OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council

8 September 2026

Agenda

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 8 September 2026 at 10.00 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.

Dr Martin Reeves OBE
Chief Executive

August 2026

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

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 11 - 26)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2026 (**CC1**).

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.

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 must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Thursday 3 September 2026. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

7. Questions with Notice from Members of the Public

The deadline to submit questions is 9am, five working days before the meeting i.e. 9am Tuesday 1 September 2026.

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 27 - 34)

Report from the Leader of the Council.

The report summarises the decisions from the Cabinet meetings held on 16 June 2026, 14 July 2026 and 28 July 2026.

10. Treasury Management Annual Performance Report 2025/26 (Pages 35 - 50)

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

This report sets out the Treasury Management position at 31 March 2026. Throughout the report, the performance for the year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2025.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2025/26.

11. Committees and Review of Political Balance (To Follow)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The report will be circulated on Monday 7 September 2026 based on the outcome of the by-election in the division of Chesterton and Launton on 3 September 2026.

12. Notification of Amendments to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer under Delegated Powers (Pages 51 - 60)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer has made a number of amendments to the Constitution for clarification, to reflect legislation, and to give effect to decisions made by Council and decisions made by the Leader of the Council.

Council is RECOMMENDED to

a) **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 (v) as set out in Annex 1 to this report;**

b) **Request the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to ensure the necessary changes are made; and**

c) **Note that a final edit of the Constitution covering layout and grammar will be undertaken prior to publication.**

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

13. Motion from Councillor Paul-Austin Sargent

Council recognises that access to high-quality healthcare is fundamental to the wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents and that the County Council has an important role in supporting its anchor partners in the NHS to improve local services.

The Council understands the importance of ensuring that high-quality cancer treatment remains accessible closer to home. The Brodey Cancer Centre in Banbury is integral to our shared ambition. Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust identified a building on the Horton General Hospital site over two years ago as an appropriate location for the re-housing of the Brodey.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Express its support for the re-housing of the Brodey Cancer Centre into the identified, refurbished building on the Horton General Hospital site.

2. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust to urge the necessary steps for the relocation to be taken expeditiously and to request a clear timetable for the re-housing project be shared with the Council and the public by the Trust.

14. Motion from Councillor Emma Markham

Large-scale developments continue to be approved and built while roads, water, sewerage and electricity capacity often fail to keep pace. Developers also frequently build infrastructure, including roads and sewers, which are never formally adopted by the Highway Authority or water company, leaving residents reliant on unmaintained systems with no clear responsibility for upkeep.

Statutory undertakers such as Thames Water are only consultees on planning applications. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 they cannot lawfully refuse a connection on capacity grounds, even where evidence suggests they should. This is acknowledged by water companies, Ofwat and the Environment Agency, yet national housing targets take no account of it.

This council has statutory responsibilities over important infrastructure considerations such as flooding and highways, but we should also be representing residents' serious concerns over national planning policy to ensure timely provision and adoption of local infrastructure.

This Council believes that government cannot keep ignoring contradictions between housing targets and infrastructure capacity. This impacts new and existing communities and undermines the credibility of planning decisions. We should also consider more robust mechanisms to ensure adoption standards, safety audits and materials.

Council therefore requests that:

1. The Leader writes to the Secretaries of State for Housing and DEFRA calling for housing targets to be matched to genuine infrastructure capacity.

2. Cabinet reviews our Section 38 agreements to ensure appropriate development standards are applied and, where possible, to ensure adoption of infrastructure is achieved in the timeliest and most efficient way possible.

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.

15. Motion from Councillor Bethia Thomas

This Council:

- Recognises the county was officially declared in drought after multiple heatwaves this summer.
- Notes the number of wildfires and uncontrolled burns that have been linked to extreme heat and dry conditions.
- Recognises these conditions are very different to those experienced previously and may set a new pattern due to climate change.
- Seeks to support and protect our fire service, our communities, and our rural landscape which is susceptible to uncontrolled burning.

Council therefore:

1. Asks the Cabinet Member for Resources to work with the Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Brigades Union to understand their needs considering the conditions they now face.
2. Asks Cabinet to consider measures to minimise the risk of uncontrolled fires by:
    a. Ensuring that wildfire prevention and management is a priority for the Climate Adaptation Team;
    b. Working with rural communities to reduce the risk of outbreaks in open country;
    c. Reviewing the management of verges and land owned by the Council taking this into account;
    d. Working with Trading Standards and Licencing Authorities to ensure the sale of fireworks, and firework displays are managed responsibly.
3. Requests the Leader of the Council writes to the appropriate Minister to request resources ensuring our fire service is equipped to fight fires like these at scale, urging them to work with other governments nationally and internationally to understand best practice, including the idea of a total fire ban when required, and a broad approach to reducing the risk of fire.

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 Liz Brighouse

This Council notes:

1. Social Care is one of the biggest issues of our time. The system is unsustainable.
2. The Prime Minister has committed to fixing the broken social care system by working across party lines, and drawing a line under decades of governments leaving this issue unaddressed.
3. Baroness Louise Casey, chair of the Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, has launched the Big Conversation on Care.

This Council welcomes:

4. The Independent Commission on Adult Social Care commitment to bring forward its reporting timetable by a year, recognising the urgency for lasting reform felt by all relying on and working in the system.
5. The Prime Minister's willingness to reach across party lines, and the engagement of all opposition parties with this process, in the belief that a problem of this scale will only be solved through a settlement built to outlast any single Parliament.

This Council resolves to ask Cabinet to:

6. Promote the Big Conversation on Care across Oxfordshire.
7. Offer full support and participation in the conversation whether that is through local engagement events, sharing local data and case studies etc.
8. Work constructively with all political groups recognising that social care reform will only endure if it is built on cross-party consensus.

9. Council also asks the Leader to send a report to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcomes of local engagement with the Big Conversation on Care, and on the Commission's findings as they are published

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.

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 30 June 2026 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at Time Not Specified

Present:

Councillor Ted Fenton – in the Chair

Councillors:

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

40/26 MINUTES
(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 May 2026 and 20 May 2026 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

41/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Coles, Cotter, Crichton, Field-Johnson, Gawrysiak, Graham, Robertshaw and Walker.

42/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

43/26 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair congratulated two officers of the Council who had received awards in the King's Birthday Honours.

Jacqui Gitau, Family Help Practitioner in Children's Social Care, was awarded an MBE for services to migrant families in Oxfordshire. Jacqui founded African Families in the UK after witnessing how many families were falling through the gaps, sometimes due to systemic barriers, and sometimes simply because they lacked timely information about education, health, and social care.

The Council's Chief Executive, Dr Martin Reeves, was awarded an OBE in recognition of his outstanding service to local government. He was Chief Executive of Coventry City Council for over 14 years, during which time Coventry became the first Marmot City in the country. He was also instrumental in establishing the West Midlands Mayoral Combined Authority and was its first Chief Executive from March 2016 to September 2017.

A full list of Oxfordshire award recipients in the King's Birthday Honours was attached at Annex 1 to the Schedule of Business.

A list of the events attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair since the last Council meeting was in Annex 2.

The Chair noted that two former chairs of this Council had passed away recently. The death had occurred of a former chair of Oxfordshire County Council and of Cherwell District Council, Timothy Hallchurch MBE. Tim was elected Conversative Member for the division of Otmoor & Kidlington in 2005 and 2009 and for Otmoor Division in 2013.

Former Councillor Hallchurch was also a Member of Cherwell District Council from 2002 to 2022, including a year as Chair in 2011/2012. He chaired this Council in 2013/2014 and served on many committees including Audit, Corporate Governance, Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and Planning and Regulation.

Councillors Mallon and Brighouse paid tribute to former Councillor Hallchurch's record of public service.

Former County Councillor John Jones was the Liberal Democrat Member for Grove Division from May 1989 until he stood down ahead of the May 1997 election. He had previously been a member of Shrewsbury Borough Council from 1964-1968, and a senior probation officer in Oxford.

Having been elected as Chair of Oxfordshire County Council in 1992, former Cllr Jones was then unusually re-elected for a second term of office, following the 1993 Oxfordshire County Council elections. He served on the Environmental Committee (1989-1992) and Education Committee from 1992.

Former Cllr Jones was extremely proud of his service as a member of Oxfordshire County Council and requested that his Former Chair's Badge of Office be placed on his coffin as it enters the church for his funeral.

Councillors Fawcett and Brighouse commended former Councillor Jones' memory to the Council.

Council observed a minute's silence.

44/26 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

There were no appointments to note under this item. Committee appointments were dealt with under Item 14: Committees and Review of Political Balance.

45/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Matthew Jerwood presented a petition on behalf of local residents calling for improvements to safety at the junction of Rose Hill, Henley Avenue and Church Cowley Road. He stated that residents, including people with mobility difficulties and families with young children, felt unsafe crossing the junction. He argued that changes in traffic patterns had led to greater congestion, speeding and other dangerous behaviour, and noted that residents had recorded nine accidents and incidents in recent months. On behalf of the 575 signatories to the petition, most of whom lived locally in OX4, he called for an urgent safety review, the installation of two pedestrian crossings, stronger speed and red-light enforcement measures, and a site visit by council representatives to work with residents on improving safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Councillor Epps, Cabinet Member for Transport, thanked the petitioners for highlighting residents' concerns and acknowledged that the junction at Rose Hill, Henley Avenue and Church Cowley Road presented longstanding safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists. He explained that, while improvements to the junction would be desirable, there were significant challenges, including the need to reduce traffic volumes without creating wider transport or safety problems. He noted that previous changes made as part of the Quickways scheme had increased space for cycling but led to additional collisions, traffic issues and poorer bus reliability, resulting in the reinstatement of the former layout. He also highlighted the high potential cost of major alterations and the absence of an allocated budget, although he said design work on possible future improvements could still be explored. He clarified that speeding and red-light enforcement were matters for Thames Valley Police and concluded by offering to follow up with the petitioners and undertake a site visit to discuss the issues in more detail.

Emma Parker presented a petition signed by 384 people calling on the Council to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists along the A40 London Road, particularly on the stretch between Thornhill Park and Ride and the Holton turn. She highlighted concerns that children travel to local primary and secondary schools along a shared footway and cycleway that runs close to fast-moving traffic and argued that the route is unsafe despite being promoted for active travel and "park and stride" journeys. While the petition originally proposed a vehicle restraint system or crash barrier, she noted that residents had also suggested measures such as speed reductions or alternative cycle routes. She urged the Council to investigate and implement the most effective safety improvements as a matter of priority, emphasising that doing so would support the Council's Active Travel Strategy and Vision Zero objectives by making walking and cycling safer and more attractive, particularly for school journeys.

Councillor Epps thanked Emma Parker for highlighting safety concerns along the A40 London Road route and acknowledged that it felt unsafe, particularly as it is used by school pupils. He outlined the Council's completed feasibility work, which proposes a range of improvements including widening and resurfacing the shared-use path, improving crossings and visibility, redesigning the Park Hill junction roundabout, closing the parking lay-by, and reducing the speed limit to 50 mph. He explained that the aim was to provide a safer, segregated cycling and walking route while complying with current Active Travel England guidance and incorporating input from local cycling groups. While barriers may be required at some locations, he noted that there were challenges to installing them along the entire route. He advised that funding was available to complete detailed design work this financial year, but that no construction budget had yet been identified. Once funding was secured, the Council would move forward with public consultation on the proposals.

Huw James, speaking on agenda item 9, Report of the Cabinet, urged the Council to support participation in the proposed Thames Valley Strategic Authority, arguing that Oxfordshire, Swindon and the wider Thames Valley form an interconnected economic area with strong transport links, integrated supply chains and complementary industries. He highlighted examples of collaboration between businesses and institutions across the region and contended that a stronger regional governance arrangement would help secure devolved powers and funding for transport, infrastructure, housing and skills. He stressed that businesses were interested not in devolution for its own sake but in the opportunities it could unlock for sustainable economic growth, improved productivity and a stronger voice with central government. He warned that delaying Thames Valley devolution could mean missing out on long-term funding settlements and growth opportunities, and urged councillors to back the Strategic Authority in order to support businesses, residents and the region's economic future.

46/26 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 7)

Three questions were submitted. The questions and responses are recorded in an Annex below. No supplementary questions were asked.

47/26 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

Thirty nine questions were submitted. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

48/26 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the Cabinet report covering the 17 March 2026, 21 April 2026 and 19 May 2026 Cabinet meetings.

On item 1 (Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire: Statutory Consultation Response), Councillor Garnett asked if the response could be styled as from the Cabinet given that the Council had not voted on local government reorganisation. The Leader noted that the administration represented the whole Council and so it was appropriate for the response to be attributed to the Council.

Councillor Baines asked for assurances that responses to the Structural Changes Order would seek cross-party consensus and input from across the Council. The Leader responded that the government set arbitrary targets for the number of councillors in a single unitary authority, which was the Council's preferred option, but that it could hopefully be addressed in the future.

Councillor Mallon asked why the working group for dealing with electoral matters was not convened at an early stage and why, when it was convened at a late stage, its advice was not followed. The Leader welcomed the input from the working group but noted that Cabinet was not obliged to take every suggestion on board.

Councillor Evans questioned whether the Leader thought it was undemocratic for some divisions to have one councillor and other divisions to have two councillors in a potential one Oxfordshire unitary authority. The Leader agreed that it was undemocratic.

On item 2 (Devolution Update – Thames Valley Strategic Authority), Councillor Middleton asked why the Leader had vetoed plans for the County Council to join a foundational strategic authority. The Leader noted that the government had initially offered a Mayoral Strategic Authority for the Thames Valley region but that this had been watered down through the process and stated that the Council wanted to be much more ambitious in what it sought to benefit from in the devolution settlements.

Councillor Brighouse noted that a Foundational Strategic Authority was intended to be short-term before transitioning to a Mayoral Strategic Authority and asked if the Leader agreed that the administration had sought to scupper devolution proposals. The Leader disagreed and stated that no timeline had been provided by the government, noting that potential changes in government ministers might help deliver meaningful devolution in the Thames Valley.

Councillor Rawlins asked what deadlines could confidently be expected from the government on devolution and local government reorganisation. The Leader noted there were no firm deadlines but expected engagement with the government in the coming weeks.

Councillor Baines asked why the Leader opposed devolution settlements for Oxfordshire given that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had experienced clear benefits from similar settlements. The Leader noted the complex local government arrangements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and that the Council wanted simpler structures that benefitted residents.

Councillor Pressel asked what discussions had taken place with the government since the decision to withdraw support from a Foundational Strategic Authority was taken. The Leader noted that the responsible Minister had previously resigned and that binary choices were not helpful in producing productive working relationships with the government on devolution.

Councillor Mallon asked about differing views between different Liberal Democrat leaders at national and local levels. Councillor Fawcett responded that the government proposals were a bad deal for Oxfordshire and that the Leader was correct to reject it to allow the government to come back with an improved devolution settlement offer.

Councillor Saul asked whether the Leader had discussed his decision to withdraw support from a Foundational Strategic Authority with District Council colleagues beforehand. Councillor Fawcett stated that District Councils and the County Council believed there was potential for a better devolution settlement, compared to the deal that was offered.

On item 3 (Improving our Fire and Rescue Service), Councillor Markham asked when a new proposal would be brought forward for decision on the future of the Fire and Rescue Service. Councillor Fawcett stated that collaborative discussions had begun with the Fire Brigades Union, which was independently chaired, to bring forward positive proposals which could hopefully be reported on to the Joint Consultative Committee for Uniformed Members of the Fire Service initially.

Councillor Saul asked if the Cabinet Member agreed that the centre of Oxford would be better served by the existing Rewley Road Fire Station compared to an edge of city location. Councillor Fawcett noted that proposals would always have trade-offs, with historic buildings in Oxford requiring faster response times due to their special value. Different plans were required in order to assess the necessary trade-offs with limited resources.

Councillor Smith asked if the process of finding positive solutions to the challenges faced by the Fire and Rescue Service had started. Councillor Fawcett stated that he was committed to finding positive solutions through a collaborative approach.

Councillor Cherry asked for reassurance that previous plans for the Fire and Rescue Service would not resurface over remaining years of the County Council. Councillor Fawcett stated there were no overall cuts proposed to the Fire and Rescue Service, but a movement of resources between facilities, with the aim of providing better services for residents and that some previous plans had been ruled out.

Councillor Phillips sought clarification on whether a decision had been made on the closure of Rewley Road or Kidlington Fire Stations. Councillor Fawcett stated that decisions on their closures had not been made, stating that the option would remain open with many factors to balance to ensure the right way forward.

Councillor Pressel asked what progress had been made on the recruitment practices for firefighters. Councillor Fawcett noted local and Oxfordshire-wide campaigns to support recruitment and stated one of the positive elements from the consultation was the strength of support from local communities for their local fire services.

On item 4 (Refresh of the Our People & Cultural Strategy 2026-2028), Councillor Barlow asked if expectations could be grounded in the current and future funding realities, acknowledging that the best chance to deliver outstanding services was by working with communities. Councillor Fawcett noted that the aim should be to deliver excellent services regardless of the financial constraints, acknowledging that the Council valued the work that employees undertake and as individuals.

Councillor Phillips asked the Cabinet Member to describe staff morale, faced with the closure of County Hall and other uncertainties, such as devolution plans for Oxfordshire. Councillor Fawcett noted that there were some factors outside of the County Council’s control, such as local government reorganisation and devolution, but that it was important to listen and communicate with staff, which was evidenced by staff morale improving across Oxfordshire, noting that the proportion of staff who work in County Hall was small.

Councillor McLauchlan noted timing challenges with delivery of services and asked what the Council was doing over the last years in which it would be in operation to retain and recruit staff. Councillor Fawcett acknowledged the frustrations over delays, recommending that councillors raise concerns with Cabinet Members if required and that the Council was aware of the risk of staff retention moving forward into the transition towards new authorities.

On item 5 (Local Transport Consolidated Funding Settlement – Local Transport Delivery Plan), Councillor Kerr asked why costs were predominantly allocated to roads when the Council's targets were on active travel and buses and how they were trying to avoid value-engineering dropping active travel elements of schemes as costs rise. Councillor Epps noted the challenges in this area, stated that detailed discussions and reviews of future programmes should continue, highlighting new initiatives on active travel and public transport outlined in the report.

Councillor Fry asked what action was being taken to increase the coverage of PM2.5 monitoring which was harder to undertake than NOx. Councillor Epps noted the work being undertaken to address air quality challenges, reflecting that air quality was a function of the District Councils but that he would be happy to sit down and discuss it further.

Councillor Barlow asked how the Local Transport Delivery Plan was being integrated into major highways decisions being made so a wide range of options were available, rather than defaulting to road building such as was the case on the Watlington Relief Road. Councillor Epps noted that several items in the report related to planning decisions and stated he'd be happy to meet with the councillor to discuss how the Council will look to prioritise going forward.

Councillor Pressel asked why the item was only on the Forward Plan for 28 days, noting that this did not give scrutiny enough time to scrutinise it. Councillor Epps stated that he was happy to take that point on board going forward and would reply on the specific point in writing.

On item 6 (Movement and Place Plans), Councillor McLauchlan asked if there was a Movement and Place Plan for the Benson area to mitigate the potentially vast induced increase in traffic from various schemes. Councillor Epps responded that he would provide a timescale in writing.

Councillor Baines asked how the 2040 Bus Strategy would shift shorter journeys onto public transport and if future Movement and Place Plans (MPP) would be more ambitious on public transport modal share. Councillor Epps noted that there was a low starting base and that work needed to be undertaken in conjunction with Local Plans to hold developers to account, looking at improvements that could be made to buses across Oxfordshire.

Councillor Saul asked if proper weight could be given to consultation responses to the West Oxfordshire Lowlands MPP that object to the introduction of parking charges and if the proposal could be avoided in the West Oxfordshire Uplands MPP. Councillor Epps reiterated that there were no plans to introduce car parking charges in West Oxfordshire Lowlands MPP and that car parking was the responsibility of West Oxfordshire District Council, committing to working on challenges in the Uplands MPP with local councillors.

Councillor Brighouse asked how Marmot principles were taken into consideration when looking at Movement and Place Plans. Councillor Epps noted that these principles had to be embedded into plans and welcomed the valuable reminder which he would take back to officers.

On item 7 (Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan), Councillor Garnett asked how bus investment could be used to encourage less car use, particularly noting cheap Park & Ride options that were available per person rather than per car. Councillor Epps noted that the arrangements weren't entirely in the County Council's control but was happy to discuss that issue moving forward.

Councillor Baines asked what consideration had been given to including the Rose Hill/Church Cowley Road junction in the list of active travel upgrades funded by congestion charge income. Councillor Epps noted he was happy to meet with local councillors to explore safety concerns and funding possibilities.

Councillor Henwood asked about the increase of charges from £5 to £70 in the transition from the temporary congestion charge to the traffic filters scheme and how that would impact the poorest communities in Oxford. Councillor Epps advised that he would need to wait for future details on the traffic filter scheme but that he was acutely conscious of the need to ensure equity is entrenched in everything we do.

Councillor Creed asked how Marmot principles were taken into consideration when looking at the congestion charge investment plan, considering that it had moved traffic into some of the most deprived areas in Oxford. Councillor Epps noted he was not the Cabinet Member at the time of the decision but referenced equality impact assessments that were undertaken and noted the importance of the Marmot principles in this area of work.

Councillor Edosomwan asked which specific parts of the investment plan would improve transport accessibility and opportunities for residents in Oxford, rather than primarily benefitting those travelling into Oxford. Councillor Epps noted support for public sector workers in schools and health services as an example of supporting residents in Oxford and stated he would be happy to meet with the councillor to discuss further.

Councillor Malik noted that park and ride support did not benefit residents in Cowley and asked about measures to improve congestion on Oxford Road and Church Cowley Road. Councillor Epps noted that the Council continues to monitor the impacts, particularly with the scheduled reopening of the Botley Road, and look for ways to relieve congestion.

On item 8 (Updates to Parking Standards for New Developments), Councillor Garnett asked how the County Council was working with City and District Councils who were responsible for planning, and for making sure a new unitary authority/authorities enforced these plans moving forward. Councillor Epps stated he was seeking to improve partnership working with the City and District Councils.

Councillor Fry noted that the Council's initial provision for cycle parking on new developments had been double the national standard and now was in line with it, querying whether the Cabinet Member would be open to going halfway to improve cycling provision on new developments and provide safe parking spaces for electric bikes. Councillor Epps noted the importance of e-bikes and referenced examples of cycle parking provision seeming too high but would be happy to have a discussion with the councillor on the potential flexibility there could be, whilst noting different travel methods across Oxfordshire and cycling levels in Oxford.

49/26 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

(Agenda Item 10)

Council was asked to note the Scrutiny Annual Report which documents the activities of the four overview and scrutiny committees for the 2025/26 Council year.

The report was proposed by Councillor Brighouse and seconded by Councillor Snowdon. Members thanked scrutiny officers for their work during the year. Following discussion, Council noted the report.

RESOLVED: that the Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

50/26 JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (JHOSC) ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

(Agenda Item 11)

Council had before it the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report that documented the breadth and depth of the Committee's work over the 2025/26 Council year.

The report was proposed by Councillor Hanna and seconded by Councillor Edosomwan. Members thanked officers and partner organisations for their work on health scrutiny during the year. Following discussion, Council noted the report.

RESOLVED: that the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JHOSC) Annual Report set out in Annex 1 be noted.

51/26 REPORT FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

(Agenda Item 12)

Council considered the report setting out proposed changes to the Council's Constitution following the findings and conclusions of the Constitution Working Group and the Audit and Governance Committee.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Shiri, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. Members thanked the members of the working group and the officers supporting it for their work.

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken on the recommendations. They were approved with 53 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED that

a) **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, be approved;**

b) **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, be noted;**

c) **the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be requested to ensure the necessary changes are made; and**

d) **a final edit of the Constitution covering layout and grammar be undertaken prior to publication.**

52/26 THE USE OF URGENCY PROVISIONS

(Agenda Item 13)

Council was asked to note a report on the use of an urgency provision in a Cabinet decision on SEND Reform.

The report was proposed by Councillor Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, and seconded by Councillor Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities. Following discussion, Council noted the report.

RESOLVED:

- **That the exemption from Call-in of the following decision be noted:**
    - **a) Cabinet on 16 June 2026 – SEND Reform Plan.**

53/26 COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

(Agenda Item 14)

Council was requested to approve committee appointments, in Annex 2 to the report, based on revised political balance calculations following Councillor Higgins joining the Liberal Democrat group.

Councillor Bearder proposed an amendment to the list of Liberal Democrat Group Members on the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Councillor Roberts to replace Councillor Shiri.

The recommendations as amended were proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair. Following discussion, the recommendations were agreed with 56 in favour, none against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED that:

a) the review of political balance of committees to reflect the current formation of the political groups as detailed in Annex 1 be noted;

b) Members be appointed to the committees of the Council as listed in Annex 2 as amended.

54/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LEE EVANS

(Agenda Item 15)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Evans and seconded by Councillor Brighouse. Councillor Evans proposed an amendment set out in Annex 5 to the Schedule of Business. Council agreed to receive the amendment so that the following amended motion was considered.

"This Council notes that many people in our county suffer from progressive and life-limiting conditions, such as Motor Neurone Disease (MND). As these diseases progress, symptoms worsen and people's needs increase, often unpredictably.

This Council believes that people living with progressive conditions deserve to live in safe and accessible homes, with as much independence and quality of life as possible. We commit to doing all we can to ensure this.

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 and other progressive or terminal conditions."

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 56 votes in favour, no abstentions and none against.

The motion was referred to Cabinet.

55/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW

(Agenda Item 16)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Barlow and seconded by Councillor Jones. An amendment, set out in Annex 5 of the Schedule of Business, was proposed by Councillor Henwood. The amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder. Council agreed to accept the amendment so that the following amended motion was considered.

"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 and all ecosystems. Serious adaptation must become standard operating practice similar to the fiduciary duty to council tax-payers.

The assessment illustrates large-scale space for water storage and retention is vital, slowing water flow and decreasing flooding. Urban design is also key - to prevent localised surface-water flooding, and build temperature resilience, preventing human-made "heat islands" which drive excess residents' deaths, especially the most vulnerable.

Adaptation measures' success depends on multi-year, multi-stakeholder, community-based collaborations at impactful scale. Partners' (e.g. Environment Agency) 6-year funding cycles allow capacity to develop – 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.
- Supporting multiple location-specific initiatives, working with councillors, officers, partner organisations and local communities, to build resilience through collaborative action to:
    - Reduce the risks associated with river, groundwater, surface water and flash flooding
    - Improve resilience to extreme heat and mitigate urban heat island effects."

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 55 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

The motion was referred to Cabinet.

56/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BETHIA THOMAS

(Agenda Item 17)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Roberts. An amendment from Councillor Middleton, as set out in Annex 5 to the Schedule of Business, was accepted by the proposer and seconder. Council agreed to accept the amendment so that the amended motion considered was as follows.

"This Council:

- Recognises that dangerous parking, on pavements, paths and verges, 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, path and verge 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, path and verge 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."

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 50 votes in favour, one abstention and no votes against.

The motion was referred to Cabinet.

………………………………………………….. in the Chair

Date of signing ……………………………………………….

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Divisions- N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 8 September 2026

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

1. SEND Reform Plan

(Cabinet, 16 June 2026)

Cabinet considered a report setting out the SEND Reform Plan for submission to the Department for Education. The plan forms part of Oxfordshire's approach to addressing the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs deficit and securing access to government support funding.

Cabinet noted the emphasis placed on earlier intervention, greater inclusion within mainstream schools and strengthening local support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The report highlighted extensive engagement with education, health and parent representatives in the development of the plan.

Cabinet approved the submission of the Reform Plan and delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) to make any necessary amendments.

2. Best Start Family Hubs Strategy

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet considered a report setting out the strategic direction for Oxfordshire's Best Start Family Hubs programme. The report proposed delivering integrated family support through a network of family hubs working with health services, schools, voluntary organisations and community partners. Cabinet also considered recommendations from the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet welcomed the ambition of the programme and noted its focus on improving school readiness, reducing inequalities and strengthening support for families. Members discussed the importance of ensuring services reflected local needs and opportunities for closer integration with mental health and community services.

Cabinet approved the strategic direction for the programme and delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to implement delivery arrangements and expenditure.

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation

3. Business Management and Monitoring Report – Performance and Risk Quarter 4 2025-26 and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2025-26

(Cabinet, 16 June 2026)

Cabinet considered the Quarter Four Business Management and Monitoring Report. The report reviewed financial performance, delivery against key performance indicators and the management of strategic risks.

Cabinet noted the balanced financial outturn position and approved a number of transfers and contributions to reserves.

4. Capital Outturn Report 2025/26

(Cabinet, 16 June 2026)

Cabinet considered the provisional capital outturn report for 2025/26, setting out delivery against the approved capital programme. The report highlighted significant investment in schools, highways, infrastructure and property assets across the county. Members noted that total capital expenditure amounted to £231.3 million, with variations arising from the reprofiling of major programmes into future years.

Cabinet approved the recommendations set out in the report.

5. Treasury Management Annual Performance Report 2025/26

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received the Treasury Management Annual Performance Report for 2025/26. The report reviewed borrowing and investment activity during the year and provided assurance that treasury management activities had been undertaken in accordance with approved strategies and prudential indicators.

Cabinet noted the report and referred the report to Council.

6. Revenue Update and Monitoring Report 2026/27

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received the first revenue monitoring report for 2026/27. Members noted that services were generally forecasting expenditure within approved budgets and that financial and service risks continued to be actively managed.

Cabinet noted the report and approved the creation of an earmarked reserve to manage fluctuations in commercial income and the new Highways fees and charges commencing on 1 August 2026.

7. Capital Programme Monitoring Report

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received a report which provided an update and monitoring on the County Council's 2026/27 Capital Programme, detailing an increased forecast expenditure across various strategic areas such as pupil places, major infrastructure, highways, property, IT, and equipment, alongside new funding allocations including the SEN High Needs Capital Allocation.

Cabinet noted the 2026/27 capital monitoring position and approved the updated Capital Programme.

Members also noted the proposed schemes for drainage infrastructure improvements, and the Didcot Valley Park SEND school.

8. Governance Arrangements for Oxford Castle Apartments Limited (OCAL)

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report which detailed the completion of the acquisition of Oxford Castle Quarter and the planned acquisition of Oxford Castle Apartments Limited (OCAL) as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council. It outlined the governance arrangements and legal requirements for OCAL, a special purpose vehicle holding residential leasehold interests.

Cabinet agreed that the Council's shareholder role would be exercised through the Shareholder Committee and delegated authority to approve the company's Articles of Association and appoint initial directors, with those decisions to be ratified by the Shareholder Committee.

Cabinet Member: Environment and Economy

9. Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet considered the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy Stage 2 Prioritisation Report. The report reviewed infrastructure priorities required to support growth, housing delivery and economic development across Oxfordshire.

During discussion, Members highlighted the need for flexibility in future prioritisation processes, stronger alignment with wider policy objectives and greater consideration of climate adaptation and sustainable funding mechanisms.

Cabinet endorsed the strategy and approved the recommendations set out in the report.

10. Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) Development and Governance

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet considered proposals relating to governance arrangements for the Thames Valley Spatial Development Strategy. The report set out proposed partnership arrangements and governance structures required to support development of the Strategy.

Cabinet approved the establishment of the partnership arrangements and delegated authority to the Director of Economy and Place to finalise detailed governance and implementation arrangements.

11. Cowley Branch Line – Enterprise Zone Funding

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received a report recommending the approval of up to £14.5 million in local funding for the Cowley Branch Line project using retained business rates from Oxfordshire's Enterprise Zones. The funding would address a shortfall in local contributions required for the delivery of this significant infrastructure scheme, which supports housing, economic growth, connectivity, and net zero objectives as part of the OxRail 2040 plan.

Members emphasised the strategic importance of the scheme for OxRail 2040, Oxford station capacity, Oxfordshire Metro ambitions and future rail projects, including Warren Grove/Wantage station aspirations.

Cabinet supported the proposal while acknowledging stakeholder concerns. They noted that the forward funding was expected to be replaced over time by future Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, although the amount and timing of those contributions were not yet certain.

12. Acquisition of Solar Farm in Oxfordshire

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet considered proposals for a potential investment in renewable energy infrastructure through the acquisition of a solar farm, subject to further investigation and due diligence.

Cabinet resolved to agree the acquisition on the terms set out in the exempt annex, delegate authority to senior officers to negotiate and finalise the acquisition terms and legal documentation and noted that the outcome of due diligence and contract terms would be shared with Performance Scrutiny and Cabinet before the contract terms were confirmed.

Cabinet Member: Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources

13. Local Government Reorganisation – Strategic Partner Recruitment

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to commence procurement of a strategic partner to support the local government reorganisation programme. Members discussed procurement arrangements, financial considerations and future governance requirements.

Cabinet approved commencement of the procurement exercise and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to finalise arrangements within the parameters set out in the report.

Cabinet Member: Resources and Deputy Leader

14. HR and Culture Change Quarterly Report

(Cabinet, 16 June 2026)

Cabinet received the quarterly workforce report covering recruitment, retention, workforce development and organisational culture. The report identified stable staffing levels, reductions in turnover and improvements in recruitment performance.

Cabinet noted the report and welcomed continued progress on apprenticeships and opportunities for care leavers.

15. Protocol for Flag Flying

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report proposing a Protocol for Flag Flying to establish a consistent framework for flag displays on council properties, ensuring compliance with legislation, supporting community cohesion, and managing one-off requests fairly and transparently.

Cabinet welcomed the amendments proposed by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved the revised protocol.

Cabinet Member: Highways Construction and Repair

16. Tree Care Framework Contract

(Cabinet, 16 June 2026)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval of a new Tree Care Framework Contract. The framework will support the ongoing inspection, maintenance and emergency response arrangements for the council’s extensive tree stock through a number of approved contractors.

Cabinet approved the establishment of the framework and delegated authority to award the contracts in accordance with the procurement process.

Cabinet Member: Adults

17. Adult Social Care Contributions Policy

(Cabinet, 28 July 2026)

Cabinet had before it a report proposing changes to the Adult Social Care Contributions Policy. The report followed consultation on proposals relating to Disability Related Expenditure (DRE), transport charges and telecare charges and included consideration of recommendations from the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cabinet also received representations from members of the public and county councillors.

Cabinet noted the significant financial pressures facing Adult Social Care and the requirement to maintain a balanced budget while continuing to meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. Members considered the safeguards available to protect vulnerable residents, including financial assessments, minimum income guarantees and arrangements for individual consideration of disability related expenditure.

Cabinet agreed to reduce the initial Disability Related Expenditure allowance from 35% to 25%, introduce an Adult Social Care Transport Policy including a £10 per day charge for transport arranged by Adult Social Care, and charge the full cost of telecare services to service users.

Cabinet Member: Transport

18. Citizens' Assembly Update

(Cabinet, 14 July 2026)

Cabinet received a report which provided an update on the progress and continued engagement related to the recommendations from the February-March 2025 Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly. The update highlighted the council's positive response, further workshops on specific transport projects such as the temporary Oxford congestion charge and OxRAIL 2040 plan, and ongoing efforts to involve assembly members in policy development and scheme delivery aligned with the county's strategic goals for greener, healthier, and fairer transport systems.

19. Scrutiny Reports

(Cabinet, 16 June & 14 and 28 July 2026)

Cabinet received the following Scrutiny reports:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Best Start in Life Family Hubs

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Adult Social Care Charging Policy

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

a) Customer Service Centre Update
b) Commercial Strategy
c) Shaping Oxfordshire's Future Economy

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Reports on:-

a) Minerals and Waste Planning
b) School Streets
c) Bus Services and Rural Transport (including Mobility Hubs)
d) Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme Monitoring
e) Unauthorised Waste Site near Kidlington: Interim Report
f) Protocol for Flag Flying

TIM BEARDER
Leader of the Council　　　　September 2026

COUNCIL – 8 September 2026

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Council is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2025/26.**

Executive Summary

1. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committees to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This report is the fourth and final for the 2025/26 financial year and sets out the position at 31 March 2026.

3. Throughout this report, the performance for the year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2025.

4. As at 31 March 2026, the council's outstanding debt totalled £265m and the average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during the year was 4.41%. No new external borrowing was raised during the year, whilst £2m of maturing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and £5m of LOBO loans, were repaid. The council's debt financing position for 2025/26 is shown in Annex 1.

5. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 agreed in February 2025 assumed an average base rate of 4.00%.

6. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was expected to be £304m in 2025/26, with an average in-house return on new and existing deposits of 3.25%.

7. During the year the council achieved an average in-house return of 4.44% on average cash balances of £406.712m, producing gross interest receivable of £18.068m. In relation to external funds, the return for the year was £4.406m,

bringing total investment income to £22.475m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £14.232m, giving a net overachievement of £8.243m.

8. At 31 March 2026, the council's investment portfolio totalled £423.960m. This comprised £256.500m of fixed term deposits, £78.358m at short term notice in money market funds and £89.101m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2026.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

9. The strategy for long term borrowing agreed in February 2025 included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £300m through internal borrowing. The aim was to reduce the council's exposure to credit risk and reduce the long-term cost of carry (difference between borrowing costs and investment returns).

10. The council is able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or through the money markets. The strategy for 2025/26 assumed no new external borrowing during the year, with any increase in the capital financing requirement met through internal borrowing, as external borrowing rates were expected to remain elevated throughout the year.

11. As at 31 March 2026, the authority had 41 PWLB loans totalling £239.383m, four LOBO loans totalling £20m and two money market loans totalling £5.41m. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.51% and the average cost of LOBO debt for 2025/26 was 3.84%. The cost of debt on the money market loan was 3.99%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.41%. The council's debt portfolio as at 31 March 2026 is shown in Annex 1.

12. The council repaid £2m of maturing PWLB loans in the first half of the financial year, whilst a LOBO with the value of £5m was called and repaid without penalty in the third quarter of the year. The council considered issuing another green bond, however elevated borrowing rates meant that it was not in the financial interest of the council to issue one during the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 3.84%. The outturn for interest payable during 2025/26 is £11.841m.

Investment Strategy

13. The council holds deposits and invested funds representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the council's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. The council continued to adopt a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions and continuously monitored credit quality information relating to counterparties.

14. During the year term fixed deposits have been placed with other local authorities in accordance with the approved lending list, whilst Money Market Funds have been utilised for short-term liquidity. Inter local authority lending remains an attractive market to deposit funds from both a security and return perspective.

15. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 included the use of external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three-year period. The strategy permitted up to 50% of the total portfolio to be invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding Money Market Funds). The performance of the pooled funds will continue to be monitored by the Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST) throughout the year against respective benchmarks and the in-house portfolio.

16. At the start of the year the UK Bank Rate was 4.50% which was in line with the forecast. The Bank of England cut rates by 0.25% in May 2025 to 4.25%, to 4.00% in August and again in December to 3.75%. The market had then forecast two more reductions to 3.25% by the end of the year, however the US and Iran war in the Middle East resulted in the Bank holding rates at 3.75% for the remainder of 2025/26.

The Council's Lending List

17. In-house cash balances are deposited with institutions that meet the council's approved credit rating criteria. The approved lending list, which sets out those institutions, is updated to reflect changes in bank and building society credit ratings. Changes are reported to Cabinet as part of the Business Management & Monitoring Report. The approved lending list may also be further restricted by officers, in response to changing conditions and perceived risk. There were no changes to the lending list during 2025/26.

Investment Performance

18. Temporary surplus cash balances include: developer contributions; council reserves and balances; and various other funds to which the council pays interest at each financial year end. The budgeted annual return on these in-house balances for 2025/26 was 3.25% and assumed an average annual in-house cash balance of £303.534m.

19. The actual average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £406.712m in 2025/26 and the average in-house return was 4.44%, producing gross interest receivable of £18.068m. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £4.406m were also realised in the quarter, bringing total investment income to £22.475m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £14.232m, giving a net overachievement of £8.243m. This over achievement

is a combination of higher than forecast balances, base rate forecasts remaining higher than previous forecasts, and a decoupling of the local to local lending market from the remainder of the money market. The local to local lending market is more aligned to the gilt market, which remains elevated as a result of persistently high inflation.

20. Due to interest rates and cash balances during the year being higher than modelled in February 2025, the investment return on treasury management activity was £8.7m above the budgeted level in 2025/26. In January 2026, Cabinet agreed to transfer £5.5m of this to a Budget Reserve. In June 2026 Cabinet agreed to add a further £8.0m, incorporating the £4.1m remaining additional interest, to the High Needs DSG risk reserve. The funding held in these reserves will be considered as part of the budget for 2027/28. Cash balances for the year were lower than they otherwise would be as a result of negative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances relating to High Needs. The negative DSG balance by the end of 2025/26 was £149.3m. This created an estimated opportunity cost of £6.0m in unearned interest during 2025/26, compared to £3.8m in unearned interest during 2024/25. The cumulative opportunity cost as a result of negative DSG balances since 2019/20 up to 31 March 2026£16.4m.

21. The council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During 2025/26 the average balance held on instant access was £76.268m, at an average rate of 4.07%.

22. During the third quarter of 2025/26, the council divested its allocation of shares in the Schroder Income Maximiser fund. Gross disposal proceeds were £12.96m against an original purchase price of £12.5m, realising a gain of £0.46m. At 31 March 2026 the total value of pooled fund investments was £89.101m, against an original purchase price of £88.06m.

23. At 31 March 2026, the council's investment portfolio totalled £423.959m. This comprised £256.500m of fixed term deposits, £78.358m at short term notice in money market funds and £89.101m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2026.

24. The council's Treasury Management Strategy Team regularly monitors the risk profile of the council's investment portfolio. An analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2026 is included at Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

25. During the year, the council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26. The position for the Prudential Indicators as at 31 March 2026 is shown in Annex 3.

Financial Implications

26. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report. The impact of additional interest on cash balances and income from investments is reflected in the forecast position set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet during the year including the Provisional Outturn Report for 2025/26 considered by Cabinet in June 2026.

27. The use of funding added to reserves in 2025/26 will be considered through the budget process for 2027/28.

28. Interest on cash balances is less likely to be significantly higher than budgeted because of the increasing impact of the High Needs DSG deficit on the cash that the council is holding. Relatively higher interest rates and returns than in 2025/26, were assumed when the 2026/27 budget was set.

Legal Implications

29. The report meets the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Council is required to comply with both Codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003. There are no other legal implications.

Staff Implications

30. There are no staffing implications arising from the updates set out in this report

Equality & Inclusion Implications

31. There are no equality or inclusion implications arising from the report.

Sustainability Implications

32. This report is not expected to have any negative impact with regards to the Council’s zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.

Risk Management

33. The purpose of treasury management is the management of the council’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”. The Prudential Code

34. Prudential indicators and credit criteria are agreed by Council each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.

35. The credit quality of institutions, changes in the interest rate forecast, cash flow, and prudential indicators are monitored throughout the year and reported monthly to the TMST and quarterly to the council's Audit & Governance Committee, Cabinet and Council.

LORNA BAXTER
Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Annex:	Annex 1 – Oxfordshire County Council Debt Financing 2025/26
	Annex 2 – Long Term Debt Maturing 2025/26
	Annex 3 – Prudential Indicator Monitoring to 31 March 2026
	Annex 4 – Oxfordshire County Council Investment Portfolio at 31 March 2026
Background papers:	Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26
Contact Officer:	Tim Chapple, Strategic Financing & Investment Manager

August 2026

Annex 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT FINANCING 2025/26

Debt Profile		£m
1. PWLB	49%	241.38
2. Other Long Term Loans	6%	30.50
3. Sub-total External Debt		271.43
4. Internal Balances	45%	218.78
5. Actual Debt at 31 March 2025	**100%**	**490.21**
6. Prudential Borrowing		38.69
7. Borrowing in Advance		0.00
8. Minimum Revenue Provision		-16.38
9. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2026		**512.52**
Maturing Debt		
10. PWLB loans maturing during the year		-2.00
11. PWLB/LOBO Loans repaid prematurely		-5.00
12. Total Maturing Debt		**-7.00**
New External Borrowing		
13. PWLB Normal		0.00
14. PWLB loans raised in the course of debt restructuring		0.00
15. Money Market loans		0.00
16. Total New External Borrowing		**0.00**
Debt Profile Year End		
17. PWLB	47%	239.38
18. Money Market loans (incl £20m LOBOs)	5%	25.41
19. Forecast Sub-total External Debt		264.79
20. Forecast Internal Balances	48%	247.73
21. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2026	**100%**	**512.52**

Line Explanation

1 – 5 This is a breakdown of the Council's debt at the beginning of the financial year (1 April 2025. The PWLB is a government agency operating within the Debt Management Office. LOBO (Lender's Option/ Borrower's Option) loans are long-term loans, with a maturity of up to 60 years, which includes a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined time intervals. Internal balances include provisions, reserves, revenue balances, capital receipts unapplied, and excess of creditors over debtors.

6 'Prudential Borrowing' is borrowing taken by the authority whereby the associated borrowing costs are met by savings in the revenue budget.

7 'Borrowing in Advance' is the amount the Council borrowed in advance to fund future capital finance costs.

8 The amount of debt to be repaid from revenue. The sum to be repaid annually is agreed at full Council each year, and is over the estimated useful life of the assets.

9 The Council's forecast total debt by the end of the financial year, after taking into account new borrowing, debt repayment and movement in funding by internal balances.

10 The Council's normal maturing PWLB debt.

11 PWLB/LOBO debt repaid early during the year.

12 Total debt repayable during the year.

13 The normal PWLB borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2025/26.

14 New PWLB loans to replace debt repaid early.

15 The Money Market borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2025/26

16 The total external borrowing undertaken.

18-22 The Council's forecast debt profile at the end of the year.

Annex 2

Long-Term Debt Maturing 2025/26

Public Works Loan Board: Loans maturing during 2025/26

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
30/04/2025	2.000	4.250%
Total	**2.000**	

LOBO Loans called & repaid during 2025/26

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
24/11/2025	5.000	3.68
Total	**5.000**	

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Prudential Indicators Monitoring at 31 March 2026

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. To demonstrate that the Authority has fulfilled the requirements of the Prudential Code the following indicators must be set and monitored each year.

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt

Actual debt levels are monitored against the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt below. The Operational Boundary is based on the Authority's estimate of most likely, i.e. prudent, but not worst case scenario for external debt. The council confirms that the Operational Boundary has not been breached during the third quarter of 2025/26.

The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum debt that the Authority can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements. The Authorised Limit was not breached in the in the third quarter of 2025/26 and is not expected to be breached by year end.

Authorised limit for External Debt	£610,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£595,000,000
Capital Financing Requirement for year	£512,517,900

	Actual 31/03/2025	**Actual 31/03/2026**
Borrowing	£271,882,618	£264,791,128
Other Long-Term Liabilities	£ 836,000	£ 4,681,818
Total	**£272,718,618**	**£269,472,946**

Interest Rate Exposures

These indicators are set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest exposures. Fixed rate investments are borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for the whole financial year. Instruments that mature during the financial year are classed as variable rate.

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	
Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 31 March 2026	-£11,617,382
Variable Interest Rate Exposure	
Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	£0
Actual at 31 March 2026	-£146.623,758

Principal Sums Invested over 365 days

Total sums invested for more than 364 days limit	£150,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days	£ 15,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing and the actual structure at December 2025, are shown below. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

	Limit %	Actual %
Under 12 months	0 - 20	12.16
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	8.68
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	11.58
5 years to 10 years	5 - 40	24.54
10 years +	25 - 95	43.04

Annex 4

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 31/03/2026

Fixed term deposits held at 31/03/2026

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Gravesham Borough Council	£7,500,000.00	01/04/2026
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	02/04/2026
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2026
Eastleigh Borough Council	£6,000,000.00	22/04/2026
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	24/04/2026
Eastleigh Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/05/2026
Surrey County Council	£10,000,000.00	08/05/2026
Darlington Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	11/05/2026
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2026
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2026
Central Bedfordshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2026
Isle of Wight Council	£5,000,000.00	18/05/2026
Central Bedfordshire Council	£5,000,000.00	20/05/2026
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	27/05/2026
Ashford Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	28/05/2026
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	28/05/2026
Cheshire East Council	£5,000,000.00	29/05/2026
London Borough of Newham Council	£5,000,000.00	01/06/2026
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	01/06/2026
Manchester City Council	£5,000,000.00	02/06/2026
Cheshire East Council	£5,000,000.00	02/06/2026
Manchester City Council	£5,000,000.00	10/06/2026
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000,000.00	17/06/2026
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	17/06/2026
Isle of Wight Council	£5,000,000.00	24/06/2026
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	01/07/2026
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	02/07/2026
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	13/07/2026
Cheshire East Council	£10,000,000.00	13/07/2026
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	30/07/2026
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	25/08/2026
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	28/08/2026
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£5,000,000.00	03/09/2026
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	22/10/2026
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2026
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	16/11/2026
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	27/11/2026
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	30/11/2026
Dover District Council	£5,000,000.00	02/12/2026

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Babergh District Council	£5,000,000.00	29/12/2026
Gloucester City Council	£5,000,000.00	30/12/2026
London Borough of Hillingdon Council	£8,000,000.00	06/01/2027
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	12/01/2027
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	22/01/2027
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	17/03/2027
Short Term Deposit Total	**£241,500,000.00**	
	Minimum Rate	4.15%
	Maximum Rate	5.25%
	Average Rate	4.41%
Counterparty	**Principal Deposited**	**Maturity Date**
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17/12/2027
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	23/12/2027
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2028
Long Term Deposit Total	**£15,000,000.00**	
	Minimum Rate	4.40%
	Maximum Rate	5.10%
	Average Rate	4.63%
Total Deposits	**£256,500,000.00**	

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/2026	Notice Period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	£2,985,000.00	Same Day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	£0.00	Same Day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	£28,437.96	Same Day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	£25,000,000.00	Same Day
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	£25,321,039.97	Same Day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	£7,972.37	Same Day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	£13,298.04	Same Day
Insight GBP Liquidity Fund	£25,000,000.00	Same Day
JP Morgan Sterling Liquidity Fund	£73.97	Same Day
Total	**£78,355,822.31**	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/2026	Notice period
Handlesbanken	£2,389.13	Same day
Total	**£2,389.13**	

Strategic Pooled Funds

Fund	Balance at 31/03/2026	Notice Period
Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	£12,425,052.28	4 Days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	£18,964,025.56	4 Days
Kames Diversified Income	£10,062,337.18	4 Days
Ninety One Diversified Income	£9,021,745.56	4 Days
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	£10,903,109.82	4 Days
CCLA Better World Cautious Fund	£4,394,451.38	4 Days
Total	**£65,770,721.77**	

Property Funds

Fund	Balance at 31/03/2026	Notice Period
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	23,330,885.24	6 Months
Total	**23,330,885.24**	

Summary of Investments as at 31/03/2026

Term Deposits	£256,500,000.00
Money Market Funds	£78,355,822.31
Notice & Call Accounts	£2,329.13
Subtotal Short Term Notice	**£334,858,151.44**
Pooled Funds	£65,770,721.77
Property Funds	£23,330,885.24
Subtotal Pooled & Property Funds	**£89,101,607.02**
Total Investments	**£423,959,758.46**

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COUNCIL

– 8 September 2026

NOTICE OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION BY THE MONITORING OFFICER UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Council is RECOMMENDED to**

a) 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 (v) as set out in Annex 1 to this report;

b) Request the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to ensure the necessary changes are made; and

c) Note that a final edit of the Constitution covering layout and grammar will be undertaken prior to publication.

Executive Summary

2. The Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer has made a number of amendments to the Constitution for clarification, to reflect legislation, and to give effect to decisions made by Council and decisions made by the Leader of the Council.

3. The changes in summary are:
   - To give effect to a Council decision to delegate authority to committees to fill any vacancy that arises where the relevant political group leader has not provided a nomination within three weeks of a request to do so.
   - To give effect to a decision by the Leader of the Council to appoint one or more Deputy Cabinet Members.
   - To clarify that members of the public may be excluded from ‘part of’ a meeting where exempt information is being discussed and not necessarily from the whole meeting.
   - To comply with the procedure outlined in legislation for situations where it is not possible to give the normal 28 days’ notice of a report or annex being exempt, due to the urgency of the decision.

Background

4. The Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to undertake certain changes to the Constitution. This authority is set out in Part 7.2 of the Constitution (Scheme of Delegation to Officers).

5. Paragraph 6.4 (v) states the Director of Law & Governance and 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."

Amendment 1

6. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 state:

   Notifications
   14. *For the purpose of enabling a political group to express its wishes in accordance with section 16 of the 1989 Act, the proper officer shall notify in writing the leader or, in his absence, the representative of a political group as soon as practicable after—*

   (a) the allocation by the authority or committee to that group of a seat on a body to which section 15 of the 1989 Act applies; or

   (b) the vacation of a seat on such a body allocated by the authority or committee to that group.

   Appointments where political group fails to express wishes
   15. *Where a political group has failed to express its wishes in relation to the appointment to such a seat as is mentioned in regulation 14 within the period of three weeks beginning with the date on which notice was given under that regulation, the authority or committee may make such appointment to that seat as they think fit.*

7. At its meeting on 4 November 2025, Council made the following decision to: "delegate to all council committees the authority to appoint to its vacant committee seats in accordance with legislation."

8. Amendment 1 in Annex 1 has been made by the Monitoring Officer under the delegation in Part 7.2, paragraph 6.4(v) b) to give effect to this decision by Council.

Amendment 2

9. On 27 August 2026, the Leader of the Council made the following decision 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.*

10. Amendment 2 in Annex 1 has been made by the Monitoring Officer under the delegation in Part 7.2, paragraph 6.4(v) b) to give effect to this decision by the Leader of the Council.

Amendment 3

11. This is a minor amendment to clarify that members of the public may be excluded from 'part of' a meeting where exempt information is being discussed. Without this amendment, it could be argued that members of the public should be excluded from the whole meeting even if only one item involved exempt information.

12. Amendment 3 in Annex 1 has been made by the Monitoring Officer under the delegation in Part 7.2, paragraph 6.4(v) c) to correct errors and otherwise for accuracy or rectification.

Amendment 4

13. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, Section 5 deals with *Procedures prior to private meetings.*

14. The Section requires that at least 28 clear days' notice must be given of the intention to hold a meeting in private. Paragraph 6 of the Section sets out procedures that must be followed "Where the date by which a meeting must be held makes compliance with this regulation impracticable".

15. Amendment 4 in Annex 1 has been made by the Monitoring Officer under the delegation in Part 7.2, paragraph 6.4(v) a) to comply with the law.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The proposal to appoint Deputy Cabinet Members 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

17. 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.

Legal Implications

18. Any potential legal implications of the new proposals set out in this report have been explored in consultation with the Head of Legal as appropriate and are set out in the contents of this report.

Staff Implications

19. There are no direct staffing implications arising from the recommendations. Officer support for the role of Deputy Cabinet Member 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.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

20. The proposals do not directly affect Local Government Reorganisation arrangements. The Deputy Cabinet Member 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.

21. The amendments reflect a drive to ensure that the Constitution is robust and up to date with legislation and reflects how the council operates, makes decisions and stays accountable to the public.

Risk Management

22. The key risks with the appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members 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.

ANITA BRADLEY, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Annex 1 Changes to be made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority
Background papers:	N/A
Contact Officer:	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager

August 2026

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Changes to be made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority

Oxfordshire CC Constitution

The following table lists a series of changes required to the Constitution to ensure it is up to date and take account of recent legislative changes.

No	Part	Change	Comments
		Part 3.1 Council Procedure Rules	
1	**Paragraph 2 Ordinary Meetings and Budget Council** **Add 2.5**	Where a political group has failed to express its wishes in relation to the appointment to a committee seat within the period of three weeks, beginning with the date on which notice was given by the Proper Officer, the committee may make such appointment to that seat as they think fit.	Reflects a decision of Council on 4 November 2025 to delegate this responsibility to the committee.
		Part 4.1 The Cabinet and Current Membership of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet	
2	**New Para 6** (renumber thereafter)	**Insert:** **Cabinet Support Members** The Leader may appoint Cabinet Support Members to increase political capacity, support portfolio delivery and provide additional focus on specific priorities or cross-cutting areas. The role does not come with a Special Responsibility Allowance nor will the postholder deputise for the Leader, Deputy Leader or any Cabinet Member or act as a spokesperson either formally or informally.	

No	Part	Change	Comments
		Part 8.1 Access to Information Procedure Rules	
3	**Para 10.3** **Exempt Information – Discretion to Exclude Public**	The public may be excluded from meetings <u>or part thereof,</u> whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed. However, there is a presumption of openness that requires any meeting to be held in public unless there are compelling grounds for excluding the public.	Provides clarity
4	**New Para 17** **Procedures prior to Private Meetings**	Where it is not possible to comply with the requirement to give 28 days' notice of an Executive decision that is classified as either Confidential or Exempt, the meeting may only be held in closed session, where prior agreement has been obtained from: a) the chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee; or b) where there is no chair or if the chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee is unable to act, the Chair of Council; or c) where there is no chair of either the relevant overview and scrutiny committee or Council, the Vice-Chair of Council,	Amends a gap in the Constitution and reflects legislation: The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, Section 5. .

No	Part	Change	Comments
		that the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred. Where this provision is exercised the matter will be reported to Council for information.	

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