



doing good

Annual Report 24/25

Oxford Direct Services Limited
Company Registration No. 10719222 (England and Wales)

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Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL)

Highlights from the year 2025

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025



Section 1

Strategic Report

For the Period Ended
31 March 2025

Annual Report 24/25

Update on the Business Plan



Our vision

Our vision is to make your part of the world a great place to live, work and visit.



✔ Our purpose - doing good

We are here to build a new kind of business, a better business, a business that's good for everyone. One that creates a more inclusive and sustainable economy that balances purpose and profit; a business that considers the impact of its decisions on employees, customers, suppliers, the community, and the environment.

Some would call it the triple bottom line. We call it “doing good.”

✔ What we do

We are responsible for managing and delivering property maintenance & construction, street cleansing, waste & recycling, parks & open spaces, highways & engineering works, fleet services and car parks management. We do this on behalf of our shareholder, Oxford City Council.

Work with our Shareholder and principle client Oxford City Council was fundamentally unchanged year on year.

✔ What we care about

We have a strong set of values, influenced and understood by our workforce and reinforced through policy, process, communication, development, and reward. We have worked hard to evolve our company values to reflect our ‘profit for a purpose’ ethos, this provides continuity in engagement, and commitment from a workforce who were primarily attracted to working for a Local Authority.

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Strategy and Outlook

The strategy of ODSL is to deliver excellent, value-for-money public services for our Shareholder and principal client, Oxford City Council.

This is achieved by delivering a service contract and pipeline of work with our shareholder and principal client, that delivers value for the client and retains contractor profit within the group.

These values summarised are:

- ✓ **Commitment** – delivering on our promises
- ✓ **Aspiration** – looking for ways to improve our services
- ✓ **Respect** – considerate to customers, colleagues, and the environment
- ✓ **Engagement** – challenging when things are not right
- ✓ **Safety** – putting safety first in everything we do

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Business Plan

How we achieve these outcomes is extremely important to us – we bring many other benefits simply by the way we do business.

The **ODSL Business Plan** sets out these ambitions:

Health, safety and wellbeing - we take pride in the health, safety, welfare, and high-performing culture we have cultivated in recent years. Achieving and sustaining the **45001** international standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management is testament to this.

Through this, we are able to deliver improvements in both the consistency and quality of our safety management process and activities. This brings numerous benefits but overall, it helps lower both the frequency and severity of incidents and increases the quality of learning from incidents and near miss events which, in turn, support our growth and journey in continuous improvement.

As our safety culture matures, we are recording the benefits of a continued low rate of incident severity and noting a persistent approach to active safety management through more focused and effective workplace inspections leading to better practice and more opportunities to improve our safety performance.



Planning the future





We have a highly qualified and competent workforce who are engaged and active in how our safety management system works for them and supports the business. As we continue to grow and increase our offering to the communities we serve, we can be confident that all ODS colleagues will continue to think and act safely and rise to the challenges we face together.

It's worth taking a moment to reflect on how far we've come in our safety culture over the years. Our incident severity rate, which is calculated using the HSE national formula of employee lost days to injury per 1,000 hours worked (where a lower number is better). This rate has improved significantly, from a high of 0.28 in previous years to just 0.04 this year (slightly higher than prior year 0.02 but continuing the downward trend from recent years).

Quality and compliance – consistent with previous years, we achieved re-certification of our ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 in quality, environmental and occupational health and safety management, continuing to assure our customers of the quality of the services we provide.

Customer satisfaction – Following the implementation of 'Localz' in 2023, ODS has achieved a NPS score of +85, which is considered world class for responsive repairs and property services provided to Oxford City Council residents.



We are committed to continually learning from feedback by conducting monthly meetings with Contract Managers on the findings, performing root cause analysis on any complaints or concerns raised, and delivering customer care training to all service delivery teams.

Great place to work – we continue to support our staff with generous terms and conditions, flexible working practices, a wide range of health and wellbeing facilities, development and promotion opportunities and staff recognition awards.

Purposeful business – At ODS “**doing good**” remains at the very heart of what we do and is one of the key drivers for change and continuous improvement. Whilst the positive impact of this is not always able to be monetised, our shareholder benefits from these strong values, and from our growing social value and sustainability credentials.

We are committed to considering our social and economic impact at every opportunity, with particular focus on how we can positively affect our local area. We have demonstrated this in recent years by becoming a signatory for the **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter** (Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership – OIEP) which highlights best practice in working towards creating a more equal and sustainable region, creating opportunities for all people within the county. We work together with others to tackle some of the region's problems and create a fairer environment where we can all contribute and share in success.

We support the **Oxford Living Wage** which is an hourly minimum wage that promotes liveable earnings for all workers and recognises the inflated cost of living in Oxford.

We also contribute positively to the local economy by spending money with local suppliers wherever possible.

doing good





We are keen to continue to promote equality, equity and inclusion such as by ensuring places on our apprenticeship schemes and work experience schemes are targeting young people from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds, or those who found academia was not the ideal environment for them. This helps us tap into a wealth of talent that could otherwise be missed by considering exam performance alone.

Our workforce is local with a majority of our people living and working in Oxfordshire (93%), which means they are invested in making our area a great place to live, work and visit in line with our [Stakeholders Vision for Oxford 2050](#).

We have supported local food banks, helped fund an additional member of staff at a local organisation that offer money, debt, housing, and benefit advice, and worked with local schools and community groups to improve facilities. We are very pleased to be supporting Sobell House Hospice in Oxford as our nominated Charity for the next three years.



We have exceeded our plan to reduce the carbon footprint of our fleet. We targeted 25% being zero emissions by end of 2023 but to date have achieved 33% and have further plans to continue decarbonising. There are large solar arrays on our Cowley and Horspath Depot roofs and along with the energy used from our utilities supplier, c. 60% of our electricity usage is from sustainable sources.

But there is still much work to do, and this is why we have recently become members of Social Value UK to help us take the huge amount of good will within the business and translate it into the most valuable action. This membership will not only help us make ideas a reality but will give us the tools to track our impact accurately.

Strategic Report >

**For the Period Ended
31 March 2025**



Dividend and return

Our business plan set out a net profit projection of £2.1m, however **£3.1m** has been achieved, resulting in retained profits of **£4.0m** (after dividend payments of £1.9m). The Board will consider a further recommendation for a dividend relating to this year.

In addition to the payment of the £1.9m dividend, ODSL provides significant cashable and non-cashable benefits to the council. Cash returns in the form of rent for depots, purchase of services and leasing of vehicles bring the total non-dividend return to the council to around £6m per annum.

Board and governance

The composition of the ODSL Board has remained broadly stable, providing welcomed continuity to the organisation. The year 2024-25 saw the Board continue to show a good balance between executive and non-executive members - whose number includes one current Deputy Chief Executive of the shareholder organisation, Oxford City Council.





ODS recruited a new Executive Director of Finance and Non-Executive Chair, along with transitioning non-executive director roles reflecting the completion of terms for predecessors.

The Board commissioned a governance review which looked at the composition of the board and its committees and refreshed the Articles and Shareholder Agreement to make sure that the documents – but more importantly the operation of the ODSL continues to meet good practice. The Board cohort increased by one further Non-Executive Director to ensure there is enough capacity given the busy work programme and the Board built on its existing skill set.

The Board continues to meet regularly, with additional meetings convened whenever circumstances dictate. These meetings are supplemented by Board calls and strategy days, as and when required.

The Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Nominations Committee, both established in 2019, continued to operate during 2024-25. Each committee is chaired by non-executive directors, report to the main Board and is tasked with specific responsibilities, enabling more focused work in their respective areas.

The Audit Committee, among its other duties, is crucial in ensuring that the company's annual accounts accurately reflect its year-end financial position. Additionally, it plays a significant role in maintaining the overall governance of the company.

The future

ODS will continue to focus on providing high-quality, value-for-money public services, on behalf of our shareholder. We will challenge ourselves to increase our understanding of workflow and demand so we can improve how we engineer services around these dynamics. We will encourage our workforce to keep asking how we can do things more effectively and strive for innovation. This is our culture and our first-order priority.

The emphasis for this plan period continues to be work with Oxford City Council in developing and delivering a revised approach to commissioning and clienting ODS, to help optimise flow and enable efficient planning, delivery, and cost control.

Securing the future of the Council under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a key priority for the shareholder and ODS will support them in this endeavour where possible.

Annual General Meeting

The company's next AGM is due to take place in early 2026, details of the formal business of the meeting will follow. We intend this to be a wider opportunity to engage with our many stakeholders as well as formally reporting to our shareholder.

Key Performance Indicators >



The Board monitors the progress of ODS by reference to a set of key performance indicators (KPI) as set out in table 1 below.

Financial:

The Company's primary financial KPI are revenue, profit, cash and shareholder returns:

Revenue for the year was **£74.4m** (2023-24: £61.1m) the increase is mainly due to higher demand for property services capital programmes and reactive works.

With margins reduced in year to 30.9% (34.8% in 2023-24), gross profit for the year amounted to **£23.0m** (2023-24: £21.2m).

Administration expenses have increased to **£19.2m** (2023-24 £17.8m) primarily impacted by employee/other labour costs.

ODSL's profit after tax came to **£3.1m** (2023-24 £2.7m).

Cash flow for 2024-25 recovered to **£0.5m** (2023-24 £(3.2)m) reflecting a reduction in dividends year on year, £1.9m in 2024-25 (2023-24 £5.4m).

	2024/25	2023/24	Movement
Financial	£	£	
Revenue	£74.4m	£61.1m	Up 22%
Profit after tax	£3.1m	£2.7m	Up 15%
Cash	£0.5m	£(3.2)m	+£3.7m
Engagement			
Customer satisfaction - repairs	95%	94%	Up 1%
Health and safety			
Workplace & activity inspections	3,967	4,172	Down 5%
Lost time (days) to injuries	51	22	Up 57%
RIDDOR reports	5	3	Up 40%
Environment			
tCO ₂ e per £m annual turnover	21.95	34.34	Down 36%
tCO ₂ e	2,000	2,094	Down 4%



**95% satisfaction rate
with our repairs service**

Engagement:

The results of our customer satisfaction surveys continue to encourage, showing a **95% satisfaction rate with the repairs service** and a 94% satisfaction rate with the timeliness of the repairs service. These are both important Tenant Satisfaction Measures set by the Regulator for Social Housing. These results support our NPS results of +85 which represents a world-class customer experience.

Health & Safety:

From a health and safety perspective, we have seen a challenging set of measured metrics in comparison to an exceptional performance in the prior year. From a wider perspective the overall number of incidents **reduced 9%** and near miss reporting increase year on year 15%. ODS continued its commitment to training performing over twelve thousand hours of training in the year.

Environment:

Our key environmental measures have seen some mixed movements year-on-year and these are included in the overview table on the previous page and reported in more detail in the Section 172 Statement later in this report.



***"ODS' profit after
tax came to **£3.1m**
(2023-24: £2.7m profit)."***

Notable continuous improvements to Health & Safety:

Statistics and numbers, although very valuable, give a general overview of the year however, when dealing with such small severity numbers, they can be easily swayed by a relatively minor single event. Therefore, it is better to look at the improvements and initiatives we have seen throughout the year. This is where the real success is generated as continuous improvement drives the business forward.

The real improvement of note over the year has been the marked increase in the level of engagement, awareness and commitment by department heads and line managers in embedding the ISO documentation and principles throughout the business. The internal audit program has demonstrated a very high level of compliance across the business and the response and engagement on audit is energetic and positive.

Another improvement is the level of progress and engagement in digitalisation of the management system throughout the workforce. This has led to improvements in speed, first hand incident and near miss reporting and response and overall compliance with safe work processes and plant/equipment safe use leading to reduced adverse incident and discrepancies.



Section 172 Statement

The directors of the Company are aware of their duty to promote the success of the Company in accordance with the provisions of s. 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (“Act”) and continuously seek to fulfil that duty. This statement describes how the directors have had regard to the matters set out in s. 172 of the Act.

During the year ended 31 March 2025, the directors of the Company acted in ways consistent with this duty. Decisions made at Board, Committees and Executive meetings included consideration of its Shareholder, employees, customers, suppliers, communities and the environment, as set out in more detail below:



Consequence of decisions in the long term

When making decisions to achieve the long term prosperity of the Company, the directors reflected on the impact of such decisions on each of its key stakeholders.

The Board of directors (Board) is responsible for the long term success of the Company, but the overall strategic direction and operation of the Company are delegated to the Executive team. The Board makes the long-term decisions that relate to the Company’s acquisition, capital, financial resources, reporting, and structure and investment strategy. While the Executive team and Committees assist the Board in dealing with and making decisions on complex, technical and specialised matters.

In the year ended 31 March 2025, the Board, the Executive team and the Committees attended regular meetings as and when necessary to discuss and review the Company’s strategy and business plan. The business plan formed the basis for financial budgets, resources allocation and investment decisions. In approving the business plan, the Board and Executive team considered the interests of its key stakeholders, external economic and political developments, market conditions and long term reputation of the Company.



Our employees

ODSL is a large local employer, and most of our employees are from Oxford and Oxfordshire (93%).

As an employer, we are committed to contemporary employment practices, and we strive to embed a strong, values based culture which places safety and wellbeing at the heart of our agenda.

We are committed to **Oxford Living Wage** and to supporting our employees development at all levels. Our flexible working practices promote great work-life balance and encourage workforce diversity.

Recruiting and maintaining sufficient workforce numbers in an increasingly competitive recruitment environment is continuing to prove a challenge right across the organisation and as a result we are continually developing and evolving our strategies.

Our use of the **HSE's Safety Climate Tool** to measure workplace safety Climate and Culture is also providing confident evidence of cultural maturity within ODS.

Between 2019 and 2022 we improved our positive responses across all eight measured factors in the tool and in the latest iteration this year we again improved by lowering all negative responses across all measured factors. This is the best and most reliable indicator of growing cultural maturity in terms of safe behaviours throughout the business and contributes to the massive reduction in lost time and injuries and the improvements in the leading indicators of meaningful workplace and activity inspections and near miss reporting and close out.

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Health and safety

Occupational Health and Safety, being one of our core values, is at the heart of everything we do as an organisation. It's built into our DNA as a doing good business and is embedded as a driving force in our planning, organising and provision of our services to the communities and customers we serve.

Safety continues to be the highest priority, underpinned and supported by dedicated resources and strong leadership commitment. To further embed a culture of safety, a structured communication strategy for 2025/2026 will drive awareness and engagement across all levels of ODS. The successful retention of certification following the March 2025 external audit reinforces our commitment to maintaining the highest safety standards for staff, customers, and service users. The Board has appointed a Non-Executive Director as Health and Safety Champion to enhance oversight and accountability at Board level.



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Customers

Our key customer is our sole shareholder, Oxford City Council, who, in the main, awards work and contracts to us under the Procurement Act 2023 “Teckal” exemption. We have a 20-year statutory services and housing repairs contract (with some fourteen years remaining), and we maintain close client relationships through various regular meetings with Council’s officers at all management levels.



OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL

Suppliers

As part of the “doing good” brand, ODSL actively invests in the Oxfordshire economy by sourcing materials, goods, and services locally. Our largest contract is for the supply of building materials. On average we spend £3.5m with a local company who provides local employment opportunities.

The spend with both local suppliers and small/medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is tracked monthly and based on an active supplier base of circa 650 businesses. On average over 60% of our total spend is directed to these local businesses.

Performance is tracked against two key measures:

- Percentage of spend with local business, tracking at an **average of 60%** at the close of year.
- Percentage of ODS spend with SME's, currently tracking at an average of **63%** at the close of year.

The procurement team conduct supplier positioning (value and risk) to identify key suppliers. Our mission is to develop and maintain strong, positive relationships with those key suppliers through the implementation of Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) programmes.



“ On average over 60% of our total spend is directed to these local businesses. ”

We work with suppliers under SRM programmes to:

- Gain a shared understanding of how they can deliver increasing value to ODSL and how we can develop mutual cost reduction approaches (understanding cost drivers)
- Understand and manage strategic supply risks including market dominance and conflicts of interest
- Manage the risk of key suppliers becoming insolvent due to challenging economic circumstances and ensure we have robust contingency arrangements
- Engage about future requirements and help them prepare for contracting opportunities
- Maintain up-to-date commercial intelligence to ensure that we understand risk, market, and technological developments
- Seek continuous improvements in value-for-money through joint improvement plans

Supplier insight, knowledge and technical expertise is also used to inform category strategies that deliver best value solutions.



Our shareholder and need to act fairly between members

As a wholly owned subsidiary of **Oxford City Council**, the directors' duty to have regard to the need to act fairly between members of the Company is limited. Nevertheless, the directors maintain regular engagement with the sole shareholder to ensure strategic and operational alignment, listen and respond constructively to oversight and support the broader interests of the Council owned group of companies.

Payments to Creditors

We comply with the Prompt Payment Code and in most cases exceed this standard. We also strive to pay everyone within the agreed contract terms or sooner:

- At the latest within 30 days of receipt of invoice
- Anybody with an OX post code and registered with ODSL as an SME is paid within 14 days of receipt of invoice
- Utility companies are paid on receipt of invoice



The community and the environment



We take our role in the community incredibly seriously. We provide many public services on behalf of Oxford City Council, which are essential in keeping the city a thriving place to live, work and visit. These public services are delivered in the main by the local community, with a majority of our workforce living in Oxford itself (58%) This connection with operations is significant as people take a pride in caring for the place they live in. They clean the streets, empty the bins, look after the green spaces, and repair and maintain over seven thousand dwellings, providing essential social housing.

Mindful of our community leadership role and under our “**doing good**” social purpose agenda, we aim to deliver value beyond financial returns – working with community groups and charities to further their aims, establishing close bonds with those in the local area. The ODS Volunteering Bank to enable staff to take paid volunteering time to undertake charitable work, supporting causes that are meaningful to them.

In addition to the benefits we deliver to people, and the profit we generate (which is returned to our shareholder for reinvestment back into public services), we also care about our impact on the planet. This is evidenced through service delivery such as our **PAS2030 Decarbonisation Retrofit Installer accreditation** which allows us to help our shareholder plan to significantly reduce its carbon footprint. In other areas **we continue to drive towards achieving a zero-carbon fleet, where 33% of our vehicles are now zero emissions.**

Our sustainability credentials will be further demonstrated as we embark on the exercise to baseline our current carbon footprint and publish a plan to work towards net zero.

**working to
achieve
ZERO CARBON
emissions across
our operations**

Streamlined energy and carbon report

We maintain close alignment with Oxford City Council in terms of policy and objectives regarding the achievement of a net zero city ahead of the national target of 2050. A goal is to reduce carbon emissions and become a Zero Carbon Council by the year 2030.

This means working to achieve zero carbon emissions across our operations. In 2024/25 ODS have seen continued progress with reductions to all scope 1 & 2 emissions (details published further on in the report).

ODS's energy usage is incorporated into the Green House Gas reporting of the City Council. This reports the group's progress towards reducing carbon emissions. ODS works with Oxford City Council to deliver initiatives to drive reductions in carbon emissions.



33%
of our vehicles are now
zero emissions

The Carbon Management Plan for the years 2021-22 to 2029-30 outlines exactly the plan to achieve this and ODS takes an active role as part of the Net Zero Steering Group.

This includes:

- Installing more solar technology across our estate.
- Electrifying the fleet of vehicles and moving to low-carbon forms of transport.
- Carrying out detailed energy assessments on our highest energy-consuming buildings.
- Decarbonising heat in our buildings by improving energy efficiency and moving to electric heating systems such as heat pumps.
- Investing and purchasing electricity from local solar farms.
- Raising awareness within our staff about the benefits and opportunities to reduce our carbon emissions.

Our business is growing, as is our desire to reduce our environmental impact - exploring innovation and collaborations to drive down the impacts of climate change for our operation and our partners and customers.

This includes:

- Electrifying our fleet and plant where feasible
- Reducing fuel consumption
- Reducing our energy consumption at our depots



Energy efficiency measures

Fleet

We now have 122 electric vehicles (EVs) in our fleet (approximately 35%), with further units ordered as part of the ongoing fleet upgrade project. All smaller sized vehicles in the fleet i.e. cars and small vans, will be replaced with an electric alternative when the life span of the vehicle has run its course. To enable the further electrification of our fleet, our fleet drivers now have the option to charge at the **Energy Superhub Oxford**. There have also been additional charging units installed across all ODS depots.



There is continued effort to strive for carbon emission net zero, with further strategies to be discussed.

To help reduce sole occupancy journeys six electrically assisted bikes have been added to the fleet which are available from all our depots.

One further electric bike fitted with storage containers was added to the fleet in 2024 to assist

with operational requirements with Waste, Streets and Highways & Engineering. Bus journeys are also encouraged with bus passes made available to staff from Cowley Depot.





HVO is a drop-in replacement for diesel and can help with significantly reducing emissions. A trial undertaken in 2023 was successful and is being considered to run the commercial fleet as well as on-site operational equipment. We continue to explore the viability of HVO with OCC to use with our ODSL and ODSTL fleet and assets, which will in turn significantly reduce emissions in the city.

We also use the latest technology to track and maximise the efficiencies of our essential journeys to deliver our services and we will continue to review and optimise.

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Depots

Our business operates from three depots in Oxford City with on-site renewable energy generated via solar panels, accounting for 18% of our total consumption.

Across all our depots, a huge effort has been made to lower our energy consumption and improve our CO2 emissions. There has also been significant encouragement to have employees return to offices, as well as increasing our capacity for electric vehicle usage by installing and utilising additional charge points across all depots. This has resulted in an increase to our energy consumption, resulting in Cowley Marsh scoring a **72C Category rating** during our energy performance review. This is an increase from the 41B Category score received in 2024, however its still significantly lower than the industry standard of 100D.

Horspath Road Depot has also achieved notable results, with the depot coming out at a Category 59C for 2024, compared to 52C in 2023. The main building of Horspath is yet to have its annual review for 2025. Again, this is significantly below the 100D industry standard.

Furthermore, we have been granted Salix funding on 2 separate occasions across 2024 – 2025, allowing the business to specify further carbon reduction measures across ODS premises. The money has been put to great use, upgrading the heating appliances at Cutteslowe Lower Pavilion and Rose Hill Community Centre, as well as upgrading all operational lighting at Cowley Marsh depot to LED light fittings. This in turn will help improve energy consumption and lower our CO2 emissions greatly, with quantifiable results due for availability at the end of 2025.

Continued efforts will be made to further improve energy use across the depots by regular monitoring, external recommendations from our approved contractors and work that is still under way that requires completion, such as pipe lagging to contain heat and movement of office layouts to reduce the risk of covering heating appliances.



on-site renewable energy
generated via solar panels,
accounting for

18%

of our total
consumption



We have carried out energy efficiency measures at our depots and are exploring the feasibility of further enhancements.

1. Solar PV array
2. LED lighting
3. Light sensors and heat controls

The following information relates only to ODSL's operations and covers energy consumption and emissions data for 2024-25 for our Scope 1 and Scope 2 Greenhouse gas emissions only.

We are also exploring our Scope 3 emissions to better understand our impact and we are producing an updated carbon reduction plan.

ODS CO2e emissions - Comparing 2024-25 to 2023-24

General summary CO2/CO2e emissions		2024/25		2023/24		YoY	
Emissions source		units	tCO2e	units	tCO2e	units	tCO2e
Electricity/kWh		601,805	110	590,275	122	2%	-10%
Gas/kWh		510,922	94	553,042	112	-8%	-16%
Fuel							
Diesel/litres		710,109	1,784	732,742	1,839	-3%	-3%
Gas Oil/litres		-	-	-	-		
Unleaded Petrol/litres		5,923	12	10,045	21	-41%	-43%
Totals			2,000		2,094		-4%

ODS Summary of GHG

Summary for Scope of emissions	2024/25	2023/24	YoY
Scope 1	tCO2e	tCO2e	tCO2e
Gas (kWh)	94	112	-16%
Diesel/litres	1,784	1,839	-3%
Gas Oil/litres	-	-	
Unleaded Petrol/litres	12	21	-3%
Total Scope 1	1,890	1,972	-4%
Scope 2			
Electricity (kWh)	110	122	-10%
Totals	2,000	2,094	-4%

Our energy intensity ratio has decreased by **36%**, reflecting reduced consumption against all measured scope 1 & 2 emissions.

Energy Intensity Ratio	FY25	FY24	YOY %Change
Ratio-tCo2e per million annual turnovers	21.95	32.83	-33%

Key risks, uncertainties and opportunities

Risk Assurance Framework

The Executive and Director team continue to evolve the Risk Assurance Framework and increase its risk maturity journey to ensure clear visibility and management of risk across the business.

Risk Governance and Assurance

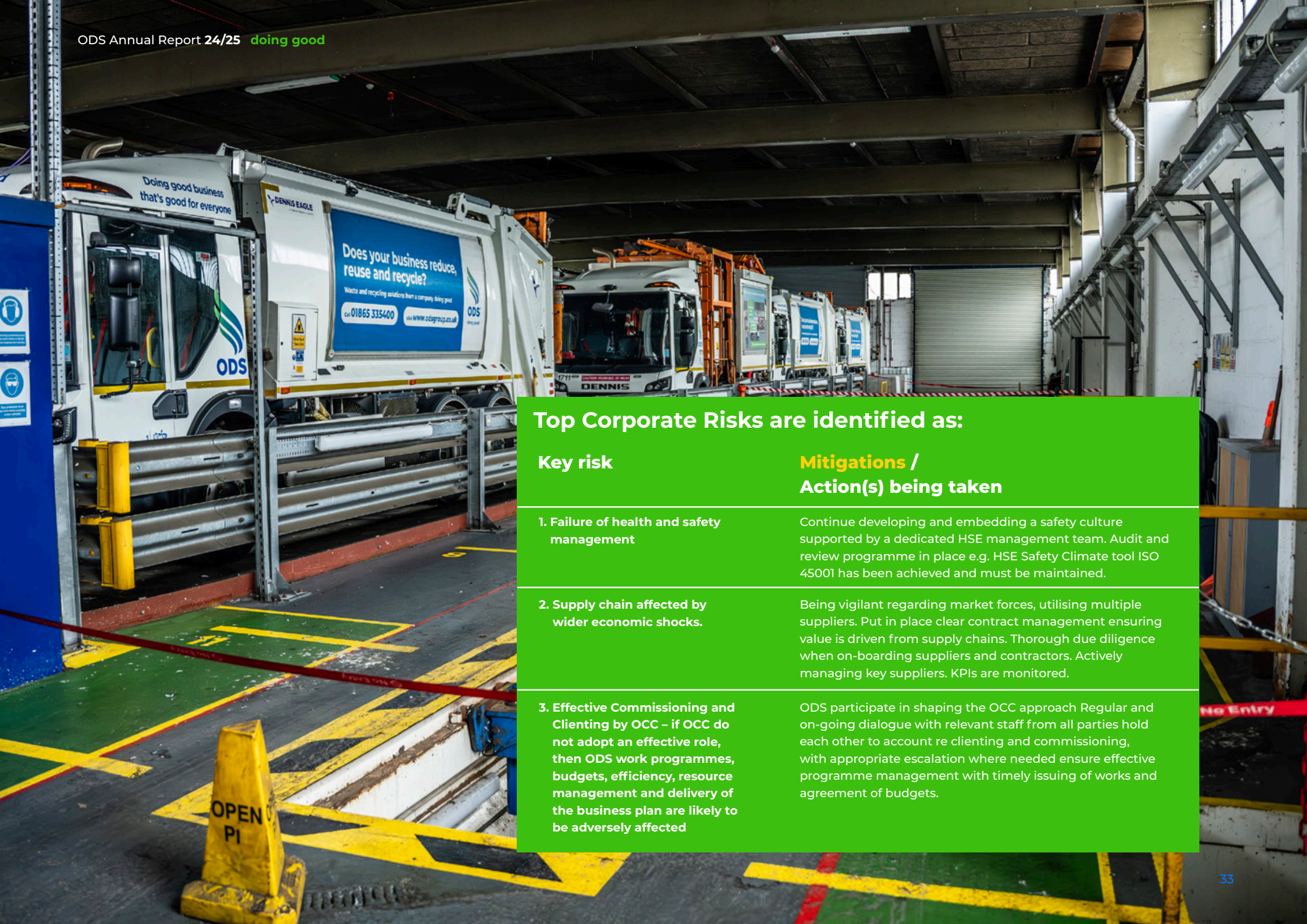
Work has continued to embed a structured approach to risk identification, assessment and management at all levels of this business with a focus on:

- A continued review of the Risk Policy, Framework, and Appetite statement to further enhance risk maturity, adding additional levels of assurance through the three lines of defence and a formal risk closure process
- Risk registers continue to be peer reviewed and updated monthly by teams with risks escalated to the Executive and Board as appropriate
- Ensuring policies are reviewed, updated and communicated across the business
- Risk refresher training continues to be carried out. This includes the Principles of Risk Assessment, Fraud Prevention and Avoiding Bribery Fraud and Corruption online training and toolbox talks for front-line staff on a 2-year basis and are included in induction
- Incorporating emergent risks in internal audit workplans, co-ordinating with company's internal auditors (BDO).

High Standards of Business Conduct

We have a range of policies in place to protect our employees and provide a safe working environment. We ensure compliance with relevant regulatory requirements and adhere to high professional and ethical standards when dealing with customers, suppliers and colleagues. We recognise our social and environmental responsibilities and customers; communities and employees are at the heart of our business - with opinions actively sought and responded to.

The Board and senior management have taken active steps to ensure appropriate governance, strategy, and commitment to fair and open business practices and good customer relations have been embraced across the organisation. By balancing the interests of our stakeholders when making decisions, the Board seeks to maintain a reputation for high standards of business conduct, thereby securing long-term success.



Top Corporate Risks are identified as:

Key risk

Mitigations / Action(s) being taken

1. Failure of health and safety management

Continue developing and embedding a safety culture supported by a dedicated HSE management team. Audit and review programme in place e.g. HSE Safety Climate tool ISO 45001 has been achieved and must be maintained.

2. Supply chain affected by wider economic shocks.

Being vigilant regarding market forces, utilising multiple suppliers. Put in place clear contract management ensuring value is driven from supply chains. Thorough due diligence when on-boarding suppliers and contractors. Actively managing key suppliers. KPIs are monitored.

3. Effective Commissioning and Clienting by OCC – if OCC do not adopt an effective role, then ODS work programmes, budgets, efficiency, resource management and delivery of the business plan are likely to be adversely affected

ODS participate in shaping the OCC approach Regular and on-going dialogue with relevant staff from all parties hold each other to account re clienting and commissioning, with appropriate escalation where needed ensure effective programme management with timely issuing of works and agreement of budgets.

Section 1

Director's Report

For the Period Ended
31 March 2025

Annual Report 24/25

Principal activities

The principal activity of ODSL is the provision of services to Oxford City Council under a 20-year operating agreement. ODSL was formed as a Local Authority Trading Company in April 2017 for the purpose of maintaining the Council's housing stock, parks and streets and providing statutory services such as waste collection.

Directors

Directors during this financial year were:

- Catherine Jane Robinson (Chair)
- Timothy Paul Sadler (Chair) (resigned 14 September 2024)
- Thomas Edward Hook (Non-Executive Director and Council Officer)
- Simon Howick (Managing Director)
- Christopher John Urwin (Executive Director of Finance)
- Paul James Concannon (Chief Operating Officer)
- Lucy Walker (Non-Executive Director)
- James Christopher Towner (Non-Executive Director)
- Raymond David Jones (Non-Executive Director)
- Catherine Pridham (Non-Executive Director) (resigned 31 January 2025)
- Michael Whitwell (Non-Executive Director) (resigned 31 August 25)
- Anne-Marie Scott (Executive Director of People and Corporate Services) (resigned 30 April 25)

The company has in place a directors and officers liability insurance policy.

"The principal activity of ODSL is the provision of services to Oxford City Council under a 20-year operating agreement."

Catherine Jane Robinson
(Chair)

Going concern

Whilst global events continue to influence the wider economic climate, general inflation has stabilised of late and is expected to remain close to the bank target of 2%.

ODSL has managed to successfully absorb and mitigate against these additional cost pressures passing on some of these inflationary increases in materials and fuel/utilities to OCC.

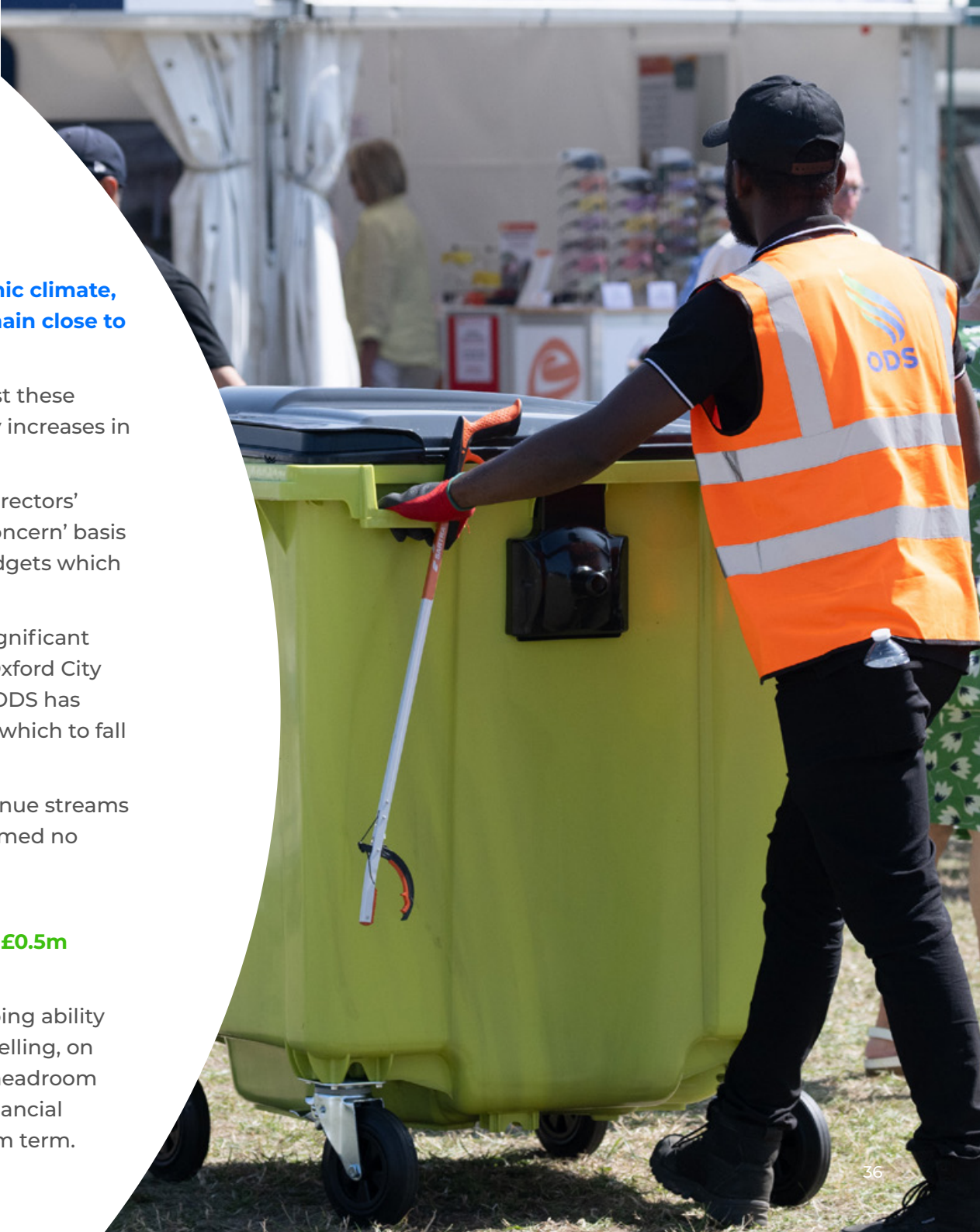
In preparing the annual report and financial statements, the directors' have considered the appropriateness of adopting the 'going concern' basis in the preparation of the financial statements and detailed budgets which factor in these circumstances, have been prepared.

There have been no cashflow issues and there have been no significant losses from trading with our principle client and shareholder Oxford City Council. The shareholder has approved the business plan and ODS has sufficient cash reserves combined with an overdraft facility on which to fall back on should circumstances require them.

Considering this, and the fact that the vast majority of our revenue streams are derived from the service contracts with OCC, we have assumed no significant structural changes to the business will be needed.

As at 31 March 2025, the balance sheet reflects a strengthening net asset position of **£4.0m** (2023-4 £2.8m) and stable liquidity **£0.5m** (2023-4 £(3.2)m).

Given that OCC is our major client we are assured of their ongoing ability to pay the statutory services fee. This is based on detailed modelling, on OCC's part, that clearly demonstrates that there is significant headroom within their funding arrangements to absorb the estimated financial impact of the current economic climate, in the short to medium term.



We are confident of our liquidity position going forward and have paid £1.9m of dividend payments during 2025.

On this basis the directors consider it is appropriate for the going concern basis to be adopted in preparing the annual report and financial statements.

Corporate governance

Structure

As the sole shareholder of ODSL, Oxford City Council established a Shareholder Group (comprising the members of the Council's Cabinet) through which the Council exercises control over the company and by which it holds the company's directors to account. In addition, shortly after the creation of the company, the Council and ODSL entered into a shareholder's agreement (which has been reviewed and refreshed in summer 2025). This agreement records and formalises the Council's service requirements of ODSL. In return the Council supplies various support services to ODSL in accordance with a Support Services Agreement.

The Shareholder Group holds formal meetings with the company directors on a regular basis, to receive reports on company performance, finances and proposals; to set and/or confirm the company's strategic direction; and to enact those matters which are expressly reserved for the shareholder (e.g. consideration/approval of the Business Plan, the appointment of directors, auditors, etc.). All company reports received by the Shareholder Group are subject to scrutiny by the Council's Company Scrutiny Panel, which is comprised of elected members with a mandate to scrutinise the actions of the Shareholder Group.



Corporate governance

Continued...

Company Board

The composition of the ODSL Board has remained broadly stable, providing welcomed continuity to the organisation.

The year 2024-25 saw the Board continue to show a good balance between executive and non-executive members.

The ODSL Board also continued to hold one member who was also an executive director and employee of Oxford City Council, thus facilitating greater and more effective communication between the Council and the company. Since mid 2022 this role has been fulfilled by Thomas Hook, the Council's Executive Director, Corporate Resources.

The Board continues to meet regularly, with additional meetings convened whenever circumstances dictate. These meetings are supplemented by Board calls and strategy days, as and when required.

The company holds a register of interests for its directors and for its senior executive officers, helping to ensure the avoidance of any conflicts of interest.

Directors are aware of their duty to promote the success of the company under s172 of the Companies Act. They are continually looking for appropriate opportunities to create value for the company, while also recognising the importance of understanding the potential risks involved, and the need for risk mitigation.



Corporate governance

Continued...

Committees

The two sub-committees created by the Board - the Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Nominations Committee - were originally established during the financial year 2019/20. They have both continued to operate during 2024-25. As before, both are chaired by non-executive directors, report to the main Board, and are designed to carry out the specific and identified tasks assigned to them, allowing more focused work to be carried out in these areas. In this way, the two sub-committees assist in strengthening the company's financial and overall governance.

Audit

Representatives of the company's internal auditors (BDO) attend all meetings of the Audit Committee and are available to provide assistance and expertise on all relevant matters arising, in addition to reporting the outcome of their various specific audit tasks. Audit report recommendations are actioned wherever appropriate. Both internal and external auditors continue to draw attention to the value of the contributions made by non-executive directors to the company's overall governance.

In addition to monitoring the progress of Risk Assurance improvements, other areas considered by the Audit Committee during the year included:

- The strategic internal audit plan and the mapping of these audits to the key risks facing the business
- Tracking management's progress to resolve issues and risks arising from audit work; no audit recommendations are overdue
- A review and subsequent follow up of the self-assessment of internal controls and governance across each area of the business



doing good

Corporate governance

Continued...

- A review of ICT strategy progress
- A review and subsequent monitoring of Information Assurance / cyber security improvements to reduce risk
- Reviewing work management have performed in managing fraud including absorption into the overall corporate risk management process with executive oversight and anti-fraud training and updates
- Updating the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference and undertaking an assessment of Audit Committee's effectiveness
- Consideration of the Annual Report and Accounts to check that they were fair balanced and understandable with an appropriate focus on good and bad news; consideration of significant judgements and the appropriateness of accounting policies.

doing good



Our employees

As an employer we are committed to ensuring that our employment policies respect individuals and offer career and personal development to our entire workforce. We strive to embed a strong, values-based culture which places safety and wellbeing at the heart of our agenda; recognised last year when we achieved accreditation against the ISO 45001 standard. We are committed to the **Oxford Living Wage** and to investing in learning for all our employees from apprentices to senior staff.

We operate a system of collective bargaining with the recognised Trade Unions (Unison and Unite) and there are a range of regular forums in place to facilitate positive partnership working and enable proactive involvement in our safety and wellbeing agenda. Our wider communication platforms are designed to appeal to our diverse employee group, including newsletters and social media platforms as well as more structured briefings.

We reflect our **“doing good”** agenda in our employer approach by focussing on local employment opportunities, partnering with local networks and charities to provide opportunities to potentially disadvantaged groups and we are building key relationships with local education providers in support of our young people strategy.



*“We reflect our **“doing good”** agenda in our employer approach by focussing on local employment opportunities.”*



We continue to work hard to further embed diversity at the heart of everything we do demonstrated by our continued support for our women's network, the achievement of Disability Confident leader status (the highest-level accreditation), working with ex-offenders and forces veterans to provide work experience and employment opportunities and our network of mental health first aiders.

Financial risk management

Treasury functions are undertaken by the Council on behalf of ODSL. The Council provides a working capital facility which is managed on a pooled basis alongside the Council's funds.

ODSL's bank balances are managed on a grouped basis with the Council's accounts and therefore we do not need an overdraft facility with our bankers.

We lease our operational buildings and our vehicles from the Council and pay interest at a fixed market rate on these arrangements, this reduces any exposure to changes in interest rates in the short term.

Oxford City Council is our sole shareholder as well as our main customer, as such the credit risk to the ODSL is deemed to be very low.

Results and dividends

ODSL made a **profit after tax of £3.1m** for the period (2023-24 £2.7m) which has led to a commensurate increase in reserves.

In-year a £1.9m dividend payments were made, further dividends will be considered when 2025 accounts are approved.



Profit after tax

£3.1m

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) and applicable law. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the profit or loss of the Company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements and...
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that ODSL will not continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain company transactions, and disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the company, and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure to Auditor

As far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware. Additionally, the directors individually have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as directors to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.



Simon Howick
Managing Director

15 OCTOBER 2025

Section 2

Summary of accounts

For the Period Ended
31 March 2025

Summary of accounts

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Revenue	74,442,798	61,094,158
Cost of Sales	51,458,201	39,857,032
Gross Profit	22,984,597	21,237,126
Administrative Expenses	19,162,603	17,817,573
Other Operating Income	130,224	71,791
Operating Profit	3,952,218	3,491,344
Investment Income	80,524	65,028
Interest Payable	876,893	872,386
Profit / (Loss) Before Taxation	3,155,849	2,683,986
Tax on Profit & Deferred Tax Adjustments	41,173	32,044
Profit / (Loss) and Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	3,114,676	2,651,942

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Statement of Financial Position

As of 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Property, Plant & Equipment	13,959,757	15,281,095
Long Term Assets	13,959,757	15,281,095
Inventories	295,541	285,953
Short Term Debtors	7,365,821	11,597,492
Contract Assets	3,209,332	3,500,771
Cash and Cash Equivalents	486,849	-
Current Assets	11,357,543	15,384,216
Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	(3,205,159)
Short Term Creditors	(9,381,239)	(11,414,643)
Current Liabilities	(9,381,239)	(14,619,802)
Long Term Creditors	(131,618)	(117,054)
Finance Lease Liabilities	(11,766,113)	(13,104,801)
Long Term Liabilities	(11,897,731)	(13,221,855)
Net Assets	4,038,330	2,823,654
Called up Share Capital	1	1
Retained Earnings	4,038,329	2,823,653
Equity	4,038,330	2,823,654

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Statement of changes in Equity

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	Share Capital	Retained earnings	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 April 2023	1	5,571,711	5,571,712
Dividend Payments	-	(5,400,000)	(5,400,000)
Retained Profit and Total Comprehensive Income	-	2,651,942	2,651,942
Period ended 31 March 2024	1	2,823,653	2,823,654
Dividend Payments	-	(1,900,000)	(1,900,000)
Retained Profit and Total Comprehensive Income	-	3,114,676	3,114,676
Balance at 31 March 2025	1	4,038,329	4,038,330

Retained earnings represent the cumulative results of the company.

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Statement of Cashflows

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Profit / (Loss) and Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	3,114,676	2,651,942
Adjustments for:		
Decrease / (Increase) in Trade, Other and Long Term Receivables	4,308,320	5,912,773
Decrease / (Increase) in Contract Assets	291,439	1,586,794
(Decrease) / Increase in Trade, Other and Long Term Payables excluding Financing Activities	(2,178,036)	(2,019,261)
(Decrease) / Increase in Contract Liabilities	-	378
Decrease / (Increase) of Inventory	(9,588)	(141,865)
Interest Expense	876,893	872,386
Investment Income	(80,524)	(65,028)
Depreciation	2,092,748	2,040,260
(Gain) / Loss on Asset Disposal	(130,224)	(71,791)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activity	8,285,704	10,766,588
Purchase of Non Current Assets	-	(111,081)
Proceeds from the sale of Non Current Assets	170,144	71,791
Proceeds from Short-Term and Long-Term Investments	3,875	65,028
Total Cash Flows from Investing Activities	174,019	25,738
Loans (to) / from Parent Undertaking	-	-
Interest Payable to Group Undertakings	(802,738)	(939,930)
Dividend Payments	(1,900,000)	(5,400,000)
Payments for of a Finance Lease Liability	(2,064,977)	(2,040,259)
Total Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(4,767,715)	(8,380,189)
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,692,008	2,412,137
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period	(3,205,159)	(5,617,296)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	486,849	(3,205,159)

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Company Information

Directors

Simon Howick
Thomas Edward Hook
Christopher John Urwin (Appointed 28 October 2024)
Catherine Jane Robinson (Appointed 1 August 2024)
Raymond David Jones (Appointed 20 February 2025)
James Christopher Towner (Appointed 20 March 2025)
Lucy Walker (Appointed 20 March 2025)
Timothy Paul Sadler (Resigned 14 September 2024)
Catherine Pridham (Resigned 31 January 2025)
Anne-Marie Scott (Resigned 30 April 2025)
Michael Whitwell (Resigned 31 August 2025)

Non Executive Secretary

Adedolapo Adeniran (Appointed 3 February 2025)
Lindsay David Cane (Resigned 28 November 2024)

Registered Office

Cowley Marsh Depot
Marsh Road
Oxford
England
OX4 2HH

Auditor

Forvis Mazars LLP
The Pinnacle
2 Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX

Company Registration Number 10719222
(England and Wales)

Incorporation Date - 10 April 2017

Business Addresses

Cowley Marsh Depot
Marsh Road
Oxford
England
OX4 2HH

Horspath Road Depot
Horspath Road
Oxford
England
OX4 2RH



**We are here to build a new kind of business,
a better business, a business that's good for everyone.**

01865 335400
enquiries@odsgroup.co.uk

www.odsgroup.co.uk

ODS | Marsh Road | Oxford | OX4 2HH

Oxford Direct Services Limited
Company Registration No. 10719222 (England and Wales)





Oxford Direct Services
Trading Limited

doing good

Annual Report 24/25

For the period ended
31 March 2025

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited
Company Registration No. 10719214 (England and Wales)



Oxford Direct Services Trading Ltd
Annual Report 24/25

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Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited

Company Registration No. 10719214 (England and Wales)

Director's Report

For the period ended 31 March 2025

The Directors present their report and financial statements
for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Directors

Catherine Jane Robinson (Chair)

Timothy Paul Sadler (Chair) (resigned 14 September 2024)

Simon Howick

Thomas Edward Hook

Christopher John Urwin

Paul James Concannon

Lucy Walker

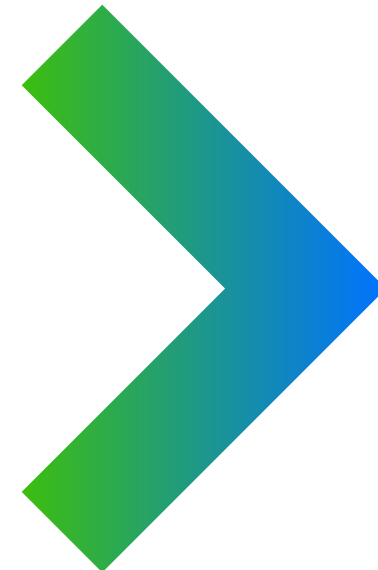
James Christopher Towner

Raymond David Jones

Catherine Pridham (resigned 31 January 2025)

Michael Whitwell (resigned 31 August 2025)

Anne-Marie Scott (resigned 30 April 2025)



Company strategy and key objectives

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (“ODSTL”) was formed in 2017 and is a wholly owned and controlled company of Oxford City Council. The company was set up to offer commercially traded services working in conjunction with its sister company Oxford Direct Services Limited (collectively referred to as ODS).

ODSTL provides a similar range of services to those provided by ODSL to businesses, public sector bodies, and not-for-profit organisations across the Thames Valley. Although ODSTL commenced trading on 1 April 2018, ODSL only moved all its external business into ODSTL in April 2021.

ODSTL primarily offer three large commercial services to the market. These account for over 80% of ODSTL’s annual revenue and comprise of:

- Commercial waste and recycling
- Civils and infrastructure work
- Construction and property management

Other services include fleet management, grounds maintenance, pest control and other facilities management services.

Our Purpose - “doing good”

Of equal importance to a company that cares about profit, are the people and the planet and these three elements are what we are driven by and how we do things.

ODS is here to build a new kind of business, a better business, a business that is good for everyone. One that creates a more inclusive and sustainable economy that balances purpose and profit; one that considers the impact of decisions on employees, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. This “triple bottom line” strategy is our **“doing good”** purpose.



How We Do Things

We have a strong set of values, inspired by the workforce, and reinforced through policy, process, communication, development, and reward. We have worked hard to evolve the values of the Company to reflect our 'profit for a purpose' ethos which provides continuity in engagement and commitment from a diverse workforce who were primarily attracted to working for a local authority.

These values summarised are:

Commitment – delivering on our promises.

Aspiration – looking for ways to improve our services.

Respect – being considerate to customers, colleagues, and the environment.

Engagement – challenging when things are not right.

Safety – putting safety first in everything we do.

All treasury transactions, such as borrowing and investments, are charged on a subsidy control-compliant basis, so that there is no subsidy being provided to the company through these transactions.

Our Future

Our two companies work together, continuing their highly symbiotic relationship and getting the balance right between ODSL's quality and efficiency orientation whilst being able to respond with agility to ODSTL's growth requirements.

The ODSTL vision is to drive a profitable income stream for reinvestment back into public services.

The aspiration for the next four years is to grow our commercial business significantly, more than doubling the revenue and profit to increase the returns to the shareholder exponentially.



Business Review

ODSTL returned a profit on ordinary activities before tax of £1.4m (2024: £0.9m) which has increased available shareholder funds to £2.9m (2024: £1.8m).

Revenue in the year increased by £2.5m to £16.3m (2024: £13.8m) primarily reflecting growth in property management and civils and infrastructure work. Revenues overall are in-line with the business plan.

Overall gross profit margins of 31% are stable year on year (2024: 30%) reflecting the business growing in highly competitive markets. The business has tracked ahead of its business plan and is confident of continuing to grow profitably in the future.

The cash position remains strong at £4.1m (2024: £2m).

ODSTL is embarking on an exciting period of growth. It has ambitious plans to scale up its commercial operations which commenced in April 2024. Building on firm foundations, the Board is confident that these plans are realistic and achievable. Built into our forecasts are increases in turnover, identified under sharp focus from the Board, and investment largely expensed in year – modest at first but then we expect a gearing up from 2025/26.

Our commercial services have been reviewed, and we have built a strong appreciation of what to sell, to whom and at what price. Our focus is very firmly on delivering for our customers, really understanding their needs – and exceeding their expectations. In this way we hope to become their ‘go to’ contractor for a range of services. We aim to influence their future decision making by delivering above and beyond their expectations.



“The cash position remains strong at £4.1m ”

Revenue in the year increased by £2.5m to £16.3m
(2024: £13.8m)

Looking at the services we offer:

Commercial Waste – expanding the business through a total waste management offering and pushing further into the region. We believe our competitors cannot match our offer as a local waste and recycling service provider, putting safety and the environment first and placing quality on everything. Owned by **Oxford City Council**, we are going to be around for a long time, so we care about building long term partnerships with our customers, rather than viewing contracts as short term. Our strong credit rating also underpins our longevity – customers will continue to get services; the supply chain will continue to get paid. We are a safe and secure option to buy services from and to work with.

**Our strong
credit rating
also underpins
our longevity**



doing good

Our **Building Services** function continues to grow our offer of general and niche property repairs and maintenance at scale – such as planned gas and electrical works, property portfolio improvements, reactive repairs, and decarbonisation, given our status as a PAS2030 retrofit installer. As a contractor, we build and refurbish projects typically in the region of £0.1m to £5m with an end-to-end design and build service.

As a **highways engineer**, we work with tier 1 contractors as an important part of the supply chain, deploying expertise and local knowledge to the benefit of our clients. The electric vehicle infrastructure network presents a significant opportunity for ODS, **working with a partner Charge Point Operator**, to make significant inroads in this market. With our exciting and innovative **Gul-e solution** there is a significant market opportunity for ODS to sell this solution to other large clients for deployment into local communities who are currently excluded from the EV market if they have no safe EV cable solution

We believe ODS has something great to offer in our services – but also of significant importance is how we do things. Our quality standards are high, with reaccreditation in ISO 9001, 14001, and 45001 yet again.

Care for ours and our customers' environments is a priority – with over 100 of our 300 strong fleet being electric vehicles.



Financial Outlook

Our foundations are strong. We expect 2025/26 to look better still with the years beyond that exponentially growing – the hard work is being done now. Building our brand, building our client base, delivering for our customers.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board reviews risk on a regular basis and currently the key risks include:

**ISO 45001 HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED**



Key Risk	Mitigations / Action (s) being taken
1. Failure of health and safety management	<p>Continue developing and embedding a safety culture supported by a dedicated HSE management team.</p> <p>Audit and review programme in place e.g. HSE Safety Climate tool.</p> <p>ISO 45001 has been achieved and must be maintained.</p>
2. Supply chain affected by wider economic events.	<p>Being vigilant regarding market forces, utilising multiple suppliers, holding fuel cards. Manage our price point with our competitive set and customers effectively, passing on rising costs where appropriate. Put in place clear contract management ensuring value is driven from supply chains. Engage with reciprocal trading relationships where possible.</p>
3. Funding to grow the business - If there is an inability to access the funding to grow the business then there will be an impact on commercial growth pace / volume	<p>Agree use of company reserves and cash Access funds from PWLB - if primarily a community service-based argument</p> <p>Parent company guarantor - case by case basis</p> <p>Build year on year balance sheets with profit</p> <p>Ensure year-end accounts completed in a timely manner to better position ODS for commercial borrowing</p> <p>Consider building assets in ODSTL as collateral</p>
4. Losing customer focus as we grow	<p>Focus on being a customer-centric organisation aligning growth to customer requirements.</p> <p>Continued focus on improving net promoter score with a structure to deliver customer satisfaction.</p>

Financial Instruments

Treasury Operations

Treasury functions are undertaken by the council on behalf of the company.

The council provides a working capital facility which is managed on a pooled basis alongside council's funds.

Liquidity risk

The company's bank balances are managed on a grouped basis with the council's accounts and therefore the company does not need an overdraft facility with its bankers.

Interest rate risk

The company does not hold any leases and pays its sister company, ODSL, for the right to use premises and vehicles. ODSL leases its operational buildings and its vehicles from the council and pays interest at a fixed commercial market rate on these arrangements therefore the company reduces any exposure to changes in interest rates in the short-term.

Credit risk

Oxford City Council is the sole shareholder of the company and as such the credit risk to the company is very low.





Health and Safety

As our safety culture matures, we are recording the benefits of a continued low rate of incident severity and noting a persistent approach to active safety management through more focused and effective workplace inspections leading to better practice and more opportunities to improve our safety performance. We have a highly qualified and competent workforce who are engaged and active in how our safety management system works for them and supports the business. As we continue to grow and increase our offering to the communities we serve, we can be confident that all ODS colleagues will continue to think and act safely and rise to the challenges we face together.

It's worth taking a moment to reflect on how far we've come in our safety culture over the years. Our incident severity rate, which is calculated using the HSE national formula of employee lost days to injury per 1,000 hours worked (where a lower rate is better). This rate has improved significantly, from a high of 0.28 in previous years to just 0.04 this year (marginally higher than prior year 0.02 but broadly stable with recent years).

Customer Success

In general, we have sought to become more customer centric, understanding ODS through our clients' eyes so we can grow in line with market requirements and buying needs.

A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution has been implemented to support better management of our customers and prospects, allowing us to market our multiple services to customers who have historically only spent in one area.

ODS provides services to a wide range of customers, therefore, maintaining a collaborative strategy across all business units is key to ensuring consistency at every touchpoint and promoting brand reliability. Our established approach to customer satisfaction includes customer feedback tools, continuous process reviews, and a cross-functional customer experience programme.

Exceptional customer service is crucial to the success of any successful business as it builds trust, loyalty, and a positive brand perception. Excellence is achieved through consistency, effective communication, and a customer-centric culture with the customers' needs at the forefront of all business decisions. In an interconnected world, an agile approach is essential for tailoring interactions to create a more personalised experience and adjusting to the evolving landscape of customer expectations.

We have invested in a sales function to drive the growth of the business and initiated Account Management plans against strategic, contracted clients, so we can understand and track our performance against contractual and aspirational customer requirements with the hope of keeping client churn to a minimum.

Our customers, and those we seek to do business with, typically have similar values to us. There are lots of other reasons that commercial customers choose to engage with ODS, and this gives us a platform to grow our market share.

Key reasons include:

- We provide a one-stop shop – a range of complementary services which enable us to develop partnerships with our customers and provides us with a route to offering them a wider range of services.
- Being a local authority owned company means we can provide assurance to our customers about our long-term financial stability.
- For public sector customers, our connection with a local authority is a key selling point.
- Our commitment to local employment and working with under-represented and challenged communities helps our customers meet their own social value targets and commitments.
- All our services have the resilience of being part of our wider operation; from equipment to plant to supply chain, we offer a solid operational foundation.
- We offer a strong track record of responding to emergency incidents – flooding, storms, and residential failures; this can be built into our core offer to provide 24/7 reassurance to customers.

**Oxford Direct Services
Trading Limited**



Quality, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Management



ODSTL remains committed to adhering to the standards for Health & Safety, Environmental and Quality Management Systems and has retained certification under **ISO 45001:2018, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015**. ODSTL have also retained Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) accreditation with both **SafeContractor** and **Constructionline Gold accreditations** in safety management and sustainability,

This reflects ODSTL's continued commitment to ensuring all compliance obligations are met as well as following industry best practice to reduce the environmental impact ODSTL has on its communities and ensuring quality services are provided to all customers.

ODSTL also holds **Cyber Essentials accreditation**. This standard demonstrates data security controls and is used by all public sector bodies.

Notable continuous improvements:

Statistics and numbers, although very valuable, give a general overview of the year however, when dealing with such small severity numbers, they can be easily swayed by a relatively minor single event. Therefore, it is better to look at the improvements and initiatives we have seen throughout the year. This is where the real success is generated as continuous improvement drives the business forward.

The real improvement of note over the year has been the marked increase in the level of engagement, awareness and commitment by department heads and line managers in embedding the ISO documentation and principles throughout the business. The internal audit program has demonstrated a very high level of compliance across the business and the response and engagement on audit is energetic and positive.

Another improvement is the level of progress and engagement in digitalisation of the management system throughout the workforce. This has led to improvements in speed, first hand incident and near miss reporting and response and overall compliance with safe work processes and plant/equipment safe use leading to reduced adverse incident and discrepancies.



Sustainability

In line with our Shareholder Oxford City Council, we share their goal of **reducing carbon emissions** and helping them become a Zero Carbon Council by the year 2030.

This plan includes the following measures which we will engage with and benefit from, with our sister company ODSL:

- Installing more solar technology across our estate
- Electrifying the fleet of vehicles and moving to low-carbon forms of transport
- Carrying out detailed energy assessments on our highest energy-consuming buildings
- Decarbonising heat in our buildings by improving energy efficiency and moving to electric heating systems such as heat pumps.
- Investing and purchasing electricity from local solar farms
- Raising awareness within our staff about the benefits and opportunities to reduce our carbon emissions.

An aerial photograph showing a large building with a flat roof covered in dark solar panels. Below this, a brick roof with several skylights is visible. The text 'Installing more solar across our estate' is overlaid on the solar panels.

Installing more solar across our estate

Regarding two features of our carbon reduction plan:

Fleet

We share a fleet with ODSL and together, we now have 122 electric vehicles (EVs) in our fleet (approximately 35%), with further units ordered as part of the ongoing fleet upgrade project. All smaller sized vehicles in the fleet i.e. cars and small vans, will be replaced with an electric alternative when the life span of the vehicle has run its course. To enable the further electrification of our fleet, our fleet drivers now have the option to charge at the **Energy Superhub Oxford**. There have also been additional charging units installed across all ODS depots. There is continued effort to strive for carbon emission net zero, with further strategies to be discussed.

To help reduce sole occupancy journeys six electrically assisted bikes have been added to the fleet which are available from all our depots. One further electric bike fitted with storage containers was added to the fleet in 2024 to assist with operational requirements with Waste, Streets and Highways & Engineering (H&E). Bus journeys are also encouraged with bus passes made available to staff from Cowley Depot.

HVO is a drop-in replacement for diesel and can help with significantly reducing emissions. A trial undertaken in 2023 was successful and is being considered to run the commercial fleet as well as on-site operational equipment. We continue to explore the viability of HVO with OCC to use with our ODSL and ODSTL fleet and assets, which will in turn significantly reduce emissions in the city.

We also use the latest technology to track and maximise the efficiencies of our essential journeys to deliver our services and we will continue to review and optimise.



Social Value

ODSTL takes seriously its value of **“doing good”**. We do business in a way that is beneficial for everyone as we contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Social value is embedded in our core, and we consistently consider the social, environmental, and financial impact of our decisions on our employees, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. With a particular focus on the local communities, we work with and for, we believe in collaboration and partnerships to deliver better outcomes.

Depot

Our business operates from three depots in Oxford City with on-site renewable energy generated via solar panels, accounting for 18% of our total consumption.

Across all our depots, a huge effort has been made to lower our energy consumption and improve our CO2 emissions. There has also been significant encouragement to have employees return to offices, as well as increasing our capacity for electric vehicle usage by installing and utilising additional charge points across all depots. This has resulted in an increase to our energy consumption, resulting in **Cowley Marsh scoring a 72C Category rating during our energy performance review**. This is an increase from the 41B Category score received in 2024, however its still significantly lower than the industry standard of 100D.

Horspath Road Depot has also achieved notable results, with the depot coming out at a Category 59C for 2024, compared to 52C in 2023. The main building of Horspath is yet to have its annual review for 2025. Again, this is significantly below the 100D industry standard.

Furthermore, we have been granted Salix funding on 2 separate occasions across 2024 – 2025, allowing the business to specify further carbon reduction measures across ODS premises. The money has been put to great use, upgrading the heating appliances at Cutteslowe Lower Pavilion and Rose Hill, as well as upgrading all operational lighting at Cowley Marsh depot to LED light fittings. This in turn will help improve energy consumption and lower our CO2 emissions greatly, with quantifiable results due for availability at the end of 2025.

Continued efforts will be made to further improve energy use across the depots by regular monitoring, external recommendations from our approved contractors and work that is still under way that requires completion, such as pipe lagging to contain heat and movement of office layouts to reduce the risk of covering heating appliances.



We have carried out energy efficiency measures at our depots and are exploring the feasibility of further enhancements.

- Solar PV array
- LED lighting – in addition to areas already upgraded
- Light sensors and heat controls

Results and Dividends

The company made a profit after tax of £1m (2024: £0.7m) for the period. This has been included within reserves, which now stand at £2.9m (2024: £1.8m). A decision on the final dividend is deferred until after the FY25 accounts are approved by the board but the business plan assumes reserves will be re-invested into the growth programme.

Employee Involvement

Whilst most staff are still provided to ODSTL by its sister company Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL), an increasing number of staff are employed directly by ODSTL on terms and conditions that match the markets we are competing in.

As an employer, we are committed to ensuring that our employment policies respect the individual and offer career and personal development to our entire workforce whilst being competitive in the commercial employment market. We strive to embed a strong, values-based culture which places customer focus and safety and wellbeing at the heart of our agenda. We are committed to the **Oxford Living Wage** and to investing in learning for all our employees from apprentices to senior staff.

Our wider communication platforms are designed to appeal to our diverse employee group, including social media channels as well as more structured briefings.



We reflect our “**doing good**” purposeful business agenda in our employer approach by focussing on local employment opportunities, partnering with local networks and charities to provide opportunities to potentially disadvantaged groups including working with veterans and ex-offenders to provide employment opportunities. We work closely with local schools as part of our workforce and social value policies, providing work experience and other learning opportunities to our community.

doing good



Social Value

ODSTL takes seriously its value of “doing good”. We do business in a way that is beneficial for everyone as we contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Social value is embedded in our core, and we consistently consider the social, environmental, and financial impact of our decisions on our employees, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. With a particular focus on the local communities, we work with and for, we believe in collaboration and partnerships to deliver better outcomes.

We are committed to considering our social and economic impact at every opportunity, with particular focus on how we can positively affect our local area. We have demonstrated this in recent years by becoming a signatory for the **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter (Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership)** which highlights best practice in working towards creating a more equal and sustainable region and creating opportunities for all people within the county. We collaborate with others to address some of the region’s challenges and foster a fairer environment where everyone can contribute and share in success.

We support the **Oxford Living Wage** which is an hourly minimum wage that promotes liveable earnings for all workers and recognises the prohibitive cost of living in Oxford.

We also contribute positively to the local economy by spending money with local suppliers wherever possible.

We are committed to addressing inequality by ensuring our apprenticeship and work experience schemes are targeting young people from less affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, or those for whom academia was not the ideal environment. This helps us tap into a wealth of talent that might otherwise be overlooked if only exam performance were considered.



We support the **Oxford Living Wage** which is an hourly minimum wage that promotes liveable earnings for all workers and recognises the prohibitive cost of living in Oxford.

Our workforce is local, with a majority of our people living and working in Oxfordshire, which means they are invested in making our area a great place to live, work and visit in line with our [Stakeholders Vision for Oxford 2050](#).

We have supported local food banks, helped fund an additional member of staff at a local organisation that offer money, debt, housing, and benefit advice, and worked with local schools and community groups to improve facilities. We are proud to support Sobell House Hospice in Oxford as our nominated charity.

To enable our workforce to pursue their personal social value goals and passions, we have introduced the **ODS Volunteer Bank**. This initiative allows any member of staff to request paid volunteering hours from a time bank set aside within the business to 'do good'. Staff have embraced this opportunity, supporting organisations close to their hearts, enriching their working lives, and positively impacting their communities. Support has been provided to a wide variety of organisations, including local scouting groups and mental health charities.

We have demonstrated our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint by exceeding our 2022 electric fleet target. Additionally, we now use 20% sustainable energy at our depots.

ODSTL has begun our journey towards Carbon Literacy accreditation, with staff undertaking learning and development that will help them make environmentally wise decisions both within the business and in their personal activities. Employees will make personal pledges to implement changes that will help positively shape our future endeavours. Becoming a **Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO)** shows that we are an organisation that is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and mitigating climate change.



ODS Volunteer Bank

Studies reveal that CLO's have happier and more fulfilled workforces, with higher job satisfaction and a greater sense of purpose, all of which align with our core company values. This initiative will also enhance our profile, increase our competitiveness in the marketplace, and contribute to a safer, more cost-efficient supply chain.

There is still much work to be done, and this is why we have recently become members of **Social Value UK** to help us harness the significant goodwill within the business and translate it into meaningful action. Our next step will be to track our social value efforts more accurately by adopting an industry-standard measurement framework, such as the TOMS system. This will allow us to use an online portal to consistently produce up-to-date and accurate reflections of our social value output, as well as that of our subcontractors.

Going Concern

As part of the directors' consideration of the appropriateness of adopting the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and financial statements, management has prepared detailed budgets.

These factor in an assessment of potential impacts the changed macro-economics might have on the company's operations and financials.

Whilst global events continue to influence the wider economic climate, general inflation has stabilised of late and is expected to remain close to the bank target of 2%. We have assumed no significant structural changes to the business will be needed because of these circumstances.

SOCIAL VALUE UK





The business has been net cash surplus all year and suffered no material losses. Orderbooks are healthy having existed the year with strength. There have been no significant challenges with customer liquidity.

The new five-year business plan was approved by the Shareholder.

The shareholder supports an ambitious plan that has the expectation to invest in growth both organic and acquisitional.

Conversations regarding funding are ongoing but there is an expectation that OCC are likely to provide the funding or guarantee for growth initiatives.

As of 31 March 2025, the balance sheet reflects a net asset position of **£2.9m** (2024: £1.8m) and the liquidity of ODSTL remains healthy with a cash balance of **£4.1m** (2024: £2m). In addition, ODSTL has access to overdraft from OCC Group. This would cover any short-term shocks to supply chain or employment costs.

ODSTL has access to assets and infrastructure provided via ODSL. Charges are at arm's length and based on usage.

On this basis of the above, the directors consider it appropriate for the going concern basis to be adopted in preparing the annual report and financial statements.

Statement of Disclosure to Auditor

For the period ended 31 March 2025

As far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware. Additionally, the directors individually have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as directors to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) and applicable law. Under company law the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state-of-affairs of the Company and of the profit or loss of the Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that the Company will not continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the board



Simon Howick
Managing Director

15 OCTOBER 2025

Summary of accounts



Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Revenue	16,312,515	13,798,742
Cost of Sales	11,176,858	9,644,334
Gross Profit	5,135,657	4,154,408
Administrative Expenses	3,875,008	3,270,566
Operating Profit	1,260,649	883,842
Investment Income	108,786	49,395
Interest Payable to Group Undertakings	-	-
Profit / (Loss) Before Taxation	1,369,435	933,237
Tax on Profit & Deferred Tax Adjustments	342,359	233,334
Profit / (Loss) and Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	1,027,076	699,903

The income statement has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Property, Plant & Equipment	207,819	-
Long Term Assets	207,819	-
Short Term Debtors	2,502,676	4,819,585
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,130,981	2,007,692
Contract Assets	721,579	513,509
Current Assets	7,355,236	7,340,786
Short Term Creditors	(4,638,866)	(5,499,271)
Current Liabilities	(4,638,866)	(5,499,271)
Long Term Creditors	(72,701)	(17,103)
Long Term Liabilities	(72,701)	(17,103)
Net Assets	2,851,488	1,824,412
Called Up Share Capital	1	1
Retained Earnings	2,851,487	1,824,411
Equity	2,851,488	1,824,412

Summary of accounts

Continued...

Oxford Direct Services Limited

Statement of changes in Equity

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	Share Capital	Retained earnings	Total
	£	£	£
Balance at 1 April 2023	1	1,124,508	1,124,509
Dividend Payments	-	-	-
Retained Profit and Total Comprehensive Income	-	699,903	699,903
Period ended 31 March 2024	1	1,824,411	1,824,412
Dividend Payments	-	-	-
Retained Profit and Total Comprehensive Income	-	1,027,076	1,027,076
Balance at 31 March 2025	1	2,851,487	2,851,488

Retained earnings represent the cumulative results of the company.

Summary of accounts

Continued...

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited

Statement of Cashflows

For the period ended 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Profit and Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	1,027,076	699,903
Adjustments for:		
(Increase) / Decrease in Trade Receivables, Other Receivables & Contract Assets	2,108,839	(2,678,800)
Increase / (Decrease) in Trade and Long Term Payables	(804,807)	889,200
Interest Expense	(49,395)	40,689
Investment Income	(253)	(49,395)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activity	2,281,460	(1,098,403)
Purchase of Non Current Assets	(207,819)	-
Proceeds from Short-Term and Long-Term Investments	253	49,395
Total Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(207,566)	49,395
Interest Payable to Group Undertakings	49,395	(40,689)
Dividend Payments	-	-
Total Cash Flows from Financing Activities	49,395	(40,689)
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,123,289	(1,089,697)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period	2,007,692	3,097,389
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	4,130,981	2,007,692

Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited

Company Information

Directors	Simon Howick
	Thomas Edward Hook
	Catherine Jane Robinson (Appointed 1 August 2024)
	Christopher John Urwin (Appointed 28 October 2024)
	Raymond David Jones (Appointed 20 February 2025)
	James Christopher Towner (Appointed 20 March 2025)
	Lucy Walker (Appointed 20 March 2025)
	Paul James Concannon (Appointed 30 July 2025)
	David Curtis (Resigned 19 April 2024)
	Timothy Paul Sadler (Resigned 14 September 2024)
	Catherine Pridham (Resigned 31 January 2025)
Secretary	Anne-Marie Scott (Resigned 30 April 2025)
	Michael Whitwell (Resigned 31 August 2025)
	Adedolapo Adeniran (Appointed 3 February 2025)
	Lindsay David Cane (Resigned 28 November 2024)

Company Registration Number 10719214
(England and Wales)

Incorporation Date - 10 April 2017



**Oxford Direct Services
Trading Limited**

Company Registration No. 10719214
(England and Wales)

**We are here to build a new kind of business,
a better business, a business that's good for everyone.**

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Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited
Company Registration No. 10719214 (England and Wales)

