Public Document Pack

Committee:	**Executive**
Date:	**Monday 13 July 2026**
Time:	**4.30 pm**
Venue	**39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD**

Membership

Councillor Lesley McLean (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Alisa Russell
Councillor Lisa Smith

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chair to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

Addresses may be presented by:

- A Local Government elector for the area,
- A person who is wholly or mainly resident in the area,
- A Council Taxpayer or National Non-Domestic Ratepayer for the area

Addresses must be on an item on the Agenda before the meeting and not exceed 5 minutes. No person may address more than one meeting on any particular issue.

Requests to address the meeting (including the agenda item and reason for the address) should be submitted to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk The deadline for requests to address this meeting is noon on Friday 10 July 2026.

The deadline to present a petition to this meeting has passed.

Full details of public participation at meetings is available in the Constitution.

4. Minutes (Pages 9 - 24)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2026.

5. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

6. Urgent Business

The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

7. Purchase of Housing Accommodation (Pages 25 - 30)

Report of Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

Purpose of report

To put the necessary approvals in place for the Council to be able to purchase suitable property with funds within the capital programme.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To authorise the Head of Housing to determine the requirements of the additional housing (including location and specification), tenancy and rent setting and manage the acquired housing in accordance with obligations of the Council as a Registered Provider of Social Housing.

1.2 To authorise the Executive Director - Neighbourhoods, in consultation with Assistant Director – Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make initial offers and begin the appropriate due diligence, once appropriate freehold or leasehold properties have been identified. A separate report to seek final approval for the exchange of contracts to purchase property will be submitted to the Executive. This will then enable the purchase of property above financial thresholds.

8. Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4 (Pages 31 - 36)

Report of Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the expenditure of capital grant received from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 4.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To approve a capital grant to South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) of £342,100 for the delivery of new social housing within Cherwell from the grant received from MHCLG; Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4.

1.2 To approve that the remaining £319,900 grant be used to provide temporary accommodation units enabled by the Council, in accordance with grant criteria.

1.3 To approve the increase to the Council's capital programme of £342,100 that arises from the report.

9. Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) Development and Governance (Pages 37 - 60)

Report of Executive Director Place and Regeneration

Purpose of report

To advise the Executive of the interim governance and working arrangements for the preparation of a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To note the interim governance arrangements for the Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy explained in this report and at Appendix 1.

1.2 To instruct officers to request that the Council be formally co-opted as a 'partner authority' with Leader representation on the Spatial Development Strategy Partnership Board until such time that a 'Strategic Planning Board' is formally established.

1.3 To note that Executor Director Place and Regeneration will advise the Executive if the Council is not confirmed as a co-opted 'Partner Authority'.

1.4 To delegate to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration the authority to agree detailed working arrangements for the pre-inception development of the Spatial Development Strategy in consultation with the Assistant Director Law and Governance.

10. Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) Final Report (Pages 61 - 70)

** Due to the size of the documents, to assist access and downloading, the appendices to the report are published as supplements to the main agenda pack. **

Report of Executive Director Place and Regeneration

Purpose of report

This report introduces the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and seeks the Executive's endorsement following the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee endorsing the OxIS on 24 April 2026.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To note and endorse the final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.

11. Local Area Development Funds - Proposal for Allocation (Pages 71 - 88)

Report of Executive Director Place and Regeneration

Purpose of report

This paper sets out the first tranche of projects – discussed and recommended by Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) – for Local Area Development Funding. This funding was agreed as part of the annual budget setting process by Council on 23 February 2026.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To agree to allocate £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects for the 2026/27 financial year as discussed and recommended at the respective Area Oversight Group:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*	Banbury
-	-	Bicester
-	-	Kidlington
Total Funding Requested	**£21,500**	
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*		

1.2 To delegate authority to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and

Regeneration, to agree final cost plans for the above projects subject to the maximum cost envelope outlined in Figure 1.

12. Finance Monitoring Report May 2026 (Pages 89 - 112)

Report of Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer)

Purpose of report

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the May 2026. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of May 2026.

1.2 To approve the use of reserves and grant funding held within appendix 4.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following reports contain exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members are reminded that whilst the following items have been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider them in private or in public. In making the decision, Members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that this item be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

"That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

14. **A New Arts Centre for Banbury** (Pages 113 - 118)

Exempt report of Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

15. **Cherwell Futures Customer Front Door Programme – Final Business Case** (Pages 119 - 216)

Exempt report of Executive Director Resources

16. **The Hill Youth and Community Centre - Lease to The Hill Banbury CIC** (Pages 217 - 224)

Exempt report of Assistant Director Property

17. **Banbury Museum Utility Charges** (Pages 225 - 232)

Exempt report of Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

18. **Renewal of Lease at Castle Quay** (Pages 233 - 246)

Exempt report of Assistant Director Property

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members' Lounge before or at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest
Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates
Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012
This agenda constitutes the 5-day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities

(Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

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Queries Regarding this Agenda
Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Friday 3 July 2026

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 16 June 2026 at 5.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean (Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration) (Chair)
Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant (Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Borkmann, Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services
Councillor David Hingley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Frank Ideh, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets
Councillor Alisa Russell, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Lisa Smith, Portfolio Holder for Lesiure

Also Present:

Councillor Paul Jeffreys, Leader of Reform UK Group
Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader, Conservative Group
Councillor Mark Gorman

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Les Sibley

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety
Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management
Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration and Economy

Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Sean Tilbury, Planning Enforcement Team Leader
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Geoff Taylor, Head of Property and Assets
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions.

The Chair advsied there was one request to address the meeting, from Parish Councillor John Offord, Chair of Hornton Parish Council, on item 7, Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Chair's Announcements

The Chair referred to the change of date and time for future Executive meetings confirming that the website had been updated and updated meeting requests sent to reflect the change.

5 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6 Wroxton Motocross Article 4 Direction

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report to inform the Executive of the recommendation to proceed with a targeted non-immediate Article 4 Direction restricting temporary use permitted development rights, and to set out the legal and procedural steps required for the Direction to be made and confirmed.

The Chair referred to correspondence from lawyers instructed on behalf of Hornton Parish Council and explained that officers had responded to the letter accordingly. The content of the letter was not for discussion at Executive.

Parish Councillor John Offord, Chair of Hornton Parish Council addressed Executive.

In introducing the report, the Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement thanked officers in planning and legal for their hard work and extended thanks to Hornton Parish Council, neighbouring parishes and local residents for their time spent on this complex issue.

The Deputy Leader – Planning and Enforcement explained that the recommendation struck the appropriate balance between allowing the longstanding activity to continue whilst ensuring the council could exercise proportionate control where needed. It was a forward-looking preventative measure that was evidence based and policy compliant and would restore the council's ability to manage the scale and operation of the events through the planning system where necessary.

Resolved

(1) That it be agreed to make the following non-immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

(2) That the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to finalise the wording of the Article 4 Direction and to undertake all necessary procedural steps to give effect to the Direction, including issuing the Direction, undertaking statutory consultation, notifying the Secretary of State, and reporting back to the Executive for confirmation following consideration of representations.

(3) That the process for making, consulting upon and confirming an Article 4 Direction, including notification to the Secretary of State and consideration of representations prior to confirmation be noted.

Reasons

It is proposed that the Executive resolves to make a targeted, non-immediate Article 4 Direction expressly designed to maximise the prospects of confirmation and to enable proportionate planning control should future evidence justify intervention, as set out below:

The development permitted pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any successor order) shall not include use of the land for motor racing:

i. on the day each year of Easter Sunday or
ii. on the day each year of Remembrance Sunday or

iii. on the day each year of Christmas Day or
iv. on the day each year of New Years Day or
v. on the first Bank Holiday Monday in May or
vi. on 11 November or
vii. on any day between the hours of 6:00pm and 9:00am.

The development permitted pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any successor order) shall not comprise use of the land for any motor racing event which involves the attendance at any event of more than 120 motor racing participants (riders) unless in accordance with the provisions of an Event Management Plan (EMP) for the specific event which in advance has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The EMP shall address, proportionately to the event's scale:
traffic, parking and noise management.

Informative: In preparing and updating the EMP, which may be submitted annually, the applicant is advised to engage with the Safety Advisory Group and include a statement summarising Safety Advisory Group feedback and how it has been addressed.

Factors in favour:

- A high volume of complaints has been received alleging harm to residential amenity, transport conditions and the environment. The Council considers there is a significant potential for planning harm were an Article 4 Direction not pursued.
- Wroxton Motocross would retain the ability to apply for planning permission for temporary uses of land, providing appropriate regulatory oversight.

Alternative options

Option 1: Make a non-immediate Article 4 Direction unconditionally removing the application of Schedule 2, Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
This option is rejected because, on balance, a qualified Article 4 Direction would result in a more proportionate approach, recognising the historic nature of the land use and toleration of motor racing activity. A qualified Direction is considered more likely to withstand challenge and therefore maximises the prospects of successful control, as opposed to seeking the full removal of permitted development rights, which would carry a greater risk of failure.

Option 2: Do not make an Article 4 Direction.
This option is rejected because, on balance, the evidence base indicates there is some harm to residential amenity and transport from the current scale and nature of the operation, and, in the absence of a Direction, the Local Planning Authority does not have an effective means to manage the scale and operation of events undertaken under permitted development rights. The Council therefore considers it expedient to make an Article 4 Direction and undertake a statutory consultation.

Option 3: Make an immediate Article 4 Direction.
An immediate Article 4 Direction is considered to be disproportionate. It would give rise also to a significant risk of compensation liability under the GPDO, in respect of abortive expenditure or losses directly attributable to the withdrawal of permitted development rights where such expenditure had already been incurred. This potential liability would arise irrespective of the merits of the Direction and could not be reliably quantified in advance. The Council considers that this exposure represents an unacceptably high financial risk, such an intervention is not necessary and that the benefit/risk assessment therefore clearly favours a non-immediate approach.

7 **Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan**

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report for Executive to consider the Examiner's report on the draft Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (the Draft Neighbourhood Plan") to determine whether the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating modifications should proceed to referendum.

Councillors Pattenden and Hingley, ward members for Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote, commended the work to date and commented on the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan for Bloxham Parish Council.

Resolved

(1) That all the Examiner's recommendations and modifications to enable the Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating the recommended modifications be approved to proceed to a referendum.

(2) That the issue of a 'decision statement' confirming the Executive's decision including that the Neighbourhood Plan will now proceed to a referendum be authorised.

(3) That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised to make any minor presentational changes and corrections necessary to ready the Neighbourhood Plan for referendum.

Reasons

The draft Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan Review has been independently examined and is recommended by the Examiner for referendum subject to the incorporation of a number of modifications. Officers agree with the Examiner's conclusion. It is therefore considered that, with the recommended modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requisite Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to accept all the Examiner's recommendations.
Where a local planning authority proposes to make a decision that differs from the Examiner's recommendations it is required to set out these reasons in a

Decision Statement which would be subject to further consultation. Officers consider that the Examiner's recommendations should be accepted.

Option 2: Not to accept the Examiner's recommendations and not to proceed to a referendum.
Option 2 could only be justified if the Examiner recommends that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to a referendum, or the Council is not satisfied that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has met the procedural and legal requirements. Officers consider that the Examiner's recommendations should be accepted and are of the view that the procedural and legal requirements have been met.

8 **Response to Motion: Keep Cherwell Tidy**

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which outlined the response to the motion submitted to Full Council in March 2026 calling for a campaign to "Keep Cherwell Tidy". As the motion fell within the remit of the Executive powers, it was referred to the Executive.

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Rebecca Biegel, who had confirmed she had no further comments and did not wish to speak at Executive.

Resolved

(1) That the response to the motion be noted.

(2) That the extensive efforts already underway to keep Cherwell tidy be endorsed.

(3) That the development of a series of campaigns throughout the year on keeping communities tidy, rather than a single campaign in March, which will better reflect the different needs of rural environments throughout the year be endorsed.

Reasons

The Council is already undertaking the activities outlined in the council motion, and therefore it is recommended that we continue delivering this vital programme through Environmental Services.

Alternative options

Option 1: Stop activity
These activities are already planned as part of the annual service delivery Environmental services. Stopping them would make the district less tidy and dirtier and prevent us from tackling perpetrators of fly-tipping and making them pay

9 **Response to Motion: Consultation on move to three-weekly collections**

The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which outlined the response to the motion submitted to Full Council in March 2026 requesting clarity on any consultation on changes to our waste collection service. As the motion fell within the remit of the Executive powers, it was referred to the Executive.

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Eddie Reeves, who had confirmed he had no further comments and did not wish to speak at Executive.

Resolved

(1) That the response to the motion be noted and the commitment to extensive consultation on any proposed changes be endorsed.

(2) That it be noted that there is no decision to proceed with three weekly collections, and this response outlines how any consultation on any proposed significant changes to the service would be conducted in the future.

Reasons

The council has committed to a thorough and meaningful consultation on any large-scale changes to waste collection and environmental services, including moving to three weekly collections.

This is the only option that both meets the Executive's commitment to "listening to residents" and delivers best value for money when making any changes. It also ensures that future services are designed with residents at the heart of what we do.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do minimal consultation
The Executive has committed to thorough and meaningful consultation on this area, with a commitment to "listening to residents" as a core principle throughout the council's work. Only conducting a minimal consultation would not meet the expectations set by Executive for Cherwell, and as such is not a recommended option.

Option 2: No consultation
Doing no consultation would not only fail to meet the Executives commitment to "listening to residents but would also expose the council to legal challenge on any significant changes to the service. This would increase costs, delay implementation, and not provide best value for money for the council.

10 Banbury Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Variation

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report sought consideration of a proposed variation to the current Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Banbury town centre, following public consultation.

Resolved

(1) That the introduction of the proposed variation to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Banbury town centre be approved.

Reasons

The results of the consultation show support for the variation to the current PSPO in Banbury Town Centre from the public and stakeholder organisations. Therefore, the Executive is recommended to approve the variation to the current PSPO in Banbury Town Centre

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to vary the PSPO.
This option is not recommended. The information gathered to support the variation of the PSPO for Banbury town centre demonstrates that there is a continuing problem with ASB occurring in and around Banbury town centre. The consultation outcomes show strong support for the variation of the PSPO to continue to tackle this problem.

11 Housing Civil Penalties Policy

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for the new Housing Civil Penalties Policy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Housing Civil Penalties Policy be approved.

Reasons

It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Alternative options

Option 1: Retain existing policy
This is an option that could be taken. However, it would have the following implications:

- Policies will not adequately reflect the statutory duty to enforce under section 107

- Ongoing risk of inconsistency across England
- Reduced clarity for officers, landlords and tenants
- Higher likelihood of legal challenge and policy failure under scrutiny
- Reputational risk for ineffectively implementing the Renters' Rights Act

This option is therefore rejected.

12 **Housing Enforcement Policy**

To Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for the new Housing Enforcement Policy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Housing Enforcement Policy be approved.

Reasons

It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Alternative options

Option 1: Retain existing policy
This is an option that could be taken. However, it would have the following implications:

- Policies will not adequately reflect the statutory duty to enforce under section 107
- Ongoing risk of inconsistency across England
- Reduced clarity for officers, landlords and tenants
- Higher likelihood of legal challenge and policy failure under scrutiny
- Reputational risk for ineffectively implementing the Renters' Rights Act

This option is therefore rejected.

13 **Community Event Parking in Banbury and Bicester**

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report to seek Executive approval to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, to approve the temporary closure or operational use of Council parking spaces or car park areas in Banbury and Bicester for civic, commemorative and community events.

The proposal related to the temporary use of parking areas to facilitate the operation of events and does not constitute the provision of free parking for event attendees.

Resolved

(1) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, to approve the temporary closure or operational use of District Council parking spaces or car park areas in Banbury and Bicester for civic, commemorative and community events where there is a demonstrable public benefit.

(2) That it be confirmed that commercial or profit-generating events will continue to be subject to the appropriate fees and charges in accordance with the Council's adopted schedule of fees and charges.

Reasons

The proposed delegation formalises the Council's longstanding approach to supporting established civic, commemorative and community events through the temporary operational use or closure of limited parking areas where required to facilitate event delivery. The proposal does not provide free parking for attendees but enables appropriate operational flexibility to support events which provide clear community and town centre benefit.

Granting delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets, provides a proportionate governance framework. It removes the need for repeated Executive reports for recurring events while maintaining appropriate Member oversight and ensuring that commercial events remain subject to the Council's adopted fees and charges.

Alternative options

Option 1: Require full payment of parking charges for all events
This option was considered but rejected. Military and civic commemorative events are held in recognition of public service and align with the Council's commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant. Requiring payment in these circumstances would be inconsistent with established practice and could undermine the Council's visible support for such events.
In the case of town centre civic and community events, the temporary closure of limited parking areas is typically operational in nature and required to facilitate the safe delivery of the event itself. These arrangements support wider town centre vitality, footfall and community engagement.

Option 2: Continue to require separate Executive approval for each event
This option was also rejected as it results in unnecessary administrative delay and repeated reporting for a small number of established, recurring events. Delegated authority provides a proportionate governance approach while retaining appropriate Member oversight.

14 **Request for Strategic Development Funding**

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report to request an allocation of £250k from the Strategic Development Fund reserve (£400k) to progress economic development and regeneration activity.

Resolved

(1) That an allocation from the Strategic Development Fund of £250k to commission an Economic Plan for Cherwell district and a masterplan for Bicester town centre be agreed and it be noted that monies would be spent according to CDC financial and procurement regulations led by the Regeneration & Growth (R&G) service.

(2) That it be agreed to renew Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire (£15k) for 2026/27, utilising existing service budgets and to agree to consider allocating funds in future years as part of the budget-setting process.

Reasons

This report seeks to agree to an allocation from the Strategic Development Fund of £250k to commission an Economic Plan for Cherwell district and a masterplan for Bicester town centre.

Monies would be spent according to CDC financial and procurement regulations led by the Regeneration & Growth (R&G) service.

The report also seeks to agree to renew Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire (£15k) for 26/27, utilising existing service budgets and to agree to consider allocating funds in future years as part of the budget-setting process.

The proposed commissions will help to position the council ahead of future LGR, setting out a clear vision and action plan for economic growth as well as a comprehensive framework for one of the district's primary urban centres. This is particularly important given the scale of development envisaged in the Bicester area over the coming years.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not proceed with the development of an Economic Plan for Cherwell and a Bicester Masterplan. This alternative would not provide a good foundation for the delivery of the council plans of the coming years or foundation blocks as LGR is enacted.

Option 2: Do not proceed with the development of a Bicester Masterplan. This is likely to lead to a more fragmented approach to development and not address the needs of existing communities.

Option 3: Do not proceed with the development of an Economic Plan for Cherwell. As Option 1, this would not provide a good foundation block ahead of LGR and would not meet the action set out in the Annual Delivery Plan.

Option 4: Do not proceed with renewal of Ambassador status with Experience Oxfordshire. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on efforts to support and grow the visitor economy in Cherwell, as referenced by current work to develop a Visitor Economy and High Streets Strategy.

15 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring End of Year Report 2025-2026

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and Head of Chief Executive's Office submitted a report to report to Executive the council's year-end financial, performance and risk position as of the end of financial year 2025-26.

Resolved

(1) That the council's finance, performance, and risk management report as at the end of financial year 2025/26 be noted.

(2) That the capital outturn position be noted and the capital reprofiling (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

(3) That the use of reserves and grant funding detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be approved.

(4) That the use of reserves to be released in 2026/27 (set out in Appendix 6 to the report) be approved.

(5) That the balanced outturn position for 2025/26 after the proposed contributions to reserves be noted.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the year-end financial, performance and risk position of the council for 2025/26. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report summarises the council's financial, performance and risk position up to the end of the financial year 2025-2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

16 **Appointments to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, Member Champions and Shareholder Committee 2026/27**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report to appoint representatives to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, where these are executive functions, Member Champions and the Shareholder Committee, for the municipal year 2026/2027.

Resolved

(1) That appointments to partnerships, outside bodies, the Shareholder Committee, Member Champions and advisory groups for the 2026/2027 municipal year be made as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

(2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to appoint Members to any outstanding vacancies and make changes to appointments, including new appointments, as may be required during the 2026/2027 Municipal Year.

(3) That appointed Members be reminded to update their Register of Interests as may be required, to reflect these appointments.

Reasons

It is proposed that representatives are appointed to Partnerships, Outside Bodies, Shareholder Committee and as Member Champions as set out at Appendix 1 to ensure that the Council is represented and maintains links with partnerships and outside bodies.

Delegation to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader provides flexibility for the remainder of the Municipal Year to appoint to any outstanding vacancies, or if amendments are required to any appointments, and ensures they are made in a timely manner.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to appoint representatives to outside bodies, partnerships and as Member Champions. This is not recommended as the internal working groups would be ineffective and the Council would not be represented on these outside bodies and could miss valuable information and opportunities.

17 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

18 **Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) - Property Services - Facilities Management - Managed Buildings**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report to seek Executive approval for the award of contract to deliver statutory Planned Preventative Maintenance services across operational buildings managed by the Property Services Facilities Management Team.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chair:

Date:

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

Document is Restricted

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This report is public	
Purchase of Housing Accommodation	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	14 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities – Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	27 May 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To put the necessary approvals in place for the Council to be able to purchase suitable property with funds within the capital programme.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To authorise the Head of Housing to determine the requirements of the additional housing (including location and specification), tenancy and rent setting and manage the acquired housing in accordance with obligations of the Council as a Registered Provider of Social Housing.

1.2 To authorise the Executive Director - Neighbourhoods, in consultation with Assistant Director – Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make initial offers and begin the appropriate due diligence, once appropriate freehold or leasehold properties have been identified. A separate report to seek final approval for the exchange of contracts to purchase property will be submitted to the Executive. This will then enable the purchase of property above financial thresholds.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Council approved a budget for 26-27 which included additions to the capital programme for investment in housing for temporary use, to assist with homelessness pressures that the Council faces. Specifically, the demand for temporary accommodation and that this demand exceeded the supply that the Council had access to through partnerships or its own stock. Increasing stock for temporary accommodation would negate future pressures that would be brought from increasing and continued use of nightly charged accommodation.

2.2 The levels of expenditure required to purchase or lease property are above limits delegated to officers within the Council constitution. Therefore, to acquire property to assist with temporary accommodation pressures outlined above, an additional report is required.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	**Commentary**
Finance	The purpose of this report is to authorise delegation to officers to determine and manage the acquisition of suitable properties for temporary accommodation. In approving this recommendation, the process of acquisition will not be delayed, avoiding additional costs. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 5 May 2026
Legal	The process for acquiring properties can take several months given the need to obtain various searches, surveys, title reports and other due diligence. We understand that properties come on and off the market quickly. There is therefore the need for Housing to be able to act dynamically and make enquiries and put offers on properties in order to allow the necessary due diligence to begin quickly in order to not lose out on potential opportunities. This requirement to react dynamically to potential opportunities needs to be balanced against the relevant spending limits and delegations within the Council's constitution. The conveyancing process can take several months to complete, and parties are free to make overs and retract them until they have exchanged contracts. Only once parties have exchanged contracts is there a legal obligation on them to proceed with the proposed sale and purchase. The proposed delegation should therefore allow officers the confidence to make offers and begin the necessary due diligence but allow time for the Council's correct governance procedures to be followed prior to exchange of contracts. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 15 May 2026
Risk Management	The recommended delegations enable the Council to act promptly in a competitive market, whilst ensuring each acquisition is subject to appropriate due diligence and approval in consultation with Finance and Law & Governance. Bringing homes into use through a planned works programme, alongside ongoing performance and cost monitoring, will help reduce reliance on nightly paid accommodation and support delivery of the intended benefits. Overall, the potential risks are considered manageable and will be mitigated and monitored through the service operational risk register, within the corresponding governance and controls.

	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader, 12 May 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There is no overall impact to Equality as a consequence of this proposal.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Quality housing and place making			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Not applicable			

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 Demand for homelessness services has increased since 2023. The trend had seen some flux through the COVID period but has since steadily risen. Due to consequential demand pressures, temporary accommodation has also risen. The Council saw a sharp rise in late 2023/early 2024 before it plateaued, later rising sharply again in winter 2025. This led to a peak of 60 households in hotels, which included the Musketeer.

3.2 A number of measures put in place by the Council has helped to slow the rise and begin to reverse the trend. This have included changes to the Allocations Scheme for social housing and increasing units of self-contained temporary accommodation, either in partnership with others or within the Council’s own stock, such as at the refurbished Town Centre House, Banbury.

3.3 These changes have helped reduce the number from 60 to a figure of around 20 in hotels, and the Council has ended its use of the Musketeer. Overall numbers in temporary accommodation have reduced by between 20% and 25% in a year, through 25-26. However, the number the Council currently is working with, which is between 70 and 75 households, is still double the figure that it routinely reported in 22-23.

3.4 Financial pressures created by nightly charged accommodation has been a challenge for the service through this period. This continues following changes to MHCLG homelessness grant rules.

3.5 The trend that the Council has observed has been similar across the other districts and City Council, as well as the rest of the Country. In 25-26, there was an overall rise in temporary accommodation usage of around 20% across the City and County combined. Cherwell was the only district to see a fall in placements.

3.6 The Council agreed within its budget 26-27 to invest in housing to assist homeless households. This is in the form of property acquisition and development. £5 million was allotted within its capital programme.

3.6 Property acquisition is an approach that is being replicated in similar forms across South Oxfordshire DC and Vale of White Horse DC, West Oxfordshire DC and Oxford City Council. The outcomes and approach are therefore compatible with future Local Government Reorganisation. Using self-contained accommodation reduces costs of temporary accommodation placements, as housing benefit does not cover the total cost of nightly charged accommodation. It also provides a rental income to the Council.

4. Details

4.1 The levels of expenditure required to purchase or lease property are above limits delegated to officers within the Council constitution.

4.2 As the property market can be fast paced, to stand a greater chance of success if a suitable opportunity arises, it is prudent for the Council to be able to move at pace. To do this, officer delegations are necessary, as outlined within the recommendations.

4.3 The report will enable officers to submit offers and enter legal negotiations on properties that are considered suitable, following the appropriate due diligence.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Do not grant the authorisations

This is the status quo option. This would lead to delays and would likely mean that the Council would be delayed in closing deals and entering negotiations, which could prove counterproductive to the purpose of the agreed funding.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The report is necessary to assist in the delivery of the project aims and funding agreed within the budget.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes Financial threshold met
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	Not applicable
Ward(s) Affected	All wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing

Report Author contact details	richard.smith@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221640
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services 12 May 2026

This report is public	
Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	14 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Greener Communities, Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	27 May 2026
Report of	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the expenditure of capital grant received from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 4.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To approve a capital grant to South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) of £342,100 for the delivery of new social housing within Cherwell from the grant received from MHCLG; Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4.

1.2 To approve that the remaining £319,900 grant be used to provide temporary accommodation units enabled by the Council, in accordance with grant criteria.

1.3 To approve the increase to the Council's capital programme of £342,100 that arises from the report.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The LAHF was established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (then DLUHC) in 2022-23 to help local authorities respond to new and emerging housing pressures faced from resettlement schemes. LAHF rounds 2, 3 and 4 also included the provision for new temporary accommodation enabled through the grant.

2.2 The LAHF 4 grant conditions stipulate that 2 units for resettlement accommodation, specifically for those on the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP), one of these should be a property that is 4 bedroom or larger, and 2 units of general needs temporary accommodation must be provided as a minimum. MHCLG have provided a capital grant allocation of £662,000 for CDC to deliver this. Grants are determined by calculations carried out by MHCLG and are based on property prices within areas. Council's can express interest in providing homes with their grant allocation.

2.3 The Council expressed interest in delivering homes within LAHF 4 and received notification of the grant amount as outlined in 1.3 and 2.2. The report proposes to grant a proportion of the money received to SOHA for the delivery of two new social housing units for resettlement families, as per grant criteria. These units will either be new houses or new social housing through market purchase. This continues existing arrangements in LAHF Round 2 and 3, which has been successful in delivering 17 units.

2.4 The report proposes to use the remaining grant to reduce the need for the Council to finance all the capital committed in the capital programme for temporary accommodation from its own borrowing.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	The approval of the transfer of the LAHF grant to SOHA, will provide more properties in the district for Resettlement families, avoiding expensive, nightly charged accommodation. Approving the use of the remaining grant for further provision of temporary accommodation, already in this year's capital programme, reduces the need for the Council to finance the whole project, which reduces borrowing costs and does not impact on cashflow or investments. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 15 May 2026
Legal	Legal Services provided advice to wellbeing and housing to assist with the preparation of the LAHF 3 grant funding agreements. At present Legal Services has not yet been instructed in relation to the LAHF 4, but will be able to provide advice and assistance as required when instructions are provided. Based on the work undertaken for LAHF 3, we note there is likely to be a need for advice around subsidy control. Legal Services will continue working with the relevant departments to assist with the implementation of the scheme as required. The funds should not be transferred until an appropriate grant funding agreement has been completed for this round of funding. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 20 May 2026
Risk Management	There are no risks arising as a direct consequence of this report, which outlines to spend grant received in line with grant terms. Related potential risks will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated to the Corporate risk register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 19 May 2025

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact	x			The outcome of the report will improve the range and nature of social tenancies throughout the district, supporting low-income households
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			Low-income households will be better provided for
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		The highest EPC ratings will be encouraged for the units purchased and delivered through the grant
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Quality housing and place making			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	The report does not have any implications for existing CDC property. Any property acquired in the future with this grant will be managed either by SOHA or by the Housing Team.			
Consultation & Engagement	None			

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 The LAHF was established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (then DLUHC) in 2022-23 to help local authorities respond to new and emerging housing pressures faced from resettlement schemes.

3.2 The Council has successfully accessed Round 1, 2 and 3 of this funding. Delivering more than 60 units of affordable housing to date within Cherwell. This has enabled the Council to access these additional units, some of which may not have been brought forward as affordable housing at all, to assist with our direct housing pressures and at minimal direct cost to the Council.

3.3 A fourth iteration of LAHF has been made available and the Council was successful in an initial bid. The total capital is £662,000.

3.4 The Council has funds within the capital programme for the delivery of homelessness accommodation to assist with temporary accommodation pressures, and an apportionment of this grant can be used to assist with new temporary accommodation. This could reduce some direct capital expenditure that Council has committed by offsetting some costs to grant.

4. Details

4.1 The proposed partnership with SOHA is a continuation of existing similar schemes funded through previous LAHF Round 2, 3 and a scheme using Council Section 106 commuted sums. It involves a grant contribution towards the purchase price of the accommodation, in accordance with grant conditions outlined above. In return, SOHA manage the property and provide it for our usage. In this instance, our usage is for resettlement families that are being assisted through the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP).

4.2 The remaining grant will be used for temporary accommodation acquisition by the Council and will be managed and delivered directly by the Council.

4.3 These units will all be delivered by the end of March 2027 in accordance with grant conditions.

4.4 Ongoing revenue costs for management of the SOHA purchased property will be met by SOHA as part of a grant agreement.

4.5 A legal agreement will cover our engagement with SOHA in relation to the grant, to ensure if is spent in accordance with conditions and for it to be returned if they fail to perform as anticipated.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to transfer the grant to SOHA and use another provider. All Registered Providers operating locally were given the opportunity to work with the Council and SOHA were the only ones to submit a compliant expression of interest. This is therefore rejected.

Option 2: The Council deliver all units. The Council is under time pressure to deliver units in accordance with the conditions of the grant and SOHA have an established reputation for delivery. The Council does have funds within the Capital Programme to purchase and develop temporary accommodation. Due to this, the report proposes to retain some of the grant to offset potential borrowing. However, the Council does not have capital within the capital programme for general property purchases (for resettlement households in this instance) and housing development that the grant could assist with. This is a requirement of the grant. This is therefore rejected.

Option 3: Not deliver any units. This would lead to the return of the grant to MHCLG. This would lead to the inability to offset any potential capital usage for temporary accommodation that is within the capital programme through grant usage. This is therefore rejected.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The report will enable more affordable housing within the district, which is required to address demand pressures. It will not directly enable the planned self-contained temporary accommodation purchase to take place, but will reduce the amount of its own capital that the Council has to use when doing so.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes, financial threshold met
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing
Report Author contact details	richard.smith@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221640
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director – Neighbourhood Services, 19 May 2026

This report is public	
Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) Development and Governance	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	13 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	Leader of the Council on behalf of Portfolio Holder 26 June 2026
Report of	Executive Director Place and Regeneration, Ian Boll

Purpose of report

To advise the Executive of the interim governance and working arrangements for the preparation of a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To note the interim governance arrangements for the Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy explained in this report and at Appendix 1.

1.2 To instruct officers to request that the Council be formally co-opted as a ‘partner authority’ with Leader representation on the Spatial Development Strategy Partnership Board until such time that a ‘Strategic Planning Board’ is formally established.

1.3 To note that Executor Director Place and Regeneration will advise the Executive if the Council is not confirmed as a co-opted ‘Partner Authority’.

1.4 To delegate to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration the authority to agree detailed working arrangements for the pre-inception development of the Spatial Development Strategy in consultation with the Assistant Director Law and Governance.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Spatial Development Strategies (SDS’s) are a new tier of the statutory Development Plan system. The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 re-introduces strategic planning at a level above Local Plans by amending the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Secondary legislation (regulations) is awaited for the establishment of statutory Strategic Planning

Boards and for the procedures to be followed in connection with the preparation, adoption and publication of a Spatial Development Strategy.

2.2 This report outlines the governance arrangements being presented to the Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet meeting (14 July 2026) the day after this meeting of the Executive. These arrangements are for the period of time before regulations are introduced and include working arrangements for preparation of the SDS. The County Council's draft report is provided at Appendix 1. A further report to the Executive is likely to be required in the autumn once regulations and guidance have been published by the Government.

2.3 During the interim period prior to establishment of the statutory Strategic Planning Board, it is proposed that governance is provided through a shadow partnership structure that mirrors the expected statutory arrangements as far as practicable.

2.4 In areas without mayoral strategic authorities, the responsibility for producing SDSs sits with non-mayoral foundation strategic authorities, or where they do not exist (as is presently the case for the Thames Valley), it sits with upper tier county councils and unitary authorities.

2.5 The partnership for the Thames Valley SDS is proposed to comprise the 'strategic planning authorities' across Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Section 12A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) defines a 'strategic planning authority' which includes an upper tier county council. It does not include a lower tier district council.

2.6 The proposed formal partnership is proposed to comprise Oxfordshire County Council and the Councils of Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wokingham and Swindon.

2.7 The County Council's report states (para. 10), '*For the avoidance of doubt, the expectation is to co-opt district councils (where relevant) and other stakeholders may be engaged through co-opted or consultative arrangements as set out under the interim governance arrangements up until the Local Government Reform in Oxfordshire has been completed. Moreover, other external stakeholders may also be engaged through co-opted or consultative arrangements'*.

2.8 The Executive is recommended to note the proposed arrangements but to seek confirmation that the Council will be co-opted as a 'Partner Authority' until such time that a 'Strategic Planning Board' is formally established. The intention of the partnership is to begin preparatory work on the SDS in earnest. As explained in the comments of the Head of Legal Services below, there is a need for clarity on the governance arrangements to help minimise the risk of later challenge to the process.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary

Finance	There are no financial implications arising from the governance and working arrangements. The Council's input will be resourced through existing service budgets. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 11 June 2026,
Legal	The principal legal risks arising are: 1. Ultra vires / governance risk: The report explains that the proposed arrangements are to enable preparatory work for the SDS ahead of the formal establishment of the Strategic Planning Board. There is a low risk that the shadow partnership arrangements could be perceived as exercising formal plan making functions prior to the establishment of statutory Strategic Planning Boards; 2. Procedural risk: interim arrangements may give rise to concerns that future statutory procedures (including for stakeholder engagement and consultation) have not been complied with; 3. Limited decision-making influence: there is an unavoidable risk that although co-option would allow the Council to participate, it will not confer formal voting or decision-making rights. There is therefore a risk that the Council contributes to a strategy which will ultimately bind local plan-making, without having legal control over its content; 4. Uncertainty / reform risk: due to on-going Local Government Reform (and subject to review of expected statutory instruments) any new unitary authority for the Cherwell area would become a formal partner. Their position on the SDS could depart from this Council's. These risks can be mitigated by: 1. maintaining a clear distinction between preparatory work and statutory decision making and ensuring that formal plan-making decisions are not taken until the Strategic Planning Board is established; 2. reviewing preparatory work undertaken in the context of secondary legislation and guidance when that becomes available to ensure legal compliance; 3. securing formal co-option with appropriate representation to maximise the Council's influence; 4. ensuring that local strategic priorities and evidence are consistently articulated and recorded throughout the process. Overall, while the proposed arrangements enable early engagement and influence, they place reliance on governance safeguards rather than statutory control, and these safeguards will need to be actively maintained to minimise legal risk. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 12 June 2026,

Risk Management	The main risk is the highlighted uncertainty about the co-opting of district councils into the partnership and the form of that co-opting. The recommendations therefore seek confirmation. The report to the County Council's cabinet highlights the 'lack of sign up to the partnership arrangements' as a risk and, by way of mitigation, the need for common understanding and information sharing. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 11 June 2026				
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		x		There is no impact on equality as a direct consequence of this report. It is expected that the SDS will be accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment in due course. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 11 June 2026
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		As above
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		As above
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		There are no implications arising from this report. Assessing environmental impacts will be part of the SDS preparation process.
ICT & Digital Impact		x		N/A
Data Impact		x		The County Council's report explains the proposed data sharing arrangements
Procurement & subsidy		x		The County Council's report explains how procurement for SDS evidence would be overseen

Council Priorities	A Vision For Lasting Change 2025-2030 Priority 1: Economic Prosperity Priority 2: Community Leadership Priority 3: Environmental Stewardship Priority 4: Quality housing and place making
Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Consultation & Engagement	Leader of the Council for Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant, Portfolio Holder – Planning & Enforcement

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) are new, high-level spatial plans looking ahead at least 20 years. Together with Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, they become part of the statutory Development Plan against which applications for planning permission are assessed. SDSs will set the framework for Local Plans which must then be in general conformity with them.

3.2 Spatial Development Strategies should set a positive vision for future growth and change at a sub-regional scale and provide a clear spatial framework for investment and growth, including for new housing. Their content should be genuinely strategic in nature and allow for more detailed issues to be considered and addressed through other parts of the Development Plan. The Government is targeting all areas of the country to have an examined SDS in place by mid-2029.

3.3 At the time of writing the final version of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is awaited which will advise more specifically on what an SDS should do. The draft version (December 2025) includes the following proposed requirements:

a) set out a strategy for a sustainable pattern of growth covering a period of at least 20 years, including through the apportionment to local planning authorities in the strategy area of objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses that are best considered at a strategic scale for the duration of the plan period;

b) identify broad locations for strategic development including new settlements, major urban extensions, major cross-boundary development and key locations with the potential for new homes and jobs; such broad locations should extend over any large site allocations in adopted local plans;

c) support economic growth by providing a spatial framework for strategic investments and giving spatial expression to strategic elements of Local Growth Plans and the National Industrial Strategy;

d) identify the general extent of areas established as Green Belt and broad locations where changes to Green Belt boundaries may need to be considered through local plan preparation, if necessary to meet the development needs of the strategy area;

e) identifying broad locations for nature conservation and habitat enhancement, restoration and creation;

f) set out the type, extent and broad location of strategic infrastructure needed to enable development and serve existing communities, including transport, social and waste infrastructure, utilities provision, flood risk management schemes and, where considered appropriate, the provision of minerals. The SDS should also make provision for infrastructure that is committed to in the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy, sectoral spatial plans and any planned strategic infrastructure identified in local transport plans;

g) use appropriate maps and diagrams to illustrate and communicate the strategy;

h) provide a proportionate level of information on the mechanisms for delivering the strategy;

i) monitor implementation and adopt a replacement no later than 10 years after the current version was adopted, or earlier:

    i. if a strategic planning authority considers there are substantial inconsistencies with current national policies; or

    ii. where changes to infrastructure are planned that are likely to have a significant impact on development and land use in the strategy area and which were not considered during the preparation of the existing spatial development strategy; or

    iii. to respond to significant change or new evidence of needs, opportunities or development constraints.

3.4 The draft NPPF states that alterations to Spatial Development Strategies should be made at least every five years to reflect any changes to housing requirements for the Local Planning Authorities in the strategy area. It suggests that it may be possible to make limited alterations if they do not fundamentally change the overall spatial strategy.

3.5 A Government consultation paper (February 2026) on the SDS areas clarified that SDSs can identify broad locations for growth and development and the necessary infrastructure needed to support that growth. It stated that this may entail the re-distribution of housing need and other development needs between local planning authorities and may include specific policies for development or to be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities when preparing or updating their Local Plans.

3.6 It also made clear that SDSs are ‘not larger Local Plans’. They cannot be site-specific nor can they allocate sites for development. That site-specific role is preserved for local plans which will have to be in 'general conformity' with the SDS once it has been adopted. SDSs are expected to be succinct and not get into detail or locally specific issues.

4. Details

Governance and Working Arrangements

4.1 The County Council's report proposes a joint Thames Valley partnership to progress the pre-inception phase of work for the Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). Government grant funding has been made available to the Thames Valley area to support this early work with defined expectations for transparency and for monitoring and evaluation reporting. Bracknell Forest Council (on behalf of all authorities) would be the accountable body and host authority for any dedicated staff resource.

4.2 A Thames Valley SDS Partnership Board would be established with Leader representation from each 'Partner Authority', responsible for oversight of the direction, endorsing the work programme and budget, and making recommendations within the scope of the pre-inception interim arrangements.

4.3 A Chief Executive group would comprise all constituent authorities along with the Place Directors of all councils to oversee the programme, delivery, manage risks and ensure alignment with each authority's governance.

4.4 A Programme Management Office / Strategic Planning Unit (hosted) is to be established - the operational team responsible for day-to-day delivery, commissioning and coordination and workstreams established.

4.5 The County Council's report highlights that undertaking pre-inception work now, the Thames Valley partnership would be ready to mobilise at pace once secondary legislation establishes the Strategic Planning Board. By agreeing the programme plan, workstreams, decision points and engagement approach in advance, partners can reduce lead-in time, make early commissioning decisions efficiently and avoid duplication of effort across authorities.

4.6 Early joint working would also create a shared baseline and narrative for the SDS, including a statement of readiness and an initial "spatial portrait" of the area. The key issues, opportunities and constraints would be identified in the interest of seeking alignment with partners and clearer communication with communities and stakeholders.

4.7 Establishing these working arrangements now would strengthen relationships, improve risk management and provide an auditable platform for transition to the statutory board when it is constituted.

Local Context

4.8 The preparation of the SDS presents an opportunity to establish strategic spatial objectives for the Cherwell area for the longer-term having regard to wider, sub-regional needs, community consultation and evidence. Broad locations for future growth across the sub-region will need to be comparably tested. Environmental, social and economic evidence specific to the Cherwell and wider Oxfordshire area will need to be considered. Examples will include the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the emerging review of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, economic strategies and evidence about the needs of our urban centres.

4.9 Evidence can be expected to emerge from the Council's on-going engagement with the Oxfordshire Growth Commission (OGC) further to the publication of its interim report (December 2025). Similarly, work with Homes England's Advisory Team for Large [planning] Applications (ATLAS) in supporting the delivering of growth at Bicester will be insightful. The knowledge and expertise of services across the Council will be informative and coordinated through the Planning Policy team to ensure that the best interests of Cherwell are well represented.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The Executive could decide not to seek formal co-opting as a 'partner authority' ahead of the establishment of a statutory Strategic Planning Board. However, it is considered to be in the best interests of Cherwell's communities to be as embedded as possible in the SDS process.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Completing an SDS for the Thames Valley by mid-2029 will be challenging. Progressing early preparatory and informative work ahead of secondary legislation is sensible and the governance and working arrangements proposed in the County Council's report will support the process. However, there remains some uncertainty about the co-opting of district councils and whether the Leader will have a seat on the Partnership Board. It is therefore recommended that the Council seeks confirmation of its co-opted partnership status and representation.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	

Appendix 1	Draft report to Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet, 14 July 2026: Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) Development and Governance
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Draft NPPF (December 2025): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697b71c52ff8d10a830d5d4a/Draft_NPPF_December_2025.pdf Government consultation: Areas for Producing Spatial Development Strategies (February 2026): https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/areas-for-producing-spatial-development-strategies/areas-for-producing-spatial-development-strategies Oxford Growth Commission Interim Report (December 2025): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-growth-commission-interim-report
Report Author	David Peckford, Assistant Director - Planning
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration, 11 June 2026

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CABINET

THAMES VALLEY SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (SDS) DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Report by the Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

A) Approve the establishment of a partnership with the councils covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon to develop a statutory Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the Thames Valley area (as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report).

B) To note the draft indicative funding and resource allocations for the pre-inception programme.

C) Agree that Bracknell Forest Council will act as the accountable body for funds received/held on behalf of the partnership and will host any staff appointed for the Thames Valley SDS programme.

D) Agree the interim governance and oversight, monitoring and assurance arrangements set out in this paper, including arrangements for the period before a statutory Strategic Planning Board (SPB) is established through secondary legislation.

E) To delegate the detail agreements and working arrangements for pre-inception development of the SDS to the Director of Economy and Place in consultation with the Head of Legal and Governance.

F) To agree to the working arrangements for development of the SDS

Executive Summary

1. This paper seeks Cabinet approval to participate in, and help lead, a joint Thames Valley partnership with councils covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon to progress the pre-inception phase of work for a Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). The SDS is a new strategic planning statutory requirement and is intended to provide a high-level spatial framework setting the scale and distribution of growth, investment opportunities and supporting Place infrastructure across multiple local planning authority areas.

2. Work to date has focused on establishing a shared understanding of the SDS requirement, engaging with Government on the emerging geography as in the consultation in February 2026 and legislative timetable and developing early

programme outputs (including a pathway/statement of readiness and a strategic spatial baseline). Government grant funding has been made available to the Thames Valley area to support this early work, alongside defined expectations for transparency and quarterly monitoring and evaluation reporting.

3. As the statutory Strategic Planning Board (SPB) for the Thames Valley is expected to be established through secondary legislation due Autumn 2026, interim governance is required to provide clear decision-making, financial accountability and programme oversight during the pre-inception period. This paper proposes a joint partnership model with agreed monitoring, assurance and dispute resolution arrangements, with Bracknell Forest Council (on behalf of all authorities) as the accountable body and host authority for any dedicated staff resource.

Background

4. The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduces a duty on designated strategic planning authorities to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). SDSs are intended to be high-level strategic plans which set out, amongst other matters, the scale and broad distribution of development and associated infrastructure across multiple local planning authority areas. The Government is targeting all areas of the country to have an examined SDS in place by mid-2029.

5. Government consultation on SDS geographies has indicated a preferred Thames Valley SDS area including Bracknell Forest, Reading, Oxfordshire Slough, Swindon, West Berkshire, Windsor & Maidenhead, and Wokingham (with the final geography to be confirmed summer/Autumn 2026). Government has also indicated that bespoke secondary legislation will establish a statutory Strategic Planning Board for the Thames Valley, with consultation expected in Autumn 2026 and the board intended to take on formal functions once established.

6. Partners authorities include Bracknell Forest, Reading, Oxfordshire Slough, Swindon, West Berkshire, Windsor & Maidenhead, and Wokingham. Option is there for Buckinghamshire to join but they have indicated they do not want to work together at present. The partners authorities have progressed preparatory work to ensure the sub-region is ready to move quickly once the statutory framework is in place. Key activity has included:

   - engagement with Government on the emerging Thames Valley SDS geography and the anticipated timetable for secondary legislation;
   - submission of an expression of interest for SDS preparation funding and agreement in principle to quarterly monitoring and evaluation reporting;
   - early development of draft governance and operational framework proposals for a shadow Strategic Planning Board, including work on a draft constitution and operating model;

- scoping of key pre-inception outputs, including a “Pathway to the Thames Valley SDS” (statement of readiness, programme plan and timetable) and a strategic spatial baseline (including mapping of planned growth, constraints and opportunities). Noting the programme plan and timetable is indicative pending clearer direction through further legislation and firming up governance arrangements, including the statutory Strategic Planning Board;

Key benefits of partnership

7. Undertaking pre-inception work ahead of the statutory SDS duty will ensure the Thames Valley partnership is ready to mobilise at pace once secondary legislation establishes the Strategic Planning Board. By agreeing the programme plan, workstreams, decision points and engagement approach in advance, partners can reduce lead-in time, make early commissioning decisions efficiently and avoid duplication of effort across authorities.

8. Early joint working will also create a shared baseline and narrative for the SDS, including a statement of readiness and an initial strategic spatial baseline (“spatial portrait”). This provides a common understanding of what the SDS is intended to do, how it relates to local plans, and the key issues, opportunities and constraints across the area, supporting alignment between partners and clearer communication with communities and stakeholders.

9. Finally, collaborative pre-inception activity enables proportionate interim governance, financial accountability and assurance arrangements to operate transparently during the grant-funded period, including quarterly monitoring and evaluation reporting. Establishing these working arrangements now will strengthen relationships, improve risk management and provide an auditable platform for transition to the statutory board when it is constituted.

Proposed joint partnership (Oxfordshire, Berkshire authorities and Swindon)

10. The partnership is proposed to comprise the strategic planning authorities across Oxfordshire, the Berkshire authorities and Swindon Borough Council (together, “the Partner Authorities”). For the avoidance of doubt, the expectation is to co-opt district councils (where relevant) and other stakeholders may be engaged through co-opted or consultative arrangements as set out under the interim governance arrangements up until the Local Government Reform in Oxfordshire has been completed. Moreover, other external stakeholders may also be engaged through co-opted or consultative arrangements.

Objectives and deliverables for the pre-inception period

11. The partnership will oversee delivery of the pre-inception programme, including (subject to further scoping and agreement with Government):

    a) a programme plan and timetable for development of the SDS, including workstreams, decision points and engagement approach;

b) a “Pathway to the Thames Valley SDS” / statement of readiness describing what the SDS is, why it is needed, governance arrangements, how it relates to local plans, and how it will be prepared and kept under review;

c) a Thames Valley growth vision and strategic spatial baseline (“spatial portrait”), including mapping of planned growth, constraints, opportunities and relationships to other strategies (e.g. infrastructure, economy, nature recovery);

d) draft governance and operating model proposals to inform the statutory secondary legislation and to enable a shadow SPB to operate effectively in advance of the statutory board;

e) procurement and commissioning activity needed to support the above (e.g. baseline mapping, specialist technical support), in compliance with procurement law and each authority’s governance.

Governance, monitoring and assurance arrangements

Proposed governance model (interim period)

12. During the interim period (prior to establishment of the statutory Strategic Planning Board), it is proposed that governance is provided through a shadow partnership structure that mirrors the expected statutory arrangements as far as practicable, while remaining proportionate to the pre-inception scope. The model comprises:

- Thames Valley SDS Partnership Board: with Leader representation from each Partner Authority, responsible for oversight of the direction, endorsing the work programme and budget, and making recommendations within the scope of the pre-inception interim arrangements.

- The Chief Executive group made up of all constituent authorities along with the Place Directors of all councils to oversee the programme, delivery, manage risks and ensure alignment with each authority’s governance.

- Programme Management Office / Strategic Planning Unit (hosted): the operational team responsible for day-to-day delivery, commissioning and coordination.

- Workstreams: time-limited workstreams (e.g. governance/legislation, spatial baseline/evidence, engagement/communications, programme planning), each with a lead authority/officer.

- Interim Accountable Body arrangements to hold regional funds granted by MHCLG to support this interim development phase and commission on behalf of the region.

13. Where decisions require formal authority (e.g. entering into contracts above delegated thresholds, committing expenditure, appointing staff, or approving material changes to scope), these will be agreed by the interim governance arrangements for the SDS prior to a formal Strategic Planning Board. The accountable authority will ensure these decisions and procurement comply with the accountable Authority's constitution and decision-making arrangements, supported by a clear recommendation and audit trail from the partnership bodies.

14. The interim arrangements will be in place until the formation of the legislated Strategic Planning Board. The Strategic Planning Board will become the Strategic Planning authority for the Thames Valley area on a geography set out by Central Government.

15. If a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) is established, the Strategic Planning Board will be dissolved, and its legal responsibilities will pass to the FSA.

16. If the geography of the SDS area and FSA footprint are misaligned, joint working and governance arrangements will be put in place.

Monitoring, performance reporting and evaluation

17. The partnership will operate on a transparent "open book" basis for the use of Government grant and partner contributions. Monitoring and reporting in the interim period and formal arrangements will include:

    a) Quarterly reporting on progress against agreed milestones, key risks/issues, and a summary of expenditure;

    b) Interim updates between quarters where required (e.g. where Government requests updates, or where material risks emerge);

    c) Expenditure records maintained by the accountable body and made available to partner authorities for assurance purposes;

    d) Evaluation returns as required by Government, including completion of any end-of-grant evaluation summarising outcomes and expenditure.

Roles, responsibilities, funding and resourcing

Accountable body and financial administration

18. Funding has already been received from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) of £764,000 to fund the pre-inception work to develop governance and working arrangements for the next stage. Oxfordshire County Council is currently acting as the accountable body and holding the first tranche of funding outlined in table Annex 1. MHCLG have indicated that there will be further tranches of funding and a 3-year settlement to fund the development and production of the SDS, which includes resources, evidence and studies.

19. Oxfordshire councils are subject to the current round of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and it is therefore recommended that a council not

subject to these reforms takes on Accountable Body status for the next phase. Bracknell Forest Council has agreed to undertake this role if agreed by partners councils and will act as the accountable body for funds received/held on behalf of the partnership for the Thames Valley SDS programme. This will include responsibility for receiving grant and/or partner contributions, maintaining proper accounting records, administering payments in accordance with the agreed programme and budget, and providing the required financial and performance monitoring returns to Government and to partner authorities. This will be reviewed on an annual basis through the Strategic Planning Board.

20. Further funding sources are expected to include Government SDS preparation grant funding and where required, partner authority contributions (monetary and/or in-kind). An outlined draft budget, including the proposed allocation by workstream and the basis for partner contributions is attached as Annex 1. It should be noted that this may be subject to change as the final SDS legislation and guidance has not yet been issued.

Programme resourcing and hosting of staff

21. To date Oxfordshire County Council has provided the majority of resource to develop the programme and fund strategic advisors with assistance from a core team of senior staff from Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon authorities.

22. Going forward the partnership will require dedicated officer capacity to manage and deliver the pre-inception programme (including programme management, strategic planning and technical support). It is proposed that any dedicated staff funded through the programme will be hosted by Bracknell Forest Council as accountable body. Staffing may be delivered through direct recruitment, secondment, or inter-authority arrangements, subject to agreement by the partner authorities and compliance with each authority's HR, finance and governance requirements (see Annex 2 & 3).

Working arrangements and data sharing

23. The SDS pre-inception programme requires regular data sharing among authorities, including local plans, growth projections, constraints, opportunities, infrastructure, and demographic, economic, and environmental datasets. Data will be shared based on necessity and proportionality, with aggregation used where possible. The partnership aims to establish unified data and digital standards for a common evidence baseline and efficient updates.

24. Partner Authorities are asked to agree to the principle of data sharing and joint use of data. An inter-authority agreement will detail the use and management of data and compliance with Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations. When processing personal data, partners will conduct Data Protection Impact Assessments and adhere to UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Financial Implications

25. The financial implications of participating in the partnership fall into three categories: (i) receipt and use of Government grant funding (where applicable), (ii) any partner authority contributions (cash and/or in-kind), and (iii) staffing and commissioning costs required to deliver the pre-inception outputs.

26. A detailed budget and resourcing plan will be maintained and reported through the partnership governance. Any financial commitments by the Council will be subject to approval through the Council's normal financial governance (including delegated authority limits) and will be captured within the formal inter-authority agreement(s) including provisions on payment schedules, treatment of underspends/overspends, liabilities, audit access and exit/termination arrangements.

Legal Implications

27. The Local Government Acts 1972 and S1 of the Localism Act 2011, local authorities have the power to enter into joint arrangements with other local authorities, delegate functions to other local authorities and do anything that individuals may generally do (the general power of competence).

28. This is reflected in Part 3.5 of the Council's Constitution (Agency, Partnership and Joint Arrangements) which sets out that the Council or the Cabinet, in order to promote the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area, enter into arrangements or agreements with any person or body; co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person or body; and exercise on behalf of that person or body any functions of that person or body. The Cabinet may make arrangements with any other local authority (or the executive of that authority if it is operating executive arrangements) whereby that other authority (or executive) will exercise executive functions of the Council. Under Part 8.2 of the Constitution (Financial Procedure Rules), the Cabinet is responsible for agreeing any strategic partnerships for the County, monitoring the performance and governance and ensuring that partnerships are improving the wellbeing and outcomes for residents of Oxfordshire.

29. The interim partnership is intended to enable collaborative programme delivery and joint oversight during the pre-inception period. The legal mechanism(s) to give effect to this may include a memorandum of understanding, a collaboration agreement, and/or arrangements under the Local Government Act 1972/Local Government Act 2000 for the discharge of functions (including the establishment of a joint committee) where needed. The chosen mechanism will reflect (i) whether any functions are being formally delegated, (ii) the extent of decision-making powers required during the interim period, and (iii) the anticipated transition to a statutory Strategic Planning Board established by secondary legislation.

30. As set out in paragraph 27 above, any redundancies that arise as a result of Bracknell employing/hosting staff for the purposes of the programme and

related costs that arise as a result of this, will be shared by all parties and this will be set out in any MOU/Agreement.

Staff Implications

31. The SDS obligations and work are over and above what is currently resourced by the councils, this is putting pressure on strategic authorities to reprioritise time and resource. Currently resources from Oxfordshire County Council, Bracknell Forest and Swindon are being utilised to develop the programme. Once the permanent resource is recruited, there may be a change in staff attribution and responsibility. It is agreed that staff time will be given as work in kind to lead and develop areas of the SDS along with aligning with Local Plan evidence and development.

32. To augment officer capabilities and capacity, the SDS development will also require support from strategic advisors and consultancies with past senior regional planning experience to support the plan and develop the evidence base.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

33. The pre-inception phase is primarily programme set-up and evidence development. Equalities considerations will be embedded in the design of the SDS programme and engagement approach, including ensuring inclusive consultation and assessing impacts as the SDS content develops. Further equality and inclusions assessments will be developed alongside the development of the SDS.

Sustainability Implications

34. Sustainability considerations will be embedded through the SDS programme, including early agreement of sustainability objectives and the approach to assessment (including any statutory sustainability appraisal and related environmental assessment requirements), and through ongoing engagement with relevant partners and evidence holders. As the SDS content is developed, further detail will be provided on how proposed strategic approaches are expected to contribute to local and national climate and environmental commitments, and how potential adverse impacts will be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

35. The SDS is intended to provide the strategic framework to integrate housing and economic growth with the delivery of supporting infrastructure, climate mitigation and adaptation, and environmental enhancement across the Thames Valley. Developing and delivering the SDS therefore has positive sustainability

implications by enabling partners to plan for sustainable patterns of development (including prioritising locations that support public transport, walking and cycling), set strategic expectations on energy efficiency and carbon reduction, and coordinate cross-boundary measures for green infrastructure, biodiversity and nature recovery.

Risk Management

36. The key risks for the pre-inception programme for the SDS and the risks for the partnership.

Risk	**Impact**	**Mitigation**
Uncertainty in final SDS geography and statutory arrangements	Partnership is based on draft structure and partnership may change	maintaining flexibility in programme scope, continued engagement with Government, and ensuring interim governance can adapt.
Lack of off sign up to the partnership arrangements	Lack of joined up working, sight and information available for the development of the SDS	Understanding the issues in each authority, sharing information and working with senior officers.
Delays in establishing interim governance / agreements	Delays in progress of programme and oversight	early legal/finance input, clear decision timetable, and use of standard inter-authority templates where possible.
Insufficient capacity or recruitment delays	Stretched resources, not being able to make progress on the programme	early scoping, use of secondments, and prioritisation of critical-path activities.

Engagement and consultation

37. Engagement with authorities has been integral to development of the SDS pre-inception programme and will continue once the partnership is formalised. There has been close working with Government on the emerging SDS geography, legislative timetable and grant expectations, and collaborative working between the Partner Authorities to agree the initial scope, deliverables, governance and resourcing proposals set out in this report. The Partner

Authorities have already collaborated to respond to the SDS geography consultation and the response to the NPPF consultation. As the programme progresses, the partnership will develop and implement a proportionate engagement and communications plan, including early engagement with key stakeholders (such as infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities, statutory agencies and relevant sub-regional bodies) and arrangements for formal public consultation at the appropriate stages once the statutory SDS process is confirmed.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Funding and finance

Annex 2: Programme

Annex 3: Resourcing & governance structure

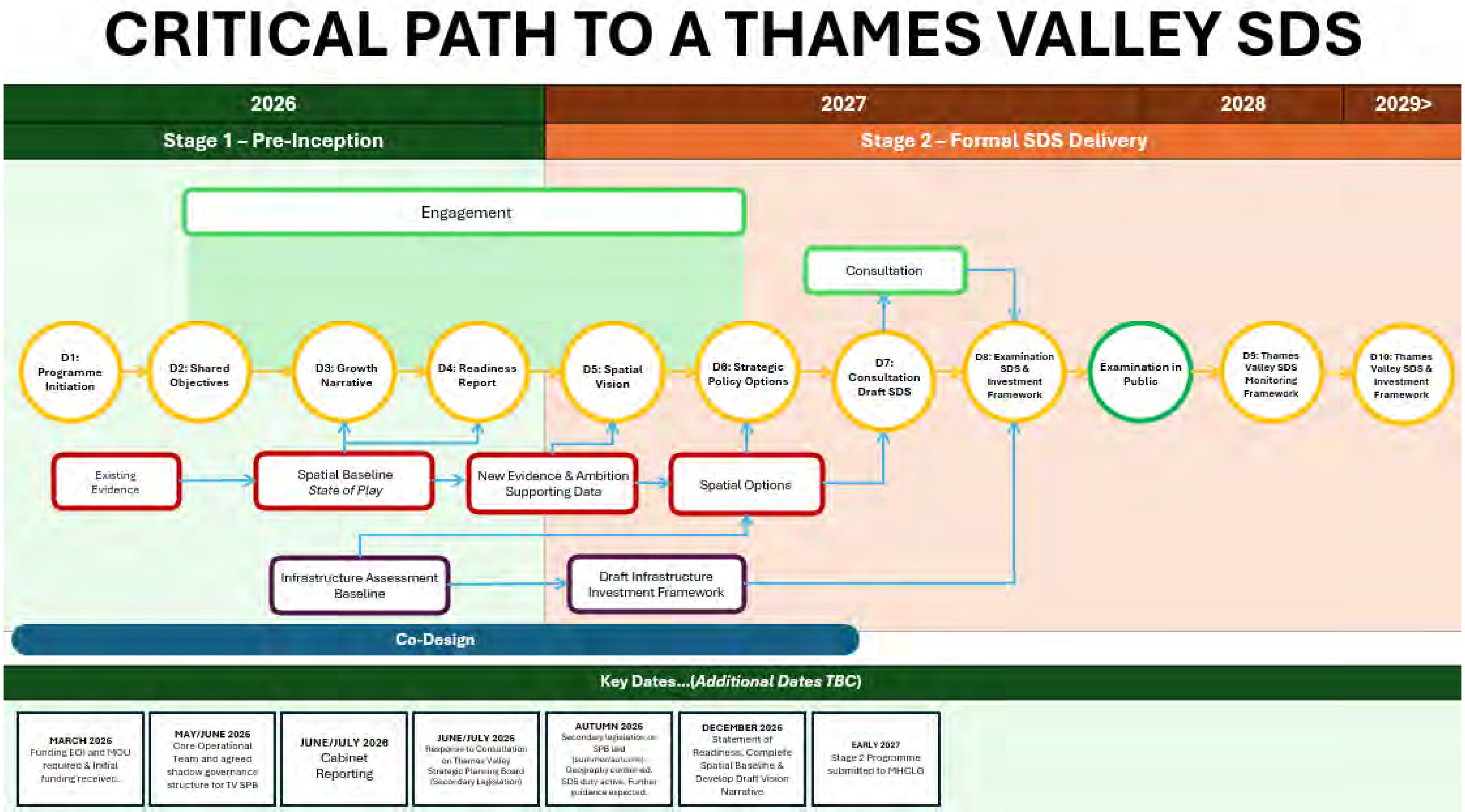
June 2026

Annex 1 – Funding and Finance

TVSDS Projected Indicative Budget - Working Draft

Costs								
Operations		**2026/27**	**Work In-Kind (WiK)**	**2027/28**	**Work In-Kind (WiK)**	**2028/29**	**Work In-Kind (WiK)**	**Total**
	Resources and Technical support	£307,600	£100,000	£724,000	£100,000	£755,000	£100,000	**2,086,600**
Commissions	**Studies/Evidence/Support**	£225,000		£830,000		£400,000		**1,725,000**
	Sub-Total							**£3,811,600**
	Contingency	**@15%**						**£571,740**
	Total			Estimated funding required:				**£4,383,340**
Revenue	MHCLG Grant Funding	£764,000		unknown		unknown		**£764,000**
	Work -in-Kind (WIK) Contributions	£150,000	£100,000		£100,000		£100,000	**£450,000**
	Local Contributions (see note 2)			£500,000		£500,000		**£1,000,000**
	Sub-Total							**£2,214,000**
	Proposed additional MHCLG Funds required							**£2,169,340**
Notes								
1. Assumes 30 month delivery programme								
2. Local contribution divided per council pre and post LGR - est. £50k per partner authority from April 2027.Oxfordshire paying £150k until LGR. WiK is flexible and may be shared between FSA workstreams and SDS.								
3. Technical study costs need verifying and are draft indicative cost. Evidence needed is unknown until further Government guidance. Savings possible if joint commissioning between SDS and Local Plans and with other SDS areas.								

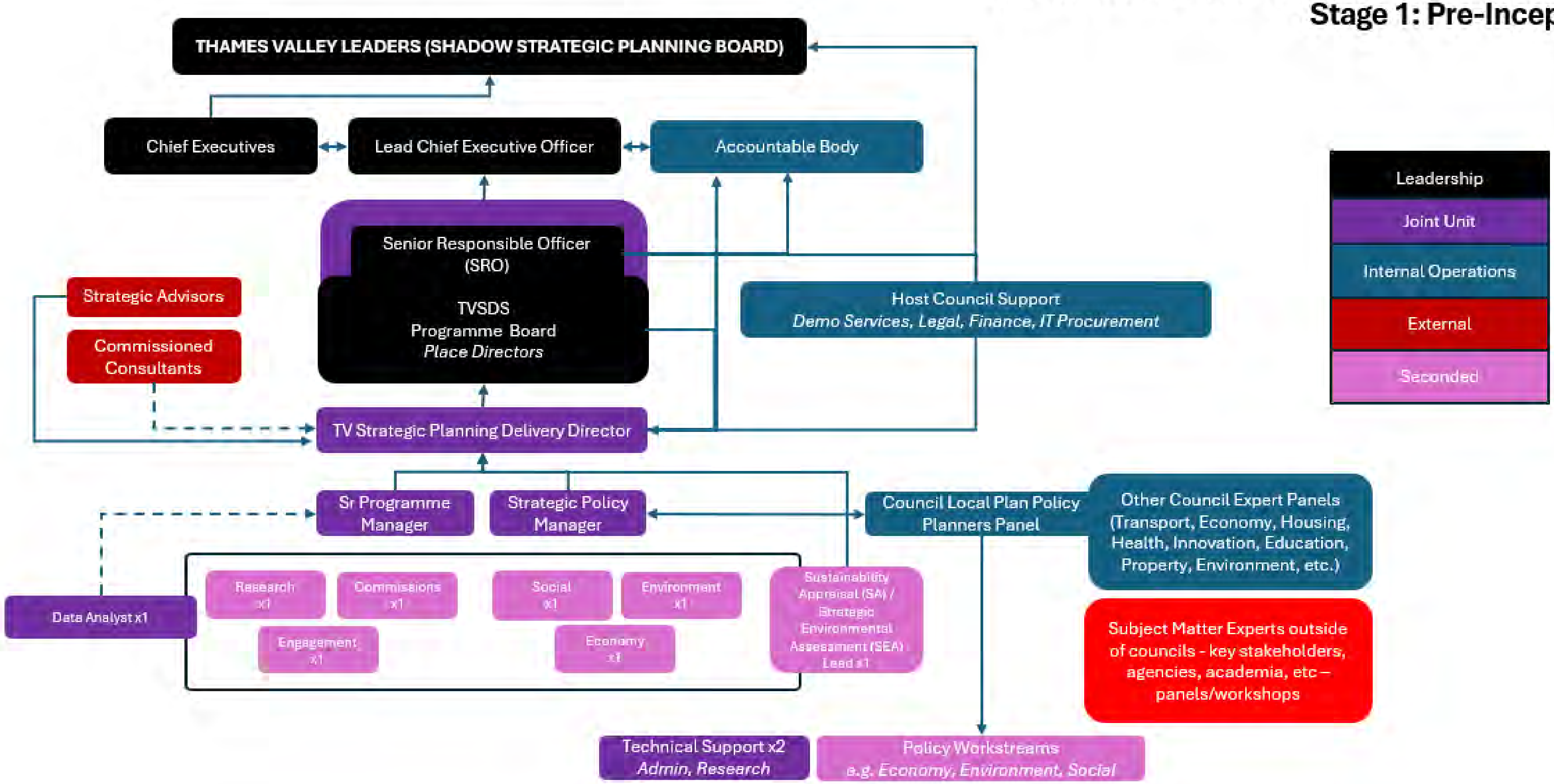
Annex 2 – High Level Programme & indicative timeline (working draft)



DRAFT

Annex 3 - Governance and resources

TVSDS Governance & Operational Framework
Stage 1: Pre-Inception



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This report is public	
Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) Final Report	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	13 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Leader of the Council - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	30 June 2026
Report of	Executive Director Place and Regeneration, Ian Boll

Purpose of report

This report introduces the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and seeks the Executive's endorsement following the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee endorsing the OxIS on 24 April 2026.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To note and endorse the final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) has been prepared on behalf of the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key strategic infrastructure necessary to support future development in Oxfordshire to 2050. The final report was considered and endorsed by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee in April 2026 and recommended its subsequent approval by constituent councils.

2.2 The Strategy builds on previous iterations to align with the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for sustainable development, focussing on nine key outcomes that include carbon neutrality, enhanced natural environments, and transformed connectivity. As a high-level strategy, it identifies the critical systems, facilities, and services required to enable long-term growth across the county.

2.3 Oxfordshire is planning for substantial growth, driven by its role in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, with major developments planned. This future development represents a transformative scale of change for the county and a significant infrastructure delivery challenge across all sectors. The prioritisation analysis for strategic infrastructure projects in Cherwell covers strategic projects beyond those considered in existing and / or emerging local plan infrastructure delivery plans.

2.4 Delivering the necessary infrastructure to support growth is estimated to cost at least £9 billion to 2050 in capital alone, excluding revenue, maintenance and land costs, of which currently identified secured funding is limited to £1.4 billion, highlighting a funding gap of over £7.6 billion.

2.5 The Stage 1 OxIS baseline assessment identified over 550 strategic infrastructure projects. This necessitated the need to undertake a logical, consistent and transparent sifting process to reduce the number of projects for inclusion in the focussed prioritisation process. Following the project sifting, a remaining schedule of 115 projects was taken forward for further consideration in the Stage 2 OxIS through the Prioritisation Framework Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA). The full list of projects remains part of the Strategy.

2.6 The Strategy has identified several key infrastructure delivery dependencies and synergies including Oxfordshire's ability to deliver sustainable development depending on addressing electricity network constraints at Bicester, wastewater treatment capacity upgrades, water supply resilience and improved digital and transport connectivity.

2.7 The Strategy identifies cross-sector benefits from delivering an integrated green and blue infrastructure network alongside other sectors' investment to address sub-regional greenspace needs and nature recovery. An example is the River Cherwell waterway park – a landscape-scale strategic project for improving mid-Cherwell's green and blue infrastructure network as proposed by the Cherwell Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

2.8 Priority transport infrastructure projects impacting Cherwell district, include Motorway improvements at junction 9 and 10 of the M40 and A34 corridor improvements to increase safety and capacity. Improvements to the Banbury railway station and proposed railway stations at Begbroke and Ardley are listed as priorities. In terms of active travel, the Strategy supports the delivery of the Oxfordshire Strategic Active Travel Network through schemes in the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans.

2.9 The Strategy identifies significant electricity network constraints particularly in Bicester, where connection times currently hinder development. Plans to upgrade the East Claydon Grid Supply Point, providing electricity to Bicester and other areas of Cherwell district is a priority energy project.

2.10 The Strategy also highlights regeneration opportunities, for example, in Banbury and Bicester to be supported through the potential for coordinated infrastructure delivery. The key infrastructure projects in the Banbury and Bicester include:

- Banbury - Multi-modal transport corridor improvements to east – west strategic movements and Warwick Road, The expansion of the Banbury Horton General Hospital.

- Bicester - North West Bicester strategic link road, Bicester community hospital extension, North West Bicester district heating network and potential connection to Ardley Energy Recovery facility, Bicester Sewage Treatment Works upgrade and Highway capacity improvements to peripheral routes.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Kimberley Digweed – Finance Business Partner 5 June 2026			
Legal	OxIS is a non-statutory strategic evidence and coordination document, it does not form part of the statutory development plan. OxIS will be a material consideration for future proposed developments but should not override the adopted Local Plans, policies or statutory tests. It should therefore not be treated as determinative in decision-making. Denzil-John Turbervill, Head of Legal, 8 June 2026			
Risk Management	Whilst there are some risks relating to funding, dependencies and delivery timescales, these are mitigated through effective partnership working and a clear prioritisation framework and monitored through the service operational risk. The Strategy provides a flexible and robust basis for managing risk and supporting sustainable growth. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 2 June 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		Neutral
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		Neutral
Climate & Environmental Impact	X			The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy is expected to have a positive climate and environmental impact in supporting long-term sustainable development through infrastructure delivery aligned to the Oxfordshire Strategic

				Vision. It aligns with other strategic plans such as the Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plan and Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Plan in delivering the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision which aims to create a greener (enhancing environmental sustainability and protecting natural spaces, improving air quality, promoting sustainable transport and achieving carbon neutrality in council operations by 2030 with a net-zero county by 2050), fairer and healthier county with thriving communities, a sustainable economy and improved wellbeing for residents.
ICT & Digital Impact				Not applicable
Data Impact				Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy				Not applicable
Council Priorities	This relates to the Council Priorities as follows: • Economic prosperity by supporting long-term sustainable development and economic growth. • Community Leadership through identifying long-term social and health infrastructure needs and promoting infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles. • Environmental stewardship by identifying strategic green and blue infrastructure projects that seek to protect the environment and address the impacts of climate change through sustainable future development. • Quality housing and placemaking by supporting long-term sustainable development through the identification and delivery of strategic infrastructure.			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	Stage 1 technical consultation took place in August and September 2025 and was followed by consultation on the Stage 2 report from 19 February to 19 March 2026.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 The first Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) was prepared in 2017. It was a requirement of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and supported the preparation of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, "The Oxfordshire Plan 2050". A second Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy was produced in 2021. The second

OxIS in 2021, took a slightly different approach focussed on local place-based projects and a comprehensive multi-criteria assessment of infrastructure linked to accelerating housing delivery and economic growth through infrastructure schemes. The third iteration of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy was commissioned in late 2024 and is the subject of this report.

3.2 The first iteration of OxIS was a comprehensive costed list of infrastructure projects, albeit with a strong focus upon transport - including active travel - and a methodology for ranking those schemes. The second iteration of OxIS was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in 2019. It set out the updated strategic infrastructure requirements for planned growth in Oxfordshire to 2040 and recast the methodology for ranking the same, the Multi Criteria assessment or MCA. Following the decision not to proceed with the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the OxIS was refocussed around four key principles:

1. To identify the infrastructure required for growth in Oxfordshire and promote the strategically important pieces of infrastructure to the Government, particularly projects with uncertainty of delivery, either through lack of funding or blockages to development.
2. To fill the gaps in knowledge of infrastructure needs common across the county, namely energy, transport, health, water and green (and blue) infrastructure.
3. To ensure that the schedule of infrastructure projects is up to date taking into account the progress in preparing Local Plans and supporting infrastructure delivery plans.
4. To ensure the infrastructure projects are assessed and prioritised.

3.3 The OxIS is not a statutory policy document and is aimed at both informing and supporting key documents such as Local Plans, Infrastructure Delivery Plans and service providers' investment strategies, to act as a prospectus and investment document for infrastructure in Oxfordshire and to enable the members of the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee to use that information to make better, more informed strategic decisions on the county's infrastructure requirements. It sets out an evidence base to inform decisions on future strategic infrastructure requirements.

3.4 The OxIS sits beneath the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. It offers a place-based infrastructure narrative, which enunciates the ambitions of the Strategic Vision to deliver sustainable growth that seeks to enhance Oxfordshire's built and natural environments and make it a better place to live and work by 2050.

3.5 This iteration of OxIS is a new strategy that both builds upon, and links back to, previous iterations as appropriate. A benefit and risk for delivering planned sustainable growth is the timely delivery of infrastructure. There is broad agreement that if we are to deliver sustainable growth, then we must also have the necessary infrastructure provided in a timely way to support that growth. Appropriate infrastructure will enable the 'good growth' as described in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision that benefits new and existing communities and continues to develop Oxfordshire as an attractive and vibrant place to live, work and enjoy leisure and other activities.

3.6 The third iteration once again updates the county's infrastructure requirements in the light of the current economic climate, updated local plans, updated policies, and ambitions for Oxfordshire to provide a clear statement of strategic infrastructure needs to 2050 with a clear understanding of the benefits and implications of the same.

3.7 An OxIS Stage 1 Baseline report was published in September 2025 and a copy is contained in Appendix 1. The appendices to the OxIS Stage 1 baseline assessment are contained in Appendix 2. The Stage 1 OxIS documents should be read in conjunction with the Stage 2 Prioritisation report as they comprise the final OxIS. A copy of the OxIS Stage 2 Prioritisation report is contained in Appendix 3 and the Stage 2 report appendices are contained in Appendix 4.

3.8 Throughout its preparation, the Oxfordshire Joint Leaders Committee (OJLC) has considered the progress of latest version of the OxIS, most recently at the meeting of the OJLC in April 2026. The final report was considered and endorsed by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee in April 2026 and recommended its subsequent approval by constituent councils.

4. Details

Introduction

4.1 The Strategy was commissioned by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee and applies to all local authorities within Oxfordshire, considering the county in its wider regional context. This includes interrelationships with neighbouring authorities and strategic geographies such as the England's Economic Heartland (the sub-regional transport body) and the Oxford to Cambridge corridor. Consultants were appointed in early 2025.

Project objectives

4.2 The OxIS project objectives are to:

- Provide an understanding of the strategic infrastructure to support future growth
- Prepare an evidence-base to support planning of sustainable development
- Prepare a key investment document and a vehicle for engagement, and
- Align with, and inform, parallel plans, strategies and initiatives.

4.3 The intended audience for OxIS comprises Members and officers of Oxfordshire local authorities, government, infrastructure providers, businesses and residents. The final Strategy sets out the strategic infrastructure requirements in Oxfordshire to support the anticipated growth to 2050. It is a high level, strategic study of the funding and delivery implications of the key strategic infrastructure requirements. The OxIS clearly identifies types of infrastructure, which has historically been the responsibility of other statutory bodies, needed to enable and support sustainable development. Examples include energy, water and sewerage, strategic health facilities and super-fast broadband.

4.4 Local authorities in Oxfordshire need to plan for these other forms of infrastructure, which support and sustain health and wellbeing and mitigate potentially harmful effects of development, such as water resilience against shortages, flood alleviation and environmental management. This Strategy addresses this wider infrastructure landscape and recognises that different infrastructure providers are at various stages of their delivery cycles. The Strategy builds upon previous strategies to align with the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

4.5 As a high-level document, the strategy identifies critical systems, facilities and services required to enable long-term growth. It functions as a statement of ambition and a tool for engagement, intended to inform local plans and guide investment priorities for local authorities, government bodies and infrastructure providers. It also considers the best mechanisms for securing funds to deliver these projects, such as through council funding, government funding, private sector delivery, or developer contributions.

OxIS in Cherwell

4.6 Within the Cherwell context, this new iteration of OxIS sets out energy infrastructure upgrades to the electricity grid supply point at East Claydon in Buckinghamshire to provide increased capacity and resilience for future development connections primarily in Bicester. It also includes strategic transport infrastructure needs on the strategic road network at motorway junctions and the A34 corridor as well as strategic active travel infrastructure schemes to support regeneration in Banbury and Bicester, projects relating to the hospitals in Banbury and Bicester, sewage treatment works upgrades and green and blue strategic infrastructure, such as the potential for a River Cherwell Waterway Park in mid-Cherwell. Appendix 5 is a list of the OxIS projects in the Cherwell district.

Stage 1 – Baseline assessment (Jan 2025 to August 2025)

4.7 The approach to preparing the Strategy followed a two-stage process. Stage 1 was a baseline assessment of current infrastructure needs. Stage 1 was developed using long-term growth scenarios beyond the current local plan periods. Upper and lower growth thresholds were used to assess the infrastructure needs of theoretical growth based on housing and employment trajectories. The Stage 1 report identifies over 550 strategic infrastructure projects to support future development, and a copy is contained in Appendix 1.

Stage 2 – Prioritisation framework (September 2025 to February 2026)

4.8 Stage 2 focussed on consultation feedback, funding sources, infrastructure project sifting and a prioritisation (framework development) process to identify the key strategic infrastructure. A copy of the final Stage 2 report is contained in Appendix 2. The long list of Stage 1 projects has been sifted down to just over one hundred projects in the Stage 2 prioritisation report using a framework multi-criteria assessment (MCA).

4.9 A “balanced scorecard” approach was used to assess individual infrastructure projects against social, environmental and other criteria based on the themes in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. This approach means that some projects do not receive the same priority as they would have done in previous infrastructure strategies that focussed more on growth and development. Infrastructure projects are presented in the Stage 2 report grouped into national/regional, district and local geographies.

Prioritisation Outcomes

4.10 The prioritisation framework, as developed, provides the OLJC and partners with a tool and not just a set of fixed outcomes. While the Strategy has chosen to present one set of base case outcomes as a demonstration to reflect the balanced scorecard approach across all themes and criteria, the Framework can be further used to present more refined outcomes according to the thematic, spatial or temporal interest of the use that can be used to promote different messages to different audiences as required.

4.11 The key infrastructure challenges facing Oxfordshire and Cherwell are covered including transport, energy and digital, water, social and health, It is estimated that the infrastructure funding gap to support growth from 2025 to 2050 is at least £9bn of which currently identified secured funding is limited to £1.4bn.

Key findings – Cherwell

4.12 The Strategy references the known electricity network constraints in Bicester (the East Claydon Grid Supply Point Strategic Development Plan is a specific project), wastewater treatment capacity upgrades, water supply resilience and improved digital and transport connectivity. For example, in terms of regionally important health and social care infrastructure, the expansion of the Banbury Horton Hospital is in the top 10 list of priority projects. M40 and A34 improvements are also show as prioritised OxIS projects of national/regional significance.

4.13 There are identified cross-sector benefits from delivering and integrated blue and green infrastructure network alongside other sectors' infrastructure investment to address sub-regional greenspace needs and nature recovery. This includes nature-based solutions to flood mitigation such as the River Cherwell Waterway Park.

4.14 Projects that support regeneration and growth in Cherwell include improvements to Banbury railway station, a proposed railway station at Begbroke and Ardley and the delivery of active travel networks through coordinated delivery of regeneration projects and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. The key infrastructure projects in the Banbury and Bicester include:

- Banbury - Multi-modal transport corridor improvements to east – west strategic movements and Warwick Road, The expansion of the Banbury Horton General Hospital site.
- Bicester - North West Bicester strategic link road, Bicester community hospital extension, North West Bicester district heating network and potential connection to Ardley Energy Recovery facility, Bicester Sewage Treatment Works upgrade and Highway capacity improvements to peripheral routes.

Engagement and consultation

4.15 Engagement with technical and other stakeholders has taken place during the preparation of the Strategy, most recently with a virtual consultation taking place for four weeks between 19 February and 19 March 2026, including infrastructure providers such as utility companies and transport operators. The Stage 1 Baseline Report was published for technical consultation in August and September 2025.

Alignment with other strategies

4.16 The Strategy aligns with other strategies and evidence workstreams including the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plan, Oxford Growth Commission interim report, Oxfordshire Rail Strategy 2040. It highlights potential for coordinated infrastructure delivery to support regeneration projects in Bicester and Banbury.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Do not endorse the OxIS – by not endorsing the Strategy, the Council would not benefit from the use of the data, and outputs it provides, in informing future plans and strategies.

Option 2: Endorse the Strategy – this is the recommended option.

Option 3: Endorse the Strategy with amendments. Officers have actively engaged in the preparation of the OxIS as part of the project working group from procurement to the final outputs and deliverable. The final reports meet the requirements of the project brief, and no further amendments are required.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The final Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy is a comprehensive countywide assessment of the strategic infrastructure needs to support sustainable development to 2050. It was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee on 24 April 2026 following a proactive approach to the Strategy's development with other Oxfordshire local authorities. It provides a potential tool for the prioritisation and funding of infrastructure projects and evidence for promoting the infrastructure needs to a wider range of audiences. Engagement included technical stakeholders has contributed to the final. Further collaboration with stakeholders will be required Oxfordshire local authorities progress the delivery of infrastructure to support growth.

Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	OxIS Stage 1 Baseline Report, Prepared for the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee, August 2025
Appendix 2	OxIS Stage 1 Baseline report appendices, August 2025
Appendix 3	OxIS Stage 2 Project Prioritisation Report, Prepared for the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee, January 2026 (Revised April 2026)
Appendix 4	OxIS Stage 2 report appendices, January 2026 (Revised April 2026)
Appendix 5	List of Cherwell OxIS projects
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee report, Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), 24 April 2026
Report Author	Andrew Bowe, Strategic Transport and Infrastructure Lead Officer
Report Author contact details	Andrew.bowe@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221842
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director Place and Regeneration, Ian Boll, 10 June 2026

This report is public	
Local Area Development Funds – Proposal for Allocation	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	13 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	30 June 2026
Report of	Executive Director Place & Regeneration, Ian Boll

Purpose of report

This paper sets out the first tranche of projects – discussed and recommended by Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) – for Local Area Development Funding. This funding was agreed as part of the annual budget setting process by Council on 23 February 2026.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To agree to allocate £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects for the 2026/27 financial year as discussed and recommended at the respective Area Oversight Group:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*	Banbury
-	-	Bicester
-	-	Kidlington
Total Funding Requested	**£21,500**	
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*		

1.2 To delegate authority to the Executive Director Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, to agree final cost plans for the above projects subject to the maximum cost envelope outlined in Figure 1.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 As part of the 2026/27 Budget, a number of new funds were agreed by Council in February 2026. This included the introduction of 3 Local Development Funds for each of the district’s three main urban centres and their surrounding areas, meaning that the entire district would have access to local development funding.

2.2 The focus of this funding is on projects that are deliverable and will have a tangible impact on our communities. The following projects have been identified for funding:

Figure 2: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*	Banbury
-	-	Bicester
-	-	Kidlington
Total Funding Requested	**£21,500**	
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*		

2.3 All projects proposed for funding have been discussed at the relevant AOG meeting and have been included in Area Priority Plans (APPs) with agreement from Ward Councillors in attendance at the respective AOG meetings.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	I can confirm that the figures within the Business Case have been reviewed by finance of which the £21.5k is available to be drawn down from the Local Area Development Funds upon review from the Executive, this will need to be closely monitored to ensure that this remains within the current budget envelope. Kimberley Digweed, Finance Business Partner, 30 June 2026
Legal	The proposed project described in this report and its appendices notes funding available for all three urban areas of the district. As noted in this report, the use of funding for any intended project will require the input of legal services to review and advise on the legal implications of the use of funding. This may include advice and support on a variety of issues including compliance with the Council's constitution, applicable legislation and other requirements. It is noted that there is a potentially wide scope of requests for use of funding. The early instruction of legal and procurement teams is recommended. On the current envisioned use of funds in this report, it is important that any changes to affected Council personnel should be agreed in writing, with appropriate consultation and certainty on what the increased provision will practically entail. Denzil-John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 24 June 2026
Risk Management	These projects have been identified and agreed by Ward Councillors as local area priorities. In part this proposal aims to mitigate a risk that our urban centres are not treated equally. Where projects identified in this paper are being delivered by the council, the internal PMO governance process will be followed,

	including a project risk register to manage and monitor this and any further identified risks. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 24 June 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		This report seeks to agree allocations of funding for specific projects. Any need for a full equality impact assessment will be subsequently undertaken as part of appropriate project governance processes, and in line with our Equalities, diversity and inclusion framework. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 24 June 2026
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Climate & Environmental Impact				Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact				Not applicable
Data Impact				Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy				Not applicable
Council Priorities	**Economic Prosperity.** The proposals within this paper are designed to help create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages that support local businesses, attract investment and enhance community life. **Community Leadership**. The proposals within this paper are a direct result of working closely with stakeholders and our communities to strengthen collaboration and resilience.			

Human Resources	If this proposal results in a permanent change to terms and conditions the Organisational change policy will apply. HR will support managers and staff with this process. Susan Blunsden, HR Manager, 22 June 2026
Property	Not applicable
Consultation & Engagement	Engagement has been undertaken with the members of the respective AOG for each area. For Bicester, the most recent AOG meeting was 13 May; Kidlington 27 May; and Banbury 11 June.

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 During 2025 the council embedded an area-based approach to growth through the creation of Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) for Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington (Five Parishes).

3.2 This area-based approach strives to take a holistic view of the development and infrastructure needs in each area and seek to ensure that local representatives can understand proposed growth and assist in shaping responses. Each area has a core AOG that meets three times per year, augmented by a further Area Priority Plan (APP) Review meeting that meets a further three times. This results in bi-monthly engagement with ward councillors.

Area Priority Plans (APPs)

3.3 APPs were created to facilitate consistent service provision which sets clear ambitions for each of the three areas whilst reflecting their differing needs and circumstances.

3.4 The purpose of an APP was to build a medium to longer-term vision for each area, the areas of planned growth, critical infrastructure to be delivered / needed, as well as to better engage with local businesses and community stakeholders. Alongside this, immediate enhancements to localities would be considered.

Local Area Development Funds

3.5 As part of the 2026/27 Budget, a number of new funds were agreed by Council in February 2026. This included the introduction of 3 Local Development Funds for each of the district’s three main urban centres and their surrounding areas, meaning that the entire district would have access to local development funding.

3.6 Regeneration & Growth is seeking an allocation of £21.5k to support delivery of the following projects.

Figure 3: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*	Banbury
-	-	Bicester
-	-	Kidlington
Total Funding Requested	**£21,500**	
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*		

3.7 Each of these projects sits on the respective APP for the relevant area and has been discussed and recommended at AOG meetings during May and June 2026.

4. Details

4.1 During 2025 the council embedded an area-based approach to growth through the creation of Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) for Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington (Five Parishes).

4.2 This area-based approach strives to take a holistic view of the development and infrastructure needs in each area and seek to ensure that local representatives can understand proposed growth and assist in shaping responses.

4.3 One of the core roles envisaged through the area-based approach was to engage with local communities and businesses through ward councillors, ensuring that community needs and aspirations are reflected in the delivery of both key infrastructure, but also in enhancements to the primary urban centres and surrounding areas.

Local Area Development Funds

4.4 As part of the 2026/27 Budget, a number of new funds were agreed by Council in February 2026. This included the introduction of 3 Local Development Funds for each of the district's three main urban centres and their surrounding areas, meaning that the entire district would have access to local development funding.

4.5 Each of the three funds has £0.300m allocated for a period of two years, with the MTFS currently assuming that there will be a third year of £0.233m funding each.

4.6 Local Area Development Funds were set up to enable local ward councillors to have the opportunity to be involved in an area framework that allows them to recommend proposals to the Executive to be funded to the benefit of their areas. Examples of potential schemes that may be put forward include:

- Relieving deprivation and improving access and opportunity with projects similar to, or an enhancement of, 'Brighter Futures in Banbury'
- Improving local public realm and the experience of the local area
- Enhancing green and amenity spaces
- Introducing growing spaces
- Flood prevention.

4.7 There is no exclusive list to the possible requests for area funding, however each request will be subject to the Council's standard checks on legal and financial implications and the Council's standing orders.

Area Oversight Groups (AOGs)

4.8 It is envisaged that AOGs will act as informal consultative bodies to recommend priority projects from their respective Area Priority Plans (APPs). All ward members for each area are invited to the relevant AOG and are voting members of the AOG for the purpose of agreeing to the funding recommendations contained within this report to Executive.

4.9 AOGs meet on a bi-monthly basis (ward councillors), with wider stakeholders attending three times per year to agree area priorities. The most recent round of meetings were the AOGs in Bicester (13 May), Kidlington (27 May) and Banbury (11 June).

Funding Recommendations - Bicester

4.10 In accordance with the above, there are no projects that have come forward to seek funding from the Executive for Kidlington in this reporting cycle.

Funding Recommendations - Kidlington

4.11 In accordance with the above, there are no projects that have come forward to seek funding from the Executive for Kidlington in this reporting cycle.

Funding Recommendations - Banbury

4.12 In accordance with the above and with the Recommendation Paper (Appendix 1), the following projects have come forward to seek funding from the Executive for Bicester:

Figure 4: Banbury Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation – Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*
Total Funding Requested - Banbury	**£21,500**
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*	

4.13 At the March AOG meeting, a priority action was agreed and added to the APP to explore the potential for street cleaning enhancements in the town centre with a specific focus on times of significant footfall. This was in response to a discussion around the desire to enhance the appearance of the town centre to support attractiveness and deliver improvements to visitors' dwell time.

4.14 Officers have explored this request and identified an opportunity to trial an increased street cleaning provision – including additional hours for existing contracted staff – and quarterly deep clean events from September 2026 until March 2027. This will include the pre-Christmas trading period which typically sees higher levels of footfall in the town centre.

4.15 The project business case (see Appendix 2) sets out a detailed proposal of additional hours for members of the council's Street Scene team to deliver this project in a typical financial year. Costs are summarised as follows:

- Annual cost of additional street cleaning (52 weeks per year) £25k
- Annual cost of quarterly deep clean events (4 per year) £10k
- A contingency of c.10% has been applied to reflect potential additional costs as yet unknown £3.5k
- This totals a full annual cost of £38.5k.

4.16 This proposal is focused on the current financial year, which has already commenced. Accordingly, for the 2026/27 financial year, the full cost will not be required as this project will be implemented part-way through the year on a trial basis. To allow for mobilisation and any contractual amendments for affected staff, it is proposed that this project commences from 1 September 2026. On this basis, the costs for 26/27 are summarised as follows:

- Part-year cost of additional street cleaning (30 weeks) £14.5k
- Two quarterly deep clean events (2 in year) £5k
- A contingency of c.10% has been applied to reflect potential additional costs as yet unknown £2k
- **This totals a cost for 26/27 of £21.5k**.

4.17 It is envisaged that this work is the first phase of a package of measures to support town centre revitalisation – these measures will be developed more fully over the coming months and reported to Executive in the future with an appropriate business case for further funding.

Summary of Funding Request

4.18 The total funding ask within this paper is to allocate £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds to the identified projects. These allocations will lead to the following funding profile for each area:

Figure 5: Local Area Development Funds Summary

AOG		**Financial Year 26/27**
Bicester	Original Allocation	£0.300m
	Funding Request	-
	Total Remaining	£0.300m
Kidlington	Original Allocation	£0.300m
	Funding Request	-
	Total Remaining	£0.300m
Banbury	Original Allocation	£0.300m
	Funding Request	**£0.022m**
	Total Remaining	£0.278m

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Do not proceed with projects proposed **-** Funds have already been allocated as set out in Section 4 and priorities have been agreed by Area Oversight

Groups. This report is intended to utilise some of this funding for enhancements identified by ward councillors as representatives of our communities. Doing nothing means that identified priorities will not be funded and commitments made to the district as part of the budget setting process will not be fulfilled.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 This report seeks to agree an allocation of £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds for delivery of specific projects in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.

6.2 The proposed projects are supported by the respective AOG and support the council's priorities around delivering economic prosperity and community leadership.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes. The decision will allocate funding for key projects across multiple council wards that is expected to have a significant positive impact on our communities.
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Recommendations Paper – Banbury
Appendix 2	Business Case – Banbury Town Centre Look & Feel
Background Papers	Banbury AOG – Minutes of Meeting held 11 June 2026
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Peter Sharp, Head of Regeneration & Growth
Report Author contact details	Peter.sharp@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221990
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director for Place & Regeneration, Ian Boll, 24 June 2026

Appendix 1: Recommendation Paper – Banbury	
Date of AOG	11 June 2026
AOG Chair	Deputy Leader of the Council - Planning and Enforcement
Report of	Banbury AOG

Purpose of report

This paper sets out the recommendations arising from the Banbury Area Oversight Group (AOG) to be put forward to the council's Executive for Local Area Development Funding.

1. Summary

1.1 To agree to request £21.5k of Local Area Development Funds to progress the following projects as discussed and recommended at the Banbury Area Oversight Group held on 11 June 2026:

Figure 1: Project Summary

Project	Est. Cost (£)	AOG
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	26/27: £21.5k **27/28: £38.5k*	Banbury
Total Funding Requested	**£21,500**	
** Figures for 27/28 full year are shown but not proposed for allocation at this stage.*		

2. Councillor Attendance and Engagement

2.1 As part of the AOG process, appropriate Ward Councillors were invited to the Banbury AOG meeting held at Castle Quay on 11 June 2026.

2.2 In total, 9 Councillors attended the AOG meeting alongside CDC and OCC Officers and representatives from Stagecoach, Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Banbury Town Council, the Mill Arts Centre, Banbury Quays Consortium, Banbury Civic Society and Banbury Community Action Group.

3. Project Proposals

3.1 All projects proposed for funding were discussed at the relevant AOG meeting and have been included in Area Priority Plans (APPs) with agreement from Ward Councillors in attendance at the respective AOG meetings.

3.2 The following projects were voted on and recommended by Councillors in attendance at the meeting:

Figure 2: Projects Proposed for Funding

Project	Votes For	Votes Against
Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation - Look & Feel	9	0

3.3 The proposed project was discussed and recommended unanimously by Councillors in attendance and was supported by AOG members in attendance at the meeting. A further phase of the proposed project is being developed for future funding and will be voted on at a future meeting.

Decision Information

Report Author	Tracey Thomas, Banbury Area Lead Officer
Report Author contact details	Tracey.thomas@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Outline Business Case

Classification: PUBLIC

Ensure personal or sensitive data is redacted before publication.

Project Title	**Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation Look & Feel – Phase 1**
Author	Tracey Thomas
Date	16/06/2026
Version	Draft 0.1
Classification	PUBLIC

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Changes
0.1	16/6/26	Tracey Thomas	Peter Sharp	
0.2	23/6/26	Tracey Thomas	Peter Sharp	

Approvals

Role	Name	Date

Reference	
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)	
Project Name	Banbury Town Centre Revitalisation Look & Feel – Phase 1
Project to be delivered by	Street Cleansing team
Department/Service	Environmental Services

Strategic Fit

It is envisaged that this work is the first phase of a package of measures to support town centre revitalisation aligning with the corporate priority of Economic prosperity: create vibrant economic centres and visitor economy and place-shaping objectives.

Business Need

Service Activity	Trial increased street cleaning provision to enhance the appearance of Banbury town centre.
Category	Desired
Corporate Business Plan Priority	Economic Propsperity
Political Sensitivity (RAG)	Green
Deliverability (RAG)	Green
Purpose of the Project	At the March Area Oversight Group (AOG) meeting, a priority action was agreed and added to the APP to explore improvements to explore the potential for street cleaning enhancements in the town centre with a specific focus on times of significant footfall. This was in response to a discussion around the desire to enhance the appearance of the town centre to support attractiveness and deliver improvements to visitors' dwell time. Officers have explored this request and identified an opportunity to trial an increased street cleaning provision – including additional hours for existing contracted staff – and quarterly deep clean events from September 2026 until March 2027. This will include the pre-Christmas trading period which typically sees higher levels of footfall in the town centre. Benefits of this project are expected to include: • Improved cleanliness and reduced litter • Increased positive perception among visitors and businesses • Potential increased footfall and dwell time • Reduced complaints on the look and feel of the town centre
Impact on Service and implications of not undertaking the project	Existing contracted staff would be asked, on a trial basis, to work additional hours to fulfil the proposed provision as detailed below. • Increase the driver labourer hours from 4.5 to 7 Saturday and Sunday • Increase the total Labourer Hours from 3 to 5 Saturday and Sunday • Add a 3hr sweeper driver shift every Saturday morning • Quarterly deep cleans – 10 labourers for 6 hours on a Saturday (x4) This has been confirmed with the service manager as deliverable and that contracted staff members would support

	the opportunity for additional hours. The service manager has confirmed with HR that this would be voluntary overtime and there will not be any changes to staff contracts. A 10% contingency has been included as this is a trial approach and there may be unknown implications of this project. If this project is not undertaken, improvements to weekend cleaning will not be seen and the ambition to enhance the appearance of the town centre will not be realised. This means that the expected benefits of the project will not be delivered.

Initial Options

Option 1 – Preferred Option
To trial the introduction of increased street cleaning provision in the town centre including additional hours for existing contracted staff, and quarterly deep clean events. This will provide additional cleanliness, helping to enhance the look and feel of the town centre whilst also periodically removing stubborn grime that routine sweeping and litter picking cannot address. Improved cleanliness and reduced litter should lead to increased positive perception among visitors and businesses, potential increased footfall and dwell time and reduced complaints on the look and feel of the town centre.

Option 2 - Trial quarterly deep cleans only

This option considers the introduction of 'deep clean' events once every three months. Scheduling a quarterly deep clean for the town centre will revitalise the local economy, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and could revitalise the town centre economy. Deep cleans remove stubborn grime, sanitise high-touch areas, and reset the cleanliness baseline that routine sweeping and litter picking cannot address.

Although this will go some way to improve the appearance of Banbury town centre, it will not address the concerns raised by ward councillors and other stakeholders regarding the appearance of the town centre on weekend mornings, following activities in the town centre on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Option 3 – Trial extra cleaning only
This option considers the trial of extra cleaning only – focused on Saturdays and Sundays. Whilst this will provide additional cleanliness within the town centre – helping to enhance the look and feel of Banbury town centre – it will not provide the deep cleaning that is periodically required to remove stubborn grime, sanitise high-touch areas and reset the cleanliness baseline that routine sweeping and litter picking cannot address.

Option 4 - Do nothing
This project will utilise Area Development Funding to enable the introduction of enhancements in Banbury, identified by ward councillors as representatives of our communities. Doing nothing means the identified issues are not addressed.

Indicative Costs

Approximate costs per year are expected to be:

- 2026/27 - £21,500 (trialling additional cleaning from 1 September 2026 to 31 March 2027 during periods of higher footfall)
- 2027/28 - £38,500 (full year costs – provided as indicative for a full financial year, not proposed for implementation)
- **Total cost - £21,500**

Annual cost of additional weekly hours

Hours	Operatives	Rate	Cost	Total	Annual Cost (x52)
2.5	1	1.5	23.24	87.15	£4,531.80
2.5	1	2	23.24	116.2	£6,042.40
2	1	1.5	19.6	58.8	£3,057.60
2	1	2	19.6	78.4	£4,076.80
3	1	1.5	26.66	119.97	£6,238.44
				Total:	**£23,947.04**

Annual cost for quarterly deep cleans - £9,281.16

Cost of each deep clean (Saturday rate)

Hours	Operatives	Rate	Cost	Total
6	6	1.5	23.24	£1,254.96
6	1	1.5	19.6	£176.40
6	2	1.5	26.66	£479.88
6	1	1.5	45.45	£409.05
			Total:	£2,320.29

10% contingency included as a trial approach - £3,500

This proposal is focused on the current financial year, which has already commenced. Accordingly, for the 2026/27 financial year, the full cost will not be required as this project will be implemented part-way through the year on a trial basis. To allow for mobilisation and any contractual amendments for affected staff, it is proposed that this project commences from 1 September 2026. On this basis, the costs for 26/27 are summarised as follows:

- Part-year cost of additional weekend street cleaning (30 weeks) approx £14.5k
- Two quarterly deep clean events (2 in year) approx £5k
- 10% contingency approx. £2k
- This is a total cost for 26/27 of £21.5k.

Note that Cost of Living salary increases have not been factored into the above calculations.

It is expected that the full cost will be covered by an allocation of Local Area Development Funding.

Revenue implications of project	
Please estimate any **one-off revenue costs** – *these are likely to relate to options appraisals, feasibility studies and speculative surveys which do not meet capitalisation criteria*	£0
Please estimate any **recurring revenue costs** once the project is completed – *e.g. maintenance and repairs, business rates, staffing etc.*	£0
Is the project expected to **increase income** or **reduce revenue expenditure** over the medium-term financial period once completed?	No
If **yes** above, please **provide an estimate** and **brief explanation** of the expected revenue benefit below	

Capital Expenditure and Funding	
Capital cost to the council (please provide an estimate, including any spend from grants etc.)	£0
Is there already an associated project in the capital programme (Y/N)? If yes, please state the name of the project	N

Capital funding identified (not already allocated to another project in the capital programme)	
Type (e.g. Grant, S106, sale proceeds)	Amount £0

Risks & Dependencies

Risk	**Impact**	**Mitigation**
Additional hours and quarterly deep cleans may exceed available budget.	Reduction in provision	• Prepare a clear cost forecast • Monitor costs monthly against budget • Adjust frequency or scope of deep cleans if required
AOG members expect immediate or significant improvements	AOG are disappointed	• Communicate realistic timelines and outcomes • Provide regular updates to AOG and stakeholders
Existing contracted staff may be unwilling or unavailable to work additional hours	Extra hours of cleaning cannot be fulfilled	• Service manager has confirmed deliverability, though voluntary overtime, rather than any need to change contracts. • Confirm staff availability in advance

Governance & Delivery

Outline the proposed governance structure and delivery approach.

- Area Oversight Group and Executive – to receive bi-monthly monitoring report
- Area Lead – to compile bi-monthly monitoring report
- Directorate Portfolio Board – to receive monthly update on delivery from Project Manager
- Project Manager – from the Street Scene and Cleansing team to be responsible for day-to-day management and coordination of increased service and monitor delivery.
- Operational Supervisor – to oversee weekend operations

Next Steps

Summarise actions required to progress to the Full Business Case stage.

- Confirm Area Development funding to cover project costs for remainder of 2026/27 financial year
- Define Measurable Outcomes & Benefits
- Operational Planning - Develop a detailed delivery schedule (rotas and deep clean timetable) and ensure equipment and resources are available

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This report is public	
Finance Monitoring Report 2026/2026 – May 2026	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	13 July 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor David Hingley
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	18 June 2026
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Michael Furness

Purpose of report

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the May 2026. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of May 2026.

1.2 To approve the use of reserves and grant funding held within appendix 4.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report sets out the Councils forecast year-end position for 2026/27, projecting an underspend of (£0.002m) to the financial year end.

2.2 The capital forecast year-end position will be reported on a Quarterly basis with the first report being June 2026.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	Financial and Resource implications are detailed within sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this report. The reserves policy requires Executive to agree transfers to and from earmarked reserves and general balances during the financial year. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 10 June 2026

Legal	There are no legal implications arising at this stage. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables Executive to remain aware of issues and understand the actions being taken to maintain a balanced budget. The report sets out as at May 2026 the finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 9 June 2026			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Financial resilience and any risks link to it are managed through the Corporate Leadership Risk register. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 9 June 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.is report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 9 June 2026
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact		X		N/A

ICT & Digital Impact		X		N/A
Data Impact		X		N/A
Procurement & subsidy		X		N/A
Council Priorities	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them during 2026/27.			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its financial position to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.

3.2 This monitoring takes place monthly for finance, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.

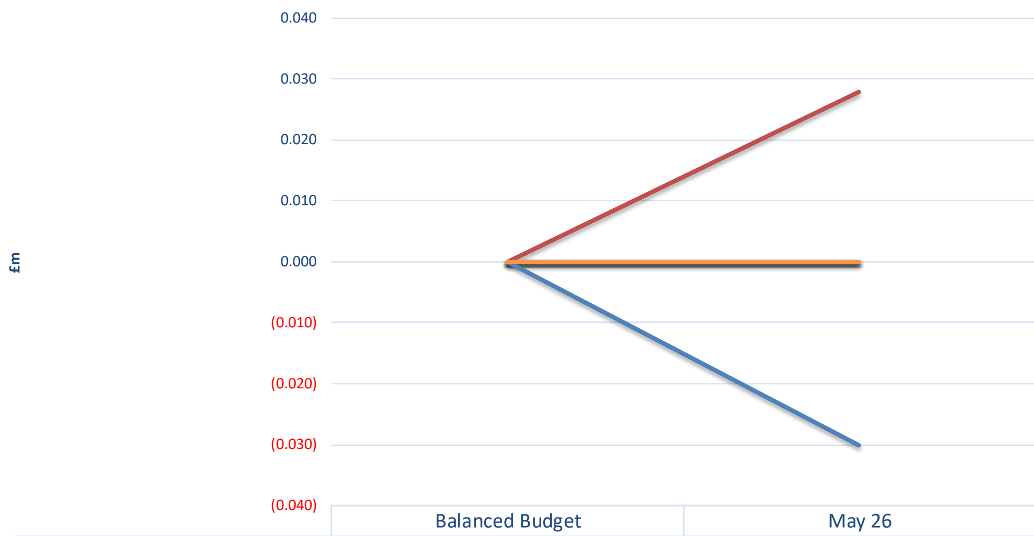
3.3 These updates are consolidated on a quarterly basis where Performance and Finance updates are given due to the implications and interdependencies between them, and this is the summary financial forecast for the end of the financial year position for 2026/27.

4. Details

4.1 Finance Update

4.1.1 The Finance section presents the forecast year-end revenue position for the 2026/27 financial year and in a summary dashboard as detailed below:

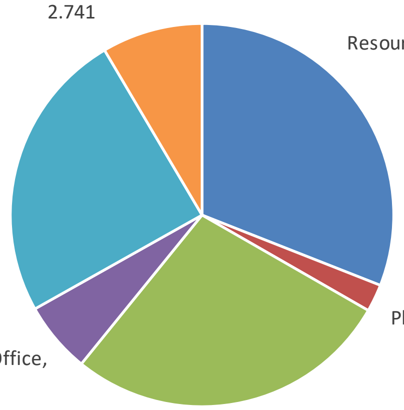
Monthly Forecast Variance By Directorate



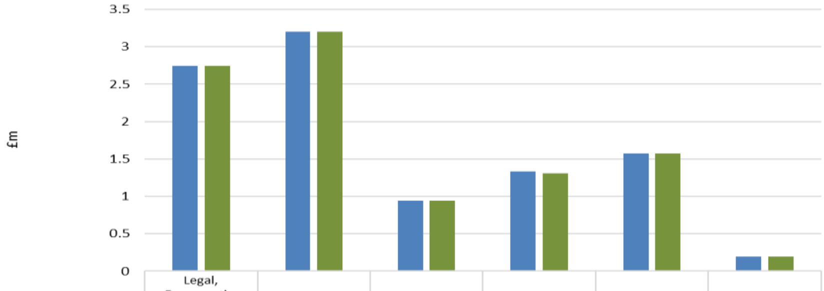
	Balanced Budget	May 26
Resources	0.000	-0.030
Place & Regeneration	0.000	0.028
Neighbourhood Services	0.000	0.000
Chief Executives Office	0.000	0.000
Policy Contingency & Executive Matters	0.000	0.000
Overall Council Position	0.000	0.00

Current Budget By Service Area

Total Net Budget £32.267m



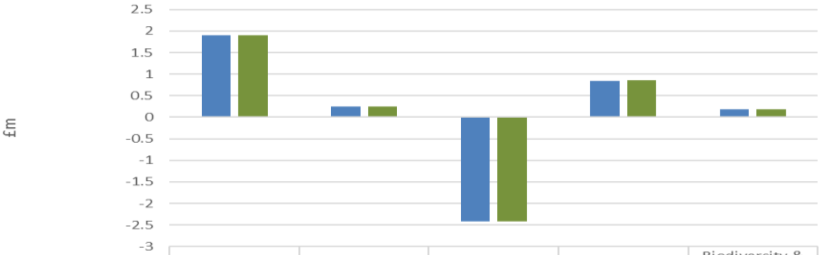
Resources - Revenue



	Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	Finance	HR & OD	Contact Centre	Digital IT	Transformation
Current Budget	2.744	3.201	0.943	1.335	1.573	0.199
Forecast May 2026	2.744	3.201	0.943	1.305	1.573	0.199

■ Current Budget ■ Forecast May 2026

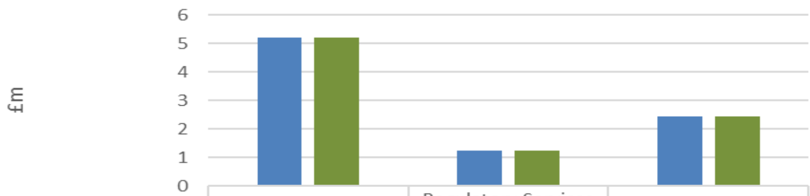
Place & Regeneration - Revenue



	Planning	Development Management	Property	Regeneration & Economy	Biodiversity & Climate Resilience
Current Budget	1.902	0.242	-2.418	0.834	0.188
Forecast May 2026	1.902	0.242	-2.418	0.862	0.188

■ Current Budget ■ Forecast May 2026

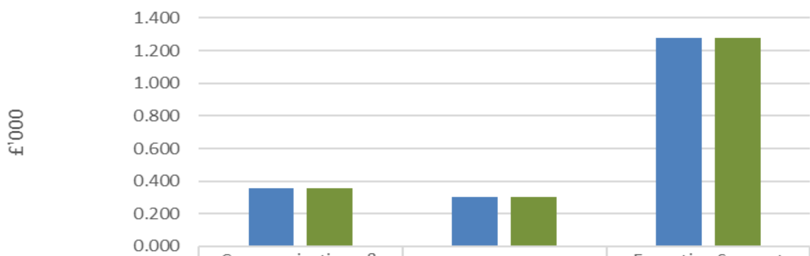
Neighbourhood Services - Revenue



	Environmental Services	Regulatory Services & Community Safety	Wellbeing & Housing
Current Budget	5.193	1.238	2.458
Forecast May 2026	5.193	1.238	2.458

■ Current Budget ■ Forecast May 2026

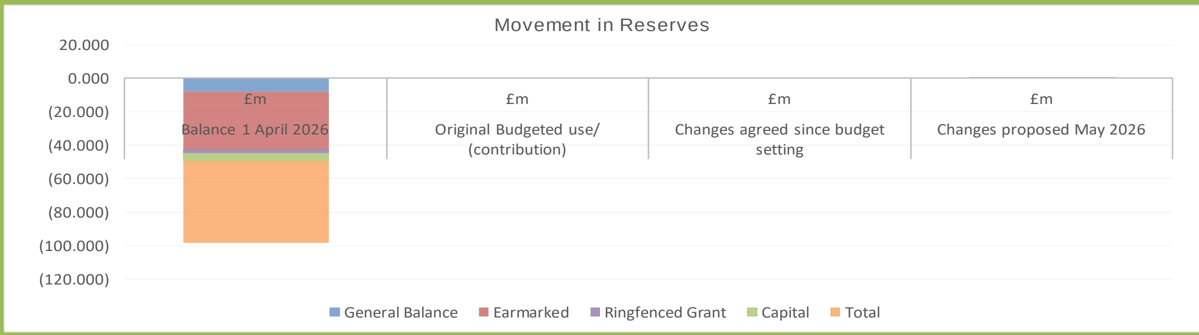
Chief Executives Office - Revenue



	Communications & Marketing	Performance	Executive Support Team
Current Budget	0.359	0.304	1.277
Forecast May 2026	0.359	0.304	1.277

■ Current Budget ■ Forecast May 2026

Service	Resources £m	Place & Regeneration £m	Neighbourhood Services £m	Chief Executive Office £m	Executive Matters £m	Policy Contingency £m	Total £m
Budget approved by Council	**9.979**	**0.728**	**8.889**	**1.940**	**7.954**	**2.779**	**32.269**
senior restructure		0.020				-0.020	**0.000**
reverse fees & charges as not applicable on court costs	0.016					-0.016	**0.000**
Current Budget	**9.995**	**0.748**	**8.889**	**1.940**	**7.954**	**2.743**	**32.269**
Contact Centre - vacant hours	-0.030						**-0.030**
Regeneration & Economy - staffing changes & devolution		0.028					**0.028**
							0.000
Current (Under)/Overspends	**-0.030**	**0.028**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**-0.002**



4.1.2 The council's overall forecast year-end position for 2026/27 is balanced. The forecast currently shows an underspend across Directorates of (£0.002m) with potential mitigations that are currently being investigated, these mitigations are not part of the forecast.

The projected outturn for the services is summarised below in Table 1 and further details providing explanations for variances can be found in Appendix 1.

4.1.3 The May 2026 forecast indicates an overall balanced financial position, with total net expenditure of £32.265m broadly in line with the £32.267m budget, resulting in a marginal underspend of (£0.002m). Most services are forecasting to be reporting on budget, notable exceptions include a small underspend within Resources of (£0.030m) (2.2%), driven by the Contact Centre, and modest overspends of £0.028m (3.4%) within Regeneration & Economy contributing to a similar variance in Place & Regeneration. These variances largely offset each other, leaving the overall directorate subtotal and total position effectively on budget, with funding fully aligned and a negligible forecast surplus of (£0.002m).

Table 1: Forecast Year End Position

Service	Current Budget £m	May 2026 Forecast to Year End £m	May Variance (Under) / Over £m	% Variance to current budget %
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	2.744	2.744	0.000	0.0%
Finance	3.201	3.201	0.000	0.0%
HR & OD	0.943	0.943	0.000	0.0%
Contact Centre	1.335	1.305	(0.030)	2.2%
Digital IT	1.573	1.573	0.000	0.0%
Transformation	0.199	0.199	0.000	0.0%
Resources	**9.995**	**9.965**	**(0.030)**	**2.2%**
Planning	1.902	1.902	0.000	0.0%
Development Management	0.242	0.242	0.000	0.0%
Property	(2.418)	(2.418)	0.000	0.0%
Regeneration & Economy	0.834	0.862	0.028	3.4%
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience	0.188	0.188	0.000	0.0%
Place & Regeneration	**0.748**	**0.776**	**0.028**	**3.4%**
Environmental Services	5.193	5.193	0.000	0.0%
Regulatory Services & Community Safety	1.238	1.238	0.000	0.0%
Wellbeing & Housing	2.458	2.458	0.000	0.0%
Neighbourhood Services	**8.889**	**8.889**	**0.000**	**0.0%**
Communications & Marketing	0.359	0.359	0.000	0.0%
Performance	0.304	0.304	0.000	0.0%
Executive Support Team	1.277	1.277	0.000	0.0%
Chief Executives Office	**1.940**	**1.940**	**0.000**	**0.0%**
Subtotal for Directorates	**21.572**	**21.570**	**(0.002)**	**0.0%**
Executive Matters	7.954	7.954	0.000	0.0%
Policy Contingency	2.741	2.741	0.000	0.0%
Total	**32.267**	**32.265**	**0.000**	**0.0%**
FUNDING	**(32.267)**	**(32.267)**	**0.000**	**0.0%**
Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit	**0.000**	**(0.002)**	**0.000**	

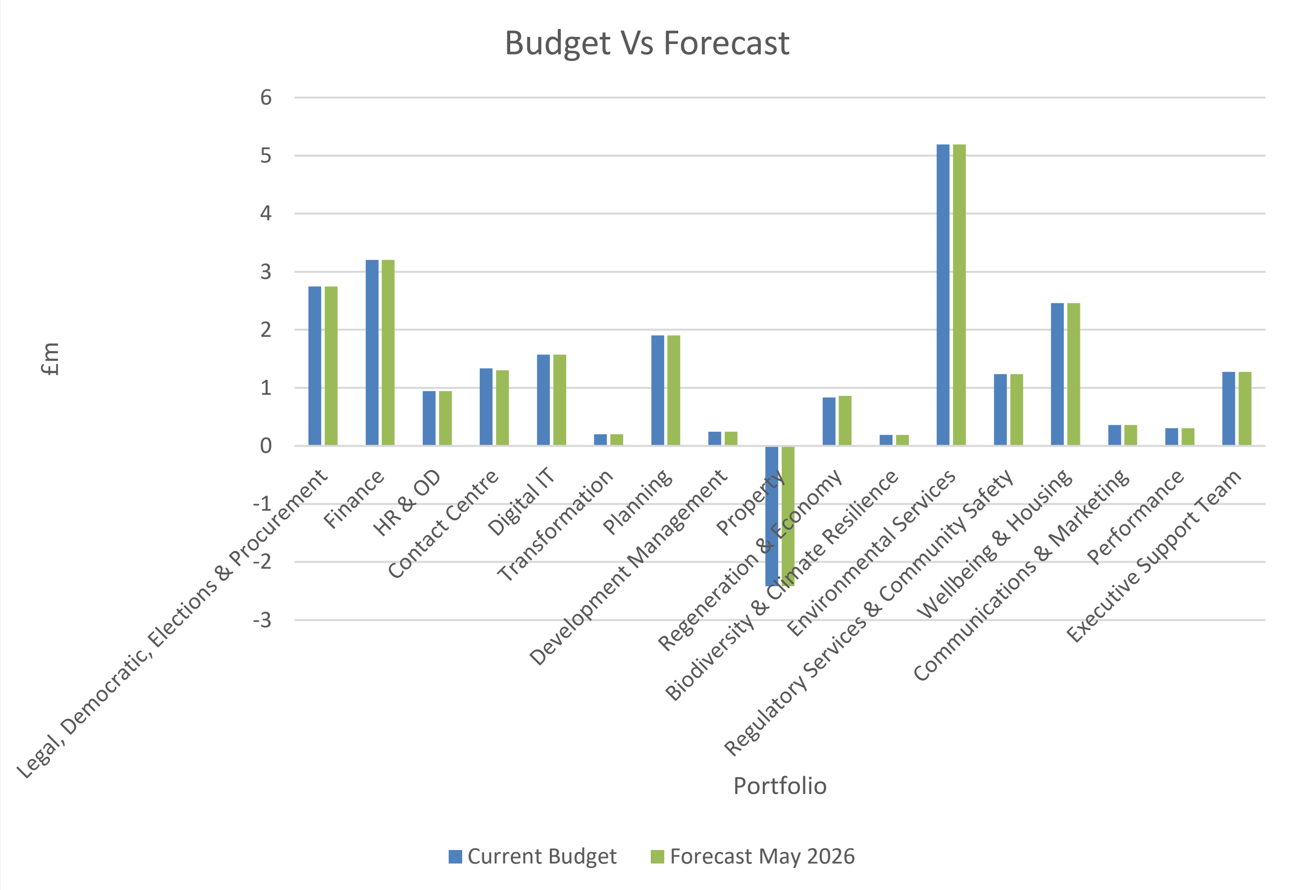
Note: A positive variance is an overspend or a reduction in forecast income and a (negative) is an underspend or extra income received.
Green represents an underspend and red represents a overspend for the forecast outturn position.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance – May 2026

Breakdown of current month forecast	May 2026 Forecast to Year End £m	Base Budget Over/ (Under) £m	Savings non-delivery £m
Resources	9.965	9.963	0.002
Place & Regeneration	0.776	0.686	0.090
Neighbourhood Services	8.889	8.863	0.026
Chief Executives Office	1.940	1.940	0.000
Subtotal Directorates	**21.570**	**21.452**	**0.118**
Executive Matters	7.954	7.954	0.000
Policy Contingency	2.741	2.741	0.000
Total	**32.265**	**32.147**	**0.118**
FUNDING	**(32.267)**	**(32.267)**	**0.000**
(Surplus)/Deficit	**(0.002)**	**(0.120)**	**0.118**

4.1.4 The graph below shows the Budget compared with the forecast to the end of the financial year.

Graph 1: Budget compared with Forecast



Reserves

4.1.5 Allocations to and from reserves are made according to the Reserves Policy. Table 3 below summarises the movements, for details of reserve requests for May 2026 please see appendix 4.

Table 3: Reserves forecast:

Reserves	Balance 1 April 2026 £m	Original Budgeted use/ (contribution) £m	Changes agreed since budget setting £m	Changes proposed May 2026 £m	Balance 31 March 2027 £m
General Balance	(8.021)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(8.021)
Earmarked	(34.630)	0.000	0.000	0.250	(34.380)
Ringfenced Grant	(1.945)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(1.945)
Subtotal Revenue	**(44.596)**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.250**	**(44.346)**
Capital	(4.601)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(4.601)
Total	**(49.197)**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.250**	**(48.947)**

4.1.6 Cherwell District Council is exploring how underused and long-term vacant spaces within Castle Quay can be repurposed to help create a more vibrant town centre. This work will consider a stronger mix of uses to help the area continue adapting to changing consumer trends and better meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. Approval is sought to release £0.250m from reserves to enable the work to progress. The funding will be support the commissioning of detailed options appraisal and feasibility studies to determine the most viable long term future options. The work is essential to inform a clear strategic direction, underpin future investment decisions, and maximise the overall value and regeneration potential of the asset.

*According to the Reserves Policy Executive are only required to approve uses of Capital Reserves, not contributions.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2027, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2026/27. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Detailed Revenue Narrative on Forecast May 2026
Appendix 2	Virements May 2026
Appendix 3	Funding May 2026
Appendix 4	Use of Reserves and Grant Funding – May 2026
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Leanne Lock, Finance Business Partners
Report Author contact details	leanne.lock@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 227098
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer, S151 Officer

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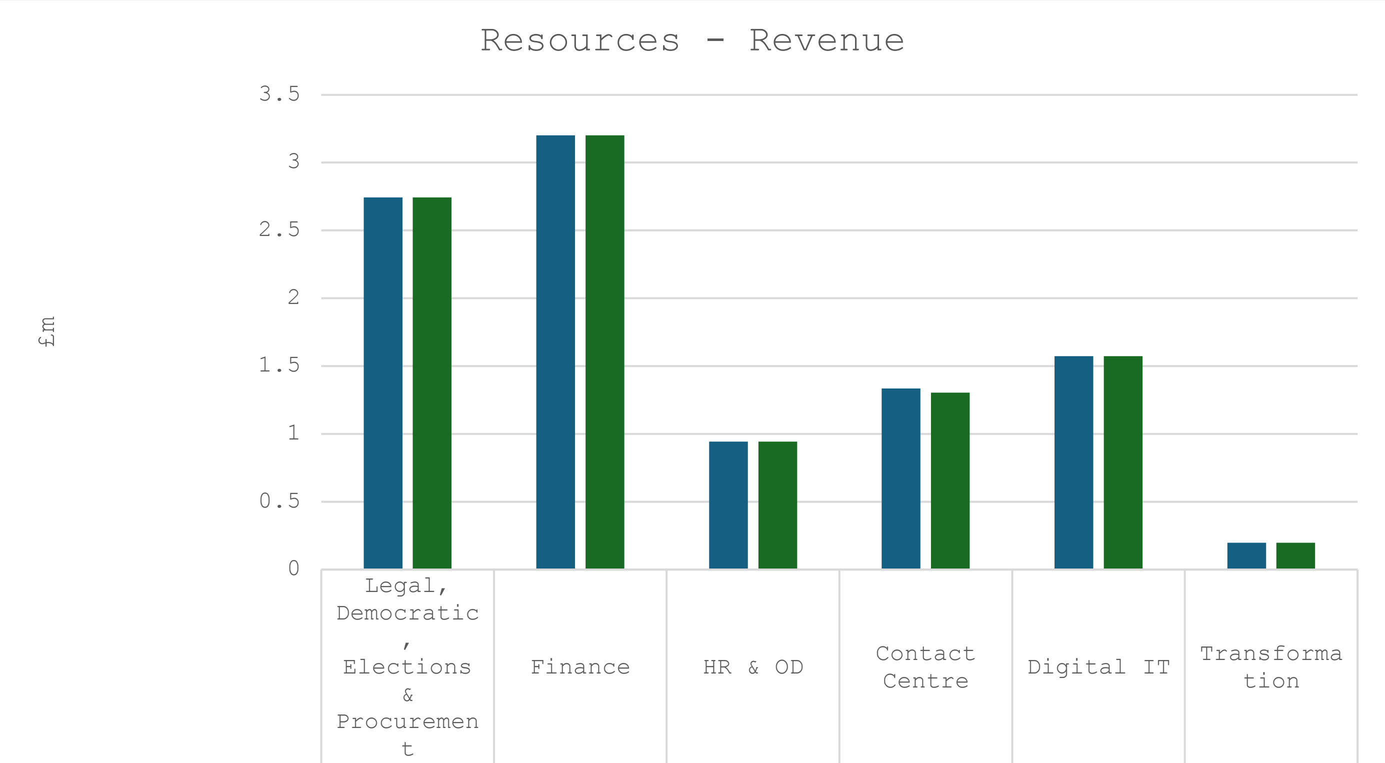
Appendix 1 – Detailed Narrative on Forecast May 2026

Resources

Revenue:

Resources are forecasting a (£0.030m) underspend against a budget of £9.995m (2.2%). Overall, a positive start to the year, also noting the work in Customer Services on holding vacancies as part of the early Customer Front Door works.



	Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	Finance	HR & OD	Contact Centre	Digital IT	Transformation
Current Budget	2.744	3.201	0.943	1.335	1.573	0.199
Forecast May 2026	2.744	3.201	0.943	1.305	1.573	0.199

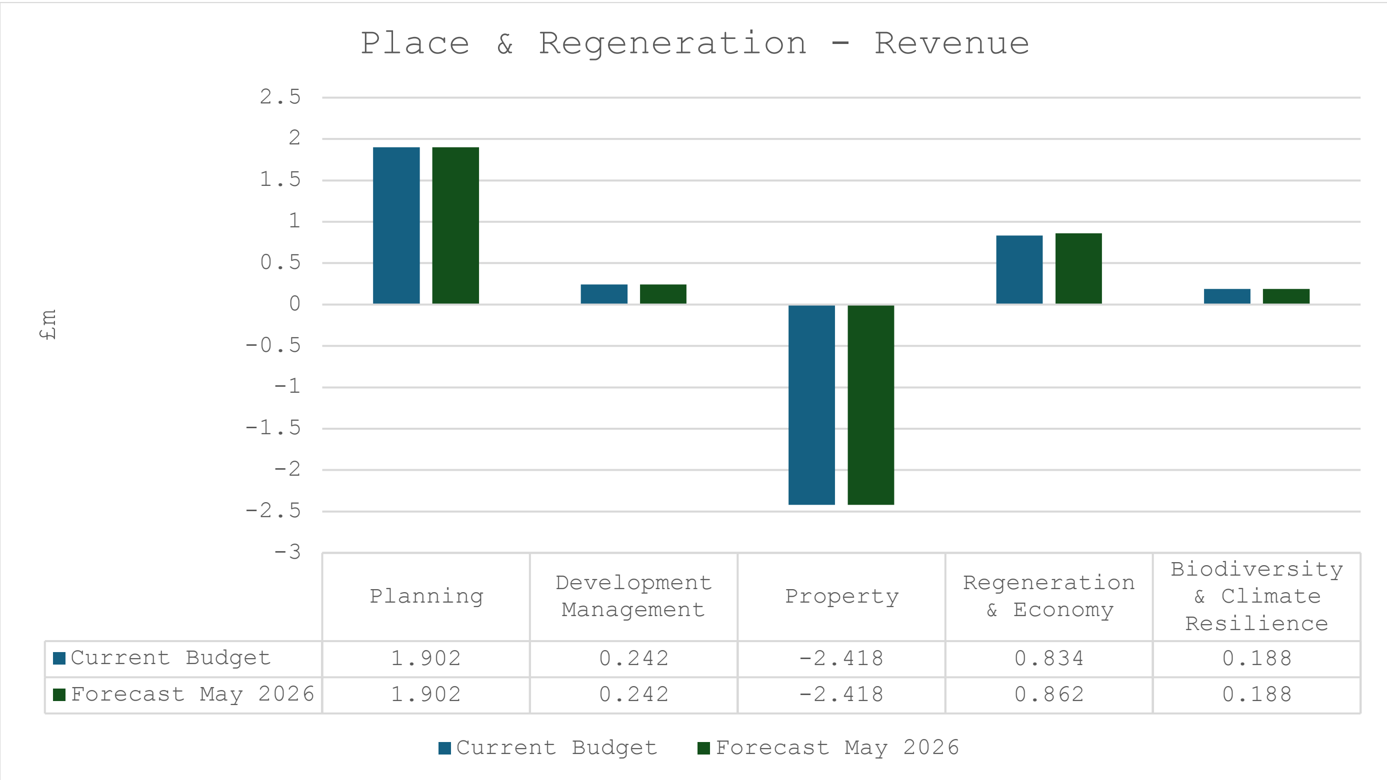
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Finance Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
HR & OD Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.

Contact Centre Variation (£0.030m) Underspend	Customer Services is showing an underspend due to vacant hours on the establishment. Land Charges is showing a small overspend due to a forecasted under recovery of £0.010m.
Digital IT Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Transformation Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.

Place & Regeneration

Revenue:

Place & Regeneration are forecasting £0.028m overspend against a budget of £0.748m (3.4%). The directorate is managing minor pressures and overspends within its overall budget at this time. Close attention will be paid to income over the coming months alongside pressures arising.



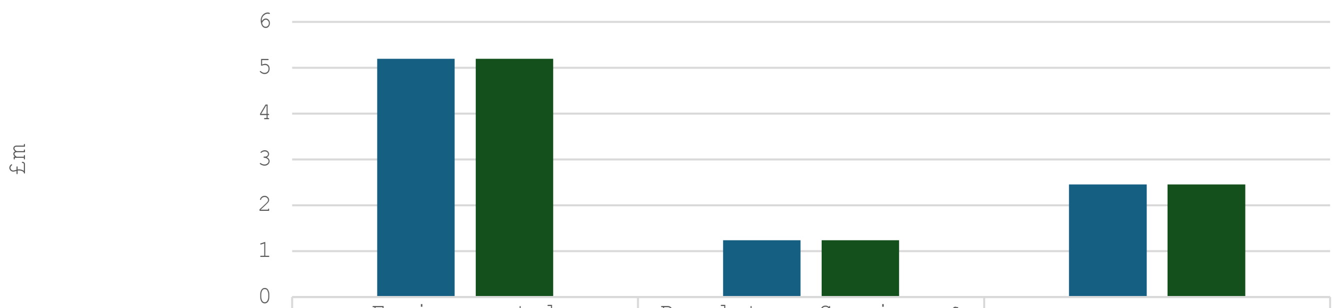
Planning & Variation £0.000m	The Planning Policy, Conservation & Design and the Building Control services are presently reported as being on budget for 2026/27.

Development Management Variation £0.000m	Development Management is presently forecasting to come in on budget for 2026/27 by balancing the level of agency support with planning fee receipts and Planning Performance Agreement income.
Property Variation £0.000m	Property is reporting on budget for 2026/27.
Regeneration & Economy Variation £0.028m Overspend	There is a small overspend reported for May. This is primarily due to costs associated with devolution and costs associated with staffing changes within the service.
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience Variation £0.000m	Biodiversity & Climate Resilience is reporting on budget for 2026/27.

Neighbourhood Services

Revenue:

Neighbourhood Services are forecasting on target against a budget of £8.889m (0.0%).
The directorate is currently forecasting a balanced outturn for the year. However, there are a number of strong headwinds arising primarily from the Iran war, and the rise in energy and fuel costs as a result, that may adversely affect the budget as the year progresses. We will ensure that these risk factors are monitored, and that appropriate mitigation measures are proposed to the Executive should the war continue to increase costs



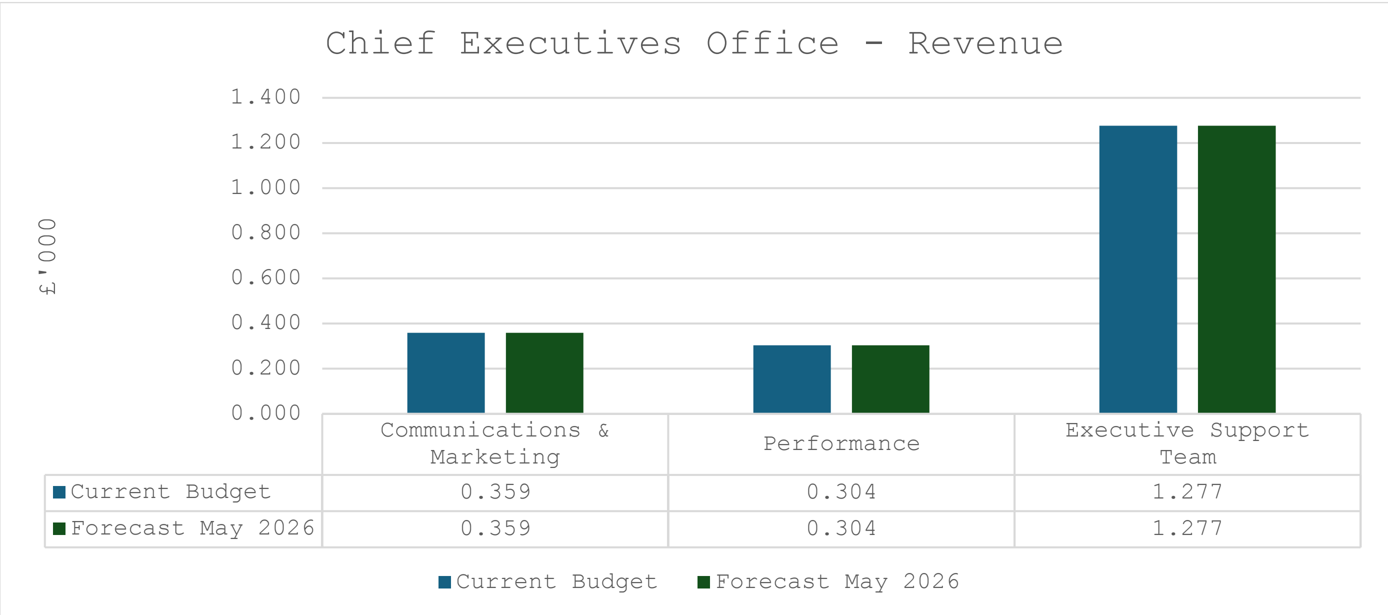
	Environmental Services	Regulatory Services & Community Safety	Wellbeing & Housing
Current Budget	5.193	1.238	2.458
Forecast May 2026	5.193	1.238	2.458

Environmental Services Variation £0.000m	Environmental Services is forecasting a balanced outturn at present but there are numerous factors that can potentially impact the budget as the year progresses. The main risk to the budget is the fluctuation of the price of oil due to the Iran war. This makes it difficult to forecast spend at this time, but costings have been carried out for various scenarios that support the current forecast. This risk is being closely monitored.
Regulatory Services & Community Safety Variation £0.000m	Regulatory Services and Community Safety are forecasting a balanced outturn.
Wellbeing & Housing Variation £0.000m	The Agency Model is still not in operation but once implemented, the income should negate the pressure caused by the delay as the expectation is the total recovered will be greater than budgeted.

Chief Executives Office

Revenue:

Chief Executives Office are forecasting on target against a budget of £1.940m (0.0%).



Communications & Marketing Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Performance Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.
Executive Support Team Variation £0.000m	Currently forecasting on budget.

Executive Matters

Revenue:

Executive Matters are forecasting on target against a budget of £7.954m (0.0%).

Executive Matters Variation £0.000m	Treasury is currently forecasting on target, however, is likely to overachieve, given the early stage of the year and anticipated in-year risks, it is considered prudent to retain this headroom at this time rather than commit it to reserves. The position will be kept under review as the year progresses.

Policy Contingency

Revenue:

Policy Contingency are forecasting on target against a budget of £2.741m (0.0%).

Policy Contingency Variation £0.000	Currently forecasting on target.

Appendix 2 - Virement Summary

Virement Movement

This table shows the movement in Net Budget from April 2026 to May 2026.

Virements - Movement in Net Budget	£m
Directorate Net Budget - May 2026	**21.572**
Directorate Net Budget - April 2026	21.572
Movement	**0.000**

Breakdown of Movements	£m
Total	**0.000**

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Appendix 3 - Funding for 2026/27

Specific Funding received since budget was set:

Dept.	Grant Name	Funding
		£
Home Office	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(£0.074)
Home Office	Syrian Resettlement	(£0.063)
HM Land Registry	HM Land Registry - Transition Payment	(£0.009)
MHCLG	ATLAS	(£0.023)
MHCLG	New burdens funding for the Renters Rights Act	(£0.146)
MHCLG	New Burdens Supported Housing Strategies Funding	(£0.048)
MHCLG	Digital Planning Improvement Fund	(£0.050)
MHCLG	Kidlington and Oxford Parkway spatial framework	(£0.080)
MHCLG	Crisis and Resilience	(£0.036)
		(£0.529)

Grants included as part of Budget setting:

Directorate	Grant Name	£m
Neighbourhood Services	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(1.550)
	Asylum Accommodation Dispersal	(0.336)
	Homeless Prevention Grant	(1.280)
	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	(0.016)
	Homes for Ukraine	(0.522)
	Housing Advice - Ns	(0.037)
	Rough Sleeper Initiative	(0.035)
	Resettlement schemes Business Support	(0.012)
	Resettlement Hardship Fund	(0.040)
	Neighbourhood Services Total	**(3.828)**
Place & Regeneration	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(0.335)
	Place & Regeneration Total	**(0.335)**
Resources	NNDR Cost of Collection Allowance	(0.231)
	Rent Allowances	(20.004)
	Resources Total	**(20.235)**
Services Sub-total		**(24.399)**
Funding	Business Rates Retained Scheme	(1.716)
	Revenue Support Grant	(17.147)
	Funding Total	**(18.863)**
Government Grants Total		**(43.261)**

Appendix 4 – Use of Reserves and Grant Funding

Uses of/ (Contributions to) Reserves

Specific requests

Directorate	Type	Reserve Name	Reason	Amount £m
Place & Regeneration	Reserves	Castle Quay Options Reserve	Cherwell District Council plans to repurpose underused and vacant spaces in Castle Quay to create a more vibrant town centre with a better mix of uses. It is seeking approval to release £250k to fund detailed studies that will identify viable long-term options, guide strategic direction, support future investment, and maximise the site's regeneration potential.	0.250
			Total Earmarked Reserves	**0.250**

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