

# Public Document Pack



Tuesday 20 January 2024

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## COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of Council, which will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB, on **Wednesday, 28 February 2024 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council:

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Elizabeth Poskitt (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Colin Dingwall, Jane Doughty, Duncan Enright, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Jackson, Edward James, Mark Johnson, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Lysette Nicholls, Mathew Parkinson, Rosie Pearson, Rizvana Poole, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Tim Sumner, Dean Temple, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray.

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, 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. **Apologies for Absence**  
To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Council.
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Council on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 24)**  
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 31 January 2024.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**  
To receive any announcements from the Chair, Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive, the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Governance and the Director of Finance.
5. **Participation of the Public**  
No requests for public participation were received by the deadline of 12.00pm on Monday 19 February 2024.
6. **Questions by Members**  
The following questions have been submitted by Members of Council to Members of the Executive, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 5A, Rule 12). Oral responses will be provided at the meeting. Following receipt of the answer to their question, Members are entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting. The Questions and Answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.  
  
**Question 1 from Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities:**  
Can you tell us how many local organisations have been successful in reaching their fundraising goals through Westhive and how much has WODC given so far (not including current pledges)?  
  
**Question 2 from Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:**  
Can the Executive Member provide a breakdown of costings for the refurbishment of Committee Rooms 1 and 2?  
  
**Question 3 from Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects:**  
There is a significant sum of S106 money which is designated for an Adventure Play Area in West Witney. Can the Executive Member provide me with an update on the progress on this please?
7. **Recommendations from the Executive (Pages 25 - 56)**  
Purpose:  
To agree recommendations made to Council by the Executive from its meetings since 31 January 2024, other than recommendations relating to the budget which are included at agenda item 9.

Recommendation:

The Executive resolved to recommend to Council to:

1. Adopt the Nature Recovery Plan as part of the Council's compliance with the new biodiversity duty.

8. **Report of the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the budget estimates, adequacy of the Council's reserves and risk 2024/25** (Pages 57 - 64)

Purpose

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Financial Officer to make a report to the Council on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the report and have regard to it when making its decisions about budget and Council Tax for 2024/25.

9. **Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy** (Pages 65 - 192)

Purpose

To provide the proposed budget for 2024/25, whilst also considering approval for:

- 1) The draft base budgets for 2024/25
- 2) The Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33
- 3) The level of Council Tax for 2024/25
- 4) The Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 5) The Council's Financial Strategies
- 6) Fees and Charges
- 7) The Council's Pay Policy Statement

Recommendation

The Executive resolved to recommend the following to Council for approval:

1. The General Fund revenue budgets as summarised in Annex B.
2. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy in Annex C.
3. The Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33 as set out in Annex E.
4. Fees and charges for 2024/25, as detailed in Annex J and K.
5. The Council's Pay Policy Statement as set out in Annex M.
6. The Council's Capital Strategy as set out in Annex N
7. The Council's Investment Strategy as set out in Annex O
8. The Council's Treasury Strategy as set out In Annex P

10. **Council Tax 2024/2025** (Pages 193 - 196)

Purpose

To enable the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2024/25.

Recommendation

That Council passes the resolution set out in Annex A to the report.

11. **Motions on notice**

No motions were received by the deadline of 12.00pm on Monday 19 February 2024.

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of a meeting of Council.

Held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB, at 2.00pm on  
**Wednesday 31 January 2024.**

### PRESENT

Councillors: Elizabeth Poskitt (Chair), Joy Aitman, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Lidia Arciszewska, Hugo Ashton, Andrew Beaney, Julian Cooper, Colin Dingwall, Jane Doughty, Duncan Enright, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Jackson, Edward James, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, Mathew Parkinson, Rosie Pearson, Rizvana Poole, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St. John, Tim Sumner, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Phil Martin (Assistant Director, Business Services), Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Phil Shaw (Business Manager, Development Management), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Sharon Ellison (Electoral Services Manager) and Andrew Thomson (Planning Policy Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Nil.

### **CL.124 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from the following Members:

Councillors Andrew Coles, Mark Johnson and David Melvin.

Councillor Ed James arrived late to the meeting at 2.06pm.

### **CL.125 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members of the Council.

### **CL.126 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 29 November 2023, be agreed by Council as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chair.

This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright and was put to a vote. There were 43 votes for, 0 votes against and 3 abstentions. The vote was carried.

Council **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 29 November 2023, as a true and accurate record.

### **CL.127 Receipt of Announcements**

Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt, Vice-Chair of the Council, stated that they had attended a number of events in the absence of the Chair of the Council, which were enjoyable experiences. The Vice-Chair stated that the 'Oxfordshire Together' event was of significant personal enjoyment.

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Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, rose to thank the Agile Working Project Team, including Carl Jones (Corporate Project Manager), Phil Martin (Assistant Director for Business Services), and Paul Webb (Facilities Manager) for their hard work and commitment to providing the Council with a fully refurbished Council Chamber and also modern technology and working practises, allowing Council to be more engaging with the public and the wider community.

The Leader also paid tribute to the work of the Council's Senior Democratic Services Officer, Max Thompson, for his hard work and commitment in ensuring that the new webcasting technology was fully operational and in working order ahead of the meeting. The Leader also stated his continued thanks to the wider Democratic Services team for their continued efforts in the round.

The Leader also advised Members and Officers of the appointments that had been made in relation to the Publica Transition. Frank Wilson had recently taken up the position of Interim Managing Director, and Dr. Christine Gore had taken up post as Chair of the Publica Board. The Leader also welcomed Andrew Pollard to his role at Programme Director, overseeing the Publica Review process.

The Leader also updated Council regarding the closure of Welch Way in Witney, owing to structural building damage caused by recent inclement weather. The Leader stated that the Council's Town Centre 'Shop' in the centre of Witney had closed as a result of the damage, with staff relocated to the Council's Woodgreen Offices until it was deemed safe for the offices to re-open.

The Leader made reference to the inconvenience this had caused to the wider community. The Council had worked closely with other local authorities in the area, and the emergency services. The Leader ensured that work would continue to ensure the safe opening of the road and area as soon as possible.

#### **CL.128 Committee Appointments Made under Delegated Authority**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which allowed Council to ratify and note the appointments made to committees under delegated authority, following the a recent meeting of Council on 27 September 2023, where political proportionalities on committees were reviewed, and where changes to the structure of overview and scrutiny committees were agreed.

The Leader stated the following changes from the Liberal Democrats group:

- Councillor David Melvin had been nominated to the Constitution Working Group;
- Councillor Julian Cooper had been nominated to the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee.

Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Opposition, advised Council that Councillor Thomas Ashby had been appointed to replace Councillor Dean Temple on the Council's Constitution Working Group.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council agree the recommendations as listed on the report, with the nominations and Member appointments noted. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

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Council **Resolved** to:

1. Ratify and note the appointments to committees made by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the wishes of political groups.
2. Appoint one Liberal Democrat member (Councillor David Melvin) to the Constitution Working Group, increasing the size of the working group to 7 members;
3. Note that Councillor Julian Cooper was nominated to the vacant seat on the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee (for later appointment by the Licensing Committee).

#### **CL.129** Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

#### **CL.130** Questions by Members

Questions by Members, as listed on the agenda, and the responses to those questions, which were circulated in advance, were taken as read.

The Chair invited the questioners to ask a supplementary question if they wished and then invited the relevant Executive Members to respond.

The Written Questions, Written Answers, Verbal Supplementary Questions and Verbal Supplementary Answers are detailed in a separate document appended to the Minutes of the Meeting.

#### **CL.131** Recommendations from the Executive

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which sought to agree recommendations made to Council by the Executive, from its meetings since 29 November 2023, and approve of the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025, as recommended by the Executive on 17 January 2024.

The Executive Member advised Council of an anomaly within the recommendations listed on the report, where there was a £ sign in front of the number 47,851.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the Council Tax Base shown in Annex F of the original Executive report, calculated as 47,841 for the year 2024/25;
2. Authorise the Director of Finance to submit the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 1 (NNDRI) to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by the submission date of 31 January 2024.

#### **CL.132** Council Tax Support Scheme 2024-2025

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which presented the results of the public consultation on proposals for revising the current Council Tax Support scheme, with effect from 1 April 2024.

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The Chair advised Council of some clerical errors contained within the recommendations listed on the report, and clarified that the agreed resolutions would reflect the correct paragraph numbers referenced in the report.

In debate, Members queried the meaning of 'Income Bands' which related to information contained within the report. The Executive Member stated that the information related to weekly income per household. Members also suggested that information relating to uptakes in Hardship Funding be made more accessible by organisations aiding the most vulnerable.

Councillor Colin Dingwall made a declaration of interest relating to this agenda item, stating that he would abstain from the vote.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed that Council agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham and was put to the vote. There were 45 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 1 abstention (Councillor Colin Dingwall).

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to increase Council Tax Support, as detailed in paragraph 2.5 from 1 April 2024;
2. Agree that any surplus in the Support Fund is transferred over to 2024/2025 for reasons detailed in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8;
3. Approve the amendment to the Council Tax Support Policy as recommended in paragraph 2.9.

#### **CL.133 Recommendations from the Constitution Working Group**

Councillor Michele Mead, Vice-Chair of the Constitution Working Group, introduced the report, which presented a recommendation to Council, from the Constitution Working Group, which related to the adoption of a Communications Protocol into the Council's constitution.

In debate, it was clarified that if Members had any questions or comments they wished to raise regarding future Council communications, best practise was to contact the Business Manager for Communications and Marketing, who would be in the best position to provide clarity on such matters.

Councillor Michele Mead proposed that Council agree the recommendation as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Joy Aitman, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the adoption of a Communications Protocol into the Council's Constitution.

#### **CL.134 West Oxfordshire District Council Programme of Meetings 2024 – 2025**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought to approve a programme of Council and Committee meetings for the municipal year 2024–2025.

A revised report had come to Council, as a report previously considered by Council in November 2023 contained clerical errors.



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In debate, Members praised the work of officers for bringing a concise report to Council for adoption, thanking them for their consideration in providing a balance for Members against professional commitments. It was also highlighted that by varying meeting start times, public attendance at meetings could also be enhanced.

Members also made reference to the upgrade and refurbishment works in the Council Chamber, meaning that meetings were able to be viewed live on the Council's website, adding greater transparency to the work of the Council.

Hybrid functionality was discussed for public participation, however officers confirmed that bandwidth constraints would be a limiting factor in the successful operation of hybrid meetings.

Members were also assured that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process would be embedded within the Executive clearance system.

Members were also given assurance that consideration was being given to the use of electronic devices for meeting agendas, minutes and other appropriate documentation.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Council agree the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by Council.

Council **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the Programme of Meetings for June 2024 to May 2025, as detailed at Annex A and Annex B;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme of meetings, in the event that there is any future decision of the Council to change the committee structure, frequencies of committees or sub-committees, or committee remits that impacts the programme of meetings;
3. Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Business Manager to set meeting dates for committees and sub-committees that meet on an ad-hoc basis (Performance and Appointments Committee, Development Control Committee, Licensing Committee, Licensing Panel, Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee, Standards Sub-Committee), member training, member briefing sessions, and any further working groups established by the Council.

**CL.135 Motion A: Thames Water Sewage 'Task Force' - Proposed by Councillor Lysette Nicholls, Seconded by Councillor Thomas Ashby.**

Councillor Lysette Nicholls introduced the motion, which sought to highlight concerns from Members of the Council, and Members of Public regarding the continued dumping of sewage into local rivers by Thames Water. The motion also requested that Council set up and establish a cross party task force to work with campaigners in helping to hold Thames Water to account.

Councillor Alaric Smith rose to propose and introduce an amendment to the motion, which had been circulated in advance. The amendment sought to note concerns from Members of the Council, and Members of Public about the continued dumping of sewage into local rivers by Thames Water. The proposed amendment would also note that Council regretted a perceived lack of action by Central Government to ensure proper regulatory oversight and control of the sector.

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Councillor Alaric Smith thanked Councillor Nicholls for proposing the original Motion to Council, and for their work in bringing attention to the subject matter. Councillor Alaric Smith further highlighted that the Council supported the work so far of the administration to do what it can to put right this wrong and to hold Thames Water to account.

In the debate of the amended motion, Members highlighted a perceived lack of action by Government in maintaining oversight of ongoing problems related to the dumping of sewage into local rivers. Members said that opportunities to address the matter had, in the round, been missed. Members referred to a Petition presented to Council in 2020, and said that in the ensuing period since the presentation, work to address issues had subsided and the overall problem had become worse.

Members made reference to meetings that had already taken place with Thames Water, and with the “Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP)” action group, which had focused on the treatment of sewage, and the infrastructure in place to deal with the treatment works. Reference was also made to “Waterways Day” events held in the West Oxfordshire District in 2022 and 2023 which highlighted the subject matter, and the Executive Member for the Environment thanked Members who had engaged with the events.

Opposition group members expressed their disappointment regarding the amended motion, stating that it would potentially discourage cross-party efforts to make significant progress in holding Thames Water to account, and sought clarity from the administration as to when tangible progress on reducing the sewage discharge would be recognised.

Members highlighted that work between central government, both previous and current, and the regulators had significantly attributed to the problems that were faced regarding the subject matter, and that the amended motion would seek to strengthen the resolve of efforts to curtail the discharge of sewage into the mainstream water network. Attention was also drawn to problems experienced at local ‘hotspots’ and sewage treatment works, which Members stated drew more attention to the overall subject matter. Members further highlighted that sewage discharge posed significant health and biodiversity risks to the wider population of the district and beyond, and that inaction to tackle the problems in the round, gave the wrong impression to residents that Members represented.

Attention was also drawn by members to historical problems surrounding privatisation of water companies, with aged debt and a lack of governance being a contributing factor to a perceived continuation of failure to stop the discharge of raw sewage into the water networks. Members drew attention the wider environmental impacts of the subject matter, and said that the situation would not improve unless significant action were to be taken in addressing the problems faced.

Members praised work that had previously been undertaken by the Council in addressing the subject matter, and highlighted that more needed to be done, both on a local and national scale, regarding engagement and seeking meaningful solutions to solve the problems experienced. Members stated that the amended motion would help to assist the Council to make more robust decisions on planning applications, particularly on the imposition of Grampian conditions, and using Thames Water as a statutory consultee for Planning applications.

Members of the opposition group highlighted that the original motion would bring about a cross-party consensus to tackle problems regarding the subject matter, rather than bringing a political divisiveness to the debate. Members agreed that more work could be undertaken to

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address the issues faced by the discharge of sewage into rivers, and that it was imperative to work together, rather than seek political gain.

Several Members also drew attention to a perceived lack of action by the Member of Parliament for Witney and West Oxfordshire in addressing the issues faced regarding sewage discharge and called for more meaningful action in the future. Members encouraged each other to make representations to the Member of Parliament for Witney and West Oxfordshire so that more robust, cross-party engagement could take place.

In seconding the amended motion, Councillor Duncan Enright highlighted that many members had made significant contributions to the wider debate on the subject matter, and stated that whilst some contributions were politically charged, it showed the strength of feeling surrounding the issues of sewage discharge both locally and nationally. Councillor Enright acknowledged a clear desire to work together but highlighted that it should be done in the right way. Councillor Enright also paid tribute to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment, for her work in helping to address the issue.

Councillor Nicholls in exercising a right of reply stated that the original motion was not designed to seek political division, and sought to bring Council together to make meaningful representations to Thames Water and provide strong, stable solutions to tackling the problems faced by discharging sewage into local rivers. Councillor Nicholls also described and drew Council's attention problems faced by residents as a result of inaction of preventing sewage blockages and discharges into mainstream water networks. Councillor Nicholls reiterated the desire to create a Task Force to work on a cross-party basis to address the issues at hand and hold Thames Water to account, stating that the amended motion would hamper the opportunity to do so.

In summing up the debate on the amended motion, Councillor Alaric Smith thanked Members for their contributions to the debate on the amended motion and highlighted a clear need for more meaningful action to address the issues being faced. Councillor Smith stated that residents were paying the price for a perceived mismanagement and indebtedness of the water industry in the round since the late 1980s, and that it was imperative of elected representatives to help address such issues. Councillor Smith highlighted a perceived intention by the original motion to seek political divide, adding that it was not the time to seek division, but it was the right time to come together and enhance work currently ongoing.

Having been proposed, seconded and debated, and the amendment was put to a vote. There were 29 votes in favour, and 15 votes against, and 2 abstentions. The amendment was carried.

In debating the original motion as amended, Members highlighted that there was a clear need to have an inclusive work ethic to help address problems pertaining to sewage discharge, and that consistent, constructive engagement was in the best interest of residents.

The substantive motion was put to a vote. There were 45 votes in favour, no votes against and 1 abstention. The vote was carried.

Council **Resolved** to pass the following Motion:

Council notes the concerns from members of this Council, and members of public in the continued dumping of sewage into our local rivers by Thames Water. This Council regrets the lack of action on the part of the Government to ensure proper regulatory oversight and control of the sector.

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The Council supports the work so far of the administration to do what it can to put right this wrong and to hold Thames Water to account. Given the continued concerns from residents across West Oxfordshire, this Council Resolves to request the Leader to:

1. Continue with the regular Executive-led meetings, supported by Officers, with Thames Water to ensure appropriate investment is made in the system in West Oxfordshire;
2. Ensure the meetings take place at least once every quarter;
3. Ensure the Executive Member for Environment reports back to Overview & Scrutiny and to full Council on a regular basis.

The Meeting closed at 3.33pm.

CHAIR

Questions by Members – Council – 31 January 2024

<u>Written Question</u>	<u>Written Answer</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Question</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Answer</u>								
<b>Q1. Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment:</b>											
<p>Can the Executive Member for the Environment, let us know how many Garden Waste Licences were sold in the following years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 &amp; 2023?</p>	<p>The table below shows garden waste subscription numbers for 2019-2022 to 2023-2024 inclusive. As can be seen from the table garden waste subscription demand has remained largely stable following incremental prices increases over the years. Subscriptions grew to their peak in 2020-2021 during lockdown as customers had greater disposable income and time to maintain their green spaces. Subscriptions have slightly declined in recent years due to the cost-of-living pressure among other factors although remain above 2019-20 levels.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Period (Financial year)</th> <th>Total Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019-2020</td> <td>32859</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-2021</td> <td>34662</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-2022</td> <td>33984</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Period (Financial year)	Total Number	2019-2020	32859	2020-2021	34662	2021-2022	33984	<p>The answer says that the table below shows garden waste subscription numbers for 2019-2022 to 2023-2024 inclusive, but what it doesn't actually show is the numbers for 2023 to 2024 inclusive. Could we have those please?</p>	<p>I am unsure as to why this was removed, but I do have the 2023-2024 figure, and it is 33,183.</p>
Period (Financial year)	Total Number										
2019-2020	32859										
2020-2021	34662										
2021-2022	33984										

	2022-2023	33426		
<b>Q2. Councillor Harry St. John to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:</b>				
<p>In the light of the possible changes to Publica, and employment of staff directly by WODC recently circulated, can the cost implications in relation to Pension contributions be highlighted at an early stage if such employees (new or existing) will become members of the LGA /OCC pension scheme?</p> <p>This is so that Members can compare the current position with the new scenario. There is a mention of £1m pa extra contributions made in a recent report – How much might it cost WODC?</p>	<p>This issue was covered in the Publica Review Report, presented to the Executive on 15 November 2023. This report identified the risk of potentially significant one-off staffing costs, including possible redundancy and pension costs. The precise value of this cannot yet be established at present, but an assumption of £75,000 for ongoing pension costs was included in the budget reported to Executive in January.</p> <p>In line with the decisions of Executive, a business case for a new operating mode and an associated transition plan will be prepared in partnership with the other Publica Council's and with Publica. This work will help the Council understand the potential costs and inform future decisions.</p>	<p>When we will get a realistic estimate of what that figure might be?</p>	<p>The best thing that we can do, is when we do have that, we will actually communicate it.</p>	
<b>Q3. Councillor Harry St. John to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:</b>				
<p>I notice the Executive approved the process of Trade Union recognition of WODC staff – Has any Union previously been recognised by WODC?</p>	<p>WODC historically has not recognised a Trade Union. Publica currently recognises both Unison and GMB and discussions are taking place with the Executive and HR</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

<p>Are there any cost implications for WODC and how many Members, if any, of the Executive are themselves Union members, particularly members of GMB or Unison, which are likely to be the main Unions involved?</p>	<p>regarding the process to recognise a trade union. To be recognised a Trade Union must confirm that it has at least 10% Union membership within the proposed bargaining unit that will be created by recognition. There are no cost implications to the Council. Membership of a trade union is a confidential matter between the union and the employee. As for Members of the Executive, any membership would be detailed on their Register of Interests as appropriate.</p>		
<p><b>Q4. Councillor Harry St. John to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:</b></p>			
<p>Last year, at the March Council, you replied to a member of the public's question regarding the Blenheim Solar Power Station, and I quote: -</p> <p>"We wish to make a fully informed judgement as to whether the harms of the proposal outweigh the benefits.</p> <p>"We will carry out any assessment as considered necessary to inform our response to the Planning Inspectorate."</p> <p>Our Planning Officers are about to report to the Development Control</p>	<p>The statement I made last March, is one that I stand behind. If we are to influence this development, we need to engage in the process set out by Government, and use the limited powers that are given to us by the process wisely and at the appropriate time.</p> <p>In that regard, short term political grandstanding is unlikely to result in the best solution for WODC and its residents, and a more nuanced and considered approach is needed. I am satisfied, having been kept abreast of this</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Committee being held on Monday 5 February 2024.</p> <p>Can you confirm why, despite being Leader of this Council, and County Councillor for Woodstock, which Division includes a number of parishes that are currently blighted by the scheme, and in light of our Council organising a bus tour of the whole site (to better inform every member of what is involved) plus a number of walkabouts at key view points within the site, you decided not to join the 11 members (on a 40 seater bus hired, one assumes at some public expense) who did come on the tour; neither did you encourage your Executive colleagues (or indeed all Members) to all come along too.</p> <p>Given the sheer scale of this proposal - roughly 2500 acres stretching over 7 miles long in our District and Cherwell, let alone more in the Vale of White Horse, this absence does seem an oversight – would you agree?</p> <p>Do you think your constituents will be happy that you missed the opportunity to view the whole site and hear what your officers were</p>	<p>development in some detail by Officers, that we are on the correct course to have the most influence.</p> <p>I would certainly have loved to have been on the site visit, but I am afraid that I could not attend due to two significant meetings – one of which was with leaders of other Councils on matters of equally significant importance to this Council.</p> <p>As advised above however, I am fully aware of the extent of the scheme and the concerns being raised such that I know the importance of this development to our local residents – as I am sure is the case for all those who will be looking into this matter at the upcoming Development Control Committee.</p> <p>This is why I want to ensure we do this right. Sometimes doing it right means that it does not give best political advantage, but that is in my view what real leadership is about.</p>		
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<p>saying on site? Isn't that what Leadership is about?, taking the lead on a key issue? (I fully realise that the final decision on this proposal is not going to be ours, but our initial response will carry a lot of weight hopefully – given most of the site is in our domain!).</p> <p>Do you agree that you and some of your/our colleagues could well be at a disadvantage when this matter comes to be debated at WODC's Development Control Committee, having not made your/themselves available for the tour?</p> <p>As they say, I think we should be told and welcome your response.</p>			
<p><b>Q5. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:</b></p>			
<p>Does he feel it's appropriate for his Deputy Leader to be now working for a communications company that is involved in work between this Council and developers given his role in the Council?</p>	<p>The Deputy Leader refers to his role as an associate with the Community Communications Partnership in his register of interests, and mentions that the CCP is communications company providing a link between the community and a range of service providers. The Deputy Leader is clear in his statement that in his role with the CCP he is not involved in any way, nor is he privy to any information, regarding</p>	<p>Thank you for your response. Will Councillor Enright be removing himself from any Local Plan discussions, given that the company he works for represents a large majority of building companies that work within West Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>I'm not aware of that, and I will provide you with a written response.</p>

	developments within or impacting Oxfordshire or West Oxfordshire. Therefore, there is no conflict of interest with his role as Deputy Leader and Executive Member.		
<b>Q6. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:</b>			
How much is the new interim programme director costing, and is this cost coming from the £200,000 set aside for the Publica transition?	The Interim Programme Director has been appointed on a day rate of £1287. This cost will be shared equally between West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council. The West Oxfordshire component of the cost will be funded from funding set aside for the transition and preparatory work.	Thank you very much for your response. So can you tell me what percentage West Oxfordshire is paying towards this? Is it split equally in thirds? Or is it split differently?	Yes, I am advised it is shared equally.
<b>Q7. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:</b>			
While presenting the Draft Budget, Councillor Smith alluded to the cost of vehicle hire for waste lorries due to the ageing fleet. Can he tell us how much it has cost this council this year?	The forecast hire costs for 2023/24 are £694,000. The hire of waste vehicles is part of the Ubico contract sum, the annual growth or saving for which is highlighted in the MTFs. In 2024/25 growth in the Ubico contract is £826,000 which includes employee costs, diesel, inflation, service & maintenance and vehicle hire.	N/A	N/A

	<p>The hire of vehicles provides service reliability and reduces the repair costs to maintain the ageing fleet as vehicles at the end of economic life are not used for daily rounds. Hire vehicles will be necessary until there is an agreed fleet replacement strategy, work for which has already started with a report to Executive planned for June 2024.</p> <p>Savings in the Ubico contract have been included in the MTFS in 2025/26 in anticipation of the reduction in hire costs and repair costs as new vehicles are purchased, initially 4 before the end of this financial year, but other costs and savings in 2025/26 related to other contract items cannot be estimated at this stage.</p>		
<b>Q8. Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment:</b>			
Can the Executive Member confirm when the A4095 between Witney and North Leigh will have a visit from the street cleaning team to collect rubbish?	Ubico are currently litter picking the A40. The A4095 cleanse will start on 31 January, however this will be the low-speed sections of the road, or the sections of the road that can safely be cleansed without a lane closure. The high-speed sections of the road that require a lane closure are	N/A	N/A

	<p>scheduled to be completed in March.</p> <p>Ubico litter picks all A roads twice a year, this frequency is built into the contract. There will be occasion where Ubico are required to complete a third cleanse in a year which is typically as a result of a third party having cut the grass without Ubico's knowledge which then exposes litter which needs to be cleansed.</p> <p>The A4095 was litter picked throughout 2023 in stages as following a pre-pick survey it was deemed that a full litter pick across the whole length wouldn't have been an efficient use of staff time, this approach is industry practice and allows targeted attention to key areas. However, a full litter cleanse of A4095 was completed in August / September 2022.</p> <p>Officers will provide a 12-month schedule for litter picking around West Oxfordshire to give members an indication of when the litter picks may occur, this will</p>		
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	be available in March. However, it should be noted that these times are only indicative as litter picking events can move as they are dependent on a number of factors including other urgent works which may be required across the district.		
<b>Q9. Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development:</b>			
Can the Executive Member confirm what funding was used for the purchase of the Marriott's Walk shopping centre?	The purchase price of Marriott's Walk Shopping Centre was £9.4m, and this was financed from cash reserves available at the time (this is known as internal borrowing). These reserves are a combination of Council Tax, Business Rates, Grants and Section 106 monies. As the capital programme was significantly curtailed last year due to a lack of suitable investments opportunities, this method of internal financing from cash reserves was available for this purchase, without the need for external borrowing.	N/A	N/A
<b>Q10. Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects:</b>			
Can the Executive member update Council as to what progress has been made to secure sites in or around Witney for new 3G pitches?	Over the last year, Officers have been working hard with Woodgreen School in Witney, about potentially developing the 3G pitch on the school playing	Thank you for the answer. I just wonder is there is scope to look at other sites outside of Witney for 4G pitches, or does it have to be within the Witney boundary?	I think I would have to refer you to officers and a write up of the findings. I would prefer to wait for their reply and their findings to give an accurate answer.

	<p>fields, parallel to the existing sand based artificial turf pitch. In order to support their proposals, the Council tasked the school with developing a business case to include the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic need for 3G pitch at the site;</li><li>• Research and consultation;</li><li>• Management and operational structure;</li><li>• Potential usage and community use;</li><li>• Sustainability (including sinking fund);</li><li>• Marketing; and</li><li>• Environmental consideration.</li></ul> <p>Despite numerous meetings and email exchanges, the Council is still yet to receive a comprehensive business case from the school. Therefore, have highlighted to the school that we are going to start looking at other locations. Officers are very aware of the details and expiry clause on the Section 106 agreement</p>		
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	<p>(16/01450/OUT), which specifies that the contribution has to be spend on grassroots football in Witney by 2029.</p> <p>Officers from the Leisure team have also been in discussions with colleagues in planning, around alternative locations, as sports lighting is a requirement and total amount of land required for just the fenced 3G area is 7,420m2. Officers have started looking previously identified sites and met with Sport England, Oxfordshire Football Association, Oxfordshire Cricket Board, Rugby Football Union, and England Hockey on 26th January 2024 to discuss the pros and cons of these sites from a national governing body of sport perspective and also to determine any sites that are viable to take forward. Officers now plan to write up a summary of the findings.</p>		
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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>COUNCIL – 28 FEBRUARY 2024</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE TO COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Andrew Brown – Business Manager, Democratic Services. Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk">andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Andrew Brown – Business Manager, Democratic Services. Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk">andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To agree recommendations made to Council by the Executive from its meetings since 31 January 2024, other than recommendations relating to the budget which are included at agenda item 9.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Recommendations from Executive to Council. Annex B – Nature Recovery Plan</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>The Executive resolved to recommend to Council to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Adopt the Nature Recovery Plan as part of the Council’s compliance with the new biodiversity duty.</li> </ol>
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>N/A</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council is required to consider recommendations made to Council by the Executive from its meetings since 31 January 2024.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1 The decisions recommended by the Executive, to be agreed by Council, are detailed within Annex A with hyperlinks added to signpost Members and the public to the original decisions taken by the Executive.
- 2.2 Recommendations from the Executive to Council relating to the budget are included at agenda item 9.
- 2.3 All other decisions of the Executive were in the Executive's gift to make.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Any financial implications of the proposed decisions are as set out in the associated reports to the Executive.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Any legal implications of the proposed decisions are as set out in the associated reports to the Executive.

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 Any risks associated with the proposed decisions are as set out in the associated reports to the Executive.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1 Any equality implications associated with the proposed decisions are as set out in the associated reports to the Executive.

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

- 7.1 Any climate and ecological emergency implications associated with the proposed decisions are as set out in the associated reports to the Executive.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

(END)

## Annex A – Recommendations from Executive to Council

Date	Meeting	Recommendations
14 February 2024	Executive	<p><u>The Executive resolved to recommend to Council to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Adopt the Nature Recovery Plan as part of the Council’s compliance with the new biodiversity duty.</li></ul> <p><i>The Nature Recovery Plan is attached as Annex B. Minor amendments were made to the document following the Executive meeting under delegated authority granted at that meeting.</i></p>

Recommendations from the Executive to Council relating to the budget are included separately, at agenda item 9.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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West Oxfordshire District Council

## Nature Recovery Plan 2024 – 2030

Restoring and enhancing West Oxfordshire's natural environment

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## Common abbreviations

BBOWT –Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LNP – Local Nature Partnership

LWVP – Lower Windrush Valley Project

OCC – Oxfordshire County Council

TVERC – Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

WFT – Wychwood Forest Trust

## Introduction

West Oxfordshire is a largely rural district comprised of a mosaic of farmland, semi-natural grassland, woodland, and watercourses. There is also a varied built environment from rural towns and villages such as Burford, Charlbury and Eynsham to the district's largest towns of Carterton and Witney which all contain features which contribute to overall biodiversity resource. The natural environment in the district has experienced large changes over the past century with industrialisation, agricultural intensification and urbanisation, in common with most of south-eastern England. However, there remains a diverse natural environment in the district, rich in different habitats and species.

In June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council (the Council) passed a motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency, leading to the development of a Climate Change Strategy. A key theme within this strategy is the Protection and Restoration of Natural Ecosystems. Following a public consultation, several strategic objectives were outlined within this theme, including the protection and restoration of Council land and a desire to engage, support and communicate good practice for biodiversity and nature recovery with the West Oxfordshire community. This strategy runs to 2025, and good progress has been made on the objectives – a new Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer post was created, and new habitat management plans were implemented across Council owned land.

This document aims to take forward and expand on the Climate Change Strategy's objectives and outline the specific objectives and actions that the Council will take to support nature recovery across the district to 2030. The separation of this Nature Recovery Plan from the original climate change strategy will give a more focussed and detailed approach, although links between the two are still strong.

### A vision for West Oxfordshire's nature recovery

The Council fully supports the vision that has been set out for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, and adopts its message for this Nature Recovery Plan:

“Radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it's given, helping to make West Oxfordshire a place where people and nature thrive”.

By 2030, groups across the district such as residents, landowners, Town and Parish Councils and community groups will have come together to help deliver a measurable improvement in the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. There will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity, with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring. Residents will also benefit from nature recovery activities through co-benefits such as natural flood management, carbon sequestration, cleaner water, and the improvement of their local green spaces and improved access to nature.

### Purpose of document

The purpose of this plan is to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions to tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the district and the wider inter-connected landscape. This plan delivers on the Council's climate and ecological emergency commitments, which have the overarching aspiration to achieve district-wide net-zero emissions and climate change resilience by 2050.

## Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

### What is biodiversity and nature recovery?

**Biodiversity** is a term used to describe the variety of life including all plants, animals, their habitats, and the natural systems that support them.

Biodiversity is fundamental to both planet and people. In addition to its key importance, biodiversity also provides a host of services and functions that bring value to our lives, including:

- Provision of food, water, timber, and fibre (provisioning services).
- Helping to regulate climate change, floods, disease, waste, and water quality (regulating services).
- Providing recreational, aesthetic, and cultural benefits (cultural services).
- Supporting soil formation, pollination, photosynthesis (supporting services).

**Nature recovery** involves the building of resilient landscapes for the future through natural restoration. This process involves identifying where both healthy and degraded wildlife habitats already exist, how they can be improved and made bigger, and how they can be connected to produce a more resilient landscape using nature-based solutions that introduce natural processes to the landscape.

Undertaking landscape-scale nature recovery will lead to the creation of a Nature Recovery Network - a joined-up system of places needed to allow nature to recover and thrive. The network will provide more space for wild species to live, feed and breed, and help the natural world to adapt to a changing climate and other pressures on the environment.

## Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire is rich in locally distinctive habitat types, including grasslands (including lowland meadows, calcareous and acid grasslands), woodlands (including ancient woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and wet woodland), heathland, wood pasture, parkland, and traditional orchards. These in turn are home to a diverse mix of locally distinctive flora, including for example valuable hay meadow and limestone grassland species in the Cotswolds and river meadowlands.

West Oxfordshire is predominantly farmed landscape, with rolling fields that typify that Cotswolds and lowland village farmland in the western end of the Upper Thames Vale; high Agricultural Land Class Grades are found in the south of the district. Over half of the district is made up of arable land (56%), in addition to a significant area of improved grassland (around 23%) that is largely managed as permanent pasture for livestock or cut for silage.

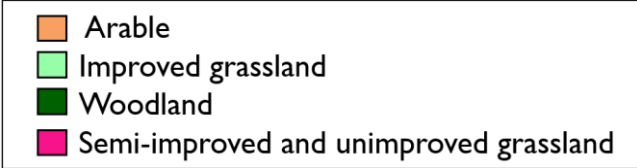
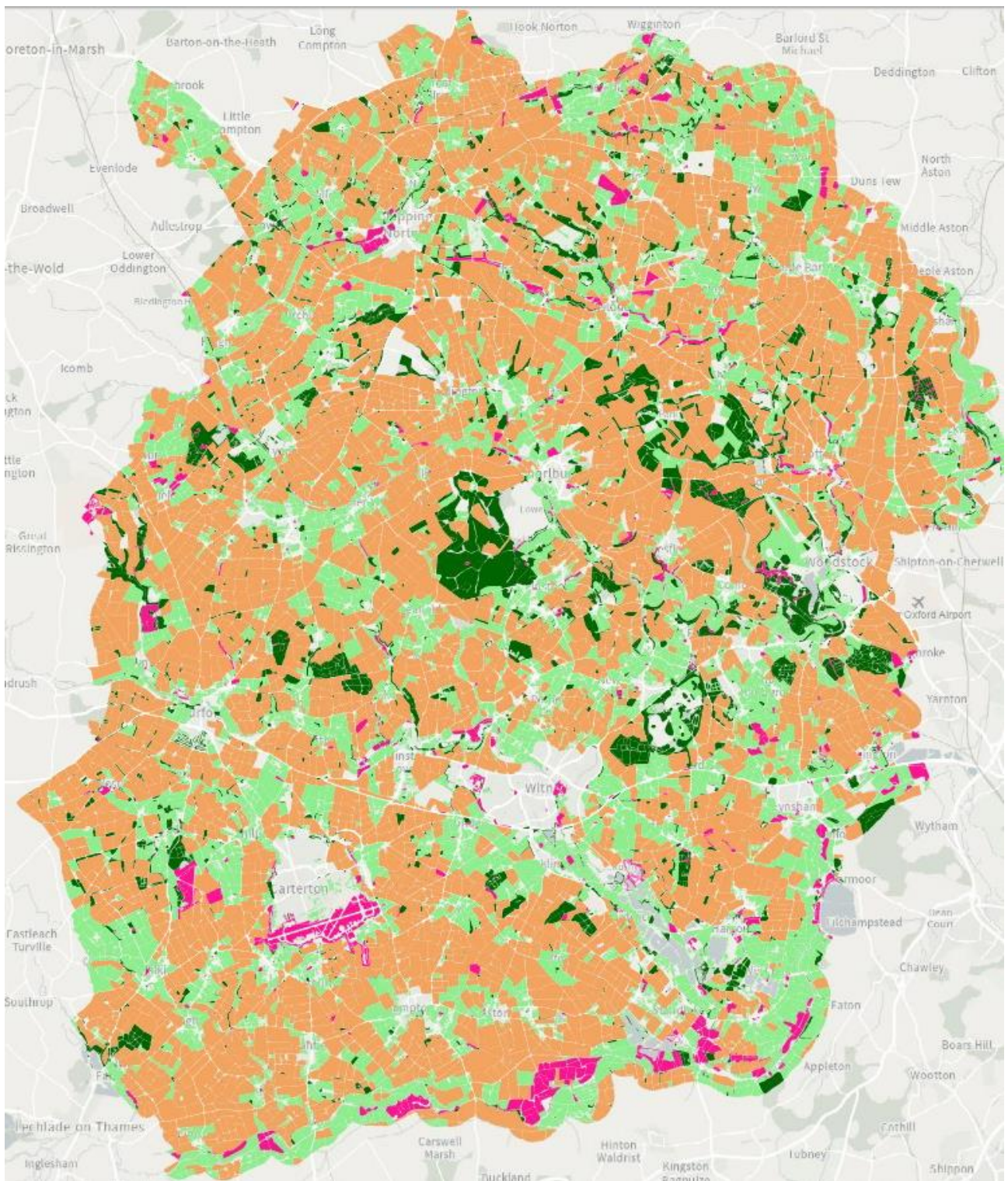
Semi-natural and unimproved grassland is a rarer but more valuable habitat across the district. Small areas of limestone grassland can be found along river and stream valleys, which support a diverse mix of invertebrates and bird life. Floodplain meadow areas along West Oxfordshire's rivers and tributaries are biodiverse habitats, especially where managed traditionally to encourage the growth of rare wildflowers such as snake's-head fritillary and great burnet.

The district has small but important areas of woodland, making up around 5% of the district's land area. These are generally found on the ridges that lie between river valleys and are associated with historic parklands – these include Wychwood Forest that lies within the Cornbury Park Estate and Eynsham Hall, and Blenheim. These woodland areas are generally made up of ash, oak, and elm,



and in well managed areas host associated flora such as violets and helleborines. Clusters of ancient trees are also present in these estates.

**Figure 1: Largest areas habitat types across West Oxfordshire**



West Oxfordshire lies within the River Thames catchment area, with the Thames itself and its tributaries, including the River Evenlode and River Windrush, running through the area. Other key watercourses include the River Dorn, River Glyme, Coombe Brook, and Shill Brook – all of these and their associated riparian habitat support a wide range of species including otters, kingfishers, and rare freshwater invertebrates. The district’s rivers are surveyed for water voles on a regular basis by BBOWT – numbers have generally remained stable over the last 10 years, with the River Windrush identified as a particular stronghold for this species (BBOWT, 2023). As well as these key habitats, smaller areas of habitats including scrub, parkland, lakes, and fen are also present in small quantities, each with their characteristic associated flora and fauna.

The district’s biodiverse landscape intrinsically holds value in the form of natural capital – this is described as “elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans” (Natural Capital Committee, 2013). From natural capital assets such as habitats, water, and ecosystems, we derive benefits in the form of ecosystem services – these can either directly provide resources, e.g. timber and fish production, regulate our environment, e.g. improving air and water quality, or give cultural benefits such as a sense of place or aesthetic beauty. Residents across the district will be receiving multiple benefits from its habitats – in particular, with its floodplain meadow and riverine areas, the valley is likely to be providing a wide range of regulating ecosystem services including carbon storage, water quality, flood resilience and pollination.

Like much of the county, the district’s biodiversity has suffered overall declines during the last few decades (Wild Oxfordshire, 2017). Several key factors that have impacted on a wide range of West Oxfordshire’s species populations include:

- Habitat loss – Losses of large areas of semi-natural grasslands and floodplain meadows are mainly due to agricultural intensification from the mid-20th century onwards. This was further worsened by losses through sand and gravel extraction, urban and industrial development, and hydrological changes to river floodplains. (Rothero et al., 2016).
- Habitat fragmentation – The continuing fragmentation of the landscape through the removal of hedgerows, and increase in infrastructure and other development, has increased the isolation of remaining patches of good habitat and the species they support. In turn this increases the probability of further extinctions of the district’s rarer species (Butaye et al., 2005). The losses and fragmentation of semi-natural grasslands, in combination with climate change impacts, are thought to have contributed to the local extinction and decline of some invertebrate species, including butterflies (Van Dyck et al., 2015) and bumblebees (Rothero et al., 2016).
- Climate change – Climate change causes changes in temperature and rainfall leading to shifts in species composition. Changes in the frequency of intense rainfall events, particularly following periods of dry weather, contributes to increased soil loss and related nutrient runoff from agricultural land. This affects local water quality as well as putting strain on local biodiversity and ecosystems (Defra, 2012). Regular summer flooding in Oxfordshire on the scale of 2007 could threaten the conservation value of semi-natural grasslands (BBOWT, 2010).
- Pollution – Water quality and river habitats have been severely impacted by historic modifications to watercourses and pressures from human activity. In recent years, sewage treatment works and Combined Sewage Overflows across the district’s rivers are having long term negative effects on aquatic and riparian species. Riverfly monitoring by volunteers (in 2018, 2019) has indicated a reduction in invertebrate diversity and abundance in the River

Windrush, and macrophytes in the reach between Burford and Witney have also seen dramatic declines (Windrush Catchment Partnership Plan, 2021). Grayling, probably the best indicator of water quality, have almost completely disappeared from the River Windrush and populations of coarse fish species such as roach and barbel have notably declined (Cotswold Rives Trust, pers. comms). Other forms of pollution can also have negative impacts on local wildlife populations, such as light pollution and air quality.

- Agricultural intensification – A significant area of the district is used for agriculture. Intense farming practices have resulted in the loss of hedgerows on farms, and increased nitrogen on surrounding environments. The use of pesticides is also having significant negative impacts on pollinator communities (Godfray H.C.J., 2014).
- Disease – The impact that disease has on the landscape has also been significant in recent years. In addition to highly destructive Dutch Elm disease which has killed millions of trees over the last 50 years, ash dieback is expected to kill 95-99% of ash trees in Britain (Hill et al, 2019), changing the composition of large areas of woodland across the district and beyond.

### **Statutory and non-statutory sites for nature**

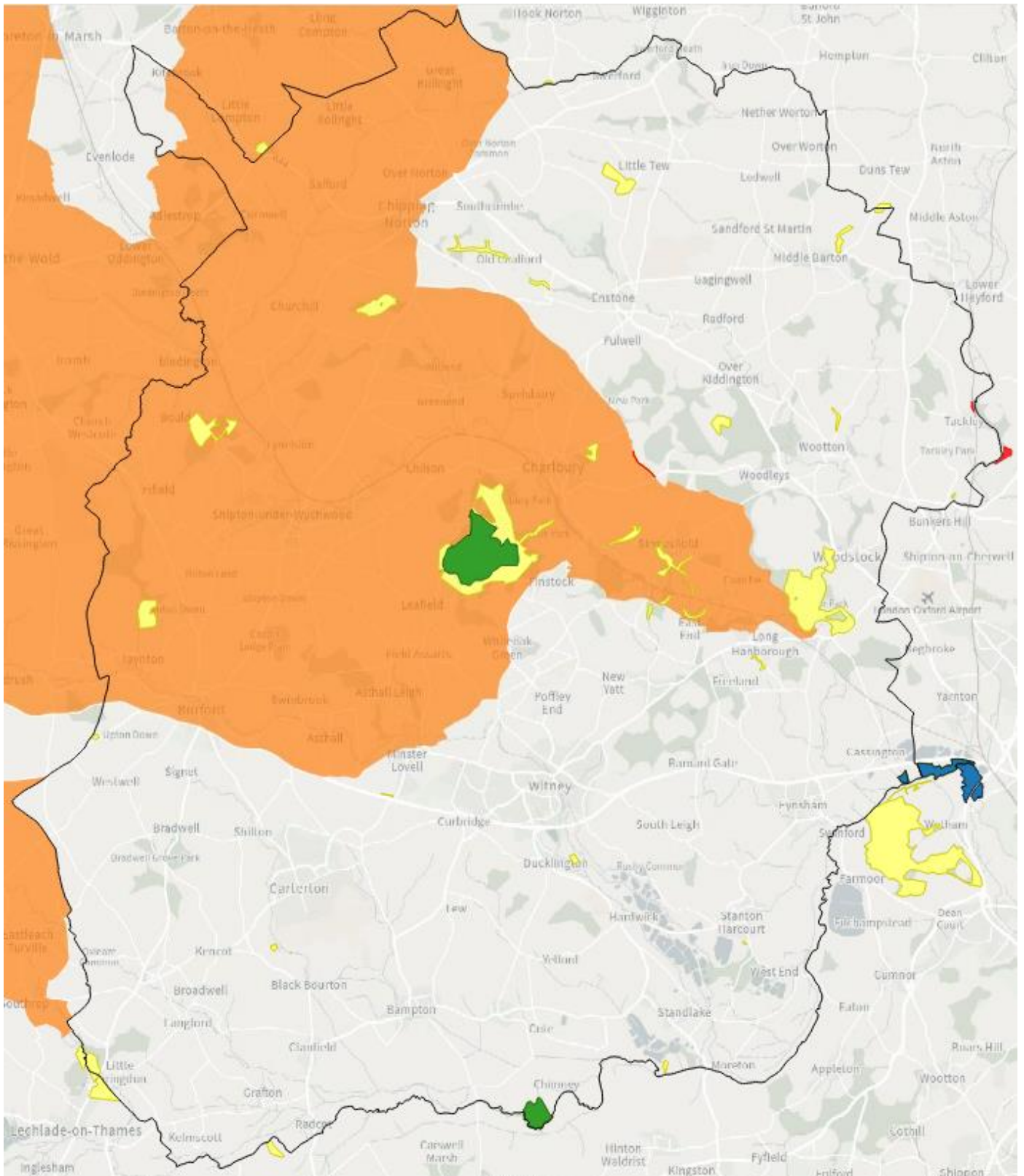
A large number of areas and sites across the district have been designated due to their importance for wildlife on local to national scales. Key statutory (i.e., those protected by law) and non-statutory sites are summarised below, with maps illustrating their locations in Figures 2 and 3:

#### Statutory sites

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – Part of the Oxford Meadows SAC, Cassington Meadows, lies partially within West Oxfordshire's boundaries. This area consists of a cluster of neutral hay meadows and fen, which are surviving remnants of semi-natural vegetation in an area now characterised by intensive arable farming and gravel extraction.
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) – These sites are designated for their special local interest either biologically or geologically. The district has two LNRs – Crecy Hill LNR, which has a diverse flora and invertebrate population on its calcareous grassland habitat, and Saltway LNR which has the largest known British colony of the very rare downy woundwort.
- National Nature Reserves (NNR) – Two sites have received this statutory designation, the Wychwood NNR and Chimney Meadows NNR. The Wychwood NNR is one of the largest areas of ancient semi-natural oak and ash broadleaved woodland in Oxfordshire, with large herds of fallow deer and notable flora including early purple orchid and less common plants such as herb paris and autumn crocus. Chimney Meadows NNR is in the floodplain of the River Thames and has a spectacular display of wildflowers during the summer months and often provides a haven for breeding curlew.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – There are 44 SSSIs across the district, so designated for a wide range of habitats including floodplain meadow, woodland and acid grassland and fen.
- Cotswolds National Landscape – The CNL sits across a large proportion of the north and west of the district, covering around a third of its area. It is the largest National Landscape in England and Wales and was primarily designated for the rare limestone grassland habitats as well as the old growth beech woodlands that typify the area.

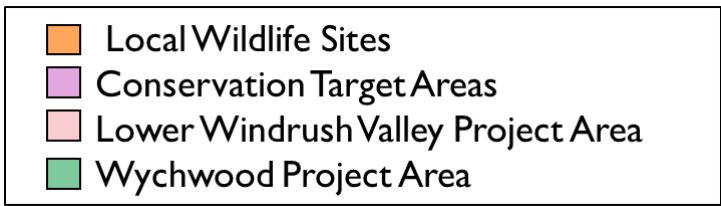
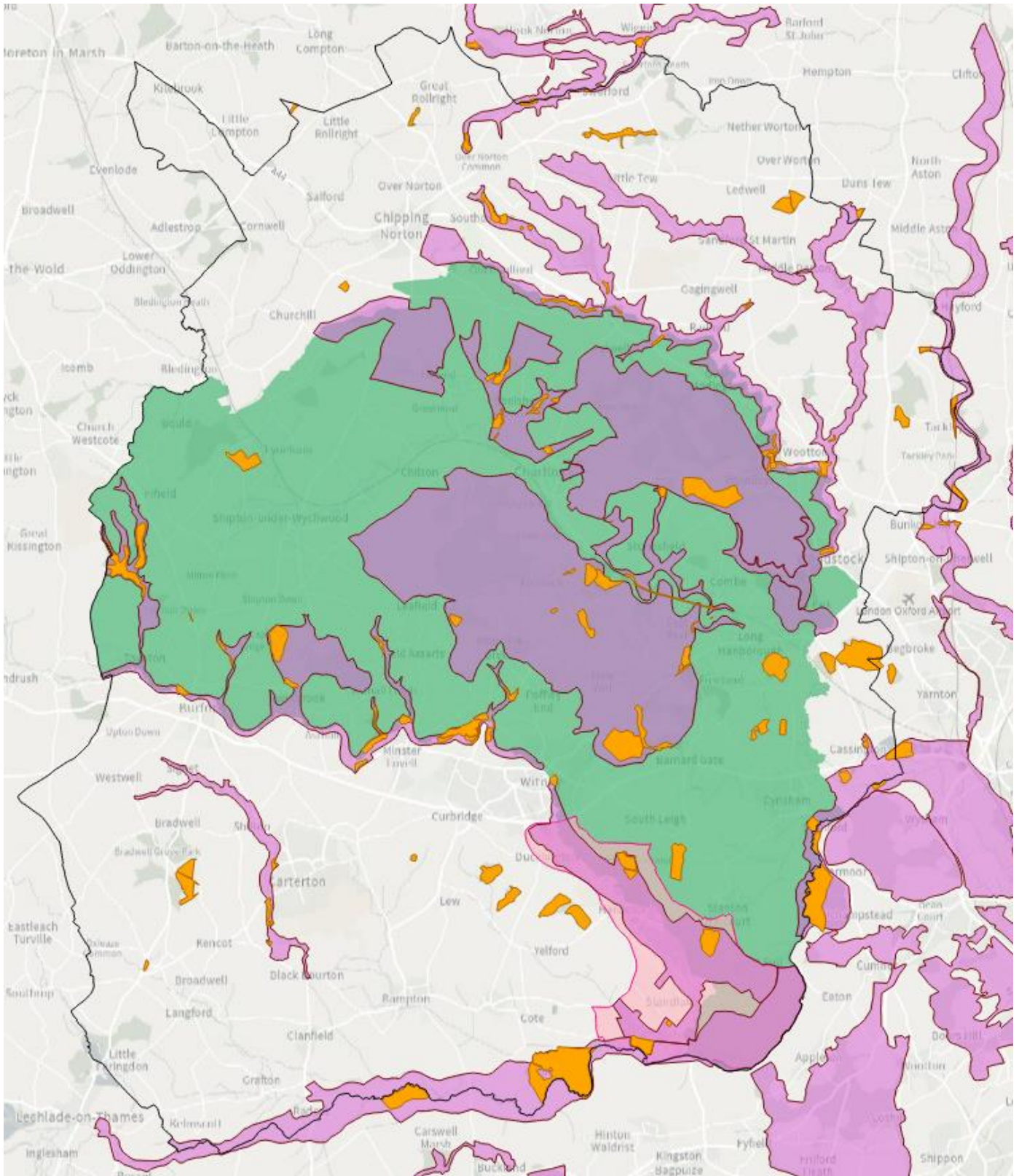


**Figure 2: Existing statutory site locations**



- Cotswold National Landscape
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserves
- Special Areas of Conservation
- National Nature Reserves

**Figure 3: Existing non-statutory site locations**





## Non-Statutory sites

- Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) – The CTAs identify some of the most important areas for wildlife conservation in Oxfordshire, where targeted conservation action has the greatest benefit. Eight CTAs are present across the district, centred primarily around its rivers and woodland areas.
- Local Wildlife Sites – These are sites that have been surveyed and selected by the Oxfordshire Wildlife Sites Project, jointly run by BBOWT and TVERC, as some of the country's most valuable wildlife areas. There are 100 Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire, totalling 1583 hectares of habitat.
- Wychwood Project area – This area and associated project aims to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood.
- Lower Windrush Valley Project area – This strategic area has a network of important habitats including floodplain meadows and lakes formed by the gravel extraction that has occurred in the valley. It has particular importance for resident migratory waterfowl.
- Windrush in Witney Project area – This area consists of a network of floodplain meadows and pathways into the Lower Windrush Valley, fundamental component of the town's landscape character.

## Local groups and partnerships

The district is fortunate in having a number of local groups and initiatives currently working to support nature's recovery;

- Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership – The OxLNP is an organisation of key partners working together to radically enhance nature. It aims to develop strategies and plans, influence relevant local and national government policy and legislation; establish voluntary working groups and task and finish groups as required; and lever resources into the sector. The partnership's outputs guide and influence the work of LNP members and others.
- Evenlode and Windrush Catchment partnerships – Hosted by Wild Oxfordshire and Cotswold Rivers Trust respectively, the catchment partnerships help local people and organisations work together to improve river water quality, enhance biodiversity, improve flood management and resilience to climate change, and build greater community engagement with the river and its tributaries.
- Wychwood Forest Trust – This conservation charity works with local communities to protect and restore the spaces once part of the historic Wychwood Forest – 120 square miles and 41 parishes in West Oxfordshire. They also run projects promoting the Wychwood's unique cultural identity and help people learn traditional rural skills and crafts such as dry-stone walling and hedgelaying.
- Lower Windrush Valley Project – Set up in 2001 following extensive mineral extraction works across the valley, the LWVP works with environmental organisations, mineral operators, landowners and communities to deliver a wide range of initiatives that aim to strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley, protect and enhance the biodiversity it supports, and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside.
- Wild Oxfordshire – This charity seeks to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all and primarily collaborates with individuals, communities and organisations offering expert and bespoke ecological advice through their community ecology programme. They also carry deliver targeted conservation action with initiatives such as the Curlew Recovery Project and the Oxfordshire Hedgerow Heroes Project.

- Cotswolds National Landscape – This organisation works to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB, increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. Their network of over 400 wardens enables them to have wide-reaching impact across their area.
- North East Cotswolds Farmer Cluster – This group is made up of 137 farms covering 42,000 hectares with a vision to lead landscape-scale regeneration of the farmed environment and local food networks through collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) – West Oxfordshire is in the western-most area that this Wildlife Trust covers, with sites such as Chimney Meadow and Foxholes nature reserves managed by its volunteers and staff. BBOWT also manages the Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Sites Project provides free wildlife surveys and information about conservation.

The groups listed above are some of the larger organisations that operate within the district; many others also work more locally to deliver significant impacts such as local Nature Recovery Groups, Long Mead, Burford Environment Action Group, Green Fifield. Smaller grassroots projects such as these have been effective in delivering positive change, focussing on their targeted areas, and inspiring residents to get involved with nature recovery. Replicating the success of these projects in other areas across the district and facilitation the networking of different local groups to share successes will see further benefits through community engagement and habitat improvement.

## Key policy influences

This Nature Recovery Plan does not sit in isolation – it considers and is aligned with a range of national, regional, and local policies and plans to ensure cohesion and a net positive contribution to wider strategic initiatives across the district and beyond.

### National policies

Environment Act 2021 – This national framework for environmental protection aims to improve air and water quality, tackle waste, improve biodiversity and make other environmental improvements. Key drivers of action around nature recovery include:

- Biodiversity Net Gain – This is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand with onsite ecological enhancement, using off-site measures as a last resort. Using habitat data, a site's biodiversity value can be quantified both before and after a development has been delivered. A minimum biodiversity gain of 10% will be mandatory for major developments from January 2024, with requirements for minor developments coming later in the year.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies – This is a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. An Oxfordshire LNRS is being produced by a partnership of organisations, co-ordinated by OCC, which the Council will feed in to as a key stakeholder – A Nature Recovery Network will also be created as the spatial element of the plan.

Natural England has also recently introduced the Green Infrastructure Framework. This provides a number of tools and guides for planners, developers and communities investing in nature in urban areas and creating climate resilient towns across England. Mapping tools, green infrastructure standards and principles, and process journeys all form part of the Framework.



With the introduction of the Environment Act 2021, local authorities must also comply with the new, strengthened ‘biodiversity duty’, where public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. As a local authority, the Council must consider relevant strategies: LNRs, species conservation strategies and protected site strategies and:

- Understand their relevance to the Council.
- Be aware of how these strategies affect land that the Council owns or manages and actions that can be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Consider how the Council can contribute to the strategy.

### Local policies

Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan 2023-2050 – This document, commissioned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, includes a route map and joint climate and nature-based actions that the Oxfordshire local authorities can take together to provide a catalyst for positive action across the region. The most relevant action is Action 12, which seeks to “Explore opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through land use change, including targeted habitat restoration and creation”.

West Oxfordshire District Council Plan 2023-2027 – The Council Plan documents key aims and priorities to improve the district for its residents. Relevant priorities include:

- Priority 2 – “Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All”, with actions including “Ensure the timely provision of built and green infrastructure which meets the needs of existing and incoming residents and that supports health and care to enable physical and mental well-being, community cohesion and delivers a high quality of life.”
- Priority 3 – “Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife”, with actions including “Work with others, and fulfil our statutory obligations, to ensure that land, air and water support biodiverse habitats, reduce pollution and bring about nature recovery to the district, putting it at the forefront of local decision making.”
- Priority 4 – “Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency”, with actions including “Encourage the use of nature-based solutions to sequester carbon and combat the risks arising from climate change at a river catchment scale, such as restoration of meadows and trees to reduce flooding and improve water quality.”

West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031 – The West Oxfordshire Local Plan sets out a vision of the district to 2031 and provides an overarching framework to guide and deliver that vision. Relevant policies include:

- Policy EH2: Landscape character
- Policy EH3: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Policy EH4: Public realm and green infrastructure

The new West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041 is currently being prepared to update planning policies and proposals, ensuring they effectively tackle vital issues like nature recovery and climate change.

WODC Carbon Action Plan 2024-2030 – This plan sets out actions to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and to carbon inset/offset residual emissions.

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025 – This is a statutory plan, which sets out the vision, outcomes, and policies for the management of the Cotswolds National Landscape for the period 2023-2025. The plan defines the landscape’s key qualities and sets out its key issues including the climate emergency, Nature’s decline and the Ecological Crisis and Health and societal changes. Key relevant policies include;

- Policy CE7: Biodiversity and nature recovery
- Policy CE8: Rural land management policy
- Policy CE9: Problem species, pests, and diseases

Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan 2021 – This plan was developed by the Cotswolds National Landscape in partnership with the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Forum. It gives details on the species and habitats of the Cotswolds, and what action can be taken to help them flourish and spread across the landscape.

## **Our work to date and role as a Council**

The Council produced its first Climate Change Strategy in 2020, with “Protection and Restoration of Natural Ecosystems” as one of its key themes. A full time, permanent Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer has been employed since its publication, who has led on different initiatives and made progress against the strategy’s objectives. Key actions within this are listed below:

- A review of land management practises across key sites has been undertaken to improve them for both people and wildlife. Working with the ground’s maintenance team at Ubico, the Council’s waste and land management contractor, grass cutting, and vegetation management regimes have changed to allow for longer flowering periods for pollinators and more traditional management of wildflower meadows.
- A series of biodiversity projects were undertaken in 2022 to kick-start the Council’s response to the ecological emergency – these include:
  - Setting up a hedgehog highways scheme, where residents are invited to create a hedgehog hole in their gardens to improve connectivity for urban hedgehog populations.
  - Creating wildflower meadows across our public open green spaces.
  - Planting hedgerows and trees in strategic locations across our estates with the help of volunteer groups, schools, and Council employees.
  - A BioBlitz at Kilkenny Lane Country Park to encourage members of the public to observe wildlife at the site and collect data for the local environmental records centre.
  - Establishing a new conservation volunteer group at Kilkenny Lane Country Park.
  - Expanding the reach of the Witney Woodland Volunteers with a licence to manage Deer Park South and providing tools and training for habitat management.
- Connections to other environmental organisations such as the Wychwood Forest Trust, Wild Oxfordshire and Lower Valley Windrush Project have been strengthened with new projects and partnership work.

- Advice has been given to several Town and Parish Councils on land management, and where relevant worked with Ubico to change maintenance regimes on their land to improve habitats on Council owned land.
- Officers are members of the Windrush and Evenlode Catchment Partnerships, shaping catchment plans and reviewing project work delivered by these groups.
- The Council is a member of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, sitting on several of the sub-groups that guide the partnership's activities.
- The Council financially supports groups such as Wild Oxfordshire, the Wychwood Forest Trust, TVERC and the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership.

The Council's Planning Service also continue to assess the ecological impacts of planning applications that are submitted across the district. Key actions from this team over the last few years include:

- Biodiversity Officer Capacity to assess planning applications has increased.
- Guidance around biodiversity net gain and its best practice use has been developed by the Council's planning ecologists and is used to secure tangible improvements to developments' green infrastructure and ecological value.
- The Salt Cross Area Action Plan was accepted by the Planning Inspector with a policy requiring the scheme to achieve 25% biodiversity net gain.
- Officers have helped to shape county-wide policies and continue to input into the Oxfordshire LNRS and LNP.
- Tree, landscape, and planning policy officers at the Council coordinate their work to see positive outcomes for nature at development sites across the district.

In addition to the work above, the Council has worked to ensure that biodiversity is considered in its decision-making processes. Each report and decision brought to the Council's Executive and Cabinet meetings includes a section on the proposal's climate and ecological emergencies implications – here officers' detail any anticipated impacts on land use, wildlife, and habitats because of the proposal.

## Consultation

This Nature Recovery Plan has been prepared in consultation with key officers, Councillors, local environmental groups, and local communities, to gain a full understanding of the barriers and opportunities available to delivering the plan.

One of the key changes following the local environmental group consultation was the change in name from "Biodiversity Action Plan" to "Nature Recovery Plan". This was made after suggestions that the term "Biodiversity Action Plan" is a more antiquated environmental term, and new name would be more positive and forward looking, to signal the alignment with the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy and a wider reinvigorated conservation effort. Additional actions and clarifications were added in the document where deemed appropriate.

The public consultation feedback generally reflected diverse opinions on biodiversity and environmental strategies. Positive responses highlighted eagerness to collaborate, emphasizing partnerships with community groups aligned with the plan's goals. Participants emphasized the

necessity of promoting biodiversity education in schools and extending the plan's coverage to include all new housing developments. Some respondents also highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to address challenges such as climate change effects, waterway clean-up, and collaborative efforts with local landowners and farmers. The feedback generally indicated a desire for tangible, measurable actions, greater collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, and a stronger focus on immediate environmental concerns while balancing long-term biodiversity preservation. A large number of negative responses highlighted issues related to Council management of highways and potholes, which are outside the remit of the District Council and this plan.

Through consultation with Council Members, concerns were raised that the NRP was too Witney and Town centric, and there was not enough consideration to rural areas. This is likely due to that fact that the majority of the Council's land is in Witney and larger towns where we as a Council can develop projects and deliver actions - it is also good to concentrate support work which benefit the widest number of people, and in areas where there are less strong bottom-up networks that are forming in more rural areas. To address this, we have amended an action on working with Town and Parish Councils on assessing and enhancing their landholdings for biodiversity to specifically working with rural Councils.

It was also raised that the NRP took too much of a top-down approach regarding community engagement. To address this, we have noted how the grass-roots approach has been effective in rural areas - taking a network approach to the facilitation of grassroots projects and getting people involved in nature recovery activities will form a key part of the new Nature Recovery Officer's role.

## Aims and objectives

There are three key areas within which the Council can advance nature recovery across the district, creating space for collective engagement and encouraging others to join in landscape-scale positive. The District Council can:

1. Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery.
2. Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council.
3. Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development.

1. Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery – As outlined in the “Local groups and partnerships” section above, West Oxfordshire has a wealth of local environmental groups and knowledge that the Council can potentially link in with to develop and deliver existing and new initiatives on a landscape-wide scale. By collaborating with groups, the Council can facilitate the restoration of natural ecosystems, improve habitat connectivity, and implement nature-based solutions to help mitigate against climate change. There are also organisations that specialise in data collection and collation that can inform a better understanding of trends of key habitats and species across the district.

2. Protect and enhancing biodiversity on Council owned sites – The Council owns and manages approximately 106ha of green space, which includes parks, fields, greens, and public open spaces within housing estates. Although work has been done to improve these sites for wildlife and people in recent years through working with Ubico and volunteer groups, there is more that can be done to protect and restore habitats and species across the Council’s landholdings. There are also new opportunities that the Council can take to expand and improve Council landholdings and connect with others to better improve habitats across the district.

3. Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development – As a local authority, the Council can ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced within the planning system and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance. BNG is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand on a site – a 10% improvement will be mandatory for major schemes from January 2024, and most other schemes from April 2024. The Council’s planning team is currently collating an evidence base to propose a 20% net gain for major schemes. The Council’s planning teams are working to ensure BNG is delivered and monitored effectively through the planning system, and developers are well informed through Design Guides and Design Codes to support this. There are also opportunities through the development of the new Local Plan to strengthen policies around ecological protection and recovery, drawing from best practice guidance.

Connections within the District Council’s teams, such as Estates, Communities, Development Planning and Flooding can continue to be strengthened, through collaborative projects of mutual benefit. The Council’s Communications team uses several platforms on which the Council can promote opportunities for conservation volunteering and share best practice with others. Bespoke outreach activities could also take place to encourage residents to better engage with the natural world.

These three focus areas form the structure of Nature Recovery Plan, set out in the section below. All actions set out within this align to Lawton’s “Making Space for Nature” principles of ‘More, bigger, better, more joined up’, - delivering action on a landscape scale will lead to more resilient, healthy, and connected ecosystems, and improve habitat quality and species populations across the district.

## Nature Recovery Plan

The purpose of the Nature Recovery Plan is to provide direction for the Council, local groups, officers, and Councillors, giving a comprehensive set of actions to achieve nature recovery across the district and deliver on the three key areas outlined above. The Plan outlines actions that both contribute to and go beyond the Council’s biodiversity duty.

The actions will be taken both in the short term to medium term over the next 1-3 years, and as part of multi-year programmes to support longer-term success. The Plan has been informed by the plans and policies outlined above, data from TVERC, the expertise of officers within the Council and local communities and residents through consultation. The success of the Nature Recovery Plan will be underpinned by collaboration with local environmental groups, policy makers and residents.

## **Delivering the plan**

The Council's nature recovery officers and other members of the Council's climate team will lead the delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan. A large number of the actions rely on partnerships with other local groups and Council teams – this collaborative effort will help us extend action beyond Council land. The roadmap below sets out an indicative timeline of how some of these actions could be delivered to 2030.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

Actions will be monitored using a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and progress reported annually. This process will help identify actions which require further support and others where more ambitious targets can be developed as delivery progresses and recognise actions that are looking unlikely to be achieved. The Nature Recovery Plan sets out actions required over the next seven years to support nature recovery across the district; however, the plan will be a flexible and living document. It will be reviewed and updated in response to changes in the policy and legislative climate, future opportunities, and the results of annual monitoring.

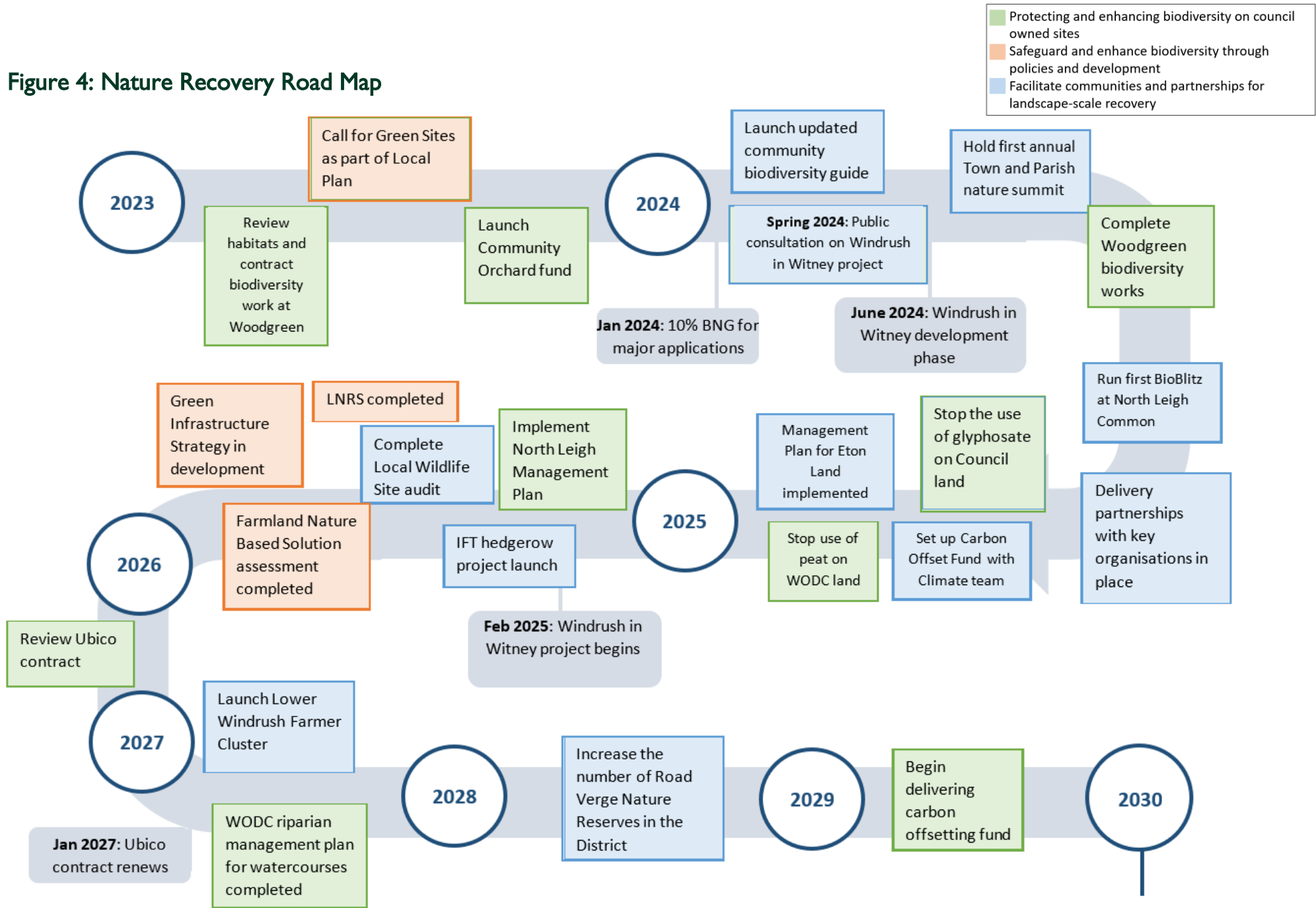
## **Resourcing implications**

The workstreams outlined below demonstrate the extensive actions that the Council can take to improve biodiversity on Council owned land and beyond. Securing resources to deliver these actions will be critical to achieve nature recovery across the district. Actions may require separate Council approvals to secure funding and resources to implement them. This will be understood in more detail at the scoping stage of each project.

Work is being undertaken by Oxfordshire's LNP to investigate the financing of nature's recovery using private sources of finance such as private investors carbon credits, and BNG offset funding, and working with businesses to address material risks and dependencies on the landscape. This is best articulated in the Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy. Grants have historically been used to deliver ecology projects across the district – these range from a local level (e.g. Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) to a national level (Esme Fairburn and the National Heritage Lottery fund). There are also opportunities to use funding from other internal teams if working on collaborative projects, for example within communities and leisure, and funding can also be acquired through Westhive to fundraise for specific projects in partnership with local communities.

The Council's climate change team, and other teams within the Council, will continue to seek out and welcome any proposals of partnership working to further nature related actions.

Figure 4: Nature Recovery Road Map



## Facilitate communities and partnerships in the district for landscape-scale recovery

<p><b>1) Collaborate with Councils, regional and local partners to collectively identify and deliver strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improving habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and nature-based solutions in land-use management</b></p>	
<p>The Council has a wealth of local environmental groups and knowledge that we can potentially link in with to develop and deliver existing and new nature initiatives across the district. By collaborating with groups, and facilitating wider action, strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improve habitat connectivity, and implement nature-based solutions to help mitigate against climate change can be maximised. The Oxfordshire LNP forms a key part in leading and informing action within this priority,</p>	
<p><b>Key delivery partners</b></p>	
<p>Community groups, farmers, landowners, OCC, Oxfordshire LNP, residents, schools, Town and Parish Councils, TOE, TVERC, WTC, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wild Oxfordshire,</p>	
<p><b>Actions</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and secure funding for the Windrush in Witney Project</li> <li>• Set up delivery partnerships with key organisations such as Lower Windrush Valley Project, Wild Oxfordshire, and Wychwood Forest Trust</li> <li>• Continue to feed into the Oxfordshire LNRS and action plans beyond this</li> <li>• Engage in the forming of the final Nature Recovery Network to ensure the Council's land with high ecological value or potential is included</li> <li>• Work with OCC with their Woodland Creator Accelerator Fund project</li> <li>• Work with OCC on the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Project</li> <li>• Support OLNP on the Enabling Nature-based Carbon Offsetting in Oxfordshire Project, including by helping to identify potential delivery sites</li> <li>• Work with rural Town and Parish Councils on assessing and enhancing their landholdings for biodiversity</li> <li>• Run a "Nature Summit" annual forum to showcase local project work within Town and Parish Councils and environmental groups</li> <li>• Facilitate the development of a Windrush Farmer Cluster</li> <li>• Identify land in the Council's ownership that could become resident managed for community benefit</li> <li>• Link with International Tree Foundation and Wild Oxfordshire on a district-wide hedgerow planting scheme</li> <li>• Work with OCC to identify more Road Verge Nature Reserves for designation in the district, and support with appropriate management and monitoring of existing verges</li> <li>• Promote and showcase wildflower grasslands and good verge management for biodiversity for town and parish Councils and other land owners</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windrush in Witney Project delivered</li> <li>• Number of SLAs with environmental groups</li> <li>• Continued contribution at OxLNP meetings and projects</li> <li>• Trees planted in the district through WCAF project</li> <li>• Number of Town and Parish Councils with biodiversity projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of nature summits delivered</li> <li>• Formation of a Windrush Farmer Cluster</li> <li>• Number of resident-led land stewardship schemes</li> <li>• Metres of hedgerow planted through planting scheme</li> <li>• Number of RVNRs in active management</li> </ul>



<b>Co-benefits</b>
Improved natural flood management, carbon sequestration, air and water quality, access to public green spaces
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups</li> <li>• Grant funding may not be successfully secured</li> <li>• Officer resource and capability</li> <li>• Resourcing the long-term management of sites and features</li> </ul>

<b>2) Improve understanding of the district's habitats and enhancement opportunities</b>
Data is required to gain a picture of how species populations are responding to changes in land use and climate, as well as where funds can best be directed for nature recovery. There are organisations that specialise in data collection and collation that can assist in better understanding ecological trends across the district.
<b>Key delivery partners</b>
BBOWT, offset providers, OxLNP, recording groups, TVERC,
<b>Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource an audit of the district's Local Wildlife Sites to understand the condition of these sites, and understand where BNG resources could be used</li> <li>• Receive public wildlife records from TVERC on a twice-yearly basis</li> <li>• Support the development and implementation of a green finance strategy across the county</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Local Wildlife Sites surveyed</li> <li>• Receipt and analysis of data from TVERC</li> <li>• Green finance strategy actioned</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>
Air and water quality, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management,
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer resource and capability</li> <li>• Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple groups</li> <li>• Willingness of landowners to engage in nature recovery and provide access to data</li> </ul>

<b>3) Work across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy with other Council Plan 2023-2027 priorities</b>
There are connections within the District Council's teams that can be strengthened – there are strong links with our internal teams such as Estates, Communities, Development Planning and Flooding, which can be improved on to develop collaborative projects that benefit each team's agendas.
<b>Key delivery partners</b>
EA, flood management team, healthy place shaping team, NHS, landowners, OCC, residents, tree team, Windrush Catchment Partnership, the Council's climate change team
<b>Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Council's communities team to deliver nature and health initiatives in strategic locations, such as the recent UKSPF Deer Park Access improvement project and acting on some of the next steps in the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery's 'equitable distribution of accessible green space' report.</li> <li>• Investigate the potential for green prescribing on a district-wide scale, in partnership with the Council's communities team and ONLP, linking in with the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Strategy</li> <li>• Work with the flood management team to develop and resource a riparian management plan for watercourses across the Council's estate</li> <li>• Work with the climate change team to develop a carbon offsetting strategy</li> <li>• Work with the Planning Policy team in relation to the development of the emerging Local Plan 2041 and BNG</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of projects completed with communities team</li> <li>• Number of surgeries with green prescribing practices</li> <li>• Local Plan published with strong ecology and BNG policies</li> <li>• Metres of Council owned riverside in active management for nature</li> <li>• Carbon offsetting strategy successfully completed</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>
Air and water quality, carbon sequestration, Improved natural flood management, resident mental, and physical health
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer resource and expertise</li> <li>• Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple groups</li> </ul>

<b>4) Improve communication and community involvement</b>
The Council's Communications team is well-equipped to share opportunities for conservation volunteering and best practices through various platforms. Additionally, we can tailor outreach activities to connect with residents and inspire them to actively engage with the natural world.
<b>Key delivery partners</b>
Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Conservation Group, offset providers, the Council's planning team, recording groups, Ubico, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wychwood Forest Trust
<b>Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly promote opportunities for conservation volunteering on the Council's website, climate bulletin and greenlight nature and climate online hub</li> <li>• Disseminate best practice on creating and managing biodiverse spaces to Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>• Run an annual BioBlitz to promote wildlife recording at different Council-owned sites</li> <li>• Work with schools across the district to deliver biodiversity enhancements on their sites and encourage pupils to interact with the natural world</li> <li>• Encourage Town and Parish Councils to include policies around biodiversity, nature recovery strategies or Local Green Space within their Neighbourhood Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued social posts and bulletin</li> <li>• Number of Town and Parish Councils engaged with the Council on biodiversity</li> <li>• Records collected from BioBlitz events</li> <li>• Number of schools engaged with the Council on biodiversity</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>
Access to public green spaces, sense of place, enhanced health, and wellbeing of local communities
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups</li> <li>• Time and resources needed from several parties</li> </ul>

## Protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned and managed land

<b>5) Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the District Council</b>	
The Council owns and manages approximately 106ha of green space, which includes parks, fields, greens, and public open spaces within housing estates. Although work has been done to improve these sites for wildlife and people in recent years through working with Ubico and volunteer groups, there is more that can be done to restore biodiversity across the Council's landholdings.	
<b>Key delivery partners</b>	
Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Conservation Group, offset providers, recording groups, Ubico, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wychwood Forest Trust	
<b>Actions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue working with Ubico on Council owned sites to enhance biodiversity across the estate, and extend the areas with targeted biodiversity management</li> <li>• Develop and resource the long-term management of North Leigh Common</li> <li>• Stop the use of glyphosate across all Council land, and seek alternative weed management strategies such as hot foam or mechanical removal</li> <li>• Stop the use of peat compost across all Council owned land</li> <li>• Employ best practice procedures to eradicate invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed across Council owned sites</li> <li>• Undertake botanical surveys of key Council sites in 2024 and 2030 - Deer Park Wood and South, Kilkenny Lane Country Park, North Leigh Common, Witney floodplain meadows.</li> <li>• Implement biodiversity features at the Council Woodgreen Offices in Witney</li> <li>• Provide annual funding to volunteer groups managing WODC sites e.g., Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Lane Conservation volunteers, Witney Woodland Volunteers</li> <li>• Develop and resource a management plan for the former Eton Land with the WFT</li> <li>• Identify and create community orchards in public estates</li> <li>• Review and potentially expand wildflower areas across Council owned estates in Witney and Carterton</li> <li>• Proactively manage woodland areas within the Council's public estates</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of Land Management Plan actions successfully completed by Ubico annually</li> <li>• m3 of North Leigh Common in active management</li> <li>• Litres of glyphosate used annually by Ubico on Council owned land</li> <li>• Litres of peat compost used by Ubico on Council owned land</li> <li>• m3 of invasive species on Council land</li> <li>• Flora species diversity and abundance at each site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• m3 of habitat enhanced at Council owned offices</li> <li>• £ annually given to groups for maintenance costs</li> <li>• Site in active management</li> <li>• Number of orchards created</li> <li>• m3 of Council owned wildflower meadow areas</li> <li>• Number of proactively manage woodland areas within the Council's public estates</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>	
Air and water quality, access to public green spaces, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management	
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance between managing spaces for both wildlife and people</li> <li>• Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including Ubico and volunteer groups</li> <li>• Resourcing of Ubico</li> <li>• Selling or purchasing Council land</li> </ul>	

## Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development

<b>6) Drive nature recovery through the planning and development process</b>	
<p>The mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity on developments is one of the key functions of the Council’s planning department. The integration of high-quality green infrastructure on these schemes is key to ensure they see gains for both people and wildlife.</p> <p>BNG is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand on a site – a 10% improvement will be mandatory for major schemes from January 2024, and most other schemes from April 2024. The Council’s planning team is currently collating an evidence base to propose a 20% net gain for major schemes. The Council’s planning teams are working to ensure BNG is delivered and monitored effectively through the planning system, and developers are well informed through Design Guides and Design Codes to support this.</p>	
<b>Key delivery partners</b>	
BNG offset providers, Councillors, developers, Publica BNG lead, the Council’s planning department	
<b>Actions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that planning applications provide high integrity ecological surveys and reports</li> <li>• Implement Oxfordshire’s BNG Guiding principles into the Local Plan, and explore the potential implementation of a higher BNG requirement than the mandatory 10% national benchmark</li> <li>• Feed relevant policies developed by the LNRS into the upcoming Local Plan</li> <li>• Provide regular BNG training opportunities for planners and ecologists</li> <li>• Work closely with offset providers to deliver appropriate gains in strategic locations within the district where BNG offsetting is required</li> <li>• Increase the capacity of our ecology team to effectively evaluate applications for BNG</li> <li>• Keep our biodiversity guidance up to date for developers through SPDs and guidance notes</li> <li>• Monitor on-site BNG to ensure the targeted habitats and conditions are being achieved</li> <li>• Encourage Town and Parish Councils to include policies around biodiversity, nature recovery strategies or Local Green Space within their Neighbourhood Plans</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % BNG in the Local Plan</li> <li>• % of LNRS suggested policies in Local Plan</li> <li>• Ecology training sessions per year</li> <li>• Developer financial contributions towards offsetting through developments</li> <li>• Number of FTE Council planning ecologists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of years since developer biodiversity guidance updated</li> <li>• % schemes monitored by the Council</li> <li>• Number of Neighbourhood Plans containing policies related to nature recovery</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>	
Air and water quality, access to public green spaces, carbon sequestration, local cooling, improved natural flood management	
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of land for offsetting across the district</li> <li>• Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups</li> <li>• Resourcing of planning and ecology team</li> </ul>	


<b>7) Take a spatially strategic approach to nature recovery</b>	
There are opportunities through the development of the new local strategic plans to strengthen policies around ecological protection and recovery, drawing from best practice guidance, and deliver gains for biodiversity.	
<b>Key delivery partners</b>	
Communities, farmers, landowners, OCC, residents, Town and Parish Councils, the Council's planning department.	
<b>Actions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the district</li> <li>• Have a call for and include sites identified for nature recovery as part of the next Local Plan and GI Strategy</li> <li>• Undertake an assessment of farmland grades across the district for targeted nature-based solutions and BNG unit creation, in partnership with Evenlode/Windrush catchment partnership</li> <li>• Consider the purchase of land for biodiversity offsetting purposes</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GI Strategy published</li> <li>• Number of sites identified for nature recovery included within the Local Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmland nature-based solutions assessment completed</li> <li>• Sites acquired by the Council for purpose of offsetting</li> </ul>
<b>Co-benefits</b>	
Access to public green spaces, air and water quality, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management,	
<b>Risks and dependencies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourcing production of plans</li> <li>• Uncertainty around BNG legislation, offsetting payments and conservation covenants</li> <li>• Willingness of landowners to engage in nature recovery</li> </ul>	

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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>COUNCIL – 28 FEBRUARY 2024</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER ON THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE BUDGET ESTIMATES, ADEQUACY OF THE COUNCIL'S RESERVES AND RISK 2024/25</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Alaric Smith Executive Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk">alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Financial Officer to make a report to the Council on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note the report and have regard to it when making its decisions about budget and Council Tax for 2024/25.</li> </ol>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> <li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>No</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

**1.1** Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a statutory duty on the Chief Financial Officer to make a report to the Council, at the time that the budget is considered, and the council tax set on:

- the robustness of the budget estimates and
- the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

The Council must have regard to this report when making decisions about the budget and council tax for the forthcoming year.

**1.2** As members will be aware local authorities are under significant financial pressure and this is reflected in the number of recent s114 notices which have been issued, not all of which can be attributed to decisions made by the management in these Councils. The most recent s114 notice being Nottingham City Council on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**1.3** The pressure on local authorities is due to a reduction in core funding, single year settlements, uncertainty about the timing and impact of the proposed local government finance changes and the general state of the economy. This all leads to a very challenging financial environment and the prospect of a general election in 2024 does nothing to alleviate this challenge in the short term.

**1.4** It should be noted that while the reserves position for the Council is currently relatively healthy, there remains a financial gap which unless resolved could significantly reduce the reserves over the life of this Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

## **2. ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET ESTIMATES**

**2.1** The budget setting process at West Oxfordshire District Council has been operating effectively for many years and is overseen by the qualified and experienced staff.

**2.2** Each year service areas are requested to review their revenue budgets, and produce estimates for the forthcoming financial year, in preparation for budget setting meetings with the Finance team. At these meeting, every line item is reviewed and sense checked. This is an important process as it enables budget pressures to be challenged and validated to ensure that the MTFS only includes those items where there is a clear business case or those that meet a wider strategic aim. These proposed changes are also carefully reviewed by senior management and Executive Members.

**2.3** Quarter 2 budget monitoring was forecasting an overspend this financial year of £433,041 over and above the approved deficit budget of £350,129, This may lead to the comment that the budget proved to be inaccurate. However, the reality of budgets is that they can only ever be based on what is known at the time and what can reasonably be foreseen or estimated. The important element is to understand the reasons for any variance and to ensure that this learning is part of the budget setting process for the subsequent year(s). The overspend forecast at Quarter 2 was mainly driven by Investment Property, the waste

contract and some fee generating services. These elements have been an integral part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

- 2.4** An Investment Property portfolio has a natural cycle of voids and rent free periods as tenants move in and out of properties. It is now the market standard that new tenants can negotiate an initial rent free period at the start of their lease term. A six-month rent-free period will reduce our rental income over the course of a 15 year lease by only 4%.

The revenue budget includes the impact of income foregone for all existing rent free periods in effect into 2024/25 and the expected voids. Rather than calculate voids on a percentage basis over the entire portfolio, it is analysed on a per property basis. These figures will change year on year, with overall income increasing year on year as more voids are tenanted over the next couple of years with either 10 or 15 leases.

- 2.5** The property at Between Towns Road is now empty but discussions have started with a potential partner to investigate the redevelopment of the site to provide temporary emergency accommodation. As these discussions are at an early stage the 2024/25 budget assumes that the property will remain void throughout the coming year with a loss of rental income of £350,000 and additional costs associated with business rates liability and making the building secure. This picture should improve during 2025/26.
- 2.6** Waste contract costs for Ubico are budgeted to increase by £826,000 in 2024/25, primarily due to pay inflation. Extensive work has been undertaken to ensure that delivery of the Waste Service is as efficient, effective and sustainable as possible over the next decade. This includes a phased vehicle replacement programme which should lead to a reduction in revenue costs of £350,000 in 2025/26 as end-of-life fleet vehicles and hire vehicles are replaced.
- 2.7** Fees and charges are reviewed annually on a cost recovery basis and to ensure that the income budget is achievable. As a result of this review Land Charges and Building Control have been reduced to an achievable level in the 2024/25 budget.
- 2.8** The leisure contract with GLL is another area where revenues have been uncertain in the past. For 2024/25 a 10% contract contingency has been included and discussions are ongoing with GLL to maximise the benefits of the contract for both parties and ensure the future viability of this contract.
- 2.9** The lack of certainty around the timing and impact of local government reforms, and single year funding settlements, make the development of the MTFs a challenging exercise. The key assumptions made for the 2024/25 MTFs are detailed in the Budget Paper. Intrinsicly the MTFs is based on the most reasonable forecasts of income and expenditure that can be inferred at this time using every source of information available to us including financial modelling by external experts who assist local authorities with regards to government funding and financial planning.

- 2.10 A Transformation Group has been established to help steer the Council's response to the challenging financial environment, guide the preparation of a sustainable MTFS consistent with the Council Plan, and oversee the delivery of the Council's work programme in terms of service transformation, investment and revenue generation.
- 2.11 Previous iterations of the revenue budget, MTFS and capital programme have been subject to review by the Executive and Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.12 The financial management process is robust with quarterly Financial Performance reports being taken to the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.13 It is imperative that the Council can balance the budget over the medium term in a sustainable and manageable way through a combination of income generation, prudent use of reserves and a robust cost reduction and savings programme.
- 2.14 The key assumptions on which the budget for 2024/25 and the MTFS have been prepared are set out in the budget paper and have been summarised above.

#### **PUBLICA REVIEW**

- 2.15 In August 2023, the four Publica shareholder councils (West Oxfordshire District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, and Forest of Dean District Council) commissioned an external review aimed at helping improve the partnership and outcomes for each of the partner councils. Publica was formed in 2017, and 6 years after the formation is an appropriate time to review how the partnership is working. Human Engine were appointed as the consultants to carry out this review.
- 2.16 The Publica Review Report, produced by Human Engine, concluded that the majority of services should return to be managed directly by the councils, with selected services being retained within the Publica model on a case-by-case basis. The report also included high level estimates on the additional cost and mitigation options associated with the return of some of the services to the Council.
- 2.17 In November 2023 the Executive supported in principle the direction recommended in the Human Engine report and requested the appropriate due diligence and preparatory work be carried out for the preparation of a detailed Transition Plan.
- 2.18 The return of services from Publica to the Council will clearly have a material impact on the Council's resources and budget over the next few years.
- 2.19 Initially one-off costs will be funded from earmarked reserves and ongoing costs will be included in the 2025/26 base budget when there is more certainty with regards to the transition plan.

- 2.20** Inevitably, there are likely to be costs arising from the transfer of services which cannot be accurately estimated at present. An Interim Programme Director is now in place, who started on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, to oversee the Publica Review and an initial draft of the Transition Plan is anticipated in April 2024.
- 2.21** The Executive have already approved the use of £200,000 of earmarked reserves for the initial project team set up costs and for external legal and HR advice. As and when more detailed costings become available the requirement for the use of earmarked reserves will be identified.
- 2.22** Capital receipts, if available, may also be applied to qualifying expenditure (e.g., cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation) in accordance with the extension of the flexibilities over the use of capital receipts in the recent settlement.
- 2.23** It is imperative that the Council takes every opportunity to make services as efficient and cost effective as possible and this will be an important element of the Transition Plan and approach to service design.
- 2.24** Whilst the governance process for the Transition Plan activities has yet to be finalised, it is recommended this includes consultation and sign-off with the Section 151 Officer to ensure overall project costs are managed, monitored, and reported to Executive and Council.
- 2.25** I am satisfied that the MTFs and Capital Programme have been based on sound and reasonable assumptions.

### **3. ADEQUACY OF RESERVES**

- 3.1** The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have issued guidance on local authority reserves and balances. It sets out three main purposes for which reserves are held:
- i) A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary borrowing.
  - ii) A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies
  - iii) A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities, known as earmarked reserves.
- 3.2** The Council expects to hold general fund balances of just under £11.4m at the end of this financial year. This is a more favourable position than many Councils.
- 3.3** However, as the MTFs shows, this position may worsen significantly in the coming few years given the risks that the Council faces as highlighted in the Budget Paper and in this report.

This situation will need to be addressed in the coming months and years as the Council needs to ensure that the appropriate mitigating actions are taken to ensure that we maintain an adequate “cushion” against “unexpected events and emergencies.”

- 3.4 Common sense, and guidance from CIPFA, would suggest that it is good practice to look not only at the level of overall reserves held, but also at the rate of depletion. Growth in the baseline budget has an impact on the rate of depletion, as well as the overall reserves held.
- 3.5 It is imperative therefore that projects coming forward to the Council, for review and approval, be vigorously challenged to ensure that they have a strong business case, or need, before approval is given.
- 3.6 The Council continues to hold reserves for specific purposes, known as earmarked reserves, in accordance with decisions made by the Council in previous years and as recommended by CIPFA. These reserves are reviewed during the financial year to ensure that they remain appropriate and adequate.
- 3.7 **I am satisfied that the level of reserves is adequate to support the 2024/25 budget although Members will need to be mindful of the reserves utilised in the coming years and take remedial actions, when possible, to ensure that reserves remain at an adequate level over the medium and longer term.**

#### 4. RISK

- 4.1 Discussion is included above, and in the Budget and Strategy papers, around the significant risks facing us as a Council.
- 4.2 One key risk is the uncertainty around local government funding from 2026/27 onwards which poses a significant risk to the financial sustainability of this, and many other, Councils due to the reliance on general fund reserves to meet increasing budget gaps. Fair Funding Review and Business Rates changes, originally due in 2020, have yet to be implemented. The upcoming General Election will undoubtedly cause further delays and continued uncertainty about local government funding.
- 4.3 For the purposes of the MTFS it has been assumed that there will be a 37.5% reduction in the level of retained Business Rates income from 2026/27 and that the Government will provide interim compensation funding to dampen the impact of the changes over the first 3 years. However, it must be emphasised that there is currently no commitment from the Government to do so.
- 4.4 The wider economic environment, in terms of inflation and interest rates, is another key risk for the Council. The state of the economy will impact both income and expenditure during the coming financial year including the demand for certain services such as homelessness provision and income generation from Council Tax and Business Rates.

- 4.5 In July 2022/23 the Executive approved the setting up of a specific budget deficit earmarked reserve to reduce the budget gap over the life of the MTFs and it would be prudent to continue to build up this earmarked reserve until the long term impact of funding changes can be accurately assessed.
- 4.6 The return of a majority of employees and services to the Council, from Publica, is another risk in terms of the revenue budget over the life of the MTFs. As mentioned above, there will inevitably be one off costs relating to the transfer of services but it is not yet known what the full financial impact will be after the transfer is complete. For this reason, the MTFs has been prepared on the basis that employee costs remain within Publica in 2024/25 with a transfer to the Council of expected wage inflation in 2025/26. The Executive have already approved the use of £200,000 of earmarked reserves for the initial project team set up costs and for external legal and HR advice. As and when more detailed costings become available the requirement for the use of earmarked reserves will be identified.
- 4.7 The possibility of the ending of the statutory override in 2025/26 for Financial Instruments (pooled funds), which requires fair value gains and losses to be taken to an unusable reserve unless the fund is sold, is another key risk. The ending of the override would require any gains and losses to be recognised in revenue thus having an impact on our revenue budget. Unrealised losses would reduce available resource to fund core services, while unrealised gains would not represent genuine resource increases that could be utilised. Our Pooled funds currently have a capital value below their purchase price because of changes in global economic conditions over the last 18 months with rising interest rates and high inflation. It is therefore advised, by our Treasury advisors Arlingclose, that it would be prudent to create an earmarked reserve to smooth out the impact of any such unrealised gains or losses that will have to be accounted for through the General Fund. The Council will be looking to set up such a reserve.
- 4.8 Investment Property income is a vital revenue stream to fund front line Council services. The volatility in this income stream is another area of risk of the Council. See more detailed information in 2.4 and 2.5 above.

Given the natural cycle of voids and rent free periods, and the risk this poses to a vital revenue stream for the Council, we will be looking to set up an Investment Property reserve to augment the revenue outturn position and reduce reliance on general fund reserves in years where there is significant impact on the revenue budget from voids.

- 4.9 **The 2024/25 Budget and the MTFs have been prepared with consideration of these risks. However, no risk can be completely mitigated, therefore an inherent level of risk still remains.**

## **5. CONCLUSION**


- 5.1** I am able to advise Members that the 2024/25 budget estimates are both prudent and robust. The level of reserves is adequate to support the 2024/25 financial position.
- 5.2** This budget is a surplus of £5,107. However, the picture from 2026/27 onwards is less optimistic with an increasing reliance on the use of reserves to fund front line services and an urgent need to identifying new, sustainable income streams.
- 5.3** The Council will need to continue to set realistic budgets, balancing current need and future financial stability, to ensure that adequate reserves are maintained.

Madhu Richards

Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

16th February 2024



 <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>COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2024</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>2024/25 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Alaric Smith Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk">alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To provide the proposed budget for 2024/25, whilst also considering approval for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The draft base budgets for 2024/25</li> <li>2) The Council’s Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33</li> <li>3) The level of Council Tax for 2024/25</li> <li>4) The Medium Term Financial Strategy</li> <li>5) The Council’s Financial Strategies</li> <li>6) Fees and Charges</li> <li>7) The Council’s Pay Policy Statement</li> </ol>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Details of Base Budget Changes by Service Area Annex B - Prior Year Comparison Annex C - MTFS 2024/25 Annex D - MTFS Graphs Annex E - Capital Programme 2024/25 Annex F - Council Tax Schedules 1-2 Annex G – Council Tax Schedule 3 Annex H – Council Tax Schedule 4 Annex I - Taxbase 2024/25 Annex J - Proposed Fees and Charges Annex K - Proposed Fees and Charges for Trade Waste (Exempt Annex) Annex L - Responses from the Annual Statutory Budget Consultation</p>

	<p>Annex M – Council Pay Policy Statement  Annex N – Capital Strategy Report  Annex O – Investment Strategy Report  Annex P – Treasury Strategy Report  Annex Q – Summary of Prudential Indicators</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>The Executive resolved to recommend to Council to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The General Fund revenue budgets as summarised in Annex B.</li> <li>2. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy in Annex C.</li> <li>3. The Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33 as set out in Annex E.</li> <li>4. Fees and charges for 2024/25, as detailed in Annex J and K.</li> <li>5. The Council’s Pay Policy Statement as set out in Annex M.</li> <li>6. The Council’s Capital Strategy as set out in Annex N</li> <li>7. The Council’s Investment Strategy as set out in Annex O</li> <li>8. The Council’s Treasury Strategy as set out In Annex P</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Meetings with Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Interim S151 and Chief Accountant. Officers also met with key stakeholders from GLL and Ubico. The Council carried out the annual statutory budget consultation.</p>

## 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Council is required to set the budget for 2024/25 by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The first draft of the 2024/25 budget was presented to the Executive on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, and updated versions on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This budget, submitted for approval by the Council, is a **surplus of £5,107**.
- 1.2 The revenue budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) have been prepared against the backdrop of continuing pressure on the Council's finances, both from a softening in some income generating activities and the uncertainty around the timing of fundamental changes to Local Government Finance by central government. Originally these changes were due to be implemented in 2020, along with significant changes to the Retained Business Rates system, with the aim of addressing the cost pressures of Adult Social Care in the sector.
- 1.3 The risk posed in the later years of the MTFS from central government funding changes is the most significant the authority faces to a sustainable financial future as the impact of these changes cannot yet be quantified with any certainty.
- 1.4 For the purposes of the MTFS it has been assumed that there will be a 37.5% reduction in the level of retained Business Rates income from 2026/27 and that the government will provide interim compensation funding to dampen the impact of the changes over the first 3 years. However, it must be emphasised that there is currently no commitment from the government to do so.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In year reporting is forecasting an overspend this financial year of £433,041 over and above the approved deficit budget of £350,129, mainly driven by Investment Property, the Waste contract and some fee generating services.
- 2.2 This draft of the 2024/25 budget, is a **surplus of £5,107**, with the picture from 2025/26 onwards becoming less optimistic with an increasing reliance on the use of reserves to fund front line services and the difficulty in identifying new, sustainable income streams.
- 2.3 While the reserves position for the Council is currently relatively healthy, there remains a financial gap which unless resolved could significantly reduce the general fund reserves over the life of the MTFS.
- 2.4 Single year settlements have exacerbated the financial strain on the Council, restricting our ability to confidently plan for more than one year in advance. Added to the long running uncertainty over the timing of the Business Rates reset, which has been delayed since 2020, and the phasing out of New Homes Bonus, this makes our funding assumptions speculative.
- 2.5 Unavoidable budget pressures, such as general and wage inflation, waste & recycling costs put additional strain on our financial position which we will struggle to offset with ongoing savings or additional income generation.
- 2.6 The Publica review has added a significant element of uncertainty around the financial impact of returning the majority of services back to the Council in terms of both one off and

ongoing costs. Initially one off costs will be funded from earmarked reserves and ongoing costs will be included in the 2025/26 base budget.

- 2.7 The use of reserves to manage short term fluctuations in the Council's financial position is necessary but cannot be sustained over the longer term where the significant budget gap, over a number of years, will exhaust these reserves.

### **3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

- 3.1 The Local Government Association (LGA), in their letter to Jeremy Hunt on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 referred to the "intense financial pressure" that councils are under and the "ongoing inflationary and pay pressures alongside spiking demand and market challenges ..... This is happening at a time of low financial resilience across the sector following a 27.0 per cent real-terms reduction in core spending power since 2010/11."
- 3.2 This view of the financial challenges facing councils is reflected in the number of recent s114 notices which have been issued, not all of which can be attributed to decisions made by the management in these Councils. The latest being Nottingham City Council on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023.
- 3.3 The last decade has seen a reduction in core funding for Councils. Single year settlements and uncertainty about the timing and impact of the proposed local government finance reforms creates an ever more challenging financial environment. The prospect of a general election in 2024 may further delay these reforms.
- 3.4 Interest rates and inflation have been higher than budgeted in the current year. Uncertainty about these continues and assumptions have been made about these for the 2024/25 budget and MTFS.

### **4. 2024/2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SETTLEMENT**

- 4.1 The provisional Local Government Funding Settlement was announced on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with additional funding announced on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- 4.2 The December settlement was in line with the assumptions made for the first draft of the 2024/25 budget, taken to the Executive on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, as the settlement was in line with the Autumn Statement (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023) and Policy Statement (5<sup>th</sup> December 2023).
- 4.3 There is an 8.8% increase in funding from 2023/24 to 2024/25 (assuming a £5 increase in the Council Tax is enacted) from Council Tax, Business Rates and Government funding.
- 4.4 There is a significant reduction in the New Homes Bonus, compared to assumptions made for the first draft of this budget, which is temporarily offset by an increase in the funding guarantee. See table below for the funding assumed in the MTFS taken to the Executive in December and the final funding amounts.

MTFS Line item	December MTFS	Final Settlement	Difference
	£	£	£
Revenue Support Grant	230,000	230,095	95
New Homes Bonus	1,579,635	1,009,640	(569,995)
Funding Guarantee	963,864	1,683,079	719,215
Rural & Services Grant	221,000	186,066	(34,934)

- 4.5 There were no changes to the Band D Council Tax Referendum thresholds of £5 or 2.99%, whichever is the higher.
- 4.6 As this was the effectively the second year of a two-year settlement, the key uncertainties around future funding still exist. With the prospect of significant cuts in funding from the local share of business rates and other funding streams, medium- and longer-term financial planning is extremely difficult.
- 4.7 This report provides details of the funding settlements and the assumptions made for both the revenue budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including the current drivers of growth.
- 4.8 The draft local government settlement has been published and the final retained Business Rates income has been calculated ready for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 31<sup>st</sup> January. The budget for 2024/25 is therefore not subject to any further change.

## 5. 2024/2025 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

- 5.1 The 2024/25 budget setting process has been informed by the financial performance in the current year and the key drivers of variances to budget year to date in 2023/24.
- 5.2 The tables below show the key changes to the budget and expected funding that have changed the £350,129 deficit in 2023/24 to a **£5,107 surplus** budget in 2024/25. In the income and expenditure sections of the budget a negative figure represents a saving and a positive figure additional expenditure. In the funding section, a negative figure represents an increase in funding and vice versa.

**TABLE I**

2023/24 budget deficit		350,129
<b>Budget Movements</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>Changes in expenditure</u></b>		
Reversal of one off items from 23/24	(1,116,591)	
Publica Review estimate of ongoing pension costs	75,000	
Publica Review one off costs	200,000	
Retained Staff	90,650	

Closure of Elmfield as an operational building	(97,625)	
External Audit fees	132,375	
Marriotts service charges	34,910	
Secondary pension contribution	96,900	
Budget Manager Review	(38,305)	
Publica contract growth	647,452	
Ubico contract growth	826,014	
Additional Legal fees for Planning Appeals/Inquiries	90,000	
		940,780
<b><u>Changes in income</u></b>		
Between Towns Road development opportunity	452,037	
Additional Planning Application income	(181,800)	
Investment Property voids	323,850	
Land Charges, Building Control and Stray Dogs fees	176,072	
Green Waste licences - subject to Portfolio holder approval	(165,000)	
Investment Property rent free periods	351,608	
Homelessness Hostels	(43,240)	
Reduction in loss of Housing Benefit subsidy for temp accommodation	(140,846)	
GLL contract income	(449,171)	
		323,510
<b><u>Changes in funding</u></b>		
Minimum Reserves Provision movement	(186,775)	
Earmarked reserves funding posts & Publica review one off costs	(807,996)	
Reverse Investment Recovery projected income in 23/24 base	175,000	
Reduction in external borrowing costs	(432,950)	
Council Tax reduction in surplus	75,000	
Treasury Management income	(54,000)	
Council Tax	(330,194)	
Provisional government funding assumptions	(52,504)	
		(1,614,419)
<b>2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET</b>		<b>(0)</b>

**TABLE 2**

Budget deficit presented to the Executive in December 2023	(0)	
<b>Budget Movements since presentation to Executive</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>Revenue Changes</u></b>		
Legal Services review	74,678	
Fees & Charges	(52,284)	
2 Year Economic Development Post	30,579	52,973
<b><u>Funding Changes</u></b>		
Local Government Funding Settlement	(5,129)	
Earmarked Reserves funding Economic Development post	(30,579)	
Council Tax surplus	(31,935)	
		(67,643)
<b>2024/25 REVISED DRAFT BUDGET</b>		<b>(14,670)</b>

**TABLE 3**

Budgeted surplus presented to Executive in January 2024	(14,670)	
<b>Budget Movements since January presentation</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>Revenue Changes</u></b>		
Secondary pension contribution	20,000	
Climate Change Officer post	33,143	
Overhead charges to Publica	61,212	
Ill Health Insurance	4,981	119,336
<b><u>Funding Changes</u></b>		
Reduction in external borrowing costs	(10,325)	
Rural Services Delivery Grant additional settlement	(9,853)	
Funding Guarantee Grant additional settlement	(85,742)	
Services Grant	(13,657)	
Earmarked Reserves funding Climate Change post	(33,143)	
Business Rates	42,947	
		(109,773)
<b>2024/25 BUDGET</b>		<b>(5,107)</b>

### 5.3 The key changes to the budget from 2023/24 to 2024/25 are as follows:

- The reversal of one-off growth items in 2023/24 which includes the contingency against leisure contract income and the budgeted movement to and from earmarked reserves. Earmarked reserve movements are recalculated every year and are used to fund posts that have been agreed by the Executive in prior years.
- Estimated one off costs of £200,000 associated with the Publica Review have been included to cover external consultancy in the areas of HR, TUPE, Project Management, Legal and Finance, with an additional £75,000 for the ongoing additional pension costs estimated in the Human Engine Report, based on an estimated phase one completion in Q3 of 2024/25.
- Publica contract growth is included in the budget at 5% pay inflation, agreed across the Publica partnership Councils, as an indicative figure in advance of a more developed transition plan becoming available. When more information is available around the timing and structure of phase one of the TUPE of staff back to the Council, these costs will transfer from the Publica contract to the Council's retained staff budget line.
- Extensive work has been undertaken with Ubico on how to most efficiently, effectively and sustainably deliver the Waste Service over the next decade. The growth included in the 2024/25 budget represents wage inflation and the unavoidable impact of the proposed capital fleet replacement programme which will go forward to Members for approval in February 2024.
- For context there are 25 waste and recycling lorries coming to the end of their economic life in 2024, plus 6 ancillary vehicles. A phased replacement programme will allow the Council to take advantage of new technologies as they mature and become more reliable in the next two to three years. Spreading the cost over the next three to four years limits the amount of external borrowing needed at the current higher interest rates. In 2024/25 it is anticipated that the Council will purchase 6 replacement waste vehicles with the remainder of the fleet brought in through contract hire arrangements.
- The revenue costs of the Ubico contract will fall by an estimated £350,000 in 2025/26 as hire vehicles are replaced and repair costs of the existing end of life fleet fall.
- Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) is tasked with appointing external auditors, consulting on and setting the external audit scale fee that is charged to Public Bodies. The PSAA have recognised the increased volume of work required to provide assurance in Local Government audits and has increased the scale fee by 151%.
- Between Towns Road is now empty but discussions have started with a potential partner to investigate the redevelopment of the site to provide temporary emergency accommodation. Whilst these discussions are underway and until development plans are finalised it is expected that the property will remain void



throughout 2024/25 with a loss of rental income of £350,000 and additional costs associated with Business Rates liability and making sure the building remains secure.

- An Investment Property portfolio has a natural cycle of voids and rent free periods as tenants move in and out of properties. It is now commonplace that tenants negotiate an initial rent free period at the start of their lease term. A six month rent free period will reduce our income over the course of a 15 year lease by less than 4%.

The revenue budget includes the income foregone for all existing rent free periods in effect into 2024/25 and the expected voids. Rather than calculate voids on a percentage basis over the entire portfolio, it is analysed on a per property basis. These figures will change year on year, with overall income increasing year on year as more voids are tenanted over the next couple of years with either 10 or 15 leases.

- It is proposed that the annual Green Waste licence charge be increased by £5 to £50. A benchmarking exercise on 10 neighbouring Councils shows an average green waste licence cost in 2023/24 of £54.09.
- Fees & charges are reviewed each year on a cost recovery basis and also assessed on whether the income budget is achievable. Land Charges and Building Control have been consistently below their income budget for some years and therefore have been reduced to an achievable level.

The reasons for the fall in income in both areas has been consistently reported in the quarterly budget monitoring reports over the last three years. Unfortunately, remedial action to recover market share has not been successful.

- The budget has been updated to include the full contractual income from the leisure contract net of a contingency of 10%. Discussions are ongoing with our leisure provider to maximise the benefits of the contract for both parties and to ensure the viability of this contract in the future.
- The prohibitive cost of capital has brought the Investment Recovery strategy to a halt for now due to the lack of available opportunities which meet the Council's agreed criteria. The one potential project currently being investigated is the redevelopment of Between Towns Road. The 2023/24 budget assumed a level of Investment Recovery activity that will no longer be achieved with the resultant reduction in both MRP and external borrowing costs in 2024/25.
- The approval by the Executive in October to recruit an additional finance officer in the Homelessness team is expected to reduce our loss of Housing Benefit subsidy on temporary accommodation by £140,000 a year.
- The government announced that there will be a 35% rise in planning fees for major applications and a 25% rise for all other applications from 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- It is proposed that Council Tax increases by the maximum amount of £5 on a Band D property.
- The following growth requests were not included in the first draft of the budget:

- i) Posts and case management system resulting from the review of the Legal Service paper approved by the Executive on 13th December meeting (see Table 2 above).
- ii) Economic Development Team Assistant – two-year fixed term post funded by earmarked reserves (see Table 2 above)
- iii) Climate Change Officer (see Table 3 above)
- Overhead charges to Publica have been reduced by £61,212 due to all staff moving out of the Elmfield office.
- Actuaries for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) carry out a triennial revaluation of the fund and set the secondary pension contribution required by the Council to keep the scheme fully funded against past and future liabilities.

## **6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1** The timing and impact of local government reforms makes the development of an MTFS a challenging exercise with single year funding settlements adding to the uncertainty in future years.
- 6.2** The MTFS (Annex C) assumes that New Homes Bonus will be paid for the last time in 2024/25 with an assumption that some kind of replacement funding will be rolled into the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) in 2025/26.
- 6.3** The business rates reset, delayed since 2020, is forecast to take place in 2026/27 with a possible 37.5% reduction in business rates income as a result as retained business rates are reduced to the baseline funding level.
- 6.4** The MTFS assumes a general inflationary increase of between 4% and 2% will apply to cost of services from 2025/26 onwards, excluding contracts where the actual inflationary increase is known i.e. Ubico contract, salary inflation, Publica contract and some software licence agreements.
- 6.5** Salary inflation over the last 3 years has been higher than we have historically estimated. For 2024/25 there is an assumed 5% increase, but this is expected to fall back over the life of the MTFS.
- 6.6** A Transformation Group has been established to help steer the Council's response to the challenging financial environment, guide the preparation of a sustainable MTFS consistent with the Council Plan, and oversee the delivery of the Council's work programme in terms of service transformation, investment and revenue generation.
- 6.7** This Council, like all local authorities, is facing external budget pressures that will impact the MTFS. Energy prices, inflation and interest rates have all had a significant impact on the financial performance in the current year and will continue to do so in the coming years.
- 6.8** The MTFS is based on the most reasonable forecasts of income and expenditure that can be inferred at this point in time.

## **7. FEES AND CHARGES**

### **7.1 Fees and charges are set on three separate bases.**

- Fees that are set centrally over which the Council has no control i.e. premises licences and penalty notices.
- Fees that are set on a cost recovery basis i.e. Building Control, taxi licences and Street Trading. The Council is required to make sure that fees are set at a level that does not generate a profit compared to the cost of providing the service.
- Fees that are discretionary where the Council has full control. These are the commercial services that operate where the Council is in competition with the private sector i.e. Pre Application (Planning) advice, pest control, trade waste, bulky waste and green waste.

**7.2** For the setting of the 2024/25 draft budget a comprehensive review has been undertaken to analyse the fees set on a cost recovery basis. As a result Land Charges and Water Sampling fees will increase by 6.7%

**7.3** The government announced an increase in Planning Application fees from 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 of 25% and an increase of 35% for major applications. This has increased our budgeted income for 2024/25 by £182,000.

**7.4** Other fee generating services i.e. food safety, private water supply testing and licences (excluding premises) were found to be under recovering their costs and therefore the fees have been uplifted as detailed in Annex G.

**7.5** A new charging regime for Pre Application Planning Advice is being introduced in 2024/25 which builds on intelligence gathered from a similar exercise undertaken by one of our Publica partner Councils in 2022/23. This regime should provide a modest increase in fee income of £15,000 and will cover the costs of delivering the service.

**7.6** Green Waste licences are to increase by £5, generating expected additional income of £165,000. This new licence charge of £50 compares to the average cost across 10 neighbouring Councils of £54.09 in 2023/24.

## **8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**8.1** The outturn report for 2023/24 will identify any capital slippage which is requested to go forward into 2024/25. So far this year, there has been significantly lower capital expenditure than was anticipated, due to a lack of viable investment projects given the increase in interest rates.

**8.2** A detailed review of the capital programme has been carried out during the 2024/25 budget process. The draft Capital Programme is attached in Annex E.

**8.3** The main programmes are the proposed Ubico vehicle replacement strategy, decarbonisation of Council buildings and solar PV schemes.

- 8.4 A Strategic Housing Development & Enabling Manager is included in the revenue budget for 2024/25 and this post will inform a strategic housing capital programme in 2025/26 and beyond.
- 8.5 Similarly, the Transformation Group is reviewing the council's Asset Management Strategy and this work will identify areas of capital spend in future years.
- 8.6 As always, inclusion in the Capital Programme at this stage does not mean that the expenditure is authorised. Identifying the possible spend, and including it in the Capital Programme, ensures that potential borrowing requirements are identified. In most cases, a business case would still need to be prepared and brought forward for review.
- 8.7 The Council has engaged with the Salix on potential decarbonisation programmes for both Witney and Carterton Leisure Centres.

## 9. RISKS AND MITIGATION

### 9.1 Local Government Funding

As highlighted earlier in this report, the uncertainty around local government funding from 2026/27 onwards poses a significant risk to the financial sustainability of this and many other Councils due to the reliance on general fund reserves to meet increasing budget gaps. In July 2022/23 the Executive approved the setting up of a specific budget deficit earmarked reserve to reduce the budget gap over the life of the MTFs and it would be prudent to continue to build up this earmarked reserve until the long term impact of funding changes can be accurately assessed.

### 9.2 Statutory Override for Financial Instruments

The statutory override for Financial Instruments (pooled funds), which requires fair value gains and losses to be taken to an unusable reserve unless the fund is sold, is set to end in 2025/26. The ending of the override would require any gains and losses to be recognised in revenue thus having an impact on our revenue budget. Unrealised losses would reduce available resource to fund core services, while unrealised gains would not represent genuine resource increases that could be utilised.

Our Pooled funds currently have a capital value below their purchase price because of changes in global economic conditions over the last 18 months with rising interest rates and high inflation. We have seen capital values start to recover throughout Q3 with our treasury advisors projecting a full recovery over the next 18 months to 2 years, barring any further economic turbulence.

Any unrealised loss would have to be moved to the General Fund in 2025/26 if the statutory override is not extended and capital values have not fully recovered. It is therefore advised, by our Treasury advisors Arlingclose, that it would be prudent to create an earmarked reserve to smooth out the impact of any such unrealised gains or losses that will have to be accounted for through the General Fund.

### 9.3 Publica Review

The return of a majority of staff and services to the Council from Publica will of course have a material impact on the revenue budget over the life of the MTFs. In the next 2 years there will inevitably be one off costs relating to the transfer of services but it is not yet known what the full financial impact will be after the transfer is complete. The partner Councils and Publica are at the early stages of the due diligence and planning of the project with more detailed financial information coming forward later in the year. For this reason, the MTFs has been prepared on the basis that employee costs remain within Publica in 2024/25 with a transfer to the Council of expected wage inflation in 2025/26.

The Executive have already approved the use of £200,000 of earmarked reserves for the initial project team set up costs and for external legal and HR advice. As and when more detailed costings become available the requirement for the use of earmarked reserves will be identified.

### 9.4 Investment Property

Investment Property income is a vital revenue stream to fund front line Council services. The variance to income budget this year is mainly driven by void units in Marriotts, Talisman and Des Roches and the delay in renting out Elmfield. A number of void units have been let during 2023 and positive negotiations are nearing completion with a few possible tenants for Marriotts, subject to Executive approval.

The success of reletting void units comes with the industry standard of an initial rent free period, which over the course of a 10 or 15 year lease represents foregone income for of 3.33% to 5%. Income budgets for 2024/25 have been recast on a property by property basis, taking into account any active rent free periods and any known voids. The most significant void property is the office block at Between Towns Road, let to Oxfordshire County Council until November 2023. In the post pandemic era, the rise of hybrid working has significantly reduced the market demand for large office premises and it is extremely unlikely we would be able to find another tenant.

The Council has entered into discussions with a partner to understand the feasibility of redeveloping the site for the provision of temporary emergency accommodation. As these negotiations mature, a report will come forward to the Executive but this is expected to take some time. For the 2024/25 budget it has been assumed that the building will be empty and the Council will forego £350,000 of rental income and take on the liability of Business Rates and costs to keep the building secure.

The 2024/25 budget assumes rental income from Investment Property of £3.6m with an additional rental income of £1.2m from Marriotts. Marriotts is not classified as an Investment Property as it was bought with the primary objective of regeneration, protecting the High Street and supporting the economic development of the whole of Witney.

Given the natural cycle of voids and rent free periods, it is recommended that an Investment Property reserve is set up to augment the revenue outturn position and reduce reliance on general fund reserves in years where there is significant impact on the revenue budget from voids.

## 9.5 Reserves and balances

The S151 Officer has undertaken a review of reserves and balances during the budget setting process and has determined that it would be possible and prudent to repurpose some of our existing earmarked reserves which are no longer needed i.e. the Covid reserve, to fund the four specific risk reserves discussed above.

As more information is available around these specific risks, the MTFs and earmarked reserves will be reviewed to ensure that the General Fund balance does not fall below a level deemed safe by the S151 Officer in order to continue to be able to set an annual budget.

## 10. BUDGET CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Council's budget consultation, via the online engagement platform CitizenLab, ran from 13<sup>th</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- 10.2 The Council used a wide range of communication channels to promote the consultation including media engagement, social media, website, stakeholders and newsletters.
- 10.3 A total of 377 responses (308 for 2023/24) were received as a result of this consultation. Respondents were requested to rank the services provided with 1 being the most important and 10 being the service considered the least important. The responses are summarised in Annex J in order of their importance to residents.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 This final version of the budget is a **surplus of £5,107**.
- 11.2 There are significant pressures on the Council's current 2023/24 budget which may mean that the general fund balances will be called upon in the current financial year to bridge the gap.
- 11.3 There are continued uncertainties and cost pressures, as detailed in this report, that will have an impact on the 2024/25 budget and the medium-term strategy.
- 11.4 The Council will need to set realistic budgets, balancing current need and future financial stability, to ensure that adequate reserves are maintained over the medium term.

## 12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no financial implications arising from this paper as it outlines the approach and context of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

### **13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**13.1** Apart from the statutory duties and obligations set out in this report, with regards to budget setting process, there are no further implications.

### **14. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**14.1** None required as a result of the content of this report.

### **15. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**15.1** No direct equalities impact with regards to the content of this report.

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

**16.1** None.

### **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Budget papers – February 2023, December 2023 and January 2024.

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**Detail of base budget changes by cost centre**

**Annex A**

	2023/24 budget	Pay inflation	Contracts	Reverse one offs	Budget change	2024/25 budget	2022/2023 Actual	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Estimate
Assets	(2,480,306)	64,432		(39,137)	161,139	(2,293,872)	(2,228,555)	(2,480,306)	(2,293,872)
Waste & Environmental	7,092,966	24,811	826,014	(10,250)	(134,773)	7,798,768	7,234,391	7,092,966	7,798,768
Comms & Marketing	176,787	10,169			11,982	198,938	165,399	176,787	198,938
Contracts	314,947	12,144	(441,171)	(575,813)	(2,814)	(692,707)	(80,497)	314,947	(692,707)
Corporate Finance	1,654,621	41,166	275,000	(47,550)	334,558	2,257,795	2,065,229	1,654,621	2,257,795
Corporate Responsibility	1,675,701	34,402		(12,033)	65,211	1,763,281	1,559,769	1,675,701	1,763,281
Customer Experience	1,144,301	78,416		(8,060)	(70,278)	1,144,379	968,552	1,144,301	1,144,379
Development Management	830,162	133,084		(166,000)	(17,330)	779,916	534,327	830,162	779,916
Env'l & Regulatory Services	102,932	6,322			(944)	108,310	95,815	102,932	108,310
Finance	828,270	39,375			5,516	873,161	790,612	828,270	873,161
Insight & Intelligence	594,355	72,829			31,211	698,395	568,609	594,355	698,395
Localities	641,221	20,454			(62,455)	599,220	596,499	641,221	599,220
Operational Services	1,707,271	110,269			(42,575)	1,774,965	1,398,051	1,707,271	1,774,965
People	318,931	18,798			(4,008)	333,721	295,180	318,931	333,721
Technology	1,414,271	86,431			(14,090)	1,486,612	1,158,558	1,414,271	1,486,612
	16,016,431	753,102	659,843	(858,843)	260,350	16,830,883	15,121,938	16,016,431	16,830,883

**Assets:**

This budget covers our operational buildings, commercial properties and our climate change programme. Investment property voids have been included in the budget on an individual tenancy basis, not as a generic percentage in order to more accurately identify expected rental income in 2024/25. Also included are any existing rent free periods, now an industry standard when establishing a new 10 to 15 year lease. The level of income will ebb and flow over time as premises are vacated and tenanted, but over the life of a 10 year lease the income foregone by the Council for a rent free period is typically 5% of the total.

The Climate Change programme has benefited from significant investment in additional resource in the last financial year in order to help deliver on the Council's Priorities. There is over £100,000 in earmarked reserves which will fund initiatives going forward.

**Waste & Environmental:**

This budget covers grounds maintenance and waste and contains large parts of the Ubico budget. Work is being carried out to develop a range of options to deliver long term revenue savings from the Waste Service by means of route optimisation, updating the vehicle fleet and exploring cross boundary working.

The income budget for Green Waste has been increased by £165,000 reflecting a proposed uplift of £5 in license fee to £50 a year for 2024/25. This is against the average 2023/24 cost of a licence in our 10 nearest Local Authorities of £54 a year.

The Ubico budget has been increased by £826,014. This figure reflects the general uplift in pay inflation in response to the cost of living crisis and a significant rise in vehicle hire costs to supplement the phasing of the proposed Waste Vehicle replacement programme which will be brought to Executive for approval

**Communications and Marketing:**

Individual Business Managers have input into their marketing spend but work directly with the specialists in the Comms team who bring their expertise to each task and find the most effective and cost efficient way to reach the largest number of people. It is a priority to increase our engagement with residents via Social Media as well as more traditional channels. There are no material changes to the 2024/25 budget.

**Contracts:**

The main item in this budget is the Leisure contract. The expected reduction in budget comes from the reversal of an income contingency in 2023/24 of the contracted Management Fee due for the year, shown in the table above. Senior Officers continue to work with our leisure provider, GLL, to stabilise the West Oxfordshire leisure offering and maximise the ability of GLL to remit the full management fee. All realistic options on how the contract is delivered have been assessed with an update coming forward to Members in the new year.

#### Corporate Finance:

This section covers centralised services like Legal and Treasury. The increase of £275,000 in the table above relates to the expenditure included in the budget for the initial costs of the Publica review which Executive have agreed to fund from earmarked reserves.

#### Corporate Responsibility:

These are central governance costs, members costs, election costs etc. The budget changes in the above table relate to the pay awards agreed in 2023/24 and a 6% increase in Members allowances - as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and agreed by Council in March 2023.

#### Customer Experience:

There are a variety of services contained in this area from Customer Services and Front of House to Homelessness. The additional expenditure identified for 2024/25 has been funded by savings in other parts of the service.

#### Development Management:

Planning applications, appeals, conservation and flood defence are covered by this budget which has seen an increase in both income and costs. The government announced an increase of 25% to planning application fees and a 35% increase for major applications from 6th December 2023. The budget therefore includes increased Planning fee income of £182,000 of which half is lost to an increase in external legal costs to support the Council at Planning Appeals. Each appeal costs on average from £20,000 to £60,000 dependent on the complexity and we have seen these costs rise considerably over the last two years.

#### Environmental and Regulatory Services:

There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget.

#### Finance:

There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget, the movement in the above table relates to the pay award agreed in 2023/24.

#### Insight and Intelligence:

The main focus of this budget is planning policy and economic development. There are two new FTC posts in this area in 2024/25, a Strategic Housing Officer who will work to bring forward a Strategic Housing Plan in the second half of 2024/25 addressing the pressures on the supply of affordable housing in the District and an Economic Development Assistant who will help support local businesses.

#### Localities:

These are the budgets for communities, arts and tourism. Savings have been identified in legacy budgets, excluding staff, and have been removed in 2024/25. There have been no other material changes to this budget.

#### Operational Services:

This department covers all aspects of benefit payments and revenue collection, including fraud investigation. It also covers Pollution Control, Food Safety and Markets. There are a number of modest revenue savings that have been identified and removed from legacy budget lines. The number of households presenting as homeless has tripled since March 2020 and is continuing to rise. The Council is able to provide 22 units of homelessness accommodation in its own properties with the excess demand utilising Bed & Breakfasts or Hotels. The approval to make some FTC posts in the Homelessness team permanent in 2023/24 will stabilise the service and allow officers to better support clients and help to move them out of temporary accommodation and into more secure tenancies.

#### People:

People covers human resources and training. There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget.

#### Technology:

This budget predominantly covers ICT. There are increases in software licence support & maintenance to reflect the current market rate increases, which are linked to inflation. These rises have been deferred and negotiated down where possible and, as much as we can, we've found or generated savings to offset them. Additional cyber security protection is required to increase the Council's resilience and is included in the base budget as part of the software licence support costs.

## 2024/25 Proposed Revenue Budget comparison to prior year

## Annex B

2022/2023 Actual £	Expenditure by Service Area	2023/2024 Budget £	2024/2025 Estimate £
(2,228,555)	Assets	(2,480,305)	(2,293,872)
7,234,391	Waste & Environmental	7,092,966	7,798,768
165,399	Communications & Marketing	176,787	198,938
(80,497)	Contracts	314,947	(692,707)
2,065,229	Corporate Finance	1,654,621	2,257,795
1,559,769	Corporate Responsibility	1,675,701	1,763,281
968,552	Customer Experience	1,144,301	1,144,379
534,327	Development Management	830,162	779,916
95,815	Environmental & Regulatory Services	102,932	108,310
790,612	Finance	828,270	873,161
568,609	Insight & Intelligence	594,355	698,395
596,499	Localities	641,221	599,220
1,398,051	Operational Services	1,707,271	1,774,965
295,180	People	318,931	333,721
1,158,558	Technology	1,414,271	1,486,612
<b>15,121,939</b>	<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>16,016,432</b>	<b>16,830,883</b>
<b>2022/2023 Actual £</b>	<b>Expenditure by Type</b>	<b>2023/2024 Budget £</b>	<b>2024/2025 Estimate £</b>
1,383,001	Employees	1,258,686	1,449,192
1,779,128	Premises Related Expenditure	1,560,865	1,517,413
4,884	Transport Related Expenditure	16,310	16,310
7,063,527	Supplies & Services	5,077,119	5,813,680
18,826,431	Third Party Payments	20,368,757	22,110,612
19,371,447	Transfer Payments	14,000,000	14,400,000
2,268,477	Capital Charges	1,731,690	1,733,952
<b>50,696,895</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>44,013,427</b>	<b>47,041,159</b>
(35,574,956)	Income	(27,996,996)	(30,210,276)
<b>15,121,939</b>	<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>16,016,431</b>	<b>16,830,883</b>

## 2024/25 Proposed Revenue Budget comparison to prior year

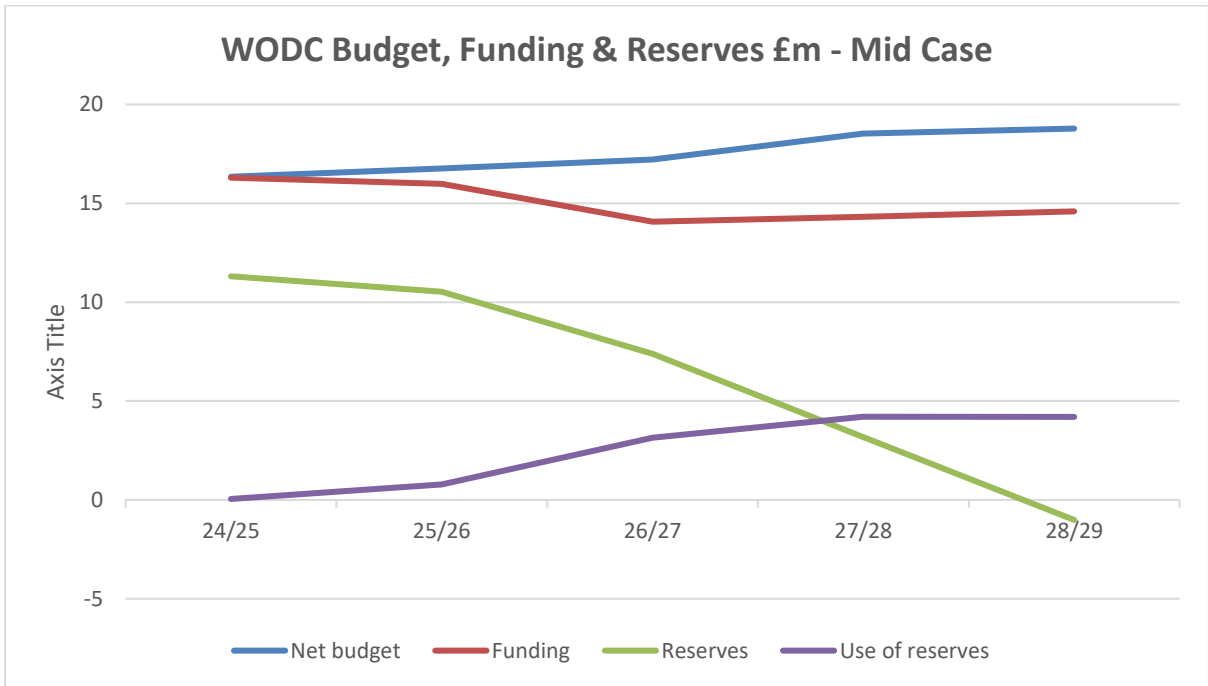
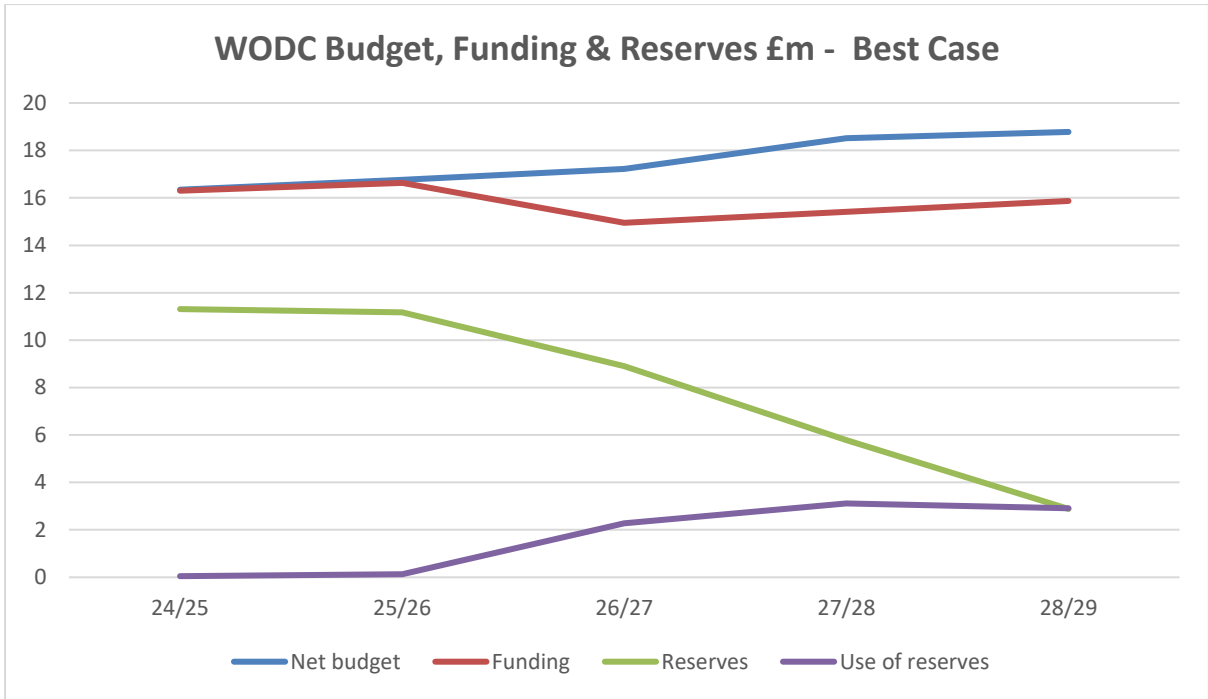
## Annex B

	2023/2024 Budget £	2024/2025 Estimate £
<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>16,016,431</b>	<b>16,830,883</b>
Capital Expenditure funded through revenue	540,100	540,100
Minimum Revenue Provision	813,391	626,616
Temporary loans interest	0	0
Interest on Long Term Borrowing	522,375	79,100
Capital charges - depreciation and amortisation	(1,731,690)	(1,731,690)
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>16,160,607</b>	<b>16,345,009</b>
Treasury and Investment Income	(2,157,124)	(1,156,228)
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>14,003,483</b>	<b>15,188,781</b>
<u>Contributions to / (from):</u>		
General Fund Balance	(350,129)	5,107
Net contribution to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	257,748	(45,966)
<b>Balance to be met from Government Grants &amp; Council Tax</b>	<b>13,911,102</b>	<b>15,147,922</b>
Transfers to / (from) Collection Fund	(199,508)	(156,443)
Revenue Support Grant	(215,801)	(230,095)
New Homes Bonus	(1,579,635)	(1,009,640)
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(148,899)	(186,066)
Services Grant	(86,796)	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(910,864)	(1,683,079)
Renewable Energy Schemes	(272,090)	(298,032)
Retained Business Rates (NNDR)	(4,877,237)	(5,634,100)
<b>Net Requirement</b>	<b>5,620,272</b>	<b>5,950,467</b>
<b>Taxbase</b>	<b>47,078.85</b>	<b>47,841.03</b>
<b>Council Tax (at Band D)</b>	<b>£119.38</b>	<b>£124.38</b>

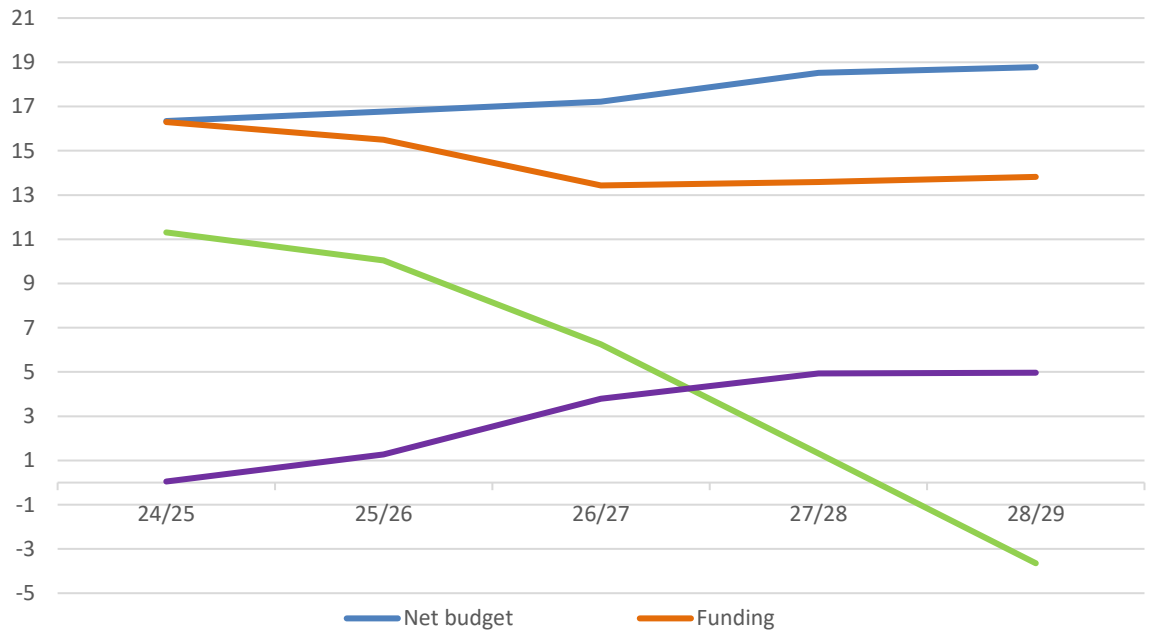
## Medium Term Financial Strategy Updated February 2024

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
<b>Inflation</b>		5%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Taxbase	1.0196	1.018	1.016	1.020	1.020	1.020
Base	13,055,622	15,105,712	16,345,008	16,766,223	17,718,712	19,530,147
Inflationary uplift			490,350	419,156	354,374	390,603
Inflation - Publica & Retained Staff	517,120	942,695	650,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Publica Review		275,000				
Inflation - Electricity & Gas	253,171					
Inflation - Ubico	754,099	826,014	(470,000)			
Leisure contract	558,613	(449,171)			1,000,000	
MRP movement	358,489	(186,775)	112,527			(76,430)
Interest on External Borrowing	419,518	(443,275)	133,338	33,333	(42,939)	(33,439)
One-off growth - reversal of prior year	(772,000)	(858,843)				
Recurring growth	270,081	(43,240)				
Investment Property Voids/Rent Free Periods		1,127,495	(280,000)			
Business Manager Review		272,409	(55,000)			
Budget growth items	745,894					
Fees & Charges		(223,012)	(160,000)			
Investment Strategy income	(1,054,896)					
<b>Target Budget (NOE)</b>	<b>15,105,712</b>	<b>16,345,008</b>	<b>16,766,223</b>	<b>17,718,712</b>	<b>19,530,147</b>	<b>20,310,880</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>						
Revenue Support Grant	215,801	230,095	247,206	(982,900)	(1,009,990)	(1,039,313)
New Homes Bonus	1,579,635	1,009,640				
Funding Guarantee Grant	910,864	1,683,079	2,478,700	5,833,349	4,759,546	3,684,886
Rural Services Delivery & Services grants	235,695	186,066	172,409	172,409	172,409	172,409
Business Rates Share & Renewables	5,149,327	5,932,132	5,932,132	3,716,065	4,152,571	4,700,899
<b>Total Funding from Government &amp; Business Rates</b>	<b>8,091,322</b>	<b>9,041,012</b>	<b>8,830,448</b>	<b>8,738,923</b>	<b>8,074,537</b>	<b>7,518,881</b>
Investment Income - Pooled Funds	1,102,228	1,156,228	1,040,605	936,545	889,717	871,923
Use of earmarked reserves	(257,748)	45,966	(203,338)	700,000	600,000	500,000
Collection Fund	199,508	156,443	120,000	100,000	90,000	85,000
Council Tax	5,620,273	5,950,467	6,282,517	6,629,715	6,996,730	7,374,560
<b>Use of GF reserves</b>	<b>350,129</b>	<b>(5,107)</b>	<b>695,991</b>	<b>613,529</b>	<b>2,879,162</b>	<b>3,960,516</b>
TaxBase	47,078	47,925	48,692	49,666	50,659	51,672
Band D	119.38	124.38	129.38	134.38	139.38	144.38
<b>Tax increase</b>	<b>4.37%</b>	<b>4.19%</b>	<b>4.02%</b>	<b>3.86%</b>	<b>3.72%</b>	<b>3.59%</b>
General fund balance	11,357,177	11,362,284	10,666,293	10,052,764	7,173,602	3,213,086

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### WODC Budget, Funding & Reserves £m - Worst Case





Draft Capital programme February 2024

Annex E

Scheme	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Total £
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	900,000
Solar PV on Council Buildings		276,345								276,345
Update Financial Management System (Agresso)	25,000									25,000
Idox System Upgrade (Planning)	150,000									150,000
Play Parks	100,000									100,000
Weavers Fold	378,000									378,000
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,800,000
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	360,000
Improvement Grants/Disabled Facilities Grants	800,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	880,000	7,840,000
Community Grants Fund	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,800,000
EVCP Woolgate	167,000									167,000
Affordable Housing	212,125									212,125
Electric vehicle recharging points	200,000									200,000
Replacement dog and litter bins	25,000			25,000				25,000		75,000
Weighbridge at Bulking Station		25,000					25,000			50,000
Replacement Street Sweepers			850,000	260,000		266,000				1,376,000
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs										0
In-cab technology		100,000								100,000
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000			10,000				10,000		30,000
CCTV upgrading	255,635									255,635
Carterton Swinbrook Public Art (S106)	44,500									44,500
Chipping Norton Creative Project	8,297									8,297
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000									75,000
Agile Working	2,150,000									2,150,000
Chipping Norton LC roof replacement	1,000,000									1,000,000
Madley Park Playing Field project										0
Cottsway - Lavendar Place Affordable Housing										0
Cottsway - Blenheim Court Growth Deal										0
Carterton Leisure Centre Upgrade PSDS	1,300,000									1,300,000
Witney PSDS		1,874,000								1,874,000
Replacement waste and recycling fleet	2,000,000	3,500,000	2,500,000		306,000	500,000		886,000		9,692,000
Town Centre Shop building renovation project										0
Investment Strategy for Recovery	5,000,000									5,000,000
	<b>14,440,557</b>	<b>7,195,345</b>	<b>4,770,000</b>	<b>1,715,000</b>	<b>1,726,000</b>	<b>2,186,000</b>	<b>1,445,000</b>	<b>2,341,000</b>	<b>1,420,000</b>	<b>37,238,902</b>

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## BASIC AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

Schedules I-2

PARISH	TAX BASE	PARISH PRECEPT £	BAND D COUNCIL TAX PARISHES £	BAND D COUNCIL TAX DISTRICT £	TOTAL BAND D COUNCIL TAX £
ALVESCOT	229.46	16,000	69.73	124.38	194.11
ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	262.99	19,500	74.15	124.38	198.53
ASTHAL	154.08	3,800	24.66	124.38	149.04
ASTON,COTE,SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY	621.93	30,935	49.74	124.38	174.12
BAMPTON	1,343.53	162,815	121.18	124.38	245.56
BLACK BOURTON	125.13	13,924	111.28	124.38	235.66
BLADON	409.24	50,000	122.18	124.38	246.56
BLENHEIM	25.45	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
BRIZE NORTON	670.56	58,654	87.47	124.38	211.85
BROADWELL	71.10	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
BRUERN	40.13	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
BURFORD TOWN COUNCIL	902.02	97,845	108.47	124.38	232.85
CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL	5,675.92	503,096	88.64	124.38	213.02
CASSINGTON	334.99	62,900	187.77	124.38	312.15
CHADLINGTON	385.89	36,518	94.63	124.38	219.01
CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL	1,380.85	145,000	105.01	124.38	229.39
CHASTLETON	69.28	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
CHILSON	57.81	525	9.08	124.38	133.46
CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL	2,879.72	375,832	130.51	124.38	254.89
CHURCHILL & SARSDEN	363.18	39,140	107.77	124.38	232.15
CLANFIELD	362.34	24,865	68.62	124.38	193.00
COMBE	341.88	15,197	44.45	124.38	168.83
CORBURY & WYCHWOOD	28.02	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
CORNWELL	26.58	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
CRAWLEY	79.01	2,600	32.91	124.38	157.29
CURBRIDGE & LEW	475.77	25,000	52.55	124.38	176.93
DUCKLINGTON	650.40	42,000	64.58	124.38	188.96
ENSTONE	592.25	42,440	71.66	124.38	196.04
EYNSHAM	2,235.77	276,886	123.84	124.38	248.22

**BASIC AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25**

Schedules I-2

<b>PARISH</b>	<b>TAX BASE</b>	<b>PARISH PRECEPT £</b>	<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX PARISHES £</b>	<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX DISTRICT £</b>	<b>TOTAL BAND D COUNCIL TAX £</b>
FAWLER	48.81	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
FIFIELD	110.40	6,000	54.35	124.38	178.73
FILKINS & BROUGHTON	225.55	21,920	97.18	124.38	221.56
FINSTOCK	295.74	25,407	85.91	124.38	210.29
FREELAND	710.14	72,001	101.39	124.38	225.77
FULBROOK	245.05	7,152	29.19	124.38	153.57
GLYMPTON	44.12	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
GRAFTON & RADCOT	30.07	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
GREAT TEW	93.20	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
HAILEY	515.07	41,695	80.95	124.38	205.33
HANBOROUGH	1,425.87	106,800	74.90	124.38	199.28
HARDWICK WITH YELFORD	52.28	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
HEYTHROP	78.14	1,200	15.36	124.38	139.74
HOLWELL	27.22	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
IDBURY	77.07	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
KELMSCOTT	45.24	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
KENCOT	65.28	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
KIDDINGTON WITH ASTERLEIGH	53.50	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
KINGHAM	395.24	30,158	76.30	124.38	200.68
LANGFORD	157.08	6,000	38.20	124.38	162.58
LEAFIELD	376.55	68,512	181.95	124.38	306.33
LITTLE FARINGDON	42.42	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
LITTLE TEW	103.63	1,300	12.54	124.38	136.92
LYNEHAM	88.28	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	809.74	52,000	64.22	124.38	188.60
MINSTER LOVELL	719.00	44,363	61.70	124.38	186.08
NORTH LEIGH	990.19	67,558	68.23	124.38	192.61
NORTHMOOR	190.91	5,295	27.74	124.38	152.12
OVER NORTON	218.66	30,287	138.51	124.38	262.89

**BASIC AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25**

Schedules I-2

<b>PARISH</b>	<b>TAX BASE</b>	<b>PARISH PRECEPT £</b>	<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX PARISHES £</b>	<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX DISTRICT £</b>	<b>TOTAL BAND D COUNCIL TAX £</b>
RAMSDEN	185.13	23,000	124.24	124.38	248.62
ROLLRIGHT	240.63	13,056	54.26	124.38	178.64
ROUSHAM	27.28	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
SALFORD	131.41	8,000	60.88	124.38	185.26
SANDFORD ST MARTIN	144.39	9,149	63.36	124.38	187.74
SHILTON	277.72	7,127	25.66	124.38	150.04
SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	702.59	38,916	55.39	124.38	179.77
SOUTH LEIGH	167.91	9,866	58.76	124.38	183.14
SPELSBURY	155.72	9,217	59.19	124.38	183.57
STANDLAKE	675.05	30,000	44.44	124.38	168.82
STANTON HARCOURT	523.18	40,000	76.46	124.38	200.84
STEEPLE BARTON	609.04	21,560	35.40	124.38	159.78
STONESFIELD	725.28	39,722	54.77	124.38	179.15
SWERFORD	90.22	8,510	94.32	124.38	218.70
SWINBROOK & WIDFORD	104.57	2,250	21.52	124.38	145.90
TACKLEY	505.67	29,425	58.19	124.38	182.57
TAYNTON	80.11	4,000	49.93	124.38	174.31
WESTCOT BARTON	86.95	1,000	11.50	124.38	135.88
WESTWELL	49.82	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL	11,213.75	1,984,834	177.00	124.38	301.38
WOODSTOCK	1,766.38	149,000	84.35	124.38	208.73
WOOTTON	301.50	16,320	54.13	124.38	178.51
WORTON	47.00	0	0.00	124.38	124.38
					0.00
<b>AVERAGE COUNCIL TAX LEVY</b>			<b>106.14</b>	<b>124.38</b>	<b>230.52</b>
<b>TAX BASE FOR THE DISTRICT</b>	<b>47,841.03</b>				
<b>TOTAL PRECEPTS</b>		<b>5,078,072</b>			

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AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/2025 - DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PARISHES

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX			BANDINGS							
	WODC	PARISHES	TOTAL	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
ALVESCOT	124.38	69.73	194.11	129.41	150.97	172.54	194.11	237.25	280.38	323.52	388.22
ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	124.38	74.15	198.53	132.35	154.41	176.47	198.53	242.65	286.77	330.88	397.06
ASTHAL	124.38	24.66	149.04	99.36	115.92	132.48	149.04	182.16	215.28	248.40	298.08
ASTON,COTE,SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY	124.38	49.74	174.12	116.08	135.43	154.77	174.12	212.81	251.51	290.20	348.24
BAMPTON	124.38	121.18	245.56	163.71	190.99	218.28	245.56	300.13	354.70	409.27	491.12
BLACK BOURTON	124.38	111.28	235.66	157.11	183.29	209.48	235.66	288.03	340.40	392.77	471.32
BLADON	124.38	122.18	246.56	164.37	191.77	219.16	246.56	301.35	356.14	410.93	493.12
BLENHEIM	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
BRIZE NORTON	124.38	87.47	211.85	141.23	164.77	188.31	211.85	258.93	306.01	353.08	423.70
BROADWELL	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
BRUERN	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
BURFORD TOWN COUNCIL	124.38	108.47	232.85	155.23	181.11	206.98	232.85	284.59	336.34	388.08	465.70
CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL	124.38	88.64	213.02	142.01	165.68	189.35	213.02	260.36	307.70	355.03	426.04
CASSINGTON	124.38	187.77	312.15	208.10	242.78	277.47	312.15	381.52	450.88	520.25	624.30
CHADLINGTON	124.38	94.63	219.01	146.01	170.34	194.68	219.01	267.68	316.35	365.02	438.02
CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL	124.38	105.01	229.39	152.93	178.41	203.90	229.39	280.37	331.34	382.32	458.78
CHASTLETON	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
CHILSON	124.38	9.08	133.46	88.97	103.80	118.63	133.46	163.12	192.78	222.43	266.92
CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL	124.38	130.51	254.89	169.93	198.25	226.57	254.89	311.53	368.17	424.82	509.78
CHURCHILL & SARSDEN	124.38	107.77	232.15	154.77	180.56	206.36	232.15	283.74	335.33	386.92	464.30
CLANFIELD	124.38	68.62	193.00	128.67	150.11	171.56	193.00	235.89	278.78	321.67	386.00
COMBE	124.38	44.45	168.83	112.55	131.31	150.07	168.83	206.35	243.87	281.38	337.66
CORNBURY & WYCHWOOD	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
CORNWELL	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
CRAWLEY	124.38	32.91	157.29	104.86	122.34	139.81	157.29	192.24	227.20	262.15	314.58
CURBRIDGE & LEW	124.38	52.55	176.93	117.95	137.61	157.27	176.93	216.25	255.57	294.88	353.86
DUCKLINGTON	124.38	64.58	188.96	125.97	146.97	167.96	188.96	230.95	272.94	314.93	377.92
ENSTONE	124.38	71.66	196.04	130.69	152.48	174.26	196.04	239.60	283.17	326.73	392.08
EYNSHAM	124.38	123.84	248.22	165.48	193.06	220.64	248.22	303.38	358.54	413.70	496.44
FAWLER	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
FIFIELD	124.38	54.35	178.73	119.15	139.01	158.87	178.73	218.45	258.17	297.88	357.46
FILKINS & BROUGHTON	124.38	97.18	221.56	147.71	172.32	196.94	221.56	270.80	320.03	369.27	443.12

AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/2025 - DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PARISHES

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX			BANDINGS							
	WODC	PARISHES	TOTAL	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
FINSTOCK	124.38	85.91	210.29	140.19	163.56	186.92	210.29	257.02	303.75	350.48	420.58
FREELAND	124.38	101.39	225.77	150.51	175.60	200.68	225.77	275.94	326.11	376.28	451.54
FULBROOK	124.38	29.19	153.57	102.38	119.44	136.51	153.57	187.70	221.82	255.95	307.14
GLYMPTON	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
GRAFTON & RADCOT	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
GREAT TEW	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
HAILEY	124.38	80.95	205.33	136.89	159.70	182.52	205.33	250.96	296.59	342.22	410.66
HANBOROUGH	124.38	74.90	199.28	132.85	155.00	177.14	199.28	243.56	287.85	332.13	398.56
HARDWICK WITH YELFORD	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
HEYTHROP	124.38	15.36	139.74	93.16	108.69	124.21	139.74	170.79	201.85	232.90	279.48
HOLWELL	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
IDBURY	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
KELMSCOTT	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
KENCOT	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
KIDDINGTON WITH ASTERLEIGH	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
KINGHAM	124.38	76.30	200.68	133.79	156.08	178.38	200.68	245.28	289.87	334.47	401.36
LANGFORD	124.38	38.20	162.58	108.39	126.45	144.52	162.58	198.71	234.84	270.97	325.16
LEAFIELD	124.38	181.95	306.33	204.22	238.26	272.29	306.33	374.40	442.48	510.55	612.66
LITTLE FARINGDON	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
LITTLE TEW	124.38	12.54	136.92	91.28	106.49	121.71	136.92	167.35	197.77	228.20	273.84
LYNEHAM	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	124.38	64.22	188.60	125.73	146.69	167.64	188.60	230.51	272.42	314.33	377.20
MINSTER LOVELL	124.38	61.70	186.08	124.05	144.73	165.40	186.08	227.43	268.78	310.13	372.16
NORTH LEIGH	124.38	68.23	192.61	128.41	149.81	171.21	192.61	235.41	278.21	321.02	385.22
NORTHMOOR	124.38	27.74	152.12	101.41	118.32	135.22	152.12	185.92	219.73	253.53	304.24
OVER NORTON	124.38	138.51	262.89	175.26	204.47	233.68	262.89	321.31	379.73	438.15	525.78
RAMSDEN	124.38	124.24	248.62	165.75	193.37	221.00	248.62	303.87	359.12	414.37	497.24
ROLLRIGHT	124.38	54.26	178.64	119.09	138.94	158.79	178.64	218.34	258.04	297.73	357.28
ROUSHAM	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
SALFORD	124.38	60.88	185.26	123.51	144.09	164.68	185.26	226.43	267.60	308.77	370.52
SANDFORD ST MARTIN	124.38	63.36	187.74	125.16	146.02	166.88	187.74	229.46	271.18	312.90	375.48



AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/2025 - DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PARISHES

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX			BANDINGS							
	WODC	PARISHES	TOTAL	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
SHILTON	124.38	25.66	150.04	100.03	116.70	133.37	150.04	183.38	216.72	250.07	300.08
SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	124.38	55.39	179.77	119.85	139.82	159.80	179.77	219.72	259.67	299.62	359.54
SOUTH LEIGH	124.38	58.76	183.14	122.09	142.44	162.79	183.14	223.84	264.54	305.23	366.28
SPELSBURY	124.38	59.19	183.57	122.38	142.78	163.17	183.57	224.36	265.16	305.95	367.14
STANDLAKE	124.38	44.44	168.82	112.55	131.30	150.06	168.82	206.34	243.85	281.37	337.64
STANTON HARCOURT	124.38	76.46	200.84	133.89	156.21	178.52	200.84	245.47	290.10	334.73	401.68
STEEPLE BARTON	124.38	35.40	159.78	106.52	124.27	142.03	159.78	195.29	230.79	266.30	319.56
STONESFIELD	124.38	54.77	179.15	119.43	139.34	159.24	179.15	218.96	258.77	298.58	358.30
SWERFORD	124.38	94.32	218.70	145.80	170.10	194.40	218.70	267.30	315.90	364.50	437.40
SWINBROOK & WIDFORD	124.38	21.52	145.90	97.27	113.48	129.69	145.90	178.32	210.74	243.17	291.80
TACKLEY	124.38	58.19	182.57	121.71	142.00	162.28	182.57	223.14	263.71	304.28	365.14
TAYNTON	124.38	49.93	174.31	116.21	135.57	154.94	174.31	213.05	251.78	290.52	348.62
WESTCOT BARTON	124.38	11.50	135.88	90.59	105.68	120.78	135.88	166.08	196.27	226.47	271.76
WESTWELL	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL	124.38	177.00	301.38	200.92	234.41	267.89	301.38	368.35	435.33	502.30	602.76
WOODSTOCK	124.38	84.35	208.73	139.15	162.35	185.54	208.73	255.11	301.50	347.88	417.46
WOOTTON	124.38	54.13	178.51	119.01	138.84	158.68	178.51	218.18	257.85	297.52	357.02
WORTON	124.38	0.00	124.38	82.92	96.74	110.56	124.38	152.02	179.66	207.30	248.76

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AGGREGATE AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX				TOTAL	BANDINGS							
	OXON CC	PCCTV	WODC	PARISHES		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p		£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
ALVESCOT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	69.73	2,014.67	1,343.12	1,566.96	1,790.82	2,014.67	2,462.38	2,910.08	3,357.79	4,029.34
ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	74.15	2,019.09	1,346.06	1,570.40	1,794.75	2,019.09	2,467.78	2,916.47	3,365.15	4,038.18
ASTHAL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	24.66	1,969.60	1,313.07	1,531.91	1,750.76	1,969.60	2,407.29	2,844.98	3,282.67	3,939.20
ASTON,COTE,SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	49.74	1,994.68	1,329.79	1,551.42	1,773.05	1,994.68	2,437.94	2,881.21	3,324.47	3,989.36
BAMPTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	121.18	2,066.12	1,377.42	1,606.98	1,836.56	2,066.12	2,525.26	2,984.40	3,443.54	4,132.24
BLACK BOURTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	111.28	2,056.22	1,370.82	1,599.28	1,827.76	2,056.22	2,513.16	2,970.10	3,427.04	4,112.44
BLADON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	122.18	2,067.12	1,378.08	1,607.76	1,837.44	2,067.12	2,526.48	2,985.84	3,445.20	4,134.24
BLENHEIM	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
BRIZE NORTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	87.47	2,032.41	1,354.94	1,580.76	1,806.59	2,032.41	2,484.06	2,935.71	3,387.35	4,064.82
BROADWELL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
BRUERN	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
BURFORD TOWN COUNCIL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	108.47	2,053.41	1,368.94	1,597.10	1,825.26	2,053.41	2,509.72	2,966.04	3,422.35	4,106.82
CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	88.64	2,033.58	1,355.72	1,581.67	1,807.63	2,033.58	2,485.49	2,937.40	3,389.30	4,067.16
CASSINGTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	187.77	2,132.71	1,421.81	1,658.77	1,895.75	2,132.71	2,606.65	3,080.58	3,554.52	4,265.42
CHADLINGTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	94.63	2,039.57	1,359.72	1,586.33	1,812.96	2,039.57	2,492.81	2,946.05	3,399.29	4,079.14
CHARLBURY TOWN COUNCIL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	105.01	2,049.95	1,366.64	1,594.40	1,822.18	2,049.95	2,505.50	2,961.04	3,416.59	4,099.90
CHASTLETON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
CHILSON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	9.08	1,954.02	1,302.68	1,519.79	1,736.91	1,954.02	2,388.25	2,822.48	3,256.70	3,908.04
CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	130.51	2,075.45	1,383.64	1,614.24	1,844.85	2,075.45	2,536.66	2,997.87	3,459.09	4,150.90
CHURCHILL & SARSDEN	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	107.77	2,052.71	1,368.48	1,596.55	1,824.64	2,052.71	2,508.87	2,965.03	3,421.19	4,105.42
CLANFIELD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	68.62	2,013.56	1,342.38	1,566.10	1,789.84	2,013.56	2,461.02	2,908.48	3,355.94	4,027.12
COMBE	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	44.45	1,989.39	1,326.26	1,547.30	1,768.35	1,989.39	2,431.48	2,873.57	3,315.65	3,978.78
CORBURY & WYCHWOOD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
CORNWELL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
CRAWLEY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	32.91	1,977.85	1,318.57	1,538.33	1,758.09	1,977.85	2,417.37	2,856.90	3,296.42	3,955.70
CURBRIDGE & LEW	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	52.55	1,997.49	1,331.66	1,553.60	1,775.55	1,997.49	2,441.38	2,885.27	3,329.15	3,994.98
DUCKLINGTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	64.58	2,009.52	1,339.68	1,562.96	1,786.24	2,009.52	2,456.08	2,902.64	3,349.20	4,019.04
ENSTONE	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	71.66	2,016.60	1,344.40	1,568.47	1,792.54	2,016.60	2,464.73	2,912.87	3,361.00	4,033.20
EYNHAM	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	123.84	2,068.78	1,379.19	1,609.05	1,838.92	2,068.78	2,528.51	2,988.24	3,447.97	4,137.56
FAWLER	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
FIFIELD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	54.35	1,999.29	1,332.86	1,555.00	1,777.15	1,999.29	2,443.58	2,887.87	3,332.15	3,998.58
FILKINS & BROUGHTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	97.18	2,042.12	1,361.42	1,588.31	1,815.22	2,042.12	2,495.93	2,949.73	3,403.54	4,084.24

AGGREGATE AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX				TOTAL	BANDINGS							
	OXON CC	TVPA	WODC	PARISHES		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p		£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
FINSTOCK	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	85.91	2,030.85	1,353.90	1,579.55	1,805.20	2,030.85	2,482.15	2,933.45	3,384.75	4,061.70
FREELAND	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	101.39	2,046.33	1,364.22	1,591.59	1,818.96	2,046.33	2,501.07	2,955.81	3,410.55	4,092.66
FULBROOK	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	29.19	1,974.13	1,316.09	1,535.43	1,754.79	1,974.13	2,412.83	2,851.52	3,290.22	3,948.26
GLYMPTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
GRAFTON & RADCOT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
GREAT TEW	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
HAILEY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	80.95	2,025.89	1,350.60	1,575.69	1,800.80	2,025.89	2,476.09	2,926.29	3,376.49	4,051.78
HANBOROUGH	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	74.90	2,019.84	1,346.56	1,570.99	1,795.42	2,019.84	2,468.69	2,917.55	3,366.40	4,039.68
HARDWICK WITH YELFORD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
HEYTHROP	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	15.36	1,960.30	1,306.87	1,524.68	1,742.49	1,960.30	2,395.92	2,831.55	3,267.17	3,920.60
HOLWELL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
IDBURY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
KELMSCOTT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
KENCOT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
KIDDINGTON WITH ASTERLEIGH	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
KINGHAM	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	76.30	2,021.24	1,347.50	1,572.07	1,796.66	2,021.24	2,470.41	2,919.57	3,368.74	4,042.48
LANGFORD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	38.20	1,983.14	1,322.10	1,542.44	1,762.80	1,983.14	2,423.84	2,864.54	3,305.24	3,966.28
LEAFIELD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	181.95	2,126.89	1,417.93	1,654.25	1,890.57	2,126.89	2,599.53	3,072.18	3,544.82	4,253.78
LITTLE FARINGDON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
LITTLE TEW	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	12.54	1,957.48	1,304.99	1,522.48	1,739.99	1,957.48	2,392.48	2,827.47	3,262.47	3,914.96
LYNEHAM	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	64.22	2,009.16	1,339.44	1,562.68	1,785.92	2,009.16	2,455.64	2,902.12	3,348.60	4,018.32
MINSTER LOVELL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	61.70	2,006.64	1,337.76	1,560.72	1,783.68	2,006.64	2,452.56	2,898.48	3,344.40	4,013.28
NORTH LEIGH	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	68.23	2,013.17	1,342.12	1,565.80	1,789.49	2,013.17	2,460.54	2,907.91	3,355.29	4,026.34
NORTHMOOR	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	27.74	1,972.68	1,315.12	1,534.31	1,753.50	1,972.68	2,411.05	2,849.43	3,287.80	3,945.36
OVER NORTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	138.51	2,083.45	1,388.97	1,620.46	1,851.96	2,083.45	2,546.44	3,009.43	3,472.42	4,166.90
RAMSDEN	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	124.24	2,069.18	1,379.46	1,609.36	1,839.28	2,069.18	2,529.00	2,988.82	3,448.64	4,138.36
ROLLRIGHT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	54.26	1,999.20	1,332.80	1,554.93	1,777.07	1,999.20	2,443.47	2,887.74	3,332.00	3,998.40
ROUSHAM	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
SALFORD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	60.88	2,005.82	1,337.22	1,560.08	1,782.96	2,005.82	2,451.56	2,897.30	3,343.04	4,011.64
SANDFORD ST MARTIN	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	63.36	2,008.30	1,338.87	1,562.01	1,785.16	2,008.30	2,454.59	2,900.88	3,347.17	4,016.60

AGGREGATE AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

PARISH	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX				TOTAL	BANDINGS							
	OXON CC	TVPA	WODC	PARISHES		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p		£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
SHILTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	25.66	1,970.60	1,313.74	1,532.69	1,751.65	1,970.60	2,408.51	2,846.42	3,284.34	3,941.20
SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	55.39	2,000.33	1,333.56	1,555.81	1,778.08	2,000.33	2,444.85	2,889.37	3,333.89	4,000.66
SOUTH LEIGH	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	58.76	2,003.70	1,335.80	1,558.43	1,781.07	2,003.70	2,448.97	2,894.24	3,339.50	4,007.40
SPELSBURY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	59.19	2,004.13	1,336.09	1,558.77	1,781.45	2,004.13	2,449.49	2,894.86	3,340.22	4,008.26
STANDLAKE	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	44.44	1,989.38	1,326.26	1,547.29	1,768.34	1,989.38	2,431.47	2,873.55	3,315.64	3,978.76
STANTON HARCOURT	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	76.46	2,021.40	1,347.60	1,572.20	1,796.80	2,021.40	2,470.60	2,919.80	3,369.00	4,042.80
STEEPLE BARTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	35.40	1,980.34	1,320.23	1,540.26	1,760.31	1,980.34	2,420.42	2,860.49	3,300.57	3,960.68
STONESFIELD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	54.77	1,999.71	1,333.14	1,555.33	1,777.52	1,999.71	2,444.09	2,888.47	3,332.85	3,999.42
SWERFORD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	94.32	2,039.26	1,359.51	1,586.09	1,812.68	2,039.26	2,492.43	2,945.60	3,398.77	4,078.52
SWINBROOK & WIDFORD	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	21.52	1,966.46	1,310.98	1,529.47	1,747.97	1,966.46	2,403.45	2,840.44	3,277.44	3,932.92
TACKLEY	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	58.19	2,003.13	1,335.42	1,557.99	1,780.56	2,003.13	2,448.27	2,893.41	3,338.55	4,006.26
TAYNTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	49.93	1,994.87	1,329.92	1,551.56	1,773.22	1,994.87	2,438.18	2,881.48	3,324.79	3,989.74
WESTCOT BARTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	11.50	1,956.44	1,304.30	1,521.67	1,739.06	1,956.44	2,391.21	2,825.97	3,260.74	3,912.88
WESTWELL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	177.00	2,121.94	1,414.63	1,650.40	1,886.17	2,121.94	2,593.48	3,065.03	3,536.57	4,243.88
WOODSTOCK	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	84.35	2,029.29	1,352.86	1,578.34	1,803.82	2,029.29	2,480.24	2,931.20	3,382.15	4,058.58
WOOTTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	54.13	1,999.07	1,332.72	1,554.83	1,776.96	1,999.07	2,443.31	2,887.55	3,331.79	3,998.14
WORTON	1,820.56	0.00	124.38	0.00	1,944.94	1,296.63	1,512.73	1,728.84	1,944.94	2,377.15	2,809.36	3,241.57	3,889.88

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PARISH	TAXBASE		
	← 2023/2024	2024/2025 →	%
	No.	No.	CHANGE
ALVESCOT	211.28	229.46	8.60
ASCOTT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	254.77	262.99	3.23
ASTHAL	158.45	154.08	(2.76)
ASTON,COTE,SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY	606.48	621.93	2.55
BAMPTON	1,330.46	1,343.53	0.98
BLACK BOURTON	122.69	125.13	1.99
BLADON	400.31	409.24	2.23
BLENHEIM	25.01	25.45	1.76
BRIZE NORTON	583.09	670.56	15.00
BROADWELL	70.31	71.10	1.12
BRUERN	36.53	40.13	9.85
BURFORD	853.24	902.02	5.72
CARTERTON	5,622.36	5,675.92	0.95
CASSINGTON	333.21	334.99	0.53
CHADLINGTON	382.92	385.89	0.78
CHARLBURY	1,362.25	1,380.85	1.37
CHASTLETON	68.84	69.28	0.64
CHILSON	56.34	57.81	2.61
CHIPPING NORTON	2,852.40	2,879.72	0.96
CHURCHILL & SARSDEN	355.97	363.18	2.03
CLANFIELD	363.17	362.34	(0.23)
COMBE	333.63	341.88	2.47
CORNBURY & WYCHWOOD	27.85	28.02	0.61
CORNWELL	26.77	26.58	(0.71)
CRAWLEY	81.15	79.01	(2.64)
CURBRIDGE & LEW	424.78	475.77	12.00
DUCKLINGTON	641.92	650.40	1.32
ENSTONE	581.06	592.25	1.93
EYNHAM	2,142.95	2,235.77	4.33
FAWLER	47.21	48.81	3.39
FIFIELD	105.55	110.40	4.59
FILKINS & BROUGHTON POGGS	218.53	225.55	3.21
FINSTOCK	293.86	295.74	0.64
FREELAND	713.23	710.14	(0.43)
FULBROOK	242.09	245.05	1.22
GLYMPTON	44.60	44.12	(1.08)
GRAFTON & RADCOT	30.48	30.07	(1.35)
GREAT TEW	93.13	93.20	0.08
HAILEY	509.41	515.07	1.11
HANBOROUGH	1,415.17	1,425.87	0.76
HARDWICK WITH YELFORD	51.53	52.28	1.46

PARISH	TAXBASE		
	← 2023/2024	2024/2025 →	%
	No.	No.	CHANGE
HEYTHROP	74.20	78.14	5.31
HOLWELL	26.65	27.22	2.14
IDBURY	74.32	77.07	3.70
KELMSCOTT	44.82	45.24	0.94
KENCOT	65.05	65.28	0.35
KIDDINGTON WITH ASTERLEIGH	51.29	53.50	4.31
KINGHAM	390.91	395.24	1.11
LANGFORD	156.32	157.08	0.49
LEAFIELD	375.73	376.55	0.22
LITTLE FARINGDON	41.67	42.42	1.80
LITTLE TEW	100.78	103.63	2.83
LYNEHAM	86.36	88.28	2.22
MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	798.10	809.74	1.46
MINSTER LOVELL	691.49	719.00	3.98
NORTH LEIGH	994.38	990.19	(0.42)
NORTHMOOR	188.82	190.91	1.11
OVER NORTON	199.42	218.66	9.65
RAMSDEN	182.08	185.13	1.68
ROLLRIGHT	243.36	240.63	(1.12)
ROUSHAM	27.50	27.28	(0.80)
SALFORD	128.18	131.41	2.52
SANDFORD ST MARTIN	137.50	144.39	5.01
SHILTON	282.45	277.72	(1.67)
SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD	701.34	702.59	0.18
SOUTH LEIGH	168.93	167.91	(0.60)
SPELSBURY	153.82	155.72	1.24
STANDLAKE	677.59	675.05	(0.37)
STANTON HARCOURT	492.86	523.18	6.15
STEEPLE BARTON	603.38	609.04	0.94
STONESFIELD	718.71	725.28	0.91
SWERFORD	88.65	90.22	1.77
SWINBROOK & WIDFORD	101.54	104.57	2.98
TACKLEY	502.82	505.67	0.57
TAYNTON	79.76	80.11	0.44
WESTCOT BARTON	87.62	86.95	(0.76)
WESTWELL	48.29	49.82	3.17
WITNEY	11,159.31	11,213.75	0.49
WOODSTOCK	1,708.78	1,766.38	3.37
WOOTTON	300.50	301.50	0.33
WORTON	48.60	47.00	(3.29)
<b>TOTAL TAXBASE (No.)</b>	<b>47,078.85</b>	<b>47,841.03</b>	<b>1.62</b>





# West Oxfordshire District Council

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[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

## Fees and Charges 2024/2025

Planning Services General Administration		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total charge £ p	VAT Status
Access to Information/Inspection of Background Documents	Charge per document (after Committee date)	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	Non vatable
	Where documents are listed under a general description (after Committee date)					
	During 5 days prior to Committee date only	8.00	9.00	0.00	9.00	Non vatable
	<i>Note: Members of the public may only inspect background documents 3 days prior to Committee date or thereafter.</i>					
	Administration Charge for Services Rendered	30 percent	30 percent		30 % + VAT	Vatable
Minutes/Agendas	Per Annum	247.00	264.00	52.80	316.80	Vatable
	Single Agenda	7.00	7.00	1.40	8.40	Vatable
Parish/Town Councils Per Annum		25.00	27.00	5.40	32.40	Vatable
Brownfields Register (Hard copy)		15.00	15.00	3.00	18.00	Vatable
Self-Build register	Part 1 – for those who meet criteria (with local connections).	25.00	25.00	5.00	30.00	Vatable
	Part 2 – for those who meet national criteria, but not local connection.	10.00	10.00	2.00	12.00	Vatable

Libraries		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total charge £ p	VAT Status
Dyeline Prints (Any type, with due regard to copyright restrictions)	A2 Size	8.50	9.00	1.80	10.80	Vatable
	A1 Size	10.70	11.00	2.20	13.20	Vatable
	From Paper Roll Larger than A1 Size	13.75	15.00	3.00	18.00	Vatable
Photocopying - (per sheet)	A4 size and foolscap	0.20	0.20	0.04	0.24	Vatable
	A3 size	0.20	0.20	0.04	0.24	Vatable
	A4 & A3 Colour Copies	0.30	0.30	0.06	0.36	Vatable
Local Plan		22.05	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable

Planning Services		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Planning Applications – Maps	Up to 6 maps (one charge for the set):					
	1:500 scale* plus admin fee #	5.00 14.00	5.00 15.00	0.00 3.00	5.00 18.00	Non vatable Vatable
	1:1250 scale* plus admin fee #	19.00 14.00	20.00 15.00	0.00 3.00	20.00 18.00	Non vatable Vatable
	1:2500 scale* plus admin fee #	78.00 13.00	83.00 14.00	0.00 2.80	83.00 16.80	Non vatable Vatable
	*All maps are provided by the National maps Centre and are subject to change if the O.S. increase their fees # Only one admin fee is charged regardless of the number of maps purchased.					
Planning Applications - Weekly Press Lists		236.00	252.00	50.40	302.40	Vatable
Planning Decision Notices	Notice requested	14.00	15.00	3.00	18.00	Vatable
Compilation of Agreement. Minimum charge increased at Officer's discretion	Section 52 Agreement Per copy of Agreement	26.00	28.00	5.60	33.60	Vatable
	Section 106 Agreements Per copy of Agreement	23.00	25.00	5.00	30.00	Vatable
Tree Preservation Orders: Per copy of order		22.00	23.00	4.60	27.60	Vatable
Valuation Fee		At Cost	At Cost	-	At Cost	Vatable
High Hedges Complaint- £500- zero-rated VAT		600.00	640.00	0.00	640.00	Non vatable
Planning application fees are set by central government. Use this link to CLG planning portal.		<a href="http://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf">http://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf</a>				

Planning Services		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Local Search Fees	Con29 only	135.50	144.50	28.90	173.40	Vatable
	Part II	21.50	21.50	4.30	25.80	Vatable
	Additional Questions	21.50	21.50	4.30	25.80	Vatable

Standard Legal and Estates Fees for Property Transactions		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Legal Fee	New Commercial Lease	500.00	535.00	0.00	535.00	Non vatable
	Renewal Leases	100.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Variation (at Tenant request)	250.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	Non vatable
	Licence to Alter £250 £150 £400	250.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	Non vatable
	Licence to Assign / Underlet £250 £150 £400	250.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Grant/Release £500 £250 £750	500.00	535.00	0.00	535.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Surrender £250 £150 £400	250.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	Non vatable
	Licence for Use £150 £150 £300	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
Estates Fee	Disposal - (at other party request) £500 £500 £1000	500.00	535.00	0.00	535.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Variation (at Tenant request)	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
	Licence to Alter £250 £150 £400	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
	Licence to Assign / Underlet £250 £150 £400	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Grant/Release £500 £250 £750	250.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	Non vatable
	Deed of Surrender £250 £150 £400	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
	Licence for Use £150 £150 £300	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	Non vatable
	Letter Licence n/a £50 £50	50.00	55.00	0.00	55.00	Non vatable
Schedule of Condition: depending on size of property £100 - £500						Non vatable
	Disposal - (at other party request)	500.00	535.00	0.00	535.00	Non vatable

**\* Legal and Estates Fee Exclusions:**

Council Contractors occupying property for service provision  
Local Charities  
Community Organisations (Not for Profit)

**Departure from Legal and Estates Fee Schedule**

In exceptional circumstances or if it is in the interest of the Council's commercial property portfolio, the Head of Legal Services, in respect of Legal fees or the Assistant Director with responsibility for Assets, in respect of Estates fees, can agree a reduction or waiver of fees, in consultation with the appropriate Executive Member whose portfolio includes Property and Assets.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – PRE-APPLICATION & DISCRETIONARY FEES		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
PROPOSED FEE LEVELS FOR PRE-APPLICATION (AND RELATED) ADVICE (April 2024)						
Is planning permission required? (to include a search of our records to ascertain whether permitted development rights have been removed)		N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
Is listed building consent required?		N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Is a building or structure considered to be curtilage listed?		N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Has a planning condition or S.106 legal agreement clause been complied with? £75 (+ £75 ph) for complicated requests – taking more than 1 hour to be agreed in advance)		N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
		N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
Simple householder advice (does not include advice relating to development proposals for listed buildings)		N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Complex householder advice (including advice relating to development proposals for listed buildings) +£75 if a site visit is required		N/a	166.67	33.33	200.00	Vatable
		N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
Each subsequent hour of officer time above the stated limit (to be agreed in advance) including specialist officers time.		N/a	41.67	8.33	50.00	Vatable
Any subsequent response to further amendments		N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Any subsequent meeting or site visit		N/a	125.00	25.00	150.00	Vatable
	1 dwelling (including replacement dwellings and holiday let/tourist accommodation)	N/a	550.00	110.00	660.00	Vatable
	Provision of up to 200 square metres of floor space for other uses e.g. equestrian/retail/commercial/industrial/ mixed development	N/a	250.00	50.00	300.00	Vatable
	Additional hour(s) of officer time (including specialist officers) to be agreed and paid in advance	N/a	41.67	8.33	50.00	Vatable
	Any subsequent response to further amendments	N/a	125.00	25.00	150.00	Vatable
	Any subsequent meeting	N/a	208.33	41.67	250.00	Vatable
	2 - 9 (inclusive) dwellings (including replacement dwellings and holiday let/tourist accommodation)	N/a	833.33	166.67	1,000.00	Vatable
	Development of less than 0.5 hectares for residential use (if number of dwellings/units is not known)	N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
	Provision of 200-1,000 square metres of floor space or 0.5 hectares for other uses (where floorspace not known) e.g. equestrian/retail/commercial/industrial/ mixed development	N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
	Development of land for other uses e.g. equestrian/retail/commercial/industrial/mixed development use with a site area of upto 1 hectare	N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
	Change of use of land or buildings	N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
	Additional hour (s) of officer and specialist time (to be agreed and paid in advance)	N/a	50.00	10.00	60.00	Vatable
	Any subsequent response to further amendments	N/a	125.00	25.00	150.00	Vatable
	Any subsequent meeting	N/a	208.33	41.67	250.00	Vatable
	Major applications (other)	10 – 199 (inclusive) residential units Residential development (where the proposed number of units is not specified), with a site area of 0.5 hectares or more and less than four hectares Provision of 1,000 - 9,999 square metres of floor space for other uses e.g. equestrian/ retail/ commercial/industrial/ mixed development	N/a	1,666.67	333.33	2,000.00
Development of land for other uses e.g. equestrian/retail/commercial/industrial/mixed development with a site area of one hectare or more and less than two hectares		N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
An hour of additional officer (including specialist) time (to be agreed and paid in advance)		N/a	208.33	41.67	250.00	Vatable
Any subsequent response to further amendments		N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
Any subsequent meeting		N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
Major applications	200 or more residential units Residential development (where the proposed number of units is not specified) with a site area of four hectares or more Provision of 10,000 square metres or more of floor space for other uses e.g. equestrian/retail commercial/ industrial/ mixed development	N/a	3,333.33	666.67	4,000.00	Vatable
	Development of land for other uses e.g. equestrian /retail /commercial / industrial / mixed development with a site area of two hectares or more	N/a	416.67	83.33	500.00	Vatable
	Any subsequent response to further amendments	N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
	An hour of additional officer (including specialist) time (to be agreed and paid in advance)	N/a	625.00	125.00	750.00	Vatable

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PRE-APPLICATION – Other Discretionary fees		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
General Policy/CIL/S106 related Advice	per hour of officer time. For those requests that will be longer, the fee will be agreed in advance.	N/a	125.00	25.00	150.00	Vatable
General Planning or other related advice not covered above	per hour	N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Applications directly due to disability, or made by Town and Parish Councils	No charge					
Applications made by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) or charities	It is at the Development Managers discretion to reduce the rates above for certain types of applications					
Assistance with filling in a planning application form or other related planning document.	per hour	N/a	62.50	12.50	75.00	Vatable
Admin charge for applications not submitted on the Planning Portal i.e postal or email.	per application	N/a	20.83	4.17	25.00	Vatable
Charging for invalid applications (that have not been made valid within 28 days or as indicated/agreed by the Councils validation team).	Householder, advertisements Certificates of Lawfulness & Prior notifications	N/a	41.67	8.33	50.00	Vatable
	Minor Applications	N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
	Major Applications	N/a	166.67	33.33	200.00	Vatable
Copy of Decision Notice, TPO, Appeal Decision Notice, Enforcement Notices, S111 etc	Per document	N/a	25.00	5.00	30.00	Vatable
Copy of S106 or Agreement	Per document	N/a	41.67	8.33	50.00	Vatable
Charges for paper copies of applications	Charge per whole application should all documents be requested. per householder	N/a	20.83	4.17	25.00	Vatable
	per Minor/Other	N/a	41.67	8.33	50.00	Vatable
	per major	N/a	83.33	16.67	100.00	Vatable
Charges per plan are based on the costs to copy and send out the document and are per sheet.	A0	N/a	6.67	1.33	8.00	Vatable
	A1	N/a	5.83	1.17	7.00	Vatable
	A2	N/a	5.00	1.00	6.00	Vatable
	A3	N/a	4.58	0.92	5.50	Vatable
	A4	N/a	3.75	0.75	4.50	Vatable
	A4 – subsequent copies	N/a	0.42	0.08	0.50	Vatable

Resources		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Administration	Freedom of Information enquiries (charge per hr for search costs over the £450 'Appropriate Limit' ):	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
	Freedom of Information photocopying - per sheet	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	Non vatable
Summons Costs - Council Tax/NNDR	Council Tax - Summons on application for Liability Order*	65.00	65.00	0.00	65.00	Non vatable
	Council Tax - Costs of Liability Order hearing*	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	Non vatable
	NNDR - Summons on application for Liability Order*	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	NNDR - Costs of Liability Order hearing* * As approved by the Magistrates Court	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	Non vatable
Miscellaneous properties	Garage rents	13.00	14.00	2.80	16.80	Vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Water Supplies		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Private Water Supplies	Risk Assessment or Investigation (fee per hour)	62.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	Non vatable
	Sampling – each visit – fixed fee	121.00	129.00	0.00	129.00	Non vatable
	Granting and Authorisation - fixed fee plus hourly rate applies	121.00	129.00	0.00	129.00	Non vatable
Sample Analysis	Taken under Regulation 10 Taken during check monitoring Taken during audit monitoring	at cost	at cost		at cost	Non vatable
Regulation of Pollution from Industrial Sources <i>Fees as laid down by the Secretary of State</i>	<b>- Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010</b> <i>Please refer to <a href="http://www.gov.uk/local-authority-environmental-permit">www.gov.uk/local-authority-environmental-permit</a></i>					
Environmental Information Regulations – Search Fees	Basic administration charge	30.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
	Contaminated Land information request	97.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Food Health & Safety		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Export of Food Products	Food Export Health Certificate (including first hour of officer time)	64.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	Non vatable
	DEFRA Export Health Certificate	126.00	135.00	0.00	135.00	Non vatable
	Officer hourly rate after first hour	45.00	49.00	0.00	49.00	Non vatable
Other Products & Services	E-learning	35.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	Non vatable
	Safer Food, Better Business Information Pack	15.00	16.00	0.00	16.00	Non vatable
	Safer Food Better Business Diary Sheets (per pack)	Na	5.00	0.00	5.00	Non vatable
	Food Hygiene Rating Re-visit	190.00	205.00	0.00	205.00	Non vatable
	Condemned Food Certificate	95.00	102.00	0.00	102.00	Non vatable



Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Animal Welfare		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Breeding of Dogs <sup>1</sup>	New Application	424.00	466.00	0.00	466.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating + annual inspection)	334.00	367.00	0.00	367.00	Non vatable
Horse Riding Establishments <sup>1</sup>	New Application	485.00	534.00	0.00	534.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating + annual inspection)	334.00	367.00	0.00	367.00	Non vatable
Pet Shops	New Application	327.00	360.00	0.00	360.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating)	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition	New Application	327.00	360.00	0.00	360.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (3 years)	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
Home Boarding for Dogs (Day-time or overnight care within the home environment)	New Application	327.00	360.00	0.00	360.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating)	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
Providing Boarding in Kennels	Dogs - New Application – up to 50 dogs	327.00	360.00	0.00	360.00	Non vatable
	Dogs - Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating) – up to 50 dogs	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
	Dogs - New Application – over 50 dogs	382.00	420.00	0.00	420.00	Non vatable
	Dogs - Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating)– over 50 dogs	334.00	367.00	0.00	367.00	Non vatable
	Cats - New Application – up to 50 cats	327.00	360.00	0.00	360.00	Non vatable
	Cats - Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating) – up to 50 cats	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
	Cats - New Application – over 50 cats	382.00	420.00	0.00	420.00	Non vatable
	Cats - Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating)– over 50 cats	334.00	367.00	0.00	367.00	Non vatable
<b>Total charge is the amount as shown plus veterinary fees</b>						

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Animal Welfare		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Providing Day Care for Dogs	New Application – up to 50 dogs	297.00	327.00	0.00	327.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating) – up to 50 dogs	279.00	307.00	0.00	307.00	Non vatable
	New Application – over 50 dogs	382.00	420.00	0.00	420.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (1 to 3 years depending on rating)– over 50 dogs	334.00	367.00	0.00	367.00	Non vatable
Supplementary Fees	Franchise Licence – Dog Boarding only <sup>1</sup>	133.00	146.00	0.00	146.00	Non vatable
	Host Fee <sup>2</sup>		0.00	0.00	0.00	Non vatable
	Additional Activity <sup>3</sup>	55.00	61.00	0.00	61.00	Non vatable
	Variation Fee e.g. amendment to a licence	30.00	33.00	0.00	33.00	Non vatable
	Inspection Fee <sup>4</sup>	146.00	161.00	0.00	161.00	Non vatable
	Re-Rating Fee <sup>5</sup>	152.00	167.00	0.00	167.00	Non vatable
	Admin Fee (Dog Breeding/Horse Riding Establishment Recharge Admin Fee)	0.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	Non vatable
<sup>1</sup> Host fees will be required in addition to this licence <sup>2</sup> Required per host family of a dog boarding franchise <sup>3</sup> Payable in addition to the appropriate licence fees where more than one activity is undertaken at the same premises <sup>4</sup> Payable if an inspection is required in addition to the initial inspection required included within the licence fee <sup>5</sup> Inspection and licence amendment for re-rating of the current star rating						
Dangerous Wild Animals	New Application <sup>1</sup>	406.00	447.00	0.00	447.00	Non vatable
	Renewal (2 years) <sup>1</sup>	358.00	394.00	0.00	394.00	Non vatable
Zoos	s14(2) dispensation - New Application <sup>1</sup>	1,413.00	1,554.00	0.00	1,554.00	Non vatable
	s14(2) dispensation - Renewal (6 years) <sup>1</sup>	1,910.00	2,101.00	0.00	2,101.00	Non vatable
	No dispensation - New Application <sup>1</sup>	2,256.00	2,482.00	0.00	2,482.00	Non vatable
	No dispensation - Renewal (6 years) <sup>1</sup>	3,177.00	3,495.00	0.00	3,495.00	Non vatable
<sup>1</sup> Total charge is the amount as shown plus veterinary fees						

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Taxis		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Drivers Licence	Hackney Carriage / Private Hire / Dual - 3 year – new application	263.00	289.00	0.00	289.00	Non vatable
	Hackney Carriage / Private Hire / Dual - 3 year – renewal	194.00	213.00	0.00	213.00	Non vatable
	Single Private Hire to Dual Licence transfer	57.00	63.00	0.00	63.00	Non vatable
Vehicle Licence – all 1 year	Hackney Carriage vehicle – new application	263.00	289.00	0.00	289.00	Non vatable
	Hackney Carriage vehicle – renewal	194.00	213.00	0.00	213.00	Non vatable
	Private Hire vehicle – new application	263.00	289.00	0.00	289.00	Non vatable
	Private Hire vehicle – renewal	194.00	213.00	0.00	213.00	Non vatable
	Transfer of vehicle licence – to another person	26.00	29.00	0.00	29.00	Non vatable
	Transfer of vehicle licence – to another vehicle (1 year)	189.00	208.00	0.00	208.00	Non vatable
	Transfer of vehicle licence – to another vehicle (remainder of plate)	90.00	99.00	0.00	99.00	Non vatable
	Temporary vehicle (Insurance Company)	263.00	289.00	0.00	289.00	Non vatable
Private Hire Operators	Change of registration number	90.00	99.00	0.00	99.00	Non vatable
	Operator Licence – 5 year – new application	420.00	462.00	0.00	462.00	Non vatable
	Operator Licence – 1 year – new application / renewal	105.00	116.00	0.00	116.00	Non vatable
Other Fees	Knowledge Test	79.00	87.00	0.00	87.00	Non vatable
	Replacement driver's badge	29.00	32.00	0.00	32.00	Non vatable
	Replacement external plate	35.00	39.00	0.00	39.00	Non vatable
	Replacement internal plate	29.00	32.00	0.00	32.00	Non vatable
	Vehicle bracket	11.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	Non vatable
	Administration charge for any other requests	26.00	29.00	0.00	29.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Street Trading		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Street Trading Licences	Witney & Chipping Norton – annual	2,893.00	3,182.00	0.00	3,182.00	Non vatable
	Witney & Chipping Norton – 3 months	862.00	948.00	0.00	948.00	Non vatable
	All other consents – annual	1,934.00	2,127.00	0.00	2,127.00	Non vatable
	All other consents – 3 months	621.00	683.00	0.00	683.00	Non vatable
	Individual Trader Day Rate (per stall)	67.00	74.00	0.00	74.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Markets						
Chipping Norton	per day per 10' frontage or pro-rata	22.00	22.00	0.00	22.00	Non vatable
	per day casual	31.00	31.00	0.00	31.00	Non vatable
	plus per canopy, per pitch, per day	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	Non vatable
Witney	per day per 10' frontage or pro-rata	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Non vatable
	per day casual	32.00	32.00	0.00	32.00	Non vatable
	plus per canopy, per pitch, per day	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	Non vatable
	Farmers Market - per site	349.00	349.00	0.00	349.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Other		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Scrap Metal	Dealer (Site) Licence – New Application / Renewal	646.00	711.00	0.00	711.00	Non vatable
	Collector's Licence – New Application / Renewal	646.00	711.00	0.00	711.00	Non vatable
Cosmetic Piercing (Accupuncture, Tattoo, Ear Piercing & Electrolysis)	Premises registration	227.00	250.00	0.00	250.00	Non vatable
	Personal registration	169.00	186.00	0.00	186.00	Non vatable
Sex Shop, Sex Cinema or Sexual Entertainment Venue	<b>Please contact <a href="mailto:ers@publicagroup.uk">ers@publicagroup.uk</a> to discuss your requirements</b>					
Houses in Multiple Occupation	HMO Licence (3 years)	752.00	802.00	0.00	802.00	Non vatable
Advisory Services	The council offers regulatory service support and advice as part of the Better Business for all partnership ( <a href="https://www.thegrowthhub.biz/support-hub/better-business-for-all">https://www.thegrowthhub.biz/support-hub/better-business-for-all</a> ); please contact <a href="mailto:ers@publicagroup.uk">ers@publicagroup.uk</a> to discuss your requirements.					

Alcohol & Entertainment (Licensing Act 2003)	<i>Fees as laid down by the Secretary of State – please refer to <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a></i>				
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Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Caravan & Campsites		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
New site application	- 5 or less units	382.00	408.00	0.00	408.00	Non vatable
	- 6 to 24 units	509.00	543.00	0.00	543.00	Non vatable
	- 25 to 99 units	612.00	653.00	0.00	653.00	Non vatable
	- 100 to 199 units	703.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	Non vatable
	- 200 units and over	806.00	860.00	0.00	860.00	Non vatable
Annual Fee for existing site licence	- 5 or less units	321.00	343.00	0.00	343.00	Non vatable
	- 6 to 24 units	424.00	452.00	0.00	452.00	Non vatable
	- 25 to 99 units	528.00	563.00	0.00	563.00	Non vatable
	- 100 to 199 units	612.00	653.00	0.00	653.00	Non vatable
	- 200 units and over	709.00	757.00	0.00	757.00	Non vatable
Other Fees	Transfer / amendment of existing site licence	121.00	129.00	0.00	129.00	Non vatable
	Change Site Conditions	121.00	129.00	0.00	129.00	Non vatable
	Site Rules Deposit	61.00	65.00	0.00	65.00	Non vatable
	Administrative and other expenses to serve notice under the Mobile Homes Act 2013	364.00	388.00	0.00	388.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Licencing Gambling Act		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	New Premises	471.68	519.00	0.00	519.00	Non vatable
	Vary Premises	471.68	519.00	0.00	519.00	Non vatable
	Transfer of Premises	105.53	116.00	0.00	116.00	Non vatable
	Reinstatement of Premises	211.01	232.00	0.00	232.00	Non vatable
	Provisional Statement	471.68	519.00	0.00	519.00	Non vatable
	New Premises with Provisional	86.88	96.00	0.00	96.00	Non vatable
	Annual Fee	186.20	205.00	0.00	205.00	Non vatable
	Copy of Licence (Set cap of £25.00)	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
Notification of change		31.00	34.00	0.00	34.00	Non vatable
For all other premises licence fees, please contact <a href="mailto:ers@publicagroup.uk">ers@publicagroup.uk</a> .						
The fees for gaming machine permits are set nationally – please refer to: <a href="https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/licensees-and-businesses/licences-and-fees">https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/licensees-and-businesses/licences-and-fees</a>						
Lotteries and Amusements ( <i>Fees set nationally</i> )	Small Lottery – new application	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	Non vatable
	Small Lottery – renewal	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	Non vatable

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Premises Li		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Number of people						
*Events that exceed 5,000 people will be liable for an additional fee to be charged on an application for a premises licence authorising the event.	5,000-9,999	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Non vatable
	10,000-14,999	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	Non vatable
	15,000-19,999	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	Non vatable
	20,000-29,999	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	Non vatable
	30,000-39,999	16,000.00	16,000.00	0.00	16,000.00	Non vatable
	40,000-49,999	24,000.00	24,000.00	0.00	24,000.00	Non vatable
	50,000-59,999	32,000.00	32,000.00	0.00	32,000.00	Non vatable
	60,000-69,999	40,000.00	40,000.00	0.00	40,000.00	Non vatable
	70,000-79,999	48,000.00	48,000.00	0.00	48,000.00	Non vatable
	80,000-89,999	56,000.00	56,000.00	0.00	56,000.00	Non vatable
	90,000 and over	64,000.00	64,000.00	0.00	64,000.00	Non vatable
<b>Note: Fees are determined by Government</b>						

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Community Safety & Licensing (Licensing Act 2003) Premises Licences		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Fees relating to applications for premises licences, club premises certificates, variations, (but not changes of name and address etc or changes of designated premises supervisor) the conversion of existing licences, and conversion/variations should be graduated using five bands as shown:	BAND A	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Non vatable
	BAND B	190.00	190.00	0.00	190.00	Non vatable
	BAND C	315.00	315.00	0.00	315.00	Non vatable
	BAND D	450.00	450.00	0.00	450.00	Non vatable
	BAND E	635.00	635.00	0.00	635.00	Non vatable
The annual charges payable by those holding licences and club premises certificates:	BAND A	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	Non vatable
	BAND B	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	Non vatable
	BAND C	295.00	295.00	0.00	295.00	Non vatable
	BAND D	320.00	320.00	0.00	320.00	Non vatable
	BAND E	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	Non vatable
Particular types of premises which do not have non-domestic rateable values would be allocated to Band A The various non-domestic rateable values should be allocated to bands in the following way: Note:*Non-Domestic rateable value	BAND A	*£0-£4,300				Non vatable
	BAND B	*£4,301-£33,000				Non vatable
	BAND C	*£33,001-£87,000				Non vatable
	BAND D	*£87,001-£125,000				Non vatable
	BAND E	*£125,001 and over				Non vatable
<b>*No fee or annual charge would be payable by church halls, chapel halls or other premises of a similar nature and village halls, parish and community halls or other premises of a similar nature for a premises licence authorising only the provision of regulated entertainment. No fee or annual charge would be payable by a school providing education for pupils up to year 13 or a sixth form college for a premises licence authorising only the provision of regulated entertainment carried on by the school or sixth from college.</b>						
Temporary Events Notice		21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	Non vatable
Personal Licence		37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	Non vatable
Minor Variations procedure		89.00	89.00	0.00	89.00	Non vatable
<b>Note: Fees determined by Government</b>						



Environmental & Regulatory Services: Community Safety & Licensing (Licensing Act 2003)		2023/2024	2024/2025	VAT	2024/2025	VAT Status
Miscellaneous Fees		Basic Charge	Basic Charge		Total Charge	
		£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	
	Application for a grant or renewal of personal licence	37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	Non vatable
	Temporary event notices	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	Non vatable
	Theft, loss etc of premises licence or summary	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Application for a provisional statement where premises being built, etc	195.00	195.00	0.00	195.00	Non vatable
	Notification of change of name or address	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Application to vary to specify individual as premises supervisor	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Non vatable
	Application for transfer of premises licence	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Non vatable
<b>Miscellaneous Fees</b>	Interim authority notice following death etc. of licence holder	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Non vatable
	Theft, loss etc of certificate or summary	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Notification of change of name or alteration of club rules	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Change of relevant registered address of club	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Theft, loss etc of temporary event notice	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Theft, loss etc of personal licence	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Duty to notify change of name or address	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Non vatable
	Right of freeholder etc to be notified of licensing matters	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	Non vatable
<b>Note: Fees determined by Government</b>						

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Environmental Services Penalty Notices		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Fine for Dog Fouling		50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Non vatable
Off Street Parking enforcement	Higher Level Contravention paid after service of charge certificate*	105.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	Non vatable
	Higher Level Contravention paid after 14 days but before service of charge certificate*	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	Non vatable
	Higher level contravention paid within 14 days*	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	Non vatable
	Lower Level Contravention paid after service of charge certificate*	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	Lower level contravention paid within 14 days*	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Non vatable
	Lower level contravention paid within 14 days*	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
<b>Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and enforcement. Department for Transport. Traffic Management Act 2004</b>						
Nuisance parking	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
Abandoned vehicles	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	Non vatable
*statutory fee						

Environmental & Regulatory Services: Penalty Notices		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Depositing litter	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	Non vatable
Graffiti & Fly-posting	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	Non vatable
Unauthorised distribution of free printed matter	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	Non vatable
Failure to comply with a waste receptacles notice	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	Non vatable
Failure to comply with a street litter control notice	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	110.00	110.00	0.00	110.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	83.00	83.00	0.00	83.00	Non vatable
Failure to comply with a litter clearing notice	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	110.00	110.00	0.00	110.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	83.00	83.00	0.00	83.00	Non vatable
Failure to produce waste documents	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	Non vatable
Failure to produce authority to transport waste	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	Non vatable
Smoking in smoke free premises or work vehicles	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	Non vatable
Failure to display no smoking signs	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 14 days	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	Non vatable
Unlawful deposit of waste	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	400.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 10 days	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Non vatable
Householder Duty of Care	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	400.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	Non vatable
	If paid within 10 days	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Non vatable
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations	Fixed penalty notices (FPN's)*	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Non vatable
Housing Act 2004 Charging for Notices	Charge for Notice served	355.00	355.00	0.00	355.00	Non vatable
Minimum Energy Performance Certificate	The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015.	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Non vatable
*statutory fee						

**BUILDING CONTROL – GENERAL NOTES****THE BUILDING ACT 1984 : THE BUILDING REGULATIONS 2010 (As amended)**

The building owner or agent must make a building regulations application and pay a fee for the construction of new works. All work must comply with the 2010 Building Regulations (as amended).

The person carrying out the building works is to liaise with and meet the requirements of the Local Authority Building Control and give the required notice for certain key stages of works as detailed in the guidance below.

The charges set out on the following pages have been set in accordance with the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010. The tables give the charges for various categories of work.

**Full Plans Applications Charges**

The 'charges' shown in the following tables relate to Full Plans Applications. For the definition and details of Full Plans Applications please visit the respective Council's website.

**Building Notice Applications Charges**

Where building work is of a relatively minor nature, the Building Notice charge is the same for the Full Plans Application charge except for Cotswold District Council where the Building Notice charge is as shown on the relevant Tables.

For the definition and details of Building Notice Applications please visit the respective Council's website.

A Building Notice Application will not, in the majority of situations, be accepted for new dwellings. It is also likely that new dwellings may potentially attract additional charges depending on what level of design input has been achieved by the applicant.

**Regularisation Applications (Retrospective Works) Charges**

The charge required when depositing an application for regularisation (or reversion) is 100% of the appropriate charge as listed in the following tables **excluding VAT**, with an additional 50% premium added to it. This type of application is exempt from VAT.

For the definition and details of Regularisation Applications please visit the respective Council's website.

**Works to provide access and facilities for disabled persons**

Charges are not payable when the proposed work is to provide access and facilities in an existing dwelling or an extension to store equipment or provide medical treatment for a disabled person. In order to claim exemption, the appropriate evidence as to the relevance of the adaptation for the person's disability must accompany the application.

Building Control		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
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TABLE A – NEW DWELLINGS e.g. flats, houses with total floor area of less than 300m <sup>2</sup> )						
Dwellings 1	Full Plans Charge	606.00	647.00	129.40	776.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	660.00	704.00	140.80	844.80	Vatable
Dwellings 2+		Price on application				
<p>a) Where more than 1 dwelling is proposed, charges will be calculated on an individual application basis; please contact Building Control for a competitive quotation.</p> <p>b) New dwellings over 300m<sup>2</sup> in floor area – charges to be</p> <p>c) No additional fees are payable for different associated garages, built at the same time as the dwelling(s) concerned.</p> <p>d) Local Authority Building Control (LABC) can provide competitively priced 10 year Structural Warranties for new housing (including conversions, social housing, self-build and competed housing) and commercial buildings. For more details and prices contact 0845 0540505 or <a href="http://www.labcwarranty.co.uk">www.labcwarranty.co.uk</a>.</p>						

TABLE B – DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL EXTENSIONS TO A SINGLE BUILDING						
Erection / Extension of a garage (30m <sup>2</sup> to 60m <sup>2</sup> )	Full Plans Charge	296.00	316.00	63.20	379.20	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	325.00	347.00	69.40	416.40	Vatable
Garage conversion to habitable accommodation	Full Plans Charge	222.00	237.00	47.40	284.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	244.00	260.00	52.00	312.00	Vatable
Loft conversion up to 100m <sup>2</sup>	Full Plans Charge	591.00	631.00	126.20	757.20	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	650.00	694.00	138.80	832.80	Vatable
Loft conversion over 100m <sup>2</sup>		Price on application				
Extension up to 20m <sup>2</sup>	Full Plans Charge	458.00	489.00	97.80	586.80	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	503.00	537.00	107.40	644.40	Vatable
Extension 20m <sup>2</sup> up to 60m <sup>2</sup>	Full Plans Charge	606.00	647.00	129.40	776.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	660.00	704.00	140.80	844.80	Vatable
Extension 60m <sup>2</sup> up to 100m <sup>2</sup>	Full Plans Charge	762.00	813.00	162.60	975.60	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	838.00	894.00	178.80	1,072.80	Vatable
Extension over 100m <sup>2</sup>		Price on application				
<b>Notes:</b>						
a) References to floor area relate to the total internal area of all storeys.						
b) Where more than one extension is proposed, the floor areas must be added together to determine the total charge.						
c) Some alterations to buildings to improve facilities for disabled persons are exempt from charges. For details and advice please contact us.						

TABLE C – ALL OTHER WORK						
Under £1,000	Full Plans Charge	111.00	117.00	23.40	140.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	122.00	128.00	25.60	153.60	Vatable
£1,001 to £5,000	Full Plans Charge	222.00	233.00	46.60	279.60	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	244.00	256.00	51.20	307.20	Vatable
£5,001 to £10,000	Full Plans Charge	296.00	311.00	62.20	373.20	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	326.00	342.00	68.40	410.40	Vatable
£10,001 to £20,000	Full Plans Charge	407.00	427.00	85.40	512.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	448.00	470.00	94.00	564.00	Vatable
£20,001 to £30,000	Full Plans Charge	577.00	606.00	121.20	727.20	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	635.00	667.00	133.40	800.40	Vatable
£30,001 to £40,000	Full Plans Charge	704.00	739.00	147.80	886.80	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	774.00	813.00	162.60	975.60	Vatable
£40,001 to £50,000	Full Plans Charge	813.00	854.00	170.80	1,024.80	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	894.00	939.00	187.80	1,126.80	Vatable
£50,001 to £60,000	Full Plans Charge	998.00	1,048.00	209.60	1,257.60	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	1,098.00	1,153.00	230.60	1,383.60	Vatable
£60,001 to £70,000	Full Plans Charge	1,073.00	1,127.00	225.40	1,352.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	1,180.00	1,239.00	247.80	1,486.80	Vatable
£70,001 to £80,000	Full Plans Charge	1,183.00	1,242.00	248.40	1,490.40	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	1,300.00	1,365.00	273.00	1,638.00	Vatable
Over £80,000		Price on application				
For competitive quotations for projects over £80,000 please contact the 01993 861651 or by emailing <a href="mailto:building.control@westoxon.gov.uk">building.control@westoxon.gov.uk</a>						

Building Control	2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
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**TABLE C – ALL OTHER WORK *continued***

Electrical installations if not using a competent electrical engineer	Full Plans Charge	460.00	491.00	98.20	589.20	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	506.00	540.00	108.00	648.00	Vatable
New windows install by non FENSA opp – up to 8 windows	Full Plans Charge	120.00	128.00	25.60	153.60	Vatable
	Building Notice Charge	132.00	141.00	28.20	169.20	Vatable
New windows install by non FENSA opp – over to 8 windows	Price on application					

**Notes on additional services:**

- a) Local Authority Building Control (LABC) can provide competitively priced 10 year Structural Warranties for new commercial buildings.  
For more details and prices contact 0845 0540505 or [www.labcwarranty.co.uk](http://www.labcwarranty.co.uk).
- b) SAP/EPC and SBEM calculations can be provided – price on application.
- c) Air pressure testing can be provided – price on application.

For more information please contact:

The building control team on 01993 861651 or Email: [building.control@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@westoxon.gov.uk)

**TABLE D – ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Additional Services	Charge to administer an application which has not been visited for 10 years.	146.00	156.00	31.20	187.20	Vatable
	Services will be charged on an hourly rate of £ 73.00 per hour (including VAT).	73.00	78.00	15.60	93.60	Vatable
<p>Other relevant services not covered by the previous tables may be undertaken on a 'cost recovery' basis.</p> <p>Provision of Completion Certificates e.g. where requested more than six months after completion of the building work</p> <p>Advisory work in connection with i) demolition of buildings and ii) dangerous structures</p>						

Environmental Services		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
<b>Dog Control (Release of an impounded Stray Dog)</b>	Statutory Fee	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
	Kennelling per day	24.00	At cost	At cost	At cost	Non vatable
	Administration Fee	40.00	87.00	0.00	87.00	Non vatable
	Delivery Charge (Optional return of dog to owner by the kennels)	59.00	70.80	14.16	84.96	Vatable
Note: The cost of veterinary treatment will be passed on in full to the dog owner. Owners in receipt of an income-related benefit shall only be charged for kennelling and the delivery charge (if requested), plus any veterinary costs incurred. This only applies in respect of the first recorded stray. Thereafter, full charges apply.						
<b>Other Services</b>	Public Sewer Searches*	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	Non vatable
	Chipping Norton Mop Fair	5,250.00	5,880.00	0.00	5,880.00	Non vatable
	Woodstock Fair	2,625.00	3,255.00	0.00	3,255.00	Non vatable
<b>Home Improvement Agency:</b>	Agency Fees for Grant-aided Works up to £5,000	17% of cost	15% of cost			As Applicable
	Agency Fees for balance of Grant-aided Works Above £5,000	14% of cost	15% of cost			As Applicable
	Small Repairs Fee - Estimates quoted at £20 per hour plus VAT (if applicable) plus cost of materials used					As Applicable
	Agency Fees for balance of Grant-aided Works Above £5,000	14% of cost	15% of cost			As Applicable
	Small Repairs Fee - Estimates quoted at £20 per hour plus VAT (if applicable) plus cost of materials used					As Applicable
*statutory fee						

Street Signage, Naming and Numbering		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Address and Street Name Amendments	Change of address	72.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	Allocating a name to a property or allocating a number to a named property	72.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	Change of a commercial building address	72.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	Change of street name at residents, developers or parish/town council request	431.00	448.00	0.00	448.00	Non vatable
	Plus additional charge per property/unit where consultation with existing residents is to be carried out by WODC	48.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Non vatable
Naming and numbering of a block of flats	Block of flats: up to 20 flats	215.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	Non vatable
	Block of flats: 21-50 flats	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Non vatable
	Block of flats: 51+ flats	400.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	Non vatable
Naming and numbering of new properties including commercial buildings	Per Unit up to 5 plots	72.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	Non vatable
	6 - 25 plots	609.00	639.00	0.00	639.00	Non vatable
	26 - 75 plots	948.00	995.00	0.00	995.00	Non vatable
	76 - 150 plots	1,354.00	1,422.00	0.00	1,422.00	Non vatable
	151 - 250 plots	1,693.00	1,778.00	0.00	1,778.00	Non vatable
	251 - 350 plots	2,031.00	2,133.00	0.00	2,133.00	Non vatable
	351 - 500 plots	2,370.00	2,489.00	0.00	2,489.00	Non vatable
501 or more plots	2,708.00	2,843.00	0.00	2,843.00	Non vatable	
Additional charges where new street names are required:	1 - 5 new street names	271.00	285.00	0.00	285.00	Non vatable
	6 - 10 new street names	542.00	569.00	0.00	569.00	Non vatable
	11 or more new street names	677.00	711.00	0.00	711.00	Non vatable
Additional charge where new Court names are required	Per Court name	160.00	168.00	0.00	168.00	Non vatable
Charge for a developer amending plans after naming and numbering has commenced.		144.00	151.00	0.00	151.00	Non vatable
Providing a Letter of Certification	Per letter of address certification	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Non vatable
Charges for preparing site location plans and supervising the installation of street nameplates	1-4 Nameplates	209.90	209.90	41.98	251.88	Vatable
	5-8 Nameplates	269.80	269.80	53.96	323.76	Vatable
	9-12 Nameplates	329.80	329.80	65.96	395.76	Vatable
	13-16 Nameplates	389.80	389.80	77.96	467.76	Vatable
	17-20 Nameplates	449.80	449.80	89.96	539.76	Vatable
	21-24 Nameplates	509.70	509.70	101.94	611.64	Vatable
	25-28 Nameplates	569.60	569.60	113.92	683.52	Vatable
29+ Nameplates	599.50	599.50	119.90	719.40	Vatable	
The charges above include all necessary administration, site visits to carry out existing address checks, establishing any new street names required and the publishing of the new addresses to relevant organisations						



Environmental Services:		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Prepaid items	*Pre paid plastic sacks - per sack (Refuse)	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	Non vatable
	*Pre paid stickers - per sticker (Refuse)	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	Non vatable
	*Pre paid plastic sacks - per sack (Recycling)	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	Non vatable
	*Pre paid stickers - per sticker (Recycling)	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	Non vatable
<b>*Service to be available where wheeled bins are unsuitable</b>						
For Domestic use only:- Bulky household waste charges	Contaminated bin	117.00	140.00	0.00	140.00	Non vatable
<b>Waste collection from commercial establishments. (See page 12.27 for chargeable items)</b>						
Green Waste Collection		45.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Non vatable
Recovery of Abandoned Trolleys (per trolley)		61.00	98.00	19.60	117.60	Vatable
Container Delivery	Black Boxes & Food Caddies	5.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	Non vatable
	Household Waste Bin 240ltr	11.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	Non vatable
	Larger Waste Bins 1100 & 660ltrs	21.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Non vatable
Emptying of litter/dog waste bins	Per empty	8.37	8.37	0.00	8.37	Non vatable
Trade Waste Fees	Charges disclosed on customer enquiry					

Bulky Household Waste Collection Service		2023/2024 Basic Charge £ p	2024/2025 Basic Charge £ p	VAT £ p	2024/2025 Total Charge £ p	VAT Status
Normal Household items*	Up to 4 items	33.00	34.00	0.00	34.00	Non vatable
	Each additional item with a limit of up to two additional items	11.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	Non vatable
Non - standard household items	Non - standard household items	33.00	34.00	0.00	34.00	Non vatable
Please refer to <a href="http://www.Westoxon.gov.uk">www.Westoxon.gov.uk</a> for the up to date list of collectable items.						
Note: The Council will not collect the following items: Asbestos, Bricks, Builders Rubble, Car Shells, Chemicals, Gas Bottles, Oil Drums, Paint, Trailers, Vehicle Engines (or other parts) or Vehicle wheels/tyres						

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

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# WODC Budget 2024/25

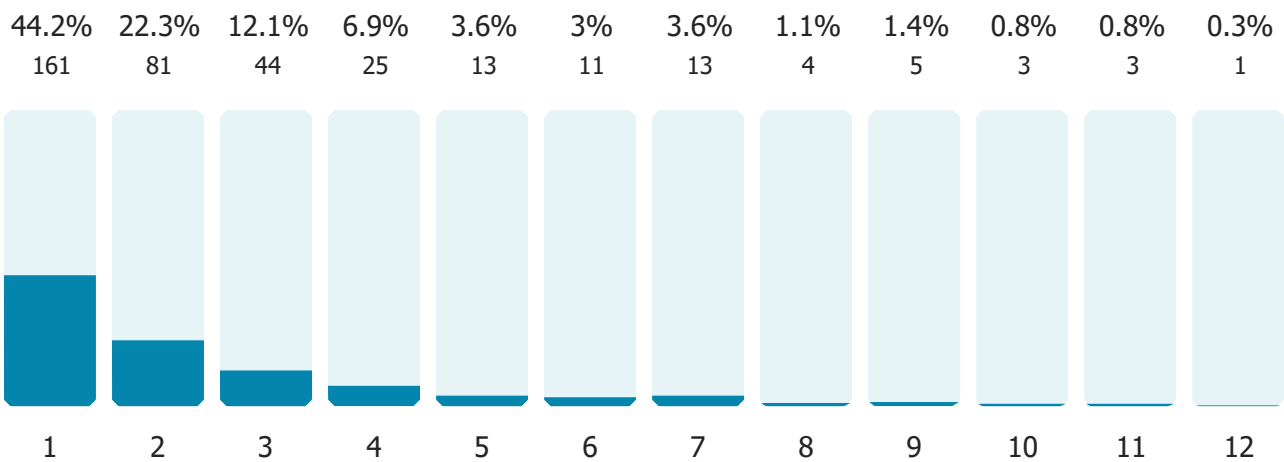
377 responses



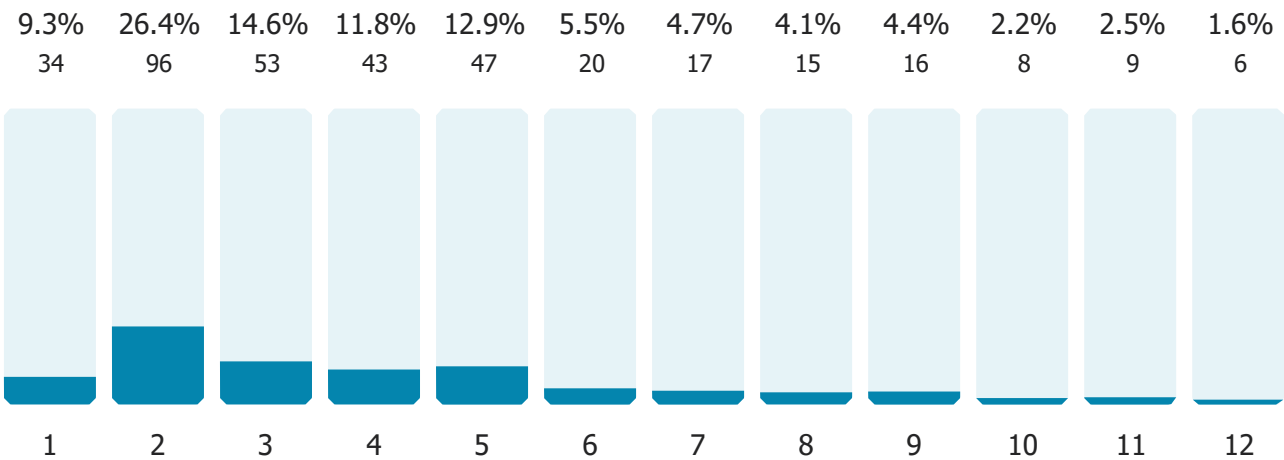
WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Please rank the services below with 1 being the service you consider most important and 10 being the service you consider least important.

### Collecting waste and recycling

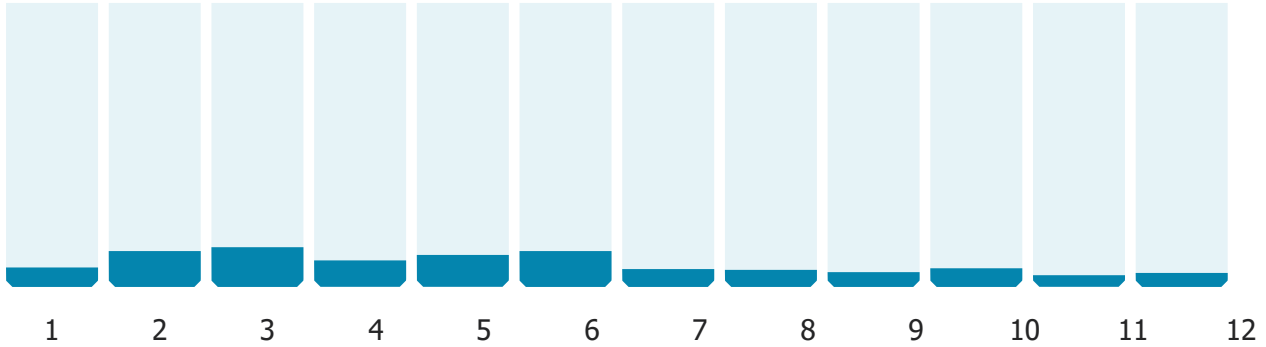


### Keeping the district clean and tidy



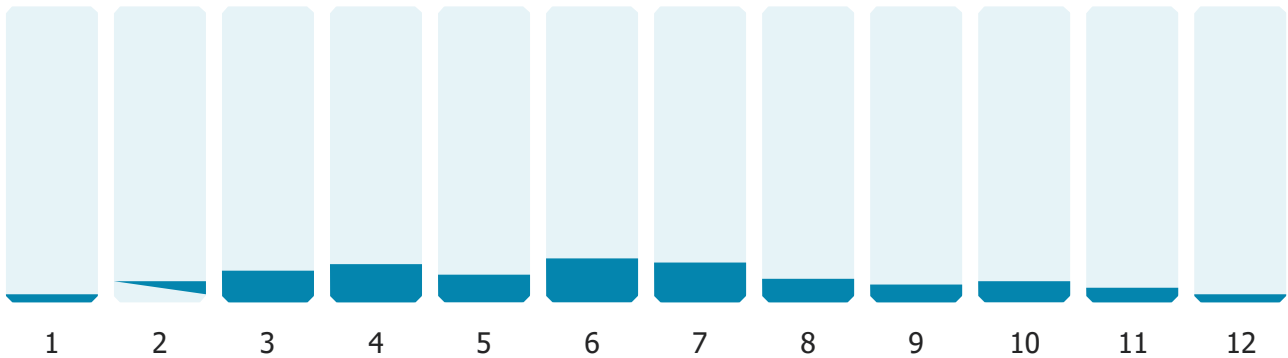
**Providing benefits and financial support**

6.9%	12.6%	14%	9.3%	11.3%	12.6%	6.3%	6%	5.2%	6.6%	4.1%	4.9%
25	46	51	34	41	46	23	22	19	24	15	18



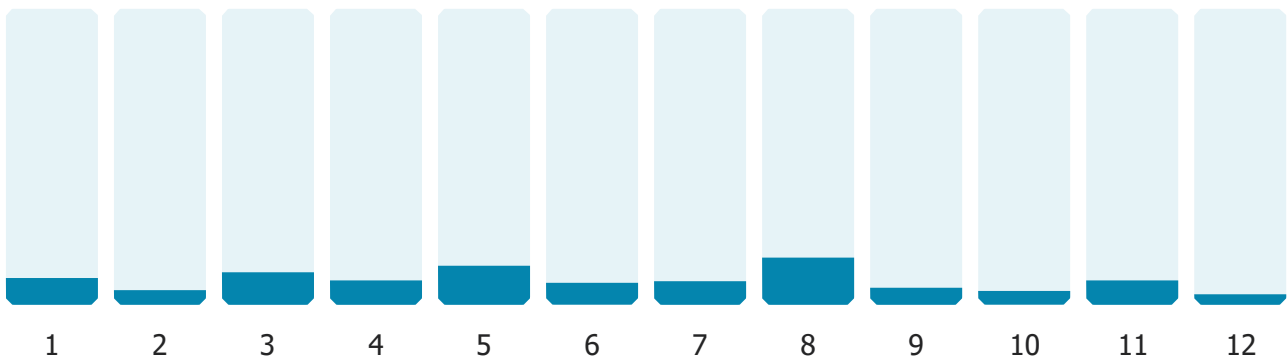
**Planning services such as planning application decisions and appeals**

2.7%	7.1%	10.7%	12.9%	9.3%	14.8%	13.5%	8%	6%	7.1%	4.9%	2.7%
10	26	39	47	34	54	49	29	22	26	18	10

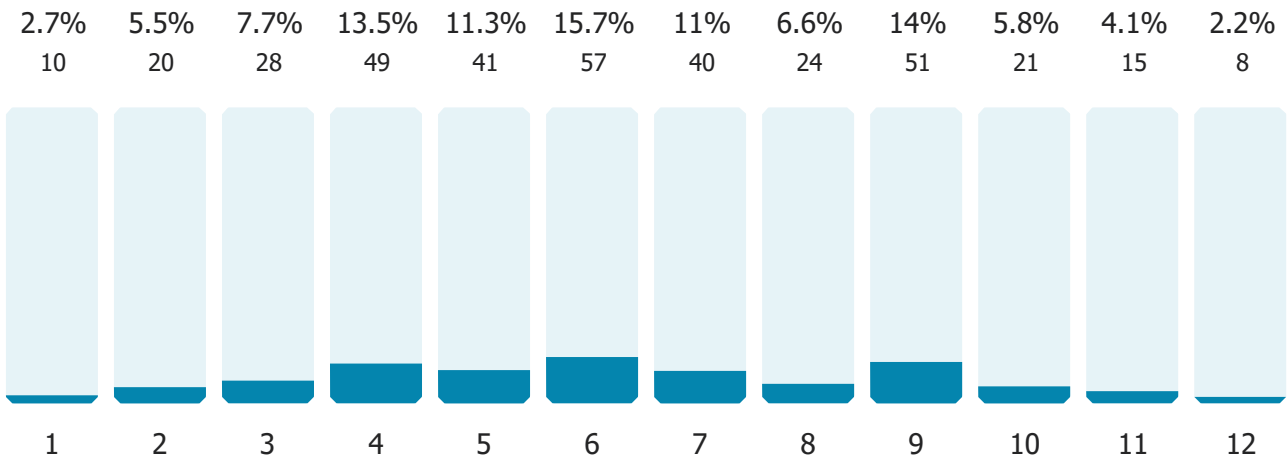


**Support for homeless people**

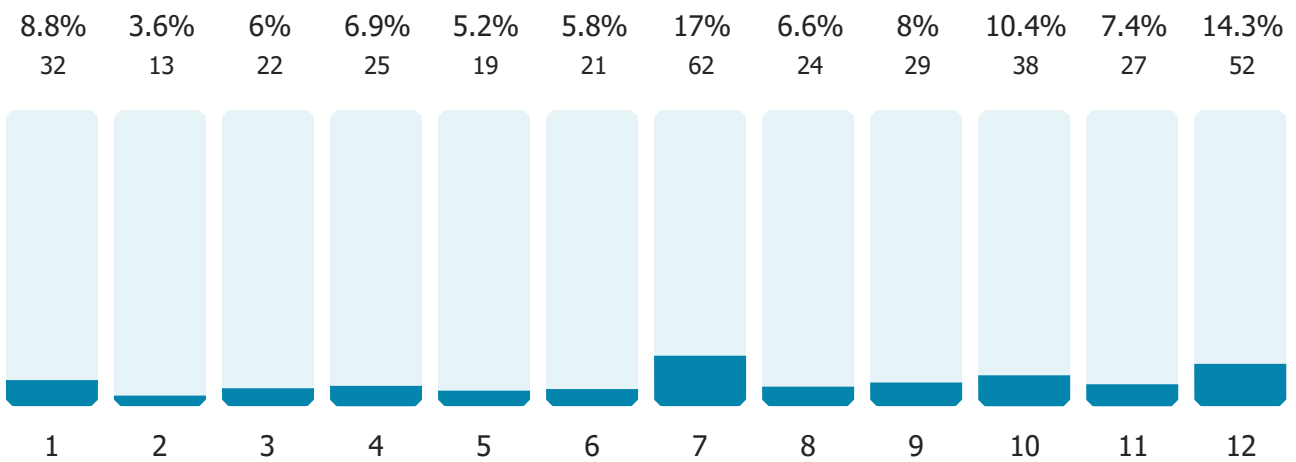
9.1%	4.9%	11%	8.2%	13.2%	7.4%	8%	15.9%	5.8%	4.7%	8.2%	3.6%
33	18	40	30	48	27	29	58	21	17	30	13



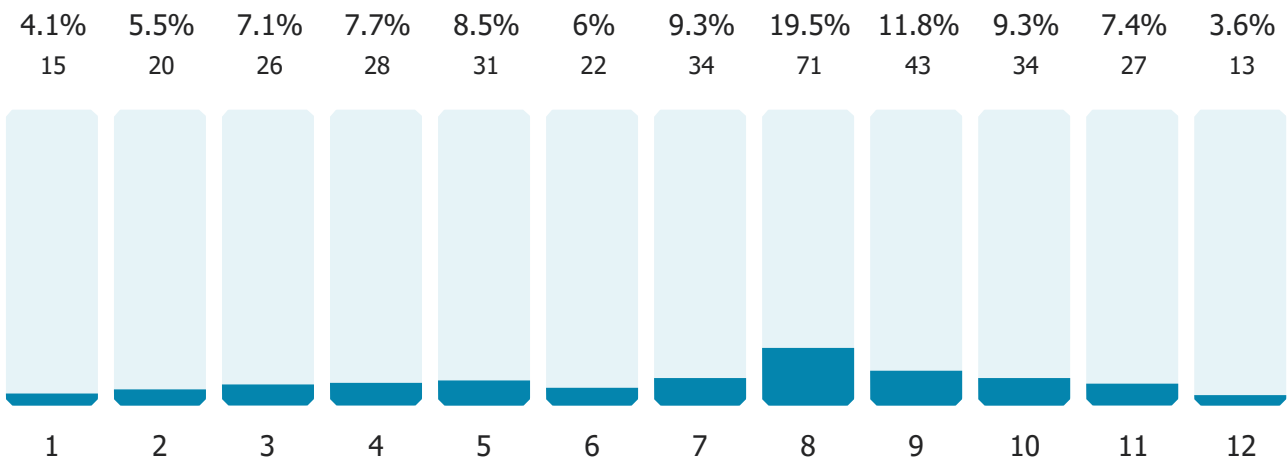
**Leisure services such as leisure centres, playing areas and encouraging people to get active**



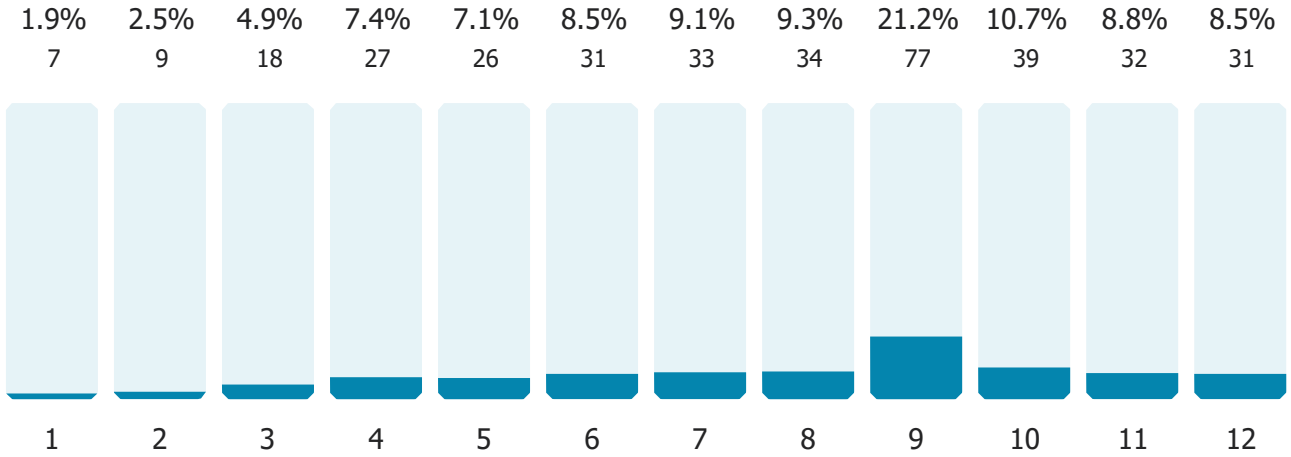
**Environment initiatives to help tackle the climate emergency**



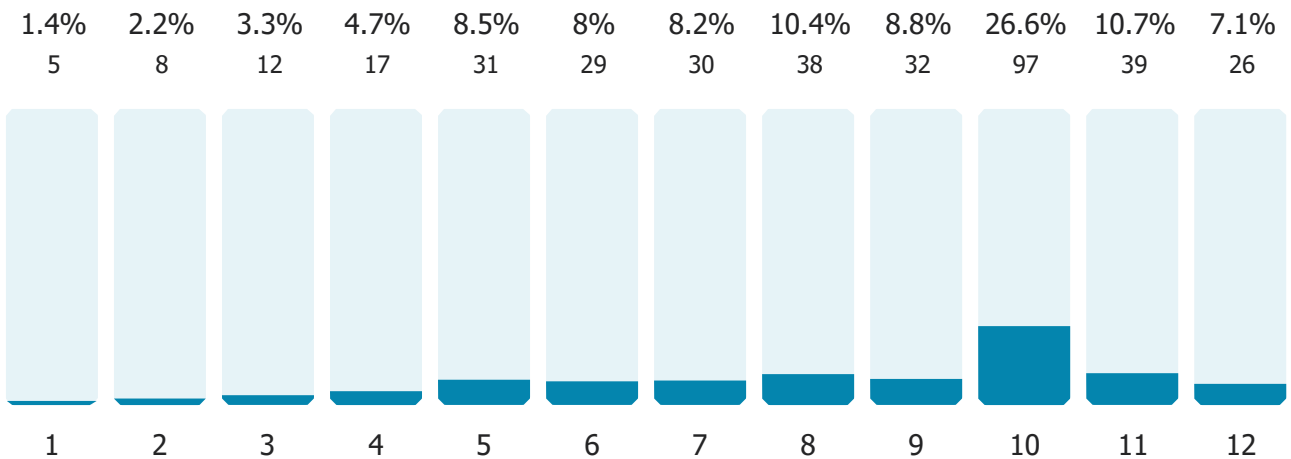
**Supporting local business and the economy**



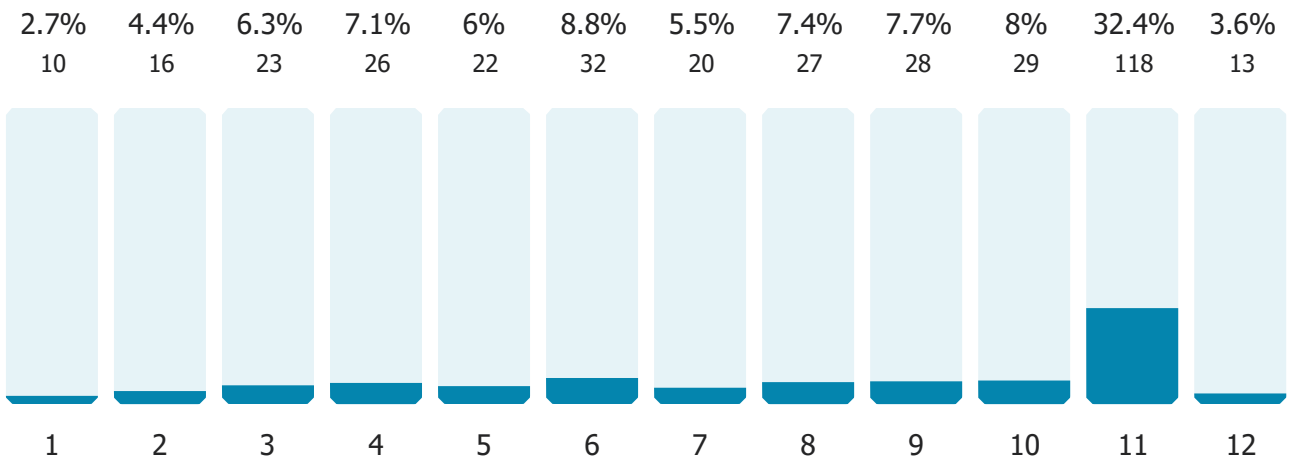
**Car parks in the district**



**Supporting community activity such as grants and supporting community initiatives and support for the homeless**

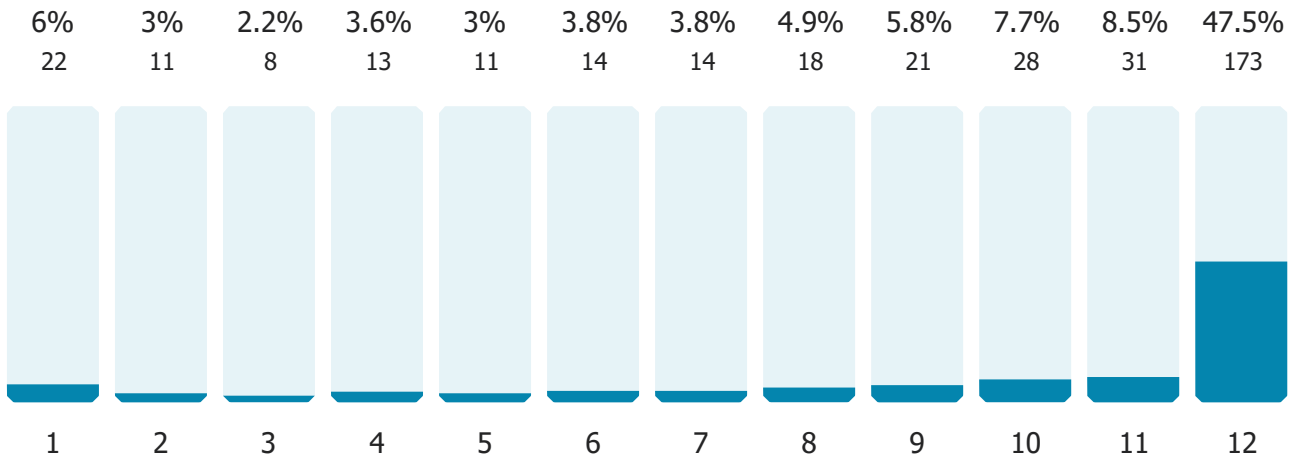


**Making sure laws are followed such as food hygiene, checking water supplies, noise disturbances and business licences**





### Collecting council tax and business rates



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## Pay Policy Statement – West Oxfordshire District Council 2024/25

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## **1. Background**

1.1. The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement is to meet the following requirements:

- s38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 which requires the Council to approve a Pay Policy Statement annually prior to the commencement of the financial year;
- the Council's obligations under the associated statutory guidance set out in the Openness and Accountability in Local Pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act (February 2012) together with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

## **2. Scope of the Statement**

2.1. To avoid confusion and provide transparency this statement will only apply to officers that are employees of West Oxfordshire District Council.

2.2. Details of pay for staff employed by Publica are found within Publica's statement of accounts.

2.3. The current Statement sets out the following elements:

- pay for each of the in scope officers
- remuneration of lowest paid officer
- the pay relationship between the highest paid officers and other officers
- performance related pay and bonuses, termination payments, transparency
- other aspects of remuneration.

## **3. Officers covered by the policy statement**

3.1. Below is a list of those officers covered by the Statement:

- Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
- Director of Finance (s151 officer)
- Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Other officers of the Council.

3.2. Those not covered by this statement include, officers who are wholly or primarily employed by Publica and who retain dual employment contracts to deliver statutory elements of their roles such as, Parking Appeal decisions or delegated planning decisions that require an employment relationship with the Council. In addition Officers mainly hosted by the Council e.g. South East England Councils (SEEC) are not included.

#### 4. General Statements

- 4.1. The Council has a range of Human Resources policies that apply equally to all officers across the Council from the highest paid to the lowest paid. These policies cover a wide range of Human Resources issues including annual leave arrangements and sickness arrangements.
- 4.2. The Council determined that directly employed staff should adopt similar policies as the Publica employees in the interests of fairness and equity.
- 4.3. Subsequent to Publica merging its multiple pay and grading structures in 2020 and adopting a new comprehensive job evaluation scheme to ensure equal pay compliance, the Council has adopted a scheme built on similar principles in line with the previous Council resolutions.
- 4.4. The new Pay and Grading structure was designed in consultation with the Trade Unions and seeks to provide flexibility for the Council to adapt to changes in pay pressures and market conditions whilst retaining equal pay protection. The scheme also provides for local pay increases in addition to the national (cost of living) pay award in a similar way to incremental pay in the current scheme.
- 4.5. Following the conclusion of the staff consultation process, the new pay structure was implemented in June 2022 (backpay to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021). This new pay structure does not cover statutory roles which remain subject to the previous benchmark approach as agreed by the Council.

#### 5. Policy on Remuneration

- 5.1 The policy for the year 2024/25 in respect of statutory officers is to maintain the level of pay in the same bands as the current year subject to any cost of living award that may be agreed nationally in relation to year 2024/25.

##### Statutory Officers – Spot Salaries

Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) - £105,570

Director of Finance (s 151 officer) - £88,298

Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer) – £88,298

##### Non-Statutory Officers

- 5.2. In respect of other senior pay the revised scheme was implemented in June 2022 (pay back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021). This will also be subject to the national pay award in respect of 1 April 2024.
- 5.3. The pay and grading scheme is made up of four levels based upon the nature of the role (Core, Implement, Guide & Translate) with each level sub divided into generic job groups (Business Manager, Level 1 Manager, Level 4 Specialist, Level 3 Specialist, Level 2 Specialist, Level 1 Specialist, Level 2 Case/Field Work, Level 1 Case/Field Work, Customer Advisor, Process & Internal Support) and specific comparable pay peer groups.

The pay levels are as follows: -

Core	£23,151 - £37,459
Implement	£28,444 - £51,665
Guide	£42,957 - £64,436
Translate	£54,297 - £81,445

- 5.4. At the time of publication of this policy statement no annual pay award has been agreed for 2024/2025. These pay levels will be automatically upgraded by the agreed pay award.

5.5. Other factors relating to pay:

- Officers are generally placed upon the bottom pay point on appointment, but this can be varied by the approval of the appropriate appointments panel.
- A local pay award (pay levelling) can be made annually to allow progression within job groups typically to the mid-point.
- Pay levels above the Job Group mid-point need to be supported by special factors such as market conditions/market forces.
- No performance related pay exists for any Officer of the Council.
- No bonuses are available for any Officer of the Council.
- Termination benefits payable will be in line with that available to all other officers as set out in the Restructuring/Redundancy/Efficiency Policy guidelines in line with Employment Rights Act tables.
- Full Council will retain the decision to make any new appointment of an officer where the pay (incorporating all payments and benefits in kind) exceeds £100,000.
- Full Council will retain the decision to approve any severance payments where the compensation payments exceed £100,000.

5.5 The details of the payments in respect of all these officers are set out in the [Transparency page](#) of the Councils website.

5.6 None of the Statutory Officers are entitled to receive overtime payments for time worked beyond the contracted hours and out of ordinary working hours.

5.7 The Returning Officer for election purposes also receives a payment for the statutory duties undertaken by virtue of the specific, additional appointment to that role in addition to other responsibilities. For national elections and referenda the amount is set and is payable by the government. For District and Town/Parish Council elections, the fees are payable by the District Council in accordance with an approved scale.

## 6. Tax avoidance

6.1. The Council does not and will not employ senior managers in permanent positions via service companies that could be construed as avoiding tax and national insurance contributions. From time to time, the Council may employ individuals via service companies to cover interim or short-term project roles. However, the Council will comply with its responsibilities regarding the application of HMRC regulations on payments made to personal service companies (known as IR35) by applying income tax and national insurance deductions to the payment.

## 7. Market forces supplement

7.1. Evidence from market and recruitment data shows that for some professions a higher salary may be necessary to attract and retain staff. For non-statutory roles this is built into the pay & grading scheme utilising the in-built flexibility above mid-point.

## 8. Retention payment scheme

8.1. A retention payment scheme is available to all areas of the Council, and might be used in the following cases:

- Difficulty in recruiting the most suitable candidate for a post.

- Difficulty in retaining key people where their leaving would significantly affect internal and/or external service delivery.
- 8.2 All additional payments will be time limited and reviewed at predetermined intervals to reconsider their appropriateness against the prevailing job market.
- 8.3 The scheme may be applied flexibly and can mean:
- Paying someone at a higher salary level
  - Making a one off payment.
- 8.4 These can be used in combination with other benefits that the Council offers. A package to suit the particular circumstances should be used and no individual should receive benefits that equate to more than 15% above the maximum of their substantive grade.

## 9. Lowest paid employees

9.1. Lowest paid employees of the Council are defined as those employees (excluding Apprentices) who are in a full time or part time role, who are above the age of 21, and are paid within the Core category of the new Job Evaluation scheme (the lowest band). From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 the lowest Core Grade was £23,151. This amount is subject to pay award pending in respect of April 2024.

9.2 The pay differential between the highest paid officer and the median officer is set out below:

Highest	£105,570
Median Employee	£49,498
Multiple	2.13

## 10. Pay protection

10.1. The Council seeks to ensure that all employees receive equal pay for work of equal value. To be consistent with equal pay principles the Council's protection arrangements will not create the potential for pay inequalities (e.g. open-ended protection).

10.2. There may be times when the grade for an individual's role changes for reasons unrelated to their performance e.g. restructures. In such cases the protection arrangements outlined will apply for 3 years from the date of the change.

## 11. Severance payments

11.1. The Council has a consistent method of calculating severance payments which it applies to all employees without differentiation. The payment is intended to recompense employees for the loss of their livelihood and provide financial support whilst they seek alternative employment.

11.2. In line with the statutory redundancy payment scheme, the Council calculates redundancy severance payments using the following calculation. The calculation is based on an employee's age and length of continuous local government service (please note that employees must have

a minimum of 2 years' continuous service to qualify for a redundancy payment) the multiplier for the number of weeks is then applied to the employee's actual weekly earnings.

11.3. The amount of redundancy pay will be calculated as follows:

- 0.5 week's pay for each full year of service where age at time of redundancy is less than 22 years of age;
- 1 week's pay for each full year of service where age at time of redundancy is 22 years of age or above, but less than 41 years of age;
- 1.5 weeks' pay for each full year of service where age at time of redundancy is 41+ years of age.

11.4. The maximum number of service years taken into account is 20. The maximum number of weeks' pay is 30 for anyone aged 61 years of age or older with 20 years or more service

## **12. Honorarium payments**

12.1. Payment of honoraria is a method by which the Council may reward an employee who has temporarily undertaken the duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post, or to recognise a specific contribution that an employee has made to the Council.

## **13. The Real Living Wage**

13.1. The Council and Publica are committed to paying the Real Living Wage (RLW). The RLW rate from October 2023 is:

- £12.00 per hour across UK (except London - £13.15) for workers 18 years and older.

13.2. The RLW is voluntary and is independently calculated based on what people need to get by. The Government encourages all employers that can afford to do so to ensure their employees earn a wage that meets the costs of living, not just the government minimum.

13.3. For Council employees whose substantive post is less than the RLW they will automatically receive the rate set out in 14.1 above.

## **14. Other pay and conditions in operation**

- Stand by and call out payments
- Long service award

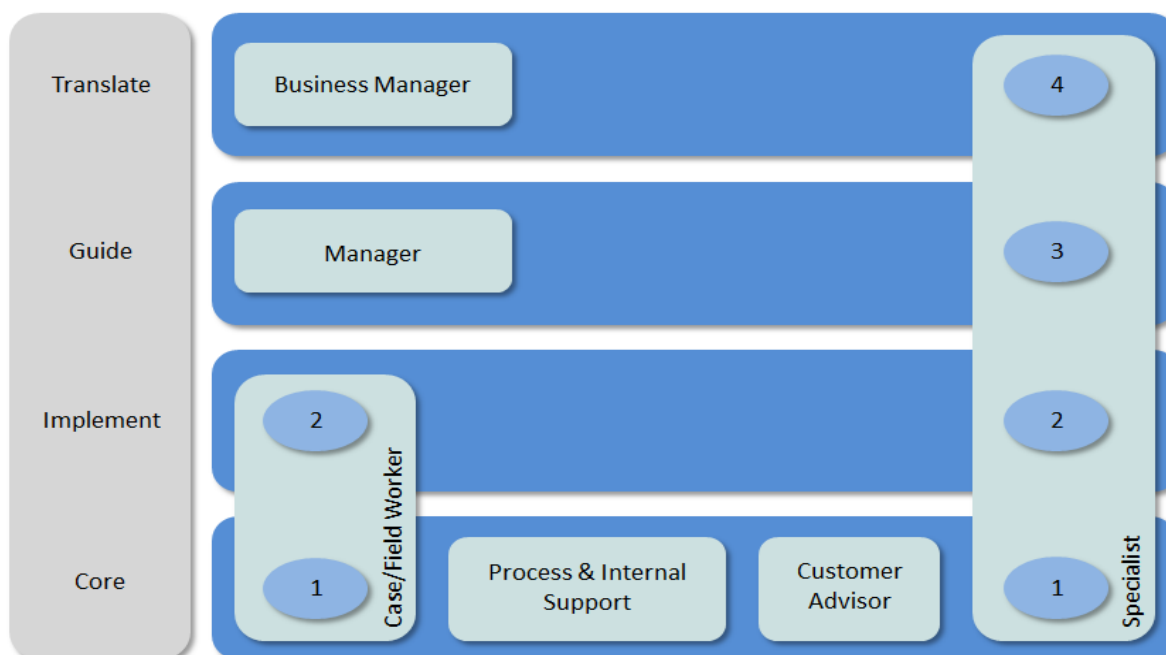
## **15. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

15.1. The LGPS provides for the exercise of discretion that allow retirement benefits to be enhanced. The Council will consider each case on its merits but has determined that it does not normally enhance pension benefits for any of its employees, nor does it operate any discretions under the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (injury Allowances) Regulations 2011.

15.2. Further information regarding the Oxfordshire County Council administering body for the Council is available from the [Oxfordshire County Council](#) website.



## Appendix I Evaluate Pay & Grading Framework – Non- Statutory Roles



Job Groups	From (£) *	Mid-Point (£) *	Top (£) *
Business Manager	54297	67871	81445
Level 4 Specialist	54297	67871	81445
Level 1 Manager	42957	53697	64436
Level 3 Specialist	42957	53697	64436
Level 2 Specialist	34443	43054	51665
Level 2 Case / Field Worker	28444	35555	42666
Level 1 Specialist	24973	31216	37459
Level 1 Case / Field Worker	23151	27766	33319
Customer Advisor	23151	27298	32758
Process / Internal support	23151	27298	32758

Please note: not all job groups will be utilised due to the structure of the Council

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# Capital Strategy Report 2024/25

## West Oxfordshire District Council

### Summary

We continue to pursue our Council set investment strategy to deliver on our Council priorities whilst also covering the cost of capital and supporting our revenue budget. This ambitious strategy was laid out in 2020 but it has proved difficult to find many suitable investments that meet the criteria set by the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) – which is a source of lending we are not currently in a position to forego our eligibility to - and deliver a yield that makes the risk of investment worthwhile and clears the hurdle rates set out in the Council's investment strategy.

We are realistic however that appropriate investment opportunities are relatively ad hoc and that while we always seek to find them, there is not a reliable pipeline of them available so we cannot place too much reliance on new income in future years generated from this source. We are taking a financially responsible approach to all of our plans, ensuring that optional expenditure is at the very least cost neutral to the Council and, where possible, delivers ongoing revenue to support services.

The investment income forecast over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has been reduced in line with the difficulty of finding suitable opportunities as outlined above, however there is still an approved expenditure of £75 million from the 2020 Investment Recovery Strategy, of which £12.3 million has been spent.

Some capital expenditure is of course unavoidable in the delivery of statutory services and our other activities and investments need to deliver financial returns in order to support those.

### Introduction

This Capital Strategy provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

While the annual revenue budget can often feel like the main focus for the Council each year, the Capital Strategy affects not only the in-year activity but the longer-term elements in the MTFS.

While some elements of the capital programme are financed by revenue, some of the projects in it will require the Council to borrow. This can be because it is outside of our normal revenue expenditure or, previous internal borrowing (which is discussed at greater length later in this paper) means that we now need external borrowing to fund the expenditure.

### What is Capital Expenditure?

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. In local government this can include spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

For details of the Council's policy on capitalisation, see the Council's accounting policies which are contained within the annual Statement of Accounts:

In 2024/25, the Council is planning new capital expenditure of £7.195m:

### Estimates of capital expenditure in £m

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
Capital Expenditure	15.01	9.44	7.20	4.77	1.72

**Governance:** Service managers will typically update Finance, as part of the budget process, who include projects in the Council's capital programme. Proposals are collated by the Finance team who calculate the financing cost (which could be nil if the project is fully funded by external contributions). The financing cost is included in the MTFS and detailed budgets for the forthcoming financial year.

For full details of the Council's proposed capital expenditure see Annex E which itemises the proposed capital programme.

While future expenditure is estimated for the purpose of calculating our borrowing requirement and projecting a cost of capital through the MTFS, individual projects still require business cases to be presented to the S151 Officer, Executive and Council for approval before expenditure can be committed.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

**Sources of capital funding £m**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Actual £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
External Sources	3.16	2.10	2.53	0.88	0.88
Own Resources	8.15	1.05	1.17	0.54	0.84
Internal & External Borrowing	3.70	6.29	3.50	3.35	0.00
	15.01	9.44	7.20	4.77	1.72

External funding could come in the form of:

- Government grants – these have been used successfully to support the rollout of Gigaclear high speed broadband, ensuring that our rural district is well connected. During 2024 the Council will be exploring the use of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding to decarbonise the leisure centres in Carterton and Witney.
- Section 106 contributions from developers – these are used to provide additional infrastructure in communities where new homes have increased the number of residents. They have funded play parks, community facilities, new affordable housing and public art amongst other things. S106 monies are currently being used to provide Electric Vehicle charging points in the Woolgate development.
- The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – this grant funds adaptations to residents' homes and other supporting activities.
- The Oxfordshire Growth Deal (now delivered through the Future Oxford Partnership) – this has funded the provision of affordable housing in partnership with registered providers such as Cottsway Housing and Heylo.

**Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)**

Before the start of the financial year, a statement of MRP policy for the forthcoming financial year must be approved by Full Council.

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG's) *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the Guidance), most recently issued in 2018.

Borrowing, both internal and external, must be paid back and so every year the Council calculates how much has to be charged to the Revenue Budget to pay off the borrowing over the life of the asset – this is called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP.

It is in effect a replacement for the depreciation that you would expect to see within a company's accounts in the private sector. In local government accounting, depreciation is charged and then reversed out so it does not affect the level of Council Tax required to fund the Council's costs, however MRP is charged to the General Fund and therefore does affect the required level of funding.

For the purpose of the calculation we determine the useful life of each asset as no less than 5 and no more than 50 years. The broad aim of the Policy is to ensure that MRP is charged over a period that is reasonably consistent with the period over which the capital expenditure, which gave rise to the debt, provides benefits. Where a local authority's overall Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (see below) is £nil, or a negative amount, there is no requirement to charge MRP.

If no life can be reasonably attributed to an asset, such as freehold land, the life is taken to be a maximum of 50 years. In the case of freehold land on which a building or other structure is constructed, the life of the land will be treated as equal to that of the structure. In exceptional cases, where a Qualified Valuer has estimated the useful life of the asset to be more than 50 years, that useful life will be used.

So, if we borrowed £1m to buy an asset with a useful life of 40 years we would need to provide  $(1,000,000/40) = £25,000$  per year for 40 years in our revenue budget. If the asset were only expected to last for 7 years, like for example some of our vehicles, then the charge to the revenue budget would be  $£1m / 7 = £142,857$  per year.

There are two main ways we could calculate MRP – the equal instalment method and the annuity method. The equal instalment method has been used in the example above while the annuity method has lower repayments in the early years which increase every year over the repayment period. MRP is only concerned with the repayment of the principal amount borrowed, so, if viewed like a repayment mortgage, the repayment of the principal under the annuity method is much lower in the early years.

MRP commences in the financial year following that in which the expenditure is incurred or, in the year following that in which the relevant asset becomes operational.

Where capital loans and finance leases made to third parties are repaid in annual or more frequent instalments of principal, these “capital receipts” arising from principal repayments reduce the capital financing requirement and thereby the need for MRP.

West Oxfordshire District Council has chosen to use the Equal Instalment Method in general but uses the Annuity Method where this most closely matches corresponding capital receipts, for example in the case of the loan to Cottsway housing which is being repaid in that profile. This avoids a mismatch between attributable MRP and the offsetting capital receipt.

If appropriate, shorter repayment periods (i.e. less than asset life) may be used for new investments.

Taking all available advice into account, the final decision on the determination of asset life rests with the Chief Finance Officer.

The General Fund MRP charge using the above method is estimated at £569,116 for 2024/25

**MRP**

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
MRP on internal/external borrowing	1.19	1.34	1.55	1.74	2.22
Capital Receipts (exc Asset Disposal)	(0.77)	(0.84)	(0.99)	(1.06)	(1.54)
MRP provision applied	0.42	0.50	0.57	0.68	0.68

**Capital Financing Requirement**

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is expressed as its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and is reduced by MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £2.83m during 2024/25. Based on the figures shown above for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

**Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)**

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
General fund services	17.78	20.14	22.98	24.59	22.63
Capital Investments	10.60	10.60	10.60	10.60	10.60
Total CFR	28.38	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22

One of the ongoing items of significant capital expenditure is the waste fleet. Waste vehicles typically have a long lead time which means that expenditure for vehicles ordered in one year can actually take place the following year.

Each replacement vehicle is reviewed to see whether lower running costs create sufficient savings for us to purchase a more expensive electric vehicle but this is not always practical for the heavy collection vehicles that make up the core of the fleet. In a rural district such as ours, most of the collection fleet have to have an operational range that exceeds that currently offered by their electric vehicles. Ubico are investigating alternative fuel vehicles and the hope is that when the alternative fuel market matures, that technology will have developed enough to be more readily available and affordable and will offer a practical solution that can deliver at the scale required.

When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. In the current situation

though, where PWLB guidance would not permit the Council to purchase replacement assets if it were to sell some of its current portfolio, it is unlikely that we would benefit in the long term from high levels of asset disposal. As can be seen from the table below, the estimates of potential asset sale are very low and are estimated based on previous years.

The lease and loan repayments relate to vehicles purchased and then leased to Ubico and loan repayments from Cottsway Housing Association and Southill Solar.

### Capital Receipts

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
Asset Disposal	0	0	0	0	0
Leases and Loans	0.77	0.84	0.99	1.06	1.54
	0.77	0.84	0.99	1.06	1.54

### Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortfall in cash may be met by borrowing. Treasury management is discussed in more detail in the Treasury Management Strategy paper but in terms of Capital we will look at the impact that our capital plans have on projected borrowing requirements.

In the past all asset purchases, even those that might have been expected to require external borrowing to fund them, have been able to be funded out of existing cash balances, also known as internal borrowing. Our cashflow forecast shows that this is no longer possible and we will need to borrow externally before the end of 2024/25 and for most capital expenditure going forward unless funded by a future receipt of external funding.

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

As part of the review of prudential indicators, the Council is asked to approve the following:



**Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt £m**

	2023/24 Budget £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m	2027/28 Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Operational Boundary	50.06	35.57	37.19	35.22	33.34
Authorised Borrowing Limit	55.06	40.57	42.19	40.22	38.34

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, as has been explained above, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants and expressed as a percentage of that.

**Estimates of financing costs to net revenue stream**

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
Interest Payable	0	0.013	0.079	0.212	0.246
MRP	0.420	0.502	0.569	0.682	0.682
Total borrowing costs	0.420	0.515	0.648	0.894	0.927
Net Revenue Stream (per MTFS)	13.91	15.15	15.23	15.47	15.16
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	3.02%	3.40%	4.26%	5.78%	6.12%

The Council makes investments to assist local public services. Many of these are crucial to our statutory provision of services but where the expenditure is not mandatory, the Council is required to find the most efficient way of delivering this service and where possible, seek grants or external funding to provide additional investment. Proposals should be brought forward with an appropriate business case to protect the Council from risk around unforeseen costs and to ensure that wherever possible any opportunity to raise additional revenue to support service delivery for the Council is explored.

**Net income from commercial & service investments to net revenue stream**

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
Capital Investments	4.06	3.33	3.66	3.66	3.66
Service Investments	0.19	0.19	1.40	1.40	1.40
Net Revenue Stream (per MTFS)	13.91	15.15	15.23	15.47	15.16
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	30.56%	23.29%	33.21%	32.71%	33.37%

## **Governance**

Decisions on service investments are made by the Council on advice from the Chief Finance Officer and must comply with the Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy. Most loans are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Further details on service investments can be found in the Investment Strategy.

## **Current Projects**

The Council owns assets totalling £111,045,000. These Assets are held principally as either commercial investments (£61m), to provide services such as Leisure, Waste or Council offices (£47m) or as a result of historic ownership, particularly of small plots of land (£3m).

In order to effectively manage this estate, the Council needs to understand its condition so it can plan for, and budget for, pro-active repairs and maintenance and future investment can form part of decision making on whether an asset is retained, redeveloped or sold.

An Asset Management Strategy is therefore being developed to provide a strategic approach to property, establishing what the Council wishes to achieve from its estate, aligning it with other Council priorities and ensuring decision making is based on clear policy. Decisions on purchasing, investing in or disposing of property would be based on pre-agreed principles to maximise return, reduce expenses and manage risk, enabling a far more strategic approach rather than consideration of individual properties in a piecemeal way.

The overarching strategic document would then be complimented by a review of the Council's assets to consider what future approach should be taken. This would be based on data such as current value, how the property is performing (lease income and return on investment) and broader opportunities to maximise income or in some cases dispose of a financial liability.

There is scope to significantly increase the efficiency with which assets are managed by streamlining delegations and decision making based on the adopted strategy and transferring or selling assets that provide no value but take time and money to manage and maintain.

Condition surveys would inform this by identifying current defects or items which will require repair or replacement over the next 5 years. This assessment of condition, and likely costs, would enable work to be planned in advance, efficiencies in procurement and more accurate budgeting, rather than reactive repairs which are often more expensive and harder to manage. The Council currently has £200,000 a year allocated in the capital programme for repair and maintenance.

Condition surveys would be undertaken for properties where the Council retains responsibility for repairs and maintenance. In some cases, responsibility is split between the Council and the tenant e.g the Council is responsible for the main structure of the leisure centres but GLL (leisure contract provider) has responsibility for internal repairs, maintenance and equipment.

The majority of the Councils' commercial investment property is let on a Full Repairing and Insuring Leases. There is a schedule of condition attached to the initial lease and then a Schedule of Dilapidations completed when the tenancy comes to an end. There are not currently the staff resources in place to carry out inspections during the lease. This means there is a risk that a lease ends and the Council suffers financial losses due to the condition, particularly in the case of bankruptcy, even though the lessee is obligated to reinstate the building to its original condition. A view on how this is best managed will be included in the Asset Management Strategy.

In 2023 the Council agreed to invest more in an in-house valuer resource to carry out valuations, rent reviews and option appraisals, all of which are estates functions which have previously been bought in from consultants, due to a lack of capacity. The valuer started at the end of August and the work he has carried out is being recorded so the financial value in terms of consultancy savings and increased income can be identified. The benefit of his role and others within the team will be maximised with a clear strategy for them to apply when undertaking rent reviews and considering options for properties.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives an annual report on the Council's investment property portfolio. In addition, the Council's Audit and Governance Committee also receives information on the Council's asset portfolio as part of the financial statements.

The Council is engaged with SALIX, a non departmental Public Body, who administer grants for Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly BEIS). The grants are used to upgrade heating systems in public buildings to be cleaner, cheaper and powered by renewable energy. The Council's aim is to use available grant funding to decarbonise the leisure centres in Carterton and Witney as part of our pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Grant funding will not cover the entire cost of the decarbonisation project. The Council will have to make a potentially significant capital contribution as well as fund ongoing revenue costs. The final decision on any proposal will therefore need to balance the need to make the best use of finite resources and responding to the Climate emergency.

A phased replacement programme, for waste vehicles, was approved by the Executive in February 2024. This will allow the Council to take advantage of new technologies as they mature and become more reliable in the next two to three years. Spreading the cost over the next three to four years limits the amount of external borrowing needed at the current higher interest rates. In 2024/25 it is anticipated that the Council will purchase 4 replacement waste vehicles with the remainder of the fleet brought in through contract hire arrangements.

### **Knowledge and Skills**

The Council employs (directly or through Publica Ltd), professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. The Chief Finance Officer and several members of her team are qualified accountants with extensive experience. The Council pays for junior staff

to study towards relevant professional qualifications such as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. The Council employs other specialist consultants to advise upon specific, extra-ordinary transactions as required. Examples of such transactions include property acquisitions, and loans to third parties. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

The Council has experience of investing in commercial property in recent years. The Council's property service is provided through its strategic service provider Publica Group (Support) Ltd. The team of property officers have the following qualifications:

- BSc Hons Real Estate Management
- Associate Member Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors
- Member Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors
- Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors Registered Valuer
  
- Member institute welfare & facilities management
- Technical member of institute for occupational safety and health
- CIMA cert BA

The Council's legal team have experience of carrying out due diligence checks, particularly for commercial property acquisitions, and the legal officers have the following qualifications:

- Fellows of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx)
- Student Member of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
- Solicitors

The Property and Legal teams work together with the Finance team to support the Council's Chief Finance Officer in developing investment proposals for the Council. External specialist advice is obtained when required to support these teams.

# Investment Strategy Report 2024/25

## West Oxfordshire District Council

### Introduction

The Council invests its money for three broad purposes:

- to generate additional revenue from surplus cash as a result of timing differences in its day-to-day activities. These are referred to as treasury management investments and are typically short to medium term cash funds with high liquidity but can be invested with the expectation of a longer term if our cashflow forecasting shows no medium term requirement for the cash.
- to support local public services by lending to other organisations or purchasing assets which generate no return but are used solely for the delivery of services (service investments), and
- to earn investment income (known as commercial investments) where, alongside the achievement of Council priorities, the objective is also to earn a return – although that may not be the primary purpose.

This Investment Strategy meets the requirements of the statutory guidance on Investments for Local Government which came into effect on 1 April 2018.

We are the custodians of third-party monies such as external grants and developer contributions through S106. We also have a portfolio of commercial investments which further Council priorities while providing crucial support to our revenue budget and therefore the delivery of our services.

Cuts in funding over a number of years have placed extreme pressures on the Council's budget. Single year settlements have exacerbated this financial strain, restricting our ability to confidently plan for more than one year in advance. Added to the long running uncertainty over the timing of the Business Rates reset, which has been delayed since 2020, and the phasing out of New Homes Bonus, this makes financial planning very difficult. The size of some of these uncertain elements in our funding, in relation to total funding requirements, make the Council vulnerable to sudden shifts. Our ability to generate investment income is therefore a key factor in our financial stability.

The Council endorsed a framework recovery investment strategy in October 2020 which laid out the criteria, in terms of yield and alignment with priorities, that any potential investment would be judged on. All investments must combine the delivery of the Council's priorities with revenue returns over and above the cost of borrowing that will provide additional funding to the Council to deliver services not only in the immediate year but over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

While everything the Council does relates to serving the residents of the district by furthering the Council's stated priorities, the investment strategy was also designed to generate new revenue streams for the Council.

It has always been important for the Council to generate its own income as much as possible and the investment strategy agreed by Council was designed to increase that capacity. However, two things have become apparent since its inception. Firstly, that the available options for investment are limited and therefore the amount of revenue that can be developed through the strategy is limited. Secondly, with the huge inflationary impacts we have seen recently, the investment strategy, even at its most ambitious, may not be enough to close the budget gap.

The Council has a good track record of investments, having purchased a portfolio of commercial property in the past from existing capital receipts that provides a healthy net revenue stream that is crucial to supporting our budget today.

In line with the aspirations of this strategy, we take a commercial view to all potential projects to ensure that revenue is generated where possible. This does not mean that we are seeking to charge for services where we would not have otherwise, rather it means that opportunities to generate income should not be ignored and that where income is able to be generated in a situation, the Council seeks to retain an appropriate proportion of it.

There has been however, a move in recent years by HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (PWLB) – formerly the Public Work Loans Board to severely restrict what Councils are allowed to invest in. This is in response to a very small number of Councils investing large sums and apparently destabilising their finances as a result. Since the PWLB is a vital source of relatively low cost loans for the Council, it would be unwise to contravene its requirements unless we could be absolutely sure that we did not need to call on it. The requirements are so stringent however that the very act of "investing primarily for yield" is enough to render the Council ineligible to access their funds, even if the investment in question was not made using their funding.

It is permissible to purchase property for the purpose of regeneration or housing, and property purchased should be within the boundaries of the Council's area but any asset bought primarily for yield will preclude the authority from accessing PWLB funds. The recent purchase of Marriotts Walk in Witney for the purpose of regeneration of the Town Centre has had a significant positive impact on the area. Not only in terms of the units occupied in the shopping centre but also the increased footfall in the high street which benefits all retailers and residents.

Whilst the previous prudential code stated that authorities must not "borrow more than or in advance of need" this new tightening of restrictions is much more prescriptive. There is some allowance for financing capital expenditure primarily related to the delivery of the authority's functions, temporary cashflow management or the refinance of current borrowing (including internal borrowing). This would allow us to borrow for example to replace the

waste fleet – which helps with the timing of cashflow. There is no return on these vehicles and they do not repay the money spent on them. They are a cost that is paid for annually from our revenue budget as part of our delivery of services. The more we spend on the vehicles, the higher the cost of service delivery.

The PWLB supports investment in Housing which includes spending on delivering new homes, improving existing homes and purchasing built homes to deliver housing services. The Council transferred its housing stock to an affordable housing provider decades ago so the skill sets required to build and manage housing has not been maintained within the Council. For this reason, any projects we are considering need to be in conjunction with an experienced partner to reduce the risk inherent in the construction process. The addition of a Strategic Housing Development Manager post in the 2024/25 budget will provide appropriate resource and knowledge to oversee the key Council priority of delivering more affordable housing in the district.

It is important to note that all projects are required to serve Council priorities, meet the criteria set out above and also be cash generating, providing returns that equal or better the rate agreed in the Council's investment strategy.

The Prudential Code does not require us to sell existing assets to fund new investments but does require us to consider that as an option when pursuing new opportunities. Capital receipts from asset sales can only be used for capital expenditure.

It also requires the S151 officer to confirm that the Council has no intention, either now, or in the next three years, to invest primarily for financial return.

In accordance with this, we can confirm that West Oxfordshire District Council has complied with paragraphs 51 to 53 of the Prudential Code in relation to investments for commercial purposes, in particular the requirement that an authority must not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and that our capital programme includes no such plans.

The Council is currently considering the possibility of equipping our Council owned properties with rooftop solar, local regeneration projects and small scale affordable housing developments.

### **Treasury management investments**

In general, the Council receives the bulk of its funding (for example, from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure (for example, through payroll and invoices). As a Council Tax 'billing authority' it collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and the Police and also holds reserves for future expenditure. Any cash surplus is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Events in the financial markets in the last two years have meant that many of our pooled funds lost a material amount of capital value while producing a significantly higher revenue return. The capital value has started to recover over the last quarter with current advice from our treasury advisors being a complete recovery over the next 18 months to 2 years

as interest rates fall, barring any further unprecedented economic events. To avoid crystallising the remaining losses, the expectation is that for the short to medium term, our treasury investments will remain relatively static in terms of where they are invested.

When the capital values have recovered, the use of pooled funds rather than external borrowing for capital expenditure will be carefully weighed against the prevailing economic conditions at the time.

These investments contribute to the objectives of the Council by providing income to fund operational activity in support of the Council's priorities.

Details of the Council's policies and its 2024/25 plans for treasury management are covered in the Treasury Management Strategy in Annex P.

### Service investments: loans

The Council lends money to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth. These include loans to organisations within the district which support the priorities of the Council.

The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal loaned and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Council, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

### Loans for service purposes £m

Category of Borrower	Actual at 31st March 2023			Forecast at 31st March 2024	
	Balance Owing	Loss Allowance	Figure in Accounts	Balance Owing	Approved Limit
	£	£	£	£	£
Local Businesses	2.58	0.00	2.58	2.30	2.30
Town/Parish Councils	0.12	0.00	0.12	0.11	0.11
Housing Associations	7.66	0.00	7.66	7.47	7.47
Local Residents (Equity Loans)	0.23	0.00	0.23	0.23	0.23
Employees (Car loans)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.59</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>10.59</b>	<b>10.11</b>	<b>10.11</b>

Accounting standards require the Council to set aside a loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The loans that the Council has made are limited to specific service areas where the risk of non-payment is minimal. As a result, no allowance for loss has been included against the loan balances. Should any indication be given that there is a risk of default then the risk will be assessed and a provision established at that time. Should a loan default, the Council will make every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and recover any overdue repayments.



The Council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by undertaking credit checks and ensuring that appropriate legal documentation is in place to secure the Council's money.

### **Service investments: shares**

The Council has a £1 shareholding in Ubico Ltd. Ubico Ltd is wholly-owned by eight local authorities and operates as a not for profit enterprise. Ubico Ltd is an environmental services company which provides household and commercial refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and fleet maintenance services to the Council.

One of the risks of investing in shares is that they potentially could fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. This is not relevant with the share held in Ubico for the reasons discussed below. The Council has no other shareholdings. The Council also owns Publica along with Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council but it is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The same potential for upside or loss exists as with Ubico.

### **Shares held for service purposes**

Category of Company	Amount Invested	Gains or losses	Value in Accounts	Approved Limit
Local Authority owned company	£1	£0	£1	£1

The Council has not invested into Ubico to generate a financial return. It has invested purely to support service provision. Ubico is a cost sharing company and any surplus generated within Ubico Ltd is returned to the partner Councils (shareholders) but any deficit would also be met by the Councils. This means that the Council's investment in Ubico carries with it an obligation to underwrite the costs of the service and that, while a budget is agreed each financial year, the Council must cover in cash any overspend to that budget which relates to the services delivered in West Oxfordshire. This is the material risk in the Ubico investment, not the £1 shareholding. This risk is being mitigated through regular communication with Ubico who are happy to give complete transparency. We are also working with them collaboratively on a service transformation programme to find new efficiencies and more cost effective ways of working.

The shareholding in Ubico does not appreciate in value due to the cost sharing nature of the company, it merely gives a shareholders stake in the control of the company, although the board of Ubico does not include all stakeholder Councils and does not currently include West Oxfordshire District Council or any of the other "Publica" stakeholder Councils. The Council has no intention to sell its investment in the foreseeable future and arguably the principal of teckal precludes ownership by third parties.

Shares are the only investment type that the Council has identified that meets the definition of a non-specified investment in the government guidance. The limits above on share

investments are therefore also the Council's upper limits on non-specified investments. The Council has not adopted any procedures for determining further categories of non-specified investment since none are likely to meet the definition.

### Commercial investments in property

Investment Property is defined in the CIPFA code of practice on Local Authority Accounting as property (land or building, or both) held solely to earn rentals, for capital appreciation, or both. The Council holds a number of assets which it classifies as Investment Properties.

The Council has historically invested in Investment Property both within West Oxfordshire and outside of the district, funded through capital receipts, with the intention of generating ongoing income to support the revenue budget.

Investment Property performance is reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

With the tightening of PWLB's restrictions on allowable investments, the existing property portfolio is extremely valuable to the Council. Were we to sell any of it we would realise an immediate cash gain in the form of capital receipts but would not be able to use that to support our revenue budget and, for all the reasons outlined above, would find it difficult to find another replacement investment that would deliver ongoing revenue budget support in the way that the existing portfolio does.

### Properties held for investment purposes in £m

Type of Property	Inside District £m	Outside District £m	Inside County £m	Outside County £m
Commercial Investment Property	15.85	27.90	40.23	3.52
Industrial Estates	7.57	0.00	7.57	0.00
Subtotal	23.41	27.90	47.79	3.52
Total Held		<b>51.31</b>		<b>51.31</b>

The table above shows the value of the properties held by the Council at 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023. The valuations at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 will be assessed by our ongoing valuation process and by external audit. The table shows the geographical split of properties inside the district and outside it and which of those properties are located inside the county. It should be noted that while just over half of the portfolio are outside of West Oxfordshire, virtually all properties are within Oxfordshire itself.

In accordance with government guidance, the Council considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.

A fair value assessment of the Council's investment property portfolio is made each year as part of the final accounts process. Investment Property is valued at market value.

The fair value of the Council's investment property portfolio dropped in 2022/23 due mostly to the reclassification of the interest held in Marriotts Close prior to purchasing the development. The demand for larger office spaces since the pandemic has declined with the Council's office building at Between Towns Road now vacant and unlikely to be let as a single building in the future. We are therefore exploring, with a partner, the redevelopment of the site for temporary emergency accommodation.

No valuation has yet been undertaken for March 2024 when further updates will be available. The Council's Investment Property is held primarily to generate a stable income stream to support the revenue budget. Should a property be sold, any 'loss' will be recognised at that point. The Council has no immediate plans to dispose of any Investment Property.

In order to maximise returns, the Council aims to generate a revenue return from its Investment Property assets which is greater than the return able to be generated by its Treasury Management activity. It is understood that the fair value of property will fluctuate. The Council aims wherever possible to secure its ongoing revenue streams by letting to tenants on long leases of 10 to 15 years. The return available from Treasury investments is also subject to change as interest rates rise and fall.

Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice, and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the Council has cash funds that can be accessed when they are needed, the Treasury Management Strategy includes the provision of liquid investments should the Council be in need of cash. We currently have a Treasury Management Investment portfolio with good short term access to liquidity so we anticipate no circumstance where the Council would be required to sell Investment Property to raise money quickly.

### **Loan commitments and financial guarantees**

Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Council and are included here for completeness.

The Council is a shareholder of Ubico Ltd (one eighth) and is a joint partner in Publica Group (Support) Limited (one quarter owner). In both cases, should the company overspend, the Council would be liable for its share of the additional costs. In both companies, transparency of reporting to the Council mitigates the risk that additional sums will be required without adequate notice.

The Council has made the following commitment in terms of cash flow cover to both Publica and Ubico and the expectation is that these will continue for 2024/25.

- Publica Group - £500k up to one year duration
- Ubico - £500k up to one year duration

The Council needs investment generated income to fund its revenue budget. The table below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives of the Council is dependent on achieving the expected income from investments over the lifecycle of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). If it cannot generate sufficient income to fund its budget, the Council will be required to draw additional balances from reserves, or generate savings elsewhere within the budget to continue to provide its services.

The table below includes the hoped for return generated by the investment strategy outlined above and in the MTFS, albeit that this is a reduced and hopefully more attainable level than that projected previously.

### Proportionality of investments

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m	2026/27 Budget £m
Gross Service Expenditure*	41.88	30.01	32.60	33.58	34.42
Treasury Investment Income	1.14	1.20	1.04	1.02	1.00
Loans Income	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.21
Commercial Investments: Property	4.06	3.33	3.66	3.66	3.66
Total	5.39	4.72	4.89	4.88	4.86
Investment income as a proportion of expenditure	12.86%	15.74%	15.00%	14.52%	14.13%

\* excluding Housing Benefit payments

Government guidance is that local authorities must not borrow more than, or in advance of their needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. The Council has plans to borrow in 24/25 to finance the replacement of the Waste fleet but has no plans to borrow in advance of need.

### Scrutiny arrangements

The Executive will make recommendations to full Council on new investments that are not considered to be covered under the Treasury Management strategy.

Financial Performance is reported quarterly to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Executive. This includes the performance of all income and expenditure against budget.

An annual report on Commercial Property is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will include yield; valuation and risk to future revenue. Treasury Management performance is reported quarterly to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive.

The Council's internal audit provider (South West Audit Partnership Ltd) regularly audits the Council's treasury management activity and its processes and procedures for approving

investment and performance management. SWAP report to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

### Investment indicators

The Council has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Council's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

The table below shows the Council's total exposure to potential investment losses. This would include amounts the Council is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down, but no such obligations exist at this point in time.

The Council has issued no guarantees to any third party loans.

### Total investment exposure £m

	31st Mar 2023 Actual £m	31st Mar 2024 Forecast £m	31st Mar 2025 Forecast £m
Treasury Management investments	31.60	29.84	29.84
Service Investments: Loans	10.59	10.11	9.81
Property investments	51.31	51.31	51.31
Total investments / exposure	93.50	91.26	90.96

Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Council does not normally associate particular assets with particular loan liabilities and future investments may require external borrowing because of previous internal borrowing, this guidance is difficult to comply with. The capital financing requirement (CFR) gives an indication of how much internal borrowing the Council has undertaken so far and also shows how that funding position is expected to move towards external borrowing over time.

Currently, all of the Council's investments have been funded by usable reserves, capital receipts and cash balances but the refinancing of some internal borrowing will be required in 2024/25 to fund the capital programme.

### Forecast borrowing requirement £m

	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m	2027/28 Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less external borrowing	0.00	(3.50)	(6.11)	(5.13)	(4.15)
Internal borrowing	30.74	30.07	29.08	28.09	27.18
Usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Cash available for investments	17.15	10.24	7.44	4.34	0.11

The table below shows the investment income received, less the associated costs, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred. It is also worth noting that while all of these investments have previously been funded by internal borrowing, and therefore currently have no cost of borrowing associated with them, new investments will be financed by external borrowing and some current investments may also have to be refinanced with external borrowing and the interest rate associated with that will reduce their return accordingly.

### Investment net rate of return

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Treasury Management	4.09%	4.85%	4.75%
<u>Service investments: Loans</u>			
Local Businesses	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%
Town & Parish Councils	1.40%	1.40%	1.40%
Housing Associations	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%
Local Residents (equity loans)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Commercial investments	6.75%	6.50%	7.13%

The Councils £1 share in both Ubico and Publica is not held to generate any return via a dividend or growth in value. They are both profit sharing companies and any savings or surplus generated results in lower contract fees for shareholders.

The Treasury Management return is diluted by the relatively large amount of cash held as short term, highly liquid funds. For returns on higher interest earning pooled funds, please see the Treasury Strategy paper.

The table above shows the importance to the support of the Council's revenue budget of the current commercial investment portfolio.

### Summary of knowledge and skills available to the Council:

The Council employ (directly or through Publica Ltd), professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. The Chief Finance Officer and several members of the finance team are qualified accountants with extensive experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications such as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field are utilised. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. The Council employs other specialist consultants to advise upon specific, extra-ordinary transactions as required. Examples of such transactions include property acquisitions, and loans to third parties. This approach is

more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills as and when needed.

The Council has experience of investing in commercial property in recent years. The Council's property service is provided through its strategic service provider Publica Group (Support) Ltd. The team of property officers have the following qualifications:

- BSc Hons Real Estate Management
- Associate Member Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors
- Member Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors
- Royal Institute Chartered Surveyors Registered Valuer
- Member institute welfare & facilities management
- Technical member of institute for occupational safety and health
- CIMA cert BA

The Council's legal team have experience of carrying out due diligence checks, particularly for commercial property acquisitions, and the legal officers have the following qualifications:

- Fellows of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx)
- Student Member of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
- Solicitors

The Property and Legal teams work together with the Finance team to support the Council's Chief Finance Officer in developing investment proposals for the Council.

### **Overview of Strategies**

The Council's Capital Strategy is concerned with its future plans for investments in a broad range of projects, the funding for these is underpinned by the Treasury Management Strategy while the Investment Strategy considers the type of investments the Council might make in the context of the risk profile and return of those it already holds.

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# Treasury Management Strategy Report 2024/25

## West Oxfordshire District Council

### Summary

The Council has cash balances invested in various pooled funds, delivering a vital revenue stream to support the Council's revenue budget. Events in the financial markets in the last two years have meant that many of our funds lost a material amount of capital value while producing a significantly higher revenue return. The capital value has started to recover over the last quarter with current advice from our Treasury advisors being a complete recovery over the next 18 months to 2 years as interest rates fall, barring any further unprecedented economic events. To avoid crystallising the remaining losses, the expectation is that for the short to medium term, our treasury investments will remain relatively static in terms of where they are invested.

The Council has always stated its intention to endeavour to maintain an investment balance of £10m which allows us to retain our status under Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFiD) 2 criteria as a professional investor. This categorisation allows us access to a wider range of financial instruments than we would otherwise be able to use.

The current levels of Treasury Investment are made up not only of the Council's general reserves but also capital receipts, unspent earmarked reserves and capital grants unapplied. These balances will be used up over time as they have designated purposes and in some cases we are merely the custodians of them.

While achieving high returns from invested treasury funds is less important to the Council than the need to limit the risk of loss, the size of the portfolio means that changes in fund allocation and strategy have a significant impact on income. In the coming year, the level of investment in Pooled funds will be weighed against the need to take out external borrowing to fund major capital programmes i.e. the Waste Vehicle replacement programme.

### Introduction

Treasury Management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and treasury investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has invested significant sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risks are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition' (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

Non treasury investments, are considered in the Council's Investment Strategy paper but the approach to borrowing outlined here and the availability of cash will underpin both that paper and the Capital Strategy paper.

Treasury Management is important to both the short and long term plans of the Council. On a day to day basis it ensures that there is sufficient immediately available cash to settle all payments the Council needs to make, that surplus cash is earning money where possible and that everywhere that cash is held has been assessed for current risk.

In the longer term it provides an important source of income for the Council and underpins the availability of cash and selection of sources of borrowing for capital spend and investments. The revenue budget is set out at the start of the year and monitored quarterly to ensure that we stay within plan, but the management of cash is a daily function that facilitates every transaction the Council undertakes. We regularly receive cash on behalf of third parties such as council tax, business rates, grant funding and S106 monies and the Treasury function must deal appropriately with those monies and forecast when they will need to be "spent" in order to determine the best way to do that.

## Balances

On 31st December 2023, the Authority held £34.5m of investments as shown in the tables below.

### WODC Treasury investments – one year return

Investments	Dec 2023	December 2022 - December 2023		
		Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return
	£			
Money Market Funds	15,000,000	0.00%	5.35%	5.35%
Bank Account	1,821,812	0.00%	5.19%	5.19%
Short Term Deposit	4,000,000	0.00%	5.29%	5.29%
Internal Investments	20,821,812	0.00%	5.28%	5.28%
Strategic Pooled Funds:				
Aegon Diversified Monthly Income Fund	2,747,750	3.35%	6.30%	9.65%
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	2,891,185	4.78%	3.46%	8.24%
M & G Strategic Corporate Bond	1,835,671	5.88%	4.65%	10.53%
Royal London Short Dated Credit Fund	1,841,786	4.10%	4.04%	8.14%
Schroder Income Maximiser Fund	890,678	3.70%	7.67%	11.37%
Threadneedle UK Equity Income Fund	1,088,528	6.06%	3.73%	9.79%
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	1,450,704	-0.86%	6.36%	5.50%
Fundamentum Social Housing REIT	970,000	3.19%	3.03%	6.22%
	13,716,302	3.84%	4.85%	8.69%
Total Investment	34,538,114	Annualised income return		6.73%
Pooled funds	13,716,302	Annualised income return		4.85%

You can see from the table above that there is a spread of holdings both of shorter term more liquid holdings and of longer term holdings which have an element of both capital appreciation (or depreciation) and income.

The average cash position over the last year has been £7.2m in the overnight Money Market Funds returning interest of £350,000. The Council now has a much improved cashflow forecast giving us more certainty of the cash requirements which is essential when forecasting cash requirements for borrowing. We have reduced the amount of working capital required which helps to keep our borrowing requirement at as low a level as possible. This is essential when interest rates are running at a much higher level than previous years, due to the negative impact on potential investment returns. There is an active lending market between local authorities for short term requirements making it possible to leave money in higher return funds and supplement a fluctuation in working capital requirements with short term borrowing if interest rates determine that as the more advantageous course of action.

### WODC Treasury investments – five year return

Investments	Dec 23	Dec 18 to Dec 23		
		Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return
	£			
Strategic Pooled Funds:				
Aegon Diversified Monthly Income Fund	2,747,750	-8.41%	13.92%	5.51%
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	2,891,185	-2.55%	8.70%	6.15%
M & G Strategic Corporate Bond	1,835,671	-4.74%	17.43%	12.69%
Royal London Short Dated Credit Fund	1,841,786	-7.11%	12.43%	5.32%
Schroder Income Maximiser Fund	890,678	-10.19%	33.06%	22.87%
Threadneedle UK Equity Income Fund	1,088,528	20.82%	19.82%	40.64%
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	1,450,704	-20.51%	24.88%	4.37%
Fundamentum Social Housing REIT	970,000	-3.00%	8.75%	5.75%
	13,716,302	-6.02%	15.81%	9.79%
Pooled Funds	13,716,302	Annualised income return		3.72%

### Borrowing requirement

The forecast borrowing requirement tracks the transition from internal borrowing to external borrowing showing our Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and how increasing capital funding requirements will affect the amount of cash available for investment. The balance between retained treasury investments and external borrowing will be dictated by the relative interest rates for both borrowing and investment and the recovery of the capital values of the funds.

In the table below, the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the CFR, while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's strategy has been to utilise our cash reserves to fund capital expenditure – internal borrowing, rather than to borrow

externally. At some point however, our capacity to internally borrow will be exhausted and the refinancing of existing capital expenditure will necessitate taking on external debt.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. The table below shows the use of borrowing expected to change the Council's debt free position from 24/25 onwards, should sufficient investment opportunities be found.

### Forecast borrowing requirement £m

#### Forecast borrowing requirement

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less external borrowing	0.00	(3.50)	(6.11)	(5.13)	(4.15)
Internal borrowing	30.74	30.07	29.08	28.09	27.18
Usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Cash available for investments	17.15	10.24	7.44	4.34	0.11

The authorised limit for external debt uses the calculated CFR to set limits for agreement on the amount of external debt that it would be prudent for the authority to stay within. Above the CFR there is an operational boundary which should provide an early warning system that we are close to our limits, followed by the Council approved Authorised limit, which should never be exceeded.

The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

### Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt £m

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Operational Boundary	50.06	35.57	37.19	35.22	33.34
Authorised Borrowing Limit	55.06	40.57	42.19	40.22	38.34

This limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

The final prudential indicator in this set is the liability benchmark. It tracks the projected situation were we to use up all of our available funds ahead of borrowing. It shows the funding requirement we currently have (CFR) and how we are projecting that into the future and how much of that could be funded by usable reserves should we choose to do so. It takes into account our balance sheet working capital in the form of debtors and creditors, plus a liquidity allowance which we have set around the balance we intend to maintain

in pooled funds till they recover their capital value. The liability benchmark should then show the level of external funding required. Our estimated borrowing is within this indicator showing that we are making good use of internal borrowing before going externally. While it shows that if we are unable to recover the capital value of our currently invested funds, we may have to increase our external borrowing, it is important to note that working capital balances are very difficult to project accurately far in advance and this indicator will be reviewed regularly. What it does show is that our expected external borrowing levels are justified and prudent. The liquidity allowance of £16m allows us to hold our current treasury investments pending capital recovery and also keeps us above the £10m threshold required to qualify as a professional investor under MiFiD 2.

### Liability Benchmark £m

#### *Liability Benchmark*

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Less working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Net loans requirement	(17.15)	(6.74)	(1.33)	0.80	4.04
Plus liquidity allowance	16.00	16.00	16.00	16.00	16.00
Liability Benchmark	-1.15	9.26	14.67	16.80	20.04

### Borrowing Strategy

The Authority could potentially enter into debt before the end of 2024/25 to fund the replacement of the waste vehicle fleet and other planned capital expenditure which is demonstrated by the table above.

The Authority may need to convert some of its current internal borrowing into external borrowing, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit but there are no current plans to borrow in advance of need.

The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities.

The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. A mixture of short term and long term borrowing will be used as determined by the medium to long term expectations on interest rates.

While very short term requirements may involve borrowing from other local authorities, if longer term loans were considered appropriate, the preferred option would be to use the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb).

The Council will however consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield but the Council's investment strategy aims to find investments within the local area that deliver the Council's priorities and are compliant with the PWLB requirements.

### **Sources of borrowing:**

The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly Public Works Loan Board)
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues
- Community bonds

In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

**Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the limit on the net exposure to variable interest rates in the treasury management indicators below.

If we were to borrow the £3.5m we expect in 2024/25 and the £3.35m we are forecasting in 2025/26, the impact of a 1% rise or fall in variable interest rates would be as follows:

*Interest rate exposures*

	Limit £k
Upper limit on one year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	210
Upper limit on one year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	(210)

We are also required to set upper and lower limits for the maturity structure of any borrowing. The reality is that the period of the loan will be determined by the optimum affordability based on the cashflows delivered by the project but should not exceed the life of the underlying asset it is funding.

<b>Maturity structure of borrowing</b>	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and within 30 years	100%	0%
30 years and above	100%	0%

**Treasury Investment Strategy**

The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held.

**Objectives**

Both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance require the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. While this is a sensible objective it is obviously more difficult in times of unprecedentedly high inflation.

**Strategy**

Given the relatively low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council, in previous years, diversified into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes and this strategy has been maintained through 2023/24. The majority of the Council's current surplus cash is invested in money market funds and pooled funds.

**Approved counterparties:** The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in the table below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

## Treasury investment counterparties and limits

Sector	Time Limit	Counterparty Limit	Sector Limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local Authorities	3 years	£15m	Unlimited
Other Government Entities	25 years	£4m	Unlimited
Secured investments*	25 years	£10m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured)*	13 months	£3m	£10m
Building societies (unsecured)*	13 months	£2m	£5m
Registered providers (unsecured)*	5 years	£3m	£5m
Money market funds*	n/a	£5m	£25m
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£5m	£25m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£3m	£5m
Other investments*	5 years	£5m	£10m

\*Treasury Management investments will only be made with entities whose lowest published long term rating is no lower than A-

**Minimum Credit rating** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account. For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality.

**Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Secured Investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

**Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.



**Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed. If the Registered Provider has no credit rating then due diligence checks through our external treasury advisors will be carried out beforehand.

**Money market funds:** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will seek to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

**Strategic Pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Real estate investment trusts:** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties. Investments in REIT shares cannot be withdrawn but can be sold on the stock market to another investor.

**Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk. This is reflected in the lower time and sector limits. Additional due diligence and monitoring would be required in these instances.

**Operational bank accounts:** The Council banks with Lloyds (Lloyds Banking Group). On adoption of this Strategy, it will meet the minimum credit criteria of A- (or equivalent) long term. It is the Council's intention that even if the credit rating of Lloyds Bank falls below the minimum criteria A- the bank will continue to be used for short term liquidity requirements (overnight and weekend investments) and business continuity arrangements. This would of course be reviewed should the credit rating fall significantly.

**Policy Investments:** The Council provides cash-flow cover for third-party organisations linked to the Council. The following limit is set for 2023/24:-

- Publica Group - £500k up to one year duration
- Ubico - £500k up to one year duration

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,

- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as “rating watch negative” or “credit watch negative”) so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation, and avoided completely, if possible, until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

**Other information on the security of investments:** The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Council’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the credit rating criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example. This may cause investment returns to fall but would protect the principal sum invested.

#### **Investment limits:**

The Council’s revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £25.89 million on 31st March 2024. In order that no more than 20% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government and registered providers) will not exceed £5.178 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers’ nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country since the risk is diversified over many countries.

## Investment limits

	<b>Cash limit</b>
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Govt	£5m each
UK Central Govt	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same mgmt	£5m per manager
Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS)	£3m max per REIT
Foreign countries	£1m per country
Registered providers	£5m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£2m in total per BS
Money Market Funds	£5m per MMF

Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

## Treasury Management Indicators

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

**Security:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

### Credit risk indicator

	<u>Rating</u>
Portfolio Average Credit Target	A-
Portfolio Credit Risk at 30th November 2023	AA-

The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling 3 month period without borrowing.

<u>Liquidity Risk indicator</u>	<u>Target</u>
Total cash available within 3 months	£2m

**Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest rate exposures, expressed as the proportion of net principal borrowed will be:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%

Fixed rate investments and borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for at least 12 months, measured from the start of the financial year or the transaction date if later. All other instruments are classed as variable rate. The table above reflects the fact that, at time of writing, we have no current borrowing and that any future borrowing would be recommended on its merit and suitability as the need arose. The Council's preference is not to undertake variable rate borrowing over long periods of time.

**Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to quantify and control cash tied up for longer than the current financial year. Penalties may be incurred for money withdrawn early but for the reasons explained above, longer term investment opportunities are likely to need to be held where they are in the short to medium term to avoid crystallising capital losses. Although removing funds early potentially risks a variation in capital value, in most cases the money can be withdrawn in around a week and the returns that can be earned in the meantime are significant. Where funds are known to be needed, they would not be placed in long term funds but in the absence of firm timescales, it is beneficial to the Council to earn as much on the available funding as possible, within the constraints in the tables above.

*Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year*

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Limit on principal invested > year	£25m	£25m	£25m
Treasury invested with no fixed maturity date	£16m	£16m	£16m

The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

**Price risk indicator**

<i>Price risk indicator</i>	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£25m	£25m	£25m	£25m

**Other Items**

There are a number of additional items that the Authority is obliged by CIPFA or CLG to include in its Treasury Management Strategy.

**Policy on the use of financial derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

**Mifid 2:** Is a legislative framework instituted by the European Union to regulate the financial markets and improve protections for investors. This Council has elected for Professional Client Status which means that to be able to invest in certain investments, it must hold a minimum of £10m in investments. If this falls below the minimum level then access to certain financial market instruments could be made unavailable to this Council. This threshold will be monitored and taken into consideration when evaluating whether to borrow externally or cash in an investment.

**Investment training:** The needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed annually as part of the staff appraisal process, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change. Staff will regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose, CIPFA and other such organisations.

**Investment advisers:** The Council, together with Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers through a tender process in February 2023. The level of desired treasury support has been increased to reflect the greater complexity of managing our cash balances and the dynamic nature of global markets.

## Appendix I

### Arlingclose Limited Economic Forecast January 2024

**Economic background:** The impact on the UK from higher interest rates and inflation, a weakening economic outlook, an uncertain political climate due to an upcoming general election, together with war in Ukraine and the Middle East, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023, before maintaining this level for the rest of 2023. In December 2023, members of the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 in favour of keeping Bank Rate at 5.25%. The three dissenters wanted to increase rates by another 0.25%.

The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged period of weak Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth with the potential for a mild contraction due to ongoing weak economic activity. The outlook for CPI inflation was deemed to be highly uncertain, with upside risks to CPI falling to the 2% target coming from potential energy price increases, strong domestic wage growth and persistence in price-setting.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures showed CPI inflation was 3.9% in November 2023, down from a 4.6% rate in the previous month and, in line with the recent trend, lower than expected. The core CPI inflation rate declined to 5.1% from the previous month's 5.7%, again lower than predictions. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling slowly, but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target before dropping below target during the second half 2025 and into 2026.

ONS figures showed the UK economy contracted by 0.1% between July and September 2023. The BoE forecasts GDP will likely stagnate through 2024. The BoE forecasts that higher interest rates will constrain GDP growth, which will remain weak over the entire forecast horizon.

The labour market appears to be loosening, but only very slowly. The unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.2% between June and August 2023, from 4.0% in the previous 3-month period, but the lack of consistency in the data between the two periods made comparisons difficult. Earnings growth has remained strong but has showed some signs of easing; regular pay (excluding bonuses) was up 7.3% over the period and total pay (including bonuses) up 7.2%. Adjusted for inflation, regular pay was 1.4% and total pay 1.3%. Looking forward, the MPR showed the unemployment rate is expected to be around 4.25% in the second half of calendar 2023, but then rising steadily over the forecast horizon to around 5% in late 2025/early 2026.

Having increased its key interest rate to a target range of 5.25-5.50% in August 2023, the US Federal Reserve appears now to have concluded the hiking cycle. It is likely this level represents the peak in US rates following a more dovish meeting outcome in December 2023. US GDP grew at an annualised rate of 4.9% between July and September 2023, ahead of expectations for a 4.3% expansion and the 2.1% reading for Q2. But the impact from higher rates has started to feed into economic activity and growth will weaken in 2024. Annual CPI inflation was 3.1% in November.

Eurozone inflation has declined steadily since the start of 2023, falling to an annual rate of 2.4% in November 2023. Economic growth has been weak and GDP contracted by 0.1% in the three months to September 2023. In line with other central banks, the European Central Bank has increased rates, taking its deposit facility, fixed rate tender, and marginal lending rates to 3.75%, 4.25% and 4.50% respectively.

**Credit outlook:** Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices were volatile during 2023, spiking in March on the back of banking sector contagion concerns following the major events of Silicon Valley Bank becoming insolvent and the takeover of Credit Suisse by UBS. After then falling back in Q2 of calendar 2023, in the second half of the year, higher interest rates and inflation, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and now the Middle East, have led to CDS prices increasing steadily.

On an annual basis, CDS price volatility has so far been lower in 2023 compared to 2022, but this year has seen more of a divergence in prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities once again.

Moody's revised its outlook on the UK sovereign to stable from negative to reflect its view of restored political predictability following the volatility after the 2022 mini-budget. Moody's also affirmed the Aa3 rating in recognition of the UK's economic resilience and strong institutional framework.

Following its rating action on the UK sovereign, Moody's revised the outlook on five UK banks to stable from negative and then followed this by the same action on five rated local authorities. However, within the same update the long-term ratings of those five local authorities were downgraded.

There remain competing tensions in the banking sector, on one side from higher interest rates boosting net income and profitability against another of a weakening economic outlook and likely recessions that increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets.

However, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

**Interest rate forecast (December 2023):** Although UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated, the Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate has peaked at 5.25%. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will start reducing rates in 2024 to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. Arlingclose sees rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.

Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to be broadly stable at current levels (amid continued volatility), following the decline in yields towards the end of 2023, which reflects the expected lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. Yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

#### **Underlying assumptions:**

- UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated but have eased over the past two months fuelling rate cuts expectations. Near-term rate cuts remain unlikely, although downside risks will increase as the UK economy likely slides into recession.
- The MPC's message remains unchanged as the Committee seeks to maintain tighter financial conditions. Monetary policy will remain tight as inflation is expected to moderate to target slowly, although some wage and inflation measures are below the Bank's last forecasts.
- Despite some deterioration in activity data, the UK economy remains resilient in the face of tighter monetary policy. Recent data has been soft but mixed; the more timely PMI figures suggest that the services sector is recovering from a weak Q3. Tighter policy will however bear down on domestic and external activity as interest rates bite.

- Employment demand is easing. Anecdotal evidence suggests slowing recruitment and pay growth, and we expect unemployment to rise further. As unemployment rises and interest rates remain high, consumer sentiment will deteriorate. Household and business spending will therefore be weak.
- Inflation will fall over the next 12 months. The path to the target will not be smooth, with higher energy prices and base effects interrupting the downtrend at times. The MPC's attention will remain on underlying inflation measures and wage data. We believe policy rates will remain at the peak for another 10 months, or until the MPC is comfortable the risk of further 'second-round' effects has diminished.
- Maintaining monetary policy in restrictive territory for so long, when the economy is already struggling, will require significant loosening in the future to boost activity.
- Global bond yields will remain volatile. Markets are currently running with expectations of near-term US rate cuts, fuelled somewhat unexpectedly by US policymakers themselves. Term premia and bond yields have experienced a marked decline. It would not be a surprise to see a reversal if data points do not support the narrative, but the current 10-year yield appears broadly reflective of a lower medium-term level for Bank Rate.
- There is a heightened risk of fiscal policy and/or geo-political events causing substantial volatility in yields.

#### Forecast:

- The MPC held Bank Rate at 5.25% in December. We believe this is the peak for Bank Rate.
- The MPC will cut rates in the medium term to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. We see rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.
- The immediate risks around Bank Rate have become more balanced, due to the weakening UK economy and dampening effects on inflation. This shifts to the downside in the short term as the economy weakens.
- Long-term gilt yields are now substantially lower. Arlingclose expects yields to be flat from here over the short-term reflecting medium term Bank Rate forecasts. Periodic volatility is likely.

	Current	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>3-month money market rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.15	4.80	4.30	4.10	3.80	3.50	3.25	3.05	3.05
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>5yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.75	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	3.77	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>10yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.75	0.85	0.85	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	3.72	3.75	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.75	3.65	3.60	3.65	3.70
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>20yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.75	0.85	0.85	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	4.16	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.25
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>50yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.75	0.85	0.85	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	3.76	3.80	3.85	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.95	3.95	3.95
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%

PWLB Certainty Rate = Gilt yield + 0.80%

PWLB HRA Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

UK Infrastructure Bank Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%



## Summary of Prudential Indicators

The Council is requested to approve the following Prudential Indicator for which are discussed in detail in the Capital Strategy (Annex N), the Investment Strategy (Annex O) and the Treasury Strategy (Annex P).

### Indicators contained within the Capital Strategy

#### Estimates of capital expenditure in £m

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
Capital Expenditure	15.01	9.44	7.20	4.77	1.72

#### Sources of capital funding £m

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
External Sources	3.16	2.10	2.53	0.88	0.88
Own Resources	8.15	1.05	1.17	0.54	0.84
Internal & External Borrowing	3.70	6.29	3.50	3.35	0.00
	15.01	9.44	7.20	4.77	1.72

#### MRP

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
MRP on internal/external borrowing	1.19	1.34	1.55	1.74	2.22
Capital Receipts (exc Asset Disposal)	(0.77)	(0.84)	(0.99)	(1.06)	(1.54)
MRP provision applied	0.42	0.50	0.57	0.68	0.68

#### Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Forecast £m
General fund services	17.78	20.14	22.98	24.59	22.63
Capital Investments	10.60	10.60	10.60	10.60	10.60
Total CFR	28.38	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22

**Capital Receipts**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Actual £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Asset Disposal	0	0	0	0	0
Leases and Loans	0.77	0.84	0.99	1.06	1.54
	0.77	0.84	0.99	1.06	1.54

**Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt £m**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Operational Boundary	50.06	35.57	37.19	35.22	33.34
Authorised Borrowing Limit	55.06	40.57	42.19	40.22	38.34

**Estimates of financing costs to net revenue stream**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Actual £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Interest Payable	0	0.013	0.079	0.212	0.246
MRP	0.420	0.502	0.569	0.682	0.682
Total borrowing costs	0.420	0.515	0.648	0.894	0.927
Net Revenue Stream (per MTFS)	13.91	15.15	15.23	15.47	15.16
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	3.02%	3.40%	4.26%	5.78%	6.12%

**Net income from commercial & service investments to net revenue stream**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Actual £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Investments	4.06	3.33	3.66	3.66	3.66
Service Investments	0.19	0.19	1.40	1.40	1.40
	4.25	3.53	5.06	5.06	5.06
Net Revenue Stream (per MTFS)	13.91	15.15	15.23	15.47	15.16
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	30.56%	23.29%	33.21%	32.71%	33.37%

## Indicators contained in the Investment Strategy

### Loans for service purposes £m

Category of Borrower	Actual at 31st March 2023			Forecast at 31st March 2024	
	Balance Owing	Loss Allowance	Figure in	Balance Owing	Approved
	£	£	Accounts		
			£	£	£
Local Businesses	2.58	0.00	2.58	2.30	2.30
Town/Parish Councils	0.12	0.00	0.12	0.11	0.11
Housing Associations	7.66	0.00	7.66	7.47	7.47
Local Residents (Equity Loans)	0.23	0.00	0.23	0.23	0.23
Employees (Car loans)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.59</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>10.59</b>	<b>10.11</b>	<b>10.11</b>

### Shares held for service purposes

Category of Company	Amount Invested	Gains or losses	Value in Accounts	Approved Limit
Local Authority owned company	£1	£0	£1	£1

### Properties held for investment purposes in £m

Type of Property	Inside District £m	Outside District £m	Inside County £m	Outside County £m
Commercial Investment Property	15.85	27.90	40.23	3.52
Industrial Estates	7.57	0.00	7.57	0.00
Subtotal	23.41	27.90	47.79	3.52
<b>Total Held</b>	<b>51.31</b>		<b>51.31</b>	

### Proportionality of investments

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m	2026/27 Budget £m
Gross Service Expenditure*	41.88	30.01	32.60	33.58	34.42
Treasury Investment Income	1.14	1.20	1.04	1.02	1.00
Loans Income	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.21
Commercial Investments: Property	4.06	3.33	3.66	3.66	3.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.39</b>	<b>4.72</b>	<b>4.89</b>	<b>4.88</b>	<b>4.86</b>
Investment income as a proportion of expenditure	12.86%	15.74%	15.00%	14.52%	14.13%

\* excluding Housing Benefit payments

**Total investment exposure £m**

	31st Mar 2023	31st Mar 2024	31st Mar 2025
	Actual £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Treasury Management investments	31.60	29.84	29.84
Service Investments: Loans	10.59	10.11	9.81
Property investments	51.31	51.31	51.31
Total investments / exposure	93.50	91.26	90.96

**Forecast borrowing requirement £m**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less external borrowing	0.00	(3.50)	(6.11)	(5.13)	(4.15)
Internal borrowing	30.74	30.07	29.08	28.09	27.18
Usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Cash available for investments	17.15	10.24	7.44	4.34	0.11

**Investment net rate of return**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Treasury Management	4.09%	4.85%	4.75%
<u>Service investments: Loans</u>			
Local Businesses	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%
Town & Parish Councils	1.40%	1.40%	1.40%
Housing Associations	2.56%	2.56%	2.56%
Local Residents (equity loans)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Commercial investments	6.75%	6.50%	7.13%

**Indicators contained in the Treasury Management Strategy****WODC Treasury investments – one year return**

Investments	Dec 2023	December 2022 - December 2023		
		Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return
	£			
Money Market Funds	15,000,000	0.00%	5.35%	5.35%
Bank Account	1,821,812	0.00%	5.19%	5.19%
Short Term Deposit	4,000,000	0.00%	5.29%	5.29%
Internal Investments	20,821,812	0.00%	5.28%	5.28%

Strategic Pooled Funds:				
Aegon Diversified Monthly Income Fund	2,747,750	3.35%	6.30%	9.65%
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	2,891,185	4.78%	3.46%	8.24%
M & G Strategic Corporate Bond	1,835,671	5.88%	4.65%	10.53%
Royal London Short Dated Credit Fund	1,841,786	4.10%	4.04%	8.14%
Schroder Income Maximiser Fund	890,678	3.70%	7.67%	11.37%
Threadneedle UK Equity Income Fund	1,088,528	6.06%	3.73%	9.79%
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	1,450,704	-0.86%	6.36%	5.50%
Fundamentum Social Housing REIT	970,000	3.19%	3.03%	6.22%
	13,716,302	3.84%	4.85%	8.69%
Total Investment	34,538,114		Annualised income return	6.73%
Pooled funds	13,716,302		Annualised income return	4.85%

### WODC Treasury investments – five year return

Investments	Dec 23	Dec 18 to Dec 23		
		Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return
	£			
Strategic Pooled Funds:				
Aegon Diversified Monthly Income Fund	2,747,750	-8.41%	13.92%	5.51%
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	2,891,185	-2.55%	8.70%	6.15%
M & G Strategic Corporate Bond	1,835,671	-4.74%	17.43%	12.69%
Royal London Short Dated Credit Fund	1,841,786	-7.11%	12.43%	5.32%
Schroder Income Maximiser Fund	890,678	-10.19%	33.06%	22.87%
Threadneedle UK Equity Income Fund	1,088,528	20.82%	19.82%	40.64%
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	1,450,704	-20.51%	24.88%	4.37%
Fundamentum Social Housing REIT	970,000	-3.00%	8.75%	5.75%
	13,716,302	-6.02%	15.81%	9.79%
Pooled Funds	13,716,302		Annualised income return	3.72%

### Forecast borrowing requirement £m

#### Forecast borrowing requirement

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less external borrowing	0.00	(3.50)	(6.11)	(5.13)	(4.15)
Internal borrowing	30.74	30.07	29.08	28.09	27.18
Usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Cash available for investments	17.15	10.24	7.44	4.34	0.11

**Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt £m**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Operational Boundary	50.06	35.57	37.19	35.22	33.34
Authorised Borrowing Limit	55.06	40.57	42.19	40.22	38.34

**Liability Benchmark £m***Liability Benchmark*

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m	Forecast £m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	30.74	33.57	35.19	33.22	31.34
Less usable reserves	(25.89)	(24.31)	(22.51)	(18.43)	(13.30)
Less working capital	(22.00)	(16.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)	(14.00)
Net loans requirement	(17.15)	(6.74)	(1.33)	0.80	4.04
Plus liquidity allowance	16.00	16.00	16.00	16.00	16.00
Liability Benchmark	-1.15	9.26	14.67	16.80	20.04

*Interest rate exposures*

	Limit £k
Upper limit on one year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	210
Upper limit on one year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	(210)

<b>Maturity structure of borrowing</b>	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and within 30 years	100%	0%
30 years and above	100%	0%

**Treasury investment counterparties and limits**

Sector	Time Limit	Counterparty Limit	Sector Limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local Authorities	3 years	£15m	Unlimited
Other Government Entities	25 years	£4m	Unlimited
Secured investments*	25 years	£10m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured)*	13 months	£3m	£10m
Building societies (unsecured)*	13 months	£2m	£5m
Registered providers (unsecured)*	5 years	£3m	£5m
Money market funds*	n/a	£5m	£25m
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£5m	£25m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£3m	£5m
Other investments*	5 years	£5m	£10m

\*Treasury Management investments will only be made with entities whose lowest published long term rating is no lower than A-

**Investment limits**

	<b>Cash limit</b>
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Govt	£5m each
UK Central Govt	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same mgmt	£5m per manager
Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS)	£3m max per REIT
Foreign countries	£1m per country
Registered providers	£5m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£2m in total per BS
Money Market Funds	£5m per MMF

**Credit risk indicator**

	<u>Rating</u>
Portfolio Average Credit Target	A-
Portfolio Credit Risk at 30th November 2023	AA-

<i>Liquidity Risk indicator</i>	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£2m

**Interest rate exposure**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%

**Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days**


*Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year*

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Limit on principal invested > year	£25m	£25m	£25m
Treasury invested with no fixed maturity date	£16m	£16m	£16m

**Price risk indicator**

<i>Price risk indicator</i>	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£25m	£25m	£25m	£25m



 <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>COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2024</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>COUNCIL TAX 2024/2025</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Georgina Dyer, Chief Accountant Email: <a href="mailto:georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk">georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To enable the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2024/25.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Proposed resolution Annex B – Council Tax Schedules – See annexes F-I of the Budget Papers.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That Council passes the resolution set out in Annex A to the report.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	

## **1. BACKGROUND AND MAIN POINTS**

- 1.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992, and the Localism Act 2011, requires:
  - a) the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year.
  - b) the Council to confirm that its basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive. This covers the requirements of Chapter 4ZA Local Government Finance Act 1992 – Referendums relating to Council Tax increases.
- 1.2. At its meeting on 14th February 2024, as part of the budget setting process, the Executive recommended a Council Tax of £124.38 at Band D.
- 1.3. The Council is required to make resolutions in respect of the tax base (Schedules 1 and 2) and aggregate levels of Council Tax. The aggregate levels of Council Tax comprise the 'basic amount' - parish and district levy (Schedules 1 and 2), amounts for each Council Tax band (Schedule 3) and precepts for Oxfordshire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley (Schedule 4).
- 1.4. The recommendations to give effect to the legal resolution of these items are necessarily framed.
- 1.5. The average parish council tax levy for 2024/25 is estimated at £106.14 (2023/24 : £98.18).
- 1.6. The Council is proposing a district Council Tax (at band D) of £124.38 for 2024/25.
- 1.7. For the purposes of passing debts through the Courts, the Council must also formally resolve that certain officers are empowered to carry out this function. Those officers are identified at [Recommendation 8](#) in [Annex A](#).

## **2. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1. There are no implications resulting from this report.

## **3. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 3.1. None

(END)

### Recommendations for the Council Tax Resolution 2024/25

That Council resolves to:

- 1) Note that for the purpose of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 35(2), there are no special expenses for the District Council in 2024/25;
- 2) Note that at its meeting held on 17th January 2024 the Executive acknowledged the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2024/25:
  - a) for the whole Council area as £47,841.03 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)]; and
  - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Schedule 1.
- 3) Agree that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) is £124.38
- 4) Agree that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - a) £53,370,154 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.
  - b) £42,341,615 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.
  - c) £11,028,539 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - d) £230.52 being the amount at 4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses);
  - e) £5,078,072 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as per the attached Schedule 2.
  - f) £124.38 being the amount at 4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(e) above by Item T(2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates;
  - g) the amounts shown in Schedule 2 being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council’s area shown in Schedule 2 divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;
  - h) the amounts shown in Schedule 3 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings

listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

- 5) Note that for the year 2024/25 the Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

Valuation band	Oxfordshire County Council £	Police and Crime* Commissioner for Thames Valley £
A	£1,213.71	£179.52
B	£1,415.99	£209.44
C	£1,618.28	£239.46
D	£1,820.56	£269.28
E	£2,225.13	£329.12
F	£2,629.70	£388.96
G	£3,034.27	£448.80
H	£3,641.12	£538.56

- 6) Agree that the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in Schedule 4 as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- 7) Agree that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 8) Agree that the following Council/Public Officers: Director of Finance, Assistant Director – Resident Services, Legal Services Manager, Legal Executive, Business Manager – Operational Support, Revenues Manager, Revenues Lead and Court Officer be authorised to:
- a) collect and recover any National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax, and
  - b) prosecute or defend on the Council's behalf or to appear on its behalf in proceedings before a magistrate's court in respect of unpaid National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.