

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

27 August 2026

Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery – Proposed Approach

Report by Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Leader is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Agree the proposed model for introducing a Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery and any subsequent Deputy Cabinet Member roles.**
- b) Confirm that a Deputy Cabinet Member role is non-statutory, advisory and delivery-focused, with no delegated decision-making powers.**
- c) Agree the governance safeguards, role description, refreshed Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check requirement and communications approach set out in this report before implementation.**
- d) Agree the Role Profile for the Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery Role attached as Annex 1 to this report.**
- e) Request the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to update the Council's Constitution using their delegation from Council to reflect the Leader's power to appoint to Deputy Cabinet Member roles and to include the role of a Deputy Cabinet Member within the executive arrangements and to report this change to Council.**

Executive Summary

1. This report seeks the Leader's agreement to introduce a Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery. The role is proposed to provide additional political capacity to support delivery of agreed Strategic Plan priorities, strengthen follow-up on agreed actions and improve the organisation and forward planning of Cabinet business. The role would be non-statutory, advisory and delivery-focused. It would not be a Cabinet position and would carry no executive decision-making powers, delegated authority or voting rights in Cabinet decision-making.

Background and rationale

2. The Leader has indicated that a Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery would support the delivery of Cabinet priorities and strengthen political capacity around agreed areas of work. Deputy Cabinet Member, assistant

portfolio holder and extended Cabinet-style roles are used by a number of councils to increase political capacity, support portfolio delivery and provide additional focus on specific priorities or cross-cutting areas.

3. At Oxfordshire County Council, the proposed approach would support stronger delivery, help progress quick wins and improve the forward planning of Cabinet business. Executive decision-making would remain with the Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet Members and officers under existing delegations.

Proposed role and scope

4. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery would support the Leader, Cabinet and relevant Cabinet Members in progressing agreed priorities. The role would include promoting specific projects or areas of work agreed by the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, supporting policy development and early engagement on emerging issues, working with officers to maintain momentum on agreed delivery priorities, supporting informal Cabinet planning and forward work programming, and engaging with relevant internal stakeholders within an agreed remit.
5. The role would not be a Cabinet position and would not form part of the statutory executive. Deputy Cabinet Members would not approve reports, take key decisions, exercise delegated authority or substitute for Cabinet Members in formal decision-making. There would be no additional Special Responsibility Allowance attached to the role.

Governance model

6. Appointments would be made by the Leader and reported to Council for transparency. Each Deputy Cabinet Member role would have a written remit agreed by the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member. Deputy Cabinet Members would operate within an extended Cabinet model and may attend informal Cabinet discussions where relevant to their remit.
7. Formal executive decisions would remain with the Leader, Cabinet, single Cabinet Members, or officers in line with the Constitution and the scheme of delegation. The role has no decision-making responsibility; however, for transparency, Deputy Cabinet Members should declare an interest and/or recuse themselves from scrutiny activity relating directly to their own area of focus as a Deputy Cabinet Member. Given the broad remit of the Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery, the postholder should take advice before participating in any scrutiny activity and declare an interest and/or recuse themselves where this supports transparency and public confidence.

Implementation and communications

8. It is proposed that initially there is one role: Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery. As the role is already underway, the role profile is attached to this report as Annex 1. The appointment as a Deputy Cabinet Member will require the postholder to complete a refreshed Disclosure and Barring Service check at an enhanced level, in line with advice from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer. Communications should

position the role as additional political capacity to support delivery, not as a transfer of powers or responsibilities. Officer-facing guidance should set out how Deputy Cabinet Members should be engaged and where formal decision-making authority remains. Public-facing information should make clear that the role does not carry executive decision-making powers.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

9. The proposal supports delivery of the council's Strategic Plan and agreed Cabinet priorities by providing additional political capacity to maintain momentum on agreed workstreams, support follow-up on actions and strengthen forward planning. The role is intended to support delivery within existing governance and decision-making arrangements, not to create new executive powers or change the council's formal scheme of delegation.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation. The proposed role would not attract an additional Special Responsibility Allowance. Any officer support would be managed within existing resources and through normal Cabinet support, governance and service arrangements.

Comments checked by:
Thomas James, Head of Financial Services

Legal Implications

11. Section 9E(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Leader to discharge any executive functions which would include the power to appoint Deputy Cabinet Members. In compliance with Section 9C(5) of the Local Government Act 2000, a local authority Executive cannot exceed 10 members. It is therefore essential that the distinction is made between the powers and delegations of a member of the Cabinet and the role of a Deputy Cabinet Member.
12. The Leader may appoint Deputy Cabinet Members to provide informal support to one or more portfolio areas. Deputy Cabinet Members are not members of the Cabinet, have no delegated Cabinet authority, and may not take Cabinet decisions. The Deputy Cabinet Member role would be non-statutory, advisory and delivery-focused. It would not be a Cabinet position and would not carry executive decision-making powers, delegated authority or voting rights. Formal executive decision-making would continue to operate in accordance with the Constitution, the Leader and Cabinet executive arrangements and the council's scheme of delegation. A written remit setting out the role and scope of responsibilities should be agreed and published or otherwise made available as appropriate to support transparency and reduce the risk of constitutional ambiguity.
13. The Constitution should be amended to include the role of a Deputy Cabinet Member and to reflect the Leader's power to appoint to such roles in support of their Cabinet.

Comments checked by:
Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Regulatory)

Staff Implications

14. There are no direct staffing implications arising from the recommendation. Officer support for the role would be proportionate, clearly linked to agreed priorities and coordinated through the relevant senior officer or Cabinet support arrangements. Any additional support requirements would need to be managed within existing resources. The postholder would be required to complete a refreshed Disclosure and Barring Service check at an enhanced level before taking up the role.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

15. No direct equality and inclusion implications have been identified at this stage. The proposal concerns political capacity and governance arrangements rather than a service change, policy change or budget proposal. Any specific projects or areas of work supported by the Deputy Cabinet Member would continue to be subject to the council's normal equality impact assessment requirements where relevant.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

16. The proposal does not directly affect Local Government Reorganisation arrangements. The role may provide additional political capacity to support delivery and forward planning during a period of significant organisational change. Any Local Government Reorganisation-related work supported through the role would need to remain within agreed council governance, programme and decision-making arrangements.

Sustainability Implications

17. No direct sustainability or climate implications have been identified at this stage. The proposal concerns political capacity and governance arrangements rather than a new budget, policy, strategy, project or programme. Any specific projects or areas of work supported by the Deputy Cabinet Member would continue to be considered through the council's normal governance, sustainability and Climate Impact Assessment processes where relevant.

Risk Management

18. The key risks relate to potential confusion about decision-making authority, constitutional ambiguity, perceived duplication with Cabinet Member or officer roles, and the need to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place before the role is implemented. These risks will be mitigated through a clear written remit, public-facing information confirming that the role has no executive decision-making powers, officer guidance, reporting the appointment to Council for transparency and requiring the postholder to complete a refreshed Disclosure and Barring Service check at an enhanced level before taking up the role.

Consultations

19. No public consultation has been undertaken. The proposal relates to internal governance and political capacity arrangements. Relevant officer advice has informed the report, including legal, governance and finance input.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 1 – Role profile: Deputy Cabinet Member for Strategic Plan Delivery

Contact Officer: Emily Schofield, Head of Public Affairs and Strategy

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