

## Minutes of a meeting of the Council on Monday 24 November 2025

### Committee 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 Jarvis	Councillor Jupp
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Latif
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Miles	Councillor Morris
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 Smowton
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Waite
Councillor Yeatman	

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

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services  
Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive - Place  
Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director  
Mish Tullar, Transition Manager  
Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Nerys Parry, Director of Housing  
James Watkins, Housing Policy and Projects Officer

## 47. Tributes

The Chair invited Council to observe a minute silence in memory of former Councillor Roy Darke.

The Lord Mayor invited tributes from Members of the Council.

Councillor Lygo commented on his time working alongside Roy Darke in a variety of roles and noted appreciation for his sense of humour and calming influence. Councillor Lygo reflected on their time spent canvassing, and his visits to Roy's home where he was always warmly welcomed.

Councillor Altaf-Khan reflected on his time living as a neighbour to Roy Darke and the relationship they had developed over more than twenty years. Councillor Altaf-Khan reflected on Roy's work and achievements within the communities he served.

*Councillor Mundy joined the meeting.*

Councillor Chapman reflected on his friendship with Roy Darke and the mentorship he had been provided through this. Personally, Councillor Chapman thanked Roy for his support, highlighted many of his achievements, and reflected on his decency, good heart, and enthusiasm for life.

*Councillor Jupp and Councillor Railton joined the meeting.*

Councillor Malik commended Roy Darke's work as the Chair of the Planning Committee and praised his well measured nature.

Councillor Clarkson reflected on Roy Darke's kind and generous nature, noting the benefits that the communities of Oxford experienced as a result. Councillor Clarkson commended Roy's successful work across councils and reflected on his modesty, integrity, and loyalty throughout. She thanked Roy and his wife for always welcoming her to their home and providing guidance and company.

*Councillor Corais joined the meeting.*

Councillor Henwood reflected on Roy Darke's personable and approachable character as a councillor and for the mentorship he had provided.

Councillor Taylor reflected on Roy Darke's career as a councillor, noting many of his achievements and efforts. On a personal level, Councillor Taylor thanked Roy and his wife for their support and care when he required a place to live in recent years.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini highlighted that Roy Darke had been a man of principle and reflected on his many achievements, noting her wish that his memories bring solace.

Councillor Rowley reflected on the last time he had seen Roy Darke and his positive and cheerful nature; despite the challenges he had been facing. Councillor Rowley also reflected on the wide range of skills and interests Roy had and his hard work as a councillor.

## **48. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Hunt sent apologies.

Councillor Turner and Councillor Roz Smith would be late.

## **49. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Gant declared his role as a County Councillor and noted that he would leave the meeting for items 18a, 18d, and 18e.

## **50. Minutes**

Council resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on 6 October 2025 as a true and accurate record.

## **51. Appointment to Committees**

There were no new appointments to committees.

## **52. Announcements**

The Lord Mayor informed Council that since its last meeting she had attended an openair event which raised £3000 for the homeless, had enjoyed coffee with Greek and Estonian ambassadors, and had invited local schoolgirls to an event with a Rugby World Cup winner in the Town Hall. The Lord Mayor also informed Council that throughout Remembrance Sunday events, thanks had been given to those who put themselves in danger to protect the public, including the armed services and emergency services. Council was reminded that Remembrance Sunday is a time to show solidarity with European neighbours and friends.

*Councillor Roz Smith joined the meeting.*

The City Rector noted the tributes to former Councillor Roy Darke and reflected on the death of President JF Kennedy in 1963 as a passing which shook the world and Oxford residents. The City Rector also commented on the historic passings of Huxley, CS Lewis, and Freddie Mercury.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

### **54. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

### **55. HRA Policies**

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to approve the HRA Policies, following the recommendation from Cabinet on 22 October 2025.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, outlining that the policy framework would support the safety of residents in council-owned homes and maintain the upkeep of the housing stock. Council also heard that the policies are designed to meet the high standards of the Regulator for Social Housing and new statutory obligations which have been imposed since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak in 2020. Councillor Linda Smith referred Members to the stipulation for all emergency cases of damp and mould to be dealt with within 24 hours and outlined the necessary process for this. Finally, Council heard that a new strategy for resident involvement will be brought forward to the next meeting of Cabinet; this was summarised, and it was confirmed that all policies brought to Council will have had resident feedback.

Councillor Fouweather welcomed the report and asked whether the entire Council Housing stock had been reviewed within the 5 years, as per the requirement noted in the report. Councillor Linda Smith explained that this has not yet been completed but noted that it is ongoing process, and all flats have been surveyed.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini welcomed the report and queried how better engagement with housing associations could be supported in relation to damp and mould issues. Councillor Linda Smith clarified that the report before Council relates only to the council-owned housing stock which does not include housing association properties, however explained that if damp and mould is present with housing association homes, then contact can be made with the Council's residential regulation team who can take up enforcement action as required.

Councillor Smowton requested clarification in relation to e-bikes at council-owned properties. Councillor Linda Smith offered to set out more detail in writing but summarised that the Council does not wish for e-bikes to be stored within council-owned properties and instead recommends residents to use outside storage units to manage fire risks.

Councillor Roz Smith welcomed the policy on e-bikes but asked how those who are not supplied with sufficiently sized storage for e-bikes and mobility scooters outside may be penalised by this policy. Council heard that external storage units must be fit for purpose. Councillor Linda Smith agreed and noted her support for the points raised; she requested information on specific areas or properties experiencing this issue to ensure it can be raised with the appropriate officers.

Councillor Miles asked whether data is available which demonstrates the proportion of the housing stock, specifically flats, where bike parking is provided. If not, it was asked that this data gap be filled to ensure targeted provision of required facilities. Councillor Linda Smith committed to providing the information in writing.

Councillor Linda Smith moved the report; Councillor Brown seconded.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the Damp and Mould Policy
2. **Approve** the Fire Safety Policy
3. **Approve** the Asbestos Policy
4. **Approve** the Disrepair Policy

## **56. Local Government Reorganisation**

The Chief Executive had submitted a report to note the decision of Cabinet with regards to Oxford City Council's Local Government Reorganisation preferred option submission

Councillor Brown introduced the report and thanked both officers who had contributed to the report, and those who had maintained the running of normal Council services simultaneously. Councillor Brown thanked Council for making the process as inclusive and cross-party in nature as possible. Council understood that the proposal had now been submitted, and a summary of its strengths were provided. Councillor Brown thanked Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee for its support.

Councillor Jarvis clarified that whilst the Scrutiny Committee did support the submission of the proposal to Government, it did not unanimously support the proposal itself.

Councillor Smowton asked whether the Leader of the Council had read a recent article from the Local Government Chronicle which described a potential legal challenge to Local Government Reorganisation and boundaries. Councillor Brown noted that having read multiple relevant articles, she is aware of some discussion regarding the legal basis on which local government boundaries may be changed but confirmed that the Council is confident that proposal submitted has taken every precaution and has made relevant legal considerations.

*Councillor Turner joined the meeting.*

Councillor Malik asked the Leader of the Council how many MPs and other Council leaders in Oxfordshire have supported Oxford City Council's bid. Councillor Brown confirmed that 2 MPs are supportive of the three unitary proposal, and noted that she had spoken to all MPs, including those in surrounding areas. Members were reminded that other local councils have put forward alternative bids.

Councillor Roz Smith queried how it has been envisioned that larger services, such as social care and children's services, will be managed and delivered, noting the wide scope of partnership working with the NHS trust. Councillor Brown emphasised that several options for this have been outlined in the proposal, including some combining of services and more local operations to reflect the varying needs of geographical areas.

*Councillor Regisford joined the meeting.*

Councillor Rehman emphasised that more open and transparent governance with a local focus must be the central priority of the proposal and that residents must be put first on matters such as housing to ensure public confidence.

Councillor Malik noted his support for unitary structures instead of two-tier governance systems as currently exist. He noted a belief that this provides better value for money to the taxpayer and is less confusing. Council heard that he did not support the three-unitary proposal.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini expressed concern that Local Government Reorganisation, may lead to the loss of Healthwatch, a valuable health scrutiny mechanism. Therefore, it was asked whether any of the options proposed provide more scrutiny hope for social care. Councillor Brown advised that the matter would be more appropriately raised in relation to devolution but explained that regardless of which proposal is accepted by government, work will remain ongoing with health partners to maintain the positive record that Oxford City Council has developed historically. In the context of devolution, it was noted that the oversight for health would likely sit with the Mayoral Strategic Authority.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked whether the Leader of the Council had any evidence which shows what the optimal population size for an authority would be; specifically, whether there is evidence that larger and fewer authorities work more effectively. Councillor Brown confirmed that evidence does show the optimum size of a council to be around 250,000 to 350,000 which is what the three-unitary proposal sets out. Furthermore, evidence also suggests that beyond a population of 500,000, a council is less likely to be efficient.

Council resolved to **note** the decision taken by Cabinet on the 10 November to submit as its preferred option on Local Government Reorganisation, a three unitary council model across Oxfordshire, incorporating West Berkshire, as set out in the Cabinet Report.

## **57. Devolution**

*The meeting was adjourned due to an ongoing protest in the Public Gallery in the Chamber at 17.57.*

*The meeting resumed at 18.01.*

The Lord Mayor emphasised that Council welcomes public speakers however proper procedure must be followed and requests to speak must be submitted in advance.

Councillor Turner commented on the unexpected comments from members of the public in the gallery and noted that whilst they were directed to him, he was unprepared to speak in response. Council was also informed that he had previously corresponded with the organisation in question and offered a meeting which had not yet been accepted.

Councillor Jarvis, Councillor Mundy and Councillor Rawle declared their membership of the organisation who had conducted the protest in the Chamber but noted being unaware of any plans for the interruption at this meeting.

The Chief Executive had submitted a report to note that Cabinet will take a decision on whether to endorse the submission by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of all Oxfordshire councils of an Expression of Interest to Government for the inclusion of the Thames Valley area in the next wave of its Devolution Programme.

Councillor Brown introduced the report and outlined the potential of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority. Members were informed that engagement in repeat discussions is ongoing and the report before Council sets out a letter to government which express interest in being part of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority. It was explained that as a district council, Oxford City Council is not

able to directly write to government and is therefore supporting a letter from Oxfordshire County Council.

*Councillor Kerr left the meeting during this item.*

Council **noted** that a Special Cabinet on 4 December will be asked to:

- a. Endorse the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions to a future Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority, and agrees to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date;
- b. Endorse the Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme;
- c. Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority;
- d. Agree that a further report will be brought to Cabinet prior to any final decision by Oxfordshire County Council as upper-tier authority on the creation of a Strategic Authority; and
- e. Note an informal Devolution Programme Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.

## **58. Updates to Constitution**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval for amendments to the Constitution, including updated Committee procedures and confirmation that Council will be responsible for approving Taxi Licensing policy.

Lord Mayor noted a correction to the report; reference to part 5.4 of the constitution should be replaced with part 5.6.

Councillor Brown introduced the report and outlined the amendments to the constitution, acknowledging and accepting Councillor Smowton's amendment:

- In the proposed new text for 12.10, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"
- In the proposed new text for 13.16, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"
- In the proposed new text for 14.8, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"

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

*Councillor Kerr rejoined the meeting.*

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the reservation to full Council of the decision making and approval of Taxi Licensing Policy as set out in Part 5.6 of the Constitution
2. **Approve** the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1 as amended;
3. **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.

**59. Recommendation from the Standards Committee to censure Councillor Malik**

The Monitoring Officer had submitted a report regarding the outcome of the Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee that found that Councillor Malik had breached the Council's Code of Member Conduct and that the sanction imposed should be the formal censure of the full Council.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the report, and the considerations required of Council. Members were informed that the recommendation to Council follows from a determination made by a Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee in relation to a compliant made against Councillor Malik.

Councillor Pressel moved the report; Councillor Diggins seconded.

Councillor Mundy noted his support for the recommendation but emphasised that the standards procedure in relation to engagement between councillors should also take account of the fact that robust engagement is not always welcomed however unreasonable conduct should be identified. Councillor Mundy also noted that the code of conduct also applies to councillors responding to members of the public who are often unaware of the code of conduct, and less likely to make a complaint.

Councillor Henwood noted disappointment in the Standards Committee and insufficiency of the findings against Councillor Mailk.

Councillor Malik addressed Council and referred to other example of behaviour he viewed to be comparable from councillors which had not been addressed by the Standards Committee. Councillor Malik considered the role of the Chair and previous Lord Mayor in the events leading to the complaint against him.

The Lord Mayor advised Councillor Mailk to refer to the report before Council only.

Councillor Smowton declared that as husband of Councillor Railton, who is related to the complaint, he would not be voting on the recommendation.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini commented that to increase confidence in the Standards Committee, an update should be made to allow independent persons to vote.

The Monitoring Officer explained that there are no provisions for Independent Persons to vote in the relevant statutory provisions however this is being considered by the government consultation.

Councillor Arshad, in response to comments from Councillor Malik, asserted that as Lord Mayor at the time of events leading to the complaint in question, she disagreed with the notion she had not lost control of the meeting. She also provided further reflections on the substance of the complaint.

Councillor Miles commented that as a woman in politics, she acknowledged Councillor Arshad's comments.

Upon being put to a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Censure** Councillor Malik in respect of the finding that he breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

**60. Recommendation from the Standards Committee to censure Councillor Latif**

The Monitoring Officer had submitted a report regarding the Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee that found that Councillor Latif had breached the Council's Code of Member Conduct and that the sanction imposed should be the formal censure of the full Council.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the report, and the considerations required of Council. Members were informed that the recommendation to Council follows from a determination made by a Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee in relation to a compliant made against Councillor Latif.

Councillor Pressel moved the report; Councillor Diggins seconded.

Councillor Latif thanked the legal advisor to the Local Hearing Panel, and the members of the Local Hearing Panel for their decision.

The Lord Mayor intervened and reminded Councillor Latif to refer to the report before Council only.

Councillor Latif persisted in making comments unrelated to the report before Council. Councillor Latif's microphone was switched off.

Upon being put to a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Censure** Councillor Latif in respect of the finding that he breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

## **61. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **a. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 October 2025**

Councillor Miles asked how Cabinet is reconciling the inconsistencies within the draft of the Air Quality Action Plan which is framed around transport initiatives of the County Council that it publicly does not support. Councillor Miles also requested clarification on the level of compliance under the existing regime of HMO licensing and what is being done to manage noncompliance. Councillor Railton, in regards the Air Quality Action Plan, explained that the City Council does not have the statutory duty to deliver on transport matters and clarified that many elements of the draft are still subject to public consultation meaning that scope and design may evolve. Councillor Linda Smith, in relation to HMO licensing, shared that enforcement action is taking place and that compliance rates have been improving as a result as prohibition orders are issued. It was also noted that compliance from landlords is key to improve standards.

Councillor Mundy, in relation to the new charge applied for visitors to the museum, asked what would constitute a minor change and what future outcomes would necessitate major changes. Councillor Hollingsworth explained that a minor change may include expanding the recipients of the various discounts, and a major change may be the subsidies agreed by Council for the museum in the future.

*Councillor Malik left the meeting during this discussion.*

Councillor Turner, in response to Councillor Mundy, also noted that discounts for youth groups and school groups could be a consideration to support those on benefits or with no recourse to public funds.

Councillor Henwood asked if there could be a tiered ticketing system according to age at the Museum, noting that there was an absence of data when the prices were decided. Councillor Hollingworth confirmed that no data was available at the time of price setting as no tickets had yet been issued and therefore decisions were based on an estimated guess. Council was assured that once ticket sales are in operation, data will be available which may confirm, or dispute estimates and adaptations can be made on this basis.

*Councillor Malik rejoined the meeting.*

**b. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 November 2025**

There were no questions on these minutes.

**c. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 November 2025**

Councillor Goddard asked whether the deferral of Hackney Carriage Emission Standards would risk disadvantaging those who have already invested in electric vehicles. Councillor Railton noted that when speaking to taxi drivers, most have been content with this decision and many who had already converted have benefited from grants and cheaper energy prices.

*Councillor Sanderson left the meeting during this discussion and did not return.*

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

47 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 19 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 discussion.

*Following the conclusion of this item Council adjourned and took a break from 19.02 to 19.33.*

*Councillor Sanderson, Councillor Altaf-Khan, and Councillor Gant did not return following the break.*

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

Council heard 1 address and Councillor Hollingsworth responded.

*Councillor Turner rejoined the meeting during the address.*

The address and response are set out in full in the minutes pack.

### **64. Scrutiny Committee update report**

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

Councillor Powell, as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, summarised the report. Councillor Powell informed Council of the content of the recent meetings, included a special meeting to consider local government organisation, as well as two regular meetings. Councillor Powell thanked officers and Cabinet members for attending. Councillor Powell referred Council to the report.

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

### **65. Motions on notice November 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:

18b. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Cllr Mundy, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

Motions taken but lost:

18a. Oppose a Work Place Parking Levy and planned Bus Gates in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Henwood, seconded Cllr Yeatman)

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

18c. Democracy and Freedom (proposed by Cllr Rehman, seconded by Cllr Latif)

18d. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles)

18e. A World-Class Multi-Modal Transport Hub for Oxford Station (Proposed by Cllr. Lois Muddiman, Seconded by Cllr. Emily Kerr)

**66. Oppose a Work Place Parking Levy and planned Bus Gates in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Henwood, seconded Cllr Yeatman)**

Councillor Henwood requested a named vote for motion 18a. The Lord Mayor asked if Council wished to proceed with a named vote; 10 Councillors indicated in favour of a named vote. Council committed to a named vote on motion 18a.

Councillor Henwood, seconded by Councillor Yeatman, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

*Councillor Morris and Councillor Waite left and rejoined the meeting during this debate of this motion.*

Following the debate a recorded vote was taken:

**For the resolution set out below:**

Councillors: Azad, Harley, Henwood, Latif, Malik, Rehman, Stares, Yeatman (8)

**Against the resolution**

Councillors: Fouweather, Goddard, Jarvis, Jupp, Kerr, Miles, Morris, Muddiman, Mundy, Powell, Rawle, Regisford, Robinson, R Smith, Smowton (15)

**Abstentions:**

Councillors: Arshad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Corais, Diggins, Djafari-Marbini, Fry, Hollingworth, Lygo, Munkonge, Ottino, Pressel, Qayyum, Railton, Rowley, Taylor, Turner, Upton, Waite (20)

With more Councillors voting against, the motion **fell**.

**Council resolved to reject the following motion:**

Oxford City Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council has approved and expressed support for:

1. The proposed Bus gate (filter) scheme;
2. The proposed Workplace Parking Levy (WPL);

Oxford City Council further notes significant public concern regarding the potential economic, social, and accessibility impacts of these measures on residents, businesses, and visitors. Council therefore resolves to:

1. Oppose for the proposed Bus Gate (filter) Scheme, and the proposed Workplace Parking Levy.
2. Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant authorities as the local highways authority to communicate this resolution.
3. Continue to support sustainable, balanced approaches to improving air quality, public transport, and cycling/walking infrastructure that do not unduly penalise residents, workers, or businesses.

## **67. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Cllr Mundy, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)**

Councillor Mundy, seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

*Councillor Arshad, Councillor Taylor, Councillor Diggins, and Councillor Pressel left and rejoined the meeting during the debate of this motion.*

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

### **Council resolved to support the following motion:**

Thames Water has become known for poor performance for managing their vital infrastructure. Having managed to discharge raw sewage into the region's waterways for almost 300,000 hours in 2024<sup>1</sup>, the company faced record breaking fines from Ofwat this year. In an ironic twist, Thames Water pleaded poverty when negotiating the fine downwards- committing to paying less than 20% of the £122.7 million fine within the next four and a half years. A fine made larger and of course less affordable by the £170 million in dividends paid out over the last two years.<sup>2</sup> The failure of water companies across the country is being rewarded with huge executive salaries: The average pay for water company CEOs in 2022 was £1.7 million.<sup>3</sup> A natural monopoly like water should be publicly owned. According to The People's Commission on the Water Sector, the environment secretary's claims that taking water back into public ownership is unaffordable, was backed by misleading figures with no basis in law.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/mar/18/thames-water-data-reveals-raw-sewage-discharges-rivers-2024> Thames Water data reveals raw sewage discharges in rivers rose 50% in 2024. The Guardian 18/03/2025

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2025-08-27/thames-water-negotiates-payment-plan-following-record-fine> Thames Water negotiates payment plan following record £122.7 million fine. ITV Meridian 27/08/2025

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/fat-cat-water-firm-bosses-26229950> EXCLUSIVE: 'Fat cat' water firm bosses earn £15m as amount of raw sewage dumped in rivers rockets. Daily Mirror 15/02/2022

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/03/a-fair-price-to-the-public-for-water-nationalisation> A fair price to the public for water nationalisation

People of Oxford are fed up of polluted waterways that used to be fit for leisure activities, fed up of aging burst water pipes flooding our streets<sup>5</sup>, and dismayed at the daft plans for an enormous reservoir which tears up local landscape and is costly and un-necessary.<sup>6</sup>

Yes, we have been here before, our Council passed a motion pushing for the nationalisation of Thames Water back in January 2023. But the Labour government still chooses not to take bold action to take back control of our water supply, deciding instead that a new regulator will solve the problems. Our Council has the opportunity to push for a rethink, to urge the government to renationalise Thames Water.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Leader of the Council writes to Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Emma Reynolds, with Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Water and Flooding Emma Hardy, stating that water privatisation has failed the people of Oxford and that our water supplier needs to be brought in to public hands.
- Ask the Planning cabinet member to write to Thames Water CEO seeking:
  - An explanation for the deplorable state of our water infrastructure. Asking, why our city suffered so much disruption from burst water mains this summer, and what is being done to ensure that the same won't be repeated.
  - A resolution of when we will see an end to routine (outside of recognised extreme wet weather conditions) dumping of raw sewerage overflow into Oxford's local waterways.
  - An urgent timetable of when sewage works in The Leys and Littlemore will be modernised and brought up to capacity to prevent the annual stench across these areas in the summer months.
- For Oxford City Council to engage with local groups such as Windrush Against Sewage Pollution and Boycott Thames Water, to push for better standards from our water supplier.

## **68. Democracy and Freedom (proposed by Cllr Rehman, seconded by Cllr Latif)**

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

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c79qr333jv4o> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwyj7ldw14eo> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr5v223epnlo> and <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-2750371/Video-Oxford-City-Centre-suffers-water-pipe-burst-UK-hosepipe-ban.html> BBC and Daily Mail Summer 2025

<sup>6</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-uk-is-surprisingly-short-of-water-but-more-reservoirs-arent-the-answer-243440> The UK is surprisingly short of water – but more reservoirs aren't the answer. The Conversation 01/13/2025

**69. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles)**

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

**70. A World-Class Multi-Modal Transport Hub for Oxford Station (Proposed by Cllr Lois Muddiman, Seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)**

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

**The meeting started at 5.03 pm and ended at 8.39 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Monday 26 January 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.*

This page is intentionally left blank