

County Council

9 September 2025

Agenda

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 9 September 2025 at 10.30 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.



Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

September 2025

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

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

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 4 September 2025. 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 2 September 2025.

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 13 - 18)

Report from the Leader of the Council.

The report summarises the decisions from the Cabinet meeting on 15 July 2025.

10. Treasury Management Annual Performance Report 2024/25 (Pages 19 - 34)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

This report sets out the Treasury Management position at 31 March 2025. Throughout the report, the performance for the 2024/25 financial year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2024/25.

11. Review of Outside Bodies (Pages 35 - 68)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The procedures and guidance around Council appointments to Outside Bodies have not been reviewed since 2013. This report summarises the procedures and proposes amendments to the way in which representatives are currently appointed to Category B (Non-strategic) and Category C (Local) Outside Bodies.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) agree that appointments to Category B non-strategic Outside Bodies, useful to the Council's work, as they relate to Council functions, be made by the Audit and Governance Committee;**
- b) agree that appointments to Category C Outside Bodies that request Council representation or are of primary value to local councillors/the local community, as they relate to Council functions, be delegated to the Monitoring Officer;**
- c) approve the Constitutional Amendments in Annex 1 to reflect these changes;**
- d) approve the definition of a Strategic Outside Bodies in paragraph 14 of this report;**
- e) note the Guidance for Members who are appointed to Outside Bodies adopted by the Audit & Governance Committee on 16 July 2025 (attached at Annex 2);**
- f) endorse the list of 'Strategic' Category A Outside Bodies in Annex 3;**
- g) confirm the appointments to Category B Outside Bodies in Annex 4;**

h) note the list of Category C Outside Bodies in Annex 5.

12. Members' Allowances - Opposition Groups and Parental Leave (Pages 69 - 76)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Independent Remuneration Panel was asked by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to provide early recommendations on two specific matters:

- i) The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to the Leaders and Shadow Cabinet Members of the two equally sized opposition groups recognised as the official opposition, following the May 2025 elections.
- ii) The application of allowances for councillors taking parental leave, following the adoption of a new policy on 8 July 2025.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to consider the Interim Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and in so doing to consider the following options, either:

- a) **To adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Special Responsibility Allowances for the recognised Opposition Group(s) as set out in Annex A to this report; OR**
- b) **To agree alternative values for any of the allowances, as the Council may determine; OR**
- c) **If the Council does not wish to accept the Panel's recommendations at this time, in whole or in part, or to substitute alternative amounts, to agree a status quo Scheme of Allowances for 2025/26 for any unchanged aspect;**
- d) **To agree the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation that basic and any Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) should continue to be paid to any councillor taking parental leave in accordance with the Parental Leave Policy approved by Council on 8 July 2025.**

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 Izzy Creed

This Council welcomes:

- 1. The Government's announcement of a programme of new Best Start Family Hubs.

2. The adoption of a national target of 75% of five-year-olds having a good level of development by 2028.

Council notes:

1. The preceding Sure Start programme was developed under the last Labour Government to provide holistic support to families with children under the age of 5. By 2010 a network of over 3,000 centres had been established.
2. A recent report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies has found that Sure Start had significant positive impacts on children's educational attainment as well as physical and mental health.

Council further notes:

1. That cuts by the Coalition Government to Local Government funding resulted in the closure of 1,168 of these valuable council-run children's centres.
2. In Oxfordshire, many children's centres were saved by being taken over by local charities and community groups. These centres continue to pay rent to the County Council and face significant financial pressures.

This Council requests:

1. The Cabinet considers how it may support existing community-operated children's centres in Oxfordshire to continue to operate, providing specialist and financial support where possible.
2. The Cabinet considers the development of a strategy to increase the range of services offered by existing children's centres in line with Government plans for new Best Start Family Hubs – prioritising those areas of greatest need.
3. The Cabinet considers if existing children's centres can help extend the reach of the County's re-established youth service.

14. Motion from Councillor James Plumb

Council notes the increasing pressures on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services across Oxfordshire, with rising demand, complex needs, and a need for stronger local support.

Previously, Oxfordshire County Council had a dedicated Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement, reflecting the importance of this area.

This role was recently removed, diluting specific leadership and focus on one of the most challenging areas of Council responsibility.

Council believes that:

1. Children and young people with SEND deserve a dedicated champion at the highest political level within the Council.
2. A single Cabinet Member with clear and focused responsibility for SEND would enhance decision-making, oversight, and transparency.
3. Reinstating this post would demonstrate a renewed commitment to improving outcomes for families who rely on these vital services.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to:

- a) reinstate the Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement as a standalone portfolio within the Cabinet.
- b) ensure this role has clear responsibility for SEND policy, provision, and engagement with parents, carers, and stakeholders.
- c) provide a written response to this motion, setting out the steps being taken to strengthen leadership and accountability within SEND services.

15. Motion from Councillor Ian Middleton

Oxfordshire hosts military air bases and training facilities, some of which are used by international forces.

Media reports have suggested that Oxfordshire air bases have been used to support Israeli Air Force actions in Gaza and that Israeli military personnel may have received training at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham.

Oxfordshire residents, faith groups and humanitarian organisations have expressed concern about the UK's potential complicity in war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank and this has already attracted demonstrations by protest groups around some Oxfordshire military bases.

Residents deserve transparency about the use of such facilities within the County and the local resources required to protect and police them given the likelihood of further protests in response to increasing evidence of war crimes and potential genocide in Gaza.

We therefore ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner requesting information on any increased costs and resource requirements for protecting facilities in Oxfordshire that are being accessed by the Israeli military.

16. Motion from Councillor Jane Hanna

Council notes with concern that Oxfordshire Healthwatch and local Councils of Governors of Oxfordshire hospitals are to be abolished within a new Health and Social Care Act, and integrated into existing local departments, with queries diverted to the NHS App.

The Council endorses the work of Healthwatch Oxfordshire for listening and helping thousands of patients each year, recognising that many vulnerable residents do not use the NHS App. Their team shared patient and carer experiences in thirty eight reports influencing local improvements through the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Place Based Partnership and contributions to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As part of the ten year NHS plan, Health and Wellbeing Boards are required to develop neighbourhood plans with NHS partners to shift more resource to prevention and from hospitals to a neighbourhood health service model. The financial, workforce and integration challenges are significant. Patients and the public will need

- A trusted and credible local body, to speak for patients, offering constructive

- challenge and supporting communities' engagement
- their elected members and lower tier councils with relevant local knowledge engaged
- Safe public spaces, including scrutiny, to speak up

Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to urgently consider how the Council working with NHS partners can safeguard and develop the Healthwatch function and engage and meaningfully consult with all local stakeholders to ensure the local delivery of national reforms at neighbourhood level best meet patient and community need.

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.

Agenda Item 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 July 2025 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 4.05 pm

Present:

Councillor Mark Lygo – in the Chair

Councillors:

Ted Fenton (Vice-Chair)	Andrew Gant	Kieron Mallon
Thomas Ashby	Emma Garnett	Emma Markham
Brad Baines	Sean Gaul	Gavin McLauchlan
James Barlow	Stefan Gawrysiak	Lesley McLean
Ron Batstone	Laura Gordon	Ian Middleton
Tim Bearder	Tom Greenaway	Toyah Overton
Will Boucher-Giles	Kate Gregory	Glynis Phillips
Chris Brant	Jane Hanna OBE	James Plumb
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Jenny Hannaby	Susanna Pressel
Mark Cherry	David Henwood	Leigh Rawlins
Andrew Coles	Georgina Heritage	Judy Roberts
Nicholas Michael Cotter	Ben Higgins	James Robertshaw
Andrew Crichton	David Hingley	Paul-Austin Sargent
Hao Du	Johnny Hope-Smith	Geoff Saul
Imade Edosomwan	Robin Jones	John Shiri
Judith Edwards	Emily Kerr	Roz Smith
Gareth Epps	Liz Leffman	Ian Snowden
Lee Evans	Dan Levy	Bethia Thomas
Neil Fawcett	Dr Nathan Ley	Liam Walker
Rebekah Fletcher	Diana Lugova	Matt Webb
James Fry	Saj Malik	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.

43/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the Annual meeting on 20 May 2025 were approved with one amendment:

Item 27/25: paragraph 5, line 5 – replace “Councillor Rooke” with “Councillor Lygo”.

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting on 20 May 2025 were approved.

44/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Creed, Field-Johnson, Filipova-Rivers, Graham and Stevens.

45/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

46/25 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

An annual event to celebrate the role of the military took place in Oxford on 23 June looking ahead to national Armed Forces Day which was on Saturday, 28 June.

The armed forces flag was raised on buildings and landmarks around the country. Oxfordshire County Council's flag raising event was overseen by Councillor Mark Lygo, Chair of the Council, in Oxford Castle Yard.

The event involved a parade which was led by 1 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps based at Bicester. Lieutenant Colonel Ged Hennigan joined the Councillor Lygo, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the High Sherrieff of Oxfordshire in raising the armed forces flag.

Military and civilian representatives were in attendance, including Oxfordshire County Council armed forces champions.

There was also a ceremony to honour the new affiliation between Oxfordshire County Council and HMS Diamond.

As signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant Oxfordshire County Council is proud of its strong and supportive relationship with the local armed forces community.

Other events attended by the Chair and Vice Chair since the last Council meeting were listed in Annex 1 of the Schedule of Business.

A full list of Oxfordshire award recipients in the King's Birthday Honours were listed at Annex 2.

The Chair made the following announcement:

"We meet today on a sad day, when businessman Dave Chester, who died in the tragic incident at Bicester Motion on 15 May, will be laid to rest. The Chester family has asked for a private funeral for family, friends and those who knew and were connected to Dave. In line with their wishes, a small

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service guard of honour will form for Dave as part of these arrangements.

Members will be aware that firefighters Jennie Logan and Martyn Sadler also tragically died. The funeral for firefighter Martyn Sadler has yet to take place. The funeral for Jennie took place on Saturday 14 June and I'd like to thank our fire service, partners and colleagues for their unwavering support in delivering a very moving and respectful procession in line with her family's wishes.

Members will also be aware that two other firefighters sustained serious injuries. Both have now been discharged from hospital. We remain in contact with them and all families affected.

Members are reminded that our [online book of condolence](#) for Dave, Jennie and Martyn remains open should anyone wish to sign. Councillors and residents can visit www.online-tribute.com/Bicester."

47/25 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

A report on committee and panel appointments was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Councillor Leffman proposed an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Fawcett was agreed unanimously:

Paragraph 7, on the Corporate Parenting Panel: Councillor Ben Higgins to be replaced by Councillor Sean Gaul.

The recommendations were approved unanimously as amended.

48/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

There were no petitions.

The Chair accepted the following requests to speak:

Item 16: Motion from Councillor Jane Hanna
Melody Drinkwater

Item 18: Motion from Councillor James Plumb
District Cllr Sally Povolotsky
Kimberly Morgan
Neil Barry
Claire Brenner

Speeches that have been supplied are published alongside the minutes.

49/25 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 7)

Nineteen questions were asked. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

50/25 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

Fifty eight questions were asked. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

51/25 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of Cabinet covering its meetings on 20 March 2025, 25 March 2025, 22 April 2025 and 17 June 2025.

On Item 1, Councillors Baines and Middleton asked about comparisons being made between the three proposed reorganisation models. Councillor Leffman responded that this was being discussed by Chief Executives to ensure that the same data sets were used and to ensure that service users would not be disadvantaged by the reorganisation.

Councillor Phillips asked if an all-Member briefing was being planned on the government's proposals for fairer funding. Councillor Leffman confirmed that all Members would be briefed once it was known what the proposals were.

On Item 2, Councillor Phillips asked about the target for reduction of agency spend. Councillor Fawcett responded that it would become harder to reduce over time and that there would be a minimum level required to support certain projects and provide cover for leave.

Councillor Smith asked about the Council's record with apprenticeships. Councillor Fawcett responded that it had been a real success story with a high proportion of the apprenticeship levy being drawn down. Officers were exploring other potential ways of increasing the numbers of apprenticeships, particularly targeting disadvantaged groups.

On Item 4, Councillors Brighthouse and Baines asked about proposals around part-night lighting. Councillor Brighthouse cited concerns of the Children's Commissioner. She asked that all evidence be properly considered. Councillor Baines asked if there was any part of Oxford where this policy might be applied. Councillor Roberts responded that the consultation on this had just finished. Some rural parishes had proposed it for environmental reasons. If area committees believe it would not be safe in their area then they will not request it. The issue had been moved to the Transport Management portfolio and she was certain that Councillor Gant would take all the views from the consultation into consideration.

On Item 5, Councillor Baines asked about progress in seeking alternative sources of finance for capital projects. Councillor Levy responded that he would provide a written answer.

On Item 6, Councillor Baines asked what conversations have taken place around the disparities in High Needs Block funding per pupil across different councils with Oxfordshire receiving a much lower amount than neighbouring councils. Councillor Brighthouse noted that the deficit had doubled in one year and asked for a breakdown of the figures. Councillor Levy responded that officers have been engaged in discussions on this disparities point. He was disappointed that the government had continued to defer a solution to the funding problem. He agreed to provide a breakdown of the figures.

On Item 7, Councillor Baines asked for an update on the proposal to open the Cowley Branch Line given the government's increase in funding towards development of railways. Councillor Levy responded that increased funding was welcome and might support a number of schemes around the county. He agreed to provide a written response on the Cowley Branch proposals.

Councillor Middleton noted the provision of extra funding for the development of Speedwell House and asked for information as to the reasons for that. Councillor Levy responded that the costs of the development were covered by the sale of County Hall.

On Item 8, Councillor Fry asked when progress would be made on the provision of pavement charging facilities. Councillor Levy agreed to provide a written response.

On Item 9, Councillor Baines asked if consideration had been given to using some of the higher than expected return in the parking account to improve the staff offer and recruit more officers for enforcement. Councillor Levy responded that he would consider the suggestion but had concerns about using funds from fines as core income.

Councillor Barlow asked if recycling rates were increasing or decreasing. Councillor Levy agreed to provide a written response.

On Item 10, Councillor Baines asked about the risks associated with the seven year backlog in bridge inspections. Councillor Levy responded that Councillor Gant would ensure that bridge inspections were proceeded with as quickly as possible.

Councillor Fry asked if past over-optimism in forecasts on the delivery of capital projects could be factored in to better inform future forecasts. Councillor Levy confirmed that officers were working on improving forecasts in this matter.

Councillor Barlow asked if the council's climate plan influenced investment strategy to ensure minimising carbon emissions. Councillor Levy responded that carbon efficiency was embedded in everything that the council does.

On Item 11, Councillor Fry asked if any unspent funds from the £6m committed in February last year to easing congestion would be spent in Oxford City. Councillor Levy responded that he would not commit to spending funds in certain areas of the county.

On Item 12, Councillor Baines asked why funds had been transferred from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund to pay for the temporary congestion charge plans given that extra funds were available from underspending in some areas and additional interest on reserves. Councillor Levy responded that capital funds were regularly moved around depending on timing of projects within the financial year.

Councillor Saul noted that extra funds had been allocated for signage on the A40 Access to Witney Scheme and asked were the costs of signage not factored in at the start. Councillor Levy confirmed that they were but there was a cost overrun on signage for what was a complicated junction.

Councillor Brighouse noted that money had been allocated many years ago to improve the Corner House junction in her division and asked if that money could be put back into the local community. Councillor Levy responded that the junction had been improved but more work needed to be done.

Councillor Barlow asked if the Access to Witney Scheme might result in inducing an increase in traffic overall. Councillor Levy responded that it was unlikely to do so but that the key aspect was that it would reduce traffic in the centre of Witney.

On Item 12, Councillor Pressel asked about the cost of living programme and asked if some of the £6m could be given to food banks to help feed disadvantaged families. Councillor Gregory thanked her for the suggestion and said she would discuss it with officers.

Councillor Cherry asked if areas of deprivation were taken into account in planning the council's cost of living measures. Councillor Gregory confirmed that the plans were data-driven to ensure that low income households were being targeted.

Councillor Edosomwan asked about the eight week pilot at Oxford Academy providing healthy snacks for pupils and if it was planned to extend it. Councillor Gregory responded that 51% of pupils reported better concentration and suspensions were down 70% in that period. Pupils were also able to spend their snack money on a better lunch instead. Officers were reviewing the findings and considering options going forward.

Councillor Middleton asked if there were any plans to provide extra support following government welfare cuts, particularly for those relying on Personal Independence Payments and other disability benefits. Councillor Gregory responded that those affected by the cuts can apply to the Resident Support Scheme.

Councillor Fry asked what more could be done to reach those most likely to be in need who might not attend advice centres or be aware of the cost of living programme. Councillor Gregory responded that the council worked with district councils and other organisations to get to the hard-to-reach households.

On Item 13, Councillor Baines ask why the temporary congestion charge was not put to the Citizens' Assembly for discussion. Councillor Gant responded that the proposal did not exist at the time of the assembly but arose from Network Rail's announcement of the continued Botley Road closure and appeals from bus companies to take action as a result.

Councillor Brighouse asked why the remit for the Citizens' Assembly was extended to include the whole of Oxfordshire when the original proposal was for it to deal with the Central Oxfordshire area. Councillor Gant responded that it was a matter of record that this was how the advisory board decided to proceed in order to deal with all the issues affecting the residents of Oxfordshire.

52/25 OXFORDSHIRE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

(Agenda Item 10)

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 2024/25 municipal year.

The report was proposed by Councillor Hanna and seconded by Councillor Epps.

Following discussion, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: to receive and note the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (JHOSC) Annual Report set out in Annex 1.

53/25 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

(Agenda Item 11)

Council was asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which documents the activities of the four other overview and scrutiny committees for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The report was proposed by Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor Brighouse.

Following discussion, the recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: Council to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

54/25 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda Item 12)

At its meeting on 11 July 2023, Council approved the creation of the roles of two Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee. The report before Council was to propose appointments to the two positions.

The report was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Shiri.

Following discussion, the recommendations were adopted unanimously.

RESOLVED: to:-

- a) confirm the appointment Kate Cartwright and Paul McGinn as Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee for a term of four years.
- b) record the Council's gratitude and appreciation for the contribution of Dr Geoff Jones as Independent Member of the Audit and Governance Committee and Chair of the Audit Working Group.

55/25 APPOINTMENTS TO AND FORMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(Agenda Item 13)

The Independent Remuneration Panel makes recommendations to Council on Member Allowances. This report is to form the Panel and appoint members to it.

The report was proposed by Councillor Leffman and seconded by Councillor Fawcett.

Following discussion, the recommendations were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: to: -

- a) confirm the appointment of Benjamin Anim-Antwi, Martyn Hocking, Stephen McKechnie and Dave Shelmerdine as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel and
- b) to form the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of two years.

56/25 COUNCILLORS PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

(Agenda Item 14)

Council was asked to approve a policy outlining councillors' entitlements to parental leave, which includes maternity, paternity, shared parental, and adoption leave.

The report was proposed by Councillor Leffman and seconded by Councillor Fawcett.

Following discussion, the recommendations were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: to approve a parental leave policy for councillors, ensuring support for new parents and best practice in local governance. The policy includes provisions for temporary cover and reflects the council's commitment to promoting equality and diversity among elected officials.

57/25 PRESENTATION OF SCROLL TO ALDERMAN BOB JOHNSTON

(Agenda Item 15)

The Extraordinary Council meeting on 20 May 2025 approved the appointment of former Councillor Bob Johnston as Alderman. As Alderman Johnston was unable to attend on that day, Council agreed to defer the presentation of the scroll to this meeting.

Members paid tribute to Alderman Johnston's work on the council and in the community. Alderman Johnston responded with thanks and recalled some of his best memories as a councillor.

The Chair presented the scroll and alderman's medal to Alderman Johnston.

58/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JANE HANNA

(Agenda Item 16)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hanna and seconded by Councillor Hope-Smith.

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was approved with 62 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Council notes with deep concern the failure of successive governments to address the crisis in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision.

Councils across the country are grappling with soaring high needs deficits, which the Local Government Association (LGA) predicts will exceed £5 billion nationally by next year.

Over half the councils providing these services warned they would face effective bankruptcy when the statutory override for SEND deficits was to

expire in 2026. The extension to 2028 has not solved the underlying problem.

Between 2020 and 2024, Oxfordshire County Council's deficit on the 'Dedicated Schools Grant' was £46 million. This increased to £85m at the end of financial year 2024-25 and is budgeted to reach £127m by the end of financial year 2025-26.

Oxfordshire saw a 27% increase in requests for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) during 2023/24 with an increase of 18% of approved EHCPs. These increases continue upward.

The LGA says that the current SEND system is "not working for anyone in it". The Spending Review once again failed to provide clarity on how the Government will address these mounting deficits.

The announced increase in core school funding amounts to just a 1.1% uplift-insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising pay costs in schools.

The Council asks the leader to write to the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves MP, urging her to set out urgently how the Government will eliminate high needs deficits and deliver a SEND system that works for children, families and councils alike.

59/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE

(Agenda Item 17)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Brighouse and seconded by Councillor Baines.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Kerr and seconded by Councillor Garnett. The proposer and seconder of the motion did not accept the amendment.

Following discussion, Councillor Levy proposed an amendment to Councillor Kerr's amendment under CPR 14.1 (vi). The new amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the original amendment.

Council voted to take the new amendment with 39 votes in favour, 21 against and no abstentions.

The amendment was carried with 40 votes in favour, 21 against and no abstentions.

Following further discussion, the motion as amended was carried with 40 votes in favour, 21 against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED:

The Children's Society notes that transport poverty exacerbates other inequalities, ~~with children from low-income families potentially missing out on school trips, extracurricular activities, or suffering poor school attendance.~~ **A and a 2025 report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies similarly identified that young people's mobility is closely tied to long-term social and economic outcomes.**

The Council notes that it is working with bus companies to improve services in Oxfordshire and thanks them for their support for its schemes to make bus services more reliable, quicker and more extensive. It would welcome the opportunity to make services more accessible to young people and others.

This Council notes that there are many transport disadvantaged groups who could significantly benefit from targeted support with public transport, such as those under 18, care leavers and asylum seekers.

~~This Council, being aware of the levels of child poverty in this county and the effect this has on the ability of families and young people to travel by public transport, asks the Cabinet to set up a Cabinet Advisory Group to consider a scheme for the whole county to provide free or significantly reduced bus travel for children and young people up to age of 18 where the money for such scheme would require substantial funding to be viable and longterm and that this will require funding from central government in addition to Oxfordshire making a contribution were a Workplace Parking Levy to be introduced.~~

~~Such a scheme could be funded from fines from ANPR enforcement and would enable children and young people to get to school and college settings by enabling bus companies to develop routes to school that better meet the travel needs of families and children.~~

~~This Council notes West of England Mayor Helen Goodwin has funded free travel for children up to 16 this summer.~~

60/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES PLUMB

(Agenda Item 18)

The time being 3.30 pm, this motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

61/25 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON

(Agenda Item 19)

The time being 3.30 pm, this motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

Divisions- N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 9 September 2025

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Resources and Deputy Leader

1. Community Banking Hubs Motion

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out the intended approach to take forward the Council Motion on community banking hubs resolved by Council on 1 April 2025. A summary of recent work was included in the report together with an analysis of areas currently lacking banking services.

Cabinet agreed to the continuation of efforts to engage banks to provide community services within library facilities and other suitable locations in areas lacking banking services.

Cabinet Member: Adults

2. Connect to Work: Approval of final Development Plan

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet received a report on Connect to Work (CtW), a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through grant funding.

The CtW programme aimed to support individuals outside the workforce and facing disadvantages to get into and to stay in work. Eligible target groups include disabled people, offender/ex-offenders, carers/ex-carers, homeless people, former members of HM Armed Forces or a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel, people with an alcohol or drug dependency, care experienced young people/care.

The Council had been designated as one of the 43 Accountable Bodies across England which would be responsible for designing the local offer to support people to find and fulfil their potential to work in line with local services and priorities.

Cabinet authorised the Council to enter into grant funding agreement/s with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop and deliver the Connect to Work Programme for such period as the programme continues to be funded by DWP.

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

3. EOTAS Policy (Education other than at School)

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding a policy for the delivery of Education Other Than At School (EOTAS). This was required to be implemented following the SEND inspection in 2023. The policy was crucial to ensure that all children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), received a suitable and effective education, even if they were unable to attend 'traditional' school settings. The EOTAS policy was designed to provide a structured framework for delivering personalised educational plans tailored to the unique needs of each child or young person.

Cabinet approved the draft policy and requested a review to be presented in April 2026.

4. Financial and land agreements relating to the conversion of Woodeaton Manor School to an academy

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet considered a report regarding Woodeaton Manor School, a foundation school without a foundation, catering for children with social and emotional difficulties and was set to convert to academy status on 1st October 2025 following the issue of Directive Academy Order, with Propeller Academy Trust (PAT) as the academy trust.

Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report regarding the strategic intention for the school buildings, the proposal for the Council to retain maintenance responsibilities, and the financial implications of the transition.

Cabinet Member: Place, Environment and Climate Action

5. Climate Action Programme update

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided a six-monthly update on the delivery of the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme workstreams, including the development of a new Circular Economy Plan.

The Circular Economy Plan expanded the council's approach to climate action by focussing additionally on the resources it used. The plan built on work which the

council was already undertaking, such as the Carbon Management Plan, and sought to deliver a culture change which embedded circular economy at the heart of the Council's policy and practice.

Cabinet approved the recommendation to adopt the Circular Economy Plan. Members also noted the climate outcomes dashboard and the update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme 2024/25 and approved the proposed Climate Action Programme for 2025/26

6. Update on Process of Producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet received a report which provided an update on progress with the production of a Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (MWDS) which contained the timetable for Minerals and Waste Local Plan production. The most recent MWDS was approved by Cabinet in December 2022.

Cabinet approved the cessation of the preparation of the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making process and authorised the production of a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the new plan-making process in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation

7. Treasury Management 2024/25 Outturn

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' required that the committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. Cabinet had before it the fourth and final update for the 2024/25 financial year which set out the position at 31 March 2025.

The report referred to prudent management, reduction in external debt, strong investment income, and operation within set indicators.

Cabinet recommended the report to Council.

8. Budget & Business Planning 2026/27 - Fair Funding Review 2.0

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided an overview of the proposals included in the “[Fair Funding Review 2.0](#)” consultation, which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 20 June 2025.

Cabinet noted the report and agreed that there would be briefings for all members of the Council when the outcomes of the review became clearer.

9. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Revenue Update and Monitoring Report

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

The budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2027/28 was agreed by Council on 11 February 2025. Cabinet had before it a report which set out the initial revenue forecast and expected outlook for the financial year and included updates on:

- financial risks which were being managed in 2025/26;
- savings and investment position; and
- funding notified since the budget was agreed

Members noted the ongoing deficit in the High Needs Block in Children’s Services was largely due to insufficient government funding, with the statutory override allowing temporary off-balance sheet treatment. Members discussed the exponential increase in EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) and the potential forthcoming reforms which would aim to address the issues.

Cabinet noted the report and approved a number of financial adjustments as recommended.

10. Capital Programme Monitoring Report

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet received the first capital programme update and monitoring report for 2025/26 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of May 2025.

The report also updated the Capital Programme approved by Council on 11 February 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.

The following schemes were approved for inclusion into the Capital Programme:-

- a) St Joseph’s, Thame
- b) Safe Space

- c) Redbridge Redevelopment
- d) Cinder Track improvements, Route 2 of the South and Vale Active Travel Network (SVATN)
- e) A420 (Oxford) Safer Roads Fund
- f) Bus Service Improvement Delivery Plan 2025/26
- g) Data Centre Hardware Refresh

Cabinet Member: Transport Management

11. Proposed response to the 2025 Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report providing background information about the citizens' assembly on travel and transport which took place in February and March 2025, its 20 recommendations and the council's proposed initial response to these.

Cabinet members expressed support for the Assembly's work and acknowledged its role in shaping bold, evidence-based policy. Members approved the initial response to the initial 20 recommendations by the assembly. They supported the development of a work programme, including an amended prioritisation matrix and further technical development and engagement work to properly assess whether each recommendation could be progressed (including policy, legal and financial considerations), as the next step to take forward the citizens' assembly recommendations. Members also supported the deeper involvement of communities in transport policy development, and scheme design and delivery, including the ongoing involvement of Citizens' Assembly members.

12. Future Civil Enforcement Contract Models

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet received a report on proposed models for Civil Enforcement contracts. Following Cabinet approval in February 2025 to procure enhanced multi contactor contracts for the civil enforcement and ZEZ operation, Civil Enforcement specialists were appointed alongside legal specialists to work with officers to develop new specifications, pricing schedules and contract terms.

The objectives of the new contract models were to improve enforcement against illegal and dangerous parking county-wide.

Cabinet endorsed the approach set out in the recommendations and authorised officers to commence the procurement of the contracts.

13.Scrutiny Reports

(Cabinet, 15 July 2025)

Cabinet received the following Scrutiny reports and will respond in due course:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

- a) S.19 of the Education Act
- b) EOTAS policy
- c) Home to School Transport Policy

LIZ LEFFMAN

Leader of the Council

September 2025

COUNCIL – 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

**Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151
Officer**

RECOMMENDATION

Council is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2024/25.

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's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This is the fourth and final update for the 2024/25 financial year and sets out the position at 31 March 2025.
3. Throughout this report, the performance for the 2024/25 financial year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.
4. As at 31 March 2025, the council's outstanding debt totalled £272m and the average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during the year was 4.41%. The council launched its "green bond" in December 2024 with an aim to raise an initial £0.5m. No other external borrowing was raised during the year, whilst £3m of maturing Public Works Loan Board (PWLb), and £10m of LOBO¹ loans were repaid. The council's debt financing position for 2024/25 is shown in Annex 1. Annex 2 shows the long term debt that matured in 2024/25.
5. The [Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25](#) agreed in February 2024 assumed an average base rate of 4.75%.

¹ LOBO (Lender's Option/Borrower's Option) Loans are long-term loans which include a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined intervals.

6. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was expected to be £463m in 2024/25, with an average in-house return on new and existing deposits of 4.25%.
7. The council achieved an average in-house return of 4.86% on average cash balances of £460.916m, producing gross interest receivable of £22.398m. In relation to external funds, the return for the year was £4.763m, bringing total investment income to £27.161m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £19.242m, giving a net overachievement of £7.919m.
8. At 31 March 2025, the council's investment portfolio totalled £484.920m. This comprised £335.000m of fixed term deposits, £52.000m at short term notice in money market funds and £97.919m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2025.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

9. The strategy for long term borrowing agreed in February 2024 included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £232m 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 2024/25 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 forecast to remain elevated for the year. The exception to this was new debt of £0.500m raised the community municipal investment known as the Oxfordshire Green Bond.
11. As at 31 March 2025, the authority had 42 PWLB loans totalling £241.383m, 5 LOBO loans totalling £25.000m and two money market loans totalling £5.500m. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.52% and the average cost of LOBO debt in 2024/25 was 3.91%. The cost of debt on the money market loans was 4.00%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.39%. The council's debt portfolio as at 31 March 2025 is shown in Annex 1.
12. The council repaid £3m of maturing PWLB loans and £10m of LOBO loans during the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 4.250%. The outturn for interest payable in 2024/25 was £12.23m. The details are set out in Annex 2.

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 first three quarters of the financial year term fixed deposits have been placed with other Local Authorities as per 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 with from a security view point. The Government's Debt Management Deposit Facility (DMADF) has not been a competitive counterparty to deposit with, however the Council maintains access to this facility for times of financial uncertainty.
15. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 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 5.25% which was in line with the forecast. Reductions of 25bps in August, November and February reduced the rate to 4.50%, where it remained until the end of the financial year.

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 the third quarter of 2024/25.

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 2024/25 was 4.25% and assumed an average annual in-house cash balance of £361.622m.

19. The actual average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £460.916m for 2024/25 and the average in-house return was 4.86%, producing gross interest receivable of £22.398m. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £4.763m were also realised in the year, bringing total investment income to £27.161m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £19.242m, giving a net overachievement of £7.918m. This reflects a combination of higher than forecast average cash balances, and higher than forecast interest rates.
20. 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 2024/25 was £92.5m. This created an estimated opportunity cost of £3.8m in unearned interest during 2024/25. The cumulative opportunity cost as a result of negative DSG balances since 2019/20 is now £10.42m.
21. The council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During 2024/25 the average balance held on instant access was £80.340m, at an average rate of 4.48%.
22. At 31 March 2025 the total value of pooled fund investments was £97.919m. Whilst this is a marginal increase compared to the value of £97.804 at 31 March 2024, it is a reduction of £2.344m compared to the recent high of £100.263m in February 2025. This reduction is due to global financial instability caused by the economic impact of changes to US import tariffs.
23. At 31 March 2025, the council's investment portfolio totalled £484.920m. This comprised £335.000m of fixed term deposits, £52.000m at short term notice in money market funds and £97.920m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2025.
24. The council's Treasury Management Strategy Team regularly monitors the risk profile of the council's investment portfolio. An analysis of the credit and maturity position of the portfolio at 31 March 2025 is included at Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

25. During the financial year, the council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. The outturn for the Prudential Indicators 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.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

27. The budget is a non-executive function, however the Cabinet has a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to monitor the budget and make any recommendations to Council as they think fit.
28. The statutory framework for the prudential financial system is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These Regulations provide that the Council must have regard to CIPFA codes in managing its budget.
29. The report is in accordance with 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 has a wide power to borrow under section 1 of the 2003 Act up to the affordable limit determined by the Council having regard to the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Council also has powers to invest under section 12 of the 2003 Act, subject to restrictions contained in the Local Authorities (Funds)(England) Regulations 1992.

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar, Head of Legal & Governance Services, jay.akbar@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

30. This report does not create any staffing implications.

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.
33. In December 2024, the council launched its first "green bond" to raise £0.5m funding to support the council's tree planting and decarbonisation projects.

Risk Management

34. 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.

35. Prudential indicators and credit criteria are agreed by Council each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.
36. 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

Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex 1 – Oxfordshire County Council Debt Profile as at
31 March 2025

Annex 2 – Long Term Debt Matured During 2024/25

Annex 3 – Oxfordshire County Council Investment Portfolio at 31 March 2025

Annex 4 – Prudential Indicators as at 31 March 2025

Background papers: [Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25](#)

Contact Officer: Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager, 07917 262935,
tim.chapple@oxfordshire.gov.uk

July 2025

Annex 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT PROFILE 31 MARCH 2025

LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End Date	LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End/Call Date
483659	2.000	4.250	25/11/1999	30/04/2025	492386	2.000	4.350	03/11/2006	01/04/2027
487777	4.000	4.650	16/05/2003	01/05/2028	492535	10.000	4.200	29/11/2006	30/06/2037
488562	7.650	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	492561	6.000	4.250	07/12/2006	30/06/2032
488563	1.733	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	492598	8.000	4.500	18/12/2006	30/04/2027
488989	6.000	4.850	16/08/2004	13/07/2030	492599	6.000	4.500	18/12/2006	31/05/2027
489168	6.000	4.700	22/10/2004	01/03/2030	492789	6.000	4.500	24/01/2007	31/01/2032
489287	6.000	4.600	22/11/2004	01/04/2032	492990	6.000	4.450	06/03/2007	31/03/2032
489429	6.000	4.550	02/12/2004	01/06/2032	492807	4.000	4.250	25/01/2007	30/06/2053
489856	5.000	4.600	06/05/2005	01/05/2033	493378	4.000	4.900	11/06/2007	30/06/2032
490105	5.000	4.450	23/05/2005	01/12/2033	493638	6.000	4.550	02/08/2007	30/09/2052
491669	4.000	4.450	23/05/2006	14/06/2026	493803	4.000	4.650	23/08/2007	20/09/2032
491948	5.000	4.650	16/08/2006	31/12/2026	493822	6.000	4.450	23/08/2007	30/09/2053
491957	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	31/12/2031	494069	6.000	4.500	21/11/2007	30/09/2052
491958	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	30/09/2031	494171	6.000	4.480	27/12/2007	31/03/2052
491959	2.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/04/2027	494200	6.000	4.420	04/01/2008	31/03/2057
491960	10.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/09/2026	494703	6.000	4.460	04/08/2008	13/07/2058
492021	5.000	4.350	25/08/2006	22/11/2031	494747	10.000	4.390	15/08/2008	26/03/2058
492063	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	31/03/2028	497549	5.000	4.190	08/07/2010	14/06/2054
492064	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	30/04/2027	LOBO 07	5.000	4.500	27/04/2005	27/10/2023
492088	4.000	4.350	04/09/2006	02/03/2032	MML 01	5.000	3.950	31/05/2005	29/05/2065
492117	4.000	4.450	07/09/2006	02/03/2037	LOBO 09	5.000	3.680	23/11/2005	24/11/2025
492371	13.000	4.500	31/10/2006	31/12/2026	LOBO 11	5.000	3.840	31/07/2006	31/07/2026
492375	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/12/2036	LOBO 12	5.000	3.825	02/10/2006	04/10/2027
492376	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/03/2037	LOBO 15	5.000	3.720	21/09/2006	13/10/2027
					MML 02 Abundance 1	0.500	4.400	02/12/2024	31/03/2030
					TOTAL	271.883			

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Long-term debt that Matured in 2024/25

Date	Amount £m	Rate %	Repayment Type	Loan Type
22/11/2024	3.000	4.250	Maturity	PWLB
31/07/2024	5.000	3.800	Maturity	LOBO
02/10/2024	5.000	4.100	Maturity	LOBO
Total	13.000			

Repayment Types

Maturity – Full amount of principal is repaid at the final maturity date

EIP – Equal Instalments of Principal are repaid every 6 months until the final maturity date

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 31/03/2025

Fixed term deposits held at 31/03/2025

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
High Peak Borough Council	£3,000,000.00	09/04/2025
London Borough of Newham Council	£5,000,000.00	11/04/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	14/04/2025
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000,000.00	17/04/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	25/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/04/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	30/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	06/05/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	13/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
Darlington Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/05/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	02/06/2025
Isle of Wight Council	£5,000,000.00	09/06/2025
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	10/06/2025
Cornwall Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Oldham Council	£5,000,000.00	29/07/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	07/08/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
Gloucester City Council	£7,000,000.00	13/08/2025
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	15/08/2025
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
South Tyneside Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	22/08/2025
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£7,000,000.00	27/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	29/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	01/09/2025
Babergh District Council	£5,000,000.00	02/09/2025
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	04/09/2025
Ashford Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/09/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	29/09/2025

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	01/10/2025
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	02/10/2025
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/10/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	14/10/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	28/10/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Wakefield Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£5,000,000.00	04/11/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	06/11/2025
North East Lincolnshire Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Worthing Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Conwy County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	24/11/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	02/12/2025
The Highland Council	£3,000,000.00	10/12/2025
High Peak Borough Council	£2,500,000.00	18/12/2025
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£2,500,000.00	18/12/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	06/01/2026
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	07/01/2026
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	14/01/2026
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	29/01/2026
Short Term Deposit Total	£300,000,000.00	
Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2026
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	25/08/2026
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	22/01/2027
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	17/03/2027
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	£35,000,000.00	
Total Deposits	£335,000,000.00	

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/25 (£)	Notice period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	25,000,000.00	Same day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	1,900,000.00	Same day

Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	25,083,046.30	Same day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	10,000.00	Same day
JP Morgan Sterling Liquidity Fund	0.00	Same day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	5,000.00	Same day
Total	51,998,046.30	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty period	Balance at 31/03/25 (£)	Notice
Santander Call Account	0.00	Same day
Barclays Current	0.00	Same day
Handlesbanken	2,389.13	Same day
Total	2,389.13	

Strategic Bond Funds

Fund period	Balance at 31/03/24 (£)	Notice
Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	12,443,200.51	4 days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	16,646,877.74	4 days
Kames Diversified Income	9,295,682.92	4 days
Ninety One Diversified Income	8,919,605.18	4 days
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	11,009,350.50	4 days
Schroder Income Maximiser	11,611,955.46	4 days
CCLA Better World Cautious Fund	4,659,914.83	4 days
Total	74,586,587.14	

Property Funds

Fund period	Balance at 31/03/24 (£)	Notice
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	23,332,563.96	6 Monthly
Total	23,332,563.96	

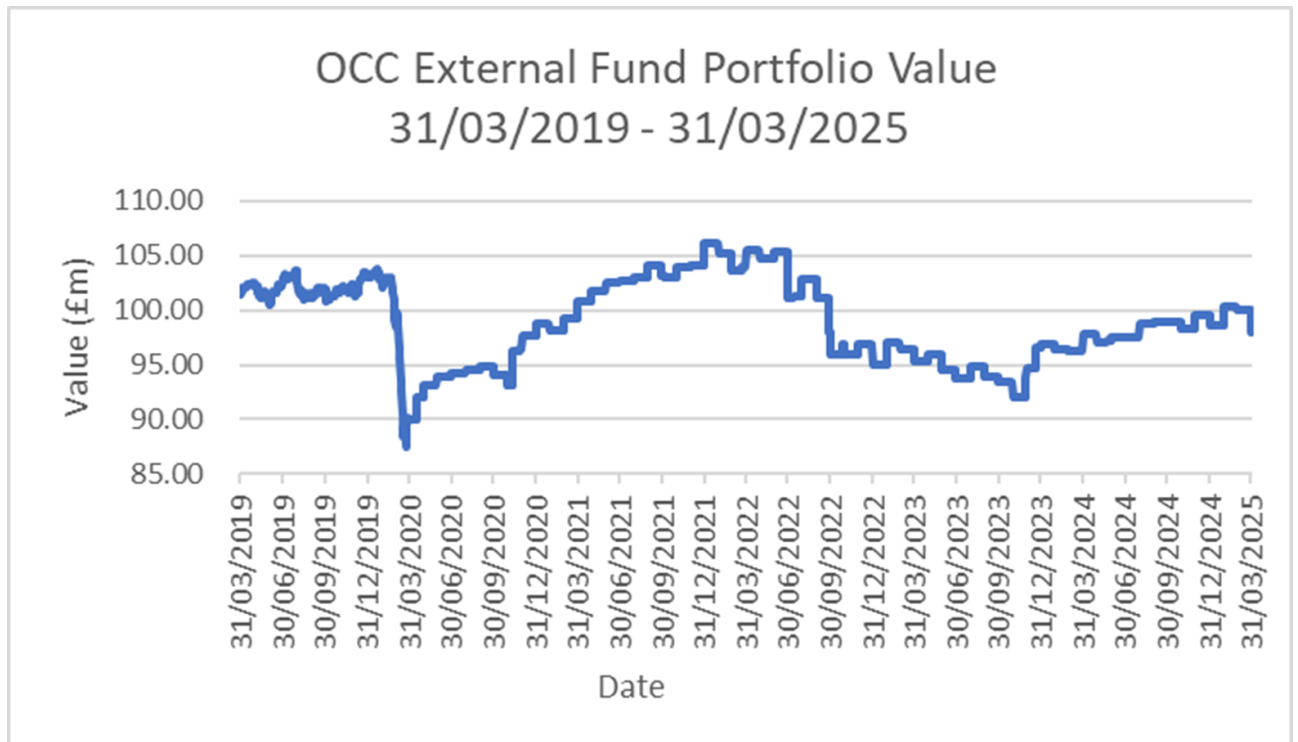
Total Strategic Pooled Funds

£97,919,151.10

Investment Portfolio Summary

Short and Long Term Deposits	£335,000,000.00
Money Market Funds & Notice/Call Accounts	£52,000,435.40
Strategic Bond Funds & Property Funds	£97,919,151.10
TOTAL	£484,919,586.53

Strategic Pooled Fund Portfolio Value Over Time



Prudential Indicators Outturn 31 March 2025**Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt**

Authorised Limit for External Debt	£555,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£570,000,000
Actual External Debt at 31 March 2025	£271,382,618

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure

Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 31 March 2025	-£75,617,382

Variable Interest Rate Exposure

Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	0
Actual at 31 March 2025	-£124,083,586

Sums Invested over 364 days

Total sums invested for more than 364 days maximum limit	£215,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days at 31 March 2025	£35,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing at 31/03/25**Limit % Actual %**

From 01/04/23

Under 12 months	0 - 20	4.42
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	11.79
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	17.46
5 years – 10 years	5 - 40	26.16
10 years +	25 - 95	40.16

The Prudential Indictors for maturity structure are set with reference to the start of the financial year. The actual % shown above relates to the maturity period remaining at 01/04/24 on loans still outstanding at 31/03/25.

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COUNCIL 9 September 2025

REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Report by Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) agree that appointments to Category B non-strategic Outside Bodies, useful to the Council's work, as they relate to Council functions, be made by the Audit and Governance Committee;
- b) agree that appointments to Category C Outside Bodies that request Council representation or are of primary value to local councillors/the local community, as they relate to Council functions, be delegated to the Monitoring Officer;
- c) approve the Constitutional Amendments in Annex 1 to reflect these changes;
- d) approve the definition of a Strategic Outside Bodies in paragraph 14 of this report;
- e) note the Guidance for Members who are appointed to Outside Bodies adopted by the Audit & Governance Committee on 16 July 2025 (attached at Annex 2);
- f) endorse the list of 'Strategic' Category A Outside Bodies in Annex 3;
- g) confirm the appointments to Category B Outside Bodies in Annex 4;
- h) note the list of Category C Outside Bodies in Annex 5.

Executive Summary

1. The procedures and guidance around Council appointments to Outside Bodies have not been reviewed since 2013. This report summarises the procedures and proposes amendments to the way in which representatives are currently appointed to Category B (Non-strategic) and Category C (Local) Outside Bodies.

2. A comprehensive guidance document, approved by the Audit & Governance Committee, is also provided for noting. The guidance ensures that the Council's representatives are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

Background Information

3. Appointments to Outside Bodies are addressed in Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (England) 2000. Schedule 2 lists "functions which may be (but need not be) the responsibility of an authority's executive".

Paragraph 19

"The appointment of any individual—

(a) to any office other than an office in which he is employed by the authority;

(b) to any body other than—

(i) the authority;

(ii) a joint committee of two or more authorities; or

(c) to any committee or sub-committee of such a body,

and the revocation of any such appointment."

4. In September 2005 this Council's then Democracy & Organisation Committee, which had responsibility for Outside Bodies at that time, agreed that bodies should be divided into three categories with different processes for appointments in each category as follows:

Category	Appointed by	Basis of Membership
A – Outside Bodies listed by the Cabinet (and endorsed by the Council) as "Strategic".	The Cabinet	As determined by the Cabinet
B – Non-strategic Outside Bodies useful to the Council's work.	Democracy & Organisation Committee following nominations by political groups	Best person for the role
C - Other Outside Bodies that request Council representation or are of primary value to local councillors/the local community.	Chief Executive in the case of local member(s) or group nominations; otherwise Democracy & Organisation Committee.	To reflect local membership

5. When the Democracy & Organisation Committee was decommissioned in 2013, its responsibilities for appointments were passed to the Remuneration Committee.
6. This report asks Council to approve the transfer of the Remuneration Committee's responsibilities for appointments to the Audit & Governance Committee. The Remuneration Committee was consulted on this change at its meeting on 9 July 2025 and supported the change. The Audit & Governance Committee agreed to accept this responsibility at its meeting on 16 July 2025.

Category A Appointments

7. The practice has been for Cabinet to review the appointments to Category A Outside Bodies at its first meeting following each Annual Council meeting. In preparation for that, Democratic Services officers contact each body on the list to confirm that it is still active and requires Council representation.
8. In many cases the representative is recommended to be the relevant Cabinet Member and that information is included in the list of Category A bodies sent to the Leader of the Council in advance of the Cabinet decision on appointments. This may not match a current portfolio title. For example, it might specify the "Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment." In the current Cabinet that is the Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action. In the previous Cabinet it was the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations.
9. In some cases, where more than one representative is required and they do not need to be Cabinet Members, the political group leaders are invited to recommend members of their group for appointment.
10. The Leader presents a report to Cabinet with the recommended appointments in an Annex and the final decision to make the appointments for the term of one council year rests with Cabinet to approve or amend the list.
11. If vacancies arise during the year or there are in year changes to any Cabinet responsibilities which need to be reflected in appointments, these can be approved at the next Cabinet meeting.
12. Occasionally a new body needs to be added to the list, for example, this was the case with the Integrated Care Partnership, following the establishment of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB-ICB).
13. As the designation by Cabinet of an Outside Body as 'Strategic' must be endorsed by Council, the latest full list of Category A bodies is provided in Annex 3 for Council's consideration.
14. The Council does not currently have a definition of 'strategic' in this context. The following definition is proposed to be adopted by Cabinet when considering whether to designate an outside body as 'strategic':

Strategic Outside Body:

- a) An outside body whose functions make a substantial contribution to
 - the achievement of the County Council's overall responsibilities and priorities, as set out in its approved policies, plans and strategies, and
 - the delivery of essential local services;
- or
- b) An organisation which directly or indirectly represents local government (or aspects of its work) at a local, regional or national level, and whose membership comprises representatives of some or all local authorities;

Category B Appointments

15. The practice has been for the Remuneration Committee to review the appointments to Category B Outside Bodies at its first meeting following each election. In preparation for that, Democratic Services officers contact each body on the list to confirm that it is still active and requires Council representation.
16. Following this exercise, the practice has been to circulate the list to the political group leaders for suggestions with any vacancies highlighted. In a few cases, it might be specified on the list that the representative should be the relevant Cabinet Member. However, the Remuneration Committee has taken the final decision on appointments for the four-year term of the Council.

Category C Appointments

17. Appointments to local Category C bodies are made on a case-by-case basis. An organisation requests a representative from the Council or the Council is notified of a vacancy on a body already on the list.
18. If the organisation's remit only covers one division, Democratic Services officers will contact the Local Member notifying them of the vacancy and requesting recommendations. The representative does not have to be the Local Member but can be a local person with relevant experience in the organisation's sector that the Local Member is content to nominate.
19. If the organisation's remit covers more than one division, Democratic Services officers will contact all the relevant Members across the relevant divisions and ask them to agree on a nominee.
20. Democratic Services officers have checked and refreshed the list of Category C bodies presented in Annex 5 to this report.
21. While the procedure specifies that nominations should be approved by the Chief Executive, in practice this has been delegated to the Monitoring Officer. If Local Members are unable to agree on a nominee, the decision used to be referred to the Remuneration Committee and it is now referred to the Audit & Governance Committee.

22. Category C appointments are indefinite unless
- (a) stated to be otherwise in the appointment; or
 - (b) the representative must be a councillor and they have ceased to be a councillor.

Appointments made by Council

23. For the purposes of clarification, the following appointments are made by Council
- a) council committees,
 - b) joint committees with other councils, for example, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel;
 - c) Joint consultative committees such as the Oxfordshire County Council and Employees Joint Consultative Committee;
 - d) the Independent Remuneration Panel; and
 - e) Independent Persons.

Appointments to a), b) and c) are made on each review of political balance due to any change in membership numbers of political groups and in all cases when vacancies occur.

Practices followed by other councils

24. Democratic Services officers have researched and collated information on how other councils categorise and appoint members to Outside Bodies (see table overleaf).

Local Authority	Categorisation of Outside Bodies	Appointing Body
Devon County Council	1. National Bodies 2. Regional Bodies 3. Countywide Bodies 4. Local Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council every four years at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). • The Chief Executive has authority (subdelegated to an officer) to approve changes outside of this cycle. • Political Whips and Secretaries have responsibility for appointing members to outside bodies.
Gloucestershire and Kent County Council	1. Executive Outside Bodies 2. Non-Executive Outside Bodies	1. The Cabinet, or the Leader of the Council directly 2. In Gloucestershire, Full Council, or sometimes the Chief Executive; in Kent, the Selection & Member Services Committee, who may delegate to officers (as reported on at each meeting).
Lancashire County Council	1. Strategic or Statutory Outside Bodies 2. Local Outside Bodies in a in a single division 3. General Outside Bodies – voluntary or community organisations	In the majority of cases, the Cabinet after an election, but a small number of appointments are made by Full Council at the AGM. In-year changes are delegated to the Monitoring Officer.
Nottinghamshire County Council	a) Outside Bodies established or owned (wholly or partly) by the County Council b) Local or national outside bodies linked to the strategic focus of the Council c) Local community groups	For all categories, the Cabinet Member for Business Management, who is also the Ruling Group's Business Manager.
Suffolk County Council	a) Outside bodies that are of statutory or strategic importance or cover the whole county or wider b) Outside bodies that cover an area greater than a single division c) Local Outside Bodies in a single division	a) The Leader and Group Leaders; the principle of political proportionality is applied if/when appointments are contested. b) Councillors in relevant divisions; if oversubscribed, a ballot is held among all the councillors. c) The appointment is offered to the local councillor only.
Surrey County Council	Strategic Outside Bodies (national or countywide remit) and Local Outside Bodies	The Chief Executive, in line with wishes of political groups; the Planning & Regulatory Committee if appointments are contested.
West Sussex County Council	1. Precepting Outside Bodies 2. Other Strategic or Local Outside Bodies 3. Non-Executive Outside Bodies	1. The Cabinet 2. Individual Cabinet members, in lieu of former area committees 3. The Governance Committee

New Proposal for Appointments

25. The Remuneration Committee, for the most part, deals with Human Resources issues. This report recommends that the responsibility for Category B appointments (non-strategic bodies), and Category C (local bodies) where necessary, would more appropriately sit with the Audit & Governance Committee.
26. Both committees have been consulted on this recommendation. The Remuneration Committee supported the change at its meeting on 9 July 2025. The Audit & Governance Committee agreed to recommend the change to Council at its meeting on 16 July 2025.
27. As already noted, Category C appointments have been delegated to the Monitoring Officer by the Chief Executive. Given the Monitoring Officer's responsibilities, this report proposes that it would be more appropriate for Category C Outside Body appointments to be delegated directly to the Monitoring Officer to reflect what happens in practice through the Scheme of Delegation.
28. If the recommendations of this report are adopted, appointments will be made as follows:

Category	Appointed by	Basis of Membership
A – Outside Bodies listed by the Cabinet (and endorsed by the Council) as “Strategic”.	The Cabinet	As determined by the Cabinet
B – Non-strategic Outside Bodies useful to the Council’s work.	Audit and Governance Committee, following nominations by political groups	Best person for the role
C - Other Local Outside Bodies which request Council representation or are of primary value to local councillors / the local community.	Monitoring Officer in the case of local member(s); otherwise Audit and Governance Committee.	To reflect local membership

Guidelines for Members of Outside Bodies

29. There is currently very little guidance for those representing the Council on Outside Bodies.
30. The guidance for members of Outside Bodies as adopted by the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting on 16 July 2025 is attached at Annex 2.

This is intended to support those appointed to Outside Bodies and to help them to understand their responsibilities and liabilities in connection with their involvement with the body to which they have been appointed.

31. The guidance also states that councillors who participate in external bodies may be indemnified in relation to liabilities they incur in that capacity, though this is subject to certain limitations (see pages 10 and 11 of the guidance in Annex 2).

Financial Implications

32. There are no new or additional financial implications.

Comments checked by: Drew Hodgson, Strategic Finance Business Partner.

Legal Implications

33. The legal implications are set out in the body of the report
34. It is important for councillors appointed to outside bodies to be clear about the nature of the appointment, including whether they have a decision-making role or not. Different duties and responsibilities apply depending on the councillor's role on the outside body and, in particular, councillors need to be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest to arise.

Comments check by: Jay Akbar, Head of Legal and Governance Services

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer

Annex:

Annex 1 – Constitutional Amendments

Annex 2 – Guidance for Members who are appointed by Oxfordshire County Council to serve on Outside Bodies

Annex 3 – List of Category A “Strategic” Bodies

Annex 4 – List of appointments to Category B Outside Bodies for 2025

Annex 5 – List of Category C Outside Bodies for 2025.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,
colm.oocaomhanaigh@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2025

Annex 1 – Constitutional Amendments

Part 5.1C The Remuneration Committee

In Section 3 Role and Function, delete

- (4) In the case of any office or body which has not been identified by the Cabinet and endorsed by the Council as strategic, the functions relating to appointment of individuals to offices or bodies as specified in Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (England) 2000.

And renumber current subsections (5), (6) and (7)

Part 5.1A Regulatory and Other Committees

In Section 1(a) Audit & Governance Committee

Insert subsection (16)

- (16) In the case of any office or body which has not been identified by the Cabinet and endorsed by the Council as strategic, the functions relating to appointment of individuals to offices or bodies as specified in Paragraph 19 of Schedule 2 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations (England) 2000.

And renumber current subsections (16) to (49)

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GUIDANCE

COUNCILLOR MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

This general advice is for Councillors and who represent the Council on organisations outside the Council, whether as a company director, the trustee of a charity or a representative on a management committee. It simply sets out some of the most important responsibilities. It is not meant to be a comprehensive guide. If Councillors have any queries, then they must contact the Monitoring Officer for advice.

Councillors are appointed formally by the Council annually to work in partnership with a range of outside bodies, including voluntary organisations, local government associations, charitable organisations and other organisations who undertake or facilitate valuable public and community work.

In performing that role, Councillors can act as individuals, representatives of the Council, directors or trustees.

The role of Councillors on outside bodies may give rise to occasional uncertainty and perhaps to conflicts of interest. This Guidance offers a simple guide on the responsibilities of Councillors. Councillors are asked to read this Guidance and if there are issues arising from their particular situation at any time, to contact the Monitoring Officer for advice.

Councillors are under a specific obligation as a result of the Local Authorities (Companies) Order 1995 ("the Order") to report back to the Council on their involvement in outside companies to which they have been nominated by the Council. In essence, the Order seeks to ensure that when local authorities engage in activities through companies, that there is transparency, accountability and financial oversight.

This Guidance and the Council's Members' Code of Conduct addresses some of the issues around the possibility of conflicts of interest. In essence, if the outside body comes into conflict with the Council and the Councillor is a director or on the management committee of the outside body, it is likely that the Councillor's prime duty would be to the outside body in the conduct of the outside body's affairs. The Councillor is however also given specific dispensation in the Council's Members' Code of Conduct to participate in the Council decision-making process in relation to the outside body to which he or he has been appointed.

General

Membership on outside bodies can take various forms and it would be prudent to establish the capacity in which you are appointed and your roles and responsibilities. The first question is whether you are appointed by the Council, or in some other capacity. If you are not appointed by the Council to a particular position, you do not owe the Council any duties in relation to the way in which you carry on your membership of the outside body. However, the normal rules on declaring interests apply, and you will need to consider

whether your role gives you a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to any Council business. The remainder of this Guidance covers the case where you are appointed by the Council.

If you are appointed by the Council, this may be either:

- a) as a member of a management committee, board of directors, or committee of trustees of the outside body.
Here, you will not only be representing the interests of the Council, but you will also have duties to the outside body and a role in its governance. If you serve in a decision-making capacity or have a position of general control or management on the outside body, whether company, trust or other association, you owe duties and responsibilities to that body which are separate and distinct from your duties owed to the Council. On occasion, it is likely that duties owed to the outside body and to the Council, will conflict e.g. If you are the treasurer of an outside body who has applied to the council for grant funding and the rest of this Guidance gives more detail on this; or
- b) As an 'observer', or an ordinary member, or undertaking a monitoring role, facilitating exchanges of views or information as an extension of your council duties, but taking no part in the outside body's management or governance, other than to attend and vote at annual or general meetings. Here, you will be mainly concerned with representing the Council and will not have responsibilities for governance of the body.

What sort of roles does this Guidance apply to?

This Guidance applies where you are:

- a) a director of a company in which the Council has an interest;
- b) a member of another authority;
- c) a trustee of a charity; or
- d) a member of the management board for an unincorporated body.

The various roles will give you responsibilities to the organisation, and to the Council in so far as you are fulfilling a role for the Council, and this creates potential conflicts.

Your responsibilities will depend on the type of body in which you become involved. The main types are as follows:

- a) **Companies:** Companies are separate legal entities. They are set up by their members, who may be either shareholders or guarantors. Liability of company members is limited to the value of their shares or by guarantee. Directors of companies have a duty to the company to act properly and in good faith. If not, they can incur personal liability, particularly if the company becomes insolvent. The activities and operation of companies are regulated by their Memorandum and Articles of Association, and also by company law.

b) **Unincorporated Associations:** Unincorporated associations are informal organisations. The members regulate their relationship by agreement, such as a membership agreement or the rules of the club or association. Because the association has no legal existence separate from its members, the liability of the members is not limited. Each member can incur personal responsibility for liabilities incurred on behalf of the association and relies on the membership agreement to be able to recover their costs from the other members.

c) **Charities:** A charity is an organisation which

- (i) is established for charitable purposes only, and
- (ii) falls to be subject to the control of the High Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction with respect to charities.

Some companies and unincorporated associations are established for charitable purposes. A charity gains relief from corporation tax, VAT and business rates, but is subject to stricter regulation by the Charity Commissioners, to ensure that it is properly managed and that it is spending its money properly on the charitable objects. As a trustee of a charity, you have a duty to act in the best interests of the charity and can be personally liable if you breach that duty.

Points to Consider

Firstly, make sure you are given a clear statement of what is expected of you if you are going to be nominated. The Council should be able to obtain this from the organisation involved.

a) ***The duty to act in the interests of the outside body*** - Being on an outside body can bring many benefits to the Council, the organisation and the community, but it will sometimes create conflicts with your work as a Councillor. For Councillors, it will have to be included as one of your interests in the Members' Register of Interests. You will have a personal interest in Council business referring to it, and sometimes a disclosable pecuniary interest where finances or regulatory matters are concerned. You will need to be sure that involvement with the organisation will not prevent you from fully participating in your work as a Councillor, particularly in areas that interest you, or, where you need to represent the community who elected you. This will depend on the nature of the body and type of involvement.

On the other hand, you will also need to make sure that you are able to commit enough time and attention to the organisation. You will want to make a meaningful contribution to their work too. If you cannot attend meetings very often, or are often conflicted out of participating, you will not be able to give the support that the organisation needs, and this will reflect badly upon the Council and upon you. It is best not to be appointed if you cannot participate fully.

- b) ***Conflict with your role as a councillor*** - As a member of the organisation's management committee, as a director of a company, or as a trustee, you will not only be representing the interests of the Council, but you will also owe duties and responsibilities towards the organisation. You will have to exercise your own best judgement in the best interests of the outside body, and you cannot just take instructions from the Council although you may take account of the Council's wishes. Where the Council's wishes may conflict with the best interests of the outside body you must nevertheless, if taking decisions for that outside body, act in its best interests. Therefore, where the Council's interests and the outside body's interests conflict it is better not to involve yourself in the decision-making process.
- b) ***Indemnities*** - Councillors who participate in external bodies may be indemnified in relation to liabilities they incur in that capacity, though this is subject to certain limitations, which are set out in more detail below.

Duties and Responsibilities of Councillors on Outside Bodies

The following is a summary of the main duties and responsibilities of Councillors who are nominated by the Council to the most common types of outside body. The main principles of the obligations applying to company directors also apply to trustees and members of management committees. If you are in doubt about your duties and responsibilities, you may seek advice from the Monitoring Officer. In many cases, however, it will be more appropriate to seek advice from the advisers to the body involved, as they will have access to the rules and protocols of the body.

Companies

A company is a separate legal entity which can hold property in its own right, enter into contracts, employ staff and sue and be sued in its own name. The company is distinct from its members, who may be either shareholders or guarantors. The Council itself may be a member of the company, either a shareholder or guarantor.

If the body is a limited company, and you are asked to be involved, it is likely that you will be appointed as a company director. The duties of a company director are set out in the Companies Act 2006, which codifies the existing common law and equitable principles. The management of a company is usually the responsibility of the Board of Directors. Directors' powers are usually set out in the company's Articles of Association. Another important document is the Memorandum of Association, which sets out the Company's objectives and powers.

The duties of a company director are not the same as your responsibilities as a Councillor. Basically, when involved in company business, the company must come first. Directors must act in the interests of the company, and not in the interests of other parties, including shareholders.

Directors' Responsibilities:

- a) To promote the success of the company, A director's primary duty is to act in good faith, in the best interests of the organisation and its objects. All directors owe a fiduciary duty to their company, which means they owe loyalty to the company and a duty of care to act in the best interests of the company, having regard to the interests of the members or shareholders of the company, the company's employees, and creditors. This includes having regard to the likely long-term consequences of decisions, the interests of employees, fostering relationships with suppliers and customers and others, the impact of operations on the community and environment, maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct, and acting fairly between members of the company
- b) To exercise care, diligence and skill, using your own knowledge, skill and experience, together with the care, skill and diligence which may reasonably be expected of a person who is carrying out the functions of a director. So, a director with significant experience must exercise the appropriate level of diligence in exercising their duties in line with their higher level of expertise. Although directors are not bound to attend all meetings of directors, attendance should be as frequent as possible, and directors should ensure that they are reasonably informed at all times.
- c) Not to exceed powers. A company director must act in accordance with the company's constitution, and exercise powers for the purposes for which they were given.
- d) To comply with the Companies Act in relation to the keeping of accounts and ensure that the relevant returns are made to the Registrar of Companies. Failure to do so will incur fines and persistent default can lead to disqualification as a director.
- e) To avoid conflicts of interest. A director must avoid a situation in which they have, or may have, a direct or indirect interest which conflicts, or could conflict, with the interests of the company. This duty applies particularly to transactions between a director and a third party in relation to the exploitation of any property, information or opportunity.
- f) To exercise independent judgement. A director nominated by the Council cannot, for example, simply vote in accordance with the Council's instructions. To do so would be a breach of duty. The director must act in the company's interests.
- g) Not to accept benefits from third parties. A company director must not accept any benefit from a third party (whether monetary or otherwise) which has been conferred because of the fact that they are a director. This is based on the established principle that a director must not make a secret profit as a result of being a director. This duty applies unless the acceptance of the benefit cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to give rise to a conflict of interest.

- h) To declare an interest in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the company. A company director who has either a direct or an indirect interest in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the company must declare the 'nature and extent' of that interest to the other directors before the company enters into the transaction. Directors' Liabilities: If a director fails to carry out his/her duties, action can be brought for breach of duty, either by the company itself, or by a liquidator if the company goes into liquidation, or with the consent of the court, by a shareholder. Such actions are unlikely where the company is properly controlled by the directors.

Some important considerations:

- a) It is not always easy to reconcile the various factors which must be taken into account when reaching a major decision. The important thing as a director is to show that you are aware of and have taken account of the relevant factors and have exercised due care and diligence in giving them all fair consideration.
- b) It may be difficult to be certain whether benefits may be regarded as giving rise to a conflict of interest. If you are unsure take advice from the company's advisers.
- c) Make sure you are aware of the company's constitution; it's Memorandum and Articles of Association, so that you know what it can and cannot do. You must take this into account when making decisions, as well as any shareholder decisions that are relevant.
- d) Be diligent, and make sure you are well informed about the company's affairs. Make sure you are well briefed when taking up the role, and that you receive regular briefings throughout your term of office.
- e) Attend training and briefing sessions.
- f) Ensure insurance is in place.
- g) Some Board decisions may be reviewed on a future occasion. Make sure detailed minutes show that all necessary factors have been considered when major decisions are being taken. Obtain expert advice where necessary e.g. regarding impact of a decision on the environment. Take legal advice where there are doubts about a director's duty in relation to a particular matter.

Local Authority Controlled and Influenced Companies:

There are special rules that affect companies in which councils have major interests. These are 'regulated' companies for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. They are in effect controlled by (more than 50% interest) or subject to a council's influence (20% interest plus business relationship) because of its level of interest, either individually, or with a group of other authorities. They will generally be subject to the local

government capital finance regime and special propriety controls. However, so far as Councillors who are involved are concerned, there are some additional requirements that need to be complied with as follows:

- a) Remuneration if any, that Councillors receive from the company should not exceed that received from a local authority for a similar role, and it should be declared.
- b) To provide information to Councillors about their activities as required by the local authority (unless it is confidential); and
- c) To cease to be a director immediately if disqualified as a Councillor.

Unincorporated Associations

“Unincorporated associations” have no separate identity from their members. The rules governing the members’ duties and liability will be set out in a constitution, which is simply an agreement between the members as to how the organisation will operate. Usually, the constitution will provide for a management committee to be responsible for the everyday running of the organisation. Management Committee members must act within the constitution and must take reasonable care in exercising their powers. An unincorporated organisation may be charitable and may register as a charity.

If you are involved in a decision-making capacity or have a position of general control or management on an unincorporated body, as the body has no separate corporate status, any liabilities will fall upon you personally. Councillors appointed to such bodies should familiarise themselves with the Constitution to understand the nature of their role, responsibilities and liabilities, and should assess the risk of personal liability, and the extent to which it has been covered by insurance.

Charities:

A charity is an organisation which operates for the public benefit and exclusively charitable purposes, either:

- ❖ the relief of poverty and human suffering
- ❖ the advancement of education
- ❖ the advancement of religion
- ❖ another purpose for the benefit of the community.

A number of useful publications are available on the Charity Commission’s website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk. ‘*The Essential Trustee- What you Need to Know*’ is a useful guide:

[The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do - GOV.UK.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know)

Those who are responsible for the control and administration of a charity are referred to as its *trustees*, even where the organisation is a company limited by guarantee and even though they are not strictly trustees. A charity may also be unincorporated. Trustees of a charity retain personal liability and can only delegate to the extent that the constitution authorises them so to do.

Charitable Trustees' Responsibilities

- a) To act in accordance with the charity's trust deed or governing document.
- b) To protect the charity's assets.
- c) To comply with the Charities Acts, and the Trustee Act 2000.
- d) Trustees must not make a private profit from their position. They cannot receive remuneration without the sanction of the Charity Commission.
- e) To perform their duty with the standard of care which an ordinary, prudent business person would show. Higher standards are required of professionals, and in relation to investment matters.
- d) Charitable trustees must ensure that the information relating to the charity and trustees is registered with the Charity Commissioners and that annual accounts, reports and returns are completed and sent.
- d) Trustees are under a duty to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation (e.g. in relation to tax and land matters).

Charitable Trustees' Liabilities:

Generally, a trustee may incur personal liability if they: -

- act outside the scope of the trust deed
- fall below the required standard of care
- act otherwise than in the best interests of the charity, in a way which causes loss to the charity fund
- make a personal profit from the trust assets

In such circumstances the trustee will be in breach of trust and will incur personal liability for losses incurred. If in doubt, always consult the Charity Commissioners. You may avoid personal liability for breach of trust if you act in accordance with their advice.

Trustees can incur personal liabilities for contracts they enter into in the name of the charity. They will normally be entitled to be reimbursed from charitable funds for liabilities and expenses properly incurred by them. If the charity is a

company, the trustees will be protected from liabilities incurred in the day-to-day running of the charity in the normal course of events but will as stated above be personally liable if they commit a breach of trust.

Partnerships:

Within the public sector, bodies are formed which can be described as partnerships. These can involve local authorities with other public sector bodies or sections of other public sector bodies in dealing with specific issues. A partnership may be:

- a) an informal group where each organisation's representative comes to the group with a defined purpose/supply of resources from their organisation to contribute to a particular programme of events. Councillors sitting on a partnership steering group or committee should act within the scope of the authority given to them by the Council.
- b) where more formal arrangements are made and a legal agreement is entered into between all the parties as to what the object of the partnership is and what the obligations/inputs will be from the partners. Councillors should familiarise themselves with the legal agreement and the rights and obligations of the partners set out in it.

Indemnities

Councillors who participate in external bodies may be indemnified in relation to liabilities they incur in that capacity, though this is subject to certain limitations.

Indemnity by the outside body:

- a) Directors: Directors cannot be indemnified by the company against liability for negligence, default, breach of duty and trust. Companies can however purchase insurance to protect directors against claims of negligence, default, breach of duty and trust. Those appointed as directors should ensure that appropriate insurance is in place. Companies can, if their Articles of Association allow, provide for directors to be indemnified for the costs of defending such a claim if they are granted relief by the court or acquitted.
- b) Trustees: Provided a charitable trustee acts properly, and within their powers, indemnity can be given from the trust fund. Trustees can take out insurance to protect themselves from personal liabilities, but not for criminal acts such as fraud. If the premiums are to be paid out of the charitable funds, the consent of the Charity Commissioners will be needed.
- c) Unincorporated Associations: Councillors may be entitled to an indemnity if they act in accordance with the Constitution of the association and are not at fault. However, regard must be had to the terms of the constitution. The

constitution will determine whether insurance can be paid for by the organisation.

Indemnity by the Council:

The Council may provide an indemnity where Councillors are acting on an outside body at the request of the Council and provided:

- a) the appointment was made by the Council, or
- b) the nomination was made by the Council, and
- c) the appointment was specifically approved for the purpose of the indemnity.

The indemnity the Council can provide is subject to limitations. In general terms, if a Councillor is acting properly, within their powers and in good faith, the power to indemnify will usually apply. However, the Council cannot, for example, provide an indemnity in relation to any action or failure by any Councillor which constitutes a criminal offence, or for any action or failure by any Councillor which is the result of fraud, or other deliberate wrongdoing or recklessness on the part of the Councillor. When you are serving on an outside body, the Council's indemnity will only apply after any indemnity or insurance from the body itself. There are further limitations, and it is advisable to be clear about the scope of the Council indemnity that may be available to you. You can seek further advice on indemnity from the Monitoring Officer.

Application of the Members' Code of Conduct – Interests:

All Councillors are subject to the Members' Code of Conduct including the Nolan Principles (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership):

[Members' Code of Conduct](#)

You will find a copy of the full Members' Code of Conduct in the Constitution at Part 9.1:

[Council Constitution | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

When Councillors act as representatives of the Council on another local authority, they must comply with the other local authority's Code of Conduct. However, when Councillors act as the Council's representative on any other sort of outside body, they must comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct unless it conflicts with the lawful obligations of the other body.

Section 30 of the Localism Act 2011 requires Councillors to tell the Monitoring Officer in writing within 28 days of taking office, or within 28 days of any change to your Register of Interests, of any interests which fall within the categories set out in the Members' Code of Conduct (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and Other Registrable Interests (ORIs)). These categories include your membership or position of control or management in any other bodies to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council.

This means that if you are present at a meeting when an item of business arises which relates to or affects an outside body to which you have been appointed, you must declare that you have a registrable interest, and the nature of that interest, before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

An exemption may apply where your interest arises solely from your membership of, or position of control or management on:

- a) any other body to which you were appointed or nominated by the authority
- b) any other body exercising functions of a public nature (for example another local authority).

In these exceptional cases, provided that you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest, you only need to declare your interest if and when you speak on the matter. You will also have another registrable interest in Council business affecting the outside body if:

- a) the matter being considered affects the financial position of the outside body; or
- b) relates to an approval, consent, licence, permission or registration affecting the outside body e.g. an application for planning permission.

If you have another registrable interest in a matter under discussion you must declare it. You must then leave the meeting room, unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, answer questions or give evidence about the matter. If that is the case, you can make your representations but must leave the room immediately after doing so. You may not remain in the room or any gallery to observe the vote on the matter.

Bias:

Where you might be inclined to the view that you have no registrable interest (pecuniary or otherwise), your duties as a director, or trustee, or member of a management committee may well be regarded, on an objective appraisal, as giving rise to a legitimate fear of lack of impartiality, especially having regard to the desirability of maintaining public confidence. Participation in the decision making at a Council committee meeting by a Councillor who is biased potentially invalidates the decision.

Where membership of the outside body is on an advisory or consultative basis, bias will not be assumed from mere membership. However, once the outside body has a line which is being advocated by you, this could potentially be viewed as bias, and the Council's decision on the issue could be vulnerable to challenge if you participate in those circumstances. It will depend on the facts, and in such circumstances, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer.

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Strategic Category A Outside Bodies – 2025 Appointments

Where appointments have been made in the following list, they were approved, except where otherwise noted, by the Cabinet on 17 June 2025.

	Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member(s)
Strategic Outside Bodies	Community First Oxfordshire	1		Cllr Ian Middleton
	Cooperative Councils Innovation Network	1		Cllr Ben Higgins ¹
	County Councils Network (CNN)	4		Cllr Liz Leffman Cllr Neil Fawcett Cllr Dan Levy Cllr Judy Roberts
	England's Economic Heartland – Strategic Transport Leadership Board	1	Leader of Council	Cllr Liz Leffman ²
	Local Government Association (LGA)	4		Cllr Liz Leffman Cllr Dan Levy Cllr Neil Fawcett Cllr Judy Roberts
	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	1		Cllr Diana Lugova
	Oxfordshire Care Partnership	1		Cllr Tim Bearder
	Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum	1		Cllr Andrew Coles
	Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board	1	Leader of Council	Cllr Liz Leffman

¹ The Cabinet will be asked to approve Cllr Higgins' appointment to the County Councils Innovation Network on 16 September.

² The Cabinet will be asked to approve Cllr Leffman's appointment to England's Economic Heartland – Strategic Transport Leadership Board on 16 September.

Joint Committees	Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board	1	Leader of Council	Cllr Liz Leffman
	<u>Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee</u>	1	Leader of Council	Cllr Liz Leffman
	Thames Valley Collaboration Group RBFRS	1	Cabinet Member for Community Safety	Cllr Jenny Hannaby
	<u>Thames Valley Fire Control Service</u>	2	Cabinet Member for Community Safety A Cabinet Member	Cllr Jenny Hannaby Cllr Neil Fawcett
	<u>Traffic Penalty Tribunal – Parking & Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Committee</u>	1	Cabinet Member for Transport Management	Cllr Andrew Gant
	Adoption Panels	4	On the nomination of the political groups according to balance	Cllr Roz Smith Cllr Susanna Pressel Vacancy (OxAll) Cllr Emma Markham
	Fostering Panels	2	On the nomination of the political groups according to balance	Cllr Nick Cotter Cllr Toyah Overton
	<u>Oxfordshire Music Hub Board</u>	1	On the nomination of the political groups according to balance	Cllr Dan Levy
	<u>School Organisation Stakeholder Group</u>	5	Non-executive County Council Members 1 observer – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Cllr Andy Graham Vacancy Cllr Judith Edwards Cllr John Shiri Cllr Sean Gaul

	<u>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education</u>	4	On the nomination of the political groups according to balance	Cllr Roz Smith Vacancy (OxAll) Cllr James Barlow Cllr Imade Edosomwan
Informal Member/Officer Working Group	Corporate Parenting Panel	9	On the nomination of the political groups according to balance	Cllr Liz Brighthouse Cllr Izzy Creed Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers Cllr Jane Hanna Cllr Ben Higgins Cllr Toyah Overton Cllr James Plumb Cllr Judy Roberts Cllr James Robertshaw

Strategic Partnerships	<u>Children's Trust Board</u>	2	Cabinet Member for Children & Young People Cabinet Member for Public Health & Inequalities	Cllr Sean Gaul Cllr Kate Gregory
	<u>Health and Wellbeing Board</u>	4	Leader of Council Cabinet Member for Adults Cabinet Member for Public Health Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Cllr Liz Leffman Cllr Tim Bearder Cllr Kate Gregory Cllr Sean Gaul
	Health Improvement Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Public Health	Cllr Kate Gregory
	<u>Integrated Care Partnership</u>	3	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board A District Council Representative	Cllr Tim Bearder Cllr Liz Leffman District Cllr David Ruane
	M Group Highways Strategic Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Transport Management	Cllr Andrew Gant
	<u>Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust</u>	1	Cabinet Member for Public Health	Cllr Kate Gregory

	<u>Oxford Strategic Partnership</u>	1		Cllr Neil Fawcett
	<u>Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</u>	1	Cabinet Member for Adults	Cllr Tim Bearder
	<u>Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership</u> ³	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment & Climate Action	Cllr Judy Roberts
	Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities	Cllr Jenny Hannaby
	<u>Rural Services Network</u>	1		Cllr Liz Leffman
	<u>South East Employers</u>	3		Cllr Neil Fawcett Cllr Lesley McLean Cllr Gareth Epps
	South East Strategic Leaders	1	Leader of Council	Cllr Liz Leffman ⁴
	<u>Viridor Strategic Partnership Board</u>	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment & Climate Action	Cllr Judy Roberts

³ The Cabinet will be asked to approve Cllr Roberts' appointment to the Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership on 16 September.

⁴ The Cabinet will be asked to approve Cllr Leffman's appointment to South East Strategic Leaders on 16 September.

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Category B – Non-Strategic Outside Bodies – 2025 Appointments

The following list of appointments for this Council was approved, except where otherwise noted, by Audit & Governance Committee on 16 July.

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member(s)
Chilterns AONB Conservation Board	1	Must be a Councillor	Cllr Gavin McLauchlan
Cotswold AONB Conservation Board	1	Must be a Councillor	Cllr Andy Graham
Environment Agency Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	1	Relevant Cabinet Member	Cllr Judy Roberts
Local Government Association – Fire Service Commission	1	Relevant Cabinet Member	Jenny Hannaby ¹
North Wessex Downs Area of ONB	1	Must be a Councillor	Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith ²
Oxford Preservation Trust	2	Must be Councillors	Cllr Roz Smith Cllr Susanna Pressel
Oxfordshire Buildings Trust Ltd	3	The Chair (ex officio) and the rest need not be councillors	Cllr Mark Lygo 2 vacancies
Oxfordshire Play Association	1		Cllr Mark Lygo
South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association	1	Need not be a councillor	Vacancy
Townlands Steering Group	1	Must be a Councillor	Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak

¹ On 16 July, Cllr Fawcett was recommended, in error, for re-appointment to the Local Government Association – Fire Service Commission, having represented the Council under the last administration; Cllr Hannaby is now the Relevant Cabinet Member and should represent the Council accordingly.

² Cllr Hannaby was recommended for re-appointment to the North Wessex Downs AONB Conservation Board, having served under the previous Council, but subsequently asked to step down. The Leader has recommended that Cllr Hope-Smith should take her place.

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Category C Outside Bodies

1. Traffic Advisory Committees

Abingdon Traffic Advisory Committee
Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee
Bicester Traffic Advisory Committee
Botley Traffic Advisory Committee
Burford Traffic Advisory Committee
Chipping Norton Traffic Advisory Sub Committee
Didcot Traffic Advisory Group
Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee
Kidlington Traffic Advisory Committee
Witney Traffic Advisory Committee
Woodstock Traffic Advisory Committee

2. Community Associations

Bicester – Bullington Community Association
Banbury – Chasewell Community Association
Oxford – Cutteslowe & District Community Association

3. Local Charities

Aston Rowant Educational Trust
Bampton Exhibition Foundation
Bicester Vision
Middleton Stoney – Countess of Jersey Educational Foundation
Eynsham – Bartholomew Educational Foundation
Childrey - Fettiplace & Godfrey Trust
Ewelme Exhibition Endowment
Bessels Leigh – John Blandy's Educational Foundation
Henley Educational Foundation
Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity
Watlington Educational Foundation
Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal Trust
Witney Educational Foundation
Woodstock Exhibition Foundation
Woodstock Relief in Need of Charity

4. Other

Didcot Power Station Local Liaison Committee
Harwell - Chilton Campus Local Stakeholder Group
Oxford - Airport Consultative Body

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COUNCIL –9 SEPTEMBER 2025

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – OPPOSITION GROUPS AND PARENTAL LEAVE

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the Interim Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and in so doing to consider the following options, either:

- a) To adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Special Responsibility Allowances for the recognised Opposition Group(s) as set out in Annex A to this report; OR
- b) To agree alternative values for any of the allowances, as the Council may determine; OR
- c) If the Council does not wish to accept the Panel's recommendations at this time, in whole or in part, or to substitute alternative amounts, to agree a status quo Scheme of Allowances for 2025/26 for any unchanged aspect;
- d) To agree the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation that basic and any Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) should continue to be paid to any councillor taking parental leave in accordance with the Parental Leave Policy approved by Council on 8 July 2025

Introduction

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is undertaking a full review of the Council's current scheme of members' allowances, with a final report to be presented later in the Council year which will recommend a further Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2026. The IRP was asked by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to provide early recommendations on two specific matters:
 - i) The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to the Leaders and Shadow Cabinet Members of the two equally sized opposition groups recognised as the official opposition, following the May 2025 elections.
 - ii) The application of allowances for councillors taking parental leave, following the adoption of a new policy on 8 July 2025

2. The Council's attention is drawn to the recommendations made by the IRP on these two issues which are set out in its interim report (Annex A). Under the Members' Allowances (Local Authorities)(England) Regulations 2003 the Council shall have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel when making or revising a scheme of allowances. Any decision not to follow the IRP's recommendations must be published. Consequently, Council should consider the IRP's recommendations, but it is for Council itself to agree any amendments to its own scheme. The Council therefore has a choice of whether to accept the IRP's recommendations in whole or in part, or not at all, or to determine other amounts. In doing so, the Council should be clear of its reasons for reaching any decision.
3. The Council may, for example, agree other amounts; or adopt a status quo which makes no substantive changes to the current scheme of allowances.

Considerations and Rationale

4. Following the May 2025 elections, the Labour and Co-operative Group and the Oxfordshire Alliance Group each have 12 members and are tied as the second largest political groups on the Council. At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2025, the Monitoring Officer reported that, in the absence of any specific mechanism in the Council's constitution to determine the recognition of an official opposition group in the event of tie in numbers of members in the second largest groups, both would need to be recognised as the official opposition.
5. The Council's current members' allowances scheme does not provide for the specific calculation of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) where there is more than one official opposition group of equal size.
6. The IRP noted that Oxfordshire was among a minority of authorities that made constitutional provision for an "official" opposition group. A benchmarking exercise revealed that a smaller number still had specified how the payment of SRAs for the Leader and Shadow Cabinet members would be calculated in circumstances where there was more than one group of equal size. This research illustrated a range of approaches, including dividing SRAs or applying specific formulas.
7. The IRP noted that paying the full SRA, as specified in the members' allowances scheme, to both opposition groups in this Council would result in a significant increase to the Council's budget (£47,328 in 2025-26) and could affect public perception negatively. The IRP also considers that the existence of two recognised opposition groups presents an opportunity for enhanced cross-party working and scrutiny.

8. The Panel also considered the payment of allowances during Parental Leave noting that the Council approved a councillors' parental leave policy in July 2025.. The IRP supports the continuation of all allowances, including SRAs, for members taking parental leave, in line with the Council's policy and national best practice.

The Panel's recommendations

9. The Panel's Interim Report is included as Annex 1 and sets out the following recommendations :-
 - a) That, in the event of the designation of two or more opposition groups of equal number that are the next largest groups to that of the Administration, the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Opposition Group Leaders and Shadow Cabinet Members specified in the Members' Allowances Scheme should be divided by the number of groups accorded with that status. This amendment to the scheme should be effective from 1 October 2025.
 - b) That basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for members taking parental leave in accordance with the Council's policy should continue to be paid during their period of leave and in making this recommendation it is accepted by the IRP that there may be an instance where a Special Responsibility Allowance may be duplicated for a limited period of time .
10. Council may choose to accept these recommendations in whole or in part, or not at all.

Financial Implications

11. Total 2025/26 annual Revenue budget for the additional Opposition Group is £47,328.
12. Additional Special Responsibility Allowances budget will be required for parental leave when duplicated.

Comments checked by:

Bick Nguyen-McBride
Assistant Finance Business Partner
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Legal Implications

13. The Members' Allowances (Local Authorities)(England) Regulations 2003 are Regulations made by the Secretary of State under S18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The duty to have regard to the

Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations is set out in Regulation 19.

19.— Duty to have regard to recommendations

(1) Before an authority referred to in regulation 3(1)(a), (b), or (c) makes or amends a scheme, the authority shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
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Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. The councillors' parental leave policy will contribute towards enhancing the diversity of experience, age, and background among local authority councillors. Furthermore, it will assist in retaining experienced councillors and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

ANITA BRADLEY
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Interim Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – September 2025

Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Chris.Reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2025

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES
Interim Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
to Oxfordshire County Council

SEPTEMBER 2025

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

- A. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) has begun its full review of the County Council's scheme of Members' allowances and will present its report to the Council later in the current Council year which will recommend a further Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2026. The IRP was asked by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to consider two specific matters initially and provide recommendations to the Council in advance of the full review. These matters relate to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to the Leaders and Shadow Cabinet Members of the two equally sized opposition groups recognised as the official opposition and allowances for Members taking parental leave.
- B. The Members' Allowances (Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2003 requires that Councils shall have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel when making or revising a scheme of allowances. Any decision not to follow the IRP's recommendations must be published. Consequently, Council should consider and have regard to the IRP's recommendations, but it is for Council itself to agree any amendments to the scheme.
- C. In summary, the IRP has concluded that the current level of SRAs does not proportionately reflect the scope and scale of the responsibilities of multiple opposition groups. They consider that payment of the full SRAs specified in the scheme of Members' allowances cannot be justified on the grounds of the impact on the Council's budget, and perception by the public of this increased expenditure. The IRP's opinion is that there is potential for more-cross party working by the two opposition groups in holding the administration to account and contributing to democratic debate.
- D. The IRP also considered the Members' parental leave policy approved by the Council on 8 July 2025. The IRP concluded that the payment of all allowances including the payment of any Special Responsibility Allowances to which a member was entitled, should continue during a period of parental leave taken by a councillor in accordance with the policy.

Principles Adopted

- E. The IRP had been asked by the Monitoring Officer to consider the payment of allowances arising from two recent decisions: -
- a) The recognition of two official opposition groups by the Monitoring Officer following the County Council Elections in May 2025. The Labour and Co-operative Group and the Oxfordshire Alliance Group were formed of an equal number of 12 members and were tied as the second largest political groups on the Council.
 - b) The Council approved a Members' parental leave policy in July 2025 and asked the IRP to confirm that the payments of any allowances payable should continue to be paid to any member taking parental leave.
- F. The Council's procedures regarding opposition groups are set out in section 9.2 of the Constitution (Protocol on Members' Rights and Responsibilities). The IRP noted that Oxfordshire County Council was among a minority of authorities that recognised an "official" opposition group within its constitutional provisions. They also noted that there was no provision within the Council's current allowance scheme to determine SRA payments if there was more than one official opposition group on the Council. The IRP asked officers to undertake a research exercise to identify the approaches taken by other authorities in circumstances where there was an equal number of members in two or more opposition groups.
- G. The benchmarking research revealed that a number of approaches were taken by individual councils to the payment of allowances to more than one opposition group. Some authorities divided the Special Responsibility Allowances between the Leaders and members of opposition groups. Other councils had devised a specific formula which applied a percentage of the allowances paid to the Leader and Cabinet members to Opposition Leaders and Shadow Cabinets.

Considerations by the Independent Remuneration Panel

- H. The IRP considered the financial implications for the Council's budget. The current scheme of Members' allowances provided for the following specific SRAs: -

Leader of the Opposition Group - £14,268
Each Shadow Cabinet Member - £3,576.

The IRP noted that the payment of these allowances to two opposition groups had resulted in growth to the budget of £47,328 in 2025-26. The IRP considered the future impact of the current approach should there be any number of opposition groups with equal numbers in the future. Their view was that this position was not sustainable because of the impact on the Council's expenditure and the public perception of maintaining this growth in the budget especially in the absence of a mechanism to determine the payment of SRA's in these circumstances. They also considered that the status of two recognised opposition groups presented an opportunity to hold the Council's administration to account through collaboration and cross-party working.

- I. The IRP concluded that, in the event of there being two or more opposition groups at any one time, the specified SRAs for the Shadow Leader and Shadow Cabinet Members be divided by the number of groups given opposition group status. The opposition group/s should only be allocated the appropriate proportion of the allowance to each shadow cabinet member they appointed, regardless of the total number of those positions within each group.
- J. The IRP also considered the question of allowance payments to Members taking leave under the provisions of the parental leave policy agreed by the Council at its meeting on 8 July 2025. Members were of the view that any allowances to which these Members were entitled should continue during the period of parental leave in line with the Council's adopted policy and the model policy provided by the Local Government Association.

Recommendations

- a) **We RECOMMEND that, in the event of the designation of two or more opposition groups of an equal number that are the next largest groups to that of the administration, the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Opposition Group Leaders and Shadow Cabinet Members specified in the Members' Allowances Scheme should be divided by the number of groups accorded with that status. This amendment to the scheme should come into effect on 1 October 2025**
- b) **We RECOMMEND that the basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for Members taking parental leave in accordance with the Council's policy should continue to be paid during their period of leave and in making this recommendation it is accepted by the IRP that there may be an instance where a Special Responsibility Allowance may be duplicated for a limited period of time.**

Dave Shelmerdine
Chair, Independent Remuneration Panel

On behalf of:-

Members: Ben Anim-Antwi,
Martyn Hocking
Stephen Mckechnie

September 2025

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