

Appendix A
Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of
the Climate and Environment Panel of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Panel on 09 March 2023 concerning the report on the Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council seeks to ensure that, amongst others, Oxford University's Biodiversity Network and the HERO project are represented on the steering group.	Partially	We will take into account these recommendations when setting up the steering group.
2) That the Council, in conducting the baseline exercise, takes account of shifting baseline syndrome.	Partially	Historic data for the sites in question may be impossible / impractical to recover, and we may not be able to do so in a consistent way that offers meaningful insights.
3) That the Council considers how best to move away from the use of chemicals in land maintenance as a matter of urgency.	Partially	A further review of the use of herbicides and pesticides by ODS on behalf of the Council will be undertaken this year which will explore the costs and efficacy of the Council ending the use of glyphosates including assessing the alternatives used by other Councils in England. It would not be appropriate to pre-determine the outcome of that review.
4) That the Council commissions or conducts its own audits of the eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the near future in order to understand their current condition.	Partially	We will evaluate the optimal approach to assessing the SSSIs in conjunction with the Steering Group.

5) That the Council ensures that the protection of mature trees is prioritised wherever possible.	Agree	The Council has a range of policies in place to ensure the protection of mature trees. However, the council also has a liability to ensure dangerous trees are felled promptly. Where this is necessary, they will be offset with new trees in the same location if suitable, or an alternative location with a greater viability to support a healthy trees. Protection of trees is also considered within planning alongside other local planning priorities including housing delivery within the city.
6) That the Council commits to ensuring that the Biodiversity Strategy is developed in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and, also, at least in alignment with Government targets to halt decline of species under the Environment Act 2021.	Agree	
7) That the Council takes account of the interconnectedness between the policies in the Local Plan and the Biodiversity Strategy when developing both documents and ensures that these links are emphasised and appropriately cross-referenced.	Agree	