

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 6 October 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 Goddard	Councillor Harley
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Latif
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Miles	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Powell
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Robinson	Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Sandelson	Councillor Stares
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Snowton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Waite	Councillor Yeatman

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

None

### **Apologies:**

Councillor(s) Jupp and Max Morris sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

## **25. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Jupp and Morris sent their apologies.

Councillors Latif, Corais, Roz Smith, and Yeatman sent their apologies for a late arrival to the meeting.

## **26. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Malik declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda.

Councillor Upton noted the interest.

## **27. Minutes**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on **14 July 2025** as a true and correct record.

## **28. Appointment to Committees**

No new appointments were made.

## **29. Announcements**

### **Announcement from the Lord Mayor**

Councillor Upton discussed the change in the constitution relating to the break and said that they may have the public address before the break. The Lord Mayor reflected on her work with friendship groups and different community groups across the city. She noted her meeting with young medical students from Gaza and said that it had made her hopeful for the future. The Lord Mayor spoke about the fun parts of her role, including the opening of St Giles' Fair. She thanked Oxford's healthcare workers, leys development unit and adult volunteers. She noted her upcoming volunteer work to raise funds for and awareness of rough sleeping in Oxford and welcomed sponsorship for this event.

### **Announcement from the Deputy Lord Mayor**

Councillor Rowley said that it was a delight to welcome a new vicar to the parish. He noted that he was happy to attend a demonstration of solidarity with the community that attends the Oxford Central Mosque, particularly in light of recent events.

### **Announcement from the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Brown announced that they had elected a new champion for events and nightlife economy, Councillor Taylor. She noted that Councillor Taylor would be working with Councillor Hollingsworth in this role.

### **Statement from the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Brown made a statement on recent events in the country.

On Thursday last week we saw the horrible attacks on the Jewish community in Manchester on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar and yesterday there was an arson attack on a mosque in Peacehaven, which thankfully did not result in any loss of life. Last night I had the privilege of being at Oxford Synagogue where people of all faiths joined the Jewish community as we all mourned the attacks two years ago, but also the terrible destruction and loss of life in Gaza and hoped and prayed for peace. We're fortunate in Oxford to have several decades of different faith communities working together to find the many things that bind us together, but at a time when antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism are all on the rise we must all double down in our efforts to listen to each other and to encourage our communities to come together.

### **Announcement from the City Rector**

The City Rector said that all of the city's faith communities appreciated the City Council's interest in their work. He reflected on the day's anniversary of martyrdom, as a reminder that atrocities happened historically as they do today. His reflection called for people to stand together in the face of ongoing violence and fear.

## **30. Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

There were no addresses or questions.

### **31. Appropriation of land at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to seek Council approval for appropriation of land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account (changing the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council).

Councillor Smith presented the paper. She said that this work should provide one hundred new affordable homes for the city. She said that two of the sites under consideration required Council agree to the appropriation of the sites. This appropriation is represented in agenda items 7 and 8. Councillor Smith said that the Elsfield site, they hoped, would provide over 30 new affordable homes for the city and that the site would be a mix of social rent and shared ownership. She moved the report and Councillor Turner seconded.

Councillor Fouweather encouraged Cabinet to increase the density of homes at this site, if possible, but noted that he was encouraged to see the report and its aspirations come forward.

Councillor Malik welcomed the report but asked what the plan was for the existing structure at the site.

Councillor Linda Smith said that they would take on board the density point and would make that argument to the planning department as they progressed. Regarding the Knights Court, she said that the plan was to convert the building to housing.

#### **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).

*Councillor Roz Smith arrived during this item at 17:17.*

### **32. Appropriation of land at Cave Street from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to seek Council appropriation of the land at Cave Street from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to facilitate affordable housing development.

Councillor Linda Smith presented and proposed the report. She said that they hoped this site would create at least 19 new affordable homes. She said that they hoped to complete the development by the end of 2026.

Councillor Turner seconded the report. He said that the building had been demolished and that the scheme for start up units had not stacked up financially. Due to this, they decided to pursue the affordable housing scheme instead.

Councillor Roz Smith expressed her support for the scheme and for the building of the new homes in this location.

**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).

### **33. Cumulative Impact Assessment and Special Saturation Policy**

This report was deferred to a later meeting. The Monitoring Officer clarified that members would not be able to ask questions or discuss the report at this stage, but that the report would return to members for consideration later and that a full briefing would be provided to all members in due course.

### **34. Hackney Carriage Vehicle Emission Standards Amendment**

This report was deferred to a later meeting. The Monitoring Officer clarified that members would not be able to ask questions or discuss the report at this stage, but that the report would return to members for consideration later and that a full briefing would be provided to all members in due course.

### **35. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure**

The Head of People had submitted a report to Council to approve the Working Overseas Policy and Procedure.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He said that this policy was the first of its kind for the Council and that data protection issues were at the centre of the policy. He noted the specific steps the policy proscribed for members and officers to work abroad and the countries which had been noted as dangerous to work in. Councillor Chapman proposed the report, and it was seconded by Councillor Munkonge.

Councillor Snowton questioned how the policy would benefit the cyber security of the Council. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services said that they were happy to review the policy as they go and integrate learnings. He noted that the policy was also one measure, amongst several others being implemented for their cyber security.

Councillor Turner asked about the scale of liabilities which members could have to pay. The Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services responded that in terms of ICO, he could not provide an answer regarding the scale of liabilities.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini asked about the delays that the policy could cause in members' ability to respond to members of the public.

Council discussed the challenges that could be caused by the policy and how this could impact their work.

**Council resolved not to:**

1. **Approve** the implementation of the Working Overseas Policy and Procedure.

Following debate of the policy, Councillor Chapman said that they would bring a revised policy back to the Council in November and proposed this to Council. This was seconded by Councillor Munkonge.

**Council resolved to:**

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

*Councillor Corais arrived at the meeting during this item at 17:31.*

*Councillor Yeatman arrived during this item at 17:44.*

## **36. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **Cabinet Minutes – 13 August 2025**

No questions were raised.

### **Cabinet Minutes – 17 September 2025**

Councillor Snowton asked about the engagement with temporary accommodation and what was being done to make sure that this would not impact people who need to access this support.

Councillor Linda Smith said that she would bring a further update to Council in due course regarding their plans to expand access to temporary accommodation.

Councillor Fouweather asked about the Council's purchase of four food waste vehicles for ODS and why ODS did not lease the vehicles from a private contractor.

Councillor Chapman explained that this was the structure outlined for ODS's acquisition of vehicles and other expensive pieces of kit.

Councillor Turner said that ODS could choose other procurement routes, but that it was more cost effective for ODS to work with the Council than with a private vendor.

## **37. Questions on Notice from Members of Council**

46 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 22 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

*Councillor Taylor arrived during this item at 18:08.*

*Councillor Gant left during this item, at 18:23.*

*The Lord Mayor moved to items 15 and 16 ahead of the break.*

### **38. Outside Organisation Report: Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) Annual Update 2025-26**

The Community Safety Service Manager had submitted a report for the annual update for 2025-2026 for the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

Councillor Arshad presented the report. She highlighted the priorities of the partnership, including tackling serious violence and violence against women and girls. She said that the report details work seeking to make Oxford a safer city. She moved the report, and it was seconded by Councillor Hollingsworth.

Council discussed the need to ensure a balance between a strong protection for vulnerable individuals and protecting the night-time economy in the city. Council also discussed actions being taken to address identified hotspots of disorder in particular areas of the city at night.

Councillor Arshad noted the community partnerships that they work in collaboration with to address these issues. She noted the particular work that had been done by Night Safe Oxford and the Oxford City Angels. She also discussed her work with the police to address hot spot areas of the city.

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

1. **Note** the annual update report of Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

### **39. Scrutiny Committee update report**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report which updates Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since the last meeting of Council.

Councillor Powell presented the report. He presented the Committee's meetings and the recommendations that they had considered in their meetings over the course of the year. He thanked officers and Cabinet for their discussions and support. Councillor Powell moved the report.

#### **Council noted the report.**

*Council took a break following this item from 18:45 – 19:15.*

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

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

Council heard 1 address and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses.

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

1. Address by **Dan Glazebrook, a representative from Friends of Grandpont Nature Park.**

*Councillor Latif joined the meeting during this item at 19:23.*

#### **41. Motions on Notice October 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:**

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

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

- a) Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather)

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

- c) Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Councillor Mundy, Seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini)
- d) Keep Oxford Open (Proposed by Councillor Goddard, Seconded by Councillor Smowton)
- e) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Councillor Jupp, Seconded by Councillor Miles)

#### **42. Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather)**

Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the following motion **was lost**.

Council resolved to:

**Reject** the following motion:

Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill<sup>1</sup> 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”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

Council also agrees with the 32 environmental organisations<sup>4</sup> and 81 environmentalists and academics who publicly criticised the bill, calling for a “Pause to bad law”.<sup>5</sup>

Council also agrees with the then Labour MP Chris Hinchcliff, who pointed out in June this year that “profit maximisation” is the biggest barrier to development, not “clear processes that uphold democracy and nature”.<sup>6</sup>

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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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>

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

<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> 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>

<sup>6</sup> 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>

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

Councillor Powell, Seconded by Councillor Jarvis, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Council agreed to suspend standing orders to extend the meeting by 30 minutes to continue the debate on this motion.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the motion **was agreed**.

#### **Council noted:**

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.<sup>7</sup>
2. Over 100,000 people marched in London at a demonstration addressed by a number of far right figures.<sup>8</sup>
3. These demonstrations have also taken place on numerous occasions in Oxford outside the Kassam Stadium Holiday Inn.<sup>9</sup>
4. Alongside this, this summer also saw a racist attack on Central Oxford Mosque.<sup>10</sup>
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.<sup>11</sup> This was most recently and clearly illustrated through our obtaining of City of Sanctuary status.<sup>12</sup>
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.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Council resolved that it believes:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 resolved:**

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

**44. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Councillor Mundy, Seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini)**

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

**45. Keep Oxford Open (Proposed by Councillor Goddard, Seconded by Councillor Smowton)**

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

**46. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Councillor Jupp, Seconded by Councillor Miles)**

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

**The meeting started at 17:00 and ended at 21:00.**

**Lord Mayor .....**

**Date: Monday 24 November 2025**

*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.*