

## 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 CABINET REPORT

### **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT**

**September 2023**

**Report by the Director of Finance**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) note the report and annexes.
- b) approve the virements in Annex 2a.
- c) approve the write off of five Adult Social Care contribution debts totaling £0.142m.
- d) approve the Supplementary Estimate request of £0.2m to fund the deficit balance for a school converting to academy status during 2023/24.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The [2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) sets out the Council's ambitions. It also shows our priority activities for the current financial year.
3. This report presents the September 2023 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
4. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:

Annex A: Performance as at September 2023

Annex B: Finance as at September 2023

Annex C: EDI as at September 2023

5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target, Amber for the last two consecutive months or more). The full performance report is included at Annex A.

#### **Performance Overview**

6. The Outcomes Framework for 2023/24 reports on the council's nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the customer contact centre and measures included in the council's Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities is comprised of monthly, quarterly, termly, six monthly and annual measures which may change as we progress through the year. At the appropriate period, relevant measures will be included in the report.

7. As at the end of September 2023 the indicators were rated as follows:

September 2023	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/Data Unavailable		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
Monthly	26	60%	6	14%	5	3%	6	19%	43
Quarterly	13	72%	2	11%	1	6%	2	11%	18
Annual	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Biannual	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>64</b>

Table 1: Summary of September 2023 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin.

8. A total of 64 measures reported in September 2023 (Table 1):  
 41 (63%) of the measures were reported as Green (meeting or exceeding target) in July.  
 Nine (16%) were rated as Amber (misses target by narrow margin), of which seven were Amber or Red for 2+ months.  
 Six (9%) were rated as Red (misses target by a significant margin).
9. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the second of 23/24. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2023/2024 reporting year, please note the numbers of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year.

Reporting Month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/ Data Unavailable		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
April 2023	12	38%	5	16%	4	12%	11	34%	32*
May 2023	27	61%	6	14%	4	9%	7	16%	44
June 2023	17	52%	6	18%	4	12%	6	18%	33*
July 2023	27	57%	8	17%	7	15%	5	11%	47
August 2023	18	56%	4	13%	4	13%	6	19%	32
<b>September 2023</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>43</b>

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2023/24. \*April, June, and August 2023 do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

10. Table 3 lists the six measures reporting as Red at the end of September 2023. Full details can be found in Annex A.

Performance measures reporting Red for September 2023 (Six Measures)
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled, or composted.
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms (Quarterly).
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures September 2023 Reporting Period

11. This table indicates the direction of travel of measures compared to August (monthly) 2023 or Quarter 1 (Quarterly)

Status changes – August 2023 to September 2023 or Quarter 1 to Quarter 2	
Red to Green	OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support (Quarterly)

	OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council
<b>Amber to Green</b>	None
<b>Red to Amber</b>	OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire (Quarterly) OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care
<b>Green to Amber</b>	OCC01.06 Number of fully funded retrofit measures delivered to low income/fuel poor homes (Quarterly) OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessment completed in Oxfordshire OCC07.04 Increase the % of children in Foster Care
<b>Amber to Red</b>	OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled, or composted
<b>Green to Red</b>	OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms (Quarterly)

Table 4: Change in Performance across August 2023 to September 2023 or Quarter 1 to Quarter 2.

## Performance Exceptions

12. This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (*consecutive for two months or more*) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focusses on the 12 exceptions, six measures that have a Red rating and the six measures that have reported an Amber rating for 2+ months.

### 13. Priority OCC01: Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our activities

This priority has three measures being reported in September 2023: one Green, one, Amber and one Red.



Figure 1: Priority OCC01 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Bill Cotton</b>

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC01.07:** Waste performance is reported a month in arrears and the figure reported is the forecast end of year performance for 2023/24. Defra's most recent published statistics for Waste Disposal Authorities for 2021/22 confirmed Oxfordshire first for the overall percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted with a recycling rate of 58.2%, compared to Devon in second place at 55.1%, and Surrey 3rd at 54.4%.

The indicator is below target because recycling rates have plateaued for some time despite continued behavioural change campaigns and encouraging residents to use the exiting recycling collections better. A step change is needed to meet Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets, which can only be made by the district councils and OCC acting together. Government waste policy changes are expected that could have a significant impact, but these have been repeatedly delayed by Defra. The District Councils are

unable to commit investment in significant changes in collection services until they have clarity on what the Government will mandate. This is a national issue affecting all local authorities. Nationally there has been limited progress. In January 2023 Defra published its consultation response on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from October 2025. However, in July Defra announced the delay of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging until October 2025 to avoid the risk of causing inflationary pressures. Defra also confirmed that implementation of consistent collections changes are deferred until after the introduction of EPR. There has been no announcement of the changes that will be required. In the meantime, national waste industry bodies continue to lobby on this issue. Locally campaign work to inform residents and encourage behaviour change is continuing, including a door stepping campaign on food waste recycling across the county this summer.

#### 14. Priority OCC03: Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

This priority has ten measures being reported in September 2023: six Green, one, Amber, one Red and two 'data not available'.



Figure 2: Priority OCC03 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire	Red	Amber	Rob MacDougall
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms	Green	Red	Rob MacDougall

Table 6: Priority OCC03 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC03.08:** Our response times are fluctuating within the usual range. Any deviance from the target could result from the nature of incidents, locations, or traffic conditions within each given month.

**OCC03.10:** This is an aspirational measure that hopes to recover or save money for victims of crime. It requires Trading Standards being made aware of incidents, at the right time, to be able to potentially intervene. Therefore, the measure is outside of our direct control and can be affected by single, high value, incidents. In addition, external developments, such as the formation of Thames Valley Police's Central Fraud Unit and The Banking Protocol (financial institutions reporting concerns to the police) is providing greater protection and support to victims, which is very positive for all, but may mean a reduction in performance against this particular measure.

#### 15. Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system

This priority has eight measures being reported in September 2023: four Green, one Amber, two monitoring only and one no data available.



Figure 2: Priority OCC04 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
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OCC04.05 % of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
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Table 7: Priority OCC04 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC04.05:** The number of older people supported to live at home continues to increase, as does the number of hours of support provided overall. Performance is marginally below the 60% target but this is not a significant concern as some fluctuation is expected. The number of older people supported to live at home is 3.4% more than 12 months ago, compared to a 0.7% increase in people in care homes.

### 16. Priority OCC06: Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

This priority has three measures being reported in September 2023: one Green, one Amber and one monitoring only.



Figure 3: Priority OCC06 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	March Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction	Amber	Amber	Bill Cotton

Table 8: Priority OCC06 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC06.04:** The Countryside Access GIS system CAMs splits public rights of way (PRoW) into 'links' which all have length data associated with them. A link is a section of path that runs from one path or road to where it connects/intersects with another path or road. In order to generate the % figure we find all significant issues recorded on the entire network that are 'unresolved'. This includes issues such as barbed wire fences, locked gates, unauthorised structures, unauthorised excavation, buildings on path. These are issues that would generally have an impact on people using the paths although in some cases there may be alternative routes used to get around them. We then find all the 'links' that these issues are associated with and can then find the total length of these links. From this we can work out the % by length of PRoW that are free from these serious issues or obstructions. It should be noted that a link can be a few kilometres in length while the issue only affects a short section. This figure has not changed over the last 6 months. This is not unexpected because as the officers resolve issues more are reported. New paths that are added to the Definitive Map, particularly those claimed through historic evidence, often have serious obstructions which impacts on this figure too.

### 17. Priority OCC07: Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

This priority has seven measures being reported in September 2023: two Green, three Amber and two monitoring only.



Figure 4: Priority OCC07 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care	Red	Amber	Anne Coyle

Table 9: Priority OCC07 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC07.05:** The total number of cared for children has fallen from 881 at the start of the year to 802 at the end of September a fall of 9%. The number of children supported in residential care has fallen from 143 at the start of the year to 123 at the end of September, a fall of 14%. The reduction in the overall numbers of cared for children is hiding the level of performance improvement.

We are increasing the number of in-house children's homes from 4 home to 9 by March 2025 with the support of the DFE capital grant and council capital resource. We currently have a block contract for 16 residential beds in Oxfordshire or within 10 miles of the border. We have access to up to 15 beds as part of the Cross Regional Contract which offers a therapeutic model of care for children with more complex needs and includes education provision at an inclusive price. Currently around 70% of residential placements are spot purchased which suggests that current frameworks and block contracts are not able to provide the number of placements required. The South Central residential framework is due to be recommissioned by October 2024 and the issues identified with the current framework such as the uplift controls will be addressed which should increase the number of providers who join which should reduce the level of spot purchasing.

### 18. Priority OCC10: Running the business - Customer Contact

This priority has five measures being reported in September 2023: four Green and one Amber



Figure 5: Priority OCC10 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC10.05 The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre	Amber	Amber	Mark Haynes

Table 10: Priority OCC10 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

**OCC10.05:** The number of calls offered in September increased by 12% compared to August. Compared to September 2022, they are down 4%.

The abandonment rate decreased by 3% to 11%.

A total of 35,447 contacts was received during September, which is an increase of 13% compared to August (31,430). This consist of 5,901 outbound calls, 6 web chat, 10 social media enquiries, and 15,672 emails.

Contacts for School Admissions increased by 86% during September which is expected due to the high number of in-year transfer applications submitted during the summer holidays; the opening of the portal to apply for Year 7 intake for 2024; and transport related enquiries for the new academic year. 97% of calls presented were answered with only 3% abandoned.

Contacts for Blue Badge, Concessionary Fares and Residential Parking continue to be high and this is where we are seeing our highest abandonment in recent months, totalling 15% for September. Staff are being cross trained to support the services which will release staff to work on the applications associated to these services.

Contacts for Children Social Care increased by 28% during September, which is an impact of school and childcare settings returning after the summer holidays. 97% of contacts were

answered with only 3% abandoned.

Contacts to the Registration Service remain consistent which is expected for this time of year, especially around birth registration. Sadly the number of death registrations is also high which is unusual for this time of year and will only sadly increase as we head into Autumn/Winter.

Contacts to Adult Social Care are slightly down from September 2022 by 4%, however a 13% increase against August. Autumn/Winter period is usually a busy time for this service and work is underway to ensure capacity is available.

## 19. Priority OCC11: Running the business - Finance

This priority has fifteen measures being reported in September 2023: Ten Green, one Amber and four Red.

Annex B provides further explanation of the finance measures in the following table.



Figure 6: Priority OCC11 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	Amber	Amber	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 11: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - September 2023

Please refer to 'Financial Position' Section and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

## Performance Highlights

20. This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering our strategic priorities.

### Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

Oxfordshire County Council's **Recycle Your Food Waste** project has been shortlisted for **Best Communications Campaign of the Year** at the annual Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) awards.

Last summer and working closely with our district councils, a targeted doorstepping project was delivered to encourage more Oxfordshire households to recycle their food waste.

Following last year's success, the project has been repeated this summer. A team of four recycling engagement officers has been calling at households in all five Oxfordshire districts since the end of May to discuss food waste disposal habits and behaviours with Oxfordshire households. So far this year, the team have called at over

10,000 households. This year's project will be complete in October with the final figure expected to be around 13,000.

From the doorstep, the recycling engagement officers have also helped to reduce or remove any barriers that have been preventing households from using the service. They have shared tips on how to make food waste recycling easier, or debunk food waste recycling myths, and given out replacement food waste caddies where they have become broken or lost.

## **Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire**

### **Action plan to be drawn up after wide-ranging study into quality of education in Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire County Council is set to act on a series of recommendations from a far-reaching deep-dive into the quality of education in the county, building on existing strengths to improve outcomes for all children.

On 19 September, the council's cabinet endorsed the recommendations of an independent Education Commission, which was set up by the county council in late 2022 to look at how the council, alongside all state-funded schools, education settings and partners, can improve outcomes and equality for all children in Oxfordshire.

The commission found that young people in Oxfordshire tend to achieve good outcomes compared to the national average but has made a total of 17 proposals to help improve things further – including tackling the inequalities faced by some children and young people.

The county council and its partners are now set to develop an action plan with clear timescales, impact measures and an investment plan to deliver on the proposals made.

**Gail Tolley, Chair of the Oxfordshire Education Commission, said:** "It has been a privilege for me to have the opportunity to lead the commission.

"In our report, we have made some strong recommendations for Oxfordshire to improve educational outcomes for children from certain demographic groups.

"I am pleased with the response to the commission's recommendations, which the council have now endorsed, and I look forward to seeing the impact they will have on the children and young people of Oxfordshire."

As part of its work, the commission spoke to people across the education system in Oxfordshire, including young people and their families, educators, businesses and wider stakeholders, to understand what is working well and what needs to change to create a world class education system.

The full report and recommendations of the commission are available to read by [visiting Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

## **Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents**

**Smokers in Oxfordshire supported to quit for good this October**



Smokers in Oxfordshire are encouraged once again to think about the benefits of quitting as Stoptober returns for its twelfth year.

Since its launch, the Stoptober campaign held during October has helped over 2.5 million people across England to quit smoking. In Oxfordshire, more than 1,000 people quit each year with the support of the stop smoking service.

The benefits of quitting start almost immediately, and research shows that smokers who give up for a whole month are up to five times more likely to stay smoke free for good.

Just two days after quitting, sense of taste and smell will start to improve, at three months the amount air that lungs can hold has increased and by a year the risk of a heart attack will have halved.

**Ansaf Azhar, Oxfordshire County Council's Director for Public Health, said:**

"When you stop smoking good things start to happen. Beating the addiction brings huge improvement to mental and physical wellbeing, as well as financial benefits. It is estimated that giving up a ten a day habit could save around £2,000 a year.

"We want to make Oxfordshire smoke free as part of our wider tobacco control strategy and inspire the county's first smoke free generation.

"We know how daunting it can be for people to give up smoking. That's why there are tools and aids to support everyone in their journey to a smoke free life. Our Stop for Life Oxon service provides free support, which is proven to help people who want to quit smoking in Oxfordshire."

Nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes are available to help individuals through Stop for Life Oxon.

Find out what support is available to quit for good by visiting Stop for Life Oxon's [website](#), freephone 0800 122 3790 or texting STOPOXON to 6077.

Discover more about Oxfordshire's tobacco control strategy and how to make a difference by visiting [Oxfordshire County Council's website](#).

### **Support carers and the social care system**

County council representatives attended the Cherwell Joint Senior and Voluntary Sector Forum at the Bodicote Council Chambers in Banbury in September. The network event was attended by over 100 people from various organisations, charities and voluntary groups. It was a great opportunity to explore how we can all work together to give our communities the best advice and support, while signposting to the right service or information. The county council gave a presentation on [Friends against Scams](#) to raise awareness of an initiative that aims to help protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

### **Chris Ingram has spent the majority of his working life caring for others.**

Having worked his way up through a variety of roles in the care sector, the 52 year old is now chief executive at Oxfordshire based care provider Style Acre.

Chris is hoping to inspire others to follow in his footsteps during [Professional Care Workers' Week](#) (18 to 22 September), supporting Oxfordshire County Council's strategy to strengthen and develop the local care workforce.

After completing a law degree and having a brief flirtation with accountancy, Chris began his career in social care as a trainee support worker in 1994. Since then, he has climbed the professional ladder, taking on roles including support manager, area manager and director of operations at three established, not for profit, care organisations.

In 2015, he became the CEO at Style Acre – a charity that supports around 300 adults with learning disabilities and autism in Oxfordshire. The organisation offers a range of person-centred support, from 24-hour care for those with complex learning, health or physical disabilities to a few hours support each week for those who live more independently.

Style Acre is part of Oxfordshire County Council's network of care providers, playing a pivotal role in the adult social care [Oxfordshire Way vision](#), supporting people to live well and as independently as possible within their own communities.

For Chris, the longevity of his career in care has all been about the people. Not only the people he's supported, but also the teams he's worked with.

**Chris said:** "I joined Style Acre as chief executive in October 2015 and can honestly say it's the best job I have ever had. It is a real privilege to work alongside such a dedicated, enthusiastic and caring group of people. It is also unbelievably rewarding to see the impact our support has on people's lives."

Chris is one of around 18,000 care workers in Oxfordshire, although the latest statistics suggest there are 1,800 unfilled posts in the sector locally. As part of this year's Professional Care Workers' Week, Chris and the council hope to raise awareness of the multitude of good career opportunities available in the caring profession.

**Chris said:** "There's no single route into caring, and it is not always seen as a career. Apprenticeships offer a way to earn as you learn with on the job training and a guaranteed pay cheque. This also gives you the chance to see what positions are available and potentially progress to other roles if you wish."

"Alternatively, there are many transferable skills that you can bring from other professions into caring - you might have experience in hospitality or food preparation for example – we're a multi-skilled sector welcoming diversity and offering job satisfaction and career progression."

Alongside his role at Style Acre, Chris is on the board of directors at Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers (OACP), an organisation that supports people who work in the caring sector in the county.

OACP has worked closely with the county council to develop a new website, [Proud to Care Oxfordshire](#), aimed at bringing more people into caring positions. The resource highlights the broad range of jobs available in the care sector as well as providing a free platform for care providers to advertise any opportunities they have available.

There's also [local information](#) on support services, funding and initiatives to help people get into work and apprenticeships, supporting their development and training.

For Chris, his career in care has given him the chance to follow his passion, helping to bring communities together.

**Chris said:** "I am passionate about people having the opportunity to play an active part in their community and striving to fulfil their potential in life, irrespective of their disability. It is a truly diverse career and although it may be a cliché, every day is different and every day has a purpose and a meaning.

"We all require support through life and I believe that it is important to provide that support in a way that is right for each individual and in a way that gives the person receiving the support the choice, control and dignity that they deserve. I believe Style Acre does this really well and it's a privilege to work here, we also have a huge amount of fun!"

## **Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network**

**Road maintenance carried out in south Oxfordshire using innovative recycling**

## **technique**

A south Oxfordshire Road has been resurfaced using an innovative recycling technique which reuses all of the existing surfacing material and saved hundreds of tonnes of carbon.

The technique, known as in-situ cold recycling, also allowed the road to be reopened eight days quicker than by using conventional resurfacing techniques.

Oxfordshire County Council carried out the scheme on a road north of Berrick Salome, near Wallingford, with its contractor Milestone Infrastructure and its partner Stabilised Pavements Limited.

In-situ cold recycling involves pulverising the existing carriageway in its original place and then mixing it with foamed bitumen and cementitious powder to create a new 300mm-deep strengthened carriageway.

The material is then compacted to return the recycled layer back to the required road level before a thin surface layer, known as surface dressing, is applied to seal the surface and provide the required skid resistance.

As the technique does not require the material to be heated and involves a lot less import of virgin materials, it is an environmentally friendly technique. It is estimated to reduce carbon by approximately 71 per cent compared to conventional surfacing of the same depth.

On this scheme alone, this is the equivalent of 227 tonnes of carbon – roughly the same as taking over 100 petrol cars off the road for a year.

The new road surface is expected to last for at least 20 years, with routine maintenance. It also has the benefit of cutting 564 lorry movements to and from site, reducing the impact on local communities.

## **Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential**

### **BIPC Oxfordshire – helping young people to succeed in business**

It's been a whirlwind year for our [Business & IP Centre \(BIPC\) Oxfordshire](#). Although it's still relatively new, we've already supported over 1,500 people with their start-ups and ideas, and all of our hard work was recently recognised in the form of an award from Libraries Connected.

We're delighted that our work helping young people in enterprising activities and supporting them into business has been recognised by [Libraries Connected](#) - a membership organisation representing the public library services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - in the form of the Children's Promise Award.

Of course, the BIPC doesn't only support young people, but we've been particularly focused on younger generations here in Oxfordshire, partnering with local and national organisations to nurture their ambitions, and give them the skills to build their enterprise.

For the past two years we've been partnering with Oxfordshire Young Enterprise to host the end of year showcase. Last year alone, we had 75 students from 14 schools all over the county attend a special learning event where they pitched, exhibited and were interviewed on their projects.

We've additionally hosted individual school visits, including those for children special educational needs. This includes introductions to resources including our free-market research databases including COBRA, which provides how-to guides on starting hundreds of different types of businesses.

For people making the first steps into business, we appreciate there can be barriers to accessing the knowledge that is mostly gained from experience. Having the tools to navigate the market is critical in so many sectors, and being able to offer access to some of these is something that makes us unique here in Oxfordshire. This is also why we're also looking at cross-organisational approaches to link up with colleagues in Target Youth Support services to help young people who may not ordinarily have this access to get involved and gain skills they need, while also signing them up to benefit from a library membership more widely.

Beyond this, we've also been looking at how we can support companies or help people to create companies that support young people in education, wellbeing and other related activities.

Among the organisations to benefit from our services is [GetFED](#). GetFED provide barista and business training for young people at risk of exclusion and exploitation. Through bespoke training sessions, the organisation supports young entrepreneurs with the basics of running a small business, developing barista skills and even project managing their own events.

[The Drone Rules](#) is another organisation that has been working closely with the BIPC. This unique organisation provides education for individuals and educational providers on all things drone-related – a technology that will be no doubt of interest to a lot of people.

BIPC Oxfordshire is certainly opening the doors for many young people and we hope we can continue to tap into the undiscovered skills of many more.

If you want to find out more about the work of BIPC Oxfordshire [jump online](#) or head to the second floor of the [Oxfordshire County Library](#) in Oxford, or chat to library employees at Bicester and Blackbird Leys Libraries.

### **Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit**

Proposals for council-owned land to be used by Oxford United FC to build a new stadium near Kidlington have been approved, but important conditions have been imposed.

The council's cabinet approved in principle the lease of land at the 'Triangle' to the football club for the development of a new stadium.

The leasehold comes with a number of conditions:

- The club must be given planning permission by Cherwell District Council.
- The club must produce a net-zero plan that is fully costed and comes with clear timescales and outcomes from design, construction and full operation of the stadium.
- The club must provide detail of how it will meet the commitments made in its submissions to the county council so far.
- Restrictive covenants will be put in place that will set aside the use of the land for football/community sports and leisure/sports stadia for the term of the lease, with limited commercial activities permitted only within the stadium footprint.

Officers had proposed the sale of the land but following their debate at the cabinet meeting, councillors decided to opt for the leasing of the land.

The county council cabinet's decision follows extensive public and stakeholder

engagement during 2022 and 2023. More than 5,000 people and organisations shared their views through a survey run during June and July 2023.

A previous survey in January and February 2022 resulted in over 3,700 responses. Feedback was also provided from the county council's Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which met on 13 September.

### Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Climate Action – Quarterly update

- Annex C and table 12 outlines the progress of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan for Quarter 2 2023.
  - Twenty-five (74%) of measures are rated as Green for Quarter 2.
  - Six (18%) of measures are rated as Amber.
  - Zero measures were rated as Red.
  - No data was added for three (9%) measures.
- There has been a delay in setting up and reporting on the Climate Action Programme for Q1 & Q2. This is being addressed by the service so that reporting is in place ready for Q3.

Plan	Green		Amber		Red		Data unavailable		Total
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	25	74%	6	18%	0	0%	3	9%	34

Table 12: RAG status of EDI Plan for Quarter 2 2023.

### Strategic Risk Management Overview

**21.** A strategic risk is a risk to the council's strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level.

**22.** The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed on a monthly basis as part of the Business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.

Risk Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	August Residual Risk Score	September Residual Risk Score	September Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial Resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	20	20	▲	➡
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15	●	➡
03. HIF1&HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council	16		12	●	?
04. Managing Demand across Adult's and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15		10	●	?
05. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	25		25	▲	?
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16	▲	➡
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the councils objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	12	12	●	➡
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25		20	▲	?
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25		16	▲	?

Table 13: Strategic Risk Overview for September 2023. Risks 3,4,5, 8 and 9 are new risks so their direction of

travel is not reported. Please note that a strategic risk about resilience in the face of climate change will be forthcoming.

## **Financial Position**

**23.**As shown below directorate are forecasting a combined overspend of £13.6m (2.4%). After taking account of an increase in interest receivable on balances held by the council and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure is reported as £4.2m higher than the budget.

	Latest Budget September 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend September 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance September 2023 £m	Variance September 2023 %	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m	Change Since July 2023 £m
Adult Services	227.3	227.3	0.0	0.0%	3.0	-3.0
Children's Services	169.1	180.9	11.8	7.0%	11.1	0.7
Environment & Place	74.6	74.2	-0.4	-0.5%	1.0	-1.4
Public Health	4.1	4.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Community Safety	27.6	27.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Resources	69.9	72.1	2.2	3.1%	2.4	-0.2
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>572.6</b>	<b>586.2</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>-3.9</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	28.4	28.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Interest on Balances	-16.6	-17.6	-1.0	6.0%	-0.5	-0.5
Inflation <sup>1</sup>	6.4	6.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contingency	12.4	5.4	-7.0	-56.5%	-7.0	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-43.6	-43.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-8.8	-1.4	19.0%	-1.4	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	19.9	19.9	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution to balances	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	<b>-9.4</b>	<b>-153%</b>	<b>-8.9</b>	<b>-0.5</b>

<sup>1</sup> Funding for pay inflation assumed at 4.5% will be allocated when the pay award for 2023/24 is agreed. Further funding from contingency would be needed if the increase is higher than 5.5%.

	Latest Budget September 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend September 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance September 2023 £m	Variance September 2023 %	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m	Change Since July 2023 £m
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578.8</b>	<b>583.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>-4.4</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>		<b>8.6</b>	<b>-4.4</b>

- 24.** The overall forecast overspend has reduced by £4.4m since July 2023 but still reflects a more challenging financial position for 2023/24 than anticipated when the budget was set in February 2023. Issues in the local and national economy, including inflation and workforce shortages, have increased the financial risk for the council and made it more challenging to forecast activity and expenditure, placing some uncertainty around this forecast position.
- 25.** The forecast overspend for Adult Services has improved by £3.0m to a breakeven position since July 2023. This is due to an agreement on the sharing of costs for adults with Section 117 aftercare support under the Mental Health Act with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, bringing the health and social care system funding more in line with other local authorities and care boards.
- 26.** The forecast overspend for Children's Services has deteriorated by £0.7m. This is mainly driven by an increase in Home to School transport activity compared to the position reported in July 2023. Other on-going underlying pressures in Children's Services, which remain a significant challenge, are driven by a combination of increased care placements costs, and reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies. Children's Services have implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls as well as market management actions to address the underlying pressures but it is taking time for these to have an impact while the overall position is worsened by further inflationary and demand increases.
- 27.** The forecast overspend for Environment & Place has improved by £1.4m compared to the July 2023 position. This is mainly driven by a reduction in energy cost prices, and additional income from income through enforcement activity.
- 28.** There are forecast overspends across most of the services within Resources and Legal & Governance. These reflect the anticipated achievement of savings, and a mix of staffing and inflationary pressures.
- 29.** 62% of the 2022/23 savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in the last financial year are currently assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered, 38% are still assessed as amber or red. 71% of the 2023/24 savings

are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered, 29% are still assessed as amber or red. Action is being taken to ensure that the delivery of both existing planned savings and new budget reductions is maximised in 2023/24. The anticipated achievement of savings is reflected in the forecast position.

- 30.**The forecast 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £18.3m and remains in line with the budget agreed by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £59.4m at 31 March 2024.
- 31.**£3.5m of the £12.4m contingency budget will be needed to meet the cost of additional pay inflation in 2023/24 in addition to the £6.4m remaining budget available to support this after taking account of the Fire Pay Awards. Further funding will continue to be held in contingency to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts as they are recruited to.
- 32.**After taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £4.2m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £25.8m, £4.4m under the risk assessed level for 2023/24. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level, will need to be considered through the Budget and Business Planning process.
- 33.**The Council's Management Team are continuing to work with directorates to identify actions to manage expenditure so that any overspend by year end is mitigated as far as possible and does not require any call on balances.
- 34.**Annex B sets out further details and commentary on the Finance position.

### **Financial Implications**

- 35.**This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2023. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets for 2023/24.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

### **Legal Implications**

- 36.**The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.



**37.** 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 report sets out as at September 2023 performance, risk and finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance

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