

# **County Council**

**4 November 2025**

## **Agenda**

To: Members of the County COUNCIL

***Notice of a Meeting of the County Council***

**Tuesday, 4 November 2025 at 11.00 am**

**Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#). Please note, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.



Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

October 2025

Committee Officer: **Democratic Services**  
E-mail: [CommitteesDemocraticServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:CommitteesDemocraticServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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**10.30am in advance of the Council meeting**

**Address by the Lord Lieutenant of  
Oxfordshire, Mrs Marjorie Glasgow BEM**

The Lord Lieutenant will speak about her role as  
representative on the King in Oxfordshire.

# AGENDA

## 1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 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. 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 30 October 2025. Requests to speak should be sent to [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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.

## 6. 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 28 October 2025.

## 7. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

## 8. Appointments (Pages 15 - 18)

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.

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

**Council is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **appoint a Member to the current vacant position on the Planning and Regulation Committee;**
- b) **delegate to all council committees the authority to appoint to its vacant committee seats in accordance with legislation.**

**9. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 19 - 26)**

Report by the Leader of the Council.

This report covers the Cabinet meetings on 10 September 2025, 16 September 2025 and 21 October 2025.

**10. Strategic Plan 2025-2028 (Pages 27 - 82)**

Report by the Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships

Following the county council elections in May 2025 and the formation of a new administration, a new strategic plan has been developed. The period of this plan will be November 2025 to 1 April 2028.

**Council is RECOMMENDED to approve and adopt the Strategic Plan 2025-28.**

**11. Financial Regulations (Pages 83 - 96)**

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

In April 2025 Council agreed a number of changes to the Constitution. As part of that the threshold for a Key Decision for capital expenditure was increased to £2.0m. Section 5 of the Financial Regulations which sets out the arrangements for Capital expenditure needs to be updated to align with the threshold for a Key Decision.

**Council is RECOMMENDED to approve:**

- a) **amendments to Section 5 of the Financial Regulations increasing the limit for Cabinet approval for new inclusions and variations to capital schemes from £1.0m to £2.0m to align with the key decision threshold of £2m.**
- b) **that in exceptional circumstances up to £0.500m funding for exploratory feasibility works can be approved by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (following discussion and recommendation at, and with the support of the Strategic Capital and Commercial Board).**

**12. Youth Justice Annual Plan 2025-26 (Pages 97 - 152)**

Report by the Director of Children's Services

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the minimum statutory requirements for Youth Justice Services. The statutory aim of the Youth Justice system is to prevent children from offending. Section 39 of the Crime & Disorder Act requires the cooperation of named statutory partners and places a duty on them to cooperate to secure and deliver youth justice services appropriate to the area.

**The Council is RECOMMENDED to adopt Oxfordshire's Annual Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026.**

**13. Use of Special Urgency (Pages 153 - 156)**

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Constitution makes provision for the taking of an urgent decision. Part 8.1 Section 17.3 requires that "the Leader of the Council will submit quarterly reports to the Council on any executive decisions taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 16 (special urgency) in the preceding three months.

**Council is RECOMMENDED to note the use of Special Urgency for a Key Decision taken on 1 September 2025 by the Leader of the Council.**

**14. Calendar of meetings 2026/27 (Pages 157 - 164)**

**Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

The calendar of meetings for each civic year, from one Annual Council meeting to the next, is presented to Council for approval.

**COUNCIL IS RECOMMENDED to approve the calendar of meetings for the 2026-27 Council year attached to the report as Annex 1.**

**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*

**15. Motion from Councillor Liam Walker**

This Council notes:

The strong opposition from some residents, businesses, and key workers to the Oxford Congestion Charge scheme and their ongoing concerns about its impact on the cost of living, local trade, and access to services across Oxford.

This Council believes:

The scheme is unfair, harmful to the local economy, and does not have public support and it's time to end the scheme.

This Council therefore resolves to:

Call on the Leader and Cabinet to immediately end the operation of the Oxford Congestion Charge scheme and ensure no further expansion or reintroduction of similar charging schemes without full public consultation and support.

*Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.*

## **16. Motion from Councillor Gavin McLauchlan**

Council notes that in July 2025 a judicial review upheld the Secretary of State for the Environment's decision to approve the proposed Thames Water Resources Management Plan which includes the South East Strategic Reservoir Option in Abingdon.

As a result, Thames Water has to have an Emergency Discharge facility in place including the ability to empty the reservoir at a rate of 1 metre per day, possibly over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. This would put water back into the Thames at a rate of 75 m<sup>3</sup>/s just south of Abingdon c.3x greater than its normal flow.

Such a discharge could cause havoc along the Thames, endangering Life, residences, businesses, wildlife and the environment, yet there is no requirement for the reservoir operator to have an emergency plan before building the reservoir, only before filling it. Dealing with the emergency in the wider area will be the responsibility of this Council as the local emergency planning authority along with the emergency services.

This Council makes clear its deep concern that we could be made responsible by default for safely managing such an emergency, leaving us with impossible decisions about which lives, homes and businesses to save in a crisis situation.

We therefore call on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to request clarity on how such an emergency discharge would be managed and to provide a commitment that we will be provided with the resources to do so before any Development Consent Order is considered.

## **17. Motion from Councillor Nathan Ley**

Pride in the appearance of the public realm is important to our residents. Clean and well-maintained pavements make people feel good about their neighbourhood, reduce accidents, and prevent more costly problems later. Neglect leads to uneven footways, hazards for those with mobility difficulties, and higher long-term repair bills.

Routine weed clearance on county pavements was part of highways maintenance until 2007/08, when budget cuts removed the programme. Some parishes now commission their own weed spraying and may be using glyphosate, increasingly opposed by residents because of its risks to health, pets, rivers, and biodiversity. Other parishes are now beginning to trial alternative approaches.

Council resolves to:

1. Note the historic withdrawal of routine weed clearance and the resulting concerns about accessibility, safety, and neighbourhood appearance.
2. Recognise the Council's statutory duty to keep pavements free of hazards, and that neglect increases both risks and costs.
3. Request an officer report with options for re-establishing pavement weed clearance and scheduled maintenance, including alternatives to glyphosate, and how the Council can support towns and parishes to reduce reliance on chemical spraying.
4. Request that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation give due consideration to the findings of this report as part of the next round of budget setting.

*Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.*

## **18. Motion from Councillor Liz Brighthouse**

This Council, being deeply concerned by the impact of poor mental health on adults and children in the County, asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to request an appropriate overview and scrutiny committee to investigate and report back on how services provided by Oxford Health and other organisations are tackling this issue.

Such an investigation needs to address issues of accessibility to services including

- assessment,
- therapeutic support,
- medication,
- emergency interventions such as “sectioning” and
- inpatient beds.

How these inventions, or the lack of them, impact on other public services such as Community Safety, Public Health, Housing, Schools, Fire and Rescue and the Police also needs to be understood. Most of all, poor mental health impacts on individuals, families and communities around the County.

Council requests that the outcome of the investigation be sent to the appropriate Secretaries of State.

## 19. Motion from Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Motion to be seconded by Councillor Emma Markham

Council notes that:

- Oxfordshire residents have endured successive crises in recent years: Covid, the cost-of-living emergency, underfunding of public services by successive governments, leaving many residents in precarious situations, creating a climate of uncertainty and fear.
- Research shows that rising inequality fuels support for far-right movements, eroding trust in institutions and creating fertile ground for scapegoating and division.
- Against this backdrop, right-wing media and far-right groups have wrongly blamed migrant communities to further their agendas.
- Extensive research, including the Migration Observatory's 2024 study, finds that migration contributes positively to the UK economy by expanding the labour force, addressing skill shortages, and supporting productivity and growth, with little evidence of wage suppression for native workers. Migrants' net fiscal impact is generally positive, with greater contributions in taxes than cost to public services.
- Oxfordshire is proud to be the first County Council of Sanctuary, committed to ensuring that everyone who lives here, whether newly arrived or long settled, is treated fairly.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Recognise the risks to our communities if the disinformation, suspicion, and intolerance disinformation generates go unchallenged, and commit to addressing them wherever they occur.
- Work with partners to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our communities and that racism is confronted wherever it occurs, in schools, workplaces, and on our streets.
- Request that Cabinet supports the co-production of a community cohesion action plan with key stakeholders in consultation with councillors, including actions to support community-led dialogue and ensure appropriate resourcing is considered during budget setting.

*Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.*



## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

### **Members Code – Other registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

### **Members Code – Non-registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.