

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 October 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 5.15pm

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

Other Members in

Attendance: Councillors Thomas Ashby, Liz Brighthouse OBE, Andrew Crichton, David Henwood, Ian Snowden and Liam Walker

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), Lisa Lyons (Director of Children's Services), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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.

133/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none received.

134/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillor Levy declared an interest in Item 17 on the agenda – “Enterprise Zone Business Rates – Forecast and Update on Planned Use” – as a

director of Enterprise Oxfordshire. Councillor Levy left the meeting during consideration of the item and did not vote thereon.

135/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 16 September 2025 were approved as a correct record.

136/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See annex.

137/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

8 - Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with respect to Part Night Lighting

Councillor James Fry

9 - Future Bus Regulation Options

Councillor James Fry

13 - Oxfordshire County Council's Biodiversity Action Framework and Action Plan

Councillor James Fry

14 - Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Councillor James Fry

15 - Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Councillor James Fry

16 - S106 Project – Accelerated Delivery and Corporate Funding

Councillor James Fry

19 – Capital Programme Update and Monitoring Report

Councillor James Fry

138/25 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to this meeting.

139/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE, Chair, presented the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on OSCP Safeguarding Annual Report

Councillor Liam Walker, Chair, presented the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report on Part-night Lighting

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair, presented the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Report on Strategic Plan 2025-28

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

140/25 UPDATE TO THE STREET LIGHTING AND ILLUMINATED ASSETS POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PART NIGHT LIGHTING

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report which presented a proposed new policy and approach to part-night lighting following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback. The report outlined the concerns raised regarding part-night lighting, as well as its levels of support. Exemptions would apply in urban areas and local communities, through parish councils, would decide on adopting part-night lighting, following a process similar to the 20 mph speed limit introduction.

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

During discussion, Cabinet members emphasised the importance of resident engagement and the flexibility for communities to choose their preferred approach.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to approve:-

- a) the updated Streetlighting and Illuminated Assets Policy and supporting Electrical Procedure (Annex A).**
- b) the adoption of the proposed Part-Night Lighting Implementation Framework (Annex B), following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback (Annexes E&F).**

141/25 FUTURE BUS REGULATION OPTIONS

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report on bus regulation and ownership options relevant to Oxfordshire. Following a motion passed by the Council in 2023, a

consultant had been asked to review options for bus franchising and municipal operation. They were also asked to consider the effectiveness of the existing Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership (EP).

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, presented the report.

Cabinet members discussed the high costs and logistical challenges of franchising, including depot purchases, and noted that current multi-operator ticketing and partnerships already delivered many benefits.

Councillor Gant moved and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to

(a) approve the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plus (EP+) approach.

(b) delegate the development of the EP+ to the Director of Environment & Highways, including defining the desired and achievable outputs of the EP+, informed by passenger and resident feedback.

(c) delegate formal adoption of the EP+ agreement to the Cabinet Member for Transport Management through the Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions process.

(d) elect not to undertake any further work on bus franchising or municipal operation at the current time

142/25 GET OXFORDSHIRE WORKING PLAN

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet received a report which presented the Get Oxfordshire Working Plan developed in response to the Department of Work and Pensions requirement for local plans to tackle economic inactivity. The County Council was leading on the plan with formal sign-off required from key partners including the Integrated Care Board and Jobcentre Plus.

Councillor Ben Higgins, Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation, presented the report.

During discussion, members referred to the county's high employment rate, the challenge of economic inactivity among specific cohorts, and the need to address entrenched inequalities and barriers to employment, such as disability, gender gaps, and transport issues.

RESOLVED to:-

a) approve the Get Oxfordshire Working Plan on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

- b) note that other partner organisations (including the Jobcentre Plus and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board) will be taking the Plan through their own approval processes.**
- c) delegate authority to the Director of Economy & Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Future Economy & Innovation, to make any amendments arising from the Cabinet discussion and to account for feedback from partner organisations, and sign off the final plan.**
- d) delegate authority to the Director of Economy & Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Future Economy & Innovation, to refresh and/or make revisions to the Plan as appropriate during its lifetime.**

143/25 OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (OSCP) ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered a report which highlighted the findings from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

The report described the partnership's review of arrangements, health checks, and other reviews, with priorities focused on tackling neglect and minimising risk to children outside the home.

Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, presented the report.

Laura Gajdus, Business Manager, answered a number of questions from members.

Councillor Gaul moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to note the annual report of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership senior safeguarding partners and to consider the key messages.

144/25 OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report summarising the work of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and its partners over the course of the year 2024-25.

The report highlighted achievements in multi-agency collaboration, national recognition for homeless mortality reviews, and ongoing work to improve frontline practice and prevention. The board's focus for the coming year included a formal risk register and continued partnership strengthening.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Adults, presented the report.

Jayne Chidgey- Clark, Independent Chair summarised the main points in the report and answered a number of questions.

Councillor Bearder moved, and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to note the findings of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) Annual Report 2024-25. It is a requirement of statutory guidance that this report is shared with the Local Authority hosting the Safeguarding Board in their area.

145/25 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY ACTION FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet received a report on a Biodiversity Action Framework and Action Plan to comply with the Environment Act 2021, aiming to conserve and enhance biodiversity through council activities and partnerships. The plan set a vision for biodiversity improvement by 2030 and 2050 with specific objectives and policies to guide actions across various council departments and with external partners.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, presented the report.

Councillor Roberts moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve the Biodiversity Action Framework and Biodiversity Action Plan contained in Annexes 1 and 2.**
- b) delegate authority for approval of an annual update to the Biodiversity Action Plan to the Director for Environment and Highways in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Environment and Climate Action.**

146/25 OXFORDSHIRE'S LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY (LNRS)

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet had before it a report which recommended the adoption of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS vision was to achieve a resilient, well-connected network of nature that benefitted biodiversity and future generations. The strategy included a narrative description of Oxfordshire's biodiversity, a set of priority actions for species and habitats, and a mapped network highlighting key locations for nature recovery efforts. Adoption would enable formal launch and alignment with national environmental goals such as the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, presented the report.

Councillor Roberts moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to

- a) **approve the adoption of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**
- b) **support the County Council's commitment to deliver, monitor, and review the LNRS in future (post-adoption) in partnership with local people and organisations.**

147/25 STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending the approval and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2025-2028 for Oxfordshire County Council, outlining its development, content, and implications.

The plan retained the themes of greener, fairer, and healthier Oxfordshire, with headline projects and measurable deliverables under each heading. Extensive resident consultation informed the plan, and it included ambitious targets for children's outcomes, youth provision, and environmental objectives.

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

During discussion, members praised the plan for its clarity and alignment with residents' priorities.

Councillor Leffman moved and Councillor Gaul seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) agree that the Strategic Plan 2025-2028 should be submitted to Council
- b) recommend the Council to approve and adopt the Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

148/25 S106 PROJECT – ACCELERATED DELIVERY AND CORPORATE FUNDING

(Agenda Item. 16)

Cabinet received a report which outlined the Council's approach to accelerating the delivery of S106 developer agreement schemes through a funded programme of infrastructure projects aimed at providing improvements and benefits to local communities.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action.

During discussion, members discussed the pipeline for future funding rounds, the importance of having shelf-ready projects, and the challenges posed by officer capacity and the timing of Section 106 receipts.

Councillor Roberts moved and Councillor Higgins seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) note the approach to accelerated s106 developer agreement scheme delivery.
- b) approve the programme of £27.5m investment as set out in Appendix A
- c) delegate the approval of procurement, sign off and any detailed changes needed to be made to the programme of schemes to the Director for Economy and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action

149/25 ENTERPRISE ZONE BUSINESS RATES – FORECAST AND UPDATE ON PLANNED USE

(Agenda Item. 17)

Cabinet received a report which set out background, principles and conditional proposals for the use of retained business rates funding

generated through the two Enterprise Zones in Oxfordshire to support economic development in Oxfordshire.

The plan prioritised strategic site development, high-quality infrastructure, and business support activities, with allocations subject to business case development.

Councillor Ben Higgins, Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation presented the report.

Cabinet noted the intention to develop a full investment plan, the need for engagement with district councils, and the conditional nature of allocations pending further strategy development.

Councillor Higgins moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) note the intention to develop an Enterprise Zone Investment Plan.**
- b) consider and endorse the proposed Enterprise Zone investment priorities as set out at paragraph 41.**
- c) conditionally approve an allocation of up to £10m from the retained funding for Enterprise Zone 1 (Science Vale) to enable the delivery of priorities arising from the forthcoming OxRail strategy.**
- d) conditionally approve an allocation of up to £4m from Enterprise Zone 2 (Didcot Growth Accelerator) for infrastructure that directly enhances access to the Enterprise Zone itself.**
- e) conditionally approve an allocation of £0.700m in 2025/26 for additional economic strategy and delivery capacity and capability at Oxfordshire County Council and Enterprise Oxfordshire from the Enterprise Zone 1 retained business rate funding.**
- f) conditionally approve an on-going allocation of up to £1.254m each year for additional economic capacity and capability at Oxfordshire County Council and Enterprise Oxfordshire from 2026/27 – 2027/28, from the Enterprise Zone 1 retained business rate funding.**
- g) note that, regarding Enterprise Oxfordshire, the acceptance of those funds will be subject to agreement of the Enterprise Oxfordshire Board and Shareholder Committee and will be considered in light of both a revised business plan for 2025/26, and a business plan for 2026 plus.**

- h) delegate authority to the Director for Economy & Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Future Economy & Innovation, to oversee the preparation of business cases for recommendations e) and f).**
- i) note that the Cabinet Member for Future Economy & Innovation, in conjunction with the Director for Economy & Place, will undertake engagement with district councils regarding the Investment Plan and pipeline of investible propositions.**
- j) approve switching the use of remaining funding of £15.7m from supporting on-going borrowing costs to a direct contribution to finance the capital investment allocated towards the City Deals & Pinch Point Programme.**

150/25 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT – REVENUE UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT (AUGUST 2025).

(Agenda Item. 18)

Cabinet had before it a detailed financial update report for 2025/26. It provided a comprehensive overview of the council's revenue forecast, budget updates, savings and investments, pay inflation, debt management, and specific financial challenges such as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block deficit. The report also included annexes with detailed financial data and reserves information.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation presented the report.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) note the report and annexes.**
- b) note that c£6.6m funding for pay inflation added to service area budgets is included in the virements relating to funding changes (paragraphs 27).**
- c) approve the following corporate debt write offs as detailed: (paragraph 28)**
 - Historic supplier account balance - £11,006 (credit)**
 - Historic supplier account balance - £10,333**

- d) Approve the change to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block 2025/26 updated budgeted deficit (paragraphs 33 - 37).**

151/25 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT

(Agenda Item. 19)

Cabinet had before it the second capital programme update and monitoring report for 2025/26 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of August 2025.

The report also updated the Capital Programme approved by Cabinet on 15 July 2025 taking into account additional funding and new schemes. The updated programme also incorporated changes agreed through the Capital Programme Approval Reports to Cabinet during the year as well as new funding.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation presented the report.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:

Capital Programme

- a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2025/26 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.
- b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Budget Changes / Budget Release

- c. Approve the inclusion of the Section 106 Accelerated Delivery Programme, into the capital programme, with a budget of £27.575m to be funded by S106 developer contributions and from £4m corporate resources agreed in February 2025 (para 67-68).
- d. To note the inclusion of several projects to deliver high-quality specialist supported housing with a total value of £2.8m, to be funded from the £5.9m allocation agreed by Council in February 2025 (para 56-57).

Funding Updates

e. To note the following grant funding updates and allocations into the capital programme:

- £2.050m Consolidated Active Travel Funding (CATF) from Active Travel England (ATE), (para 70).

152/25 DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2025

(Agenda Item. 20)

There was no use of delegated powers during the period July to September 2025.

153/25 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 21)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

RESOLVED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

154/25 REPORT ON URGENT DECISION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE SUPPLY OF COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT

(Agenda Item. 22)

Cabinet noted a report on an urgent decision by the Chief Executive and Director of Adult Social Care to directly award a contract for community equipment supply due to the collapse of the previous provider. This action ensured continuity of essential services for vulnerable residents in Oxfordshire.

155/25 REPORT ON URGENT DECISION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE TELECARE MONITORING AND RESPONSE SERVICE

(Agenda Item. 23)

Cabinet noted a report on an urgent delegated decision to directly award a three-year contract for Telecare Monitoring and Response following the financial collapse of the previous provider. This action ensured uninterrupted support to vulnerable residents in Oxfordshire, enabling them to live independently at home.

156/25 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEMS (TO FOLLOW)

(Agenda Item. 24)

Cabinet noted the following responses to Scrutiny items:-

Oxford temporary congestion charge
Strategic Plan 2025-28

157/25 FIRE AND RESCUE COVER MODEL

(Agenda Item. 25)

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded for the duration of item 25 since it is likely that if they were present during that item there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and specified below in relation to those items and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cabinet received a report on a proposed Fire and Rescue Cover Model aimed at improving resource deployment, response times, and workforce resilience. The proposed initiatives would undergo a 12-week consultation process involving the public, employees, and stakeholders.

Councillor Jeny Hannaby, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Safety, presented the report.

The Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety answered a number of questions regarding the proposals outlined in the report.

Councillor Hannaby moved, and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to Support the Fire and Rescue Cover Model being taken forward to public consultation with a view to authority being delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and Director for Community Safety Services (CSS) to undertake a 12-week employee, stakeholder and public consultation on the proposals and to report back to Cabinet.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

