

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 December 2025 commencing at 4.00 pm and finishing at 4.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Neil Fawcett
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Andrew Gant
Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Kate Gregory
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Ben Higgins
Councillor Dan Levy
Councillor Judy Roberts

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Lorna Baxter
(Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer),
Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and
Monitoring Officer), Colm Ó Caomhánaigh (Democratic
Services Manager)

The Cabinet considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

183/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none.

184/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none

185/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 3)

There were none.

186/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the recommendations on Devolution for Oxfordshire.

The report was received, and Cabinet's response was published in an Addenda before the meeting.

187/25 DEVOLUTION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda Item. 5)

Cabinet had before it a report which outlined Oxfordshire County Council's proposal to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for devolution, aiming to establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) to drive regional economic growth and collaboration.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

During discussion, members referred to the process and rationale for submitting an expression of interest for devolution, with the proposal being signed by the leaders of Oxfordshire County Council and Bracknell Forest, representing the councils in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

Members emphasised the importance of clarifying which councils were involved in the devolution process and highlighted the need for clear communication to ensure certainty around the process.

Members noted that the submission was proactive, not prompted by government request, and aimed to align the region with the timeline of other devolution proposals, despite recent postponement of mayoral elections to 2028.

Members also noted the establishment of an informal devolution board, the involvement of council leaders, and the commitment to robust governance and stakeholder engagement throughout the devolution process. There was a need to align economic development with the green agenda, address geographical and organisational complexities, and continue engaging with neighbouring councils such as Buckinghamshire.

Members acknowledged that the current proposal may evolve due to factors such as the abolition of police and crime commissioners and NHS reorganisation, indicating the process is subject to ongoing change.

Cabinet noted that the proposal had already been discussed at length in the previous Council meeting, where it received clear cross-party support, and that the cabinet's role was to build on this consensus.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) **Endorse the significant benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions and agree to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date.**
- b) **Approve the Expression of Interest (EOI), attached as Appendix 1, to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme.**
- c) **Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority.**
- d) **Agree that a further report will be brought to Cabinet prior to any final decision by Government on the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority.**
- e) **Note the informal Devolution Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.**

.....in the Chair

Date of signing