

Oxford City Council Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-17 to 2019-20 and 2016-17 Budget for Consultation (Equality Assessment)

The following assessment gives more details from an equality and diversity perspective on the various on-going budget proposals. It provides an initial commentary, incorporating input from Heads of Service and specialist officers, to indicate the potential risks and actual mitigating actions already in place or planned to support the investment proposals before the wider public consultation period from December 2015 to January 2016.

The draft budget has been structured so that it is in balance for the next four years, and although national economic pressures on local government are ever present, it recommends revisions, efficiencies and small reductions in service but aims to protect frontline services as far as possible, particularly for the most vulnerable. Despite an assumption of zero of central government revenue support grant funding by 2018-19 it also outlines proposals to put resources in place for large scale regeneration projects which will bring economic growth, jobs, more decent homes and wider interventions to ensure social inclusive communities and opportunities, and to make Oxford a fairer and more equal place to live and work.

Amendments raised by the City Executive Board discussions and public consultation will be reflected in the final working document.

Budget Proposal	Increase Council Tax by an expected 1.99% for 2016/17, and maintain the existing Council Tax Support Scheme
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<p>This is an annual consideration. The Autumn 2012 national budget statement lowered the local authority tax referendum threshold to 2%. It is expected that as in previous years that a one year freeze grant will be available to local authorities that freeze their council tax at the previous years' level, equivalent to the product of a 1% increase. Given the loss of revenue to the council in the current and following years the recommendation is for the council to increase council tax up to the maximum level at which a referendum is not required. The current assumptions are for a 1.99% council tax rise 2016/17 followed by increases of 1.5% thereafter on the basis that levels higher could be capped by the Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.55 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £284.52 per annum
What are the likely risks?	Council Tax rises are likely to have the hardest impact on the most economically disadvantaged groups such as part time and low paid workers (although these are mitigated by the council tax support scheme, which is being maintained in full).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased arrears due to benefit changes arising from the roll out of universal credit 									
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?	There will be further opportunities for comment on the level of council tax increase and the Council Tax Support Scheme as part of the public consultation in January 2016.									
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?	<p>The Council has agreed the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme on the same basis as that introduced on 1st April 2013. This, in essence, continues the previous level of entitlement provided by Council Tax Benefit, and has not passed on the reduction in government funding for council tax relief to those on the lowest incomes in the city. It is estimated the scheme will cost the Council £550k in 2016/17 although as Revenue Support Grant is reduced this will increase.</p> <p>Currently the total net caseload is 12,422 receiving Council Tax Benefit & Housing Benefit, with 75% of those receiving CT benefit on full benefit and therefore the 1.99% increase will have no effect. Of the remaining 25% in receipt of some benefits those hardest hit are likely to be in part time or low paid work and will be variably impacted on a case-by-case basis. This means that the remaining 48,000 CT payers will be directly affected by the increase.</p>									
Overall assessment of the equality risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to estimate the dimensions of equalities risks around CT increases. The Council has put in place proportionate mitigating actions such as the CT Support Scheme and the work of the Welfare Reform Team to protect the most vulnerable and economically challenged communities across Oxford. <hr/> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Race</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Disability</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> </tr> </table> <hr/> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Gender reassignment</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Religion or Belief</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> </table>	Race	Disability	Age	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
Race	Disability	Age								
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral								
Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation								

	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Budget Proposal	Decrease in council house rents by 1% per annum for the next four years		
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<p>The Chancellor's summer budget, delivered on 08 July 2015, has required a significant review of the rent strategy and investment plans previously agreed (a strategy of annual rent increases) as it introduced significant changes to the delivery of the housing service by social landlords in both the Welfare Reform and Work Bill (rents) and the Housing and Planning Bill (the forced sale of high value dwellings and pay to stay).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rents in social housing to be reduced by 1% a year for the next four years. Local authorities and housing associations will need to find efficiencies to fund the rent reductions 2. Forced Sale of High Value Council Housing (HVCH) 3. Pay to Stay: Social tenants jointly earning more than £30k per annum will pay market rate rents 4. Associated rates of housing benefit capped at the relevant local housing allowance 		
What are the likely risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rent Reduction The Welfare Reform and Work Bill (first presented on 09/07/15) indicates that with effect from April 2016 social housing rents will be reduced by 1% per year for 4 years from their 8 July 2015 position. The effect of this summer budget proposal on Oxford City Council will be to reduce the HRA dwelling rent income by £31m between 2016/17 and 2019/20 against the existing HRA BP assumptions. Additionally, there is no indication of the level of rent increase, if any the council will be required to apply after the initial four years of annual 1% reductions ● Forced Sale of High Value Council Housing (HVCH) The July 2015 budget also recommended that local authority landlords will be forced to sell their highest value dwellings once they became void. The receipts generated, after allowing for some deductible expenditure and an estimate for associated debt would be handed back to the Government to compensate Housing Associations for the discounts associated with extending RTB 		

to their tenants who hold assured tenancies.

Given the high property values in Oxford a significant proportion of the general housing stock will be unintentionally captured by this policy. Thus, given the “regional” property type thresholds currently available it is estimated that up to 25% of the Council’s annual re-lets could be at risk of being forcibly sold. This equates to 95 properties per year and would be concentrated in the one and two bedroom property types. It is estimated that these sales would generate gross capital receipts in the order of £21m per annum if the average RTB disposal prices continue at current levels of £220,958 before discount. The majority of this would be paid back to the Government and not re-invested locally.(The HRA Business Plan assumes disposals of around 40 dwellings per year until 2021/22 due to the Government’s re-invigorating Right to Buy initiative. An additional 5 properties per year from 2017/18 have been added reflecting further RTB’s occurring as a result of Pay to Stay)

The recent published Housing and Planning Bill suggests that HVCH payments to Government will now “not” be based on actual sales but on a formula driven methodology. This means that payments will be required irrespective of whether the Council has generated an actual capital receipt. So all the financial risk of funding this initiative now sits with the Council. The fundamentals as to how the formula will work that would allow some calculations of the likely effect on the finances of the HRA are as yet still unknown.

It is understood that this initiative will be implemented with effect from 01/04/2017.

- **Pay to Stay**

All social housing tenant households who have income above £30k outside London will be required to pay market or near market rent for their property.

Housing Associations will be allowed to retain this additional income to re-invest in new build but local authority landlords will be required to hand back all additional rent to the Government to assist in their welfare reduction exercise. Therefore there is no indication it will be used to re-invest back into national housing initiatives, or indeed regionally around Oxford

	<p>It is envisaged that this scheme will similarly become operational in April 2017 and if it is implemented on a formula basis as per the proposal for HVCH, then the assumed increased rent amounts will have to be paid to Government irrespective if it has actually been collected by OCC staff from affected tenants.</p> <p>There are risk implications of and increased incidence of homelessness arising from lack of affordable council housing provision and increased cost to tenants from the pay to stay initiative</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4. Housing benefit caps</p>
<p>What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?</p>	<p>Agree to consult on an increase in council rents and service charges through special focus groups of council tenants/ leaseholders</p>
<p>What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is provision in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill for social landlords to seek an exemption from the 1% reduction proposal in cases where they can evidence that serious financial difficulty would be unavoidable if they were to introduce the proposals. The Council does intend to seek such an exemption and will send a formal request to the Secretary of State at the end of November 2015. The Secretary of State can : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exempt the Council from the whole process b. Agree the authority can hold rents at current levels for next four years c. Agree to a reduction of less than 1% d. Can allow the authority to increase rents 2. Given the uncertainties around the Governments HVCH initiative it is prudent to create a contingency for the Council to meet the potential cost. This contingency, produced from reductions in the HRA Capital Programme is in the order of £25 million 3. All the financial risk of this initiative will be borne by the Council's HRA 4. The July budget announced a range of other welfare reform measures including a reduction in the Benefit Cap from £26,000 to £20,000 a freezing of most benefits (including Local Housing Allowance rates) and a number of technical amendments to Housing Benefit, Tax Credits and Universal Credit to be introduced over the next two years. The

	<p>Council's Welfare Reform Team is making preparations to support customers affected by these measures. There is a residual risk that Welfare Reform/ Universal Credit impacts the authority more adversely than assumed:</p> <p>Capping of Housing Benefit to Local Housing Allowance</p> <p>5 The rate of housing benefit in the social sector will be capped at the relevant local housing allowance. Whilst officers are currently looking at the impact it is likely that it will negatively impact those under 35 in our and RSL properties, around 1,180 of our tenants</p>									
<p>Overall assessment of the equality risks</p>	<p>Overall, and particularly because of the combination of high levels of deprivation in parts of Oxford, and also very high housing costs, Oxford City Council remains especially exposed to adverse financial pressures resulting from rent reduction, HVCH, Pay to Stay and the range of welfare reforms. There would be a change in the formula for housing benefit subsidy for households in temporary accommodation. Whilst the Government will give an additional £10 million towards this, it is unlikely that this will cover the cost.</p> <p>The revised HRA Business Plan, has deleted all spend of £17 million over the next four years in order to give flexibility over the payment to the Government of Pay to Stay and HVCH initiatives</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="618 874 2047 1283"> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 874 1120 1070"> <p>Race Neutral/ Negative</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1120 874 1568 1070"> <p>Disability Negative</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1568 874 2047 1070"> <p>Age Negative</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1070 1120 1177"> <p>Gender reassignment Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1120 1070 1568 1177"> <p>Religion or Belief Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1568 1070 2047 1177"> <p>Sexual Orientation Neutral</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1177 1120 1283"> <p>Sex Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1120 1177 1568 1283"> <p>Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1568 1177 2047 1283"> <p>Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Race Neutral/ Negative</p>	<p>Disability Negative</p>	<p>Age Negative</p>	<p>Gender reassignment Neutral</p>	<p>Religion or Belief Neutral</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation Neutral</p>	<p>Sex Neutral</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral</p>	<p>Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral</p>
<p>Race Neutral/ Negative</p>	<p>Disability Negative</p>	<p>Age Negative</p>								
<p>Gender reassignment Neutral</p>	<p>Religion or Belief Neutral</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation Neutral</p>								
<p>Sex Neutral</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral</p>	<p>Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral</p>								

Budget Proposal	Increase in council housing service charges						
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<p>Service charges such as caretaking, cleaning, CCTV, communal areas etc. have been increased in line with the convergence formula in previous years. The Council agreed to remove any associated service charge limiter (credits) over a 4 year period limited to a maximum of £1/wk. It is estimated that this will deliver £50k of additional income by 2017/18 at which time the limiter would have been removed from all associated accounts</p> <p>There is a regular review of leaseholder charges (caretaking, cleaning, CCTV, communal areas) and these will be linked to increases in the RPI.</p>						
What are the likely risks?	<p>It is estimated that 2,800 tenants were potentially impacted in the last financial year. This figure reduces significantly each year as the limiters are removed.</p> <p>The Council will need to determine the greatest areas of disadvantage and whether any specific protected groups are placed more at risk</p>						
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?	Agree to consult on an increase in council rents and service charges through special focus groups of council tenants/ leaseholders						
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?	The proposal will remove inequity/ anomalies that tenants living side by side and in receipt of the same benefits associated with service charges are being charged different amounts. Tenants in receipt of HB will see the service charge increases covered.						
Overall assessment of the equality risks	<p>Strong governance and review will mitigate against any adverse impacts, although none have been flagged</p> <hr/> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;">Race</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;">Disability</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 33%;">Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Neutral</td> </tr> </table>	Race	Disability	Age	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Race	Disability	Age					
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral					

	Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Budget Proposal	Increases in Fees and Charges across Council services		
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<p>The MTFS allows for fees and charges to increase over the medium term resulting in increased ongoing income of around £2.4 million by 2019-20. In the latter years of the plan there is increased income arising from car parking at Oxpens and Diamond Place and a £1 increase in park and ride charges with effect from 2018-19, together with additional property investment income. Increases are proposed in the following services (fuller details are contained in Appendix 9 of the CEB report):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. An increase in garden waste bins of £2 per bin per year ii. Pre-application advice for planning services -25% increase (reflecting the outcome of a “benchmarking” exercise with other authorities) iii. Leisure activities including swimming, skating, tennis, membership fees, fitness gyms, where the majority of fees and charges show proposed increases of 10p to £1.20 or 2% to 5%. There are no changes proposed to rates for those on lower incomes iv. Pest Control increases range from £5 to £20 for treatments to more be more reflective of the actual cost of the service v. Cemeteries increases range from 1.5% to 2.33% for exclusive burial rights, representing a £15 increase for purchasing 50 year adult grave rights for residents and £30 for non-residents vi. Off street Car Parking – increases of between 10p and 20p. It is anticipated that Park and Ride charges will follow those set by Oxfordshire County Council and no increases have been assumed until 2018-19 		

	vii. Garages - 5% increase across the board
What are the likely risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has recognised that affordability of services is a significant problem for those in receipt of benefits. It has built in protections accordingly: with c. 2400 residents (accounting for 23.5% of all service users) receiving free garden waste services. Given the current economic climate for the public sector the ability to sustain this free service will be reviewed but any proposal to change would seek to minimise the impact on vulnerable communities. It remains an aim to maintain a universal and free service wherever possible and to minimise the impact of any charging to minimal or zero levels for those in receipt of benefits. Previous charges for garden waste collection services have been set below market rates. Note also that over 1000 residents receive assisted collections and that cases are reviewed annually.
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?	Budget consultation annually (December 2015/ January 2016).
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?	<p>The Council gives concessions to customers that are in receipt of Housing Benefit in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonus Concessionary Leisure Card – qualifying benefits such as : Job seeker’s allowance, Unemployed / interim payment, Youth training courses / new deal, Income support, Housing benefit, Council Tax benefit, Pension credit, Asylum Seeker, Invalid Care Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - Disability Living Allowance, NHS: AG2, AG3, HC2 or HC3 Certificate holders, and Foster Carers Free Swimming for children under 17 at various sessions during the week Free one off winter garden clearance for council tenants in receipt of Council tax reduction or housing benefit and physically unable to carry out work A range of pest control visits for mice, rats, wasps, ants, moths, fleas, squirrels and other pests where the customer is in receipt of Housing Benefit Garden waste collection where customer is in receipt of benefit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Council service area proposing fee increases will undertake an analysis of service users (where identifiable) to assess any issues of potential adverse impact • All fees and charges have been applied across the board. In many cases, the small increases being proposed follow a period where no increases were applied. Where statutory provisions allow, discretionary reductions will be applied to be both responsive to and influence best practice around compliance (rewarding high standards). <p>With the withdrawal of Housing Benefit in favour of Universal Credit, it will not be possible to identify all such benefits and whilst the numbers on Universal Credit are limited at present they will grow over the next 12-18 months. It is therefore recommended that concessions for the fees and charges identified above are granted where claimants are either in receipt of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Universal Credit, or in the case of leisure concessions for the allowances identified above until such time as those benefits are phased out.</p>																		
Overall assessment of the equality risks	<p>There may be groups adversely affected by specific service fees, however, consultation and monitoring will take place with these groups once identified.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="618 935 2047 1337"> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 935 1120 991">Race</td> <td data-bbox="1120 935 1568 991">Disability</td> <td data-bbox="1568 935 2047 991">Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 991 1120 1046">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1120 991 1568 1046">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1568 991 2047 1046">Neutral</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1126 1120 1182">Gender reassignment</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1126 1568 1182">Religion or Belief</td> <td data-bbox="1568 1126 2047 1182">Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1182 1120 1238">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1182 1568 1238">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1568 1182 2047 1238">Neutral</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1238 1120 1294">Sex</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1238 1568 1294">Pregnancy and Maternity</td> <td data-bbox="1568 1238 2047 1294">Marriage & Civil Partnership</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1294 1120 1337">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1120 1294 1568 1337">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1568 1294 2047 1337">Neutral</td> </tr> </table>	Race	Disability	Age	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Race	Disability	Age																	
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral																	
Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation																	
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral																	
Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership																	
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral																	
Budget Proposal	New Homes Growth Bonus Payments																		

Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	A system introduced by central government in 2011/ 2012 to pay grant based on the net growth in housing. This grant is given for a six year period based on new dwelling completions in year. The Council allocates New Homes Bonus to fund the Capital Programme in order to de-risk the Medium Term Financial Strategy.									
What are the likely risks?	The net growth in housing and affordable homes will have a positive impact on regeneration projects and impact strongly on groups in receipt of benefits and in work but on lower incomes; supporting strategic housing and other local economic growth priorities through Local Enterprise Partnerships									
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?	The Council will monitor potential growth estimates until 2016/ 17									
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?	<p>Conservative estimates indicate a positive return above £2 million for each of the next two years.</p> <p>No further New Homes Bonus has been assumed for 2018/ 19 and beyond. This is no change on the previous year's assumption</p>									
Overall assessment of the equality risks	<p>The main risk is that the grant is lower than estimated or ceases altogether. A mitigating action could be to reduce the council's Capital Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with Revenue Support Grant should New Homes Bonus be received in 2018/19 and 2019/20 then it is recommended that Members decide on appropriate use on one-off schemes. <table border="1" data-bbox="618 970 2029 1361"> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 970 1133 1070"> <p style="text-align: center;">Race</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 970 1648 1070"> <p style="text-align: center;">Disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1648 970 2029 1070"> <p style="text-align: center;">Age</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1161 1133 1262"> <p style="text-align: center;">Gender reassignment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 1161 1648 1262"> <p style="text-align: center;">Religion or Belief</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1648 1161 2029 1262"> <p style="text-align: center;">Sexual Orientation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="618 1262 1133 1361"> <p style="text-align: center;">Sex</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1133 1262 1648 1361"> <p style="text-align: center;">Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1648 1262 2029 1361"> <p style="text-align: center;">Marriage & Civil Partnership</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p style="text-align: center;">Race</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Age</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gender reassignment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Religion or Belief</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sexual Orientation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sex</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Marriage & Civil Partnership</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Race</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Age</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>								
<p style="text-align: center;">Gender reassignment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Religion or Belief</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sexual Orientation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>								
<p style="text-align: center;">Sex</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Marriage & Civil Partnership</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p>								

Budget Proposal	Significant pressures on the Council's ability to deliver a balanced MTFP:
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recyclate increased cost -_the City Council uses a recycling facility at Enstone operated by an external contractor. Due to variations in prices paid for recyclate reflecting the current low price the operation was no longer financially viable. Following a procurement there has been an increase for this service of £1million in a full financial year with effect from 1st October 2015. This cost may be mitigated by up to £250k per annum with the construction on a new waste transfer station to be operated by the Council for which budgetary provision has been provided in the Councils capital programme in the order of £1.4 million • Housing Benefit Administration Grant. Housing Benefit Grant for 2015/16 is £784,421 a further reduction of 10% is estimated for 2016/17 followed by reductions of 37% in 2017/18, and 15% for the next two years resulting in a reduction of grant at the end of the four year period to around £300k. The 2017/18 reduction reflects the introduction of universal credit. The Council will seek to partially mitigate these reductions by reductions in employee costs producing savings in the order of £370k per annum from 2019/20 onwards • Homelessness – The costs of providing for homeless families continues to escalate. An additional £200k per annum has been added to the existing budget of £1 million. This stems from reductions in levels of Local Housing Allowance, making privately rented property unaffordable to people on lower incomes in Oxford and leading to many private landlords ending tenancies of people who can no longer afford their rent.
What are the likely risks?	
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?	Budget consultation annually (December 2015/ January 2016)
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative	<p>To counter the financial pressures from homelessness the Council proposes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of a un-ring fenced grant of around £942k within its Formula Grant which it traditionally uses on a range of measures to support organisations preventing

impacts?	<p>homelessness. Going forward it is uncertain whether the level of grant given by the Government will be maintained at this level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To counter the financial pressures from homelessness, the Council has agreed to allocate £5 million in the General Fund Capital Programme to work with Real Assets Lettings in conjunction with the organisation St Mungos Broadway to purchase dwellings to house families requiring temporary accommodation. Under the initiative the Councils £5million is match-funded by an external organisation. This scheme will provide around 50 properties for homeless families in and around the city 									
Overall assessment of the equality risks	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Race Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Disability Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Age Neutral</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Gender reassignment Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Religion or Belief Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Sexual Orientation Neutral</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Sex Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral</td> </tr> </table>	Race Neutral	Disability Neutral	Age Neutral	Gender reassignment Neutral	Religion or Belief Neutral	Sexual Orientation Neutral	Sex Neutral	Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral	Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral
Race Neutral	Disability Neutral	Age Neutral								
Gender reassignment Neutral	Religion or Belief Neutral	Sexual Orientation Neutral								
Sex Neutral	Pregnancy and Maternity Neutral	Marriage & Civil Partnership Neutral								
Budget Proposal	Value for Money & Efficiency									
Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review?	<p>A recent review of administration procedures has produced on-going savings from 2015/16 of approximately £600k per annum some £250k above the initial estimate. Over the next four years the Council will generate a further £7million of efficiencies with on-going efficiencies of £2.1 million be achieved from 2020/21 onwards. The programme of cumulative efficiency savings are set out in Appendix 3 of the CEB report. The bulk of these efficiencies have arisen from decisions in previous years including:</p>									
What are the likely risks?	The risks are assumed to be neutral as the council continues to make progress in improving value for									

	money and generating efficiency savings		
What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?			
What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further office rationalisation £200k per annum from 2017/18 • Replacement of ICT Infrastructure contract £150k per annum • Multi skilling in call centre - £50k • Reductions in ICT Business Partners - £115k per annum • Reduction in Planning ICT scanning contract £70k per annum • Staffing savings in Financial Services - £158k per annum • Changes to senior management structure - £200k per annum • Community Services staffing changes -£85k per annum • Vehicle fuel savings £150k per annum • Renegotiation of leisure centre contract - £10.1 million since 2009 		
Overall assessment of the equality risks	Race	Disability	Age
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	
	Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	

<p>Budget Proposal</p>	<p>New Investment and Service Enhancement proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Policy Officer -Post in the current structure which was a bid in previous years for a fixed term, it is now being proposed that this post becomes permanent in the structure. The role of this officer is to develop the Councils safeguarding policy and procedure and promote, coordinate and implement them £24k per annum • Apprenticeships training: £15k one-off bid to deliver “one council” interventions to push forwards BME/ Women in trade based roles, wider apprenticeship awareness raising work and opportunities for preparing local apprentices for work links with major regeneration partners. This can also partially offset the risk pressure of the new apprenticeship levy from April 2017 (e.g. 0.5% cost of payroll for all companies with a payroll bill of over £3 million = c. £200k cost for OCC) and the governments’ aim from 2016 to ensure that at least 2.3% of the workforce will be comprised of apprentices (all public sector bodies over 250 will have to employ an apprentice) <p>HRA Capital Programme: The revised programme of £115.742 million over the next 4 years includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower block refurbishment £18.97 million • Great Estates enhancement of car parking and other infrastructure £4.8 million • Barton Regeneration £3.7 million • Improvements to doors, windows, controlled entry including the Oxford Standard - £6 million • Improvements to kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, heating and electrics -£18 million • Blackbird Leys Regeneration - £2.2 million – to undertake estate re-generation • A contingency of £25.427 million will be created to mitigate the potential financial effect of the Government’s initiatives around High Value Council Housing. This could either be in lieu of selling high value council housing, or to ‘top-up’ any sales to Registered Providers at lower values in exchange for nomination rights <p>New Build at Barton:</p> <p>The previous HRA Business Plan assumed £52.269 million for the purchase of 354 social housing</p>
-------------------------------	---

	<p> dwellings at Barton up to 2023/24. The purchases would be part funded (30%) by retained RTB capital receipts (RRTB) of approximately £15.6m with the remaining finance provided by other HRA revenue resources. Whilst these new build properties under current proposals may eventually be captured by the Government’s sale of HVCH or RTB if they were to remain in the HRA under current proposals, the Council would not be compelled to actually sell these specific properties although they may be required to generate an equivalent capital receipt. The methodology proposed by the Government provides for Councils to be flexible about how they generate the resources to meet the HVCH payments</p> <p>General Fund Capital Programme: The proposed programme amounts to around £84.46 million over the four year period and includes £3.7 million on flood relief schemes, pavilion and community centre improvements £2.2 million, mandatory disabled facility grants £2.0 million, parks, open spaces and athletics facilities £5 million, acquisition of investment properties £10.3 million, car parks resurfacing and improvements £2.7 million, purchase of homeless dwellings £5 million, vehicles £6.3 million, ICT £2.2 million</p>						
<p>What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This budget proposes that the Council does not proceed with the purchase of these homes, as it would be rendered highly disadvantageous, and indeed possibly unviable, by the proposals in the Housing and Planning Bill. Officers are currently looking into the implications of establishing a Local Housing Company as part of the Council’s response to the future housing agenda. Such a company could purchase the properties at Barton subject to approval or potentially properties from the HRA to meet the HVCH costs. 						
<p>Overall assessment of the equality risks</p>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="801 1171 898 1203">Race</td> <td data-bbox="1256 1171 1402 1203">Disability</td> <td data-bbox="1771 1171 1839 1203">Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="801 1225 898 1257">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1256 1225 1402 1257">Neutral</td> <td data-bbox="1749 1225 1861 1257">Neutral</td> </tr> </table>	Race	Disability	Age	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Race	Disability	Age					
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral					

	Gender reassignment	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Sex	Pregnancy and Maternity	Marriage & Civil Partnership
	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral