

County Council

30 June 2026

Agenda

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 30 June 2026 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 OBE
Chief Executive

June 2026

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

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 11 - 20)

To approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 12 May 2026 (CC1a) and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 20 May 2026 (CC1b).

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.

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.

See item 14 "Committees and Review of Political Balance".

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

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 21 - 28)

Report by the Leader of the Council.

The report, for noting, includes items at the Cabinet meetings on 17 March 2026, 21 April 2026 and 19 May 2026.

10. Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26 (Pages 29 - 62)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Within the Council's Constitution at Part 6.2 paragraph 4 (ix) the scrutiny committees may report annually to full Council on their work. This is given effect through a Scrutiny Annual Report, which is attached to this report as Annex 1.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to receive and note the Scrutiny Annual Report

11. Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) Annual Report 2025/26 (Pages 63 - 94)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is under a constitutional duty to prepare an annual report. That report is set out in Annex 1 and documents the breadth and depth of the Committee's work over the 2025/26 municipal year.

Council is RECOMMENDED to receive and NOTE the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JHOSC) Annual Report set out in Annex 1.

12. Report from Audit and Governance Committee - Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (Pages 95 - 204)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

This report sets out the findings and conclusions of the Constitution Working Group and the Audit and Governance Committee and seeks the approval of Council so that the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution can be made. The details of which are set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution as**

recommended by the Constitution Working Group and Audit and Governance Committee, as set out Appendix 1, including amendment number 11;

- b) Note the amendments undertaken by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, in accordance with Part 7.2 of the Constitution (Scheme of Delegation to Officers), paragraph 6.4 (t) and considered by the Constitution Working Group and Audit and Governance Committee; as set out in Appendix 2;
- c) Request the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to ensure the necessary changes are made; and
- d) Note that a final edit of the Constitution covering layout and grammar will be undertaken prior to publication.

13. The Use of Urgency Provisions (Pages 205 - 208)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Constitution makes provision for urgent decisions to be made exempt from call-in on the agreement of the Chair of the Council that the decision is urgent. When this occurs, it must be reported to the next meeting of Council.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note

(a) the exemption from Call-in of the following decision:

- Cabinet on 16 June 2026 – SEND Reform Plan

14. Committees and Review of Political Balance (Pages 209 - 214)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 2 to follow.

Council is requested to approve committee appointments based on revised political balance calculations following Councillor Higgins joining the Liberal Democrat group.

Council is RECOMMENDED

- a) To note the review of political balance of committees to reflect the current formation of the political groups as detailed in Annex 1;
- b) To appoint members to the committees of the Council as listed in Annex 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

15. Motion from Councillor Lee Evans

This Council notes that Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is a rapidly progressing condition. Tragically, a third of people die within a year of diagnosis and half within two years. As the disease progresses, symptoms worsen and people's needs increase, often unpredictably.

This Council believes that people living with progressive or terminal conditions like MND deserve to live in safe and accessible homes, with as much independence and quality of life as possible. To the extent that the County Council is involved in ensuring this is the case, we commit to doing so.

This Council notes that early interventions, as well as being good for individuals and their families, can save taxpayer's money by enabling people to manage their condition more effectively and reducing the need for critical interventions at a later stage.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Adults to review the County Council's role in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and report to the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee with:

- How the Council currently delivers its role in the DFG;
- Timeliness over the past three years for the County Council fulfilling its role in the DFG, including assessments and referrals;
- How the Council's processes could be improved, including the timeliness of assessments and the working relationship with District Councils and other partners;
- Whether the County Council is acting quickly enough to ensure that target timeframes of 55 days for simple adaptations and 130 days for complex adaptations can be met for people living with MND.

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.

16. Motion from Councillor James Barlow

Council notes:

1. Climate impact is the Council's highest strategic risk.
2. The Oxfordshire Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (2024) identifies flooding and extreme heat as significant, growing climate risks; driven by warmer, wetter winters, more intense rainfall, prolonged summer heatwaves and increased built-up areas.
3. Impacts of climate and Nature collapse are acknowledged to be even greater than thought in 2024. They pose an existential threat to humanity. Serious adaptation must become standard operating practice similar to the fiduciary duty to council tax-payers.

The assessment illustrates the need for large-scale space for water storage upstream, to decrease flooding impacts downstream. Urban design is also key - to both prevent localised surface-water flooding, and build temperature resilience, preventing human-made “heat islands” which drive excess residents’ deaths, especially amongst the most vulnerable.

Council notes the success of adaptation measures depends on multi-year, multi-stakeholder and community-based collaborations at appropriate, impactful scale. Partners (e.g. Environment Agency) have 6-year funding cycles, allowing capacity and capability to develop appropriately – starkly contrasting to the Council’s annual budget-setting process.

Council requests that Cabinet considers:

- Significantly increased investment through the Council’s remaining years’ budget process to accelerate Oxfordshire’s capacity and capability to convene and work at impactful scale, in multi-stakeholder action groups, embedding climate adaptation as standard operational procedure.
- Multiple new councillor-supported, location-specific initiatives, convening, alongside officers and partners, to build resilience capability through collaborative action in:
 - Locations to mitigate or adapt to river, groundwater, urban and flash flooding
 - Urban neighbourhoods to mitigate heat islands.

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.

17. Motion from Councillor Bethia Thomas

This Council:

- Recognises that dangerous parking, on pavements, in cycle lanes, around schools and in many other instances, causes significant danger and inconvenience to many people particularly those with limited mobility.
- Understands that this is a county wide issue, and many representative groups have worked tirelessly to highlight these issues.
- Recognises the findings from the Government’s consultation, allowing the highway authority to enforce a ban on pavement parking.
- Recognises that a ban on pavement parking needs to be accompanied by the consideration of parking as whole, and by extra budget from Government or else effective enforcement may not be possible.

Council therefore:

1. Fully endorses the objective to end pavement parking and doing so in a way which suits local needs best.
2. Commits to supporting the use of civil enforcement powers in a way which enforces this policy effectively in a cost neutral way to the council.
3. Asks the Cabinet Member for Transport to:
 - a. Oversee the introduction of an enforcement mechanism, recognising that different areas will require different solutions.

- b. Ensure that key stakeholders and representative groups of people with restricted mobility be consulted throughout.
 - c. Ensure that the Council follows the progress of Government's latest research exercise into this issue, responding as appropriate.
4. Asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Minister for Local Transport to request further resources to be able to implement the enforcement mechanism effectively.

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.

Agenda Item 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12 May 2026 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 11.50 am

Present:

Councillor Ted Fenton – in the Chair

Councillors:

Roz Smith (Vice-Chair)	James Fry	Saj Malik
Thomas Ashby	Andrew Gant	Kieron Mallon
Brad Baines	Emma Garnett	Emma Markham
James Barlow	Sean Gaul	Gavin McLauchlan
Ron Batstone	Stefan Gawrysiak	Lesley McLean
Tim Bearder	Laura Gordon	Ian Middleton
Chris Brant	Andy Graham	Toyah Overton
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Tom Greenaway	Glynis Phillips
Mark Cherry	Kate Gregory	James Plumb
Andrew Coles	Jane Hanna OBE	Susanna Pressel
Dr Izzy Creed	Jenny Hannaby	Leigh Rawlins
Andrew Crichton	David Henwood	Judy Roberts
Hao Du	Georgina Heritage	James Robertshaw
Imade Edosomwan	David Hingley	Paul-Austin Sargent
Judith Edwards	Johnny Hope-Smith	Geoff Saul
Gareth Epps	Robin Jones	John Shiri
Lee Evans	Emily Kerr	Ian Snowdon
Neil Fawcett	Liz Leffman	Peter Stevens
Nick Field-Johnson	Dr Nathan Ley	Bethia Thomas
Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Diana Lugova	Liam Walker
Rebekah Fletcher	Mark Lygo	Tony Worgan

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

24/26 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2026/27 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Mark Lygo, the retiring Chair, welcomed the Honorary Aldermen, Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff and invited The Reverend Anthony Buckley, Vicar of St Michael at the North Gate, City Rector, to open the meeting with a prayer.

Councillor Lygo thanked his wife and Consort, Louise Lygo, and his family for their support during the year. He also thanked the Democratic Services and Facilities Management Teams. It was noted that over £10,500 had been

raised for the Chair's chosen charities, OXSRAD, Oxford United in the Community and Abingdon Riding for the Disabled, and the retiring Chair thanked all for their support.

The Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the office of Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Council Year. Councillor Walker moved, and Councillor Leffman seconded, that Councillor Ted Fenton be elected as Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Council Year. There being no other nominations and no dissent, Councillor Fenton was duly declared elected.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Ted Fenton be elected as Chair for the 2026/27 Council Year.

(Councillor Fenton in the Chair).

25/26 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2026/27 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 2)

The Chair invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Council Year. Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor McLauchlan seconded, that Councillor Roz Smith be elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Council Year. There being no other nominations and no dissent, Councillor Smith was duly declared elected.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Roz Smith be elected as Vice-Chair for the 2026/27 Council Year.

26/26 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2026 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

27/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 4)

Apologies were received from Councillors Cotter, Higgins, Levy and Webb.

28/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest.

29/26 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair announced that for the 12th year in a row, Oxfordshire residents were the best in England for recycling, reusing and composting. Oxfordshire County Council had again been named the top performing waste disposal authority in the two-tier system in figures published last month. In 2024-25,

residents recycled, reused or composted 56.6 per cent of their household waste.

The Chair congratulated Oxfordshire Shared Lives carer Jawaid Malik on his appointment as High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in recognition of decades of public service and commitment to supporting people across the county. Jawaid, who lives in Oxford, had spent many years serving others through both his professional and voluntary roles, including his long-standing work as a [Shared Lives carer](#) alongside his wife, Rahat.

The Chair noted that a list of the events attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council since the last Council meeting in March was in Annex 1 to the Schedule of Business.

Annual Council observed a minute's silence to mark the first anniversary of the tragic fire that took place at Bicester Motion on 15 May 2025. Members remembered Firefighter Jennie Logan, Firefighter Martyn Sadler and Dave Chester, and expressed sympathy with their families, friends, and all those affected. Council also sincerely thanked the emergency service responders who attended the scene for their professionalism and care in such difficult circumstances.

30/26 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda Item 8)

Council received the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee setting out the role and summarising the work that has been undertaken both as a Committee and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2025/26.

The report was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Shiri, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 Council Year.

Following discussion, Council noted the report.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee 2025/26 be noted.

31/26 CABINET MEMBERSHIP AND DELEGATION OF CABINET FUNCTIONS

(Agenda Item 7)

Council noted the Leader's Cabinet appointments. The detailed portfolios were circulated to Members and published online in the Schedule of Business.

Resources and Deputy Leader: Cllr Neil Fawcett
Future Economy and Innovation: Cllr Laura Gordon

Children and Young People: Cllr Sean Gaul
Place, Environment and Climate Action: Cllr Gareth Epps
Finance, Property and Transformation: Cllr Dan Levy
Transport Management: Cllr Rebekah Fletcher
Adults: Cllr Tim Bearder
Public Health and Inequalities: Cllr Kate Gregory
Community Wellbeing and Safety: Cllr Judith Edwards

32/26 COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council is required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis.

There was a correction to the list in Annex 2 for the Remuneration Committee. The Liberal Democrat members will be Councillors Leffman, Fawcett and Graham.

The Chair moved recommendation a), to decommission the Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Horton HOSC), and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Following discussion, the motion was put. Councillor Mallon requested a named vote and this was supported by at least seven members standing.

The motion was lost.

The result of the roll call vote was as follows:

Councillors voting in favour (9): Bearder, Filipova Rivers, Gaul, Greenaway, Hanna, Hope-Smith, Leffman, Ley and Rawlins

Councillors voting against (38): Ashby, Baines, Barlow, Brant, Brighouse, Cherry, Coles, Creed, Crichton, Du, Edosomwan, Epps, Evans, Field-Johnson, Fry, Garnett, Gawrysiak, Gordon, Gregory, Henwood, Hingley, Jones, Lygo, Malik, Mallon, Markham, McLauchlan, McLean, Middleton, Phillips, Plumb, Pressel, Robertshaw, Sargent, Saul, Snowdon, Walker and Worgan.

Councillors abstaining (16): Batstone, Edwards, Fawcett, Fenton, Fletcher, Graham, Hannaby, Heritage, Kerr, Lugova, Overton, Roberts, Shiri, Smith, Stevens and Thomas.

The Chair moved recommendations d) e), and f), which were seconded by the Vice-Chair. Recommendations d), e) and f) were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- d) That the committees and committee positions, including Horton HOSC, listed in Schedule 2 in Annex 1 be appointed, continuing with the existing terms of reference; and
- e) That members to the committees of the Council be appointed as listed at Schedule 2 in Annex 2 as amended.
- f) That the review of political balance of committees to reflect the current formation of the political groups be noted.

33/26 SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

(Agenda Item 10)

At its Annual Meeting, Council is required to agree the officer scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution. Council received a report noting that the Scheme was being reviewed by the Constitution Working Group and a revised scheme will be taken to the Council meeting on 30 June 2026.

The recommendation was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers was being considered by the Constitution Working Group and that the Council meeting on 30 June 2026 will receive their report.

34/26 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2026/27

(Agenda Item 11)

Council considered a report proposing a change to a meeting date of the Education and Young People Overview of Scrutiny Committee.

The recommendations were moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Council approves moving the meeting of the Education and Young People Overview of Scrutiny Committee, originally scheduled for 30 June 2026, to Friday 26 June 2026 with a 10:30 am start; and
- b) That the Calendar of Meetings in Annex 1 be noted.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Extraordinary meeting held on Wednesday, 20 May 2026 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 10.45 am

Present:

Councillor Ted Fenton – in the Chair

Councillors:

Roz Smith (Vice-Chair)	Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Gavin McLauchlan
Thomas Ashby	Rebekah Fletcher	Ian Middleton
Brad Baines	James Fry	Toyah Overton
Ron Batstone	Andrew Gant	Glynis Phillips
Tim Bearder	Emma Garnett	James Plumb
Chris Brant	Sean Gaul	Susanna Pressel
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Stefan Gawrysiak	Leigh Rawlins
Mark Cherry	Laura Gordon	Judy Roberts
Nicholas Michael Cotter	Jane Hanna OBE	James Robertshaw
Dr Izzy Creed	Jenny Hannaby	Paul-Austin Sargent
Andrew Crichton	David Henwood	John Shiri
Imade Edosomwan	David Hingley	Ian Snowdon
Judith Edwards	Emily Kerr	Peter Stevens
Gareth Epps	Liz Leffman	Bethia Thomas
Lee Evans	Mark Lygo	Liam Walker
Neil Fawcett	Saj Malik	Tony Worgan
Nick Field-Johnson	Kieron Mallon	

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

35/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Barlow, Coles, Graham, Greenaway, Gregory, Higgins, Jones, Ley, Lugova, Markham and Saul.

36/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

37/26 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no announcements.

38/26 PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 4)

There were no public addresses.

39/26 ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 5)

Council had before it a report from the Monitoring Officer outlining the reasons for calling the Extraordinary meeting of Council following the resignation of Councillor Leffman as Leader of the Council.

The Chair moved the recommendation and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair for:

“Council to elect a Leader of the Council following the resignation of Councillor Liz Leffman as Leader on the afternoon of 12 May 2026.”

Members questioned why Councillor Leffman resigned immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Council, necessitating a further meeting of Council being called a week later. Members asked for Council to receive a report into the matter. The request was noted by the Chair.

The Chair invited nominations for the office of Leader of the Council.

Councillor Bearder was nominated by Councillor Leffman and seconded by Councillor Fawcett.

Councillor Walker was nominated by Councillor Mallon and seconded by Councillor Snowdon.

Councillor Brighthouse was nominated by Councillor Pressel and seconded by Councillor Phillips.

The Chair called on Members to vote electronically for each nominee in turn in the order nominated by voting “Yes” for one nominee only.

Councillor Bearder received 30 votes, Councillor Walker received 12 votes and Councillor Brighthouse received 10 votes.

Councillor Bearder, having received a majority of the 52 votes cast, was declared elected as the Leader of the Council.

The Chair noted that Councillors Walker and Brighthouse will continue as Leaders of the Opposition.

Councillor Bearder thanked Council and announced his Cabinet Members and portfolios:

- Councillor Neil Fawcett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources
- Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
- Councillor Gareth Epps, Cabinet Member for Transport
- Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
- Councillor Liz Leffman, Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair
- Councillor Rebekah Fletcher, Cabinet Member of Adults
- Councillor Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities
- Councillor Judith Edwards, Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources
- Councillor Laura Gordon, Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Divisions- N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 30 June 2026

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Leader

1. Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire: Statutory consultation response

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet had before a report regarding the Council's draft responses to the Government statutory consultation on three proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire. These were, a single council for all Oxfordshire, two councils including West Berkshire, and three councils also including West Berkshire.

Cabinet reiterated the Council's preferred option for a single unitary authority for the whole of Oxfordshire.

Cabinet approved the submission of three consultation responses (Annex 1, 2 and 3) to the Ministry for Housing Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG)'s consultation on local government reorganisation (LGR) in Oxfordshire as requested by the Minister of State for Local Government's letter on 5 February 2026.

2. Devolution Update - Thames Valley Strategic Authority

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet received an update on Thames Valley devolution, focusing on national policy changes and governance options.

Cabinet noted the invitation to submit an expression of interest (EOI) for foundation strategic authority status, ahead of possible mayoral strategic authority status. The EOI was submitted by the deadline, and further developments await clarification on governance and geography.

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader and Resources

3. Improving our Fire and Rescue Service

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet received a report on the results consultation on the proposed Fire and Rescue Service cover model. The report focused on proposals to enhance emergency response effectiveness, including changes to fire station operations, fire engine availability, and workforce deployment, while reflecting on public and

employee feedback and financial considerations to guide future decisions and investments in the service.

Strong public feedback favoured maintaining local services and investment-led approaches to improve reliability and response times. The North Oxfordshire Fire Station proposal would undergo further review.

The Cabinet acknowledged financial implications of these decisions and agreed to consider future investment as part of the 2027-28 budget process. Ongoing engagement with staff, the Fire Brigades Union, and local communities was emphasised, particularly regarding future shift patterns and long-term service sustainability.

Cabinet Member: Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources

4. Refresh of the Our People & Culture Strategy 2026-2028

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet received a report on the refreshed Our People and Culture Strategy 2026–2028 which outlined Oxfordshire Council’s approach to supporting and developing its workforce amid organisational change, focusing on leadership, culture, and capability to deliver quality services. This refreshed strategy was built on previous plans and responded to current challenges including Local Government Reorganisation and financial pressures.

The strategy was designed to help staff navigate the challenges of local government reorganisation, ensuring they felt secure and supported as they transitioned to new roles or organisations, and emphasising the importance of clear communication and ongoing engagement.

Cabinet Member: Transport

5. Local Transport Consolidated Funding Settlement - Local Transport Delivery Plan

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet considered a report outlining the Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP) in Oxfordshire, which was a requirement following a funding settlement from the Department for Transport. The LTDP detailed how funds will be allocated and spent, with a draft due by 20 March 2026 and a final version by 18 September 2026. The Council was also required to report on carbon emissions forecasts and undertake whole life carbon assessments in line with new guidance, with further details expected later in 2026.

The plan recommended approaches for grant allocation and proposed a programme for submission. Concerns regarding active travel and PM2.5 emissions monitoring were addressed as priorities, and the recommendations were approved.

6. Movement and Place Plans

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet considered and approved the Bicester and Surrounding Villages Movement and Place (MAP) Plan, which was the second document in the MAP Plan programme. This new plan superseded the previous 2016 “Area Strategies” from Local Transport Plan 4 and was now incorporated as a “Part 2” of the Local Transport Connectivity Plan, directly supporting Policies 52 and 53.

The MAP Plan establishes a vision and guiding principles for the area, is designed to be updated annually, and seeks to address the needs of growth, active travel, and public transport, whilst acknowledging the complexities arising from ongoing development. Member noted concerns regarding the cumulative effects of multiple developments, the need for a dedicated impact board, and whether the plan sufficiently meets the demands of future growth and rural transport.

7. Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan

(Cabinet, 21 April & 19 May 2026)

At its April meeting, Cabinet had before it a report setting out the proposed investment plan for surplus income from Oxford’s temporary congestion charge scheme, outlining recommended allocations and justifications for spending to support local transport policies.

Cabinet heard from external speakers on matters including the performance of the free park and ride scheme, bus usage, impacts on small businesses, monitoring arrangements, and proposals for express hospital bus services and enhanced active travel infrastructure.

Cabinet acknowledged the positive outcomes identified to date, including reduced congestion and improved bus reliability, but agreed that further stakeholder engagement and refinement of the proposals was required before formal approval. The decisions on the proposals were deferred until the Cabinet meeting on 19 May 2026.

At its May meeting, Cabinet received a further report with revised recommendations on the investment plan which included transitioning to a £3 combined park and ride ticket, targeted support for NHS and school staff, hospital express services, and active travel schemes.

Following contributions from a number of speakers, the investment plan was unanimously approved, with Cabinet members recognising the need to embed successes, spread benefits widely, and remain aware of the time-limited nature of congestion charge funding. Flexibility was maintained to adapt the plan based on future revenue and stakeholder feedback.

8. Updates to the Parking Standards for New Developments

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet approved proposed updates to the Council's 'Parking Standards for New Developments' to better align with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and recent national policy changes. The updated parking standards aimed to reduce reliance on private cars and encourage sustainable transport, introducing a new 'car light' category and aligning cycle parking requirements with national guidance (LTN 120), while acknowledging local variations in cycling rates.

Cabinet members highlighted the importance of the policy in supporting future housing growth, sustainable transport, and active travel, while noting the need for improved public transport services and enforcement by local planning authorities.

9. Quiet Lanes Policy & Pilot Programme

(Cabinet, 19 May 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report on Oxfordshire County Council's proposed Quiet Lanes Policy aimed at enhancing rural road safety and promoting active travel modes such as walking, cycling, wheeling, and horse-riding. The policy established a consistent countywide framework for the assessment, design, and delivery of Quiet Lanes, prioritising physical traffic restrictions and speed limit reductions to create safer, healthier, and more attractive rural routes. The policy will initially be tested through a pilot program before wider implementation.

A budget of £250,000 had been allocated for up to 10 pilot schemes across Oxfordshire, identified through engagement with parish councils and technical feasibility assessments. Evaluation will inform future recommendations and proposals.

Cabinet approved the Quiet Lanes Policy, assessment criteria and toolkit; endorsed the pilot programme; and delegated authority to the Director of Environment & Highways, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management, to make the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders for the pilot schemes.

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

10. Best Start in Life Plan

(Cabinet, 19 May 2026)

Cabinet received a report on the Oxfordshire Best Start in Life Plan which aims to improve early childhood outcomes in Oxfordshire, particularly for disadvantaged children. The plan focusses on timely, coordinated support to improve child development outcomes and reduce inequalities. The plan aligns with national strategies and sets ambitious local targets to exceed national development goals for children, especially those eligible for free school meals.

Early progress included auto-enrolment for free school meals and work to improve family finances and access to school meals.

Cabinet noted the release of the plan and stressed that support should extend beyond education to services such as libraries, community provision, leisure centres, parks, and open spaces.

Cabinet Member: Public Health and Inequalities

11. Cost of Living Programme 2026-29

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet reviewed a report on Oxfordshire's Cost of Living Support Programme for 2026–2029, introducing the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) to replace the Household Support Fund. The funding will address financial hardship among residents, informed by the previous programme and resident consultation.

Cabinet noted cuts in government funding and the discontinuation of school holiday meal vouchers, with the last issued at Easter, and approved targeted support through family hubs, early years services, resident schemes, school-based initiatives, and the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

12. Community Cohesion Action Plan

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report detailing Oxfordshire County Council's ongoing efforts to enhance community cohesion in response to a council motion and amid various social challenges. It outlined recent initiatives, contextual background, and future plans to foster stronger, more connected communities.

The report referred to new government guidance and strategy documents on community cohesion, including the Common Ground framework and the Protecting What Matters action plan, which emphasise tackling misinformation, hate crime, and declining trust in institutions.

Cabinet noted the establishment of a cross-party advisory group, ongoing member workshops, and pilot "listening exchange" work in partnership with the University of Oxford. Members welcomed suggestions regarding the role of the public realm and transport schemes in supporting community cohesion.

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation

13. Treasury Management Q3 Performance Report 2025-26

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet reviewed the third Treasury Management report for the 2025/26 financial year, as required by CIPFA's Code of Practice. The report provided an update on treasury activities and risks up to 31 December 2025, following previous reports in September and November. The report confirmed compliance with prudential indicators, outlined the Council's debt and investment strategies, and reported on the performance of external funds, including the Council's divestment from the Schroder's fund and continued dividend income.

14. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Performance and Risk - Quarter 3 2025-26

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

The Cabinet reviewed the Quarter 3 2025/26 Business Management and Monitoring Report, which formed part of the council's suite of documents outlining ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The report highlighted a forecasted overspend of £14.1 million, balanced by underspends elsewhere to result in a minor net overspend. Members noted the importance of meeting budget targets in light of uncertain future funding and addressed concerns about underperformance, noting that efforts were underway to improve results. Members also noted, in particular progress in Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, with timeliness improving significantly due to the SEND Improvement Assurance Board.

Cabinet noted the report and its annexes and approved the recommendations including supplementary estimates of £0.9 million for additional election costs, £0.5 million for Bicester Motion, and £2.2 million for Woodeaton Manor Special School. Cabinet also approved updates to Fees & Charges for Environment & Highways

15. Update on High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding and Deficits

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

The Cabinet received a report outlining the Government's arrangements for funding High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits up to the end of 2025/26, as detailed in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27. The report highlighted the estimated share of the 2025/26 deficit that Oxfordshire County Council (or the relevant council, subject to Local Government Reform) would need to fund when the statutory override ends on 01/04/2028. Although the Government had not specified funding plans beyond 2025/26, the report presented scenarios for the council's forecast deficit shares in 2026/27 and 2027/28, comparing these with planned funding.

Members noted that the Government would write off 90% of the high needs block deficit, provided the council submitted and gained approval for a SEND reform plan, with the remaining 10% to be funded locally. Future arrangements after 2028 remained uncertain. Officers were preparing a robust SEND reform plan with support from the Department for Education, which was crucial for securing the deficit write-off and improving SEND provision. The council had prudently allocated budget to

address the funding gap and stressed the importance of maintaining parental and carer confidence during the transition.

16. Capital Programme Update and Monitoring Report

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet reviewed its fourth capital programme update and monitoring report for 2025/26, reflecting activities up to the end of January 2026. This report detailed changes to the Capital Programme since its approval in February 2026, including additional funding, revised budget priorities, and new schemes. Updates incorporated both previously agreed changes and new funding allocations made throughout the year.

Notable additions included the Milton Heights Bridge, funded through Section 106 contributions, Council resources, and retained business rates, to enhance walking and cycling connections in the area. The programme also addressed population growth with new schools and classroom expansions, mainly financed by Section 106 contributions.

The Cabinet Member responded to concerns about project delays and overruns by citing cases of early delivery and stressing the complexity involved in funding and executing major projects.

17. Acquisition of a property/lease in Oxfordshire.

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet considered a report on acquiring three leases for a property in Oxfordshire, aiming to advance place-shaping and regeneration in line with the Council's economic and corporate objectives. The report outlined the financial due diligence, anticipated income, and prospects for capital growth, highlighting the acquisition's potential to revitalise a neglected area.

Cabinet agreed to acquire the three leases, subject to the terms set out in the exempt annexes to the report. Cabinet also delegated authority to negotiate and finalise the acquisition terms, and to complete all necessary legal documentation, subject to the satisfactory completion of due diligence.

18. Community Asset Transfer and Community Leasing

(Cabinet, 21 April 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding two updated policies for transferring or leasing council-owned properties to community organisations to promote public benefit and community empowerment. These policies clarified processes, eligibility, and assessment criteria to better support local voluntary and community groups while safeguarding council interests.

The policies established a process for receiving and assessing applications from community groups, with working parties evaluating proposals against council

priorities such as equality and public health. Ongoing monitoring would ensure that groups used assets as intended.

Cabinet Member: Environment and Economy

19. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) - Management Re-provision

(Cabinet, 17 March 2026)

Cabinet reviewed a report proposing the procurement of a new management contract for Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) across Oxfordshire. The contract is set to cover an eight-year period commencing on 1 October 2027, with provisions allowing flexibility in light of possible Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The report detailed background information, assessed available options, and considered financial and legal implications, as well as outlining the key milestones for the procurement process.

The Cabinet approved the recommended approach for HWRC management, authorised officers to initiate the procurement process, and endorsed further exploration into the capital purchase of HWRC plant and equipment during the tendering stage. It was agreed that the final decision to award the contract—and any extensions—would be delegated to the Director of Environment and Highways, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

20. Scrutiny Reports

(Cabinet, 17 March, 21 April & 19 May 2026)

Cabinet received the following Scrutiny reports:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:

- a) Local Area Partnership Monitoring and Priority Action Plan
- b) Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Guidance

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Domestic Abuse - Safe Accommodation Provision

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:

- a) Road Safety initiatives in Oxfordshire
- b) Repairing of defects and Superusers

TIM BEARDER

Leader of the Council

June 2026

Divisions Affected – All

COUNTY COUNCIL

30 June 2026

Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Council is **RECOMMENDED** to
 - i) Receive and note the Scrutiny Annual Report.

Executive Summary

2. This report invites the Council to consider the Scrutiny Annual Report and formally receive it.

Background

3. Within the Council's Constitution at Part 6.2 paragraph 4 (ix) the scrutiny committees may report annually to full Council on their work. This is given effect through a Scrutiny Annual Report, which is attached to this report as Annex 1. A separate Annual Report for the Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is presented as a separate item to Council, elsewhere on this agenda.

Financial Implications

4. There are no financial implications associated with the formal receipt of the Scrutiny Annual Report.

Comments checked by: Bick Nguyen-McBride, Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

5. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new political governance system for local councils following an “executive arrangement” in England and Wales. The Council follows an executive arrangement as it has a Leader and Cabinet system of governance, therefore at least one overview and scrutiny committee must be established (section 9(F)(1))
6. The legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees for England are set out in the Localism Act 2011.
7. The powers set out in the Local Government Act 2000 include the power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and in connection with those powers to make reports or recommendations to the authority.
8. Part 6.2 paragraph 4(ix) of the Council’s constitution provides scrutiny committees with the ability to “report annually to full Council on their work and make recommendations for future work programmes as appropriate.”

Comments checked by: Jay Akbar - Head of Legal and Governance

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Annex 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

June 2026

June 2026

Scrutiny

annual report

2025/26



1 Introduction

The past year has been a period of significant activity and progress for the Overview and Scrutiny¹ function at Oxfordshire County Council (the Council). Its primary focus has continued to ensure that the council's decisions and policies are subject to rigorous examination and that they reflect the needs and aspirations of our community. With many new members coming onto the Council and Scrutiny function to share their ideas, increasing public engagement, and collaborating with various service areas, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have striven to enhance transparency, accountability,

and effectiveness in local governance. This annual report provides an overview of the function's key areas of focus and recommendations, highlighting the impact of our work on the council's operations and the community at large.

The report covers the work of the last civic year, from Annual Council in May 2025 to Annual Council in May 2026.

¹ Unless overview is specifically mentioned the term 'scrutiny' refers to both overview and scrutiny. A distinction is often drawn between 'overview' which focuses on the development of policy, and 'scrutiny' which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.



What is Overview and Scrutiny?

In the Council most major decisions are taken by the Cabinet members, either through ‘single member decisions’ or formal meetings of the whole Cabinet. The Cabinet is made up of elected councillors from the controlling political administration. During the municipal year 2025-26 this was a Liberal Democrat administration.

In operating an ‘executive’ (Cabinet) decision-making governance model, the Council is required by law to have an Overview and Scrutiny (“Scrutiny”) function, made up of elected councillors who are not on the Cabinet. The Scrutiny function acts as a counterweight to the Cabinet, empowering its cross-party membership of ‘backbench’ councillors to hold the Cabinet and its decision takers to account for the Council’s performance and its decisions, and to strengthen council decision-making. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Scrutiny Committee) can also investigate any issue that affects the county

or its residents, regardless of whether it is within the direct responsibility of the Cabinet. The work of Scrutiny helps to provide assurance that the Council is performing well, delivering value for money, and taking the best decisions it can to improve public services and the quality of life for the residents of Oxfordshire through influencing existing policy and informing policy development.

A Scrutiny Committee has no power to require that decisions be reversed or policies changed. It operates in a very similar fashion to Parliament’s select committees in that it seeks to engage relevant and informed individuals, consider policy or performance in light of the evidence gathered and present, in what is referred to as a ‘critical friend’ approach, recommendations for the relevant decision-maker to consider how improvements might be made. When Scrutiny makes a recommendation it is a legal duty that the recommendation be responded to in writing by the relevant Council decision-maker.



The Shape of Scrutiny at Oxfordshire County Council

The Scrutiny function at the Council has seven Committees:

- 1. Education and Young People** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 2. Performance and Corporate Services** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 3. Place** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 4. People** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 5. Oxfordshire Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 6. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 7. Horton Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This report primarily focuses on the work of the Education and Young People, Performance and Corporate Services, Place, and People Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a joint Committee (meaning it includes members of the district and city councils within Oxfordshire) has its own annual reporting arrangements. This document can be read [here](#). Likewise, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of representative members from all councils within the named area and has been the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council to administer since September 2025. Details of their work is included in the Health Scrutiny annual report at the link above.

The Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee established by the Oxfordshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has not met since September 2019, although any activity would be included within the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee Annual Report.

Overview and Scrutiny function



Cllr Glynis Phillips (chair)

Performance and
Corporate Services



Cllr Liam Walker (chair)

Place



Cllr Liz Brighthouse (chair)

Education and Young People



Cllr Ian Snowdon (chair)

People

Membership

Cllr Glynis Phillips (Chair)

Cllr Ian Middleton
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Brad Baines

Cllr Will Boucher-Giles

Cllr Tom Greenaway

Cllr Dr Nathan Ley

Cllr Kieron Mallon

Cllr John Shiri

Cllr Roz Smith

Membership

Cllr Liam Walker (Chair)

Cllr Bethia Thomas
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Thomas Ashby

Cllr Chris Brant

Cllr Laura Gordon

Cllr Emily Kerr

Cllr Lesley Mclean

Cllr Susanna Pressel

Cllr Leigh Rawlins

Membership

Cllr Liz Brighthouse,
OBE (Chair)

Cllr Andy Graham
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Dr Izzy Creed

Cllr Rebekah Fletcher
(from September 2025)

Cllr Georgina Heritage

Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith

Cllr Emma Markham

Cllr Toyah Overton

Cllr John Shiri
(May-September 2025)

Cllr James Plumb

Fraser Long
– Catholic representative
co-optee

Toby Long
– Anglican
representative co-optee

Hana G
– Young Person co-optee
(until November 2025)

Katie N
– Young Person co-optee
(until January 2026)

Peace Nnaji
– Parent Governor co-optee
(from February 2025)

Membership

Cllr Ian Snowdon
(Chair)

Councillor Toyah Overton
(Deputy Chair)

Councillor James Barlow

Councillor Will Boucher Giles

Councillor Imade Edosomwan

Councillor Judith Edwards

Councillor Lee Evans

Councillor Rebekah Fletcher

Councillor Georgina Heritage

2 Scrutiny in numbers

Number of
meetings held

25

Reports
to cabinet

39

Members
of public involved
(public speakers)

34

Number of
substantive items
considered

61

Working
group reports

0

Click-throughs
to agendas

8,549

Working group
recommendations

0

Cabinet response breakdown
(based on responses received at time
of publication)

67 accepted (64 per cent)

29 partially accepted (28 per cent)

9 rejected (8 per cent)

67 no reply

Scrutiny
recommendations

172

Scrutiny in numbers can provide interesting insights. However, it is important to recognise its limitations. Quality of scrutiny is more important than quantity, meaning that a higher number of substantive items is not necessarily a good thing.

Equally, when scrutiny has looked at an issue and not found anything it wishes to make a recommendation on it will not make a report to Cabinet. Lastly, there is no optimum number for what constitutes 'success' in terms of Scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet. This number will always be impacted by two variables: the value of the recommendation itself, and the willingness of an executive to engage with suggestions from Scrutiny.

Noting the caveats above, the numbers tell us a number of things:

- The Scrutiny function has undertaken significantly more scrutiny over the last year compared to the previous year. The number of meetings has almost doubled, from 19 to 37, and the number of substantive items considered over the year increasing by approximately 50 per cent, from 19 to 27 and 42 to 61 respectively. The outputs from these meetings, reports and recommendations have also almost doubled in number, from 22 to 39, and 90 to 172 respectively.
- Cabinet's responses to Scrutiny recommendations are broadly stable, with over 9 in 10 recommendations responded to accepted fully or partially.
- Public engagement in the Scrutiny function has increased significantly – the number of click throughs to Scrutiny agendas has increased from last year, averaging a little over 700 per month, and the number of public speakers has almost doubled from 18 to 34.
- There is a high number of no responses. It is important to recognise that this is as much a function of the timing of when recommendations were issued as much as issues around making responses within the statutory deadline. On the latter, however, there remains work to do, which will be detailed later in the report.
- Despite the increase in output, no working groups have completed their work. However, it should be noted that a working group on lessons learned from the Woodeaton school academisation process has been established but is yet to complete its work.

Call-in

Call-in is a statutory function that enables councillors to challenge decisions that have been taken by an executive decision-maker, such as Cabinet or a Cabinet member, before they are implemented. This power was not used in the period covered by the report. One request was made, regarding the Congestion Charge, was requested but failed to meet the threshold required for a successful call-in.

The Council's Constitution requires that provisions relating to call in are monitored annually. This process has recently been undertaken as part of the Council's wider review of its Constitution. The Council agreed to revise comprehensively its process last year, meaning it was not put forward for further amendment this year.

3

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair's introduction

An effective scrutiny function helps to improve service provision and inform policy.

This year the committee decided to focus on the performance of the individual services such as Public Health, Highways, Children and Adults Social Care to question how key decisions have been made and address issues of concern to the local community such a parking permits, road maintenance and Customer Services.



Cllr Glynis Phillips (chair)

The Committee is the forum for considering issues which are genuinely corporate and this has enabled non-executive members to challenge and make their views known in crucial issues such as the Budget, the Council's Strategic Plan, Devolution, the commitment of the Council to becoming a Marmot Place, and the reshaping of its Social Value and Community Asset Transfer policies. The outcomes of these initiatives and policies should have significant impacts on our residents

I am grateful to my fellow committee members including the Deputy Chair Cllr Ian Middleton for their perceptive questions and commitment to scrutiny to ensure that local services improve and that value for money is a central consideration The Committee has considered twice the number of items from last year, with a similar increase in the number of recommendations made to Cabinet

My thanks also go to Cabinet members and senior officers who have attended the meetings for their willingness to engage with the Scrutiny process.

Special thanks to Tom Hudson and Ben Piper for their enabling work on behalf of the Committee.

Cllr Glynis Phillips, Chair of Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26

Membership

Cllr Glynis Phillips (Chair)
 Cllr Ian Middleton (Deputy Chair)
 Cllr Brad Baines
 Cllr Will Boucher-Giles
 Cllr Tom Greenaway
 Cllr Dr Nathan Ley
 Cllr Kieron Mallon
 Cllr John Shiri
 Cllr Roz Smith

Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
5	13	0
Click-throughs to agendas		1,483
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	0
	Scrutiny recommendations	74
Members of public involved (public speakers)		2
Cabinet response breakdown*		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 accepted (49 per cent) • 14 partially accepted (19 per cent) • 6 rejected (8 per cent) • 18 no reply (24 per cent) 		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

Key areas of focus and achievements

The core of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work is best summarised by a number of key themes it has worked towards over the last civic year.

Member Engagement

As the scrutiny committee with responsibility for overall corporate activity, Performance and Corporate Services has a particular duty to give all members a greater understanding and voice in relation to crucial changes being decided by the Council.

Budget

The Committee takes a lead role in the scrutiny of the budget and the corporate plan. However all councillors have to make decisions about the Council’s budget and the Committee made budget Scrutiny available to all members, both in pre-briefings and in-committee scrutiny. This attracted a wider cross-section of members beyond the committee’s membership. Amendments to the budget are proposed at the budget Council meeting and the primary aim within Scrutiny this year was to increase the level of understanding about the budget and to better understand the implications of any amendments.

Devolution

The issue of devolution affects a wider geographical area than Oxfordshire, with discussions over establishing a ‘foundation strategic authority’ with new powers and access to new funding involving councils across the Thames Valley together with central government. Due to the partnership nature, and because central government is the ultimate decision-maker as to the shape and membership of any future strategic authority, the Council’s ability to shape the ultimate outcome is limited. Scrutiny’s role has been to provide the opportunity for non-executive members to better understand the implications for the residents of Oxfordshire and to make recommendations to the Cabinet.

High Spend and High Public Interest

It is important that the Committee prioritises consideration of those areas with the most significant spend, as well as those which are of highest concern to the public. To that end, Adult Social Care (twice) and Children's Social Care, reflecting approximately 40% and 30% of the Council's directorate budget respectively have been looked at, as well as issues of significant concern such as Parking Permits, Fix My Street and Customer Services.

One of the key assurances given by Cabinet from these items was that funding secured by the Council for rebuilding youth services will be spent on a needs-led basis, rather than simply extending existing services.

The recommendations agreed by Cabinet in relation to Parking Permits and Fix My Street included raising the proportion of pot hole repairs being quality assured, to improve overall standards and reduce the number of repaired potholes failing shortly after being repaired, and a number of measures to ensure that Fix My Street – the primary interface with residents – better communicated with those using the service to address frustration around unclear expectations or not knowing whether works were planned. Likewise, Cabinet's response to the Committee's recommendations over Parking Permits means that the Council will prioritise functionality and ease of use over price in the forthcoming procurement for a new parking permit IT system, residents without email addresses will be written to warning them of the upcoming expiry of their permits, and GPs will be made more aware of their responsibilities for helping unregistered carers access permits.

It is expected that the Committee will continue to provide Scrutiny of the decision-making and value for money of large capital projects which attract high levels of public interest, for example the Watlington Relief Road.

Cross-cutting, Corporate Issues

The other major focus of the Committee has been to look at issues which cut across the whole of the Council, rather than being limited to a specific service area. Topics falling within this category include the Council's Strategic Plan, which outlines its high-level priorities, the Our People and Culture Strategy, the performance of the Public Health service following the Council's commitment towards making Oxfordshire a 'Marmot Place', and its review of the Social Value and Community Asset Transfer policy.

These are all important areas owing to the breadth of their impact. Indeed, activity around Social Value, Community Assets and the Marmot Place agenda extend significantly beyond the Council's own activity and into local partnership working. In this area, particularly, the Committee through its recommendations has effected meaningful change.

For instance:

- From consideration of the Our People and Culture Strategy work is being undertaken to ensure that unused apprenticeship levy funds are redirected to organisations in the county who can use them.
- The Social Value Policy discussions have resulted in commitments by Cabinet to partner with other anchor institutions to ensure that social value priorities are consistent locally, and that the Council will develop a report to show how it will ensure social value is integrated corporately to ensure all areas are pulling in the same direction. Specifically, social value targets will be integrated with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to support its delivery.
- The Committee has ensured that plans for how the Council intends to begin its journey towards addressing the broader structural determinants of inequality are developed as part of its Marmot Place pledges.
- The Cabinet agreed to include within its proposals to Council for the Strategic Plan a commitment to improve access to renewable energy infrastructure.

How Scrutiny made a difference

The committee made a clear difference by broadening member involvement in major council decisions, improving transparency and access to information, and influencing developing practical outcomes which will benefit residents.

4 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair's introduction

I am pleased to introduce this report on the Committee's work during the 2025/26 municipal year in which members have examined a wide range of important issues affecting communities across Oxfordshire, from transport, highways and road safety to environmental management, planning and the significant implications of local government reorganisation. Throughout, the Committee has sought to provide constructive, evidence-led scrutiny with a clear focus on how decisions are experienced by residents, businesses and local communities.

This report reflects the Committee's commitment to asking difficult questions in a constructive and non-partisan way, improving transparency, and strengthening accountability in decision-making.

I would like to thank Committee Members for their thoughtful contributions over the course



of the year, and Cabinet members, officers, and external partners for their engagement with the scrutiny process.

To quote Cllr Gant, then the Cabinet member for Transport Management, in response to our recommendations at Cabinet in March, "it was an excellent discussion and the recommendations are indeed practical and robust and cover a number of important areas." I hope this report demonstrates the value of effective scrutiny in supporting better outcomes for the people and places we serve.

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26

Membership

Cllr Liam Walker (Chair)
 Cllr Bethia Thomas (Deputy Chair)
 Cllr Thomas Ashby
 Cllr Chris Brant
 Cllr Laura Gordon
 Cllr Emily Kerr
 Cllr Lesley Mclean
 Cllr Susanna Pressel
 Cllr Leigh Rawlins

Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	8	Reports to cabinet	13	Working group reports	0
Click-throughs to agendas			3,532		
Number of substantive items considered	19	Working group recommendations	0		
		Scrutiny recommendations	74		
Members of public involved (public speakers)				20	
Cabinet response breakdown*					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 accepted (21.62 per cent) • 10 partially accepted (13.51 per cent) • 1 rejected (1.35 per cent) • 47 no reply* (63.51 per cent) 					
*(based on responses received at time of publication)					

* The high number of 'no replies' reflects the fact that at the time of drafting all recommendations from the last two meetings, of which there were a particularly high number, were in the process of being responded to within the statutory timeframe.

Key areas of focus and achievements

Introduction and overall impact

The Committee's work during the past municipal year has sought to focus on impact: how the Council decisions on transport, highways, planning, environmental management, place based services and significant changes to governance arrangements are experienced by residents, businesses and communities across Oxfordshire.

Across the year, the Committee consistently moved beyond presentation and reassurance to make sure that it probes the evidence before decision-makers as well as delivery and accountability. The Committee's impact was rooted in sustained, informed challenge across multiple meetings. This ensured that issues were not simply noted and moved on from, but, rather, were returned to, refined and strengthened.

Members have scrutinised a range of topics that matter to residents from the seemingly mundane but immediately visible verge and vegetation management, part night lighting, to future bus regulation options, the temporary congestion charge, the strategic direction for Oxford city centre development, and the Council's work on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In each case, Scrutiny supported clarification of proposals, articulation of trade offs and assurance that community impact and democratic accountability remained central to decision making.

Transport policy, network management and future regulation

Inevitably, Transport remained a central theme throughout the year, with the Committee providing a structured forum for examination of the relationship between strategic policy and day to day experience.

August saw an extraordinary meeting scheduled to consider the temporary congestion charge proposals. Eight members of the public addressed the Committee and eight recommendations were put forward to Cabinet. The majority of these

were accepted, albeit in part, which means, that it is thanks to the Committee that monitoring data has been published regularly.

In September, the Committee considered future bus regulation options ahead of Cabinet decision making. Members tested the assumptions underpinning different models for bus services (whether or not the Council should adopt a franchise model where it ran the bus service or, if not, how involved it should be). The Committee probed how each option would affect reliability, affordability and coverage, particularly for rural communities and young people. The Committee emphasised that governance choices should be judged not only on speed of implementation but on their ability to deliver tangible improvements for passengers and to align with the Council's wider transport and climate objectives. Whilst it did not make recommendations at that point, it did insist that further proposals should be considered by the Committee.

As well as bus regulation, the Committee explored the OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail in November. Its five recommendations were all broadly accepted by Cabinet and the key theme of those recommendations was integration – ensuring work was undertaken in a timely fashion so that district councils could take advantage of the work already undertaken when drawing up their Local Plans.

Across the year, members also scrutinised congestion management and network performance by questioning whether the evidence being used genuinely reflected conditions on the ground. Particular attention was paid to how transport data was presented, how impacts were measured across different communities, and how uncertainty was acknowledged rather than obscured.

That challenge mattered. By pressing for clearer baseline data, disaggregated impacts and more transparent presentation of uncertainty, Scrutiny strengthened the evidential foundations on which future transport decisions will rest. In doing so, the Committee reinforced the principle that monitoring is not a peripheral activity but, rather, a core part of responsible and transparent delivery.

Bus services, rural transport and accessibility

As well as bus regulation options, the Committee's scrutiny of bus services and rural transport focused on whether policy commitments translated into real accessibility for residents.

Members challenged the reliance on high level performance metrics where these did not always capture localised pressures, unmet need or, indeed, the experience of passengers. Scrutiny explored how transport performance affected access to employment, healthcare (including hospitals), and essential services, particularly in rural areas.

By repeatedly returning to questions of fairness, reliability, accessibility, and inclusion, Scrutiny contributed to a narrative which reinforced that transport systems must be judged not only on efficiency but on who they serve and, importantly, how well they do so.

Recommendations included ensuring the public is aware of which buses are available and what services might be used, using plain English terms that the public understand, and making sure that bus stops are accessible for all.

School Streets and practical delivery

The Committee's examination of the School Streets programme demonstrated Scrutiny at its most practical and delivery focused.

Whilst almost unanimously supportive of the programme's aims, Members focused on the details that determine success: consistency of signage, enforcement arrangements, communication with schools and parents, and how issues at individual sites were identified and addressed.

As a result of this scrutiny, officers committed to stronger monitoring arrangements, clearer standards and more systematic logging of issues, enabling targeted follow up where schemes were not operating as intended. Scrutiny's role here was not to delay progress, but to support assurance that intended outcomes are matched by effective implementation.

Road safety and the Vision Zero approach

The Committee maintained a strong focus on road safety, treating Vision Zero, the Council's strategy to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads, as a live commitment rather than a static strategy.

Members scrutinised action plans, queried delays in updates, and pressed for clearer links between strategy and observable outcomes. Particular emphasis was placed on pedestrian safety, post collision response, and the balance between education, enforcement and engineering.

Through sustained questioning, Scrutiny reinforced the importance of keeping prevention at the centre of road safety policy and ensuring that commitments translate into measurable change.

Highways maintenance, verges and vegetation management

Highways maintenance featured prominently in the Committee's work, reflecting its visibility and importance to residents, as evidenced by 62% of residents in the 2025 Residents' Survey considering it the most important of the Council's services for local people.

In September, the Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of verge and vegetation management. Members explored how the Council balanced biodiversity objectives with road safety, accessibility and public expectations. Scrutiny examined the consistency of cutting regimes, communication with parish and town councils, and how residents were informed about the rationale for different approaches.

Members also tested whether current arrangements provided sufficient transparency and responsiveness when concerns were raised locally. As a result, the Committee made recommendations aimed at improving communication, reviewing payments to parish and town councils, and strengthening the Council's ability to explain and evidence the benefits of its approach to biodiversity led management.

The Committee has often called for online visibility and did so here, too, with a recommendation being accepted around progressing the digitisation of an online platform setting out who owns and who is responsible for verges and vegetation. That will aid transparency which will ultimately benefit residents.

The Committee also considered a report on highways defects in February. Members examined patterns in defect reporting, questioned the durability of repairs, and probed the interaction between weather, contract management and inspection regimes. Importantly, Scrutiny also explored the pressures created by rising compensation claims and the feedback loops between repair quality and financial risk.

This questioning prompted clearer explanations from officers about prioritisation, quality assurance and contractor accountability, and reinforced the need for consistent communication with members and communities about what can be fixed quickly and what cannot be – and the reasons for that. Whilst Scrutiny cannot fill potholes, it can force clarity about why they appear and how systems respond and it did so.

On these two important issues, the Committee played a critical role in improving understanding, transparency and accountability around how decisions are made, and why some outcomes differ across the network.

Planning, minerals, waste and city centre development

In considering planning related matters, the Committee played a vital role in connecting local concern with strategic oversight.

September scrutiny of the strategic context for Oxford city centre development highlighted the Committee's role in testing clarity of vision, governance and accountability. Members explored how county and city responsibilities interacted, how major sites were being progressed, and how uncertainty was being managed following changes to assumptions.

The Committee is always pleased to hear from the public about items for its work programme

and letters from two parish councils on minerals and waste issues led to a report on this in April. These concerns were used as a starting point for structured questioning, ensuring that officer responses engaged directly with community experience whilst remaining grounded in regulatory frameworks.

This approach reinforced trust in the scrutiny process and ensured that community voices informed, rather than bypassed, formal decision making.

Local Government Reorganisation and governance change

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was a significant strand of the Committee's work during 2025/26. The Government's plans to end the two-tier system whereby Oxfordshire's residents are served by both the county council and a district council will lead to wholesale change across local government throughout the county.

Whilst the County Council's Cabinet had put forward a proposal for one unitary authority, the City Council had proposed three unitary authorities, and the remaining districts had proposed two.

In September, the Committee received and scrutinised a formal progress update on the Council's work. Members examined the rationale underpinning the County Council's preferred option, the engagement undertaken with residents, partners and town and parish councils, and the potential implications for service delivery, democratic accountability and neighbourhood governance. Scrutiny focused on whether the proposed approach genuinely reflected the statutory criteria, local evidence, and the concerns being expressed by communities.

This scrutiny was revisited and developed further at the November meeting, as the Committee considered the direction of travel ahead of Cabinet decision making. Members tested how feedback from engagement and scrutiny was being incorporated, the readiness of the programme to move to the next phase, and the risks associated with pursuing reorganisation alongside the ongoing delivery of vital front line services.

Through this work, the Committee provided a formal mechanism for transparent public examination of a complex, county wide change programme. Scrutiny's contribution helped to ensure that decisions on LGR were informed not only by structural ambition, but by realism about capacity and impact as well as the importance of maintaining public trust during a period of uncertainty and change.

The Committee's recommendations led to the Council committing to engaging, accessible, and interesting public communications regarding LGR and, also, that greater attention should be paid to neighbourhood governance and area committees within its proposals.

Environmental protection and illegal waste: making accountability unavoidable.

The Committee's scrutiny of illegal waste dumping near Kidlington demonstrated the distinctive value of a public, cross agency forum. Whilst it was disappointed by the absence of the Environment Agency, it was pleased to welcome a representative from Cherwell District Council to the table.

Members interrogated how responsibilities were shared between the County Council, Cherwell District Council, and the Environment Agency, and why escalation and communication had not happened sooner. This scrutiny brought into the open the limitations of existing enforcement powers and highlighted the complexity of responding to organised waste crime.

Crucially, Scrutiny ensured that lessons were identified, not defensively but constructively. Officers acknowledged weaknesses in early communication and committed to clearer escalation routes and member notification in future cases. Scrutiny's impact here lay in making systemic learning explicit rather than implicit.

Public engagement, clarity and transparency

Across all areas of work, including local government reorganisation, the Committee consistently emphasised the importance of plain English, accessible reporting and meaningful engagement.

Members repeatedly challenged reports that obscured key messages or relied on technical language without explanation, reinforcing Scrutiny's role as both a critical friend to officers and an advocate for the public interest.

How Scrutiny made a difference

Over the course of 2025/26, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee improved the quality and transparency of transport monitoring and evidence, strengthened delivery and consistency in programme based initiatives including School Streets, and ensured that road safety remained focused on prevention rather than process.

The Committee also highlighted systemic pressures in highways maintenance, including verge and vegetation management, supported the robustness of environmental and lighting proposals through constructive challenge, and provided structured, visible scrutiny of major governance change, including local government reorganisation.

This was not opposition for its own sake, but cross-party, constructive challenge that improved decisions before and after they were made.

Looking ahead

As Oxfordshire faces continuing challenges around transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, growth and wholesale structural change to local government, the Committee is well placed to build on the foundations laid during 2025/26.

The year established a clear expectation that ambition must be matched by evidence, delivery by monitoring, and reassurance by accountability. Scrutiny's task in the year ahead will be to maintain that standard in the interests of residents and communities across the county.

5 Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair's introduction

It has been a demanding and, at times, challenging year for children and young people's services in Oxfordshire. It has, therefore, been a year in which scrutiny has mattered.

The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has deliberately focused its work on how systems operate in practice, how decisions affect families, and how confidently we can say that the right children are being supported at the right time. Impact and outcomes have been our focus.

Throughout the year the Committee has engaged openly with officers, Cabinet Members, partners and, importantly, members of the public. Some of the evidence heard has been encouraging and has demonstrated progress, innovation and commitment across the system. Some evidence has been uncomfortable. Scrutiny's role is to create the space for both.

As a Council, we are the corporate parent for some of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children. That role brings with it a collective responsibility for every councillor to take an active interest in whether children in our care are safe, supported, and able to achieve their potential. The Committee has reflected that responsibility in its scrutiny of the Virtual School, SEND provision, attendance, alternative provision and safeguarding arrangements, and in its insistence that lived experience is heard alongside performance data.



Liz Brighthouse, OBE (chair)

The Committee has taken a firm but constructive approach, returning repeatedly to themes such as inclusion, attendance, early intervention, co-production, and the lived experience of families. In doing so, it did not seek to obstruct improvement but to strengthen it..

I would like to thank fellow Committee members for their thoughtful and collegiate contributions, our co-opted members for grounding our work in lived experience, and both Cllr Gaul as the Cabinet Member for Children's Services as well as officers for their willingness to engage robustly but constructively with scrutiny. I would also like to acknowledge the parents and carers who have taken the time to share their experiences with us. Their voices have made a difference.

At Cabinet in March, Cllr Gaul described the Committee as "a really useful place where we get sufficient check and challenge... in a very constructive environment." That is precisely our intention!

**Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OBE, Chair,
Education and Young People Overview
and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

Membership

Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OBE (Chair)
 Cllr Andy Graham (Deputy Chair)
 Cllr Dr Izzy Creed
 Cllr Rebekah Fletcher (from September 2025)
 Cllr Georgina Heritage
 Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith
 Cllr Emma Markham
 Cllr Toyah Overton
 Cllr John Shiri (May-September 2025)
 Cllr James Plumb

 Fraser Long
 – Catholic representative co-optee
 Toby Long
 – Anglican representative co-optee

 Hana G
 – Young Person co-optee (until November 2025)

 Katie N
 – Young Person co-optee (until January 2026)

 Peace Nnaji
 – Parent Governor co-optee (from February 2025)

Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
7	10	0
Click-throughs to agendas		2,435
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	0
	Scrutiny recommendations	18
Members of public involved (public speakers)		12
Cabinet response breakdown*		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 accepted (66.67 per cent) • 3 partially accepted (16.67 per cent) • 0 rejected (0 per cent) • 3 no reply (16.67 per cent) 		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

Key areas of focus and achievements

The Committee's work in 2025–26 has been shaped by the recognition that, whilst systems supporting children and young people are under significant pressure, such pressure cannot become an excuse for drift. Across education, SEND, safeguarding and early help, members focused on how well different parts of the system connect, how clearly responsibilities are understood, and how consistently improvement is delivered.

Rather than treating issues in isolation, the Committee has sought to take a joined-up approach, returning to key themes across the year in order to test how effectively different parts of the system work together and whether improvement is being sustained over time.

The Committee's impact has rested on sustained challenge, clear expectations and formal recommendations designed to strengthen policy design, delivery and monitoring.

Supporting inclusion and educational outcomes

Attainment and narrowing gaps

The Committee considered provisional attainment data not as a scoreboard but as a diagnostic tool. Whilst Oxfordshire continues to perform at or above national averages in several headline measures, scrutiny focused on the persistent gaps affecting disadvantaged children, particularly disadvantaged white British pupils, and children with SEND.

Members questioned whether existing interventions were sufficiently targeted and whether support across early years, school improvement, attendance and safeguarding was aligned effectively. Recommendations emphasised the need to share best practice more systematically, to strengthen engagement between councillors, schools and communities, and to ensure that inclusion, safeguarding and curriculum reform are embedded within the county's education and inclusion strategy.

These discussions reinforced that attainment cannot be separated from belonging, attendance and wellbeing which helped to reposition achievement as a whole-system responsibility rather than an isolated education issue.

The role of the Virtual School

The Committee's examination of the Virtual School Annual Report highlighted the importance of strong corporate parenting and trauma-informed practice.

Members focused on progress in attendance, exclusion and continuity of education, and on how effectively partnerships support children placed out of county. Scrutiny reinforced that improving outcomes for children in our care requires sustained, visible leadership and continued oversight across the system. The two recommendations, which were accepted, emphasised the importance of continued focus on targeted attendance interventions and, also, the need for strengthened communication between governing boards and social workers.

SEND system improvement and accountability

Local Area Partnership monitoring

One of the most significant pieces of scrutiny during the year was the Committee's examination of progress against the SEND Local Area Priority Action Plan. This had been in place since the Area Partnership (i.e., the County Council and the Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board) was informed by Ofsted that it required improvement in September 2024. Consideration of the Priority Action Plan took place at an additional meeting called after publication of the report of the SEND Monitoring Visit by Ofsted.

Officers attended from both the Integrated Care Board and the Council as well as the Independent Chair of the SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board and the Chair of the Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum.

Members welcomed Ofsted's finding of 'effective action' but focussed their scrutiny on whether improvements were sufficiently embedded to withstand ongoing demand, workforce pressure and financial constraints. Recommendations pressed for clearer plans that explain not only what is improving but how improvements will be sustained over time.

This scrutiny helped to shift the focus from reassurance to resilience, underlining the need for long-term planning, transparent governance, and continued engagement with children, young people and families. The Committee hopes that its recommendations around clear plans for long-term sustainability of targeted SEND support will come to fruition for the betterment of the children and young people who need it.

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)

The Committee considered the EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) policy and guidance, reflecting the complexity and sensitivity of this area. Whilst the packages are used by a relatively small number of families (around 70 at the time of the January meeting when the Committee considered the topic for a second time), the total cost is around £3.8 million per annum. Each package is bespoke with the most expensive at around £300k per year, with most falling between £60k and £100k annually.

Evidence from parents and carers highlighted the impact of inconsistent processes, unclear communication and delay. Scrutiny therefore focused on clarity, accessibility and trust, ensuring that both policy and guidance were examined through the lens of lived experience and accountability.

The Council needed to have a policy in place, not only for legal reasons but so that its management of the expenditure was fair, and the Committee reviewed the proposed policy before it went to Cabinet for approval. However, it was concerned by the seeming level of concern over the accompanying guidance. The Committee therefore considered that, after it had been rewritten in a co-produced way with parents and carers, it should return to the Committee.

The Committee established that, despite the efforts of the Council, it had not been possible to co-produce the guidance and that, whilst there was consensus over some elements, some concern remained from some quarters. The Committee made recommendations to make the guidance clearer and easier to use.

Attendance, safeguarding and early intervention

Attendance as a system issue

The Committee's scrutiny of attendance reinforced that it is not merely an education metric but a safeguarding and wellbeing concern.

Members explored how attendance information is used to trigger early help, how responsibilities are shared between schools and the local authority, and how barriers such as anxiety, mental health need and unmet SEND are addressed before absence becomes entrenched. Whilst no formal recommendations were moved, the Committee's encouragement of capturing parental feedback regarding recent policy updates and the engagement that follows was accepted in the meeting so that, ultimately, barriers to attendance are overcome.

Safeguarding oversight

In considering the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, the Committee focused on learning, accountability and transparency.

Members welcomed improvements in governance and multi-agency working, while pressing for clearer public visibility of priorities and outcomes and a continued focus on children's voices in practice. The Committee's call for a sustained, smart educational campaign to support parents, particularly regarding online threats, will lead to parents and carers being more confident in approaching their child's online activity. They also said that, in next year's report, data relating to self-harm and the effectiveness of new screening tools should be specifically addressed. This will enable members to ensure effective monitoring as well as providing transparency.

Early years and best start in life.

Scrutiny of early years provision and the Best Start in Life agenda highlighted the importance of early intervention to later outcomes.

Members focused on sufficiency, workforce capacity and persistent development gaps for children eligible for free school meals, reinforcing that sustained improvement depends on strong early years provision rather than later remedial action.

Listening to families and communities

Across the year, the Committee heard directly from parents, carers, and organisations representing them. These contributions informed scrutiny questions, shaped recommendations and strengthened the Committee's ability to test policy and practice against people's actual experience.

The Committee also benefited from the membership of two young co-opted members, each of whom has since chosen to leave the Committee. As this reporting cycle draws to a close, the Committee agreed to recruit further co-optees and will be recommended to co-opt the two successful candidates.

How scrutiny made a difference

During 2025/26, the Committee reinforced accountability in SEND system improvement, strengthened the treatment of attendance as a safeguarding and inclusion issue, ensured that EOTAS policy and guidance were scrutinised alongside lived experience, and supported stronger corporate parenting through sustained examination of the Virtual School.

This was deliberate, evidence-based challenge aimed at improving services for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Looking ahead

The challenges facing children and young people's services are unlikely to diminish in the short term. Financial pressures, rising demand as well as national policy change will continue to test the system.

The Committee enters the next municipal year with a clear sense of purpose. Scrutiny will continue to focus on impact, sustainability and accountability, ensuring that ambition is matched by delivery and that improvement is felt by children, young people and families.

The Committee's fundamental role will remain what it has been throughout 2025-26 – asking difficult questions in the service of better outcomes.

6 People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair's introduction

Adult social care and public health services continue to face significant and sustained pressures, both locally and nationally.

Rising demand, increasing complexity of need, ongoing workforce challenges and persistent inequalities mean that the Council's responsibilities towards adults in Oxfordshire require careful oversight and robust challenge.

Against this backdrop, the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has played an important role in examining how effectively services are responding, how statutory duties are being discharged, and how the Council's strategic ambitions are translating into outcomes for residents.

During the 2025/26 Council year, the Committee focused on a number of core themes: preparedness for external inspection and assurance, support for unpaid carers, safeguarding adults, health inequalities, transitions into adulthood, supported living and housing, and the Council's statutory duties relating to domestic abuse safe accommodation. Throughout the year, Members sought to adopt a constructive and evidence-based approach, acting as a critical friend to Cabinet and officers while ensuring that the voices and experiences of residents remained central.



Cllr Ian Snowdon (chair)

I would like to thank Committee Members for their thoughtful contributions, challenge and cross-party engagement, the Cabinet Members and officers who attended meetings for their openness and responsiveness. I hope that this report demonstrates both the breadth and depth of scrutiny undertaken during the year and provides a strong foundation for the Committee's work in the coming municipal year.

**Councillor Ian Snowdon
Chair of the People Overview and
Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

Membership

Councillor Ian Snowdon (Chair)
 Councillor Toyah Overton (Deputy Chair)
 Councillor James Barlow
 Councillor Will Boucher Giles
 Councillor Imade Edosomwan
 Councillor Judith Edwards
 Councillor Lee Evans
 Councillor Rebekah Fletcher
 Councillor Georgina Heritage

Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
5	3	0
Click-throughs to agendas		1,099
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	0
	Scrutiny recommendations	5
Members of public involved (public speakers)		0
Cabinet response breakdown* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 accepted (0 per cent) • 2 partially accepted (40 per cent) • 2 rejected (40 per cent) • 1 no reply (20 per cent) 		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

Key areas of focus and achievements

Impact of Scrutiny in 2025/26

The impact of the Committee's work during 2025/26 is best understood in terms of how scrutiny has shaped focus, strengthened assurance, and influenced the approach taken to key areas of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's remit, rather than through discrete service changes attributable solely to scrutiny.

A key development has been the evolution of the Committee's approach to Adult Social Care assurance following the Council's first Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment. Scrutiny moved beyond one off consideration of inspection findings towards an intention to monitor improvement over time. By focusing on the substance of the CQC findings and the Council's response through the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan, the Committee has established a clear expectation that areas identified for improvement will be revisited on a continuing basis.

The Committee has also contributed to raising the visibility of issues not previously subject to detailed scrutiny in recent years, including domestic abuse safe accommodation and support for unpaid carers. In doing so, scrutiny provided a forum to examine statutory duties, service provision and wider system pressures, bringing these areas into clearer focus for Members and officers.

More broadly, the Committee has reinforced a consistent emphasis on system-wide issues, including prevention, early intervention and the interaction between housing, workforce capacity and demand. These changes have been reflected in the Committee's forward work programming, with an intention to return to key themes and track progress over time.

Key Areas of Focus and Scrutiny Activity

Over the course of the 2025/26 Council year, the work of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was shaped by a small number of significant strategic pressures and system-wide challenges, rather than by a large volume of discrete topics. Chief among these was the increased focus on external assurance, improvement and accountability within Adult Social Care, set against a wider backdrop of growing demand, increasing complexity of need and persistent inequalities across Oxfordshire.

CQC Local Authority Assessment

The most significant moment in the Committee's work was the publication of Oxfordshire County Council's first CQC local authority assessment under the new inspection regime. The inspection, and the 'Good' overall rating that followed, provided both reassurance and a clear framework for the Committee's scrutiny going forward. While Members welcomed the positive headline outcome, scrutiny deliberately focused less on the rating itself and more on the substance of the findings: where the Council was performing well, where improvement was required, and how learning from the inspection would be embedded into routine practice.

In this context, the Committee's role shifted increasingly towards ongoing assurance and monitoring of improvement, rather than one off challenge. Discussions explored how the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan responded to both CQC findings and earlier LGA peer review feedback, and how progress would be tracked over time. Members were particularly interested in consistency and timeliness of assessments, communication with residents and carers, and equity of access for rural and marginalised

communities, areas which the CQC identified as requiring improvement and which also reflected concerns raised consistently through committee discussions.

The inspection has already begun to shape the future direction of People scrutiny, providing a shared reference point against which Members expect to measure progress. Rather than revisiting inspection findings in isolation, the Committee signalled its intention to return to these themes through targeted updates, using CQC quality statements and improvement actions as a structure for scrutiny over the medium term. In doing so, the Committee aims to maintain focus on sustained improvement beyond the immediate inspection cycle.

Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding adults formed a second, closely related strand of the Committee's work, reinforcing the emphasis on system effectiveness, learning and accountability. Through consideration of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report and follow up discussion, Members examined how safeguarding responsibilities were shared across agencies, how learning from safeguarding adult reviews was disseminated, and how professional judgement and person centred practice were balanced within increasingly pressured services. Issues such as thresholds, multi agency risk management and workforce capacity were explored not as isolated concerns but as indicators of wider system resilience.

Alongside assurance and safeguarding, the Committee repeatedly returned to the importance of prevention, early intervention and system flow, particularly where blockages or delays risked increasing demand downstream. This theme was evident in scrutiny of unpaid carers support,

transitions into adulthood, supported living and domestic abuse provision. In each area, Members explored how effective identification, early support and accessible pathways could reduce crisis driven intervention later, while recognising the practical constraints created by housing shortages, workforce pressures and fragmented responsibilities across local systems.

Unpaid Carer Support

Support for unpaid carers, for example, was considered not only in terms of the services commissioned, but through broader questions of visibility, identification and sustainability. Members highlighted that carers' needs often cut across health, social care and community services, and that improvements depended as much on culture, communication and data sharing as on formal service provision. The Committee's interest in the proposed Carers Strain Index reflected this wider concern with proactive, needs led approaches rather than reactive support.

Similarly, scrutiny of transitions into adulthood and supported living focused on how effectively different parts of the system joined together around individuals and families. Members consistently emphasised the importance of early planning, joined up commissioning and housing availability, recognising that pressures in one part of the system, particularly specialist housing, had consequences across others, including safeguarding, mental health and financial sustainability.

Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation

Domestic abuse safe accommodation, considered at the Committee's final meeting of the year, brought many of these themes together. Scrutiny examined statutory compliance under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, but also highlighted capacity constraints, move on challenges, data limitations and the lived experience of service users navigating complex systems at a point of crisis. Members' recommendations reflected an emerging interest in longer term outcomes and system learning, rather than focusing solely on immediate access or throughput.

Across all these areas, the Committee adopted an increasingly outcome focused and system aware approach, looking beyond individual services to understand how different pressures interacted. The CQC inspection in particular provided a unifying context for this work, helping to align scrutiny around shared priorities of quality, equity, communication and continuous improvement.

As the Council moves into the next phase of its improvement journey, the Committee is well placed to use these themes as a through line for future scrutiny, ensuring that progress is sustained, transparent and grounded in the experience of Oxfordshire residents.

The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee enters the next municipal year with a strong base of evidence, emerging data and constructive working relationships, which will support continued effective scrutiny of services that have a profound impact on the lives of Oxfordshire's residents.

7 Other Areas of Work

Briefings

It is common for Scrutiny Committee members to be briefed by officers on areas of particular interest or relevance. Although briefings are designed to equip Scrutiny members to undertake their role, the briefings can also be of wider relevance. Over the reporting period Scrutiny has hosted Scrutiny briefings on:

- Budget Proposals
- Customer Service Centre

8 Reflections and Future Ambitions

Reflection

Performance Against Previous Priorities

In last year's annual report, the Scrutiny function identified two areas for specific focus: maximising the opportunity afforded by the election of so many new councillors, and improving public engagement. In both areas the function has shown success.

Whilst Committee memberships did move throughout the year, approximately two thirds of the members on the Council's internal Scrutiny committees were newly elected members. This presented clear challenges with twice as many meetings, reports and recommendations having taken place over the last year. Meanwhile, there has been a similar level of acceptances by decision makers despite the increased number of recommendations, which demonstrates that Scrutiny's input continues to make a positive difference. Likewise, with an increase in the business considered by Scrutiny there has been a comparable increase in public engagement at our Scrutiny Committees. Whilst not the only measure, this demonstrates that Scrutiny considers matters of interest to our residents.

Priorities for Future

Some priorities at individual level have been detailed in the Committee reports above. The actions below detail the broader priorities of the wider Scrutiny function over the coming municipal year.

Local Government Reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – in whatever form government ultimately decides it wishes to take forward – will involve deep and far-reaching change. It will also entail large amounts of complex work whilst the current councils – County, Districts and City – remain responsible for delivering services for residents. This Council's Scrutiny function recognises its threefold responsibility in this area:

1. To enable Scrutiny of LGR as it is designed.
2. To ensure that Scrutiny is fully considered and built into the governance arrangements of the future unitary council/councils to maximise the value non-executive members can add
3. To maintain scrutiny of the council's performance of its responsibilities and functions during the transitional period.

Performance

Members are consistently reminded that Scrutiny is a collective endeavour. As highlighted by the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in its statutory guidance on Scrutiny, 'The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.' The successes of Scrutiny elucidated above, therefore, do not belong to the Scrutiny function alone, but to the whole organisation. Equally, however, there are steps which the Council could take to improve Scrutiny's effectiveness and add further value.

The most important area is in relation to Cabinet's responses to the recommendations made by Scrutiny. Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's governance framework and works on the basis of influence. There is a requirement that Scrutiny's recommendations be replied to. In a small number of instances this has not happened in a timely fashion. It is important that this is addressed in a constructive manner and will remain an area of focus going forward.

9 Thanks

Scrutiny is a collective endeavour, which requires open working between individuals and groups. Much work is undertaken by the Chairs outside the Committee setting to manage changes or ensure the smooth-running of meetings, committee members in their preparation and engagement, Cabinet members for attending to defend their policy, and officers for preparing the reports and providing detail in discussion. Thanks is given to all.

Particular thanks from this year is given to Peace Nnaji, Hana G, Katie N, Fraser Long, and Toby Long for their willingness to give up their time and share their expertise as co-opted members of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

“A really useful place where we get sufficient check and challenge... in a very constructive environment.”

— Cllr Gaul, March 2026

10 Contacting Scrutiny

If you would like to contact scrutiny with suggestions, ideas or comments please email scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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Tom Hudson,
Scrutiny Manager

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Richard Doney,
Scrutiny Officer

- Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- People Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Ben Piper,
Democratic Services Officer

- People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2025/26



Omid Nouri,
Scrutiny Officer (Health)

- Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
- Thames Valley JHOSC
- Also supports and coordinates the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Divisions Affected – All

COUNCIL 30 JUNE 2026

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) Annual Report 2025/26

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is **RECOMMENDED** to:

Receive and **NOTE** the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JHOSC) Annual Report set out in Annex 1.

Executive Summary

2. The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is under a constitutional duty to prepare an annual report. That report is set out in Annex 1 and documents the breadth and depth of the Committee's work over the 2025/26 municipal year.
3. The annual report annexed to this cover report explains some of the key accomplishments and highlights of the Committee's activities over the past municipal year.

Background

4. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Regulation 28(1) of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council has a duty to "review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health services in its area".
5. As part of this overarching duty the JHOSC has a duty, enshrined in the Council's Constitution, to report on its activity over the preceding year. The Committee complies with it by producing an annual report on its activity over the preceding year.
6. The Constitution specifies in Part 6.1B s 23 that this report is to be produced annually.

Corporate Priorities

7. Improving health and wellbeing of residents and reducing health inequalities are stated ambitions within the Council's Strategic Plan. This annual report indicates the Committee's scrutiny of the extent to which progress is being made by the Council and its NHS partners in achieving this.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by
Bick Nguyen-McBride, Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

9. Part 6.1B, s. 23 of the Council's constitution requires the production of an annual report, stating that:

The Committee shall produce in April each year a report for the Appointing Authorities on its activities during the preceding year. That report shall also be published to health bodies and the public.

10. This report is presented at the first opportunity the Committee has to report to Council on the activity of the entire preceding civic year.

Comments checked by
Jay Akbar – Head of Legal & Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Staff Implications

11. None arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

12. None arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

13. None arising from this report.

Consultations:

14. None arising from this report.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: 1. JHOSC Annual Report 2025/2026

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

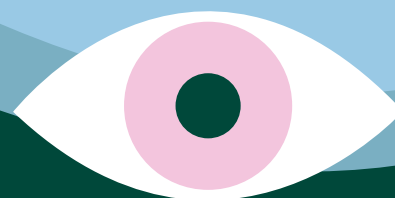
Contact Officer: Dr Omid Nouri, Health Scrutiny Officer

June 2026

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June 2026

Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

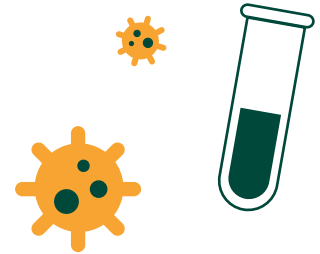


Annual Report

2025/26



1 Chair's introduction



This Annual Report covers the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JHOSC) work during the municipal year from June 2025 to May 2026.

The year saw pressure across the NHS and social care system, with rising demand alongside workforce, estate and financial constraints. These national challenges have had clear local impacts in Oxfordshire, including access pressures, long waits and negative consequences for patient experience and staff wellbeing. Throughout the year, the JHOSC has scrutinised these pressures across multiple arenas within the Health and social care system, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for residents, and acting as a constructive “critical friend” to those commissioning and providing services.

The JHOSC's scrutiny has remained grounded in what residents experience when seeking safe, timely and effective care. A priority of the Committee was to focus on the need of residents for timely GP appointments and this was taken forward by a working group. The Committee scrutinised performance and delivery across a range of priority areas during the year—including on mental health services for both children and adults, and on actions taken by Oxfordshire system partners to reduce health inequalities through prevention.

Early scrutiny was also undertaken on local implementation of the ten year plan for neighbourhoods. Additionally, the Committee focused on core system pressures: recruitment and retention; urgent and emergency care resilience; reducing planned care and diagnostics backlogs; the sustainability of primary and community services; and communication and coordination at transitions of care. We also reinforced that improvement must be shaped by meaningful involvement of patients, carers and communities—particularly where health inequalities are greatest.

The Committee also contributed to scrutiny at the wider Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) level through Oxfordshire County Council members' participation in the BOB Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (BOB JHOSC) With ongoing organisational and policy change affecting integrated care systems—including significant financial pressures and proposals to reshape local commissioning arrangements — system level scrutiny has remained essential. Committee members maintained a strong focus on protecting effective locally-based services, recognising that centralisation and reorganisation can weaken local relationships, intelligence and responsiveness. Where proposals could have a materially adverse effect on commissioning or oversight in Oxfordshire, members have sought early clarity on resident impact, governance arrangements and the assurance in place to protect quality, safety and access.

Despite the scale of challenge across health and care, the JHOSC has worked to maintain strong relationships with partners across the Oxfordshire system. Democratic oversight is essential to public trust, transparency and accountability, and is delivered through public meetings, formal



recommendations and follow up, and engagement between meetings—including through the Committee’s working groups. This year’s work has been strengthened by constructive input from NHS partners, Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Members and senior officers, Healthwatch Oxfordshire and many members of the public who have written to, or spoken at, the Committee. I am grateful to all who have contributed time, evidence and expertise to support effective scrutiny. Although the Committee’s remit does not extend to the resolution of individual complaints, it has taken a critical interest in the management of complaints through offering a one-off facilitation between Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) and a group representing patients, with a view to exploring an agreed process of facilitation which would be acceptable to all. The experience this year of a rising number and complexity of engagements with the Committee about the NHS has emphasised the importance of the work done by the JHOSC since the announcement last year that local Healthwatch is to be abolished.

The Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in relation to this, and in line with the JHOSC recommendation to explore a local future independent patient voice function, the Health and Wellbeing Board set up a working group to action a plan towards ensuring this.

NHS (key officers and representatives who supported the Committee’s work during 2025/26):

NHS

Susannah Butt (Transformation Director – Community Health Services, Dentistry and Primary Care, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust)

Julie Dandridge (Deputy Director, Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

Olivia Clymer (Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust)

Daniel Leveson (former Oxfordshire Place Director, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

Matthew Tait (Chief Delivery Officer, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board)

Oxfordshire County Council (Cabinet Members and senior officers who engaged with the Committee during 2025/26):

Cllr Sean Gaul (Cabinet Member for Children, Oxfordshire County Council)

Ansaf Azhar (Director of Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council)

Karen Fuller (Director of Adult Social Care, Oxfordshire County Council)

Lisa Lyons (Director of Children’s Services, Oxfordshire County Council)

I also wish to record my thanks to all members of the Committee (including District Cllr Dorothy Walker as vice-chair) who served during 2025/26 and contributed to the JHOSC's work programme, lines of enquiry and recommendations. The Committee's strength lies in its mix of County, District and City representation, and in the local knowledge members bring about the lived experience of residents in communities across Oxfordshire—urban and rural alike.

Councillor Jane Hanna OBE (Chair)

District Cllr Dorothy Walker
(Vice-Chair 2025-2026)

Councillor Ron Batstone

Councillor Imade Edosomwan

Councillor Judith Edwards

Councillor Gareth Epps

Councillor Emma Garnett

Councillor Paul Austin Sargent

District Councillor Katharine Keats-Rohan

District Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt

District Councillor Val Shaw

City Councillor Louise Upton

Sylvia Buckingham

Barbara Shaw

Special thanks goes to Dr Omid Nouri, Health Scrutiny Officer, for the breadth and quality of support provided to the Committee throughout 2025/26—from research and briefing, to supporting stakeholder engagement, and ensuring that recommendations and follow-up are tracked effectively.



Councillor Jane Hanna OBE
Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(2025/26)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hanna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

2 About the committee

The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) is a statutory committee of Oxfordshire County Council established to provide democratic oversight of health services affecting residents of Oxfordshire. The Committee operates within the legislative framework governing local authority health scrutiny and plays a central role in ensuring transparency, accountability and public interest are upheld within the local health and care system.

As a joint committee, the JHOSC brings together elected members of Oxfordshire County Council alongside representatives nominated by each of the District Councils and Oxford City Council. This joint composition ensures that scrutiny of health services reflects both countywide strategic considerations and district-level intelligence about local populations, community assets and service accessibility. The Committee also benefits from the participation of co-opted members who are not councillors but are appointed on the basis of their professional expertise or lived experience relevant to health and care services. The presence of co-optees strengthens the Committee's capacity to interrogate clinical, operational and patient-experience issues in a rigorous and informed manner.

The Committee does not make executive decisions, allocate funding, or directly manage services. Instead, its role is to examine, challenge and influence decisions made by bodies responsible for the commissioning and delivery of NHS services in Oxfordshire, including Oxfordshire County Council, the BOB Integrated Care Board (now Thames Valley ICB since April 2026), and NHS Provider Trusts.

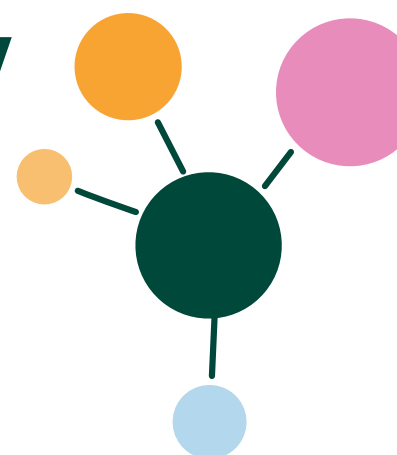
The Committee is empowered to require relevant bodies to attend meetings, submit reports, and respond formally to recommendations. In accordance with statutory requirements, responses to Committee recommendations must be provided in writing within prescribed timescales, enabling the Committee to track actions and hold system partners to account.

The Committee makes structured use of standing working groups alongside formal public meetings. These arrangements also enable scrutiny of areas undergoing substantial service changes, including primary care access and estates, and the implementation of new models of community health provision.



3 Summary of activity

HOSC activity in brief



The Committee convened five public meetings in the municipal year 2025/2026. Over the course of these meetings it scrutinised 15 substantive items. Key items of scrutiny involved:

- ▶ **Eyecare services.**
- ▶ **NHS Reforms.**
- ▶ **General Practice Services.**
- ▶ **Maternity Services.**
- ▶ **Children’s Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health and CAMHS.**
- ▶ **Adult/Older Adult Mental Health Services.**
- ▶ **Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan.**
- ▶ **All-Age Autism Strategy.**
- ▶ **Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan.**
- ▶ **Director of Public Health Annual Report.**
- ▶ **Services and estates being planned and delivered as part of the Oxford Community Health Hubs project led by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.**
- ▶ **The ongoing development of the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan in light of national directives to local systems to formulate neighbourhood and community health provision.**



The Committee’s substantial change working group had also held three online check-in briefings with representatives from the ICB and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OH) and OUH in the municipal year 2025/2026. This was to receive updates on the progress being made in implementing the Committee’s recommendations for the NHS to deliver on its promises following the permanent closure of rehabilitation beds Wantage Community Hospital.

In addition, the Committee’s Oxford Community Health Hubs working group held three briefings with representatives of OH in the past year for the purposes of examining progress being made on establishing three community health hubs in Oxford City for the provision of an array of outpatient services to the North, Central, and Southern parts of the City.

Also, the Committee’s newly formed Primary Care Access and Estates working group met seven times since its formation in January 2025; having held sessions with representatives of the ICB, the BOB Local Medical Committee, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Council planning and estates Officers, and Healthwatch Oxfordshire.

Within the past municipal year, the Committee has issued 46 formal recommendations to the NHS as well as Oxfordshire system partners. Of these 46 recommendations, 19 were accepted, 13 were partially accepted, and 0 rejected. At the time of writing this report, the JHOSC is awaiting responses to 10 recommendations, which it expects to receive by the time of publication.

The Committee also received briefings from the NHS on a number of areas including:

- ▶ **Maternity Services delivered by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in light of findings from previous Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections and ongoing concerns that the Committee has been hearing around maternity services both nationally and locally.**

Key accomplishments

Over the past year, the JHOSC has devoted significant time to scrutinising developments and decisions with direct implications for the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents. As in the preceding year, the Committee has taken a broad view of health and wellbeing—reflecting both national direction and local priorities. It has supported continued integration across health and care and reinforced a wider approach that looks beyond clinical services alone. The Committee also championed the importance of the work of Healthwatch, and the value of an independent patient voice function to Oxfordshire and to democratic health scrutiny.

The impact of the Committee’s work is best demonstrated through the outcomes it has helped to influence across the system. Set out below are the areas where the JHOSC’s scrutiny and recommendations have made the most notable contribution over the year.

i. Safeguarding Oxfordshire’s Place Based Voice during NHS Reform

During 2025/26, the Committee devoted particular attention to the implications of national NHS reforms for Oxfordshire, with a particular focus on safeguarding effective local ‘place based’ leadership, accountability and responsiveness at a time of significant organisational change. This work took place against the backdrop of major reductions in Integrated Care Board (ICB) running costs and further changes to the ICB operating model, which had the potential to create clear risks around loss of local capacity, diluted decision making, and potentially reduced visibility of Oxfordshire specific priorities within larger system structures.

The Committee scrutinised NHS reform and system governance issues directly through its agenda items on NHS reforms, System Urgent Emergency Care Pressures, and the development of the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan, returning repeatedly to how national policy requirements were being implemented locally and what this meant in practice for Oxfordshire residents. Members consistently tested whether commissioning changes risked weakening place based relationships, slowing delivery, or reducing the system’s ability to identify and respond to local pressures early.

Across these items, the Committee made formal recommendations seeking assurance that, despite reductions in ICB running costs, Oxfordshire would retain sufficient commissioning presence and leadership at place level; that governance arrangements would remain clear and transparent; and that system partners would continue to engage meaningfully with local authorities, providers and communities. These recommendations (which were accepted) were framed not as requests for information, but as expectations around how reforms should be implemented in a way that protected service quality, access and accountability for Oxfordshire residents.

The Committee also reinforced place based scrutiny through its routine public meeting items, standing working groups, and follow up activity. By tracking how national reforms intersected with delivery on priority issues such as primary care access, urgent and emergency care pressures, discharge and flow, workforce sustainability, and the rollout of neighbourhood level models of care, the Committee ensured that organisational change remained anchored in real world impact rather than abstract restructuring. This approach helped to highlight where reduced capacity or altered operating arrangements could have unintended consequences for delivery, engagement or inequalities.

Taken together, this strand of work around securing the interests and centrality of Oxfordshire place in the context of significant national and system-level changes represents a substantive contribution by the Committee during 2025/26. Through repeated scrutiny, formal recommendations and system level engagement, the Committee played an active role in ensuring that NHS reform and cost reduction measures did not erode Oxfordshire's place based voice, democratic oversight or focus on local outcomes — reinforcing the principle that efficiency and reform must be balanced with responsiveness, accountability and meaningful local partnership working.



ii. Wantage Community Hospital: Securing Services and Maximising Benefits for the Community

A further significant accomplishment has been the Committee's continued role in securing and maximising the future of services to be delivered at Wantage Community Hospital. Building on the formal support the Committee gave in January 2024 to the NHS Project Delivery Plan to expand hospital like services at Wantage, the Committee has maintained sustained scrutiny throughout the past year to ensure that commitments secured in principle were translated into tangible progress on the ground.

Over the year, this work has been led primarily through the Committee's Substantial Change (Wantage) Working Group, which has remained closely engaged with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, the Integrated Care Board and other system partners. During the 2025/26 municipal year, the Working Group held three structured online check in meetings specifically focused on the future of Wantage Community Hospital and progress against the agreed Project Delivery Plan. These sessions provided continuity of oversight between public Committee meetings and enabled detailed testing of delivery, risks and governance.

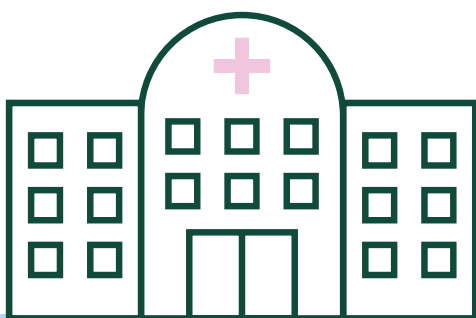
The working group examined delivery of the five phase refurbishment programme, including delays arising from the discovery of lead paint and the actions taken by Oxford Health to mitigate programme slippage and minimise disruption to patients. Members scrutinised the revised timeline and funding position, and in line with recommendations made by the working group, the Trust committed to investment remaining protected despite wider NHS financial pressures and organisational change.

Across the check in meetings held during the year, the Working Group scrutinised not only the physical redevelopment of the hospital but also progress in expanding and restoring services in line with the 2024 Project Delivery Plan. In response to the working group and the wider committee's previous recommendations, both OH and OUH expressed commitments to providing a wide range of audiology, ophthalmology, ultrasound and other outpatient services. On the basis of the working group's recommendations, the NHS is also giving consideration to potential new services including chemotherapy pilots and community based specialist clinics. Further, it is exploring the extent to which commissioning and workforce capacity were supporting timely service rollout. Particular attention was also given to the dependency on ICB contracting decisions and the risks posed by system reorganisation and reduced commissioning capacity.

Crucially, this scrutiny took place against a backdrop of significant NHS reform and a near 50% reduction in ICB running costs. The Committee therefore used the Wantage programme as a practical test of whether place based commitments could still be delivered in a more constrained and centralised operating environment. Through its working group activity, the Committee reinforced the expectation that Wantage Community Hospital would remain a priority, that previously agreed ambitions would not be diluted, and that local accountability for delivery would be maintained despite organisational change.

Essentially, the Committee's work during 2025/26 has moved beyond safeguarding Wantage Community Hospital in principle to actively consolidating its future in practice. By sustaining detailed, place based scrutiny over time — and by returning consistently to progress against the Project Delivery Plan first endorsed in January 2024 — the Committee has played an important role in ensuring that Wantage Community Hospital continues to develop as a viable, valued and expanding asset for the local community.

The work that has involved co-production with the local community is also being scrutinised from the perspective of the positive value that this brings to this neighbourhood. One example has been working together to align a new community bus with the community hospital plans, with local groups helping to resolve parking issues during the refurbishment. Meaningful coproduction has meant the project has built on the existing assets and networks of the local area to amplify what is possible.



iii. Safeguarding a Future Independent Patient Voice for Oxfordshire.

A further significant accomplishment has been the Committee's scrutiny of national proposals to abolish Healthwatch and its work to safeguard a future independent patient voice for Oxfordshire. Throughout the year, the Committee maintained a clear and consistent position that, while national legislation may remove Healthwatch as a statutory body, the core functions it provides – independence, local reach, and the ability to challenge the system credibly – must not be lost.

The Committee examined the risks associated with transferring patient voice functions into commissioner or provider structures, particularly in terms of loss of independence, reduced candour from the public, and diminished trust among seldom heard communities. This took place alongside wider scrutiny of NHS reform and system restructuring, reinforcing the Committee's concern that organisational change should not weaken democratic oversight or public involvement.

Building on this scrutiny, the Committee agreed formal recommendations that Oxfordshire system partners should work collectively to retain an independent, locally rooted patient voice function, even if the Healthwatch organisational form were abolished through legislation. These recommendations were explicitly aligned with a cross party motion agreed by Oxfordshire County Council, which requested that system partners explore mechanisms to preserve the independent patient voice post Healthwatch abolition, and report progress through established governance routes including HOSC.

To reinforce this position beyond the local system, the Committee wrote formally to all Oxfordshire Members of Parliament in October 2025, setting out its concerns and seeking their support in raising the issue with national government and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The letter emphasised Oxfordshire's strong track record of independent patient engagement, the risks associated with centralising or internalising patient voice functions, and the importance of preserving independence during a period of significant NHS reform. The correspondence was subsequently escalated to the DHSC through MPs, with responses shared back with the Committee.

The Committee returned to this issue at subsequent public meetings during the year, including its November 2025 and January 2026 discussions on NHS reform, neighbourhood health planning and system governance, where members continued to test how the abolition of Healthwatch might intersect with emerging place based and neighbourhood models of care.

Importantly, this ongoing scrutiny by the JHOSC directly informed and influenced system level decision making. In its 4 December 2025 public meeting, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to establish a working group on a Future Independent Patient Voice, explicitly recognising the concerns and recommendations raised through JHOSC scrutiny and the Full Council motion. The working group was tasked with exploring future models for an independent patient voice in Oxfordshire, identifying the core principles that must be preserved, mapping existing engagement functions, and overseeing public engagement activity to inform future arrangements.

Updates on the establishment and early work of the Working Group were reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2026, including confirmation of its remit, membership and planned programme of work. The Committee's earlier recommendations were explicitly reflected in the working group's focus on independence, avoidance of duplication, and maintaining trust and legitimacy in engagement – particularly as national legislation continues to develop. The Committee will therefore continue to engage on the national and local plans as they develop.

As such, this strand of work demonstrates how the Committee has used its scrutiny role not only to scrutinise national reform, but to shape a proactive local response. From public scrutiny and formal recommendations, through Council support and national correspondence, to tangible system action via the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Committee's work during 2025/26 has helped to ensure that the future of patient voice in Oxfordshire remains firmly anchored in independence, accountability and local credibility, even in the context of significant national change.



iv. Securing the future of access and estates for GP services

During 2025/26, the Committee devoted consistent attention to the future of primary care access and estates in Oxfordshire, recognising that the availability and suitability of premises is a critical determinant of capacity, workforce sustainability and patient access. This work reflected growing concern that, without concerted system wide action, pressures on general practice—particularly in areas of population growth and relative deprivation—risk being exacerbated by longstanding estate constraints and fragmented accountability.

The Committee explored how limitations in physical estate capacity were constraining the ability of practices to expand workforce, offer additional appointments, or deliver new models of care. Particular attention was given to the uneven distribution of estate pressure across Oxfordshire, with some communities facing persistent difficulties in securing appropriate premises or delivering promised infrastructure alongside major developments.

Following this scrutiny, the Committee agreed formal recommendations aimed at strengthening system wide planning, accountability and collaboration around primary care estates. These included recommendations which secured earlier engagement between the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and local planning authorities; ensuring clearer ownership of estate strategy at local, place level; and strengthening assurance that estate constraints would not undermine commitments around access, workforce resilience and neighbourhood working. Though the Committee received responses from the ICB, which drew attention to constraints relating to capital funding, national policy and regulatory frameworks, it views these issues as requiring ongoing scrutiny rather than one off consideration.

In recognition of the complexity and persistence of these challenges, the Committee established a Primary Care Access and Estates working group. The rationale for creating the Working Group was explicitly to move beyond episodic discussion at public meetings and instead provide a forum for detailed, sustained and place based scrutiny of the structural issues affecting general practice access. This included the relationship between estates, workforce capacity and commissioning decisions, and the interaction between health planning and local authority housing and infrastructure processes.

Since its establishment, the working group has met on several occasions and has engaged with a range of system partners, including representatives from the ICB, the BOB Local Medical Committee (LMC), Healthwatch Oxfordshire, and district council planning and estates officers. Through these discussions, members examined evidence on population growth and list size pressures, variations in access across practices, and the practical constraints faced by practices operating from outdated or insufficient premises. The working group also explored how national funding mechanisms, Section 106 arrangements and capital approval processes can impede timely delivery of primary care infrastructure, even where need is clearly evidenced.

A consistent observation emerging from the working group's work has been that estate constraints are frequently the limiting factor in expanding access, even where workforce funding or additional roles are theoretically available. Members noted that without sufficient clinical rooms, compliant facilities and long term security of tenure, practices cannot fully utilise available staff or invest confidently in service development. The working group also highlighted the importance of earlier and more strategic engagement between health partners and local planning authorities, particularly at the pre application stage of major developments, to avoid reactive and piecemeal solutions.

Through its working group activity, the Committee has reinforced the need for clearer governance and transparency around responsibility for primary care estates at place level—particularly in the context of NHS reform, reduced ICB running costs and evolving neighbourhood based models of care. Members have consistently tested how system partners are mitigating the risk that estate shortcomings could undermine delivery of neighbourhood health ambitions, exacerbate inequalities, or place additional strain on already pressured practices.

At the time of writing this report, the Committee is planning site visits to both urban and rural GP practices in Oxfordshire, with a view to understand the barriers and enablers around primary care access and estates. The working group also plans to submit its final report with a finalised list of findings and recommendations to the wider JHOSC in its September 2026 public meeting. The working group's findings will also be shared with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to seek government's support for local efforts to address challenges relating to access and estates in primary care.

Taken together, the Committee's work during 2025/26 has demonstrated a consistent and structured approach to securing the future of primary care access and estates in Oxfordshire. Through public scrutiny, formal recommendations, and the establishment of a dedicated Working Group, the Committee has sought to ensure that primary care estates are treated not as a peripheral technical issue, but as a core system enabler requiring coordinated, place based leadership, long term planning and continued democratic oversight.

v. Securing support from MPs to Safeguard the Sustainability of NHS Eyecare and Escalate Systemic Risks to Government

The Committee undertook focused scrutiny of eyecare services in Oxfordshire, reflecting the significant and persistent concerns being raised by residents, clinicians and system partners about access, waiting times and the sustainability of NHS ophthalmology services. This work has been grounded in the Committee's responsibility to examine not only performance pressures, but also the wider system factors shaping the availability and quality of NHS eyecare locally.

The Committee considered eyecare services as a substantive public meeting item, during which it examined the scale of unmet need, growing waiting lists and the practical impact of long delays on patients' quality of life and clinical outcomes. Members tested how current commissioning and delivery arrangements were responding to rising demand, and how pressures within ophthalmology were interacting with wider workforce shortages and estate constraints. Particular concern was expressed about the cumulative risk posed by prolonged waits for diagnosis and treatment, especially for conditions where delayed intervention can result in irreversible sight loss.

A key strand of the Committee's scrutiny focused on the position of the Oxford Eye Hospital within the local eyecare pathway, and the wider implications of commissioning increasing volumes of activity from independent service providers. While recognising that independent providers are used nationally as part of capacity management, the Committee repeatedly examined whether the balance of activity risked undermining the sustainability of NHS ophthalmology services, fragmenting patient pathways, or destabilising training, workforce recruitment and specialist capacity at the Oxford Eye Hospital. Members consistently tested whether system decisions were being taken with sufficient regard to long term resilience, continuity of care and the maintenance of a comprehensive NHS service locally.

Following this scrutiny, and in light of the seriousness of the issues raised, the Committee agreed that the concerns extended beyond matters that could be resolved solely at local system level. The JHOSC wrote formally to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and DHSC, setting out its concerns about the current state of NHS eyecare services, the pressures facing ophthalmology departments, and the unintended consequences that an over reliance on independent provision can have for NHS providers such as the Oxford Eye Hospital. The correspondence emphasised that the Committee's concerns were grounded not only in system intelligence, but also in the lived experiences being reported to the Committee by Oxfordshire residents waiting for care.

In parallel, the Committee sought and received support from Oxfordshire's Members of Parliament, who agreed to raise these concerns with the Secretary of State and to assist in chasing a response given the urgency of the issues. The involvement of local MPs was an important step in reinforcing the seriousness of the challenges facing eyecare services in Oxfordshire and ensuring that local scrutiny concerns were amplified within national policy and accountability structures.

Throughout this work, the Committee has maintained a strong focus on the impact of eyecare service pressures on residents, and on the need for national policy approaches to support, rather than inadvertently weaken, NHS ophthalmology services. By escalating its concerns formally to the Secretary of State and DHSC, and by working with Oxfordshire MPs to pursue national engagement, the Committee has used its scrutiny role not only to highlight local service pressures, but to advocate for systemic solutions that safeguard the sustainability and integrity of NHS eyecare provision in Oxfordshire.

In essence, this strand of work demonstrates how the Committee has responded proactively to emerging risks within eyecare services—moving from local scrutiny and challenge, to formal escalation and national engagement—reflecting both the urgency of the issues facing patients and the Committee's commitment to protecting safe, timely and sustainable access to NHS ophthalmology for Oxfordshire residents.

4 Other key highlights of HOSC activity

Sustained Scrutiny and Engagement on Maternity Services in Oxfordshire:

During the 2025/26 municipal year, the Committee undertook significant scrutiny of maternity services in Oxfordshire, reflecting both national concerns about maternity safety and the specific experiences being raised locally by families who had used services provided by OUH. This work has been characterised by a focus on transparency, accountability, and the importance of what is meant by engagement with families affected by maternity care.

The Committee scrutinised maternity services as a substantive public meeting item in January 2026, where it examined performance data, quality and safety issues, and the Trust's response to previous regulatory concerns. Members scrutinised the information provided by OUH, the correspondence and testimony the Committee had received from families who had experienced maternity services, and information provided by the public speaker from Keep the Horton General Hospital. This enabled the Committee to test whether reported improvements aligned with lived experience and whether the system was responding effectively to concerns being raised by patients and families.

Following this scrutiny, the Committee agreed a series of formal recommendations aimed at strengthening assurance around maternity safety, improving governance and accountability, and ensuring that learning from adverse incidents is embedded consistently across the service.

These recommendations emphasised the need for transparency in reporting, robust data quality, and clear mechanisms for engaging with and supporting families affected by maternity care failures or poor experience.

A key development arising from the January 2026 scrutiny was the Committee's response to concerns regarding errors and inaccuracies in data submitted by OUH as part of its report for the meeting. In light of the seriousness of these issues, and the potential impact on the Committee's ability to undertake effective scrutiny, the Chair of the JHOSC wrote formally to the Chief Executive and Chair of OUH. The correspondence set out concerns raised by families, sought an explanation for the incorrect data presented, and requested assurance regarding how the Trust would rectify these issues and ensure accuracy in future submissions as well as seeking an update on meaningful engagement with groups.

Through this correspondence, the Committee made clear that accurate, complete and transparent information is a prerequisite for effective democratic oversight—particularly in relation to services as sensitive and high risk as maternity care. The Committee also emphasised the importance of the Trust maintaining open and constructive engagement with families who have been affected by maternity service failures, including listening to concerns, offering appropriate responses, and demonstrating how learning is being implemented.

Alongside formal recommendations and correspondence, the Committee has consistently promoted the need for improved engagement between OUH and affected families, recognising that rebuilding trust requires more than procedural compliance. Members have stressed that families' voices must inform service improvement, and that meaningful engagement is essential both for accountability and for restoring confidence in maternity services. There have been concerns about the process for meaningful engagement, and the JHOSC has offered one-off facilitation with a view to an agreement between groups of families on what would be an agreeable process for future engagement between families and the Trust.

Looking ahead, the Committee has made clear that maternity services will remain under active review, including at the Horton General.

The Committee will continue to monitor progress against its recommendations, seek further assurance from OUH and system partners, and consider additional scrutiny where concerns persist or new issues emerge. This reflects the Committee's commitment to continued scrutiny of maternity services—recognising that long term improvement requires consistent oversight, challenge and follow up.

Taken together, this work demonstrates how the Committee has used its scrutiny role to address serious concerns in maternity services through public examination, formal recommendations, direct engagement with Trust leadership, and ongoing monitoring. The Committee's approach during 2025/26 has reinforced the importance of accountability, transparency and patient engagement in safeguarding maternity services for families across Oxfordshire.

Shaping Oxfordshire's Progress Towards Becoming a Marmot Place

On 25 November 2024, Oxfordshire County Council agreed to become a Marmot Place, meaning that Oxfordshire is now an area that formally recognises that health and health inequalities are mainly shaped by the social determinants of health. As part of this process, the Committee has undertaken detailed scrutiny around the Council (and its partners) plans relating to becoming a Marmot Place. The Committee's work in this area has been driven by a clear understanding that improving population health outcomes cannot be achieved through healthcare services alone, and that progress depends on sustained, cross system action aligned to the Marmot principles.

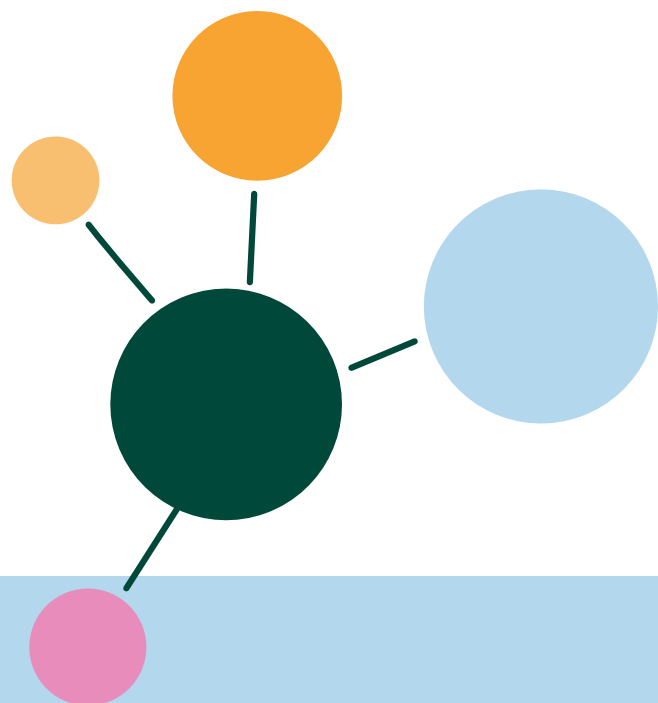
The Committee considered this issue formally at its public meeting in June 2025, where it received an update on Oxfordshire's emerging Marmot Place approach and how the principles were being translated into local strategy, delivery and governance. Members examined how the Marmot framework was being embedded across partner organisations, how progress would be measured, and how the approach would ensure a tangible focus on reducing inequalities experienced by communities facing the poorest health outcomes.

Following this scrutiny, the Committee agreed formal recommendations emphasising the importance of maintaining clear accountability for Marmot delivery, ensuring that the approach was embedded consistently across system priorities, and demonstrating how Marmot principles would shape decision making rather than sit alongside existing strategies in isolation. The Committee welcomed the positive responses received, including commitments from system partners to continue developing the Marmot Place approach, align it with wider population health and prevention strategies, and reflect Marmot principles within emerging plans such as neighbourhood health and place based delivery models.

Hence, due to the Committee's intervention, Marmot delivery is expected to be more clearly accountable to Oxfordshire County Council and the JHOSC, and more fully integrated into the health and social care system.

The Committee also made clear through its recommendations that meaningful progress on Marmot required sustained visibility, transparent reporting and a willingness to test whether actions were genuinely reducing inequalities over time. This included an expectation that partners would articulate how Marmot principles were influencing commissioning, service design and prioritisation, particularly for communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage. Through this, the Committee has ensured that Marmotisation in Oxfordshire is more transparent over its impacts on residents.

Importantly, the Committee has retained a consistent thread of focus on Marmot principles across a range of other scrutiny items and themes during the municipal year since June 2025. This has included scrutiny of urgent and emergency care pressures, primary care access and estates, neighbourhood health planning, discharge and flow, and prevention and population health activity—where members have repeatedly tested whether disadvantaged groups are disproportionately impacted, and whether system responses are aligned with the Marmot ambition of proportionate universalism.



Through this approach, the Committee has deliberately avoided treating Marmot as a standalone policy label, instead using it as a critical lens through which wider system activity is examined. Members have consistently challenged system partners on how inequalities are identified, prioritised and mitigated in practice, and how progress on Marmot commitments is being tracked and owned across organisations.

Looking ahead, the Committee has made clear that Marmot Place will remain an enduring area of scrutiny, rather than a time limited initiative. The Committee will continue to return to Marmot through relevant agenda items and working group activity, seeking assurance that commitments translate into action, measurable outcomes and improved health equity for Oxfordshire residents.

Therefore, this work demonstrates how the Committee has used the Marmot framework to anchor its wider scrutiny of population health and inequalities—ensuring that strategic commitments are reinforced through democratic oversight, challenge and follow up, and that reducing health inequalities remains central to system decision making throughout Oxfordshire.

Supporting development of a Neighbourhood Health Plan for Oxfordshire

Another key area of scrutiny focus by the Committee is the development of the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan, recognising neighbourhood working as a central pillar of national NHS policy and a key mechanism for delivering more preventative, integrated and community centred care. In line with government guidance, a Neighbourhood Health Plan is a locally developed plan that sets out how health and care services will be organised, integrated and delivered at neighbourhood level to improve population health, access to services and prevention, while reducing reliance on acute hospitals.

Local systems, including Oxfordshire, are required to develop a Neighbourhood Health Plan. As part of this process, Committee's approach has been grounded in a strong emphasis on place, equity and accountability—seeking assurance that neighbourhood models would respond effectively to local need rather than operate as abstract system level constructs.

The Committee considered the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan as a substantive public meeting item in November 2025, where it examined the very early emerging vision, governance arrangements, the proposed delivery approach, and the resources available. Members scrutinised how neighbourhood footprints were being defined, how local population need and health inequalities were being reflected, and how the plan would translate into meaningful changes for residents at community level. Particular attention was given to the relationship between neighbourhood working and existing primary care, community and voluntary sector services, and to the risk that insufficient clarity or resourcing could limit the effectiveness of implementation.

A clear theme of inquiry was also what the values would be that would underpin neighbourhood health, with concern by the committee that neighbourhood health should be based on understanding the needs and assets of any local community, and working to amplify and support local community leadership and grass-roots organisations who connect with public services across health and care. The JHOSC emphasised the important role of local parish and town Councils that have insights into local eco-systems that underpin every community and the public services accessible to communities. The concern raised by the JHOSC was that it was imperative that any reforms to local health arrangements were done with communities, so that existing neighbourhoods can be improved. There was also scrutiny of the resources available for neighbourhood health, and how the funding mechanism would be the Better Care Fund.

Following this scrutiny, the Committee agreed formal recommendations aimed at strengthening clarity, accountability and local assurance around neighbourhood health delivery. These recommendations emphasised the importance of clearly defined neighbourhood footprints; visible leadership and ownership at neighbourhood and place level; alignment with wider population health, prevention and Marmot Place commitments; and meaningful engagement with local communities through town and parish councils and local members, local authorities and the voluntary sector. The Committee also stressed that neighbourhood models must be supported by realistic workforce and estate capacity if they were to succeed in reducing pressure on acute services and addressing inequalities (and that there was not yet necessary assurance at this early stage that this was available).

The Committee subsequently received positive responses to these recommendations from system partners, including commitments to refine neighbourhood definitions, strengthen links with place based governance arrangements, and ensure that neighbourhood health development would be aligned with existing strategies rather than duplicating or fragmenting delivery. Partners also acknowledged the Committee's emphasis on engagement, inequality and local accountability, and committed to continuing dialogue with HOSC as neighbourhood delivery matured.

Importantly, the Committee has retained a consistent thread of focus on neighbourhood health across a range of other scrutiny items during the municipal year from June 2025 to the present.

This has included consideration of neighbourhood health principles within scrutiny of urgent and emergency care pressures, primary care access and estates, discharge and flow, prevention and population health activity, and the Marmot Place approach. Across these items, members have repeatedly tested whether neighbourhood level models are sufficiently resourced, whether they are reducing avoidable pressure on acute pathways, and whether they are reaching communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage.

Through this cross cutting approach, the Committee has sought to ensure that neighbourhood health is not treated as a standalone policy initiative, but as a practical delivery framework that must be consistently reflected in commissioning decisions, service design and system priorities. Members have emphasised that progress on neighbourhood health must be evidenced through tangible improvements in access, coordination and outcomes at community level, and through clear accountability for delivery across partners.

Looking ahead, the Committee has made clear that the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Health Plan will remain under active and ongoing review. The Committee will continue to return to neighbourhood health through relevant agenda items and working groups, seeking assurance that commitments made at system level are translating into sustained implementation, meaningful community engagement and measurable impact for Oxfordshire residents.



Focus and Advocacy around Autism and Learning Disabilities

Given the increased awareness of the impacts of autism, ADHD, and Learning Disabilities, the Committee undertook sustained scrutiny of adult autism and ADHD services, alongside detailed examination of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan, reflecting longstanding concerns about access, waiting times, service coordination and the lived experience of adults with neurodivergence and learning disabilities. This work has been grounded in the Committee's commitment to safeguarding equity, dignity and inclusion for people with complex needs, and to ensuring that system plans translate into tangible improvements in outcomes and experience.

The Committee scrutinised adult autism and ADHD services. It examined the scale of unmet need, extended waits for assessment and diagnosis, and the challenges individuals face in accessing timely post diagnostic and ongoing support. Members explored how current service pathways were operating in practice, the extent to which demand was outstripping capacity, and the implications for individuals' mental health, employment, independence and interaction with other parts of the health and care system. Particular attention was given to the need for clearer, more integrated pathways and improved communication with service users.

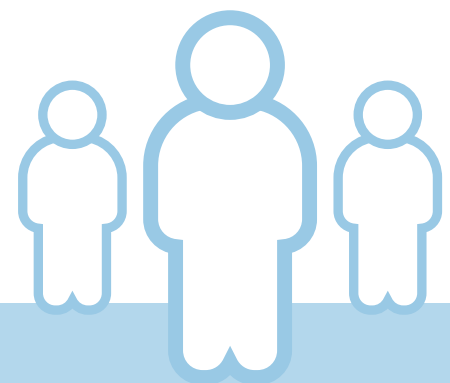
Following this scrutiny, the Committee received positive responses from system partners to its recommendations, including commitments to continue work to improve pathway clarity, strengthen service coordination, and maintain engagement with the Committee as improvement activity progressed.

The Committee returned to learning disability services through its scrutiny of the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan at its public meeting in January 2026.

Members examined the Plan's priorities, governance arrangements and delivery actions, with a particular focus on whether commitments around health inequalities, access to primary and community services, and support for people with complex needs were sufficiently robust and clearly owned. The Committee also tested how the Plan aligned with wider system strategies, including neighbourhood health and prevention activity.

As part of this scrutiny, the Committee agreed formal recommendations seeking assurance that the Learning Disability Plan would result in measurable improvement for people with learning disabilities, particularly in relation to access to healthcare, reasonable adjustments, and consistency of support across the county. The Committee welcomed the constructive responses received, including commitments from system partners to continue developing the Plan, strengthen accountability for delivery, and maintain transparency around progress and outcomes. The Committee also recognised from its annual report in 2025 the importance of recommendations that year on epilepsy (1 in 5 people with a learning disability have epilepsy, and this population has the worst premature life expectancy). A particular recommendation made by the Committee this year was that the plan was dynamic, and that it should be reviewed again in 2027.

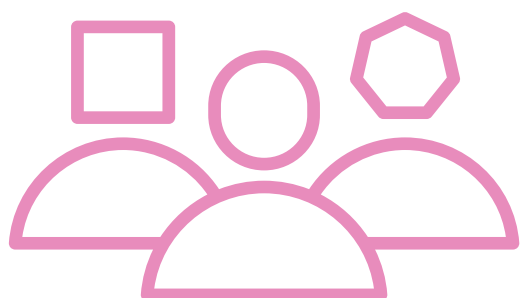
The Committee has sought to ensure that autism, ADHD and learning disability services are not treated as peripheral or specialist concerns, but as core components of a fair and inclusive health and care system. The Committee had consistently emphasised the need for joined up pathways, clear accountability, and meaningful engagement with people who rely on these services.



Moving forward, the Committee has made clear that adult autism, ADHD and learning disability services will remain under ongoing review. The Committee will continue to return to these issues through relevant agenda items and working group activity, seeking assurance that commitments made by system partners translate into ongoing improvement, reduced inequalities and better lived experience for adults with learning disabilities and neurodivergent conditions across Oxfordshire. In essence, the Committee’s work during 2025/26 demonstrates a sustained and structured approach to scrutiny in this area—combining public examination, clear recommendations, positive system engagement and continued thematic oversight to support meaningful and lasting improvement.

Promoting Prevention, Early Intervention and Accountability in Mental Health Services

In the previous municipal year, the JHOSC maintained its ongoing focus on children’s and adults’ emotional wellbeing and mental health. This work formed both a core element of the Committee’s ordinary scrutiny programme/practice and a direct response to the Oxfordshire County Council Full Council motion on mental health agreed in December 2025, which called for strengthened system accountability, improved access, and a renewed emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The Committee’s scrutiny of mental health services was not driven solely by this motion; rather, it reflected the Committee’s long standing commitment to examining mental health provision across the life course as a central element of its statutory role.



In November 2025, the Committee held a public scrutiny item on Children’s Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, incorporating focused examination of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the School Health Nurse (SHN) service. This item provided the Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise both specialist and universal provision, as well as how services were interacting to support prevention, early identification, and timely intervention for children and young people. The Committee’s discussion emphasised concerns around rising demand, variability in access, and the experience of families navigating complex pathways, particularly for neurodivergent children and those awaiting diagnosis or treatment.

In view of Council’s motion, the Committee wishes to draw attention to its work around mental health. The following link contains a JHOSC report outlining the Committee’s scrutiny, evidence received, and recommendations issued as part of the deep-dive on children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health services in Oxfordshire **Agenda for Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 29 January 2026, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council**

The Committee heard from the Cabinet member for children services at Oxfordshire County Council, and recognised the 2025 inspection by Ofsted and the CQC had found that the Council and its NHS partners had taken effective action across five priority areas for children. Routine waiting lists for CAMHS had reduced, and extra appointments had been created for long waits. Families were being offered support whilst waiting and a new AI pilot was showing early signs of supporting recognition of neuro-diverse children with simple, complex and very complex needs for intervention.

The Committee heard from all partners about the importance of work with families and schools and early prevention (with a view to children with serious clinical needs being identified and seen earlier), and about early evidence that interventions such as the Telmi App were helping. The Committee also heard that there was strong intention to continue with improvements, but that this was also against a context where financial pressures were severe and were increasing.

As a result of this scrutiny on children's mental health, the Committee issued a set of substantive and forward looking recommendations designed to drive system change rather than seek additional information. These included recommendations that system partners put in place clearer mechanisms to evaluate the deliverability and impact of the Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy; secure more sustainable funding sources for early intervention and community based support; and provide more structured, proactive support for families waiting for assessment or treatment, including the scaling up of interim programmes such as Supportive Steps.

The Committee also recommended improved communication and transparency through a more coherent navigation offer for families, embedding the Whole School Approach to mental wellbeing across Oxfordshire schools, and maintaining and strengthening school based health and sexual health provision, particularly in rural areas. Recognising the importance of joined up early help, the Committee further recommended closer alignment between Family Hubs and the wider emotional wellbeing and mental health system, including consideration of how children's voices should be reflected in any future independent patient voice arrangements for Oxfordshire.

System partners responded positively to the majority of these recommendations, with most being accepted and others partially accepted with clear commitments to action.

Responses outlined concrete steps to embed CAMHS transformation workstreams within existing SEND governance, expand interim support for families awaiting diagnosis through both digital and programme based interventions, enhance the role of School Health Nurses through locality based and specialist training models, and strengthen the delivery of Whole School Approaches through mental health leads, training, and public health commissioning. Collectively, these responses demonstrated a willingness across the system to act on the Committee's scrutiny and reinforced the value of sustained, outcomes focused challenge.

The Committee returned to mental health at a system level in April 2026, when it held a further public meeting item on Adult and Older Adult Mental Health. This item enabled scrutiny of progress on community mental health transformation, equity of access, co production, and the interface between mental health services, physical health, and wider system pressures. In keeping with its earlier work, the Committee again framed its recommendations as clear expectations of the system.

These included calls for equity of access to be treated as a core performance objective, for co production to be embedded in neighbourhood mental health models, for access standards to prioritise quality and continuity of care, and for stronger collaborative action on reducing out of area placements and improving physical health checks for people with serious mental illness. The Committee also emphasised the importance of smooth and supportive transitions between children's and adults' mental health services, reinforcing a life course approach to emotional wellbeing.

Previous work of the JHOSC had included a site visit and scrutiny of the Warneford Hospital, where Committee members agreed unanimously that the state of the estate where little has changed for over two hundred years directly hinders therapeutic work, suitable space to support human dignity, prevention and management of challenging behaviour, and reductions in length of stay in hospital.

The JHOSC previously submitted a report/letter on the Warneford estate to the government in support of the proposal for a new vision for the Warneford Estate, as it believes this to be urgently overdue for ensuring there are improvements to mental health estate and in support of the prevention agenda.

Again, and also in view of Council’s motion, the Committee wishes to draw attention to its work around adult mental health. The following link contains a **JHOSC report** outlining the Committee’s scrutiny, evidence received, and recommendations issued as part of the deep-dive on adult and older adult mental health services in Oxfordshire.

Beyond these two major public scrutiny items, and in keeping with the Council motion on mental health, the Committee retained a consistent focus on emotional wellbeing, prevention, and early intervention across its work programme between June 2025 and April 2026. This included ongoing scrutiny of related areas such as SEND improvement, primary care access and capacity, neighbourhood health models, health inequalities, and the future of independent patient voice in Oxfordshire—all of which intersect directly with mental health outcomes and involve the need for effective mental health services.

Through this cumulative programme of work, the Committee demonstrated that its scrutiny of mental health is not episodic, but embedded, strategic, and responsive, supporting both immediate service improvement and longer term system transformation in line with its statutory responsibilities and the priorities set out by elected Members through the Council’s motion on mental health.

5 Looking ahead to 2026/27



As the Committee looks ahead to the 2026–27 municipal year, it does so in the context of ongoing pressure across the health and care system, alongside ongoing organisational reform in the NHS, financial constraint and rising demand. These pressures reinforce the importance of robust, independent and locally grounded scrutiny. The Committee remains committed to providing constructive, evidence based challenge that supports improvement while safeguarding outcomes for Oxfordshire residents.



Co opted Members and Strengthening Expertise

The Committee places significant value on the contribution of its co opted members, whose professional expertise, lived experience and independent perspective strengthen the quality, credibility and depth of scrutiny. As the Committee’s remit continues to encompass increasingly complex clinical, operational and patient experience issues, the role of co-optees in supporting informed, inclusive and rigorous challenge is ever more important.

The Committee is in the process of actively recruiting one more additional coopted member (to fill in the last vacant co-optee post). The aim is to ensure that co opted representation remains relevant to the Committee’s work programme and reflective of the communities and service users affected by the decisions under scrutiny. This includes considering the balance of skills, experience and perspectives needed to support scrutiny effectively, particularly in relation to safeguarding, disability, neurodiversity, health inequalities and patient experience.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in ScrutinyCo-optees:

Practising and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will remain integral to the Committee’s approach—not as a standalone consideration, but as a lens through which all scrutiny activity is undertaken. The Committee recognises that many of the most persistent system pressures disproportionately affect people experiencing disadvantage, including disabled people, neurodivergent people, people living in deprivation, and communities facing barriers to access.



The Committee will therefore continue to:

- ▶ Test how system plans and service changes impact different population groups; through monitoring the implementation of the JHOSC’s recommendations that any systemic level changes (including ICB restructures and the emerging Neighbourhood Health Plan) do not reduce the availability or efficacy of health and care services for local residents in Oxfordshire.
- ▶ Ensure that scrutiny considers the needs and experiences of seldom heard communities through continued focusing on items of relevance to services that ethnic minority or disabled residents with comorbidities heavily rely on (including mental health, learning disability, and maternity services).

- ▶ Promote meaningful engagement with people with lived experience as part of service improvement activity through continuing to examine the degree to which coproduction is at the heart of any service development/ improvement. This is particularly crucial for mental health, learning disability, and maternity services.

This commitment will continue to underpin scrutiny of areas such as neighbourhood health, primary care access, mental health, learning disability and autism services, maternity care and prevention—helping ensure that system level decisions translate into equitable outcomes at community level.



Priorities for Future Scrutiny

In developing its forward work programme for 2026–27, the Committee will retain flexibility to respond to emerging risks and intelligence, while maintaining a focus on issues where continued scrutiny is likely to add the greatest value. Areas will be decided by the Committee's work programme and areas expected to merit continued or future scrutiny include:

- ▶ **Independent Patient Voice**, and how that can be exercised in a meaningful way consistent with local democratic values through a structure of local governance across local authority and NHS settings.
- ▶ **Children and adult mental health services**, with continued focus on access, waiting times, quality and outcomes, and the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention support and with appropriate mental health estate suitable for the 21st century. This will align with, and help track progress against areas of concern raised by the Council motion on mental health referenced earlier in this report.
- ▶ **Primary care access and sustainability**, including the interaction between estates, workforce capacity and commissioning decisions. Given primary care's role as the front door to the system, consistent pressure in this area has wide ranging implications for access, inequalities and demand on acute services. The Committee has planned scrutiny of Dentistry because alongside access to GPs this is a high priority for the public.
- ▶ **Neighbourhood based models of care**, including how neighbourhood health arrangements are implemented in practice, how communities experience them, and whether they reduce pressure elsewhere in the system. Ongoing scrutiny is essential to ensure neighbourhood working delivers tangible, place based improvements with local communities rather than becoming a purely structural reform.
- ▶ **Maternity, autism and learning disability services, and epilepsy** where concerns around safety, access, waiting times and lived experience require long term oversight rather than one off examination. These services are high impact, high risk and often involve people at their most vulnerable.
- ▶ **Urgent and emergency care pressures and system flow**, including discharge, community capacity and workforce sustainability. Continued scrutiny will be important where pressures risk becoming normalised rather than addressed.
- ▶ **Prevention, population health and health inequalities**, including Oxfordshire's Marmot Place commitments. Scrutiny in this area is vital to ensure that strategic ambitions translate into measurable reductions in inequality over time.
- ▶ **The ongoing implementation of NHS reform** and the three planned shifts from hospital to community; analogue to digital and sickness to prevention; with critical consideration of the implications of system level restructuring for place based leadership, democratic accountability and engagement with local authorities and communities.



Continuing the Committee's Role

Overall, the Committee enters the next municipal year with a clear and consistent sense of purpose. It will continue to act as a constructive “critical friend” to system partners—supporting improvement and generating scrutiny outcomes which add value while providing challenge where assurance is insufficient.

The health scrutiny landscape is very broad, multi-layered and complex. The County Council officer support and elected members involved in scrutiny at place are also serving to scrutinise health at the Thames Valley ICB level. All upper-tier local authorities within the new Thames Valley footprint of the ICB will be required to establish a new Thames Valley JHOSC that corresponds to the new geographical ICB boundaries.

In the context of Local Government Reorganisation, the importance and the value of health scrutiny cannot be overstated. The JHOSC will play a central role in continuing to ensure that health and care services continue to serve the best interests of residents at a time of significant change and reform.

To sustain this work, it is vital that the demands on and the capacity of the Committee is understood and not over stretched; that the contribution from district as well as County local members continues to be valued alongside co opted expertise.

By embedding equality and inclusion, and maintaining focus on high impact areas of scrutiny, the Committee aims to remain an effective, credible and trusted part of Oxfordshire's health and care governance landscape.



6 Contacting Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee

If you would like to contact Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee with suggestions, ideas or comments please email scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Meetings of its committees are open to the public and are livestreamed, the link to which can be found on the relevant meeting agenda which can be accessed from this page:

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

We also welcome members of the public sharing their views on relevant items on the agenda in person or via Teams.

To know what is coming to a particular committee it is possible to register for updates via :

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ielogon.aspx?lp=1&RPID=1954675&HPID=1954675&Forms=1&META=mgSubscribeLogon>

For further information on the Committee, and its work, see the links and contact details below:

[Committee details - Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny](#)



Contact Officer: Dr Omid Nouri,
Scrutiny Officer (Health)

omid.nouri@oxfordshire.gov.uk

- Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
- Thames Valley JHOSC
- Also supports and coordinates the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board



Tom Hudson,
Scrutiny Manager

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Divisions Affected - All

COUNCIL 30 JUNE 2026

REPORT FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is **RECOMMENDED** to:
 - a) Approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution as recommended by the Constitution Working Group and Audit and Governance Committee, as set out Appendix 1, including amendment number 11;
 - b) Note the amendments undertaken by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, in accordance with Part 7.2 of the Constitution (Scheme of Delegation to Officers), paragraph 6.4 (t) and considered by the Constitution Working Group and Audit and Governance Committee; as set out in Appendix 2;
 - c) Request the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to ensure the necessary changes are made; and
 - d) Note that a final edit of the Constitution covering layout and grammar will be undertaken prior to publication.

Executive Summary

1. Following the re-establishment of the Constitution Working Group (CWG), four meetings of the CWG were held to discuss proposed changes and improvements to the Constitution. Meetings of the CWG were held on 2 February, 6 March, 16 and 28 April 2026, respectively. The findings and recommendations for those sessions have been considered by Audit and Governance Committee. A progress update report was considered on 11 Mar 2026. The list of changes was considered and endorsed for submission to Council by Audit and Governance Committee on 20 May 2026.
2. This report sets out the findings and conclusions of those discussions and seeks the approval of Council so that the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution can be made. The details of which are set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

Report

3. On 26 November 2025 Audit and Governance Committee agreed to re-establish the Constitution (Member) Working Group. It was reported to that meeting that the Council has a duty to keep its Constitution under review and that one would be undertaken. The review covered the relevant codes and protocols, the procedure rules for committees, as well as general corrections, updates, amendments, and any developments required to the Constitution following legislative changes and arrangements. Given a Constitution Working Group had previously served as a vital forum for cross-party engagement and consensus-building on matters relating specifically to the review and updating of the Council's Constitution, the working group was re-established with cross-party support.
4. CWG has considered a number of changes and suggestions, with time built for Party Group discussions and feedback. These include recommendations made by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer as well as suggestions from Members. The changes from the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring are set out in Appendix 2, and provide clarity to content, update memberships and descriptions as well as some committee terms of reference, through to correcting grammatical and formatting anomalies. It should be noted that the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to undertake such changes. This authority is set out in Part 7.2 of the Constitution (Scheme of Delegation to Officers), paragraph 6.4 (t); which states the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer is authorised to:

“make textual amendments to the Constitution to address any inconsistencies or correct any cross-referencing errors arising from or as a consequence of the amendments, along with updating job and group titles if those referred to in the Constitution are obsolete (insofar as the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer does not already have such a delegation);”.
5. In view of the Monitoring Officer's delegation, a number of the amendments have already been made to the Constitution. Appendix 2 lists those changes in order to provide transparency.
6. The CWG also considered a number of more significant changes which, required Member consideration prior to submission to Council for final approval. These relate to changes to the Council's Key Decision arrangements, as set out in Appendix 1.
7. The Key Decision definition has been revised to simplify the arrangements. Additional text has been included to explain the process for dealing with key decisions and the publication of decisions. The Council's management structure has been updated, as set out in Part 7.1 of the Constitution. In Part 7.2, the Officer Scheme of Delegation has been strengthened to cover technical issues as well as to provide transparency on the powers delegated to officers.

8. CWG considered a number of matters associated with Council meeting arrangements. These include the number of motions and the order, the petition scheme, as well as Council meeting start and finish times. The time allocated to guest speakers was also discussed. These are set out in Appendix 1, amendments 7, 8, 9 and 10. Whilst the CWG was of the view that it was appropriate to bring the start time of Council forward, the consensus was that the finish time should not be changed. CWG was of the view that the time allocation for individual items on the Council agenda as currently adopted, should remain the same, noting the Chair's discretion. It was agreed that these measures, as well as a general commitment to focus the debate, would provide Council with sufficient time to work through its business. The change to the order of Party Group motions as they appear on the Council agenda, reflects current convention, which is by way of rotation. In the event that not all the Party Group motions listed on the Council agenda are considered, a new approach is proposed to the order of motions as they appear on the Council agenda. This is covered in more detail in paragraph 10 below.
9. The changes set out in the attached Appendices 1 and 2, include summary comments explaining the rationale behind the proposed changes. More detailed changes are attached as separate Annexes to Appendix 2. Annexes 1-4 are extracts from the relevant sections of the Constitution and show the changes in a tracked change format.
10. Unfortunately, one of the proposed changes was inadvertently omitted from the Audit and Governance Committee agenda on 20 May 2026. This relates to the order of Group Motions and how they appear on the Council agenda. It suggests that in the unlikely event that not all the group motions are considered, the order of rotation will commence with the group whose motion was due to be discussed next. This was accepted by CWG. Whilst Audit and Governance Committee did not formally consider that change, all members of Audit and Governance Committee have been notified, and no objections have been received. This change can be found in Appendix 1, amendment number 11.
11. It should be noted that prior to publication of the Constitution, the content will be fully reviewed for grammar and layout. This approach was supported and welcomed by the CWG.

Financial Implications

12. There are no direct financial implications directly relating to, or arising from, the recommendations in this report.

Checked by: Drew Hodgson
Strategic Finance Business Partner – Resources, FRCS and
TDCE

Legal Implications

13. The recommendations set out in this report are consistent with the Council's duty under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 to have a constitution and to keep it up to date. The Constitution must contain (a) a copy of the authority's standing orders, (b) a copy of the authority's code of conduct (if any) under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 and (c) such information as the Secretary of State may direct, and (d) such other information (if any) as the authority considers appropriate.
14. The Council's Constitution must comply with The Local Government Act 2000 (Constitutions)(England) Direction 2000 issued on 12 December 2000 by the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Part 1.2 of the Council's Constitution at 2(a) confirms that adopting and changing the Constitution is reserved for approval by the Council.

Checked by: Jay Akbar
Head of Legal and Governance Services (Deputy
Monitoring Officer)

Equality & Inclusion Implications

15. The recommendations in this report do not in themselves raise equality implications. However, keeping the Constitution up to date is important to its accessibility. The recommendation for bringing forward proposals for reviewing the Constitution recognises that any such proposals would involve consultation with elected members. Furthermore, as part of the review officers are currently reviewing the guidance provided on the Council's website in relation to public engagement in the Council's formal decision-making arrangements.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Dave Burn, Chief Governance Officer (Interim),
dave.burn@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2026

List of recommended changes for approval

Oxfordshire CC Constitution

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 1.2 How Oxfordshire County Council operates			
1	Section 2 Fourth para amend (m) Council	A full list of the responsibilities of Council is set out below. Only the Council will exercise these functions: agreeing to the creation of new posts established with an annual salary exceeding £100,000; and	Amendment made due to the proposal in 2 below <i>(See also changes to be made by the MO in Appendix 1)</i>
2	Section 2 Fourth para NEW (n) renumber existing (n) (o)	the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women and the granting of the Freedom of the County; and	Provides clarity and highlights existing arrangements and function of Council. (See 1 above)
Part 1.3 Decision Making			
3	Paragraph 3 (b) Key Decisions	A decision taker may only take a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Cabinet Procedure Rules and Access to Information Rules in this Constitution. Regulations define a “key decision” as “an	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>executive decision which is likely to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the County.” The regulations authorise local authorities to determine their own definitions, building on the guidance provided in the regulations, as highlighted above.</p> <p>The Proper Officer in determining the meaning of significant will take into account of any guidance from the Secretary of State.</p> <p>In assisting tThe Proper Officer in determining the meaning of significant, it has been defined ‘significant’ as being one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of the annual revenue budget for the relevant service block (i.e. that part of the Council’s total revenue budget allocated to the Cabinet Member for the service area concerned) Revenue expenditure of £1m or more, or • Expenditure of £2m or more in the case of capital expenditure; • A decision that significantly impacts or 25% of the people living or working in two or more divisions. in the area affected; or 	

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>• or frequency or hours of operation of a service or facility.</p> <p>(Move to unnumbered para 5) Whilst it is lawful for officers to be able to take key decisions, the working rule is that key decisions will routinely be taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members unless Cabinet or a Cabinet Member has delegated a decision to an officer, which may, depending on the circumstances, amount to a key decision in its own right. Whoever makes a key decision will need to comply with the key decision requirements by providing formal notification on the Forward Plan, together with a decision report that properly sets out the considerations for the decision including any financial and legal implications. Given the public nature of the decision making involved and the work involved in drafting a report it is considered appropriate that these decisions are taken in the main by Members. Officers taking a key decision within this definition may only do so after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>NEW UNNUMBERED 6</p> <p>All key decisions should be published in advance on the Council’s Forward Plan. Legally, at least 28 days’ notice must be given before a key decision can be taken (unless there are exceptional, or urgent, reasons otherwise, in which case other Constitutional provisions apply). The</p>	

No	Part	Change	Comments
		Forward Plan process is essential to enable transparency to the public. Key decisions are also subject to call-in under the Council's scrutiny rules and, as such, decisions cannot be implemented until the call-in timeframe has passed.	
4	Paragraph 3 (c) Executive and Non-Executive Decisions	An executive decision other than a key decision can be taken by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, an Individual Member of the Cabinet or an officer. Please refer to paragraph 5 above. Non-executive decisions are those decisions which relate to non-executive functions and are those which are set out in this Constitution and can be taken by a Council C committee or S sub- C committee or an officer.	Provides clarification and aligns with above
5	Paragraph 5 Decision Making by Officers	Decisions taken by officers on executive matters will be recorded by the Council. In order to ensure that decisions that materially affect the Council's position are published, all decisions over £100,000 will be published. (Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.)	Provides clarity of current requirements. See also 1 above.
Part 3.1 Council Procedure Rules			
6	NEW paragraph 3.4 Extraordinary Meetings	The appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women and the granting of the Freedom of the County may be held at an Extraordinary meeting of the Council.	Provides clarity and highlights existing arrangements and function of Council.

No	Part	Change	Comments
7	Paragraph 5.1	<p>Suggested revision:</p> <p>5. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS</p> <p>5.1 All meetings of the Council will:</p> <p>(i) take place in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Oxford;</p> <p>(ii) Commence 10.030 am;</p> <p>(iii) be adjourned for lunch around 1 pm and finish by 3.30 pm;</p> <p>subject to the Chair, after consultation with Group Leaders where appropriate, varying any or all of the above. In all cases, the date, place and start time shall be set out in the summons to the meeting.</p>	
8	Paragraph 10.1.1 (i) Petitions	<p>“Any person (other than a member of the Council) may present a petition at a Council meeting provided that: the petition relates the council’s functions or to the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area;” is relevant to a function which the Local Authority has a responsibility for and/or directly affects the County or its inhabitants</p>	Provides clarity
9	NEW paragraph 10.3.3 Chair’s discretion	<p>In the event of guest speakers being invited by the Chair to address Council, the maximum speaking time allotted may be increased by the Chair, subject to prior</p>	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		consultation with the Leaders and the Proper Officer.	
10	Paragraph 13.2.1 Motions set out in the Agenda	Each political group shall have only one motion on the agenda at a meeting. Where two or more motions have been submitted by members of the a same group, the Group Leader shall notify the Proper Officer, within 24 hours of the deadline for receipt of motions having passed, which motion is to be taken on the agenda. If no such notice has been received, the first motion received will be taken.	Provides clarity.
11	Paragraph 13.2.2	Motions for the agenda will be listed in the order in which notice was received by the Proper Officer, subject to one motion from each political group, being considered in the order determined by the Chair in consultation with the Group Leaders; The order of group motions will be listed on rotation, as is the current convention, meaning that the group that appears first on the list motions for a meeting of Council, will appear last at the next meeting, and so on. In the unlikely event that not all the group motions are considered, the order of rotation will commence with the group whose motion was due to be discussed next. Any change to the order of motions will be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Group Leaders;	Considered and agreed by CWG on 28 April 2026 but omitted in error from the report to Audit and Governance Committee on 20 May 2025. Members of Audit and Governance Committee and CWG have been notified.
12	Paragraphs 13.2.1 – 13.2.4	Number paragraphs correctly – 13.2.1 – 13.2.4	Correction

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 4.1 The Cabinet and Current Membership of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet			
13	Paragraph 3 Leader	<p>The Leader will be a Councillor elected by the Council to that position. This will normally be at the Annual Meeting following whole council elections which are held every four years. The Leader will hold office for the full four year remaining term of the Council unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) they resign from the office; or (b) they are no longer a councillor; or (c) on the expiry date of their fixed term of office as Leader which is the date of the post-election annual meeting which follows their election as Leader; or (d) or they are removed from office by resolution of the Council. <p>In the event that the circumstances in (a) to (c) above occur to create a vacancy in the office of leader of the council, an election to fill the vacancy will be taken at the next ordinary meeting of the Council or at an extraordinary meeting of the Council. In the case of (c) the election to fill the vacancy should occur, where possible, at the same meeting at which the resolution removing the leader is passed. The newly elected leader will remain in office for the remaining term of the Council subject to paragraphs 3(a) to (c).</p>	<p>Makes the position legally compliant, in accordance with the LG Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 2000 as amended.</p> <p><i>Subject to the approval of Council, the paragraph numbering will be sorted when the Constitution is amended. Hence reference to paragraph X (a) – (c).</i></p>

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>In the event of (d) above and the Council passes a resolution to remove the Leader, a new Leader is to be elected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) at the meeting at which the Leader is removed from office; or (b) at a subsequent meeting; or (c) at an extraordinary meeting of the Council called for that purpose <p>The Leader may be removed from office by resolution of the Council on notice of a Motion to Council and approved, without amendment, by the Council. Any such Motion must be delivered to the Proper Officer in writing at least ten working days before the date of the meeting at which it is to be addressed. If the Council passes such a resolution, a new Leader is to be elected in accordance with paragraph x (a) – (c) above.</p>	
14	<p>NEW Paragraph 4</p> <p>Deputy Leader</p> <p>Re-number following paragraphs accordingly</p>	<p>The Leader will appoint at least one of the Cabinet Members as Deputy Leader, who will hold office until the end of the Leader’s term of office, unless they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resign as Deputy Leader, • cease to be a councillor; or • are removed from office by the Leader. <p>Where a vacancy occurs, the Leader must appoint another Deputy Leader. The Deputy Leader must, if for any</p>	<p>Makes the position legally compliant, in accordance with the LG Act 1972 and places into separate paragraph.</p>

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>reason the Leader is unable to act or the office of Leader becomes vacant (and pending the election of a new Leader by the Council), discharge all roles and functions of the Leader. If, for any reason, both the Leader and Deputy Leader are unable to act or both positions become vacant, the Cabinet must act in the Leader’s place or must arrange for another Cabinet Member to act in their place.</p>	
15	<p>Existing paragraph 4, renumber 5</p> <p>Other Cabinet Members</p>	<p>In addition to the Deputy Leader, the Leader will appoint a maximum of eight members to serve as Other Cabinet Members. The Leader will maintain and publish a list of portfolio responsibilities of the individual Cabinet Members, which will be shall be Councillors appointed by the Leader and notified to the Council. One of the other Cabinet Members will be designated as Deputy Leader. Cabinet Members will hold office until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) they resign from office; or (b) they are no longer councillors; or (c) they are removed from office by the Leader of the Council who must give written notice of any removal to the Proper Officer in writing or by e-mail. The removal will take effect two working days after receipt of notice by the Proper Officer. 	<p>Makes the position legally compliant, in accordance with the LG Act 1972.</p>

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 7.2 Scheme of Delegation to Officers			
16	Paragraph 3.4 Recording of Delegations and Decisions	<p>Any decision of an officer having material substantive effect shall be recorded in such a manner that all those who may have an interest in that decision have certain knowledge of its effect. Additionally, in order to ensure that decisions that materially affect the Council's position are published, all decisions over £100,000 will be published. (Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.)</p> <p>Any key decision shall be recorded as required by the Access to Information Rules and notification given in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules at Part 6.2 of this Constitution.</p>	Provides clarity of current requirements.
Part 9.5 Protocol on Member/Officer Relations			
17	NEW paragraph 7.4 Contact Between Members and Officers	<p>When officers are communicating with an individual member, they should exercise discretion and respect confidentiality. Officers should refrain from automatically copying such communication with other members, including those of other groups, and/or the relevant portfolio holder. Officers need to be vigilant when receiving email chain correspondence. If in doubt, officers should seek the express consent of the member concerned.</p>	Provides clarity

No	Part	Change	Comments
18	<p>NEW paragraph 7.5</p> <p>Contact Between Members and Officers</p>	<p>Members may occasionally wish to refer their constituents to officers directly. Members should not ordinarily pass on officer details without the consent of the officer, certainly not those of junior officers (officers below grade 10). Service numbers that are available on the Council’s website and/or in the public domain can be given. If in doubt, members should check with the officer or team concerned.</p>	<p>Provides clarity</p>

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Changes to be made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority

Oxfordshire CC Constitution

In addition to those listed below, the Constitution will be checked prior to publication of the final version for layout, numbering, general formatting, job titles and grammatical errors.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Part 1.1 The Oxfordshire County Council Constitution		
1	Paragraph 4.1 (c) and (d) Review of the Constitution	(c) record and analyse issues raised with the Monitoring Officer by Councillors, officers, the public and other relevant stakeholders; and (d) compare practices in the authority with those in other comparable authorities, or and national examples of best practice	Provides clarity
2	Paragraph 6 (b) Publication of the Constitution	(b) The Monitoring Officer will ensure that copies of the Constitution are available for inspection at council offices, libraries and other appropriate locations, and is available electronically on the Council's public website and can be purchased by Councillors members of the local press and the public on payment of a reasonable fee.	It would appear that 'Councillors' was inserted following a generic change. The rest of the constitution will be checked.

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 1.2 How Oxfordshire County Council Operates			
3	Section 1, first paragraph Councillors	Oxfordshire County Council comprises 69 3 County Councillors, due to an increase to 69 Councillors from May 2025, elected every four years (beginning 2001). The terms of office of Councillors will start on the fourth day after being elected and will finish on the fourth day after the date of the next regular election. If that date falls on a Bank Holiday, the terms will start and finish on the next day that is not a Bank Holiday (Local Government Act 1972, Section 243(1)). County Councillors are democratically accountable to the residents of their electoral division. The overriding duty of County Councillors is to the whole community of Oxfordshire, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.	Provides clarity.
4	Section 2, second paragraph Council	The Council is responsible for appointing the Leader of the Council and various committees: some of these committees are responsible for overseeing and reviewing the decisions of the Cabinet on behalf of the Council; others have statutory non-executive responsibilities to discharge. Further details of the committees of the Council are summarised below. More detailed information can be found in Parts 4, 5 and 6 of this Constitution. A full list of the responsibilities of Council is set out below.	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
5	Section 2, fourth paragraph	A full list of the responsibilities of Council is set out below. Only the Council will exercise these following functions:	Provides clarity.
6	Table 2.A How Oxfordshire County Council operates	Plan/strategy	Required as a result of changes made by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which have only recently come into effect
		Local Development Scheme and Development Plan Documents (including Minerals and Waste) Minerals and Waste Plan	
7	Section 3, third paragraph (f) and (h) The Chair of Council	(f) speaks for the Council as a whole where there is unanimity on non-political issues, particularly on public occasions;	Provides clarity.
8		(h) Where the Council has expressed its wish, does not speak publicly unless explicitly requested to do so by the Council, save in accordance in accordance with the declared wish of the Council. See (f) above;	See above.
9	Section 4, first paragraph Cabinet	The Cabinet is the part of the Country Council which is responsible.....	The explanation is not required.
10	Section 4, second paragraph	Many of the day-to-day decisions on these matters will, in practice, be taken by sub-committees comprising of Ecouncillors or by professional officers acting in	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		accordance with the delegation arrangements described later.	
11	Section 6 Overview and Scrutiny Committees	These committees monitor the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and assist with policy development. This is done, in part, by reviewing the actions of the Cabinet, and the other including Cabinet Sub-Committees, by holding and may call them to account. Non-Cabinet members can (subject to certain rules) require decisions of the Cabinet to be 'called in' for review by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. The committee may recommend that the Cabinet reconsider the decision, although the final decision will still remain with the Cabinet.	Provides clarity
12	Section 8 The County Council's Staff	The County Council employs professional staff (or 'officers') to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the County Council acts within the law and uses its resources effectively and efficiently. wisely.	Provides clarity.
Part 1.3 Decision Making			
13	Paragraph 4 Decision Making by Council Bodies Acting as Tribunals	The Council, a C committee or S sub- C committee of the Council, a C councillor or an officer acting as a tribunal or in a quasi-judicial manner.....	Grammar.

No	Part	Change	Comments
14	Paragraph 5 Decision Making by Officers	The d Decisions taken by officers on executive matters will be recorded by the Council.	Grammar.
Part 3.1 Council Procedure Rules			
15	Paragraph 1.1.2 (iv) Annual Meeting of Council and the same change in Ordinary Meetings Paragraph 2.2 (ii)	approve the minutes of the last meeting. and receive for information any matters arising from them	To consider matters arising from the minutes would be contrary to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as now incorporated into the Local Government Act 1972).
16	Paragraph 1.1.2 (x) Timing and Business	“be deemed to have appointed, as substitute alternate members for each member of the Council appointed to a committee, all those members of that member’s political group who are not for the time being members of that committee, save that only Members of the Cabinet shall be deemed to have been appointed as substitute alternate members for other Members of the Cabinet and only non-Cabinet members shall be deemed to have been appointed as substitute alternate members for other non-Cabinet members on scrutiny committees;”	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
17	Paragraph 2.1 (a) Ordinary Meetings	Ordinary Meetings and Budget Council a) normally be held on the second third Tuesday in February (the budget meeting);	Provides clarity
18	Paragraph 3.1 amend (iv) and remove existing (v) Extraordinary Meetings	any ten five Members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Chair of the Council and they have refused to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition at least one third of the Members of the Council if they have signed a requisition presented to the Chair of the Council to move a motion for the removal of the Leader of the Council.	Makes the position legally compliant, in accordance with the LG Act 1972.
19	Paragraph 3.4	The Chair may exercise his discretion	Correction
20	Paragraph 4.2 (iv) Substitution	subject to the completion of any training requirements specified by the Monitoring Officer	Provides clarity
21	Paragraph 6 Notice of and Summons to Meetings	The Proper Officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Proper Officer will send a summons signed by him or her by post and electronic mail to every member of the Council or leave it at an	Clarifies the current position.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		agreed designated place for collection. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted; and will be accompanied by such reports as are available. A copy of the notice will be placed on public inspection and be available online.	
22	Paragraph 8.2 Attendance	Members attending virtually at Council and members of statutory committees attending virtually at the committee are not legally considered to be present and therefore unable must not to vote, do not count towards the quorum and will not normally be entitled to must not speak at the meeting. The chair of Council or a committee may agree exceptions to this the speaking rule to allow Members to speak virtually.	Provides clarity. Paragraphs will be reformatted.
23	Paragraph 10.5 (i) Petitions and Request to Address Council Chair's Discretion	City and District Councillors be given their own speaking slot at meetings of the County Council's Planning & Regulation Committee at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee and normally only where County Councillors enjoyed a similar privilege at District and City planning meetings;	Grammar.
24	Paragraph 10.5 (ii) Chair's Discretion	where that reciprocal arrangement was is not in place then District and City Councillors would will retain the right to apply alongside other members of the public.	Grammar

No	Part	Change	Comments
25	Paragraph 11.2 Questions by the Public Order of Questions	Subject to the maximum time allowed for public questions at any one meeting being 30 minutes, questions will normally be listed and asked in the order they were notice of them was received by the Proper Officer. It should be noted that the Chair has the discretion to except that the Chair may group similar questions together. Where this happens the order in which the questions are listed and asked may vary from the order in which they were received.	Provides clarity
26	Paragraph 11.4 Number of Questions	At any one meeting no person or organisation may submit more than one question. and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of any one organisation.	Provides clarity
27	Paragraph 11.8 Written Answers	Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the member of the public or representative of an organisation, by to whom it was to be put, will be deemed dealt with by the provision of a written answer.	Provides clarity
28	Paragraph 12.2.1 Questions on Notice at Full Council	Subject to Rule 12.3, a member of the Council may ask up to 3 questions at ordinary meetings of the Council with notice, on any matters to which the Council has powers or duties affecting the County of: (i) To the Leader of the Council; (ii) To other Members of the Cabinet; or	Provides clarity

No	Part	Change	Comments
		(iii) To the Chair of a scrutiny or other council committee; at ordinary meetings of the Council on any matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affects the County.	
29	Paragraph 12.2.2	Subject to the maximum number of questions from any member being 3, the time allowed for Councillors' questions with notice at any one meeting being 30 minutes, questions will be listed and asked in the order they were notice of them was received by the Proper Officer. except that the Chair may group together similar questions; It should be noted that the Chair has the discretion to group similar questions together. Where this happens the order in which the questions are listed and asked may vary from the order in which they were received.	Provides clarity.
30	Paragraph 12.3.3 (iv) Notice of Questions	If answering a question would require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information, then the Proper Officer will shall reply to the member in an appropriate writing in a confidential manner;	Provides clarity.
31	Paragraph 12.3.4	In all cases the final decision on whether a question is appropriate falls to the Chair of the Council, having regard to the advice of the Proper Officer.	Provides clarity and tightens the process.
32	Paragraph 12.4	The Proper Officer will record enter each question in a which will be stored electronically and be book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the	Reflects current arrangements.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Record of decisions	question to the member to whom it is to be put. That Member must give her/his reply to the Proper Officer by 10 am on the second working day before the meeting. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all accepted questions and replies will be circulated to all Councillors on the day prior to the meeting and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.	
33	Paragraph 12.6.3 Response to Supplementary Question	where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally at the meeting , a written answer subsequently circulated later to the questioner and copied to all Members of the Council.	Provides clarity.
34	Paragraph 13.1.2 Motions On Notice Notice	A motion which, in the opinion of the Chair, following advice from the Monitoring Officer, does not comply with offends against the requirements in Rule 13.3 (Scope) shall be excluded from the agenda. but In such cases the member who gave notice of the motion , it shall first be advised and allowed the opportunity to modify the motion to make it acceptable.	Provides clarity.
35	Paragraph 13.5.6 Treatment of Motions	A motion to amend a motion of which notice has been given under this Rule shall only be considered only if it is presented to the Proper Officer in writing or electronic mail by 9.00 am two working days before the meeting.	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
36	Paragraph 14.1 NEW xii and renumber thereafter Motions Without Notice	The following motions may be proposed without notice: NEW xii to provide a personal explanation or point of order;	Corrects an omission.
37	Paragraph 15.2 Rules of Debate Right to require Motion in Writing	Unless notice of a motion has already been given, the Chair may require it to be written down and presented to the Chair handed to him/her before it is discussed.	Clarification.
38	Paragraph 15.3 Secunder's Speech	A member seconding a motion or amendment may reserve their right to speak her/his speech until later in the debate but shall lose the right to speak if a motion under Rule 14.1 (vii) "that the question be now put" is carried	Provides clarity.
39	Paragraph 15.4.1 Content and Length of Speeches	Speeches must be directed to the motion under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order and it shall be the duty of the Chair to stop discussion which the Chair considers in her/his judgement, is irrelevant.	Provides clarity.
40	NEW paragraph 15.4.3	The time limits in 15.4.2 above will be subject to these time limits being extended at the February (or budget setting) meeting to ten minutes and five minutes respectively, when discussing the budget.	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
41	NEW paragraph 15.4.4	In subject to in all cases, the Chair of the Council will have the discretion to limit the number of persons who may speak on any issue and the order of speaking in the best interests of the efficiency of the meeting. The Chair shall have regard to the advice of the Proper Officer.	Provides clarity.
42	Paragraph 15.6.1 after (ii) Amendments to Motions	but any such amendment shall not have the effect of introducing a substantially different proposal into , or negating the whole motion. The amendment must not take the original motion over 250 words.	Provides clarity.
43	Paragraph 15.6.2	Only one amendment will be moved and discussed at any one time, unless the Chair determines otherwise (such as grouping amendments together) to allow for the efficient running of business. No further amendment will be moved until the amendment under discussion has been dealt with unless, in the view of the Chair, the efficient consideration despatch of business would be assisted if two or more amendments were debated simultaneously before being put (separately) to the vote.	Provides clarity.
44	Paragraph 15.6.8	After an amendment has been carried, the Chair will ensure that members Councilors are clear on the wording of the amended motion and, if necessary, read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments or, if there are none, putting it to the vote.	Provides consistency.
45	Paragraph 15.8	A motion or amendment once proposed shall not be withdrawn except with the agreement of the mover and seconder and the consent of the Council. The meeting's	Provides clarity

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Withdrawal of Motion	consent will be signified without discussion. No member may speak on the withdrawn motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.	
46	Paragraph 15.9.4 Right of Reply	A member exercising a right of reply shall not introduce new matters.	Grammar.
47	Paragraph 15.11.1 Closure Motions	A member who has not already spoken may move, without comment, at the end of a speech of another member 'that Council moves the vote the question be now put'.	Provides clarity.
48	Paragraph 15.14.1 Time Limit for Debate	Each debate on a motion (including any amendments) shall be subject to a time limit, which shall be determined by the Chair following publication of the agenda and following consultation with Group Leaders. at the pre-meeting briefing meeting. The respective time limits shall be determined having regard to the overall content of the agenda and on the basis of an initial presumption of a maximum of 30 minutes for any one debate (excluding themed debates, where a maximum of 2 hours shall be applied), and shall be notified to members Councillors through the published Schedule of Business; provided that T he Chair may extend the time limit for debate on a motion if, during the debate, the Chair thinks it desirable to allow extra time for that debate but only to take up time gained on the early despatch of previous business. In such instances the Chair, will a At the conclusion of the time	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>allocated to a debate, the Chair will draw the attention of the meeting to this Rule. The debate will shall immediately be concluded as if the motion “that the question be now put” had been moved and carried in accordance with Rule 15.11.3 above, subject to the right of any seconder who has reserved their her/his speech until later having the right to speak before the rights of reply are exercised.</p>	
49	Paragraph 15.14.2	<p>Where an item on an agenda (for example the Report of the Cabinet) contains a number of items of business, or where items of business (for example Motions on Notice) have been grouped together on an agenda; each such item or grouping shall be deemed to constitute an individual ‘category’ of business. In such circumstances the Chair, following publication of the agenda and subsequent consultation with Group Leaders, shall determine an overall time limit to be applied to each such category. The time limits so allocated, shall be determined and notified in accordance with the arrangements set out at Rule 15.14.1 above. Any business which remains unfinished at the expiry of the time set down shall be deferred either to an adjourned meeting, to the next scheduled meeting or to an additional, extraordinary meeting. The destination of such deferred business shall be determined by the Chair. This does not apply to Motions of Notice received in accordance with Rule 13 above not proposed and seconded in accordance with Rule 15.1 above, which shall be considered to be dropped.</p>	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
50	Paragraph 17.4 Voting Recorded Vote	If the Chair or seven Councillors, by standing in their places, where possible , so require (whether before or after a show of hands or electronic vote, but before the next business has commenced) a named vote shall be taken when each member shall be called upon to register their vote electronically for or against the motion (or, if required by the Chair, saying 'yes', 'no' or 'abstain'). Where a member makes an error in registering their vote <u>they</u> may rectify the error provided this is done before the electronic vote has closed (or the next member has been called upon to vote). The Chair will clarify with Council that all Councillors have voted prior to closing the vote.	Provides clarity
51	Paragraph 18.1 Minutes Signing the Minutes	The Chair will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Chair will move that the minutes of the previous meeting(s) be signed as a correct record. There can be no discussion on the Minutes other than to consider The only part of the minutes that can be discussed at this point in the meeting is their accuracy.	Provides clarity.
52	Paragraph 18.3 Form of Minutes	Minutes are not a verbatim record and are prepared to provide a summary of the debate and to record the decisions. The Minutes will contain all motions and amendments in their exact form and in the order that they were put to the meeting.	Provides clarity.
53	Paragraph 20.1 Disturbance by Public	Removal of a Member of the Public If a member of the public interrupts proceedings at any meeting, the Chair shall issue a warning. warn her/him. If	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	<p>Removal of Member of the Public</p>	<p>they continue the interruption, the Chair will order them to leave the meeting room. If they do not leave, the Chair shall order them to be removed. If a member of the public persistently creates a disturbance, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for fifteen minutes or as long as they think necessary.</p>	
<p>54</p>	<p>Paragraph 21.3</p> <p>Councillors' Conduct</p> <p>Member not to be heard further</p>	<p>If a member in the opinion of the Chair, misconducts themselves her/himself by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair, by using offensive expressions or gestures, or by otherwise behaving improperly or obstructing the business of the meeting; the Chair may require that the member named to withdraws any offensive expression or gesture and may also move that the member named be not further heard. If seconded, this motion shall be put to a vote without debate. If carried, the member named shall not speak further at the meeting.</p>	<p>Provides clarity.</p>
<p>55</p>	<p>Paragraph 22.1</p> <p>Suspension and Amendment of Council Procedure Rules</p> <p>Suspension</p>	<p>All of these Council Rules of Procedure except Rule 17.5 and Rule 18.2 may be suspended by motion on notice or without notice if at least one half of the whole number of Members Councillors of the Council are present. If granted, the sssuspension will can only apply be for the duration of the meeting.</p>	<p>Provides clarity</p>

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 4.1 The Cabinet and Current Membership of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet			
56	Paragraph 6 Responsibility for Functions	Cabinet Member – Functions updated Similarly, the membership of the Cabinet and the Opposition Shadow Cabinet has been updated	Titles, names and responsibilities are updated to reflect the current position. <i>These are kept updated and administered by the MO under delegated powers.</i>
Part 4.2 Cabinet Procedure Rules			
57	Paragraph 3.2 Order of Questions	Subject to the maximum time allowed for councillors' questions with notice at any one meeting being 30 minutes, questions will be asked in the order they were notice of them was received by the Proper Officer; except that the Chair may group together similar questions. It should be noted that the Chair has the discretion to group similar questions together. Where this happens the order in which the questions are listed and asked may vary from the order in which they were received.	Brings into line with the suggested change to paragraph 12.2.2. (See 29 above)
58	Paragraph 3.4, second sub-para Number of Questions	The Chair may exercise his discretion around the number of questions, including multi-part questions a councillor may ask, where (taken together) these would not, in the Chair's view, take up the whole of the allotted time or otherwise prejudice any other constitutional rights.	Grammatical

No	Part	Change	Comments
59	Paragraphs 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 Record of Questions	Need to renumber as there are two 3.6.2s	Typing error
Part 4.3 Cabinet Committees			
60	NEW paragraph 3 and Appendix A Shareholder Committee	(3) Shareholder Committee The Shareholder Committee was established by Cabinet on 19 November 2024. The Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix A.	Shareholder Committee has been established. Clarifies the position. See Annex 1 attached.
Part 5.1A Membership of the Committees and Sub-Committees			
61	Para 1, sub para 42 Regulatory and other Committees - Audit and Governance Committee	After existing sub para 42 insert the following heading: Ethical Governance Sub paras 43-45 remain unchanged	Corrects an omission
62	Part 5.1D Membership of Other Joint Committees (Correction to the title)		

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 6.1A Overview and Scrutiny Committees			
63	Paragraph 1 Terms of Reference	<p>The Council will appoint three four Overview & Scrutiny committees as set out below.</p> <p><i>Membership details for the 4 Committees will also be updated.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> • <i>People Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> • <i>Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> • <i>Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> 	Provides clarity
64	Paragraph 5	<p>Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Its terms of reference will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council and to provide a focused review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting (b) Budget scrutiny (c) Local Government Reorganisation 	Updates terms of reference

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>(ii) To monitor the performance of the Council by means of effective key performance indicators, review of key action plans and obligations and through direct access to service managers, Cabinet Members and partners;</p> <p>(iii) To exercise the statutory right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet;</p>	
65	<p>Paragraph 6</p> <p>Place O&S Committee</p>	<p>Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have a membership of 9 county councillors. The membership will be politically proportional. Its terms of reference will be: Climate change, transport, highways, planning and place-based services. Including the delivery of regulatory services, fire and rescue, community safety and community services such as libraries. NB This Committee will act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder' Committee.</p> <p>be:</p> <p>i. To focus on the following key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Climate change b. Transport c. Highways and highway maintenance d. Planning and place-based services. This includes the delivery of regulatory services, fire and rescue, community safety, community services such as libraries 	Updates terms of reference

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="763 277 1447 344">ii. To act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder' Committee. <li data-bbox="763 395 1447 507">iii. To exercise the statutory right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet. 	
Part 6.1B The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Current Membership			
66	Paragraph 18	Under Regulation 26(2) of The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, where an NHS or health service provides, or arranges for the provision of, services to persons residing within the area of several local authorities, its duty under paragraph (1) will be satisfied if it provides information to the joint overview and scrutiny committee of those authorities. The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee qualifies as the joint health overview and scrutiny committee to be informed when a variation in services will affect residents across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Geography as a collective.	Clarification.

No	Part	Change	Comments
Part 6.2 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules			
67	Paragraph 19, sub-paragraphs z and z ii Call in (Exemption)	(z) The foregoing provisions of this Rule shall not apply to any decision of the Cabinet in the following situations: where either: ii. the decision is taken by the Cabinet after taking account of any recommendations or other comments by the Scrutiny Committee following a call-in of a decision taken previously by the Cabinet; or	Clarifies the sentence and current arrangements.
Part 7.1 Officers			
68	Part 7.1 Officers	Reflects the new officer structure	See Annex 2 attached. <i>Amendments 69 – 70 have been superseded by the changes shown in Annex 2 and are included for the purposes of transparency.</i>
69	Paragraph 2 c Functions of the statutory post of Head of Paid Service	Urgency. The Head of Paid Service is authorised to take any urgent action necessary to protect the Council's interests and assets where time is of the essence and it is impracticable to secure authority to act where such authority would otherwise be required. The Head of Paid Service, in so acting, will be guided by the Budget and the Policy Framework at Part 1.2 of this Constitution, will	Correction.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		consult the other Statutory Officers before acting and will report, in writing, as soon as practicable to the body which would otherwise have been required to give the necessary authority to act. Key decision procedures and call in procedures (Parts 8.1 and 6.2(19) of the Constitution) will apply to any key decisions taken under the this authorisation.	
70	Paragraph 3 b Functions of the statutory post of Monitoring Officer	Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making. After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with their statutory functions , will report to the Full Council or, in the case of an executive function, to the Cabinet, if they the Monitoring Officer considers that any proposal, decision or omission, has given, or would be likely to give rise to unlawfulness, or if any decision or omission has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered	Provides clarification.
	Part 7.2 Scheme of Delegation to Officers		
71	Part 7.2 Scheme of Delegation to Officers	Provides clarity and reflects the new officer structure	See Annex 3 attached <i>Amendments 72 – 75 have been superseded by the changes shown in Annex 3 and are included for the purposes of transparency.</i>

No	Part	Change	Comments
72	Paragraph 1.5 (f) Introduction	if when any exercise exercising a delegation an making is made to any part of the Constitution, relevant statute, legislation or by elaw, this shall not, of itself, invalidate the authorised delegation.	Provides clarification
73	Paragraph 2.1 (f) Principles of Delegation	Where an officer is absent from the workplace for a period of time which that requires others to exercise delegated authority in that officer's absence, another officer should be nominated by the Chief Executive. This nomination should be formally recorded in writing.	Provides clarification
74	Paragraph 2.1 (i)	Anything delegated to an officer is also delegated to the Chief Executive, other than the statutory functions assigned to the Monitoring Officer;	Provides clarification.
75	Paragraph 6.7 Specific Powers and Functions	For the avoidance of doubt, the delegation to the Director of Economy and Place is subject to consultation includes the power, jointly with the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, to determine applications for certificates of lawfulness of existing or proposed use or development.	Provides clarification.
Part 8.1 Access to Information Procedure Rules			
76	Paragraph 3 Rights to attend and Report on Meetings	Rights to Attend; and Report on; Meetings	Remove commas from heading.

No	Part	Change	Comments
77	Paragraph 14.2 Insert NEW b The Forward Plan Contents of the Forward Plan	New (b) renumber after whether the decision is to be considered in closed session, where it involves confidential or exempt information;	This is a legal requirement and one of the drivers for legislation governing it. Brings into line with 14.3 e
78	Paragraph 16 Special Urgency	If by virtue of the date by which a key decision must be taken Rule 15 (general exception) cannot be followed, then the decision can only be taken if the decision maker obtains the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred. If there is no Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, or if the Chair is unable to act, then the agreement of the Chair of the Council, or in their absence the Vice-Chair will suffice.	Clarification
79	Paragraph 20 Non-Cabinet Members	All members of the Council and the voting co-opted members of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be entitled to receive the Cabinet Forward Plan electronically each month when it is published. All members of the Council will, subject to the provisions of Section 7 of the Protocol on Councillors' Rights and Responsibilities set out at Part 9.2 of this Constitution, be entitled to receive the agenda for and minutes of each meeting of the Cabinet or a committee of the Cabinet. The voting co-opted members of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	Provides clarity and updates the name of the committee.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		Committee will be entitled to receive, subject to the provisions of Section 7 of the Protocol on Councillors' Rights and Responsibilities set out at Part 9.2 of this Constitution, any items on an agenda of the Cabinet or any Committee of the Cabinet which concern the discharge of any education functions.	
8.2 Financial Procedure Rules			
80	Paragraph 1.4 Introduction	In Part 7.1 of this Constitution, section 4(b) states that "the Director of Finance will have responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the council" under s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Part 7.2 then states at paragraph 4.1 that:	Grammar. Insert colon at end of sentence
81	Paragraph 5 – (renumber as not paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 Responsibilities of the Cabinet	Renumber 5.1 and 5.2	Correction as paragraphs (were) incorrectly numbered.
82	Paragraph 5.1 (12.1)	The Cabinet is responsible for making sure that there is effective financial planning within the council following advice from the Proper Officer.	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
83	Paragraph 6.2 Responsibilities of Councillors	All councillors must operate within the required accounting standards and timetables to ensure that all the Council's transactions, material commitments and contracts and other essential accounting information is are recorded completely, accurately and on a timely basis.	Provides clarity.
84	Paragraph 15.1 Financial Regulations	These Financial Procedure Rules set out the high-level principles and responsibilities which apply to all financial matters in the council. Regulations setting out the activities which should be undertaken in support of these financial standards are maintained on the council's intranet. The Financial Regulations contents list of Regulations is attached at Annex 1 below.	Financial regs are now published as part of the Constitution, in full.
8.3 Contract Procedure Rules			
85	Throughout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 5.4 – provides clarity around the route to market including below threshold direct award. • Rule 5.6 – reflects the updated thresholds under the Procurement Act • Rule 7.1 – to align the text with the heading and to expressly provide for the use of Framework/Dynamic Market conditions of contract. Under the current drafting we can include these “Council’s written conditions” but the amendment adds clarity. • Rule 9.7 – excludes the application of certain rules to agreements with statutory undertakers which are governed by the NRSWA 1991. Although technically 	Provides clarity. See Annex 4 attached.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>“contracts”, these arrangements (including sharing of costs) are governed by the Act. The Act imposes a statutory relationship between the Council and the statutory undertaker. Any terms and conditions or engagement accompanying the detailed estimates from the statutory undertakers which are inconsistent with the NRSWA have no legal force. Statutory Undertakers all have their own standard forms of detailed estimates that the council signs up to. These arrangements cannot be completely excluded from CPRs because they are not excluded from the Procurement Act 2023 but are covered under the direct award justification where above threshold and may be directly awarded where under threshold with the approval of the Procurement Team. It has only recently become apparent that these arrangements were being entered into by highways colleagues without regard to CPRs. Highway colleagues have been given advice from both Procurement & Legal services that these arrangements are caught under CPRs. However, under Rule 9.1 the Director of Law and Governance can agree that these types of contracts do not have to be in accordance with terms and conditions prepared or approved by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer. It is proposed that the Director of Law & Governance give such approval. The amendments to CPR 9.7 will then dovetail with this by removing the mandatory requirements in respect of bribery & corruption,</p>	

No	Part	Change	Comments
		<p>payment terms and sealing contracts over £500k. Work may also be required under other legislation such as Town and County Planning or pursuant to compulsory purchase orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 14.2 – to ensure that decisions to award are in place prior to commencement of standstill periods and to ensure key decisions to award contracts are not implemented until after the call-in period has expired. I have issued guidance to Procurement Services on this but am still seeing procurement timetables where this is being dealt with incorrectly. 	
	8.4 Officer Employment Procedure Rules		
86	Paragraph 7.5 (a) Disciplinary Action and Dismissal – Chief Officers	the dismissor has notified the Proper Officer of the name of the Chief Officer recommended for dismissal , person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss and along with any other particulars considered which the dismissor considers are relevant to the dismissal;	Provides clarity.
87	Paragraph 7.5 (b) (i)	the Proper Officer has notified every member of the cabinet of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the name of the Chief Officer recommended for dismissal; person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss 	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	8.4 Annex 2 Protocol for Employees Working Part-Time and/or Temporarily for, or Providing Consultancy to, Other Bodies or Councils		
88	Paragraph 1(d) Release for Outside Work While Employed by the Council	the employee has fulfilled their obligations under paragraph 12 above;	Correction.
	9.1 Members' Code of Conduct		
89	Paragraph 5 Application of the Code of Conduct	Your The Council's Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from the your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and Parish Councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.	Provides clarity.
90	Paragraph 6.2.3, third sub-para	The Protection from Harassment Act 1997, defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such	Grammar. Insert comma after the date of the Act.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Shall promote equalities and not discriminate against any person	conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.	
9.2 Protocol on Councillors' Rights and Responsibilities			
91	Paragraph 5 Rights of Opposition and Other Groups to Put Forward their own budgets	The political groups of the Council, other than the Group(s) in power from which the Cabinet is drawn, will have the right to put forward their own proposed budgets for consideration at the relevant Council meeting (normally the February one). They will be assisted by the Proper Officer in that process.	Provides clarity.
92	Paragraph 7 Rights of Councillors to Place Items on Agenda	Correct the title: Rights of Councillors to Place an Item on an Agenda	Grammar.
93	Amend paragraph 7 d (i) and delete 7 (iii) Rights of Councillors to	notice of the request is received by the Proper Officer by 5.00 p.m. on the tenth twentieth working day before the meeting of a committee or sub-committee, to enable a report to be prepared; the item will normally be for oral report unless 20 working	To comply with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as now incorporated into the Local Government Act 1972).

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Place Items on an Agenda	days' prior notice is given to enable a report to be prepared.	
94	Paragraph 11 Rights of Councillors to Access to Documents and Other Information	Correction to the title: Rights of Councillors to Access to Documents and Other Information	Correction.
9.3 Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)			
95	Paragraph 3 Examples of where members may wish to use CCfA	Government Guidance as prepared by the then on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - together with the Centre for Public Scrutiny gives further examples of how this new power might be used.	Provides clarity
9.4 Councillors' Planning Code of Practice			
96	First paragraph, page 9-48	DELETE Be careful about accepting gifts or hospitality wherever possible. If some hospitality is unavoidable, ensure that it	Aligns wording with the National Planning Policy Framework.

No	Part	Change	Comments
	Gifts and Hospitality	<p>is not excessive or inappropriate. Whilst not a disclosable pecuniary interest, a councillor, nevertheless, has the option of registering this so as to demonstrate openness and transparency to avoid any allegation of corruption or impropriety.</p> <p>AND REPLACE WITH</p> <p>Don't accept gifts or hospitality from any person involved in or affected by a planning proposal. If a degree of hospitality is entirely unavoidable, ensure it is of a minimum, its acceptance is declared as soon as possible, including its addition to your register of interests where relevant.</p>	
97	<p>Third paragraph, page 9-50</p> <p>Procedure if Officers' Advice is not to be Followed</p>	<p>Chair may adjourn briefly for proposer and seconder to discuss and formulate reasons with officers, reconvening for a vote and for reasons to be fully recorded. If the Chair concludes that there are opposing views amongst Committee members the Chair may take a vote on the proposal without adjourning for discussion with officers. In such circumstances the planning reasons for the proposal should be set out in detail before the vote is taken.</p>	Provides clarity.
9.5 Protocol on Member/Officer Relations			
98	<p>Paragraph 1.3</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<p>It is applicable, as appropriate, to non-€councillors (Co-optees, Independent Members etc) who are Mmembers of any €committee or €sub-€committee of the Council.</p>	Provides clarity.

No	Part	Change	Comments
			Need to check capitalisation throughout.
99	Paragraph 3.1.3 Role and Responsibilities - Members	The Council will appoint the Leader and also appoint M members to serve on the Overview and Scrutiny and other C Council C committees, as appropriate. Members can also be appointed to represent the Council on a range of external bodies whose work is of importance to the Council and the community.	Provides clarity.

Appendix A – Oxfordshire Shareholder Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Shareholder Committee is to approve and oversee the council's strategic objectives for the ~~€~~Council's company, **Enterprise Oxfordshire** and to support the development of the company in line with the ~~€~~Council's regulations and ambitions and the constitutional instruments of the company.
2. The Shareholder Committee will provide strategic oversight of ~~the council's company,~~ **Enterprise Oxfordshire** and provide assurance to the ~~€~~Cabinet that **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the company~~ is compliant with the ~~€~~Council's constitution, rules and procedures including achieving best value.
3. The Shareholder Committee will take decisions on any matters that are reserved to the ~~€~~Council as member or shareholder in **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the company's~~ Articles of Association or Shareholders Agreement and will receive annual and periodic reports for the **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~company~~.
4. The Shareholder Committee will not have operational control over **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the council's company~~. The day-to-day operation of **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the company~~ is the responsibility of the **appointed** Directors. The Shareholder Committee will provide overarching oversight including business case sign off in line with ~~the~~ **Enterprise Oxfordshire's** ~~company~~ constitutional governance arrangements. Operational liaison ~~between with~~ **Enterprise Oxfordshire** and the ~~€~~Council's ~~company~~ will be between the **relevant** ~~client~~ service of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director of **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the company~~.

Membership

5. The Shareholder Committee shall subject to (7) below comprise such of the Cabinet Members as the Cabinet shall determine.
6. The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council shall have the right to attend and speak at meetings of the **Shareholder** Committee.
7. In the absence of any or all the members referred to in (5) above any Cabinet Member(s) nominated by the Leader of the Council or the Deputy Leader of the Council may act in their place as full voting members of the **Shareholder** Committee.

Chair

8. The **Shareholder** Committee shall appoint one of its members to act as its Chair, but that member shall not be entitled to cast a second or casting vote.

Quorum

9. The Shareholder Committee quorum will be two voting members.

Competency

10. All members of the Shareholder Committee and Cabinet members attending as reserves must:

- have undertaken mandatory training in the relevant law and procedures which relate to the **Shareholder** Committee's work; and
- undertake further mandatory training, on an ad hoc basis, when there are changes to procedure or relevant legislation that are deemed significant by the relevant **Service** Director.

Meeting Frequency

11. The **Shareholder** Committee will meet at such times as shall be agreed by its members. Any member of the Council shall be entitled to attend and observe any meeting of the **Shareholder** Committee.

Decision making

12. Decisions will be taken by a consensus of members present unless any member of the Shareholder Committee requests a vote, in which case a majority decision will be taken with each member present having a single vote.

Attendees

13. The **Council's** Chief Executive, the **Deputy Chief** Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Monitoring Officer will advise the Shareholder Committee and representatives of **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~the company~~, including the Company Secretary, **and they** shall be invited to **attend** all meetings on a non-voting basis.

14. Other members may be invited to attend meetings on a non-voting basis.

15. Meetings will be operated in accordance with the following rules:

- Agendas will be published 5 clear working days in advance of meetings.
- Members of the public will be able to observe the public parts of meetings and access papers relating to any public business for **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~each company~~ and **any related** joint venture.
- Officers ~~of~~ the Council will be able to observe the public parts of meetings and access papers relating to any public business for **Enterprise Oxfordshire** ~~each company~~ and **any related** joint venture but will only be able to attend private parts of meetings and access papers relating to private business where specifically authorised to do so by the Chair or a statutory officer.

Relationship to Scrutiny

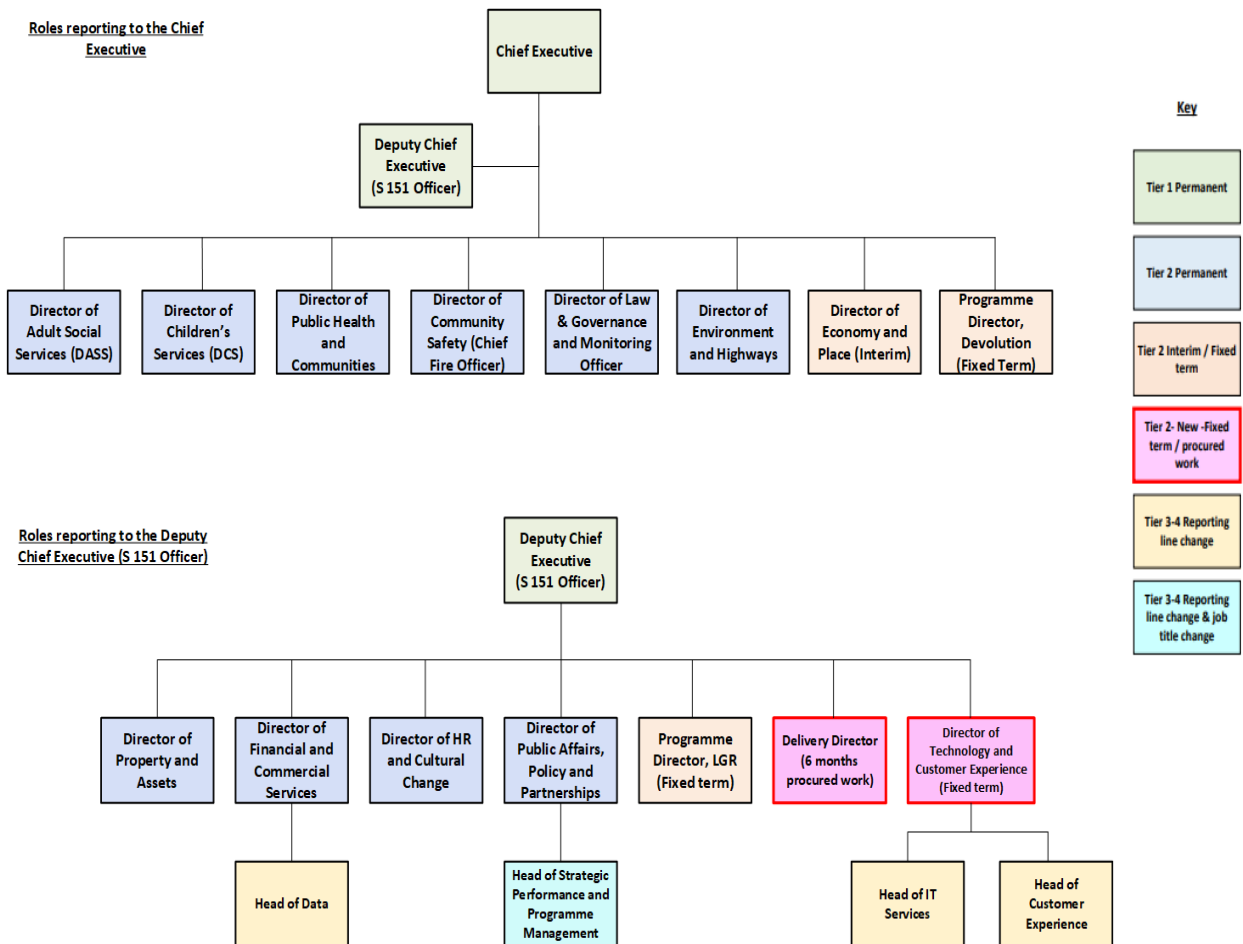
16. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the **authority** ~~ability~~ to scrutinise the business and decisions of the Shareholder Committee and to make recommendations to the Shareholder Committee. Decisions of the Shareholder Committee will be subject to call in by the Chair of the **Performance and Corporate Services Overview and** Scrutiny Committee or any 4 members.

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Officers

1. Management Structure

- (a) The ~~full~~ Council may engage staff (referred to as officers) as it considers necessary to carry out its functions.
- (b) The Council has engaged officers to the following posts which, together form the Council’s senior leadership team.



Post	Principal Areas of Service <u>Responsibility</u>
Chief Executive	Head of the Council's Paid Service; corporate management and promotion of the Council's strategic objectives; overall responsibility for emergency planning, disaster recovery and resilience as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; overall responsibility for health and safety as it relates to the functions of the Council (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974).
Executive Director of People and Transformation	Cross Council Transformation programme; line management of Director: of Public Health and Communities, Director: Adult Social Care and Director: Children's Services; Chief Fire Officer and Community safety, community hubs; customer services; insight; digital and transformation.
Executive Director of Resources <u>Deputy Chief Executive</u> (and Section 151 Officer)	Corporate financial management and administration (Section 151 Officer); internal audit & counter fraud; procurement & commercial; Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Fund; human resources and cultural change; health and safety; property services; equalities, diversity and inclusion; corporate strategy; public affairs; marketing and communications; and IT Services; Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO).
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer	Monitoring Officer; the Constitution and corporate governance framework; ethical governance; Legal Services and advice; support for councillors and the democratic process; access to information; elections; Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman; information governance; Data p <u>P</u> rotection Officer and Data Controller qualified person pursuant to S36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; e <u>C</u> oroners s <u>S</u> ervice and Registration.

Post	Principal Areas of <u>Service Responsibility</u>
Director of Public Health & Communities	<p>Statutory role including: delivery of the council's public health duties; steps to improve the health of the people in its area; planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health. Services in connection with teenage pregnancy; drugs and alcohol; Libraries and Heritage services, which includes libraries, history and museum services; <u>Asylum and Resettlement services including services for refugees.</u></p>
Director of Adult Social -Services	<p>Statutory role: <u>The Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) including: holds statutory</u> responsibility for adult social care including improving preventative services and delivering earlier intervention; tackling inequalities and improving access to services; increasing support for people with the highest levels of need; <u>and</u> promoting social inclusion and wellbeing. <u>The role is responsible for the Ddelivery and oversight of a comprehensive range of adult social care-services</u> including residential and nursing care; supported living; intermediate care; home support; assessment and re-ablement; occupational therapy; sensory impairment <u>services</u>; hospital <u>social work</u> teams; mental health <u>services</u>; carers' services; translation and interpretation <u>services</u>. <u>Sshared Lives</u> (CQC registered); <u>the</u> employment <u>services</u>; print <u>services</u>; community support services; <u>Approved Mental Health Professional (AMPH)</u> services and transitions <u>teams</u>.</p> <p><u>The DASS also holds Rresponsibility for the</u> joint commissioning <u>team</u> with the <u>Integrated Care Board (ICB)</u> <u>which includes responsibility-accountability</u> for the <u>governance, management and assurance</u> of associated Section 75 <u>partnership</u> agreements.</p>

Director of Children's Services	<p>Statutory role including: discharging the education, <u>SEND</u>, and children's social <u>care</u> services, <u>Youth Offending services</u> functions of the local authority; leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services; securing the provision of services which address the needs of all children and young people. -Delivery of social care and education including: early years and childcare; family support; fostering and adoption; looked-after children; residential and leaving care; asylum seekers; child protection; school performance; resourcing and support for schools; school governor support; school admissions; school transport (policy); special educational needs; behaviour support; youth service; youth justice.</p> <p><u>Statutory delegation on behalf of the Chief Executive to discharge and oversee safeguarding responsibility across the local authority geography.</u></p>
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Post	Principal Areas of Service Responsibility
Director of Environment and Highways	Highways <u>maintenance</u> ; network management; road safety; travel planning;- bus services; nature policy; countryside, <u>trees</u> and <u>public</u> rights of way services; archaeological service; waste management; Lead Local Flood Authority transport scheme and infrastructure delivery, and Tt transport Pp olicy and & <u>Sstrategy</u> .
Director of Economy and Place	Inclusive economic development <u>and business engagement</u> ; climate change, <u>adaptation, circular economy, and energy</u> policies and programmes; development plans and developer funding; strategic development schemes; place shaping <u>and regeneration</u> , strategic and regulatory planning; <u>Rail Strategy and Programmes</u> ; <u>Lead Local Flood Authority, strategic development strategies</u> ; transport development control; local highway authority responses to consultations on planning applications; minerals and waste; devolution, strategic <u>and regional</u> partnerships and business engagement ; <u>and Innovation, service; flood risk management.</u>
Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety	Fire and rescue services*; trading standards; animal welfare; emergency planning; community safety. *NB -The Chief Fire Officer has statutory responsibility for the fire and rescue service
<u>Interim</u> Director of Transformation <u>Technology, Digital and Customer Experience</u>	Public enquiries; Transformation programme; IT and the digital programme; data hub; performance and insights.
Director of Financial and Commercial Services	Commercial strategy; green finance initiatives; budget planning and forecasting; internal auditing; capital programme; local authority's pension fund; treasury management; procurement and social value.
Director of Property and Assets	<u>Provide Sstrategically leadership and operational oversight for the council's property and asset portfolio, including the management and maintain optimisation of council-owned and /operated buildings; fleet services; manage and maintain fleet owned/operated by the council; and home-to-school and service transport for Adults and/ Children, 's including SEND provision, home to school/facilities transport; supporting Adults & Children's with associated property needs; gypsy and traveller services. Ensure the effective delivery of property-related services supporting Adults' and Children's services (including Gypsy and Traveller sites), alongside the development and assurance of the council's Health and Safety management system and policy framework.</u>

Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	External communications, marketing and campaigns; consultations and engagement; public affairs; strategy and policy development, including equality, diversity and inclusion; key partnerships, including the voluntary and community sector and the civilian military partnership; councillor priority fund scheme. Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO), performance and insight; business improvement.
Director of HR and Cultural Change	Human resources; recruitment and retention; cultural change (Delivering the Future Together); internal communications; staff training and development; apprenticeship management.

- (c) **Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer**
The Council has designated officers to perform these statutorily prescribed roles as follows:

Designation	Officer
Head of the Council's Paid Service	Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer	Director of Law and Governance <u>and Monitoring Officer</u>
Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)	Executive Director of Resources <u>Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer)</u>

The duties associated with these designations are set out in paragraphs 2 - 4 below.

2. Functions of the statutory post of Head of Paid Service

- (a) **Discharge of functions by the Council.** The Head of Paid Service will report to ~~full~~ Council on the manner in which the discharge of the Council's functions is co-ordinated, the number and grade of officers required for the discharge of functions and the organisation of officers.
- (b) **Restrictions on functions.** The Head of Paid Service may not be the Monitoring Officer but may hold the post of Chief Finance Officer if a qualified accountant.
- (c) **Urgency.** The Head of Paid Service is authorised to take any urgent action necessary to protect the Council's interests and assets where time is of the essence and it is impracticable to secure authority to act where such authority would otherwise be required. The Head of Paid Service, in so acting, will be guided by the Budget and the Policy Framework at Part 1.2 of this Constitution, will consult the other Statutory Officers before acting and will report, in writing, as soon as practicable to the body which would otherwise have been required to give the necessary authority to act. Key decision procedures and call in procedures (Parts 8.1 and 6.2(19) of the Constitution) will apply to any key decisions taken under ~~the~~ this authorisation.

3. Functions of the statutory post of Monitoring Officer

- (a) **Maintaining the Constitution.** The Monitoring Officer will maintain an up-to-date version of the Constitution and will ensure that it is available to councillors, staff and the public.
- (b) **Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making.** After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer in accordance with their statutory functions will report to the ~~Full~~ Council or, in the case of an executive function, to the Cabinet, if ~~they~~ the Monitoring Officer considers that any proposal, decision or

omission has or would be likely to give rise to unlawfulness or if any decision or omission has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered.¹

- (c) **Supporting the Audit & Governance Committee.** The Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support and advice to the Audit & Governance Committee.
- (d) **Receiving complaints.** The Monitoring Officer will receive and act on complaints about Councillor conduct.
- (e) **Reviewing complaints.** The Monitoring Officer will review complaints in accordance with the Council's arrangements for dealing with member complaints.
- (f) **Proper officer for access to information.** The Monitoring Officer will ensure that decisions, together with the reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers are made publicly available as soon as possible.
- (g) **Advising whether executive decisions are within the budget and policy framework.** The Monitoring Officer will advise whether decisions of the Cabinet are in accordance with the budget and policy framework.
- (h) **Providing advice.** The Monitoring Officer will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues to all councillors.
- (i) **Restrictions on posts.** The Monitoring Officer cannot also hold the position of the Head of Paid Service or the Chief Finance Officer, or the
- (j) **Issue of Guidance.** The Monitoring Officer will issue guidance from time to time on the discharge of the above functions.

4. Functions of the statutory position of Chief Finance Officer

- (a) **Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making.** After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer will report to the ~~full~~ Council or, in the case of an executive function, to the Cabinet, and to the Council's external auditor, if they consider that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause a loss or deficiency or if the Council is about to enter an item of account unlawfully.
- (b) **Administration of financial affairs.** The Chief Finance Officer will have responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council.²

¹ Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989

² Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972

- (c) **Contributing to corporate management.** The Chief Finance Officer will contribute to the corporate management of the Council, in particular through the provision of professional financial advice.
- (d) **Providing advice.** The Chief Finance Officer will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues to all councillors and will support and advise councillors and officers in their respective roles.
- (e) **Giving financial information.** The Chief Finance Officer will provide financial information to the media, members of the public and the community.

5. Duty to Provide Sufficient Resources to the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer

The Council will provide the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer with such officers, accommodation and other resources as are in their opinion sufficient to allow their duties to be performed.

6. Deployment and Management of Staff in General

- (a) The recruitment, selection and dismissal of officers will comply with the Officer Employment Rules set out at Part 8.4 of this Constitution.
- (b) The Head of Paid Service will determine and publicise a description of the overall structure of the paid service of the Council showing the management structure and deployment of officers. This is set out on the Council's Intranet.

7. Powers Exercisable by Officers

Officers may exercise functions of the Council, the Cabinet and committees of the Council to the extent and subject to the conditions specified in the Officer Delegations set out in Part 7 of this Constitution.

8. Sub-Delegation to Designated Officers

The Chief Executive's and other officers' powers conferred by this Part 7.1, including any proper officer functions, may be exercised by other officers designated in writing by the Chief Executive, (and the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) in relation to financial delegations), either generally or in specific circumstances.

9. Conduct of Officers

Officers will comply with the Officers' Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.

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Scheme of Delegation to Officers

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This scheme of delegation authorises the relevant officers to exercise the functions of the Council as set out in this scheme and the Constitution. For the purpose of this scheme, 'officers' includes those officers included in Part 7.1 of the Constitution.
- 1.2. This scheme is without prejudice to the exercise of the Council's functions by the Council, the Cabinet, the Council's committees and sub-committees and their own powers of delegation and by the officers mentioned within 1.1 above.
- 1.3. For the avoidance of doubt anything which is not covered by this scheme, including the appointment of a proper officer for the purpose of any statutory function, will be determined by the Chief Executive.
- 1.4. The Council has given a General Indemnity to any officer acting in the purported discharge of any authority delegated to them for any action, costs, claim or liability incurred by them.
- 1.5. For the avoidance of doubt:
 - (a) the Chief Executive has over all other officers the powers which they are entitled to exercise under this Scheme;
 - (b) an officer may refer any matter to the Council, the Cabinet, or a committee of the Council as appropriate either:
 - (i) in lieu of exercising their powers in relation to that matter; or
 - (ii) for consultative purposes before exercising those powers;
 - (c) the power to exercise any function includes the power to exercise that function in a positive or negative manner or to refuse to exercise the function;
 - (d) nothing in this Scheme prevents the Council, the Cabinet or a committee of the Council from exercising a [non-operational](#) function in place of an officer;
 - (e) in this Scheme references to the Cabinet shall be taken to include the relevant Cabinet Member, or a committee of the Cabinet insofar as the function concerned has for the time being been delegated to such member or committee;
 - (f) ~~if when any exercise of exercising a~~ delegation ~~an making~~ incorrect references ~~is made~~ to any part of the Constitution, relevant statute, legislation or byelaw; ~~this~~ shall not, of itself, invalidate the authorised delegation.

2. Principles of Delegation

2.1. The Chief Executive and other officers (as defined in paragraph 1.1 of this Scheme) – are empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council in accordance with the following general principles:

- (a) If a function, power or responsibility has not been specifically reserved to the Council, a committee, or the Cabinet, the other officers within whose remit the matter falls ~~are~~^{is} authorised to act.
- (b) The Council, its committees and the Cabinet will make decisions on matters of significant policy. The Chief Executive and the other officers have express authority to take all necessary actions to implement Council, committee and Cabinet decisions that commit resources, within agreed budgets in the case of financial resources, as necessary and appropriate.
- (c) The Chief Executive and the other officers are empowered to take all operational decisions, within agreed policies, in relation to the services for which they are responsible.
- (d) The Chief Executive and the other officers are empowered to take all necessary decisions in cases of emergency¹.
- (e) In relation to all delegated authority conferred on the other officers by this scheme, the Chief Executive may allocate or re-allocate responsibility for exercising particular powers to any officer of the Council in the interests of effective corporate management as they think fit.
- (f) Where an officer is absent from the workplace for a period of time ~~which~~^{which} requires others to exercise delegated authority in the officer's absence, another officer should be nominated by the Chief Executive. This nomination should be formally recorded in writing.
- (g) Where there is doubt over the responsibility for the exercise of a delegated power, the Chief Executive or their nominee is authorised to act;
- (h) All officers are empowered to act as deputies of the Chief Executive in their absence, subject to the following:
 - (i) In the first instance, the person deputised to act will be the other officer named on the duty rota operated by the Council

¹ For the purposes of this scheme, emergency shall mean any situation in which the relevant officer believes that failure to act would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. Such interests are to be interpreted widely and include (but are not limited to) the risk of damage to property or threat to the health or wellbeing of an individual.

- (ii) In the absence of both the Chief Executive and the duty rota officer, any other officers may deputise for the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer and the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer).
 - (i) Anything delegated to an officer is also delegated to the Chief Executive, other than those reserved to the statutory officers;
 - (j) These delegations should be interpreted widely to aid the smooth running of the organisation, the effective deployment of resources, the efficient delivery of services, and the achievement of the Council's goals.
 - (k) The exercise of delegated functions shall be in accordance with the managerial requirements of the Chief Executive otherwise than in matters of professional expertise, and subject to the legal requirements of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer and the financial requirements of the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer).
- 2.2. In deciding whether or not to exercise such delegated powers, the Chief Executive and the other officers should consider whether to consult the appropriate Cabinet member(s) or committee chair and have regard to their views. Officers shall always be entitled to refer matters for decision to the appropriate member body where they consider it expedient to do so.
- 2.3. The Chief Executive and the officers may authorise officers in their service areas to exercise, on their behalf, powers delegated under this scheme.

3. Recording of Delegations and Decisions

- 3.1. All delegations conferred under this scheme must be recorded in writing by the Chief Executive and the other officer in such a form as the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer may prescribe (including for the avoidance of doubt any delegation under paragraph 2.1(e) above). Any decision taken under such authority shall remain their responsibility, and must be taken in their name.
- 3.2. Each officer will maintain a separate record of sub-delegations pertaining to their directorate and will provide copies to the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer for retention.
- 3.3. The Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer will maintain a central record of all delegations under this scheme and make this available for public inspection. The record shall be kept up to date according to any additions or other variations to the powers and functions which are delegated to officers.
- 3.4. Any decision of an officer having substantive effect shall be recorded in such a manner that all those who may have an interest in that decision have certain knowledge of its effect. Any key decision shall be recorded as required by the

Access to Information Rules and notification given in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules at Part 6.2 of this Constitution.

4. Scope of Powers

- 4.1. In exercising these delegated powers the officers concerned shall have broad discretion, subject to complying with all relevant legislation, the Council's Constitution, including its ~~C~~contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedures Rules (~~at Part 8.2 of this Constitution~~) and ~~R~~regulations (respectively at Parts 8.3 and 8.2 of this Constitution) (and any guidance made in respect of these rules), and overall Council policy, to use the most efficient and effective means available, including the deployment of staffing and other resources within their control and the procurement of other resources necessary, whether within or outside the Council.
- 4.2. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the Chief Executive and the other officers shall have the power:
- (a) to take all lawful action consistent with overall Council policy to deliver agreed strategy, plans and policy within their area of responsibility and within approved budgets. This shall include, but not exhaustively:
 - (i) invitation ~~and acceptance~~ of tenders and award of contracts, subject to the Contract Procedure ~~R~~rules at Part 8.3 of this Constitution;
 - (ii) preparation and submission of bids for external funds or grants for purposes related to the provision of services and acceptance of such funds and grants on such terms and conditions as may be agreed, subject to consulting the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer where contractual obligations are involved;
 - (iii) write-off of irrecoverable amounts (including bad debts) up to such limit as may for the time being be prescribed by the Financial Procedure Rules at Part 8.2 of this Constitution subject in each case to the written approval of the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) (or of a member of their staff nominated by them for that purpose) and to such approval being shown in the accounting records;
 - (iv) virement (within the budget framework);
 - (v) disposal and acquisition of assets;
 - (vi) subject to the requirements of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer given either generally or in a particular case, the issue of formal notices, orders, instructions and instruments required under any legislation relating to their

- functions and areas of service or otherwise to give legal effect to the exercise of the powers set out above;
- (vii) authorising the institution, defence or appearance in criminal or civil proceedings in relation to any legislation which they are responsible for monitoring, enforcing or otherwise implementing on behalf of the council, subject to authorisation by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer;
 - (viii) the negotiation of agreements or arrangements with other services of the Council or other companies or organisations relating to the provision of services for their area of responsibility;
- (b) to put in place management arrangements, which define the area of responsibility of all officers under their area of responsibility;
- (c) in the case of any overspend to notify the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ [Deputy Chief Executive \(S.151 Officer\)](#) in the role of Section 151 officer in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules and regulations;
- (d) subject to the Officer Employment Rules set out at Part 8.4 of this Constitution, to determine staffing arrangements within their service within approved budgets (except for staff employed in schools with delegated budgets), including:
- (i) appointments, unless the power to appoint to a particular post rests with the Council or a committee of the Council;
 - (ii) dismissal of any employee subject to the concurrence of the Director of Human Resources [and Cultural Change](#) (except where the power of dismissal is vested by law in the other officer);
 - (iii) the transfer of posts within the total establishment of their service;
 - (iv) all disciplinary matters;
 - (v) granting ex-gratia payments up to a limit determined by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer to employees who have suffered loss of, or damage to, personal property in the course of their work;
 - (vi) extending an employee's sick leave on half pay for a period not exceeding the equivalent period of half pay already received; and
 - (vii) granting up to 10 days' additional paid leave on compassionate grounds, or up to twelve months unpaid leave;
 - (viii) granting unpaid leave beyond twelve months, and any other exceptional request for leave, subject to the agreement of the

Director of HR and Culture Change and the ~~Executive Director of Resources~~ Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer).

- (e) to take all action to recruit, appoint, develop, manage and reward employees, in accordance with legislation and within approved Council policies and procedures (including operation of policies for voluntary severance, early retirement, redundancy and redeployment) and relevant conditions of service for staff.

5. Delegation in Practice

5.1. In taking any decision, the officer concerned must be satisfied that the following issues have been properly considered and completed where appropriate. All of these issues should be considered at the earliest possible stage:

- (a) a key decision should be taken in accordance with the [relevant requirements set out in the Constitution for key decisions](#) (including the requirements for the recording of such decisions under Rule 18 of Part 8.1 of this Constitution). [It should be noted that officers can only take key decisions when delegated by Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder](#);
- (b) the views of the relevant Cabinet member(s) and committee chair following the application of the consultation criteria set out in paragraph (c) below;
- (c) the implication of any Council policy, initiative, strategy or procedure. Officers need to be aware of any potential impact of a delegated decision on other services. In such cases, consultation with officers, relevant Cabinet member(s) or committee chairs from any affected portfolio and local members, where the issue relates to a specific area, should take place;
- (d) consultation in accordance with the Council's consultation strategy and the views emanating from that process;
- (e) the range of available options;
- (f) the staffing, financial and legal implications;
- (g) the assessment of any associated risks in accordance with the Council's risk management strategy;
- (h) the involvement of appropriate statutory officers and/or other officers;
- (i) the relevance of any regional or national guidance from other bodies;
- (j) the Council's Constitution, including the Forward Plan, its contract and financial procedures and regulations, all relevant guidance, legislation, codes of practice and protocols.

- 5.2. Any member may request that executive decisions taken by officers under delegated powers are scrutinised by the appropriate scrutiny committee.

6. Specific Powers and Functions

6.1. Subject to the foregoing and without prejudice to the general effect of this scheme, the Chief Executive and the other officers designated for the purpose may exercise such specific powers and functions:

- (a) in the capacity of proper officer; or
- (b) otherwise on behalf of the Council, the Cabinet or a committee of the Council

as may be delegated to them from time to time. The powers and functions which are for the time being delegated to the Chief Executive, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, ~~and the Executive Director of Resources Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) and other service directors~~ are listed in this section.

- 6.2. The Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer shall keep this scheme of delegation up to date according to any additions or other variations to the powers and functions of the Chief Executive, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, the ~~Executive Director of Resources Deputy Chief Executive (S.151 Officer)~~ and the other officers.

6.3. The **Chief Executive** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The functions under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as the Head of Paid Service of the Council, and in accordance with Part 7.1 of this Constitution.
- (b) Allocation of accommodation for the purposes of the Council, the Cabinet, committees, sub-committees and members.
- (c) Any function of the Cabinet or of a Council committee or sub-committee, after consultation with the appropriate other officer and thereafter:
 - (i) in the case of an executive function, with the Leader of the Council or, in their absence, the Deputy Leader of the Council; or
 - (ii) in any other case, with the Chair of the relevant committee or sub-committee or, in their absence, the Deputy Chair of the relevant committee or sub-committee.

Any exercise of these functions shall be reported to the Cabinet or other relevant committee or sub-committee and shall be published on the website as soon as possible.

- (d) Following consultation with employees' representatives and with the Cabinet Member having responsibility for human resources and any

other member(s) of the Cabinet whose responsibilities include a service particularly affected, approval of amendments to the ~~County~~ Council's personnel policies and procedures, subject to reference being made to the Cabinet where either:

- (i) they would have material budget implications; or
 - (ii) material concerns about them have been expressed by the employees' representatives.
- (e) The powers and duties of County Returning Officer for the purposes of Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.
- (f) Overall responsibility for emergency planning, disaster recovery and resilience as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- (g) Overall responsibility for health and safety as it relates to the functions of the Council (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974).

6.4. The **Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer** is authorised to:

- (a) take any action to implement any decision taken by or on behalf of the Council, including the signature and service of statutory and other notices and any document; and authority to apply the Common Seal of the ~~County~~ Council to deeds in order to execute them;
- (i) The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer will be responsible for the safe-keeping and secure administration of the Common Seal of the Council.
 - (ii) The Common Seal of the Council may be affixed either by physical means or by such electronic means as the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer may from time to time authorise. References in this Rule and elsewhere in the Constitution to the Common Seal (or the Seal) of the Council and to the sealing of documents shall be taken to refer to the official seal and any accompanying attesting signatures as being affixed either by physical means, or by the electronic means provided for in this Rule.
 - (iii) The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer or other person authorised by them may authenticate any document that may be required for legal proceedings.
- (b) institute, defend, settle or participate in any legal proceedings or disputes in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or in any case where the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer considers that such action is necessary to protect the Council's interests;

- (c) consult with and instruct counsel, solicitors and other experts for legal proceedings, public inquiries, and other matters involving the Council, and the negotiation and settlement of legal disputes on behalf of the Council, the Cabinet, committees of the Council or officers and arrangements for their representation in any court, public inquiry or other forum where they consider formal representation to be proper, including the incurring of such fees in respect thereof as may be appropriate;
- (d) authorisations under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 (appearance by persons other than solicitors in legal proceedings);
- (e) acting as trustee on behalf of the Council in respect of any matter whereon they consider such action to be appropriate;
- (f) enter objections to any proposal affecting the County, the Council or the inhabitants of the County;
- (g) undertake the following proper officer functions of the Council under the Local Government Act 1972:
 - (i) Declaration of Acceptance of Office (Section 83);
 - (ii) Notice of Resignation of Office (Section 84);
 - (iii) Convening of and Summonses to Meetings (Section 88 & Schedule 12);
 - (iv) Filling of Casual Vacancies (Section 89);
 - (v) Ordnance Survey (Section 191);
 - (vi) Charitable Trusts (Section 210);
 - (vii) Deposit of Documents (Section 225);
 - (viii) Certificate of Photographic Copies of Documents (Section 229);
 - (ix) Authentication of Documents (Section 234);
 - (x) Procedure etc. for Bye-Laws (Section 236);
 - (xi) Evidence of Bye-Laws (Section 238);
 - (xii) Enactments relating to Town & Country Planning (Schedule 16 where not repealed)
 - (xiii) Adaptations, Modifications and Amendments of Enactments (Schedule 29);
- (h) the functions of Monitoring Officer within the meaning of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and in accordance with Part 7.1 of this Constitution;
- (i) the proper officer functions of the Council for the purposes of giving public notice of the receipt of a report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, for the purposes of Part III of the Local Government Act 1974;
- (j) following consultation with the [Executive Director of Resources Deputy Chief Executive \(S.151 Officer\)](#) -and with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, approval of new or amended operational policies and

procedures for the governance of the Council, subject to reference being made to the Cabinet where either:

- (i) they would have material budget or substantive policy implications; or
 - (ii) material concerns about them have been expressed by the employees' representatives;
- (k) such proper officer functions of the Council other than those specified in this section as are not specifically delegated to any other officer;
- (l) the functions under Section 16(1) and Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to give effect to the wishes of the political groups as regards membership of overview and scrutiny committees and committees of the Council;
- (m) the proper officer functions of the Council for the purposes of Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Information);
- (n) making of appointments to outside bodies in accordance with the Council's published arrangements relating to representation on outside bodies;
- (o) making of appointments to school admission and exclusion appeal panels and school transport appeal panels;
- (p) to adjust the terms of reference of an overview and scrutiny committee to reflect detailed changes in the remits of individuals or bodies which are specified in those terms of reference, consulting with the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Deputy Chairs in each case;
- (q) authorisation of the reproduction or display of the Council's armorial bearings or any part thereof;
- (r) as Monitoring Officer, the functions of the 'qualified person' under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Section 36(5)(o)(iii)) for determining whether the exemptions under Section 36 are engaged;
- (s) to put in place appropriate indemnity and insurance to enable councillors to undertake their functions;
- (t) make textual amendments to the Constitution to address any inconsistencies or correct any cross-referencing errors arising from or as a consequence of the amendments, along with updating job and group titles if those referred to in the Constitution are obsolete (insofar as the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer does not already have such a delegation);
- (u) approve councillor attendance at conferences and councillor claims for expenses including travelling, subsistence and accommodation.

- (v) The Monitoring Officer is authorised to make any changes to the Constitution which are required:
 - a) to comply with the law; or
 - b) to give effect to decisions of the Council or (so far as within their powers) the Cabinet, scrutiny committees and ordinary committees; or
 - c) to correct errors and otherwise for accuracy or rectification.
- (w) to update Part 10.1 of the Constitution - Members' Allowances annually in line with any requirement under the Scheme of Allowances to apply indexation to Members' Allowances.

(x) [the proper officer functions of the Council for the purposes of providing statutory oversight and governance of the data protection and processing of personal data by the Controller \(the Council\) under the Data Protection Act 2018 \(s.69-71\), the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025, the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation 2003 and relevant data legislation. Position of Data Protection Officer \(Data Protection Act 2018, section 70\).](#)

6.5. The [Deputy Chief Executive \(S.151 Officer\)](#)~~Executive Director of Resources~~ is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The proper officer functions of the Council for the purposes of Section 115 of the Local Government Act 1972 (Receipt of Money) and for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under Section 151 of the Act, and in accordance with Part 7.1 of this Constitution.
- (b) The proper officer functions of the Council for the purposes of Section 146 of the Local Government Act 1972 – Transfer of Securities.
- (c) The functions of 'responsible officer' for the purposes of financial administration under the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- (d) Functions as the officer responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit.
- (e) Implementation of pay awards made nationally or locally under procedures recognised by the Council.
- (f) The making of investments of the County Pension Fund in accordance with the policies determined by the Pension Fund Committee.
- (g) Determination of cases of whether the education or training should be treated as continuous where an eligible child for the payment of a dependent's pension benefit under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations is over 17 and has been engaged continuously in

full-time education or in training for a trade, profession or vocation has taken a gap year, subject to a report to the Pension Fund Committee on such determinations.

6.6. The **Director of Adult Social Services** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of Section 6(1) Local Authority Social Services Act 1970;
- (b) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of the Health and Social Care (National Data Guardian) Act 2018; National Data Guardian. To act as the Caldicott Guardian for the Council, ensuring compliance with the Caldicott Principles and statutory guidance on the use and sharing of personal confidential information in health and social care; and
- (c) All functions relating to Adult Social Services and Commissioning and be the Authority's designated Director of Adult Services as required by the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

6.7. The **Director of Children's Services** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of Section 18 Children Act 2004;
- (b) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of Section 532 Education Act 1996;
- (c) All functions relating to Children's Services as set out in legislation, and be the Authority's designated Director of Children's Services as required by the Children Act 2004;
- (d) Delegated statutory functions for safeguarding on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer under 'Working Together' legislation 2024 and 2026;
- (e) All functions relating to education except for decisions to publish statutory notices to open or make significant changes to schools which must be taken in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder; and
- (f) All functions relating to the Youth Service and the Youth Justice Service.

6.8. The **Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of Section 72(1)(a) Weights and Measures Act 1985 (as Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures);
- (b) Measures to ensure the provision of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Fire Protection and Trading Standards legislation and associated policies are discharged appropriately;
- (c) All functions relating to the Fire and Rescue Service;
- (d) All enforcement and licensing functions relating to Health and Safety including the storage of explosives and petroleum;
- (e) All functions relating to Trading Standards, Weights and Measures and Consumer Protection;
- (f) All functions relating to food standards and safety;
- (g) All functions relating to animal health and welfare, and animal feed;
- (h) All functions relating to Civil Aid and Emergency Planning;
- (i) All functions relating to investigations and enforcement to enable delivery of the service; and
- (j) All other functions relating to the delivery of the service as outlined in the legislative framework.

6.9. The **Director of Economy and Place** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) Those delegated decisions associated with the Council's role as a Planning Authority and Minerals and Waste Authority as delegated by the Planning and Regulatory Committee including the conclusion and management of s106 obligations and other legal agreements related to planning decisions, development management and enforcement;
- (b) Other steps to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory and non-statutory responsibilities in relation to the Planning Framework, such as archaeology and conservation, including commissioning and agreeing the Council's formal responses to planning and other related consultations as statutory and non-statutory consultee;
- (c) The negotiation, conclusion and management of Agreements under the Highways Act 1980;

- (d) The Council's functions as Lead Local Flood Authority;
- (e) The development of place infrastructure related policy and strategy, including the Oxford Infrastructure Strategy;
- (f) Steps to ensure that services build enduring relationships with partner Local Authorities and their Planning and Regeneration teams to secure joined up and effective place services;
- (g) The integrated delivery, improvement, management, and performance of a diverse portfolio of Council services including Innovation (iHub), Innovate Oxfordshire and the client role for Enterprise Oxfordshire, commissioning and directing activity within the Council and externally, as required; and
- (h) All other functions relating to Economy and Place, including the development and implementation of policy and strategy relating to Minerals and Waste development, Climate Action, Adaptation and Circular Economy, Energy, Future Economy, Healthy and Sustainable Place Shaping and Regeneration and Rail.

6.10. The **Director of Environment & Highways** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) All functions relating to highways (including highways management, maintenance and network management);
- (b) All functions relating to the development of transport infrastructure in respect of the planning and delivery;
- (c) All functions relating to environmental and countryside services, such as Public Rights of Way, biodiversity and landscape promotion, arboriculture management;
- (d) All functions relating to traffic management;
- (e) All functions relating to passenger transport;
- (f) All functions relating to road safety;
- (g) All functions relating to waste, including disposal and Household Waste Recycling Centre Services;
- (h) The development of transport planning related policy and strategy, including the Local Transport Plan and associated documents;
- (i) All functions relating to investigations and enforcement for the delivery of the highways and environment service.; and
- (j) All other functions relating to the delivery of the highways and environment service as outlined in the legislative framework.

6.11. The **Director of Financial and Commercial Services** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) All functions relating to Financial and Commercial Services to ensure the implementation of effective and compliant financial and procurement practice across the whole organisation;
- (b) the implementation of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- (c) All functions relating to Pension Services;
- (d) The provision of an effective Internal Audit and Counter Fraud service; and
- (e) The delivery of the Capital Strategy with a focus on capital programme evaluation control and governance.

6.12. The **Director of HR and Cultural Change** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The management of the Council's HR and Cultural Change activities including job evaluation and judgement on market forces and employee benefits;
- (b) Industrial relations and employment matters; and
- (c) All functions relating to HR.

6.13. The **Director of Property and Assets** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) All actions to deliver the effective, efficient, and compliant management of the Council's land and property portfolio, aligning asset decisions to corporate priorities and service outcomes;
- (b) All actions in relation to the disposal of land or property under section 123, taking consideration towards a wider social, economic, and service objectives, delivering best value while supporting the Council's strategic priorities;
- (c) The management of leases granted or entered into by the Council including lease renewals, rent reviews, applications for consents and the negotiation and enforcement of schedules of dilapidations;
- (d) Facilities management, premises-related contracts, property maintenance to ensure assets remain safe, compliant, operationally fit for purpose, and cost-effective;

- (e) The discharge of all functions related to the provision of Adults' and Children's SEND home-to-school and facilities transport, ensuring accessibility, safety, and value for money;
- (f) All functions relating to the provision, management, and compliance of travellers' sites; and
- (g) Overall responsibility for all functions as outlined in the relevant legislative framework relating to property and assets, providing assurance, governance, and professional leadership across the Council's estate.

6.14. The **Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) All functions relating to external communications, marketing and campaigns; public affairs; strategy and policy development;
- (b) All functions relating to partnerships, including the voluntary and community sector and the civilian military partnership;
- (c) All functions relating to Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO); business improvement; and performance & insight; and
- (a) All functions relating to the councillor priority fund scheme.

6.15. The **Director of Public Health and Communities** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) The proper officer functions for the Council for the purposes of Section 73A of the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012);
- (b) All functions relating to Public Health;
- (c) All functions relating to Libraries and Heritage services, which includes libraries, history and museum services; and
- (d) All functions relating to Asylum and Resettlement services.

6.16. The **Interim Director of Technology and Customer Experience** is authorised to undertake:

- (a) All functions relating to public enquiries, IT and the digital programme; and data hub.

6-6-6.17. Other Officers

Each officer is authorised to act on behalf of the Council in relation to any operational matters within the service areas for which they are responsible as set out in Part 7.1, subject to the provisions of Part 7.2 of this Constitution. The Officer will maintain a separate record of sub-delegations pertaining to their directorate and will provide copies to the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer for retention under this Schedule.

~~6-7-6.18.~~ For the avoidance of doubt, the delegation to the Director of Economy and Place is subject to consultation jointly with the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, to determine the Council's own applications for certificates of lawfulness of existing or proposed use or development.

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Contract Procedure Rules for the Supply of Goods, Services and Works

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Contract Procedure Rules for the Supply of Goods, Services and Works

CHAPTER ONE: BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Compliance with these Rules, Council Policies, Relevant Legislation and Legal Requirements

Introduction

1.1 These Rules shall be regarded as standing Orders of the Council for the purposes of section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 and aim to ensure that when the Council conducts its procurement activities and makes decisions, it:

- (i) furthers its strategic aims and objectives
- (ii) delivers value for money
- (iii) maximises public benefit
- (iv) acts, and is seen to act with integrity,
- (v) shares information with suppliers and others with the purpose of allowing them to understand the Council's procurement policies and decisions
- (vi) treats suppliers the same unless a difference between suppliers justifies different treatment
- (vii) has regard to barriers that may be faced by small and medium-sized enterprises as and when required to do so by the Procurement Legislation.

1.2 These Rules govern all Contracts let by the Council otherwise than specified in these Rules⁴. Further, these Rules apply to arrangements which the Council wishes to enter into in consequence of it having received grant funding from an outside body to procure a service, goods or works, or to receive an income in return for giving another body the right (a concession) to run a service.

1.3 These Rules must be read in conjunction with other parts of the Council's Constitution (for example, if a decision about a contract is also a "key decision" then the requirements set out in the Constitution in relation to key decisions will also have to be met).

1.4 Failure by an Officer to comply with these Rules could lead to disciplinary action being taken against them and in some cases may be referred to

any relevant authorities. Any non-compliance with these Rules should be dealt with in accordance with Rule 18.

What contracts must comply with

- 1.5 All Contracts must comply with all of the following:
- (i) English law (including the Council’s statutory duties and powers including the Council’s fiduciary duty to safeguard public funds);
 - (ii) these Rules, as supplemented by complementary rules in the Council’s Constitution including its Financial Procedure Rules;
 - (iii) any relevant Council policies/regulations; and
 - (iv) any legal requirement stipulated by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.
- 1.6 The procurement and award of Contracts must comply with the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, equal treatment, and proportionality.
- 1.7 Where the estimated value of a Contract dictates that the tender procedure is to be carried out under the Procurement Legislation, additional rules applying to such tender procedures must be complied with. The relevant Procurement Team should be consulted for advice.
- 1.8 In addition to Officers, these Rules must be complied with by all other persons who are authorised to carry out procurement and contracting on behalf of the Council (“Agents”). It must be a term of all Contracts between the Council and its Agents that the Agents comply with these Rules.

Scope

- 1.9 These Rules do not apply to:
- (i) contracts which are not for the provision of goods, services or works.
 - (ii) contracts entered into by schools with delegated budgets (which should instead be awarded in accordance with the Scheme for Financing Schools).
 - (iii) low value purchases that may be made from petty cash or procurement cards in accordance with any operational instructions and the financial limits issued by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer pursuant to the Financial Procedure Rules.
 - (iv) supply of works, goods or services by the Council.

- (v) grant funding agreements save that all grant funding agreements with a value of £500,000 or more must be sealed. The Financial Procedure Rules and the Financial Regulations govern external arrangements including grants and therefore it is important to ascertain at the outset whether a proposed arrangement is a grant or a contract for services and which rules apply. Subsidy Control Law will need to be considered.
- (vi) contracts which are exempt by virtue of Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023 (e.g. contracts of employments, certain legal and financial services, land transactions etc.) These contracts will, however, need to (i) comply with any requirements imposed by the Procurement Act 2023, (ii) comply with the Council's internal governance requirements and (iii) secure value for money. Officers should seek advice from the relevant Procurement Team/Legal Services at any early stage of planning a procurement if uncertain as to whether a contract is exempt.

1.10 The following Contracts are exempt from the requirement to conduct a competitive procurement process (as would otherwise be required under Rule 5.1):

- (i) Health Care Services subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 ("PSR Regulations") which are, regardless of value, to be procured under direct award processes (A, B or C) or the most suitable provider process. The decision as to which selection process shall be followed must be made in accordance with the PSR Regulations and on advice from the Relevant Procurement Team.
- (ii) Contracts which are to be directly awarded pursuant to either section 41 (and one or more of the justifications in Schedule 5), section 42 or section 34 of the Procurement Act 2023 (including, but not limited to, genuine urgency, user choice, single supplier, insolvency etc).

The rest of the Rules must be complied with.

2. Where to get advice

- 2.1 Officers requiring advice on procurement practice and the Procurement Legislation should contact the Relevant Procurement Team who will consult with Legal Services where necessary.
- 2.2 Officers requiring Contracts, terms and conditions or legal advice should contact Legal Services.
- 2.3 Officers requiring support or advice relating to finance issues relating to these Rules should contact the relevant Finance Business Partnering Team.

CHAPTER TWO: STEPS PRIOR TO PROCUREMENT

3. Pre-Tender Authorisations, Requirements and Market Engagement

- 3.1 Authorised Officers must ensure, before entering into any process which will or may result in the incurring of any expenditure for the supply of goods, services or works be it capital or revenue, that:
- (i) Where it is a key decision, the requirements of Part 1.3, paragraph 3(b) (Decision Making), Part 4.2, paragraph 2.3 (Cabinet Procedure Rules) and Part 8.1, paragraph 13 (Access to Information Procedure Rules) of the Constitution will be complied with;
 - (ii) the provisions of the Financial Procedure Rules at Part 8.2 of the Constitution and Financial Regulations have been complied with (including ensuring that there is adequate budgetary provision) and written authorisation has been obtained in accordance with Appendix 2, Table 1 of this Part (unless authorisation has been obtained under the Financial Procedure Rules, Part 8.2 of the Constitution);
 - (iii) they have considered whether any consultation requirements apply, including whether the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to any services, and have complied with any such requirements.
- 3.2 The Relevant Procurement Team and Legal Services must be notified before officers enter into any procurement process which will or may result in the incurring of any expenditure for the supply of goods, services or works, where:
- (i) the estimated value of the proposed Contract is £30,000 incl VAT (£25,000 excl VAT) or more; or
 - (ii) the proposed Contract is for the benefit of two or more services or parties; or
 - (iii) the Contract is considered complex, sensitive or high-risk for any other reason (e.g. an outsourcing involving a TUPE transfer of Council staff), or will involve the use of a third party Framework Agreement, dynamic purchasing system or dynamic market.
- 3.3 Prior to the commencement of any procurement exercise:
- 3.3.1 The Head of Pension Fund and the Director of HR & Cultural Change must be notified by the Authorised Officer where the procurement:

- (a) will or may result in any transfers of staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (“TUPE”) where any of the staff are or were previously Council employees; or
 - (b) will or may result in any transfers of staff under TUPE who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- 3.3.2 The Director of Property and Assets as Corporate Landlord must be notified where the procurement will or may result (a) in a contract that confers exclusive possession of the Council’s premises or (b) in the acquisition by the Council of a property interest.
- 3.3.3 The Head of IT must be notified where any procurement involves the purchase of IT products or services that are not listed in the ICT Service Catalogue in order to address any potential data security implications for the Council.
- 3.3.4 The Information Governance Manager must be notified where any procurement or contract involves the transfer of personal or sensitive data to ensure compliance with data protection legislation.
- 3.3.5 As part of the options appraisal and business case (if appropriate) for the relevant procurement the Authorised Officer must undertake an appropriate risk assessment before entering into any process which will or may result in the incurring of any expenditure for the supply of goods, services or works to determine whether there are, or may be, financial, reputational, legal or other risks posed by the proposed contract, and how they are to be treated or managed.
- 3.3.6 All contracts must include risk assessed levels of insurance requirements, to be determined pre-procurement, supported by the relevant Procurement Team, and in accordance with any Guidance approved by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer.
- 3.4 Where there is a corporate contract (i.e. a contract for the benefit of the Council as a whole) for the supply of goods, services or works, no other contract may be used for the supply of those goods, services or works unless this has been authorised in advance in writing by the Relevant Procurement Team.

Market Engagement

- 3.5 The Officer responsible for any procurement may consult potential suppliers in general terms about the nature, level and standard of the contract packaging and other relevant matters, provided this does not

prejudice any potential Bidder. The Officer must not adopt any technical advice in the preparation of an Invitation to Tender or Request for Quotations from anyone where this may prejudice the equal treatment of Bidders or distort competition. When considering undertaking any pre-tender market engagement in respect of a procurement above the Procurement Act Threshold, the Relevant Procurement Team must be consulted to ensure requirements of the Procurement Act are satisfied.

- 3.6 Authorised Officers must keep and maintain records in respect of each contract in order to demonstrate compliance with these Rules and the Procurement Legislation where applicable. Authorised Officers must work with the Procurement Hub to ensure that the contract management system is updated to hold the relevant contract information and updates throughout the life of the Contract. A Contract must be retained for 6 years after the end of the Contract where it has been signed and for 12 years after the end of the Contract where it has been sealed.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

- 3.7 Officers must, prior to conducting either a procurement above the Procurement Act Threshold or a regulated below Procurement Act Threshold, (with the exception of below threshold Call-Off Contracts) have regard to the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises may face particular barriers in competing for a contract and consider whether such barriers can be removed or reduced.

4. Establishing the Value of the Contract/Expenditure per Contract

- 4.1 For the purposes of calculating Contract values under these Rules, the Contract value is the estimated aggregate or recurring value payable in pounds sterling excluding VAT over the entire Contract period, including any form of options or extensions of the Contract. For the purpose of determining whether the procurement thresholds set out in Rule 5.6 Table 1 have been met or exceeded (in which case the Procurement Act will apply) the same calculation will apply except the sum shall be inclusive of VAT. Where the Council is not able to estimate the value of the Contract (for example where the Contract duration is indefinite), the Contract is to be treated as being subject to the Procurement Act (where it applies).
- 4.2 Subject to Rule 4.1, in the case of establishing new Framework Agreements or a dynamic market, the Contract value must be calculated to include the total estimated value of all of the Contracts (or, in respect of open Frameworks, the value of all Frameworks) envisaged to be awarded for the total term of the Framework Agreement or the dynamic market and Concession Contracts must be calculated to include the maximum a Supplier could expect to receive under or in connection with the Contract.

- 4.3 Contracts must not be split into smaller contracts in order to avoid any of these Rules. Spend with Suppliers will be monitored regularly by the Procurement Team to ensure Contracts are not disproportionately awarded and exceeding thresholds.

- 4.4 Where the award of a Contract to a particular Supplier creates circumstances where any reasonably foreseeable future additional work could only be awarded to the same Supplier (e.g. because of the Supplier's ownership or exclusive rights in relation to a product or service) the value of the Contract for the purpose of this Rule 4, should include the likely value of such additional work.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

5. Procurement Process and Thresholds

- 5.1 Please refer to Appendix 2, Table 2 of this Part, for the procurement thresholds and the process to be followed.
- 5.2 Where Requests for Quotation or Invitations to Tender are not required to be sought, Authorised Officers must take practicable steps to secure value for money in accordance with the Guidance approved by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer.
- 5.3 Where Requests for Quotation or Invitations to Tender are required, Authorised Officers must take practical steps to secure value for money through a combination of cost, quality and competition. Competitive quotations or tenders must be sought in consultation with the Relevant Procurement Team following the Guidance approved by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer. A Legal & Procurement instruction form must be completed for all projects with a value of above £25,000 excl VAT and for lower value projects where legal advice is required.
- 5.4 Where the estimated value of a Contract is between £25,000 excl VAT and the current Procurement Act Threshold, the Relevant Procurement Team will, in consultation with the service area, determine the most appropriate method for procuring the supplies, services or works (which may include direct award). This will consider aspects such as capability and capacity of officers in the relevant service area to manage the procurement themselves, timescales, risk and the relative maturity and state of the supplier market. The rationale for selecting a particular procurement method will be documented, recording details behind the selection.
- 5.5 The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services will maintain a record of all contracts below the Procurement Act Threshold that have been awarded directly to a Supplier (such record to contain the date of the contract, the nature of the contract, the value and duration of the contract, the name of the Supplier and the relevant service area) and will provide a copy of this record to the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer at least every 6 months, and where otherwise requested to do so by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.
- 5.6 Where the total value of:
 - (i) a Contract;
 - (ii) all contracts to meet a single requirement for goods or services; or
 - (iii) all successive contracts of the same type (the Relevant Procurement Team must be consulted for advice on calculating this)

is equal to or exceeds the Procurement Act Threshold set out below, the Authorised Officer shall contact their Relevant Procurement Team to establish whether the relevant Procurement Act Threshold has been met or exceeded. The Procurement Act Thresholds (in bold) are inclusive of VAT and will be revised every even year. To assist calculations, the values in italics are shown exclusive of VAT).

Table 1

	Threshold (from 1 January 2026) (incl.VAT)
Goods & Services	£207,720 <i>(£173,100 excl VAT @ 20%)</i>
Works & Concessions	£5,193,000 <i>(£4,327,500 excl VAT @ 20%)</i>
Light Touch Contracts	£663,540 <i>(£552,950 excl of VAT@20%)</i>

- 5.7 Where it is intended to direct award an above Procurement Act Threshold contract pursuant to either section 41 (and one or more of the justifications in Schedule 5), section 42 or section 34 of the Procurement Act 2023 (including, but not limited to, genuine urgency, user choice, single supplier, insolvency etc), the Relevant Procurement Team must consult Legal Services.

6. Pre-Qualification Requirements/Minimum Standards for Suppliers

- 6.1 Authorised Officers are responsible for ensuring that all Suppliers awarded Contracts for the supply of goods, services or works to the Council have met the Council's minimum standards of suitability, as advised by the Relevant Procurement Team.
- 6.2 Where the procurement is for a below Procurement Act Threshold Contract regulated by the Procurement Act, the Council must not restrict the submission of tenders or quotes by reference to an assessment of the Supplier's suitability to perform the Contract. This does not apply to (a) a works contract with a value of not less than £214,905 or (b) an award of a Contract in accordance with a Framework.

7. Invitations to Tender/Request for Quotations

- 7.1 All Invitations to Tender or quote must:
- (i) Clearly specify the goods, services or works that are required (subject to appropriate adjustment applicable to the procedure being used);
 - (ii) list the criteria on which the tender(s) will be evaluated (see Rule 8) showing the weighting of the various evaluation criteria unless otherwise advised by the Relevant Procurement Team and Legal Services;
 - (iii) include a requirement for Bidders to declare that the tender content, price and all other figures or particulars concerning the tender have not been disclosed by the Bidder to any other party;
 - (iv) include a requirement for Bidders to complete fully and sign all tender documents including certificates confirming that no canvassing or collusion has taken place; and
 - (v) include the written conditions of contract and state that the Contract will be subject to these. The conditions of contract may either be the Council's own conditions, or where a Framework Agreement/Dynamic Market is being used, the conditions specified by the Framework Agreement/Dynamic Market.
- 7.2 The list of requirements in Rule 7.1 of this Part, is not exhaustive and any and all additional requirements of the Relevant Procurement Team must also be met.

8. Evaluation Criteria

- 8.1 In determining the relevant evaluation criteria for any procurement, Authorised Officers, in consultation with their Relevant Procurement Team, must consider all factors relevant to their requirement, including environmental and social considerations, including social value benefit where appropriate, so far as this is lawful.
- 8.2 The evaluation process must clearly demonstrate that the Council is seeking to award a contract which offers the best value for money. For procurements (including Call-off Contracts under Framework Agreements) under either the Public Contract Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act this respectively means the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) or the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) (see Rule 5 of this Part).

9. Terms and Conditions of Contracts

- 9.1 Terms and conditions for all Contracts for goods, services and works with a value of £50,000 (excl VAT) or more (and preferably all other Contracts, particularly consultancy contracts to ensure that all intellectual property rights are transferred to the Council, no data is wrongly removed from the Council's possession and no employee or worker rights are acquired by the consultant) must be in accordance with

terms and conditions prepared or approved by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, unless otherwise agreed by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

- 9.2 Any Contract of less than £50,000 (excl VAT) which is of indefinite duration must be in accordance with any terms and conditions prepared or approved by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer so as to ensure that the termination provisions are satisfactory. Other Contracts under £50,000 (excl VAT) should also be on terms and conditions prepared or approved by Legal Services where there are specific legal issues arising such as ownership of intellectual property rights or the processing of personal data.
- 9.3 All written Contracts (whatever their value) shall require that:
- (i) any payment due from the Council is made no later than 30 days from the date on which the relevant invoice is received provided that the invoice is not considered to be invalid or is disputed. Where an invoice is considered invalid or is disputed, the Supplier must be notified without undue delay;
 - (ii) any invoices submitted by the Supplier are considered and verified by the Council in a timely fashion and undue delay in doing so is not to be regarded as sufficient justification for failing to treat an invoice as valid or undisputed;
 - (iii) any subcontract imposes obligations similar to those which (i) and (ii) require and an obligation that the subcontractor is required to impose such obligations in any further subcontract.
- 9.4 All Contracts with a value of £50,000 (excl VAT) or more must include a clause empowering the Council to terminate the contract for bribery or corruption and to recover from the Supplier the amount of any loss resulting from such termination in a form approved by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.
- 9.5 All Contracts with a value of £500,000 (excl VAT) or more and any other Contract requiring the additional limitation period of 12 years rather than 6 years for court proceedings in the event of default must be drafted as a deed and sealed by the Council. This is particularly relevant to construction contracts in the case of latent defects.
- 9.6 Any Contract that will result in a public facing website/mobile app where the Council or a Supplier on its behalf is presenting information relating to the Council or services the Council offers, must comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- 9.7 Rules 9.3 to 9.5 shall not apply to below Procurement Act Threshold agreements with statutory undertakers for diversion of apparatus under either Sections 84-85 of The New Road and Street Works Act 1991 or other legislation.

10. Third-Party Framework Agreements, Dynamic Purchasing

Systems and Dynamic Markets

- 10.1 A Contract may be awarded by calling-off a third-party Framework providing the following criteria are met:

- i) Legal Services have reviewed the framework documentation, confirmed that the Framework is lawfully accessible to the Council and any access agreements are entered into;
- ii) The Framework Agreement is considered suitable taking into account the complexity and scale of the requirement, the relevant market and value for money (following consultation with the Relevant Procurement Team);
- iii) The call-off can be undertaken in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Framework Agreement (such terms and conditions must meet the Council's requirements as set out in these Rules and have been approved by Legal Services); and
- iv) For above Procurement Act Threshold Contracts, the outcome was not determined prior to identifying the Framework.

10.2 Contracts based on either a third-party Dynamic Purchasing System or Dynamic Market may be awarded if they comply with the relevant Procurement Legislation. Legal and Procurement advice must be sought at an early stage to ensure legal compliance and the relevant access arrangements are put in place.

11. Receipt of Tenders (including under Framework Agreements) and Opening of Tenders

All tenders/quotations must be submitted online via the Tendering Portal except where authorised by the Relevant Procurement Team.

12. Evaluation of Tenders or Quotations

- 12.1 Authorised Officers must ensure that all tenders (including those in mini-competitions under Framework Agreements) are evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified in the Invitation to Tender or in the Requests for Quotations and that the evaluation process is managed by the Relevant Procurement Team.
- 12.2 The arithmetic in compliant tenders, including those in mini-competitions under Framework Agreements, must be checked.
- 12.3 Authorised Officers must compare submitted tender prices with any project appraisal or pre-tender estimates. Where tender prices are above the estimated value of a contract, Authorised Officers must be satisfied that the tender/quotation represents value for money and ensure that sufficient budget is available prior to proceeding to award.
- 12.4 Where the submitted tender price of any Bidder in response to a PA Tender is an Abnormally Low Tender, the requirements set out in Section 19 (4) & (5) of the Procurement Act must be followed. Where the submitted tender price of any Bidder in response to a non- PA Tender is an Abnormally Low Tender, advice must be sought from the Relevant Procurement Team.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONTRACT AWARD

13. Authorisation for the Award of Contracts

- 13.1 Contracts may only be awarded by the Council if there has been full compliance with these Rules and the Financial Procedure Rules.
- 13.2 Tenders may be evaluated and recommended for acceptance as follows:
- 13.3 No tender can be accepted or Contract awarded unless this is on the basis of the evaluation criteria sent out with the Invitation To Tender or Requests for Quotation.
- 13.4 Where a key decision was obtained to authorise the entering into of the procurement process under Rule 3.1 (i), the Contract must not be awarded unless that decision has been complied with (for example, a new decision may be required prior to award if the risk factors have changed).
- 13.5 Where a key decision was not initially considered necessary under Rule 3.1 (i) but due to the price of the winning bid it has become a key decision, the requirements set out in Rule 3.1 (i) must be complied with before the Contract is awarded.

14. Procedure for Award of Contracts

- 14.1 For procurements not covered by Procurement Legislation, following Contract award, successful and unsuccessful Bidders must be notified of the award of the Contract for which they bid. This notification letter will be issued by the Relevant Procurement Team.
- 14.2 Where there has been a procurement covered by Procurement Legislation, the Relevant Procurement Team will need to comply with various transparency requirements prior to award and/or post award. The Authorised Officer must therefore consult the Relevant Procurement Team prior to any award being made. Where a standstill period is being applied (whether mandatory or voluntary), standstill letters/assessment summaries must only be issued following the decision to award. Where a decision to award is a key decision, the decision must not be implemented until the expiration of any applicable call-in period under Rule 19, Part 6.2 of the Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Rules. Where there is a court challenge prior to completion of the Contract then the Contract must not be completed without the authorisation of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer, the Relevant Procurement Team and the relevant Director.
- 14.3 All Contracts must be in writing and should be held on the Council's contract management system. Authorised Officers are responsible for providing a copy of the Contract to the Relevant Procurement Team.

- 14.4 Contracts must be signed or sealed in accordance with Appendix 2, Table 1 (for the avoidance of doubt no elected or co-opted Member of the Council may sign any Contract for or on behalf of the Council).

14.5 In relation to Contracts with a total value in excess of £5,000 excl VAT which have not been supported by the Procurement Team, Authorised Officers must inform the Relevant Procurement Team of all Contracts (including Call-off Contracts) awarded promptly (and preferably within 5 working days of the date of the award) so that the:

- (i) details of the Contract can be added to the Council's Contracts Management System; and the Relevant Procurement Team can publish details of the Contract award in accordance with any legal requirements; and
- (ii) all transparency and reporting requirements can be met.

15. Commencement of Contracts

No supply of goods, services or works must commence until all contract documentation is duly completed (see Rule 14 above) except where otherwise approved by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

CHAPTER FIVE: POST-AWARD

16. Contract and Risk Management

Contracts must be managed according to the Procurement Legislation (as applicable) and Guidance approved by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer.

17. Variations of Contracts (including extensions)

17.1 Any variation to a concluded Contract for works, supplies or services (including an extension to the length of any such Contract or a replacement of the original Supplier) ('the Variation') is only permissible if the Variation in principle:

- a) demonstrably represents Value For Money or is otherwise in the Council's best interest to progress;
- b) can be funded from an approved budget;
- c) in the opinion of the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services entails no diminution in any Social Value identified at the commencement of the Contract;
- d) does not conflict with the provisions of the Procurement Legislation (where applicable);

and it is established with advice from the Relevant Procurement Team that a competitive process does not need to be followed. The Relevant Procurement Team must consult with Legal Services where the Variation is regulated by Procurement Legislation. The Relevant Procurement Team will publish any required transparency notices.

17.2 Where, as a consequence of a proposed Variation, a Contract originally below the Procurement Act Threshold will exceed the Procurement Act Threshold, the Variation will become regulated by the Procurement Act and the Relevant Procurement Team must be consulted.

17.3 Any Variation outside these requirements would require the conduct of a new tender process for a new Contract.

17.4 Where an Authorised Officer proposes to terminate a Contract which is covered by the Procurement Act or where a Contract which is covered by the Procurement Act is due to expire, the Authorised Officer must consult with the Relevant Procurement Team in order that transparency requirements can be met.

CHAPTER SIX: GENERAL

18. Non-compliance with these Rules

- 18.1 Any officer who becomes aware of any non-compliance or potential non-compliance with these Rules must notify the Relevant Procurement Team, Legal Services and the relevant Finance Business Partner as soon as this is identified, together with a proposed compliant solution wherever possible. Instances of non-compliance may be escalated to the relevant Director for further investigation.
- 18.2 If the non-compliance cannot be remedied by the taking of any appropriate step or measure, the matter must be notified to the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer and the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer by the relevant Director. Where a particular course of action is specified by both the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer and the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer this must be complied with.
- 18.3 If a non-compliance has given rise to, or is likely to give rise to illegality or maladministration, the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer and the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer must be notified.

If these Rules are not complied with, this will not invalidate any Contract entered into by or on behalf of the Council, except where English law provides to the contrary.

19. Schemes of Delegation

- 19.1 Directors must ensure that they have Schemes of Delegation identifying:
- (i) Authorised Officers; and
 - (ii) the extent of Authorised Officers' delegated authority (including expenditure limits which reflect authorisation limits set out in the Financial Scheme of Delegation).
- 19.2 Authorised Officers may not, under any circumstances, act outside the delegated powers of their Director.
- 19.3 Directors must ensure that all Authorised Officers receive the necessary training to be and remain conversant with these Rules.

20. Conflicts of Interest

Officers and Members must comply with their respective Codes of Conduct under Part 9 of the Constitution to avoid any conflict between their own interests and that of the Council. Where required by the Relevant Procurement Team, a conflict assessment must be undertaken at the start of a procurement and shall

be kept under review during the lifetime of the Contract where one is awarded. Conflict Assessments will be retained by the Relevant Procurement Team.

Appendix 1 Definitions

For the purposes of these Rules:

Abnormally Low Tender means a tender which gives rise to doubts that the price offered is economically sustainable and will properly deliver the contract.

Authorised Officers means those officers of the Council identified as such by Directors in their Schemes of Delegation and approved by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer to undertake procurement and contracting on behalf of the Council (including authorisation of expenditure, preparing and/or negotiating contract documentation, awarding and signing Contracts and/or managing Contracts) and any Agents as defined in Rule 1.8 of this Part, with such authority;

Bidder means a potential Supplier who responds to an Invitation to Tender or Request for Quotations or any person who is invited to submit a tender or quote.

Concession Contract means a contract for supply of works or services, for a pecuniary interest, where at least part of the consideration for that supply is a right for the Supplier to exploit the works or services that are the subject of the Contract and where, under the Contract, the Supplier is exposed to a real operating risk.

Contract means an agreement which:

- (i) may be oral, written, partly oral and partly written or implied from conduct between the Council and another person;
- (ii) gives rise to obligations which are enforceable or recognised by law (i.e. legally binding); and
- (iii) commits the Council to paying or doing something;

and, where the context requires, a reference to a contract means a contract to which these Rules apply and a "Call-off Contract" means an order made/call-off contract entered into under a Framework Agreement. Note that service level agreements or SLAs are not generally legally binding and must not be used with third parties (i.e. outside the Council) without the consent of Legal Services.

Director – for the purposes of these Rules the title "Director" includes Executive Directors, and, where a Director has delegated their function to a Deputy Director or Head of Service under the Scheme of Delegation it shall include the Deputy Director/Head of Service to whom it has been delegated.

Framework or Framework Agreement means a Contract with a Supplier or Suppliers that provides for future award of contracts (Call-off Contracts) to the Suppliers or to a Supplier.

Guidance means the procurement guidance available on the Council's Intranet.

Head of Service means an officer who reports directly to a Director and is designated by them to be a Head of Service;

Invitation to Tender means the document headed as such and used by the Council to invite Suppliers to bid for the provision of goods, services or works;

Light Touch Contract means a contract wholly or mainly for the supply of services of a kind specified in section 9 of the Procurement Act.

Monitoring Officer means the officer appointed under Section 5 of the [Local Government and Housing Act 1989](#). The Monitoring Officer is statutorily responsible for reporting to the Council on any proposal, decision or omission by the Council, any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or officer which has given rise to, or is likely to or would give rise to a breach of the law or potential maladministration.

PA Tender means a tender procedure which needs to be carried out under the Procurement Act.

Person means any individual, partnership, local authority or incorporated or unincorporated body.

Procurement Legislation means either The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, The Concession Contracts Regulations 2016, The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 ("PSR Regulations") or the Procurement Act 2023 as appropriate.

Procurement Act means the Procurement Act 2023.

Procurement Act Threshold means the thresholds set out in Rule 5.4, Table 1 of this Part (as may be revised by the government every two years).

Relevant Procurement Team means whichever of the following category based teams advises the Authorised Officer:

- (i) the Economy & Place Team;
- (ii) the Health, Education & Social Care Team; or
- (iii) the Resources Team

Request for Quotations means the document headed as such and used by the Council to invite Suppliers to bid for the provision of goods, services or works.

s151 Officer means the Chief Finance Officer appointed under s151 Local Government Act 1972 and officers to whom the s151 Officer has delegated their functions in accordance with the relevant Scheme of Delegation;

Scheme of Delegation has the meaning given to it under Rule 21.

Subsidy Control Law means the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as may be amended or any successor legislation.

Supplier means any Person who provides or seeks to provide goods, services or works to the Council.

Tendering Portal means the e-tendering system/tool authorised by the Relevant Procurement Team.

Appendix 2

Table 1 - Pre-Procurement Authorisation, Contract Award Authorisation and Execution Requirements

Subject to compliance with Rule 3.1(i) and Rule 13.4, authorisations may be given in accordance with the Tables below:

Goods and Services

Cumulative expenditure per contract (excl VAT)	Pre- Procurement and Contract Award Authorisation	Execution
Up to but not exceeding £200,000	Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limits	Signed by one Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit.
Above £200,000 but not exceeding £500,000	Head of Service and Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer*	Signed by Head of Service and one other Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit
£500,000 and above	Director and Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer*	Sealed by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council on the instructions of the Director and one other Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit

Works

Cumulative expenditure per contract (excl VAT)	Pre- Procurement and Contract Award Authorisation	Execution
Up to but not exceeding £500,000	Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limits	Up to £200,000 signed by one Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit. From £200,000 up to £500,000 signed by two Authorised Officers in

		accordance with their delegated financial limits
Above £500,000 but not exceeding £2,000,000	Head of Service and Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer*	Sealed by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council on the instructions of the Head of Service and one other Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit
£2,000,000 and above	Director and Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer*	Sealed by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council on the instructions of the Director and one other Authorised Officer in accordance with their delegated financial limit

* Authorisation by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer is only required at Contract Award stage where there have been variations to the scope/cost of the contract after the Pre-Procurement Authorisation was obtained.

Note: Framework Agreements and Call-off Contracts should be authorised in accordance with this Appendix 2. However, Framework Agreements over £500k in aggregate value do not need to be sealed but should be signed by a Director and S.151 Officer. Call-off Contracts over £500k should be sealed in accordance with this Appendix 2.

Table 2 - Procurement thresholds and processes

Estimated cumulative expenditure per contract	Competition
Supplies, Services or Works £25,000 or above up to the Procurement Act Thresholds	<p>The Relevant Procurement Team will review the needs of the service area and will identify an appropriate procurement method for the required supplies, services or works. This will take into account aspects such as capability and capacity of officers in the relevant service area to manage the procurement themselves, timescales, risk and the relative maturity and state of the supplier market. Where a competitive process is undertaken, templates will be utilised to standardise the process and tenders may be advertised on Find A Tender, depending on the requirements.</p> <p>For all procurements, the rationale for selecting a particular procurement method will be documented, recording details behind the selection.</p>
Equal to or exceeding the relevant Procurement Act Threshold	<p>Tenders must be advertised where required by the Procurement Act and conducted using an appropriate competitive procedure under the Procurement Act (as advised by the Relevant Procurement Team). See Rules 5.7 and 1.10 regarding direct awards under the Procurement Act.</p>

Divisions Affected – N/A

COUNCIL – 30 June 2026

THE USE OF URGENCY PROVISIONS

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Council is RECOMMENDED to note**
 - (a) the exemption from Call-in of the following decision:
 - Cabinet on 16 June 2026 – SEND Reform Plan

Executive Summary

2. The Constitution makes provision for urgent decisions to be made exempt from call-in on the agreement of the Chair of the Council that the decision is urgent. When this occurs, it must be reported to the next meeting of Council.
3. There was one occasion on which this provision was used since the Annual Meeting of Council on 12 May 2026. The request for the matter to be treated as urgent whereby it would be exempt from Call in was made on 1 May 2026 to the then Chair of the Council, Councillor Lygo. The Chair agreed in this case that the matter should be treated as urgent and it was therefore exempt from Call in by virtue of the Constitution in Part 6.2, Section 19 (z) iii.
4. The decision needed to be implemented before any call-in period for decisions made at Cabinet would expire, as the plan needed to be submitted to the Department for Education by Friday 19 June 2026.

Urgency Provisions

5. The Constitution states (Part 6.2, Section 20) that the provision for Call-In “shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Cabinet, Officer or other decision maker is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council’s or the public’s interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision maker, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call in. The Chair of the Council must agree that in all the circumstances the decision should be treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair’s agreement shall be

required. In the absence of both, the Proper Officer's agreement shall be required. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency."

6. The Director of Children's Services requested an exemption from Call-In for a Key Decision by the Cabinet on Tuesday 16 June 2026 on the following item:

SEND Reform Plan

The SEND Reform Plan sets out how Oxfordshire will respond to the Government's proposed SEND reforms and the Schools White Paper, providing a shared, system-wide approach to improving inclusion, outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and long-term financial sustainability. Developed jointly with partners, the plan builds on existing improvement activity and reflects shared accountability across the local area. It is structured around the national SEND reform framework and sets out the priorities and actions required to deliver sustainable improvement locally.

7. The reason for the requested exemption from Call-in was that the decision needed to be implemented before the call-in period for decisions made at Cabinet would expire, as the plan needed to be submitted to the Department for Education by Friday 19 June 2026. Call-in would not expire until 5pm on Monday 22 June 2026.
8. The report on the item can be viewed [here](#).

Financial Implications

9. There are none arising from this report which is noting decisions previously taken.

Comments checked by:

Legal Implications

10. Regulation 19 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 requires that the executive leader submits a report to the authority at least annually on executive decisions taken in cases of special urgency (Regulation 11), including the particulars of each decision.

The Constitution at Part 6.2 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules), paragraph 20 makes provision for urgent decision-making.

This report is fulfilling both the legal and Constitutional duty to inform Council.

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar – Head of Legal & Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

ANITA BRADLEY
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: None

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,
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June 2026

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Divisions affected – All

**COUNCIL
30 JUNE 2026**

COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is RECOMMENDED
 - a) To note the review of political balance of committees to reflect the current formation of the political groups as detailed in Annex 1;
 - b) To appoint members to the committees of the Council as listed in Annex 2.

Review of political balance

2. Seats are allocated to political groups in accordance with the groups' proportionate strength on the Council as a whole. Any seats left over are distributed to any non-grouped members.
3. The following rules, in priority order, apply for political proportionality:
 - (i) Where a group has an overall majority on the Council, that group is entitled to a majority of the seats on each committee and sub-committee.
 - (ii) Each political group is entitled to its proportion of the total number of seats on all the committees added together, according to the ratio of the number of members of the group to the number of members of the Council.
 - (iii) Subject to (i) and (ii) above, each group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats on each individual committee.
 - (iv) For sub-committees and some other bodies, a group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats regardless of the total number of seats involved (but still subject to the majority rule in (i) above).

4. Annual Council on 12 May 2026 received the last report on political balance. On 19 June 2026 officers received a Notice of Joining a Political Group form confirming that Councillor Higgins has joined the Liberal Democrat group.
5. As this form has been received more than a month following the previous review of political balance, a new review must take place (The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Regulation 17(c)).

6. The group numbers are now as follows:

35	Liberal Democrat Group
12	Labour & Cooperative Group
12	Oxfordshire Alliance Group
7	Green Group

There are three Members not aligned to any political group.

7. The political proportionality calculations following this change are shown in Annex 1 and are summarised as follows:
 - There are 69 councillors and 97 seats on committees to allocate proportionally.
 - Due to rule (i) above, the Liberal Democrat Group must have a majority on each committee. This results in a total of 56 seats – above their proportion of 49.20.
 - The Labour & Cooperative Group and the Oxfordshire Alliance Group would be entitled to 16.87 seats each under strict proportionality. Because they have the same number of seats, they have the same proportion calculation on each committee. As was the case following the election in May 2025, there were six committees on which one group should have two seats, and the other group should have one seat. The two group leaders agreed how those seats were to be shared between the groups in a way which maintains the overall balance. It is proposed to return to the same allocation of seats. The result is that both groups have 16 seats.
 - The Green Group would be entitled to 9.84 seats under strict proportionality. However, there are only 9 seats remaining to allocate. The Group has been allocated one seat on each of the eight committees on which it has the highest proportion.

Appointments

8. The leaders of the political groups are requested to submit their nominees for their committee places in time to be included in the Schedule of Business to be published as Annex 2 to this report the day before the Council meeting.

Legal implications

9. Political groups are constituted and notified to the Proper Officer in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990/1553.
10. Council is responsible for appointing to Committees under s102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Under section 15 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council has a duty to allocate committee seats to achieve political proportionality. This applies to all committees of the Council where at least three seats have to be filled by the members of the Council.

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar

Head of Legal and Governance Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Financial implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Comments checked by:

Drew Hodgson, Strategic Finance Business Partner

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 1 – Political proportionality calculations

Annex 2 – Committee membership

Contact officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,
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June 2026

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Group	Seats	%
Liberal Democrat Group (LD)	35	50.72%
Labour and Cooperative Group (L&C)	12	17.39%
Oxfordshire Alliance (OA)	12	17.39%
Green Group (Grn)	7	10.14%
Total Grouped	66	95.65%
Non-aligned (NA)	3	4.35%
Total	69	100.00%

		LD	LD*	L&C	L&C	OA	OA	Grn	Grn	Totals
		%	Alloc	%	Alloc	%	Alloc	%	Alloc	
Planning & Regulation Committee	12	6.09	7	2.09	2	2.09	2	1.22	1	12
Audit & Governance Committee	9	4.57	5	1.57	2	1.57	1	0.91	1	9
Pension Fund Committee	7	3.55	4	1.22	1	1.22	2	0.71		7
Remuneration Committee	6	3.04	4	1.04	1	1.04	1	0.61		6
Charlotte Coxe Trust Committee	5	2.54	3	0.87	1	0.87	1	0.51		5
Overview & Scrutiny Committees:										
Performance & Corporate Services OSC	9	4.57	5	1.57	2	1.57	1	0.91	1	9
People OSC	9	4.57	5	1.57	1	1.57	2	0.91	1	9
Place OSC	9	4.57	5	1.57	1	1.57	2	0.91	1	9
Education and Young People OSC	9	4.57	5	1.57	2	1.57	1	0.91	1	9
Horton HOSC	8	4.06	5	1.39	1	1.39	1	0.81	1	8
Oxford Joint HOSC	7	3.55	4	1.22	1	1.22	1	0.71	1	7
BOB HOSC	7	3.55	4	1.22	1	1.22	1	0.71	1	7
Overall com total	97	49.20	56	16.87	16	16.87	16	9.84	9	97

* Where a group has an overall majority on the Council, that group is entitled to a majority of the seats on each committee and sub-committee.

The Leaders of the two groups agreed on an equal share out of seats on these committees to maintain the overall proportions.

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