

Record of Decisions of the meeting of the Council

On Monday 6 October 2025

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Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Council held on Monday 6 October 2025.

Decisions made by the Cabinet and Planning – Oxford City Planning Committee will be subject to a two-day call-in period.

The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Committee and Member Services.

7 **Appropriation of land at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

8 **Appropriation of land at Cave Street from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Cave Street from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

11 **Working Overseas Policy and Procedure**

Council resolved to:

1. **Agree** to review the policy and to bring a revised Working Overseas Policy and Procedure back to Council in November 2025.

18 **Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather)**

Council resolved to:

Reject the following motion:

Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill¹ 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. This would remove opportunities for councillors to judge whether the harm and benefits of applications are appropriately balanced.

Part 3 would permit environmental obligations in relation to development to be discharged, disapplied or otherwise modified if a developer pays the nature restoration levy (called “cash to trash”² by the RSPB). This fund would be used according to a plan prepared by Natural England, not the local authority.

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.³

Council also agrees with the 32 environmental organisations⁴ and 81 environmentalists and academics who publicly criticised the bill, calling for a “Pause to bad law”.⁵

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”.⁶

Council calls for the preservation of planning committees’ current powers, and for a strong presumption towards environmental mitigation on-site or close by in preference to levy payment.

Council asks the Leader to write to Oxford’s MPs communicating these concerns with the bill.

19 **Oxford stands for diversity, for fairer migration policy and against the far right (Proposed by Councillor Powell, Seconded by Councillor Jarvis)**

Council resolved to:

Agree with the following motion:

¹ <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/61396/documents/6667>

² 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>

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

⁴ 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>

⁵ 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>

⁶ 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>

Council notes:

1. Throughout the summer and into September, protests have taken place outside hotels housing asylum seekers across the UK, many directly organised by far-right groups.⁷
2. Over 100,000 people marched in London at a demonstration addressed by a number of far right figures.⁸
3. These demonstrations have also taken place on numerous occasions in Oxford outside the Kassam Stadium Holiday Inn.⁹
4. Alongside this, this summer also saw a racist attack on Central Oxford Mosque.¹⁰
5. Oxford City Council has consistently made clear that it wants to see a fairer migration system, that refugees are welcome in our city, and that policies like immigration detention and removal are harmful.¹¹ This was most recently and clearly illustrated through our obtaining of City of Sanctuary status.¹²
6. The government has recently announced new policies designed to create a more restrictive migration and asylum system, most notably through the suspension of family reunion.¹³

Council believes:

1. Oxford is a city proud of its diversity and its history of solidarity with people from all across the world.
2. The protests and attacks seen this summer are deeply worrying, and are designed to intimidate and divide our communities.
3. Attempts by politicians, media outlets and commentators to whip up hate and to blame migrants and refugees for the problems in our society should be condemned.
4. Hostile attitudes towards migrants are in part driven by central government policies which seek to create a more hostile environment for migrants and refugees.
5. Neither hotel accommodation, nor detention centres are fair, humane or suitable accommodation for people seeking asylum, and a drawn-out, lengthy process for reviewing asylum applications is harmful for those enduring it.
6. People seeking asylum should not be prevented from working while their claims are being processed.
7. Enabling family reunion is a basic cornerstone of a humane and fair asylum system and suspending it risks putting people who would otherwise be allowed to enter the UK in significant danger.
8. Hostile rhetoric and policies directed at migrants and people seeking asylum make many Oxford residents less safe by fueling xenophobia and racism.

Council resolves:

1. To request the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Safer Oxford:

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/23/members-of-far-right-party-organising-asylum-hotel-protests-across-uk-facebook-posts-show>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwydezxl0xlo>

⁹ <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25482399.oxford-asylum-protest-man-taken-away-police/>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70xnzp0ej4o>

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yj5j072ero>

¹² <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1612/oxford-city-council-awarded-local-authority-of-sanctuary-accreditation>

¹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c626p66d6jxo>

1. Reiterate the council's commitment to stand with and support all of Oxford's diverse communities and to oppose attempts to divide and intimidate.
2. Write to the Home Secretary reiterating this council's opposition to the re-opening of Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre and to the decision to suspend family reunion applications.
3. To publicly support and campaign for people seeking asylum to be permitted to work and accommodated within communities

For more details on the subject of the Decision or for a copy of the Decision Note please contact:

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager, Mobile: 01865 602767
or Email: democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk

The Record of Decision sets out the decision taken by the Committee. Details of the reasons for the decision and any alternative options put forward for consideration (if any) were published within the reports

The Decision is available on the [Council's website](#) for the call-in period.