

# Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 5 July 2022

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## CABINET

You are summoned to a meeting of the Cabinet which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 13 July 2022 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Dan Levy, Mathew Parkinson, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett and Geoff Saul

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

## AGENDA

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 10)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any declarations from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.
5. **Receipt of Announcements**  
Purpose:  
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Cabinet.
6. **Review of Legal Services, Interim Monitoring Officer Arrangement and Retained Officer Structure (Pages 11 - 16)**  
Purpose:  
For Cabinet to consider instigating reviews of the Council's legal services, and the interim monitoring officer arrangement and retained officer structure.  
  
Recommendation:  
That Cabinet resolves to:
  - a) Note the decision of Cotswold District Council on their commissioning review of legal services.
  - b) Agree, subject to Cotswold District Council agreeing to remain party to the shared Cotswold/Forest of Dean/West Oxfordshire legal service, to support the formalisation of the shared service under a Collaboration Agreement and Section 101 agreements, and a review of the shared service for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
  - c) Authorise the Chief Executive to undertake a review of the current interim monitoring officer arrangement and the retained officer structure, including interrelationships with the shared legal service and Publica, with recommendations from the review reported to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
7. **Outline Business Case to Improve Openness and Transparency in Council Business and Support Agile Working and Decarbonisation Measures (Pages 17 - 32)**  
Purpose:  
To seek agreement to changes to Woodgreen and Elmfield Council offices to facilitate the implementation of the Agile Working Strategy, reduce costs and carbon impact of the Council's operations and increase public accessibility.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- (a) Support Option 2 in section 4 to upgrade technology in the Council Chamber and Committee rooms plus modernisation of the Council Chamber and public spaces to create an attractive, flexible and publicly accessible space;
- (b) Confirm that, the first floor of 3 Welch Way offices will not be re-let when the current tenancy ends to enable use of this space for staff;
- (c) Note that a report will be brought back for decision on the future letting options of Elmfield, to consider how that space is utilised;
- (d) Delegate a final decision on a replacement heating solution to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet members for Climate Change and Finance;
- (e) Recommend to Council to allocate £2.15m of funding from the Capital Programme “Investment Strategy for Recovery” line item to facilitate the changes and deliver up to £186,000 of net annual revenue benefits with a return on capital of up to 10% after capital financing costs.

8. **Local Development Scheme (LDS) update (Pages 33 - 50)**

Purpose:

To approve an update of the District Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS) which provides information on which planning documents the Council intends to prepare and when, to ensure transparency and enable effective community engagement. The LDS also provides information on Neighbourhood Planning.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

Approve the updated Local Development Scheme attached at Annex A

9. **West Eynsham Masterplan (Pages 51 - 54)**

Purpose:

To provide an update in relation to the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan which was approved as a material planning consideration by Cabinet on 16 March 2022 but subject to a subsequent legal challenge.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Note the content of the report;
- b) Agree that Officers should invite the four main landowners/developers responsible for the preparation of the masterplan to engage with all other third party landowners within the SDA boundary; and
- c) Agree that any updates/consequential amendments to the masterplan arising from that process of further engagement be reconsidered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

10. **Approval of Funding for West End Link Study (Pages 55 - 58)**

Purpose:

To agree the release of additional funds from the Council’s unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund transport options appraisal work relating to Bridge street, Witney including consideration of the West End Link Road (WELS).

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

Approve the release of £15,000 from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund the transport options appraisal work commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council.

11. **Investment Plan for UK Shared Prosperity Funding (Pages 59 - 68)**

Purpose:

To seek agreement to the initial projects and themes which will be included in the Council's Investment Plan for UK Shared Prosperity Funding and delegations to enable sign off of the final plan before submission and progression with projects requiring expenditure in 2022/23.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Support the inclusion of the projects and interventions listed in this report in the Council's Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- b) Delegate authority for the final approval of the Investment Plan submission and any subsequent amendments to it, to the Group Manager - Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.
- c) Agree a variation and pay Publica the £20,000 revenue allocation from the UK SPF for Investment Plan preparation the application of which is to be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- d) Agree that 4% of the fund is used for administration of the Programme, with the total sum of £40,000 over the life of the project being paid to Publica to employ a shared UK SPF Programme Manager, to monitor and manage project progress and undertake the required reporting.
- e) Delegate authority for the award of contracts to consultants/contractors to deliver projects highlighted for delivery in 2022/23 to the Group Manager - Property and Regeneration in consultation with the S.151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

12. **Oxfordshire Food Strategy (Pages 69 - 92)**

Purpose:

To review and offer comments on the Oxfordshire Food Strategy Part 1 and note the development of detailed action plans in Part 2.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Review and comment on the Oxfordshire Food Strategy: Part 1 including the principles and framework for delivery;
- b) Note that Part 2 will see the development of detailed action plans for partners involved in the strategy and that this will return to Cabinet, in the autumn;
- c) Note the grant allocation proposed by the County Council to assist with the development of Part 2.

13. **West Oxfordshire Council Plan (Pages 93 - 96)**

Purpose:

To agree a revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan and development of an Action Plan that will underpin the delivery of the Council Plan.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Agree to a revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan.
- b) Agree to the development of an Action Plan setting out activity to be taken to deliver the priorities of the Council Plan.
- c) Agree to a programme of engagement that will inform the revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan and development of supporting Action Plan.

14. **Budget Monitoring Report Year End outturn (Pages 97 - 116)**

Purpose:

To provide details of the Council's financial performance at the end of 2021/2022, the key movements to reserves and the capital budget including the unspent funds rolled over.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Note the 2021/22 end of year financial performance.
- b) Recommend to Council to approve the carry forward of Capital Budget of £14,399,348 as detailed in Annex B
- c) Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report
- d) Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to spend from the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve to fund ad hoc investigation, advice and consultancy services for potential investments and projects.

15. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

If Cabinet wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16. **Recovery and Investment Strategy Proposal (Pages 117 - 152)**

Purpose:

To consider an investment opportunity in the strategic economic infrastructure of West Oxfordshire in line with the Investment Strategy for the Recovery of West Oxfordshire approved in October 2020.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Approve the decision in principle to acquire the site in line with its priority for re-invigorating commercial centres and ensuring economic vibrancy;

- b) Confirm the proposed acquisition price subject to receipt of independent advice on valuation;
- c) Approve that appropriate due diligence be carried out noting that any costs incurred will be charged to the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve should the acquisition not be pursued;
- d) Seek the views of the Capital Programme Investment Board on the proposal;
- e) Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Cabinet member for Economic Development the final terms of the acquisition.

(END)

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 1

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 22 June 2022**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman (Cabinet Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities), Lidia Arciszewska (Cabinet Member for Environment), Dan Levy (Cabinet Member for Finance), Mathew Parkinson (Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery), Andrew Prosser (Cabinet Member for Climate Change), Carl Rylett (Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development), Geoff Saul (Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare).

Also present Councillors: Andrew Coles, Jeff Haines, Michelle Mead,

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica), Michelle Ouzman (Strategic support Officer) and Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer).

#### **18 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 May were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was noted that all councillors present were to be included on minutes of meeting.

#### **19 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lidia Arciszewska and Councillor Joy Aitman.

#### **20 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **21 Participation of the Public**

There were no participation of the public received.

#### **22 Receipt of Announcements**

The Leader of the Council Councillor Andy Graham welcomed everyone to the Cabinet Committee meeting.

The Chair confirmed that 2 members of the Cabinet were not in attendance due to Covid. The Chair highlighted that the number of Covid cases are increasing and to be aware of the ongoing risk. The Chair advised members to test for Covid prior to public meetings if they have been in contact with others with Covid. The Chair wished Cabinet colleagues well who were absent and a speedy return.

A reminder note for Councillors who received an invite from Bev Hindle to attend a Pan-Regional Partnership for the Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire area. The invitation was to attend a briefing regarding the changes and is to be held on the evening of June 22 from 7pm. There will be an opportunity to ask questions moving forward before a formal report is issued.

Cabinet

22/June2022

The Chair announced the appointments on Outside Bodies, they were as followed;

Future Oxfordshire Partnership;

Councillor Richard Langridge.

Councillor Julian Cooper.

Councillor Charlie Maynard.

Cycling Champion;

Councillor Ruth Smith.

Armed Forces Champion;

Councillor Natalie King.

The Chair stated that he will be in attendance with the Chief Executive, Giles Hughes at the Local Government Association Conference. The Chair expressed that it would be a great opportunity to development for our partnerships.

The Chair explained that partnerships fundamentally underpin the delivery of services in West Oxfordshire and how this would be a way to extend partnership arrangements where appropriate to give better value of delivery of services.

### **23 Community Facilities Grants - 1st Round 2022/23**

Members received a Communities Facilities Grants – 1<sup>st</sup> Round 2022/23 report.

Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for Stronger, Healthier Communities was absent therefore the Chair introduced the policy which was on pages 9-14 on the agenda. There were 2 applicants, The Charlbury Bowls Club and the Chipping Norton Swifts FC whom met the criteria that was set out. The Chair expressed that there is expectation for both to have a great community benefit. The Chair proposed to agree the award grant in accordance with the recommendations set out in Annex A.

Councillor Enright the Cabinet Member for Economic Development seconded the proposal and noted in the report point 3.3 that for every pound grant aided £2.83 of external community funding added. The proposal was duly put to vote and was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** cabinet approved as per recommendations in the report.

### **24 Performance Monitoring Report Q4 - 2021/22**

Members received the Performance Monitoring Report Q4 -2021/22

The Chair introduced the report which was on pages 15-44 of the agenda. The Chair explained that Q4 will cover up to April 2022. The Chair noted the statement of the annual plan for Q4. The Chair opened the floor to questions. There were none so the Chair proposed to note the statement. Councillor Mathew Parkinson, Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery seconded the proposal. The proposal was duly put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved as per recommendation in the report.



**25 Cleaning & Maintenance of Public Conveniences**

Members received the Cleaning and Maintenance of Public Conveniences report.

In the absence of Councillor Lidia Arciszewska the Cabinet Member for Environment, the Chair introduced the report which was on pages 45-50 of the agenda. The Chair explained the purpose of the report, it was to provide options for the delivery of service of the public convenience cleaning and maintenance services, at the end of the current contract with Danfo. The Cabinet have looked at the report and discussed the options of renewing the contact, with a view of proposal to approve. The Chair opened the floor to questions.

Councillor Enright observed under point 1.4 of the report that awards for excellent standards of service have been won and complimented Danfo on doing a very good job. Councillor Enright highlighted that the awards are given on un-announced spot inspections.

The Chair clarified that the contact with Danfo will run from October 22, 2022 to September 2023 as this information was not in the papers. The Chair confirmed that the future contract will be reviewed in good time to enable the Cabinet to look at options.

The Chair proposed to note and this was seconded by Councillor Mathew Parkinson. The proposed was duly put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved as per recommendation in the report.

**26 Sustainable Warmth - Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG)**

Members received the Sustainable Warmth – Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) report.

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Cabinet Member for Climate Change introduced the report and explained the Sustainable Warmth Grant is in Phase 3 of the delivery. This has been done in cooperation with other local authorities in the South East. Councillor Prosser asked to move the recommendation to note the briefing on Sustainable Warmth in annex 1 and to agree delegated authority to the Chief Executive to enter agreement on behalf of the Cabinet.

Councillor Mead raised a question on point 2.8 of the report, that there would be no cost to the Council expect in kind, i.e. in officer's hours. Councillor Mead asked how many hours the officer would have to spend on that task?

Councillor Prosser responded by explaining that he did not know but felt that it would not be a huge amount of time and he would check on how many hours. Councillor Prosser went on to explain that the council would be receiving a grant for £10,000 for communications and officer's time would be spent leading the communication programme. Councillor Prosser proposed that the Cabinet approve as per the recommendations in the report.

The Chair asked if the cabinet were happy with the proposal by Councillor Prosser and this was seconded by Councillor Enright. The proposal was duly put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved as per recommendation in the report.

**27 Acquisition of Amenity Land in Witney**

Members received the Acquisition of Amenity Land in Witney report.

The Chair stated that there was an attachment annex which was a restricted document, therefore the Chair advised if any questions arose from this document, then the meeting would need to go into private session, to enable the Cabinet to discuss them. There were no questions, therefore the Cabinet did not need to go into private session.

Councillor Carl Rylett, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development put forward the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Enright.

Councillor Rylett introduced the report. Councillor Rylett expressed that this was a great news story regarding the green space next to Cogges conservation area, acknowledged that the space is very well used by the public for walking and cycling. Councillor Rylett also recognised the great cooperation between the Council and the community who have worked together to protect this important piece of land. Councillor Rylett then proposed the recommendation to the officers to acquire the land at a cost of about £30,000. And for delegated authority for the officers to approve the final terms of transaction.

Councillor Enright seconded the proposal. Councillor expressed his delight to note that there is a swathe of green land in Witney which is in public hands in trust or in the Council's control. Councillor Enright thought that this is great news for residents, as the area is safe guarded and can be prone to slight flooding. Councillor Enright acknowledged the continued use by walkers, cyclists and other residents of the town. Councillor Enright concluded by thanking officers who put in brilliant work on this and was grateful to the residents who rose to the occasion.

Chair asked if Cabinet were in agreement with the recommendations in the report. The proposal was duly put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved as per recommendation in the report.

**28 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The Chair stated that there was an attachment annex which was a restricted document, therefore the Chair advised if any questions arose from this document, then the meeting would need to go into private session, to enable the Cabinet to discuss them. There were no questions raised and therefore the Cabinet did not need to go into private session.


**29 Acquisition of Amenity Land in Witney**

As there was no private session this item was fully concluded under item 27 of these minutes.

The Meeting closed at 2.16 pm

CHAIR

# Agenda Item 6

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date</p>	<p><b>CABINET - 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 6</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Review of Legal Services, Interim Monitoring Officer Arrangement and Retained Officer Structure</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham, Leader; Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>For Cabinet to consider instigating reviews of the Council's legal services, and the interim monitoring officer arrangement and retained officer structure.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>(a) <i>That Cabinet note the decision of Cotswold District Council on their commissioning review of legal services.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>That, subject to Cotswold District Council agreeing to remain party to the shared Cotswold/Forest of Dean/West Oxfordshire legal service, Cabinet supports the formalisation of the shared service under a Collaboration Agreement and Section 101 agreements, and a review of the shared service for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>That the Chief Executive undertake a review of the current interim monitoring officer arrangement and the retained officer structure, including interrelationships with the shared legal service and Publica, with recommendations from the review reported to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>

Consultees/ Consultation	Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services
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## 1. BACKGROUND

### Legal Service

- 1.1 Currently West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and the Forest of Dean District Councils share a joint legal service. The Service operates on an informal footing with all legal staff being made available by and to the other participants on a co-operative and collaborative basis. The staff are however retained by their employing authority for 'pay and rations' purposes. A mutual co-dependency has developed between the councils with each reliant on the other for legal service provision.
- 1.2 In July 2020 Cotswold District Council agreed that the then Group Manager for Legal Services should be allowed to take early retirement. The Group Manager was a Cotswold District Council employee. The current Interim Head of Legal Services is Susan Gargett. Cotswold District Council also resolved in July 2020 in principle to seek to join the One Legal Partnership with Tewkesbury Borough, Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City and Stroud District Councils.
- 1.3 Cotswold District Council is currently completing a legal services commissioning review which assesses a proposal from One Legal alongside a proposal from the current shared legal team. Cotswold District Council's Deputy Chief Executive, who is charged with leading the review, is recommending that Cotswold District Council's legal service should continue to be provided by the shared legal team.
- 1.4 This review is due to be reported to Cotswold District Council's Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- 1.5 Cotswold District Council's Deputy Chief Executive is also recommending that the position of the shared service should be formalised under a Collaboration Agreement and Section 101 agreements, and that there is a review of the shared service for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

### Monitoring Officer

- 1.6 In February 2022 West Oxfordshire District Council resolved to designate Susan Sale as the Council's Monitoring Officer on an interim 12 month basis with effect from 1st March 2022. Susan Sale is also the Head of Law and Governance at Oxford City Council and is also designated as the Monitoring Officer for that authority. The arrangement is that Susan remains an employee of Oxford City Council whilst being seconded to West Oxfordshire District Council for the interim period, and she dedicates 2 days a week to the West Oxfordshire role. The agreement also includes executive support.
- 1.7 The law requires the Monitoring Officer to be an Officer of the Council, but not necessarily an employee, giving rise to lawful opportunity for shared Monitoring Officer arrangements.
- 1.8 Under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council is required to appoint one of its officers to act as Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring officer is responsible to report to the council :
  - Any contravention of law or any code of conduct or practice made or approved by or under legislation
  - Any maladministration or injustice
  - Any matter which is likely to give rise to any contravention or maladministration
- 1.9 Additional responsibilities were delegated to the Monitoring officer under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Localism Act 2011 with regard to the operation of the Constitution and the promotion of ethical governance within the district and parish councils.

## Retained Officer Structure

- 1.10 West Oxfordshire District Council directly employs a Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), a Deputy Chief Executive/ Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), and two Lawyers/ Legal Executives who are part of the shared legal service. The Head of Paid Service and Section 151 roles are statutory roles that the Council is required to have.
- 1.11 There are also a number of officers with joint Publica/West Oxfordshire contracts which enable those officers to make delegated decisions on the Council's behalf.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 It is important that West Oxfordshire has access to an effective legal service. The Council provides a wide range of services in complex legal environment. While the current shared team has provided a cost effective service for the Council, the Cotswold District Council commissioning review has identified a number of areas for improvement.
- 2.2 The current shared Legal Service arrangements are based upon informal arrangements. The financial contributions which reflect the way the service now operates need to be incorporated within the legal documents which will underpin the service. The documents should include a Collaboration Agreement and S.101 arrangements. This will place the service on a more stable footing and protect the interests of the Council.
- 2.3 A service review should be carried out to ensure that the legal team are performing appropriate work, at the appropriate level, and are using systems and processes which optimise economy, efficiency and effectiveness. An important part of the review is to determine the appropriate resourcing for the team. It is suggested that this review be jointly carried out by Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils, in conjunction with the Publica Group Manager for Organisational Development and Transformation.
- 2.3 The role of the Monitoring Officer requires a detailed knowledge of local government law and procedure. The current interim appointment was agreed to allow a wider consideration of the options for the Monitoring Officer role long term. Consideration needs to be given to whether the current 2 day a week arrangement is sufficient to meet the demands of this role. There is also the opportunity to consider how this role works with the other retained officers in taking forward the Council's priorities and to look at the options moving forwards.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Cotswold District Council evaluated the One Legal partnership proposal against that from the current shared legal service on a range of factors including cost, although there was limited information on costs for the One Legal option. The current shared legal services scored higher overall.
- 3.2 The partner Council contributions to the cost of the shared legal service team, are summarised below. The contributions are based upon pay and grading changes which come in to full effect from April 2023 and current provision for supplies and services costs.

	Cotswold District Council	West Oxfordshire District Council	Forest of Dean District Council
Contribution	£217,429	£213,478	£167,383

- 3.3 The table below compares the current Council contributions, against an equal split of costs:

	Cotswold District Council	West Oxfordshire District Council	Forest of Dean District Council
Current Contribution	£217,429	£213,478	£167,383
Equal contribution	£199,430	£199,430	£199,430
Growth/(Saving)	(£17,999)	(£14,048)	£32,047

- 3.4 The table shows a potential saving for the Council on the assumption that costs are split equally, but if the service review confirms that investment is required in the legal services team, there would be a potential financial impact to add to the above.
- 3.5 External legal costs are in addition to the above and include court fees and external legal advice commissioned by legal services or directly by service areas.
- 3.6 A summary of external legal costs for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22 is set out below:

<b>External Legal Costs 2018/19 - 2021/22 - Actual Spend</b>						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total	Average (2019/20 - 21/22)
	£	£	£	£	£	
Cotswold District Council	39,661	43,772	34,633	44,663	162,728	41,022
West Oxfordshire District Council	33,657	11,399	16,348	19,612	81,016	15,786
Forest of Dean District Council*	84,758	40,034	35,461	36,330	196,583	37,275
	158,076	95,204	86,442	100,605	440,327	94,084
*Forest Locum Solicitor	77,225	22,146	0	0	99,371	7,382
Forest Other External Costs	7,533	17,888	35,461	36,330	97,212	29,893
	84,758	40,034	35,461	36,330	196,583	37,275

- 3.7 In order to ensure that external legal costs are managed it is important that the legal team control the commissioning of external legal advice. This needs to form part of a service review of legal services with a view to reducing spend on external legal advice.
- 3.8 The current monitoring officer arrangement costs £72,109 for the interim 12 month period.

#### 4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The legal documents to underpin the shared service, such as a Collaboration Agreement and Section 101 arrangements should be completed to place the shared service on a sound footing.
- 4.2 As set out the Council is required to appoint one of its officers to act as Monitoring Officer.

## **5 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 A decision by Cotswold District Council to move their legal service to One-Legal would have significant implications for the legal services at both West Oxfordshire and the Forest of Dean District Councils.
- 5.2 The nature of the monitoring officer role is such that it needs to be responsive to issues as they arise. Therefore there is a risk that if a significant number of issues arise in a short time period that the capacity in the monitoring officer role may be overwhelmed. One of the mitigations to manage this risk is for the monitoring officer to appointment deputy monitoring officers, and the current monitoring officer's approach is to look to have two.

## **6 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. No negative effect on different service users, customers or staff is expected from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## **7 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None from this report.


## **8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1 If Cotswold District Council decide to move their legal service to One-Legal that will have significant implications for the legal services at both West Oxfordshire and the Forest of Dean District Councils. In the event of a Cotswold decision to move to One-Legal there will be an implementation period to work through the arrangements before it takes effect. This will provide a period for both West Oxfordshire and the Forest of Dean District Councils to review their legal services.
- 8.2 In the event that Cotswold District Council did decide to move to One Legal the following options could be explored for West Oxfordshire:
- Shared service with Forest of Dean
  - Shared service with other Council(s)
  - In house West Oxfordshire service

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.2 The following documents are of relevance to this report:
- Publica Business Plan - 2020 to 2022; and
  - Publica Annual Report 2020-21;
  - Ten years of collaboration and sharing, Publica



 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No. 7</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE TO IMPROVE OPENESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN COUNCIL BUSINESS AND SUPPORT AGILE WORKING AND DECARBONISATION MEASURES</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>Witney North</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>CLlr Andy Graham, Leader Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Claire Locke, Group Manager Email: <a href="mailto:claire.locke@publicagroup.co.uk">claire.locke@publicagroup.co.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To seek agreement to changes to Woodgreen and Elmfield Council offices to facilitate the implementation of the Agile Working Strategy, reduce costs and carbon impact of the Council’s operations and increase public accessibility.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Proposed building layout for each option Annex B - Equalities Impact Assessment Annex C - Current emissions from Woodgreen and Elmfield offices</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Support Option 2 in section 4 to upgrade technology in the Council Chamber and Committee rooms plus modernisation of the Council Chamber and public spaces to create an attractive, flexible and publicly accessible space;</li> <li>(b) Confirm that, the first floor of 3 Welch Way offices will not be re-let when the current tenancy ends to enable use of this space for staff;</li> <li>(c) Note that a report will be brought back for decision on the future letting options of Elmfield, to consider how that space is utilised;</li> <li>(d) Delegate a final decision on a replacement heating solution to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet members for Climate Change and Finance;</li> </ul>

	(e) Recommend to Council to allocate £2.15m of funding from the Capital Programme “Investment Strategy for Recovery” line item to facilitate the changes and deliver up to £186,000 of net annual revenue benefits with a return on capital of up to 10% after capital financing costs.
Corporate priorities	<p>Operate with a culture of openness, giving you a voice, choice, priority and access.</p> <p>Securing your Council’s financial future to deliver on priorities and continuously improve your services.</p> <p>Taking urgent action to address the climate and ecological crisis by working in partnership with others.</p>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	

## I. SUMMARY

- I.1. After the election in May 2022 the new administration made a commitment to enhancing the public accessibility of the Council in all aspects of its business. In particular the administration has stated that it is keen to open up Council meetings for better public access which would support the principle of openness and transparency in decision making and enable local ownership of 'Your Council'.
- I.2. To this end the administration is seeking to modernise its office spaces and reception desks and enhance the accessibility in respect of timing; place and method of that access. To achieve this will require significant investment in technology to support streaming and recording of meetings together with improvements to the fabric of the publicly accessible parts of the buildings to ensure they are welcoming to residents.
- I.3. In addition to the commitments of the new administration there is a recognition that the introduction of agile working for officers has created a significant amount of spare capacity in the existing office footprint. Recognising that this is an inefficient use of resources, an assessment has been carried out to rationalise the office usage which would release space to be rented by other tenants, giving additional much needed income to the Council and delivering positive effects on our climate agenda as our direct carbon impact would be lowered by reducing our overall building requirements (noting that let property does still impact on the Councils carbon account).
- I.4. There are other significant benefits to this. The change in working arrangements offers the opportunity to increase our accessibility in the centre of town by moving more officers to the Welch Way location, offering an increased range of services in a more publicly accessible space.
- I.5. The Council has also been able to obtain £250k of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to create a multi-media facility which could be used to livestream events such as weddings and allow guests who cannot attend in person for whatever reason to interact with the people present and for other third parties to use as an interactive meeting space. This has the added benefit of allowing the Council to progress its ambitions to stream civic meetings making for a more inclusive and accessible District Council.
- I.6. As part of the review of office space, there are various measures we can take to improve our decarbonisation and active travel agendas. It should be noted that Woodgreen was previously assessed for decarbonisation measures under the original Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and unfortunately deemed unsuitable because of the structure and nature of the building. The difficulty and expense of installing an alternative heating system vs the estimated savings they would bring made it ineligible for govt funding but there remains a possibility for a further bid with a hybrid heating solution as set out in 5.5 below.
- I.7. There is a strong case for the rationalisation of the office space as it delivers many Council objectives and fundamentally, the current situation is an underutilisation of

Council assets. The reduced requirement for desk space is not going to change. The rationalisation of office space allows us to take advantage of that.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The Agile Working Strategy was adopted in August 2020 and has resulted in a permanent shift to a hybrid way of working with most staff working remotely for 2 - 3 days a week and being office based the remainder of the week. Whilst the Strategy provides an overarching framework, further work has been undertaken to ensure that the environment provided facilitates a more agile, collaborative approach to working.
- 2.2. As a result of this shift in approach to working, the Council has the opportunity to reduce the occupied footprint of the Council offices, and provide around 40% of office space which can be repurposed.
- 2.3. In considering the future use of the offices, opportunities have been explored to utilise space more efficiently, maximise the use of meeting rooms and Civic space, reduce costs and direct carbon usage from the Council's occupation of buildings and utilise spare office capacity to achieve against Council priorities.
- 2.4. The Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in June 2019, with the aim of making the Council carbon neutral by 2030. Following public consultation in May 2020, the Council adopted a Climate Action Plan in October 2020 and subsequently a Climate Change Strategy was adopted in February 2021. Alongside changes to the use and occupation of buildings, the Council is also looking at opportunities to decarbonise buildings through the retrofit of carbon reducing technologies.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1. The Covid 19 pandemic and the required move to large scale home working in 2020 accelerated work to consider a more agile approach to working and reduce our office footprint. This transition to homeworking has highlighted the financial and carbon benefits which could be achieved if the majority of staff spend a proportion of time working remotely. It has also demonstrated that the business needs of the Council could still be met.
- 3.2. The majority of staff have indicated that they support some home working as it reduces time spent commuting and provides a better work and home life balance. Evidence points to this being a key factor to aid recruitment and retention, as people seek more flexibility in a modern and post Covid work environment. In addition it widens the pool of potential employees as applicants may consider roles further afield if they do not have to travel into the office daily to work.
- 3.3. In early 2021, a detailed information gathering exercise was undertaken, to capture the agile working requirements of each service. This was to establish numbers of desks required (hot desks and dedicated desks), meeting room and storage space requirements, any service specific needs (e.g. confidential interview rooms) and the Members' Civic requirements.

- 3.4. This information indicated that the 242 desks currently provided within the Woodgreen and Elmfield Council office buildings could be reduced to 119 desks freeing up the Elmfield offices as desk requirements are reduced by over 50%. Consultants were then commissioned to produce draft office layouts within the reduced footprint. Consideration of space that would continue to be occupied by Council/Publica staff and Members and that which would be freed up has been influenced by a number of key factors:
- Ability to separate Council and tenant areas, with security doors and separate access where feasible;
  - Scope for the Council to occupy one building only, rather than both Woodgreen and Elmfield;
  - Creating tenant areas that will be attractive to prospective tenants and meet their business needs;
  - Location of specialist ICT and Strong Rooms which would be disproportionately expensive to relocate;
- 3.5. Lead officers who are familiar with the offices have helped refinement of the plans before staff were also consulted to ensure space requirements and business needs can still be met for each service.
- 3.6. As part of the review of office space, the location of the Council Chamber and the fact it is used infrequently has been considered. The Council Chamber is currently located on the first floor at Woodgreen with Committee Rooms located below it on the ground floor. The Committee Rooms can be used quite flexibly. However, the Chamber has a layout and furniture provision which cannot easily be adapted for other purposes.
- 3.7. As additional office space was needed to accommodate staff relocating from Elmfield one of the options considered was to repurpose the Council Chamber as office space for the Planning team. However, this option was discounted due to concerns that the loss of the Council Chamber would result in inadequate provision of larger meeting rooms.
- 3.8. The provision of suitable civic space to facilitate formal Council, Cabinet and committee meetings and enable more informal meetings is essential. Improving accessibility for the public and installing new technology that will enable meetings to be live streamed is a key area of focus for Cabinet. The existing Chamber, committee rooms and member rooms are restrictive in their layout, furniture and technology. The inability to adapt the Council Chamber quickly and easily to different uses means it is underutilised and discourages use by external community groups, businesses or individuals who could also benefit from the stream and technology solution.
- 3.9. The options include in this report therefore support retention of the Council Chamber and provision for installation of technology to facilitate the live streaming of meetings in both the Council Chamber and the Committee rooms. Two options for modernisation of the Council Chamber with more flexible furniture or a general

refurbishment to lighting and decoration to make the space more attractive and encourage wider use are included.

#### 4. OPTIONS

4.1. Both options propose moving staff out of Elmfield and making some changes to how rooms are occupied at Woodgreen. The Council has already successfully secured 'Contain Outbreak Management Funding' of £250,000 to fund new ICT equipment including portable microphone units and video conferencing facilities for Council meetings. This enables tables to be configured in different arrangements without the restriction of hardwired microphone systems and will facilitate the proposed flexible use of meeting rooms.

4.2. The principle differences between each option are set out below:

	Option 1	Option 2
New ICT equipment installed to Council Chamber	✓	✓
New ICT equipment installed to Committee rooms	✓	✓
Furniture in Council Chamber changed to flexible, moveable tables & chairs		✓
Minimal redecoration of Council Chamber	✓	
Substantial modernisation of decor and lighting in Council Chamber		✓
COMF funding available	£63k	£198k

#### **(Option 1) Upgrade of technology to Council Chamber and Committee Rooms**

4.3. New technology to provide for portable microphones, video conferencing and live streaming meetings would be installed to the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms. The COMF funding is to facilitate more accessible meeting space for the Council and the Public. Simply installing this technology in the Council Chamber does not meet this requirement due to the lack of flexibility the room provides. This option would therefore require the Council to fund the installation in the Chamber but would enable COMF funding to be used to install the same technology in the Committee Rooms.

#### **(Option 2) Upgrade technology in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms, whilst also modernising the Council Chamber to create an attractive, flexible and accessible space.**

4.4. As with option (1) new technology would be installed in the Council Chamber. However, in addition the carpets and lighting would be changed to create a more

modern and attractive meeting space and new folding tables and stacking chairs purchased to enable the room to be reconfigured for weddings, community and business functions as well as meeting the formal requirements of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings. This option would enable the COMF funding to be utilised in the Council Chamber.

#### **Generic benefits of office changes**

- 4.5. The proposed changes provide the opportunity to reduce costs and enable significant rental income to be secured for Elmfield. Some refurbishment of the new tenanted areas is required to make the area more attractive to prospective tenants.
- 4.6. As part of the next stage detailed design, consideration of the Council's parking needs must be undertaken. The Council could decide to retain some parking at the Elmfield site for use by staff and Members or for wider public use if Electric Vehicle Charging Points are installed.
- 4.7. Agile, collaborative working places and the provision of break-out areas and meeting spaces are vital, particularly as teams will not have desk space to accommodate all their staff at one time. A number of quiet working/hot desk rooms, meeting rooms and 'break out zones' have been identified. The designs for these will be detailed at the developed technical design stage, but this provides an opportunity to create innovative spaces that promote collaborative, agile working.
- 4.8. The detailed design stage will also look at opportunities to ensure all service and Member needs are fully met. The proposed layouts meet services' desk requirements on the whole and it is anticipated that with a systematic de-cluttering ahead of the implementation of the new layouts that storage requirements can also be met. Welfare of staff remains a priority and managers will continue to support staff who work from home to ensure they do not become isolated and welfare issues are managed. There is a particular focus on staff who may live on their own or face particular challenges if they work from home. Staff who are unable to work safely from home and need to come into the office for their physical or mental wellbeing will be supported to do so.

#### **Office space at 3 Welch way**

- 4.9. During early 2022, the Welch Way offices underwent a refurbishment of its ground floor space; providing an opportunity for customers to access Council services in a central location, whilst also offering face to face service provision. The Customer Services team relocated from their offices in Woodgreen, into Welch Way. To ensure a positive service experience for customers, officers from the Revenues, Benefits and Housing Advice Services also occupy desk space alongside customer service colleagues.

- 4.10. The first floor is let to a tenant with the current 5 year tenancy due to expire on 17th July. The tenants have indicated that due to their own shift in work patterns they will not be renewing the lease.
- 4.11. Space within the ground floor area is limited; which restricts the number of employees in occupation and therefore reduces the level of service provision. There is currently no available space for meetings, and no facilities for conference calls or training. There is also a need to provide space for the Parking Wardens who do not require dedicated desks but do require space to take breaks, plug in their handheld enforcement devices, dry wet clothing etc. This was previously provided in the Shop Mobility office at Woolgate, however that service is now provided by a third party so the Parking Wardens no longer have access to suitable welfare space.
- 4.12. With the Council vacating Elmfield but retaining the Council Chamber, there is a pressure on office space within Woodgreen. It is therefore proposed that the first floor of 3 Welch Way would not be re-let but would instead be repurposed for additional office space for Revenues and Benefits staff who would move out of Woodgreen offices. There would also be space to accommodate the needs of the Parking Wardens. The loss of lease income and increase in business rates is therefore built into the business cases.

#### **Elmfield Option Appraisal**

- 4.13. The proposal within this report recommends that Elmfield is repurposed for tenants or, alternatively, a joint venture business development is pursued to provide a commercial return for the Council. More detailed work will be undertaken on the commercial options before a final decision on lease, partnership and occupation is made and a further report will be brought back on the matter.

## **5. DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES**

### **Future decarbonisation and sustainability measures at Woodgreen**

- 5.1. Given the Council's stated position on the Climate Emergency all options include provision for Woodgreen to benefit from a retrofit programme of carbon reduction measures. Due to its age and layout this will not result in a carbon neutral building. However, its value in terms of embodied carbon means that re-use of the existing building is preferable to a high-embodied carbon, new build alternative.
- 5.2. The proposed refurbishment of Woodgreen presents an opportunity to incorporate energy-efficiency and sustainability measures, ensuring improvements to the energy performance of the building, renewable energy supply, water and waste minimisation, access to active travel and low-carbon transport infrastructure are all a consideration in the design of future office space.



- 5.3. In April 2021, the Council’s consultants completed a full energy modelling and sustainability assessment of Woodgreen and Elmfield offices. It was concluded that a complete decarbonisation strategy involving a switch from the existing end-of-life gas boilers to a 100% heat pump heating solution, was not financially viable. The cost of completing this work was in excess of £1million, requiring internal wall insulation to the external walls, all new heating system pipework, radiators and a new electricity substation on site. During further work on a decarbonisation strategy for Woodgreen, a hybrid heating system with 60% high-efficiency gas boiler/40% Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) was assessed as an alternative strategy taking the Council a step further towards its carbon-neutral targets but this alternative still has a payback period well in excess of its useful life.
- 5.4. In June 2022 the boilers at Woodgreen had their routine three-year clean during which time the contractor informed the Council that all parts for these boilers are now obsolete so if there are any failures of individual modules they cannot be repaired.
- 5.5. The Council can therefore either:
- (a) Proceed with limited decarbonisation measures such as Solar PV, LED lighting and a like-for-like replacement high efficiency gas boiler at a total cost of £106,000 and a payback period for the decarbonisation measures of 9 years;
  - (b) Proceed with the Solar PV, LED lighting and the hybrid heating system without PSDS funding, at a total cost of £414,750 with a decarbonisation payback period of 30 years;
  - (c) Wait to bid in the next round of PSDS funding which could, if successful, offset in the order of half of the cost of the hybrid heating system and make it a viable alternative. This will carry risk of the existing system failing with no spares available.
- 5.6. The table below sets out the individual energy measures, high-level cost estimate, CO2e and cost savings with payback period.

Measures	Est cost	CO2e/yr saved	% gas/yr saved	% elec/yr saved	£/yr saved 22/23**	Payback in yrs 22/23
Switch all lighting to LEDs	£2.5k	6%	-7.2%*	15.8%	£3,172	0.8
Replacing end of life boilers with a hybrid system: 40% ASHP / 60% gas boilers	£399k	15.8%	55.96%	-14.9%	£9,300	43

New gas boiler high efficiency	£90k	11.9%	16.80%	8.2%	£6,781	13
Solar PV, 40sqm equal to 10kWp	£13.5k	4,010kg	0	4.3%	£1,540	8.8

\* A switch to LED lights results in a slight increase in gas heating required as non-LED bulbs are very warm, giving off heat.

\*\*Prices of energy and relative paybacks have been modelled using actual energy bills for 2019/20 (a year pre-Pandemic) and an estimated price based on a 40% increase in 2022/23 to reflect present-day markets.

- 5.7. Based upon current calculations the hybrid heating solution will deliver an additional £2,519 of annual savings for an additional £309,000 of investment and an additional reduction in carbon consumption of 3.9%.
- 5.8. Cabinet could choose to invest this additional funding on the Woodgreen heating system or alternatively decide to invest this on measures elsewhere with a stronger financial and carbon business case.

**Active travel and low-carbon transport measure.**

- 5.9. Access to walking and cycle routes and public transport would be clearly signposted at Woodgreen offices in an accessible location providing all staff, Councillors and visitors to the building access to the nearest routes and available services.
- 5.10. Showers, changing facilities, drying space and lockers, would be provided as on-site facilities for cyclists, and accommodated within an office redesign.
- 5.11. Car sharing would be given priority within the Woodgreen car park. At least 5% of the total car parking capacity could be given over to staff and Councillors wishing to enter into a car sharing arrangement. This would be equivalent to four spaces.
- 5.12. To enable the Council to purchase its own electric vehicle fleet and make provision for Councillors, staff and visitors, it is recommended that six bays (three EVCPs with dual charging) are installed. Alternatively EVCP could be installed at Elmfield for staff and tenants. The cost is estimated to be £70,000, however a detailed site survey will be required from the supplier as well as an estimate of connection costs from the Distribution Network Operator.

**Future decarbonisation and sustainability measures at Elmfield.**

- 5.13. In letting Elmfield offices, the Council would have a responsibility to meet Government’s Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for non-domestic buildings. The current regulations require all non-domestic buildings to have a MEES of no lower than an EPC band of E. Elmfield’s EPC rating is band C and is therefore currently compliant with MEES. The building is heated by three 120 kW gas boilers which were fitted in 2016. As these are only five years old, and have a long serviceable life of another 15 years, it is recommended they are retained rather than

upgraded at this stage. It is however recommended that the following measures be considered to further enhance the building performance in preparation for tenants, providing energy, financial and marketable benefits.

- 5.14. In terms of energy-efficiency measures, all lighting within the building should be replaced for a low-energy demand LED alternative. Changing all lighting fixtures to LED would result in 17.33% reduction in electrical demand, equivalent to 6.15% reduction in overall CO<sub>2</sub>e. The integrated solar PV system is near its end of operational life, so it is recommended that a new roof-mounted array, as a replacement and enhanced system, be installed to feed directly into the building helping reduce electricity costs for future tenants. A total of 23 kWp of solar PV, positioned on southerly and south-easterly roofs in unshaded locations, would derive both carbon and cost savings.
- 5.15. The table below sets out the impact of proposed measures at the Elmfield offices in respect of LED lighting and Solar PV high-level cost estimate, CO<sub>2</sub>e and cost savings with payback period.

Measure	Est cost	CO <sub>2</sub> e saving t/yr	Energy cost saving/yr 2022/23*	Payback 2022/23
LED lighting	£2,300	8.468t	£2,667	0.9
23 kWp Solar PV	£31,050	9.803t	£3,780	8.2

\*Prices of energy and relative paybacks have been modelled using actual energy bills for 2019/20 (a year pre-Pandemic) and an estimated price based on a 40% increase in 2022/23 to reflect present-day markets.

### Next Steps.

- 5.16. Should Cabinet agree to the changes proposed in this report and Council agree the allocation of capital, a project team will be established to deliver the following:
- Office decluttering and clearance of documents, furniture and equipment that are no longer needed.
  - Phased plan for offices moves, noting this will be incremental, as teams will need to move as other space is freed up - the sequencing of this will be planned to avoid moves at times that are critical to certain teams (i.e. annual billing, elections etc.).
  - Planned installation of ICT and refurbishment of Council Chamber (as appropriate) noting a 16 -18 week lead time on ICT equipment due to supply chain issues affecting availability of parts from placement of order.
  - Procurement of all works required.
  - Completion of all works.
  - Detailed consideration of best commercial options for providing business units at Elmfield.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The proposed works to make changes to offices, ICT, furniture etc. will incur considerable costs. However, this needs to be set against the long term benefits of a more suitable and adaptable workspace, increased public accessibility to Council meetings, a reduction in costs and carbon impact and an increased income from tenants.
- 6.2. The high level indicative income, savings and costs for each option are set out in 6.8 below. These capital and revenue figures may be subject to change so the net annual revenue position cannot be guaranteed. There is a particular risk around building and material costs which have risen dramatically together with difficulties with imports and labour shortages and other world supply chain issues.
- 6.3. The reduction of income from the first floor at 3 Welch way is £10,300 plus an additional service charge of £5,000 a year. Rates payable in respect of the first floor are £5,863. There would be some additional costs for any refurbishments to the first floor and it is estimated to cost £5,000 for the installation of video conferencing equipment.
- 6.4. Lease income has been calculated based on likely rent and use of available space at Elmfield, with some allowance for uncertainty regarding rent levels and ability to release all space and subsequently secure tenants for all space. A lease income of £150,000/year has been included but there may be scope to increase this by around £50,000 if all opportunities and income levels are maximised, bringing the net annual revenue position to £200,000/year.
- 6.5. There will be an opportunity to further increase income over time if the civic space can be promoted and used more by external groups or businesses and further office space can be freed up for tenants. However, income is likely to be marginal and therefore not built into the business case.
- 6.6. The decarbonisation works proposed in section 4 above are summarised as:

Measures	Cost (A)	Cost (B)
Woodgreen (A)– gas boiler, LED lights & Solar PV	£106,000	
Woodgreen (B) – hybrid heating LED, Solar PV		£415,000
Other measures (water/cycling etc)	£21,900	£21,900
EVCP	£70,000	£70,000
Elmfield - LED & PV	£33,350	£33,350
Total Decarbonisation costs	£231,250	£540,250

6.7. Two decarbonisation options are included based on gas versus a hybrid heating solution. It is recommended that some additional work is carried out to finalise the appropriate solution weighing the financial and environmental benefits. Given the pressing need to replace the heating system it is recommended this final decision is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with appropriate Cabinet members.

6.8. The tables below includes the business case for Agile working, the decarbonisation costs and the combined business case with the gas / hybrid heating decarbonisation options.

<b>OPTION 1</b>	<b>Agile</b>	<b>Decarbonisation</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Capital cost	£1,253,032	£231,250 or £540,250	£1,484,282 or £1,793,282
Net revenue Saving (before borrowing)	£243,915	£17,940 or £20,459	£261,855 or £264,374
Capital financing	£51,628	£9,528 or £22,260	£61,156 or £73,888
Net annual revenue position including borrowing costs	£192,287	£8,412 or (£1,801)	£200,699 or £190,486
Return On Investment	15%	3.6% or (0.3%)	13.5% or 10.6%
Simple Payback Period	5.1 years	13 years or 26 years	5.7 years or 9.4 years

<b>OPTION 2</b>	<b>Agile</b>	<b>Decarbonisation</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Capital cost	£1,606,160	£231,250 or £540,250	£1,837,410 or £2,146,410
Net revenue Saving (before borrowing)	£243,915	£17,940 or £20,459	£261,855 or £264,374
Capital financing	£66,178	£9,528 or £22,260	£75,706 or £88,438
Net annual revenue position including borrowing costs	£177,737	£8,412 or (£1,801)	£186,149 or £175,936

Return On Investment	11%	3.6% or (0.3%)	10.1% or 8.2%
Simple Payback Period	6.6 years	13 years or 26 years	7 years or 8.1 years

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The Council is statutorily required to provide a safe and suitable workspace for its staff. The proposals set out here meet legal requirements.
- 7.2. If the Council agrees to the principle of letting Elmfield then the normal due diligence in checking the suitability of tenants will be carried out and a delegated decision process will be followed to allocate the required legal transactions to Legal Services to progress. The Council will also need to follow minimum standards of energy efficiency on any buildings it leases to tenants.
- 7.3. The Council is required to provide a safe working environment for staff and Members and would not therefore be able to operate from the Council offices if there was no working heating system.
- 7.4. Save from the above there are no other legal implications arising directly from this Report.

## 8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1. The effects of the pandemic on the buoyancy or otherwise of the office rental market are not yet clear. There is a risk tenants cannot be found for all space available. The revenue income stated above is based on expected rental income and some allowance has been made for 'void' periods, where the tenanted areas are vacant. A reduction in the market value and periods of void, above that allowed, will have an adverse effect on the payback periods.
- 8.2. Construction material costs are currently volatile as a result of post-Brexit conditions and the pandemic. As a result the proposed works to the Committee rooms and Chamber, refits and refurbishment costs may be affected. However, the cost plans contain a 'risk' and 'inflation' sum to accommodate this unpredictability to a degree.
- 8.3. Costs are high level at this stage and will be refined through the developed design and technical design stage. This may result in adjustments up or down.
- 8.4. If meeting space, desk numbers or storage space requirements have been underestimated, this may reduce the space available to rent to new tenants. Conversely, a reduction in any of these variables, may release additional new tenanted space. This will become clearer at the developed design and technical phase. If insufficient space is available for teams to meet, this may limit collaboration and impact on the business.
- 8.5. Car parking for Council/Publica staff and Members and that allocated to tenants needs to be carefully considered. There may be a need to put plans in place to limit

the number of staff on site during large meetings such as Planning Appeals which could see high numbers of additional visitors.

- 8.6. The existing gas heating system is liable to fail and this presents a major risk. Its replacement cannot therefore be delayed.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1. The requirements of any staff with specific needs will be considered as part of the detailed planning stage. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Annex B.

## **10. ECOLOGICAL AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The move to a more agile way of working significantly reduces the work related journeys that staff will do, reducing fuel consumption and carbon. A 40% reduction in work related staff mileage would achieve a 88,748 mile reduction, achieving a carbon saving of up to 26,053 KgCO<sub>2</sub>e and financial savings of £37,000 for the Council. However, the financial savings from this mileage reduction have already been included in budgets so are not included in this business case.
- 10.2. The table in Annex C shows CO<sub>2</sub>e for Woodgreen and Elmfield WODC Council offices for the last two years. If Elmfield is no longer occupied by the Council and becomes a tenanted building, the CO<sub>2</sub>e for Elmfield becomes the tenants' responsibility rather than the Councils although the Council will still need to account for this appropriately.
- 10.3. The savings total 363,336 kWh of energy (electricity and gas totals) which is equivalent to 69,916 KgCO<sub>2</sub>e which represents 3% of the Council's total annual emissions for 2020/21.
- 10.4. In addition to the CO<sub>2</sub>e savings for the Council, there will be savings for staff as well. Staff will reduce their commuting and the costs that they themselves incur. Whilst it's difficult to accurately calculate the carbon impact of staff commuting to and from work by vehicle - as vehicles will vary by size, fuel type, emissions and efficiency, not all staff work full time and some travel to different offices - a high level estimate based on distance from home address to main office location (usually the Publica office closest to home) can be calculated. This indicates that if all WODC/CDC/FODDC Publica staff did one return journey it would equate to just over 10,000 miles which is equivalent to a total 3,480 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e (based on an average for diesel and petrol vehicles). Allowing for some reduction based on a proportion of staff only working part time and therefore not travelling 5 days a week, a broad weekly estimate would be in the region of 15,000 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e, which could equate to as much as 775t/CO<sub>2</sub>e each year, once staff leave is deducted. A move to agile working could see this figure reduced by 40 - 50%.

- 10.5. Alongside a reduction in Council energy consumption, comes a potential increase in energy bills for staff who are working remotely as they will need to heat and light the room that they work in at home. For many, any increase they see is likely to be offset by the CO<sub>2</sub>e and cost savings from reducing their travel distance to and from work. This is also hard to quantify as everyone's home, heating system and pattern of usage will be different. Staff are being signposted to further advice and guidance to help them minimise home energy costs, consider improving home heating systems, using renewables and any domestic grant funding that is available. Staff will have a degree of choice with agile working and no one will be required to work at home if they do not have suitable working conditions. However, the majority of staff have expressed a desire to work from home for part of their working week.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**


- 11.1. The Council could choose to continue to occupy all the space within the offices and not seek tenants but this would not achieve any cost reductions or attract any additional income.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1. None

(END)



 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 8</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) UPDATE</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Carl Rylett Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: <a href="mailto:carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk">carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To approve an update of the District Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS) which provides information on which planning policy documents the Council intends to prepare and when, to ensure transparency and enable effective community engagement. The LDS also provides information on Neighbourhood Planning.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Local Development Scheme (2022 – 2025)</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>a) That the updated Local Development Scheme attached at Annex A to the report be approved.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The LDS is a procedural document and has no direct effect/implications in terms of the priorities and objectives set out in the Council Plan (2020 – 2024) however, the planning documents it refers to relate to a large number of the plan’s priorities and objectives including climate action, strong local communities and healthy towns and villages.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>None.</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** Members will be aware that a Local Development Scheme (LDS) is required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).
- 1.2.** The LDS must specify (among other matters) the development plan documents (i.e. Local Plans) which form (or will form) the development plan for the area. Local planning authorities are also encouraged to include details of other documents which form (or will form) part of the development plan for the area, such as neighbourhood plans. The LDS can also include details of any supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which the authority has adopted or intends to adopt.
- 1.3.** The LDS must be made publicly available including on the Council's website and must be kept up to date, being revised at least annually or more frequently where the need arises.
- 1.4.** The Council's most recent LDS was approved in May 2021, however since then, a number of issues have arisen which mean that it is necessary to agree a further update.

## **2. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE (2022 – 2025)**

- 2.1.** The updated LDS is attached at Annex A and covers the period July 2022 – July 2025. The main changes from the previous version are summarised below.  
*West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041*
- 2.2.** The previous LDS set out the a commitment to prepare a new Local Plan covering the period to 2040 with a process of informal engagement due to start in November 2021.
- 2.3.** That process of engagement has been purposefully deferred in part due to slippage with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timetable (which the new Local Plan will complement). The process of informal engagement on the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan is now expected to start in August 2022.
- 2.4.** The LDS has been updated to reflect this and to set an ambitious commitment to formally submit the new Local Plan for examination by December 2023. This would enable examination and adoption in 2024.
- 2.5.** The end date of the new Local Plan is now proposed to be 2041 so as to ensure a period of at least 15-years from the assumed date of adoption (2024).  
*Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)*
- 2.6.** The LDS has also been updated to reflect the current position of the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP which is currently going through independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.7.** Following formal submission in February 2021, hearing sessions were held in June/July 2021, following which the Inspector wrote to the Council, effectively 'pausing' the examination and inviting the Council to undertake further work on the phasing essential infrastructure.
- 2.8.** That additional work was published and consulted upon earlier this year and on 26 May 2022, the Inspector wrote to the Council to confirm that the AAP can be found 'sound' subject to a number of Main Modifications.
- 2.9.** It is anticipated that consultation on those Main Modifications will take place in July 2022 after which point, the Inspectors will consider the responses received and look to issue their final report.

- 2.10. On this basis, the District Council hopes to be in a position to formally adopt the AAP during autumn 2022. The AAP has been updated to reflect these anticipated timings.

*Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)*

- 2.11. The LDS has been updated to reflect the fact that the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was formally adopted last year and to provide revised timings for the Developer Contributions SPD which remains in preparation, with further consultation proposed in August 2022, followed by formal adoption in November 2022.

- 2.12. An update is also provided in relation to the preparation of a new masterplan for Hanborough Station, with the LDS explaining that although the scope/brief for this work has now been agreed, the exact timings are still to be determined but that there is a broad expectation that it will have been significantly progressed by the end of the year.

- 2.13. At that point, Officers will take a view on whether there would be merit in progressing the masterplan as a formal SPD (the currently agreed budget not allowing for this).

*Neighbourhood Planning*

- 2.14. The section dealing with neighbourhood planning has been updated to reflect the fact that the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan has now been formally 'made' (i.e. adopted) and that a neighbourhood plan is also now underway for Stonesfield.

*Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)*

- 2.15. Some additional text has also been added to the section of the LDS which explains the date and purpose of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

- 2.16. Essentially this is to highlight the fact that that moving forwards, the Council expects to adopt a much greater digital focus for its planning policy related consultations, with the introduction of a new Digital Engagement Platform. This follows on from a successful funding bid to central Government through Round 2 of its PropTech Digital Engagement Fund.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The LDS update raises no direct financial implications although there are financial implications associated with the various documents referred to therein including in particular the new Local Plan 2041.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The preparation and maintenance of an up to date Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a legislative requirement.

**5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The report raises no significant risks. Failure to maintain an up to date LDS could put the Council at risk of legal challenge through the plan making process.

**6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. The report raises no specific implications for any particular equality strand. The new Local Plan 2041 will be the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment – either standalone or forming part of an integrated assessment taking up other requirements including Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

**7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1.** The report raises no specific implications in relation to climate change although the various documents referred to in the LDS clearly present an opportunity to address the climate emergency through various mechanisms.

**8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1.** No alternatives have been considered. The Council could choose not to update the LDS but that would be contrary to legislative requirements

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1.** None.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme (LDS)

July 2022

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS). It explains what planning policy documents the Council already has in place and what will be prepared during the three-year period July 2022 – July 2025

## 2. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

- 2.1 The current [West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#) was formally adopted on 27 September 2018. The plan carries full weight in the determination of planning applications, providing an overall framework for growth in the period up to 2031.
- 2.2 Although the current Local Plan is relatively recent, it was prepared under previous national policy which has since been updated and the plan could usefully be considerably strengthened in a number of key areas around climate change, environmental enhancement and health and well-being.
- 2.3 As such, a new Local Plan will be prepared covering the period 2021 – 2041. This will complement the new Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (currently in preparation) adding more detail at the local level. The proposed end-date of 2041 for the new Local Plan relates well to the Oxfordshire Plan which is anticipated to be split into ten-year ‘tranches’. It will also help to ensure a period of at least 15 years from the date of adoption of the new Local Plan (assumed to be 2024) in line with national policy.
- 2.4 The Council is committed to getting a new Local Plan in place as quickly as possible and the following key stages and milestones are expected to apply:
- Informal engagement (Regulation 18<sup>1</sup>) – August 2022 – August 2023
  - Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 19) – Sept 2023
  - Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Reg 22) – December 2023
- 2.5 Timings beyond this including examination and adoption will depend on a number of factors and so are not set out in detail here but we anticipate the new Local Plan being adopted sometime in 2024.
- 2.6 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the Local Plan 2041 is set out at Appendix I.

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<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

### 3. Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 3.1 A key element of the adopted Local Plan is the allocation of land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham for a new garden village of around 2,200 homes, together with business space and other supporting uses and facilities. The proposal is being supported by central Government through its locally led garden village, towns and cities programme.
- 3.2 Development of the garden village is being led by a separate [Area Action Plan \(AAP\)](#) which, when adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire alongside the Local Plan 2031.
- 3.3 The AAP was formally submitted for examination in February 2021, with examination hearing sessions held in June/July 2021. Following the hearing sessions, the appointed Planning Inspector wrote to the Council, effectively 'pausing' the examination and requesting further work on the phasing of infrastructure.
- 3.4 Subsequently, the Inspector wrote to the District Council on 26 May 2022 confirming that the AAP meets the requirements of the duty to co-operate and that there are no other issues of fundamental legal compliance at this point. Importantly, the Inspector concluded that the AAP can be made 'sound' through a number of Main Modifications.
- 3.5 Consultation on those Main Modifications is expected to take place in July 2022 after which point, the Inspectors will consider the responses received and look to issue their final report. On this basis, the District Council hopes to be in a position to formally adopt the AAP during autumn 2022.
- 3.6 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the AAP is set out at Appendix I.



## 4. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

4.1 Supplementary planning documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Their main purpose is to elaborate on specific local plan policies and explain in more detail how those policies will operate.

4.2 At present, the Council has two adopted SPDs including the [West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD](#) adopted in 2016 and the [Affordable Housing SPD](#) adopted in 2021.

### *Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document*

4.3 A further SPD is proposed on the topic of ‘Developer Contributions’ setting out in detail the District Council’s approach to mitigating the impact of new development by securing the right package of supporting infrastructure.

4.4 Initial consultation on a first draft of the SPD took place in November 2020 with 27 responses received from a variety of Town and Parish Councils, developers and landowners, other local authorities, statutory bodies and individuals.

4.5 Further consultation on a revised draft version of the SPD is planned for August 2022 and it is anticipated that the SPD will then be finalised and formally adopted in November 2022.

4.6 Further information on the anticipated purpose, scope and timing of the SPD is set out at Appendix I.

### *Hanborough Station Masterplan*

4.7 The District Council has previously agreed to provide funding, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council, to commission the development of a masterplan for Hanborough Station.

4.8 After a period of delay, the scope/brief of the masterplan has now been established and it is hoped that work can begin during summer 2022. Completion of the project will depend on a number of factors including the outcomes of stakeholder consultation and so detailed dates are not provided here. In broad terms, the District Council expects significant progress to have been made by the end of the year.

4.9 It has however become evident that whilst the development of a masterplan for the station is possible within the available budget, taking it forward formally as a supplementary planning document would have additional cost implications in terms of additional procedural requirements and stakeholder consultation etc.

4.10 As such, once the masterplan has been produced, Officers propose to then take a view on the merits of taking it forward as a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

## 5. Neighbourhood Planning

5.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

5.2 There are currently six adopted Neighbourhood Plans in West Oxfordshire including:

- Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 15 March 2016)
- South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 8 January 2019)
- Shilton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- Hailey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 6 February 2020)
- Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 14 June 2021)

5.3 There are seven other Neighbourhood Plans currently in progress including:

- Ascott under Wychwood
- Brize Norton Neighbourhood Plan
- Cassington
- North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan
- Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan
- Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan

5.4 Because the progress and timing of neighbourhood plans are beyond the control of the District Council, the LDS does not include any information on their anticipated timetables. Further information can however be obtained from the District Council's website<sup>2</sup>.

## 6. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

6.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and other related documents. It also provides information about how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in relation to the determination of planning applications.

6.2 Local planning authorities are required to review their Statements of Community Involvement every 5 years with the Council's most recent SCI being adopted in February 2020<sup>3</sup>. Although there is no immediate need to review the SCI because it remains quite recent, we anticipate that planning policy related consultations will in

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/jo0g3prh/statement-of-community-involvement.pdf>

the future have a much greater digital focus, with the District Council having recently secured funding from central Government under Round 2 of the PropTech Engagement Fund<sup>4</sup> to implement a new digital engagement platform.

- 6.3 Depending on how that process rolls out, Officers will consider whether there is a need to review the SCI to reflect the increased digital focus.

## **7. LDF Monitoring Report**

- 7.1 In accordance with national planning regulations the Council is required to produce a monitoring report addressing various matters including plan progress and implementation, neighbourhood planning, CIL (where applicable) and the duty to co-operate.
- 7.2 The Council's most recent monitoring report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021<sup>5</sup>.

## **8. LDS availability and updates**

- 8.1 The LDS must be made publicly available and kept up-to-date.
- 8.2 In terms of availability, a copy of this LDS is online at <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/>
- 8.3 Hard copies are also available in the locations listed in the following table.
- 8.4 The LDS will be updated annually or more often if there are any significant changes in timescales or documents being prepared.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.localdigital.gov.uk/proptech-engagement-fund-round-2/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wqdcxefn/annual-monitoring-report-2020-2021.pdf>

<p>West Oxfordshire District Council Witney Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 861000 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm</p>	<p>Witney Town Council Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG Tel: 01993 704379 Open: Mon, Tues and Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Wed 9.30am to 5pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm.</p>	<p>Carterton Town Council 19 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JL Tel: 01993 842156 Open: Monday – Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm</p>
<p>Chipping Norton Town Council The Guildhall Market Place Chipping Norton OX7 5NJ Tel: 01608 642341 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 1pm</p>	<p>Bampton Library Old Grammar School Church View Bampton OX18 2NE Tel: 01993 850076</p>	<p>Burford Library 86A High Street Burford OX18 4QF Tel: 01993 823377</p>
<p>Carterton Library 6 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JH Tel: 01993 841492</p>	<p>Charlbury Library Charlbury Community Centre Enstone Road Charlbury OX7 3PQ Tel: 01608 811104</p>	<p>Chipping Norton Library Goddards Land Chipping Norton OX7 5NP Tel: 01608 643559</p>
<p>Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street Eynsham OX29 4JS Tel: 01865 880525</p>	<p>North Leigh Library Memorial Hall Park Road North Leigh OX29 6SA Tel: 01993 882935</p>	<p>Stonesfield Library Village Hall Longore Stonesfield OX29 8EF Tel: 01993 898187</p>
<p>Witney Library Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 703659</p>	<p>Woodstock Library The Oxfordshire Museum Fletcher's House Park Street Woodstock OX20 1SN Tel: 01993 814124 07759 140531</p>	<p>Wychwood Library 29 High Street Milton-under-Wychwood OX7 6LD Tel: 01993 830281</p>

## Appendix I – Document Profiles

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan will set out the overall framework for future growth in West Oxfordshire to 2041. This is expected to include strategic policies dealing with the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development as well as non-strategic policies dealing with other matters including site allocations and development management policies. It will complement the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 which is currently in preparation.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	<p>Informal engagement (Regulation 18) – <b>August 2022 – August 2023</b></p> <p>Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) – <b>Sept 2023</b></p> <p>Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 22) – <b>December 2023</b></p> <p>Examination and adoption - <b>2024</b></p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	Supplements the Local Plan 2031 providing additional detail on the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) – now referred to as Salt Cross Garden Village. The AAP will establish a vision for the garden village, supported by a series of core objectives and policies arranged on a thematic basis. A key focus of the AAP will be delivery and implementation.
Geographical coverage	Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) north of Eynsham
Timetable	Submission – <b>February 2021 (COMPLETE)</b> Examination hearings – <b>June/July 2021 (COMPLETE)</b> Consultation on Main Modifications – <b>July 2022</b> Adoption – <b>autumn 2022</b>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Developer Contributions SPD	
Status	Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Overview	Intended to provide further guidance on the Council's approach in respect of developer contributions including planning obligations.
Geographical coverage	District-Wide
Timetable	<p>Informal consultation – <b>November 2020 (COMPLETE)</b></p> <p>Further consultation – <b>August 2022</b></p> <p>Adoption – <b>November 2022</b></p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031)
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Hanborough Station Masterplan	
Status	To be confirmed. Potentially to be taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) either in whole or in part.
Overview	A masterplan for Hanborough Station considering a range of factors including accessibility, the use of space, circulation, available facilities etc.
Geographical coverage	Hanborough Station
Timetable	Work to commence in summer 2022 with exact timings for completion to be confirmed.
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	<p>The masterplan will be produced by external consultants with input from West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council as the commissioning authorities.</p> <p>If the masterplan (or elements of it) is/are subsequently taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), that process may be led by the District Council.</p>
Resource requirements	Masterplan to be commissioned through external consultants.
Community engagement	The masterplan will be the subject of extensive stakeholder engagement. If taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document, any further engagement as part of that process would be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).




**Appendix 2 – Overall Timetable**

Document	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	
Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)				S				H	H												MM				A		
Developer Contributions SPD	IC																					FC			A		
Hanborough Station Masterplan	Dates to be confirmed																										
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission; H = Hearings; MM = Main Modifications; A = Adoption																											

Document	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	IC	FC			S										
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission																											

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 9</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>WEST EYNHAM MASTERPLAN</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>Eynsham</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Carl Rylett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: <a href="mailto:carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk">carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To provide an update in relation to the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan which was approved as a material planning consideration by Cabinet on 16 March 2022 but subject to a subsequent legal challenge.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>a) To note the content of the report;</i> <i>b) To agree that Officers should invite the four main landowners/developers responsible for the preparation of the masterplan to engage with all other third party landowners within the SDA boundary; and</i> <i>c) To agree that any updates/consequential amendments to the masterplan arising from that process of further engagement be reconsidered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Successful delivery of the West Eynsham SDA supports a number of key objectives set out in the Council Plan 2020 – 2024 including housing land supply and delivery, the provision of a range of new housing opportunities to meet identified needs including affordable housing, healthy place-shaping, net biodiversity gain, economic growth and high-quality place-making.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The West Eynsham SDA Masterplan has been subject to previous stakeholder engagement but this excluded a small number of landowners. As a result, a legal challenge from one of those landowners was received following the approval of the masterplan by Cabinet in March 2022. Subject to agreement of the recommendations above, Officers are now proposing to invite the four</p>

	main landowners/ developers to engage with those interested parties prior to reconsideration of the masterplan by Cabinet.
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.** Members will be aware that land to the west of Eynsham is allocated as one of five strategic housing sites in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 with the relevant policy (EW1) requiring comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan.
- 1.2.** To fulfil that policy requirement and to facilitate the delivery of the site, the main land controlling interests within the SDA have recently prepared a masterplan which was submitted to the District Council for consideration in late February 2022.
- 1.3.** The masterplan was considered at a Joint Climate & Environment and Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 March 2022 and subsequently at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 16 March 2022 where it was formally agreed as a material planning consideration.

## **2. LEGAL CHALLENGE**

- 2.1.** Subsequent to this, the District Council received correspondence on behalf of a landowner whose land falls within the boundary of the SDA, but who had not been engaged in the preparation of the masterplan document.
- 2.2.** The correspondence related to the Council's decision to approve the masterplan and took the form of a letter before claim in accordance with the judicial review pre-action protocol.
- 2.3.** The District Council subsequently took its own legal advice and as part of that process it was agreed that the Council would reconsider the masterplan having first given the claimant and any other landowners who were not involved in its preparation, the opportunity to submit representations to the Council by 23 June 2022.

## **3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

- 3.1.** In line with the steps outlined above, Officers sought to engage with the claimant and a meeting was held on 20 June 2022. In parallel to those discussions, Officers also sought to contact other landowners (where known) and to ascertain other land ownerships (where not known) with a view to inviting further representations on the masterplan.
- 3.2.** This resulted in correspondence from the claimant and two neighbouring landowners as well as from Polar Technology whose engineering site is located in the southern part of the SDA.
- 3.3.** A further separate parcel of land is shown as 'third party land' in the masterplan, but Officers were not able to ascertain the ownership and invite representations from that landowner ahead of the agreed date of 23 June 2022.

## **4. SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD**

- 4.1.** In light of the correspondence which has been received and the fact that there remains other third party land likely to have an interest in the masterplan document, Officers propose to invite the main landowners/developers responsible for preparing the masterplan to actively engage with any landowners that were not originally involved in the process, so that their views can be considered.
- 4.2.** A further report will then be brought back to Cabinet, setting out the outcome of that further engagement, including where necessary, any consequential amendments/ updates to the masterplan.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1.** As set out in the report, the decision of Cabinet on 16 March 2022 to formally approve the masterplan was the subject of a subsequent legal challenge. As a result, of the agreed steps outlined above in Sections 2 and 3, that claim is now discontinued.

**6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1.** If the suggested way forward outlined in Section 4 above is not followed, there is a risk of further legal challenge.

**7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1.** The report raises no direct implications with regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**


- 8.1.** Although the masterplan addresses a number of issues regarding climate change, this report which focuses on procedure rather than content, raises no specific implications.

**9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1.** One alternative option would be to revoke the Cabinet's previous decision of 16 March 2022, however this is likely to lead to a delay in the delivery of the SDA in light of the policy requirement for comprehensive development led by an agreed masterplan.
- 9.2.** A second alternative option would be to not reconsider the masterplan and for it to remain in its current form, however, as set out in Section 6 above, this would create a risk of further legal challenge.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1.** None.

 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 10</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR WEST END LINK STUDY</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>Witney (North, South, East, West and Central) Hailey, Minster Lovell and Leafield</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Carl Rylett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: <a href="mailto:carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk">carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To agree the release of additional funds from the Council’s unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund transport options appraisal work relating to Bridge Street, Witney including consideration of the West End Link Road (WEL2).</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>a) That Council be recommended to approve the release of £15,000 from the Council’s unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund the transport options appraisal work commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The transport options appraisal work will help to inform the delivery of the North Witney SDA – one of a number of strategic housing allocations contained in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The transport options appraisal work will be developed with input from a number of key stakeholders.</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** Members will be aware that the North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) is allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 for the provision of around 1,400 homes and other supporting services and facilities.
- 1.2.** A key aspect of the allocation is the delivery of the West End Link (WEL2) which would effectively provide an additional river crossing, thereby reducing the current reliance placed on Bridge Street which suffers from traffic congestion and associated air quality problems, particularly at peak times.
- 1.3.** Oxfordshire County Council in their role as highway authority have recently commissioned an options appraisal study relating to Bridge Street and the WEL2 and have invited West Oxfordshire District Council to make a financial contribution to cover part of the cost.

## **2. WITNEY TRANSPORT OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY**

- 2.1.** As outlined above, land to the north of Witney is allocated for the provision of around 1,400 new homes in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Given the size of the allocation, it clearly has the potential to impact on the local highway network, including Bridge Street which is a known area of traffic congestion and associated air quality problems.
- 2.2.** Evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan demonstrated that the provision of the WEL2 and Northern Distributor Road will, in combination with other strategic highway measures proposed at Witney, have a number of tangible benefits as well as mitigating the impact of the proposed development at North Witney.
- 2.3.** As such, Policy WIT2 requires development of the SDA to be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure including the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road.
- 2.4.** The WEL2 is also identified in the current Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as one of four major schemes – the other three schemes being capacity improvements at the A40/A415 Ducklington Lane/Station Lane junction (completed in 2014) the A40/Downs Road roundabout (completed in 2018) and the Shores Green Slip Road scheme (due to be implemented in 2024).
- 2.5.** As the North Witney SDA allocation moves forward to the delivery stage (note: there are two current planning applications on parts of the site with the development of a comprehensive masterplan for the site also expected this year) the County Council has commissioned an options appraisal study to establish the optimal solution for the Bridge Street area of Witney.
- 2.6.** In essence, the appraisal will comprise an options generation exercise through which a range of different multi-modal options will be identified and assessed, including the WEL2, leading to the identification of a preferred option.
- 2.7.** The outputs are intended to inform the emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP5) and are likely to be subject to a further detailed feasibility study in due course.



**3. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 3.1. Consultants have now been appointed with the options appraisal work expected to be completed around October 2022.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council the release of £15,000 from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part-fund the options appraisal study.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The report raises no direct legal implications.

**6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. The report raises no specific risks.

**7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1. The report raises no specific implications in relation to the public sector equality duty or Equality Act 2010.

**8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The report raises no direct climate change implications although the options appraisal study will consider various multi-modal solutions.

**9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1. The purpose of the options appraisal study is to identify and assess a range of different multi-modal options leading to the identification of a preferred option.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1. None.

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 11</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>SUBMISSION OF INVESTMENT PLAN FOR UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Duncan Enright – Cabinet Member for Economic Development. Email: <a href="mailto:duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk">duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Will Barton, Business Development Officer Tel: 01993 861482 Email: <a href="mailto:william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk">william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk</a> Claire Locke, Group Manager - Property and Regeneration Tel: 01285 623427 Email: <a href="mailto:claire.locke@publicagroup.uk">claire.locke@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To seek agreement to the initial projects and themes which will be included in the Council’s Investment Plan for UK Shared Prosperity Funding and delegations to enable sign off of the final plan before submission and progression with projects requiring expenditure in 2022/23.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Invitee list for Partnership Group</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p><i>That Cabinet agrees:</i></p> <p><i>(a) to support the inclusion of the projects and interventions listed in this report in the Council’s Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</i></p> <p><i>(c) to delegate authority for the final approval of the Investment Plan submission and any subsequent amendments to it, to the Group Manager - Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.</i></p>

	<p><i>(d) to agree a variation and pay Publica the £20,000 revenue allocation from the UKSPF for Investment Plan preparation the application of which is to be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.</i></p> <p><i>(e) to agree that 4% of the fund is used for administration of the Programme, with the total sum of £40,000 over the life of the project being paid to Publica to employ a shared UK SPF Programme Manager, to monitor and manage project progress and undertake the required reporting.</i></p> <p><i>(f) to delegate authority for the award of contracts to consultants/contractors to deliver projects highlighted for delivery in 2022/23 to the Group Manager - Property and Regeneration in consultation with the S.151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.</i></p>
Corporate priorities	Emerging priorities that focus on support for Towns and villages, the local economy, climate action and the natural environment.
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cabinet Members Stakeholders (see Annex A)

## I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is part of the government’s Levelling Up agenda. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK through the support of high-quality skills training, improving pay, supporting employment and productivity growth.
- 1.2. The fund provided to West Oxfordshire District Council, has three themes:
- communities and place;
  - supporting local business;
  - people and skills (which comes into effect from 2024/25 onwards).
- 1.3. West Oxfordshire District Council has been allocated £1,000,000 of funding, with set allocations for each of the three years which must be spent in-year and cannot be rolled forward. This is set out in the Spend Profile table below:

### Spend profile

Financial year	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Total allocation	£70,467	£140,934	£788,598	£999,999
Min capital	£7,047	£18,321	£157,720	£183,088
Max revenue	£63,420	£122,613	£630,878	£816,911

- 1.4. The fund can be used flexibly to support interventions across the three themes including grants to public or private organisations, commissioning third party organisations, procurement of service provision or in-house provision and loans (in “limited circumstances”). There is a prescribed set of interventions, outputs and outcomes for the fund but there is also flexibility for the inclusion of other measures, subject to agreement.
- 1.5. The Council is required to produce an Investment Plan which must be submitted by 1st August 2022. The Plan needs to identify the challenges the district faces and the opportunities to address these using the fund. The Plan then needs to set out the interventions and the outcomes that will be delivered across each of the three financial years – not individual projects at this stage.
- 1.6. There is a need for stakeholder engagement and a consensus amongst stakeholders on the challenges to be addressed and the interventions used. The guidance makes reference to a raft of stakeholders that the Council should collaborate with in the preparation of their Plan – this specifically includes our MP.
- 1.7. The Council will lead the programme and administer the funds, although the majority of projects are likely to be delivered by third parties.

## 2. INVESTMENT PLAN PREPARATION

- 2.1. Officers initially mapped the priorities in the Council Plan against the UKSPF interventions and outputs to see which fall within scope. These have been finessed as the Council's new priorities have started to emerge. These helped identify the Investment Plan structure and are due to be discussed with stakeholders between time of writing and the Cabinet meeting. A verbal update on the outcome of these discussions will accompany this report.
- 2.2. The strict and escalating spend profile dictates the structure of the programme. The funding is heavily geared towards the third year with only £70,467 available in the first year.
- 2.3. There is no option to carry funds forward from one year to the next so projects identified for year one need to be fully worked up and ready to go.
- 2.4. Years two and three will identify challenges to be addressed along with selected interventions and outputs rather than actual projects. This will then be developed with partners once the investment plan has been submitted.
- 2.5. As projects that will be funded in 2022/23 must be completed this year, a delegation is sought to enable the rapid appointment of consultants, contractors or partners. If there is a requirement to report back to Cabinet on actual costs once procured, there is a risk of delays which could impact on the Council's ability to spend the allocation by March 2023.
- 2.6. **Proposed Projects For Year 1**
- 2.7. An initial review of project proposals received to date indicates the following investments should be prioritised in Year 1 (2022/23), these will be confirmed through the delegation.

Initiative	Investment (Draft figures)	
	Revenue	Capital
Biodiversity Toolkit	£15,000	
Deerpark South Access Project	£5,647	£20,000
Carterton Town Centre Strategic Plan	£10,000	
Market Towns feasibility study	£10,000	
Rural services feasibility study	£7,000	
4% administration	£2,820	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£50,467</b>	<b>£20,000</b>

**2.8. Approach to investment in Years 2 and 3**

2.9. Whilst some possible projects have already been identified for years two and three they will not be defined in the Investment Plan. Instead the interventions we will be seeking will be set out as well as the outcomes and outputs they will deliver, enabling time to identify and develop the projects with partners that will best deliver these outcomes and are feasible within the required timescales.

2.10. Calls for projects that include relevant interventions will be made by the Council. Submissions will be assessed against the outputs and outcomes they will deliver as well as value for money on a project scoring sheet. Governance will be discussed and agreed with Cabinet.

**2.11. Investment in Year 2 - 2023/24**

2.12. The proposal for year two is to focus on work that supports rural services to ensure people have access to what they need, and town centres and markets to help ensure their viability and the towns' roles as vibrant service centres for residents and visitors.

2.13. The proposed interventions for year two are as follows (The 'E' numbers refer to the UKSPF Interventions List):

- E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.
- E11: Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
- E12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.
- E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.
- E14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies.
- E16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.
- E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.
- E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.

**2.14. Investment in Year 3 – 2023 / 2024**

2.15. The profiling of the SPF has been designed to fit in with the ending of European Social Fund (ESF) projects so SPF can be used to pick up gaps that are left. In Oxfordshire, the cessation of ESF affects skills training and also coincides with the end of the budget for the Oxfordshire LEP Growth Hub – the central point through which county-wide business support programmes are run.

2.16. Both skills training and business support are more effectively delivered at a larger scale and there is a willingness from the other Oxfordshire councils and key stakeholders including OxLEP and Abingdon and Witney College to work collaboratively on these themes. Joint priorities emerging from discussions include an 'enterprise agency' type business advice service which has been proven to increase business survival rates and a focus on green skills including retrofit and maintenance and repair of new carbon zero/low carbon technologies in buildings and vehicles.

2.17. The proposed interventions for year three are therefore as follows:

- E16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.
- E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.
- E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- E24: Funding for new (and improvements to existing) training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.
- E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.
- E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.
- E38: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs. This includes technical and vocational qualifications and courses up to level 2 and training for vocational licences relevant to local area needs and high-value qualifications where there is a need for additional skills capacity that is not being met through other provision.
- E39: Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions.
- E40: Retraining support for those in high carbon sectors.

2.18. Due to the limited time available for Investment Plan preparation and the requirement to submit proposals by 1st August, Cabinet approval is requested before the final version of the Investment Plan has been completed. Agreement is therefore sought to the suite of projects with final sign off of the Plan delegated to ensure deadlines are met.

2.19. In addition to the £1M fund, the Council has an allocation of £20,000 for Investment Plan preparation, which must be spent by 1st August 2022. This will fund project management and preparation of data and evidence. It is recommended that this sum is paid to Publica to



enable them to provide these services on the Council's behalf. These funds will be ring fenced to expenditure on West Oxfordshire District Council's UKSPF submission.

- 2.20. The Council can spend 4% of the £1M allocation on administering the fund. As the lead authority for administering the fund, the Council will have a significant amount of work to do to manage the programme of projects and meet the regular reporting requirements. This allocation equates to £40,000 over the three years. Agreement is sought to pool this fund with partner councils, (Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council), to provide a total budget of £120,000 which can then fund a dedicated UKSPF project manager from 2022 - March 2025. This would be an efficient use of the resources as the delivery and reporting requirements will be the same for each Council.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1. The submission of an Investment Plan that is clearly targeted to meet UKSPF objectives as well as deliver against the Council Plan will provide significant benefits, unlocking or accelerating project delivery. The projects set out in this report have been carefully selected based on the outcomes they will deliver and have been agreed by key stakeholders.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Council has assessed the legal implications of individual projects and will ensure that they meet legal requirements, obtain relevant permissions and are procured and funded appropriately.
- 4.2. In securing UKSPF the Council must meet the requirements of the fund to avoid any repayment of the allocation. The delivery of the UKSPF will be run as a Programme and managed through Publica's existing Project Management Framework to ensure compliance with fund requirements and other risks are identified and managed effectively.
- 4.3. Save from the above, there are no other legal implications arising directly from this Report.

### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. If the annual funding allocation is not spent, it does not carry forward and has to be repaid. Deliverability of projects has therefore been a key consideration to mitigate this risk.
- 5.2. Increasingly the Council is securing capital and revenue funding through Government grants to deliver projects which support its priorities. In some cases this will reduce the capital requirement and therefore the revenue cost of borrowing for the Council. There is however a challenge in meeting the staff resource requirements to deliver any projects that the Council will deliver directly. There may therefore need to be an allocation in future budgets for additional staff resources in specific areas, to deliver key projects.
- 5.3. There is a risk that some stakeholders do not agree with the selected projects as they consider their own projects should be funded instead. The Council is seeking to collaborate and gain a consensus and will try to mitigate this risk as much as possible. However, there is a risk some stakeholders criticise the choice of projects.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. An EIA will be undertaken for each project as they are developed, where appropriate.

## **7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The climate and ecological implications of each project are taken into account during the assessment process. The guidance published by the Government makes clear that climate change should be a key consideration.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1. The Council could choose not to submit an Investment Plan however it is likely it would not then receive the £1M UKSPF allocation.
- 8.2. The Council could select different projects in year one but this would not enable sufficient time to prepare the required information and evidence on them and the Investment Plan submission date would be missed.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**


- 9.1. Annex A - List of stakeholders invited to consultations

## **Annex A - List of stakeholders invited to consultation**

- All town and parish councils
- All WODC councillors
- Abingdon and Witney College
- Aspire
- Burford Chamber of Commerce
- Chippy Larder
- Cogges Manor Farm
- Community First Oxfordshire
- Cotswolds AONB
- Evenlode Catchment Partnership
- FarmED
- Lower Windrush Valley Project
- Marriotts Shopping centre manager
- OCC Climate Lead
- OCC Head of Healthy Place Shaping
- OCVA
- OSEP
- Oxford City Climate Lead
- Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
- Oxfordshire Greentech
- OxLEP - Skills
- OxLEP - Business Support
- Rotary Club of Witney
- South and Vale Climate Lead
- Stagecoach
- Wake up to Woodstock
- Windrush Catchment Partnership
- Witney Blanket Hall
- Witney Chamber of Commerce
- Woolgate Shopping centre manager
- Wychwood Project

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 12</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>OXFORDSHIRE FOOD STRATEGY</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Joy Aitman - Cabinet Member for Stronger Healthy Communities Email: <a href="mailto:joy.aitman@westoxon.gov.uk">joy.aitman@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Heather McCulloch – Community Wellbeing Manager Email: <a href="mailto:heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk">heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>An Oxfordshire wide food strategy has been developed by a range of partners. This report provides an overview of the strategy, its principles and the overarching framework to be adopted, so that Cabinet can review and offer comments on the Oxfordshire Food Strategy Part 1 and note the development of detailed action plans in Part 2.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Oxfordshire Food Strategy: Part 1</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>Cabinet is recommended to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>Review, comment on and endorse the Oxfordshire Food Strategy: Part 1 including the principles and framework for delivery;</i></li> <li>b) <i>Note that Part 2 will see the development of detailed action plans for partners involved in the strategy and that this will return to Cabinet, later in the autumn;</i></li> <li>c) <i>Note the grant allocation proposed by the County Council to assist with the development and delivery of the action plan.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy Towns and Villages</li> <li>2. Strong Local Communities</li> <li>3. A Vibrant District Economy</li> <li>4. Climate Action</li> </ul>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Public and stakeholder engagement in developing the strategy initially took place during August – October 2021. This included consulting with relevant Councillors/officers across Oxfordshire local authorities, farmers markets and producers and members of the public attending food related events.</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** The government published a National Food Strategy in July 2021 that made recommendations to government to address climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, dietary related illness, health inequalities, food security and trade. For local government, it recommends that local authorities work with communities and partners to develop local food strategies to reduce health inequalities.
- 1.2.** This was further supported by the publication of the Levelling Up white paper in February 2022 where the government committed to narrowing the gap in health inequalities between the highest and lowest life expectancy areas.
- 1.3.** An Oxfordshire wide food strategy has been developed as a partnership between Good Food Oxfordshire, the County, City and district councils and representatives from Oxfordshire community sector groups. The strategy supports a broad range of this Council's priorities including community wellbeing, a vibrant local economy, climate action and biodiversity, access to healthy food and green spaces, addressing food poverty and tackling inequalities.
- 1.4.** This paper sets out the partnership work that has enabled the development of the strategy and outlines the ambitions established in Part 1 that will guide the development of action plans in Part 2.
- 1.5.** The strategy was commissioned during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic as it quickly became apparent that food security and access to food became challenging. Local food banks saw a three to fourfold increase, with a conservative estimate suggesting that around 6,000 people a week required support to access food.
- 1.6.** Whilst community food networks have risen to this challenge, the ongoing and increasing cost of living crisis means that there is still a need to build resilience into our local food systems to ensure better access to food and reduce carbon emissions.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

### **2.1. Development of the food strategy**

- 2.1.1.** The Oxfordshire Food Strategy has been developed by a multi-stakeholder partnership including county and district councils, community groups, local food producers and other major institutions. It has been developed to tackle the challenges of health and wellbeing; climate change and biodiversity; fair incomes and employment and a vibrant and sustainable food system. Part 1 of the strategy (attached as annex A) seeks to identify priority areas for action, links to existing initiatives and policy and showcase examples of excellence that can be learnt from and built upon.
- 2.1.2.** Public and stakeholder engagement in developing the strategy initially took place during August – October 2021. This included consulting with relevant Councillors/officers across Oxfordshire local authorities, farmers markets and producers and members of the public attending food related events.

### **2.2. Partnership ambitions**

- 2.2.1.** The strategy presents a vision which seeks to ensure 'Everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day' through the following ambitions:
  - a.** Food justice: healthy and sustainable food is affordable and accessible to everyone
  - b.** Sustainable food economy: Local food businesses flourish, with more productions, more outlets, more employment and better standards for workers

- c. Good food movement: more people can enjoy and engage with healthy, sustainable food and 'good food for everyone' is part of our culture
- d. Food for the planet: We waste less food and the food that we do produce, consume and waste has a less negative impact on the planet
- e. Sustainable supply chains: More locally produced, sustainable food is bought and consumed locally, and supply chains are more resilient
- f. Governance and strategy: Continue, evaluate and strengthen existing initiatives. Build foundations for new initiatives. Establish enablers to manage and monitor progress.

### **2.3. Achieving the vision**

**2.3.1.** In helping achieve the strategy's vision each Council is invited to consider a range of commitments:

- a. Adopt a whole systems approach to food, ensuring that food is considered within health, climate, and economy policies and programmes
- b. Embed healthy and sustainable food and healthy weight environments within existing policies, plans, and targets
- c. Develop a specific food policy that encapsulates key themes and recommendations defined in the strategy
- d. Champion the development of district level food action plans in partnership with other stakeholders to agree specific council commitments and measure progress against these
- e. Promote and support community groups and businesses working for a better food system through public procurement and access to resources
- f. Support vibrant, healthy food communities through access to skills and spaces for growing, cooking, and sharing food
- g. Lobby national government using local evidence and action
- h. Appoint food champions at cabinet level as conduits for food issues and action

**2.3.2.** To support the ambitions of the strategy, action plans will be developed in partnership which will be tailored to meet the different needs of each city/district area and working in partnership with established community groups in each local area.

**2.3.3.** The action plan can link into a number of the Council's priorities, including:

- a. Taking affirmative action in relation to climate change - measures that will link to net zero targets such as food waste reduction;
- b. Tackling inequalities and providing opportunities for everyone - measures that will seek to ensure equality of access to food and actions to tackle food poverty;
- c. Protecting, restoring and enhancing the quality of the West Oxfordshire environment – measures that will encourage approaches which match the needs of the area and work in harmony with it;
- d. Supporting local business – working in partnership to implement and deliver the strategy and its broad-ranging benefits;

- e. Planning for thriving communities in a quality environment using embedding principles of healthy place shaping - measures put in place to ensure that spaces for growing food are available.

2.3.4. This strategy spans the breadth of portfolio areas with an underlying priority to contribute to tackling the climate emergency whilst improving the health and wellbeing of our residents. Cabinet is asked to endorse Part I of the Strategy including the challenges faced, the vision and its ambitions.

### 3. NEXT STEPS – DEVELOPING OUR ACTION PLAN

- 3.1. It is estimated that 8 – 10 % of all households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity (Good Food Oxfordshire, 2021) and the ambitions within the strategy seek to address this by supporting more locally produced and sustainable food and enabling all residents the equal opportunity to access healthy food all year round, through education to minimise food waste or grow their own, and through accessing food banks or community larder schemes. There are longer term ambitions within the strategy to grow Oxfordshire’s local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs and local wealth generation.
- 3.2. As part of the strategy, an action plan needs to be developed with responsibilities and commitments to meet the ambitions. These actions are to be defined but will include communications and marketing, practical support such as identifying opportunities or providing access to green spaces for community gardens and to provide local business support to address food waste and explore locally sourced food options.
- 3.3. Whilst some of the actions will be completed as ‘business as usual’, there is a need to ensure we can collectively deliver on our ambitions to address issues around cost of living and food poverty for all our residents across West Oxfordshire. To facilitate this, the County Council will allocate funding to all districts and city partners and to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to support delivery of our joint commitments.
- 3.4. A total of £250,000 will be made available to the district and city councils be put towards delivery of actions that will directly impact accessibility to food, that can be used internally or put towards community groups within the district area. It is not recommended that this funding is used towards employment or personnel resource, as this would provide a short-term solution to a long-term commitment.
- 3.5. To determine the allocation per locality the intention is to use a previously established Department for Works and Pensions formula, which is based on population and weighted by deprivation, as measured by the index of multiple deprivation index. This will result in allocation of funding as follows:

Local Authority	Percentage	Allocation
Cherwell District Council	26%	£65,000
Oxford City Council	28%	£70,000
South Oxfordshire District Council	17%	£42,500
Vale of White Horse District Council	16%	£40,000
West Oxfordshire District Council	13%	£32,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£250,000</b>



**3.6.** Examples of actions the funding can be used towards include:

- Communications, including signposting for residents to access existing schemes, raising awareness on available options and providing advice and guidance
- Supporting infrastructure, guidance and access to funding for community food services including distribution networks, foodbanks, larders and fridges
- Exploration of providing access to vacant and shared spaces and resources to enable communities to come together to grow, cook, eat and share food together

**3.7.** A timeline for adopting the strategy and its action plan is set out below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
July 2022	Phase 1 proposal to Cabinet for adoption
July to October	Development of action plan
October/November	Action plan to OCC for comment and recommendations
December 2022	Phase 2 proposal to Cabinet for approval

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1.** Whilst there is no explicit cost to the Council, the task of undertaking the actions will have resource implications in terms of staff time. Currently there is no role dedicated to support this work.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1.** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

#### **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**6.1.** There are no financial risks in this report. This is a countywide commitment so there is a reputational risk in the Council not committing to the programme where all other councils in Oxfordshire will be signing up. There has been a significant amount of preliminary work done to arrive at the invitation for the Council.

#### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**7.1.** There are no positive or negative effect on different service users, customers or staff arising directly from this report. An equalities impact assessment will be completed when the action plan is developed.

#### **8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1.** As identified in the strategy, food systems contribute 40% of greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2022). Small scale community food production can make a valuable contribution to sustainable land management, food security and physical and mental health. Any reduction in food miles and food waste represents positive climate action.

#### **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**9.1.** The Council could choose not to endorse the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1.** None

(END)

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# Oxfordshire Food Strategy

May 2022



Part 1



www.oxford.gov.uk



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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# 1.

## Introduction

Building a healthy, fair and sustainable food system for Oxfordshire.



## Food is both the source of, and solution to, many of the problems we face today.



**To tackle the challenges of health and wellbeing, climate change and biodiversity loss, and fair incomes and employment, Oxfordshire must have a vibrant and sustainable food system. This is integral to our organisations, community, and culture.**

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also noted the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies.

The Oxfordshire local food strategy was developed by a multi-stakeholder partnership including county and district councils, community groups, local food producers, retail and hospitality businesses, and major institutions. It is a first step towards drawing together the many strands of work that are already happening across the county and seeing them as a coherent whole.

Part 1 of this strategy, presented here, identifies priority areas of action, links to existing initiatives and policy, and showcases some examples of excellence that we can learn from and build on. Part 2 will embed the strategy in existing programmes and plans, develop Food Action Plans for each District, initiate pilot projects, and monitor and evaluate progress.

COP26 highlighted that 1.5 is still alive but we must act swiftly. Whilst much emphasis is placed on fossil fuels and

alternative energy sources, food systems currently account for roughly 40% of total greenhouse gases and contribute to biodiversity loss (IPCC, 2022). Furthermore, food poverty in Oxfordshire is real, and whilst COVID exacerbated the problem, it is not a new phenomenon. Between 9-14% of all households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity. This equates to 62,000-96,000 people (Moretti et al 2021).

Removing barriers and ensuring that everyone in Oxfordshire can access affordable, healthy food in ways that promote dignity, recognise diversity, and celebrate our rich cultural heritage are fundamental to this strategy. Alongside building vibrant, thriving communities, supporting the local food economy can be part of the solution. It is fundamental to providing local jobs that serve local communities' needs. Oxfordshire's food economy accounts for 10% of jobs, and in 2020 generated turnover of £2.2 billion or 10% of the local economy. We also know that "pound-for-pound, money spent in the local food web supports three times the number of jobs as the equivalent spent in national grocery chains" (Willis, 2012).

The challenges of food poverty, the climate emergency, food supply, and our diet-related health crisis cannot be addressed without redefining our food systems. The time for action is now.



## Part 1: Developing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Understanding the strategic challenges of food in Oxfordshire, in consultation with the Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO) network.



Defining the vision and strategic priorities. Identifying the influencing factors and priority areas for action.



Building on what is currently being done. How the strategy supports, evaluates, and strengthens existing initiatives, and builds the foundations for new initiatives.



## Part 2: Implementing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Support and strengthen existing programmes and campaigns



Embed actions to deliver strategic priorities in existing policies and plans



Develop detailed Food Action Plans with each key stakeholder



Initiate foundation projects to build our knowledge base and inform detailed implementation plans for new initiatives



## Good Food Oxfordshire is a network of over 150 local organisations committed to a better food system for Oxfordshire.

Throughout this document we refer to "good food". To us, this means food that provides health and social benefits, contributes to thriving local economies and communities, enhances our natural resources, and tackles climate change.

In other words: food that is good for people, good for communities, and good for the planet.



# 2.

## Oxfordshire's food challenge

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## Oxfordshire's food challenge was real, and now it's far worse.

Fair access to good quality, sustainably produced food is problematic across Oxfordshire, and has been made worse by pressures over the last few years.

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to

re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also stressed the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies to increase food security and improve good food access.



# The local picture

Localised, sustainable food systems can provide an opportunity to improve food security for vulnerable groups, meet Oxfordshire's climate and sustainability targets, and improve food supply resilience.



## Food poverty

9-14% of Oxfordshire's residents experience food insecurity. This is **62,000–96,000 people** (Moretti et al 2021)



In 2022, the **rise in living costs** mean households face an average loss of **£1,200 to their annual incomes** forcing people into a 'heat or eat' dilemma (Harari et al. 2022)

Cost of living rises disproportionately impact lower income households. There are fewer good-quality 'value' ranges and **prices increase up to 350%** for basic items (Monroe, 2022)

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## Health crisis



**1 in 4 children in Year 6 are obese.** Children living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in least deprived areas.

Obesity rates in both Reception-age and Year 6 children **increased by around 4.5% between 2019-20 and 2020-21.** These are the highest annual rises since the measurement programme began in 2006/7 (NCMP, 2021)

**55% of adults** in Oxfordshire are classified as overweight or obese (JSNA, 2021)

People limited by health problems and disability are **5x more likely** to experience food insecurity (Food Foundation, 2021)

## Climate emergency

Food systems contribute **40% of greenhouse gas emissions** (IPCC, 2022)

Biodiversity of priority species **has fallen more than 70%** in the UK since 1970 (NFS, 2021)

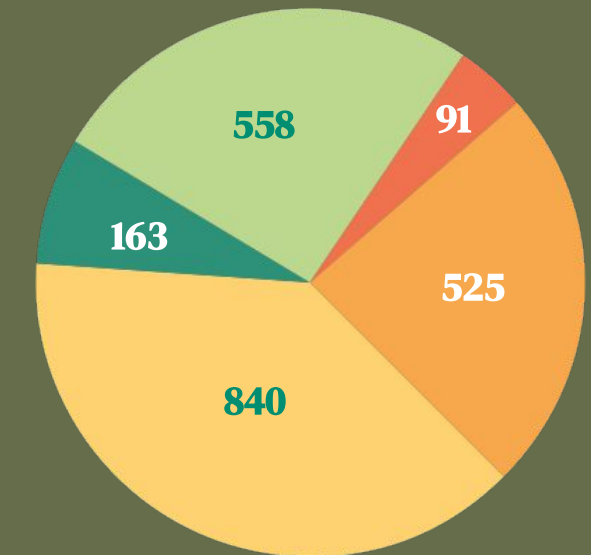


Research by GFO (2020) reported **the valuable contribution of small-scale and community food production** to sustainable land management, food security, and physical and mental health.

## Food supply

Oxfordshire's food economy turnover (£millions) by subsector (ONS, 2022)

- Agriculture
- Manufacture
- Wholesale
- Food retail
- Services



In 2013, half of Oxford's food came from the UK, a third came from the EU, and 15% was imported from further afield. Less than **1% was sourced directly from the region** (Curtis, 2013).

**74% of Oxfordshire's land area is agricultural,** mostly cereals, followed by livestock grazing for meat and dairy

In 2020, Oxfordshire's local food economy contributed **£2.2 billion in turnover, supporting 19,500 jobs and 2,970 enterprises** (ONS, 2022)





# Voices from Oxfordshire

We have listened to local people, groups, and enterprises.



Through our Oxfordshire Community Insights Programme and through workshops, questionnaires, and interviews with local residents, groups, and businesses we have heard what matters to people about food and their current experiences.



## Snapshots and learnings



### Childhood Malnutrition: From Grassroots to Policy Action

Roundtable Event November 2021

#### Key learnings:

"Taking a whole systems approach to address the double burden of both underweight and overweight childhood malnutrition involves recognition of the important overlap between the food system, education system and health system"

"breaking down artificial silos between sectors"

"need to trust their [grassroots organisations'] ability to understand the needs and priorities of the community"

(Nagraj et al 2022)

### Interviews / survey of growers and producers

"Turnover [of workers] is very high....we need skills and mentoring programmes for apprentice growers... places to live affordably in rural areas."

"Food margins being driven down every year... we need to value doing good and sustainability."

"Every person in the food chain doubles the price."

"Local markets build strong relationships and loyal customers."

### School food surveys and workshop

May 2021

### and workshop

March 2022

"We need to listen to children's voices - understanding why they sometimes avoid the food is powerful and can help with small changes."

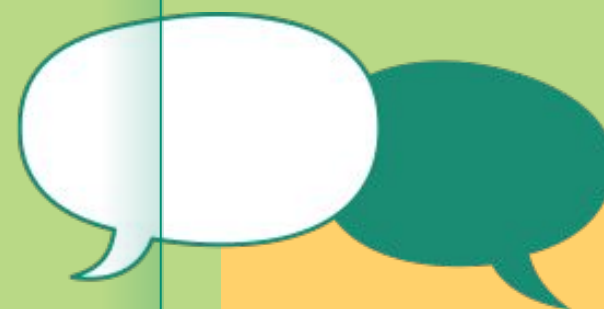
Parents on school meals: "They try things they wouldn't at home then come back asking for it, it's fantastic."

"Too many chips according to my daughter."

"nobody needs meat every day, and for the price it can't be from sustainable and high welfare sources. It just destroys our planet and is irresponsible."

**Caterers** need to keep their businesses viable and struggle to balance children's preferences for unhealthy food with their ambitions to provide nutritious meals.

**Schools** have the ambition to improve school food, but they lack the time, capacity, and resources necessary to make a significant change.



## Key Events

September 2021  
**Good Food Procurement Webinar**  
20 attendees OSEP and GFO

November 2021  
**Childhood Malnutrition Roundtable Event**  
33 attendees, representing community groups, schools, housing associations, councillors, council officers, academics, and researchers\*

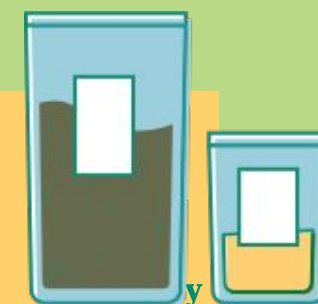
March 2022  
**Oxfordshire Schools Food Workshop**  
40+ attendees representing schools, councils, communities, and caterers

April 2021 - ongoing  
**Healthy Weight Insights Programme**

To date... engaged 28 community partners in Banbury Ruscote/Grimsbury, Blackbird Leys, Abingdon, Witney, and Berinsfield  
Conversations with children at target sites  
Listened to wider stakeholders at three workshops (146 people, 50 + organisations)

September 2021 - January 2022  
**GFO Research**

11 locations, 100+ members of public interviewed  
50+ individual stakeholder meetings held  
75+ stakeholders engaged at eight GFO events and network meetings



## Voices from Oxfordshire

### Chippy Larder

Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.

### Cherwell Collective

We need to return to a more symbiotic relationship between food systems and communities. By connecting people to their food, through growing and cooking, people learn the value of food and not just the price. This in turn helps to reduce food waste and improves health and wellbeing through a stronger sense of community and engagement with nature.

### Orange Bakery

We love having a good relationship with our mill, our milk and our eggs... it makes all the difference

### Community insights

**Life is complex and chaotic:** "Many families tell us they have bigger issues to deal with than their child being a bit overweight"

Many people lack the **skills, capacity, or resources** to cook and to change routines & habits: "We don't plan, we live day to day"

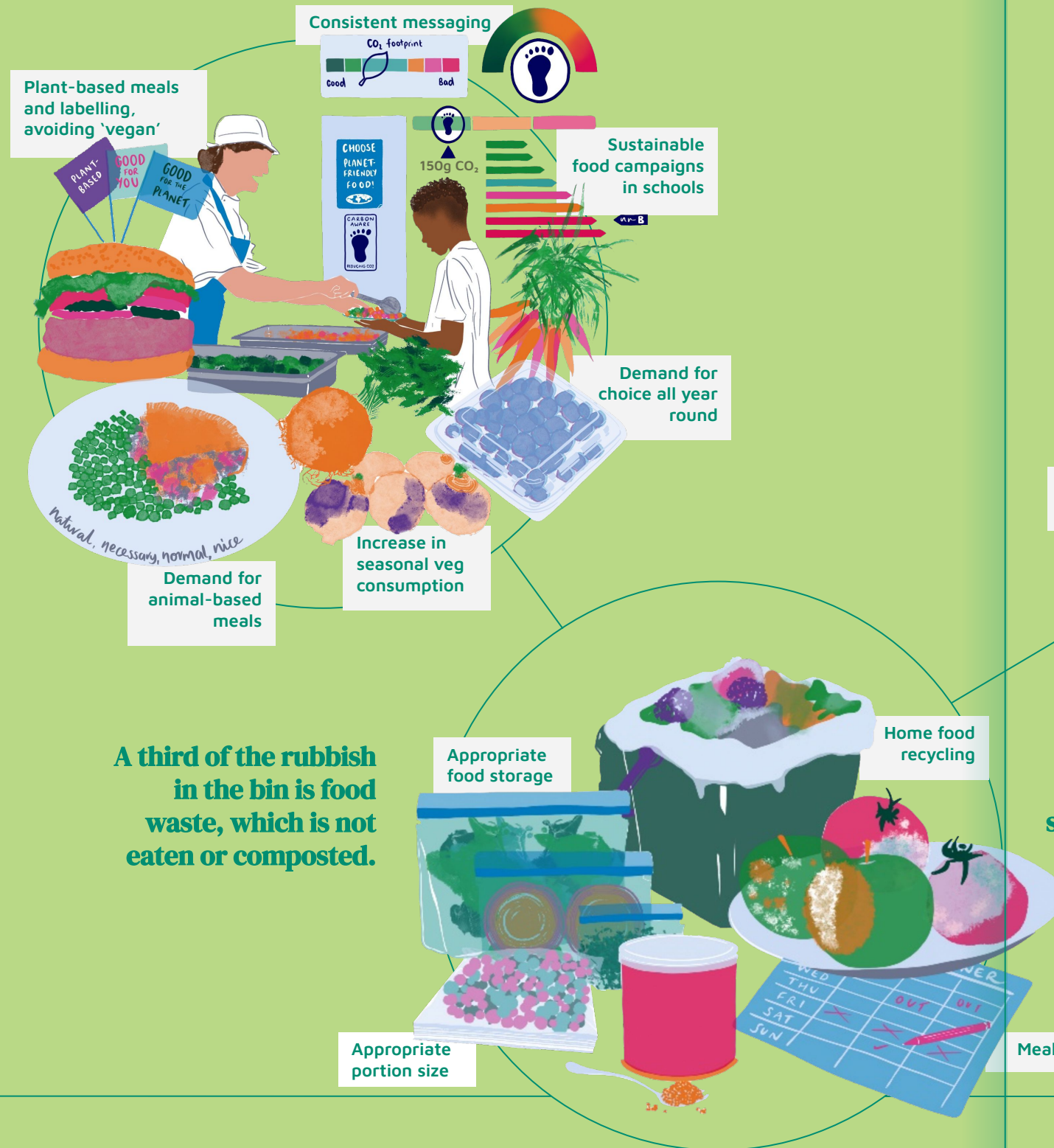
Professionals can lack resources or skills to have **difficult conversations** about weight, food, and wellbeing to **help people to achieve a healthy weight:** "It is easier to talk about death than to talk about their child being overweight"

### GFO community research

Over 90% of respondents (members of the public) emphasised the importance of buying local food: to support the local economy, reduce food miles, and care for the environment.



# Workshops on food and climate identified common themes and links across health, supply, waste, and poverty.



Much of the UK's fruit and vegetable supply comes from a small number of growing areas in Europe. Access to land for food production in Oxfordshire is difficult.



# 3.

## Vision and strategic priorities



## Ambitions to help deliver a collective vision

A coherent food strategy for all those involved with food in Oxfordshire can help push back against these pressures and deliver a vision in which everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.



# We have identified the following priority areas for action

Addressing these priorities will deliver the following outcomes.



## Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health

### Priorities

Expand and strengthen existing services and programmes aimed at those at risk of food poverty, including Community Food Networks (foodbanks, larders, and fridges), Healthy Start Vouchers, Holiday Activities and Food.

Adopt Healthy Place Shaping principles and a Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight.

### Outcomes

Everyone in Oxfordshire can access healthy food every day without shame or stigma.

More eligible people accessing existing schemes that tackle health and nutrition inequality.

Uptake of available central government funding is maximised, making full use of available funds, and providing evidence of the local need.



## Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

### Priorities

Support communities to grow, cook, learn, and enjoy food together. Promote campaigns and events that enable everyone to access healthy food, reduce food waste, and encourage dietary choices that are good for health and for the planet.

### Outcomes

Stronger communities through sharing and participation in food-related activities.

More people can access knowledge and skills to support growing, cooking, and better nutrition.

People make food choices that are better for their health and planetary health.

## Grow the local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation

### Priorities

Focus on local enterprises that are driven by local needs, provide employment, and multiply the impacts of money earned and spent locally.

Use the power of anchor institutions (schools, hospitals, universities, businesses, etc) to procure locally and provide access to finance, infrastructure, and skills. This is called a Community Wealth Building approach.

### Outcomes

More local food enterprises flourish.

Better livelihoods, skills, and opportunities for local food workers.



## Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

### Priorities

Detailed scoping project to define the needs, options, and future plans for local supply chain solutions for Oxfordshire.

Consider public and institutional procurement as a way to provide scale and certainty for local sustainable producers.

Identify appropriate infrastructure to support the supply chain including local food processing hubs and dynamic procurement systems.

Work with landholders, existing producers, and new agricultural practitioners to explore access to land, infrastructure, and skills to meet local food demands.

### Outcomes

Clear and robust understanding of appropriate solutions for Oxfordshire.

More sustainable food is produced and processed locally for local consumption.

Net zero goals are supported through sustainable food production and reduced food miles.

Consumers are more engaged and connected to the provenance of their food, reinforcing healthier and more sustainable habits.



## Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

### Priorities

Embed healthy, sustainable local food principles and targets within institutional catering.

Link food to net zero targets and promote accreditation schemes such as Food for Life, Fairtrade, and Sustainable Restaurant Association.

### Outcomes

More people have access to healthy and sustainable food via local institutions.

The local food economy is supported by institutional procurement.

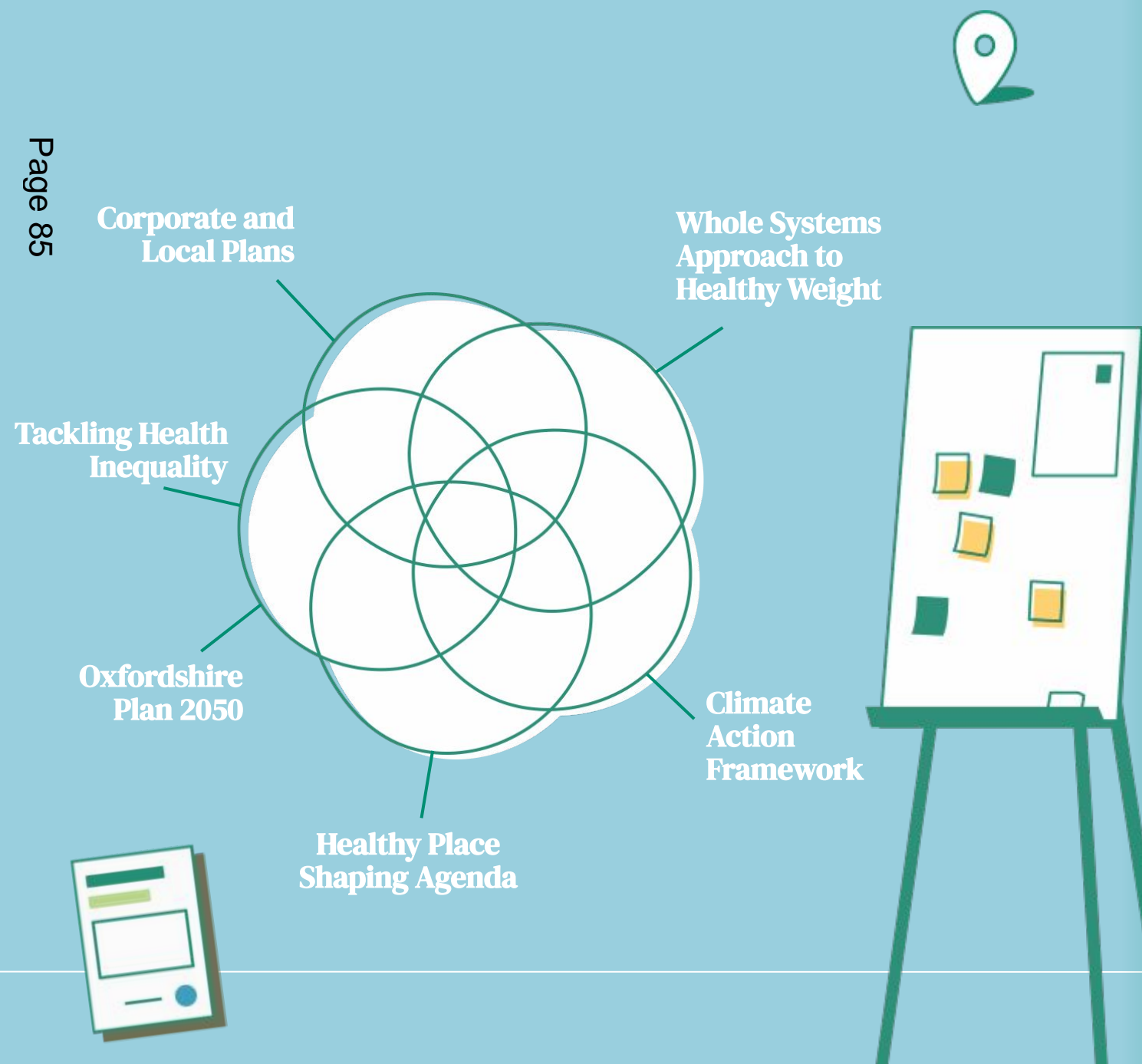
Institutions' climate and sustainability targets are supported through better food practices.



# 4.

## Delivering the outcomes

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To achieve these ambitions, we need to ensure that food is integrated within existing policy and programmes.

Policy/ programme	Synergies with food strategy
----------------------	------------------------------

<b>Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight</b>	Access to healthy food Awareness and promotion of a healthy diet A healthy start for families Planning healthy weight environments Tackling health inequalities
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<b>Healthy Place Shaping</b>	20 minute neighbourhoods - easy access to healthy food Planning healthy weight environments Food systems central to healthy places - growing, buying, cooking, sharing
------------------------------	--

<b>Tackling Health Inequality</b>	Focus on areas of inequality where access to food and health outcomes such as higher rates of obesity in children, and life expectancy gaps, are usually worse than the Oxfordshire average (Director of Public Health Report 2019/20)
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<b>Climate Action Framework</b>	Emissions and biodiversity: food choices, production, handling, and waste Improved local supply chains, reducing emissions from e.g., transportation, waste, and higher production standards
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<b>Oxfordshire Plan 2050</b>	Climate action planning and infrastructure Healthy Place Shaping to guide housing growth and inclusion of growing spaces Land-use - local food production to support short, local supply chains
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<b>Corporate and Local Plans</b>	Role of farming in climate, nature, and economy Sustainable food businesses as part of green economy Food as a facilitator of Inclusive communities through growing, cooking, and sharing together Community health and wellbeing improved through access to affordable, nutritious food Access to spaces and infrastructure
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We must ensure that flourishing campaigns and initiatives across Oxfordshire are recognised, supported, and strengthened.

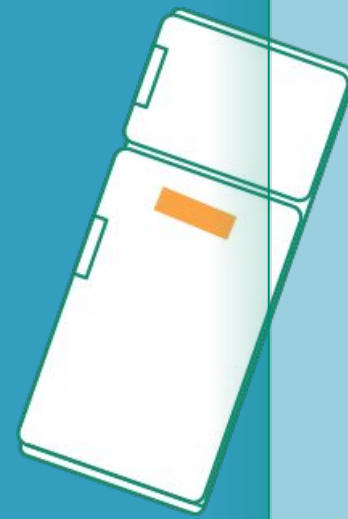
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NOURISH AND FLOURISH



# By showcasing examples of excellence, we aim to celebrate success and show what is possible...



# ...as well as building foundations and collaborations, and developing new initiatives.



## Priority areas to develop

Case study	Great example of...
<b>Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm</b>	Communities growing and sharing food together
<b>Salt Cross Garden Village</b>	Ambition to create better food environments in new developments, navigating complex planning challenges
<b>Oxford City Council – Healthy Start</b>	Partnership working to increasing the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers
<b>Swan School</b>	Improving the health and sustainability of school food
<b>Play:Full</b>	Community-led approaches to tackling holiday hunger
<b>Cherwell Collective</b>	Building solutions to food poverty and the climate crisis through community growing, cooking, sharing
<b>OX4 Food Crew</b>	Community Wealth Building, tackling food poverty, supporting resilience and community-led enterprise
<b>Abingdon Community Fridge</b>	Building community, tackling food poverty, reducing food waste
<b>The Wonky Food Company</b>	Sustainable food enterprise preventing food waste
<b>The Orange Bakery, Watlington</b>	Supporting local producers and providing employment for disadvantaged persons
<b>Oxford City Farm</b>	Community education and engagement in growing
<b>Sandy Lane Farm</b>	Organic and regenerative agriculture



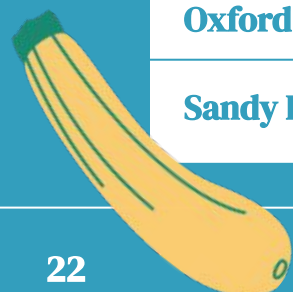
**Work with schools, caterers, and children to better understand the challenges of school food.** Collaboratively develop solutions that are impactful but achievable to improve the quality and sustainability of school food. This approach can also benefit the local food economy through institutional commitments to buying local, ethically, and sustainably produced food. The learnings from the schools pilot can be applied to other institutional settings, including – hospitals and social care.



**Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains that improve resilience to external shocks and the local food economy.** Work with local institutional buyers – including schools, universities, and hospitals – to commit to increasing local procurement. Work with local producers to increase local, sustainable production to meet demand. Identify the technology, infrastructure, processes, and relationships to facilitate this.



**Support Community Wealth Building approaches to preventing food poverty, building resilient communities, and developing skills, jobs, and enterprises that retain wealth locally.** Councils and major institutions commit to being anchor organisations, increasing local procurement, making local assets available to local enterprises, and championing local enterprise.



# Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

## Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm

Promoting dignity, affordable access to good food and community growing.

I set up The Chippy Larder to redress the imbalance in my community. We support families who are not only in food, fuel, and educational deprivation but also at high risk of poor physical and mental health. To be surrounded by businesses offering high quality, nutritionally dense, locally produced food, that was and still is financially inaccessible to many is not acceptable.

The first step was to set up a hub that didn't stigmatise those in need, the key was to be inclusive so the whole community could benefit. The Community Larder model was a perfect fit - Chippy Larder is open to everyone providing access to affordable food and reducing food waste. Partnering with Bruern Farm we have set up the Chicky Larder - getting members outdoors and involved with growing. Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.



## Wonky Food Company

Reducing food waste - flourishing with support from OxLEP

The Wonky Food Company makes relishes from imperfect and surplus fruit and vegetables. Started in Oxfordshire in 2018, the business sells via the Midcounties Co-op and Ocado, as well as through a growing network of independent delis, farm shops and artisan food stores.

In 2022, it was accepted on to the Co-op's first national incubator scheme, focusing on small sustainable food and drink brands. The Wonky Food Company has benefited from local business support since its inception. It received start-up support via OxLEP and is now part of OxLEP's eScalate programme, a three-year European funded initiative supporting social enterprises, charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. "It's been such a fantastic programme to be part of," says founder Ashley Cavers. "We have benefitted from some great peer group and networking opportunities. It has also enabled us to build our knowledge in important areas such as impact measurement and raising investment.



## Community Wealth Building

from food poverty to resilience and prevention

## OX4 FOOD CREW

OX4 Food Crew (OX4FC) is a partnership of nine organisations based in OX4 working with and for people experiencing food poverty, which has been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Founded in April 2020, we quickly responded to local needs by delivering nutritious cooked meals to people experiencing food insecurity in the local area. We are now developing the partnership to move beyond the emergency pandemic-driven response to include services which help build community food resilience. These include free cooking for health and wellbeing courses for parents, 'Pay as you feel' community meals, and incubator support for food social enterprises including Damascus Rose Kitchen and No Vice Ice. As a coalition of organisations, our aim is to work with local communities to co-investigate and design flexible, community-led support and innovations that will help build food resilience in the local area, alongside ongoing emergency food support.

## The Swan School Oxford

Improving school food

Family dining enables all students and teachers to share a delicious hot meal together every day. No packed lunches are allowed.



We recreate a 'family' atmosphere. Everyone is encouraged to engage in conversation and take responsibility for different aspects of the service, for example laying the table, serving food, or tidying the table at the end of the meal.

Lunches at The Swan are vegetarian (meat is available at other times) for three main reasons:

- Quality – vegetarian meals allow us to provide better quality for the same price.
- Environment – reducing meat consumption decreases our carbon footprint.
- Community – all our students are able to sit together, regardless of their dietary preferences or religious requirements.



# Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

## Cherwell Collective

**Stronger communities, reducing waste, alleviating poverty by growing, cooking, learning, and sharing together.**

Started during COVID lock-down, Cherwell Collective was a response to food poverty, hardship, and isolation. We have developed our ambitions to empower our community, to increase well-being, to support the vulnerable, and to reduce waste and environmental impact in daily lives. We have over 5,000 users, hundreds of whom are supported weekly.

Our food services include three main groups:

**Cherwell Larder:** Friends feeding friends - alleviating food poverty, reducing food waste, and a community hub for distributing surplus of all kinds.

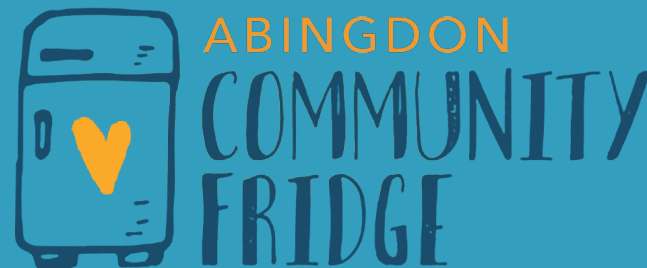
**Harvest at Home:** Food security from the ground up - supporting people to grow at home and in the community. Providing home-growing kits, skills training, support, and access to resources. We have helped over 900 people start growing food for the first time.

**Climatarian Kitchen:** Eat to save the earth! At our food surplus cafe we enjoy climate-friendly meals together, using surplus and locally grown food. 'Pay what you can' meals have suggested donations according to the carbon footprint of the dish. We also offer freshly made ready meals, meal kits, flexi recipes, shared equipment (via Oxford Party Library), and cooking courses.



## Abingdon Community Fridge

**Fighting food waste and building community**



At Abingdon Community Fridge we are focused on reducing food waste by collecting surplus food from local organisations and making this freely available to the whole community. Over 85 tonnes of food has been redistributed since opening in July 2019. Local residents benefit from this access to healthy, nutritious food, with the fridge supporting over 150 visits each week. As a volunteer-led group we are extremely proud of maintaining this free resource and the real sense of community which has grown between the fridge-users, volunteers, and the wider community.

## Orange Bakery, Watlington

**Embedded in local community, supporting mental health, local producers, employment, and training**

We started in our kitchen during lockdown to support mental health and help young people with focus, purpose, and an opportunity for creativity. Initially we baked for ourselves, then our neighbours who were isolating, and then through crowd-funding we were able to fund a shop front on the high street in Watlington.

We bake from the Scout Hut and now employ an apprentice from the local prison. We have learnt so much, from the basics of baking through to running a business. Being embedded in our local community has been vital to this journey - we have benefitted from the generosity of other bakers who offered their time, expertise, and equipment as well as those who crowd-funded us. More formal start-up support from small local enterprise schemes for mission-driven businesses via OSEP's Escalate scheme has been invaluable, particularly the opportunity to connect with peers and networks of like-minded organisations.



## Play:Full

**A local response to holiday hunger**

Play:Full is a response to tackle holiday hunger experienced by many children who rely on Free School Meals during term-time. The evidence suggests that this group of children start the new term several weeks, if not months intellectually behind their more fortunate peers who have enjoyed a more wholesome diet and lots of activity during school holidays.

Play:Full was initiated in Banbury as part of the Brighter Futures project, and has since been trialled in the City and South and Vale. Healthy, nourishing food is embedded alongside enrichment activities and positive food experiences from trying new foods, preparing simple snacks and meals, and enjoying shared meal-times with friends. Sessions are open to all to avoid stigmatisation, but focused on the most deprived wards to target children most in need. The impacts of the programme are clear: children try new foods, learn through enrichment, have fun, and are less isolated. Play:Full helps parents and carers with extra holiday food bills, and connects vulnerable families to a wider network of support.



# Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

## Oxford City Farm

Growing food and growing community



At Oxford City Farm we provide valued opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with farming and food production, animals, nature, and each other. The food we grow is shared with volunteers and distributed within our local community, enabling us to get fresh produce onto the plates of people who might otherwise have limited access to it.

We work with a range of local organisations to deliver engaging hands-on land- and kitchen-based social and educational opportunities related to food and farming and the environment. Participants include children, vulnerable adults, and people experiencing loneliness and mental health challenges. Not only can participants learn growing and cooking skills in our new on-site teaching kitchen, but also experience an increased sense of well-being and connectedness, greater confidence, team-working, and life skills.

## Oxford City Council - Healthy Start Vouchers

Partnership working to increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers in Oxford



Healthy Start Vouchers support eligible pregnant women and young children to buy fruit, vegetables, and dairy and are funded centrally via the NHS. In January 2022 in Oxford City, around 240 eligible families were missing out on Healthy Start Vouchers, equivalent to £9,000 per week of unclaimed vouchers.

Through joined-up working across housing, health, and locality teams, the City Council has supported an additional 36 families to access the scheme since the start of 2022. Providing a dedicated contact point within the council to liaise with other teams and provide training, and communications materials has been pivotal to making this change happen.



## Sandy Lane Farm

Organic and regenerative agriculture

We are a traditional, mixed, family run farm in the South Oxfordshire countryside, passionate about growing organic veg. The team produces a wide diversity of vegetables in the farm's sandy soil. This is partly to spread the risk that is inherent when you farm without pesticides, partly to keep the soil healthy, and also to champion locally grown veg. Selling vegetables directly to our customers means better value for them and us, and a good variety of produce throughout the year keeps things interesting. The Bennett's commitment to organic growing is both a passion and a mission, and they utilise traditional farming methods - firmly backed by modern science. Biodiversity (above and below ground) is at the heart of organic farming, and our approach is try to keep 'nature in balance' every step of the way. Each year the farm's fields are bordered by beautiful 'beetle banks,' areas of wildflowers and grasses, sown to encourage pollinators and 'nature's pest controllers' to the crops. Early in 2020, the teams also planted nearly 1000 trees on the farm, a mini-agroforestry project which should improve irrigation, provide a habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as providing valuable aerial cover for the farm's 350 organic egg laying hens.



## Salt Cross Garden Village

Ambition to create better food environments in new developments, navigating complex planning challenges.

'a place to grow, a space to breathe'

West Oxfordshire's Salt Cross Garden Village is a landscape-led proposal. It hopes to tackle climate change, is proposing a zero-carbon community, and 25% biodiversity net gain. It hopes to contain 2,200 homes, 50% of which will be affordable within walkable neighbourhoods; a park and ride with 6 minute connection to Oxford City; and utilise the local rail station to Oxford and London.



Salt Cross's edible garden community aims to embed sustainable food systems and maximise food growing opportunities. It will connect people to growing, production, consumption, and contribute to local, fresh food supply.

It proposes: private and community food growing gardens, doorstep allotments, and community orchards; people coming together to cook, learn about, and celebrate changing seasons; careful species selections, hedgerows, woodland edges providing foraging grounds; edible trees and plants along walkways; places for residents to engage with growing food and nature. Planning, delivery, and stewardship challenges are being carefully considered with committed leadership, vision, and ambition. Salt Cross will be an edible garden community that will contribute to Good Food Oxfordshire's sustainable food network, providing healthy, fair, and environmentally sustainable food for all.



# We all need to act now to make this vision a reality

## Ideas for local councils

- Adopt a whole systems approach to food, ensuring that food is considered within health, climate, and economy policies and programmes
- Embed healthy and sustainable food and healthy weight environments within existing policies, plans, and targets
- Develop a specific food policy that encapsulates key themes and recommendations defined in the strategy
- Champion the development of district level Food Action Plans in partnership with other stakeholders to agree specific council commitments and measure progress against these
- Promote and support community groups and businesses working for a better food system through public procurement and access to resources
- Support vibrant, healthy food communities through access to skills and spaces for growing, cooking, and sharing food
- Lobby national government using local evidence and action
- Appoint food champions at cabinet level as conduits for food issues and action



ACT  
NOW

## Ideas for community groups

- Sign the [Oxfordshire Good Food Charter](#) and join a movement of collective action for a better food system for everyone in Oxfordshire
- Connect with a range of partners in your local food system to work together to solve local food problems like community food services, cooking and growing groups, councils, farms, and food businesses. Together we can do more. Contact [mail@gfo.org.uk](mailto:mail@gfo.org.uk) to find out more
- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, and agree specific commitments. Measure progress against these
- Join campaigns and events that bring communities together to grow, cook, and share food. Visit [gfo.org.uk](http://gfo.org.uk) to find out more



## Ideas for institutions and businesses

- Commit to buying more sustainably-produced local food for catering
- Participate in initiatives to scope and develop short, local supply chain solutions. Contact [mail@gfo.org.uk](mailto:mail@gfo.org.uk) to find out more
- Ensure food policies and reporting reflect health and sustainability targets, and link into net zero ambitions
- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, agree specific commitments and measure progress against these
- Adopt accreditation and measurement schemes that support food targets
- Engage employees around healthy, sustainable local food. Support campaigns and events. Visit [gfo.org.uk](http://gfo.org.uk) to find out more




## Ideas for individuals

- Support local organisations working to tackle food poverty and food waste
- Join local growing schemes. Visit [www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk) and [www.goodtogrowuk.org](http://www.goodtogrowuk.org) to find out more
- Use local sustainable food businesses and markets whenever possible
- Support and volunteer with campaigns and events that promote good food like cooking, nutrition, and growing programmes
- Participate in the develop of Food Action Plans for local areas
- Visit [gfo.org.uk](http://gfo.org.uk) or email [mail@gfo.org.uk](mailto:mail@gfo.org.uk) to find out more



End of part 1



 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM No 13</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PLAN</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Officer for West Oxfordshire District Council Tel: 01993 861658 Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To agree a revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan and development of an Action Plan that will underpin the delivery of the Council Plan. To agree a programme of engagement to inform the revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan and supporting Action Plan.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p>a) <i>That Cabinet agree to a revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan.</i> b) <i>That Cabinet agree to the development of an Action Plan setting out activity to be taken to deliver the priorities of the Council Plan.</i> c) <i>That Cabinet agree to a programme of engagement that will inform the revision of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan and development of supporting Action Plan.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The development of a revised Council Plan for West Oxfordshire will generate a new set of corporate priorities for the activity of West Oxfordshire District Council.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>A programme of engagement is proposed to give a wide range of stakeholders the opportunity to inform and influence the priorities of the revised Council Plan to ensure that it reflects the issues of importance to those living and working in West Oxfordshire. It is proposed that this will include:</p> <p>a) A digital public consultation open to all b) A Town and Parish Council Forum c) A stakeholder event for a range of organisations active in the District who may be potential partners for delivering the priorities of the revised Council Plan</p>

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** In May 2022 a new administration was voted into power at West Oxfordshire District Council and the Cabinet (made up of a cross party coalition, the West Oxfordshire Alliance) published an early set of priorities highlighting particular issues they seek to address during their tenure.
- 1.2.** The current adopted Council Plan 2020 – 2024 sets out 6 priorities established under the outgoing Conservative administration: climate action; healthy towns and villages; a vibrant district economy; strong local communities; meeting the housing needs of our changing population and modern council services and sustainable finance.
- 1.3.** It is timely given the new administration, and that the context in which these were developed has changed (not least by impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic), to revisit these priorities with a view to revising the West Oxfordshire Council Plan.
- 1.4.** A review provides an opportunity for engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public, to test that the priorities in the Council Plan correctly reflect the challenges facing the District today.
- 1.5.** The Council Plan will be underpinned by an Action Plan, setting out action to be taken by the Council in order to deliver Council Plan priorities. This will demonstrate that the Council is focussed on addressing issues that matter the most to those who live and work here.
- 1.6.** An up to date Council Plan will helpfully provide a corporate policy framework against which other areas of Council activity will sit, for example the review of the Local Plan (as the spatial strategy for the development of the District) and the allocation of £1,000,000 UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies to projects in the District.

## **2. PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

- 2.1.** Early discussions between Councillors and Officers have generated a set of 9 draft emerging priorities which provide a framework for discussions with stakeholders that will inform a review of the Council Plan:
  - Leading efforts and working with others to protect, restore and enhance the quality of West Oxfordshire’s natural and built environment.
  - Taking urgent action to address the climate and ecological crisis by working in partnership with others.
  - We will tackle inequalities by providing opportunities to everyone in West Oxfordshire to achieve their full potential.
  - Supporting businesses to ensure great opportunities for residents through a vibrant local economy and its services.
  - We will enable everyone to lead healthy and fulfilling lives in thriving communities.
  - We will help everyone live in a house that meets their needs.
  - Operate with a culture of openness, giving you a voice, choice, priority and access.
  - Securing your Council’s financial future to deliver on priorities and continuously improve your services.
  - We will work in partnership to influence and deliver more effective results for your communities.

- 2.2. In order to ensure that the priorities in the revised Council Plan correctly reflect the challenges facing the District today and address the issues that matter the most to those that live and work here wide reaching engagement is required. Three groups of stakeholders will be provided with an opportunity to input: the general public, Town and Parish Councils and organisations who are active in West Oxfordshire from the public, private and community and voluntary sectors.
- 2.3. To reach as broad and diverse an audience as possible a digital consultation will be held which will inform the Council Plan and the Local Plan, which is also in its early stages of development. This joint approach will have the benefit of enabling the public to input into both the Council Plan and the development of policy which will steer development of the District to 2041. By using digital platform CommonPlace (funded by the government's PropTech fund) there is an opportunity to make the consultation accessible, visual and interactive. The consultation will be designed to generate a strong steer on those issues that matter the most to the public and to enable the Council to sense check whether the emerging draft priorities are correct in emphasis.
- 2.4. To give the democratically elected representatives of the District's communities the opportunity to input in person, a Town and Parish Forum will be held. This will be a facilitated discussion to obtain the views of Town and Parish Council's about issues particularly relevant to their local communities. As with the digital public consultation, this is an opportunity to get an insight into local priorities and to also explore the potential for joint working between the District Council and the Town or Parish Council to address locally important issues. Where there are specific projects identified for delivering against the Council Plan priorities, these will be captured in the proposed Action Plan.
- 2.5. A stakeholder engagement event will be held for a range of organisations active in the District with remits that relate to West Oxfordshire's environment, economy and/or the community. This will provide an opportunity for the Council to benefit from their local insight and expertise, to identify where common interests lie and the potential for working jointly to deliver the priorities in the revised Council Plan.

### **3. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 3.1. Subject to the agreement of Members that a revision of the Council Plan should be undertaken and an Action Plan developed in support of this, the engagement programme to inform this should be undertaken with a view to presenting a Council Plan at Full Council in October 2022.
- 3.2. The three engagement activities will therefore be conducted as follows:
  - Joint Council Plan and Local Plan Digital Consultation: July/August 2022
  - Town and Parish Forum: August 2022
  - Stakeholder Event: August 2022
- 3.3. The outputs of the engagement programme will be analysed and these, together with contextual data on the profile of the District, will inform the development of the Council Plan.
- 3.4. On adoption of the revised Council Plan, the Action Plan will be developed specifying actions to be taken including detail on the role of the Council in this, required partner inputs, resources required and anticipated outputs with defined 'measures of success' to enable the Council to demonstrate that the Council Plan priorities are being delivered.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no legal implications arising directly from this Report.

#### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The purpose of the Council Plan is to direct effort towards priority issues and this should help ensure that resources are focussed on delivering what is most important to the Council. Any significant actions will be subject to the Council's corporate risk management approach and will, therefore, be tested in terms of risk likelihood, potential impact and identification of mitigation steps.

#### **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. The pursuit of a revised Council Plan should have a positive effect in terms of its equalities impact. It will be appropriate to complete an informed Equalities Impact Assessment as the work is further specified following development of priorities in the Council Plan and plans for delivery are outlined in the supporting Action Plan.

#### **7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None arising directly from this report. Addressing the climate and ecological crisis have been identified as a priority of Cabinet and will therefore be represented as an area of focus for Council attention and investment in a revised Council Plan.

#### **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1. Not relevant

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None.





**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET 13 JULY 2022</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 14</b>
Subject	<b>Financial Performance Report 2021/22 Year End</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Dan Levy Cabinet Member for Finance Email: dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Elizabeth Griffiths, Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861188 Email: Elizabeth.Griffith@westoxon.gov.uk
Annexes	Annex A – Revenue Outturn and Capital Programme
Recommendations	That Cabinet resolves to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Note the 2021/22 end of year financial performance.</li> <li>(b) Recommend to Council to approve the carry forward of Capital Budget of £14,399,348 as detailed in Annex B</li> <li>(c) Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report</li> <li>(d) Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to spend from the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve to fund ad hoc investigation, advice and consultancy services for potential investments and projects.</li> </ul>
Corporate priorities	Council approved its current Council Plan in January 2020. The Plan sets out a Council vision across a set of priority themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Climate Action</li> <li>2. Healthy Towns and Villages</li> <li>3. A Vibrant District Economy</li> <li>4. Strong Local Communities</li> <li>5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population</li> <li>6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance</li> </ol>
Key Decision	Yes
Exempt	No

## I. FINANCIAL POSITION AT YEAR END

- 1.1. 2021/22 was yet another year where the Council faced uncertainty over its finances. The annual budget included contingencies of £1.826 million relating to income from the Leisure contract and investment properties that was expected to be uncollectable. All income was discussed and budgeted in consultation with service managers but the reality was that it was very hard to predict how long the effects of the pandemic would last and what customers would do over the coming months. Areas such as parking income have still not recovered as expected even though restrictions have been lifted and consumers have been encouraged to return to the high streets.
- 1.2. In the end, our final position was a surplus, mainly driven by substantial amounts of Government grants received in the year. These replaced some income lost due to Covid, allowed us to provide additional services in targeted areas and delivered support and mitigation for some of the additional pressures we faced. Specifically it has funded temporary staff in areas such as Revenues and Benefits, Internal Audit and the Counter Fraud unit who are still dealing with not only post audit assurance on the multiple Covid grants schemes we administered on behalf of the government but also the new support payments being rolled out this year. This work sits on top of the regular requirement for Council Tax and rates billing and collection and has put a lot of pressure on these teams.
- 1.3. Not all of this additional funding was spent. The proposal detailed below is that some of it be channelled into new projects designed to address the ongoing recovery from the pandemic and to deliver Council priorities in the context of the current cost of living crisis. The balance will be taken to reserves. The Council still faces expected funding cuts and, in addition to an expected cost of living increase in salaries, is facing a significant rise in the cost of delivery of services such as waste which are heavily impacted by the rising cost of fuel. There is also ongoing pressure on income from the leisure sector which is projecting a £750k increase in utility costs over the coming year while still suffering from footfall which is lower than pre-pandemic levels. It is highly unlikely that grant income will continue at material levels given the Government's stance that the pandemic is over so retaining some surplus from last year to mitigate some of the current risk would be wise.
- 1.4. The Council received a significant amount of Section 31 grant which compensates for the income lost due to additional reliefs given to business rate payers in the year. This is given by the Government as a short term cashflow support to remove the impact created by the reduction in collectable grants. As such, it does need to be repaid over the business rates cycle and will be part of our payments in 2022/23. This will be moved to an earmarked reserve over the March 22 year end, ready to fund its repayment in the current (2022/23 financial year). This process is discussed in more detail in the funding section below.

## Revenue Budget Monitoring Outturn 2021/22

Service Area	Quarter 4			
	Original Budget 2021/22	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£	£
Democratic and Committee Services	952,702	927,704	961,455	33,751
Environmental & Regulatory Services	478,583	476,483	432,409	(44,074)
Environmental Services	7,088,145	6,925,385	6,893,323	(32,062)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	889,592	899,592	895,758	(3,834)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,801,649	1,819,751	1,772,129	(47,622)
Land, Legal & Property	863,453	807,046	776,394	(30,652)
Leisure & Communities	2,057,791	2,055,832	1,984,828	(71,004)
Planning & Strategic Housing	712,370	778,061	720,036	(58,025)
Revenues & Housing Support	894,923	749,354	790,479	41,125
Investment Property and Retained Services	(1,870,756)	(180,016)	(425,680)	(245,664)
<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>13,868,452</b>	<b>15,259,192</b>	<b>14,801,131</b>	<b>(458,061)</b>
<b>Plus:</b>				
Investment income receipts	(787,778)	(787,778)	(794,358)	(6,580)
<b>Cost of services before financing:</b>	<b>13,080,674</b>	<b>14,471,414</b>	<b>14,006,773</b>	<b>(464,642)</b>
S31 NNDR Compensation Grant	0		(5,212,642)	(5,212,642)
New Burdens	0		(308,548)	(308,548)
COVID LA Support Grant	0		(407,212)	(407,212)
COVID Sales, Fees & Charges Compensation Grant	0		(336,606)	(336,606)
General Government Grants	0		(18,254)	(18,254)
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	177,878	177,878	0	(177,878)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>177,878</b>	<b>177,878</b>	<b>(6,283,262)</b>	<b>(6,461,140)</b>
<b>Total contribution (to)/from General Fund</b>	<b>13,258,552</b>	<b>14,649,292</b>	<b>7,723,511</b>	<b>(6,925,782)</b>

Annex A contains the detailed analysis of variances with some of the key variances explained below.

- 1.5. The underachievement of parking income of £124,950 is consistent with reporting throughout the year. The performance of parking income continues to be significantly below budget in 2022/23 and may be indicative that this income stream will not recover because people have fundamentally changed their shopping habits over the course of the Pandemic. As our income comes from penalty charge notices the substantial reduction in income could be viewed as a success story in as much as people are now parking legally. Discussions are underway with Oxfordshire County Council for them to take back On Street Parking Enforcement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, this will be reflected in the budget setting process for 2023/24.
- 1.6. Income from Land Charges was £68,000 below target due to a combination of Covid and the significant rise in free unofficial Personal Searches (through Personal Search Agents) which made up 70% of Land Charges searches in the year. This is up from 58% in 2019/20. The Housing Market faces a challenge in 2022/23 from the loss of confidence caused by cost of living increases. Budgets for 2023/24 will begin to be reviewed in September, by which time

the trends in Personal Searches and the health of the Housing Market should begin to be apparent and can be built into our budget assumptions.

- 1.7. As part of our support for GLL, our leisure operator, the base budget in 2021/22 included a contingency equal to 100% of our budgeted income, effectively removing any expectation of management fees being paid in the year. This has been reversed in 2022/23 as the Council expects to receive the contracted income from GLL and they have confirmed their expectation to pay it. Given the reduced footfall however and the sharply rising cost of utilities, our leisure service continues to be a cause for concern and we are working with GLL to improve the leisure service's financial stability and therefore secure its provision.
- 1.8. Ubico who provide the Council's waste and environmental services returned a £140k saving on their £7.4m budget last year in spite of additional repair costs and an overspend on fuel. Publica delivered a saving of £70k against their budget of £9.4m. With the sharp increase in fuel costs and the inflationary pressures on salaries, both of these partners are expected to need to overspend their agreed 2022/23 budgets and this has been reflected in the movements to earmarked reserves.
- 1.9. Bank charges were almost £100k over budget in 2021/22 due to a combination of high transaction charges and an increase in transactions. The contract was renegotiated in Q3 of 2021/22 so the benefit of this will be seen in the 2022/23 budget.
- 1.10. Our base budget anticipated £325k less income from our investment properties as a result of the pandemic but a combination of reduced maintenance spend, better than expected income and additional rental streams from the new property purchased in Carterton saw that budget bettered by almost £250k. The Estates team have been working closely with tenants to manage the financial strains that Covid put them under arranging payment plans and renegotiating terms where appropriate. This careful management, combined with the efforts of our recently appointed credit controller who has been targeting old debt in areas like Trade Waste, combined with a review of processes to stop current invoicing becoming a problem, has seen our bad debt provision at year end reduce by an encouraging £383k.
- 1.11. The pandemic has seen a not unexpected rise in Council Tax arrears. At the end of 20/21, the arrears specific to that year stood at £2.65m. 62% of those have since been recovered. At the end of 21/22, the arrears relating to that year were £3.8m. The Revenue collection team remain confident that most can be recovered over the expected 2 year cycle.
- 1.12. The Government's Everyone In and Protect & Vaccinate policies continued into 2021/22 which required the Council to house more people at risk of homelessness than was required under our pre Covid statutory responsibilities. Our newly acquired service building, the Old Court came into use in the last quarter of the year after the necessary renovations had been completed, providing accommodation to 15 single clients.

- 1.13. The Council has had to utilise Hotel and Bed & Breakfast accommodation throughout the year but the Government has provided additional grant funding to offset these additional costs. Some of the Council's initiatives i.e. Our House and Housing First have relied on a combination of Rough Sleeper Initiative and Homelessness Prevention funding. The Rough Sleeper Initiative funding programme has now come to an end but provided the Council with additional income of £183,467 in the year together with additional Homelessness Prevention Grant of £153,117.
- 1.14. The use of Temporary Emergency Accommodation has an adverse impact on our receipt of Housing Benefit Subsidy, which in 2021/22 cost the Council £107,000 as we are only able to recover a small proportion of the Housing Benefit we pay out.
- 1.15. Much needed help and support has been provided to residents and business owners in the district over the course of the year, from the administration of £350k of Test & Trace payments, supporting the re-opening of the High Street through initiatives like the Loyalfree App which promotes local shops, the provision of Ice Skating in the Winter half term holidays and the use of £437,470 of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) which was used for grants to the voluntary sector, food vouchers, support for clinically extremely vulnerable residents and the enforcement of compliance measures. Although not shown in our income and expenditure report, £900K of unspent COMF was also moved to reserves at year end in line with CIPFA guidance. This funding was allocated to WODC by Oxfordshire County Council for specific Covid projects and resources which are already in progress
- 1.16. All Business Support grant schemes closed in 2021/22 and funds not distributed have either been returned to the Government or accrued pending their return in the current year. The remainder of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) was fully distributed in 2021/22 and the ARG Earmarked Reserve set up at the end of 2020/21 has been closed.
- 1.17. There will continue to be a significant amount of Post Payment Assurance work through 2022/23 which we have an obligation to carry out and New Burdens grant funding has been provided by the Government to offset the cost of the temporary resource employed to deliver this work.
- 1.18. Relatively small progress was made against the Council's Recovery Investment Strategy last year with only one suitable regeneration project found which met the Council's criteria. We are hopeful that, in spite of the difficulty in finding eligible projects, we will make more progress on this in 2022/23. In recognition of this, the proposal is to "slip" the full amount of unspent capital budget from 2021/22 (£12.6m) to the 2022/23 budget of £10m, making a total of £22.6m. This is still well within the overall budget of £74m agreed by Council, of which only £2.4m has been spent so far. In addition to this proposal it is suggested that delegated authority be given to the S151 officer to authorise spend from the Project Contingency earmarked reserve. This was set up at the end of last financial year to provide funding for ad hoc consultancy fees, legal fees, due diligence etc on projects and initiatives. This effectively provides a budget to develop and explore options and respond quickly to opportunities that arise. Additional funds are being added to the Project Contingency reserve from this year's

surplus in recognition of our desire to find and pursue more Council Plan investments this year.

- 1.19. Other movements to reserves reflect the current demands on our budget. The proposal is that additional funds are set aside for the revision of the Local Plan, to increase the funding available in the Council Priorities reserve and to cover expected inflationary budget pressures this year. A detailed list is shown below.

Proposed Transfers to Reserves	£	
Business Rates Deficit Reserve	5,212,642	Exceptional S31 grant to fund Business Rates deficit - to be repaid in accounting terms to the Collection Fund in 22/23 and in cash terms to the Government
Local Plan Review & AAP	100,000	£650k was budgeted for the Local Plan review but there is a possibility that it may cost more than this (based on other Council's expenditure) so this reserve could be applied to ease any additional requirements both in 2022/23 and beyond. The AAP has already cost slightly more than budget.
Council Priorities	450,000	Top up to replace monies moved from Council Priorities and ensure that WODC can fund future plans.
New Burdens Funding	258,548	Additional funding given by the Government in 2021/22 to cover additional resourcing for Covid related activities such as business grants and post payment assurance.
Pay Inflation	300,000	Expected additional pay award to address the cost of living increase in line with the NJC collective bargaining agreement. Actual increase tbc.
Other Inflationary Pressures	500,000	To compensate for additional increases in overheads such as fuel that have risen by far greater amounts than the budget anticipated.
Project Contingency Reserve	100,000	Additional budget allocation for due diligence and legal costs on potential opportunities.
Transfer to General Reserve	4,592	Residual surplus to be taken to General Fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,925,782</b>	

- 1.20. In 2020, as we made plans to support the residents through the Pandemic, we developed Covid Recovery workstreams and set aside £650k of funding from the Council Priority Reserve in order to facilitate delivery of a suite of two year programmes. With the bulk of these either delivered or nearing completion, the proposal is that another set of projects be initiated to respond to both the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the new cost of living crisis facing our residents. This new allocation of funding would come from Earmarked Reserves but draw less heavily on Council funds by repurposing grant funding received in previous years but no longer required for its original project. In spending it now, consideration would be given to the purpose it was originally intended for where possible.

Original purpose of reserve	£
To improve affordable accommodation options for young people under 35	48,074
To encourage the usage of brownfield land for residential development	28,332
New burdens grant funding received pre Brexit to assist with mitigations	34,968
Funding for projects promoting and improving biodiversity	25,000
New burdens funding to assist with additional Council spend through Covid	170,000
Council Priorities reserve	443,626
<b>Total funding available for new initiatives</b>	<b>750,000</b>

## 2 RETAINED BUSINESS RATES AND POOLING

- 2.1 The accounting arrangements for Business Rates are complex and statute requires recognition of items charged in one financial year to be resolved in the following year i.e. the deficit arising in 2021/22 (the shortfall in collectable rates vs expected due to the Govt's reliefs) will be repaid to the Collection Fund in 2022/23. This deficit has therefore been budgeted for in 2022/23 and is funded by the exceptional S31 grant received in 2021/22. The deficit is £5.212m and will be carried over from 21/22 as per the table above and held in earmarked reserves until repayment.
- 2.2 In the 21/22 budget, Retained Business Rates income accounted for 33% of funding for Council services but our ability to collect it was impacted by the continuation of Extended Retail Discount announced by the Government in March 2021. This provided eligible businesses with 100% relief from Business Rates for Q1 of 2021/22 and 66% relief for the remainder of the year. As a result the amount of Business Rate income we collected this year fell to £29,591,598 against an original budget of £40,635,609.
- 2.3 As the Billing Authority we collect 100% of the 'payable' income but distribute 50% of the 'budgeted' income to Central Government & 10% to the County Council on a monthly basis (regardless of whether the actual cash collected has reduced significantly due to Govt reliefs).
- 2.4 Similarly to 2020/21 this resulted in an enormous pressure on Billing Authorities' cash flow, which the Government recognised and accordingly gave monthly compensatory cash flow support payments to Councils for income that had been lost due to the extension of Retail Relief.
- 2.5 The table below shows the calculation of the budgeted / expected Business Rate income for the Council vs the Actual. The distribution of income is set through NNDR I at the

point the budget is set, with the uncollectable income being compensated through S31 grant. You can also see the funding of the deficit payable in the year through earmarked reserves, as discussed in the 2020/21 outturn report. We have an identical situation in 2021/22, where we must repay £5.212m of deficit in 2022/23 and therefore need to move that amount to earmarked reserves.

	<b>Budget 2021/22 £m</b>	<b>Actual 2021/22 £m</b>	
Total Business Rate Income	40.636	29.591	Expected vs Collectable
WODC Business Rates Income (40%)	16.254	16.254	WODC receive 40%. 50% goes to Govt with 10% going to County.
Less Tariff	(12.035)	(12.035)	Govt specified adjustment to reduce our collected rates to the baseline funding level they determine.
NDR Deficit Payable from the Collection Fund	(6.877)	(6.877)	Fixed at Budget Setting
S31 Grant	1.844	1.844	Grant received to compensate for lost business rates income due to Central Gov policy
Renewable Energy	0.209	0.209	Income retained by WODC for renewable energy schemes
Business Rates Income	<b>(0.605)</b>	<b>(0.605)</b>	
Less Levy	(1.706)	(0.491)	
Net Business Rates	<b>(2.311)</b>	<b>(1.096)</b>	
Exceptional S31 Grant	0	3.739	Grant received to compensate for lost business rates income due to Extended Retail Discount
Tax Income Guarantee	0	0.044	Compensation from Central Govt for 75% of Business Rate income losses compared to budget.
Movement from reserves	7.101	6.877	To fund the Collection Fund deficit paid out in the year relating to 2020/21
Movement to Reserves		(5.212)	To fund the Collection Fund deficit repayable in 2022/23
Retained Business Rates	<b>4.790</b>	<b>4.352</b>	

2.6 The Council has again benefitted from being part of the Oxfordshire Pool in 21/22. An estimated gain of £731,119 was recognised in the 2021/22 outturn based on figures provided by the Pool lead (actual figure yet to be confirmed).

2.7 Changes to the Business Rate Retention Scheme were due to be implemented by Central Government in 2020/21 but were delayed due to the impact on businesses of the pandemic. A Consultation of the 2023 Business Rates Revaluation transitional arrangements has been published by DLUHC which will close on 25<sup>th</sup> July and changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme may go live in 2023/24. The government has indicated that the settlement this year will cover the next two years instead of the usual



one. While many doubt that the rates reset will be implemented next year due to the many other pressures that Councils are facing, it could be that a two year settlement allows them to give notice to Councils of a funding cut in the following year.

### 3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The capital programme approved by Council as part of the budget for 2021/22 totalled £24,134,389. At year end £5,685,947 had been spent against this budget.
- 3.2 A significant item of expenditure was the purchase of The Old Court in Witney for use as temporary emergency accommodation for 15 clients at risk of homelessness and the purchase of Plots 1-3 Carterton Industrial Estate which will bring in a rental income of £280,000 per annum to the Council.
- 3.3 The majority of the underspend is £12.6m related to the Recovery Investment strategy due to the difficulty in finding investment opportunities that comply with the restrictive borrowing requirements of the PWLB and offer the level of return required in the Council's approved Investment Strategy. Work is ongoing to identify and investigate investment opportunities and the recommendation is that this sum is carried forward to 2022/23's capital budget.
- 3.4 A full breakdown of the schemes for the year and expenditure at 31<sup>st</sup> March is attached at Annex A.

## Comparison of Q4 Budget Monitoring

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Democratic Services</b>			
DRM001-Democratic Representation and Mgmt.	97,440	99,084	1,644
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	392,050	430,750	38,700
ELE001-Registration of Electors	71,200	67,709	(3,491)
ELE002-District Elections	39,102	39,102	0
ELE004-Parliamentary Elections	0	0	0
ELE005-Parish Elections	0	0	0
ELE006-County Elections	0	0	0
ELE007-European Elections	0	0	0
ELE008-Police & Crime Commissioner Elections	0	0	0
SUP001-Administration	327,912	324,811	(3,101)
<b>Total - Democratic Services</b>	<b>927,704</b>	<b>961,455</b>	<b>33,751</b>

DRM002 - £12,500 overspend due to an error in the Councillors Allowances budget, £2k additional National Insurance contributions due to a National Budget change, £2.5k additional costs to post out committee papers when face to face meetings were not possible, £19,000 on annual printing recharge (Committee Papers)

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>			
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning	(139,924)	(129,019)	10,905
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning	68,454	71,887	3,433
EMP001-Emergency Planning	13,723	7,611	(6,112)
ESM001-Environment – SMSS	106,541	91,563	(14,978)
PSH002-Private Sector Housing	3,000	0	(3,000)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	0	0
REG002-Licensing	8,777	(36,801)	(45,578)
REG009-Environmental Protection	168,332	165,943	(2,389)
REG011-Authorised Process	(11,900)	(10,063)	1,837
REG013-Pollution Control	122,897	118,462	(4,435)
REG016-Food Safety	129,283	131,495	2,212
REG021-Statutory Burials	5,000	7,598	2,598
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	1,900	13,068	11,168
<b>Total - Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>	<b>476,483</b>	<b>432,409</b>	<b>(44,074)</b>

BUC001 - Building Control income is £15,000 behind budget but is an increase of £59,000 from 2020/21. There is a small underspend of £4,000 in the supplies & services budget. Income targets will be reviewed as part of the 23/24 budget setting process

ESM001 - £5k underspend on legal expenses, £10k underspend on IT maintenance. These are legacy budgets which were not spent in 20/21 or 21/22 and have been removed in 22/23

REG002 - £45,828 total overachievement of income of which £26,813 relates to taxi/private hire licences/knowledge test. Many drivers let their licences lapse in 2020/21 and so there have been an increase in renewals in 2021/22 as Covid restrictions have lifted

TAC309 - £10k underachievement of income, compared to an underachievement of £20k in 19/20 and £54k in 20/21. The 22/23 income budget has been reduced by £16k.

Q4 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

**Finance, Human Resources & Procurement**

SUP003-Human Resources	165,245	154,824	(10,421)
HLD302-Miscellaneous Cash	0	100	100
HLD313-Lease Cars	0	0	0
SUP009-Accountancy	320,163	320,006	(157)
SUP010-Internal Audit	159,725	170,708	10,983
SUP011-Creditors	41,478	38,921	(2,557)
SUP012-Debtors	55,326	55,702	376
SUP013-Payroll	56,679	54,062	(2,617)
SUP019-Health & Safety	30,614	30,614	0
SUP020-Training & Development	26,599	26,656	57
SUP033-Central Purchasing	34,830	34,850	20
SUP035-Insurances	8,933	9,314	381

**Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement**


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<b>899,592</b>	<b>895,758</b>	<b>(3,834)</b>
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SUP003 - £11k underspend in legacy budgets that are no longer required, removed in 22/23

SUP010 - CFU costs not budgeted for in 21/22, corrected in 22/23 budget (£13k)

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>ICT, Change &amp; Customer Services</b>			
SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	116,276	115,225	(1,051)
HLD301-ICT Purchases	0	(0)	(0)
SUP005-ICT	795,521	767,070	(28,451)
SUP006-Telephones	10,000	6,645	(3,355)
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	462,356	450,538	(11,818)
SUP014-Cashiers	6,400	4,798	(1,602)
SUP041-Business Solutions	284,113	291,366	7,253
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(4,799)	(22,580)	(17,781)
TOU002-Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	149,884	159,067	9,183
<b>Total - ICT, Change &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>1,819,751</b>	<b>1,772,129</b>	<b>(47,622)</b>

SUP005 - £9k underspend on equipment & software licences/maintenance, £16k underspend Publica contract

SUP008 - underspends in legacy budgets - protective clothing & software licences, removed in 22/23 budget

TMR002 - £11k overachievement of income, £6k underspend equipment purchase, removed in 22/23 budget (EP)

TOU002 - VIC closing and the effect on income - obsolete stock sold at a reduced rate plus redundancy costs

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Land, Legal &amp; Property</b>			
ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	26,668	18,314	(8,354)
ADB302-Guildhall	12,163	13,613	1,450
ADB303-Woodgreen	195,113	192,827	(2,286)
ADB304-Elmfield	169,037	167,082	(1,955)
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	398,904	369,887	(29,017)
ADB306-Depot	(35,367)	(35,067)	300
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(157,968)	(90,018)	67,950
SUP004-Legal	245,879	212,467	(33,412)
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Witney	(47,383)	(72,711)	(25,328)
<b>Total - Land, Legal &amp; Property</b>	<b>807,046</b>	<b>776,394</b>	<b>(30,652)</b>

ADB301 - There is a £4k underspend on electricity, due to the Town Centre Shop being closed for a significant portion of the year and £4k overachievement of service charges to our tenants

ADB305 - £10K underspend repairs & maintenance, £7k prof fees, £6k rental income from Wychwood Project for office space charged for 20/21 & 21/22, £6k underspend standby payments (Ubico)

LLC001 - £68k underachievement of income, discussed in the Outturn report

SUP004 - £23k underspend prof fees normally spent on Barristers for specialist areas of law that we are unable to resource in-house. £13k underspend shared service costs due to less than 100% employment in the Legal Team in 21/22, £4k overspend in retained employee costs

TAC303 - £11k underspend premises costs for repairs and maintenance which has not been required and £2k additional income.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Leisure &amp; Communities</b>			
CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	22,687	21,212	(1,475)
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	11,393	14,735	3,342
CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant	218,820	189,814	(29,006)
CCT001-CCTV	89,100	92,646	3,546
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	89,064	75,691	(13,373)
CUL001-Arts Development	54,737	52,176	(2,651)
ECD001-Economic Development	67,382	65,760	(1,622)
REC001-Sports Development	96,746	97,676	930
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	50,285	51,922	1,637
REC003-Play	31,402	45,329	13,927
REC301-Village Halls	13,349	13,936	587
REC302-Contract Management	1,013,774	972,925	(40,849)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	100,269	103,661	3,392
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	196,824	187,344	(9,480)
<b>Total - Leisure &amp; Communities</b>	<b>2,055,832</b>	<b>1,984,828</b>	<b>(71,004)</b>

CCR301 - Fewer grants paid out in the year than anticipated

CSM001 - £13k underspend in legacy supplies & services budget £10k removed in 22/23

REC003 - £13k repairs to Kilkenny play area

REC302 - £17k underspend equipment purchase & professional fees, £21k Solar income invoiced to GLL not budgeted for, £8k dual use payment from school, £7k overspend premises insurance

TOU001 - Legacy supplies & services budget underspends, £5k removed in 22/23 budget

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Environmental Services</b>			
CCC001-Climate Change	141,088	132,874	(8,214)
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	20,955	16,107	(4,848)
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	233,312	257,404	24,092
CPK011-On Street Civil Parking			
Enforcement	17,942	113,608	95,666
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	450,400	457,487	7,087
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	839	(2,806)	(3,645)
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land			
Drainage	148,045	144,710	(3,335)
REG004-Dog Warden	55,320	57,086	1,766
REG005-Public Health Sewerage	(24)	798	822
REG018-Pest Control	14,000	9,069	(4,931)
REG019-Public Conveniences	180,477	152,873	(27,604)
REG023-Environmental Strategy	80,067	72,048	(8,019)
RYC001-Recycling	2,614,908	2,719,992	105,084
RYC002-Green Waste	145,460	(72,302)	(217,762)
STC001 – Street Cleansing	0	0	780
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	1,031,390	1,019,928	(11,462)
STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles	0	(2,086)	(2,086)
TRW001-Trade Waste	45,560	119,305	73,745
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(1,100)	(29)	1,071
WST001-Household Waste	1,702,393	1,655,320	(47,073)
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	13,268	(3,549)	(16,817)
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd,			
Witney	31,085	44,704	13,619
<b>Total - Environmental Services</b>	<b>6,925,385</b>	<b>6,893,323</b>	<b>(32,062)</b>

Car Parks - in line with in year reporting, Oxfordshire County Council likely to take back on street enforcement on 1st April 2023

REG019 - £45k saving on cleaning contract, £17k underachievement of income due to reduction in usage

RYC001 - £239k overspend Suez contract 22/23 budget increased by £300k, £20k additional income (recycling credits) due to fluctuations in recyclate prices, £58k Ubico contract refund, £17k underspend in marketing, £39k underspend in legacy IT maintenance, software licences and professional fees £15k removed in 22/23

RYC002 - as reported in year, budget incorrect, corrected in 2022/23



STC004 - £20k Ubico contract refund, £9k overspend protective clothing

TRW001 - £14k contract refund, £18k below income target (Schedule 1 £47k). £107k reduction in bad debt provision credited to Revenue. The remaining variance is due to a change in Q2 in the way we manage tipping charges payable to Oxfordshire County Council. This has been adjusted in 22/23

WST001 - £29k Ubico contract refund, £12k underspend on new bins, £6k underspend marketing

WST004 - £17k overachievement of income

WST301 - £13k repairs & maintenance overspend

Q4 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

#### Planning & Strategic Housing

DEV001-Development Control -

Applications

(369,994) (364,148) 5,846

DEV002-Development Control - Appeals

76,183 76,272 89

DEV003-Development Control -

Enforcement

155,578 155,876 298

ECD301-WOSP

10,575 1,575 (9,000)

ENA001-Housing Enabling

116,178 98,567 (17,611)

ENI301-Landscape Initiatives

51,588 51,158 (430)

HLD315-Growth Board Project

(Planning)

20,400 20,401 1

PLP001-Planning Policy

470,208 462,163 (8,045)

PLP003-Implementation

(917) 0 917

PLP004-Conservation

85,115 86,220 1,105

PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt. &

Support Serv

163,147 131,952 (31,195)

**Total - Planning & Strategic Housing**

**778,061 720,036 (58,025)**

ECD301 - Town Team project underspend £9k on professional fees

ENA001 - £18k legacy supplies & services budget for Professional Fees & Printing, reduced in 22/23 by £8k

PSM001 - £19k underspend professional fees usually spent on consultancy & feasibility studies, £14k underspend on printing removed in 22/23

Q4 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

**Retained Services**

COR002-Chief Executive	240,563	257,462	16,899
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	67,144	78,909	11,765
COR004-Public Relations	12,060	10,239	(1,821)
COR005-Corporate Finance	325,556	330,716	5,160
COR006-Treasury Management	26,700	16,236	(10,464)
COR007-External Audit Fees	57,000	78,017	21,017
COR008-Bank Charges	69,200	166,271	97,071
COR302-Publica Group	123,568	147,743	24,175
COV022 – Covid Grants	1,762,767	1,758,701	(4,066)
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(437,864)	(556,724)	(118,860)
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(790,895)	(826,090)	(35,195)
FIE343-Talisman	(1,296,450)	(1,450,635)	(154,185)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(498,100)	(528,404)	(30,304)
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	(40,865)	(46,524)	(5,659)
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	599,100	646,949	47,849
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(166,350)	(185,420)	(19,070)
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(221,950)	(302,008)	(80,058)
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(11,200)	(18,350)	(7,150)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	0	(2,770)	(2,770)
<b>Total - Retained Services</b>	<b>(180,016)</b>	<b>(425,680)</b>	<b>(245,644)</b>

COR002 - £13k ARC membership not budgeted for

COR003 - contribution to Countywide Policy & Partnership Manager

COR007 - additional costs from KPMG related to Revs & Bens audit

COR008 - the £97k overspend is in line with reporting in the year. As transactional volume goes up, so do our bank charges but we should see a significant drop in expenditure in 2022/23 due to a renegotiation of the banking contract.

COR302 - error in the base budget (income) relating to Overhead Recharges to Publica corrected in 22/23

FIE341 - contingency £68k higher than lost rental income, £20k income relates to 20/21, £32k reduction in bad debt provision credited to Revenue

FIE343 - £55k underspend premises costs i.e. repairs & maintenance/Business Rates, £20k higher contingency than lost income

NDC001 - on a monthly basis the Council pays the LGPS a compensation payment and a deficiency payment. These payments bring our pension pot in line with the actuaries estimate.

TAC305 - Additional income from purchase of Units 1 -3 Carterton Ind Estate

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Revenues &amp; Housing Support</b>			
HBP001-Rent Allowances	202,419	273,246	70,827
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	(7,000)	59	7,059
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	120,144	120,436	292
HOM001-Homelessness	215,581	194,700	(20,881)
HOM002-Homelessness Grants	10,000	0	(10,000)
HOM003-Rent In Advance Scheme	0	362	362
HOM004-Refugees	5,808	5,808	0
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel			
Accommodation	11,586	11,448	(138)
HOM006 - The Old Court	0	(12,666)	(12,666)
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	119,314	115,707	(3,607)
LTC002-Council Tax Support			
Administration	146,538	144,679	(1,859)
LTC011-NNDR Collection	(59,926)	(48,697)	11,229
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	46,269	46,368	99
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(61,379)	(60,970)	409
<b>Total - Revenues &amp; Housing Support</b>	<b>749,354</b>	<b>790,479</b>	<b>41,125</b>

HBP001 - £107k impact of additional temporary emergency accommodation on subsidy reclaim, £34k refund from HMCTS for overcharging of liability orders in prior years

HOM001 - £16k reduction in bad debt provision credited to Revenue

LTC011 - cost of collection budget is £10k higher than that provided in NNDR I

## ANNEX B

### Capital Slippage - 2021/22

The annual Revenue Budget setting process requires the Council to put forward a 10 year Capital Programme of estimated future expenditure.

It is only expenditure that is funded through Revenue that is approved through the budget setting process. Capital Expenditure funded through Earmarked Reserves, S106, Grants, Borrowing or External Contributions all require a business case to be submitted to Members for approval.

Scheme	2021/22 Budget	2021/22 Actual	Funded By	Over / (Underspend)	Recommend c/f	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Total Budget
In-cab technology	140,000	137,749	Borrowing	-2,251			
Replacement dog and litter bins	52,701	135,400	Borrowing	82,699		25,000	
Replacement Street Sweepers	200,000	183,477	Borrowing	-16,523			
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	1,004,374	186,533	Borrowing	-817,841		1,080,000	1,080,000 a
Vehicle & Plant Renewal	70,157		Borrowing	-70,157			
Unicorn CPO purchase provision	700,000		Borrowing	-700,000			
Welch Way building renovation project	75,000	23,803	Borrowing	-51,197	51,197		51,197 b
Electric vehicle recharging points	400,000		Borrowing	-400,000	200,000		200,000 c
Property Purchase in Carterton	2,400,462	2,400,462	Borrowing				
Investment Strategy for Recovery	12,599,538		Borrowing	-12,599,538	12,599,538	10,000,000	22,599,538
Old Court House, Witney	1,452,750	1,427,690	Borr/RTB receipts	-25,060			
CCTV - Upgrade	200,000	0	Capital Receipts	-200,000		300,000	300,000
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000	0	Capital Receipts	-10,000		10,000	10,000
Cottsway - Blenheim Court Growth Deal	170,500		Ext Contribution	-170,500		170,500	170,500 d
Cottsway - Lavender Place Growth Deal	99,000		Ext Contribution	-99,000	99,000		99,000 d
Affordable Housing in Witney (Heylo)	1,761,875		Ext Cont'n/S106	-1,761,875			1,761,875 e
Improvement Grants (DFG)	606,800	766,880	Grant	160,080	200,950	606,800	807,750 f
Carterton Leisure Centre PSDS Project			Grant			1,300,000	
Deployment of High Speed Broadband	1,230,366	0	Reserves	-1,230,366	1,230,366		1,230,366 g
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	112,244	14,983	Revenue Cont'n	-97,260		100,000	
Council Buildings Maint Programme	325,000		Revenue Cont'n	-325,000		200,000	200,000
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000	16,002	Revenue Cont'n	-23,998		40,000	
Community Grants Fund	325,115	167,426	Revenue Cont'n	-157,689		200,000	200,000
Madley Park playing Fields Project	6,165		S106	-6,165		6,165	6,165
Abbeycare - Public Art	0	3,410	S106	3,410			
Play Parks	0	0	S106			100,000	100,000
EVCP Woolgate			S106				167,000
Chipping Norton Creative	30,063	11,766	S106	-18,297	18,297	10,000	28,297
Carterton Connects Creative (S106)	47,280	6,909	S106	-40,371		44,500	44,500
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000		S106	-75,000		75,000	
Developer Capital Contributions		203,455	S106	203,455			
	<b>24,134,389</b>	<b>5,685,947</b>		<b style="color: red;">-18,448,443</b>	<b>14,399,348</b>	<b>14,267,965</b>	<b>29,056,188</b>

Where funding is noted as "borrowing", this could be internal or external. To date no external borrowing has been undertaken.

a) The budget for Ubico vehicles relates to the replacement of leased vehicles with owned vehicles. This replacement programme was slower than anticipated in 2021/22 due to the lead times on vehicles increasing to an average of 20 weeks.

b) The residual suggested budget for Welch Way renovations has been slipped forward to 2022/23 in recognition that there is an appetite under the Agile work programme for further changes to be made to the building. This will still need a business case to be brought forward for any further work to be done.

c) The EVCP charging points in Burford will cost less than £50k and other locations have been deployed under the County funding scheme so the capital budget allocated to this has been reduced with £200k being carried forward pending further business cases coming forward.

d) The capital programme budget for 2021/22 includes the final contract payments to Cottsway for the Affordable Housing schemes at Blenheim Court and Lavender Place. These final payments represent 10% of the total contract cost and are held back until the schemes are certified as fully completed. These final payments will go out in 2022/23.

e) The Council's partnership with Heylo for the provision of Affordable Housing is funded through a combination of Future Oxford Partnership funding and S106. The payment will go out in 2022/23.

f) The expenditure on Improvement Grants (Disabled Facilities Grant) in the year was higher than anticipated, but this expenditure is fully funded by a Grant. The grant for 2022/23 has been confirmed at £807,750.

g) The deployment of High Speed Broadband was funded 50% by Government Grant and 50% through Earmarked Reserves. The project is complete and the payment to Gigaclear will go out in 2022/23 on receipt of their invoice.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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