



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025
Subject	Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment Email: <a href="mailto:lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk">lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
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Summary/Purpose	To seek Executive approval for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) to invest and participate in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP)
Annexes	EXEMPT Annex A – Executive Summary
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Approve WESP participation in principle for an initial five-year term.</li><li>2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Services, the Executive Member for Finance and the Director of Finance to:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Approve the WESP business case.</li><li>ii. Oversee programme implementation.</li><li>iii. Ensure governance, risk management, and benefits tracking are in place.</li></ol></li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Putting Residents First</li><li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li><li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	<p>YES – Annexe A</p> <p>Oxfordshire – Waste &amp; Environmental Services (WES) Programme Business case.</p>
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Transformation Task &amp; Finish Group</li> <li>• Councillor Lidia Arciszewska</li> <li>• Councillor Alaric Smith</li> <li>• Senior Council officers</li> </ul>

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1. This report seeks Executive approval to invest and participate in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP), a collaborative programme between local authorities in Oxfordshire designed to transform the delivery of waste and environmental services across the county. WESP sets a strategic course for transformative change in waste and environmental services, with participating Councils, including West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), actively shaping the outcomes to ensure they reflect shared priorities of a modern, fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for residents and delivers real benefits such as fleet decarbonisation and modern strategically located facilities.
- I.2. WESP is not a fixed set of operational changes but a strategic framework comprising eight interdependent mini business cases aimed at improving service efficiency, environmental outcomes, and financial sustainability.
  - a. **Waste Collection Harmonisation** – Aligning collection systems and frequencies to improve efficiency and resident experience.
  - b. **Circular Economy Acceleration** – Coordinated efforts to reduce waste and promote reuse, repair, and recycling.
  - c. **Joint Procurement** – Leveraging scale of economy to reduce costs and improve supplier performance.
  - d. **Infrastructure Development** – Creating a hub-and-spoke model for waste transfer and treatment.
  - e. **Fleet Maintenance Collaboration** – Sharing resources and expertise to reduce downtime and costs.
  - f. **HWRC Management** – Improving access, consistency, and cost-effectiveness of recycling centres.
  - g. **Paid-for Services** – Reviewing chargeable services (e.g. commercial, garden, and bulky waste collections) for effectiveness and efficiency.
  - h. **Streets & Grounds Maintenance** – Exploring alignment of services to improve public realm outcomes.
- I.3. The Programme responds to key challenges including rising operational costs, plateauing recycling rates, increasing environmental pressures, and anticipated structural changes from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It proposes a shift in operating model for waste collection, a mixed economy model for other services, and a hub-and-spoke infrastructure; centralised locations where major activities will take place alongside smaller satellite sites typically handling localised tasks, to support operational efficiency.
- I.4. The overall programme across all authorities is projected to deliver a net benefit of £98.9m over 10 years (£119m revenue, £20.1m cost).
- I.5. It is anticipated that, subject to full partner inclusion, an investment of £1.7m by WODC will realise benefits of circa £17.4m over the 10-year period.

**1.6.** Key drivers include:

- 1. Circular Economy**
- 2. Cost Efficiency**
- 3. Environmental Impact**
- 4. Resident Friendliness**

**1.7.** The Programme is designed to be LGR-neutral, adaptable to any future governance structure in Oxfordshire, and includes a robust governance and benefits management framework to ensure WODC retains strategic influence.

**1.8.** By agreeing in principle, WODC secures a leadership role in shaping the programme without committing to full implementation until benefits are clear.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **Current Contractual Arrangements**

**2.1.** The current waste collection contractor for WODC is Ubico Ltd. In February 2023, the Executive and Council approved extending the Ubico contract by two years, from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2026.

**2.2.** Considering the current contract nearing expiry and other legislative changes that are due to come into force within the medium term, a report was commissioned in partnership with Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council to undertake a review of the future options for the authorities. The report outlined the opportunity and appetite to work collaboratively with other district Councils in Oxfordshire as well as with Oxfordshire County Council in its capacity as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). It concluded that WODC is well placed to take a transformative approach to how it provides its waste and environmental services over the next few years.

**2.3.** For WODC, the realistic options for future service delivery once the Ubico contract ends could be;

- 1. Outsourcing the contract to a private sector contractor**
- 2. Continuing to deliver the services with Ubico**
- 3. Exploring alternative service delivery models**

**2.4.** A report was presented to the Executive on 15 Jan 2025 where it was resolved to

- “endorse and support the principle of working collaboratively in the future with other local authorities in Oxfordshire on environmental and waste services” and
- “to agree to support the creation of the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP).”

## Development of Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP)

- 2.5. The scope of the Programme includes all major waste and environmental services: household, food, and garden waste collection; recycling centres and management; waste disposal and energy recovery; trade and hazardous waste; street cleaning; grounds maintenance; and associated support and commissioning services.
  - 2.6. The Programme has been developed to respond to a growing set of strategic challenges facing local authorities in the delivery of waste and environmental services. These included rising operational costs, recycling performance plateauing, increasing environmental pressures, and the anticipated structural changes from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
  - 2.7. Other regulatory changes due to impact waste and environmental services include Simpler Recycling, Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR).
  - 2.8. WESP has now produced a business case that sets out the case for the four authorities to work in partnership to deliver waste and environmental services in a co-ordinated and integrated way across the county to deliver improvements in operational performance; in environmental sustainability and biodiversity; and to deliver substantial savings and efficiencies. The proposals anticipate all the potential results of Local Government Reorganisation and consider all regulatory changes.
- ### 3. Case for Change
- 3.1. The business case identifies drivers for change, including the climate emergency, shared sustainability goals, financial pressures, performance gaps, and the need to address fragmentation in service delivery. The Programmes overarching key drivers are;
    1. **Circular Economy:** Promoting sustainable resource use by reducing waste, extending the life of assets, and keeping materials in high-value circulation.
    2. **Cost Efficiency:** Leveraging economies of scale through joint procurement and partnership working.
    3. **Environmental Impact:** Aligning with Net Zero through activities such as Fleet decarbonisation and biodiversity goals.
    4. **Resident Friendliness:** Ensuring a modern, fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for to residents.
  - 3.2. An agreement in principle ensures WODC can influence programme design and governance while retaining flexibility should anticipated benefits not materialise.

**3.3.** The programme's primary outcomes are:

- a. To have improved the sustainability of our waste and environmental services
- b. To have improved the quality and efficiency of our waste and environmental management services
- c. To have reduced the cost of waste and environmental management services, and
- d. That successes will have been built upon an ambitious partnership

**3.4.** Despite relatively strong recycling performance (average county rate of 56.23% in 2024/25), progress has plateaued, and residual waste is increasing. This trend is environmentally and financially unsustainable, WESP is also designed to align with national policy reforms such as:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - a policy approach that makes manufacturers responsible for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their entire lifecycle, including end-of-life recovery and recycling. By shifting the cost and accountability away from local authorities and consumers, EPR incentivises producers to design products that are more durable, easier to repair, and fully recyclable, helping to reduce waste and support a circular economy.
- **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)** - Under the ETS, Energy-from-Waste (EfW) plants are required to hold allowances for the carbon emissions they produce. As the cap on emissions tightens and the cost of allowances rises, EfW operators will face higher operational costs. These increased costs are expected to be passed on to local authorities and waste customers through higher gate fees or service charges, ultimately making residual waste treatment more expensive and strengthening the financial case for recycling, reuse, and waste reduction.
- **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)** - places a refundable deposit on drinks containers, which consumers can reclaim when they return the empty container to a designated return point. For collection authorities, this means a significant portion of high-quality and therefore income generating recyclables, particularly aluminium cans and plastic bottles, will be removed from kerbside collections. As a result, authorities may see reduced volumes (and therefore reduced revenue) from these materials, alongside potential adjustments to collection services and contractual arrangements. However, lower contamination levels and reduced littering may also lead to operational savings in street cleansing and waste processing.
- **Simpler Recycling** - a policy approach that standardises the types of materials collected for recycling across all local authorities, ensuring households have a consistent, easy-to-understand recycling system. For collection authorities, this means adapting local services to meet national requirements, such as collecting the core set of materials (paper, card, plastics, metals, glass, and food waste), which may require changes to collection routes, containers, contracts, and processing arrangements. While this may involve upfront operational adjustments, it is intended to improve recycling performance, reduce confusion for residents, and create more efficient, streamlined services.

**3.5.** These reforms have the potential to significantly impact the cost and structure of waste services, and WESP positions Oxfordshire to respond proactively.

- 3.6. Importantly, the Programme anticipates the different potential outcomes of LGR and is structured to be adaptable to any of the three proposed models: a single Oxfordshire Council, two councils (e.g. Oxford & Shires and Ridgeway), or three councils (e.g. Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire, Ridgeway). By acting now, WODC can ensure it retains strategic influence over the future direction of its waste services, rather than being subject to decisions made post-reorganisation.
- 3.7. The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) therefore represents a strategic, operational, and financial opportunity for the Council to be part of a strategic partnership shaping the future of waste and environmental services in the county reflecting the shared priorities of a modern, fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for residents and delivers real benefits such as fleet decarbonisation and modern strategically located facilities.

#### 4. Transforming Waste Services – Key Initiatives

- 4.1. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Programme sets a strategic course for transformative change in waste and environmental services, with participating Councils actively shaping the outcomes to ensure they reflect shared priorities and deliver real benefits.
- 4.2. The WESP Programme addresses challenges through a comprehensive programme of works, structured around eight business cases. These projects target key service areas and as well as being designed to be interdependent, they form a cohesive and integrated programme of change.
- 4.3. The mini business cases comprise of:
- Paid-for Products – Standardising and expanding commercial services (e.g. commercial, garden, and bulky waste collections) to benefit residents and local businesses.
  - Procurement – Creating a programme-wide procurement function to take advantage of economies of scale.
  - Waste Collections – Harmonising resident friendly collection services and introducing Simpler Recycling.
  - Circular Economy – Driving behaviour change, seeking to minimise waste by keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, recycling, and sustainable design.
  - Waste Infrastructure – Developing a strategically located hub-and-spoke model with modern Eco Hubs to ensure services are operated from the most efficient location.
  - HWRCs – Reviewing sourcing delivery options for recycling centres.
  - Fleet Maintenance – Centralising fleet services to optimise fleet size and sustainability.
  - Streets & Grounds Maintenance – Optimising services and introducing biodiversity practices.

- 4.4. Collectively, these initiatives deliver a modern, fit-for-purpose service model, combining uniform standards with strategically located eco-hubs and low-emission fleets
- 4.5. As part of the Programme's implementation planning, a delivery options appraisal is proposed to identify the most effective vehicle for delivering the transformed services. WODC are actively working with current service partners, including Ubico, to assess and determine the optimum delivery model that aligns with strategic goals, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1. In considering the future of waste and environmental services in West Oxfordshire, it is essential to evaluate the alternative options available to the Council. The WESP Programme presents a compelling case for transformation, but decision-makers must be confident that it offers the best route forward compared to other plausible approaches. The business case outlines three principal alternatives:

### **5.2. Do Nothing**

This option involves maintaining the status quo and deferring any major decisions until the outcome of LGR is known. While this may appear prudent, it carries significant risks. The current service model is fragmented, inefficient, and increasingly costly. Waste volumes are rising, recycling rates have plateaued, and the financial pressures on local authorities are intensifying. The introduction of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2028 will add costs annually to incineration costs across Oxfordshire, the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will reduce the value of items collected at the kerbside and inflationary pressures are also projected to increase costs.

Waiting for LGR would delay the realisation of benefits and reduce WODC's influence over future service design. It would also risk duplication of effort, missed funding opportunities (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility payments), and loss of strategic momentum. The business case scores this option lowest in terms of strategic alignment and value delivery.

### **5.3. Independent Transformation by WODC:**

This option would see WODC to pursue its own transformation programme outside of WESP. While this may offer greater control, it would be significantly more complex, costly, and less effective. The scale of change required, across infrastructure, procurement, service delivery, and behaviour change, is beyond the capacity of a single district council. Independent transformation would also forgo the economies of scale, shared expertise, and purchasing power that WESP offers.



Additionally, national policy reforms such as Simpler Recycling, EPR, and ETS require coordinated responses. Fragmented approaches risk non-compliance, inefficiency, and reputational damage. The business case highlights that outsourcing or independent procurement is not viable in the current climate due to market instability, regulatory uncertainty, and the scale of transformation required.

#### **5.4. Agree in principle to proceed with WESP Ahead of LGR**

This is the recommended option.

This option allows WODC to act decisively, secure early benefits, and retain strategic influence. The Programme is designed to be adaptable to any LGR outcome, whether Oxfordshire moves to a single unitary council, two councils (e.g. Oxford & Shires and Ridgeway), or three councils (e.g. Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire, Ridgeway). Acting now ensures WODC helps shape the future rather than being shaped by it. This approach balances early influence with prudent risk management, allowing WODC to shape the programme without binding commitment until benefits are proven.

The Programme is ready to proceed, with the eight business cases developed, a programme governance model proposed, and anticipated benefits of £98.9m over 10 years. (£17m for WODC) It aligns with national policy, supports climate and biodiversity goals, and offers a robust financial case. Sensitivity analysis confirms resilience even under adverse conditions.

### **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.** In summary, the alternative options available to West Oxfordshire District Council either delay progress or fragment effort. Choosing to wait for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) risks missing out on substantial financial savings, strategic influence, and early alignment with national reforms. Pursuing independent transformation would be complex, costly, and less effective, lacking the scale, shared expertise, and purchasing power that a county-wide approach offers.
- 6.2.** By contrast, the WESP Programme presents a well-developed, evidence-based solution that is both strategic and scalable. By investing in a modern, fit-for-21st-century service model, WODC will deliver clarity for residents, environmental gains through fleet decarbonisation, and operational efficiency through strategically located facilities.
- 6.3.** WESP is projected to deliver significant benefits over 10 years, with a large Return on Investment (ROI), pay back within three years and a high Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). Even under adverse conditions, the Programme remains financially viable.
- 6.4.** Importantly, the Programme recognises that while Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) introduces uncertainty, it does not prevent progress as it anticipates the three potential

models (single, dual, or triple unitary councils) and remains adaptable to each, ensuring that WODC retains strategic influence regardless of the outcome.

- 6.5. By investing for five years, the Council will be able to benefit from the options and initiatives that can commence as soon as the Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) is agreed, delivering early benefits and maintaining momentum. These include operational improvements, procurement activities, and preparatory work that are not contingent on governance changes. The five year term will allow further initiatives, such as infrastructure and Commercial Services development, to be strategically sequenced to commence following the LGR decision in mid-2026, ensuring alignment with future governance structures and maximising long-term benefits.
- 6.6. Although WESP will not fully launch until all partners have signed up and WODC's delegated decision is confirmed, agreeing in principle provides WODC with control and influence during programme development, while safeguarding against premature commitment. Committing to invest now guarantees influence over service design, accelerates benefits for residents, and positions WODC as a proactive, forward-thinking partner dedicated to sustainability, efficiency, and innovation. Acting promptly avoids the risks of delay, such as missed savings, diminished influence, and continued fragmentation.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The financial case for the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) is compelling, both in terms of the scale of projected benefits and the urgency of the pressures it seeks to address. Waste and environmental services currently represent a significant and growing cost for WODC, outpacing inflation and reflecting broader trends in rising operational costs.
- 7.2. Investing in the WESP Programme is projected to deliver significant net benefits over 10 years. The investment includes both capital and revenue expenditure, with the majority of investment front-loaded in the first three years to support programme mobilisation, infrastructure upgrades, and service transformation. The total programme, inclusive of all Oxfordshire Authorities, breaks even from year 3, where savings initiatives are a mixture of cost efficiencies through economies of scale and optimising income streams for commercial offerings.
- 7.3. The delivery of each of the mini business cases and the achievement of larger performance and financial benefits of the wider programme will require additional capital and revenue investment, circa £20m.
- 7.4. The table below shows the indicative total requirement (Revenue and Capital) of £1.7m over the 10-year timeline for WODC.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE - INDICATIVE WESP INVESTMENT REQUIREMENT											
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	TOTAL
Revenue	191	401	371	228	51	51	69	51	51	69	1,533
Capital	0	0	0	82	0	0	0	82	0	0	165
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1,697</b>

- The costs associated with the delivery of each initiative have been apportioned to partners based on the level of benefit that each individual authority will receive. The benefits and costs are indicative at this stage. There are several assumptions upon which the costs and benefits are based, as follows.
  - Some revenue costs are one-off, whilst others, such as the investment in behaviour change campaigns, will be on-going.
  - Programme and project management revenue support costs are included at a total cost of £6m across the first three years of the program.
  - Excluded from the spend above is the investment required in infrastructure and the capital receipts that the Programme may achieve from the sale of current sites.
- 7.5. These assumptions will continue to be developed and revised as each mini business case is worked through, with further papers being brought forward to seek additional funding, if the requirement cannot be contained within existing budgets.
- 7.6. The Programme also anticipates further financial opportunities through asset rationalisation, commercialisation, and improved contract management. These have not yet been fully quantified but are expected to enhance the overall financial return and will be evaluated once the overall programme is underway.
- 7.7. To underpin this commitment, a strict benefits management plan will be developed and implemented. This plan will track financial, environmental, and operational outcomes against agreed targets, enabling transparent reporting and timely intervention if benefits deviate materially from expectations.
- 7.8. To ensure West Oxfordshire District Council secures a return on investment, it is proposed that the Council commits to a minimum of a five-year term of participation in WESP. This timeframe aligns with the Programme's financial modelling and allows for the delivery of early benefits while maintaining flexibility for future governance decisions post-LGR.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The legal implications of West Oxfordshire District Council's (WODC) participation in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) are significant and must be carefully considered to ensure compliance, transparency, and resilience throughout the transformation process. The Programme proposes a new operating model that includes the establishment of a shared local authority company, the redesign of commissioning and other services that support Waste and Environmental services, and the potential reallocation of

service responsibilities, all of which require robust legal frameworks and governance arrangements.

- 8.2.** Establishment of a Shared Local authority Company: One of the central legal considerations is the creation of a shared Local authority company to deliver waste collection and potentially other environmental services. Under UK procurement law, specifically the Procurement Act 2023, contracts awarded to Local authority companies are exempt from competitive tendering if certain conditions are met. These include that the company is wholly owned by the contracting authorities, that it carries out at least 80% of its activities for those authorities, and that the authorities exercise control over the company similar to that which they exercise over their own departments
- 8.3.** The legal structure of the Local authority company must be carefully designed to ensure compliance with these conditions. This includes drafting Articles of Association, Shareholder Agreements, and Service Level Agreements that clearly define ownership, control, governance, and operational scope. Consideration must also be given to employment law, particularly in relation to TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, if staff are transferred into the new entity.
- 8.4.** An agreement in principle reduces immediate legal exposure and allows governance frameworks to evolve as the programme matures.
- 8.5.** Governance and Contractual Arrangements: The Programme will require new governance arrangements to oversee the Local authority company and the broader transformation. These arrangements must be legally sound and capable of adapting to future changes, including Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Options include joint committees under the Local Government Act 1972, shareholder boards, and delegated authority models. Each option carries different legal responsibilities and risks, particularly in relation to decision-making, liability, and transparency
- 8.6.** Contracts currently held by WODC and other authorities may need to be novated or renegotiated. This includes long-term service contracts, leases, and supplier agreements. Legal advice will be required to assess the feasibility and implications of contract novation, particularly where third-party consent is needed or where termination clauses may be triggered.
- 8.7.** Procurement and Commissioning Reform: The Programme proposes a consolidated procurement and commissioning function to improve value for money and strategic alignment. This function must operate within the framework of the Procurement Act 2023, which introduces new rules on transparency, competitive procedures, and contract management. Legal support will be needed to ensure that all procurement activities comply

with the Act and that any exemptions (e.g. Local authority arrangements) are properly documented and justified.

- 8.8. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** The Programme is designed to be adaptable to LGR, which introduces additional legal complexity. Depending on the model adopted—single, dual, or triple unitary councils—there may be changes in statutory responsibilities, asset ownership, and service delivery structures. Legal advice will be essential to navigate these changes and ensure that WODC’s interests are protected during the transition
- 8.9. Risk and Liability:** Legal risk management will be critical throughout the Programme. This includes ensuring compliance with environmental regulations, data protection laws (e.g. GDPR), health and safety legislation, and employment law. The Programme’s risk register identifies legal risks and proposes mitigation strategies, including robust governance, stakeholder engagement, and contingency planning.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1.** The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) is a large-scale transformation programme involving multiple authorities, service areas, and delivery models. As such, it carries a range of strategic, operational, financial, and legal risks that must be actively managed to ensure successful implementation and long-term sustainability. The business case outlines a comprehensive risk management framework, including a programme-level risk register, mitigation strategies, and governance arrangements.
- 9.2. Strategic Risks**
- The most significant strategic risk is the potential misalignment of partner priorities, particularly in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). While four authorities are currently committed to the Programme, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have opted to pursue independent procurement routes. Their future participation remains uncertain, and any changes in political leadership or policy direction could affect the Programme’s cohesion and scope.
  - Mitigation: The Programme has been designed to be adaptable to any LGR outcome, including single, dual, or triple unitary models. Governance arrangements will be structured to accommodate new partners and ensure continuity of service delivery regardless of structural changes.
- 9.3. Operational Risks**
- Operational risks include delays in implementation, resistance to change, and capacity constraints. The Programme involves the consolidation of services, infrastructure upgrades, and the establishment of new delivery vehicles (e.g. a Local authority company). These changes require significant coordination, staff engagement, and technical expertise.

- Mitigation: A phased implementation plan has been developed, supported by a dedicated programme team and four interdependent workstreams. Each workstream will have its own project manager responsible for risk identification and mitigation. A Programme Risk Management Group will oversee risk reporting and escalation.

#### **9.4. Financial Risks**

- Financial risks include cost overruns, under-delivery of savings, and uncertainty around funding sources. The Programme is projected to deliver significant net benefits over 10 years, but this is contingent on successful implementation of the mini business cases and realisation of projected efficiencies and income growth.
- Mitigation: A detailed financial model has been developed, including sensitivity analysis and contingency planning. Even under adverse scenarios (e.g. 50% reduction in savings and 100% increase in costs), the Programme remains viable. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments provide short-term funding to support mobilisation and early investment.

#### **9.5. Legal and Regulatory Risks**

- Legal risks include non-compliance with procurement regulations, employment law, and environmental legislation. The establishment of a Local authority company and the redesign of procurement functions must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and other statutory requirements.
- Mitigation: Legal advice will be sought throughout the Programme to ensure compliance. Governance documents (e.g. Articles of Association, Shareholder Agreements) will be developed to formalise roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Regulatory changes (e.g. ETS, Simpler Recycling) will be monitored and incorporated into planning.

#### **9.6. Reputational Risks**

- Failure to deliver promised benefits or disruption to services could damage public trust and stakeholder confidence. This is particularly relevant given the Programme's visibility and its alignment with climate and sustainability goals.
- Mitigation: A robust communications and engagement strategy will be implemented, targeting elected members, staff, partners, and the public. Benefits realisation will be tracked through a dedicated framework, and lessons learned will be captured and shared across the Programme.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

### **10.1. See below**

## II. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

### **Project Brief**

The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) is a bold, county-wide transformation programme designed to proactively tackle the current environmental, financial, and operational pressures facing our waste services based on the following principles: 1 - Circular Economy: Embedding sustainable resource use and waste minimisation. 2 - Cost Efficiency: Addressing high residual waste disposal costs, fragmented delivery models and utilising scale of economy. 3 - Environmental Impact: Responding to the climate emergency and aligning with Net Zero, Biodiversity and Environmental targets. 4 - Resident Friendliness: Ensuring services remain reliable, accessible, and responsive to local needs.

Criteria	Score	Justification
Energy Use	2	The electrification of the fleet will reduce the use of fossil fuels.
GHGs	2	One of the key strategic drivers of the programme is to achieve Environmental and Net Zero targets.
Air quality	2	A collaborative approach towards fleet sustainability will lead to more efficient routes and reduce the overall amount of vehicles used.
Land use change	0	While there is an infrastructure mini business case included in the programme, it is likely to only affect brownfield sites
Soil and waterway health	8	Collaboration between Oxfordshire Authorities will decrease the use of pesticides in the drive to increase biodiversity.
Waste	4	A key driver for the programme is to move towards a Circular Economy and move as much waste as possible up the waste hierarchy.
Sustainable Transport	2	Meeting net zero targets will include the electrification of part of the fleet
Biodiversity	4	The Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Mini business case includes the increase of biodiversity within its benefits
Climate Change Adaptation	0	While any new infrastructure will be as environmentally friendly as possible, this is not clearly stated in the Business case
Sustainable Materials	4	The collaborative approach will allow greater control over the destination of collected recyclables. A key driver is the move towards a circular economy.
Food	0	The Programme will not have a direct effect on this.
Health	4	The move towards the electrification of the fleet and increased sustainability of all fleet activity will reduce the impact on air quality
Housing	0	The Programme will not have a direct effect on this.
Education	0	The Programme will not have a direct effect on this.
Built Community	2	The Infrastructure mini business case includes a "Hub & Spoke" model for strategic sites, placing services closer to where they are needed.
Cultural Community	0	The Programme will not have a direct effect on this.

Accessibility	2	The Infrastructure mini business case includes a "Hub & Spoke" model for strategic sites, placing services closer to residents
Local Economy and Jobs	2	The collaborative approach will allow a wider range of Jobs and apprenticeships across the county
Safety	2	The service visits every property in the County each week, it will also maintain a presence in town centres, play parks etc increasing "eyes on the ground"
Democratic Voice	2	A key driver for the programme is customer satisfaction. Consultation through elected members will ensure meaningful engagement
Equity	1	Positive impact on groups with protected characteristics.



## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS



**12.1.** The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None.

**12.2.** These documents will be available for inspection online at [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk) or by contacting democratic services [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk) for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)