

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 10 February 2026 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 5.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Mark Lygo – in the Chair

Councillors:

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

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.

1/26 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

2/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Edwards, Field-Johnson, Fry, Garnett, Gawrysiak, Sargent and Smith.

3/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4/26 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair announced that Oxfordshire County Council had again been awarded gold in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme recognising its ongoing commitment to the armed forces community.

The Gold Award was the highest honour for employers who demonstrated exceptional advocacy, flexible HR policies, and sustained support for defence. First awarded to the council in 2020, this year's revalidation highlighted the authority's ongoing commitment to supporting veterans and reservists, as well as adult cadet volunteers and the spouses and partners of armed forces personnel who work in the council. The Chair congratulated all involved.

The Oxfordshire recipients of awards in the New Year's Honours were listed in Annex 1 of the Schedule of Business. The Chair congratulated all those honoured.

A list of events attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair since the December Council meeting was included in Annex 2.

The Chair thanked those who attended his Gala Dinner on 30 January and those who could not attend but donated to the charities. £816 was raised from this event, which will be distributed between the Chair's three charities: Abingdon Riding for the Disabled, Oxford United in the Community and OXSRAD.

The Council had been informed of the passing of two former county councillors in recent months.

Former Cllr David Nicholson was elected as the Liberal Democrat Member for Woodstock Division in 1997 and stood down ahead of the 2001 elections. He was a member of the Education Committee, Schools Performance & Quality Sub-Committee, Community Education (Youth & Adult) Sub-Committee and Public Protection Committee during his term of office.

Former Cllr Nicholson was also a member of West Oxfordshire District Council, representing the Witney East Ward from 2003 to 2007 and a

parliamentary candidate. Councillors paid tribute to his contribution to public service.

Former Leader of the Council, Ian Hudspeth, had been a member of Bladon Parish Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council, before becoming the Conservative Member for Woodstock Division on 5th May 2005, a seat he held until May 2021.

Ian held the Cabinet portfolio for Transport Implementation, later Transport from 2007, changing to take on the Growth & Infrastructure portfolio from 2009 until 2011.

He was elected Leader of the Council in May 2012, a position he held until 2021. He remained active in politics and stood again for election in May 2025 even though he was not elected.

Councillors paid tribute to his work as Leader of the Council and contribution to public service.

Members stood for a minute's silence.

5/26 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation for the Cabinet as set out in the report from the Proper Officer in Addenda 4, be noted.

6/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair accepted a request from Linda Goodhead to present a petition calling for a weight limit on Hinksey Hill. She stated that the local community had understood that a vehicle weight limit would be applied to Hinksey Hill following the construction of the Lodge Hill interchange on the A34. However, they were told that there was insufficient funding for the signage on the A34. Petitioners asked the Council to look again at the funding for the signage and put it high on their list of priorities.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, thanked petitioners for their proactive approach towards ensuring the safety and well-being of the local community. She responded that officers were exploring potential alternative designs and specification, for implementation of a Weight Limit Traffic Regulation Order on Hinksey Hill as part of the Lodge Hill Scheme. The matter has been referred to the Director of Environment and Highways.

The Chair accepted three requests to speak on Item 8 - Budget and Business Planning:

- Debbie Davies
- Richard Drew
- Steve Bolingbroke

Speeches that have been provided to the Council are published alongside the minutes.

7/26 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

(Agenda Item 7)

Council considered a report on the pay policy statement which set out the council's approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011.

The report was moved by Councillor Fawcett and seconded by Councillor Leffman. Following discussion, the recommendations were approved with 44 votes in favour, 14 against and 4 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to the adoption of the 2026/27 pay policy statement and that it be published on the council website and intranet, as required by The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) and the Code of Practice on Data Transparency.

8/26 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2026/27 - 2030/31

(Agenda Item 8)

Council had before it a report on the Budget and Business Planning process for 2026/27 to 2030/31. It set out the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2026/27, medium term financial plan to 2030/31 and capital programme to 2036/37, together with a number of strategies and policies that the Council was required to approve for the 2026/27 financial year. Officer amendments to the report had been set out in Addenda 4.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Leffman, Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.

A set of amendments, set out in Addenda 1, were proposed by Councillor Brighthouse, Leader of the Labour and Cooperative Group, and seconded by Councillor Baines, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation. Following debate, the amendments were put to the vote and a roll call vote was taken. The amendments were lost.

The result of the roll call vote for the amendments in Addenda 1, was as follows:

Councillors voting in favour (11): Baines, Brighouse, Cherry, Coles, Creed, Crichton, Edosomwan, Lygo, Philips, Pressel and Saul.

Councillors voting against (45): Ashby, Batstone, Bearder, Boucher-Giles, Brant, Cotter, Du, Epps, Evans, Fawcett, Fenton, Filipova-Rivers, Fletcher, Gant, Gaul, Gordon, Graham, Greenaway, Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Henwood, Heritage, Higgins, Hingley, Hope-Smith, Leffman, Levy, Ley, Lugova, Malik, Mallon, McLean, Overton, Plumb, Rawlins, Roberts, Robertshaw, Shiri, Snowdon, Stevens, Thomas, Walker, Webb and Worgan.

Councillors abstaining (6): Barlow, Jones, Kerr, Markham, McLauchlan and Middleton.

A set of amendments, set out in Addenda 2, were proposed by Councillor Walker, Leader of the Oxfordshire Alliance and seconded by Councillor Mallon, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation. Following debate the amendments were put to the vote and a roll call vote was taken. The amendments were lost.

The result of the roll call vote for the amendments in Addenda 2, was as follows:

Councillors voting in favour (10): Ashby, Evans, Fenton, Henwood, Malik, Mallon, Plumb, Robertshaw, Snowdon and Walker.

Councillors voting against (51): Baines, Barlow, Batstone, Bearder, Boucher-Giles, Brant, Brighouse, Cherry, Coles, Cotter, Creed, Crichton, Edosomwan, Epps, Fawcett, Filipova-Rivers, Fletcher, Gant, Gaul, Gordon, Graham, Greenaway, Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Heritage, Higgins, Hingley, Hope-Smith, Jones, Kerr, Leffman, Levy, Ley, Lugova, Lygo, Markham, McLauchlan, McLean, Middleton, Overton, Phillips, Pressel, Rawlins, Roberts, Saul, Shiri, Stevens, Thomas, Webb and Worgan.

Councillors abstaining (1): Du

A set of amendments, set out in Addenda 3, were proposed by Councillor Middleton, Leader of the Green Group and seconded by Councillor Markham. Prior to the amendments being formally moved and seconded, Councillor Middleton withdrew and did not move the amendment relating to the Capital Programme to reallocate funds from Watlington Relief Road to drainage infrastructure investment and delivery of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Councillors Leffman and Levy accepted the revenue amendments set out in Addenda 3.

The meeting adjourned at 3pm to consider the proposal.

The meeting resumed at 3.30pm. A Supplementary Report was circulated to councillors and published online detailing the amendments from Addenda 3 that had been accepted by Councillors Leffman and Levy, excluding the capital amendments, namely the reallocation of funds from Watlington Relief Road.

Following debate, the substantive motion was put to the vote and a roll call vote was taken. The substantive motion was carried.

The result of the roll call vote for the substantive motion was as follows:

Councillors voting in favour (39): Barlow, Batstone, Boucher-Giles, Brant, Cotter, Epps, Fawcett, Filipova-Rivers, Fletcher, Gant, Gaul, Gordon, Graham, Greenaway, Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Heritage, Higgins, Hingley, Hope-Smith, Jones, Leffman, Levy, Ley, Lugova, Markham, McLauchlan, McLean, Middleton, Overton, Rawlins, Roberts, Shiri, Stevens, Thomas, Webb and Worgan.

Councillors voting against (11): Baines, Brighouse, Cherry, Creed, Crichton, Du, Edosomwan, Lygo, Philips, Pressel and Saul.

Councillors abstaining (9): Ashby, Evans, Henwood, Malik, Mallon, Plumb, Robertshaw, Snowdon and Walker.

RESOLVED to:

- a. have regard to the statutory report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) [set out in Cabinet Section 3.1 and amended at Green Group Section 3.1] in approving recommendations b to d below;
- b. (in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve the following:
 - (1) the council tax and precept calculations for 2026/27 [at Cabinet Section 4.3] and in particular:
 - (i) a precept of £567,372,273.74;
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £2,006.78;
 - (2) a budget for 2026/27 [as set out in Supplementary Section 4.4 which incorporates Cabinet Section 4.4 amended by Green Group Section 4.4];
 - (3) a medium term financial strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 [as set out in Supplementary Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in Cabinet Section 4.2 amended by Green Group Section 4.2)];
 - (4) the Financial Strategy for 2026/27 [at Cabinet Section 4.5];

- (5) the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 [at Cabinet Section 4.6 and amended by Green Group Section 4.6]. This includes:**
 - (i) the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)'s recommended level of General Balances for 2026/27 [at Cabinet Section 4.6], and**
 - (ii) the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27 to 2030/31 at Cabinet Section 4.6.1 amended by a reduction of £1.0m in the Budget Priorities Reserve and £0.2m in the Grants and Contributions Reserve].**

c. (in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2026/27 to 2036/37 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Cabinet Section 5.1].**
- (2) a Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2036/37 [as set out in Cabinet Section 5.3].**

d. (in respect of treasury management – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27 [at Cabinet Section 5.2] including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Specified Investment and Non-Specified Investment Instruments.**
- (2) that any further changes required to the 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing