

Decision type: Decision Specifically Delegated to Officers

Decision date: 05 March 2026

Decision maker: Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Decision title: Appointment of Interim Programme Director – Cowley Branch Line

Summary

Decision being taken:	To appoint Clive Tritton as Interim Programme Director – Cowley Branch Line from (3 rd March 2026) for up to 12 months.
Key decision:	No
Source of delegation:	Part 9.3 of the Constitution provides that the Chief Executive can make interim appointments, of up to twelve months in total, to the senior management structure in order to facilitate projects or fill a skills gap. The Chief Executive shall consult with all political group leaders prior to the implementation of any changes to the senior management structure, and report to the Appointments Committee within six months of any change being implemented
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader
Corporate Priority:	Inclusive Economy, Well-run Council.
Policy Framework:	None.

The Chief Executive decides as follows:

1. To appoint Clive Tritton to position of Interim Programme Director, Cowley Branch Line from 3rd March for up to 12 months.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	N/A	No

Introduction and background

1. The reopening of the Cowley Branch Line to passengers is a key council priority. The City and County Councils have supported a bid to central Government to secure support.
2. On 23rd October 2025 government announced it intended to support the project, earmarking £120m of funds. This was on the basis of a local contribution of £35m from local partners.
3. Alongside the rail project, the City and County Councils have been working on a Place and Infrastructure study to set out the likely infrastructure needed to connect the new railway line and stations into the local communities.
4. Both councils are now working with the Department for Transport to move the project forward with the next gateway in the summer where an updated business case will be submitted with an aim of entering into contract to deliver the scheme in the autumn of 2026.
5. Contractual agreements will also be needed to enter into an agreement between Oxford City Council as the local accountable body and Network Rail, plus back-to-back agreements between Oxford City Council and the other local funders.
6. Furthermore, Homes England, working with the Oxford Growth Commission to support the production of a spatial framework for the area, showing how new homes and jobs could be unlocked.

Reasons for the decision

7. Given the importance and complexity of working with Network Rail on the delivery of a major rail project, plus the delivery of the place and infrastructure work and the spatial framework, a joint City and County team is to be established. It is expected that this team would be in place until 2029/30 albeit that employment would be with a new unitary council.
8. The CBL is a major priority project for the city, and we need to act quickly to maintain momentum and secure funding. As the work around the CBL is a multi-million-pound programme, with significant public and private sector partners to report to. As such, an urgent skills gap has been identified in the need to secure a Programme Director to manage this team.
9. The decision to appoint Clive Tritton for between 6-12 months plugs that gap and provides the time for the councils to make a longer-term appointment. The initial contract will be for 6 months, but this decision provides for the option of a further 6 months if needed.
10. The interim Programme Director will establish this team and associated governance and move forward with the delivery of all aspects of the project. The post will report jointly to the City and County Council. The post does not sit on CLT or have other line management responsibilities within the City Council. The post will be funded by S106 money secured to deliver the Cowley Branch Line and held by the County Council.

Alternative Options Considered

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11. Doing nothing would put the project delivery at risk as there is not the officer capacity to lead a project of this complexity without having a detrimental impact on other priorities.
12. Waiting to appoint via a recruitment process would have left a gap in senior oversight of the project team at a critical stage when the project need momentum. This could lead to failure to meet milestones and the failure of the project to move forward to delivery. Appointing an interim Programme Director allows for the recruitment of a longer-term replacement to now take place in the coming months.

Equalities Impact

13. This interim appointment provides for immediate project support to a key priority, while also allowing the time to be taken to ensure a recruitment process is put in place for a longer-term replacement that looks to support broader objectives around equalities.

Risks

14. The main risk is that we fail to recruit in the initial round. This decision allows for up to a contract of up to 12 months, which would allow for a second round of recruitment,

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

15. N/A

Implications of making the decision

Financial implications	The role would be funded through s106 secured for the delivery of the Cowley Branch Line. This money is held by the County Council and paid to the City Council.	Completed by: Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) Date: 20 February 2026
Legal implications	Under section 9.3 of the Constitution the Head of Paid Services may amend the senior management structure to deliver the Council's objectives in the most effective and efficient manner, for up to 12 months. This is subject to consulting all group leaders, which has been done. A report to the Appointment Committee within six months of this decision is also required.	Completed by: Emma Griffiths, Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer) Date: 20 February 2026
Other implications	N/A	Completed by:

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		Jonathan Malton Date: 05 March 2026
Member declared interests	N/A	Completed by: Jonathan Malton Date: 05 March 2026

Background Documents
N/A

Report author	Tom Bridgman
Job title	Deputy Chief Executive – Place
Service area or department	Place
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Consultee checklist

Consultees	Name and job title	Date
Senior officer e.g. the relevant service manager / Director where the decision maker is the Chief Executive or a Deputy Chief Executive.		
Group Finance Director Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director	20/02/2026
Director of Law, Governance and Strategy Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Emma Griffiths, Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer), in lieu of Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)	20/02/2026

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Cabinet Member(s) Where required by the conditions of the delegation	N/A	
Ward Members Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	N/A	

Decision Maker Approval

<i>Name and job title</i>	<i>Date</i>
Caroline Green, Chief Executive	25/02/26

This form must be completed and sent to Committee and Member Services **on the date that the decision maker signs it. This must be only done once all consultees have given their approval. The decision shall be effective from the date of publication; therefore, it is important that you send to Committee and Member Services as soon as it is completed and dated by the decision maker. Please note that it is not effective until it is published and the call in period has passed.**

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NOTES

The law¹ requires the Council to record executive and non-executive decisions taken by officers under delegated powers and to publish them on the Council's website.

These requirements apply to decisions that would have been taken by Council or the Cabinet if delegated powers had not been given to an officer:

- under an express delegation granted at a meeting of Cabinet, Council or a Committee.
- in accordance with Part 4.4 of the Constitution as follows:
 - Awarding a contract where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
 - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds or leaseholds granting new leaseholds (excluding assignments and rent reviews) where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
 - Making a regulatory order which affects a number of people, for example a Public Space Protection Order or a Parking Place Order
 - Where the effect of a decision is to grant a licence or permission or it affects the rights of citizens
 - Discharging any other express delegation from Cabinet or a Cabinet Member a committee or Council.

These requirements **do not** apply to:

- planning and licencing matters where there are established arrangements for recording decisions: or
- decisions which are purely administrative or operational in nature

All other officer decisions should be recorded on an officer decision form but do not need to be published. They must though be stored so as to ensure that they are not lost should an officer leave the authority.

Exempt or Confidential information

Information relating to a delegated officer or single member decision does not have to be made public if it is exempt or confidential. Summary information from this decision sheet (excluding all exempt or confidential information) will be published on the Council's website.

¹ the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012/2089 (Regulation 13(4)) and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014/2095 (Regulation 7)

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Key or Non Key Decision

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Have a significant effect on people living or working in a least two wards or
- Involve spending, income, or saving a significant amount – whether an amount is significant depends on the Council's total budget for the service involved. For this Council 'significant' in budgetary terms is:
 - Expenditure, income, or savings of £750,000 or greater in the context of the medium term financial strategy,
 - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds with a consideration over £500,000 in the context of the medium term financial strategy except for disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation
 - Acquiring or disposing of leaseholds where either the rental value is in excess of £250,000 per annum and/or the premium is £750,000 except for statutory lease renewals under Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation.
 - Acquiring or disposing of easements with a value over £750,000 and/or rental value over £250,000 each year

A key decision can only be taken and recorded here if notice of it has been published on the Forward Plan for at least 28 clear days. Key decisions taken by officers may be "called in" by any four councillors or the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee within two days of the notice of decision being published.

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