlier engagement of wide-reaching reports to the Scrutiny Committee to be reviewed to ensure more focussed and engaged feedback and any amendments can be included before submission to Cabinet or Council. • Add to the forward plan decisions to be taken at Audit and Governance and Licensing Committees to ensure senior leadership has oversight of decisions and relevant matters • Review the access to information policy for members

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	There are sound policies and processes in place which are working across services that provide for good governance arrangements and support compliance with the requirements of this principle and the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. There may be minor areas for continuous improvement, but these do not represent a significant or material risk to the Council's overall governance framework.
	Whilst there are policies and processes in place, there are some areas which remain a challenge for the Council or require further improvement, which may impact the effectiveness of elements of the Council's Governance Arrangements, compliance with this principle and achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. The Council has in place an action plan to address challenges and improvement matters

The Council has significant challenges in relation to the policies and processes which may impact the effectiveness of elements of the Council's Governance Arrangements, compliance with this principle and achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. We have implemented plans for corrective actions to manage these risks

Action Plan 24/25

Action to be taken	Lead Officer	Reporting / Monitoring
Review of the governance documents and arrangements for OCHL group	Emma Jackman	SHJVG / CMT & A&G
Review of the Money Laundering Policy	Nigel Kennedy	A&G October 2024
Review of the Risk Management Strategy	Nigel Kennedy	Cabinet / CMT & A&G
Deliver a plan to support the new competency and conduct standard for Social Housing being introduced in October 2026. (covered below by Nerys?)	Gail Malkin	Cabinet/ CLT
Each Service Area to develop and publish on the intranet their own scheme of delegation for powers flowing to them from Cabinet and/or Council	Each Head of Service	Cabinet / CMT & A&G
Review and refine the existing policy and strategy development toolkit by August 2026	Lucy Cherry	CMT
Implement our comprehensive action plans for transforming the organisation, operation and governance of all aspects of our housing services, controlling and driving down our temporary accommodation, as well as ensuring compliance with the Consumer Standards and Social Housing Act in our role as a social housing landlord	Nerys Parry	Cabinet / CMT
Continue through the Procurement Board to review of the Council's processes and procedures	Annette Osborne	CMT
Review guidance documents for all processes	Annette Osborne	CMT
Work with legal to finalise the tender documents for all processes (RFQ's, ITT's, CFP, Assessment summaries, evaluation matrices)	Annette Osborne	CMT
Deliver Contract Management Training	Annette Osborne	CMT
Deliver Evaluation Training	Annette Osborne	CMT
Work with legal to finalise new sets of terms and conditions with guidance as to how each set should be used	Annette Osborne	CMT
Complete the refresh of the Service KPI reporting and process	Mish Tullar	CMT
Continue to build capability for adoption of new technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence, and business transformation to drive efficiency and effectiveness	Gail Malkin	CMT
Review Councillor development and training	Jonathan Malton	Standards Committee
Prepare for compliance with the new Employment Rights Bill	Gail Malkin	CLT

Action to be taken	Lead Officer	Reporting / Monitoring
Prepare the organisation for LGR through individual development, resource management challenges and preparedness for change.	Gail Malkin	CLT
Implement the 2024 to 2026 revised People Strategy	Gail Malkin	CLT
Senior Management Review	Caroline Green	
Review and produce complaints policies for corporate and housing related complaints	Tom Hook / Nerys Parry	CLT / Cabinet
Constitutional Amendments		
Review of arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints	Emma Jackman	Standards Committee
Annual Review to be undertaken and signing of agreements governance to be reviewed upon the implementation of e-signature solutions	Emma Jackman	Council / CMT
Develop a section specifically outlining property and grants rules	Emma Jackman	Council / CMT
Refresh the Whistleblowing Policy	Emma Jackman	Council / CMT

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OXFORD
CITY COUNCIL

**Code of Corporate
Governance**

2024

Introduction

This Code of Corporate Governance (“the Code”) outlines the Council’s systems, processes and standards of behaviour that deliver good governance, detailing the elements and mechanisms that ensure and demonstrates the Council’s commitment to the principles of good governance.

Good governance enables the Council to deliver its outcomes whilst always acting in the public interest.

The Code forms part of the Council’s Governance Framework and, in conjunction with other things such as the Annual Governance Statement and Constitutional Review, provides a cycle of continuous improvement of governance.

This Code sets out for Oxford City Council:

1. Its Corporate Governance Principles
2. How the Council’s Governance Framework meets the Principles
3. How the Council ensures review and maintenance of the Code of Corporate Governance.

The Code does not assess the Council’s performance against this Framework, which is undertaken as part of the preparation of the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.

Corporate Governance Principles

Good Corporate Governance is about the Council ensuring it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

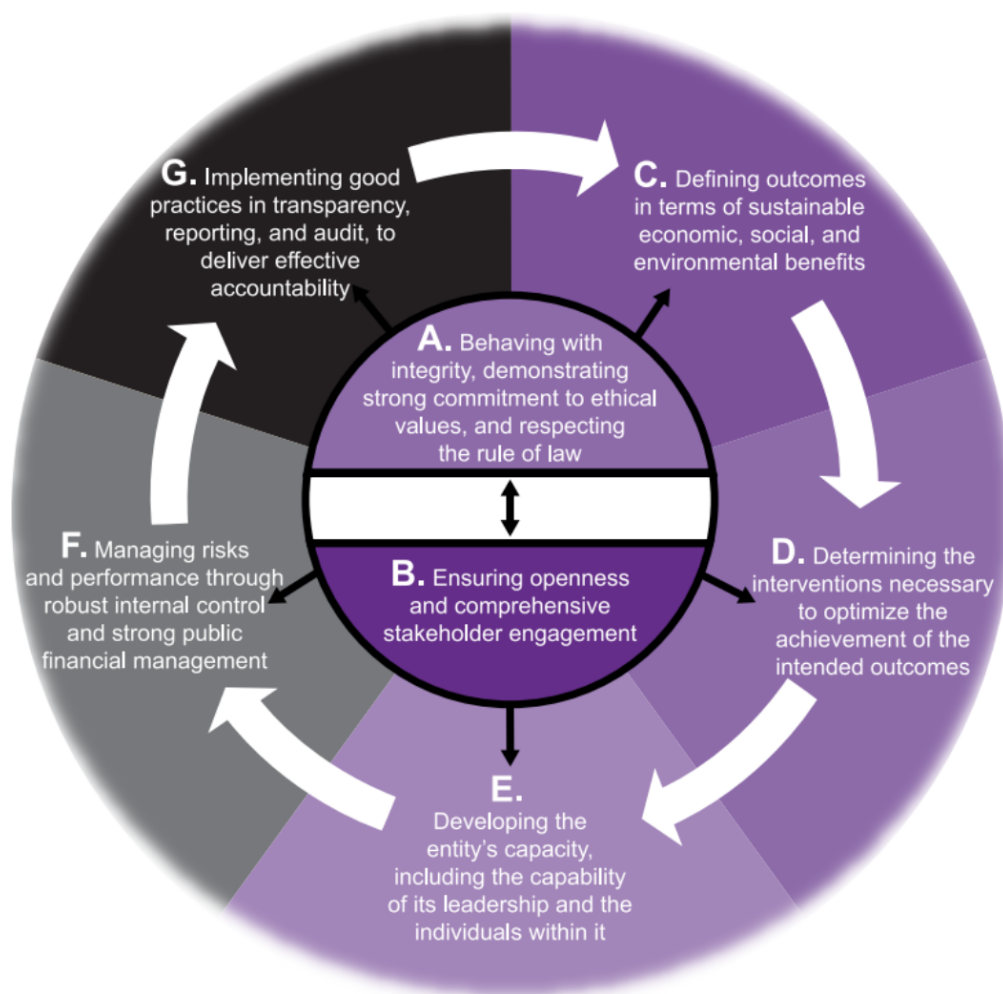
As has been seen in many examples of intervention across the sector, poor governance in a council is likely to have a detrimental impact on the Council’s ability to deliver best value in carrying out its functions.

To that end good governance is vital in contributing to effective:

- leadership and management;
- performance and risk management;
- stewardship of public money; and
- public engagement and outcomes for our citizens and service users.

The “Delivering Good Governance Local Government Framework” produced by CIPFA in conjunction with SOLACE (the CIPFA Framework) establishes seven principles of good governance. Through the adoption of this Code the Council is setting out its commitment to upholding these principles of good governance.

The CIPFA Framework establishes the following 7 principles:



How the Council ensures it meets the Corporate Governance Principles

The Council has established the key documents and bodies set out in Appendix 1 to this Code, each of which is integral to the delivery of good governance throughout the Council and its decision making.

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

Behaving with integrity

- Our Constitution: Clearly setting out the roles and responsibilities of members and key officers individually and collectively whilst defining the organisation's approach this is the key document for the Council when looking to what it can do and how. Officers and members are guided by the Constitution and put its rules in to practice in decision making.

- The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and developing high standards of conduct Council wide.
- Key policies including the Whistleblowing Policy, Codes of Conduct, Anti-Bribery Policy (see Appendix 1) all ensure clear and transparent processes and decision making where concerns are raised or issues arise in terms of conduct of officers and members and set expectations as to behaviour, along with the process for upholding those expectations.
- Members are required to register interests and gifts/ hospitality: the register of members' interests and the details of gifts/ hospitality are published on the Council's website and members are required to declare any relevant interests at formal meetings. Officers are required to submit declarations of interests and a register is published on the council's website on a quarterly basis of gifts and hospitality offered to officers.
- The Council has a zero tolerance policy towards bribery, fraud and corruption as reflected in its policies and procedures.
- The Member Development Programme includes training for Members on their roles and responsibilities in relation to integrity and conduct.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- Oxford City Council has adopted and embedded in all its relevant policies the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) which officers and members are expected to adhere to.
- The Council's Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy details our commitment to equality and our expectations of all colleagues, members and relevant third parties and sets out the actions the Council will take to tackle and address inequality.

Respecting the rule of law

- The statutory roles of the Head of Paid Services, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer are clearly defined within the Constitution.
- The Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising on the correctness and propriety of the Council's decisions and provides advice to ensure that council decision-making follows relevant regulations and legal processes.
- The Monitoring Officer as the Council's Data Protection Officer and having responsibility for information governance for the Council ensures that the Council complies with the Data Protection and information access legislation.

- The Committee and Member Services Team ensures that all decisions are taken in accordance with the legislation and constitution, that meetings are lawfully convened and papers available in line with legal requirements.
- The Council's financial rules set out the responsibility and accountability of officers for financial matters. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring they are followed and implemented.
- The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for financial management and recommending any actions needed accordingly. It receives regular reports from external and internal audit and on risk management arrangements and it approves the Council's Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the annual Statement of Accounts.
- Contract rules reflect the legal position with regards to the letting and tendering of contracts by the Council. This is overseen and monitored by the Section 151 Officer who is responsible for the Procurement Services Team.
- The Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that budget calculations are robust, reserves adequate and in accordance with CIPFA guidance and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate management accounting systems, functions and controls are in place and kept under regular review.
- Health and Safety is subject to an adopted policy that is reviewed regularly, with a governance process around health and safety that ensures corporate and service level oversight.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness

- Reports and decisions of the Cabinet, the Council and its committees are published online.
- Call-in is applicable to executive decisions, key decisions taken by officers, ward member spend decisions and decisions of the planning department and Planning Committee are subject to the call-in process by backbench councillors to enable them to raise any concerns they may have.
- Council, Cabinet, SHJVG and Committee meetings are webcast, and an archive of meetings is available online and (for more historical records) at the Town Hall for inspection.

- A Disclosure Log is updated with regularly published information and also any published because of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests.
- A forward plan of decisions for Cabinet, key decisions of officers, decisions to be taken by the Council and the SHJVG is maintained and published at least one month in advance.
- All governance and decision-making arrangements are set out in the Constitution, including terms of reference for decision making committees, which is available online.
- The Statement of Accounts provides the financial backdrop to the past achievements of the Council, future plans and forward strategy. As part of this document, the Council publishes its accounts to communicate the authority's activities, achievements, its financial position and performance.
- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is refreshed each year as part of budget setting. It sets out the Council's financial objectives, assumptions, and plans over the medium term, including the dividend assumptions of the Council's wholly owned companies.
- An annual report of the Scrutiny Committee is produced each year, which outlines the work of the Committee in the preceding year.
- The Council reviews and reports against its Best Value Performance across various reports throughout each year and not through one all-encompassing review. This includes monthly finance and performance reports to the CMT, quarterly Financial & Performance Monitoring reports to the Cabinet via Overview and Scrutiny, the Council's Business Plan, annual updates on the Council's Corporate Strategy and agreed KPI's, as well as the Annual Statement of Accounts and budget setting process.

Engaging comprehensively with Stakeholders (non-citizens)

The Council is actively involved with a number of strategic partnerships as set out in Appendix 1. as set out in Appendix 1.

The Council recognises that it cannot work in isolation and actively engages through trusted community networks to help with outreach work. The Oxford Community Champions bring together people from diverse communities and backgrounds in the city, working as a collective to build strong local services and community cohesion.

The Council actively engages with anchor organisations, which play a crucial role in co-creating practical and replicable solutions that address the needs of the communities they represent in Oxford communities. For example:

- Asylum Welcome
- Turning Point

- Lived experience Advisory Forum (LEAF)
- Transition Lighthouse
- Refugee Resource
- African Families in the UK (AFiUK)
- Oxford Community Action (OCA).

There are several organisations which are independent of the Council but have an impact on its service areas. Representatives of the Council, usually elected councillors, sit on the various responsible committees and fora. Further detail is provided on the Council's website.

In July 2023, the Council invited a Local Government Association team for its first Corporate Peer Review in eight years. The review assessed the Council, ODSL, and OX Place, providing independent insights on their performance and areas for improvement. In April 2024, a Progress Review updated the LGA Peer Team on advancements made against the Plan and their recommendations.

Engaging comprehensively with Citizens and tenants

- The Council's Citizen and Community Engagement Policy sets out how the Council engages with its citizens and communities in decision making. The policy provides the framework for how the Council engages with its citizens and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs and facilitate inclusive and meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect them.
- The budget setting proposals are consulted on annually before the budget is set.
- The Council also consults citizens, or subsets of the public, on twenty or so other matters each year. While an online consultation portal forms the main platform for engagement, this is often supplemented by additional feedback gathered from face-to-face, email, and telephone contact.
- The Council invites participation on Talkback panels and by publishing Your Oxford.

Both statutory and non-statutory consultations are undertaken with the public and/or tenants to ensure their participation and involvement in any decision making proposed. This includes strategies such as the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies, the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy, the Tenancy Strategy and numerous other formal and informal consultations to inform service delivery, development and business plans.

- The Council has a Corporate Complaints Process which is published and reported on annually to demonstrate learnings and improvements made as a result of complaints received and any feedback and recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This is aligned with the statutory requirement to comply with the Housing

Ombudsman's Code of Complaint Handling, which also includes an Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report relating to the service that the Council provides to its tenants as a landlord.

- The Council provides tenant engagement opportunities which currently under review.
- The Council's Oxford Residents' Panel is an online group of approximately 900 residents who have agreed to give their views on a range of topics including current work by the Council, new or existing services, or broader issues that the Council may require feedback on. Panel membership is broadly representative of the Oxford population to ensure the Council hears a diverse range of voices.

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- The 4 year Council Strategy ("the Strategy") defines the ambitions and outcomes of the Council at a corporate level with associated corporate KPIs which are reported against. It is backed by an annual Business Plan, setting specific delivery objectives for each year of the Strategy period.
- The Council also sets operational KPIs many of which are reported as part of regular performance updates to the Council, the annual Business Plan and the budget process.
- The Council has voluntarily adopted the Socio-Economic Duty (SED) in its policy-making and decision-making processes. The Council's developing and holistic approach aims to address and mitigate inequalities from socio-economic disadvantages, reduce inequality, promote fairness, and enhance inclusive decision-making for Oxford's citizens and communities. This is reflected across the Council's wider strategies, for example the Capital Strategy, where these pillars are considered in the development of a business case.
- The Council has a framework of plans and policies to deliver the Council Strategy and a Medium-Term Financial Strategy that prioritises resources to the delivery of it.
- Service planning is undertaken in conjunction with the Budget setting annually to ensure that there is a reflection. This sets the department objectives.
- Equalities Impact Assessments are made in line with internal requirements, ensuring that the outcomes are reflective of, take account of and are responsive to any impacts upon equalities in achieving the outcomes, ensuring the outcomes of the Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.

- The Council has set longer term objectives and defined pathways for its own operations to become Net Zero by 2030 and for the city of Oxford to become Net Zero by 2040.
- For significant decisions, carbon and environmental considerations align with internal requirements, ensuring outcomes reflect and respond to impacts on the Council achieving its Net Zero aspirations.
- Social value:
 - All template Request for Quotation and Invitation to Tender documents ask for a minimum 10% weighting for responses to social value questions.
 - We have “Match my Oxford”, an easy-to-use online social value platform that helps community projects, businesses and suppliers connect and find ways to support each other.
- The Oxford Living Wage (OLW) is an hourly minimum wage designed to provide workers in Oxford with enough earnings to meet the city’s high living costs. The rate is set annually and is 95% of the London Living Wage, as determined by the Living Wage Foundation. This initiative aims to provide liveable earnings, improve worker motivation and retention, and enhance the reputation of employers who adopt it. By offering fair wages, the OLW seeks to address the financial challenges faced by workers, promoting a more equitable and sustainable local economy.
- The Council has adopted the OLW and has pledged to continue to be a Disability Confident employer, to improve the diversity of the workforce through inclusive recruitment practices, to offer work experience for local school and college students who are disadvantaged and to pledge unspent apprenticeship levy to local organisations to grow apprenticeships in Oxford.

D. Determining interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Determining Interventions

- To underpin the delivery of the Council Strategy, the Council publishes an annual Business Plan that sets out the key transformative priorities and actions the Council will undertake in each year of the Council Strategy.
- In turn the annual Business Plan is complemented by the Council's annual Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan that will allocate resources against the priorities set.
- Service Plans are developed and owned by each service area following the creation of the Business Plan, drilling into more detail, and embedding the Council's regular work, which is not captured in the Business Plan.

- The Council maintains a Capital Strategy that sets out the principles the Council will follow in its capital planning including the methodology for inclusion of schemes within the Capital Programme and the arrangements for management of capital schemes.
- All reports brought to the Cabinet, the Council and its committees include consideration of legal and finance comments, and all require legal and finance clearance before publication.
- Clear statements of the roles of the Council, the Cabinet (as a group and individually), their Committees and officers are set out in the Constitution.
- The Council has strong working relationships with Unison and Unite for the purposes of representing the workforce with regular meetings involving Cabinet members and officers.
- The Monitoring Officer and Section 51 Officer (or their representatives) attend corporate boards to advise and ensure process is being followed. Both are consistently consultees in the exercise of any delegation to officers from Cabinet or Council.

Optimising the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Regular reports on performance monitoring are provided to the Corporate Management Team, the Council, the Cabinet and their Committees as appropriate, including Audit and Governance, Scrutiny and Standards Committees (as appropriate). These demonstrate the level to which intended outcomes and targets are being achieved and allow for intervention to address non-performance.
- The Council's risk management processes and procedures are designed to help ensure that risks to delivery of intended outcomes are appropriately mitigated. Risk registers and their updates are centralised in terms of requiring updates and reporting to ensure timely update and review.
- The monitoring of the quality of the Council's governance, risk management and controls is undertaken by the internal auditors and the Audit and Governance Committee. This ensures independent assurance of the risk management framework and associated controls, informed by the reports of our external auditors.
- Key governance boards have been established with defined areas of responsibility to ensure corporate oversight – the Development Board, the Citizen Experience Board and the Communities Board (see Appendix 1). These monitor progress and performance of all relevant projects and initiatives within their scope.

E. Developing the entities capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Developing the entity's capacity.

- The People Strategy contains the Council's approach to attract, recruit and retain talent, improve diversity and inclusion and develop leaders and managers.
- The Council's talent strategy is designed to meet both short- and long-term resourcing needs by attracting apprentices and graduates at the start of their careers and developing existing staff to build the skills the organisation needs and also provide succession for leadership roles.
- The Council is developing inclusive recruitment practices and providing positive action management development programmes to improve the diversity of the workforce so that it better reflects the communities it serves.
- The Council's Appraisal scheme is used to set stretching objectives for officers that are linked to team, departmental and corporate objectives. The Appraisal process is also used to assess the skills and competencies needed by officers to enable them to fulfil their roles fully.
- It is mandatory for all new starters to complete the Council Induction Module along with a number of other corporate, mandatory training modules such as Health and Safety and Data Protection.

Developing the capability of the Council's leadership and other individuals

- Our Member Development Programme, which is currently being reviewed and redeveloped, includes arrangements for member induction, mandatory training and supports members to take control of their own learning and development.
- Officers can access the on-line learning platform which provides access to e-learning and other development resources.
- Managers and leaders are being supported and developed to effectively manage and motivate performance to achieve the Council's objectives.
- Training budget / apprentice levy. The Council's central training budget and the apprenticeship levy fund is being used to invest in essential skills such as contract management (in line with new procurement regulation), Artificial Intelligence, managing change and transformation and mandatory professional qualifications for key roles. In addition, there is investment in management development, personal safety training and diversity and inclusion training.
- We have several staff networks covering race and ethnicity, disability, women's health, LGBT+ and neurodiversity. Mental health and wellbeing

support is available and is a particular focus for the organisation since hybrid working has been established.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust and internal control and strong public financial management

Managing Risk

- The Council has an adopted Risk Management Strategy which aims to embed risk management into the culture, ethos, policies and practices of the Council.
- The Council also has an adopted Risk Management Operating Framework which aims to provide a clear and consistent approach to the management of risk across the organisation, between services and between corporate and service levels.
- There is a Risk Management Group which meets around three times a year and covers the Council and its wholly owned companies. The members are there to provide additional Risk Management Support across the organisation.
- The Council maintains both corporate and service level risk registers which are administered by a central team and reviewed monthly by the services and senior officers and updated where needed.
- Corporate risks are owned by Executive Directors and Heads of Service. The Corporate and Service Risk Registers are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- The Corporate Dashboard is prepared each month and monitored by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), it includes emerging and critical issues the CMT needs to be aware of or unblock and highlight risks to the Council and its services areas.
- Corporate Boards are attended by the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Governance, or their nominees, to provide financial and legal oversight of the matters under consideration and advise on and address any risks or issues in advance of decisions being taken.
- The Council develops plans to prevent, respond to and recover from emergencies identified as the highest risk to the city by the Community Risk Register. The Emergency Planning team is supported by a Service Level Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council's Resilience Team.
- As a Category One responder, the Council is a member of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and its Emergency Response Arrangements.

- The Council has an up to date and risk based Audit Plan which takes account of emerging issues and is reactive to them.

Managing Performance

- The Council has a suite of 16 quantifiable corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) as measures around delivery of its Council Strategy 2024-28. In addition to these corporate KPIs, the Council sets operational KPIs some of which are reported as part of regular performance updates to the Council, the annual Business Plan and the budget process. The monthly Corporate Dashboard reports on the performance of all these KPIs.
- Conduct of members is monitored by the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee and reported on as required to the Council.
- The Council's Appraisal scheme is used to set stretching objectives for officers that are linked to team, departmental and corporate objectives and also to monitor performance against the set objectives.
- Contract management - all employees of the Council who have responsibility for the management of a contract are required to undertake the internal Contract Management training course and be able to effectively manage their own contracts in-line with the Constitution and the Public Contract Regulations.
- Clienting of the Council's companies
 - The Council has a Service Level Agreement with ODSL, which it is periodically reviewed. It also has regular client meetings to maintain oversight.
 - The Council is in the process of agreeing a new Collaboration Agreement and Gateway process with Oxford City Housing Limited that will refresh how the company is cliented
 - Regular client meetings take place to manage performance and oversight.
- The Scrutiny Committee has the following roles:
 - Developing and reviewing policy - The Scrutiny Committee can help Council and the Cabinet to develop policy by studying issues in detail;
 - Carry out research and consultation on policy; Consider and introduce schemes to involve the public in developing policy; and Work with national, regional and local organisations to promote the interest of local people.
 - Holding the executive to account The Scrutiny Committee can: Review the performance and decisions of the Cabinet, and council officers (but not decisions on individual planning or licensing applications),
- Finance and Performance Panel

- A cross-party standing panel established by the Scrutiny Committee
- Reviews and scrutinises all financial matters and budgetary decisions, including annual review of the Council's budget, quarterly monitoring of finance and performance (including performance of the Council's companies), executive decisions made in relation to any companies wholly or partly owned by the Council.
- The Scope of the Finance and Performance Panel was recently reviewed and included the provision to scrutinise decisions relating to the Council's wholly owned Companies (Oxford City Housing and Oxford Direct Services). Any recommendations from the Panel for part of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group.
- The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for:
 - Setting the Council Tax base
 - Reviewing internal control and risk management, particularly: the way the Council identifies and deals with key risks; policies for making sure the Council follows regulatory guidance; the way the Council's strategies, policies, processes and procedures are working in respect of anti-fraud and corruption and money-laundering; the Annual Governance Statement; the statement on internal control to be included in the internal auditor's annual report and all risk and control related disclosure statements before they go to the full Council.
 - Audit and risk; agreeing the internal audit programme; considering the main findings of internal audit investigations and the management's response; ensuring co-ordination between internal and external auditors; and ensuring the Council allocates enough resources to audit and risk and takes audit and risk sufficiently seriously
 - External audit; considering the choice of auditor and the auditor's fees; discussing the terms of reference of audits before they happen; making sure that all external audits and inspections are co-ordinated; and reviewing external audit reports, including value for money reports and annual audit letters, along with the management response.
 - Statement of accounts Considering and approving the annual statement of accounts, focusing on whether the Council's accounting policies and practices are up to date and areas where serious criticisms and important adjustments resulted from the audit.

Strong public financial management

- The Council has a professionally qualified and experienced Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) who acts in accordance with and upholds the responsibilities and duties set out in the CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the CFO in Local Government.
- Procurement board - Monthly procurement boards have been established as a platform for sharing, learning and collaborating amongst

procurement, commercial and commissioning professionals subject to the Public Procurement Regulations.

- The Scrutiny Committee plays a key role in promoting transparency and accountability in the Council's decision-making by scrutinising policy decisions, service delivery, and financial planning to ensure public resources are used effectively and in line with strategic priorities. It ordinarily establishes a Budget Review Group to examine the Council's budget proposals for the next financial year, which helps ensure good financial governance practices.
- The Committee now has the provision to scrutinise the Council's wholly owned Companies (Oxford City Housing Limited and Oxford Direct Services Limited) as part of its scheduled business. Improved Forward Planning has also been implemented with Key Decisions due to be scrutinised at meetings of Shareholders and Joint Venture Group being added to the Forward Plan in advance of the required 28 days.
- The Finance and Performance Panel focuses specifically on the Council's financial health and performance by conducting detailed reviews of the Council's budget proposals, medium-term financial strategy, and financial performance throughout the year.
- The Financial Rules in the Constitution give a clear transparent framework for managing the Council's financial affairs, along with the Council's Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy.
- The Contract Rules in the Constitution ensure compliance with procurement legislation and also regulate the procurement of under threshold spend.
- The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for financial management and to recommend any actions accordingly. It receives regular reports such as internal audit plans and risk management arrangements and it approves the Council's Statement of Accounts.

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

The Council supports Principle G in the following ways:

Implementing good practice in transparency

- The Council's Constitution publishes how its affairs will be conducted and how residents can get involved. It includes rules on access to information, participating at meetings and petitions, amongst other ways the public can interact with the Council.

- Key public facing procedures and policies are available on the website, including how to raise service complaints and how to make a complaint about a councillor, along with all relevant information.
- The Members' Register of Interests is published on the Council's website, along with any declarations of hospitality or gifts over £50 and any decisions against a member in terms of an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- The Council operates a disclosure log on which it published information released via information requests which may be of public interest or be likely to be requested again.
- The Annual Governance Statement provides an annual report on the Council's arrangements for financial and internal control as well as managing risk and identifies areas for improvement and associated actions. This is published on the Council's website.
- The Council publishes all its agenda and minutes online and webcasts most of its meetings where possible.
- The Council publishes all payments over £500 and procurement card transactions monthly, and the remuneration details of the Corporate Management Team and directors in the annual Statement of Accounts and on its website
- The Council publishes a forward plan of decisions to be taken by the Cabinet, the Council, the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group and by officers under specific delegations.
- The Council's Pay Policy and gender pay gap are published on its website.

Implement good practices in reporting

- Regular reporting cycles are in place relating to:
 - the Council's finances
 - complaints to the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Annual Governance Statement
 - recommendations of Scrutiny
 - outside Organisations
- Annual reports from the Scrutiny Committee are made updating on its work plan and work undertaken.
- A reporting cycle is in place which ensures that reports are directed to the appropriate bodies through the correct pathways, ensuring sound corporate and political oversight of forthcoming decisions.

Implement good practices in Audit

- Internal Audit plans are produced based on risk assessments of council officers and are considered and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee
- Internal and External Audit Reports and updates are submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee
- Progress on Audit recommendations are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and officers are held to account accordingly

Appendix 1 – Key Governance documents and bodies

Key Documents	
The Council Strategy	The 2024-2028 Council Strategy was adopted by Full Council in July 2024 and sets out the high level aims and outcomes for the Council to be achieved by the end of the Strategy period. It contains 5 core priorities reflecting the Council's commitment to a "citizen-first approach". It is complimented by the annual Business Plans and performance against it is monitored monthly, via Smartsheets, the monthly Corporate Dashboard and reported to the Corporate Management Team.
The Constitution	The Constitution details the Council's rules of governance, responsibility for functions and decision making. It is reviewed annually with input from senior officers, elected members and the Statutory Officers in full and amended during the year as required either by full Council or the Monitoring Officer where there are delegated powers.
Scheme of Delegations	The Executive Scheme of Delegation has been set out within the Constitution. This explains what is reserved to Cabinet and Cabinet Members. The scheme of delegation from Council is also set out in full
Terms of Reference (decision making bodies)	The terms of reference for decision making bodies of full Council and the Cabinet are set out in the Constitution. These are subject to the annual review of the constitution and are amended as needed for clarity and to reflect changes. The Scrutiny Panel terms of reference are agreed by the Scrutiny Committee as they are established and as required. Terms of reference for officer boards are agreed as the entity is established and shared with the CMT for agreement in advance.
Financial policies	The Medium Term Financial Plan, Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy are prepared on an annual basis by the Section 151 Officer and submitted to Council for approval in February of each year.
Treasury management strategy	The Corporate Debt policy outlining the Council's approach to the collection of debt is updated as
Medium Term Financial Plan	
Capital Strategy	
Corporate Debt Policy	

Discretionary Relief for Business Rates and Council tax Council Tax Reduction Scheme	appropriate supported by discretionary relief policies for business rates and council tax. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is consulted on annually before being submitted for approval by Council. The Financial Inclusion Strategy has been combined with the EDI & Thriving Communities Strategies.
Financial Rules	These will be subject to a full review and refresh in 2024/2025, though they have been reviewed annually. They follow best practice in establishing controls and procedures around all matters financial, including spend, debt write off and movement within the overall budget.
Legal Rules	These establish that the Monitoring Officer can take any legal action necessary to carry out the Council's decisions or protect its interests. They also provide the rules on signing and sealing of documents. These will be reviewed as part of the next constitutional review. There is a need to properly document who can sign an agreement as there are no express rules on this beyond where a seal is applied.
Contract Rules	These are in the process of being reviewed in light of the legislative changes to the procurement regime. They will come forward as part of the full review and refresh of the Constitution in 2024/2025. They set out the basis on which the Council can let contracts to entities. This includes standalone contracts to the Council's companies. Though property transactions and grants are exempted there are no constitutional rules on either and these will be prepared separately and brought into the Constitution in 2024/2025.
Risk Management Strategy	The Risk Management Strategy defines the approach the Council takes towards the management of risk throughout the Council. In light of the development of the Housing Regulator and OFLOG, this will require a review and refresh against the backdrop of both of these regulatory bodies.
Members' Code of Conduct, Member Officer Protocol and other member	In May 2022 the six Oxfordshire authorities adopted a new joint Code of Conduct for Members ("the Code") based on the LGA Model Code. A review of

guidance to promote and support ethical behaviour and proper standards of conduct by members	the procedure will be undertaken to streamline the process to enable complaints to be disposed of sooner where it is considered there is no basis for a complaint under the Code. The Code is supplemented by other policies and protocols in the Constitution which are also covered in members' training. Training is an annual requirement.
Roles of the Statutory Officers	The Statutory Officers (or their appointed deputy) attend key meetings of the Council to advise and support the meetings. This includes meetings of the Council, Cabinet and the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. In addition, the Statutory Officers will attend other meetings relevant to their office, such as the Standards Committee for the Monitoring Officer, Audit and Governance Committee for the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer and the Appointments Committee for the Head of Paid Service. Whilst the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer do not report directly to the Chief Executive, the three Statutory Officers meet quarterly and ad hoc, as needed with a good working relationship and regular 121s. The Constitution sets out additional roles for the Statutory Officers, such as the Returning Officer, Money Laundering Officer and Data Protection Officer.
Key Corporate Policies & procedures Whistleblowing Money laundering Anti-Bribery, Fraud and Corruption ICT Acceptable User Policy	Training for staff is undertaken in relation to the four policies listed on commencement of employment. The policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis: The Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed in July 2021 and is pending a review in 2024/2025 The Money Laundering Policy was adopted in 2019 and is due to be reviewed by Audit and Governance in October 2024 The Anti-Bribery, Fraud and Corruption Policy was adopted in June 2023 and will be reviewed in 2026. ICT Security Policy was adopted in June 2023 and will be reviewed in May 2025. A programme of updated training is being rolled out to all staff in 2024/2025

Information Governance policies and procedures Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) / Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) Data Protection	Training is undertaken by all staff on FOIA and Data Protection as part of the induction process. Authorising Officers and those who may seek to conduct investigations using RIPA receive training appropriate to their role. • RIPA policy – adopted July 2023 and for review in July 2026 • FOI Policy has been reviewed and amended in 2024 • Data Protection Policy – adopted in 1 April 2018, for review in September 2024
Employment, Equalities and other policies and procedures which promote and support ethical behaviour and proper standards of conduct by officers	The Employee Code of Conduct sets out expectations for standards of behaviour and includes equality and inclusion, safeguarding, data protection, political neutrality, bribery and corruption and gifts and hospitality. A register of gifts and hospitality is kept and there are processes for capturing the employment of relatives and conflict arising through secondary employment or voluntary positions.
Corporate Complaints Process AND Housing Complaints process	A procedure published which sets out the process and expectations for those members of the public wishing to raise complaints about the Council monitoring, and performance reporting is made to Corporate Management Team annually. Complaints relating to the Council's function as a landlord are handled in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Complaint Handling, which is a statutory requirement. We also comply with the requirement to publish an Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report which we send to Cabinet.
People Strategy	The People Strategy 2024 is being finalised. This is a plan that takes into account the current challenges facing the Council, and sets objectives designed to build a high performing organisation that meets the needs of the community it serves. The People Strategy also aims to support the Council's planned work against its five priorities: • Good, affordable homes • Strong, fair economy • Thriving communities • Zero carbon Oxford

	• A well-run council Within the People Strategy we recognise the diversity of Oxford City in terms of ethnicity, educational attainment and socio-economic status. The Strategy highlights the Citizen Experience Strategy which was launched in 2023 with the commitment to 'working with our communities to ensure our citizens are at the heart of service delivery, getting everything they need to enjoy living and working in the City of Oxford'. The Strategy sets out that putting our customers at the heart of everything we do will continue to be a key priority.
Key Bodies	
Corporate Management Team	The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for the corporate oversight and management of the Council and "health" of the organisation. This includes a significant amount of assurance and challenge on governance, finances and processes. The Corporate Management team comprises the Chief Executive, the two Executive Directors, the Monitoring Officer, the s151 officer and the Head of Corporate Strategy. The CMT meets twice each week to consider strategic and corporately important items. Decisions of the CMT relate to matters reserved to the CMT, such as • Market supplement payments for staff • Reports going onward for political decision making • Reports from the strategic boards of the Council (Change Board and Communities Board). • Monthly updates from each service area via the Corporate Dashboard • Budget monitoring reports • Policy development and updates • Quarterly health and safety updates • Quarterly Workforce (People) updates

	Meetings are routinely held in person, and on a regular basis there is an extended CMT meeting with all Heads of Service in attendance.
Group Leaders Meetings	This is a regular meeting for the engagement with the group leaders of the Council's political groups on decisions prior to them coming forward to Cabinet and/or Council. It has terms of reference and meetings are generally in person. It supports cross party co-operation and collaboration and officer engagement with all political groups on any significant decisions coming forward.
Audit and Governance Committee	The Committee's activities and functions comply with the standards set out in CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities (2018), and its purpose is to provide independent assurance to the Council and those charged with governance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and internal control environment. It is attended by the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers (or their deputies).
Standards Committee	The Standards Committee is properly established and has terms of reference. It is responsible for dealing with breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct, amendments to the Code of Conduct, dispensations and reports from and advising the Monitoring Officer on training. Member development will be looked at in terms of establishing a programme and a review of the member induction programme and taken to the Committee in 2024 following the local elections and completion of the induction training programme.
Scrutiny Committee	The Scrutiny Committee operates to provide democratic oversight and public assurance that the Council is carrying out its business effectively; and to act as a check and balance function to ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of the people of Oxford. Scrutiny carries out research,

	reviews and hears from independent experts, as well as Council officers, making recommendations for service improvement where necessary. The Scrutiny Committee adopts a set of operating principles, establishes and appoints standing panels and review groups at the beginning of each municipal year.
A range of Programme Boards	Development Board Oversees the Council's capital programme. It reviews and recommends new projects and projects moving from feasibility to detailed design and delivery. It also reviews project and programme performance via monthly project highlights reports and the capital programme. Organisational Change Board Oversees the Council's corporate change programme across ICT & Digital, Finance, People Plan, Customer Experience and PMO, and the 'Front Door of Change' ensuring coordination and resourcing of projects. Reports into CMT on a monthly basis. Communities Board Programme manages key initiatives across the Communities Directorate, including housing, HRA, community safety, leisure and community safety. Reports into CMT on a monthly basis.
Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SHJVG)	A decision-making sub-group of the Cabinet responsible for decision making as the Shareholder of the Council owned companies and JVCs. Terms of reference are established and clear. Scrutiny arrangements have been reviewed to ensure formal scrutiny of the decisions of the SHJVG as it is exercising powers of the executive. Revised arrangements were introduced in 2024 to ensure that decisions are taken in line with legislation in with: • The Financial and Performance Panel (FPP) now having responsibility for the scrutiny of the shareholder decisions. Meetings for SHJVG will be aligned with the meetings of FPP to allow pre-decision scrutiny. • Provision has been made so that the Company's reports can be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if timescales align with

	the relevant Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. • Key decisions will now be dealt with in line with legislative requirements and the Constitution. • Non-key decisions will now be dealt with in line with the Council's Constitution. The group has been streamlined in terms of Cabinet membership to ensure that there is the ability for the Cabinet to function without a conflict of interest arising. There will remain a standing invitation for the scrutiny chair to attend the SHJVG which can be revoked as needed.
Internal Audit – an independent and objective function designed to add value to the Council's operations	The internal audit function of the authority has been externalised, with the tender due for renewal in 2025. The internal audit fulfils the duty of the Section 151 Officer to maintain a continuous internal audit function under the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The internal auditors play a key role in the terms of maintaining internal financial control in the organisation in recommending the annual audit plan, undertaking audits in accordance with the plan and monitoring the implementation of agree audit recommendations as well as providing an audit opinion on the performance of the authority.
External Audit – providing objective and independent assurances through the Annual Audit report. Process and a range of other measures	External auditors give an audit opinion on the Council's annual statement of accounts and also a VFM opinion on the authority. They are appointed on behalf of the authority by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), the Local Government Association owned company, for periods of up to 5 years.
Health and Safety Boards	There are a number of boards which report into the Health and Safety Compliance Board ("HSCB") which monitors Health and Safety performance and risk registers. It is attended by all members of the CMT, the Head of Business Improvement and the Health and Safety Manager ("the HSCB"). The following report into the HSCB: • People Safety Board (including Union Reps,) • Companies Safety Board • Property Compliance and Safety

	Public Safety, Emergency Response and Contingency Planning Together the boards have oversight and responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy. This is a new governance structure, established and embedded in the Financial Year 2023/24 and continues to develop.
Net Zero Steering Group	A quarterly meeting of senior officers representing key service areas that considers new actions, policy changes or other factors required for the Council to meet its 2030 and 2040 Net Zero targets. The Steering Group also reviews the Council's Net Zero Masterplan – which tracks actions being taken and is reported to the Climate & Environment Scrutiny Panel.
Policy Officers Group	The purpose of the Policy Officer's Group (POG) is to improve the quality and impact of the Council's policies and strategies. It is also a forum to share information about work streams that are cross cutting in nature and have the potential to impact other service areas. The group meets quarterly and is attended by key services areas such as Policy & Partnerships, Business Improvement, Business Intelligence, Finance, Housing, Planning, ODS, Regeneration and Economy and Law & Governance. It may conduct a strategic review of any policy or strategy in the early stages of development or renewal.
Key Partnership arrangements:	The Council is an active member of several key strategic partnerships. Including: The Future Oxford Partnership, whose purpose is to deliver the bold aims of the strategic vision for sustainable development in Oxfordshire, which all six councils have adopted. The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), whose role is to champion Oxfordshire's economic potential, acting as a catalyst and convener to drive a dynamic, sustainable and growing economy. The Oxford Strategic Partnership, which the Council developed and facilitates. The Partnership brings together senior representatives from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors. It helps to provide direction for the city's future,

respond to local priorities and engage more effectively with local concerns such as Economic Development, Stronger Communities, Zero Carbon Oxford and Safer Communities

The **District Councils' Network** is a cross-party network of 169 district and unitary Councils, providing a single voice for all district services. The Leader of the Council is Labour Vice Chair on the body of the DCN.

The Council is a member of the Local Government Association (LGA), and actively participate in various LGA initiatives, including the Corporate Peer Challenge, which helps the Council improve its performance and share best practice.

The **Oxford to Cambridge Partnership** is a group of leaders from local government, business boards, the Arc Universities Group and England's Economic Heartland, with government, come together as a pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge regions.

The **Fast Growth Cities Group** is a coalition of some of the UK's most dynamic and rapidly expanding cities. This group consists of Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough and Swindon. The group was formed to address common challenges and leverage opportunities for economic growth and development.

The **Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership** is a collaborative initiative aimed at achieving net zero carbon emissions in Oxford by 2040, and across the rest of Oxfordshire by 2050. This partnership brings together some of Oxford's largest and most influential organisations including universities, the NHS Trust, the City and County Councils, large businesses, and community organisations. New business and local authority members from Oxfordshire outside of the city are currently being recruited.

The **Oxford Safer Communities Partnership** brings together various statutory authorities and organisations to tackle crime and disorder in Oxford. The groups' purpose is to address local community safety concerns and ensure all partners tackle those crimes that affect Oxford's community.

	The Oxford Inclusive Economy Partnership is a coalition of over 100 organisations including the Council, employers, businesses, educational institutions, community groups, and local government entities. The group aims to create a more equal and sustainable region, including the city of Oxford, by addressing some the Oxfordshire's most significant challenges (e.g. Inclusive Employment, Educational Attainment, Social Value and Procurement, Place-Based Interventions). The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing is a partnership initiative designed to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Oxfordshire, including citizens and communities in the city. It brings together local government, including the Council, the NHS, and community representatives, including local GPs, councillors, Healthwatch Oxfordshire, and senior local government officers. The board also oversees several sub-groups, such as the Health Improvement Board and the Childrens' Trust, which focus on specific areas like public health and children's services. The Oxford Economic Growth Board is a key forum under the Oxford Strategic Partnership. It focuses on steering Oxford's economic strategy and fostering collaboration on economic and business issues within the city.
Thriving Communities Strategy	This strategy has been written following our Thriving Communities City Conversation where we heard from hundreds of people. It is all about working together with communities and partners in Oxford to ensure all residents can live their lives to the full. The Thriving Communities Strategy has six key principles, which guide how we will work to achieve its 10 aims: • target our resources where they will have the greatest impact • move towards an enabling approach using our Thriving Communities Principles • embed lessons that we have learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic • adapt and integrate our services so they can react to changing community needs, working more closely with partners and connecting with the integrated care system

	• ensure that our people (Council employees) have the skills to support communities • foster a sense of belonging • provide many different opportunities to be active • develop a sustainable, inclusive and accessible leisure and community offer • enable a vibrant, innovative and sustainable cultural sector and economy • use a variety of methods to demonstrate how we improve life chances and strengthen communities
Oxford Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (EDI)	We are committed to building a fairer, greener, city in which everyone can thrive. To support flourishing communities, we are focused on ensuring our services, investments, and policymaking are designed to address Oxford's social and financial inequalities. Our EDI Strategy builds on the Local Government Association's priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These are cross-cutting themes that underpin all our work and our service strategies. We need clear oversight and processes to ensure we remain on track to deliver our commitments in this strategy. The Strategy sets out our commitment, priorities and how we are responding to the current challenged and their impact on EDI.

In addition to the above officers, Heads of Service, Executive Directors and the CMT as a collective also meet informally with members to brief on upcoming decisions or progress with corporate projects.

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Councillor's guide: Improvement and assurance framework for local government

This framework is designed to support members and officers to take appropriate measures to gain assurance both of the performance of their authority's services and of its corporate governance.

Introduction

Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement. This is recognised in the 'sector-led improvement' approach which is underpinned by the key principles that councils:

- are primarily accountable locally, not nationally
- have a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the local government sector.

The LGA's role is to provide tools and support councils and also to maintain an overview of the performance of the sector.

To comply with the Best Value Duty to secure continuous improvement in the way the authority's functions are exercised, each council must take appropriate measures to gain assurance both of the performance of its services and of its corporate governance.

Through a focus on effective assurance, councils can mitigate the risks and costs of failure and their impacts on local residents and businesses.

This framework aims to:

- support councils to understand how to use the components within the framework and how they fit together
- increase the effectiveness of assurance in the sector. While it cannot itself prevent failures, its use may reduce the risk – and costs - of statutory or non-statutory intervention, whether by central government or other regulators;
- make it easier for local residents and businesses to understand how to hold their local authority to account.

Assurance may sometimes be seen as a dry topic, and accountability may, wrongly, be feared. However, the management and routine operation of internal controls and risk management support councils to manage the future constructively and safely. As one council leader said, 'it's what helps me to sleep at night'.

All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance.

Not all of the components of the system are currently working as well as they should. In the context of the continuing crisis in local audit, it is more important than ever that councils should undertake their own assurance activities effectively. The LGA will continue to work with its partners to seek to ensure continuous improvement of the system and all of its components.

Elected members play a crucial and continuous role in seeking assurance of the council's activities and governance. This includes assurance of each council's own local objectives, for which they are accountable to their local electorate.

Councils will rightly make political choices in response to local circumstances: successful authorities make these choices within the context of good management practice, consideration of cost-effectiveness and value for money, robust controls and risk management.

Councils exist to improve the quality of life of, and the quality of places for, the communities they serve. Therefore, the focus of councils' assurance work is on the assurance they provide to local communities.

This framework includes the key components of local authority assurance. Many of these are processes and structures. The framework also includes organisational culture, behaviours and ways of working.

There is a crucial role for political and managerial leaders in challenging poor behaviour (in both formal and informal settings) and non-compliance.

What is the scope and status of this framework?

The framework is applicable to unitary, county, district and borough councils in England, and to English authorities with all types of governance system.

The specific assurance requirements for combined authorities are set out in the [English Devolution Assurance Framework](#) but the principles in this framework will apply to combined authorities too.

The framework is part of a suite of guidance, tools and resources for the sector produced by the LGA and other bodies. Effective assurance is achieved mainly through the application of best practice rather than statutory activity, although the framework points to statutory provisions where relevant.

Failure in one service area may impact significantly on the whole organisation. This framework focuses on corporate areas and overarching governance, rather than including every service-specific source of assurance. Each service area will have its own mechanisms for assurance and accountability and councils will need to assure themselves of compliance with statutory duties in each case. Effective corporate

assurance will support assurance of individual services and the principles and good practice identified in this framework will apply to all services as well as corporate activities.

What is the relationship between this framework, corporate peer challenge, best value standards and statutory interventions?

At any one time, each local authority will be at a point on a continuum. At one end are authorities which have a strong awareness of their strengths and areas for development, are proactive in seeking opportunities for improvement and delivering best value (even where performance is strong) and elected members and officers take appropriate actions to assure themselves in relation to their performance and governance.

The characteristics of a well-functioning authority set out in the [best value standards](#) include effective use of many of the framework's components: equally, the standards' indicators of potential failure may arise where assurance activity is not effective. A failure to deliver best value is, essentially, a failure of governance.

At the other end, a small minority of authorities are not sufficiently self-aware, do not take effective action to achieve continuous improvement, do not have effective assurance arrangements and consequently have entered statutory intervention. Local authorities can and do move between points on this continuum over time.

The LGA works with regional groupings of councils, professional bodies and others to support as many local authorities as possible to stay at the positive end of the continuum, aiming to prevent authorities from moving towards the 'intervention' end, so that they continue their improvement journey even further.

The LGA's [corporate peer challenge](#) is one of the improvement tools that councils can use as part of their assurance of their own performance and governance, so that they can address their own challenges where possible without central government or regulators needing to become involved.

What do we mean by assurance?

We have developed the following definition through consultation with the sector:

Timely and accurate information, evidence and evaluation of how local authorities are delivering their duties, functions and outcomes, which can be used to hold them to account and may give confidence.

There should be no assumption that assurance will always be gained, particularly as the scale of challenges facing local government increases.

A ‘not assured’ outcome, as long as it is acted upon, may be as valuable to an authority as ‘assured’. Where positive assurance is not possible there is support available, from the LGA and from others in the sector, to help the council put things right.

By using the assurance system and its components effectively, councils can increase their chances of identifying issues and addressing them before they get more difficult – and costly – to fix. The cost of statutory intervention can be far greater than the cost of sector support.

Assurance cannot be gained ‘by numbers’ or a one-off event: there is no simple list of yes/no indicators which will help a council decide whether or not it can be assured of its performance or governance.

It is achieved through a series of nuanced, qualitative and triangulated judgements, to gain a view of the council in the round.

What do we mean by accountability?

The [Review of Audit and Accountability](#) defined accountability as:

...the requirement to provide explanations about the stewardship of public money and how this money has been used.

There are multiple elements of accountability in local government, for example:

- councillors to their constituents
- the executive (cabinet), where relevant, to the overview and scrutiny function
- the executive, where relevant, and the organisation to the audit committee
- officers to the council (through line management)
- specific statutory officers to the full council (through reporting responsibilities)
- officers to their professional bodies in relation to professional standards and conduct (where applicable)
- the council for its stewardship of public resources (through external audit)
- the council to ombudsmen / inspectors / regulators
- the council to the courts/ redress schemes
- the council to wider partnerships, bodies and authorities.

Components of the framework

The key components of the improvement and assurance framework for local government are set out in the following categories, shown diagrammatically through the links below:

- [Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities](#), by:
 - officers, not usually in public
 - members and officers, sometimes but not always in public
 - members and officers, in public
 - other bodies, not usually in public
- [Local authorities' public accountability](#):
 - the authority holding itself to account
 - others holding the authority to account.

Some of these components:

- are required by legislation;
- include a mixture of legislative requirements and best practice;
- reflect practice which is not set down in statute but is necessary in a well-run authority;
- reflect content from the [best value standards](#) and/or reports relating to 'failed' councils which identify where key activities were absent or poorly performed.

More information about each component, with links to relevant guidance and improvement support, appears below.

Engagement with sector support is itself a key component of the framework, whether from other authorities, regional, national and/or professional bodies. The LGA's [regional teams](#) include member peers who can advise on a range of support for local authorities which will help understanding and implementation of the assurance activities shown below. This includes bespoke support and mentoring in addition to:

- [councillor and officer development](#)
- [top team development](#)
- [corporate, finance and governance peer challenges](#)
- [transformation tools and support](#)

In addition to considering what the key components are, read on to consider how they are implemented, with information about key principles and what good looks like.

The ‘three lines’ model

The ‘three lines model’ outlines the different contributions that different sources of assurance can provide:

Three lines model

First line	Actions by managers and staff who are responsible for identifying and managing risk as part of their day-to-day management and delivery of services. This includes: • actions by operational directors • corporate project and programme management
Second line	The way the authority oversees the effectiveness of its controls so that it operates effectively, for example, the responsibilities of: • Strategic Management Team • Corporate statutory officers • Audit Committee
Third line	Independent assurance, such as internal audit. Accountable to Full Council.
Governing body	Full Council
External assurance providers	For example: • External audit • Regulators, inspectors

There should be regular dialogue and coordination between the different ‘lines’ and escalation where appropriate.

What actions contribute to assurance of local authorities by officers (not normally in public)?

Appendix 3



[Open a larger version of this diagram](#)

What should you expect of key officers?

- The **chief executive** (head of paid service):
 - is responsible for ensuring the appropriate number, grades, organisation and management of staff for the discharge of the authority's functions
 - ensures appropriately senior and skilled staff are employed, including for:
 - risk management
 - health and safety
 - emergency planning and business continuity
 - and that these arrangements are appropriately managed and coordinated:
 - ensures that an appropriate person leads the **review of the effectiveness of the authority's governance arrangements** to inform the annual governance statement

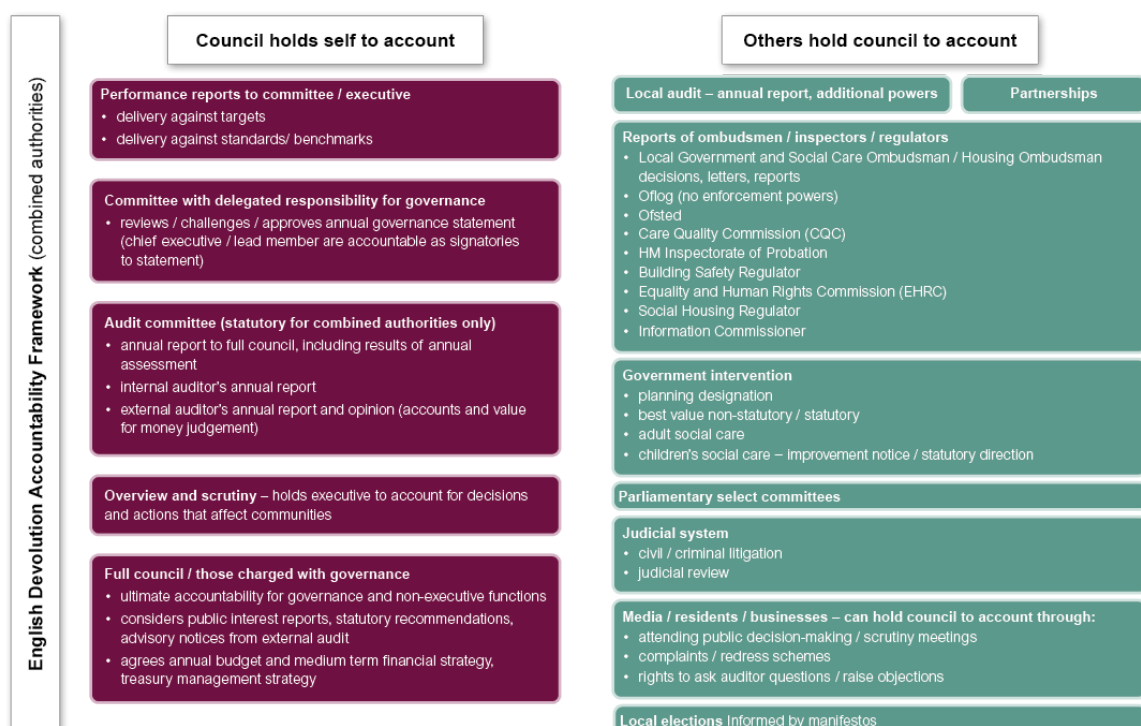
- ensures the adoption, effectiveness and regular review of the [authority's whistleblowing policy](#).
- The **monitoring officer**:
 - regularly reviews the constitution to ensure that it reflects both legislation and good practice (working with Democratic Services)
 - oversees arrangements for member decision-making, ensuring their compliance with the constitution and legislation
 - acts as principal adviser to the Standards Committee.
- The [chief finance officer](#) is responsible for ensuring proper administration of the authority's financial affairs (including budget-setting, budgetary controls, procurement practices and the authority's counter-fraud policy).
- The **head of paid service**, monitoring officer and chief finance officer [act together as the 'Golden Triangle'](#) to ensure and support good governance in the authority.
- The **strategic management team** effectively oversees operational and strategic delivery, including:
 - reporting and review of performance, finance and risk, including:
 - delivery of corporate plan objectives
 - compliance with statutory requirements and national outcomes frameworks
 - delivery of budget savings and medium term financial strategy
 - responses to and learning from complaints
 - corporate health indicators (for example, staff turnover, grievances)
 - staff and resident surveys and feedback from service user and community engagement
 - [benchmarking with relevant organisations](#)
 - considering and responding to annual reports by internal and external audit, ombudsmen, inspectors, regulators and peer reviews, and statutory/ non-statutory reviews.

In addition to considering all of the above individually, it is essential that the strategic management team consider the cumulative impact where limited or no assurance is possible in relation to more than one issue or service.

Appendix 3

- The **head of internal audit** provides independent assurance by:
 - preparing the annual internal audit plan, informed by risk in the authority, and implementing that plan;
 - auditing the authority's governance, risk management, controls, policies, procedures and reporting;
 - developing and implementing the internal audit quality assurance and improvement programme, including external assessment against the **Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**.

Working with auditors



Open a larger version of this diagram

What is members' role?

All members have a responsibility to oversee and assure effective governance and accountability.

- The **Executive (Cabinet) / Policy and Resources Committee** reviews performance, finance and risk reporting at a strategic level, including:
 - delivery of corporate plan objectives

- compliance with statutory requirements and national outcomes frameworks
- delivery of the medium term financial strategy
- corporate health indicators (for example, staff turnover, grievances).

Reporting should be regular: good practice would be at least quarterly.

- The Executive (Cabinet) / Policy and Resources Committee holds itself to account for delivery against performance targets, standards and benchmarks.
- In authorities with the executive governance model and those with the committee system which choose to appoint them, [overview and scrutiny committee\(s\)](#):
 - review performance/ [finance/ risk](#) reporting
 - undertake pre-decision and/or budget scrutiny
 - [call-in executive decisions](#)
 - undertake scrutiny reviews in order to support policy development or consider and review strategic options.
- Overview and scrutiny committees hold the Executive (Cabinet) to account for the decisions and actions that affect local communities.
- The work of scrutiny is supported by the statutory scrutiny officer.
- When reviewing finance and risk issues, scrutiny will need to have regard both to the work of the audit committee but also to the executive's own role in oversight and assurance.
- There is [statutory guidance](#) which sets out how effective overview and scrutiny should be conducted, and support and further guidance is available from the [Centre for Governance and Scrutiny](#). For devolved areas, a [scrutiny protocol](#) provides further detail.
- The **Appointments Committee** recommends to full council the appointment of appropriately qualified statutory officers.
- The [Audit Committee](#):
 - monitors and reviews the effectiveness of the authority's internal controls, risk management and financial reporting [holds internal and external audit to account](#)
 - approves the internal audit plan, ensuring that it is informed by the strategic risks facing the authority. It oversees the plan's implementation

and ensures compliance with the [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards](#)

- reviews internal and external audit reports and opinions and oversees management responses
- assesses its own practice (an annual external review is recommended)
- may include lay members to provide additional expertise
- holds management to account in relation to the opinions of internal and external audit and for the implementation of their recommendations
- is held to account by Full Council through an annual report, which should include reference to a self-assessment of its own performance.

CIPFA provides more [detailed guidance](#), including terms of reference for Audit Committees.

The LGA provides a range of support for audit committees:

- [Ten questions for audit committees to ask.](#)
- [Audit Committees: Leadership Essentials.](#)
- Regional audit forums for audit committee chairs provide an opportunity to access training, share good practice and discuss common issues. [Email for more information.](#)

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has produced [guidance](#) on the respective roles of audit and scrutiny committees.

- The **committee with delegated responsibility for governance:**
 - reviews the draft annual governance statement
 - holds management (via the chief executive and lead member as signatories) to account for implementation of improvement actions identified in the annual governance statement
 - oversees regular reviews of the constitution.
- **Standards Committee:**
 - reviews the [member code of conduct](#) and [arrangements for investigating complaints into member conduct](#) to ensure compliance with the [Nolan Principles](#)
 - reviews the monitoring officer's annual report
 - seeks the perspective of the committee's Independent Person(s).

In many authorities the committee is also responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of programmes of member training, ensuring their appropriateness and take-up by members. If this is not within the remit of Standards Committee, the authority will need to ensure that another member-level body has that remit.

The role of Standards Committee as part of the governance framework is distinct and should be separate from that of the Audit Committee which oversees the effectiveness of that framework.

- **Full Council** is the body charged with the governance of the council and while it may delegate some responsibilities it remains accountable and therefore should seek assurance. It does this by:
 - considering the s.25 statement of the chief finance officer of the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves before approving the budget
 - reviewing (at least) an annual report from each of the chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (where relevant), Audit and Standards Committees and holding them to account
 - appointing appropriately qualified statutory officers
 - consideration of the external auditor's annual report also represents good practice and ensuring appropriate responses to public interest reports, statutory recommendations and advisory notices from external audit.
- Corporate statutory officers have a range of individual statutory duties to report to Full Council. These include, but are not limited to, the chief finance officer reporting actual or potential unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget (through a 'Section 114' notice), the monitoring officer reporting maladministration and the head of paid service reporting on the arrangements for the discharge of the authority's functions.

What actions contribute to assurance of local authorities by members and officers working together (sometimes but not always in public)?

- Officers provide professional advice which informs members' decisions. It is essential that this advice includes all relevant information (including consideration of risk and options analysis), is current and presented in a way that is comprehensible to the decision-makers.

Where this information relates to a 'key decision', such information might appear in background papers which would normally be published.

Members and the public can be supported to understand the implications of the annual budget if the 's.25 statement' by the chief finance officer on the council's financial sustainability is clearly worded in non-technical language and is prominent as a separate report on the Cabinet/ Policy and Resources Committee and full council agendas.

Where a decision is required on very technical matters (for example on treasury management or certain kinds of commercial decisions), the council may need to engage industry specialists to inform decision-making.

- Each portfolio holder or policy committee chair meets regularly with directors relevant to their remit to review performance, finance and risk, consider activities required where assurance is not gained, and ensure appropriate formal reporting to members.
- The community safety partnership has oversight of the development and implementation of relevant cross-organisation strategies.
- Other boards and partnerships, such as Growth Boards or Joint Committees, are constituted to oversee activities which can only be achieved by the local authority working in partnership with others. Clear governance arrangements are essential to enable assurance of the partnership's activity and accountability for delivery.
- The authority may commission peer-led challenges for individual service areas and/or at corporate level, from the LGA (for example, [corporate peer challenge](#)), professional bodies (for example, [CIPFA financial resilience advisory reports](#)) and regional bodies.
- The corporate peer challenge (CPC) considers the effectiveness of the authority's political and managerial leadership, as well as its prioritisation, culture, governance, financial management and capacity to improve: authorities are expected to publish the report and action plan and have a follow-up visit to review progress. The preparation of an honest self-assessment ahead of a CPC is an important part of the process.
- A Council Improvement Board or Independent Assurance Panel (for example, [Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council](#)) may provide additional focus to and assurance of the authority's improvement activity, which may be targeted on prevention as opposed to recovery from failure.

Other bodies' contribution to local authority assurance (not usually in public)

- Grant funding bodies place many and varied reporting requirements in relation to their programmes, including where the local authority is the accountable body for other agencies and wider partnerships.
- Regional networks may undertake benchmarking and maintain an overview of performance, providing constructive challenge and in some cases improvement support (for example, [London's Self Improvement Board](#)).
- Officials from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) undertake early engagement with local authorities where they become aware of indicators of potential failure, to understand their challenges in relation to governance, finance and service delivery and to gain assurance of how they are being managed.
- Government departments make ad hoc requests for information and assurance where they have queries or concerns relating to local authority performance relevant to their remit.
- Political parties have their own disciplinary processes in relation to the conduct of members of their parties – including elected members:
 - [Conservative](#)
 - [Labour](#)
 - [Liberal Democrat](#)

The parties also have their own approaches to engagement with authorities where they are the largest party and where significant performance issues have been identified.

- Local (external) audit undertakes assurance activity throughout the year and acts as a critical friend.
- Professional bodies have varying roles in relation to standard setting, the specification and awarding of qualifications, capability and disciplinary procedures and guidance and tools to support decision making.
- The LGA maintains an overview of the performance of the sector.

How do others hold the authority to account?

- Ombudsmen, inspectors, regulators and others issue reports which require the authority to take action. While most of these relate to specific services, a failure leading to an adverse judgement by one of these bodies is a probable indicator of wider failings in assurance:
 - Building Safety Regulator*
 - Care Quality Commission*

Appendix 3

- Equality and Human Rights Commission*
- HMI Probation
- Housing Ombudsman*
- Information Commissioner*
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Ofsted.*

*Body with powers to take or trigger enforcement action.

Where there are services with a greater degree of regulation, often those with the largest budgets, this may skew assurance activity and attention. It is important for authorities to understand the scale and nature of assurance (both internal and external) of all higher-risk services and to put additional measures in place where necessary.

- There is guidance for members to help them understand their roles in relation to the assurance of children's services:
 - [Must know: The role of a council leader in improving outcomes for children.](#)
 - ['Must knows' for children's services portfolio holders.](#)
- Government departments formally intervene by issuing directions (statutory interventions) or requests (non-statutory interventions):
 - [adult social care](#)
 - [children's social care](#)
 - [local planning authority performance.](#)
- A parliamentary select committee may require a local authority to appear in front of it in relation to concerns about its performance.
- The judicial system may hold a local authority to account, whether through criminal or civil litigation, or judicial review.
- Local residents and business and the media can hold their local authority to account by:
 - attending public decision-making and scrutiny meetings, asking questions where permitted by the constitution
 - making use of complaints or redress schemes
 - invoking rights to ask the auditor questions and/or raise objections.

- Local residents hold elected members to account at local elections.
 - The [English Devolution Accountability Framework](#) sets out how devolved areas are scrutinised and held to account through local scrutiny, by the public and by government.
-

Key principles of good assurance and accountability

1. **Clarity:** understand who is accountable for what. Is it easy to see in your council's constitution who can take which decisions? Do the people who have key roles relating to assurance in your council have a shared understanding of those roles and have they had appropriate training?
2. **Proportionality:** assurance activity must add value, be cost-effective and be proportionate to the level of risk. As risk changes, so should the council's assurance activities, both at a strategic level and in relation to specific high-risk activities.
3. **A whole-council approach:** All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance. Everyone should understand their contribution, and this may include partners and other stakeholders.
4. **A culture of assurance and accountability, with a low tolerance for poor governance/ performance:** 'The culture of any organisation is shaped by the worst behaviour the leader is willing to tolerate' (School culture rewired, Gruenert and Whitaker). Councils which entered statutory intervention had many of the right processes in place, but cultures which tolerated non-compliance, including poor behaviours. In some places there was a lack of curiosity and intolerance of internal challenge to norms: while trust is important, so is constructive challenge.
5. **Monitoring against standards, benchmarks and local targets:** some elements of what good performance looks like change over time: understanding how the authority performs in terms of value for money should be a constant endeavour. In addition to local targets, many council service areas will have standards against which they are measured: reporting to elected members should include performance against these. [LG Inform](#) is freely available to all and enables any council's performance to be compared with any other council or group of councils.

6. **Credible, quality data and information:** elected members and the public can only be assured where they are confident in the quality of the information on which assurance judgements are based.
 7. **Transparency, accessibility and intelligibility of information:** a commitment to transparency is a fundamental element of good governance. [Access to information for elected members.](#)
 8. **Seeking and engaging with external challenge and support:** there are multiple opportunities for peer challenge and support at (sub)regional and national levels, for individual services and at a corporate level. The LGA's [peer challenge programme](#) supports continuous improvement by providing insight, guidance and challenge as well as assurance to local leaders and residents.
 9. **Independent assurance:** assurance should be proactively sought from a variety of sources. All of the corporate statutory officers, in particular, should be prepared to approach audit (whether internal or external, both are independent) with any concerns and seek their advice, in addition to commissioning audits of specific activities or programmes. Where risks are significant, the council should consider seeking additional external assurance from relevant experts.
-

What does 'good' look like?

Good practice in local government assurance includes:

1. **Visible, collective ownership and leadership of good governance by both political and managerial leaders.** All members and officers should be able to see that the council's political and managerial leadership prioritise assurance activity and accountability. This includes taking difficult decisions as and when necessary. The [Leadership Academy](#) and [Leadership Essentials](#) support the development of political leadership skills.
2. **Being a learning organisation.** Continuous improvement requires continual learning and development. Self-awareness is an essential first step, with a recognition of both strengths and areas for development. Organisations which guard against complacency are less likely to be caught by 'unknown unknowns'. Openness to external challenge and a lack of defensiveness are also prerequisites. Continuing professional development is essential for both the authority's political leadership and corporate statutory officers.
3. **Assurance as a constant process, not a one-off event.** The external auditor's annual report mainly looks back at previous activity, and internal audit reports capture practice at a moment in time. Ensuring consistent use of processes and

engagement with training, and use of monitoring information can help provide assurance between bigger assurance ‘events’.

4. **Assurance supports the achievement of priority outcomes.** Assurance is not an end in itself. A culture of assurance and accountability is more likely to be embedded where elected members and officers understand that assurance activity keeps the council ‘safe’ and able to deliver for residents.
5. **Making it easy for the public to hold the council to account.** This includes communicating well with the public on the council’s performance and ensuring public understanding of and access to key accountability opportunities and assurance information. Local authorities must also comply with the [Transparency Code](#).

We have collected some [case studies](#) which give examples of recent good practice in councils.

Developing an effective assurance framework in a local authority

An authority’s local code of governance describes – at high level - its own governance and assurance arrangements, or framework.

CIPFA has published [useful guidance](#) to help a local authority to consider whether it has the optimum assurance framework in place.

How was this framework developed?

The LGA has consulted with local authorities, professional bodies and other key stakeholders to prepare this framework and supporting guidance, which has been informed by draft guidance on best value standards and intervention and learning from recent council failures.

The LGA will continue to develop it over time as new insights and best practice are identified, reviewing the framework at least annually. Tools and training to support its implementation will also be developed by the LGA and partners.

Glossary of terms

Accountability: the requirement to provide explanations about the stewardship of public money and how this money has been used.

Annual Governance Statement: an annual report prepared, approved and published with the financial statements that describes the effectiveness of the council's overall governance arrangements and an action plan to improve them.

Assurance: timely and accurate information, evidence and evaluation of how local authorities are delivering their duties, functions and outcomes, which can be used to hold them to account and may give confidence.

Assurance statement: a statement providing evidence and confidence that an internal control(s) and/or service is operating in an effective way, in line with any statutory duties and/or best practice.

Best Value: the legal duty introduced in the Local Government Act 1999 that requires local authorities to make arrangements to continuously improve the way in which their functions are exercised and to have regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. [Best Value Standards and Intervention: a statutory guide for best value authorities \(section 5\)](#).

Corporate statutory officers: three corporate statutory officers within all councils, the head of paid service, chief finance officer and monitoring officer, who each have distinct legal roles and responsibilities and work together to ensure the effectiveness of the council's corporate governance and assurance.

Operational directors: officers with overall responsibility for managing a service. Legislation requires local authorities to have some but not all posts, for example, Directors of Public Health are statutory roles, whilst Directors of Transport are not.

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Improvement and assurance framework for local government

Each council must take appropriate measures to gain assurance both of the performance of its services and of its corporate governance. This framework is designed to support local authorities to understand the various components of assurance and accountability in local government, and to access guidance and support to increase the effectiveness of assurance activities in the sector.

Introduction

Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement. This is recognised in the ‘sector-led improvement’ approach which is underpinned by the key principles that councils:

- are primarily accountable locally, not nationally;
- have a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the local government sector.

The LGA’s role is to provide tools and support councils and also to maintain an overview of the performance of the sector.

In order to comply with the best value duty to secure continuous improvement in the way the authority’s functions are exercised, each council must take appropriate measures to gain assurance both of the performance of its services and of its corporate governance. Through a focus on effective assurance, councils can mitigate the risks and costs of failure and their impacts on local residents and businesses.

There has not previously been a document or framework which sets out, in one place, the various required components of local government assurance, how they all fit together, how to use them effectively and what improvement support is available to help. This framework aims to:

- support councils to understand how to use the components within the framework and how they fit together;
- increase the effectiveness of assurance in the sector. While it cannot itself prevent failures, its use may reduce the risk – and costs - of statutory or non-statutory intervention, whether by central government or other regulators;
- make it easier for local residents and businesses to understand how to hold their local authority to account.

Assurance may sometimes be seen as a dry topic, and accountability may, wrongly, be feared. However, the management and routine operation of internal controls and risk management support councils to manage the future constructively and safely. As one council leader said, *‘it’s what helps me to sleep at night’*.

It is not just the responsibility of the monitoring officer or the head of internal audit. All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance.

Assurance cannot be gained ‘by numbers’ or a one-off event: there is no simple list of yes/ no indicators which will help a council decide whether or not it can be assured of its performance or governance. It is achieved through a series of nuanced, qualitative judgements, often informed by assessments of behaviours and relationships. It is essential to triangulate numerous sources of evidence, and to apply multiple assurance activities effectively, to gain a view of the council in the round.

Not all of the components of the system are currently working as well as they should. In the context of continuing crisis in local audit, it is more important than ever that councils should undertake their own assurance activities effectively. The LGA will continue to work with its partners to seek to ensure continuous improvement of the system and all of its components.

Elected members play a crucial and continuous role in seeking assurance of the council’s activities and governance. This includes assurance of each council’s own local objectives, for which they are accountable to their local electorate. Councils will rightly make political choices in response to local circumstances: successful authorities make these choices within the context of good management practice, consideration of cost-effectiveness and value for money, robust controls and risk management.

Councils exist to improve the quality of life of, and the quality of places for, the communities they serve. Therefore, the focus of councils’ assurance work is on the assurance they provide to local communities.

This framework includes the ‘nuts and bolts’ – the key components of local authority assurance. Many of these are processes and structures. The framework also includes organisational culture, behaviours and ways of working, since constructive working relationships are fundamental to effective assurance activities. There is a crucial role for political and managerial leaders in challenging poor behaviour (in both formal and informal settings) and non-compliance.

It will not always be possible for assurance to be gained, particularly as the scale of challenges facing local government increase. Where positive assurance is not possible there is support available – from the LGA and from others in the sector – to help the council put things right. By using the assurance system and its components effectively, councils can increase their chances of identifying issues and addressing them before they get more difficult – and costly – to fix. The cost of statutory intervention can be far greater than the cost of sector support.

Sector-led improvement has always played a part in providing councils with assurance of their own performance. Increasingly, it contributes to the assurance of councils' performance for the wider public and central government. The LGA will work with professional bodies to maintain an overview of the sector's performance, seeking to ensure that support is targeted where it is needed.

What is the scope and status of this framework?

The framework is applicable to unitary, county, district and borough councils in England, and to English authorities with all types of governance system. The specific assurance requirements for combined authorities are set out in the [English Devolution Assurance Framework](#) but the principles in this framework will apply to combined authorities too.

The framework is part of a suite of guidance, tools and resources for the sector produced by the LGA and other bodies. Effective assurance is achieved mainly through the application of best practice rather than statutory activity, although the framework points to statutory provisions where relevant.

Failure in one service area may impact significantly on the whole organisation. Since the scope and objectives of the local government sector are so wide-ranging, this framework is mainly focused on corporate areas and overarching governance, rather than including every service-specific source of assurance. Each service area will have its own mechanisms for assurance and accountability and councils will need to assure themselves of compliance with statutory duties in each case. Effective corporate assurance will support assurance of individual services and the principles and good practice identified in this framework will apply to all services as well as corporate activities.

What is the relationship between this framework, corporate peer challenge, best value standards and statutory interventions?

At any one time, each local authority will be at a point on a continuum. At one end are authorities which have a strong awareness of their strengths and areas for development, are proactive in seeking opportunities for improvement and delivering best value (even where performance is strong) and elected members and officers take appropriate actions to assure themselves in relation to their performance and governance.

The characteristics of a well-functioning authority set out in the [best value standards](#) include effective use of many of the framework's components: equally, the standards' indicators of potential failure may arise where assurance activity is not effective. A failure to deliver best value is, essentially, a failure of governance. Achieving continuous improvement requires an ongoing drive to move from 'good' to 'great'.

At the other end, a small minority of authorities are not sufficiently self-aware, do not take effective action to achieve continuous improvement, do not have effective assurance arrangements and consequently have entered statutory intervention. Local authorities can and do move between points on this continuum over time.

The LGA works with professional bodies, regional groupings of councils, and others to support as many local authorities as possible to stay at the positive end of the continuum, aiming to prevent authorities from moving towards the ‘intervention’ end, so that they continue their improvement journey even further. The LGA’s corporate peer challenge is one of the improvement tools that councils can use as part of their assurance of their own performance and governance, so that they can address their own challenges where possible without central government or regulators needing to become involved.

How was this framework developed?

The LGA has consulted with local authorities, professional bodies and other key stakeholders to prepare this framework and supporting guidance, which has been informed by [guidance on best value standards and intervention](#) and learning from recent council failures. We also had helpful discussions with commissioners. CIPFA, Lawyers in Local Government and Solace acted as a ‘sounding board’ during the drafting process.

Developing the framework has been an iterative process and the LGA will continue to develop it over time as new insights and best practice are identified, reviewing the framework at least annually. Tools and training to support its implementation will also be developed by the LGA and partners.

What do we mean by assurance?

We have developed the following definition through consultation with the sector:

Timely and accurate information, evidence and evaluation of how local authorities are delivering their duties, functions and outcomes, which can be used to hold them to account and may give confidence.

There should be no assumption that assurance will always be gained – in some cases the outcome will be ‘not assured’.

A ‘not assured’ outcome – as long as it is acted upon – may be as valuable to an authority as ‘assured’.

How does accountability work?

The [Review of Audit and Accountability](#) defined accountability as...

...the requirement to provide explanations about the stewardship of public money and how this money has been used.

Through engagement with the sector, we have identified multiple elements of accountability in local government, for example:

- councillors to their constituents
- the executive (where relevant) to the overview and scrutiny function
- the executive (where relevant) and the organisation to the audit committee
- officers to the council (through line management)
- specific statutory officers to the full council (through reporting responsibilities)
- officers to their professional bodies in relation to professional standards and conduct (where applicable)
- the council for its stewardship of public resources (through external audit)
- the council to ombudsmen / inspectors / regulators
- the council to Government departments (e.g. grant funding arrangements, [the PSN Code of Connection](#))
- the council to parliamentary select committees (as and when required)
- the council to the courts/ redress schemes
- the council to wider partnerships, bodies and authorities.

Components of the improvement and assurance framework

The key components of the improvement and assurance framework for local government are set out in the following categories, shown **diagrammatically through the links below**:

- [Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities, by:](#)
 - officers, not usually in public
 - members and officers, sometimes but not always in public
 - members and officers, in public
 - other bodies, not usually in public
- [Local authorities' public accountability:](#)
 - the authority holding itself to account
 - others holding the authority to account.

Some of these components are required by legislation (e.g. the requirement for the s151 officer to report to full council if they consider that a decision will incur unlawful expenditure). Many include a mixture of legislative requirements and best practice (e.g. ensuring appropriate governance and reviews of joint ventures and local authority trading companies). Others reflect practice which is not set down in statute but is necessary in a well-run authority. A significant proportion reflect content from the [best value standards](#) and/or reports relating to ‘failed’ councils which identify where key activities were absent or poorly performed.

More information about each component, with links to relevant guidance and improvement support, appears below. Engagement with sector support is itself a key component of the framework- whether from other authorities, regional, national and/or professional bodies - for benchmarking, sharing good practice and seeking assurance and support for improvement. All authorities – including those seeking to move from good to great – can benefit from looking outwards to learn from practice elsewhere.

The LGA’s [regional teams](#) can advise on a range of support for local authorities which will help understanding and implementation of the assurance activities shown below. This includes bespoke support and mentoring in addition to:

- [councillor and officer development](#)
- [top team development](#)
- [corporate, finance and governance peer challenges](#)
- [transformation tools and support](#)
- assurance reviews provided by CIPFA and Local Partnerships (for individual services, business cases and programmes).

In addition to considering *what* the key components are, read on to consider *how* they are implemented, with information about key principles and what good looks like.

Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities by officers (not normally in public)

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[Open a larger version of this diagram](#)

- Operational directors ensure that:
 - directorate assurance statements to inform the annual governance statement are comprehensive and accurate, informed by an assessment of compliance with all relevant policies and procedures;
 - project and programme management complies with corporate requirements and good practice;
 - **[data used to inform decision-making and performance monitoring is of high quality](#)**. Effective performance management, using good quality data, is a necessary contribution, but is not the only source of assurance. Services where poor performance may be less visible (such as social care) require additional, and different performance management;
 - performance appraisals are conducted consistently, with individual objectives linked to corporate objectives; capability and disciplinary procedures are utilised consistently and as appropriate;
 - appropriate governance is in place for any **[partnerships, joint ventures and local authority trading companies and that it is reviewed regularly](#)** (including ensuring clarity of shareholder roles, avoiding

- conflicts of interest and consideration of independent data on performance);
- there is appropriate oversight of reporting on performance, finance and risk, including:
 - delivery of corporate plan objectives
 - compliance with statutory requirements (e.g. timescales for determination of planning applications, response to FOIs)
 - national outcomes frameworks (e.g. ASCOF)
 - delivery of budget savings
 - responses to and learning from complaints;
 - actions in response to internal audit recommendations are implemented to agreed timescales;
 - **effective consultation and engagement** with service users and wider communities informs service design, planning and delivery. This is fundamental to accountability and requires consideration of any actions or support required to enable communities to engage with the authority;
 - all necessary training is delivered to relevant members and officers to enable compliance with policies, procedures and strategies (including HR, standards, procurement and risk management). For senior member and officer roles, this should include space to reflect on practice, for example through mentoring.
- **Corporate programme/ project management reflects good practice**, with capacity and capability commensurate with the scale, complexity and risk of the authority's major programmes.
 - The strategic management team effectively oversees operational and strategic delivery, including:
 - reporting and review of performance, finance and risk, including:
 - delivery of corporate plan objectives
 - compliance with statutory requirements (e.g. timescales for determination of planning applications, response to FOIs)
 - national outcomes frameworks (e.g. ASCOF)
 - delivery of budget savings and medium term financial strategy

- responses to and learning from complaints
- corporate health indicators (e.g. staff turnover, grievances)
- staff/ resident surveys and feedback from service user and community engagement
- [benchmarking with relevant organisations](#)
- triangulation of all sources of data on performance;
- contributing to the review of the effectiveness of the authority's governance arrangements to inform the annual governance statement;
- considering and responding to annual reports by internal and external audit, ombudsmen, inspectors, regulators and peer reviews, and statutory/ non-statutory reviews.

In addition to considering all of the above individually, it is essential that the strategic management team consider the cumulative impact where limited or no assurance is possible in relation to more than one issue or service. A trend of, for example, increasing complaints, whistleblowing and staff turnover may be an indicator of more systemic failings.

- The [head of paid service](#):
 - reviews corporate performance reporting to inform their actions to ensure the appropriate number, grades, organisation and management of staff for the discharge of the authority's functions;
 - ensures appropriately senior and skilled staff are employed, including for:
 - risk management
 - health and safety
 - emergency planning and business continuity;
and that these arrangements are appropriately managed and coordinated;
- ensures that an appropriate person leads the [review of the effectiveness of the authority's governance arrangements](#) to inform the annual governance statement;
- ensures adoption, effectiveness and regular review of the [authority's whistleblowing policy](#).

The National Audit Office [good practice guide on Whistleblowing](#) in the civil service contains much information that is also relevant for local government.

Top tips for chief executives in ensuring good governance and assurance.

- The monitoring officer:
 - regularly reviews the constitution to ensure that it reflects both legislation and good practice (working with Democratic Services);
 - oversees arrangements for member decision-making, ensuring their compliance with the constitution and legislation
 - acts as principal adviser to the Standards Committee (the LGA has commissioned guidance and training materials to support monitoring officers in this role).
- The **chief finance officer** is responsible for ensuring proper administration of the authority's financial affairs (including budget-setting, budgetary controls, procurement practices and the authority's counter-fraud policy).
- The head of paid service, monitoring officer and chief finance officer meet and **act together as the 'Golden Triangle'** to ensure and support good governance in the authority. They should also consider involving and consulting other senior officers as appropriate such as the Head of Internal Audit and the Head of HR. Solace, CIPFA and Lawyers in Local Government have produced further **guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Golden Triangle**.
- The monitoring officer works with the chief finance officer to ensure that the authority's **scheme of delegation** is regularly reviewed, appropriately comprehensive, current, and with member-level decision-making and transparency proportionate to the scale of the authority's activity and risks.
- The Senior Information Risk Owner has responsibility for information governance and managing information security risks. In upper tier and unitary authorities, the Caldicott Guardian ensures that the confidentiality of people's health and care information is protected and that it is used correctly.
- The head of internal audit provides independent assurance by:
 - preparing the annual internal audit plan, informed by risk in the authority, and implementing that plan;
 - auditing the authority's governance, risk management, controls, policies, procedures and reporting;

- developing and implementing the internal audit quality assurance and improvement programme, including external assessment against the [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards](#).

[Working with auditors](#)

Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities by members and officers working together (sometimes but not always in public)

- Officers provide professional advice which informs members' decisions. It is essential that this advice includes all relevant information (including consideration of risk and options analysis), is current and presented in a way that is comprehensible to the decision-makers.

Where this information relates to a 'key decision', such information might appear in background papers which would normally be published. Authorities need systems in place to recognise where this applies and to ensure that papers are consistent and comprehensive.

Members and the public can be supported to understand the implications of the annual budget if the 's.25 statement' by the chief finance officer on the council's financial sustainability is clearly worded in non-technical language and is prominent as a separate report on the Cabinet/ Policy and Resources Committee and full council agendas.

Where a decision is required on very technical matters (for example on treasury management or certain kinds of commercial decisions), the council may need to engage industry specialists to inform decision-making (including the preparation of technical assessments).

Assurance is not a one-off activity: the advice or business case on which a decision was based may change over time. Officers have a responsibility to bring such changes, where material, to the attention of decision-makers. Where no assurance is possible due to changed circumstances, this may require consideration of additional mitigations or even the reversal of the decision.

[Guidance on taking a structured and robust approach to considering commercial activity](#)

[Writing a report for a business case related member decision](#)

- Each portfolio holder or policy committee chair meets regularly with directors relevant to their remit to review performance, finance and risk, consider activities required where assurance is not gained, and ensure appropriate formal

reporting to members;

- The community safety partnership has oversight of the development and implementation of relevant cross-organisation strategies;
- Other boards and partnerships, such as Growth Boards or Joint Committees, are constituted to oversee activities which can only be achieved by the local authority working in partnership with others. Clear governance arrangements are essential to enable assurance of the partnership's activity and accountability for delivery.

Guidance on effective assurance and accountability of delivery in place-based partnerships

- The authority may commission peer-led challenges for individual service areas and/or at corporate level, from the LGA (e.g. [corporate peer challenge](#)), professional bodies (eg [CIPFA financial resilience advisory reports](#)) and regional bodies. The corporate peer challenge (CPC) considers the effectiveness of the authority's political and managerial leadership, as well as its prioritisation, culture, governance, financial management and capacity to improve: authorities are expected to publish the report and action plan and have a follow-up visit to review progress. The preparation of an honest self-assessment ahead of a CPC is an important part of the process.
- A Council Improvement Board or Independent Assurance Panel (e.g. [Wirral](#)) may provide additional focus to and assurance of the authority's improvement activity, which may be targeted on prevention as opposed to recovery from failure.

The LGA has produced a [version of this framework for elected members](#) explaining their roles in contributing to the assurance of the authority."

Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities by members and officers in public

- The Executive / Policy and Resources Committee reviews performance, finance and risk reporting at a strategic level, including:

- delivery of corporate plan objectives;
 - compliance with statutory requirements (e.g. timescales for determination of planning applications, response to FOIs)
 - national outcomes frameworks (e.g. ASCOF)
 - delivery of the medium term financial strategy
 - corporate health indicators (eg staff turnover, grievances).
Reporting should be regular: good practice would be at least quarterly;
- In authorities with the executive governance model and those with the committee system which choose to appoint them, [overview and scrutiny committee\(s\)](#):
 - review performance/ [finance](#)/ [risk](#) reporting
 - undertake pre-decision and/or budget scrutiny
 - [call-in executive decisions](#)
 - undertake scrutiny reviews in order to support policy development or consider and review strategic options.

The work of scrutiny is supported by the statutory scrutiny officer.

When reviewing finance and risk issues, scrutiny will need to have regard both to the work of the audit committee but also to the executive's own role in oversight and assurance.

There is [statutory guidance](#) which sets out how effective overview and scrutiny should be conducted, and support and further guidance is available from the [Centre for Governance and Scrutiny](#). For devolved areas, a [scrutiny protocol](#) provides further detail.

- The Appointments Committee recommends to full council the appointment of appropriately qualified statutory officers;
- The [Audit Committee](#):
 - monitors and reviews the effectiveness of the authority's internal controls, risk management and financial reporting [holds internal and external audit to account](#);
 - approves the internal audit plan, ensuring that it is informed by the strategic risks facing the authority. It oversees the plan's implementation and ensures compliance with the [Public Sector Internal Audit](#)

Standards (set by CIPFA, who add interpretations for the UK public sector to international internal audit standards);

- reviews internal and external audit reports and opinions and oversees management responses;
- assesses its own practice (an annual external review is recommended)
- may include lay members to provide additional expertise.

CIPFA provides more **detailed guidance**, including terms of reference for Audit Committees.

The LGA provides a range of support for audit committees:

- **[Ten questions for audit committees to ask.](#)**
- **[Audit Committees: Leadership Essentials](#)**
- Regional audit forums for audit committee chairs provide an opportunity to access training, share good practice and discuss common issues. **[Email for more information.](#)**

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has produced **guidance** on the respective roles of audit and scrutiny committees.

- The committee with delegated responsibility for governance:
 - reviews the draft annual governance statement
 - oversees regular reviews of the constitution.
- The Standards Committee:
 - reviews the **[member code of conduct](#)** and **[arrangements for investigating complaints into member conduct](#)** to ensure compliance with the **[Nolan Principles](#)**
 - reviews the monitoring officer's annual report
 - seeks the perspective of the committee's Independent Person(s).

In many authorities the committee is also responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of programmes of member training, ensuring their appropriateness and take-up by members. If this is not within the remit of Standards Committee, the authority will need to ensure that another member-level body has that remit.

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The role of Standards Committee as part of the governance framework is distinct and should be separate from that of the Audit Committee which oversees the effectiveness of that framework.

- The following officers have a statutory duty to report to full council:
 - The head of paid service, on arrangements for discharge of the authority's functions (s.4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989)
 - The chief finance officer (s.151 officer in councils and s.73 officer in combined authorities):
 - on the robustness of the estimates for expenditure and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (s.25 Local Government Act 2003)
 - if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget (s.114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988)
 - The monitoring officer on matters they believe to be illegal or amount to maladministration (s.5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989)

Before issuing a report, the chief finance officer or monitoring officer must first consult (as far as is practicable) with the head of paid service and each other.

- Full Council is the body charged with the governance of the council and while it may delegate some responsibilities it remains accountable and therefore should seek assurance. It does this by:
 - Considering the s.25 statement of the chief finance officer of the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves before approving the budget;
 - Reviewing (at least) an annual report from each of the chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (where relevant), Audit and Standards Committees and holding them to account;
 - Appointing appropriately qualified statutory officers.

Consideration of the external auditor's annual report would also represent good practice.

Actions to contribute to assurance of local authorities by other bodies (not usually in public)

- Grant funding bodies place many and varied reporting requirements in relation to their programmes, including where the local authority is the accountable body

for other agencies and wider partnerships;

- Regional networks may undertake benchmarking and maintain an overview of performance, providing constructive challenge and in some cases improvement support (e.g. [London's Self Improvement Board](#))
- Officials from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) undertake early engagement with local authorities where they become aware of qualitative or quantitative indicators of potential failure, to understand their organisational challenges in relation to governance, finance and service delivery and to gain assurance of how they are being managed. [Best Value Standards and Intervention: a statutory guide for best value authorities \(section 5\)](#)
- Government departments make ad hoc requests for information and assurance where they have queries or concerns relating to local authority performance relevant to their remit.
- Political parties have their own disciplinary processes in relation to the conduct of members of their parties – including elected members:
 - [Conservative](#)
 - [Labour](#)
 - [Liberal Democrat](#)

The parties also have their own approaches to engagement with authorities where they are the largest party and where significant performance issues have been identified.

- Local -or external – audit undertakes assurance activity throughout the year and acts as a critical friend.
- Professional bodies have varying roles in relation to standard setting, the specification and awarding of qualifications, capability and disciplinary procedures and guidance and tools to support decision making. In relation to corporate service areas, the following bodies have key roles:

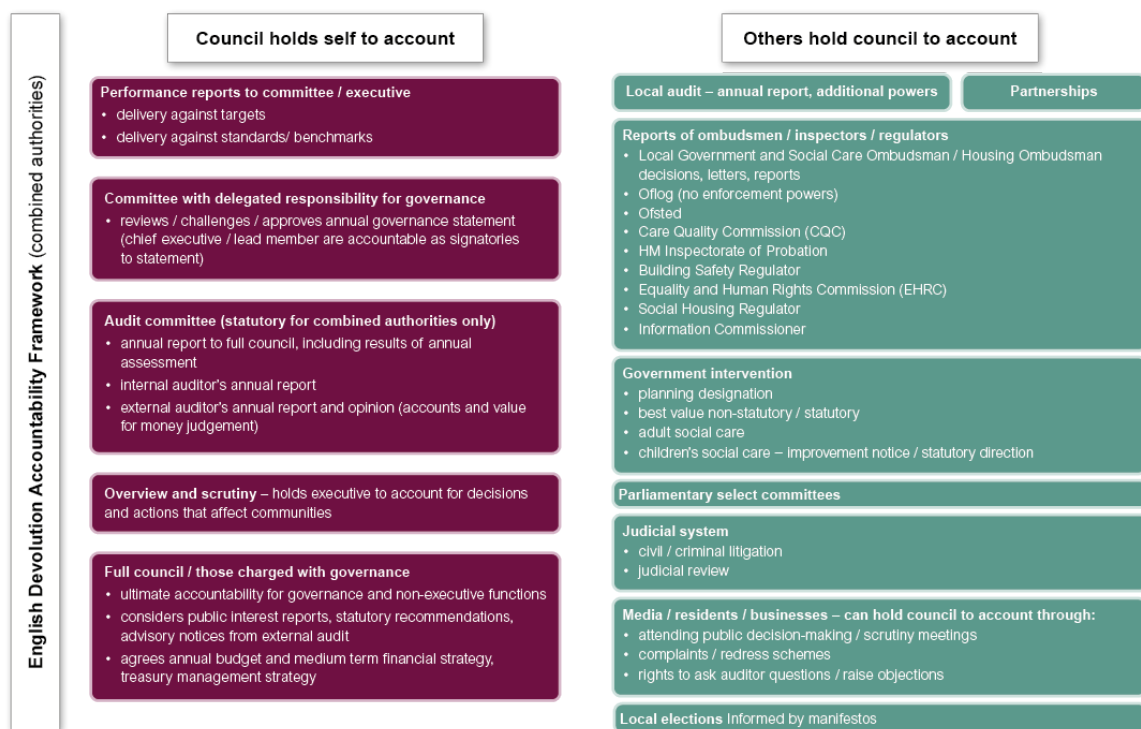
Finance	The chief finance officer in England must be a member of one of the following bodies:

	• <u>The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy</u> • <u>The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants</u> • <u>The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants</u> • or any other body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose
Internal Audit	• <u>The Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors</u> • <u>The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy</u>
Legal services	There is no requirement for a monitoring officer to be legally qualified. For those that are, the following bodies are relevant: • <u>Solicitors Regulation Authority</u> • <u>Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX)</u> • <u>The Law Society</u> • <u>Legal Services Board</u>

- The LGA maintains an overview of the performance of the sector.

How does the authority hold itself to account?

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[Open a larger version of this diagram](#)

- The **English Devolution Accountability Framework** sets out how devolved areas are scrutinised and held to account through local scrutiny, by the public and by government.

Good governance for combined authorities

- The Executive/ Policy and Resources Committee holds itself to account for delivery against performance targets, standards and benchmarks;
- In authorities with the executive governance model, overview and scrutiny committees hold the Executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect local communities;
- The Audit Committee:
 - holds management to account in relation to the opinions of internal and external audit and for the implementation of their recommendations

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- is held to account by Full Council through an annual report, which should include reference to a self-assessment of its own performance;
- The committee with delegated responsibility for governance reviews, challenges and approves the annual governance statement and holds management (via the chief executive and lead member as signatories) to account for implementation of improvement actions identified;
- The Full Council:
 - is ultimately accountable for the council's governance and other non-executive functions
 - considers and must ensure appropriate responses to public interest reports, statutory recommendations and advisory notices from external audit
 - agrees the annual budget, medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy.

How do others hold the authority to account?

- Ombudsmen, inspectors, regulators and others issue reports which require the authority to take action. While most of these (and the more formal interventions which follow) relate to specific services, a failure leading to an adverse judgement by one of these bodies is a probable indicator of wider failings in assurance:
 - Building Safety Regulator*
 - Care Quality Commission*
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission*
 - HMI Probation
 - Housing Ombudsman*
 - Information Commissioner*
 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
 - Ofsted*
 - Regulator of Social Housing

*Body with powers to take or trigger enforcement action;

Where there are services with a greater degree of regulation – often those with the largest budgets – this may skew assurance activity and attention. It is important for authorities – and particularly the chief executive – to understand the scale and nature of assurance (both internal and external) of all higher-risk services and to put additional measures in place where necessary.

There is guidance for members and chief executives to help them understand their roles in relation to the assurance of children's services:

- [Chief executives 'must know' for children's services](#)
- [Must know: The role of a council leader in improving outcomes for children](#)
- ['Must knows' for children's services portfolio holders](#)
- Government departments formally intervene by issuing directions (statutory interventions) or requests (non-statutory interventions):
 - [adult social care](#)
 - [children's social care](#)
 - [local planning authority performance](#);
- A parliamentary select committee may require a local authority to appear in front of it in relation to concerns about its performance;
- The judicial system may hold a local authority to account, whether through criminal or civil litigation, or judicial review;
- Local residents and business and the media can hold their local authority to account by:
 - attending public decision-making and scrutiny meetings, asking questions where permitted by the constitution
 - making use of complaints or redress schemes
 - invoking rights to ask the auditor questions and/or raise objections;
- Local residents hold elected members to account at local elections.

The 'three lines' model

The ‘three lines model’ outlines the different contributions that different sources of assurance can provide:

First line	Actions by managers and staff who are responsible for identifying and managing risk as part of their day to day management and delivery of services. This includes: • actions by operational directors • corporate project and programme management
Second line	The way the authority oversees the effectiveness of its controls so that it operates effectively, for example, the responsibilities of: • Strategic management team • Corporate statutory officers • Audit committee
Third line	Independent assurance, i.e. internal audit. Accountable to full council.
Governing body	Full council
External assurance providers	For example: • External audit • Regulators, inspectors

There should be regular dialogue and coordination between the different ‘lines’ and escalation where appropriate. Regular interaction between internal audit and management will ensure the work of internal audit is relevant and aligned with the authority’s strategic and operational needs. Collaboration between the first and second lines and with internal audit will ensure no unnecessary duplication, overlap or gaps. Regular liaison between internal and external audit can inform the identification of risks. A [briefing by the Institute of Internal Auditors](#) provides more detail on how the different sources should complement each other.

Key principles of good assurance and accountability

1. Clarity: understand who is accountable for what. Is it easy to see in your council's constitution who can take which decisions? Do the people who have key roles relating to assurance in your council have a shared understanding of those roles and have they had appropriate training?
2. Proportionality: assurance activity must add value, be cost-effective and be proportionate to the level of risk. As risk changes, so should the council's assurance activities, both at a strategic level and in relation to specific high-risk activities.

The [governance risk and resilience framework](#) provides a tool for authorities to identify, understand and act on risks to good governance. The LGA has produced a [guide on risk management for senior leaders](#) to help those in leadership roles understand what good risk management looks like and how they can undertake their roles successfully. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny have also provided a briefing on [the respective roles of audit and scrutiny in the oversight of risk](#).

[ALARM](#) provides training and guidance to public sector risk management professionals in the UK.

3. A whole-council approach: assurance isn't just the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer or the Head of Internal Audit. All members have a responsibility to oversee effective governance, and all officers have a duty to comply with good governance and provide information to demonstrate that compliance. Everyone should understand their contribution – and this may include partners and other stakeholders.

The opportunity provided by the preparation of the annual governance statement to step back and consider how well the authority's systems and controls are working as a whole is a crucial one: depending on the scale of challenges and risks the authority is facing, the corporate statutory officers and/or audit committee may need to find other opportunities to do so at intervals during the year.

4. A culture of assurance and accountability, with a low tolerance for poor governance/ performance. 'The culture of any organisation is shaped by the worst behaviour the leader is willing to tolerate' (School culture rewired, Gruenert and Whitaker). Councils which entered statutory intervention had

many of the right processes in place, but cultures which tolerated non-compliance, including poor behaviours. In some places there was a lack of curiosity and intolerance of internal challenge to norms: while trust is important, so is constructive challenge.

The existence of a policy or procedure does not in itself provide assurance: is there sufficient evidence to show that it is appropriately and consistently implemented?

5. Monitoring against standards, benchmarks and local targets: some elements of what good performance looks like change over time: understanding how the authority performs in terms of value for money should be a constant endeavour. In addition to local targets, many council service areas will have standards against which they are measured: reporting to elected members should include performance against these. [LG Inform](#) is freely available to all and enables any council's performance to be compared with any other council or group of councils.
6. Credible, quality data and information: elected members and the public can only be assured where they are confident in the quality of the information on which assurance judgements are based.

The [Better use of data programme](#) supports local authorities to develop an evidence-informed culture which will enable well-informed decisions and improve service design, accountability and transparency.

7. Transparency, accessibility and intelligibility of information: a commitment to transparency is a fundamental element of good governance. That commitment is hollow if key information is full of jargon or technical detail which is unintelligible to non-experts, or if it is hidden away in an obscure part of the council website.

Is confidential or 'exempt' information in member reports kept to an absolute minimum so that members of the public can see and understand why members are making the decisions that they do? Is there regular financial reporting to Cabinet/ Policy and Resources Committee during the year? Is the information that enables, for example, audit committee to be assured easily accessible?

Access to information for elected members.

8. **Seeking and engaging with external challenge and support:** There are multiple opportunities for peer challenge and support at (sub)regional and national levels, for individual services and at a corporate level.
9. **Independent assurance:** assurance should be proactively sought from a variety of sources. All of the corporate statutory officers, in particular, should be prepared to approach audit (whether internal or external, both are independent) with any concerns and seek their advice, in addition to commissioning audits of specific activities or programmes. Where risks are significant, the council should consider seeking additional external assurance from relevant experts.

What does ‘good’ look like?

Good practice in local government assurance includes:

1. **Visible, collective ownership and leadership of good governance by both political and managerial leaders.** All members and officers should be able to see that the council’s political and managerial leadership prioritise assurance activity and accountability. This includes taking difficult decisions as and when necessary.

Collective leadership of good governance relies on members and officers working together constructively. Member-officer relations protocols help to define behavioural expectations, respective roles, responsibilities and boundaries, supporting accountability and ethical decision-making. **Good practice guidance on member-officer relations protocols** assists members and officers to develop a robust protocol for their authority and monitor its effectiveness.

Top tips for chief executives on governance and assurance are designed to support chief executives to keep at ‘front of mind’ the key elements of good governance and assurance. The **chief executives’ development hub** provides support for the complex set of accountabilities that chief executives hold.

The **Leader’s guide on leading good governance and assurance** helps new leaders and elected mayors to consider where to focus and what questions to ask. The **Leadership Academy** and **Leadership Essentials** support the development of political leadership skills.

2. Being a learning organisation. Continuous improvement requires continual learning and development. Self-awareness is an essential first step, with a recognition of both strengths and areas for development. Organisations which guard against complacency are less likely to be caught by ‘unknown unknowns’. Openness to external challenge and a lack of defensiveness are also prerequisites.

Continuing professional development is essential for both corporate statutory officers and the authority’s political leadership.

3. Assurance as a constant process, not a one-off event. The external auditor’s annual report mainly looks back at previous activity, and internal audit reports capture practice at a moment in time. Ensuring consistent use of processes and engagement with training, and use of monitoring information can help provide assurance between bigger assurance ‘events’.
4. Assurance supports the achievement of priority outcomes. Assurance is not an end in itself. A culture of assurance and accountability is more likely to be embedded where elected members and officers understand that assurance activity keeps the council ‘safe’ and able to deliver for residents.
5. Making it easy for the public to hold the council to account. This includes communicating well with the public on the council’s performance and ensuring public understanding of and access to key accountability opportunities and assurance information. In addition to meaningful compliance with the [Transparency Code](#), this would include, for example, making it easy for the public to access:
 - a two-page summary of the budget
 - the annual governance statement (or a summary) and action plan
 - the external auditor’s annual opinion letter and in particular the value for money judgement
 - corporate performance reports which show the council’s performance in relation to others (potentially using [LG Inform](#))
 - reports from peer challenges and regulators, with associated action plans
 - a comprehensive forward plan which shows what decisions will be made by members in the coming months

- equality impact assessments related to member decisions and other information related to the Public Sector Equality Duty
- information provided in response to freedom of information and environmental information requests.

It is important to recognise that in many places, the local media does not cover local government in the same depth or detail as was previously the case. The development of social media has also had impacts on behaviour, defensiveness and openness in some places. The council's communications team has an important role to play in ensuring that the council's commitment to transparency is reflected in practice and building relationships with local media and local democracy reporters to help them understand key performance and assurance information.

The LGA will produce a version of this framework explaining how the public can contribute to holding their local authority to account.

We have collected some [case studies](#) which give examples of recent good practice in councils.

Developing an effective assurance framework in a local authority

An authority's local code of governance describes – at high level - its own governance and assurance arrangements, or framework.

CIPFA has published [useful guidance](#) to help a local authority to consider whether it has the optimum assurance framework in place, and the [CIPFA/ SOLACE guidance on delivering good governance in local government](#) provides more detail about the approach to take when reviewing the effectiveness of governance arrangements, to inform an annual governance statement.

Assessing your council's assurance framework

An authority can use the '[Improvement and assurance framework: Self assessment tool](#)' to assess the appropriateness of the measures they have in place to gain assurance both of their performance and corporate governance.

Oxford City Council & Group

Progress report
Year ended 31 March 2025

15 January 2026



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Audit & Governance Committee
Oxford City Council
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's,
Oxford,
OX1 1BX

15 January 2026

Dear Audit & Governance Committee Members

2024/25 Progress report

We attach our progress report, summarising the status of our audit for the forthcoming meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee. We will update the Audit & Governance Committee of Oxford City Council at its meeting scheduled for 28 January 2026 on further progress to that date and explain the remaining steps to the issue of our final opinion.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2024/25 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains an update on the progress made, matters to bring to your attention at this time and an outline of the process for completing this year's audit. Each year sees further enhancements to the level of audit challenge, the exercise of professional judgement and the quality of evidence required to achieve the robust professional scepticism that society expects. We thank the management team for supporting this process.

The Audit & Governance Committee, as the Oxford City Council's body charged with governance, has an essential role in ensuring that it has assurance over both the quality of the draft financial statements prepared by management and the Council's wider arrangements to support the delivery of a timely and efficient audit. We consider and report on the adequacy of the Council external financial reporting arrangements and the effectiveness of the Audit & Governance Committee in fulfilling its role in those arrangements as part of our assessment of Value for Money arrangements; and consider the use of other statutory reporting powers to draw attention to weaknesses in those arrangements where we consider it necessary to do so. We draw Audit & Governance Committee members' and officers' attention to the Public Sector Audit Appointment Limited's Statement of Responsibilities (paragraphs 26-28) which clearly sets out what is expected of audited bodies in preparing their financial statements.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Audit & Governance Committee and management, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Audit & Governance Committee meeting on 28 January 2026.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Brittain

Partner, For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

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Progress Report

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Progress Report – Context for the audit

Scope update

In our Audit Planning Report presented at the 23 July 2025 Audit & Governance Committee meeting, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan, with the following exceptions:

Changes in materiality: We updated our planning materiality assessment using the published draft financial statements, please see table below. We have also reconsidered our risk assessment throughout the audit and concluded that these levels remain appropriate.

	Planning materiality based on 2023/24 SoA (£m)		Year end materiality based on 2024/25 draft SoA (£m)	
	Group	OxCity	Group	OxCity
Planning Materiality	4.4	3.86	6.4	5.4
Performance Materiality	2.2	1.9	3.2	2.7
Audit Differences	0.22	0.19	0.32	0.27

472 Changes to audit risk- The audit risk relating to Minimum Revenue Provision has been removed, as the amounts are immaterial at year-end and no issues were identified in the prior year.

Status of the audit

Our audit work in respect of the group opinion is ongoing.

Details of each outstanding item, actions required to resolve and responsibility is included in Appendix A.

Given that the audit process is still ongoing, we will continue to challenge the remaining evidence provided and the final disclosures in the Annual Report and Accounts which could influence our final audit opinion

Progress Report – Context for the audit

Areas of audit focus

In our Audit Planning Report we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of the Council. We still consider these area to be our areas of focus.

Risk/area of focus	Risk identified	Conclusion
Misstatement due to fraud or error	Fraud risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.
Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, through inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure	Fraud Risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.
Inappropriate revenue recognition of rental income	Fraud risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.
473 Valuation of Land and Buildings included within Property, Plant & Equipment and Investment Property	Significant Risk	Similar to the prior year, we have been unable to obtain sufficient supporting evidence for our sample selected for Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) valuation testing and additions testing. Therefore, officers have agreed that we will not be in a position to obtain assurance over the closing balance of PPE in advance of the backstop date which is 27 February 2026. Similar to the prior year, we have not been able to obtain sufficient supporting evidence for all of our samples selected for our testing of Investment Property (IP) valuations. Therefore, officers have agreed that we will not be in a position to obtain assurance over the closing balance of IP in advance of the backstop date which is 27 February 2026.
Pension Liability Valuation	Inherent risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.
Group Consolidation	Inherent risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.
IFRS-16 Leases	Inherent risk	The audit is ongoing, and our findings and conclusions will be reported at the completion of the audit.

Progress Report (cont'd)

Value for Money

Our value for money (VFM) procedures are still on-going, We have identified one potential risk of significant weaknesses relating to the Council's capacity to support the external audit process. As the audit is ongoing we yet to conclude on this and will report to you once the audit is completed in the Audit Results Report.

Audit differences

Audit differences identified to date:

- Corrected misclassification £1,984k: Council tax court cost and Rent Deposit Scheme allowances were included in Provisions in error whereas these should have been offset against Debtors. This will be corrected in the final version of accounts.
- 474 ▪ Corrected misclassification in Group accounts £4,508k: there was a reclassification of group other operating income to group other operating expenditure
- We have also identified number of disclosure misstatements which management has agreed to correct in the final version of the financial statements.

Control observations

During the course of the year end audit, we identified areas where the year end accounting process can be improved:

- The timely allocation of cash-in-transit to debtors, rather than the use of a suspense account, to evidence the year end position for individual debtors' balances
- Allocation of income that relates to the following financial year through the use of deferred income account as appropriate

Our procedures on the financial statements are still on-going. We will provide any further observations as they arise during the process.

Progress Report (cont'd)

Factors impacting the execution of the audit

Management, and the Audit & Governance Committee, as the Council's body charged with governance, have an essential role in supporting the delivery of an efficient and effective audit. Our ability to complete the audit is dependent on the timely formulation of appropriately supported accounting judgements, provision of accurate and relevant supporting evidence, access to the finance team and management's responsiveness to issues identified during the audit. The table over-page sets out our views on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements to support external financial across a range of relevant measures.

As set out in further detail in that table over-page we experienced:

- Significant delays in the provision of evidence to support the samples selected from the figures reported in the financial statements.
- The quality of the working papers provided, and specifically the evidence to support them, requires improvement in order to support an efficient audit.

Further details on these issues, and the actions needing to be taken by the Council, can be found on the next few slides.

475 We have considered this will impact further in:

- Our ability to complete the audit.
- Our assessment of the final audit fee.

Progress Report (cont'd)

Factors impacting the execution of the audit

Delivery to our proposed timeline is based on the assumption that the Council complies with PSAA's Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies.

See <https://www.psaa.co.uk/managing-audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies/statement-of-responsibilities-of-auditors-and-audited-bodies-from-2023-24-audits/>.

In particular the Council should have regard to paragraphs 26-28 of the Statement of Responsibilities which clearly set out what is expected of audited bodies in preparing their financial statements. We set out these paragraphs in full below:

Preparation of the statement of accounts

26. Audited bodies are expected to follow Good Industry Practice and applicable recommendations and guidance from CIPFA and, as applicable, other relevant organisations as to proper accounting procedures and controls, including in the preparation and review of working papers and financial statements.

27. In preparing their statement of accounts, audited bodies are expected to:

- prepare realistic plans that include clear targets and achievable timetables for the production of the financial statements;
- ensure that finance staff have access to appropriate resources to enable compliance with the requirements of the applicable financial framework, including having access to the current copy of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code, applicable disclosure checklists, and any other relevant CIPFA Codes.
- assign responsibilities clearly to staff with the appropriate expertise and experience;
- provide necessary resources to enable delivery of the plan;
- maintain adequate documentation in support of the financial statements and, at the start of the audit, providing a complete set of working papers that provide an adequate explanation of the entries in those financial statements including the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the judgements and estimates made by management;
- ensure that senior management monitors, supervises and reviews work to meet agreed standards and deadlines;
- ensure that a senior individual at top management level personally reviews and approves the financial statements before presentation to the auditor; and
- during the course of the audit provide responses to auditor queries on a timely basis.

28. If draft financial statements and supporting working papers of appropriate quality are not available at the agreed start date of the audit, the auditor may be unable to meet the planned audit timetable and the start date of the audit will be delayed.

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Progress Report (cont'd)

Factors impacting the execution of the audit

Capacity Issues within the Finance Team:

The Council has experienced capacity issues within the finance team for a number of years, which has impacted the ability to support the external audit process and complete this in an efficient manner by the target dates set by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations.

The evidence on which our view is based:

Whilst we acknowledged that there have been a number of 'one-off' technical and IT issues during this time capacity issues within the finance team could not adequately support for example the 2021/22 audit which effectively started in July 2022 and was still ongoing as at December 2023 when a decision was made that there were too many fundamental issues still to resolve in advance of the upcoming backstop date. The delays therefore resulted in a disclaimed audit opinion not only for 2021/22 but also resulted in a disclaimed audit opinion for 2022/23 as Council staff could not deliver to the required timeline in 2021/22. Similar issues were experienced during the 2023/24 audit with that audit being signed only on the last day before the backstop date and another disclaimed audit opinion was issued for 2023/24. The 2023/24 disclaimed opinion highlighted a number of issues including: Investment Property and Property, Plant and Equipment Valuations where the Council could not support the valuations on the balance sheet. This was compounded by delays in the time taken by the finance team to respond to audit requests for support. Other issues were experienced in our testing of Grants Receipts in Advance and Debtors. We commenced the 2024/25 audit in October 2025 due to the IT issues caused by the cyber attack on the Council, which delayed the production of the 2024/25 draft financial statements. We have experienced similar issues to that detailed above with further delays in responding to our audit enquiries and also issues with the quality of the supporting evidence received. Our view is this is caused by a lack of capacity within the core team in the Council responsible for financial reporting and supporting the audit process. It is then exacerbated by a lack of understanding of the enhanced requirements to respond to external audit enquiries by those from other functions in the Council.

The impact on the Council:

Failure to improve the Council's processes to report financial information timely and support the external assurance over these, will also impact its ability to meet statutory financial reporting deadlines and to restore timely financial reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations.

The action that the Council needs to take to address this issue:

1. **Finance Function Workflow Review:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the finance function workflow to identify bottlenecks in the flow of information and the completion of key finance tasks. Use the findings to redefine roles and responsibilities within the finance team, ensuring an equitable distribution of workload and preventing any single individual from being overburdened.
2. **Quality Assurance Function Review:** Implement a thorough review of the quality assurance process for draft accounts, underlying workpapers and evidence to support these. Establish clear timelines for the closedown process, ensuring appropriate segregation of duties between those preparing and those reviewing the draft accounts and workpapers. Monitor adherence to this process and report performance to the Audit & Governance Committee.
3. **Finance Team Capacity:** Re-assess roles, responsibilities and resource requirements for financial reporting across the Council, including an assessment of the required support from, and education of, those from other functions within the organisation for the financial reporting function to meet its objectives and to restore timely financial reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations.

Conclusion:

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Council to consider or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e., "a report in the public interest"). Whilst at this stage these recommendations are not statutory formal recommendations under section 24 and Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended), we gave serious consideration to making statutory recommendations. We believe that the matters are significant and fundamental and need to be brought to the attention of those charged with governance. We are keen to work with the Council as they address these matters and would request a formal response as to the Council's considerations and the proposed timeline for any updates as per the recommendations above so that we can factor this into our planning for 2025/26. We will also need to consider the above matters as we conclude our value for money review for 2024/25.

Progress Report (cont'd)

Factors impacting the execution of the audit (cont'd)

Area	Status			Explanation	Further detail
	R	A	G		
Timeliness of the draft financial statements	Requires Improvement			The financial statements were not published by the 30 th June 2025 deadline set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Following the cyber-attack on Oxford City Council, key systems were taken offline as a precaution, which delayed the publication of the draft accounts.
Quality and completeness of the draft financial statements	Effective			When received, the draft financial statements were complete. There were a few of non-material internal inconsistencies, typographical and arithmetic errors in the draft financial statements that should have been detected through internal quality review prior to publication.	
Delivery of working papers in accordance with agreed client assistance schedule	Effective			Majority of the working papers were provided to the agreed timetable.	N/A
Quality of working papers and supporting evidence	Requires Improvement			The quality of the working papers and supporting evidence were generally below the standard required to support an efficient audit. For instance, in a number of areas we had to return the evidence given since it was not the third-party evidence that we had requested. In several instances, we were provided with complex internal workings spread across multiple tabs of a workbook, without any explanation of the calculations or how they linked to the evidence that we had requested.	This has resulted in an additional audit effort and therefore we expect to raise a scale fee variation in respect of this.
Timeliness and quality of evidence supporting key accounting estimates	Requires Improvement			Delays were experienced in the provision of supporting evidence for walkthroughs, leases, samples across various significant accounts. The delay in providing evidence contributed to a delay to the audit process being completed.	N/A
Access to finance team and personnel to support the audit in accordance with agreed project plan	Requires Improvement			Generally there were no issues with access to the finance team and key personnel. However, ongoing capacity constraints have limited their ability to support the external audit, resulting in delays in providing responses and addressing audit queries.	N/A
Volume and value of identified misstatements	Effective			To date, few material misstatements have been detected as a result of our work.	N/A
Volume of misstatements in disclosure	Effective			A small number of misstatements in disclosures were detected in our work, particularly in relation to IFRS 16. We acknowledge that this is the first year of the Council implementing IFRS 16.	N/A

Progress Report (cont'd)

Other Reporting issues

Our review of the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement is still in progress. The outcomes of the procedures performed will be reported in the Audit Results Report.

We are awaiting the detailed instructions from the National Audit Office (NAO) for the Whole of Government Accounts.

Independence

No independence issues have been identified.

Appendix A – Status of audit testing

Status of audit

Our audit work in respect of the Council opinion is progressing. An update of progress on the opinion audit is as follows:

Item	Complete or Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Cash and cash equivalents	- Bank Confirmation testing - outstanding	EY & Management
Debtors (Short term & Long Term)	- Existence testing - outstanding - Cut-off - In review - Bad debt provision - In review - Council tax & NDR debtors - Outstanding	EY & Management
Investments	- Confirmation testing - outstanding	EY & Management
Group Statements and Notes	- Work on component teams - In review with only few items outstanding - Group consolidation work - In progress	EY & Management
Property, plant & equipment (PPE)	- Additions testing - several items outstanding	EY & Management
Investment Property (IP)	- Valuations testing - We have concluded that we cannot obtain assurance over the closing balance of PP&E & IP	
Revaluation gains / losses		
Heritage Assets	- Completed	N/A
Leases	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Intangible Assets	- Completed	N/A
Creditors	- Existence testing - a few items outstanding - Cut-off - In review - Search for unrecorded liabilities - a few items outstanding	EY & Management
Long term creditors	- Samples sent, awaiting response from client	EY & Management
Grant Receipts in Advance	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management

Appendix A – Status of audit testing (cont'd)

Item	Complete or Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Provisions (including NDR Appeals)	- Completed	EY & Management
Pension scheme liabilities Actuarial gains/losses	- Testing of estimate - outstanding	EY & Management
Revenue Contract Liabilities	- Completed	N/A
Borrowings	- In review	EY & Management
Reserves	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Grant Income	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Other Income	- Supporting evidence outstanding from client	EY & Management
Rental Income	- A few items outstanding	EY & Management
Taxation and non specific grant income	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Collection fund	- A few items outstanding	EY & Management
HRA Expenditure	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
HRA Income	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Employee costs	- Starters & leavers testing - outstanding	EY & Management

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Appendix A – Status of audit testing (cont'd)

Item	Complete or Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Finance & investment	- Testing outstanding	EY & Management
Housing Benefits	- Testing in review	EY & Management
Other Expenditure	- A few items outstanding	EY & Management
REFCUS	- A few items outstanding	EY & Management
WGA	- Not started	EY & Management
Disclosures	- A few items outstanding	EY & Management
ISA 315	- Awaiting supporting evidence	EY & Management

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The above items are in addition to the regular closedown procedures that are needed including obtaining financial version of the accounts, letters of representation and completion of manager and partner quality review process over the ongoing work.

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