

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 18 March 2026**

## **Committee members present:**

Councillor Brown

Councillor Turner

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Railton

Councillor Linda Smith

## **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services

Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance, and Strategy

Emma Griffiths, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Nerys Parry, Director of Housing

Roo Humpherson, the Regeneration Manager

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services

Richard Wood, Housing Needs and Strategy Manager

Tom Porter, Senior Strategy and Service Development Officer

James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager

Kate Protheroe, Asset Manager

Lucy Cherry, Policy and Partnerships Officer

Clare Keen, Policy and Partnerships Officer

Clare Paterson, Strategic Finance Manager

Courtney Bennett, Regulatory Services Manager

Ted Bowler, Corporate Asset Manager

James Watkins, Housing Policy and Projects Officer

Anneri Gatial, Affordable Housing Supply Senior Programme Officer

Dave Scholes, Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead

Demmi Russell, Senior Housing Development Officer

Emma Gubbins, Corporate Assets Lead

Doug Harvey, Senior Estates Surveyor

### **Also present:**

Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of Scrutiny

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Turner sent apologies for a late arrival.

### **153. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Railton declared an interest in Agenda Item 22, due to her role as a Trustee. Councillor Linda Smith declared an interest in Agenda Item 22 due to her membership position. Councillor Turner declared an interest in Agenda Item 22 due to a family connection.

Councillor Brown noted the legal advice that her and Councillor Hollingsworth had received, detailing that they did not have to declare an interest in the Jericho Wharf item.

### **154. Minutes of the previous meeting**

**Cabinet resolved to approve** the minutes of the meeting held on **11 February 2026** as a true and accurate record.

### **155. Addresses by members of the public**

**Cabinet received four addresses from members of the public.**

**Address to Cabinet from John Mair, local resident of the Jericho area.**

I have lived in Jericho for ten years. I invented *My Jericho* ([myjericho.co.uk](http://myjericho.co.uk)) and in that time have put on approximately 350 speakers, visits and more. £8000 in gate money has been passed on to local charities. I have put on five or six (virtual and in person) events to discuss the Jericho Wharf site, the latest in February

Without being over dramatic the lapse in planning permission for the site gives the City Council an opportunity to provide a vision and to think holistically about a whole Jericho Canalside development. It will not come round again. From Hythe Bridge to Mount Place an integrated scheme. That will be all our legacy beyond 2026

It means starting about on how to use the land. There are five pockets owned by landowners. South to North.

a. Towards Hythe Bridge owned by Worcester College with money to develop student accommodation there.

b. The Jericho Wharf site which has been derelict for two decades, maybe longer. No boat has been repaired there in all of that time, maybe longer. It is overgrown and currently used by Cheerteam to dump builder's rubble

c. The College Cruisers site owned and operated by them. Maybe rented or owned?. They have a small boatyard to repair the insides of narrowboats. It thrives.

d. The Council owned garages in Dawson Place, the apartment block that is Whitworth court and Mount Place, recently restored by Greening Jericho and today used for irregular community events like the musical Lazy Saturdays. Bands playing live with beer and german sausages on tap. I run them.

Together these five packets of land are enough to make up a significant development.

Jericho wharf/the boatyard site. The yard is an albatross that hampers most schemes. There is little evidence of demand. Just 16 residential boats comprise the 'Jericho boating community'. The figures of '200', or even '800', boats are mythical and used to bolster a very slim case, Restoring the boatyard and building a three dry dock construction is creating a noisy, not so small factory in a tight residential area. A reversion to inner city industry. The price? Somewhere north of £20million pounds. If the Boatyard/ Albatross were lifted out of the site there would be plenty of land for mixed housing development. One local architect is already working on plans

Next Door, College Cruisers has moorings for their fleet of 20(?) narrow boats. The business is profitable and also serves as a repair yard and has for many years for the small local community.

These would all be linked by a canalside boardwalk from Hythe Bridge street to Mount place.

Whitworth Court is problematic, A 25(?) flat development now used by the City Council for 'challenging' tenants. It could be refurbished but maybe better razed to the ground and rebuilt more upscale. Revenue from any sale used for badly needed social housing in the Wharf site .

Likewise the community centre in Canal Street. Freehold owned by St Barnabas operated by the City Council and the Community Association. It has been allowed to descend into a very poor state. I use it regularly. With love and affection and funds it could easily become user friendly again. A brand new community centre with an indoor sports pitch is simply not needed. Not enough demand from the demographic. The current users are a popular food pantry/soup kitchen, various exercise classes and some outre alternative classes. It needs shaking up. Badly

What Jericho canalside needs is not looking back to a supposed golden utopian past. That was then this is now. The Jericho Wharf Trust, depleted now that St Barnabas Church has left the committee, has shown sheer intransigence on their aims and attempts since formation in 2006 to attempt to force their 'vision; through bullying, never changing position and, as a result, driving away four developers to date. Dissatisfaction is their default position – 'not enough this', 'not enough that'.for each plan.

It has lead to dereliction and no way forward. The JWT have achieved nothing positive. The site is still derelict and and abandoned. Jericho still left with an eyesore. Opposition is not a vision.

The time is ripe for the City Council to use the CPO (which I support unless Cheer Team comes up with a new workable development) take back control and spearhead a brave new world to leave Jericho and Oxford a lasting legacy. It just needs imagination and public support.

### **Address to Cabinet from Peter Stalker, Treasurer, Jericho Community Association**

As someone who has lived in Jericho more than 50 years, I can speak from experience about the unique value of the Jericho Community Centre. This has always been a people's initiative. In the early 1980s, the Vicar of St Barnabas, working with the City Council, transformed the old Church Institute into a centre for everyone in Jericho and the surrounding neighbourhoods. From the start, it was to be run by local people and financially self-sufficient. We would have to pay our way.

To make that possible, we set up a management committee that has since evolved into the Jericho Community Association. We also recruited me to take on the community newspaper — then the Jericho Echo, now Jericho Online.

Since those early days, the Community Centre has remained a focal point in the heart of Jericho. Some residents know it through the voluntary groups that run all along the age spectrum: from Biscuits and Babies at one end to Alive and Kicking at the other. Others know it through the weekly Jericho Pantry, which provides free food to those who need it. Some will have heard the Jericho Brownies dashing around the downstairs hall or have attended one of the many children's parties. Others may recognise the more soothing tones of the piano from the ballet classes, or the rhythms of the two Indian classical dance groups. In total, our hired rooms now host 16 regular activities.

And that is only part of what happens inside the building. Several other upstairs rooms contribute directly to mental and physical wellbeing. Two are used by low-cost counselling services, another by alternative health practitioners, and we have two strength-and-balance classes each week. The arts also have a strong presence: Saturday life-drawing, a wood-carving workshop, and a thriving pottery studio.

These activities may be located in Jericho, but they draw in people from across the city — who also become customers for other local businesses. It is no secret that the Oxford Morris Dancers after a couple of thirsty hours practising with bells and sticks, have been known to patronise several nearby establishments.

I am speaking today as the Treasurer of the Community Association. Our task has always been to balance the books: using income from the paying users to subsidise free or low-cost activities, and securing steady revenue by renting out offices, consulting rooms, and studios upstairs. That is the business model we intend to replicate in the new centre. To do that, we need enough halls and rooms to sustain all

these activities and get the income they provide. The new centre too must also be financially sustainable.

The institute building has served us valiantly for more than 40 years, but it is showing its age. The fabric is deteriorating. It cannot be adapted to be fully accessible. Part of our financial juggling in the current building has been to keep up with essential repairs while setting aside funds for emergencies — all the while planning for a new centre. Whilst we make do and mend, we cannot continue indefinitely, and we are reaching a position when major repairs will be needed.

Over a decade ago, the Council declared the Centre not fit for purpose and planned for a replacement on the Wharf site. With this prospect on the horizon the Community Association has engaged positively with landowners and developers to secure planning permissions for new facilities – but they never materialized.

And a new centre has become even more vital. Jericho has continued to evolve. We have fewer shops and pubs, and hundreds of new homes have appeared along the canal and beyond. Yet where are the new community buildings to match this growth? They are sadly missing. For the many more people now living in and around Jericho — on land and on water — there is only the Jericho Community Centre.

Whether as developers, community organisations, or as a City Council, we now need to work together to provide the facilities that support a healthy society and an economically vibrant neighbourhood. I won't be here in another 50 years — I suspect few of us in this room will be — but I hope we can sustain our shared vision for a diverse and lively community and be justly proud of what we create next.

### **Address to Cabinet from David Edwards on behalf of the Jericho Wharf Trust**

Councillors—thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly in support of the officer's report and recommendation to seek a developer/operator for the Jericho Wharf site and if resolution cannot be achieved by negotiation seek a Compulsory Purchase Order to unlock the site.

The Jericho Wharf Trust includes all Jericho's main community groups and is in partnership with St Barnabas Church. We are Our Jericho and represent a very broad and inclusive community— we have low income housing, Council housing, our residential boating community and foodbanks as well as the advertised tourist hotspots and the scourge of AirBnB.

You will have heard that the community has been waiting for over 20 years for a new community centre which is promised on the Wharf site. The Victorian building fabric is well passed its useful life and is not capable of being refurbished and brought up to date. The Council reported it was not fit for purpose over a decade ago and ended its lease of the property. It is not sustainable. The building not only serves the local community but is a focus for groups from across the city. Jericho is a community with few community assets—little open space and a crumbling community centre but facing pressures which undermine community cohesion such as high house prices and development pressures.

Similarly Oxford's residential boating community has been waiting for over 20 years for the boatyard to re-open and allow boats to be maintained, repaired and kept safe. The Council has the survey information which shows that there are around 200 residential boats in Oxford and a further 200 on the boundary. This part of our community is often marginalised—kept out of sight and out of mind. Yet the community comprises young

and old, families and single persons including professionals, skilled and unskilled. Over three quarters are in work in Oxford-but on low incomes. This is affordable housing where we have a housing crisis-not just a lifestyle choice. Residential boaters are on low incomes and have to have access to facilities where they can undertake their own repairs rather than face expensive commercial rates-and this model is common in many boat yards. Some of these boats were last repaired 20 years ago when the Jericho boatyard closed. As the condition of boats has declined the risks to health have increased. The cost of removing derelict and abandoned boats is substantial.

The Trust has the skills and experience to manage the community facilities. It has a successful track record in managing the existing community facilities. It has a long term relationship with Tooley's boatyard in Banbury to manage facilities at Jericho Wharf. If you go to Aylesbury you can see the model of a successful modern community run boatyard with docks and event and conference facilities above which are let for external functions

The Trust has worked constructively and pragmatically with the Council and successive landowners/developers. However, despite assurances that the new community facilities and boatyard will be delivered once planning permission has been received these promises have evaporated and the site is put up for sale at a higher price and the community is held to ransom. We have seen this cycle repeated and the community is tired of empty promises or yet another speculative scheme. Our petition in support of a CPO continues to grow and we have over 2,200 supporters. We have had substantial discussions with potential partners who have the capacity and capability to deliver the necessary development on the site. We would prefer a negotiated way forward but unless there is a resolution within a reasonable timescale a Compulsory Purchase Order is the only way forward.

Thank you. Please support the officer's report and recommendations.

### **Address to Cabinet from Toby James, local resident of Oxford.**

I'm Toby, I live on a narrowboat on the Oxford canal. The canal was built in the late 18th Century, as a freight route. It runs from Coventry down to the Thames. It used to have a large basin near Hythe Bridge Street – this is now a car park.

It is a really important part of our country and city's industrial heritage, and to a lot of us, it's home.

There are probably a few hundred boaters in Oxford, living on the canal, in private Marinas, and on the Thames. And many more who stop off on their way through. We're a welcoming community, no different to those in many other parts of Oxford. We're teachers, pensioners, engineers, gardeners, whatever. I work for a trade union.

For us, a boatyard in Jericho would be transformative. Currently our nearest boatyards are in Heyford or Witney. There is an obvious issue here. If my engine packs it in, I could punt down to Jericho. I certainly don't fancy punting 13 miles up the canal to Heyford. Boats need regular repair, and when things go wrong, it can be hugely damaging. A tankful of diesel leaking this close to the Thames would clearly be a disaster.

Most narrowboats are significantly longer than the canal is wide. Currently, to turn a boat around, you need to drop into the Thames at the Isis lock. When the Thames is high, fast, or in flood, this is potentially dangerous. Developing the Wharf would give a space to turn a boat without doing this.

I recognise that a lot of what I'm mentioning may make you question why anyone lives on a boat at all. The answer, for the vast majority of us, is because it is wonderful. Hire

a narrowboat for a weekend. You'll get it. And for many of us it is the only housing option in Oxford that is affordable.

I would also recommend you go to the boatyard at Heyford. It's 15 minutes by train – or two days by boat. You can see why the railways replaced the canals! The boatyard there is beautiful. Sit outside, have a bottle of local cider, have a cake, watch the ducks and the colourful narrowboats drift by. We can have this in our city. Just think how beautiful it could be. Jericho is the perfect place for it, in the shadow of the wonderful St Barnabas church, a quick walk from the station. And instead we just have an eyesore. It would be a boon for boaters, a wonderful asset to the local community, and a destination for the rest of Oxford. Thank you.

### **Councillor Ed Turner provided Cabinet's response to the addresses from the members of the public.**

Councillor Turner apologised for arriving late and missing the presentation of the first few addresses. We welcome the range of support for the report. We agree that there is a need to bring forward a workable development and this report makes clear that the City Council is not prepared to see the current situation continue. Any development will need to comply with planning policy, including bringing forward community facilities. However, it will be for the developer to demonstrate the scale and type of community facilities that are both necessary and viable to meet these needs. We also absolutely recognise the adjacent boatyard is an asset to boat owners. We also agree that there is a need to ensure that the community can have new fit for purpose facilities on the site. The existing planning policy set out in the current Local Plan as well as the proposed new policy in the Local Plan 2045 continue to require these facilities as part of any development proposals. This report allows the Council to start the process of finding a new development partner. We will leave no stone unturned with the aim of achieving a deliverable development sooner rather than later.

*Councillor Turner arrived during this item at 18:39.*

### **156. Councillor addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda**

None received.

### **157. Councillor addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None received.

### **158. Items raised by Cabinet Members**

None.

### **159. Reports from the Scrutiny Committee**

The Scrutiny Committee met on 10 March 2026 and considered the following items:

- More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update
- Scrutiny Commissioned report on the Nighttime Economy
- Scrutiny Commissioned report on Fly-tipping and Litter Management

The Climate and Environment Working Group met on 25 February 2026 and considered the following items:

- EV Infrastructure Update
- Heat Network Update
- Net Zero Tracker

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group met on 26 February 2026 and considered the following items:

- Allocations Scheme Review
- Measures to meet growing demand for Temporary Accommodation

Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of Scrutiny, presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions regarding the More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update.

- **Recommendation 1:** That future reports provide More Leisure KPI outcomes broken down by gender, as well as youth participation by geographic venue, acknowledging that demographic in certain geographic areas differ. This is to identify if there are any interventions required to address any gaps or segments that are underrepresented.
- **Recommendation 2:** That, as part of the service plan, Council and More Leisure set out what could be done to expand into non-traditional sports that are not currently offered in the leisure centres.

Councillor Munkonge responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny. He said that Cabinet accepted both recommendations and thanked Scrutiny and Councillor Powell for their consideration of the report.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions regarding the Nighttime Economy report.

- **Recommendation 1:** That when considering the nighttime economy in relation to families and children, age groups are disaggregated into children up to age 11 and young people under 18.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the ongoing work maintains an open-minded approach to a wider range of nighttime activities, including bookshops, museums, the Covered Market, and other activities that are non-alcohol related.
- **Recommendation 3:** That late night cafés are categorised separately from other food-related venues.
- **Recommendation 4:** That consideration is given to include local promoters as part of the Live Music Taskforce.
- **Recommendation 5:** That the Council continues to engage with employers to identify how best to address the issues faced by workers travelling home late at night.
- **Recommendation 6:** That current analysis includes the capacity of venues, in addition to the number of venues.

Councillor Hollingsworth responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny and noted that Cabinet accepted all the Committee's recommendations. He highlighted their focus on addressing the obstacles which local individuals and organisations face navigating the nighttime economy.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Scrutiny Committee's discussions regarding the Fly-tipping and Litter Management report.

- **Recommendation 1:** To explore the provision of facilities in parks during the summer period to allow "2-minute litter picks" where this would be beneficial.
- **Recommendation 2:** To review the appropriateness of measures businesses have in place to ensure that the waste they produce is managed responsibly and that they are encouraging their customers to dispose of litter appropriately.
- **Recommendation 3:** To audit the use of signage in areas with high levels of fly-tipping and to consider where additional signage could be most effectively implemented.
- **Recommendation 4:** That Council consider reengaging with education programmes and resources aimed at addressing behaviours and culture relating to litter and fly-tipping.
- **Recommendation 5:** That future reports include a breakdown of locations with high levels of litter across the city, presented visually on a map where possible.

Councillor Chapman responded to the recommendations from Scrutiny. He said that Cabinet accepted the first, third, and fourth recommendations and that Cabinet accepted the fifth recommendation in part. He noted that Cabinet had not accepted the second recommendation, because of the unmanageable scale of work which this recommendation would require. He outlined the work that ODS was doing with the Environment Agency to address litter and fly tipping issues in the city.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Housing and Homelessness Working Group's discussions regarding the Allocations Scheme Review and Measures to meet growing demand for Temporary Accommodation report. He noted that no recommendations arose from the Working Group's consideration of the reports.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Climate and Environment Working Group's discussions regarding the EV Infrastructure Update and the Net Zero Tracker. He noted that no recommendations arose from the Working Group's consideration of these two reports.

Councillor Alex Powell presented the Climate and Environment Working Group's discussions regarding the Heat Network Update.

- **Recommendation:** That Cabinet formally write to Central Government seeking inclusion of Oxford in the first tranche of Heat Network Zones to be designated following the commencement of Heat Network Zoning Regulations, so that the Council will have clear statutory powers to enforce delivery against agreed plans, intervene in cases of non-compliance or underperformance, prevent monopolistic practices, as well as ensure transparency and appropriate safeguards.

Councillor Railton responded to the comments from Scrutiny. She said that Cabinet accepted the recommendation on this report and that this work would be included in the procurement process.

## **160. Measures to meet growing demand for Temporary Accommodation**

The Director of Housing Services had submitted a report to Cabinet seeking approval to implement measures to meet demand and bring down cost of Temporary Accommodation.

Councillor Linda Smith presented the report. She outlined the growing need for temporary accommodation in the city and how the report helped to address these needs. She emphasised that the report would also improve the quality of temporary housing in the city.

Richard Wood, the Housing Needs and Strategy Manager, said that the centrepiece of the plan was the Council's investment into temporary accommodation units. He said that they would try to buy the units in Oxford, or the wider county if necessary. He noted that the project would also support the financial health of the Council. He spoke about the flexibility included in the project and how this would support their work to address the city's housing needs.

Councillor Brown thanked the officers for their work on the report and to improve accommodation in the city.

Councillor Turner spoke about the Renter's Rights Act and that there could be an uptick in people serving notice before the legislation comes in. He asked the team if they had seen evidence of this happening.

The Housing Needs and Strategy Manager said that there had been a rise in demand for temporary accommodation in the past 3 years. Over the last 12 months, he said that they had seen an increase in families becoming homeless. He said that they had seen a rise in landlords evicting tenants as they moved away from being landlords. He said that they were monitoring the Renter's Rights Act and how this related to homelessness in the city.

Councillor Smith outlined the new funding the advice centre was receiving to provide extra support for tenants as the new legislation comes in.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked if the legislation meant that landlords were leaving the market and if that created opportunities for the Council to pursue multiple block acquisition.

The Housing Needs and Strategy Manager said that this would create opportunities and that they were engaging with landlords and portfolio landlords to discuss these possibilities.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Approve the latest set of mitigations the Council is taking, as summarised in paragraph 6 of this report, to increase the provision of temporary accommodation, to improve quality, and decrease cost.
2. Delegate to the Director of Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, and the Group Finance Director:
  - a. subject to the parameters as set out in paragraph 19, authority to agree the properties to be acquired and the detailed terms for the acquisition of properties and enter into all necessary documentation

- to effect the acquisition of each property into the Housing Revenue Account for the use of Temporary Accommodation; and
- b. authority to enter into necessary agreements or contracts required, and to authorise expenditure, for any works required to convert or carry out works to (a) any new properties acquired by the Housing Revenue Account or (b) to suitable existing properties from the General Fund to enable them to be used for Temporary Accommodation and to ensure compliance prior to occupation  
Provided all such expenditure is within the £32 million capital budget as contained in the MTFP.
3. Note the additional measures as set out in paragraphs 21 to 26 of this report.

## 161. Allocations Scheme Review

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to request that Cabinet approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford, following public consultation.

Councillor Linda Smith presented the report. She noted that the first recommendation would be amended to the following

Recommend that Full Council approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford;

Councillor Smith thanked the officers for their work in this area. She said that she was pleased with the outcomes of the survey and tenants' engagement and awareness of the scheme.

Tom Porter, Senior Strategy and Service Development Officer, said that the report proposed minor changes to their current practice. He outlined how they had reviewed guidance, legislation, and the work that similar councils do in this area when drafting the report.

Councillor Chapman said that the paper was very clear and thanked officers for the transparency of the system and their hard work in this area.

With the change to the first recommendation, Cabinet resolved to:

1. Recommend that Full Council approve the new draft Social Housing Allocations Scheme for Oxford;
2. **Recommend** that Full Council delegates authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to authorise the date on which the Allocations Scheme is implemented, noting the explanation and timelines in paragraph 23;
3. **Recommend** that Full Council delegates authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to make minor changes to the Allocations Scheme, in order to comply with changes to legislative and statutory guidance, related Council policies (approved by Cabinet) and to make technical changes to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the scheme.

## 162. Jericho Wharf

*Councillor Brown altered the order of the agenda so that this item was taken as the first substantive report, following the recommendations from Scrutiny.*

The Deputy Chief Executive – Place had submitted a report to Cabinet to put in place a process for this council to assist in bringing forward the Oxford Plan proposals for development at Jericho Wharf.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He spoke about the wonderful community which Jericho is home to and thanked the people who have advocated for improvements to the community through their local groups and the City Council. He noted that the Councillors for this area had been tenacious in pushing for this development work. Councillor Turner noted the frustration he feels about how long it has taken for them to get to this position. Councillor Turner outlined the recommendations in the report and the reasons why the Council was pursuing this approach to developing the site. Councillor Turner thanked officers for their work to get this work moving forward.

Roo Humpherson, Regeneration Manager, spoke about the CPO process and how that was outlined in the report.

Councillor Hollingsworth said that he had received legal advice that he did not have a conflict of interest in this item. He noted the points made by public speakers and the improvements to the local area which are needed for the Jericho community. He outlined the need for a boatyard in Oxford to support the lives of the hundreds of people living on boats in and around the city. He spoke about the way that the Jericho community serves not only the people who live there, but also people across the city who come to Jericho for the art, culture, restaurants, and other high points which the community is home to.

Councillor Turner noted that following further legal advice, the first recommendation needed to be amended to the following:

Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - Place to seek to procure a development partner / operator, with a viable business plan, to try to acquire the Jericho Wharf site by agreement and deliver the requirements set out in *Oxford Local Plan Policy SP33* and to indemnify the Council for the associated costs

With the change to the first recommendation, Cabinet resolved to:

1. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - Place to seek to procure a development partner / operator, with a viable business plan, to try to acquire the Jericho Wharf site by agreement and deliver the requirements set out in *Oxford Local Plan Policy SP33* and to indemnify the Council for the associated costs
2. Confirm that if the Jericho Wharf site cannot be acquired by agreement, then, as a last resort it would be willing subject to compliance with all relevant legal and policy requirements, if necessary consider the use of its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to acquire the site; and to
3. Note that if an option to use CPO powers was to be pursued a further report would need to be submitted to Cabinet to seek approval for a detailed scheme for the redevelopment of this site demonstrating that the legal and policy tests for the use of its CPO powers had been satisfied. This would need to be accompanied by a recommendation to Council to seek authority to set up a

budget for any additional costs for the implementation of its CPO powers, which would be redeemed from the development partner.

### **163. More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update**

The Director of Communities and Citizens Services had submitted a report to Cabinet to update Cabinet on the highlights of the second year of the new leisure contract and approve the Annual Service Plan 2026-27, 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 the report updated Cabinet on the highlights of their work and requested that Cabinet approve the 26/27 service plan. He thanked officers for their continued work and their efforts to continue their good relationship with More Leisure. He emphasised the increases in participation across the board, with more residents accessing city services. He said that their leisure systems helped to address health inequality in the city.

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager, celebrated the success of their work with young people in the Leys Youth Hub and the strong outcomes they had seen in this area.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Leisure Annual Service Plan 2026-27 and delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Citizens Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford, to make any necessary amendments.

### **164. Disposal of City Centre Property**

The Director of Property and Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to approve the disposal of the freehold titles of Floyds Row and Old Mortuary in Oxford.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He said that the city owned the freehold titles of Floyds row and Old Mortuary. He said that they did not want buildings to be empty so they had done market testing and received a bid which they would like to recommend that the council pursue. He said that this would be beneficial to the council and the city.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Directory of Property and Assets, in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Group Finance Director and Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management to agree the final sale terms and enter into the final agreement and any other documents necessary to effect the transfer of the freehold titles of Floyds Row and Old Mortuary. The delegation will be on the basis that the sale will meet the requirements of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (which states that a council shall not dispose of land otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonable be obtained).

## **165. Oxford City Council annual Business Plan 2026 to 2027**

The Director of Law Governance and Strategy and the Transition Director had submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council's annual Business Plan priorities 2026 to 2027; and to provide an update on delivery of the 2025 to 2026 Business Plan.

Clare Keen, the Policy and Partnerships Officer, presented the report. She said that the business plan built upon the work they had done previously and as always, they were focusing on the Council's core themes. She said that they did a review against their aspirations and the realities of Local Government Reorganisation. She said that the business plan was created in the view of Local Government Reorganisation and the context this created.

Lucy Cherry, the Policy and Partnerships Officer, said that the business plan aligned with the Council's strategy for 24 – 28. She said the plan set out the priority workplan for the year ahead, which was aligned with the budget. She said that the Council was performing well in the current climate and there were strong examples where the Council was being ambitious and meeting KPIs around their strategy priorities.

Caroline Green, Chief Executive, reminded Cabinet that this was not an exhaustive list of things going on across the Council, but focused on key priorities and key areas of work. She noted the additional challenge posed by Local Government Reorganisation. She said that it was still an impressive list of priority areas of work. She thanked officers for their work to put together the priorities and the plan. She commended the leadership team for their work putting the plan together as they navigated Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Brown said that it was amazing that although they had reduced the number of priorities they were focusing on, there was still an incredible amount of work across the Council, even as they address Local Government Reorganisation. She said that the priorities reflected the priorities of people from across the city. She thanked officers for their work on the report.

Councillor Hollingsworth said that the report focused on Local Government Reorganisation as an important factor to consider. He asked if they would need to review the plan again in July, once the government had announced its decision regarding Local Government Reorganisation.

The Chief Executive said that they would review the plan after the decision is made and that they wanted to ensure that the plan gave them continuity of work while they undergo the transition.

Councillor Brown said that all Councils across Oxfordshire were working closely together to determine how they would merge services, whatever the decision on Local Government Organisation.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Agree the draft Oxford City Council annual Business Plan priorities 2026 to 2027, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year beginning 1 April 2026;

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and Transition Director in consultation with the Council Leader to make any further minor amendments to the Business Plan priorities before implementation, provided that such amendments do not materially affect the substance of the Business Plan;
3. Note the progress made delivery against the actions set out in the Business Plan 2025 to 2026.

## **166. Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 3 2025/26**

The Group Finance Director had submitted a report to Cabinet to note the update to the Cabinet on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He said that they were headed towards an overspend, but that they picked that up in the current year's budget and that they had mitigation measures in place.

Councillor Brown thanked Nigel Kennedy and noted that this was his last Cabinet meeting before his retirement. She also welcomed Alistair Rush, who would be taking over from Nigel in a few weeks' time.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Note the financial position for quarter 3 (Q3) 2025/26 including forecast outturn, as well as the current position on risk and performance at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

## **167. Additional HMO licensing scheme renewal**

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report to Cabinet to approve the designation of the whole of the City of Oxford as subject to Additional HMO Licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 for a further five years commencing from June 2026 and following expiry of the 3-month statutory notice period.

Councillor Smith presented the report. She said that this scheme was particularly important in Oxford, where they have stringent requirements for licensing. She said that this scheme relates to smaller HMOs which they choose to license, though they are not required to. She said that respondents to the survey supported their renewal of the scheme. She thanked officers for their work on the report.

Courtney Bennett, the Regulatory Services Manager, outlined their consultation work for the scheme renewal and the support this showed for the scheme. As expected, she said that landlords and agents had more mixed views, but many acknowledged the role that licensing plays in maintaining standards. She said that the report proposed renewal, with only small changes from the work they were already undertaking. Regarding the Renter's Rights Act, she said that they were working with the housing team and were looking at creating a new position to do in depth investigation and enforcement work. She said that with every property licensed in Oxford they were able to catch low quality properties before they become uninhabitable.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Having considered the outcome of the statutory consultation and the evidence previously considered by Cabinet in October 2025, confirm that the statutory tests set out in sections 56 and 57 of the Housing Act 2004 are met and that a renewed Additional HMO Licensing Scheme is required.
2. Designate the whole of the City of Oxford as subject to Additional HMO Licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 for a period of five years commencing from June 2026 and following expiry of the 3-month statutory notice period.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regulation to finalise and sign, publish and implement the designation and take all necessary steps to give effect to the renewed scheme.
4. Approve the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme as set out in Appendix 2 including the simplified licence condition relating to waste management.
5. Note that the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme will continue to operate on a full cost-recovery basis, with licence fees set through the Council's annual budget and fees and charges approval process.

## **168. Grant of Easement**

The Director of Property and Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to Request approval to enter into an Option Agreement in relation to granting an Easement in relation to land at Blackberry Lane.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He outlined the grant of easement outlined in the report and outlined how the report would be beneficial to the Council.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, the Group Finance Director, and the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets to agree the final commercial terms for the Option Agreement as set out in Exempt Appendix 1.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, Group Finance Director, and Lead Member for Finance and Assets, to approve the final form of the Option Agreement and enter into it on behalf of the Council.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Group Finance Director and Lead Member for Finance and Assets to agree the final disposal price for the easement and to ensure that the disposal is compliant with the Council's statutory duty to obtain Best Consideration reasonably obtainable pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **169. HRA Policies: Compliance, Gas Safety, Decant, Permit to Work, Radon, Health and Safety**

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet recommend that Council approve the following policies: compliance, decant, gas safety,

health and safety, permit to work and radon to ensure the maintenance and good management of the housing stock.

Councillor Linda Smith presented the report. She said that this was another draft of HRA policies being brought forward for review and update. She said that these were important to have in place so that they are transparent to their tenants about what the Council's responsibilities are.

James Watkins, the Housing Policy and Projects Officer, noted how the tenants and residents had reviewed and provided input into the policies. He said that the compliance policy was an overarching policy to ensure the safety of tenants and staff. He stated that the decant policy would only be implemented in extreme situations. He outlined that the gas safety policy ensured that there are safety standards in place at all times and appropriate alarms in properties. He noted that the health and safety policy, for the HRA work, covers a range of different issues. He outlined how the permit to work policy covers contractors working on site, ensuring that there is a proper process in place for contractors to work. He said that the radon policy is a precautionary policy as there is only a low risk of radon in Oxford, but the policy addresses this low risk.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked if there were any differences across the policies concerning the Council's different relationships as landlord, social landlord, freeholder, leaseholder, and employer. He asked if they could provide a brief table outlining any of these differences. The Housing Policy and Projects Officer said that they could provide that information.

Councillor Chapman discussed the context of the social housing regulator and that he was impressed with the speed they had taken up the review of HRA Policies. He spoke about the good work that ODS does in the application of these policies across the city.

Cabinet resolved to recommend the following policies for Council approval:

1. The draft Compliance Policy
2. The draft Decant Policy
3. The draft Gas Safety Policy
4. The draft Health and Safety Policy
5. The draft Permit to Work Policy
6. The draft Radon Policy

## **170. Project Approval and Delegations for the Harebell Road affordable housing scheme**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet to seek project approval and delegations in relation to the affordable housing scheme at the former garage site on Harebell Road. The report seeks approval to commence the appropriation of land from the current purpose of garages to a planning purpose, within the General Fund. The report also notes the future intent to appropriate land from the General Fund ("GF") to the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") where necessary, prior to completion of the scheme.

Councillor Smith presented the report. She said that she was very pleased to see this report come forward. She said it was very important for them to make use of these sites wherever possible, to address the city's housing needs and to improve communities across the city.

Anneri Gatial, Affordable Housing Supply Senior Programme Officer, said that they had completed demolition work on this site and others. She said they would like to work at pace to get this to development to get more affordable homes on the site. She said that four sites, along with this one, would be developed to make use of unutilised land.

Councillor Brown recognised that many of these sites were difficult to develop and thanked the team for their work in the direction of development.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked if they had planning permission for the site. The Affordable Housing Supply Senior Programme Officer said that they had a Planning pre-application meeting scheduled next week.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Grant project approval noting Full Council allocation of the £863,000 budget for this scheme within the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as part of its budget setting in February 2026, to develop this scheme, as set out in this report, within the allocated Housing Revenue Account capital budget and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford on the Harebell Road former garage site;
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - City and Citizens' Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Group Finance Director/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into design and build contracts and any other necessary agreements to facilitate the delivery of the scheme within the identified budget, except where there is an existing officer delegation within the Council's Constitution;
3. Agree to commence the process for the appropriation of this site (as per the red line shown at para 5) to a planning purpose;
4. Note the intent to take a report to the Full Council to approve the appropriation of land from the General Fund (GF) to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at a later date (prior to scheme completion).

## **171. Project Approval and Delegations for Redbridge Paddock affordable housing scheme**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to Cabinet to seek project approval and delegations to enable the continued delivery of more affordable housing at the Redbridge Paddock site.

Councillor Smith presented the report. She said that this and the preceding and following report show the Council's work to address the housing needs of the city.

Dave Scholes, the Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead, said the site had its challenges in development and that there was quite substantial remediation needed. He said that they think they have a viable scheme to do this work. He said that they would bring this to initial planning application later this year and house building would begin in 2029. He said that it would be a mixed tenure scheme and the delivery approach would be brought through OX Place.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked why it would take over a year for the reserved matters to be resolved.

The Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead said that there were significant restraints around contamination, as well as other challenges. He said that the timeline they'd outlined was a realistic approach to the requirements of the site.

Councillor Brown emphasised that this was a brown field site.

Councillor Chapman asked about the relationship with Homes England in the project.

The Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead said that they were working with Homes England and hoped to work with them on the business case from April onwards. He said that if they could secure additional housing beyond the local plan there might be some ability for them to secure additional funding.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Give project approval for the development, including the land sale and acquisition of affordable dwellings developed by Oxford City Housing (Development) Ltd (OCH(D)L) for which budgetary provision has been made in the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in respect of Redbridge Paddock;
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - City and Citizens' Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into any necessary agreements and contracts to facilitate the agreed purchase by the Council of the affordable housing (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, within the identified budget, for the provision of the affordable homes, as set out in this report, on the Redbridge Paddock development, within the project approval;
3. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to approve the final terms, which will be S123 compliant, and enter into the sale agreement for the Redbridge Paddock site from the General Fund to OCH(D)L;

## **172. Project Approval and Delegations for Sandy Lane Recreation Ground affordable housing scheme**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to seek project approval and delegations in relation to the affordable housing scheme at the Sandy Lane Recreation Ground, together with the relocation of football pitches and providing changing facilities and storage as set out in the report. The report also seeks approval to commence the process for the appropriation of the land from its current purpose (including recreation ground and open space) to a planning purpose, within the General Fund. The report further notes the future intention, subject to separate decision of Full Council, to appropriate land from the General Fund ("GF") to the Housing Revenue Account ("HRA"), prior to completion of the scheme.

Councillor Linda Smith presented the report and said that this was a 100% affordable housing scheme. She said that they were not taking it lightly that they were building on recreation ground and that the football pitches would be re-provided. She said that they would not just re-provide the pitches but would provide the local clubs with improved

facilities. She confirmed that the re-provided pitches and facilities would need to be open before building work on the Sandy Lane recreation site began.

The Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead said that it was the most substantial delivery of affordable housing on a single site that they were bringing forward. He said that it would be directly agreed in the HRA, using OX Place as the development agent. He highlighted the benefits of the scheme, including the number of affordable homes, the number of new residents to be housed, and the knock on effect of allocating those homes. He said that the plan should improve housing for about 1200 people.

In response to a question from Councillor Arshad, Demi Russell, the Senior Housing Development Officer, said that it would take about six years for the whole development and that they were looking at a phased approach.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked how the project would impact or align with the construction of the Cowley Branch Line.

The Senior Housing Development Officer said that they were working closely with the Cowley Branch Line team to coordinate with one another. She said that they were working closely together to make sure there were no negative impacts on the two projects.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** noting Full Council allocation of the £97,551,302 budget for this scheme within the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as part of its budget setting in February 2026, to fund the development of this scheme, as a proposed Housing Revenue Account (“HRA”) project, as set out in this report, within the allocated HRA capital budget and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford on the Sandy Lane Recreation Ground site;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens’ Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Group Finance Director/Section 151 Officer; and the Council’s Monitoring Officer, to enter into design and build contracts and any other necessary agreements to facilitate the scheme development within the identified budget, except where there is an existing officer delegation within the Council’s Constitution. Facilitating the scheme development includes the relocation of football pitches and providing a pavilion as set out in the report;
3. **Agree** to commence the process for the appropriation of this Site (as per the red line shown at para 12) to a planning purpose, following completion and handover of the replacement playing pitch facilities at Herschel Crescent and **note** the intention to bring forward a further report for Cabinet to consider the appropriation of the Site from recreation/open space purposes to planning purposes and the potential to rely on *section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016* in the event of interference with private rights;
4. **Note** the intent to take a report to the Full Council seeking approval for the subsequent appropriation of the Site from the General Fund (GF) to the HRA (prior to practical completion of the scheme or delivery of the first phase, if delivery of the units is phased).

### **173. Making of a new parking order at 1 car parking site and introduction of a tariff**

*Councillors Smith, Turner, and Railton left the meeting for this item due to their declared interests.*

The Director for Property & Assets had submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet approve making of a new off-street parking place order as well as implementing charges at one car park.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report. He said that the report created an off-street parking place order.

Emma Gubbins, Corporate Assets Lead, clarified the way that the tariff implementation would work.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Approve the making of new off-street parking places order covering Car Park off Meadow Lane
2. Approve the introduction of charges at Meadow Lane Car Park as set out in Appendix 1
3. Delegate authority to the Director for Property & Assets in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members to follow due procedure as set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Order (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and in the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 including required public consultation and consideration of objections and responses to them.
4. Delegate authority to the Director for Property & Assets in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members to approve Notice of Making and Making of Orders.

## **174. 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 18:30 and ended at 20:38.**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Wednesday 15 April 2026**

*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.*