

## **Procedure for debate on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget (Item 11 on the agenda)**

The Constitution 11.4 (Council budget debate procedure) sets out the order of business for the Council meeting(s) where the Council's budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy for the following year(s) are approved and the Council Tax is set and sets out the timings and order of the debate on Item 11.

The procedure and timings for the debate on Item 11 of the agenda are set out in the table below.

### **Before the meeting**

- To ensure all amendments are reviewed and cleared for publication of the Briefing Note, **all amendments should be received** by Committee and Member Services by **1.00pm three working days before the meeting (Tuesday, 17 February 2026)**. The Chief Finance Officer shall report on the soundness of these amendments before these are debated.
- All principal speakers for the budget debate and amendments should be nominated in advance to Committee and Member Services ([democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk)) by 9.00am one working day before the meeting. The Lord Mayor will decide the order speakers are taken subject to advice from Group Leaders. Additional speakers will be taken by the Lord Mayor should time allow.

### **Before or at the meeting**

- The Leader or in their absence the Deputy Leader shall indicate before debate which amendments they will accept without a vote.
- Individual amendments in part h(iii) shall be presented in writing with financial information and reasons; taken as read without the requirement for the proposer to speak; and taken in order as presented to the Committee and Member Services Officer (submitted at least 15 min before the start of debate on budget at item 11).
- The Chief Finance Officer shall report on the soundness of these amendments before these are debated.

## Procedure for debate on item 11: Budget 2026/27

Debate on the Council's Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy as recommended by the Cabinet (to last no more than 1 hour and 25 minutes excluding the debates at (b) and (c) and the votes).

Timings may vary depending on the amendments submitted but they will be taken in order based on size of groups.

Normal rules of debate and rights of reply apply at each stage.

Stage	Debate Time (maximum)	Lengths of speeches: All speakers have 3 minutes unless otherwise stated.
(a) Proposal of the Cabinet budget	15 minutes for proposer's speech	Proposer – max 15 minutes Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)  Move straight to (b 1)
(b 1) Proposal of Liberal Democrat Group budget amendments	13 minutes	Proposer – max 10 min Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)  proposer of (a) responds (3 min speech) before proposer of (b1) sums up
Vote (ordinary vote)		Liberal Democrat Group proposals all together
(b 2) Proposal of the Green Group budget amendments	13 minutes	Proposer – max 10 min Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)  proposer of (a) responds (3 min speech) before proposer of (b 2) sums up
Vote (ordinary vote)		Green Group proposals all together
(b 3) Proposal of Independent Oxford Alliance budget amendments	13 minutes	Proposer – max 10 min Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)  proposer of (a) responds (3 min speech) before proposer of (b1) sums up
Vote (ordinary vote)		Independent Oxford Alliance Group proposals all together
(b 4) Proposal of the Oxford Independent Group budget amendments	13 minutes	Proposer – max 10 min Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)

		proposer of (a) responds (3 min speech) before proposer of (b 2) sums up
Vote (ordinary vote)		Oxford Independent Group proposals all together
<b>(b 5)</b> Proposal of the Real Independent Group budget amendments	<b>13 minutes</b>	Proposer – max 10 min Secunder required (may reserve right to speak)  proposer of (a) responds (3 min speech) before proposer of (b 2) sums up
Vote (ordinary vote)		Real Independent Group proposals all together
<b>(c)</b> Individual amendments debate  submitted by the deadline and published in the briefing note <b>or</b> extracted from the submitted amendments and circulated in writing after the break	<b>40 minutes</b>  No limit on debate for each amendment.	Taken in order received. Those out of time fall. Taken as read: announced with proposer and seconder by Lord Mayor.  Normal rules of debate, except the proposer is encouraged to speak just once at the end of the debate on their amendment.
Vote (ordinary vote)		Separate votes on each amendment or group of amendments
<b>(d)</b> Debate on Budget (amended or unamended)	<b>30 minutes</b> + unused time from (a), (b) and (c) to take to <b>max of 2hr 30min overall</b>	Normal rules of debate.
<b>Recorded vote</b>		<b>Must be a recorded vote</b>

Followed by

- Adjournment for 10 minutes if necessary
- Report on Setting of the Council Tax for the following year (agenda item 10)
- Recorded vote on the proposed Council Tax.

## **11.4 Council budget debate procedure**

Order of business for the Council meeting(s) where the Council's budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy for the following year(s) are discussed and the Council Tax is set.

All amendments will be subject to the normal rules of debate except for those at Part 7(h)(iii) which will be taken as read by the meeting.

### **Part 1 – Public business**

- (a)** Election of chair (if the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor are absent)
- (b)** Apologies for absence
- (c)** Declarations of interest
- (d)** Announcements from the Lord Mayor, Leader, Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer
- (e)** Consideration of any proposed amendments to the budget debate procedure.
- (f)** Public questions and addresses relating to a decision at this meeting (a maximum of 30 minutes in total)
- (g)** Report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer on the soundness of the financial proposals before Council
- (h)** Council's budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy as recommended by the Cabinet (to last no more than 1 hour and 25 minutes excluding the debates at 11.4(h)ii. All speakers will have 3 minutes unless otherwise stated. All speakers will be nominated in advance to Committee and Member Services (democraticservices@oxford.gov.uk) by 9.00am one working day before the meeting. The Lord Mayor will decide the order speakers are taken subject to advice from Group Leaders. Additional speakers will only be taken by the Lord Mayor should time allow. Debate on this item shall be:
  - i. Proposal by the relevant Cabinet member (15 minutes)
  - ii. Amendments submitted by opposition groups (proposal and debate 30 minutes for each group's amendments: proposers may speak for up to 10 minutes). These amendments must be received by Committee and Member Services by 1.00pm three working days before the meeting. These proposals will be voted on as one amendment for each group.
  - iii. Individual amendments submitted in writing to the Committee Services Officer in advance of the meeting or at least 15mins before the start of this item at the meeting, on the form provided (40 minutes in total). Amendments will be taken in the order submitted to the Committee Services Officer on the form provided and will be taken "as read" by the meeting and voted on. A proposer and seconder is required. Should the proposer and seconder agree, amendments can be taken in groups. Any amendments not taken within the time fall.
  - iv. Debate on the budget presented by the Cabinet, as amended (30 minutes or the remaining time overall, whichever is the greater).
- (i)** Recorded vote on the budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy recommended by the Cabinet (as amended).

- (j) Adjournment for 10 minutes if necessary
- (k) Setting of the Council Tax for the following year.
- (l) Recorded vote on the proposed Council Tax.
- (m) Any other items for decision which are related to the business above
- (n) Items for decision which must be determined before the next ordinary meeting.

There will be no other business at this meeting except with the agreement of the Lord Mayor, Leader and opposition group leaders: there will be no part 2 or part 3 of the ordinary agenda.

The Leader or in their absence the Deputy Leader shall indicate before debate which amendments they will accept without a vote.

The Chief Finance Officer shall report on the soundness of the amendments before these are debated.

Amendments shall be presented in writing with financial information and reasons; taken as read without the requirement for the proposer to speak; and taken in order as presented to the Committee and Member Services Officer before the start of debate on amendments.

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