

Decision type:	Single Member Decision
Decision date:	06/08/2026
Decision maker:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, Inclusive Economic Growth and Culture
Decision title:	Acceptance of funding from MHCLG to support the work of Oxford Growth Commission including work relating to Oxford West End and strategic infrastructure capacity.

Summary	
Decision being taken:	Acceptance of funding from MHCLG to undertake work relating to the Oxford Central and West End opportunity area and strategic infrastructure capacity.
Key decision:	Yes - Issue details - Acceptance of funding from MHCLG Oxford City Council
Source of delegation:	3.1 and 3.4 in the Council's Constitution
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, Inclusive Economic Growth and Culture
Corporate Priority:	Strong, fair economy; Thriving Communities; and Good, affordable homes.
Policy Framework:	Corporate Strategy, Oxford Economic Strategy

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, Inclusive Economic Growth and Culture decides as follows:

1. **Accept** £1m of funding from MHCLG to support the work of Oxford Growth Commission including work relating to Oxford West End and strategic infrastructure capacity and deposit the funding within an earmarked reserve specifically for the purposes set out in the Memorandum of Understanding
2. **Note** the Memorandum of Understanding relating to this funding that will be signed by the Director for Regeneration, Economy and Sustainability

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
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Appendix 1	Memorandum of Understanding for signing	No
Appendix 2	Risk Register	No

Introduction and background

3. The Oxford Growth Commission (OGC) was established in May 2025. In December 2025, OGC published their interim report. This contained over 40 recommendations focused on accelerating housing delivery, fostering innovation, and upgrading infrastructure across 13 strategic opportunity areas. Among these opportunity areas were several locations within Oxford including Oxford Central / West End. This area is also an Area of Change in adopted Oxford Local Plan 2036 (Areas of Focus in the Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045) and is also identified as a priority in the Oxford Economic Strategy. The OGC report identified the need to explore new funding mechanisms to support infrastructure and the public realm delivery as well as strategic infrastructure improvements with examples across rail, water and energy.
4. In order to undertake further work on these opportunities and funding mechanisms MHCLG are providing Oxford City Council £1million to commission and resource an evidence base to support the delivery of planned growth, make the case for investment and help make the case for bringing forward longer term funding streams. This is likely to be a suite of different projects and distinct evidence studies but the majority relates to Oxford West End. The funding will also cover officer time for those working on the projects.
5. MHCLG have sought for the city council to enter a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of this funding. This is not a legally binding document and there is authority within the constitution for the Head of Law and Governance or her identified delegate to sign this. It is included as Appendix 1 to this decision for information and context. The funding is being provided as a one off payment up front to the work so there is no risk associated with having to undertake work in advance of funding receipt. As this funding is for a specific purpose and needs to be spent in line with the Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG it will be placed in an earmarked reserve for this specific purpose.

Reasons for the decision

6. The recommendation is to accept this funding which will support the delivery of planned growth and enable progression of an evidence base to make the case for investment and help make the case for bringing forward longer term funding streams including a business case for a Business Rate Retention scheme. This is additional funding into Oxford.

Alternative Options Considered

7. The only alternative is to not accept this funding and either not undertake the work or fund it ourselves. The council does not have funding to progress this work itself and the opportunity to explore this significant opportunity will be lost. This potentially in the long term misses the opportunity for significant money being retained in Oxford.

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Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

8. There are no specific implications for Local Government Reorganisation. This is additional funding into Oxford that seeks to support planned growth and assist in making the case for longer term funding and income, which will be of benefit under any LGR model. The MOU applies up to and including 31/03/2027 and so the funding will have ended before the date of reorganisation.

Equalities Impact

9. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision. This is a predominantly administrative decision to accept funds to be used to commission studies and evidence. There are no policy changes or service delivery linked to this decision. For example, this decision does not alter existing public services or council policies and it does not directly provide or affect a front-line service to residents. EIAs will be undertaken where required on the individual work strands.

Risks

10. The main risk identified is if the funding is not sufficient to fulfil the objectives. This is considered low risk and will be mitigated by agreeing the scope based on quotes with MHCLG and ensuring that enough buffer is retained to allow for any unforeseen additions.
11. Although not legally binding, another risk identified is reputational risk if the council does not fulfil the parameters of the Memorandum of Understanding. Officers involved with the projects will be provided the MoU and reminded of its parameters. Regular meetings are in place with the relevant officers at MHCLG and any issues will be raised early to agree how best to address them to avoid reputational damage. The risk register is included as appendix 2.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

12. There are no specific carbon or environmental considerations relevant to this decision to accept funding for the purposes set out.

Implications of making the decision

Financial implications	In accordance with the MOU, the funding will be an up-front payment of £1 million, ensuring that there is no spend prior to receipt of funding and thus lowering risk to the Council. The funding will be earmarked for the purpose set out in the MOU. It should be noted that the spend will have to be completed by 31st March 2027 on the specified purpose in order to ensure that the funding does not have to be returned. If there are any delays in the work then officers will	Completed by: Bill Lewis Financial Accounting Manager Date: 30/07/2026
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	have to get specific written approval from MHCLG to extend the term.	
Legal implications	Whilst the MoU is not legal binding it should be adhered to. If the government also issue a funding letter, any conditions in that must also be adhered to in order to ensure there is no risk of clawback. There will be legal implications arising from the spend of the funds and these will be considered as the individual elements are brought forward.	Completed by: Emma Jackman Director of Law, Governance and Strategy Date: 21.7.26 Insert date
Other implications	N/A	Completed by: Carolyn Ploszynski Date: 05/08/2026
Member declared interests	N/A	Completed by: Carolyn Ploszynski Date: 05/08/2026

Background Documents
Oxford Growth Commission interim report, December 2025

Report author	Insert details here
Job title	Carolyn Ploszynski
Service area or department	Director of Regeneration, Economy and Sustainability
Email contact	cploszynski@oxford.gov.uk

Consultee checklist

<i>Consultees</i>	<i>Name and job title</i>	<i>Date</i>
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Senior officer e.g. the relevant service manager / Director where the decision maker is the Chief Executive or a Deputy Chief Executive.	N/A	
Group Finance Director Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Bill Lewis	30/07/2026
Director of Law, Governance and Strategy Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Emma Jackman	21.7.26
Cabinet Member(s) Where required by the conditions of the delegation	N/A (also the decision maker)	
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>
Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, Inclusive Economic Growth and Culture	04/08/2026

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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