

## **CABINET**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Wednesday, 10 September 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12:50pm

### **Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Andrew Gant  
Councillor Sean Gaul  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor Jenny Hannaby  
Councillor Ben Higgins  
Councillor Dan Levy  
Councillor Judy Roberts

### **Other Members in**

**Attendance:** Councillors Liz Brighthouse, Glynis Phillips and Liam Walker

### **Officers:**

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Paul Fermer (Director of Environment and Highways), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

*The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **113/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none.

### **114/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

### **115/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 3)

5 – Oxford temporary congestion charging points

Bernadette Evans  
Richard Parnham  
Jake Swinhoe  
Luke Marion  
Ian Loader  
Geoffrey Sutton  
Dr Anne Gwinnett  
Emily Scaysbrook  
City Cllr Jemima Hunt  
Mark Thompson  
Scott Urban  
Danny Yee  
Siobhann Mansel-Playdell  
Hannah Kirby  
Patrick Lingwood  
Aeron Buchanon  
Graham Jones  
Cllr Saj Malik  
Cllr David Henwood

**116/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Liam Walker, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report on Oxford temporary congestion charging points. Cllr Walker emphasised the necessity for improved data on peak capacity at park and ride sites and advocated for real-time monitoring of the scheme, ideally via a dedicated dashboard accessible to councillors and the public, rather than relying on monthly reports.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended exemptions from the congestion charge for families awaiting Education and Health Care Plan assessments due to lengthy waiting times and welcomed the proposal for free park and ride buses in November and December, noting the importance of supporting rural residents who often lacked adequate bus services.

The Committee also recommended that income from the charge was used proportionally to support deprived urban and rural areas, investing in rural services, and increasing investment in education and publicity to promote bus usage. The Committee also advised against basing the resident pass system on the unpopular parking permit IT platform and called for faster processes and clearer communication with police for suspending restrictions during emergencies, referencing delays during previous flooding events.

The Committee urged the cabinet to accelerate the implementation of smaller schemes, such as school streets and pickups, as schools had already resumed and some initiatives were not yet underway.

Cabinet received the report and will respond in due course.

## **117/25 OXFORD TEMPORARY CONGESTION CHARGING POINTS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

Cabinet had before it 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.

The points raised by speakers are summarised as follows:-

- Some speakers argued that the congestion charge would negatively impact small businesses, particularly those outside the city centre, by reducing customer numbers and increasing operational uncertainty, and criticised the proposed mitigation measures as insufficient in scope and duration.
- Others questioned the accuracy of the Council's traffic modelling, arguing that it overestimated modal shift and underestimated the needs of hospital staff and patients, many of whom relied on cars due to shift patterns and regional catchment areas, and warned of potential gridlock and increased costs for vulnerable groups.
- Supporters of the proposals highlighted the potential for the congestion charge to reduce traffic, improve bus reliability, enhance air quality, and create safer streets for walking and cycling, referencing successful examples from other cities and the need for bold action.
- Several speakers raised concerns about the impact on military youth organisations, children with special educational needs, and those with mobility challenges, calling for specific exemptions and improved access arrangements.

- Opponents cited the results of public consultations and petitions, noting that a significant majority of respondents opposed the scheme, and argued that the Council should respect this feedback and consider alternative approaches, while supporters referenced the Citizens Assembly's backing for congestion reduction measures

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

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 acknowledged the volume of public opposition but noted that many objections were based on misunderstandings of the scheme and stressed the importance of weighing the strength of arguments and evidence rather than treating the consultation as a referendum.

Cabinet members highlighted the need for real-time data monitoring, clear public communication, and flexibility to adjust the scheme based on emerging evidence, with a focus on park and ride capacity, rural access, and the needs of vulnerable groups.

Following discussion and a short adjournment, the recommendations were amended to delegate surplus investment decisions and scheme implementation to relevant directors and cabinet members, ensure user-friendly systems, and commit to operational readiness by 10 November 2025.

Councillor Gant moved and Councillor Higgins seconded the following amended recommendations and they were approved

**RESOLVED to:-**

- a) approve the implementation of six temporary congestion charging points in Oxford as described in Annex 1, for a maximum of two years from the date of implementation
- b) authorise the Director of Environment and Highways (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management) to make any necessary changes to the scheme to ensure its successful delivery; provided that these do not substantially alter the scheme's impact
- c) authorise the Director of Environment and Highways (in consultation with the Director for Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) to make and implement the necessary Charging Order under the Transport Act 2000

- d) approve the development and implementation of the necessary infrastructure and supporting systems at an estimated cost of £190,000
- ~~e) instruct officers to develop and implement the investment plan outlined in paragraph 96 along with any additional measures in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management~~
- e) delegate approval for future surplus investment to the Director for Environment and Highways, in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, Cabinet Member for Transport Management and Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.**
- f) delegate responsibility for implementation of the scheme to the Director for Environment and Highways in consultation with Cabinet Member for Transport Management, with the intent to be operational no later than 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025.**

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....