

Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 7 October 2025

Tel: 01993 861000

e-mail: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 15 October 2025 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Executive

Councillors: Andy Graham, Duncan Enright, Lidia Arciszewska, Hugo Ashton, Rachel Crouch, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

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 Executive. The quorum for the Executive is 3 Members.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from members of the Executive on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 16)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 10 September 2025.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Chief Executive.
5. **Participation of the Public**
Anyone who lives, works, or studies in West Oxfordshire is eligible to ask one question at the meeting, for up to three minutes, directed at the Leader of the Council or any Executive Member on any agenda item or on any issue that affects the district or its people.

All questions must be no longer than three minutes long.

Members of the public wishing to speak at a meeting must notify democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk, or call Customer Services on 01993 861000 including their name and the agenda item or topic they wish to speak on, by 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (e.g. for a Wednesday meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Friday before).

If the topic of the question is not within the remit of the Council, advice will be provided on where best to direct the question.

The Leader or relevant Executive Member will either respond to a question verbally at the meeting or provide a written response which will be included in the minutes of the meeting.
6. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
To consider any reports or recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7. **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**
To consider any matters arising from the Audit and Governance Meeting on 25 September 2025.

8. **Infrastructure Funding Statement (Pages 17 - 44)**

Purpose

To note the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2024/25.

Recommendations

That the Executive Resolves to:

- I. Note the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A, with a view to it being published on the Council's website by 31 December 2025 in accordance with legislative requirements.

9. **Safeguarding Policy Update July 2025 (Pages 45 - 70)**

Purpose:

To inform Members of the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Recommendation:

That Executive resolves to:

- I. Agree and adopt the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

10. **The Low Income Family Tracker (Pages 71 - 76)**

Purpose:

To give a brief overview of the Low-Income Family Tracker progress since inception.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

- I. Note the report.

11. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

12. **Reconsideration of Business Rates Hardship Relief (Pages 77 - 134)**

Purpose:

To reconsider an application for Hardship relief submitted under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

- I. Uphold the original decision not to award a Hardship relief submitted under S49.

13. **Business Rates Write off in excess of £5,000 (Pages 135 - 138)**

Purpose:

To seek approval to write off irrecoverable business rates in excess of £5,000.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Approve the write offs totalling £95,442.41 as detailed within this report, and;
2. Note that the actual cost to the council is £38,176.96, being 40% of the total amount to be written off.

14. **Options Appraisal of Leisure Management Arrangements (Pages 139 - 168)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of the Leisure Management Options Appraisal outcomes and to seek authority to commence implementation of the recommended management option for the Council's Leisure Services.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the findings of the Leisure Management Options Appraisal and enters a five-year Contract extension with Greenwich Leisure Limited, for the operation and management of the Council's leisure facilities as set out in the current Contract scope.
2. Delegate authority to Director of Place, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Head of Legal, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy and Executive Member for Finance to commence negotiations with Greenwich Leisure Limited regarding the risk profile of any amendments to the Contract or specifications, and the impact of any capital projects to the Council.
3. Delegate authority to Director of Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy and Executive Member for Finance to commence consultation with landowners of facilities where lease agreements expire within the extended Contract term.
4. Delegate authority to the Director of Place and Director of Finance, in consultation with Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy and Executive Member for Finance to work in partnership with GLL to develop their capital investment proposals.

(END)

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Executive

Held in the Small Hall (Carterton) - Carterton Community Centre at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 10 September 2025**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham, Duncan Enright, Lidia Arciszewska, Hugo Ashton, Rachel Crouch, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Phil Martin (Director of Place), Claire Locke (Interim Executive Director), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Alison Borrett (Senior Performance Analyst), Melanie Dodd (Senior Biodiversity Officer), Kim Hudson (Principal Policy Officer), Hannah Kenyon (Climate Change Manager), Heather McCulloch (Community Wellbeing Manager), Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer), Si Pocock-Cluley (Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead), Sam Stronach (Economic Development Manager) and Stuart Wilson (Leisure Contracts Lead)

Other Councillors in attendance: Julian Cooper, Phil Godfrey, Martin McBride, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson and Elizabeth Poskitt

372 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from, Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change and Nature Recovery.

373 Declarations of Interest

9. Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Declaration for Transparency, Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader, declared that he had undertaken work with The Community Communication Partnership (CCP). In this role Councillor Enright noted that he did not undertake any work in Oxfordshire and therefore this interest did not preclude him from taking part on the vote or discussion on any item on the agenda.

374 Minutes of Previous Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2025.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council. Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

The proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2025.

375 Receipt of Announcements

Councillor Graham welcomed the public and Members to the Executive meeting. Councillor Graham reminded those in attendance that there was an engagement session on the

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Carterton Area following the meeting. This session was the first of a series of events and discussions on this topic. These sessions were about putting the views of the community first. Notes of the sessions would be made available for those unable to attend.

Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy, announced that £3.5m was to be invested in improvements at the district's leisure centres. The investment would lead to significant and noticeable improvements and modern high quality leisure centres. This money was for essential repairs and were needed to avoid the need for emergency works and unplanned closures. This work would also help to retain the value of the sites. More detail on this investment was to be presented at item 8 of the agenda.

Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities, announced the appointment of a Council Youth Development Officer. The Officer was a qualified youth worker and had been in post for six months. In this time he had been visiting communities and identified six priority areas for his work.

Councillor Duncan Enright announced that the Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme had been launched and was available for grants of up to £11k. The period for applications closed on Friday 19 September 2025.

376 Participation of the Public

There was no participation of the public.

377 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 3 September 2025 and made recommendations to the Executive in relation to agenda item 10 – Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning.

Councillor Graham advised that the Executive response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees recommendations would be dealt with as part of item 10 on the agenda.

378 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

There had been no meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee since the last meeting of the Executive.

379 Leisure Planned Investment Programme

Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy, presented the item, the purpose of which was to present the forecast expenditure required to ensure the Council owned leisure facilities remained operationally effective and compliant with modern standards as well as improving the leisure services for residents into the future. A breakdown had been included to demonstrate the costs over a range of periods along with a summary of associated implications. It was intended that the report would allow Members to decide on the preferred Planned Investment Programme.

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Councillor Sumner advised that:

- It was the Executive's wish to keep facilities open and well maintained for the benefit of residents of all ages and abilities.
- He was proud that the Council would be investing £3.5m in the face of closing and unsustainable facilities across the country.
- The investment was over a five-year period.
- It was noted that Executive Members had visited all facilities across the district to see first hand what works had been required and how the leisure offering could be improved.

Another Councillor in attendance stated that investment was important as there was competition for customers in this area.

Councillor Sumner proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Alaric Smith seconded the proposal and suggested that the investment tied in with the Asset Management Strategy which had looked at all council owned assets and allowed works to be planned more effectively.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Allocate funds in the Capital Programme for the delivery of a 5-year planned investment programme, as determined by the latest condition surveys conducted at all Council owned Leisure Facilities.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with Executive member for Leisure and/or the Section 151 Officer to approve the project specific procurement of works and services directly, or via the Leisure Operator to deliver the programme of works over the agreed time period.

380 Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to consider the formal approval of the District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule following independent examination.

Councillor Ashton explained the process that had taken place for the schedule to reach this stage. This process had included consultation and independent examination. Minor amendments had been made to the schedule following examination, including a reduction in CIL for developments over 250 homes, otherwise it had been approved by the examiner.

Councillor Ashton noted that one of the advantages of CIL was that it would apply to smaller developments that did not attract S106 contributions. CIL therefore allowed the cumulative impact of developments to be considered, with a proportion of the contribution being transferred to the host town or Parish Council. The next stage was for Council to approve the schedule on 1 October 2025. A proposed effective date for the schedule to come into effect on applications was 31 January 2026

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Councillor Ashton proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Graham seconded the proposal and noted that CIL added a further layer of contributions from developers which would give local councils influence on what contributions were used for such as localised projects.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Note the content and recommendations of the independent examiner's report attached at Annex A, including the modifications (EM1 and EM2) which have been recommended in respect of the CIL Charging Schedule attached at Annex B;
2. Recommend to Council that the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule attached at Annex B be formally approved with an effective date of 31 January 2026 in accordance with Section 213 of the Planning Act 2008.
3. Recommend to Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning to further progress work on the draft CIL Implementation Plan in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

381 Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to seek approval to proceed to Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) programme and complete a districtwide local area energy plan.

Councillor Ashton stated that:

- Local area energy planning was a process that set out the pathway to a zero-carbon future.
- The Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee was supporting six Oxfordshire councils to work together to develop LAEPs.
- Some of the benefits of having a LAEP were that clear plans and projects to transition to zero-carbon could be set-out and local supply chain capacity and capability for projects could be created.
- Phase 1 of LAEP was ending and had identified where upgrades and flexibility solutions were needed to ensure homes, businesses and essential services had affordable and secure energy. Phase 2 would commence on approval by the Executive and would translate this analysis into district-level actions plans that would help councils prioritise projects.
- The LAEP was critical in delivering the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 and would dovetail with the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy to help to identify constraints in the grid.

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- The Executive were required to agree that acceptance criteria had been met in terms of key deliverables in Phase 1 and agree that there was sufficient officer resource to proceed to Phase 2.
- The report outlined the officer resource required to proceed to Phase 2, and could be seen in annexe B.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made three further recommendations to be included in the report. These recommendations had all been agreed by the Executive and would be included in a third recommendation.

Councillor Ashton proposed accepting the recommendations of the report, subject to the addition of a third recommendation that accepted the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the supplement to the agenda.

Councillor Graham seconded the proposal.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, to approve the remaining Phase 1 key deliverables of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme.
2. Subject to the completion of Phase 1, agree to proceed to Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme and the completion of a districtwide local area energy plan.
3. Agree the response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees recommendations as set out in the supplement to the agenda.

382 West Oxfordshire District Council response to the draft Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to consider the endorsement of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for publication.

Councillor Arciszewska stated that:

- The LNRS had been prepared by Oxfordshire County Council in collaboration with all Oxfordshire districts.
- This was a huge project and had sought to define the value of existing biodiversity and identify what could be done to improve this value and connect valuable habitats.
- The outcome of the project was a series of maps that identified the areas of biodiversity and explored how to protect and connect them.

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- This work was important as it would feed into planning policy and the development of the Local Plan to identify areas in which it would be suitable to build and those which needed to be protected.
- In endorsing the strategy, the Council is obliging itself to adhere to it.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Graham seconded the proposal and noted that the work was important in enabling the management and monitoring of biodiverse areas in order that residents felt reassured that this was being done correctly and strategies could be adapted if they were not suitable.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Endorse the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication by Oxfordshire County Council.

383 Quarterly Finance Review Q1

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter One 2025-2026.

Councillor Smith advised that:

- At quarter 1 there was an overall underspend of £260,745 against a profiled budget for the period. Key factors driving this position were: additional income from Trade Waste; the Leisure Contract; vacant posts and better than expected performance in respect of the materials recycling contract.
- Budget setting for 2025/26 had reduced the base budget for recycling by £300,000, however despite this, in quarter 1 the contract was £25,000 underspent.
- Income from Trade Waste was £164,000 above target but this was partially offset by expenditure on bins and boxes.
- There had been vacant positions in Legal and Conservation that had resulted in a combined underspend on employee costs of approximately £50,000. Officers were now in place in those areas and so these savings would now end.
- The leisure contract was £41,000 ahead of budget, so was performing better than expected
- The Governments consultation on Fairer Funding Review and Business Rates Reset had ended and final proposals from MHCLG were expected by the end of October. West Oxfordshire would be subject to a cash cut as it was not subject to a funding guarantee. This had been modelled in the Councils medium term financial strategy which would be further updated when more detail emerged.

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Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Graham seconded the proposal.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- I. Noted the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter One 2025-2026.

384 Quarterly Service Review Q1

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2025-26 Quarter One (Q1).

Councillor Graham made the following points:

- Service Performance in all areas had remained broadly positive.
- Areas that were above target included: the percentage of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collected; Leisure centre visits and gym memberships and number of affordable houses delivered.
- Customer satisfaction was above target at 98.21%, however Councillor Graham reassured those present that, while this was positive, where there were issues the Council would respond and communicate quickly.
- Service areas below target could be seen in section 3.3 of the report. It was noted that household waste recycling was below target but this reflected seasonal factors and a national trend. With regard to Planning Appeals Allowed, the granular detail revealed that this related to single figures of appeals.

Councillor Graham proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader, seconded the proposal and noted that West Oxfordshire had scored well in recent leagues tables on action for climate change and as a district to set up a business.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- I. Noted the 2025/26 Q1 service performance report.

385 3 year Service Level Agreements - Year 1 reporting and future funding options

Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, introduced the item, the purpose which was to provide a summary of the performance at the end of Year 1 of all 7 organisations receiving grant funding. In addition the purpose was to consider the Council's appetite for offering future multi-year funding once the current arrangement comes to an end in March 2027.

Councillor Crouch raised the following points:

- The multi-year Service Level Agreements had been awarded in March 2024 to seven organisations, with combined value of £553,500 over three years.
- Highlights from the reports submitted by the organisations could be seen at section 3.2 of the report and these were briefly outlined by Councillor Crouch. These highlights clearly showed the great work that had been done because of the funding.
- The report sought to explore if this work should be continued beyond the 2027 arrangement.

Councillor Crouch proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Alaric Smith seconded the proposal and noted the timing of this report was important to ensure such support did not cease with LGR.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities, to explore the feasibility of securing a legacy position for the Voluntary and Community Sector in this year's budget setting round to continue to offer a multi-year funding arrangement from 2027-2030.

386 Public Toilet Review

Councillor Andy Graham advised the public that if items 15, 16 and 17 required the Executive to discuss the exempt annexes to the report that there would be a requirement to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to consider current provision of public conveniences in each location, costs, income and building condition. The aim was to provide a balance between the continued provision of good quality public toilet facilities, protect essential facilities into the future and to reduce the financial burden on the Council.

In her presentation Councillor Arciszewska made the following points:

- The Council managed thirteen public conveniences across the district, which had a cost of £270,000.
- Officers had worked to establish the patterns of use of the facilities and as a result sought to establish if the maintenance and provision of the facilities was money well spent.
- An asset assessment exercise had been to establish the state of repair of the facilities.
- The result of the work so far was that the conveniences had been placed into categories and the Council now sought to investigate how these should be managed into the future. The Council wished to engage with Town and Parish Councils in nine localities to establish if there was an appetite for them to take the facilities over.

Other Members in attendance, not part of the executive stated;

- There was a need for Town and Parish Councils to understand what the consequences of refusing to take on the facilities would be. In response Councillor Graham suggested that the detail of this would be part of the discussion with Town and Parish Councils and that any decisions would be the subject of a further report and scrutiny.
- Queried if there was a distinction made between disabled and non-disabled facilities. Councillor Graham advised that Officers would be asked to consider this.

Councillor Enright drew the meetings attention to the consideration given in the report by Officers to the locations that had alternative facilities, such as The Leys in Witney.

Councillor David Melvin asked the Executive Members to confirm that facilities at Kilkenny Country Park would remain open. This was confirmed by the Executive Member.

Councillor Arciszewska proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Graham seconded the proposal and noted that there would be a further detailed report but that this decision was timely with respect to LGR in order to invest before such a transition.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Agree to work with Town and Parish Councils and the Public Convenience Task and Finish Group to explore the options in regards to transferring these assets where possible, either on long leases or freehold, as detailed in the report.

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2. Delegate authority for the terms of any disposals arising from recommendation 1 to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.
3. Agree that, where transfer cannot be achieved, to retain facilities at Langdale Gate in Witney, Guildenford and High Street in Burford, Bampton Town Hall, New Street in Chipping Norton, Hensington Road in Woodstock and Kilkenny Country Park, and to bring forward a further report regarding the repairs and improvements required to ensure good quality facilities are provided.
4. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to terminate leases at the Town Hall in Chipping Norton and Charlbury, noting the lease implications set out in Annex D to the report.
5. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to close facilities at The Leys, Witney, Browns Lane, Woodstock, Back Lane, Eynsham, Black Bourton Road in Carterton which are in the Council's ownership and consider options such as conversion, lease or sale of the buildings.

387 Review of the Ubico Shareholder Agreement & Ubico Board Member Appointments

Councillor Andy Graham, The Leader of the Council, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to seek approval to agree a new UBICO Shareholder Agreement and Ubico Board Member Appointments.

Councillor Graham proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Enright seconded the proposal.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Approve the termination of the shareholders' agreement between the following local authority shareholders:
 - a. West Oxfordshire District Council
 - b. Cheltenham Borough Council
 - c. Cotswold District Council
 - d. Forest of Dean District Council
 - e. Stroud District Council
 - f. Tewkesbury Borough Council
 - g. Gloucester City Council; and
 - h. Ubico Ltd

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that was entered into in January 2020 (the “2020 Shareholders’ Agreement”).

2. Approve the proposal described in this report to enter into a replacement Shareholders’ Agreement between the above parties in the form set out in exempt Annexe B to this report.
3. Approve the proposal described in Exempt Annex D to this report in relation to the number of votes for each shareholder, further amending the agreement set out in Exempt Annex B.

388 Decision Taken Under Urgency Powers: Ubico Growth Request

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to report to the Executive on a decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer under urgency powers. Councillor Graham expanded on how a requirement for such a decision may have arisen.

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, explained the circumstance in which the decision had arose. There had been a proposal for a further Authority to join Ubico. This required agreement by all shareholders that included the Council. The timescales for the decision to be made had meant that it had not been possible to bring the decision to the Executive.

Councillor Graham proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Enright seconded the proposal.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- I. Note the decision taken as set out in Annex A.

389 Exclusion of Press and Public

The item was not considered at the meeting.

390 Exempt Annex D for Item 15 - Public Toilet Review

This was not discussed, as the item was dealt with in the open part of the meeting without reference to the exempt material.

391 Exempt Annexes B, C and D for Item 16 - Review of the Ubico Shareholder Agreement & Ubico Board Member Appointments

This was not discussed, as the item was dealt with in the open part of the meeting without reference to the exempt material.

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392 Exempt Annex B for Item 17 - Decision Taken Under Urgency Powers: Ubico Growth Request

This was not discussed, as the item was dealt with in the open part of the meeting without reference to the exempt material..

The Meeting closed at 3.08 pm

CHAIR

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 15 OCTOBER 2025</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS) 2024/25</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Hugo Ashton – Executive Member for Planning. Email: Hugo.Ashton@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves – Head of Planning. Email: Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Kim Langford-Tejrar – Infrastructure Delivery Lead (Shared) Email: Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To note the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2024/25.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A, with a view to it being published on the Council's website by 31 December 2025 in accordance with legislative requirements.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The main purpose of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is to provide greater clarity on the receipt and use of developer contributions including Section 106 planning obligations to fund new and enhanced infrastructure in support of planned growth. As such, the IFS will help to support several aims and objectives of the Council Plan.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The IFS is prepared in consultation with internal teams.</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Local authorities are required to report on the receipt and use of developer contributions through the publication of an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). The contents and broad format of an IFS are prescribed by the legislation and national reporting requirements. The IFS must be updated and published on the Council's website no later than 31st December each year.
- 1.2. The main purpose of the IFS is to provide transparency around infrastructure delivery in the area.
- 1.3. In particular, the IFS must include reports on the previous financial year's developer contributions (s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)) secured, received, spent and held. It is intended to be a factual financial report and does not set out strategies for securing and spending developer contributions towards infrastructure. It must also identify the up-to-date infrastructure needs of the Council which are intended to be met through CIL funding.
- 1.4. It is important to note that West Oxfordshire District Council receives funding from developer contributions which it must pass directly to partner agencies (such as the County Council for roads, education and flood alleviation, and the Integrated Care Board for healthcare). Whilst the District Council secures the funding, it does not have control over how or when these funds are directed by such partner agencies (beyond the terms of any s106 agreement) once the funds have been transferred. As such, the County Council must produce its own IFS and the District Council's IFS should be read in that context.
- 1.5. West Oxfordshire District Council works to secure funding for these (and other) infrastructure types by:
 - 1.6. Working closely with stakeholder/ partner agencies to collate infrastructure requirement lists (Infrastructure Delivery Plans- IDPs) and identifying funding needs,
 - 1.7. Setting planning policy requirements and producing developer contributions guidance,
 - 1.8. Negotiating planning obligations with developers,
 - 1.9. Reviewing site and plan viability,
 - 1.10. Seeking out all available funding streams, including CIL (charging CIL must be robustly justified); and,
 - 1.11. Keeping existing developer contribution receipts under review and directing those receipts which remain within its control towards the most pressing, priority infrastructure projects.
- 1.12. The figures in the IFS are set out as per the requirements in the CIL Regulations, which are different from the Council's Statement of Accounts (which is compiled in line with accounting standards). The IFS is, however, reconciled with the Council's accounting team.

2. WEST OXFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2024/25

- 2.1. The Council's latest Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is attached at Annex A and covers the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.
- 2.2. Section 2 of the IFS provides an overview of future infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire with reference to several sources of information including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) prepared in support of the Local Plan. The work of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) group is also referred to.

- 2.3. Section 3 reports on S106 planning obligations (agreed, received, spent etc.) in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.
- 2.4. **Headline figures** to note:
- 2.5. **Secured- £3,440,837.95** in financial contributions (a 7.5% increase on the previous financial year) as well as **263 affordable homes** were secured in Section 106 legal agreements during 2024/25;
- 2.6. **Collected- £2,525,351.53** of Section 106 funds were collected by the District Council in 2024/25;
- 2.7. **Spent- £1,110,130.81** of Section 106 funds were either spent by West Oxfordshire District Council or transferred to another party (such as Oxfordshire County Council, Town/Parish Councils or Thames Valley Police) for expenditure;
- 2.8. **Allocated- £2,143,908.138** of received Section 106 funds were allocated (i.e. committed to a certain project) but not spent in 2024/25;
- **Pooled- £8,506,287.75** received from Section 106 funds before 1st April 2024 which has not been formally allocated (see note below on 'allocation'). This includes **£1,025,286.89** of commuted sums which are held for maintenance of open spaces. As of 1st April 2024, the District Council held a total of £14,377,836.10 in S106 monies towards infrastructure projects.
- 2.9. A note on 'allocation'- The Council only formally allocates s106 funds once the infrastructure scheme in question has reached the commencement/ implementation stage and a successful request for draw down of funds has been made. Once this request is reviewed and the transfer of funds has been approved, then the amount is identified as 'allocated. This means that infrastructure schemes reach an advanced stage before they are formally acknowledged in our IFS reporting as 'allocated'.
- 2.10. The reporting limits of the IFS do not reflect the work that the Council is doing to bring infrastructure schemes to this point and the way it pools funding towards infrastructure, and because of this the 'allocated' financial figure can appear disproportionately low. Whilst funding might be held (or pooled), it is often earmarked towards specific infrastructure projects, and those projects are planned in reliance of that funding. Officers are continually and proactively working with stakeholders (including Parish and Town Councils) to bring infrastructure projects forward using the s106 funds which remain within the Council's control.
- 2.11. In the 2024/2025 financial period, a review of s106 available funds for strategic infrastructure projects was carried out and a significant proportion of the unspent/ unallocated funds are either
- a) earmarked towards those strategic projects; or,
 - b) unable to be earmarked for strategic projects because they are already earmarked for other specific infrastructure projects.
- A total of **£4,765,714.50** was earmarked as of the end of the financial year. Of that, **£2,969,663.83** was earmarked towards strategic priority projects and the rest of the total pooled was unavailable for earmarking to strategic projects because it was already earmarked towards specific local infrastructure types within the s106 agreement. As they are not formal 'allocations' or 'spends', these figures cannot be reported in the IFS, but they do provide important context.

- 2.12. Section 4 of the IFS provides a brief update on the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which will begin charging on 31 January 2026, following the adoption of the charging schedule on 01 October 2025.
- 2.13. Section 5 explains the extent of the infrastructure funding need that exists in West Oxfordshire. This need requirement covers the existing Local Plan period (20 years) and will be reviewed to respond to the emerging Local Plan 2041. It is proportionate to the funding need identified by other local authorities. The IFS explains the steps that the Council is taking to address this need, which includes the adoption of CIL. As part of CIL implementation and the emerging Local Plan preparation, the Council will also be reviewing its Spending Policy and priorities, to continue to ensure funding is directed as efficiently and effectively as possible towards the infrastructure which is most critical and beneficial to our residents.
- 2.14. Section 5 also provides an overview of the District Council's future spending priorities with reference to several relevant sources including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted in July 2023.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The IFS provides information on monies received and spent in relation to Section 106 planning obligations during the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. It also provides an overview of future infrastructure needs and costs and the spending priorities of the Council in relation to Section 106 planning obligations and CIL, subject to future implementation.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a requirement of the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.
- 4.2. There are potential legal implications if the Council does not fulfil its obligations in respect of Section 106 legal agreements. The preparation of the IFS provides much greater transparency in relation to S106 funds including those which have been received, spent, allocated and not yet allocated or spent.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The report raises no specific risks.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of equality.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of climate change.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. None. The publication of the IFS is a legislative requirement. Its content is dictated by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None.

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West Oxfordshire District Council

Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2024/2025

15 October 2025



Infrastructure Funding Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. To mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, developers are expected to make contributions towards new or improved infrastructure (schools, roads etc.) by way of Section 106 planning obligations (S106).
- 1.2. Section 106 agreements can relate to direct provision of onsite infrastructure, such as provision of affordable housing as part of a residential scheme and they can also include financial contributions towards the improvement of nearby community facilities. The terms of the S106 agreement determine when and how the contribution can be spent.
- 1.4. To provide transparency around how developer contributions are secured, collected, transferred and spent, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) annually¹. The IFS ‘looks back’ over the previous financial year².
- 1.6. The IFS must also ‘look forward’ to set out likely future infrastructure spending priorities for the Council.
- 1.7. Whilst there is no single format for preparing an IFS, the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) (CIL Regulations) require the following information to be included as a minimum:
 - A S106 planning obligations report;
 - A Community Infrastructure Levy report (where CIL is in place - note that CIL was not in place for 2024/2025 in West Oxfordshire District); and
 - A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund wholly or partly through CIL.
- 1.8. It is important to note that West Oxfordshire District Council receives funding from developer contributions, which it is required to pass directly to partner agencies, such as the County Council (for roads, education, and flood alleviation) and the Integrated Care Board (for healthcare). While the District Council is responsible for securing these funds, it does not control how or when the partner agencies allocate them, except as outlined in any Section 106 agreement. Therefore, the County Council must produce its own Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), and the District Council’s IFS should be interpreted in that context.

¹ Regulation 121A- community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended)

² This IFS covers the financial period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, which is referred to as 2024/2025.

- 1.9. West Oxfordshire District Council plays a key role in securing funding for a range of infrastructure types by:
- Collaborating closely with stakeholder and partner agencies to compile infrastructure requirements (Infrastructure Delivery Plans – IDPs) and identify funding needs;
 - Establishing planning policy requirements and publishing guidance on developer contributions;
 - Negotiating planning obligations with developers;
 - Assessing site and plan viability;
 - Exploring available funding sources, including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Adoption of a CIL charge must be robustly justified;
 - Proactively monitoring existing developer contribution receipts and allocating those within its control to the most urgent and high-priority infrastructure projects.
- 1.10. This IFS contains information on the infrastructure funding collected and spent by West Oxfordshire District Council and should also be read in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council’s IFS which is available to view separately at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/> .

2. Infrastructure Needs in West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 2.1. The main source of information on infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire is the District Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2016.
- 2.2. The IDP identifies the infrastructure that is needed to support housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire during the currently adopted Local Plan period 2011 – 2031.
- 2.3. It considers infrastructure needs under three broad categories.
- Physical infrastructure (including transport, water, energy, waste and recycling, minerals and telecommunications);
 - Social infrastructure (including education, leisure and sport, health, public safety, community and culture, social care and criminal justice); and
 - Green infrastructure (including informal and formal green space, public rights of way, Local Wildlife Sites, Conservation Target Areas etc.)

- 2.4. The IDP includes a schedule of infrastructure projects based on these three main categories. For each project, the schedule provides details of the anticipated costs (where known) expected delivery partners, any funding which has already been secured and how any shortfall is expected to be funded (e.g. S106, CIL).
- 2.5. A number of key projects identified in the IDP have now been completed including Phase 2 of Carterton Leisure Centre, a pedestrian crossing on Bridge Street in Witney and improvements to the Downs Road/A40 junction at Witney.
- 2.6. Others such as the Shores Green Slip Road improvements (SGSR) are currently in the process of coming forwards whilst some projects such as the West End Link Road in Witney are expected to come forward in the later period of the Local Plan. A new Infrastructure Delivery Plan/Strategy will be prepared to inform the new Local Plan.

Eynsham Area Infrastructure Delivery Plan (July 2020)

- 2.7. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 identifies the provision of around 3,200 new homes to the north and west of Eynsham, the former comprising a new garden village of around 2,200 homes and the latter, a sustainable urban extension of around 1,000 homes (237 of which are already completed/underway).
- 2.8. Delivery of the garden village (now referred to as Salt Cross) is being led by an Area Action Plan (AAP) and West Eynsham through a developer-led masterplan.
- 2.9. An Eynsham Area IDP (Stage 1 Draft Report, May 2019 and Updated Draft Report, July 2020) has been prepared, forming part of the evidence base for the Salt Cross AAP and helping to inform discussions on future infrastructure provision at West Eynsham.

Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019)

- 2.10. In February 2019 the Blenheim Estate and Woodstock Town Council commissioned Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to consult the community about the current and future infrastructure needs of Woodstock.
- 2.11. Following extensive consultation during 2019, the findings of the CFO work were launched at community events held in November 2019. Their report can be viewed online including a series of supporting appendices.
- 2.12. The report will be taken into account in the review of the West Oxfordshire IDP (2016) and also in relation to the consideration of relevant planning applications in the Woodstock area.

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

- 2.13. There have been two previous iterations of OxIS in 2017 and 2022 respectively. The current iteration of OxIS has identified a strategic infrastructure list for Oxfordshire which is, at the time of writing, out to consultation with internal stakeholders. The next stage of the OXIS working group project is to prioritise the infrastructure on that list. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive and is subject to change as the various Local Plan evidence bases develop. This work will be taken into account in preparation of the new Local Plan.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.14 The Council adopted its CIL charging schedule on 1 October 2025 with the implementation of CIL due to go live from the end of January 2026. CIL will provide additional income from developer contributions which is less geographically constrained in terms of its spending than S106 agreements. CIL can be used towards the improvement of existing infrastructure or the provision of new infrastructure support growth in the wider district area³ (and can be pooled with other planning authority's CIL receipts towards infrastructure beyond the boundaries of the district).
- 2.15 As a Charging Authority (CA) the Council will be able to determine the best ways to direct CIL to meet infrastructure needs for its area. The Council proposes to do this via a Spending Policy, as part of a time-bound implementation project for CIL. In addition to addressing core infrastructure needs the Spending Policy will seek to make funding available to promote healthy and sustainable communities within the district, and to respond to the climate and ecological emergency declared by the Council in 2019.

³ Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) - Regulation 59

3. Section 106 Planning Obligations

- 3.1. Planning obligations (generally set out in S106 agreements) are legal obligations entered into in order to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal and make it acceptable in planning terms.
- 3.2. Most often, this will be via a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – known as a Section 106 or S106 agreement - and will involve both the person with an interest in the land and the Council. It can also be achieved via a unilateral undertaking without the Council's involvement.
- 3.3. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address the unacceptable impact of development through a planning condition or by the use of other statutory controls. They are legally binding and enforceable if planning permission is granted and they are tied to the land.
- 3.4. Importantly, planning obligations must meet three legal tests; they must be:
 - Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Directly related to the development; and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 3.5. The District Council has been negotiating, securing and entering into S106 agreements for many years and has used this process to successfully deliver a raft of benefits to West Oxfordshire residents including new affordable housing, highway improvements, pedestrian and cycling routes, leisure and sports facilities, culture and art, primary health care provision and so on.
- 3.6. Set out below is an overview of S106 contributions which have been secured (i.e. formally agreed), collected, spent and allocated during the 2024/25 financial year.

S106 Summary for 2024/25

Table 1 - Financial comparison between current and previous reporting years

Reporting Year 2024/25	Amount (£) 2024/25	Reporting Year 2023/24	Amount (£) 2023/24	% Increase (Decrease)
Funds Secured through S106 Agreements entered into in 2024/25	3,440,837.95	Funds Secured through S106 Agreements entered into in 2023/24	3,183,352.60	8%
Funds Collected in 2024/25	2,525,351.53	Funds Collected in 2023/24	892,062.70	183%
Funds Spent in 2024/25	1,101,130.81	Funds Spent in 2024/25	1,510,850.55	(27%)
Allocated Funds	2,143,908.13	Allocated Funds	2,281,472.15	(6%)
Non-Allocated Funds	8,506,287.75	Non-Allocated Funds	8,603,240.35	(1%)
Maintenance of Open Spaces	1,025,286.89	Maintenance of Open Spaces	1,171,107.35	(12%)
Maintenance of Attenuation Ponds (Brize Meadow)	295,854.35	Maintenance of Attenuation Ponds (Brize Meadow) ⁴	270,115.81	10%

Table 2 - Annual comparison of Affordable Housing dwellings secured

Reporting Year 2024/25	Number 2024/25	Reporting Year 2023/24	Number 2023/24	% Increase (Decrease)
Affordable Housing dwellings required from S106 planning obligations signed in 2024/25	263	Affordable Housing dwellings required from S106 planning obligations signed in 2023/24	287	(8%)
S106 Agreements signed with S106 Affordable Housing planning obligations	4	S106 Agreements signed with S106 Affordable Housing planning obligations	7	(43%)

⁴ In 2023/24, the Maintenance of Attenuation Ponds figure was reported under Non-Allocated Funds. However, given the specific nature of the contribution, supporting the upkeep of attenuation ponds constructed on-site, it was separated out for clarity in the 2024/25 reporting. To enable a meaningful comparison, the 2023/24 figures have been adjusted accordingly in Table 1

S106 contributions secured (formally agreed) in 2024/25

- 3.7. During 2024/25, the Council secured commitments totalling £3,440,837.95 in future financial contributions through signed S106 agreements. These funds are expected to be received as developments progress. This sum is broken down in Table 3, which sets out the location of each development and the type of provision/contribution made.
- 3.8. These contributions are expected to come forward in a phased manner and it is important to note that the majority of the contributions will be index-linked and therefore this total should not be taken to be an exact sum that will be received by the District Council.
- 3.9. The Council also secured non-monetary obligations from S106 agreements signed in 2024/25, including on-site affordable housing provision. These are categorised and listed by location in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 3 - S106 Funds Secured through S106 Agreements entered into in 2024/25⁵

Reference	Location	Type	Amount (£)
20/02654/OUT	Land South East Of Oxford Hill, Witney	Biodiversity Net Gain Monitoring Fee	12,000.00
		Healthcare Facilities	388,800.00
		Community and Culture	56,700.00
		Lower Windrush Valley Project	33,711.00
		Outdoor Pitch Provision	805,500.00
		Eton Close Play Park Upgrade	20,000.00
		Sports Hall Provision	195,494.00
		Swimming Pool Provision	215,806.00
		Additional First Homes Contribution	TBC ⁶
21/00217/OUT	Land North Of Banbury Road, Woodstock	Healthcare Facilities	211,594.00
		S106 Monitoring Fee	5,000.00
		S106 Registration Fee	500.00
		Outdoor Pitch Provision	420,650.00
		Swimming Pool Provision	112,698.95
		Additional First Homes Contribution	TBC ⁶
22/03311/FUL	Mill House Hotel, Station Road, Kingham	Village Hall/Sports Pavilion Improvements	20,000.00
		S106 Monitoring Fee	500.00
22/03415/FUL	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,000.00
22/03539/FUL	Land (E) 429494 (N) 207689, Monahan Way, Carterton	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,500.00
		Elder Bank Hall	70,000.00
		New Community Hub/Sports Pavilion	240,000.00

⁵ Excludes payments secured that are to be paid direct to Oxfordshire County Council who will provide this information in their statement.

⁶ This will only become due if First Homes are sold as market housing. Contribution will depend on the sales value.

Reference	Location	Type	Amount (£)
		Healthcare Facilities	85,536.00
		Additional First Homes Contribution	TBC ⁶
23/00794/OUT	Land South Of 1 New Yatt Road, North Leigh	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,500.00
		Additional First Homes Contribution	TBC ⁶
		MUGA Maintenance	50,000.00
23/01206/FUL	Land West Of Witney North Of A40 And East Of Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Onsite Formal Outdoor Sports Facilities	349,800.00
		Healthcare Facilities	69,048.00
		Additional First Homes Contribution	TBC ⁶
		S106 Monitoring Fee	1,500.00
23/02245/FUL	Wychwood Garage, Fairspear Road, Leafield	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,000.00
		Affordable Housing Contribution	71,000.00
Total Funds Secured			3,440,837.95

Table 4 - Affordable Housing required from S106 planning obligations signed in 2024/25

Reference	Location	Total Units
20/02654/OUT	Land South East Of Oxford Hill, Witney	180
22/03539/FUL	Land (E) 429494 (N) 207689, Monahan Way, Carterton	35
23/00794/OUT	Land South Of 1 New Yatt Road, North Leigh	18
23/01206/FUL	Land West Of Witney North Of A40 And East Of Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	30
Total Affordable Housing Required		263

Table 5 - Non-monetary contributions from S106 planning obligations signed in 2024/25

Reference	Location	Type
20/02654/OUT	Land South East Of Oxford Hill, Witney	23 Self/Custom Build Housing
		Allotments
		Biodiversity Net Gain
21/00217/OUT	Land North Of Banbury Road, Woodstock	Community Engagement Role
		Biodiversity Net Gain
22/03539/FUL	Land (E) 429494 (N) 207689, Monahan Way, Carterton	Green Infrastructure
		Play Area
		Public Open Space
23/00794/OUT	Land South Of 1 New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Public Open Space
23/01206/FUL	Land West Of Witney North Of A40 And East Of Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Green Infrastructure
23/01732/FUL	The Bungalow, Station Road, Bampton	Green Infrastructure

S106 contributions collected in 2024/25

3.10. The Council collected a total of £2,525,351.53 through S106 planning obligations in 2024/25. Table 6 below provides a full breakdown of the contributions.

Table 6 - S106 Funds Collected in 2024/25⁷

Reference	Location	Contribution for	Received (£)
12/0084/P/OP	Land At West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Affordable Housing	567,579.00
14/0091/P/OP	Land East Of Monahan Way, Carterton	Football Pitches	475,697.30
		Carterton Leisure Centre	796,617.45
		Kilkenny Lane Country Park	68,803.09
		Public Art	152,895.75
20/01511/FUL	1 Farley Lane, Stonesfield	Affordable Housing	39,586.15
20/01933/FUL	Police Station, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Affordable Housing	7,698.65
20/02422/FUL	Land East Of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Healthcare Facilities	75,686.40
		Play and Recreation	54,299.78
		Sport and Recreation	95,540.35
		Public Art	11,756.54
20/02654/OUT	Land South East Of Oxford Hill, Witney	Biodiversity Net Gain Monitoring Fee	12,000.00
21/00217/OUT	Land North Of Banbury Road, Woodstock	S106 Monitoring Fee	5,000.00
		S106 Registration Fee	500.00
22/00986/FUL	Land North Of Cote Road, Cote Road, Aston	S106 Monitoring Fee	500.00
		Leisure	80,832.10
22/03240/OUT	Land South Of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	S106 Monitoring Fee	5,500.00
22/03311/FUL	Mill House Hotel, Station Road, Kingham	S106 Monitoring Fee	500.00
22/03539/FUL	Land (E) 429494 (N) 207689, Monahan Way, Carterton	Elder Bank Hall	70,358.97
		S106 Monitoring Fee	1,500.00
23/01206/FUL	Land West Of Witney North Of A40 And East Of Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,500.00
23/02245/FUL	Wychwood Garage, Fairspear Road, Leafield	S106 Monitoring Fee	1,000.00
12/0084/P/OP	Land At West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Affordable Housing	567,579.00
Total S106 Funds Collected			2,525,351.53

⁷ Excludes payments made direct to Oxfordshire County Council, Parish and Town Councils or other organisations under the terms of any Agreements.

S106 funds spent in 2024/25

3.11. A total of £1,101,130.81 collected from S106 planning obligations was spent in 2024/25.

Table 7 below provides a full breakdown of this expenditure.

3.12. The Council did not spend any funds collected from S106 planning obligations on repaying borrowed money.

Table 7 - S106 Funds Spent in 2024/25

Reference	Contribution for	Recipient ⁸	Amount (£)
08/1341/P/FP	Eynsham Village Hall	Eynsham Parish Council	28,513.70
08/1341/P/FP	Community Notice Boards, Eynsham	Eynsham Parish Council	1,718.30
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Installer (UBICO Ltd)	160.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Windrush CofE Primary School	3,460.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist	290.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Facilitator (Oxfordshire Play Association)	2,500.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist	100.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	The Little Blue Van	400.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist	3,205.47
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist	180.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist (Flourish Oxford Ltd)	180.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Artist	410.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Community Choir (Windrush Church)	6,970.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art (Witney)	Venue (Windrush CofE Primary School)	120.00
12/1217/P/FP	Highway Land Trees Maintenance (Carterton)	Oxfordshire County Council	13,000.00
12/1217/P/FP	Travel Plan Monitoring (Carterton)	Oxfordshire County Council	900.00
13/0345/P/FP	Raleigh Crescent Play Area, Witney	Witney Town Council	75,000.00
13/1465/P/OP	Public Art (Bampton)	Bampton Parish Council	23,752.00
13/1465/P/OP	Bampton Primary School	Bampton Primary School	9,947.00
13/1465/P/OP	Buckland Road Recreation Ground, Bampton	Bampton Parish Council	51,795.46
13/1752/P/FP	Public Art (Carterton)	Creative Workshops (AGE UK)	5,480.00
13/1752/P/FP	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Toilets	West Oxfordshire District Council	11,133.00
14/0091/P/OP	Brize Meadow Attenuation Pond 1, Brize Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	6,826.70
14/01496/FUL	Extra Care Housing Windrush Place, Witney	West Oxfordshire District Council	1,521.00
14/01884/FUL	Public Art (Chipping Norton)	Facilitator (The Branch Trust)	10,000.00

⁸ West Oxfordshire District Council has passed on the contributions and the responsibility for the actual spend is normally with the recipient of the S106 monies.

Reference	Contribution for	Recipient ⁹	Amount (£)
15/00320/FUL	Northmoor Play Area	Northmoor Parish Council	26,584.00
15/01934/OUT	North Leigh Pictorial Village Sign	North Leigh Parish Council	8,032.00
15/03148/OUT	Old Witney Road Play Area, Eynsham	Eynsham Parish Council	32,472.05
16/00758/OUT	Public Art (Ducklington)	Ducklington Parish Council	2,639.00
16/01450/OUT	Curbridge Parish Hall	Curbridge & Lew Parish Council	3,597.00
16/03416/OUT	Public Art (Chipping Norton)	Chipping Norton Town Council	5,805.00
16/03627/OUT	Stanton Harcourt Village Hall	Stanton Harcourt Parish Council	78,265.04
17/00629/FUL	Standlake Recreation Ground Play Area	Standlake Parish Council	5,355.13
17/00629/FUL	Standlake Village Hall	Standlake Parish Council	1,100.00
17/01859/OUT	Ripley Avenue Play Area, Minster Lovell	Minster Lovell Parish Council	72,294.19
17/03509/FUL	Automated Prescription System	Chipping Norton Health Centre	16,645.87
19/00728/FUL	Ducklington Arts Trail	Ducklington Parish Council	25,858.00
22/03539/FUL	Elder Bank Hall, Brize Norton	Brize Norton Parish Council	70,358.97
CGU008	Waterford Road Play Area	West Oxfordshire District Council	3,918.60
20/02654/OUT	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	12,000.00
21/00217/OUT	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	5,500.00
22/00986/FUL	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	500.00
22/03240/OUT	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	5,500.00
22/03311/FUL	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	500.00
22/03539/FUL	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	1,500.00
23/01206/FUL	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	1,500.00
23/02245/FUL	S106 Monitoring Fees	West Oxfordshire District Council	1,000.00
STC032	Maintenance of Open Spaces	West Oxfordshire District Council	145,820.46
Various ⁹	Biodiversity Net Gain at Radford Farm, Chipping Norton	Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment	117,832.35
Various	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Car Park Extension	West Oxfordshire District Council	161,528.15
Various	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Play Area	West Oxfordshire District Council	37,462.37
Total S106 Funds Spent			1,101,130.81

⁹ Various indicates that a combination of contributions from different developments have been spent on these projects

S106 money received by the Council in prior years but not spent in 2024/25

- 3.13. The CIL Regulations require local authorities to report on the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was received before the reported year but which has not been allocated by the authority, and the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was allocated but not spent during the reported year.
- 3.14. A total of £2,143,908.13 received prior to 1 April 2024 was allocated for funding infrastructure but not spent during 2024/25. Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the allocations.

Table 8 - Allocated S106 Funds, received prior to 1 April 2024, but not yet spent

Reference	Allocated to	Amount (£)
07/1970/P/FP	Temporary Public Art Programme at Windrush Place, Witney	788.24
08/1341/P/FP	Annual Maintenance Programme Flood Management, Hazeldene Close, Eynsham	16,904.89
12/0084/P/OP	Public Art Features in West Witney	83,983.82
13/0345/P/FP	Public Art Features in Witney	2,603.27
13/1752/P/FP	Temporary Public Art and Interpretation in Carterton provided by West Oxfordshire District Council	34,890.90
14/0091/P/OP	Public Art Features and Programme in Village and Brize Meadow by Brize Norton Parish Council	29,640.98
14/01496/FUL	Affordable Housing in Witney	32,662.00
14/01884/FUL	Temporary Public Art Programmes for Youth and Community in Chipping Norton Delivered by Various Organisations	1,889.71
14/1215/P/OP	West Witney Sports Ground	356,669.58
16/03416/OUT	Chipping Norton Town Hall Window Murals	3,000.00
16/04230/FUL	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	5,545.92
18/01517/FUL	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Trees	19,875.67
21/00228/FUL	3G Pitch at Carterton Football Club	373,195.42
Various ¹⁰	3G Pitch at West Witney Sports Ground	1,002,100.88
Various	Skate Park Extension for Buckland Rd Recreation Ground, Bampton	120,000.00
Various	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Car Park Extension	38,351.85
Various	Chipping Norton Artist Led Wellbeing Projects	21,805.00
Total Allocated S106 Funds		2,143,908.13

¹⁰ Various indicates that a combination of contributions from different developments have been allocated towards these projects

- 3.15. A total of £8,506,287.75 was received through S106 planning obligations before 1st April 2024, and which had not yet been allocated by the District Council at the end of the reporting period.
- 3.16. The Council only formally allocates s106 funds once the infrastructure scheme in question has reached the commencement/ implementation stage and a successful request for draw down of funds has been made. Once this request is reviewed and the transfer of funds has been approved, then the amount is identified as 'allocated'. This means that infrastructure schemes reach an advanced stage before they are formally acknowledged in our IFS reporting as 'allocated'.
- 3.17 The Council is doing to bring infrastructure schemes to this point and the way it pools funding towards infrastructure, and because of this the 'allocated' financial figure can appear disproportionately low. Whilst funding might be held (or pooled), it is often earmarked towards specific infrastructure projects, and those projects are planned in reliance of that funding. Officers are continually and proactively working with stakeholders (including Parish and Town Councils) to bring infrastructure projects forward using the s106 funds which remain within the Council's control.
- 3.18. During the 2024/2025 financial year, a review of available s106 funding for strategic infrastructure projects was undertaken. This review found that the unspent or unallocated funds are either:
- a) earmarked for strategic infrastructure projects (more than half of the total unspent funds), or
 - b) not eligible to be earmarked for strategic projects due to being already committed to specific infrastructure schemes as defined by the terms of the individual s106 Agreements.
- 3.19. A breakdown by category is set out in Table 9 below. As and when decisions are made to allocate these various S106 contributions, this will be set out in future iterations of the IFS as in Table 8 above.

Table 9 - Non-Allocated S106 Funds received before 1 April 2024

Contribution for	Amount (£)
Affordable Housing	2,755,134.67
Cemeteries	67,150.07
Community Facilities	533,841.08
Flood and Water Management	18,982.80
Flood and Water Management (Brize Meadow)	98,223.94
Green Infrastructure	36,880.00
Highways and Sustainable Transport	12,147.00
Public Art	153,027.35
Sports, Play and Leisure	3,954,020.67
Town Centre Improvements (Carterton)	82,339.61
Town Centre Improvements (North Leigh)	2,000.00
Town Centre Improvements (Witney)	666,264.67
Waste and Recycling	126,275.89
Total Non-Allocated S106 Funds	8,506,287.75

3.20. The District Council held a total of £14,377,836.10 in S106 monies on 1st April 2025 as per the table below.

Table 10 - Overview of S106 Funds held on 1 April 2025

Contribution for	Amount (£)
Maintenance of Open Spaces	1,025,286.89
Maintenance of Attenuation Ponds (Brize Meadow)	295,854.35
Non-allocated	8,506,287.75
Allocated	2,143,908.13
Received (but not spent/allocated) in 2024/25	2,406,498.98
Total S106 Funds	14,377,836.10

Some of the impactful projects made possible by S106 funding during 2024/25.

New extension at Elder Bank Hall, Brize Norton

The Elder Bank Hall extension provides a versatile meeting room with accessible facilities for both the Parish Council and local community groups. When not in use for meetings, it serves as a hot-desking space to support remote workers seeking social interaction. Additionally, the project includes a secure office for the Parish Clerk, enhancing the management of council affairs.



Refurbishment of Ripley Avenue Play Area, Minster Lovell

Using Section 106 financial contributions, the Parish Council has successfully expanded and upgraded the Ripley Avenue Play Area in Minster Lovell. The improved space now offers a diverse and stimulating environment designed to engage children of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers, encouraging active play, social interaction, and outdoor enjoyment.



Automated Prescription System, Chipping Norton Health Centre

Thanks to Section 106 financial contributions, a 24/7 medicine vending machine has been installed at the Health Centre. This innovative service allows patients to request their prescriptions be delivered to the machine, enabling convenient, secure collection at any time, day or night. It improves access to medication, reduces pressure on pharmacy staff, and offers greater flexibility for those with busy schedules or mobility challenges.



4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 4.1 CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help fund supporting infrastructure. It can only be levied if there is an adopted charging schedule in place. The Council did not have an adopted charging schedule in place during the reporting period but has since formally adopted its CIL charging schedule on 1 October 2025, following an examination held in July 2025.
- 4.2 The Council will begin charging CIL from 31 January 2026 and will thus be reporting on CIL receipts from the 2025/2026 financial year onwards.
- 4.3 Further detail, including the examination report, draft charging schedule and relevant guidance are available on the Council's website¹¹.

¹¹ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-infrastructure-levy/community-infrastructure-levy-examination/>

5. Infrastructure Funding Need and Future Spending Priorities

- 5.1. West Oxfordshire District Council has previously undertaken an Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis to assess the level of infrastructure funding required to support planned growth across the district. This analysis forms a vital part of the evidence base used to justify the need for developer contributions towards infrastructure delivery¹².
- 5.2. The latest analysis (March 2025) identifies an overall infrastructure funding requirement of between £143.9 million and £176.7 million, based on anticipated costs and known funding sources. This figure reflects the majority of infrastructure needs for the current Local Plan period (2011–2031). The analysis will also be reviewed and updated to support the development of the new Local Plan. It is important to note that this is a conservative estimate, and the actual funding need is likely to be higher due to evolving infrastructure demands over time. This level of funding need is broadly typical for a local authority area. Based on this evidence, the Council has demonstrated the justification for introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which it plans to begin charging in January 2026.
- 5.3. The Council continues to proactively address these infrastructure needs by identifying, securing and efficiently utilising all possible funding streams. Developer contributions play an important role in meeting the infrastructure needs arising from economic and residential growth. As set out in Section 4 above, the Council has now adopted a CIL charging schedule to increase income for investment in infrastructure. Income and expenditure from CIL will be reported in the next IFS for the financial year 2025-2026.
- 5.4. As well as securing as much investment funding as possible, the Council also prioritises spending to ensure that the most vital and pressing needs are met first. Future infrastructure spending priorities in West Oxfordshire are in part set out at section 2 of this report. They will be influenced by a number of factors including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and any subsequent update/replacement prepared to inform the new Local Plan. Regard will also be had to any locally specific evidence of infrastructure needs such as the Eynsham Area IDP and Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019) as well as any relevant countywide assessments of need set out in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).

¹² i.e. The shortfall in funding available to meet identified infrastructure requirements when the total cost (where known) is set against known or likely available funding.

- 5.5. In considering infrastructure priorities emerging from these studies the Council will have regard to relevant changes in circumstance (e.g. projects since having been completed, or additional/alternative sources of funding having been identified etc.) as well as the respective degree of importance of each infrastructure item in supporting planned growth.
- 5.6. Future funding will be drawn from a variety of sources including Section 106 legal agreements (planning obligations), CIL and other potential sources of funding where applicable and available (e.g. from Central Government).
- 5.7. Further information on the District Council's future spending priorities is set out in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted in July 2023 and will be further clarified in the future CIL Spending Policy. The SPD provides information on what contributions will be sought from new development in West Oxfordshire and from what source i.e. Section 106 and/or CIL.

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 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 15 OCTOBER 2025
Subject	SAFEGUARDING POLICY UPDATE JULY 2025
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities Email: rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Claire Locke, Interim Director, Publica Email: claire.locke@publicagroup.uk Susan Hughes, Business Manager Support and Advice and Designated Safeguarding Lead Email: susan.hughes@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Paula Massey, Enabling Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Email: paula.massey@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To inform Members of the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
Annexes	Annex A - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Annex B - Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That The Executive resolves to: I. Agree and adopt the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Publica Executive Leadership Team. No wider consultation as this is an update to the Cabinet approved policy 12 November 2020

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Care Act (2014) places a duty on local authorities to:

- Consider people's wellbeing when making decisions around care and support.
- Provide services or take steps towards preventing, delaying or reducing the needs for care and support.
- Providing information and advice on services available locally.

1.2 In November 2020 West Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet approved the implementation of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

1.3 This updated policy consolidates changes to referral processes and clarifies key responsibilities, ensuring the Council continues to meet its statutory duty of care.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 West Oxfordshire District Council is committed to safeguarding, which primarily involves protecting adults at risk, young people, and children from harm, abuse, or neglect. This commitment also extends to early intervention, promoting health and wellbeing, and upholding human rights. In collaboration with partner agencies, the Council aims to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect and ensure that individuals' views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs are central to any decisions made. Promoting individual wellbeing remains a core priority throughout all safeguarding actions.

2.2 West Oxfordshire District Council delivers a range of services that directly impact the lives of adults, young people, and children. Employees, elected members, contractors, and volunteers often work closely with individuals who may be at risk, placing the Council in a key position to safeguard and promote adult welfare. Services such as Licensing, Benefits, Planning, Environmental Health, Strategic Housing, Homelessness, Enforcement, Community Safety, Leisure Management, and Customer Services all play a role in this responsibility. Where appropriate and within legal parameters, the Council is required to share information with partner agencies to protect adults at risk of harm.

2.3 The Safeguarding Policy outlines the Council's roles, aims, and responsibilities. Through training and increased awareness, they equip employees and members to take proactive and informed action when concerns arise regarding an adult, young person or child's safety or wellbeing.

3. MAIN POINTS

3.1 As a second-tier authority, the Council has a statutory responsibility and duty of care to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities and agencies.

3.2 West Oxfordshire District Council is a member of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (OSCP).

3.3 Key data relating to cases:

- Rising safeguarding activity in 2023–2024

- 30 cases during financial year 2024-2025
- 16 cases this financial year as at 17.09.25
- Mental Health & Suicide Ideation: Most frequent category

3.4 By implementing this Policy, the Council establishes a corporate-wide approach to safeguarding that applies across all services, providing clear strategic direction and defined lines of accountability.

3.5 A similar Policy will be adopted for Publica Group Ltd to ensure its officers support the Council's duties in respect of safeguarding groups at risk.

Internal consultation and engagement will be undertaken as necessary to ensure the effective implementation and delivery of this Policy.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Do nothing namely not review the 2020 policy

This is not good practice where guidance has changed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The current resourcing of the safeguarding function requires a review to ensure that all statutory responsibilities of the Councils are being effectively met. Subject to the outcome of this review and discussions with Councils, there may be a need to consider additional staffing resources to strengthen the safeguarding function and ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

5.2 There will be a requirement to deliver ongoing training and awareness which could have financial implications. Training of employees is currently undertaken through the online iHASCO training suite to Level 2 for both Adults and Children. Additional training can be obtained through the Safeguarding Board and Partnership for a one-off cost, dependent upon the course.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Children Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 place duties on the Council to ensure its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and adults at risk.

6.2 The Council requires up to date policies to support its actions and avoid legal challenges.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Council has a duty of care towards adults at risk, children, and young people who participate in its activities or access its services. It recognises that all adults at risk, young people and children have the right to be safe and protected from harm. Without a safeguarding policy and appropriate staff training, there is an increased risk of harm to individuals and potential reputational damage to the Council.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed and is attached as Annex B to this report.

9. SUSTAINABLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Result – No actions required.



(END)



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures



Safeguarding is Everyone's Concern

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Background and Aims**
- 3. Definitions and Types of Abuse**
- 4. Governance**
- 5. Responsibilities**
- 6. Training**
- 7. How To Report A Concern**
- 8. What Happens Next**

Versions

Document Control	Date	Author
Version 1	21.10.2020	Enabling Manager
Version 2	18.09.2025	Enabling Manager, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Documents of influence:

Ref No	Acts and Policies of Influence	Date of Issue
	Legal Framework	
	Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023	
	Care Act 2014	
	Mental Capacity Act 2005	
	Partners	
	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board	
	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	
	Associated Acts	
	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	
	Crime and Disorder Act 1998	
	Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022	
	Modern Slavery Act 2015	
	UK Data Protection Legislation	
	Prevent Duty	
	Policies	
	Suicide Prevention Guidance	October 2024
	Whistle-Blowing Policy	January 2022
	Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure	September 2023
	Recruitment Policy and Procedure	February 2024

1. Introduction

Safeguarding refers to measures and practices put in place to protect adults at risk, young people and children from harm, abuse or neglect. More widely it is about early prevention, health, wellbeing and human rights.

The purpose of the policy and procedures are to ensure that West Oxfordshire District Council, (the Council) are aware of their legal obligations to meet their responsibilities in safeguarding adults at risk, young people and children with a consistent approach.

This guide applies to employees, elected members, casual workers, volunteers, contractors and partners delivering services on behalf of the organisation.

2. Background and Aims

Safeguarding does not operate in isolation; its relevance is important to all services and has direct links to other policies, see the table above for Documents of Influence. This policy will raise awareness of safeguarding and what to do if there are suspicions that abuse is taking place.

The Council advocates that **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS** and that all people have the right to live in safety, free from abuse, harm and neglect.

The Council aims to create an environment where employees, elected members, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligations and are adequately trained and encouraged to think of safeguarding as being part of their responsibility, understanding the need for them to take a full and active part in the prevention and response to safeguarding.

The Policy aims to ensure:

- Protection for adults at risk, young people and children while using services that the Council are responsible for, whether directly delivered or commissioned.
- Employees, elected members, casual workers, contractors and volunteers involved in working with adults at risk, young people and children, implement good working practices to ensure a safe and healthy environment.
- Awareness of safeguarding is raised and what to do if a form of abuse is suspected or identified.
- Sound recruitment and selection procedures are operated for employees and volunteers to ensure their suitability for working with adults at risk, young people and children.
- Provide appropriate training for employees, and volunteers who work with adults at risk, young people and children.
- Sharing information is done in compliance with our Data Protection Policy, the Data Protection legislation (currently the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018).

There are fundamental differences between the legislative framework for safeguarding adults and children, which recognises an adult's right to self-determination.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

The Council have a duty under the Care Act 2014, with responsibilities applying to adults who:

- Have care and support needs (whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs or not).
- Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Council have a duty under the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people when carrying out their functions.

3. Terms, Types of Abuse and Definitions

Terms

Term	Definition
Safeguarding	Actions taken to protect an individual's health, wellbeing, and human rights, ensuring they live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.
Adult At Risk	An adult at risk is any person aged 18 or over who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Has needs for care and support.- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.- As a result of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.- Lacks capacity to promote their rights as laid down in the Mental Health Capacity Act (2005) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (2007).
Young Person	A young person is anyone aged 16-17, acknowledging their increased autonomy and potential for making choices about their own safety, even if those choices are unwise.
Children	A child includes everyone under the age of 18.
Child Protection	Activities undertaken to prevent children suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm.

Adult Abuse

Type	Definition	Example Indicators
Physical	Non accidental use of physical force that results or could result in bodily injury, pain or impairment including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication and restraint.	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching, bruising consistent with being hit, unexplained burns, unexplained fractures.
Domestic Abuse	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality.	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching, bruising consistent with being hit, isolation from friends and family, emotional abuse, withholding finances, gaslighting, coercive and controlling.
Sexual	Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.	Incontinence, difficulty/discomfort walking, excessive washing, sexually transmitted diseases, bruising/bleeding in genital areas, bruising, urinary infections.

Emotional or Psychological	Acts or behaviour which impinge on the emotional health of, or which causes distress or anguish to individuals.	Disturbed sleep, anxiety, confusion, extreme submissiveness or dependency, sharp changes in behaviour, loss of confidence or appetite.
Neglect and Acts of Omission	Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs which result in a situation or environment detrimental to the individual.	Ignoring medical, physical or emotional care needs (incl. dressing), failure to provide access to appropriate health care, withholding medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
Financial and Material Abuse	Unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of an adult at risk. Scamming and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs.	Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills, unexplained withdrawals of money from accounts, personal possessions going missing, unusual interest by a friend/neighbour in financial matters.
Discriminatory	When values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals. Including discrimination on grounds of race, faith, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment, slur or similar treatment.	Inciting others to commit abusive acts, lack of effective communication, bullying.
Institutional or Organisational	Where the culture of the organisations places the emphasis on the running of the establishment above the needs and care of the person.	Lack of care plans, contact with the outside world not encouraged, no flexibility or lack of choice.
Self-neglect	Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.	A deterioration in physical appearance, lack of grooming, rapid weight gain or loss.

Child Abuse

Type	Definition	Example Indicators
Emotional	Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. This includes coercive control, a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, or abusive behaviour.	Conveying to children that they are worthless or inadequate; imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations; serious bullying; exploitation; isolation; segregation.
Sexual	Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including use of images through social media or other IT.	Inappropriate sexual behaviour, use of language, fear of adults, recoiling from physical contact.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child's psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.	Inadequate food, clothing or shelter. Poor access to appropriate medical care or treatment, isolation, truancy, lateness.
Physical	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.	Unexplained bruising, burns, fractures, weight gain or loss, repeat illness.
Criminal and Sexual Exploitation	Using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification or some other personal or financial advantage.	Challenging behaviour; Appears to be making unwise choices. Don't understand that they are being exploited. Criminal exploitation is a main method used by County Lines gangs. Sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's recognition such as being persuaded to post sexual images on social media or other IT.

Acts that constitute abuse.

Type	Definition
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation as all procedures, involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
Honour Based Violence (HBV)	HBV refers to acts of violence, threats or abuse that are committed to protect or defend the perceived honour, dignity or reputation of a family or community.
Forced Marriage	Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both parties do not, or cannot, give full and free consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.
Stalking	Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviour that causes a person to feel alarmed, distressed or fearful for their safety or the safety of others.
Radicalisation	Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to adopt or support extreme political, social or religious ideas often associated with terrorism, violence or other forms of extremism.
Modern Slavery	Modern Slavery refers to individuals being exploited and forced to work through threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power. It is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Local authorities have a duty as designated 'first responder' agencies, to identify and refer all potential child victims and consenting adult victims.
Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of exploitation.
Cyber Crime	Cyber-crime is any criminal activity committed using computers or the internet including attacks on systems, theft of data, online fraud and exploitation. These crimes can cause serious harm and pose significant threats to adults at risk, young people and children. Cyber-crime may take the form of cyber bullying, the process of using the Internet, mobile phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. The harassment can have wide-reaching effects on the victim, as the content used to harass the victim can be spread and shared easily among many people and often remains accessible for a long time after the initial incident.

4. Governance

Confidentiality, Data Protection and Sharing of Information

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. The Data Protection laws should not prevent, or limit, the lawful sharing of information for the purposes of keeping adults at risk, young people and children safe. Lawful and secure information sharing between Social Services and other local agencies is essential for keeping adults and children safe and ensuring they get the support they need. Lawful sharing of information needs to be justified and documented.

The Data Protection Act 2018 introduced 'safeguarding' as a reason to be able to process sensitive, personal information, even without consent (**DPA, Part 2, 18; Schedule 8, 4**).

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of adults, young people and children. As with all data sharing, appropriate organisational and technical safeguards must be in place.

All employees and volunteers must comply with legislative requirements and the Council guidelines with regard to Confidentiality, Data Protection and Information Sharing.

The Council recognises that all information regarding the safeguarding of adults at risk, young people and children should be kept confidential. However, in order for individuals to be protected from harm, in some circumstances, usual considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situations within the Council may be overridden.

The Council will abide with the relevant Safeguarding Board Information Sharing Protocols.

[Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board](https://www.osab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Working-in-Partnership-Oxfordshire-Procedures.pdf)

<https://www.osab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Working-in-Partnership-Oxfordshire-Procedures.pdf>

[Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.oscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-seven-golden-rules-of-information-sharing.pdf)

<https://www.oscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-seven-golden-rules-of-information-sharing.pdf>

The Council understands the importance of ensuring that personal data is always treated fairly, lawfully and appropriately and that the rights of individuals are upheld. The Council are fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

The Council are required to share information for several reasons, including when information is requested in connection with an assessment of a child's needs under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, or an enquiry under section 47 of that Act, or in connection with court proceedings.

Under certain circumstances the Council may need to share information about a child or young adult with other agencies. This information sharing is coordinated by the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

The type of information that may be shared includes names, contact details, information about a person's physical or mental health or relations with others. The sharing of this information will be restricted to those who have a demonstrable need to know and robust protections, such as encryption of electronic data, will be used to share this information.

All employees and volunteers must comply with the Council's internet and e-mail policy and IT Security Policy.

The Lead Safeguarding Officer(s) will act as a first point of contact for notification of any deaths of adults at risk, young people and children on Council premises.

Information must only be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis, but Council Officers do not need consent to share information if an adult at risk, young person or child is suffering, or at risk of, serious harm.

Employees or volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

5. Responsibilities

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility and duty of care to report issues relating to Safeguarding to the appropriate authorities/agencies, furthermore the Council will actively contribute to any Audit of safeguarding practises:

The Council are members of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP).

We will ensure safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, Government guidance and complies with best practice and Safeguarding Boards' requirements.

All employees and elected members must ensure that they are fully aware of all policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, are fully trained and will contribute to raising awareness, and reporting any issues or concerns around safeguarding.

Designated Senior Leaders

The Chief Executive of the Council has overall responsibility for safeguarding ensuring that their organisation fulfil safeguarding duties and responsibilities and that clear lines of accountability are established.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team will ensure that:

- The Council meets its legal obligations.
- All safeguarding matters are treated seriously and dealt with in a timely fashion.
- Safeguarding, where applicable is considered in strategies, plans and services to ensure compliance with national and local policies.
- Employees and members are supported on all aspects of safeguarding to ensure procedures are adhered to.
- Appropriate training is facilitated, in particular, for frontline employees.
- There is a consistent overview of all contracts to ensure that the aims of this safeguarding policy are always embedded.

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Business Manager Support and Advice
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) - Enabling Manager

Designated Safeguarding Officers will ensure that they:

- Support the leadership team, employees and elected members.
- Provide guidance and advice to aid implementation of this policy and in making a referral to appropriate agencies and to fulfil their roles in relation to safeguarding.
- Manage the logging of issues of concern and associated details.
- Provide supervision and support for all employees in matters of safeguarding issues of concern.
- Communicate to all employees when the safeguarding policy is updated with a summary of the amendments and provide easy access to the updated policy.

Safeguarding Support Officers

Safeguarding Support Officers will ensure that they:

- Support the leadership team, employees and elected members.
- Provide guidance and advice to aid implementation of this policy and in making a referral to appropriate agencies and to fulfil their roles in relation to safeguarding.
- Triage all reported issues of safeguarding concern and action appropriately.
- Manage the logging of issues of concern and associated details.

Service Managers

Service Managers will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is adhered to across the organisation.
- They and their employees complete and implement the appropriate safeguarding training and that this is reinforced through team meetings, 121s etc.
- Employees handling safeguarding issues are fully supported.
- They take responsibility for the quality of safeguarding adults at risk, young people and children in their service area.
- All employees and volunteers working with adults at risk, young people and children are subject to the Disclosure and Barring checks appropriate to their role and legislative requirements relevant to their role.
- They implement a culture of open communication between employees, apprentices, employers, and mentors.
- Consideration is given to social interaction in the workplace and outside within the team when working with Apprentices.
- They report any concerns in compliance with the policy.

Human Resources

Human Resources will ensure that:

- The relevant policies are in place e.g. Safer Recruitment, Disciplinary Procedures, Whistleblowing, Safeguarding Apprentices and Young People in the workplace.
- Managers are supported in the use of these policies directly and indirectly associated with safeguarding.
- Provide support with the pre-employment checks (including through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)).
- All relevant posts are subject to a satisfactory disclosure being received. This will be detailed in an employee's written statement of terms and conditions of employment.
- All existing employees whose role requires a DBS certificate will be required to have a recheck every three years.
- There is awareness within the workplace for all employees working with apprentices where they are under 18, classed as young people or children, and that therefore there may be different considerations in the language used and their interaction with them.

Employees

Employees will:

- Treat all safeguarding matters seriously.
- Report any concerns in compliance with the policy.
- Be aware of and adhere to the safeguarding policy and referenced policies.

- Complete safeguarding training relevant to their role covering children, adults, prevent, domestic abuse and modern slavery.
- Demonstrate active professional curiosity.

Elected Members

Elected Members are uniquely placed to support the safeguarding of adults at risk, young people and children within their community. They can also provide effective leadership to ensure that the council are fulfilling its corporate responsibility.

Elected Members should:

- Work and abide in accordance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Report their concerns about an adult at risk, young person or child's welfare or someone else's behaviour regarding an adult at risk, young person or child as outlined in this policy.
- Adopt good practice in terms of safeguarding when carrying out their council duties.
- Seek support or raise concerns with the Safeguarding Support Team when necessary.
- Undertake safeguarding awareness training covering children, young people, adults, domestic abuse and modern slavery.

Commissioning and Procurement

When services are commissioned and procured on behalf of the Council, it still retains a duty to ensure that those services comply with relevant statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

As part of the tendering process, the tenderer will be required to evidence documentation of their safeguarding compliance where appropriate.

The Lead Commissioner for an individual contract will be responsible, with support of the DSL and Legal team, to ensure compliance with safeguarding regulations at all stages of the commissioning process.

Contractors

The Council will ensure that:

- All contractors providing services directly related to adults at risk, young people or children must have a safeguarding policy and safeguarding practices aligning with the Council's requirements.
- Contractors providing a service to the Council such as maintenance work at a council property will be made aware of the council's procedures and policies.
- Relevant safeguarding practices are adopted by the contractor.

Volunteers

All service areas must ensure that volunteers are aware of and have received appropriate training and are fully DBS compliant in relation to this Policy.

Council owned buildings

Council owned buildings may be used by organisations providing services or activities for adults at risk, young people or children. As a condition of occupancy, all agreements relating to occupancy of the building must seek assurances that organisations have robust protocols in place to mitigate any specific safeguarding concerns and that they have a safeguarding policy in place that adheres to the principles of the relevant county Adult Safeguarding Board and Children Safeguarding Partnership.

6. Training

The followed must be adhered to in relation to training:

- All new employees and members will receive general awareness of safeguarding training at induction.
- All employees must complete the Mandatory iHASCO training modules of Level 2 Safeguarding Adults and Level 2 Safeguarding Children and subsequent refresher modules. Specific focus will be on timing of undertaking the training for those involved in the training and mentoring of apprentices and young people.
- Responsible and Lead Officers should ensure that there is the right level of staff trained to Level 3 Safeguarding.
- All employees must complete the Prevent Duty classed as Mandatory in iHASCO.
- Employees are encouraged to complete the Modern Slavery training which is an optional module in iHASCO.
- All employees must complete the Business Compliance training which includes elements of Modern Slavery which is an iHASCO Mandatory module.
- All Taxi and Private Hire Drivers must undertake safeguarding training. This is facilitated by the Council prior to a licence being issued. A refresher must be undertaken every three years. If a driver has their licence suspended, they must provide a renewed certificate of safeguarding for a licence to be reissued.
- The Council will seek to ensure that any knowledge is cascaded appropriately across the organisation and opportunities to enhance and upskill through additional training are shared.

7. How To Report A Concern

Our duty of care extends to employees, adults at risk, young people and children and as adults with trust and influence, our employees are in a powerful position to recognise and receive information about abuse.

It is not the responsibility of an employee to take responsibility for deciding whether abuse is taking place. It is their responsibility to take all allegations seriously whether the allegation is about an employee or the public and raise the issue of concern by following the procedures detailed in the flowchart below.

Where there are concerns about an employee's behaviour outside the workplace towards an adult at risk, young person or child, this should be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate Service Manager.

The Council assures all employees and volunteers, that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent) report his or her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a person may be being abused or bullied.

Furthermore, the Council recognises it has a duty of care to an employee against whom allegations have been made.

Issues of concern

[Link to the Council's Portal for page to raise an issue of concern](#)

<https://portal.westoxon.gov.uk/wodc-portal/ls/content/3443256375251131/support/safeguarding>

Oxfordshire direct referrals

For children – contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 4pm on Fridays 0345 0507666

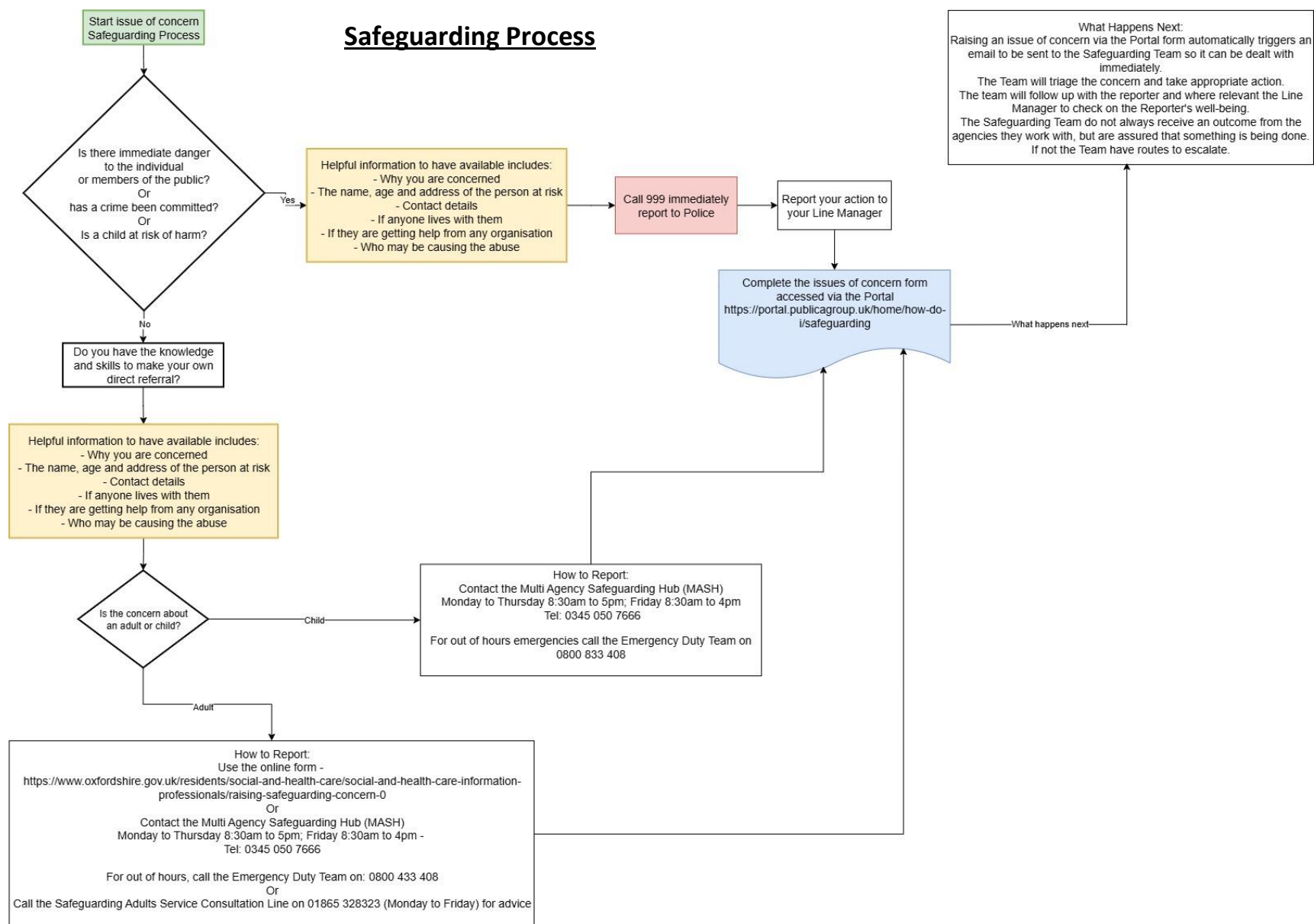
For out of hours emergencies, call the Emergency Duty Team: 0800 833408

For adults – [use the online form](#) or call the MASH on 0645 0507666

Or call the adults safeguarding consultation line 01865 328232, Monday to Friday for advice.

For out of hours emergencies, call the Emergency Duty Team: 0800 833408

Safeguarding Process



What Happens Next

If the issue of concern is referred directly to an external organisation, they will undertake their own investigation and determine next steps in the process. We may not receive any feedback on the outcome.

If the issue of concern is reported through the Portal, the Safeguarding Support Team/Leads will consider the information provided and decide whether or not the concern needs reporting to the appropriate Safeguarding bodies, whether signposting to support groups or other organisations is required, or if no further action should be taken. The person reporting the issue of concern may be contacted by a member of the Safeguarding Team to discuss the matter further and to check in on wellbeing.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Paula Massey	
Date of assessment: 01.08.2025	Telephone: 01594 812389 Email: paula.massey@publicagroup.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Safeguarding Policy Update July 2025

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

To update the existing corporate Safeguarding Policy to ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibility and duty of care in reporting safeguarding issues and that its members, officers, contractors and those commissioned to provide services are aware of their legal obligations to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The Care Order Act 2014 The Children Act 2004
--

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Oxfordshire	✓	Oxfordshire Adults Safeguarding Board; Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership; Oxfordshire Safeguarding Districts Sub-



		Group
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	✓	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB). Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Other Districts Recently Refreshed Policies
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

n/a

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

Internal consultation and engagement will be undertaken as necessary to ensure the effective implementation and delivery of this Policy

If NO please outline any planned activities

N/A

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	✓
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>



9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People		✓		The proposal is inclusive to people of different age groups, but it is not specific to age.	
Age – Old People		✓		The proposal is inclusive to all ages.	
Disability		✓		The proposal is inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability.	
Sex – Male		✓		The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender.	
Sex – Female		✓			
Race including Gypsy and Travellers		✓		The proposal is inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race.	
Religion or Belief		✓		The proposal is inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion.	
Sexual Orientation		✓		This proposal is inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation.	
Gender Reassignment		✓		The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender.	
Pregnancy and maternity		✓		The proposal is inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or maternity leave, but it is not specific to this group.	
Geographical impacts on one area		✓		The proposal is inclusive to the whole of West Oxfordshire district.	
Other Groups				This proposal is inclusive of all the other groups that are not mentioned.	
Rural considerations:		✓		The proposal is inclusive to whole of West	



ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.				Oxfordshire district.	
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10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale

11. Is there anything else that you wish to add?

n/a

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where an negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Council and that I/we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Paula Massey	Role:	Enabling Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Date:	01.08.2025
Line Managers signature:	Susan Hughes Business Manager – Support and Advice and Designated Safeguarding Lead			Date:	05/08/2025

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 15 OCTOBER 2025
Subject	THE LOW-INCOME FAMILY TRACKER
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Rachel Crouch –Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities Email: rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Jon Dearing – Interim Executive Director. Email: jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager, Environment, Welfare and Revenues Mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To give a brief overview of the Low-Income Family Tracker progress since inception
Annexes	N/A
Recommendations	That the Executive resolves to: I. Note the report
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Community Wellbeing Manager. Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) is a product developed and provided by the organisation, Policy in Practice. It is a platform that combines a comprehensive welfare policy analytics engine with the council's administrative data to help support strategic and operational decisions. This enables the council to identify financially struggling households, design appropriate interventions, and track the effectiveness of those interventions.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** Lift was implemented in November 2024 with an initial set up of initiatives as follows:

- 1) Benefit Maximisation – Targeting cohorts of households who were not receiving the full range of benefit they may be entitled to, such as Attendance Allowance, Pension Credits and Council Tax Support.
- 2) Healthy Start – Targeting cohorts who have children at pre-school age (0-5) to support access to healthy food, baby formula and other help to support mothers both during and post pregnancy. The support has a value of £1230 per household.
- 3) Free School Meals (FSM) – Although the council does not hold data of eligible families, it is aware that not all eligible families take up the FSM. From data held on LIFT campaigns can be run against those households on low income/benefits that have children of school age to promote FSM.
- 4) Identifying Households in an Income Deficit – With targeted support to those identified through LIFT the council can support in maximising incomes which helps build a solid foundation.

- 2.2** Following implementation, the first campaign was run, identifying those of pension age, eligible for pension credit, but not in receipt of it. 233 letters were sent to those households identified, promoting pension credits and providing detailed advice of how to make a claim.

- 2.3** An evaluation of this campaign has shown that 68 pensioners (29%) has so far made a successful pension credit claim.

- 2.4** Overall, the campaign has generated £250,125 in support for those 68 pensioners; giving them access to winter fuel payments, plus other passported support. A breakdown of the figures is as follows:

- Annual value of pension credit £183,681 (average per household, £2,701)
- Backdated pension credit £52,843
- Additional winter fuel payment £13,600

Based on the average age of pensioners and the average life expectancy of a pensioner in the West Oxfordshire District being 81 years old, the lifetime pension credit amount is £1.8 million.

A further campaign promoting eligibility to pension credits will be run later in the year.

- 2.5 Due to the annual billing and benefit uprating taking precedence and commencing in January 2025, LIFT campaigns were paused. The second campaign, Warm Homes Discount (WHD) take-up was launched in March.
- 2.6 WHD is a one-off £150 discount off a household's electricity Bill. Households are eligible for a WHD if they receive the guaranteed credit part of pension credit or have a low income and high energy costs. For many households, this discount is automatic; but many can miss out due to their energy suppliers, meter type or payment method.
- 2.7 3500 households were identified through LIFT as being eligible and letters were sent advising them of their eligibility and how to claim the discount. Data shows that for those contacted:
- Saw an average increase in take home income of £86 per month, per household.
 - 114 households moved out of arrears greater than £250.
 - 81 households moved out of a cash shortfall.
 - 17 households moved out of fuel poverty, and
 - 57 households moved out of food poverty.
- 2.8 This campaign shows that as households take-up additional support, they are then able to pay back debts and afford more of the essential costs, like food and fuel. Interventions are either helping increase household income and/or reducing expenditure which will have a positive impact on households abilities to manage debts, maintain mortgage/rent payments and reduce child poverty.
- 2.9 The Severe Disability Premium (SDP) is an additional amount added to housing benefit to support households with severe disabilities. Due to changes in circumstances, some eligible households may miss out on this additional support.
- 2.10 The benefits team use data within LIFT to conduct monthly reviews with households on housing benefit and eligible for SPD. So far, 3 households have found to have underclaimed this premium, with one of these households receiving a £1,000 underpayment and an overall increase of over £60 in their monthly income from April 2025.

3 FUTURE CAMPAIGNS

- 3.1 In the first week of July a campaign was run to identify those households in receipt of Universal Credit, but not council tax support. 239 households were identified, and letters have been sent to all advising them of their possible eligibility.
- 3.2 A similar campaign was also run during the same week to identify those of pension age in receipt of housing benefit but not council tax support. 20 household were identified, and application forms were sent to this cohort.
- 3.3 As these campaigns have only just been run, there is no evaluation data available yet on how productive they have been.
- 3.4 In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, the council has also launched a Free School Meals (FSM) campaign. FSMs gives children a free meal during the school days as well

as access to holiday activities, uniforms, and trips. Schools also benefit from additional pupil premium funding for each child taking up this support.

- 3.5 Families save when they take up FSMs, In 2024, the cost to the government for one year of meals for a child cost £490. A working family in receipt of universal credit would need to pay £1513 to cover the same cost.
- 3.6 Through the LIFT platform officers have identified 791 households with 1,585 children eligible for FSMs in the district. Letters have been sent to this cohort encouraging them to take up the support.
- 3.7 Officers are also planning to launch a campaign in the coming months to increase the take up of Attendance Allowance (AA).
- 3.8 AA is a vital support towards providing extra support for pensioners with a disability or health condition severe enough that they need someone to help look after them.
- 3.9 Together with AgeUK, officers have created a letter tailored to increase household engagement. Each letter will also include information about improving support for council tax once AA has been claimed.
- 3.10 The LIFT platform has so far identified 564 households that might be eligible for AA.
- 3.11 Also, in collaboration with Citizens Advice, the council will be looking to support households to increase their financial literacy through providing advice and support on how to lower their household expenses and increase their income.
- 3.12 250 households have been identified through the LIFT platform and letters will be sent inviting them to engage with Citizens Advice. Households will be given a £50 voucher following full engagement of the scheme and that notable changes have been made to improve their financial resilience.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Oxfordshire County Council funded the first year of the LIFT platform for all Oxfordshire Local Authorities through its Cost-of-Living programme. The County Council has also indicated that they will continue to fund the project up to 31 March 2027. Confirmation of this is pending.

- 5.2** Resource for analysing data and running campaigns is through base staffing budgets; however, the cost of printing and posting letters to households will increase above budget allocation. Consideration should be given to use surplus housing benefit 'one-off' new burden funding to cover any additional costs in this area.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Given the need to process personal data, a General Data Protection Impact Assessment is also required by law to be undertaken before any data processing is undertaken. The ICT Audit and Compliance Manager has ensured that all GDPR have been processed correctly and that the Department for Works and Pensions, Memorandum of Understanding for the reuse of data has been complied with.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** There are no risks associated with this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** None

(END)

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