

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 16 June 2026 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Tim Bearder – in the Chair
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Gareth Epps
Councillor Rebekah Fletcher
Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Laura Gordon
Councillor Kate Gregory
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Dan Levy

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors Lee Evans, Ian Snowdon and Liam Walker

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Lisa Lyons (Director of Children's Services), Robin Rogers (Director of Economy and Place) Kathy Wilcox (Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

The Cabinet 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.

77/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Judith Edwards.

78/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

79/26 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 were approved as a correct record.

80/26 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See attached.

81/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

7 - Reports from Scrutiny Committees

Rita Atkinson
Greg O'Broin
Bernadette Evans
Fraser Jones
Geoff Sutton

Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE

8 – SEND Reform Plan

Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE

82/26 APPOINTMENTS 2026/27

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding the appointments of members to various bodies for the year 2026/27 that supported the Council's executive functions. It outlined the categories of bodies for which appointments are to be made and the legal and financial context of these appointments.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Leader of the Council, presented the report and added that a vacancy remained on the Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Bearder seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to agree the appointments set out in the annex to the report.

83/26 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cllr Glynis Phillips, Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the report on Customer Service Centre Update.

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the reports on:-

- a) Minerals and Waste Planning
- b) School Streets
- c) Bus Services and Rural Transport (including Mobility Hubs)
- d) Temporary Congestion Charge Scheme Monitoring
- e) Unauthorised Waste Site near Kidlington: Interim Report

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

84/26 SEND REFORM PLAN (TO FOLLOW)

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report which gave details of the Council's draft Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform plan, which needed be submitted to the Department for Education by 19 June 2026. The plan aimed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND while addressing financial sustainability, particularly the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.

Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, presented the report. He thanked officers in the Children's Services Department for their hard work in producing the SEND Reform Plan.

Members noted that the plan focused on strengthening early intervention, increasing inclusion within mainstream settings and reducing reliance on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The development of the plan had involved engagement with education and health partners, as well as parent carer representatives, and would be subject to regular review. It was further noted that delivery arrangements included delegated authority for implementation and minor amendments, supported by established governance structures.

Councillor Gaul moved and Councillor Gegory seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve the draft special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reform plan for Oxfordshire to support submission to the Department of Education by 19th June.**
- b) delegate authority for delivery of the SEND reform plan, subject to business cases and appropriate governance for specific initiatives, to the Director of Children's Services and**

the Section 151 Officer, overseen by the SEND Executive and Local Area Partnership.

- c) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer to make any necessary minor amendments to the SEND reform plan prior to the final submission deadline to the Department of Education.**

- d) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer to utilise Year 1 of the Experts at Hand Department of Education grant in line with the direction outlined in this report. This will include recruitment of roles required and through procuring external services in accordance with the grant conditions and Procurement Regulations 2024**

85/26 TREE CARE FRAMEWORK - CONTRACT AWARD

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet received a report which outlined the need for a Tree Care Framework Contract and set out the approach undertaken to secure the best mechanism and value for money provision to deliver service requirements.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair, presented the report.

Members noted that the framework would cover the management of approximately 400,000 trees across highways and other Council-owned land, enabling a structured inspection regime and improved responsiveness to maintenance requirements. The procurement process had attracted significant interest, with multiple contractors applying, and that the framework would support more localised and efficient delivery of services.

Councillor Leffman moved and Councillor Epps seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve the use of a Tree Care Framework Contract model to deliver planned and responsive tree management activity for trees within the county council's responsibility as highway authority and property owner.**

- b) delegate the award of the contract, and any future extensions, to Director of Environment & Highways in consultation with Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair**

86/26 HR & CULTURAL CHANGE - QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE DATA REPORT Q4 2025/6

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report summarising the Quarter 4 (Q4) 2025/26 workforce performance against the Our People and Culture Strategy and highlighting the main employee trends across the last four quarters of 2025/26.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Human Resources.

Members noted that overall workforce levels remained stable and that staff turnover had decreased, alongside improvements in recruitment processes, including reductions in time to hire. The report also highlighted ongoing work to expand apprenticeship opportunities and increase placements for care leavers, with a clear target for delivery.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Gegory seconded the recommendation, and it was approved.

RESOLVED to note the report.

87/26 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - PERFORMANCE AND RISK QUARTER 4 2025-26 AND PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2025-26

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet received a report which presented details of the County Council's performance, strategic risks, and provisional financial outturn for the year 2025/26, providing insights into service delivery, risk management, and budgetary outcomes.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, presented the report.

Members noted that financial pressures across service areas had been managed within the overall budget through the use of contingencies and higher than anticipated interest income.

The report also set out proposals for additional contributions to reserves, including those relating to high needs, congestion charge and future budget priorities.

In respect of performance, the report indicated that just over half of performance indicators were on track, with continued demand pressures across services and a requirement for further savings in the medium term.

Cabinet also considered the strategic risks facing the Council, including financial resilience and SEND-related pressures.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) **Note the report and annexes;**
Annex A Performance – Quarter 4 2025-26
Annex B Exceptions – Quarter 4 2025-26
Annex C – Complaints and FOI's
Annex D – Provisional financial year end position 2025/26
Annex E – Annual report
- b) **Note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2025/26 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as explained in Annex D.**
- c) **Reserves:**
 - i. **Approve an £8.0m additional contribution to High Needs DSG risk reserve in 2025/26 (ahead of submission of the SEND Reform Plan to the Department for Education). The balance held in the reserve will be considered as part of the budget process for 2027/28 (Annex D Para 116 -118).**
 - ii. **Approve that the £2.7m 2025/26 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is held in reserves and carried forward for use in future years as set out in Annex D Appendix 4c (Annex D Para 116, 119).**
 - iii. **Approve the creation of a Congestion Charge Reserve, and contribution of £1.4m, to hold and support funding for the ongoing operation of the scheme as well as investments set out in the report to Cabinet in May 2026 (Annex D Para 116, 120).**
 - iv. **Approve a £0.8m contribution to the Budget Priorities reserve to support Education SEND (Annex D Para 121 - 122).**

88/26 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2025-26

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a detailed report on the Capital Programme Outturn for the financial year 2025/26, It reviewed the performance against the Council's ten-year Capital Programme, comparing actual expenditure to the original and updated budgets, and provided insights into funding sources, project progress, and risk management related to capital investments.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, presented the report.

Members noted that total capital expenditure amounted to £231.3 million, with variations arising from the reprofiling of major programmes into future years.

Cabinet highlighted the positive impact of capital investment on communities, including the delivery of new school places, improvements to transport infrastructure and progress on major schemes.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESSOLVED to:

- a) note performance against the Capital Programme for 2025/26.
- b) note the Capital Programme Provisional Outturn Summary for 2025/26

Annex 1a: Strategy Programmes Expenditure

Annex 1b: Capital Financing

Annex 1c: Strategy / Programme Level Reporting during the year

89/26 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 13)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

RESOLVED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

90/26 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet noted the response to the following Scrutiny item:-

Repair of defects and superusers

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

