

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 10 December 2025

Committee members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Railton

Councillor Turner

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Linda Smith

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance, and Strategy

Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services

Nerys Parry, Director of Housing

Mariam Salawu, Senior Data Analyst and Reporting Officer

Lorraine Freeman, Team Leader - CIL, Data Analysis and Reporting

Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager

Stephen Cohen, Refugee and Resettlement Manager

Clare Paterson, Strategic Finance Manager

Pete Davies, Resident Involvement Manager

Annette Osborne, Strategic Procurement Manager

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Lead

Uswah Khan, Committee and Member Services

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Also present:

Pete Sayers, tenant with the resident co-design group

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor

Apologies:

No apologies were received

103. Declarations of Interest

None.

104. Minutes of the previous meeting

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2025 and 04 December 2025 as true and accurate records.

105. Addresses by members of the public

None received.

106. Councillor addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None received.

107. Councillor addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None received.

108. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

109. Reports from the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 2 December 2025. The Committee considered the following items.

- Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement
- Housing Complaint Handling Performance (Q1 and Q2)

- Building Safety & Compliance (Q1 and Q2)
- Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-28
- Decarbonisation update: Impact of Energy Efficiency Funding programmes (LAD1b and SHDF) and EPC programme
- Net Zero Tracker
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act update
- Treasury Management Annual Report

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor, presented the comments and recommendations from Scrutiny Committee regarding the Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement.

- **Recommendation 1:** For Cabinet to review the reporting of housing delivered, separating out those on sites of under 10 units where the requirement for affordable housing is not triggered within the covering report for future years.
- **Recommendation 2:** For Officers to identify, if possible, the complex set of reasons as to why the housing completions reported are currently under the target or if not possible, explicitly state this.
- **Recommendation 3:** For Cabinet to request officers to investigate bottlenecks with the current processes.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented Cabinet's response to the recommendations. He said that they agreed the first two recommendations from the Committee. Regarding the third recommendation, he said that they had a productive conversation and debate about this matter, and they acknowledged the issue they face around the pressure of resource. He said that they welcome the recommendation as it highlights their work to help resolve this challenge.

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor presented the comments and recommendations from Scrutiny Committee regarding the Housing Complaint Handling Performance (Q1 and Q2), Building Safety & Compliance (Q1 and Q2), Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-28, Decarbonisation update: Impact of Energy Efficiency Funding programmes (LAD1b and SHDF) and EPC programme, Net Zero Tracker, and Air Quality Action Plan. She noted that no recommendations arose from their consideration of these reports.

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor presented the comments and recommendations from Climate and Environment Working Group regarding the Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act Update.

- That Cabinet draw on the expertise of community and voluntary groups to provide input and support the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy; and actively inform the public about the criteria for good habitat, clearly promoting what good biodiverse habitat looks like so as to strengthen public understanding and support for practices (such as leaving verges uncut) that protect local species.

Councillor Railton responded to the recommendation from the working group and noted that they were in agreement with the recommendation.

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor presented the comments and recommendations from Finance and Performance Working Group's consideration of the ODS Group Performance Report. She noted that these recommendations were originally presented to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group, but it was recognized that these recommendations would be more adequately addressed by Cabinet.

- **Recommendation 1:** To increase the use of CCTV given that it has been the most effective measure for preventing fly-tipping.
- **Recommendation 2:** That repairs of play area equipment be reverted to a delegated budget arrangement, as this model has previously demonstrated greater efficiency and addresses the backlogs in maintenance.

Councillor Railton responded to the second recommendation regarding the ODS Report and stated that Cabinet did not agree this recommendation.

110. Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q2 2025/26

The Group Finance Director submitted a report for Cabinet to note the update on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters at 30th September 2025.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He said that the quarterly reports were useful for identifying trends and their progress in the year. He noted the costs of cyber security, challenges around costs in law and governance, and that there was a favourable increase in interest. Overall, he noted that they were down a bit on the general fund but had mitigation strategies in place to address this. He asked that colleagues keep the ongoing matters in mind as they set the budget in February of 2026. He noted the trends in the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Program.

Cabinet resolved to:

- Note the financial position for quarter 2 (Q2) 2025/26 including forecast outturn, as well as the current position on risk and performance at 30th September 2025.

111. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2027-28 to 2029-30 and 2026-27 Budget for Consultation

The Group Finance Director submitted a report to propose a Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the 2026/27 Budget for consultation.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He reminded Cabinet of the process for the approval of their budget, and that they were presenting the current report for budget consultation, and they would be agreeing the full budget in February of next year. He said that they were awaiting information on their funding settlement from central government and that this had caused delays in their budget setting process. He noted that their approach had been cautiously optimistic and that he anticipated that there would be more change between the consultation and final recommendation than normal, due to the delays they had faced. He outlined some of the implications of Local Government Reorganisation on the four-year MTFs but said that it was their view that it was still sensible to have this four-year plan in place. He said that there were positive points in the budget, including funding for council homes. Councillor Turner commended the officers involved for their work in putting the budget together for consultation.

Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director, outlined the lack of certainty they had in this budget process, in part due to the implications of Local Government Reorganisation and the delays from central government.

Councillor Arshad thanked the officers and team for their hard work in putting the budget together for consultation.

Councillor Turner noted that there was a change in the recommendation 1 b in the report. It would now read as following:

The HRA budget for 2026-27 of £68.2 million and an increase of 4.8% + up to £2 for rent convergence (max) for 2026/27 (subject to any subsequent cap on increases imposed by central government) in social dwelling rents from 1st April 2026 giving an average weekly increase of £8.47 per week, and a revised weekly average social rent of £143.40 as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.

Councillor Turner said that the change in the recommendation was to provide cover for the Council in the event of central government proposing any unforeseen restrictions or changes.

Including the change in recommendation 1b,

Cabinet resolved to:

1. Approve the 2026-27 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets for consultation and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-10, noting:
 - a. The Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £30.945 million for 2026/27 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £10.67 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £367.38 per annum assuming it is confirmed that the authority is able to do so.
 - b. The HRA budget for 2026-27 of £68.2 million and an increase of 4.8% + up to £2 for rent convergence (max) for 2026/27 (subject to any subsequent cap on increases imposed by central government) in social dwelling rents from 1st April 2026 giving an average weekly increase of £8.47 per week, and a revised weekly average social rent of £143.40 as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.
 - c. The increase in shared ownership rental in accordance with the lease as shown in paragraph 93-94
 - d. The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6.
2. Agree the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7
3. Delegate to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance and Assets the decision to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 29-30 of the report.

112. Annual Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement

The Director of Planning and Regulation submitted a report to seek Cabinet's approval of the Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement for publication.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report. He highlighted key points from the report, such as the housing land supply issue facing this and many other councils. He noted the changes in housing land supply, due to the national framework which required them to use a new method to calculate their housing need. This points to the fact that they have an undersupply of housing and housing land, an issue the Council has been grappling with for some time. Councillor Hollingsworth outlined the issues beyond their control which had impacted their ability to deliver housing. He explained how the Infrastructure Funding Statement was structured and how the value of affordable housing provided on site was left out of this methodology.

Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager, noted that when a new local plan is adopted, the basis for the calculation reverts and the dip they're seeing currently should be temporary.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25 for publication.
2. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation to make any necessary minor corrections not materially affecting the document prior to publication.

Councillor Arshad left the meeting during this item at 18:24.

113. Approval of the revised Local Development Scheme 2025-2030

The Director of Planning and Regulation submitted a report to request Cabinet's approval of the Local Development Scheme 2025-2030, which sets out the work programme for the revised Oxford Local Plan 2045.

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report. He said that they were proposing an adjustment to the timetable, but there were no other significant changes to the local plan as it had been presented previously.

The Planning Policy and Place Manager added that they were now referring to the Local Plan as the Local Plan 2045. She said that they adjusted the time period after receiving advice, to ensure that they included enough time after the adoption of the Plan.

Councillor Hollingsworth noted the changes that central government was making in the planning system. He said that the National Policy Planning Framework was due to be updated sometime in the next week.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Local Development Scheme 2025-2030;
2. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation Services to make any necessary minor corrections not materially affecting the document prior to publication.

3. **Agree** the change to the Oxford Local Plan period from 2022-2042 to 2025-2045

114. Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy

The Director of Housing submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet recommend to Council approval of the updated new Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

Councillor Linda Smith presented the report. She noted the differences between the tenancy strategy and tenancy policy. She said both reflect their key priorities regarding the provision of affordable housing in the City. She noted that the report sets out that this is not just about tenants and immediate homes, but also about addressing issues in the broader community and providing good quality neighbourhoods for tenants.

Stephen Cohen, Refugee and Resettlement Manager, said that the tenancy strategy sets out the Council's expectations for registered providers in the City. He said that the strategy seeks to ensure that registered providers are in line with the Council's priorities and wider objectives. He said that the strategy has been brought into line with new legislation. He noted that the Tenancy Policy was for Oxford City Council tenants and sets out their policy as a social housing landlord.

Councillor Hollingsworth noted the risks flagged in an earlier report in relation to social housing regulation. He asked if this report related to that risk.

Nerys Parry, Director of Housing, said that it was part of the issue. She said that this was contributory work towards their compliance with standards.

Councillor Brown asked how they would enforce the principles with other registered providers, as some housing associations fail to meet their responsibilities as social landlords.

The Director of Housing responded that they have regulatory powers to enforce on specific matters. She said that they were required to lead in the collaborative effort with registered providers and that they needed to pull their collaborative work into one place and focus their conversations. The Director of Housing outlined the work they would be doing to achieve this aim in the new year and that there was still work to be done in this area, but it was being addressed.

Councillor Smith added that the registered providers in Oxford had been consulted on this report and had been involved in its construction.

Councillor Brown thanked the team for their work in this area and said that it was good to hear how they were continuing to establish better cooperation and enforcement measures.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.
2. **Recommend to Council** to approve and adopt the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, authority to update the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy with minor amendments to keep the documents up to date with any future changes in legislation, regulations, governance and best practice.

115. Resident Involvement Strategy

The Director of Housing submitted a report to Cabinet to request that Cabinet recommend to Council to approve the new Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy – 2025/28.

Councillor Smith presented the report. She thanked the officers, tenants, and leaseholders who were involved in the creation of the report. She emphasised that the strategy involved a broad range of opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved, in informal and formal ways. She commended the team on the report and said that they were really proud of the work they were doing in this area.

Pete Sayers, a tenant with the resident co-design group, further presented the report. He outlined the work that had been undertaken to engage with residents and that the feedback had been that trust had been broken with the Council as landlord. He noted the ways that resident feedback had been integrated into the strategy, including in the strategy's core principles, vision statement, and resident priorities. He emphasised how collaborative the work had been to create the strategy and how the strategy would allow them to continue undertaking positive work in this area.

Pete Davies, Resident Involvement Manager, said that in their conversations with residents it was clear that they needed to reset the relationship. He discussed the momentum they had built over the past several months and how this strategy would help them continuing pushing this forward.

Councillor Brown commended the work that had went into the strategy and how the strategy would allow them to continue the team's positive work in this area.

Councillor Chapman thanked the team for their efforts and said that it was an excellent piece of work. He noted how this strategy would support the Council when they were scrutinized by the social housing regulator in a few years' time and how the housing team was filling an important vacuum with this work.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked how they were working to engage with leaseholders, who were often difficult to get engaged with in this type of work.

The Resident Involvement Manager said that they had surveyed leaseholders regarding their understandings of the lease and are inviting expressions of interest to join a Leasehold Management Policy Review Group in the new year. As a result of that work, it's expected that leaseholders will recommend that Oxford CC establishes a Leaseholder Forum. He noted how the forum would amplify this group's voice and bring them into the housing team's efforts to engage with all residents.

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Lead, noted the enthusiasm he had seen from working with leaseholders already and that they were looking forward to working more closely with leaseholders.

Councillor Brown thanked the officers for their work and expressed her enthusiasm for this important area of work.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the draft Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy (2025 – 2028) and action plan attached to the strategy which outlines how the priorities for resident involvement and engagement will be taken forward.

2. **Recommend to Council** to approve and adopt the new Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028.
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for housing and Communities, on approval of the strategy, to put in place the necessary governance and monitoring arrangements to oversee the implementation and delivery of the strategy as well as to make any minor amendments reflective of legislative changes or best practice.

116. Procurement Strategy

The Group Finance Director submitted a report to request that Cabinet recommend to Council approval to a three-year Procurement Strategy.

Councillor Turner presented the report. He noted the substantial value of the Council's procurements. He said that the strategy would help them to continue complying with the law, procure things at good value, and help them to pursue ethical procurement practices. He commended officers on their work in bringing the strategy together.

Annette Osborne, Strategic Procurement Manager, outlined how they had sought to balance Council, local, and national priorities in the strategy. She said that they had tried to create an agile strategy, particularly in the face of Local Government Reorganisation. She noted the changes from central government that they expected, which would impact their ability to reserve the bidding of contracts to a specific geographic area.

Councillor Munkonge commended the team for their work and expressed his support for the strategy and its efforts to support small businesses and the living wage in Oxford.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Consider** the draft Procurement Strategy 2026-2029 (at appendix 1); and
2. **Recommend** to Council that the draft Procurement Strategy be adopted.

117. Fleet Procurement Report

The Group Finance Director submitted a report to request that Cabinet delegate authority to the Group Finance Director for the remainder of the current financial year to award any fleet contracts valued in excess of £750k following a compliant procurement process.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He said that the report was before them to delegate authority to the Group Finance director for the remainder of the current financial year to award any fleet contracts valued in excess of £750k following a compliant procurement process. He outlined how this would give them more flexibility and renew the fleet to ensure they avoid any service delivery impacts.

The Strategic Procurement Manager said that this decision would help to be more agile and avoid the bottleneck they had around renewing fleet contracts. She noted that a table in the report had missed off a noting of 27 commercial vans which they intend to buy.

Noting the addition to the report,

Cabinet resolved to:

- **Delegate** authority, for the remainder of the current financial year, to the Group Finance Director to award contracts with values in excess of £750k for the purchase of fleet vehicles.

Councillor Turner left the meeting during this item at 19:05.

118.Land Quality Strategy 2025

The Head of Environmental Sustainability submitted a report to request that Cabinet agree the adoption of the Land Quality Strategy 2025.

Councillor Railton presented the report. She said that this was a statutory document that they had to review every five years. She outlined the differences to the strategy from five years prior and said that the changes were deemed so minor that it was not proposed for consultation.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. To approve the revised Land Quality Strategy for adoption.
2. To continue to endorse the approved procedure for dealing with contaminated land by:
 - Using the development control regime wherever possible in order to assess and remediate land affected by contamination.
 - Where this is not possible we will utilise powers under Part 2a of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) in order to ensure contaminated land is remediated.
3. Note that if works are required under Part 2a Of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), then this will be funded from contingencies and reserves.

119.Treasury Annual Report

The Group Finance Director submitted a report to Cabinet which sets out the Council's Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2024/25, (including any prudential borrowing limits which are in line with the capital programme and proposed financing), in line with requirements from CIPFA's code of practice.

Nigel Kennedy, the Group Finance Director, presented the report. He said that the report highlighted how the Council manage their funds and their adherence indicators. He noted the highlights in the report including their investments, how they have spent

their cash balances to fund the capital program, and net interests. He outlined their loans at the end of the year and stated that there was no debt in the general fund, that the debt was for the HRA.

Councillor Munkonge thanked the Group Finance Director for the report and asked how Local Government Reorganisation might impact the Council’s investment holdings.

The Group Finance Director responded that that would depend on the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation. He said that when the time came, they would work with other local authorities to address this issue.

Cabinet resolved to:

- Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2024/25 and the Council’s compliance with the Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

120.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 18:00 and ended at 19:12.

Chair Date: Wednesday 21 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.*

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