

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