Appendix A
Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Budget Review Group of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Budget Review Group and endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on 06 February 2024 concerning the Scrutiny Budget Review 2024/25. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

Recommendation	***Agree?***	***Comment***
1) That the Council sets out the net savings it is aiming to achieve in respect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 01 April 2025 onwards, then models several alternate scenarios as to how those savings might be achieved and consults, without expressing the Council's preference on which, if any, of these alternate scenarios should be pursued when the Council Tax Reduction Scheme goes out to public consultation.	Yes	There will be a number of options available to achieve the savings that are in the MTFP of £146k net of administrative costs. We will look to model these options and include in the consultation that we are required to hold before setting the scheme for 2025-26.
2) That the Council continues to pursue conversations with the owner of Golden Cross to negotiate the opening of their gate to enable access to the Covered Market from Cornmarket during late night opening.	Yes	The deliverability and potential cost will be considered at the same time as the option to continue late night opening beyond the one-year trial.
3) That the Council seeks to introduce a charge for 0-1 hours of parking at park and rides and factors projections into the Medium Term Financial Plan about the level of income this would raise.	In Part	There are a low number of ticket sales per year in the 0-1 hour tariff. If we were to introduce charging it would not be aligned with the County Council and it could drive short-term users to alternative parking. However, we can monitor data and discuss this proposal with our partners, so that it might be introduced by both in the future.
4) That the Council ensures adequate opportunities for cross-party Member involvement in the Strategic Review	Yes	We will consider how best to provide for cross-party involvement in the design of the Communities Review.

of Services Provided across Community Services from an early stage to facilitate meaningful Member input.		
5) That the Council facilitates meaningful and representative co-production with communities in shaping the Strategic Review of Services Provided across Community Services and its outcomes.	Yes	We plan to undertake engagement sessions with communities as part of the Review.
6) That the Council reconsiders its proposed involvement in, and funding of, the Fibre to Homes initiative with a view to exploring whether there is a strong enough case for the Council to pursue it given the already sufficient internet speeds available in the properties in question and the limited availability of Council resources, which could be put to better use offsetting proposed cuts in other areas.	No	The Council is recommending this to ensure an equal playing field no matter what accommodation you live in. It isn't for the Council to describe current internet speeds as "sufficient", given how "fibre to the premises" (FTTP) is spreading throughout the country and county, based on established Government policy; Oxfordshire's Digital Infrastructure Strategy, which includes a focus on FTTP as key elements of delivery countywide; and Oxford's Economic Strategy, which cites this as a priority action area. The Council has established that there is a strong enough case to pursue the Fibre to Homes initiative: without pursuing non-exclusive wayleave discussions with operators, all residents in Council "multi-dwelling units" (i.e. in blocks of flats) will be unable to be connected to the fastest internet speeds, while at the same time their neighbours in houses will treat 1Gb per second as normal. Doing nothing on this theme would be to accept the digital divide between more and less privileged residents in Oxford. It should be noted that this provision is made in the Housing Revenue Account, and therefore its removal cannot be used to offset cuts in the General Fund.

7) That the Council includes data on children when undertaking data collection related to domestic abuse and homelessness going forward.	Yes	Such data is being collected and needs to be interrogated to provide targeted intelligence of the numbers of children associated with homeless families as a result of domestic abuse.
8) That the Council compiles information to share with the future Government about the issues faced by local government as a result of a lack of coordination between Central Government departments, which could be solved by those departments communicating, collaborating and cooperating around policy development where there was direct or indirect overlap.	Yes	We will compile evidence of this. It is worth noting that lack of coordination between policies within a Government department can also be an issue, an example being between different Asylum Seeker resettlement schemes from the Home Office and the impact on councils needing to provide temporary accommodation for qualifying asylum seekers. Other improvements could be a return to more timely, longer than one year financial settlements.
9) That the Council continues to lobby the Home Office to engage with Oxford City Council and local authorities more broadly in relation to asylum dispersal hotels to enable more certainty around predictive modelling, resource implications and demand management.	Yes	Oxford City Council is part of the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership and takes the opportunities through various consultations and interactions with Government offices to lobby on a range of issues that impact local authorities' ability to respond effectively to refugee and migrant issues.

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