

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 14 July 2025**

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### **Council members present:**

Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant (Sheriff)
Councillor Harley	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Miles
Councillor Max Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Ottino
Councillor Powell	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Railton	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Sandelson
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Smowton	Councillor Stares
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Yeatman
Councillor Waite	

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

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services  
Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance  
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Amber Khagoon, Trainee Solicitor  
Emma Griffiths, Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

## **8. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Goddard, Lygo, Jupp, Rehman, Regisford, Malik, Hunt, Mundy and Latif sent apologies.

It was noted that Councillor Yeatman, Councillor Corais and Councillor Roz Smith would be late.

## **9. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Gant noted his Cabinet role at Oxfordshire County Council in relation to items 17a and 17d. Council were informed that he would leave the meeting during discussion of those items.

## **10. Minutes**

Council resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2025 and the annual meeting of Council on 15 May 2025.

## **11. Appointment to Committees**

There were no new appointments to committees.

## **12. Announcements**

The Lord Mayor informed Council of events she had recently attended and noted her enjoyment of her new role. Council heard that she had recently attended a performance of the East Oxford Community Choir, met Mo Farah, accompanied the Silver Joggers, and attended a dinner at Queens College. The Lord Mayor had also met over 100 students from China at Oxford Town Hall and attended a networking event for refugees and migrants at Oxford Brooks University. Council also heard further examples.

The Sheriff also noted his enjoyment of his responsibilities and Council heard that the annual inspection of Port Meadow had been completed successfully.

The City Rector reflected on the power that speeches hold for changing history. Council heard that in Oxford in 1833, poet John Keble delivered a sermon which called on the nation to learn from the past and look to the future. The City Rector reflected on how this positively impacted communities and recommended that Council consider the value of his words.

### **13. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

There were no addresses or questions.

### **14. Positive Action Policy**

The Head of People had submitted a report regarding the Positive Action Policy. Cabinet had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 18 June 2025.

Councillor Chapman presented the report, noting that the policy is a critical tool for ensuring that under-representation across varying levels of the council is addressed. Council heard that the trade unions support this policy, and it has been integrated within current training, recruitment, and retention efforts.

Councillor Smowton queried what the Council will do to encourage representation of trans persons given the recent Equality Act ruling. Councillor Chapman emphasised that Council would continue reach out and encourage applications from persons within the trans community and will treat all applications properly and fairly. Where already employed, members of the community will be positively encouraged to take up greater responsibility.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini welcomed the addition of recommendations from the child poverty review group relating to social economic duties and the inclusion of KPIs within the policy to support target setting.

Councillor Chapman moved the report to a vote. Upon being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the Positive Action Policy for publication and use.

### **15. Adopt the Revised Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report regarding the changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy, and for Council to approve the amended Charging Schedule. Cabinet had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 18 June 2025.

*Councillor Henwood left the meeting.*

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report and recommended it for approval.

Councillor Smowton requested that the rationale behind keeping use class C1 hotels on lower CIL rates, as set out in the report, be explained. Councillor Chapman explained that classifications within the report were based on what was deemed likely to be viable and successful through public inquiry processes.

*Councillor Roz Smith joined the meeting.*

Councillor Turner welcomed the report, emphasising that it is backed up by evidence and reflects the buoyancy of the market in Oxford.

*Councillor Henwood rejoined the meeting.*

Upon being seconded by Councillor Arshad, the recommendations were put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

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

## **16. Appointment of Independent Persons**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report recommending Council appoint six Independent Persons to assist with supporting the Monitoring Officer with the Standards Process. The Standards Committee had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 3 July 2025.

Councillor Pressel presented the report and moved for it to be voted upon. Upon being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Authorise** the Monitoring Officer to re-appoint Chris Ballinger and Andrew Mills-Hicks and to appoint Eric Feltin, Lois Lezmore, Ala Soualhi and Dr. Bushra Almunir Yousef as the Council's Independent Persons for a five-year term.

## 17. Urgent Key Decisions Since March 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to update Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since March 2025.

Councillor Brown presented the report.

Councillor Gant, in relation to the report on urgent decision brought to Council in January 2025, emphasised that proper scrutiny and oversight must be ensured. It was asked why further urgent decisions had since been taken, and why they could not have been taken within proper timescales to facilitate sufficient overview. Councillor Brown acknowledged the matter and explained that all three examples within this report were subject to the requirement for decisions to be taken with haste, especially that relating to local government reorganisation. In these scenarios, Council heard that it would have been impossible for normal timescales to have been observed. Councillor Turner also commented that in some circumstances, there can be significant advantages to the Council if it is able to act with unusual speed, for example in relation to property transactions.

Council resolved to **note** the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report.

## 18. Constitution Review 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval to the updated Committee procedures in the relevant sections of the Constitution and further amendments to the Constitution.

Councillor Brown presented the report and commended the work of the Constitution Review Group. Council understood that an amendment had been proposed by the Green Group to clarify some wording on point 11.2.

Councillor Jarvis proposed a minor amendment in line with the spirit of the document's intentions. It was proposed that section 11.2 be altered from 'Nominated Councillors must have served at least **one full 4-year term** as a Councillor' to 'Nominated Councillors must have served at least **four full years** as a Councillor'.

Councillor Jarvis explained that the amendment was technical and aimed at ensuring that civic officer holders have a full and proper understanding of the council. Council heard the possible consequences of not agreeing this amendment. Councillor Powell, noting that he had been a member of the Constitution Review Group, seconded the amendment.

Councillor Hollingsworth questioned from what point four years from nomination date would be measured. Councillor Brown clarified that it would be from the date of taking office and Councillor Rowley explained that it would be from the date of the annual council at which persons are appointed to office.

Councillor Henwood noted his support for the amendment but raised concern that Councillor Malik has served the Council for 21 years but not been offered the position of Lord Mayor.

Council **agreed** the amendment.

Councillor Brown moved the report. Upon being seconded by Councillor Smowton, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

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.

## **19. Pay Policy Statement**

The Head of People has submitted a report which asked Council to approve the pay policy.

Councillor Chapman presented the report and moved for it to be voted upon, noting that it sets out the technicalities of how staff are attracted and retained. Council heard that it was supported and agreed by the trade unions. Upon being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Agree** the pay policy.

## **20. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 April 2025**

No questions were raised.

### **b) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18 June 2025**

Councillor Smowton asked, in relation to the leisure review, whether more data is available to explain the year-on-year fall in visits to leisure centres. Following a discussion of the absence of this data within the minutes, Councillor Munkonge suggested that he discuss the matter with Councillor Smowton outside of the meeting.

Councillor Powell noted that the same statistics were discussed at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Munkonge explained that the first year of data is considered a baseline and next year more data would be available to provide information on performance.

### **c) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 9 July 2025**

Councillor Morris, in relation to item 27, noted his disappointment for the reasons provided for the Council's choice not to produce a map in support of Oxford as a walkable city. It was asked whether Cabinet would reconsider the reallocation of funding for this purpose in the next budget. Councillor Railton emphasised that this would be a decision for the next budget, and not a matter to be considered within a motion.

Councillor Smowton, in relation to the Community Lettings Policy, asked the cabinet member whether current tenants are supportive of the policy, and secondly, in relation to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, whether there has been any progress made by the Council in urging central government to avoid a reduction in this. Councillor Turner explained that the Community Lettings Policy is necessary and treats all organisations in the round. Councillor Linda Smith explained that the policy only applies to new leases and does not affect existing tenants. In relation to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Council heard that some progress has been made, and it has been learned that changes will be phased in and some mitigations will be added in response to representations made by the Council about the proposed formula.

## 21. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

26 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 11 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

*Councillor Jarvis left and rejoined the meeting during this item.*

*Councillor Corais left and rejoined the meeting during this item.*

*The Lord Mayor moved to items 16a, 16b and 16c ahead of the break.*

## 22. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

### a) **Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board/ Health Improvement Board Partnership Report**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to provide the annual report on the work of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing/Health Improvement Board.

Councillor Munkonge presented the report which outlined the actions Oxford City Council is taking to tackle health inequalities and support residents. Council heard that the matter is complex, but that Councillor Munkonge is proud of the ongoing partnership work with Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini asked how local government work on health and wellbeing will be scrutinised given a recent report from national government that notes relevant organisations disappearing. It was also asked whether representations will be made to central government on this issue. Councillor Munkonge recognised the importance of the question and committed to raising it at the next board meeting.

Councillor Robinson asked whether gardening and community allotments had been considered as gentle means of activity to improve health and wellbeing. Council also heard of the connection of this with food and nutrition understanding. Councillor Munkonge appreciated the recommendation and committed to adding it to the report.

Council resolved to **note** the annual report of the work the City Council does to support the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board.

**b) Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-2025**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report to Council to provide a summary of the Scrutiny function during the 2024/2025 municipal year.

Councillor Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025, presented the report, noting that the Committee's discussions took place across a challenging landscape in the last year which further emphasised the importance of the scrutiny function and its delicate balance. Council heard that across the year the Committee made 96 recommendations to Cabinet; 59 of which were accepted in full. Councillor Miles noted that members of the Committee were encouraged that its views were embraced, and its role valued, and she noted her happiness that, despite political differences, members united and worked towards shared goals and values. Councillor Miles thanked officers and members and handed over to Councillor Powell as the new chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Council resolved to **note** the update report.

**c) Scrutiny Committee update report**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report to update Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since March 2025.

Councillor Powell presented the report, noting that it applies to activities dated between 13 March 2025 and 11 July 2025. Council heard that the Scrutiny Committee met for the first time in the new Council year on 10 June and agreed the Committee's operating principles, established 3 working groups, and reconstituted the Budget Review Group. Council also heard that the Committee's operating principles were recommended to Council for formal amalgamation into the Constitution. Councillor Powell also noted that the Committee has made 19 recommendations across its meetings so far relating to topics such as leisure, the Oxford local Plan 2042, and homelessness. Further examples of matters discussed were also detailed.

Council resolved to **note** the update report.

*The meeting broke for 45 minutes at the conclusion of this item.*

## **23. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting**

*Councillor Yeatman joined the meeting during the break.*

*Councillor Gant, in line with his earlier declared interest, left the meeting and did not return.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen's Services, the Group Finance Director, and the Trainee Solicitor left the meeting and did not return following the break.*

Lord Mayor noted that member of the public who raised a question was not in attendance but that the response would be published in the minutes.

Council heard 3 addresses and Cabinet members responded.

All addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

## **24. Motions on notice July 2025**

Council had before it 5 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

### **Motions agreed as set out below:**

- a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)

### **Motions not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished:**

- 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)

**a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)**

Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Qayyum, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Councillor Henwood proposed an amendment to the motion, as set out in the briefing note and was seconded by Councillor Stares.

Following the debate and on being put to the vote, the amendment **fell**.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the unamended motion **carried**.

**Council resolved to:**

- **Express** its' opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council

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

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

**c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis)**

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

**d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad)**

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

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

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm**

**Lord Mayor .....  
2025**

**Date: Monday 6 October**

*Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:  
Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision  
and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.  
Details are in the Council's Constitution.*