



Oxfordshire County Council
Equality and Climate Impact Assessment

November 2021

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment & Place Directorate, Strategic Infrastructure and Planning
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	<p>22/23 Budget Proposals - Environmental and Community bids</p> <p>Development and implementation of a county wide Nature Recovery Strategy</p> <p>It is expected that the Environment Bill will introduce a requirement for Nature Recovery Strategies to be developed. It is further expected that upper tier authorities will be the lead authority to adopt and oversee such strategies and the government is currently consulting on what form such strategies might take so there remains uncertainty.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has done some preliminary work on the spatial component of such a strategy and the proposed new Local Nature Partnership will likely have a role in its further development. Following on from adoption of the strategy OCC is likely to have new duties under the Environment Bill to monitor and report progress. In addition to additional officer time noted as a new pressure there is expected to be a need to invest in the process and data and partnership working, which will be necessary to deliver the strategy. The timescales when this becomes a formal requirement are yet to be determined. This pressure is included to ensure that there is some recognition of the new demands that are expected, and as further details emerge, the actual values will need to be confirmed.</p> <p>Preparation of the strategy is just one part, there is ongoing delivery, monitoring and reporting which is why the pressure is maintained year on year. It may be that new burden funding is available from central government but there is no clarity on this yet.</p>
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	This is a new function, expected as a requirement of new government legislation.

Summary of assessment	The development, implementation and monitoring of a county-wide nature recovery strategy (NRS) has potentially significant and wide-ranging long-term impacts. As the government legislation that drives this policy has yet to receive Royal assent there remains considerable uncertainty. The primary purpose of the NRS will be to influence land use decisions and drive land use change at various scales. It is not currently possible to offer detail on the proposals that will emerge, as this will be the result of wide ranging, national stakeholder consultation. At this stage it is not intended or expected that the proposals will discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups.
Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	
Completed By	Nick Mottram
Authorised By	Rachel Wileman
Date of Assessment	8 th November 2021

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background	This will be a new responsibility for the county council should it be asked and agree to take on the role of Responsible Authority for the preparation of the NRS. The background will be set out in the regulations and guidance arising from the Environment Bill should it receive Royal Assent.
Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	

<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>It is likely that the county council will be asked by DEFRA to assume the role of Responsible Authority for the preparation of the NRS. As noted in the first section if the council takes on this new duty there will be a wide range of inputs required from various organisations to deliver a successful NRS. The full extent of these responsibilities is not known. This proposal is a first step to consider what resources may be required and allocate these. At present there is not considered sufficient capacity within the organisation to meet these new obligations. It is expected that this resource proposal alone will not be sufficient to meet all the requirements of developing the NRS. Contributions from other sources including local authority partners and central government may be required.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>The only firm evidence to date is the information contained in the evolving Environment Bill. DEFRA and some local bodies have organised workshops to pass on what current thinking is. This will however only become apparent once the Environment Bill receives Royal Assent.</p> <p>The NRS is expected to include consideration of key challenges such as climate change when identifying biodiversity priorities and considering the spatial distribution of habitat change. As such the outcomes of the proposal in the long-term are expected to be in line with the council's Climate Action Framework.</p>

<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>As this is an early stage in the process and in the absence of formal guidance there are no alternatives to consider. It could be possible for the county council not to take up the role of Responsible Authority, however, the biodiversity issues to be determined are best considered at county scale and is in line with our strategic priorities to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work. Even if not acting as Responsible Authority the county council would be expected to contribute to the development of the NRS.</p>
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The impact cannot yet be identified. However it is likely that many of the biodiversity measures will be implemented in rural areas. This may result in a change in character in the landscape, changed land-use business requirements.		NRS is likely to need ongoing monitoring and reporting on a statutory basis – period tbc
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is potential that the NRS could bring improved amenity and greater access to green spaces in deprived areas		NRS is likely to need ongoing monitoring and reporting on a statutory basis – period tbc

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential benefits to be identified on other areas of council responsibility, such as natural flood management and LLFA flood risk management, national trails and development management		NRS is likely to need ongoing monitoring and reporting on a statutory basis – period tbc
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Social Value¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A positive impact on social, economic and environmental wellbeing for communities across Oxfordshire.		

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC aims to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Energy use in our buildings or highways	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Our fleet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Staff travel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Purchased services and products (including construction)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Maintained schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

We are also committed to enable Oxfordshire to become carbon neutral by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is likely that measures arising from the implementation of the NRS will be beneficial in sequestering carbon in natural features and habitats		NRS is likely to need ongoing monitoring and reporting on a statutory basis – period tbc

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	TBC – dependent upon the timing of implementation of the NRS following government legislation
Person Responsible for Review	Director Environment and Place and delegates.
Authorised By	Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy