

Appendix 2

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, endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2026, concerning the Scrutiny Budget Review 2026/27. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

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Recommendation	Agree?	Comment																																																					
<p>1) To freeze the garden waste concessionary rate in this year and instead raise the standard rate by 5.2% (an additional 0.2% on the consultation budget) in order to cover the income that would have been generated by the proposed concessionary rate rise.</p>	<p>In Part</p>	<p>We have reviewed the likely cost of freezing the concessionary rate and believe it can be delivered within the existing budget envelope.</p> <p>Oxford garden waste bin collection charges are in the highest 1% in England. They have risen by over 50% in the last 5 years. This has led to a decrease in garden waste collections of 20% over this time period.</p> <p>Garden Waste if not disposed of correctly ends up in residual waste, which will further decrease our recycling rate and increase risk of reduced further pEPR grant (linked to recycling performance) as well as increasing costs of disposal.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1144 986 2101 1182"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Collection Type</th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> <th>2025/26</th> <th>% Ch last 5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="6">Garden Waste</td> <td>Garden Waste Bags Pack 10</td> <td>£38.50</td> <td>£40.35</td> <td>£50.35</td> <td>£55.35</td> <td>£58.50</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Garden Waste Bags Pack 20/Bin</td> <td>£57.00</td> <td>£60.00</td> <td>£75.00</td> <td>£85.00</td> <td>£94.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concessionary rate for Garden Waste Bags/Bin</td> <td>£45.00</td> <td>£47.16</td> <td>£47.16</td> <td>£50.00</td> <td>£53.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income</td> <td></td> <td>£933,223</td> <td>£1,142,913</td> <td>£1,258,123</td> <td>£1,295,335</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licences/Pa</td> <td></td> <td>16850</td> <td>15181</td> <td>14957</td> <td>14662</td> <td>13520</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>From March 2026 under Simpler Recycling legislation, all LAs are required to provide a garden waste collection service. Legislation stipulates that reasonable charges can be applied.</p>		Collection Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	% Ch last 5	Garden Waste	Garden Waste Bags Pack 10	£38.50	£40.35	£50.35	£55.35	£58.50		Garden Waste Bags Pack 20/Bin	£57.00	£60.00	£75.00	£85.00	£94.00		Concessionary rate for Garden Waste Bags/Bin	£45.00	£47.16	£47.16	£50.00	£53.00		Income		£933,223	£1,142,913	£1,258,123	£1,295,335		Licences/Pa		16850	15181	14957	14662	13520									
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<p>2) That cancellation form for garden waste collection and other paid Council services include reason-</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The current form does allow us to collect reasons for leaving the service.</p>																																																					

<p>based tickboxes for discontinuing the service, to enable the Council to understand better whether a decline in usage is driven by costs, service performance, or other factors.</p>		
<p>3) To assess the cost of offering compost bins at a discounted rate to support residents in composting on their own site, particularly for those who find an offsite garden waste collection service unaffordable.</p>	Yes	<p>Agreed as part of a wider programme.</p> <p>Over the next 6 months the Council's Waste & Recycling Team will obtain composition analysis on residual waste across different demographics of Oxford. This will give us insight into how much food, dry mixed recycling and garden waste is not being recycled and is included in the residual waste stream. This will provide the data to build a programme prioritising the behaviour change most needed by geographical area and include finding other ways of reusing and reducing garden & food waste. Home composting, including an option for discounted compost bins will be part of that workstream, alongside working with community action groups, albeit Oxfordshire County Council already offer compost bins for Oxfordshire residents at a cost of £32.98 per bin.</p>
<p>4) That HMO licence fees incorporate a pre-payment (or a levy) to cover bulky waste disposal to help offset costs incurred by the Council to remediate flytipping, and that a mechanism be introduced where HMO licensing services notify ODS of forthcoming end-of-tenancy periods. This allows timely collection of bulky waste and reduce instances of fly-tipping of mattresses and other broken furniture.</p>	No	<p>The licence fee cannot make a bulky waste collection mandatory. We can add further informatives on what to do in the event that a bulky waste collection is needed, raise it at Landlord Forums and publicise in other ways, noting of course that whilst ODS is our preferred method, landlords could arrange for bulky waste to be collected and appropriately disposed of in other ways.</p>
<p>5) That the Council works jointly with the County Council (as the highways authority), neighbouring districts, and ODS to coordinate the gritting of well-used pedestrian and cycle routes when icy conditions are forecast, including the ring-road</p>	Yes	<p>The County Council as the Highway Authority does not currently have a programme for gritting cyclepaths. Gritting within the City is currently undertaken to the County specification which is summarised in the link below. The County fund this work.</p>

<p>cycleway and southern bypass, and manage the associated costs through cross-authority cooperation.</p>		<p>https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/street-maintenance-z/salting-and-snow-clearance</p> <p>None of the adjacent districts have the same S42 arrangement with the County Council as the City and the County Council deliver all highway works in the other districts.</p> <p>We have got budget in place to grit some cycle paths, including the purchase of new machinery, and details are being finalised including investigation of the suitability of grit on cyclepaths, staffing and training required and routes that can be covered. We will encourage the County Council to play its part and grit pavements and support with funding.</p>
<p>6) That the Museum of Oxford offer paying customers options to make entry more attractive. In particular, by offering joint MOX/Café tickets that provide a hot drink as well as entry to the Museum to have the added benefit of increasing the number of customers at the café; in addition, that paying customers receive a 10% discount on purchases in the MOX shop with a wider range of products to make gift purchasing in the shop cheaper than in souvenir shops.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>A public call is due to be undertaken imminently to enable relevant businesses/attractions that wish to offer joint tickets or discounts with MOX. The Cafe would be able to respond as part of this process.</p> <p>The shop already sells a wider range of products than are available in most souvenir shops, at reasonable prices. Discounting by 10% will reduce the overall take at a time we need to increase income.</p> <p>It is likely that other income generating schemes will be set up later in the year e.g. a Friends scheme and we need to reserve additional benefits for that.</p>
<p>7) That the closure of the Oxpens and/or Worcester Street car parks is pushed back for one year to preserve revenue, unless development is imminent.</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>Oxpens income has been modelled in line with the current development programme and will be kept under review. Worcester Street car park is assumed to be income producing through the MTFP.</p>
<p>8) That Council introduce a permitted long-stay parking option at Park & Rides, such as one or two</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Both the City Council and County Council agree the fees and charges across all 5 park and rides to ensure consistency. If we</p>

<p>weeks, designed to encourage parking outside the city centre such as for tourists staying for several days in city centre hotels, with pricing set above standard short-stay charges; and for this rate to be adjustable if there proves to be more demand to manage the spaces taken by long-term users, preventing displacement of spaces needed for regular Park & Ride users.</p>		<p>were to consider this it would instead need to be next budget round if County agree. It would be unlikely to result in an increase in income</p>
<p>9) That Council counteracts the loss of officer capacity for twinning by supporting voluntary groups maintaining vital twinning links by creating a £20,000 annual budget, managed by the Civic Office, to be used to support these links.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This has been included in the Labour Group's amendments to the Consultation Budget.</p>
<p>10) To proceed with Option 3 (Continue with noticeboards, with City Council actively managing and operating the boards) as the preferred approach for the management and maintenance of community noticeboards costed at £75,000 one-off capital investment for the resurvey, installation, replacement or repair of noticeboards, and an annual budget of £35k for ongoing management and maintenance. In implementing this, existing arrangements led by parish councils or neighbourhood association should not be discouraged nor discontinued.</p> <p>Should Option 3 not be achievable due to budgetary constraints, it is recommended that no further action is taken (Option 1).</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>I agree in principle with the proposed approach, and a view will need to be taken whether this can be implemented this year or is something to be included in the next iteration of the MTFS.</p>