

Divisions- N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 4 November 2025

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Leader

1. Strategic Plan 2025-2028

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet praised the plan for its clarity and alignment with residents' priorities, and it was recommended to the Council for approval.

Cabinet Member: Resources and Deputy Leader

2. HR and Cultural Change Quarterly Employee Data Report - Quarter 1 2025-26

(Cabinet, 16 September 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarised the main employee-related trends for Q1 2025/26. The report highlighted positive trends such as a decrease in agency spend and staff turnover, though challenges remained in recruitment due to market conditions. The report also highlighted the importance of detailed sickness data.

Cabinet Member: Transport Management

3. Oxford temporary congestion charging points

(Cabinet, 10 September 2025)

Cabinet received a report on proposals for six temporary congestion charging points in Oxford. In June 2025, the Cabinet approved a public consultation on the proposals, operating at the same locations and times as the six trial traffic filters approved in November 2022, along with a number of smaller schemes to address congestion in the city.

The report outlined the case for action, alternative options considered, the results of the consultation, and the expected impacts of the temporary congestion charging points.

A wide range of speakers, including business owners, residents, transport operators, advocacy groups, and councillors, presented arguments both for and against the temporary congestion charge, raising concerns about business impacts, hospital access, modelling assumptions, and public opposition, while others highlighted environmental, health, and transport benefits

Cabinet members discussed the evidence, consultation responses, and recommendations. Members reviewed the policy's alignment with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, the need to address congestion, and the evidence from other cities, emphasising that the scheme aimed to change behaviour rather than raise revenue, and that similar measures had previously led to increased city centre footfall and improved air quality

Cabinet agreed amended recommendations to approve the implementation of six temporary congestion charging points in Oxford for a maximum of two years from the date of implementation and delegated surplus investment decisions and scheme implementation to Directors in consultation with Cabinet Members, to ensure user-friendly systems, and commit to operational readiness by 10 November 2025.

4. Future Bus Regulation Options

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report on bus regulation and ownership options relevant to Oxfordshire. Following a motion passed by the Council in 2023, a consultant had been asked to review options for bus franchising and municipal operation. They were also asked to consider the effectiveness of the existing Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership (EP).

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

Cabinet approved the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plus approach, delegated further development to the relevant directorate, and elected not to undertake further work on franchising or municipal operation at this time.

Cabinet Member: Place, Environment and Climate Action

5. Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with respect to Part Night Lighting

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which presented a proposed new policy and approach to part-night lighting following stakeholder engagement and public consultation feedback. The report outlined the concerns raised regarding part-night lighting, as

well as its levels of support. Exemptions would apply in urban areas and local communities, through parish councils, would decide on adopting part-night lighting, following a process similar to the 20 mph speed limit introduction.

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

The updated street lighting and illuminated assets policy and the implementation framework were approved.

6. Oxfordshire County Council's Biodiversity Action Framework and Action Plan

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

Cabinet approved the Biodiversity Action Framework, delegated authority for annual updates and emphasised the importance of embedding biodiversity in all council activities.

7. Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

Cabinet approved the adoption of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and supported the County Council's commitment to deliver, monitor, and review the LNRS in future (post-adoption) in partnership with local people and organisations.

8. S106 Project – Accelerated Delivery and Corporate Funding

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet approved the programme of investment, delegated procurement and programme changes, and noted ongoing improvements to streamline project delivery.

Cabinet Member: Future Economy and Innovation

9. Get Oxfordshire Working Plan

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet approved the plan, delegated authority for amendments and future revisions, and emphasised the importance of regular monitoring and linking the plan to initiatives including the Connect to Work programme

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation

10. Delivering the Future Together - Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Strategy

(Cabinet, 16 September 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided a strategic overview consolidating Oxfordshire County Council's new Digital Strategy, Data Strategy, and Technology Strategy into a unified framework for transformation and innovation from 2025 to 2028. It supported the Council's "Delivering the Future Together" vision and aligned with its seven operating principles, focusing on efficiency, collaboration, digital-first service delivery, and proactive demand management.

The Digital, Data and Technology (DDAT) Strategies 2025-2028 were adopted.

11. Treasury Management Quarter 1 Report

(Cabinet, 16 September 2025)

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. Cabinet received a report which set out the position at the end of the first quarter of 2025-6. The report highlighted that the council operated within debt indicators and had reduced Public Works Loan Board debt. Investments yielded returns above budget due to higher cash balances and interest rates. The report also highlighted the ongoing challenge of the negative High Needs Block Direct Schools Grant (DSG) balance and the need for government intervention.

12. Business Management & Monitoring Report -- Performance and Risk Quarter 1 2025-26

(Cabinet, 16 September 2025)

Cabinet received a report which set out the Quarter 1 2025/26 performance and Strategic risk overview for the council as well as an update on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The report emphasised addressing underperformance and the importance of meaningful metrics. The Council noted challenges with special educational needs and but acknowledged progress and adherence to budget plans. The report also covered the Homes for Ukraine scheme, praising community support for displaced Ukrainians and Hong Kong residents.

Cabinet noted the report and approved the allocation of Homes for Ukraine grant funding.

13. Capital Programme Update - September 2025

(Cabinet, 16 September 2025)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out changes to the capital programme requiring Cabinet approval to be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in October 2025.

Cabinet approved the inclusion of Grove Airfield Primary School (Phase 2 of Grove Airfield Development) into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £1.600m and £2.400m to enable the purchase of two new buildings to facilitate staff relocation.

14. Enterprise Zone Business Rates – Forecast and Update on Planned Use

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

Cabinet received a report which set out background, principles and conditional proposals for the use of retained business rates funding generated through the two Enterprise Zones in Oxfordshire to support economic development in Oxfordshire.

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

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

Cabinet endorsed the investment priorities, conditionally approved funding allocations, and delegated authority for business case preparation and engagement.

15. Business Management & Monitoring Report – Revenue Update and Monitoring Report (August 2025).

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

Cabinet noted report and approved a number of financial adjustments.

16. Capital Programme Update and Monitoring Report

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet noted the capital monitoring position for 2025/26 and approved the updated Capital Programme set out in the report.

Cabinet Member: Community Wellbeing and Safety

17. Fire and Rescue Cover Model

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

Cabinet agreed that the proposals should be put to consultation and noted that members would receive a further report in due course.

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

18. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) Annual Report

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet noted the report.

Cabinet Member: Adults

19. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024-25

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

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

Cabinet noted the report.

20. Report on urgent decision by Chief Executive re supply of community equipment

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

21. Report on urgent decision by Chief Executive re Telecare Monitoring and Response Service

(Cabinet, 21 October 2025)

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

22. Scrutiny Reports

(Cabinet, 10 & 16 September and 21 October 2025)

Cabinet received the following Scrutiny reports:-

- a) Place Overview and Scrutiny report on Oxford temporary congestion charge
- b) Education and Young People report on School Catering and Corporate Cleaning Contract
- c) People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Oxfordshire Employment Services
- d) Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Our People and Culture Strategy
- e) Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on E-bike and e-scooter contract
- f) Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on OSCP Safeguarding Annual Report

- g) Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report on Part-night Lighting

- h) Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Strategic Plan 2025-28

LIZ LEFFMAN

Leader of the Council

October 2025