

Supplement for Council

On **Monday 14 July 2025** At **5.00 pm**

Briefing Note and Supplementary Papers

Contents

11. Constitution Review 2025	5 - 10
<p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy has submitted a report to seek approval to the updated Committee procedures in the relevant sections of the Constitution and further amendments to the Constitution.</p> <p>Recommendation: That Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1;2. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any other consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the changes in appendix 1 to the extent that they have not been identified in the above, provided such changes are purely required as a direct consequence.	
13a Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 April 2025	11 - 16
<p>To be circulated with the Briefing Paper.</p>	
13b Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18 June 2025	17 - 28
<p>To be circulated with the Briefing Paper.</p>	
13c Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 9 July 2025	29 - 40
<p>To be circulated with the Briefing Paper.</p>	

14.	Questions on Notice from Members of Council	41 - 60
	<p>Questions on notice from councillors received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.11(b).</p> <p>Questions on notice may be asked of the Lord Mayor, a Member of the Cabinet or a Chair of a Committee. One supplementary question may be asked at the meeting.</p> <p>The full text of questions must have been received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 1.00pm on Wednesday, 2 July 2025.</p> <p>These, and written responses where available, will be published in the briefing note.</p>	
15.	Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting	61 - 68
	<p><i>This item will be taken at or shortly after 7.00pm</i></p> <p>Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution and <u>not</u> relating to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.</p> <p>Up to five minutes is available for each public address and up to three minutes for each question. Questions must be less than 200 words.</p> <p>The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address or question must be received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 July 2025.</p> <p>The briefing note will contain the text of addresses and questions submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available.</p> <p><i>A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items.</i></p> <p><i>Responses</i></p>	
16b	Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-2025	69 - 78
	<p>The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has submitted a report to Council, providing a summary of the Scrutiny function during the 2024/2025 municipal year.</p> <p>Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025, will present the report.</p>	

Recommendation: That Council resolves to note the update report.
Report will be published in the Briefing Note.

16c Scrutiny Committee update report

79 - 94

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has submitted a report which updates Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since March 2025.

Recommendation: That Council resolves to note the update report.
Report will be published in the Briefing Note.

17. Motions on notice July 2025

95 - 108

This item has a time limit of 60 minutes.

Motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with the rules in Section 11 of the Constitution by the deadline of 1.00pm on Wednesday, 2 July 2025 are listed below.

Cross party motions are taken first. Motions will then be taken in turn from the Labour Group, Liberal Democrat Group, Green Group, Independent Oxford Alliance Group, Oxford Community Independent Group, Oxford Independent Group and Real Independent Group in that order.

Substantive amendments to these motions must be sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 10.00am on Friday, 11 July 2025 so that they may be circulated with the briefing note.

Minor technical or limited wording amendments may be submitted during the meeting but must be written down and circulated.

Council is asked to consider the following motions:

- a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)
- b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)
- c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis)
- d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad)
- e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

The agenda, reports and any additional supplements can be found together with this supplement on the committee meeting webpage.

Addendum to item 11 – Constitution Review 2025

Five further amendments have been made to Part 4 of the Constitution (Who carries out executive responsibilities?), under 4.11, Responsibilities not covered by these rules.

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Appendix 1 – List of Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Part 4 Who carries out executive responsibilities?

Paragraph	Current	Change	Reason
4.11 Responsibilities not covered by these rules Neighbourhood Planning	N/A – new section of 4.11	The Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio will be responsible to designate the Neighbourhood Area, to approve or refuse the area designation, 13 weeks from application otherwise must designate all the area.	The neighbourhood planning regulations have been amended with the aim of increasing the 'speed' at which they can be prepared. This includes introducing timescales for LPA decision making on neighbourhood plans. There are also more recent regulations for dealing with neighbourhood plan reviews and there is also a need to redesignate neighbourhood forums every 5 years.
4.11 Responsibilities not covered by these rules Neighbourhood Planning	N/A – new section of 4.11	The Director of Planning and Regulation will be responsible for the Designated Neighbourhood Area, contiguous with parish area and can approve the area designation only (i.e. Must legally designate except where part is already designated, or part is separately proposed to be designated at that time).	
4.11 Responsibilities not covered by these rules Neighbourhood Planning	N/A – new section of 4.11	The Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio will be responsible to designate the Neighbourhood Area, to approve or refuse designation of neighbourhood forum, 13 weeks unless multiple forum applications for the same area.	

4.11 Responsibilities not covered by these rules Neighbourhood Planning		The Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio will be responsible to decide on whether to proceed to referendum accepting all examiners recommendations within 5 weeks.	
4.11 Responsibilities not covered by these rules Housing	N/A – new section of 4.11	The Director of Housing will be responsible for the executive functions relating to the use of property owned within the Council's Housing Revenue Account, and the ability to change the use and eligibility of accommodation for specific properties on a case-by-case basis (including the ability to close accommodation), and the ability to order the demolition of accommodation.	The City Council faces unprecedented pressures on its housing stock, due to rising housing need and homelessness in the City, and due to the requirements from the Social Housing Regulator to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards. The Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Group Finance Director, and Director of Legal Services, along with tenant consultation, needs to be able to make faster and more responsive decisions about the use of the Council owned housing stock to meet the needs of current and future tenants. For example, the need to change eligibility of who can access certain accommodation, or the

			need to shut and decant a property if no longer met standards
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Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 9 April 2025

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Committee members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Turner

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Railton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services

Emma Griffiths, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Directory

Mish Tullar, Director of Corporate Strategy

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer

Kate Protheroe, Asset Manager - Corporate Assets

Emma Gubbins, Corporate Assets Lead

Arome Agamah, Senior Planner - Spatial & Economic Development

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager

Natasha Davis, Recruitment Consultant

Also present:

Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of Scrutiny

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Chapman, Linda Smith and Upton sent apologies.

Councillor(s) Turner and Railton sent apologies for a late arrival to the meeting.

152. Declarations of Interest

None.

153. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None received.

154. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None received.

155. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None received.

156. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

157. Scrutiny Reports

Councillor Miles presented the reports from Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee met on 26 March 2025 and reviewed the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Update and the Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update. The Climate and Environment Panel met on 27 March 2025 and reviewed the Energy Efficiency Update, the Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update, and the Zero Carbon Industrial Decarbonisation Update.

Councillor Miles presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Update.

- Recommendation 1: That the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy incorporate a clause referencing the principles of 'Safe by Design' in public spaces, and ensure its application in the planning of new public spaces and redesign of existing locations identified as hotspots for anti-social behaviour
- Recommendation 2: That Council explore approaches to pavement parking as a form of ASB, for example identifying any multi-agency approaches to combat such problems trialled in designated areas by other local authorities, and assess the feasibility of implementing similar measures locally, noting the potential need for cross-agency collaboration in enforcement and policy development.

Councillor Arshad responded and noted that Cabinet had accepted the first recommendation and had partially accepted the second recommendation. Councillor Arshad said that the first recommendation represented a key priority area of work for the Council. She said that she had written a letter to the County Council regarding the pavement parking issue and that they would continue to work with the County Council and the police to address these concerns.

Councillor Miles presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendation regarding the Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update.

- That an end-of-year summary update on Urgent Key Decisions is provided to the Scrutiny Committee, at the discretion of the Scrutiny Chair, in the next municipal year, enabling the Committee to assess whether the mitigations implemented have effectively addressed the high frequency of these decisions.

Councillor Brown responded and noted that the Chair of Scrutiny would continue to be informed of all urgent key decisions as they arise. She said that they would review this matter as they move through the year and decide if further work was needed in this area.

Councillor Miles presented the Climate and Environment Panel's discussions and recommendations regarding the Energy Efficiency Update, the Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update, and the Zero Carbon Industrial Decarbonisation Update.

- Recommendation 1: A brief assessment of the heat mapping exercise as part of the District Heating Network across the city of Oxford, and to confirm when the data would be available.
- Recommendation 2: Explore the properties in Oxford that have already installed air source heat pumps (i.e commercial properties, private landlords, private properties).
- Recommendation 3: Update for Local Carbon Oxford project to be provided for the Panel at a later date.

Councillor Miles noted that the Panel had made no recommendations on the Zero Carbon Industrial Decarbonisation Update.

Councillor Railton responded and stated that Cabinet had agreed the first recommendation in full, had partially agreed the second recommendation, and had agreed the third recommendation in full.

Councillor Brown thanked Councillor Miles for her work and for the work of the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillors Turner and Railton arrived during this item, at 18:03.

158.Oxpens Car Park Lease Renewal

The Director of Property and Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval to renew the lease of the car park at Oxpens Road.

Councillor Turner presented the report and said that the carpark is currently running and being managed by the Council. He said that they would like to enter into a new updated lease with OxWED, which would provide continued provision for the facility and income for the Council.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** entering into a new lease with OxWED LLP for the Car Park at Oxpens Road; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens' Services in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Group Finance Director to agree the final terms and enter into the lease.

159. Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet endorse the examination of the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Upton virtually presented the report. She said that the report set out how they approached the creation of a Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan. She said that the draft plan had gone out to consultation, and that following the Cabinet meeting they would submit the draft plan to an independent inspector. Councillor Upton outlined the remaining steps for the neighbourhood plan, for it to progress to a referendum vote.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Proceed** with the neighbourhood plan process by submitting the consultation responses and the draft plan for independent examination
2. **Delegate** to Director of Planning & Regulation to proceed to referendum following receipt of the examiners report, including any modifications or amendments the Examiner recommends.

160. Update to the Annual Flag Flying Arrangements

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) had submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet agree the lists of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments and to note the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing.

Councillor Brown presented the report. She said that there were a few changes to the agreed list of flags. They had added two additional flag flying requests. Councillor Brown said that one was the Windrush flag to be flown in June and the Black history flag to be flown throughout October for Black History Month.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Agree** the List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments attached at Appendices 1A and 1B to this report;
2. **Note** the List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments attached at Appendix 2 to this report; and
3. **Note** the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

161. Recruitment agency procurement and delegation to award contracts

The Head of People had submitted a report to request that Cabinet approves re-procurement arrangements for Recruitment Agencies to supply temporary, contract and permanent workforce.

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager, presented the report. She said that they are looking for approval to re-procure for their recruitment agencies. She said that they were also seeking delegation for authority to award the contracts.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the re-procurement of agencies to supply temporary, contract and permanent workforce with an approximate value of £2.5m per annum a minimum of 4 years.
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of People, in consultation with the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer):
 - a. determine the format of the procurement and contract structure; and
 - b. award the subsequent contracts following completion of the procurement exercise.

162. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 12 March and 19 March 2025 as true and accurate records.

163. Dates of Future Meetings

Cabinet noted the dates of future meetings.

Matters Exempt from Publication

If Cabinet wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting started at 18:00 and ended at 18:20.

Chair

Date: Wednesday 18 June 2025

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 18 June 2025

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Committee members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Railton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services

Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance, and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager

Mish Tullar, Director of Corporate Strategy

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer

Emma Gubbins, Corporate Assets Lead

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager

James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager

Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)

Kat Mayes, Customer Care & Complaints Manager

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

Alex Miller, Transactions Manager - Corporate Property

Lorraine Freeman, Team Leader - CIL, Data Analysis and Reporting

Sobia Afridi, the Diversity and Inclusion Specialist

Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager

Also present:

Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of Scrutiny

Apologies:

Councillor Turner sent apologies for being unable to attend the meeting in person. He joined the meeting virtually.

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None received.

3. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None received.

4. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None received.

5. Scrutiny Reports

Councillor Alex Powell presented the reports from Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee met on 10 June 2025 to consider the Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan, the Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document, and the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan.

- **Recommendation 1:** That the accuracy of the data presented within the Annual Service Plan, particularly regarding baseline usage figures and the 3% growth KPI's, be improved by utilising best estimates for the quantity of missing visits; and that the revised data be included in the update report to be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee in six months' time
- **Recommendation 2:** That the Council seek confirmation as to whether there is an ongoing contract between Serco and Lynxight and, if so, examine the nature of Lynxight's engagements. This should include providing further details on how human rights and ethical procurement policies are applied within the leisure

service contracts, ensuring this information is published to reassure residents that these commitments are being upheld

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document.

- **Recommendation 1:** That the Cabinet review the cycle parking standards proposed in the draft Local Plan 2042 to ensure Consultation materials encourage more specific public feedback on this issue in alignment with the Council's wider transport policy commitments, particularly the goal to increase cycling trips within the city.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the Cabinet review and consider strengthening the wording of policies HD8 and HD9 in the draft Local Plan 2042 to better support appropriate densification in order to meet Oxford's housing needs whilst respecting the scale and character of different parts of the city.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendation relating to the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report.

- That future complaints handling reports include benchmarking data from other housing providers, particularly those operating at a local level, to help assess the Council's performance in context and support continuous improvement

Councillor Munkonge responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny regarding the Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan. He said that Cabinet had agreed the first recommendation in part and that this was due to the regular reviews which would be taken with the plan. Councillor Munkonge said that Cabinet had fully agreed the second recommendation.

Councillor Hollingsworth responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny regarding the Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document. He noted the technical difficulties which had impacted the Scrutiny Committee's meeting. With cycle parking, he noted that the policies came from county, but they would be reviewing this to see what they can do and that they would consider this alongside comments from the public. Regarding the second recommendation, Councillor Hollingsworth read the policy and said that it was difficult to change this to make it clearer that density was the issue. He said they can make their language sharper and more clearcut and that they would work to do so. Councillor Hollingsworth commended Scrutiny for their focus on maximising densification and their positive conversations on this report.

Councillor Linda Smith responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny regarding the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report. She said that Cabinet had accepted the recommendation from Scrutiny on this paper.

Councillor Brown thanked Councillor Alex Powell for his report and presentation.

6. Leisure Investment Programme Update

The Director of Communities and Citizens Services had submitted a report to update Cabinet on the highlights of the first year of the new leisure contract and approve the Annual Service Plan 2025-26, which is an annual requirement of the operator, aiming to align outcomes to the Council's priorities and to address health inequalities.

Councillor Munkonge presented the report. He said that there was a lot of good work being done in the plan and that they had seen a number of improvements, including an increase in numbers in swimming lessons. Despite these improvements, he recognised that they can always make improvements and do more. Councillor Munkonge apologised that the report did not have information regarding the creche. He noted that conversations were still underway between More Leisure and the Council on this topic and the outcome would be in the next plan for 26/27.

James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager, said that there had been a lot of success in the last year and they had seen several improvements from their previous operator. Overall, he said that they were confident that everything was now running as it should. With transformation work in the centres, he noted that there was still work to do. Following up from Councillor Munkonge, the Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager said that their community fund was now open for applications.

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager, said that there had been great successes with the contracts. He noted the positive developments with Hinksey pool and the Leys soft play area. He noted the good attendance that they had seen and discussed the governance they'd put in place to provide assurance moving forward.

Councillor Linda Smith noted her disappointment that no one from Serco had been able to attend the meeting. Councillor Smith emphasised the importance of having creches in their leisure facilities and discussed how this would make the leisure facilities. She noted that multiple creches had closed during COVID and had not reopened. She said that she was disappointed that the plan did not include the reopening of creches in their leisure facilities.

Councillor Munkonge responded and said that they should focus on the bigger picture. He noted that some of the creches had closed because they were not viable. Councillor Munkonge agreed that the inclusion of a creche was important and apologised that their discussions about the creches had not been included in the agenda pack. He said that he had assured Councillor Smith that he would address this matter. He said that they were working with More Leisure to include creches in their plan for 26/27.

The Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager added that there was a commitment from Council Officers and More Leisure to explore the viability of the creche for the 26/27 plan. He said that the current contract sought to look at things differently and make the centres more accessible. He noted the small childcare provision which was in place at the moment in one of their locations. He said that they were looking at different options and were looking to work with people in the community to find a good solution.

Councillor Chapman said that there was a lot to be proud of in the plan and in the improvements they'd seen. He noted his concern regarding their resilience with lifeguard staff and the issues that had been seen with catering at several of the centres.

Councillor Arshad said that she was grateful for the report, and she appreciated the work the team had done to get this far. She agreed with Councillor Smith and emphasised the importance of having creches in their facilities so that they were more accessible. She said that she was happy with the Leys soft play area and noted that she was looking forward to the Leys Youth Hub. She asked about the discrepancy in equipment between the different facilities in the city.

The Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager responded and said that the resiliency of lifeguard staff was an industry issue. He said that they had been working with a national organisation to make leisure a career option for young people. He added that they were also working with a specialised lifeguard recruitment agency. Regarding the catering

issues, he said that ongoing work was being done to address these problems at the Hinksey and Ferry centres. He agreed with Councillor Arshad about the importance of the creche and agreed that they needed to align a creche service with the hours of their women only classes in their centres. The Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager said that they were still making improvements to the soft play area, to make it more attractive to families during the daytime. He explained that the difference in gym equipment was due to the different age demographics in each area and that some equipment was more suitable for the older demographics in some areas of the city.

Councillor Munkonge added that they were considering undertaking a benchmarking exercise, to compare their approach to leisure centres with neighbouring areas.

The Active Communities Manager said that in addition to their work to recruit more lifeguards, they were also working locally with schools to promote drowning prevention training. He added that they were working to improve the catering in the centres and were striving to make the food healthier. He recognised that there was still work to do in this area.

Councillor Turner concurred with fellow Councillors that there had been significant improvements over the past year. He acknowledged some of the frustration that had been voiced but said that they also needed to take accountability as they had a hand in deciding what was in the contract. He said that it would be useful for More Leisure to aid the visibility of the transport consultation being undertaken by the County Council. Councillor Turner said that he would advise the provider to work with user groups to consider opportunities to further their ambition for improvements.

Councillor Brown thanked the officers for their work. She said they all recognised the significant improvement in their leisure centres that had been seen over the past year. She said that she was excited to see the soft play opening and she noted the work underway to reinstate creches at their centres.

Cabinet resolved to:

Approve the Leisure Annual Service Plan 2025-26.

7. Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report to request that Cabinet approve the First Draft Oxford Local Plan 2042 (Regulation 18 consultation) Document for consultation. The Plan looked to accelerate the move to zero carbon building standards and continues to see housing delivery as a priority whilst ensuring the Council deliver a mixed and inclusive economy.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report. He emphasised that although Oxford was a successful and thriving city, that they do not have enough affordable housing. He noted that this was a country wide problem in England, as the country was about 4 million short of the number of houses they need. In this local plan, he said that they would be consulting on their policies to protect and enhance the environment, to protect and enhance their heritage, and to ensure jobs, opportunities, careers, businesses could do well in the city. He said that they would also work on the furtherance of access to affordable housing. Altogether, he said that the plan sought to create equal opportunities across the board for the city and its residents.

Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy), said that the plan before Cabinet was the regulation 18 consultation and that this was the first statutory stage in the local plan process. She said that they had done early consultation and were in a good position to

know what is needed and what people want to see. For this regulation 18 stage, she said that they had presented draft policies to people, they had been clear that there were options behind the draft policies, and they explained why they had selected what they had. She added that they needed to look at green belt work, after direction from national government, and that this work would come in the regulation 19 stage. She said that the regulation 19 stage work was due towards the end of the year. That work would be on the draft plan which they will submit for independent examination. She said that they hoped to be able to submit the plan to government in April 2026 and that from then the timing would be out of their hands, but their goal was to have it adopted by March 2027.

Councillor Arshad asked when the consultation for this would come up.

The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the consultation would take place between the 27th of June and the 8th of August.

Councillor Arshad asked what kind of things they were expecting from residents and if they had any expectations on changes that could come from the consultation.

Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that they did not yet know. She said that they had different ways of reaching different people. This included leaflets to be taken door to door, online resources, and events where they would talk with people face to face.

Councillor Brown thanked the Team Leader (Planning Policy) for her responses and for the work that the officers had put into the report. She said that they were very supportive of the plan and she agreed with colleagues that housing remained as one of the biggest crises in the city.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the First Draft Oxford Local Plan 2042 (Regulation 18 Consultation) document for public consultation;
2. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation to make any necessary minor editorial corrections to the documents and the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.

8. Annual Housing Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to seek the approval of the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report (Landlord Services) 2024/25.

Kat Mayes, the Customer Care & Complaints Manager, presented the report. She said that this was a report that they produce annually, as a requirement from the housing ombudsman. It is required that they publish this report and that they have a response from Cabinet. She highlighted the challenges they had faced in the previous year and discussed the measures they had taken to correct the causes of these issues.

Bill Graves, the Landlord Services Manager, highlighted the exceptional work that the Customer Care & Complaints Manager had done to cover when they'd had a shortage of staff and the work they had done since to improve the situation. He said that they expected to be fully up to speed with responses to complaints by the beginning of July.

Councillor Smith presented the Cabinet's response to the report, also published in the agenda pack.

As a Cabinet, she said that they once again welcomed the publication of this report as part of their commitment to transparency and their determination to ensure the views of citizens help shape their services.

The Customer Care & Complaints team within Landlord Services had faced capacity problems in 2024/25, resulting in the published figures around response times for complaints. She said that they were pleased to note that action had already been taken to increase staff in this area and work was being closely monitored, they expect to see a marked improvement in this area as they progress into 2025/26, alongside an increase in customer satisfaction with their handling of complaints.

Cabinet also noted the service improvements that had been made throughout the Council and by their contractor, ODS, and will be interested to see the longer-term impact of these on the complaints figures for 2025/26.

The Housing Ombudsman determinations are an interesting addition to this year's report, as there were none for last year other than the Complaints Handling Failure Order that the Council regrettably received. Whilst they would like to see a mutually agreed resolution to complaints as early as possible within the process without Ombudsman intervention, these determinations provide a valuable external review of their complaints service and inform them as to whether the Council is meeting the Housing Ombudsman's expectations.

This year's report includes some of the further insight into the types of complaint received and the root causes that they requested last year. Cabinet expected this to continue and for opportunities for deeper analysis to be explored.

Their residents are at the heart of their services, and the plans to expand their involvement in the complaints service and seek their feedback will be a welcome step towards greater transparency, accountability, and co-regulation.

Although parts of this report were not positive, such as the percentage of complaints responded to within target and the findings of maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman, there had also been positive progress in several areas. Cabinet accepted the assurances given that steps have been taken to address issues, and they expected to see evidence that these had succeeded by the time the next annual report is produced.

Cabinet said that they would like to thank all of those within to Council who assisted with the investigation and resolution of complaints, as well as all of the citizens who had taken the time to raise issues and provide their views.

Councillor Brown thanked the complaints team and the Customer Care & Complaints Manager for their work in the difficult year. She thanked them for the improvements that already had been made. Councillor Brown said that they welcome these reports as it is was important for them to learn from the feedback their receive, as that is how they can improve the services.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Agree** the content of the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report (Landlord Services) 2024/25 in Appendix 1.
2. **Provide** a formal response to the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report 2024/25.

9. Disposal of City Centre Commercial Property

The Director Property & Assets had submitted a report to seek approval for the long leasehold disposal of 9, 10, 16a & 16b Ship Street and 10 St Michaels, properties owned by the City Council.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He said that these disposals would allow them to make best use of their commercial portfolio. He noted that these properties had not been in use recently and there were restrictions in what the Council could do with them. Councillor Turner said that the appropriate processes had been followed and that this decision would be financially beneficial for the Council.

Alex Miller, Transactions Manager - Corporate Property, clarified that they would retain the freehold title of these properties with the current decision.

Councillor Hollingsworth said he was pleased to see this report. He emphasised the properties had been sitting unused for too long and that it was good to see the effort to bring them back into use. He said that this would be a good outcome for the buildings and the Council.

Councillor Brown concurred with Councillor Hollingsworth and thanked the officers for their work on the report.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the long leasehold disposal of 9, 10, 16a & 16b Ship Street and 10 St Michaels these properties as set out in the report.
2. **Delegate** authority to the Director Property & Assets in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management, the Director of Law, Governance & Strategy and the Group Finance Director the agreement of the detailed terms for the disposal and to enter into all necessary documentation to effect the disposal on the basis that the terms comply with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972, where powers are not already delegated within the constitution.

10. Adopt the revised Community Infrastructure Levy

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report to ask Cabinet to recommend to Council the approval of the Partial Review of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report. He said that this was a proposed change to our CIL charging schedule and that it had been through the appropriate processes. He said that they were not proposing changes to shops and housing but were proposing a change to the office and research and development businesses. He said that the report reflects the demand for those businesses in Oxford and the return those businesses were able to make in the city. He noted that the proposed change would provide a greater source of revenue to be invested in infrastructure and repair in the city.

Lorraine Freeman, the Team Leader - CIL, Data Analysis and Reporting, said that if approved, the decision would go into effect on the 15th of August.

Councillor Brown welcomed the report and thanked the officers for their work on the report.

Cabinet resolved to recommend to Council that they resolve to:

1. **Adopt** the CIL Charging Schedule in line with the recommendation of the independent examiner as set out in Appendix 1; and

2. **Approve** the date on which the amended tariffs will come into effect.
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Planning and Regulatory to make any necessary further minor changes to the documents or any minor change to the implementation date for the new CIL rates.

11. Positive Action Policy

The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist had submitted a report to request that Cabinet agree to the proposed Positive Action Policy.

Councillor Chapman presented the report and noted that it would also be going to Council in July. He said that this policy was a subset of their approach to EDI. He emphasised that the policy was focused on tackling underrepresentation in the Council's workforce. He said that the effective use of this policy would cover actions in recruitment, retention, training, mentoring, and development. Councillor Chapman emphasised the differences between positive action and positive discrimination and said that they were only implementing positive action. Applied well, he highlighted how helpful this policy can be.

Sobia Afridi, the Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, said that they believe the policy will help to improve the diversity of the Council. She noted that they want to improve their diversity figures to better represent the people of the city that they serve.

Melissa Hope, the Organisational Development Manager, said that a lot of the work in the policy was already underway, but that the policy would give them a central point to refer to. She said that this would be useful for hiring managers to help them understand how to put the policy into action. She said that they had benchmarked against what other councils do and considered their specific needs when they were making the policy.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked for clarification on how the consultation with the trade unions had worked and asked what the feedback from trade unions had been.

The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist said that the unions had received the policy positively and were keen for it to be implemented. She said that the unions liked that the policy was simple and easy to understand. She said that the unions had flagged the issue of monitoring, and they had agreed. She said they were working to consider how they would monitor the policy, to ensure that it is effectively implemented.

Councillor Arshad said that she was grateful for the policy. She asked if any feedback in this area had been received from exit interviews. She also noted that they had flagged that more work could always be done, she asked what that work could be.

Councillor Chapman responded and said that they do hold exit interviews. He said that most of the reasons given for leaving from individuals from underrepresented groups were related to pursuing other opportunities or higher pay. He said that there was no trend of people leaving because of how they were being treated or due to discrimination. He said that the staff survey had also demonstrated a strong sense of belonging amongst staff. Regarding further work, he said that they just have to continue persistently and patiently doing work in this area. With the more work they do and the more improvements they make, he said they would consistently become a good place to work.

Councillor Arshad thanked the officers for their work on the policy.

Councillor Munkonge highlighted that the politics on EDI were changing and that other places were looking to back off of this work. He emphasised how positive it was that as a Council, they were choosing to not only retain but strengthen their approach to this work.

Councillor Chapman said that when he is presented with arguments made by critics of EDI work, it makes him more determined to fight for these efforts. He emphasised that it was fundamental for the Council to pursue the furtherance of equality and opportunity, because that is how they get a workforce which is representative of the city.

Councillor Brown agreed that it was crucial that they ensure that the Council's workforce represents the people of the city. She concurred that this work is a long process, but that she had also been reassured by the recent staff survey. She welcomed this policy and the ongoing work to make the Council more diverse and representative of the residents of Oxford. She thanked the officers for their work on the policy.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** this policy to go forward to Council for approval, publication and use.

12. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on **09 April 2025** as a true and accurate record.

13. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

14. Dates of Future Meetings

Cabinet noted the dates of future meetings.

Matters Exempt from Publication

If Cabinet wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting started at 18:00 and ended at 19:15.

Chair

Date: Wednesday 9 July 2025

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal
decision notice is issued*

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 9 July 2025



Committee members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Turner

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Railton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services

Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance, and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Helen Bishop, Director of Communities and Citizens' Services

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer

Emma Gubbins, Corporate Assets Lead

Melissa Hope, Organisational Development Manager

Richard Wood, Housing Needs and Strategy Manager

Stephen Cohen, Refugee and Resettlement Manager

Vicki Galvin, Citizen Experience Programme Manager

Liz Jones, ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead

Also present:

Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of Scrutiny

Apologies:

Councillor Munkonge sent apologies.

15. Declarations of Interest

None.

16. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None received.

17. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None received.

18. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None received.

19. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

20. Scrutiny Reports

The Scrutiny Committee met on 1 July 2025 to consider the Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users, the report on Tourism (a Scrutiny-commissioned paper), and the Citizen Experienced Strategy. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group met on the 24th of June to consider the National Homelessness Property Fund 1 and the Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users.

- **Recommendation:** That there is explicit recognition under section 3, Diversity Implications, of the way in which national immigration policy makes people less likely to disclose domestic violence, given Oxford's status as a Council of Sanctuary, it is especially important to acknowledge how national policy can harm the efforts of local authorities to build inclusive and safe communities.

Councillor Arshad thanked Scrutiny for their recommendation and emphasised the importance of the issue. She said that they had partially accepted the recommendation, to include and highlight the fear certain survivors of domestic abuse might feel towards deportation. This validates concerns of those survivors of domestic abuse and demonstrates their commitment to supporting them. This gives the clarity and support needed to those impacted.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the Tourism (a Scrutiny-commissioned paper). He noted that the Committee had discussed the challenges of tourism and possible avenues to attract a wider variety of tourist groups.

- **Recommendation 1:** That the Council take further steps to publicise the locations of public toilets that are accessible to visitors and residents alike, such as those in the Town Hall and other public buildings.
- **Recommendation 2:** That Council encourage the highest possible level of elected representation within the ABID task groups, within the constraints of the scheme, in order to promote democratic accountability, recognising the Council's role as the scheme's facilitator.

Councillor Hollingsworth responded to the recommendations and thanked Councillor Powell for the detailed and useful session with Scrutiny. In response to the first recommendation, Councillor Hollingsworth said that they would review to see how else the Council could publicise this information, including physical and digital signage options. Regarding the second recommendation, he said that the Cabinet had agreed the recommendation, but emphasised that the Council are not the decision maker in the ABID

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the Citizen Experienced Strategy. He noted that the discussions analysed how the Council engages with younger people and how they consider the implications of AI.

- **Recommendation 1:** That Cabinet consider incorporating physical presence in future consultations, particularly in areas further outside the city centre, and undertake support of language interpreters where appropriate.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the environmental and equality impacts of AI use be considered as a core component of the full review of the Citizen Experience Strategy in 2027, adding dedicated sections addressing the implications of AI in both areas within the strategy.
- **Recommendation 3:** That proactive efforts be made to consult children under 12, in recognition of the city's commitment to becoming an age and children friendly city.

Councillor Chapman thanked Scrutiny for their recommendations and their discussion of the paper. In response, Councillor Chapman said that they were broadly supportive of the recommendations and had agreed the first and third recommendations. He said that they had not agreed the second recommendation, because the Council was already undertaking work on a broader AI Strategy which would address those issues raised by the second recommendation.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Housing and Homelessness Working Group's discussions and recommendations relating to the National Homelessness Property Fund 1. No recommendations came to Cabinet from the Working Group regarding this report.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Housing and Homelessness Working Group's discussions and recommendations relating to the Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28.

- **Recommendation 1:** That Cabinet continue to actively lobby against changes to local government funding for homelessness services, particularly those that would result in significant funding reductions for Oxford and other local authorities with high levels of homelessness.

- **Recommendation 2:** That Council explore all available measures to safeguard tenants from unjust or revenge evictions pending the passage of the Renters' Rights Bill.

Councillor Smith responded to the Working Group's recommendations and said that Cabinet had agreed both the recommendations. She said that the response from Cabinet demonstrates that they are already working in these areas and will be progressing this work, in line with the recommendations from the Working Group.

Councillor Brown thanked Councillor Powell for their work and the presentations from Scrutiny.

Councillor Arshad left the meeting during this item at 18:15.

21. Appointment to Outside Bodies 2025-26

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report to request that Cabinet agree appointments to Outside Bodies for the 2025/2026 Council Year.

Councillor Brown presented the report thanked Jonathan Malton, the Committee and Member Services Manager, and other officers who worked on the report for their efforts in drafting the document. She asked members being appointed to outside bodies to report back to Jonathan and others in his team to let them know if they receive invitations to relevant meetings with Outside Bodies organizations. She highlighted that the aim of these partnerships was to further engagement between members and the organizations, but if this was not happening, the members should report this back to the Committee and Member Services team.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as set out in Appendices 1A – 1D; and note the appointments to partnerships as detailed in Appendix 1E;
2. **Note** the guidance for appointees in Appendix 2; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and where appropriate with other group leaders, to make any changes to appointments to Outside Bodies as required during the Council year 2025/2026.

22. Community Rents Policy

The Director of Property and Assets submitted a report to seek Cabinet approval to agree the Community Lettings Policy.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He discussed the need to set an appropriate market rent for community organizations but highlighted that market rent depends on how a space is being used. He said that the report proposes to have three bands of market rents, one for commercial organizations, a second for medium sized charities and non-profits, and a third for small charities and non-profits. The report also proposed to make grants to organizations to help with the cost. He stated that this makes the funding process more transparent and gives the Council an opportunity to decide how they want to prioritize funds. Councillor Turner noted the importance of this considering the two new community centres currently being developed. He said that the report

proposes that the change in charges is phased in over time, to give organizations time to adjust.

Councillor Hollingsworth said that this was an important step to allow the Council to more decisively prioritize how they allocate funding in this area. He noted that this will also support greater transparency and expressed his support for the report's proposals.

Cabinet resolved to:

Approve the Community Lettings Policy in Appendix 1

23. Citizen Experience Strategy Refresh

The Director of Communities and Citizens' Services submitted a report to Cabinet to review the Citizen Experience Strategy 2025-27 and to seek approval of the updated action plan.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He noted that this was a refresh report and that they were midway through a four-year term of the current strategy. He discussed the transition to digital and said that they had handled this quite well. As they transition to digital, Councillor Chapman emphasised that they would continue to have face to face services, to provide for those individuals who cannot access digital services.

Councillor Chapman presented the four strands of focus for the strategy:

- Citizen Focused
- Positive Citizen Experience (CEX)
- Inclusive Access
- Get it right first time

Councillor Chapman discussed the limitations on what they can offer in some areas and the alternatives they offer as they seek to mitigate these challenges. He said that independent analysis of their performance was positive and said that more work on digital services would be part of the next phase of the strategy. Councillor Chapman highlighted the Council's performance in this area, stating that they are usually rated in the top ten of local authorities in England and Wales.

Councillor Brown said that when they had begun offering digital services, they had endeavoured to take people with them. Now, the situation has changed, and they have to work to keep up with peoples' appetite for online services. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that people can access digital services on their mobile phones and guaranteeing that the information on their websites is accurate.

Councillor Turner asked about the financial implications of the strategy and if they were on course to meet their budget in this area.

Councillor Chapman said that he believed they were. He noted that they could make savings faster, but to do so, they would need to cut back up services which are crucial to ensuring people can access the Council's services. Due to this, he emphasised that it was worth investing this money into working for individuals and keeping a balance between in person and digital services.

Cabinet resolved to:

Approve the Citizen Experience Strategy for 2025-27 and the accompanying Action Plan.

24. Annual Review of the Housing, Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

The Director of Housing submitted a report to Cabinet to provide an update on the progress made in Year 2 of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and to seek approval for the implementation of the Year 3 action plan.

Councillor Smith presented the report. She said that the report asked Cabinet to agree an action plan and signified the great work being done in the Council's housing areas. Councillor Smith highlighted the successes that the team had achieved in the delivery of homes for social rents, supplying more affordable housing, and making the private rental sector more accessible. She said that the team had also done great work in the transformation of landlord services and that their stock condition survey was going well. Councillor Smith added that OX Place was building above regulations to keep carbon emissions down and support the move towards Net Zero. She highlighted the national award that the Housing Team had earned in their work to prevent homelessness. She commended the work that the Housing Team had done to address homelessness and rough sleeping in the city.

Councillor Brown thanked the officers for their thorough report and commended them for their ongoing work in this important area. She emphasised the Council's commitment to tackling homelessness challenges in the city and thanked the officers for their work to support these efforts.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the progress made in Year 2 to implement the Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan and the emerging risks and challenges for delivery over next year and beyond;
2. **Approve** the adoption of the new Strategy Action Plan for Year 3 (25-26); and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to update the Action Plan when required.

The Chair of the meeting slightly amended the agenda and Item 13 was taken directly after Item 11, because the same officers were responsible for the two reports. Agenda Item 12 was taken after Item 13.

25. Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users

The ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users.

Councillor Turner presented the report in Councillor Arshad's absence. He said that this work represented part of the domestic abuse housing accreditation which the Council are passionate about pursuing in their work to support survivors of domestic abuse. He said that the report had received good input from a public consultation, survivors, charities, and others in the sector. Councillor Turner asked if they would expect changes to come from the report, or if the report was more formalizing their current way

of working. He also flagged the initiatives from central government in this area and asked if there was anything else to highlight.

Liz Jones, the ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead, said that the policy would formalize their current processes. She said that they were seeking to improve their responses to domestic abuse and that relevant services had seen an improvement in their engagement with the Council over the past several years. She discussed the recommendation from Scrutiny regarding individuals with insecure immigration status and how they had addressed this recommendation, to ensure that service users with fears of deportation would feel comfortable engaging with the service.

Councillor Brown thanked the ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead for their work on the report and emphasised Cabinet and Council's commitment to this area of work.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Domestic Abuse Policy for Service users (Appendix 1)
2. **Delegate** authority to the Domestic Abuse Lead, to make minor changes in the future to reflect any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.

26. National Homelessness Property Fund One

The Director of Housing submitted a report to seek a decision on the future of the Council's investment in NHPF1.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He said that the Council have an investment into the NHPF1, and it was important to maintain this, due to the financial implications of exiting the fund and the pressures this would further on temporary accommodation. He emphasised that exiting the fund would not only be difficult, but also disadvantageous.

Richard Wood, the Housing Needs and Strategy Manager, discussed the advantages of the fund and said that it makes financial sense for the Council to stay in the fund, as the returns come in through the investment. Moreover, he flagged the immediate impacts on access to housing for the homeless community in Oxford if they exited the fund.

Councillor Brown agreed and highlighted the housing elements, as well as financial implications, to consider in this report.

Councillor Hollingsworth expressed his support for the report's recommendations. He asked about the timeline with the second option, and if the fund had fixed buy in dates.

The Housing Needs and Strategy Manager said that in the last update with Resonance, the intention was for the Ever-Green Fund to launch by the end of the year. He said that we could return to the decision to increase the investment later in the year before the funds launches, but that the indication was that there would be further regular opportunities to invest in the fund into the future. He outlined how this flexibility was a benefit of the fund.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the principle of Oxford City Council moving its current £10m investment in National Homelessness Property Fund One, into a new “evergreen” property fund, in order to preserve nomination rights to 69 homes in Oxfordshire alleviating homelessness.
2. **Delegate** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, the Deputy Leader (statutory) for Finance and Asset Management, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) and Group Finance Director (S151) the authority to enter in to such agreements as necessary to make the reinvestment in to the new “evergreen” property fund subject to reassurance from the fund that all or majority of the homes owned in Oxfordshire are retained through the reinvestment and satisfactory approval of the terms of the investment agreement.

27. Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability submitted a report to Cabinet to respond to Council motion of 25 November 2024, which requested (subject to a Cabinet decision) a plan for making Oxford a truly walkable city.

Councillor Railton presented the report. She said this was a short paper in response to a motion at Council in November 2024. She said that the motion had asked for the Council to produce a walking map of the city. The report discusses options in how to produce the map but given that there was no budget allocated for this, the report recommends that they do not produce the map. Councillor Railton outlined other work they had done in this area, including discussing the matter with County Council and central government.

Councillor Turner said that they had a budget amendment which reflected the importance Councillors attached to this area of work. He noted the outstanding pavement works that they were going to address in the current year. He expressed his support for the report’s recommendations.

Councillor Chapman commended the paper. He said that they often had motions in Council, but that it was easy for the motions to slip through the cracks and not be addressed. He said that this was a good piece of practice to ensure that they followed up and explained why they could or could not do the things requested in motions.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the Council motion of 25 November 2024 and note those elements which do not rely on additional resources beyond those in the Council’s budget which are currently being implemented.
2. **Not to support** the production of a new plan for walking or a walking map for Oxford as these are County Council responsibilities and would duplicate what is currently available through online and retail outlets.

28. Post Print Contract Re-Tender

The Director of Communities and Citizen Services submitted a report to Cabinet to request the commencement of procurement of a contract for postage and printing of Council correspondence, and to delegate approval to award the contract to Deputy Chief Executive, Citizen & City Services.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He outlined the hybrid aspects of the report, and how the increasing reliance on working from home changed how posting and printing operated. He said that the contract also related to their online portals and how they contact users of the portals. Councillor Chapman said that the current contract ended on the 31st of October and the request was to Cabinet for the cost of the next contract.

Helen Bishop, Director of Communities and Citizens' Services, said that they might need to push the timetable back slightly and that this was due to staff absence. She said that she was working with procurement colleagues to extend their current contract so that they can undertake the procurement exercise.

In response to a question from Councillor Brown, the Director of Communities and Citizens' Services said that they had not arranged the new contract and procurement process sooner due to staff absence in her team.

Councillor Brown expressed concern that this had happened with contracts frequently. In future, she said that she hoped they could get the procurement process underway sooner, as these tight timetables and extended contracts were not helpful for anyone involved.

Nigel Kennedy, the Group Finance Director, said that they had introduced a business partner role for procurement. He noted that under the new regulations they had to have a procurement pipeline in place. Through the business partnering, he said that they could have more oversight over this and nudge managers to work on these issues earlier. He agreed that in this instance, it had fell because multiple staff involved were absent due to ill health. However, he assured that they would improve on pushing things forward and that they had received assurances from the procurement team as well.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Give project approval** for the procurement of a hybrid print and post contract for a term of four years to replace the existing contract, which expires on 31st October 2025; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Deputy Chief Executive of City and Citizen Services to take any decisions and actions required to award a contract for the supply of a hybrid print and post solution for the Council.

29. Direct Award for Apprenticeship Training

The Organisational Development Manager submitted a report to Cabinet seeking approval to award a contract without competition for apprenticeship training to the current training provider, Multiverse Group Ltd.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He said that this training would be with staff in the Council to develop digital and AI skills. He said that they had 88 staff members scheduled for the training and that the feedback from those who had already done the training was positive. He thanked Melissa Hope, the Organisational Development Manager, for her work on the training and her work to organize funding for the training.

The Organisational Development Manager said that they had had great successes from the first people who had gone through the program. She said that the individuals had

also passed learning on to others, demonstrating the usefulness of the training program. She assured that the safe use of AI is embedded into the training. While they are investing significantly into this area, she also assured that they were still focusing on other areas of skill development. She discussed the other apprenticeships they were undertaking in procurement, building control, and other areas within the Council.

Due to one of the companies mentioned by the Organisational Development Manager Councillor Hollingsworth asked if he needed to declare an interest. The Director of Law, Governance, and Strategy confirmed that he did not need to and that he could vote on the item.

Councillor Brown thanked the Organisational Development Manager for her work and said she was proud of the work the Council was doing on apprenticeships. She said that she hoped this work could expand to other areas of the city, to give people more lifelong training opportunities. She expressed her support for the report.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the award of a contract without a competitive procurement process for training in AI, Data and Business Transformation to Multiverse Group Ltd with an approximate value of £600k for cohort 2 (2025/2026/2027). This is a Cabinet and key decision due to the aggregated value of income to Multiverse, following previous appointment of them by the Council for apprenticeship training, being more than £750K (across years 2025/2026/2027). The current spend is approximately £495K (2024/2025)
2. **Delegate** to the Deputy Chief Executive City and Citizen's Services authority to award further contracts if required, in accordance with Councils procurement processes.

30. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on **18 June 2025** as a true and accurate record.

31. Dates of Future Meetings

Cabinet noted the dates of future meetings.

Matters Exempt from Publication

If Cabinet wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting started at 18:00 and ended at 19:05.

Chair

Date: Wednesday 13 August 2025

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal
decision notice is issued*

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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To: Council
Date: 14 July 2025
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.

Responses are included where available.

Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the Cllr answering the original question.

This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.

Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth; Leader of the Council

SB1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown

Question

Oxford is home to a large number of trans, queer and non-binary people who will be understandably anxious after the judgment of the UK Supreme Court in For Women Scotland. Can the portfolio member please confirm that Oxford City Council remains fully committed to providing trans and non-binary people with public services and amenities that are appropriate to their chosen gender and which ensure that trans and non-binary people in our city are in all cases treated with dignity and respect?

Written Response

The Council remains fully committed to providing services to everyone, respecting trans and non-binary people in line with their chosen gender. We must treat all our citizens with dignity and respect. We will need to deliver services in line with the law and are awaiting the EHRC formal guidance on this matter to be agreed and published. However, we do not anticipate the change to the legal definition of sex under the Equality Act to change our commitment to inclusion for all groups.

SB2: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown

Question

I was pleased to see the announcement of proposals for a Greater Oxford Unitary authority. However, many residents may be concerned about the expansion of the city region into the Green Belt. Will the leader take this opportunity to put on record the commitment of City Council and the broader proposal to protecting green spaces and ensuring sustainability?

Written Response

Firstly, it is important to say that green spaces and Green Belt are not synonymous, some areas of Green Belt are very much not green and have already been developed, often in a poorly planned way.

Our commitment is clear; a Greater Oxford would deliver the homes this city and its citizens need, and we would do this as close to the city as possible, rather than dispersed across the whole county, which forces more

commuting and car-dependency. Inevitably, to do this we will need to carefully release areas of Green Belt.

It would be wrong to speculate where these areas might be at this point, but we would ensure that there is a robust evidence-base and rigorous public consultation before any release could go ahead. It will be a priority to ensure sites have excellent links into the city through sustainable transport modes.

Critically we will ensure that new developments provide high levels of accessible green space on site as well as making significant contributions to creating new (and improving existing) access to green spaces, such as country parks.

ET1: From Cllr Smowton to Turner

Question

In February Council accepted the Labour budget amendment that substantially integrated Lib Dem proposals as follows (considering year 1 only)--

1. Add a homelessness prevention officer
2. Add a planning enforcement officer
3. Introduce a fund supporting pavement and other walkability works
4. Development of a city centre play space
5. Development of smart parking charges (e.g., weight or emission dependent)

Could you please update Council as to how these have progressed to date?

Written Response

1) The Homelessness Prevention Officer has now been recruited. They are working in the Early Intervention section of the Homelessness Prevention team, working with clients to sustain accommodation and to help people to move ahead of eviction to avoid homelessness.

2) The additional planning enforcement officer is being recruited to, with the application window recently closed and interviews pending.

3) ODS are identifying locations where previous requests have been made for provision of works to aid accessibility for pedestrians with restricted mobility and wheelchair users which it has not been possible to address due to the lack of budget. Once this information is available the works will be prioritised for use of the budget available in 2025/6 and budget identified for the following year.

4) The concept of a city centre playground is being piloted through a series of pop-up children's events throughout summer 2025. City and County officers meet weekly to assess the success of these pop-ups and gather key insights. Following the conclusion of the events, a comprehensive review will be conducted to evaluate potential sites for permanent play spaces within the city.

5) A wider piece of advice has been commissioned initially on the car park portfolio to ensure the service offers value for money. A review of parking charges will form part of this but it is likely that work will commence on the parking charges specifically next calendar year.

ET2: From Cllr Miles to Turner**Question**

The Oxford mail reported that £10,932,486.09 is owed back to residents who have or continue to pay council tax to the city. How is this data broken down by year?

Written Response

COUNCIL TAX	
Year	31/05/2025
2007	£11,618.72
2008	£14,302.27
2009	£25,985.24
2010	£30,970.99
2011	£43,450.07
2012	£72,409.11
2013	£81,589.95
2014	£112,334.07
2015	£142,956.94
2016	£148,320.58
2017	£213,939.78
2018	£293,845.59
2019	£381,444.19
2020	£521,908.69
2021	£980,335.85
2022	£1,461,891.96
2023	£2,162,932.43
2024	£4,232,249.66
£10,932,486.09	

ET3: From Cllr Miles to Turner**Question****Written Response**

Is this council willing to waiver or reduce the fee for regular street closures for children's playing out sessions in the city?

Oxford City Council supports the Oxford Civic Society's Street for People Initiative that encourages local people to use their street to play in and interact with neighbours. The Council's road closure fee for street parties is £19, covering the administrative process and statutory consultation. This fee is currently applied to street closures for children's playing out sessions, which are often an element of community-led street parties. If a ward member feels this fee cannot be afforded, it might be a good use for ward member funds.

ET4: From Cllr Miles to Turner

Question

What has been the annual budget and team size for the environmental health team at the city council over the last 5 years broken down by year?

Written Response

Cost centre	Gross		Net		Gross		Net		Gross		Net		Gross		Net		Gross		Net		Budgeted	
	Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend		Spend	
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26													
Business Regulation	511	261	443	249	483	278	486	272	557	314												
Private sector safety	324	311	122	75	107	65	126	129	143	142												
HMO Enforcement	363	394	382	344	372	325	443	387	426	389												
HMO Licencing	219	-598	193	-571	191	-609	231	-473	195	-577												
TOTAL	1,417	368	1,140	97	1,153	59	1,286	315	1,321	268												

FTEs in Cost centre	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
ED16 Business Regualtions	10.7	9.5	9.7	10.1	10.1
ED17 Private Sector Safety	9.0	9.8	3.0	3.0	4.0
ED18 HMO Enforcement	8.4	8.6	8.5	8.5	7.8
ED22 HMO Licensing	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
TOTAL	34.1	33.9	27.2	27.6	27.9

ET5: From Cllr R Smith to Turner

Question

We note that the City council plans to increase its CIL on labs and office space, and while this is not yet agreed, would request that some funds are earmarked for a city centre playground or playgrounds given that these jobs are likely to attract working families

Written Response

Should the increase in the CIL schedule be agreed at Council, then the new rate will apply to schemes determined after August 15th. The additional income from the levy increase will take a few years to be filter through to increased income. After that, it will be for full council to take decisions on spend, not me as portfolio holder, and of course there are likely to be many competing priorities, including this (excellent) suggestion.

ET6: From Cllr Fouweather to Turner**Question**

Can the Cabinet Member give a current financial statement on the amounts held by the Council resulting from S106 and CIL agreements with developers? Specifically, the amounts held and allocated to specific projects in this financial year, held and allocated for specific projects in future financial years and held but currently unallocated to any projects?

Written Response

This information is usually published as part of our annual Infrastructure Funding Statement which comes to Cabinet and Council around December each year. However, I have asked officers to give a high-level summary now in order to answer this question, with detail to follow in the IFS.

£13,975,756 of S106 contributions are currently held and are to be used towards the following:

Affordable Housing	£12,166,478
Community Facilities and Health	£403,000
Environmental/Economic	£267,611
Transport	£227,036
Open space/Leisure	£867,678
Other	£43,953

As S106 requests must be project specific there are no unallocated amounts.

The CIL balance at the end of 24/25 was £11,961,367 the allocations for which are:

Strategic Capital Programme Projects £8,381,983
 Oxford North transport improvements £2,227,803
 Neighbourhood CIL portion £1,138,024

This leaves £244,147 currently unallocated, although there are a number of capital projects currently under consideration.

AR1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton**Question**

We congratulate the City council on the success of the pop up play space scheme. Could the member please clarify how this moves the scheme forward to a permanent solution and what the ETA might be?

Written Response

By the end of the summer 2025, the pop ups will have completed. A review will then take place, to consider locations of permanent play spaces in the city. Additionally, the City Centre Manager will encourage developers to also consider the public realm outside spaces that they have under development.

AR2: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Railton**Question**

I congratulate the City council on the success of the pop up play space scheme and its collaboration with the county council to achieve this, but could the portfolio holder please detail the collaboration ongoing with the county to find a more permanent location for the playground?

Written Response

City and County meet once a week to review the success of the pop ups and identify key learnings. At the end of the pop ups a review will take place, to consider locations of permanent play spaces in the city. Additionally, the City Centre Manager will encourage developers to also consider the public realm outside spaces that they have under development.

AR3: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Railton**Question**

□□ In the most recent budget, the city council allocated funds to develop the idea of a city centre playground. Could the cabinet member please detail the progress of that spend to date or the plan to spend it with a view to accelerating the project?

Written Response

The concept of a city centre playground is being piloted through a series of pop-up children's events throughout summer 2025. City and County officers meet weekly to assess the success of these pop-ups and gather key insights. Following the conclusion of the events, a comprehensive review will be conducted to evaluate potential sites for permanent play spaces within the city.

At this stage, the allocated funds remain unused. After the review, careful consideration will be given to the best way to utilise the funding - whether to build a new playground, commission consultants to identify the optimal locations, or invest in upgrading an existing area.

Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford**LA1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad****Question**

I, like many other residents, was shocked at the high speed crash in Morrell Avenue in late May. This collision arises from a long history of dangerous speeding in the Avenue. Does the portfolio holder agree with me that Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley police need to urgently work together to ensure a speed camera is added to the avenue?

Written Response

Thank for you raising this issue. I too am shocked at the speeds some vehicles travel at in the city. I would also like to commend the work of the local resident's Speedwatch group in addressing speeding in this area. I will be contacting the police to ask for their assessment of speeding in the Morrell Avenue area and the suitability of a speed camera in the location.

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

NC1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Chapman

Question

Can the Cabinet Member explain how many temporary or agency staff are currently employed by the Council? Can he also provide the same information for consultants currently working for the Council on a contract basis either on a fixed term or extendable basis?

Written Response

Current records at 3 July show that the Council has 53 temporary agency staff and 2 consultants out of approximately 850 staff overall. Temporary Agency staff are used where we need to cover vacancies that are difficult to fill or to support with surges in demand. Currently, the largest proportion of roles being covered are specialists in Property, Law and Information Technology. These are fields where we have struggled to recruit for a long time. In addition, there are roles in Housing with short-term funding, niche roles such as in Ecology and temporary Project Manager roles.

NC2: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman

Question

Can the portfolio holder outline the council's policy on glyphosate use on residential streets and pavements and how many incidences of its use there have been in the last 12 months?

Written Response

The Council has a clear policy on the use of glyphosate-based weedkillers, which was agreed after a thorough review in the autumn of 2023.

The review, which looked at other Council practices, medical evidence, and the state of regulation for glyphosate products, found that deploying these weedkillers was by far the most efficient and cost effective of tackling the City's weeds on hard surfaces like roads, pavements, and tennis courts, and of combatting Japanese Knotweed and other pernicious shrubs.

ODS uses well trained and experienced contractors, and the application is by "targeted droplets" rather than mass spraying. The public are warned if glyphosate weedkillers are being used in an area. Treatments are not applied when conditions are windy.

	<p>The products continue to be licenced for use in the EU, the USA and here in the UK.</p> <p>Weed treatments are typically carried out three times per year. The first round will usually begin in March, the second treatment in June, and the final round being conducted towards the end of August. There may be a slight variance in treatment times depending on weather conditions.</p> <p>In the last 12 months we undertook treatments in April 24, August 24, and April 25. We have just finalised the second round of treatments in July and the final round will be undertaken by September 25.</p> <p>We have promised to look again at our use of these weedkillers if new evidence emerges to challenge the findings of our last review.</p>
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NC3: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Chapman

Question

Can the portfolio holder outline how road cleaners currently manage kerbside cleaning around parked cars on streets, given how parked cars can inhibit the cleaning process? Are there steps that can be taken to improve this?

Written Response

ODS have no legal powers to enforce parking restrictions so our sweepers work around parked vehicles as they can. This is apart from areas targeted for deep cleaning, where it was agreed that ODS would trial signs and advance notices on lamp posts to advise residents in good time of upcoming work.

AH1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth

Question

The Museum of Oxford trustees have expressed concern that the latest City Council budget has left them facing unrealistic revenue and/or cost-cutting targets for this year. Will you work with them to (a) provide whatever support the council is able to help them improve their financial position, or (b) if necessary put the case for an in-year budget bid to ensure they are able to sustain their valuable cultural offer?

Written Response

The Museum of Oxford is a service run by Oxford City Council, not by a separate organisation. This has been the case since the late 1990s when the City Council took over running the museum from the Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

As with all Council run museums in the UK, financial pressures mean that the service needs to both be offering a service to local people and covering at least some of its costs from visitors and from donors. That responsibility falls on Oxford City Council, as the organisation that both hosts and runs the Museum.

The Museum of Oxford Development Trust is a charitable organisation whose aim as set out on the Charity Commission record is to "raise funds for the development and continued support of the Museum of Oxford"; in other words, not to run the Museum itself. It has raised money from various funding bodies, and makes contributions in line with its charitable objectives to the Museum of Oxford.

The Charity Commission data for the Museum of Oxford Development Trust's most recent financial report for the year ending 31 July 2024 has a total income of £106,546 and total expenditure of £21,010.

AH2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

In addition to the Local Plan's ordinary Call for Sites process which primarily targets medium-to-large sites, does or will the council proactively engage with SME developers that could bring forward small (less than 10 unit) sites in order to encourage such sites' contribution to our housing need?

Written Response

The Call for Sites process looks for all development opportunities; as the Call for Sites documentation says, "there is no minimum (or maximum) size of site" being called for.

The Housing Land Availability Assessment and then the Local Plan processes assess and then allocate specific larger housing sites of 10 or more homes. They also encourage housing to come forward on smaller sites and the Local Plan has a suite of policies to encourage this. Officers take care to promote the Local Plan and the Call for Sites extensively and have a range of virtual and in person drop-in sessions open to all landowners and developers.

AH3: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

Could Cllr Hollingsworth update council on progress of the feasibility study into a possible Business Improvement District for Oxford? BIDs are a well-established tool for managing and improving urban centres in partnership with local stakeholders, and have been successfully in operation in many historic towns for many years, including elsewhere in Oxfordshire. The idea was first considered by this council as far back as 2008, and the current administration agreed to start work on a feasibility study almost a year ago, on 23 July 2024. What progress has been made, and when can we expect a decision and potential action to flow from that process?

Written Response

The question conflates two slightly separate things. A Business Improvement District (BID) is something which covers all businesses in a designated area. The project that began in 2024 which was to support work by the accommodation businesses and providers on a possible Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID), which covers all businesses of a specific type in a designated area. Similar names, but different things. What they do have in common is that the decision to create one or not does NOT sit with the City Council, but the businesses and organisations that would be impacted by it.

Since last summer Oxford City Council has been working closely with accommodation providers such as hotels and colleges to assess the

	<p>impact of tourism and explore potential funding through an Accommodation Business Improvement District.</p> <p>An initial feasibility study, along with an independent report by The Mosaic Partnership, was completed in December 2024. The findings indicated a tentative interest in establishing an ABID, though several significant concerns were raised by visitor accommodation providers. Since then, efforts have focused on addressing these concerns, with a strong emphasis on building trust and fostering relationships with accommodation providers.</p> <p>Given the extensive challenges that the hospitality sector has been facing in 2025, without this groundwork there would be a risk of any ballot being held rejecting the idea of an ABID. This scenario is not unique and many other towns and cities have faced similar challenges and have extended the process to allow for thorough stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>The Council is now advancing to the next phase of the project with support from a consultant. Separate Task Groups for hotels and colleges will be established to evaluate the impact of tourism and identify potential projects. These groups will also explore funding options and determine whether an ABID ballot is likely to be successful.</p> <p>Funding for officer time and the consultant has been allocated through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).</p> <p>It is important to understand that the Council will have no direct influence over whether any options are pursued; the final decisions, including how any funds raised are allocated, rest entirely with the levy payers.</p>
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Question

Last December the Jericho Wharf Trust made a request to the Council for Compulsory Purchase action on a site that has now been derelict for 20 years. The Hong Kong landowner's latest proposals are to sell the land for development of up to 230 student flats, without delivering any of the established planning policies for the site which specify a new community centre and repair boatyard facilities as well as housing and affordable housing. What is the Council's latest position on Jericho Wharf?

Written Response

The City Council's planning policy for this site is set out in the Local Plan 2036, and has not changed. Any application received has to be determined on its merits by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority through the planning process, as set out in legislation.

AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

Surveys have consistently identified around 400 local boats which should be taken out of the water every 4 years for inspection and essential maintenance of their hulls.

This is essential maintenance to keep boats safe and in a good state of repair. However, there is currently nowhere to do this in Oxford. Will the Council support local boaters by using their compulsory purchase powers to buy Jericho Wharf where space could be provided for essential boat repair facilities?

Written Response

The Council has been working with the Jericho Wharf Trust for many years to bring forward the Jericho Wharf site, and I share their frustration that the site has not yet been developed for the long overdue community facilities needed.

While the City Council will remain open to using CPO powers to ensure development of the site it is important to understand that the process is inherently risky and very expensive. Initiating a CPO that fails to succeed will use up substantial amounts of public money as abortive costs to the Council, taking funds away from other much needed schemes and making no difference to this site.

If the landowner comes forward with another planning application now and secures permission, then the clear legal advice received by the Council is that a CPO would be highly unlikely to succeed.

Therefore, the Council's position is that we need to understand very clearly the current position of the landowner. To this end the City Council is

facilitating a meeting between the landowner and the Jericho Wharf Trust later this summer.

After this meeting the Council will continue to review its position and act accordingly.

AH6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth

Question

Will the Council use its powers to compulsory purchase Jericho Wharf and if so, how long would the process take?

Written Response

The process for a CPO would likely take a number of years. It is notoriously hard to predict timeframes and will be dependent on a wide range of external factors. Timing will not be in the control of the City Council as the applicant.

Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion

CM1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Munkonge

Question

Headington area schools complain of needing to transport children back and forth to leisure centres across the city when Barton Leisure Centre would be a manageable walk. In order to save time, money and transport emissions, will you do your utmost to ensure slots are made available for all schools to use their nearest centre?

Written Response

Children being able to swim 25 metres before they leave primary school is a key priority for Oxford City Council. The importance of this priority is also supported by More Leisure the Council's leisure operator.

More Leisure have confirmed that there are several schools within the Headington area that are using Barton Leisure Centre and don't seem to have a record of any unsuccessful approach. If there are schools from the local area who are interested please do get in touch with Christopher.hawkes@serco.com or alternatively speak to James Baughan or Hagan Lewisman who are the relevant Council officers.

In tandem with this More Leisure will pro-actively reach out to local schools in each leisure centre local area.

CM2: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Munkonge

Question

Will the portfolio holder undertake to work with the leisure provider to ensure that the trans and non-binary residents of and visitors to our city continue to be treated with dignity in the provision of leisure services within Oxford City, following the judgment of the UK Supreme Court in For Women Scotland and the associated EHRC draft Code of Practice, which has understandably generated significant anxieties?

Written Response

Yes we are committed to working with the leisure provider to ensure that all visitors to our leisure centres are treated with dignity and respect. The leisure industries UK Active organisation is due to provide some guidance in this area shortly.

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

LS1: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Smith

Question

What reassurances can the portfolio holder give to residents that social housing enquiries are working effectively, given the death in Plowman Towers in April which was not discovered for over a month, even after neighbours had repeatedly reported the smell? Can the portfolio holder reassure residents that the housing tenancy portals and communications are working as intended?

Written Response

The Council's Contact Centre received four calls from two residents in late March complaining that there was a smell near the bin chute area. Blocked bin chutes are not an uncommon occurrence. An order was raised to clear the bin chutes and one of the residents confirmed that the smell had dissipated. A visit to a neighbouring property the following week presented no smell in the area. I am satisfied that the enquiries made were properly recorded and followed up with actions by officers. It is not believed that the smell present in late March were connected with the death of the tenant. Some three weeks later, on 22nd April, an ODS Operative was concerned about another smell and promptly called Thames Valley Police who forced entry.

Chair of the Planning Committee – Oxford City Planning Committee

MC1: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Clarkson

Question

Could you provide clarity on why proposals for Meadow Lane Car Park have not yet been brought to Planning Committee, particularly when the call-in was requested in March 2024 and could you outline when proposals for Meadow Lane Car Park will be brought to Planning Committee?

Written Response

Officers have been working with the applicant to resolve outstanding objections from the Local Highways Authority in relation to the application. It would appear that this is close to being resolved, and as such officers are looking to take this to committee in either August or September.

Chair of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

KM1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Miles

Question

During the meeting of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee on 21 May 2025, the committee elected not to pass a Special Saturation Policy. Instead pausing the special saturation policy pending more evidence. As a councillor representing Cowley Road, this is a matter of real concern. Can the chair please outline what actions are open to councillors to have an interim policy in place while further work is carried out?

Written Response

There is currently no legal provision for implementing an 'interim' Special Saturation Policy under the Licensing Act 2003, just as there was no provision to 'pause' the policy whilst more discussions could occur. At the meeting on 21 May 2025, the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee resolved not to adopt the proposed policy. Instead, the committee requested that officers bring forward a revised recommendation in September 2025, which may include the original proposal.

To: Council

Date: 14 July 2025

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Question from Naomi Gann
2. Address from Richard Parnham
3. Address from Jack Abraham
4. Address from Kaddy Beck

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Question from Naomi Gann

I am from ACORN, a community union representing tenants. Members of our union here in Oxford have been victims of illegal behaviour from landlords. They've been made to live in dangerous homes and had their complaints ignored, and have also been harassed and revenge-evicted. The experience of our members is reflected in research by housing charity Shelter, which found that 45% of renters in the South East are victims of illegal behaviour from landlords. So we are really concerned that Oxford City Council has only prosecuted 1 landlord in the past five years. Why won't you take a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords, and commit to increasing prosecutions?

2. Address from Richard Parnham

I'm here today to speak in favour of council motion 17a "Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme". In fact, I don't think you should just "resolve" to oppose the congestion charge, I think you should go further. Perhaps even consider legal action against Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for dreaming up a scheme that, objective, bonkers.

Let me give you a few examples of why I regard the congestion charge plan as bonkers. If you were out walking near the Plain just two-three weeks ago during the morning rush hour, you'd see that Iffley Road was rammed with cars as far as the eye could see¹. By contrast, St Clements was busy (ish), but fundamentally free flowing². So which road is OCC proposing to put a £5 congestion charge on? St Clements obviously³, not Iffley Road. The quieter road, not the busier one.

And it's a similar picture up in Marston. During the morning rush hour, traffic flows freely on Marston Ferry Road⁴. Meanwhile, the nearby Marsh Lane – a residential road – is absolutely rammed⁵. So which road gets the congestion charge camera? Marston Ferry Road, obviously. And, to make matters worse, the already busy Marsh Lane is predicted to get hundreds of more cars a day as result⁶, according to OCC modelling data.

And, to top it off, a safety report produced by OCC as part of the related traffic filters scheme, predicts "shunts, pedestrian trips and falls or pedestrian / vehicle collisions" are likely to occur outside the Swan School as a direct result of this scheme being introduced⁷. (Not so) fun fact: the officers' recommendation to move the camera site was overruled. So much for vision zero.

It gets crazier. If you walk along St Cross Road during the morning rush hour⁸, even during term time⁹, the road is practically empty. Despite a lack of any objective justification for a congestion charge on this road, it's getting one anyway. A quiet road getting quieter. Again.

Not that you'd know that from the Ricardo report, which failed to include this key congestion charge location in its modelling report. Oops.

If displaced traffic from the (non-residential) St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road ripples out to cause extra congestion and pollution at the top of the already busy Woodstock and Banbury Roads¹⁰, then bad luck to those who live there. The university district gets even clearer air: residents in the outer suburbs don't, across both North and East Oxford¹¹. How very gown versus town.

This, then, is the insanity of a transport policy that is wilfully blind to the evidence staring it in the face.

Now imagine an alternative reality, where facts drive policy responses.

¹ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1939947119873274232>

² <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1933061016436306233>

³ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/temporary-congestion-charge>

⁴ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1935243498648748411>

⁵ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1937407180895850969>

⁶ Ricardo. Oxford Traffic Filters Interim Scheme, 13 June. Table 3.1.

⁷ Oxfordshire County Council. Road Safety Audit response for RSA Stage 1 (DMRB GG119). 18 August 2022. Available [here](#).

⁸ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1942128932322509056>

⁹ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1932697594305917312>

¹⁰ Ricardo, as above. Also. Steer. Traffic filters Temporary Road Charging Scheme – Modelling and Income Forecasting Report. June 2024. Available [here](#).

¹¹ Ricardo, as above.

In that magical reality, someone at OCC would have realised that morning traffic jams on Iffley Road traffic evaporate the moment the private – not state schools – go on holiday¹². If councillor officers would finally recognise this obvious fact, then maybe a targeted intervention, involving private school traffic, might be trialled. Maybe open up park and rides to become school bus pick-up and dropping off points – which what they're designed to do anyway? A simple idea, which OCC is only now vaguely pondering. Why wasn't this idea trialled first, at practically no cost to anyone?

Likewise, if everyone acknowledged that hospitals were likely to be a significant source of traffic in outer Oxford¹³, maybe we could do something about it? Maybe a car park could be built along the A40 near Barton Park, with a shuttle bus provided to the hospital through the "secret"¹⁴ bus gate linking the A40 with Meadon Hill in Northway? If it's quick and easy to hop on a shuttle bus to the JR from a new car park at Barton Park, why wouldn't you? Carrots, not sticks.

Maybe also try to persuade Oxford's main hospitals to spread out their clinic days, so hundreds of outpatients aren't trying to get to the same location on the same day. Really, really, simple ideas to trial. But no.

But, of course, this is all just crazy talk. Because what's driving this whole proposal is not a plan to fix actual congestion hotspots, or to propose solutions that are likely to make tangible difference.

Instead the congestion charge scheme is proposed in a desperate attempt to meet an arbitrary target that OCC committed to when bidding for the electric bus grant¹⁵. And, of course, OCC can't lose face by doing something that would improve bus reliability, such removing the LTNs. The LTNs, if anyone needs reminding "caused an immediate and profound collapse in service reliability and bus productivity across East Oxford" .. and "have been a failure in almost all respects"¹⁶ – according to the bus companies.

As a result, OCC will – if not challenged – will approve this scheme, to help it meet its bus company KPIs, while also making a few million pounds in revenue and fines¹⁷. And it will do so, no matter what damage the congestion charge inflicts on the city.

In light of OCC's intransigence in the face of appeals to reason, Oxford City Council should oppose the congestion charge proposals with all the powers at its disposal.

3. Address from Jack Abraham

Thank you councillors for giving me the time, on behalf of The Smartphone Free Childhood Campaign, to speak with you today.

First and foremost we are parents. Many of you will be parents as well. Some of you will have older children and perhaps some of you are regretting choices that you made around how to integrate technology into your family. If that is you then forgive yourself. It has always been hard to raise children and now it is perhaps the hardest it has ever been.

¹² <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1942118990244892793>

¹³ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1941443251212607774>

¹⁴ <https://maps.app.goo.gl/zj8z6AxoSPBoeSyR8>

¹⁵ <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1934883235814883644/photo/1>

¹⁶ Additional East Oxford LTNs cabinet documents 17 October 2023, Annex 12. Available [here](#).

¹⁷ Steer report, above.

This is precisely why we urgently need a coalition of parents, educators and policy makers to come together and co-create the environment in which our young people can flourish.

I want to draw your attention to the fifth aim of your motion. Where you articulate the council's intention to offer support and encouragement to continue to develop policies addressing concerns related to smartphone and social media use in schools.

You have read the statistics for yourself. Educators need support. Educators need encouragement and educators need tools to be able to make the necessary changes on behalf of young people and their families within their communities.

Our politicians and civic leaders must step in. You must help make the space to enable parents and educators to ask the hard questions of one another that need to be asked. To hold meaningful open discussions. To explore solutions together to be better able to navigate the myriad and highly individual circumstances in which they are living and working and help to provide the framework to create the solutions that work for them in light of the unhappy facts we are all faced with.

Of the many group action problems humanity faces today the question of allowing our children access to the internet, and - a more terrifying thought - allowing the internet access to our children, is one that is being addressed but by individual school leaders.

Leaders such as Louise Cowley here in Oxford at Spires Academy, however many schools in our county who are already struggling for resources do not have the time and wherewithal to take the step that she did and ban mobile phones.

There is a huge risk that if leadership on this issue is not provided then we will see more schools struggle to deliver the educational values and concepts they strive so hard to deliver every day.

We will see more children suffer both physically and mentally.

We will see an ever greater gap in attainment between children who are lucky enough, due to location or resources, to attend schools who have banned phones and those children who, through no fault of their own, do not attend schools who have enacted a ban on mobile phones.

Children who do not attend schools where the responsibility to manage the immense effects of smartphones, social media, notifications and apps has been taken back from them and placed in the hands of responsible adults.

The word "ban" is loaded. Conjuring images of Puritanism and condemnation and hides what is a nuanced issue. So we understand that the implementation of a ban could be seen by some as being a backward or even regressive step.

Yet you have heard and read the statistics of the havoc on young people that the combination of smartphones and the internet is wreaking. Many of you will see the impact with your own eyes in your day to day life with your own children, family members and your clinics.

The truth then is exactly the opposite. For what could be more progressive than to reflect with humility on the new information we have learned and make change.

We did not know what we now know. We did not know that our children, young people and all of us in this room would be impacted in the ways we have been by this powerful technology.

It is now our duty to respond to this emergent and unignorable issue and take the necessary steps to protect our children and enable them to discover themselves, each other and the world around them without these seductive devices until they are ready.

4. Address from Kaddy Beck

The last time we spoke, we explained that we wanted to challenge your decision to appropriate Bertie Park on the grounds that our recreation ground is obviously “still required for the purpose for which it (was) held immediately before the appropriation.” (S122 LGA 1972)

Your documentation used data from the Local Insight Profile for Hinksey Park Ward (like the lower quartile house price and the % of households living in social rented homes) to show that there is “a significant need for affordable housing in the area.” Most would use this same data to conclude that there is also a significant need for recreation space.

In the cabinet meeting last October, Cllr Hollingsworth described your plans for Bertie Park as “a re-provision of open space, in a slightly different place/form and the provision of 2 new play areas in a slightly smaller form.”

“Slightly” was understatement of the year. At a time when you want to build hundreds more homes in this area, your documentation makes it clear that your proposed re-provision will not even meet the needs of existing users. But still you decided to proceed with appropriation.

Our lawyers advised us that we could not argue that this was wrong. We had to argue that no rational person could make this decision. Yet here we have a Labour council who argues, in the face of your own research and policies AND national policies, that areas that need social housing don't also need proper recreation grounds.

So, our lawyers advised us to wait and challenge any award of planning permission.

It is nearly 2 years since the Environment Agency first objected to your plans for Bertie Park. In October 2023 Cllr Upton told us that you were considering amendments to “respond to the concerns expressed by the EA,” and that “any such amended plans (would) be re-consulted on ahead of any report to Planning Committee.” (Cllr Upton)

After 4 more letters from the Environment Agency, little has changed. One of their biggest objections is to a massive bridge that the EA say “is entirely inappropriate within the landscape and threatens the area's ecological functionality and ultimately value.” They also say that “it increases the risk of flooding both onsite and elsewhere”

You hold that this bridge is compensation for the significant downgrading of our recreation space because it improves access to the land behind Wytham Street. We would just like to point out that, some years ago, OCC installed bars at the entrance to the current bridge in response to complaints it received about joyriding. You now want to spend who knows how much money building a bridge to improve access to a 250m footpath/race track on land that the police say is not suitable for unaccompanied children. If the EA object to your bridge, we don't think it makes much sense either!

So, would the council be able to tell us:

Whether you intend to meet all of the EA's objections or to refer the application to the Secretary of State for Housing?

Whether you intend to hold a second consultation? If so, when?

And, because you have told us time and again that ALL of your proposals for replacement recreation facilities are only "indicative", do you intend to clarify what your intentions really are before you apply for planning permission?

In responding to this, please don't tell us that the site has been on the plan for 20 years.

While this is true, the plans, which you consulted on, complied with both local and national policies. Your current proposals do not.

call and that nobody in this area wants.

Our recreation ground is central to our community, and with 200 extra homes Redbridge Paddock, Bertie Park will be needed even more. The Local Insight Profile for Hinksey Park Ward

We have a community area where

- 0.8 per cent of households suffer multiple deprivation compared with an England average of 0.5 per cent

Housing tenure and affordability

47.4% of homes are owner-occupied against an England average of 64.1%. Of these 1.3% are shared ownership properties against the England average of 0.8%. 17.8% of households live in social rented homes almost in line with an England average of 17.7%.

The average house price to August 2020 is £401,360 where the England average is £304,430. The Lower Quartile house price ('affordable housing') is £125,321 against an England average of £39,328. The total ratio of years to earnings in Hinksey Ward is 6.89 compared to the England average of 3.57 years and the total ratio of years of earnings for a house is 8.3 against an England average of 5.5 (Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas Oct 16-17; ONS earnings data 2015/16).

There is therefore significant need for affordable housing in the area.

Date taken from [Local Insight profile for Hinksey Park Ward](#)

Disability	Attendance Allowance claimants (paid to people over the aged of 65 who are severely disabled. Physically or mentally and need a great deal of help) - claimants is 10.4%, compared to 12.5% in England	Impact: negative (immediate)	In the longer term the redevelopment is likely to have a positive impact re age and disability – creating more inclusive and accessible access to green space: A new accessible footbridge to Site B and a quality footpath for the nature trail are proposed facilitating pedestrian and wheelchair movement.
	Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health, terminal ill-health)- 3.4%, compared to 6.0% in England	Lower than average number of residents with disabilities and or long term/terminal ill-health.	

The documentation you submitted with your application the social profile of our area meant that our need for social housing out-weighed our need for a recreation ground.

We were advised that we could not argue that this was so unreasonable that This is what Cllr Hollingsworth believes. But we think that it is very surprising for a Labour council to argue that working class areas don't need recreation grounds. Especially when they are supporting pop up play areas for under fives in town. What about

.... Years ago, residents in this area pressured the council to restrict access across the current bridge across the Redbridge stream to prevent joy riding on the land behind Wytham Street. You have now decided that our community needs a totally new bridge to provide better access to a 250m footpath on this land. The community don't want this bridge. You have received 5 letters from the EA say that the bridge is totally out of ... with the surroundings and likely to increase flooding across the area. Will you alter the design.

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To: Council
Date: 14 July 2025
Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024/25
Title of Report: Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To provide Council with a summary of Scrutiny activity during the 2024/2025 municipal year
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024/25
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2024-28

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1.	Note the update report.

Information Exempt from Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Breakdown of Scrutiny recommendations 2024/25	No

Foreword by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee



Scrutiny during the municipal year of 2024-25 took place against a political context shaped by a minority-run administration and a fragmented city council composition following the local elections. An administration under no overall control presents challenges for scrutiny committee but also underscores the critical importance of its function in a setting where there is a delicate balance of power.

This scrutiny unfolded against the backdrop of the Planning Inspectorate's recommendation that Oxford City Council withdraw its Local Plan 2040 from examination due to their assessment of a failure in the duty to cooperate.

In this context, the council's constitutional processes have been tested. Firstly, there was the rare use of a call-in to scrutiny of a Cabinet decision—a process less likely to be employed under an overall control scenario. In this case, the call-in related to a decision regarding the sale of council land in Headington, with the cabinet decision ultimately supported by scrutiny.

Secondly, there has been a trend in the use of the council's procedure that requires scrutiny chair approval to shorten, and in some cases nullify, call-in periods for urgent decisions. This prompted a dedicated item on the scrutiny agenda to explore in greater depth the rationale behind the use of this mechanism and consider its appropriacy. While recognising that nimbleness and legal processes may require the occasional use of such measures, scrutiny made recommendations aimed at improving procedural robustness and capacity, with safeguards against overuse of the mechanism. Consequently, the Committee requested an annual report on call-in removals to keep a watching brief on this developing trend.

Thirdly, moving beyond procedural matters, scrutiny focused on thematic policy priorities amid a global political climate marked over the past year by growing instability and increasing divisions on topics related to immigration, diversity and inclusion, and climate change. Despite this wider context, I am heartened that, despite our own local political differences, scrutiny has united around shared values that have informed its recommendations. The Committee has embraced its voice and role as a constructive critical friend, acknowledging successes and offering recommendations to strengthen the Council's practices in building inclusive and diverse communities, as well as promoting diversity and inclusion within its own workforce.

Scrutiny has also maintained a strong commitment to advancing the council's net zero ambitions, evidenced by the continuation of the Climate and Environment Panel and its focus on climate change, biodiversity and air quality agendas, including related topics discussed and addressed in the main committee, such as the council's approach to flood response.

As I hand over the reins to my capable colleague and successor, I extend my sincere thanks to the officers, committee members and cabinet members who have all devoted time, effort and many an evening to make scrutiny happen for the benefit of our city and its residents.

Councillor Katherine Miles
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024-25, Oxford City Council

Introduction

1. This report provides a summary of activities undertaken by Council's Scrutiny function during the 2024/25 municipal year. It reflects on the work carried out by the Committee and its Panels, highlights key recommendations made to Cabinet, and offers a forward look at its priorities for the coming year.

Overview of structure and function

2. Scrutiny at Oxford City Council operates through the overarching Scrutiny Committee, supplemented by three standing Panels: Finance and Performance, Housing and Homelessness, and Climate and Environment. Each panel was given the responsibility to undertake detailed review of decisions and issues relevant to their remit, with the Finance and Performance Panel also taking on the examination of the Council's companies performance.
3. Scrutiny Committee was comprised of 12 cross-party, non-executive Members, reflecting the political composition of the Council. It was chaired by Councillor Katherine Miles.
4. The Panels were made up of:
 - Finance and Performance Panel – 4 members
 - Housing and Homelessness Panel – 6 members
 - Climate and Environment Panel – 4 members
5. Membership of the Committee and Panels were as follows:

Scrutiny Committee Cllr Katherine Miles (Chair) Cllr Tiago Corais (Vice-Chair) Cllr Mohammed Altaf-Khan Cllr Chris Jarvis Cllr Dr Amar Latif Cllr Sajjad Malik - <i>until March 2025</i> Cllr Edward Mundy Cllr Simon Ottino Cllr Asima Qayyum Cllr Dianne Regisford Cllr Ajaz Rehman - <i>from March 2025</i> Cllr Mike Rowley Cllr Anne Stares	Finance and Performance Panel Cllr James Fry (Chair) Cllr Dr Christopher Smowton Cllr Chris Jarvis Cllr Ian Yeatman
	Housing and Homelessness Panel Cllr Lizzie Diggins (Chair) Cllr Theodore Jupp Cllr Edward Mundy Cllr Asima Qayyum Cllr Rosie Rawle Cllr Anne Stares
	Climate and Environment Panel Cllr Emily Kerr (Chair) Cllr Judith Harley Cllr Jemima Hunt Cllr Katherine Miles

6. The Committee saw a minor change in its membership in March 2025 when the Real Independent Group requested to vacate their seat. Following approval by Council, the seat previously held by Councillor Malik was reallocated to Councillor Rehman of the Oxford Independent Group.

7. The Committee's work balanced between consideration of Cabinet reports and commissioned items, with the aim to contribute ideas and evidence to policy development, holding decision-makers to account, and support the continual improvement of Council services.

Summary of activities

8. During 2024/25, the Scrutiny Committee held 11 meetings (9 ordinary meetings, 1 informal remote meeting and 1 extraordinary meeting). The Panels collectively held 16 meetings (6 meetings of Finance and Performance Panel, 5 meetings of the Housing and Homelessness Panel, and 5 meetings of the Climate and Environment Panel).
9. The Committee and its Panels collectively made a total of **96 recommendations** to Cabinet across a wide range of policy areas. Of which, 59 were agreed, 16 agreed in-part, and 15 were not agreed. Cabinet did not indicate its position on 6 recommendations, providing only written commentaries.
10. Whilst not all recommendations were agreed, the Committee believe they formed a constructive part of the policy and decision-making process, and provided opportunities for the function to influence Council decisions in a meaningful way. A breakdown of Scrutiny recommendations and whether they were agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed is supplied in Appendix 1.
11. Scrutiny covered a broad range of issues this year, reflecting both its statutory responsibilities and wider areas:
 - **The Scrutiny Committee** considered cross-cutting strategies including the thriving communities strategy, the council's internal equalities review, and investment plans for leisure services. It looked at the council of sanctuary framework and commissioned items on anti-social behaviour, adult exploitation and modern-day slavery, update on the development of the Oxford river action plan, and how responsibilities around flood risk management are coordinated between different bodies, leading to some valuable clarity being gained.
 - **The Housing and Homelessness Panel** considered key strategic housing and landlord issues including the development of tenancy engagement strategy, roll-out of selective licensing, and implementation of the HRA asset management strategy. The Panel reviewed the performance of homelessness and landlord services and ongoing efforts to reduce rough sleeping and temporary accommodation use. There was strong interest from Panel Members in how tenant voices are embedded in decision-making, helping shape a number of key recommendations.
 - **The Climate and Environment Panel** looked at progress against the Council's Net Zero and climate resilience ambitions. It reviewed delivery of initiatives such as eco-moorings, solar panel feasibility at council-owned car parks, and wider energy efficiency measures. The Panel also considered updates on air quality, and played a key role in shaping the Council's position on the expansion of the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP).

- **The Finance and Performance Panel** provided ongoing oversight of the Council's budget position and financial planning, including scrutiny of treasury management. It reviewed the performance of the Council's wholly-owned companies and monitored budget outturns and quarterly performance reports.
12. In November 2024, the Committee convened for an extraordinary meeting to consider a call-in request pertaining to Cabinet's decision to enter into an Option Agreement for the disposal of land at Foxwell Drive. Following deliberation, the Committee agreed to uphold Cabinet's original decision. This was the only call-in received during the year.
 13. This year, the Committee also re-established the **Budget Review Group** to conduct the annual examination of the Council's budget proposals for 2025/26. The Group met 5 times between December and January, reviewing a range of evidence from CMT and Cabinet Members. The work of the Budget Review Group concluded with the submission of a report containing 23 recommendations to Cabinet. The report was formally presented to Council in February 2025.
 14. Further to this, Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Panel made a combined 8 recommendations to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group in relation to various businesses of the Council's Companies. All 8 recommendations were accepted.

Impact of Scrutiny's Work

15. Scrutiny made a number of tangible contributions this year. It helped strengthen the Council's Equalities action plan following detailed feedback. It supported improvements in tenant engagement across the housing service. It raised concerns around the clarity and transparency of urgent key decisions, which have since informed governance discussions. It also helped shape the direction of the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership strategy. In each case, scrutiny provided a space to challenge, question, and test assumptions in a constructive way.

Reflections and looking ahead

16. As ever, Scrutiny faced challenges. The breadth of issues under review often meant hard decisions had to be made about what to prioritise. Timescales for considering some reports were tight, which made deep dives more difficult in some cases. And engaging residents and external voices in the process remains a continuing challenge. Despite these, Scrutiny remained committed to robust, evidence-led examination of issues, not with the intention to criticise, but to drive better outcomes for Oxford residents.
17. In the year ahead, Scrutiny will continue to review the Council's Forward Plan to identify reports for consideration and look to focus on a number of key areas including: oversight of the Oxford Local Plan 2042; monitoring the delivery of the Council's key strategies and priorities particularly around housing provision in the city and our environmental sustainability goals; review emerging changes to the local authority landscape; support effective governance; and work collaboratively to ensure the scrutiny process focuses on the issues that matter most to residents.

18. Scrutiny will also continue to evolve and fine-tune its procedures to strengthen its role in supporting Cabinet and the Council through robust reviews, staying committed to keeping its practices effective and proactive.

Acknowledgements

19. The Scrutiny Committee and its Panels extend their thanks to all Cabinet Members, Council officers, external witnesses, and members of public who contributed to scrutiny work this year, and look forward to continued meaningful collaboration in 2025/26.

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APPENDIX 1

Scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet

Meeting Date	Committee/Panel	Report	Number of Recommendations Made	Agreed	Agreed In-Part	Not Agreed
2 July 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024/2028	3*			
		Update of Byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces	2	1	1	
		Leisure Investment Programme	2	2		
3 September 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter/Pledges - Annual Update	2*			
		Anti-Social Behaviour	1	1		
4 September 2024	Finance and Performance Panel	Integrated Performance Report Q1 2024-2025	1	1		
		Treasury Management Annual Report 2023-24	1	1		
10 September 2024	Climate and Environment Panel	Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) Expansion	1	1		
		Annual Air Quality Status Report	3	2	1	
4 November 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Update on the development of Oxford River Charter	3	1	1	1
		Leisure Update	3	2		1
7 November 2024	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Furnished Tenancy Scheme	1	1		
20 November 2024	Climate and Environment Panel	High-level challenges and constraints impacting on the deliverability of solar opportunities at Council car parks	3	3		
		Eco-moorings Update	1		1	
27 November 2024	Housing and Homelessness Panel	HRA Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year Investment Programme	1	1		
		Tenancy Engagement and Management	1	1		

	(Extraordinary meeting)					
2 December 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-24	2	1		1
		Thriving Communities Strategy Update	5	5		
14 January 2025	Scrutiny Committee	Council of Sanctuary Framework	4	2		2
		HRA Rent Setting for 2025/26	2	2		
		Flood Management	3	1	2	
		Governance changes to address the increase in Urgent Key Decisions	2	2		
29 January 2025	Scrutiny Committee	Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations 2025/26	1	1		
		Equalities Update	10	6	1	3
		Budget Review Group Report	23	9	7	7
26 February 2025	Climate and Environment Panel	Net-zero Masterplan	1	1		
		Update and Overview of the Work of the Waste Review	1	1		
		Heat Networks and Zoning	1	1		
3 March 2025	Scrutiny Committee	Oxford City Council Annual Business Plan 2025 to 2026	2	2		
		Adult Exploitation and Modern Slavery	1	1		
6 March 2025	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Selective Licensing Implementation Update – Year 2	2	2		
		Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment	1	1		
26 March 2025	Scrutiny Committee	Anti-Social Behaviour Update	2	1	1	
		Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update	1*			
27 March 2025	Climate and Environment Panel	Energy Efficiency Update	2	1	1	
		Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update	1	1		
			96	59	16	15

Scrutiny recommendations to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group

Meeting Date	Committee/Panel	Report	Number of Recommendations Made	Agreed	Agreed In-Part	Not Agreed
27 August 2024	Finance and Performance Panel	ODS Group Performance Report	2	2		
		ODS Executive Pay and Executive Pay Policy	2	2		
4 November 2024	Scrutiny Committee	OX Place – OCH(I)L Recovery Plan	1	1		
4 December 2024	Finance and Performance Panel	ODS – ODSTL Business Plan Refresh	2	2		
14 April 2025	Finance and Performance Panel	ODSL Acquisition Strategy	1	1		
			8	8		

**Cabinet response did not indicate whether 6 recommendations were agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.*

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To: Council
Date: 14 July 2025
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Update from the Scrutiny Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To update Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee and Working Groups.
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1.	Note the work of the Scrutiny Committee and the recommendations as set out in the report.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet responses	No
Appendix 2	Exempt Scrutiny recommendations for SJVG and responses	Yes

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on the activities of the Scrutiny Committee and its Working Groups since the last update to Council on 24 March 2025. It covers the period from 13 March 2025 to 11 July 2025.

Committee Arrangements for 2025/26

2. The Committee met for the first time in 2025/26 municipal year on 10 June 2025, and agreed its operating principles to guide its work for the year. The Committee also agreed to establish three Working Groups to focus on key areas of Council activity. Each working group was assigned remits aligned with the Council's strategic priorities. Membership and Chair appointments were confirmed as follows:

Finance and Performance Working Group (4 members):	Cllr James Fry (Chair), Cllr Dr Christopher Smowton, Cllr Chris Jarvis and Cllr Ian Yeatman
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (5 members):	Cllr Theo Jupp (Chair), Cllr Lizzie Diggins, Cllr Rosie Rawle, Cllr Anne States and Cllr Edward Mundy
Climate and Environment Working Group (4 members):	Cllr Katherine Miles (Chair), Cllr Jemima Hunt, Cllr Kate Robinson and Cllr Judith Harley

3. The Budget Review Group was reconstituted to be given the task of examining the Council's annual budget proposals for the following year. Findings of all Working and Review Groups will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee accordingly.
4. Additionally, the Committee agreed to recommend that Council amalgamate its Operating Principles into Part 13 of the Constitution. This would formalise key aspects of the committee's work and enable the Constitution Review Group to review its procedures annually in future years.

Update of Activities

5. Since the last full Council meeting, the Committee held three meetings, on 26 March 2025, 10 June 2025 and 1 July 2025, to consider a range of substantive items:

26 March 2025

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Update
- Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update

10 June 2025

- Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan
- Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document
- Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report

1 July 2025

- Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users
- Tourism (and Accommodation Business Improvement District presentation)
- Citizen Engagement Strategy

6. The Committee also endorsed recommendations from the following Working Group meetings:

Climate and Environment Panel – 27 March 2025

- Energy Efficiency Update
- Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update
- Zero Carbon Industrial Decarbonisation Update

Finance and Performance Panel – 14 April 2025

- Social Value and Procurement (Act and Regulations) Update
- ODS Group reports

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 24 June 2025

- National Homelessness Property Fund 1
- Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

7. Cabinet considered 19 Scrutiny recommendations across the various aforementioned items during its meetings on 9 April 2025, 18 June 2025 and 9 July 2025, providing commentary on each to inform the Committee of the rationale behind its decision. Of the which, 12 were agreed, 5 partially agreed, 1 not agreed. Cabinet did not indicate its position on 1 recommendation, providing only a written commentary.
8. Further to this, 1 recommendation was made in relation to ODS Acquisitions Strategy which was accepted by the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group at its meeting on 29 April 2025. A table summary of these recommendations and responses is included as appendices. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were made.
9. Minutes of relevant meetings are provided below as hyperlinks:
 - [Scrutiny Committee 26 March 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 10 June 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 1 July 2025](#)
10. The Scrutiny Committee wish to put on record:
 - Its appreciation for the constructive engagement with Serco Group during the review of the Leisure Investment Programme and More Leisure Service Annual Plan.
 - Recognition of the importance of the scrutiny-commissioned review on Tourism (and ABID) in Oxford that has provided valuable insights, and development of strategies to enhance the city's tourism offer and ensure it meets the needs of both visitors and residents.
 - It's view that the implications of AI require more careful consideration across a range of council functions, but particularly in regard to the Citizen Experience Strategy.
11. The Committee would like to thank the Cabinet Members for their contributions. They were also grateful to invited guests and Council Officers for their hard work and presentation of the reports, as well as answering questions.

Financial implications

12. Financial implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
13. Where appropriate, any further financial implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Legal issues

14. Legal implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
15. Where appropriate, any further legal implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Level of risk

16. Risk Registers, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
17. Where appropriate, the risk register was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Equalities impact

18. Equalities Impact Assessments, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
19. Where appropriate, the Equalities Impact Assessments was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

20. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
21. Where appropriate, the Carbon and Environmental impacts were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

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Appendix 1: Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

Table 1 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in April 2025

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 26 March 2025.

Anti-Social Behaviour Update

83	Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
	1) That the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy incorporate a clause referencing the principles of 'Safe by Design' in public spaces, and ensure its application in the planning of new public spaces and redesign of existing locations identified as hotspots for anti-social behaviour.	Yes	The policy can include a principle of designing out the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, and working retrospectively in locations that are of greater concern. The Oxford Local Plan, paragraph 6.11 sets out the Secure By Design expectations for new developments.
	2) That Council explore approaches to pavement parking as a form of ASB, for example identifying any multi-agency approaches to combat such problems trialled in designated areas by other local authorities, and assess the feasibility of implementing similar measures locally, noting the potential need for cross-agency collaboration in enforcement and policy development.	Partially	The Council are not the lead agency on highways enforcement issues but will work with the County Council, Thames Valley Police and other partners at their behest where the issue of pavement parking persists. Pavement parking will not fall under the definition of ASB in the new policy.

Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That an end-of-year summary update on Urgent Key Decisions is provided to the Scrutiny Committee, at the discretion of the Scrutiny Chair, in the next municipal year, enabling the Committee to assess whether the mitigations implemented have effectively addressed the		The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is always consulted on all urgent key decisions and will be told why it is deemed that the decision can't be taken with either 28-day notice and/or a 2-day call-in period. We will liaise with the Chair next year to confirm if a report would be required,

high frequency of these decisions.		subject to a reduction of urgent key decisions taken. As per the Constitution, all urgent key decisions are reported to full Council at the meeting after the decision has been taken.
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Energy Efficiency Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) A brief assessment of the heat mapping exercise as part of the District Heating Network across the city of Oxford, and to confirm when the data would be available.	Yes	Heat Mapping is a key part of both the District Heat Network (DHN and Local Energy Area Planning (LAEP) projects. The mapping will assess current and future heat demand and supply, including where a district heat network could provide the lowest cost solution for decarbonised heat. This exercise should be completed during 2025.
2) Explore the properties in Oxford that have already installed air source heat pumps (i.e commercial properties, private landlords, private properties).	In Part	<u>Domestic Properties</u> The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) data shows Oxford currently has 309 ASHPs and EPC data shows 346 properties with an ASHP. Further work would need to be done to determine tenure type. <u>Commercial properties</u> Data on commercial property ASHPs installs is not currently collected. It may be possible to gain indicative figures from commercial EPCs. Local Energy Area Planning (LAEP) will provide an audit of the baseline data for commercial EPCs. It is likely that numbers of commercial ASHPs could be possible via this process and data can be reported back to the panel once completed.

Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) Update for Local Carbon Oxford project to be provided for the Panel at a later date.	Yes	An update can be provided to the panel when the Innovate UK grant funding support for the project ends in June 2025.

Table 2 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in June 2025

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 10 June 2025.

Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan

Recommendations	Agree?	Comments
1) That the accuracy of the data presented within the Annual Service Plan, particularly regarding baseline usage figures and the 3% growth KPI's, be improved by utilising best estimates for the quantity of missing visits; and that the revised data be included in the update report to be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee in six months' time.	In part	We will work with More Leisure to update the Year 1 baseline figures, to include our best estimates. We feel an update in 12 months' time would be better suited as this will show a full year's worth of data.
2) That the Council seek confirmation as to whether there is an ongoing contract between Serco and Lynxight and, if so, examine the nature of Lynxight's engagements. This should include providing further details on how human rights and ethical procurement policies are applied within the leisure service contracts, ensuring this information is published to reassure residents that these commitments are being upheld.	Yes	<p>Serco has a licence agreement with Lynxight for ongoing, remote support for the AI-powered drowning prevention system currently being used at Ferry Leisure Centre, Leys Pools & Leisure Centre & Barton Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Lynxight was co-founded by people who saw AI as something that could improve water safety and help prevent drowning. The company operates internationally and is endorsed by the UK Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS).</p> <p>Lynxight is state of the art technology, which supports lifeguarding teams to provide an enhanced level of safety for the people using our pools.</p> <p>This AI system is used at other Serco-managed facilities and they have recently signed agreements to other UK</p>

		<p>Operators including David Lloyd.</p> <p>Through the agency agreement the system was procured in line with Serco's strict code of conduct and our humanitarian policy on behalf of More Leisure. Serco are a trusted provider to the UK government and other governments around the world.</p> <p>Serco have high standards and strict procurement procedures; these are covered by their Supplier Code of Conduct and Sustainable Procurement Charter. Respecting human rights is an integral part of Serco's operation, whose core values are Trust, Care, Innovation and Pride.</p>
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Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document

Recommendations	Agree?	Comments
1) That the Cabinet review the cycle parking standards proposed in the draft Local Plan 2042 to ensure Consultation materials encourage more specific public feedback on this issue in alignment with the Council's wider transport policy commitments, particularly the goal to increase cycling trips within the city.	Yes	<p>The cycle parking standards proposed in the draft Local Plan 2042 at Policy C7 are those created by Oxfordshire County Council and therefore recommended by them for inclusion. Rather than delay consultation by entering into a debate with the County Council about their cycle parking standards at this stage, it will be more productive to review their standards in parallel to the Regulation 18 consultation, and based on the technical advice from them as the Transport Authority alongside the responses from the consultation to weigh up whether changes to policy at the Regulation 19 and Public Enquiry stages will have a good chance of success. The wording of materials used to promote the consultation will make clear that the City Council is looking for feedback on the detail of policies such as parking requirements as well as the broader principles across the Local Plan.</p>

2) That the Cabinet review and consider strengthening the wording of policies HD8 and HD9 in the draft Local Plan 2042 to better support appropriate densification in order to meet Oxford's housing needs whilst respecting the scale and character of different parts of the city.	In part	The policies themselves are already clear that they support densification as a principle. However, the supporting text which will sit around policies is just as important in making clear what principles lie behind policies; that will be drafted for the Regulation 19 consultation stage and we will ensure we reflect this principle in the supporting text.
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Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report

Recommendations	Agree?	Comments
1) That future complaints handling reports include benchmarking data from other housing providers, particularly those operating at a local level, to help assess the Council's performance in context and support continuous improvement.	Yes	The 2025/26 Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report will include benchmarking data with other registered providers of social housing, with a focus on those operating in the Oxford area.

Table 3 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in July 2025

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 1 July 2025.

Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Recommendations	Agree?	Comment
1) That Cabinet continue to actively lobby against changes to local government funding for homelessness services, particularly those that would result in significant funding reductions for Oxford and other local authorities with high levels of homelessness.	Yes	<p>Cabinet will continue to use opportunities to influence the governments approach to funding for homelessness services, and where proposed changes are detrimental to Oxford we will make the case for the support we need from central government for local services.</p> <p>Recently Officers completed a formal consultation response to the government's proposed changes to the Homelessness Prevention Grant formula which if implemented would result in the reduction of funding to Oxford City Council and other Local Authorities with a similar profile. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities also wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister to raise these points.</p> <p>The Government has confirmed in their response to the consultation that the planned changes will still go ahead, but there have been amendments which will mitigate some of the reductions for the Council based on the response of Oxford and other Local Authorities. The Council will continue to look for opportunities to lobby government on key issues that affect the Council and residents.</p>

<p>2) That Council explore all available measures to safeguard tenants from unjust or revenge evictions pending the passage of the Renters' Rights Bill.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Council continues to support tenants to ensure that they are protected from unjust or revenge evictions under current provisions within the law and will raise awareness and support tenants to use the new protections within the Renters' Rights Bill once its agreed and implemented.</p> <p>Alongside reactive engagement with tenants who have made complaints regarding their property and landlord, the Council continues to employ a Tenancy Relations Officer (TRO) who's specialist area of work is to support tenants who have complaints against their landlord, for example allegations of threats or harassment. The TRO offers a weekly face to face drop in for residents and can take enforcement action under the Prevention from Eviction Act 1977 to prevent illegal evictions if necessary.</p> <p>Alongside supporting tenants, the Council is also focused on engaging and supporting landlords to following the correct process when renting out their property. We have launched the 'Call B4 You Serve' - landlord advice and mediation service, which provides a dedicated Officer for landlords to contact to provide upstream advice to resolve and mediate between tenants and landlords to avoid evictions and homelessness.</p> <p>In preparation for the Renters' Rights Bill, Officers have launched a cross department working group to improve training and develop changes to services in preparation for the implementation of the new legislation if it becomes law.</p>
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Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That there is explicit recognition under section 3, Diversity Implications, of the way in which national immigration policy makes people less likely to disclose domestic violence, given Oxford's status as a Council of Sanctuary, it is especially important to acknowledge how national policy can harm the efforts of local authorities to build inclusive and safe communities.	In-part	Partially – to include an additional bullet point in S3.4 of the DA Policy for Service users: Fear of deportation This will be in line with the style of the policy and informs service users (the policy will be on our website) that the City Council validates the victim/survivors concerns and will support them.

Tourism (and Accommodation Business Improvement District)

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council take further steps to publicise the locations of public toilets that are accessible to visitors and residents alike, such as those in the Town Hall and other public buildings.	Yes	The Council will ensure that public toilets are publicised on the widest possible range of information providers online and in physical form such as signs and posters.
2) That Council encourage the highest possible level of elected representation within the ABID task groups, within the constraints of the scheme, in order to promote democratic accountability, recognising the Council's role as the scheme's facilitator.	Yes	The Council will continue its role as the scheme's facilitator, supporting the work being done by the ABID decision makers, the accommodation providers themselves. The Task Group will be led by those decision makers, and they will ultimately determine its attendance. The Council will encourage the Task Groups to consider the most appropriate attendance from the City Council.

Citizen Experience Strategy

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That Cabinet consider incorporating physical presence in future consultations, particularly in areas further outside the city centre, and undertake support of language interpreters where appropriate.	Yes	This is best included in the Council's Citizen and Community Engagement Policy, scheduled for Cabinet in September 2025.
2) That the environmental and equality impacts of AI use be considered as a core component of the full review of the Citizen Experience Strategy in 2027, adding dedicated sections addressing the implications of AI in both areas within the strategy.	No	We will ensure that the Council's future AI Strategy – which is currently being worked on - incorporates an assessment of the environmental and equality impacts. This is the right place for this work, rather than the full review of the Citizen Experience Strategy, which is at least two years away.
3) That proactive efforts be made to consult children under 12, in recognition of the city's commitment to becoming an age and children friendly city.	Yes	This is best included in the Council's Citizen and Community Engagement Policy, scheduled for Cabinet in September 2025.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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To: Council

Date: 14 July 2025

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Motions and amendments received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18

Councillors are asked to debate and reach conclusions on the motions and amendment listed below in accordance with the Council's rules for debate.

The Constitution permits an hour for debate of these motions.

Introduction

This document sets out motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18 by the deadline of 1.00pm on 2 July 2025, as amended by the proposers.

All substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by publication of the briefing note are also included below.

Unfamiliar terms are explained in the glossary or in footnotes.

Motions will be taken in turn from the Oxford Community Independents, Oxford Independent Group, Real Independent, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green Independent Oxford Alliance groups in that order.

Introduction

- a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor David Henwood, Seconded by Councillor Saj Malik]
- b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)
- c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Simon Ottino, Seconded by Councillor Ed Turner]
- d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Chris Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Katherine Miles]
- e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

**a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)
[Amendment Proposed by Councillor David Henwood, Seconded by Councillor Saj Malik]**

Labour Group Motion

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

Independent Oxford Alliance Group Amendment

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

The council additionally expresses its concerns over modelling which suggests the congestion charge will:

- increase traffic on already-busy / congested outer Oxford roads during morning and evening rush hour, notably Woodstock Road, Garsington Road and the Eastern Bypass near Cowley¹ (where average daily traffic is predicted to rise by 1966 vehicles).²
- decrease traffic³ on already free-flowing roads, notably St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road – while increasing traffic on residential Marsh Lane.⁴
- fail to reduce overall traffic on Hollow Way.⁵

If agreed, the motion would read:

This council resolves to express its opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council.

The council additionally expresses its concerns over modelling which suggests the congestion charge will:

- increase traffic on already-busy / congested outer Oxford roads during morning and evening rush hour, notably Woodstock Road, Garsington Road and the Eastern Bypass near Cowley⁶ (where average daily traffic is predicted to rise by 1966 vehicles).⁷
- decrease traffic⁸ on already free-flowing roads, notably St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road – while increasing traffic on residential Marsh Lane.⁹
- fail to reduce overall traffic on Hollow Way.¹⁰

¹ [OCC Cabinet. Traffic filter trial delay – mitigation proposals. 17 June 2025.](#)

² [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

³ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁴ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

⁵ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁶ [OCC Cabinet. Traffic filter trial delay – mitigation proposals. 17 June 2025.](#)

⁷ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

⁸ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

⁹ [Modelling and income forecasting report \(Steer Report\) figure 4.4, Figure 4.6.](#)

¹⁰ [Air Quality Technical Note - Issue \(Ricardo report\) Appendix 2.](#)

b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

This Council calls for restrictions on the use of smartphones in all primary and secondary schools for children up to the age of 16 years within Oxford

MP Josh MacAlister's Safer Phones Bill¹¹ has been watered down to exclude the ban on smartphones in schools. He reports, "It's time to address the negative effects of excessive screen time and social media use on children's health, sleep and learning. Parents are crying out for legislation to support them in keeping their children safe from online harm. Gen Z themselves regret how long they spend on social media".

Gillian McDermott Head of Cutteslowe Primary School points to Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*,¹² showing overwhelmingly the harm done to children through excessive use of smartphones. The author examined what happened to young people in the early 2010s that triggered the surge of anxiety and depression, social isolation and cyber-bullying and academic disengagement from 2012 which in some cases have contributed to self harm and death since then.

The LibDem MP Max Wilkinson¹³ says regulations are far behind reality and technology. Barnardos¹⁴ say that the average teenager is spending up to five hours a day on social media. Ofcom research¹⁵ found that 71% of children aged between 5 and 15 used a smartphone to get online in 2023. 75% of parents had concerns related to content inappropriate for their children's age. 73% was adult or sexual content.

Eric Schmit¹⁶ the ex-boss of Google and Alphabet emphasised the use of smartphones can be safe but need to be moderated. "Why," he asks, "would we run such a large uncontrolled experiment on the most important people in the world, which is the next generation?"

The council recognises that digital devices (e.g. a tablet, camera or video recorder) may be permitted for certain academic activities or research but should be provided by the school if required for learning. Moreover, students with specific learning needs may be permitted to use a digital device without social media access as a support tool.

Finally, this Council recognises that many parents in our city have signed up to the parent pact for a Smart-Phone Free Childhood – a collective agreement to delay getting kids smartphones until at least 14, and social media 16.

This Council:

1. Supports the principles of a Smartphone Free Childhood
2. Regrets that Josh McAlister's Bill has been watered down.

¹¹ 7 March 2025 BBC News Safer Phones Bill October 2024

¹² Cutteslowe Community Partnership Full Meeting 6 Feb 2025 The Anxious Generation Jonathan Haidt, Penguin 2024

¹³ BBC R4 Any Questions 07.03.25

¹⁴ Westminster Hall Debate May 2024

¹⁵ Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes 29.03.2023

¹⁶ BBC 13 Feb 2025

3. Notes that Secretaries of State for Education have favoured mandatory limits on mobile phone use in schools over the last fifteen years.
4. Asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Education urging support for the original intentions of the McAlister Bill.
5. Asks the Leader to write to all schools in the city to offer the council's support and encouragement to continue to develop policies addressing concerns related to smartphone and social media use in schools.
6. Ask the Leader of the Council to look into whether the City Council can do this and implement as possible

c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Simon Ottino, Seconded by Councillor Ed Turner]

Green Group Motion

Council notes:

1. Whilst the Council accepts the interpretation of the courts which are now law, the wider principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.¹⁷
2. That motion stated: "Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary."
3. It continued by saying: "Our aspiration is for Oxford to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for everyone, no matter their gender identity."
4. Since the passing of the motion, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex as set out in the Equality Act.¹⁸

Council believes:

1. The principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.
2. Since the November 2021 motion was passed by this council, trans and non-binary people have been subjected to a manufactured moral panic which seeks to demonise their very existence and undermine their rights.
3. Overly simplistic approaches to understanding sex, gender and sexuality can undermine the rights not only of trans and non-binary people, but also those of gender non-conforming cisgender people.
4. Trans and non-binary residents of our city deserve reassurance that they will not be discriminated against in the provision of council services.

Council resolves:

¹⁷ <https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31680>

¹⁸ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10259/>

1. To request the leader of the council writes to the Minister for Women and Equalities calling for the government to introduce new legislation which protects trans rights and access to services.
2. To request the leader of the council writes to the Equality and Human Rights Commission calling for it to ensure that the Code of Practice it issues in relation to the Supreme Court ruling does not lead to trans and non-binary people facing discrimination or harassment in service provision.
3. To request that the leader of the council publicly sets out how the city council intends to ensure that its provision - including public toilets, community centres, housing and homelessness services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive.
4. To request that the leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Healthy Fairer Oxford, for Planning and Culture and for Citizen Focused Services undertake to work with both council bodies and local businesses to ensure that the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary residents of Oxford are supported to the maximum extent permitted by law in the delivery of services.
5. To request that the Cabinet member for Healthy Fairer Oxford write to the director of More Leisure publicly stating the councils support for an inclusive approach to accessing facilities and encourage More Leisure to ensure that they continue to provide services which are, to the maximum extent permissible by law, appropriate to the self-identification of Oxford residents.

Labour Group Amendment

Council notes:

1. Whilst the Council accepts the interpretation of the courts which are now law, the wider principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.¹⁹
2. That motion stated: "Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary."
3. It continued by saying: "Our aspiration is for Oxford to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for everyone, no matter their gender identity."
4. Since the passing of the motion, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex as set out in the Equality Act.²⁰

Council believes:

¹⁹ <https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31680>

²⁰ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10259/>

1. The principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.
2. Since the November 2021 motion was passed by this council, trans and non-binary people have been subjected to a manufactured moral panic which seeks to demonise their very existence and undermine their rights.
3. Overly simplistic approaches to understanding sex, gender and sexuality can undermine the rights not only of trans and non-binary people, but also those of gender non-conforming cisgender people.
4. Trans and non-binary residents of our city deserve reassurance that they will not be discriminated against in the provision of council services **or as employees of the Council**.

Council resolves:

1. To request the leader of the council writes to the Minister for Women and Equalities calling for the government to introduce new legislation which protects trans rights and access to services.
2. To request the leader of the council writes to the Equality and Human Rights Commission calling for it to ensure that the Code of Practice it issues in relation to the Supreme Court ruling does not lead to trans and non-binary people facing discrimination or harassment **in employment or** in service provision.
3. To request that the leader of the council publicly sets out how the city council intends to **follow the Code of Practice and** ensure that its provision - including public **and workplace** toilets, community centres, housing and homelessness services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive **to the maximum permissible by law**.
4. To request that the leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Healthy Fairer Oxford, for Planning and Culture and for Citizen Focused Services undertake to work with both council bodies and local businesses to **understand and interpret the Code of Practice** ensure that the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary residents of Oxford are supported to the maximum extent permitted by law in the delivery of services.
5. To request that the Cabinet member for Healthy Fairer Oxford write to the director of More Leisure publicly stating the councils support for an inclusive approach to accessing facilities and encourage More Leisure to ensure that they continue to provide services which are, to the maximum extent permissible by law, appropriate to the self-identification of Oxford residents.

If agreed, the Motion would read:

Council notes:

1. Whilst the Council accepts the interpretation of the courts which are now law, the wider principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.²¹
2. That motion stated: "Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary."
3. It continued by saying: "Our aspiration is for Oxford to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for everyone, no matter their gender identity."
4. Since the passing of the motion, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex as set out in the Equality Act.²²

Council believes:

1. The principles of the November 2021 motion still apply and still reflect this Council's beliefs.
2. Since the November 2021 motion was passed by this council, trans and non-binary people have been subjected to a manufactured moral panic which seeks to demonise their very existence and undermine their rights.
3. Overly simplistic approaches to understanding sex, gender and sexuality can undermine the rights not only of trans and non-binary people, but also those of gender non-conforming cisgender people.
4. Trans and non-binary residents of our city deserve reassurance that they will not be discriminated against in the provision of council services or as employees of the Council.

Council resolves:

1. To request the leader of the council writes to the Minister for Women and Equalities calling for the government to introduce new legislation which protects trans rights and access to services.
2. To request the leader of the council writes to the Equality and Human Rights Commission calling for it to ensure that the Code of Practice it issues in relation to the Supreme Court ruling does not lead to trans and non-binary people facing discrimination or harassment in employment or in service provision.
3. To request that the leader of the council publicly sets out how the city council intends to follow the Code of Practice and ensure that its provision - including public and workplace toilets, community centres, housing and homelessness

²¹ <https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=31680>

²² <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10259/>

services and leisure provision remain trans inclusive to the maximum permissible by law.

4. To request that the leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Healthy Fairer Oxford, for Planning and Culture and for Citizen Focused Services undertake to work with both council bodies and local businesses to understand and interpret the Code of Practice ensure that the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary residents of Oxford are supported to the maximum extent permitted by law in the delivery of services.
5. To request that the Cabinet member for Healthy Fairer Oxford write to the director of More Leisure publicly stating the councils support for an inclusive approach to accessing facilities and encourage More Leisure to ensure that they continue to provide services which are, to the maximum extent permissible by law, appropriate to the self-identification of Oxford residents.

d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad) [Amendment Proposed by Councillor Chris Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Katherine Miles]

Labour Group Motion

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- Proposals to switch off Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed [here](#). If this had been implemented, the decision would have been carried out with just a week's notice being given to the general public, and with no opportunity for them to make their views heard.
- Fortunately public outrage from this council and others stopped that from happening
- The county council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.

Council believes:

- Every resident in Oxford has the right to feel safe in their community.
- Darkened streets create an environment that fosters antisocial behaviour and crime, putting our most vulnerable residents at increased risk.
- The County Council's proposals would have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality, and retail, carers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

- These proposals also disregard public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ignoring both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position to oppose any proposal by the County Council to turn street lights off at 12midnight in Oxford
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to rush through this half-baked, dangerous, and divisive proposal for the sake of financial expediency.
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, Anneliese Dodds MP, and Sean Woodcock MP, who have spoken out against these proposals.

Liberal Democrat Group Amendment

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- **There is no evidence that Part-Night Lighting increases crime: some reports conclude it can reduce crime^{23 24 25 26}**
- Proposals to switch off **some of** Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed here. ~~If this had been implemented, the decision would have been carried out with just a week's notice being given to the general public, and with no opportunity for them to make their views heard.~~
- ~~Fortunately public outrage from this council and others stopped that from happening.~~
- **Due to feedback from City and County councillors as well as campaigners and members of the public, these plans were withdrawn for further revision.**
- The County Council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.

²³ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/news/report-finds-no-evidence-part-night-lighting-impact-crime-levels>

²⁴ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/mar/street-lighting-may-enable-rather-hinder-street-crime>

²⁵ <https://www.wendover-pc.gov.uk/post/less-lighting-has-no-impact-on-crime-or-collisions-says-report>

²⁶ <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s120181/9%20App%20A%20-%20Streetlighting%20and%20Crime%20Report.pdf>

- There are clear guidelines in the county's proposal which indicate that areas in Oxford are unlikely to meet the criteria for implementation
- The county council's proposal includes processes which ensure that any scheme will only go forward at the active request of local elected members, and that in Oxford this responsibility sits with ward councillors rather than this council as a whole

Council believes:

- The suitability of Part-Night Lighting varies significantly from place to place: what is appropriate for Oxford naturally varies significantly from what is suitable for more rural locations.
- Whether individual towns and parishes outside Oxford feel PNL is suitable for their circumstances is a matter for them; this Council therefore restricts this motion to Oxford only.
- Every resident in Oxford has the right to feel safe in their community.
- Darkened streets **in the wrong context** may create an environment that fosters antisocial behaviour and crime, putting our most vulnerable residents at increased risk.
- ~~The County Council's proposals~~ **Part-night lighting, if requested in an inappropriate context**, would have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality, and retail, carers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- ~~These proposals also disregard~~ **Similarly, deploying PNL in an inappropriate location may aggravate** public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ~~ignoring~~ **relating to** both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position **to decline to apply in its capacity as Local Authority** ~~to oppose any proposal by the County Council to turn street lights off at 12 midnight in Oxford.~~
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to ~~rush through this half-baked, dangerous, and divisive proposal for the sake of financial expediency~~ **apply part-night lighting in Oxford, and to maintain its present intent only to proceed with PNL where the local town or parish council or local authority, as well as the local County Councillor, give their support.**
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, ~~Anneliese Dodds MP and Sean Woodcock MP~~ **and MPs and Councillors across Oxford**, who have ~~spoken out against~~ **expressed views** regarding these proposals.

If agreed, the motion would read:

Council notes:

- Well-lit streets are a key component to our community's safety, security, and well-being.
- According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, an approximate [40% of all vehicle collisions occur at night time](#). Residents in nearby [Warwickshire](#) and [Northamptonshire](#), where street lights have been off for some years in the early hours, have reported feeling less safe at night due to the change.
- There is no evidence that Part-Night Lighting increases crime: some reports conclude it can reduce crime^{27 28 29 30}
- Proposals to switch off some of Oxfordshire's street lights at 11pm were originally proposed by the then Liberal Democrat and Green Party-led Oxfordshire County Council with some exceptions as detailed here.
- Due to feedback from City and County councillors as well as campaigners and members of the public, these plans were withdrawn for further revision.
- The County Council now talks about communities having the option to request 'part-night lighting' which it defines as switching them off between 12 midnight and 5.30am in urban areas.
- There are clear guidelines in the county's proposal which indicate that areas in Oxford are unlikely to meet the criteria for implementation
- The county council's proposal includes processes which ensure that any scheme will only go forward at the active request of local elected members, and that in Oxford this responsibility sits with ward councillors rather than this council as a whole

Council believes:

- The suitability of Part-Night Lighting varies significantly from place to place: what is appropriate for Oxford naturally varies significantly from what is suitable for more rural locations.
- Whether individual towns and parishes outside Oxford feel PNL is suitable for their circumstances is a matter for them; this Council therefore restricts this motion to Oxford only.
- Every resident in Oxford has the right to feel safe in their community.
- Darkened streets in the wrong context may create an environment that fosters antisocial behaviour and crime, putting our most vulnerable residents at increased risk.
- Part-night lighting, if requested in an inappropriate context, would have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as all those who work unsocial hours including those in the NHS, hospitality, and retail, carers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

²⁷ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/news/report-finds-no-evidence-part-night-lighting-impact-crime-levels>

²⁸ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/mar/street-lighting-may-enable-rather-hinder-street-crime>

²⁹ <https://www.wendover-pc.gov.uk/post/less-lighting-has-no-impact-on-crime-or-collisions-says-report>

³⁰ <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s120181/9%20App%20A%20-%20Streetlighting%20and%20Crime%20Report.pdf>

- Similarly, deploying PNL in an inappropriate location may aggravate public safety concerns raised in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, ignoring relating to both actual and perceived risks.
- Particularly in urban areas, people will be heading home from a night out or to and from work during this period.
- During these hours there are fewer people around and many will already feel more vulnerable.

Council resolves:

- To ask the City Council cabinet to adopt a position to decline to apply in its capacity as Local Authority to turn street lights off at 12 midnight in Oxford.
- To call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Leader of the County Council requesting them not to apply part-night lighting in Oxford, and to maintain its present intent only to proceed with PNL where the local town or parish council or local authority, as well as the local County Councillor, give their support.
- To share the concerns raised by local communities, Thames Valley Police, and MPs and Councillors across Oxford, who have expressed views regarding these proposals.

e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill³¹ will, if passed, significantly change the way this council makes planning decisions. Council believes these changes will curtail local democratic oversight and reduce environmental protections.

Clause 51 gives the Secretary of State powers to decide which applications are heard at committee, and to dictate the size and composition of planning committees.

Part 3 removes the requirement for developers to undertake an environmental impact assessment and deliver mitigation on a site-specific basis. Instead, clauses 66 to 75 provide for a “nature restoration levy”, allocated at national level by Natural England (called “cash to trash”³² by the RSPB).

This council believes these measures go entirely against the spirit of effective local decision-making and evidence-based environmental protection.

Council agrees with the Office for Environmental Protection:

In our considered view, the bill would have the effect of reducing the level of environmental protection provided for by existing environmental law. As drafted, the provisions are a regression.³³

³¹ <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/61396/documents/6667>

³² As quoted by Carla Denyer MP, HoC, 9 June 2025, see HC Hansard, col 689: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

³³ 1 May 2025: <https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/oep-gives-advice-government-planning-and-infrastructure-bill>

Council also agrees with the 32 environmental organisations³⁴ and 81 environmentalists and academics who publicly criticised the bill, calling for a “Pause to bad law”.³⁵

Council also agrees with Labour MP Chris Hinchcliff, who pointed out that “profit maximisation” is the biggest barrier to development, not “clear processes that uphold democracy and nature”.³⁶

This Bill will damage Oxford and Oxfordshire permanently, and will not build a single extra house.

Council asks the Leader to write to Oxford’s MPs communicating these concerns, and asking them to oppose these elements in the bill.

³⁴ Wildlife and Countryside Link, ‘Letter to Steve Reed MP, secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, ref Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 8 April 2025: <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/2025/20250408WCLJointPlanningLetter.pdf>

³⁵ Justin Adams et al, ‘Joint statement: Pause to bad law- a call for meaningful consultation on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 22 May 2025: see House of Lords briefing, 19 June 2025, page 53: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2025-0025/LLN-2025-0025.pdf>

³⁶ Report stage, 10-11 June 2025, backbench amendment no. 69, see HC Hansard, 9 June 2025, col 678 and 729: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

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