



Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

'One Oxfordshire' LGR proposal'

22/10/2025

Section 1 Summary details

Proposal Assessed: ‘One Oxfordshire’ Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposal to replace Oxfordshire’s existing two-tier councils with a single countywide unitary council. This EIA examines the proposal’s potential impacts on equalities.

Summary of Assessment: The One Oxfordshire proposal is a structural change intended to streamline services and improve efficiency across the county. There is no evidence of inherent bias or discrimination in the proposal’s design; it does not single out or exclude any group. On the contrary, the intended service model (a single ‘front door’ for all residents) aims to provide consistent access for everyone countywide. If implemented, One Oxfordshire could advance equality of opportunity by eliminating the current fragmentation of services; it is expected to benefit all communities including those with protected characteristics (for example, through more cohesive planning of social care, housing and other support).

This assessment has considered whether any group would be unfairly disadvantaged. No unfair disadvantage is anticipated provided that robust mitigations are in place during transition. The proposal does not alter eligibility or provision of services based on any protected characteristic; services will continue to be delivered on need. Some risks (e.g. temporary disruption during reorganisation, or perceptions of reduced local voice in rural areas) have been identified, but these are practical issues, not deliberate biases. With careful management (see mitigations in Section 3), such risks can be minimised.

Overall, the proposal complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty, it seeks to foster equitable service access and does not introduce any form of unlawful discrimination. This EIA focuses on objective impacts against the Equality Act criteria, ensuring a neutral, balanced analysis.

Conclusion (Section 1):

1. One Oxfordshire is assessed as a neutral-to-positive proposal in equalities terms. It neither biases nor unfairly disadvantages any protected group. In fact, it offers opportunities to address existing inequalities (for example, by applying a countywide strategy to tackle deprivation and improve access in underserved areas).
2. Ongoing monitoring and mitigation will be important, but at this stage the proposal is deemed consistent with equalities duties and can proceed to detailed impact analysis for each group below.

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Section 2 Detail of Proposal

2.1 Context / Background

Oxfordshire currently operates a two-tier local government system: Oxfordshire County Council plus five district councils (Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire). This structure has been in place for ~50 years. In recent years, multiple factors have driven the case for change:

- **Financial Pressures** – Like many areas, Oxfordshire’s councils face severe budget strain. Rising service demands (especially in adult and children’s social care) and reduced central funding have led to forecasts of future financial shortfalls. Efficiency savings and transformation are needed to maintain services. The government’s devolution agenda (White Paper 2024) has also signalled that moving to unitary councils is a preferred solution to improve financial resilience and reduce costs.
- **Fragmentation of Services** – The two-tier structure is viewed as fragmented and inefficient, with overlapping responsibilities across county and districts. Key functions are split (e.g. the county manages social care and highways, while districts handle housing and planning), leading to duplication, siloed decision-making, and complexity for residents, as well as hindering strategic action on cross-cutting issues (for example, aligning housing development with social care or public health). The current system can also result in uneven service experiences in different parts of the county.
- **National Policy Direction** – In December 2024, the government invited all remaining two-tier areas across England to submit an interim proposal(s) for a new unitary authority or authorities. Government guidance indicates new councils should serve populations of ~500k+ to be viable and efficient. Oxfordshire’s population (~725,000 in 2021, projected 760,000+ by 2025) fits well within this criterion, bolstering the case for a single unitary council.

Given the above, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has put forward the ‘One Oxfordshire’ proposal to create a modern council structure that is simpler, financially resilient, and better able to meet residents’ needs. This is seen not just as a structural change, but as an opportunity to improve outcomes for residents.

The context for One Oxfordshire is also influenced by devolution discussions (as part of a future Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority). A single county unitary is presented as the best platform for local service integration and for engaging with regional devolution.

2.2 Proposal

One Oxfordshire entails establishing a single ‘Oxfordshire Council’ unitary authority for the whole county, replacing the county and district councils. In practical terms, this means all local government services would be delivered by the single countywide council instead of six separate councils. The new council would be governed by one elected body of councillors and a single leadership team.

Rationale / Why this option - Through an options appraisal, One Oxfordshire was identified by Oxfordshire County Council as the preferred and most beneficial model for the county's future. Key reasons include:

- **Streamlined, 'One-Stop' Services.** Residents and businesses will have one point of contact ('one front door') for all local government services. This simplifies access, removes confusion over which council is responsible for delivering services, and provides clear accountability for service delivery.
- **Avoiding Service Disruption.** One Oxfordshire maintains countywide critical services intact. Services like adult social care, children's services, and firefighting are currently run by OCC for the whole county; this proposal keeps them under one roof, avoiding disaggregation.
- **Financial Efficiency and Resilience.** A single council is projected to make a £63 million annual saving, with total net savings of £163 million achieved by year five. These figures have been independently verified by PwC. The new council would have a much larger tax base and budget, improving resilience to financial shocks and allowing strategic investment. One Oxfordshire is estimated to be the fastest and least costly option to implement. Savings can be reinvested in frontline services and initiatives to address inequalities, benefiting all communities.
- **Stronger Strategic Capacity.** A single council can plan at scale for the whole county's needs. This is vital for issues like housing, infrastructure and economic development that transcend district boundaries. It also creates a single strong voice to work with partners (including the NHS, police, universities, and neighbouring counties) and to advocate for the county's interests. This can unlock opportunities like devolution and investment.
- **Neighbourhood Empowerment.** The single unitary model is designed to empower local communities by establishing area committees and a new 'Communities' unit to ensure decision-making happens at the local level on local matters. Town and parish councils would be key partners (possibly taking on more responsibilities and funding in local service delivery). Essentially, residents would still have local democratic forums (area committees, parish engagement) but backed by the resources and coherence of a countywide unitary authority. Maintaining local identity and sense of place is a stated priority: no changes to ceremonial boundaries or postal addresses are proposed, and services would be delivered in communities as today, just managed by one council instead of six.

In summary, the proposal is to create a single unitary that delivers 'stronger, simpler services that are closer to communities, connected and cost effective', with the capacity to tackle countywide challenges like inequality, housing and climate change in a coordinated way.

2.3 Evidence / Intelligence Supporting the Proposal

The formulation of One Oxfordshire has been supported by a range of evidence:

- **Independent Research and Reviews.** The financial case is based on independent modelling by PwC and analysis by Pixel Financial Management.

Likewise, projections for service demand (e.g. in social care) were informed by external experts such as Newton Europe. The proposal references lessons from counties which recently became unitaries, such as Buckinghamshire and Dorset, assessing what worked well there and what pitfalls to avoid.

- **Engagement and Consultation.** Extensive stakeholder engagement underpins the case. Over Summer 2025, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) ran a countywide engagement programme with residents and stakeholders:
 - A statistically representative residents' survey (with ~1,200 respondents) covering all parts of Oxfordshire.
 - An open public survey (1,300+ responses) and on-street interviews gathering wider public opinion.
 - Deliberative research: focus groups (9 groups with 63 residents) and youth sounding boards (81 young people) to get qualitative insights.
 - Targeted sessions with stakeholders, e.g. town and parish councils (318 local councils were invited), voluntary sector, business groups, MPs, and public service partners.

Feedback from these channels indicated residents' and stakeholders' priorities align with the aims of One Oxfordshire: people want a council that is cost-effective, with simpler services and easy access, but also reassurance that local voices will continue to be heard and there will be strong local governance. This helped shaped the proposal, confirming the importance of the 'one front door' approach to services, and the need for robust measures for localism (such as area committees) to address concerns about local voices.

- **Data on Needs and Inequalities.** The proposal references Oxfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and other research to illustrate current and future service needs. For instance, the JSNA highlights a growing and ageing population (Oxfordshire's 65+ age group grew 48% from 2001–2021), which implies rising demand for adult social care, a challenge better met by a unified council pooling resources. It also notes pockets of deprivation and health inequalities even in a relatively affluent county. These findings support the argument that a single council could deploy countywide initiatives (like the Marmot programme on health inequalities) more effectively than multiple councils. Local service performance data also indicates that the county council has very low unit costs and strong outcomes in adult social care and children's services). The risk to these services would be lowest with a single unitary.
- **Consultation with Other Councils.** Data and perspectives have been shared between councils, and regular meetings between chief executives and leaders have taken place during the proposal development.

2.4 Alternatives Considered / Rejected

During development of the proposal, OCC considered three main options against the government's criteria for reform:

1. One council for all of Oxfordshire.
2. Two councils (eastern/western Oxfordshire, northern/southern Oxfordshire and Oxford plus the surrounding county).

3. Three councils (Oxford and two rural authorities).

- **Option 2 (Two councils)** This option was rejected because it scored lower on key criteria. Neither new council would meet the preferred population size (both would be well under 500k), which raises concerns about resilience and viability. Financially, while some savings would be made, they would be reduced by the costs of disaggregating county services, which also brings risk. The creation of two smaller tax bases could result in differences in need (services) and resources (funding), which would likely create undue advantage or disadvantage across the county. For these reasons, a two-council model was not pursued further.
- **Option 3 (Three councils)** This option was rejected as it scored lower on key criteria. Three smaller unitaries would be significantly below the population for new councils required by government (approximately 200k–300k each). The fragmentation of services would be greatest here: not only splitting current county services three ways (with attendant cost and risk), but also potentially altering boundaries. Financially, this option provides the lowest savings, which would be mostly offset by the costs of disaggregation. For these reasons, a three-council model was not pursued further.
- **‘Do nothing’ (status quo)** This was not listed as an option in the submission as it does not meet government requirements for local government reorganisation.

Why One Oxfordshire was chosen over the alternatives.

One Oxfordshire (Option 1) was found to:

- Meet government requirements in terms of population size.
- Offer the highest financial benefit, with a swift payback.
- Avoid breaking up crucial countywide services (adult social care, children’s services, fire), avoiding the attendant risks of Options 2 and 3.
- Provide a coherent geography matching Oxfordshire’s functional economic area and identity.
- Be simplest to implement, with lowest risk of service interruption during the changeover.

The chosen proposal includes measures to mitigate the potential downsides of large unitaries (such as area committees to strength local governance) so that the benefits of scale are combined with the strengths of local focus. This balanced approach is at the heart of One Oxfordshire. Its anticipated impacts, especially on different community groups, are detailed in the next section.

Section 3 Impact Assessment: Protected Characteristics

The following assessment considers potential impacts (positive, negative, or neutral) of the One Oxfordshire proposal on each of the nine protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief. It also identifies any actions or mitigations required to address negative impacts.

This analysis draws on Oxfordshire-specific data (e.g. Census 2021, JSNA) and knowledge of how services might change under the new council. All impacts are assessed in light of the proposal's scope - a structural reorganisation - noting that many equality effects will depend on how the new council operates in practice (implementation phase).

For each characteristic, we indicate whether the impact is positive, negative or neutral and explain the reasoning.

3.1 Protected Characteristic: Age

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Description of Impact:

1. The age profile in Oxfordshire is diverse: the county has both an ageing population (20% of residents in rural districts are 65+ vs 12% in Oxford city), and areas with many young people (Oxford's student population makes its median age only 32). One Oxfordshire is expected to benefit older people by protecting and enhancing adult social care and health services. Under a single council, critical services for older adults (e.g. social care, home care, day services) will not be split or disrupted; the proposal explicitly avoids disaggregating these services. This stability is crucial because older residents rely heavily on such support. In fact, maintaining one countywide adults' service prevents the major risk of fragmentation that could occur under multiple smaller councils (which could lead to uneven care standards). A single authority can also more effectively join up services that older people use, for example integrating OCC's adult social care with district-run housing adaptations and community transport, which should improve outcomes for older residents (currently these are handled separately).
2. There is a potential concern that a larger council might feel more distant for some elderly residents, especially in rural areas. However, mitigations are built into the proposal: the new council plans area committees to retain a presence in communities. Customer access points (like libraries or council hubs) will remain distributed, so an elderly person should still be able to access support nearby. The council's digital services will be made user-friendly for those who prefer online access. By bringing together information and resources, it may become easier for older people to navigate one system rather than several. The proposal also emphasises working closely with town/parish councils and the voluntary sector in service delivery. This local partnership approach will help ensure older residents in rural communities are not left isolated or unheard.

3. For younger people and children, the impact is likewise neutral or slightly positive. Children's social care and youth services (currently county run) would continue seamlessly, avoiding any break-up of teams that support vulnerable children. Education services (school place planning, SEN support) remain unified, potentially benefiting from closer links to housing and community services now under the same council. A single council can align early years support, public health and family services across the county to further the council's Marmot Place goal of giving every child the best start in life.

In summary, there is no aspect of the proposal that would treat people negatively due to age. Service delivery will continue to be needs-based, while the council's strategic focus on prevention (as described in the case for change) could help both ends of the age spectrum, e.g. projects to reduce isolation among the elderly and better opportunities for young people countywide.

Mitigations

1. Invest in community initiatives such as family hubs to tackle child and family poverty, and create more inclusive spaces that are child and dementia-friendly.
2. Work closely with the voluntary and community sector to ensure that services are delivered as close as possible to communities, helping build social connection and identify risks early.
3. For rural areas, area committees will be established to give local representatives (including those advocating for older residents) a forum to influence decisions.
4. The new council may wish to consider the possibility of retaining locality teams for social care so that, on day 1, an elderly resident still deals with the same social worker or support team as before (just under a new employer).
5. The county council has an age-friendly initiative through its public health and communities' strategies (e.g. 'community hubs' for multi-generational activities), which the new council could expand.

In summary, by carefully managing the changeover and investing savings into frontline services, the needs of both older and younger residents will be safeguarded. No further specific actions are required beyond those already planned (e.g. communications to elderly residents about where to get help, continuity of care assurances), but continuous monitoring is advised.

Action Owner: Programme Transition Lead & Adult Services Director

Timescale: throughout transition 2025–2028, with post-vesting day review of any reported access issues from elderly or youth groups.

3.2 Protected Characteristic: Disability

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Description of Impact:

1. Around 99,000 people in Oxfordshire have a disability (per Census 2021, including physical, mental and sensory disabilities).
2. Ensuring their needs are met is a vital part of this proposal. Overall, disabled individuals should not experience any reduction in support; on the contrary, they could see improvements through more integrated services. For instance, currently someone with a disability might receive social care from the county council, housing support (such as Disabled Facilities Grants for home adaptations) from a district council, and use district-run leisure facilities with concession schemes.
3. Under the One Oxfordshire proposal, these functions would be coordinated within one authority, making it easier to deliver a holistic package of support. The proposal explicitly notes that keeping services like adult social care and Special Educational Needs (SEN) services intact is a benefit, avoiding the disaggregation that could 'increase costs and lower service standards' for these critical areas. This continuity is a positive for people with disabilities who rely on consistent care, therapy or specialist education support.
4. The new council will continue the county's commitments to accessibility and inclusion. Oxfordshire County Council has been working on improving digital accessibility, building access, and rolling out tools for people with disabilities (for example, the 'Inclusive Service Delivery' strategy under the Including Everyone framework).
5. These efforts will carry on uninterrupted, now applied countywide with potentially more resources. There is no indication of any negative impact such as loss of eligibility or reduction in provisions for disabled residents; the transition to a single unitary does not change service criteria. If anything, a unified approach may make it easier to address gaps. For example, consistent Blue Badge parking enforcement policy across the county, or a single disability register for planning services, could emerge as benefits.
6. The new council should give careful consideration to community-based support networks so that people do not lose local support (currently, some districts fund local disability charities or run accessible recreation programmes). The new council could look at how such support should be targeted so that all parts of Oxfordshire have equitable access.

Mitigations

1. It is recommended that the implementation should involve disability advocacy groups in the design of the new processes, to ensure nothing is inadvertently made less accessible (e.g. new council website, contact centre, physical offices should all meet accessibility standards from the outset).
2. OCC already has an accessible website and carries out Equality Impact Assessments for major changes; this culture will continue in the new council. The EIA finds no inherent negative impact on disabled people. However, to

solidify positive outcomes it is recommended that the new council could streamline assessment processes (for instance, explore a single assessment that covers social care needs and housing needs together).

3. The council should maintain the existing Joint Commissioning approach with the NHS for services like Learning Disability support. This joint working can be enhanced when there is one local authority instead of six.

In summary, One Oxfordshire can be beneficial for people with disabilities. All planned mitigations (maintaining service continuity, engaging users) are in place; no significant additional actions are needed beyond monitoring.

Action Owner: Adult Social Care & Community Services Leads

Timeline: design phase 2025-27 to ensure all customer pathways are accessible, review post-2028.

3.3 Protected Characteristic: Gender Reassignment

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. This refers to people who are transgender or non-binary. Oxfordshire has a relatively small but notable trans/non-binary community. About 0.6% of residents identify with a gender different from birth sex (slightly above the national average), and Oxford City is known to have one of the largest trans and non-binary populations outside London.
2. The One Oxfordshire proposal is not expected to have any direct specific impact (positive or negative) on this group as it does not alter personal identity documents or gender-related services. The council's duties toward trans residents (e.g. providing inclusive services, tackling any discrimination) remain unchanged.
3. One potential indirect positive is that a single council can adopt uniform inclusive policies and staff training across the whole county. Currently, OCC and the districts may have slightly different approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion (though all follow Equality Act requirements).
4. With One Oxfordshire, there will be one Equality & Diversity framework. OCC's 'Including Everyone' framework 2025-2029 emphasises tackling discrimination and specifically mentions commitments like achieving the Race Equality Code and being a Council of Sanctuary for vulnerable migrants. While these are broader, they create an environment of inclusion beneficial to all protected groups, including trans people.

Mitigations

1. Given a neutral impact, it is recommended that the main mitigation should be to continue engagement and inclusive practices. The council should ensure its public consultation and communication recognises trans and non-binary voices (for example, using the appropriate language, providing the option for people to

identify as non-binary in surveys, etc., which OCC already does). There should also be a focus on supporting LGBTQ+ youth, e.g. ensuring youth services and schools remain attentive to gender identity issues.

2. It is recommended that the existing LGBTQ+ employee network at OCC should be expanded to all employees of the new council, which helps maintain an internal culture of inclusion that translates into better service for the community.

In summary, no adverse impact on gender reassignment is identified. The new council's policies will uphold the rights and dignity of trans individuals just as the current councils do.

Action Owner: EDI Lead

Timeline: ongoing.

3.4 Protected Characteristic: Marriage & Civil Partnership

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. Marriage and civil partnership status does not receive differential service. For the public, the main related service is the Registration Service (for marriages, civil partnerships). Currently, Oxfordshire County Council already manages births, deaths and marriages registration countywide; this will continue under the unitary.
2. No change in how marriages or civil partnerships are registered or recognised will occur; all legal rights remain the same. The workload and offices of the Registration Service simply move into the new council structure.
3. There is no indication that any group of people based on marital status would be advantaged or disadvantaged by the council reorganisation. Married people, single people, those in civil partnerships or divorced, all would continue to access services equitably. The Census data shows about 47% of Oxfordshire households are married couples (including 0.8% same sex married/civil partners). Those proportions are not expected to shift due to this proposal.

Mitigations

1. None needed specific to this characteristic. The Registration Service should ensure continuity (e.g. existing bookings for weddings at council-run venues will be honoured without interruption by the change in governance). Communication to residents might clarify that 'Oxfordshire Council' will be the authority issuing marriage certificates instead of OCC, but legally this is a seamless transition.
2. Council policies (for example, employee benefits for spouses/partners) will carry over and likely be standardised at the best level across the new organisation.

Action Owner: No further action required.

Timeline: Monitored as part of general service continuity.

3.5 Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy & Maternity

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. Services touching on pregnancy and new parents include maternity healthcare (NHS-led), but also council services like antenatal classes in children's centres, health visiting (commissioned by public health), family support and housing for expectant mothers. These will not be negatively impacted by the structural change.
2. Oxfordshire's general fertility rate is slightly below national average (about 51 births per 1,000 women) and in 2021 there were ~7,380 births in the county. The proposal does not change eligibility or access to any support for pregnant women or parents of infants.
3. Having a single council overseeing both children's services and housing could help families who need support. For instance, a pregnant woman facing homelessness currently might navigate between district housing and county social services; under one council, assistance can be more coordinated. The council already has initiatives for early help (through Children & Family Centres), which will continue.
4. No adverse impact is foreseen on maternity leave or related employment rights within the council; employees who are pregnant or on maternity leave will transfer to the new council with protected terms (TUPE legislations apply). For service users, free childcare entitlements, maternity disability adaptations etc are governed by national policy and remain unaffected.

Mitigations

1. Ensure that information for new parents (e.g. how to register a birth, how to access support) is clearly consolidated under the new council, but this is a straightforward communications task.
2. The council's public health function, which includes maternal health improvement programmes, will remain intact and likely get a stronger platform in one authority.
3. It is recommended that maternity voices are included in planning for the transition, e.g. invite local mother and baby groups or parent forums to provide feedback to catch any unforeseen hiccups (like if a particular baby group was district-run, making sure it continues).

In summary, there appear to be no negative impacts, so no major mitigation is required beyond maintaining service levels.

Action Owner: N/A

Timeline: to be reviewed by Children's Services post-reorganisation.

3.6 Protected Characteristic: Race (including ethnicity and national origin)

Impact: Neutral to Slight Positive

Description of Impact

1. Oxfordshire's population is ethnically diverse in some areas and less so in others. Overall nearly 1 in 4 residents (23%) are from an ethnic minority background (not White-British). Oxford City is ~47% non-White-British, whereas some rural districts are over 90% White-British. The council reorganisation does not alter any person's ethnic background or how they are treated by law; it can, however, influence how well the council addresses racial inequalities.
2. There is no indication of any negative impact such as reduced access for any ethnic group. All residents, regardless of ethnicity, will come under the new council's single set of services and policies, which will be designed to be inclusive.
3. One Oxfordshire could help standardise best practice countywide. For example, if one district has particularly effective outreach to Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities, the new council can adopt that approach across the board. As a single employer, the council can strengthen diversity in its workforce.
4. OCC's Including Everyone framework highlights that the council is working toward Race Equality Code accreditation. This commitment will extend to the single unitary, potentially improving how services are delivered to minority ethnic residents (through cultural awareness, language support, etc.).
5. Some racial disparities exist in Oxfordshire's outcomes (for instance, higher proportions of ethnic minorities in Oxford experiencing poverty or lower access to services). A single unitary council can address these more strategically, e.g. targeting deprived multi-ethnic neighbourhoods with coordinated interventions (housing, education and public health).
6. The proposal explicitly mentions tackling deep inequalities across the county. The Marmot Place programme and Local Policy Lab are tools the new council will use to reduce inequalities in health and increase opportunity for ethnic minorities. This suggests a positive intent.
7. There is a risk worth noting: if there were a lack of trust or engagement from minority communities due to changes in governance (for example, the new council might need to rebuild relationships that district community workers had), it must be managed carefully.
8. The EIA does not foresee this as a systemic issue, but it is important that the new council visibly continues support for initiatives like Oxford's Inclusive Communities work so that those communities feel equally valued under the new structure.

Mitigations

1. It is recommended that the new council continues targeted engagement with ethnic minority communities, for example by maintaining advisory groups or

forums (like Oxford City's migrant communities forum or similar initiatives) at the county level. Providing translated information about the changes (in common community languages like Polish, Urdu, Portuguese, noting ~9% of residents speak English as second language) is a simple communication mitigation to ensure no one is left confused by the transition.

2. Monitoring service uptake by ethnicity after the reorganisation will be important to ensure that previously underserved groups are not slipping through cracks.
3. In employment and service design, applying an anti-racism lens (the county council has committed to be an anti-racist organisation) will help guard against bias. There is no evidence the reorganisation would cause bias, but maintaining training and accountability (e.g. continue unconscious bias training for staff, embedding Equality Impact Assessments in all new policies) will mitigate any subtle negative trends.

In summary, the impact on racial groups is expected to be neutral or even positive through improved equity strategies.

Action Owner: EDI Lead, Engagement Team

Timeline: during transition communications and ongoing in new council's EDI strategy

3.7 Protected Characteristic: Sex

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. This considers impacts on men and women. The population of Oxfordshire is roughly half male, half female (50.1% female, 49.9% male). The council's services are largely gender-neutral in provision (apart from specific initiatives like women's refuges for domestic abuse survivors, which will continue).
2. The reorganisation does not alter any rights or access based on sex. Both women and men should see no change in how they receive services like libraries, waste collection, social care, etc. One possible positive is that a single council may streamline initiatives that benefit a particular gender group, e.g. domestic abuse services (currently the county council handles support while the districts handle housing for survivors) could be unified for a more cohesive response.
3. This would benefit predominantly women (who are most domestic abuse victims) but also male victims who will have one system to approach. Similarly, things like support for women's health or men's health via public health could see more consistent rollout across all areas.
4. It is important to note that no job losses or service cuts should be made in areas that would disproportionately affect one gender. For instance, if there were a reduction in a service primarily used by women (like certain childcare programmes), that could be negative. However, nothing of that sort is in the proposal; services are expected to continue and potentially improve through efficiencies.

5. Combining councils will reduce the overall number of councillors. Currently, across six councils there is a certain gender makeup; in the new single council, the representation could change.

Mitigations

1. Ensure continuity and strengthening of gender-specific programmes: e.g. a commitment to being a White Ribbon authority or supporting initiatives for men (such as men's mental health projects, father's parenting groups, etc.).
2. There is no direct negative impact to mitigate but being vigilant that service redesign post-merger does not inadvertently overlook gender differences is key. For example, if community engagement structures change, make sure women's groups (WI, mother toddler groups) and men's sheds or similar have equal voice.
3. In employment, the council should monitor any changes: ensure female staff (who may form a larger portion of the workforce in services like care) are treated fairly through reorganisation. The proposal already notes the need to engage and retain staff through the change; this includes both men and women.
4. It is recommended that the new council's elections encourage diverse representation. This is more of a democratic consideration than a service impact, and the election process will be governed by the usual rules (and is outside the scope of this EIA).

In summary, with these considerations in place, we foresee a neutral impact on sex.

Action Owner: N/A

Timeline: N/A

3.8 Protected Characteristic: Sexual Orientation

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. Approximately 3.4% of Oxfordshire residents identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB+) in the 2021 Census, though the true figure may be higher due to non-disclosure. The One Oxfordshire proposal does not negatively affect residents based on sexual orientation. All services are provided regardless of sexual orientation, and that will remain so.
2. As with gender reassignment, the impact here is more about ensuring continued inclusion. The new council can champion county-wide LGBTQ+ inclusion (for instance, supporting Pride events in Oxford and more widely across the county).
3. A unified council may allocate more consistent support to LGBTQ+ community groups, which previously might have only been funded by one or two district councils. There is no evidence that any council-run service specifically for LGB or heterosexual people will change; services such as sexual health clinics are NHS but commissioned jointly with OCC Public Health and will remain coordinated.

Mitigations

1. Maintain visible support for LGBTQ+ communities as a single council to signal continuity. For example, if multiple councils currently mark Pride Month, the new council must do the same so no one feels the loss of an ally. Internally, policies like supporting staff networks for LGBTQ+ employees should continue.
2. Externally, the council should continue diversity training so that frontline staff provide inclusive service to all residents.

In summary, there is no direct adverse impact to mitigate beyond these ongoing good practices. The new council should adopt existing equality policies from the county council and district councils that protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Action Owner: EDI Lead/ HR/ Policy

Timeline: by vesting day when policies merge.

3.9 Protected Characteristic: Religion or Belief

Impact: Neutral

Description of Impact

1. Oxfordshire residents have various faiths, 47% Christian, ~3% Muslim, ~1% Hindu, etc, and 37% no religion (2011 data, similar proportions in 2021). The council reorganisation is secular in nature and does not affect freedom of religion. People of all religions will continue to receive services equitably. If anything, one council might better coordinate with faith groups on community projects (for instance, working with churches, mosques, etc. on social initiatives could be streamlined under one authority rather than separate approaches by district and county).
2. There are no policies in the proposal that touch on religious practices (e.g. planning permission for places of worship will follow the same planning rules, just under one planning authority). The only minor consideration is that currently some district councils have civic traditions tied to certain religious dates (like a civic service); the new council will establish its own civic traditions but this has a negligible impact on the public.

Mitigations

1. Ensure the new council continues interfaith engagement. OCC has, for example, connections through its Prevent and cohesion work with religious leaders. This should be maintained so faith communities feel represented. Practical accommodations (e.g. prayer rooms in public buildings, or scheduling meetings around major religious holidays) should continue.

In summary, no negative impact is identified so mitigation is simply ongoing inclusion.

Action Owner: EDI Lead

Timeline: Ongoing

3.10 Summary: Protected Characteristics

None of the protected characteristics are identified as facing unfair negative impact from the One Oxfordshire proposal. The majority are neutral impacts, with potential positives for some (Age, Disability, Race) due to improved service integration and equity focus.

Mitigations centre on maintaining continuity and inclusion during the transition. The Public Sector Equality Duty will continue to be met by the new council's policies and practices, and this assessment will be reviewed as the implementation proceeds to address any new issues that arise.

Below is a tabulated summary of impacts by characteristic, indicating whether we anticipate **Positive (+)**, **Negative (-)**, or **No Impact (0)** and key points:

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Impact Summary |
|---|--------|--|
| Age (Older people, Young people) | + / 0 | Generally positive or neutral. Preserves countywide adult & children's services (no fragmentation), benefiting older residents and families. Unified planning across ages (e.g. 'best start in life' and Marmot goals). Mitigation: ensure local access for rural elderly. |
| Disability | + / 0 | Likely positive or neutral. One council provides seamless support (social care, adaptations under one roof) for ~99k disabled residents. Avoids disrupting SEN, adult care services. New council will uphold accessibility standards (Including Everyone commitments). |
| Gender Reassignment (Trans / Non-binary) | 0 | Neutral. No change in service or recognition for trans and non-binary residents. New council will maintain inclusive practices and policies; no adverse impact identified. Will continue current support to this community (e.g. LGBTQ+ inclusive training). |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | 0 | Neutral. Registration of marriages/civil partnerships continues as currently (county function). No impact on married/civil-partnered status in service delivery. |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | 0 | Neutral. Maternity/parental services (health visiting, children's centres) remain unified and may improve through integrated family support. No reduction in support for pregnant women or new parents. Employees' maternity rights are protected. |
| Race (Ethnicity) | + / 0 | Neutral or slightly positive. One Oxfordshire enables a consistent approach to all ethnic groups across the county. Can better tackle racial inequalities with single strategy. No negative bias identified. Language/translation needs will be met uniformly. |
| Sex | 0 | Neutral. Services delivered equally to people as before. No differential impact, e.g. both male and female service users benefit from continuity. Possibly improved coordination in areas like domestic abuse support (benefiting women) and health initiatives for men. No adverse issues identified. |
| Sexual Orientation (LGB) | 0 | Neutral. The reorganisation does not affect residents based on orientation. The new council will continue to support |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| | | LGBTQ+ inclusion (events, networks, anti-discrimination policies). No service impacts specific to orientation. |
| Religion or Belief | 0 | Neutral. The single council will serve all faith communities without bias. Engagement with all faith and religious groups will continue. No change in how specific religious needs (e.g. burial services, if relevant) are handled other than simplifying any cross-district issues. |

(Key: ‘+’ Positive impact, ‘-’ Negative impact, ‘0’ No significant impact. See narrative above for detailed analysis and mitigation actions.)

Section 4 Impact Assessment: Additional Community Impacts

Beyond the nine protected characteristics, Oxfordshire County Council also considers impacts on certain other categories as part of its inclusive approach set out in [its EDI Framework, Including Everyone 2025-2029](#). These include **Rural Communities, the Armed Forces community, Carers, and Areas of Deprivation** (socio-economic disadvantage). Each is addressed below.

4.1 Additional Impact: Rural Communities

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Context

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in Southeast England; about 40% of residents live in small towns, villages and hamlets. Rural areas have specific challenges: distances from services, limited public transport, and an older population profile (higher proportion of 85+ residents in villages). Currently, rural services are split among councils but the county council provides the majority of key services (roads, buses, social care) while districts handle things like waste collection and local planning.

Description of Impact

1. One Oxfordshire will not change the presence of services in rural areas, for example, libraries in market towns. It may indeed benefit rural residents by coordinating improvements across the whole rural area rather than by district. For instance, the new council could develop a comprehensive strategy for rural transport links or digital connectivity using the combined resources of county and districts.
2. Rural communities sometimes fear that a large, centralised authority could overlook them in favour of urban centres. The proposal recognises this and explicitly commits to ‘bringing decision making closer to communities’ through area committees and closer working with town and parish councils. With these structures, rural voices (parish councillors, local community groups) should have a formal channel into the new council, arguably stronger than under the two-tier system where influence might have been fragmented.

3. From an equalities perspective, rurality itself is not a protected characteristic, but rural isolation can exacerbate disadvantage (e.g. accessing care or employment). The new council's duty is to ensure equitable service delivery so that rural residents get a fair share of attention. Given OCC already covers the whole rural area for many services, continuity is assured for those services. District-level rural programmes (like specific rural grants or community bus services) would be absorbed into the unitary, and it will be important that these are not lost. However, the amalgamation of budgets could potentially allow more streamlined support for rural initiatives by eliminating duplication.

Mitigations

1. Maintaining localism is the key mitigation. The proposal of creating area committees for different parts of the county will mitigate the risk of rural communities feeling removed from decision-making. These committees can focus on local priorities. It is recommended the new council retains locality-based officers (community liaison) who understand rural community needs; this is an approach OCC already uses in some services.
2. Continue to provide local service delivery points, such as local libraries and rural tip sites. The data shows rural areas have poorer physical access to services (85 small areas in Oxfordshire are in the worst 10% nationally for access to key services by distance); a single council can target these through innovative solutions, such as mobile services and digital offers.
3. Effective communication will also mitigate concerns, such as informing rural residents how to contact the new council. Emphasising that local councillors will represent divisions that are often rural in nature, and that parishes remain intact, will help reassure continuity of local democratic input.

In summary, with these mitigations, no negative impact on rural communities is expected. Instead, the outcome should be neutral or slightly positive if one council can deliver more consistent support to rural areas (for example, applying successful pilots in one district to all rural areas countywide).

Action Owner: Policy & Partnerships Team

Timeline: within first year of new council

4.2 Additional Impact: Armed Forces Community

Impact: Neutral

Context

Oxfordshire has a significant Armed Forces presence, including around 10,000 serving military personnel stationed in the county and an estimated 23,500 veterans residing in the county. Military families (approximately 3,000 service children in local schools) form a distinct community with specific needs under the Armed Forces Covenant.

Description of Impact

1. One Oxfordshire will inherit OCC's lead role in the Armed Forces Covenant for the county. Currently both county and districts have covenant commitments (e.g. each district may have an Armed Forces champion councillor, while OCC coordinates countywide support). Under a single council, this support can be unified, which may simplify things for service members and families.
2. There should be no break in services for the armed forces community. For instance, currently a veteran might approach a district housing authority for social housing and OCC for adult care; with one council, those processes will join up.
3. The distinct nature of military life (frequent moves, schooling needs, healthcare, etc.) means the new council must remain sensitive to the armed forces community. As OCC already covers education admissions (important for forces children) and healthcare liaison, continuity is strong.

Overall, we do not anticipate any negative impact. The covenant rights of the Armed Forces community will continue (e.g. priority in school admissions, housing allocations where applicable), but under a single set of policies.

Mitigations

1. The new council should continue the Armed Forces Covenant partnership work, ensuring representation from military base commanders in community engagement structures.
2. A practical action is to re-issue the covenant under the new council's name promptly to show commitment has not changed. Specialist staff roles, such as an Armed Forces Liaison Officer, should be maintained to help service families navigate council services. By keeping these in place, forces personnel and families should experience seamless support.

In summary, the impact is neutral: no loss of service or additional barriers. The cohesive approach could even be beneficial by having a single set of consistent policies.

Action Owner: Policy & Partnerships Team

Timeline: within first year of new council

4.3 Additional Impact: Carers

Impact: Neutral to Positive

Context

Carers include unpaid carers who look after relatives or friends due to illness, disability, etc. Oxfordshire has approximately 52,000 unpaid carers (as of 2021 Census) and notably a slightly higher prevalence of young carers than national average. Carers often rely on support services from the council (respite care, information, carers' assessments).

Description of Impact

1. Under One Oxfordshire, the support to carers (which is largely through adult social care and children's services for young carers) remains under the same organisation; there is no structural change in roles. It may even simplify things: currently a carer might interact with the county council for a Carer's Assessment and with a district for a housing issue; one council can handle both aspects in a joined-up way. The proposal emphasises strengthening social care, which indirectly benefits carers by ensuring the people they care for get consistent support. There is no anticipated negative effect on carers; eligibility and rights (from the Care Act) remain.
2. Potential positives include unified data that might help identify and support 'hidden' carers across the county. Also, a single council could pool budgets to enhance respite services or carers' breaks. If any districts had local carer support grants, those could be merged with the county's carers support budget to create a larger, countywide programme (ensuring equitable access for carers in all areas).

Mitigations

1. The new council should continue the existing Carers Strategy work. OCC has a carers support team and contracts with charities (like Carers Oxfordshire). Those will remain in place and be managed by the new council. It will be important to communicate to carers that all contact points remain (e.g. the Carers Helpline number stays active).
2. No disruption in services like respite bookings should occur; this is ensured by the commitment to a 'safe and legal day 1' for all social care operations. Since carers are by nature often stretched thin, the council must avoid any confusion for them during transition; clear communication can help mitigate any anxiety among the carer community.

In summary, One Oxfordshire is expected to treat carers the same or better, with the possibility of more integrated support.

Action Owner: Adult Social Care, Carers Lead

Timeline: at point of transition communications.

4.4 Additional Impact: Areas of Deprivation (Socio-economic disadvantage)

Impact: Positive (slight)

Context

Oxfordshire is an affluent county overall, but it contains pockets of significant deprivation, e.g. parts of Oxford City, Banbury and Didcot rank in the bottom 10% nationally for multiple deprivation. Nearly 20,000 children and 12,000 older people in Oxfordshire live in poverty. These communities often have complex needs and benefit from targeted programmes.

Description of Impact

1. The One Oxfordshire proposal explicitly aims to tackle inequalities across the county. By having one council, resources can be directed efficiently to deprived areas. A single council can take a countywide view and ensure that the most deprived wards (wherever they are) get priority in investment.
2. The proposal references tackling inequalities by building on and progressing existing work led by the county council's public health team, as well as utilising partnerships and new alliances. This indicates a likely positive impact for deprived areas: more coherent anti-poverty strategies (across housing, education, skills, public health), and potential reinvestment of efficiency savings into preventive services in those communities.
3. One council can simplify customer service for those facing hardship. For instance, currently a resident in poverty might have to apply to a district for housing benefit/council tax support and to the county for a welfare assistance grant; a single council could have a one-stop application for financial support.
4. There is no negative impact foreseen on deprived areas; services in deprived areas (such as community centres, advice centres, etc.) will continue and develop. However, one risk might be if a deprived area feels that losing its district council means losing its 'champion'. Mitigation through area committees can ensure local advocacy remains.

Mitigations

1. The new council should develop a targeted plan for deprived communities, building on existing district regeneration plans. The advantage is that these plans can be combined with transport or education projects in that area for a bigger impact. Ensuring community involvement in shaping interventions will mitigate any disengagement.
2. Continuing to monitor socio-economic data (as OCC does currently via the JSNA and insight reports) will help the new council direct funding appropriately. The proposal mentions leveraging the Local Policy Lab initiative to address inequalities; this will provide evidence-led actions for deprived areas. The council's adoption of the socio-economic duty (through the Including Everyone framework) means it will consider poorer groups in decisions. All this indicates a systemic positive approach.

In summary, no mitigations are needed because the overall impact is positive. The key will be for the new council to maintain the focus.

Action Owner: Public Health & Communities

Timeline: ongoing, with review of indices post-implementation to gauge progress.

Section 5 Impact Assessment: Additional Wider Impacts

This section evaluates broader implications of the One Oxfordshire proposal beyond protected groups and communities. It covers potential impacts on employees of the councils, other council services, external service providers and contractors, and social value (economic, social, environmental benefits under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012). Each is assessed impartially, noting positive opportunities and any negative risks, with measures to mitigate the latter or enhance the former.

5.1 Wider Impact: Employees (All impacted employees)

Impact: Mixed (Positive and Negative)

Description of Impact

1. Under the proposal, savings will be achieved through a reduction in senior leadership roles and the removal of duplicated front office, back office and service delivery roles.
2. Approximately 8,000–10,000 employees (those currently employed by the county and five districts) will come together as a single workforce. This will be through the TUPE process, which will mean a change of employer that can be unsettling for some employees. It may potentially have a negative impact on morale and may raise feelings of anxiety around job security.
3. A single council will help create better and clearer progression pathways and create a roadmap for shaping a unified and inclusive culture. Consolidated learning budgets, policies, systems and processes will enable all employees to do their jobs well, thereby supporting equal opportunities and job satisfaction for everyone. This is therefore a positive impact.

Mitigations

1. A People and Culture workstream will help shape the new organisation. A robust engagement strategy will ensure employees and relevant trade unions are fully informed, consulted with, and supported throughout the transition, with safe spaces provided for colleagues to ask questions and raise their concerns
2. Employees across all six councils will be engaged and empowered to help shape the new council's values and culture, ensuring alignment with its vision and identity. Regular opportunities for input, including from senior leadership, will support a positive transition.
3. Robust transition plans will be put in place across all services to make employees feel welcomed to the new organisation, ensuring any existing reasonable adjustments and flexible working arrangements are in place from day 1.
4. Consistent and regular monitoring of equalities will be critical to ensuring that transition to vesting day and beyond will be as equitable and fair as possible.

In summary, the impact on employees is being managed through a careful HR strategy to maximise the positive aspects (broader opportunities, unified purpose) and mitigate

anxiety and uncertainty. With these measures, the aim is the new council has an engaged and motivated workforce that feels supported and well-informed. Continued monitoring of employee satisfaction and turnover during the transition (via employee surveys, engagement forums etc.) will be crucial to ensure any emerging issues are addressed promptly and efficiently.

Action Owner: HR working with Unitary Implementation Lead

Timescale: ongoing from decision through 2028, with regular pulse surveys and union meetings to monitor workforce well-being.

5.2 Wider Impact: Other Council Services

Impact: Positive

Description of Impact

One of the main benefits of a single unitary council is to improve council services by eliminating fragmentation, so the net impact on services is intended to be positive. 'Other council services' here refers to the operation and delivery of all functions (beyond those affecting specific community groups already covered above).

The proposal has been designed to avoid disrupting any service at point of transition and then to enhance service delivery through integration. Therefore no negative impacts are expected if the transition is managed well; indeed the proposal cites this option as being 'the least risky' for maintaining service standards. However, there are some risks to manage during implementation (e.g. potential temporary dips in performance while systems merge).

1. One Oxfordshire brings services together that are currently split between the county and districts. This is expected to improve strategic coordination and remove the 'silo effect' that can impede service effectiveness. It should also enable more innovative and streamlined service models.
2. The implementation plan includes service-specific workstreams to ensure each service area is mapped and handed over smoothly. For example, there will be dedicated planning to merge IT systems and contact centres so that no emails or calls get lost in the changeover.

Mitigations

Ensuring that the impact on services stays positive requires meticulous planning and continuous oversight.

- For each service area, a continuity plan will be drawn up. This means identifying key tasks, deadlines, and responsible personnel during the transition. A 'safe and legal day 1' audit will be performed to verify all statutory services are fully staffed and legally compliant as the new entity begins.
- The transition programme includes a legal and procurement review of contracts across all councils. The expectation is that all third party contracts will be novated across to the new council in the first instance, which would provide an extra layer of reassurance that there would be no disruption to services on day 1.

- As part of transition planning, a prioritised opportunity list of projects will be identified based on benefit to residents and commercial benefit allowing the new council to transform services and secure the benefits of a single unitary while prioritising the service experience for residents.
- Clear public communication will help mitigate any confusion over the transition to the new council. This includes updating signage, websites, emails, etc. on a coordinated schedule so that residents always find the help they need.

Action Owner: TBC

Timescale: detailed continuity plans by late 2027, with first year of new council (2028-29) monitored as a transition period.

5.3 Wider Impact: Providers

Impact: Neutral to Slight Positive

Description of Impact

1. Currently, some providers have contracts with the county council, others with district councils, some with both. Upon reorganisation, all these contracts will be transferred to the unitary. The contract terms, payment schedules, and points of contact might eventually be consolidated, but initially the providers continue delivering services as contracted.
2. Over time, the positive impacts for providers could include larger unified contracts, which increase scale and efficiency; larger grant funds for VCS organisations rather than multiple small pots, increasing funding stability; and greater regulatory consistency as processes will be clearer and uniform.
3. Potential negative impacts could include smaller local providers being edged out by big firms if the council moves to large consolidated contracts.

Mitigations

1. The council will proactively engage contractors, suppliers and commissioned partners well before the transition to explain how invoicing, contract management, and contacts will change. Clear guidance will be provided so that no provider is confused about who to contact for their contract.
2. A legal-procurement team will review every contract. They will identify any that require formal novation letters or consents from the provider and ensure those are secured.
3. To mitigate the risk to small providers, the new council's procurement strategy will follow the Social Value Action Plan so that local businesses and social enterprises get fair opportunity. Additionally, the council will apply the Social Value Act in all procurements, considering economic and social well-being benefits in awarding contracts.

With these measures, providers should experience a smooth transition. Over the longer term, any efficiencies in contract management could potentially translate into

savings that allow the council to reinvest in services (potentially benefiting providers through expanded contracts).

Action Owner: Head of Commercial & Procurement

Timescale: communication in the year before vesting day; formal novation of contracts by Day 1; review of procurement strategy in first year to maximise local and social value.

5.4 Wider Impact: Social Value

Impact: Positive

Description of Impact

1. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires councils to consider improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing in procurement of services. Oxfordshire County Council already has a strong social value policy and has recently developed a new definition and action plan for social value.
2. A single unitary council provides the opportunity to embed these principles across all services and contracts countywide, potentially generating greater social value. The impact is positive in that it can amplify initiatives like local job creation, carbon reduction, and community resilience by leveraging the larger scale of the new council.
3. There is no identified negative aspect – if the council simply carries on existing practices, the impact would be neutral; at best, it would actively use the reorganisation to drive more ambitious social value outcomes.
4. One Oxfordshire's scale might allow innovation in delivering social value. The Commercial & Procurement Service's action plan (2025) outlines steps such as establishing local supplier frameworks and setting default social value criteria for tenders.

Mitigations

1. It is recommended the new council merges the existing county and district policies on social value into one robust policy. This policy should be approved by the new council's Cabinet early on, signalling the importance of social value in all procurement.
2. Ensure that all commissioning officers and decision-makers in the new council understand how to incorporate social value. The Commercial team is already planning learning and development around this – that will continue.
3. Some services (like waste collection, housing maintenance) that were previously district-led might not have embedded social value clauses historically. As those contracts come up for renewal, the new council can enhance them with social value requirements.
4. The new council should track the social value delivered. Strong monitoring will ensure the positive impacts (jobs, community benefits) materialise.

5. The council should consider reinvesting some of the savings made from reorganisation into social value projects. Prioritising some reinvestment in preventative, community-level work (aligned with being a 'Marmot Place') would boost the social outcomes of the new council.
6. Legally, for any service contract over the threshold, the council must consider social value. The new council's larger procurement will meet that threshold regularly. To mitigate any risk of non-compliance, standard procedures should be in place to document how social value is considered for each relevant contract.

Action Owner: Head of Commercial & Procurement

Timescale: New Social Value Policy adopted by Vesting Day, apply to all new procurements thereafter.

Section 6 Overall Conclusion

This Equalities Impact Assessment finds that the One Oxfordshire proposal, if implemented with the planned safeguards, is fair and aligned with the public sector equality duty. It does not inherently discriminate against any protected group or community. Most impacts are neutral, with some opportunities for positive outcomes by tackling existing inequalities more effectively. Identified risks (loss of local familiarity, transition confusion) can be mitigated through strong community engagement, maintaining local access, and clear communication, all of which are part of the proposal's implementation plan. However, the new council must remain vigilant and responsive to community feedback to ensure that no group is left behind during the transition.

With the measures described, One Oxfordshire has the potential to promote equality and address the needs of all residents - urban and rural, young and old, disadvantaged and affluent - thereby fulfilling its obligations under the Equality Act.

Section 7 Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question).

Review date

30/10/2026

Person responsible for review

Helen Mitchell, Programme Director – Local Government Reorganisation

Authorised by

Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships

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