

County Council

9 December 2025

Agenda

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 9 December 2025 at 10.30 am

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#). Please note, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.



Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

December 2025

Committee Officer: **Democratic Services**
E-mail: CommitteesDemocraticServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note

Members are reminded that they must declare their interests orally at the meeting and specify (a) the nature of the interest and (b) which items on the agenda are the relevant items. This applies also to items where members have interests by virtue of their membership of a district council in Oxfordshire.

Members should also note that at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2025, general dispensations to speak and vote on certain items were granted to all Oxfordshire County Council Members including:

- Determining an allowance (including special responsibility allowances), travelling expense, payment or indemnity given to Members

4. Official Communications

5. Appointments

To make any changes to the membership of scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups and to note any changes to the Cabinet made by the Leader of the Council.

6. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak on an item on the agenda at this meeting, or present a petition, can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to present a petition must be submitted no later than 9am ten working days before the meeting.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting.

Requests should be submitted to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am on the day of the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

7. Questions with Notice from Members of the Public

The deadline to submit questions is 9am, five working days before the meeting i.e. 9am Tuesday 2 December 2025.

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 13 - 18)

Report by the Leader of the Council.

The report includes items at the Cabinet meetings on 13 November 2025 and 18 November 2025.

10. The Calendar of Council Meetings 2026-27 (Pages 19 - 22)

Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

COUNCIL IS RECOMMENDED

to note that the Chair of the Council will consult with Political Group Leaders on a proposal to bring the Council meeting originally scheduled for 7 July 2026 forwards to 30 June 2026 in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.1. This is in order to avoid a clash with the Local Government Association Annual Conference.

11. Devolution for Oxfordshire (Pages 23 - 40)

Report by the Chief Executive

This report seeks Council's endorsement for Cabinet to approve the decision that Oxfordshire submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Government for a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA), attached as Annex B. This item is scheduled to be received for approval by Cabinet immediately following the rising of the Council meeting.

Council is RECOMMENDED to

- a) NOTE the draft Cabinet report (Annex A)**
- b) RECOMMEND to Cabinet that it approves the submission of the Expression of Interest (EOI) (Annex B) to Government.**

12. Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports 2024/25 (Pages 41 - 60)

Report by the Director of HR and Cultural Change

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 stipulate that all businesses, public sector and third sector organisations with over 250 employees must publicly report on average pay differences between their male and female employees.

Unlike the gender pay gap, the Council is not legally required to publish its ethnicity pay gap. However, positive steps have been taken to measure and be transparent about the Council's performance in this area.

Council is RECOMMENDED to

- a) **Note Oxfordshire County Council's statutory Gender Pay Gap report of 2025 and approve it for onward submission to the Gender Pay Gap Service by 31 March 2026.**
- b) **Note the Council's voluntary Ethnicity Pay Gap report of 2025.**
- c) **Agree to the publishing of both reports on the Council's website by 31 March 2026.**

13. Treasury Management Mid-term Review (Pages 61 - 76)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

This report sets out the position at 30 September 2025. Throughout the report, the performance for the first half of the year to September 2025 is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2025.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2025/26.

14. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (Pages 77 - 102)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Each year, Full Council is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances to apply from 1 April of the following year. In particular, it must set the amount of a Basic Allowance payable to all members and may make payments for Special Responsibility and Co-opted Members' Allowances. Accordingly, this report asks members to adopt a Scheme of Allowances to apply from 1 April 2026.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances for the financial year 2026/27, and in so doing to consider the following options, either:

- 1) **To adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel made in November 2025 and as set out in Annex 1 to this report; OR**

- 2) To adopt any particular recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as the Council may determine; OR
- 3) To agree alternative values for any of the allowances, as the Council may determine; OR
- 4) If the Council does not wish to accept the Panel's recommendations at this time, in whole or in part, or to substitute alternative amounts, to agree a status quo Scheme of Allowances for 2026/27 for any unchanged aspect; AND
- 5) That in any event, the Council adopts an annual index for a four year period (whereby if no other changes occur to a Scheme, then the Members' Allowances may increase in relation to that index for a period of no more than four years), and that this should relate (as in previous years) to the annual pay award for local government staff. If adopted, the increase will be in line with the percentage rise in overall employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council arising from the annual Local Government Pay Award for staff and that this should take effect from the date on which the award for staff similarly takes effect.

15. Review of Member Champions (Pages 103 - 114)

Report from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

This report proposes some changes to the role and function of Member Champions and clarifies the appointment process for future Member Champions.

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

amend the Council's Constitution to replace part 8.5, Member Champion Role with the text in Appendix 2.

MOTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS WITH NOTICE MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE PROPER OFFICER IN WRITING BY 9.00 AM ON THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE MEETING

16. Motion from Councillor Gavin McLauchlan

Council notes that in July 2025 a judicial review upheld the Secretary Of State for the Environment's decision to approve the proposed Thames Water Resources Management Plan which includes the South East Strategic Reservoir Option in Abingdon.

As a result, Thames Water has to have an Emergency Discharge facility in place including the ability to empty the reservoir at a rate of 1 metre per day, possibly over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. This would put water back into the Thames at a rate of 75 m³/s

just south of Abingdon c.3x greater than its normal flow.

Such a discharge could cause havoc along the Thames, endangering Life, residences, businesses, wildlife and the environment, yet there is no requirement for the reservoir operator to have an emergency plan before building the reservoir, only before filling it. Dealing with the emergency in the wider area will be the responsibility of this Council as the local emergency planning authority along with the emergency services.

This Council makes clear its deep concern that we could be made responsible by default for safely managing such an emergency, leaving us with impossible decisions about which lives, homes and businesses to save in a crisis situation.

We therefore call on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to request clarity on how such an emergency discharge would be managed and to provide a commitment that we will be provided with the resources to do so before any Development Consent Order is considered.

17. Motion from Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Council notes that:

- Oxfordshire residents have endured successive crises in recent years: Covid, the cost-of-living emergency, underfunding of public services by successive governments, leaving many residents in precarious situations, creating a climate of uncertainty and fear.
- Research shows that rising inequality fuels support for far-right movements, eroding trust in institutions and creating fertile ground for scapegoating and division.
- Against this backdrop, right-wing media and far-right groups have wrongly blamed migrant communities to further their agendas.
- Extensive research, including the Migration Observatory's 2024 study, finds that migration contributes positively to the UK economy by expanding the labour force, addressing skill shortages, and supporting productivity and growth, with little evidence of wage suppression for native workers. Migrants' net fiscal impact is generally positive, with greater contributions in taxes than cost to public services.
- Oxfordshire is proud to be the first County Council of Sanctuary, committed to ensuring that everyone who lives here, whether newly arrived or long settled, is treated fairly.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Recognise the risks to our communities if the disinformation, suspicion, and intolerance disinformation generates go unchallenged, and commit to addressing them wherever they occur.
- Work with partners to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our communities and that racism is confronted wherever it occurs, in schools, workplaces, and on our streets.
- Request that Cabinet supports the co-production of a community cohesion action plan with key stakeholders in consultation with councillors, including actions to support community-led dialogue and ensure appropriate resourcing is considered during budget setting.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

18. Motion from Councillor Liz Brighthouse

This Council being deeply concerned by the impact of poor mental health on adults and children in the County asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to request the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate and report back to them and to the County Council on how Mental Health services provided by Oxford Health and other organisations are tackling this issue.

Such an investigation of issues needs to include addressing accessibility to services including

- Prevention
- Assessment
- Therapeutic support
- Medication
- Emergency intervention such as "sectioning"
- Inpatient beds

How these issues impact on other public services such Community Safety, Public Health, Housing, Schools, Fire and Rescue and the Police also needs to be assessed and understood. Most of all poor mental health impacts on individuals, families, and communities around the County and this must be addressed.

Council requests that the outcome of the investigation be sent to the appropriate Secretaries of State.

19. Motion from Councillor James Plumb

Council notes that:

- November is Men's Health Awareness Month ("Movember"), raising awareness of key issues affecting men and boys, including mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.
- Men across Oxfordshire, as nationally, continue to experience significant health challenges, including lower healthy life expectancy and a greater likelihood of living more years in poor health.
- Men are statistically less likely to seek help for both physical and mental health issues. This is especially true in rural communities, where access to services may be more limited and traditional stigma around help-seeking can be stronger.
- Men continue to account for the majority of suicide deaths, demonstrating the urgent need for early intervention, better support, and improved signposting to local services.

Council welcomes the work already taking place across Oxfordshire to support men's physical and mental health.

Council resolves to:

1. Request Cabinet to recognise November each year as “Men’s Health Month in Oxfordshire”, working with NHS partners, veteran groups, charities, and community organisations to promote awareness, early intervention, and personal responsibility for health and wellbeing.
2. Request Cabinet to seek a standalone report from the Director of Public Health on men’s health outcomes in Oxfordshire, including mental health, suicide prevention, cancer awareness, rural and urban access to services, and practical recommendations that strengthen early help and reduce health inequalities.
3. Ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care giving this council’s support for the introduction of the government’s National Men’s Health Strategy.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

20. Cross-party Motion from Councillor Nathan Ley, seconded by Councillor James Barlow

Pride in the appearance of the public realm is important to our residents. Clean and well-maintained pavements make people feel good about their neighbourhood, reduce accidents, and prevent more costly problems later. Neglect leads to uneven footways, hazards for those with mobility difficulties, and higher long-term repair bills.

Routine weed clearance on county pavements was part of highways maintenance until 2007/08, when budget cuts removed the programme. Some parishes now commission their own weed spraying and may be using glyphosate, increasingly opposed by residents because of its risks to health, pets, rivers, and biodiversity. Other parishes are now beginning to trial alternative approaches.

Council resolves to:

1. Note the historic withdrawal of routine weed clearance and the resulting concerns about accessibility, safety, and neighbourhood appearance.
2. Recognise the Council’s statutory duty to keep pavements free of hazards, and that neglect increases both risks and costs.
3. Request Cabinet to seek an officer report with options for re-establishing pavement weed clearance and scheduled maintenance, including alternatives to glyphosate, and how the Council can support towns and parishes to reduce reliance on chemical spraying.
4. Request that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation give due consideration to the findings of this report as part of the next round of budget setting.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in

which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.