



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE - 15 JULY 2026.
Subject	OXFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (OxIS)
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Liz Leffman - Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure Email: liz.leffman@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Chief Executive Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk
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Summary/Purpose	This report introduces the completed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) 2026 and seeks Executive endorsement of the final document, following its earlier endorsement by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (OLJC) in April 2026. The strategy outlines the critical, county-wide infrastructure necessary to support development and sustainable growth across Oxfordshire through to 2050. It seeks to support rather than replicate the Infrastructure Delivery Plans developed by councils as part of their Statutory Development Plans by focussing upon large strategic infrastructure projects that span or influence a wider area than one district.
Annexes	Annex A - OxIS Stage Two - Final Strategy Annex B - OxIS Stage Two - Final Strategy Appendices
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to:

	I. Endorse the final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) which has already been endorsed by the Oxfordshire Joint Leaders Committee (OLJC) on 24th April 2026.
Corporate priorities	• A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	This is considered to be a key decision due to the significance of OxIS in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the authority.
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Stage 1 Report was offered to stakeholders for review and comment in a technical consultation exercise running during August/September 2025, which gave all consultees the opportunity to review and refine the data set. Subsequently the Stage 2 Project Prioritisation Report was open to public consultation earlier this year which closed in March 2026.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report sets out the refreshed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), establishing a clear, evidence-led framework to prioritise and promote the strategic infrastructure required to support sustainable growth across the county to 2050. It brings together a comprehensive and updated pipeline of infrastructure projects, refined through stakeholder input and aligned with the latest local plans, transport strategies, and wider regional priorities.
- 1.2** A key outcome of the work is the creation of a prioritised shortlist of strategic infrastructure schemes, reduced from an initial longlist of 377 projects to just over 100. These have been assessed using a multi-criteria “balanced scorecard” approach, which considers not only their role in supporting growth, but also their social, environmental and carbon impacts. This represents a significant evolution from previous, growth-led assessments and ensures that infrastructure investment supports the broader ambition of delivering sustainable and inclusive ‘good growth’.
- 1.3** The refresh also addresses critical gaps in the evidence base, particularly in relation to energy, water resources, green infrastructure and health provision. Strengthened partnerships, including with the Local Area Energy Plan and Local Nature Partnership, have enhanced the overall quality and integration of the evidence.
- 1.4** OxIS positions itself as a practical investment tool, clearly articulating Oxfordshire’s shared infrastructure priorities to Government and other stakeholders, particularly where delivery remains uncertain or funding is not yet secured. By estimating the scale of the infrastructure funding gap and providing a flexible, transparent framework for ranking and presenting projects, the strategy enables partners to tailor messages to different audiences and funding opportunities.
- 1.5** Overall, the report seeks to enable more coordinated, evidence-based decision-making and to strengthen Oxfordshire’s case for investment, ensuring that infrastructure delivery keeps pace with planned growth while supporting wider environmental and social objectives.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The purpose of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) is to identify and understand the strategic infrastructure required to support development across the county to 2050. It serves as an evidence-based document to underpin the planning of sustainable growth.
- 2.2** The first iteration of OxIS produced in 2017 was considered to be a success for Oxfordshire. It demonstrated a proactive approach to strategic infrastructure planning that helped achieve the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and successful Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bids.
- 2.3** However, both the first iteration and the second iteration of OxIS, prepared in 2021/22 differed in approach from this current, third iteration, in that they focused upon the examination of infrastructure through a narrow lens of housing numbers and growth. This perceived mismatch between the growth-related messaging of OxIS and the changing

political climate in Oxfordshire led to some councils not approving the second iteration of OxIS.

- 2.4** This third ‘refresh’ of OxIS was originally a commitment in the Housing and Growth Deal. This was part of the larger commitment to the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 but with the decision to cease work on the Plan, OxIS was refocussed around four key principles. These were to identify and promote critical but uncertain infrastructure for Oxfordshire’s growth, address key cross-district knowledge gaps, update the infrastructure evidence base, and ensure project prioritisation reflects current strategic ambitions and plans.
- 2.5** Funded by OLJC, a working group of officers drawn from across the councils have led the project from inception and all major milestones have been approved by the working group and, when appropriate, the Executive Officer group of OLJC.

3. PURPOSE OF THE OxIS

- 3.1** The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) identifies the strategic infrastructure required to support development across the county to 2050 and it serves as an evidence-based document to underpin the planning of sustainable growth. In addition, it will act as a key investment framework and a vehicle for engagement and consultation.
- 3.2** The Strategy applies to all local authorities within Oxfordshire and also considers the county in its wider regional context. This includes key interrelationships with neighbouring authorities and strategic geographies such as England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) and the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor.
- 3.3** OxIS seeks to support rather than replicate the Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) developed by councils as part of their statutory Development Plans by focussing upon large strategic infrastructure projects that span or influence a wider area than one district.
- 3.4** As outlined above, this third ‘refresh’ of OxIS was originally a commitment in the Housing and Growth Deal but with the decision to cease work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Plan, OxIS was refocussed around four key principles as follows:
- To promote the strategically important pieces of infrastructure to government required by Oxfordshire’s growth, but whose route to delivery was uncertain, either through lack of funding or other blockages to development.
 - To fill the gaps in knowledge of infrastructure needs common across most districts, namely energy issues, health issues, water stress and quality, and the promotion of strategic environmental or green infrastructure.
 - To ensure that the population of infrastructure projects is up to date. Since the last iteration of OxIS there have been more recent local plans and related Infrastructure Development Plans (IDP) published as well as the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LCTP).

- To ensure that the ranking or prioritisation matrix agreed in OxIS accurately reflects the full range of Oxfordshire's political ambitions, as set out in the Strategic Vision, Local Plans, and other relevant strategies.

- 3.5** OxIS is not strictly a strategy, in that it does not assess the infrastructure needs of Oxfordshire afresh and then consider how they could be actioned. Instead OxIS is a data set of the known strategic scale infrastructure requirements for planned or projected growth to 2050.
- 3.6** OxIS takes the data set of known infrastructure projects and does two things. Firstly, it applies an agreed framework or set of prioritisations or rankings to arrive at an agreed listing for the schemes, this with the intention of showing to government and others our agreed infrastructure requirements to enable planned 'good growth'. Secondly, it calculates, or to be precise, estimates the infrastructure funding deficit.
- 3.7** OxIS only considers strategic infrastructure projects not anticipated to be funded solely from developer contributions collected through S106 or CIL contributions. It is therefore in many respects an investment document designed to promote those strategic infrastructure projects that are collectively important for Oxfordshire to Government and other stakeholders.

4. PROJECT PREPARATION

- 4.1** The OxIS Project was split into two phases. The first phase concentrated on gathering a complete list of strategic infrastructure projects across Oxfordshire from a wide range of stakeholders. Alongside this data gathering exercise, OxIS developed a set of theoretical scenarios for growth based upon existing local plans and the government's Standard Method for assessing housing need. This was necessary to be able to understand future infrastructure requirements, although they were not decisions either on actual need or where that need arises.
- 4.2** A second phase was the filling of gaps in our infrastructure knowledge. The agreed brief for the project acknowledged that there were key gaps in our infrastructure knowledge that required filling to ensure a comprehensive infrastructure picture. The identified gaps prioritised were energy, water stress and quality, green infrastructure, and health. Addressing these knowledge gaps has highlighted real progress in partnership engagement since the last iteration of OxIS. For example, the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) Commission is closely aligned to OxIS, and both projects fed into each other to ensure a seamless set of conclusions. In addition, OxIS benefitted from active involvement of the Local Nature Partnership which has given green infrastructure a profile not seen in previous iterations of OxIS.
- 4.3** The first stage of OxIS was summarised in a Stage One Strategy. This report was offered to stakeholders for review and comment in a consultation exercise during August/September 2025, which gave consultees the opportunity to review and refine the data set.
- 4.4** The second stage of the OxIS took this long list of infrastructure projects (377 in total) and conducted two further exercises. The first was an initial sift to bring this list down to a

more manageable size, based upon a tightening of the definition of what constitutes a strategic infrastructure project. This reduced the list of strategic infrastructure projects to just over 100 which was then assessed using a multi criteria, needs based assessment process.

5. MULTI CRITERIA ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- 5.1** Each project within the short list was appraised through a Multi Criteria Assessment Process (MCA) to provide a 'balanced scorecard' approach rather than just examine each through the lens of how it enables housing development or other growth. For example, the balanced scorecard examines the social implications, the environmental impact or benefit and how the infrastructure project contributes to Oxfordshire's carbon reduction journey.
- 5.2** It is important to note that this 'balanced scorecard' approach inevitably means that some infrastructure projects do not receive the priority they would have received in previous, more growth focussed iterations of OxIS, whilst others will see a greater degree of promotion than previous. However, the Working Group felt that the greater level of complexity applied to assessment of infrastructure projects in this 'balanced scorecard' version of OxIS marks an advancement in our assessment methodology and offers a data set that promotes 'good growth' in Oxfordshire, as defined in the Strategic Vision.
- 5.3** The final OxIS that accompanies this report presents the balanced scorecard approach to the ranking of schemes and categorises them by scale, district, countywide and regional. It also demonstrates two further examples of how the shortlist of projects can be represented in the appendices, the overall 'balanced scorecard' methodology and a version adjusted to give priority to growth that aligns to previous OxIS. Finally, the appendices also present the projects by category.
- 5.4** This set of project rankings demonstrates how the data set that can be used to draw out a range of different ranked lists be it scale, type, score that can be used by councils, including West Oxfordshire, to promote different messages to different audiences, as required.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1** The Executive may choose not to endorse the OxIS, however, this is not recommended as it could undermine the development of the Council's Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and weaken the Council's ability to secure future funding for strategic infrastructure that supports the county as a whole.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1** The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) provides a comprehensive and collaborative framework to identify, prioritise and promote the strategic infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth to 2050.
- 7.2** By compiling and refining an evidence-led dataset of projects, addressing key knowledge gaps, and applying a balanced multi-criteria assessment methodology, OxIS strengthens the

county's ability to advocate for investment and coordinate delivery across council boundaries.

- 7.3** Ultimately, it serves as a tool for aligning infrastructure planning with Oxfordshire's broader strategic ambitions, helping to enable well-managed, inclusive and environmentally responsible growth.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1** No significant risks have been identified with the preferred approach, particularly as this is a jointly developed strategy supported by all councils across the county.
- 10.2** As outlined above, choosing not to approve the OxIS would present risks, including potential impacts on the delivery of the Council's Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and a reduced ability to secure future funding for strategic infrastructure.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1** The Council must legally consider and demonstrate due regard to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality across protected characteristics, fostering good relations, and respecting human rights, and the Strategy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on these groups.