

**Decision type:** Decision Specifically Delegated to Officers

**Decision date:** 31 March 2026

**Decision maker:** Tom Hook Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens’ Services

**Decision title:** Decision to enter into an Memorandum Of Understanding with the MHCLG in relation to the provision of funding

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Decision being taken:</b>	To enter into an MOU with the MHCLG to provide additional Growth Deal funding for the delivery of the Oxpens River Bridge
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes  <a href="#">Issue details - Entering into an agreement with Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government in respect to funding for Oxpens River Bridge   Oxford City Council</a>
<b>Source of delegation:</b>	Decision taken by Cabinet on the 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2025 to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - Place. In his absence the decision will be taken by Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens’ Services (see legal comments below).  <i>Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive - Place, in consultation with the Council’s Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer), the Director of Law Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture to enter into legal agreements, or amend legal agreements, to secure the additional external funds required to meet the £3.7 m needed to deliver the Oxpens River Bridge and to enter an amended agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to enable the Growth Deal funding to be spent in 26/27.</i>
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Hollingsworth Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Enable an inclusive economy; Support thriving communities; and Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Adopted Local Plan policy AOC1 and SP2 and West End SPD

The Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens’ Services decides as follows:

1. To enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MHCLG for Growth Deal Funding

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Confidential Appendix	Yes  This information is exempted from publication under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 since it is:  1. Information about someone’s finances or business and  2. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Removal of Call-In following confirmation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee	No

### Introduction and background

3. Growth Deal funding was identified to deliver the Oxpens River Bridge in 2020. As the design of the project has been developed and delays have occurred, the cost of delivering the bridge has increased. This was reported to Cabinet 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and additional funding has been sought to enable the delivery of the bridge.

The MHCLG has identified additional funding and provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to accompany the funding. The MOU sets out that the funding is Growth Deal Funding and ‘.....should be spent by Oxford City Council by the end of the financial year 25/26 on activities relating to the aims of the Growth Deal – to deliver significant increases in the supply of new homes in Oxfordshire’.

The agreement is subject to two project milestones;

- March 2026: The Council will spend the money on any activities relating to the terms of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
- October 2026: Construction of the bridge will be completed.

The agreement also requires ‘full transparency open book working on all matters relating to the project, including project proposals, project expenditure, reporting and evaluation forms.’ The MOU also includes standard requirements re participation in wider evaluation, assurance and risk and marketing and branding and due diligence and procurement.

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4. The MOU sets out that it is not legally binding on the parties but that it is expected that the parties will honour the MOU.
5. The proposal for the Oxpens River Bridge is being funded through the Oxfordshire Growth Deal (OGD). The OGD identified infrastructure that would be funded to facilitate housing delivery. Within the city, due to the nature of the housing sites, the housing delivery supported by the infrastructure was spread across the city. In the case of the bridge the housing delivery was in the central, south and western parts of the city. Since the original funding allocation costs have increased as the programme has been delayed and hence the need for top up funding.

### **Reasons for the decision**

6. This decision enables the work to deliver the proposed bridge at Oxpens to progress using external funding.
7. The Cabinet report, <https://oxfordcityintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s85945/25%2007%2023%20Cabinet%20Report%20v%207%202.pdf> set out a number of risks related to the project and construction.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

8. The alternative would be not to enter the MOU. The implication of this would be that the funding would not be available and it would be unlikely to be able to deliver the project.

### **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation**

9. The decision to proceed with the bridge was taken prior to the Government's announcement and plans for Local Government Reorganisation. The budget is in place to enable the project to proceed.

### **Equalities Impact**

10. This decision relates to an MOU and funding and as such does not give rise to new equalities issues in relation to the infrastructure to be delivered.

### **Risks**

11. The acceptance of the funding in itself does not have risks subject to meeting the terms of the MOU.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

12. There are no new environmental considerations arising from this decision as it relates to an MOU and funding and does not alter the design or details of the project.

### **Implications of making the decision**

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<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>The funding will support the delivery of capital schemes. Given the funding timescales it can refinance existing capital spend in accordance with the terms of the MOU freeing funding for future years to meet estimated project costs. With reference to point 3, if the second milestone isn't met, the funding will need to be returned. Capital programme capacity sufficient to mitigate this risk.</p>	<b>Completed by:</b> Paul Swaffield <b>Date: 31.03.26</b>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>Under part 18.21 of the Council's constitution it is a decision of Cabinet to accept grant funding in excess of the key decision threshold. On the 13 August 2025 Cabinet delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive Place to enter into legal agreements, or amend legal agreements, to secure the additional external funds. This decision to enter into an agreement with MHCLG is a Key Decision and has been advertised on the forward plan.</p> <p>Under 4.4 of the Council's constitution the Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens' Services can take the decision in the absence of the Deputy Chief Executive Place.</p> <p>As the decision will result in £3 million pounds being received and spent by the Council any impact this will have on the Council's Budget and the process for agreeing and or amending the budget will need to be addressed in accordance with the Constitution.</p> <p>A review of the MOU and legal comments with regards to it can be found in the confidential appendix.</p>	<b>Completed by:</b> Joanna Williams <b>Date: 30.3.26</b>
<b>Other implications</b>	None	<b>Completed by:</b> Jenny Barker <b>Date:</b>




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		30 March 26
<b>Member declared interests</b>	None	<b>Completed by:</b> Jenny Barker <b>Date:</b> 30 March 2026

<b>Background Documents</b>
N/A

<b>Report author</b>	Jenny Barker
Job title	Regeneration Lead
Service area or department	Regeneration, Economy & Sustainability
Email contact	Jbarker@oxford.gov.uk


### Consultee checklist

<b>Consultees</b>	<b>Name and job title</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Senior officer</b> e.g. the relevant service manager / Director where the decision maker is the Chief Executive or a Deputy Chief Executive.	Carolyn Ploszynski 	30/03/2026
<b>Group Finance Director</b> Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	 Nigel Kennedy	31/03/26
<b>Director of Law, Governance and Strategy</b> Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	 Emma Griffiths – Legal Services Manager for and on behalf of the Director of Law, Governance & Strategy	30 March 2026
<b>Cabinet Member(s)</b>		31 March 2026

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Where required by the conditions of the delegation	Cllr Alex Hollingsworth Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture	
<b>Ward Members</b> Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	N/A	

### Decision Maker Approval

<i>Name and job title</i>	<i>Date</i>
 Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens' Services	31 March 2026

This form must be completed and sent to Committee and Member Services **on the date that the decision maker signs it. This must be only done once all consultees have given their approval. The decision shall be effective from the date of publication; therefore, it is important that you send to Committee and Member Services as soon as it is completed and dated by the decision maker. Please note that it is not effective until it is published and the call in period has passed.**

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## NOTES

The law<sup>1</sup> requires the Council to record executive and non-executive decisions taken by officers under delegated powers and to publish them on the Council's website.

These requirements apply to decisions that would have been taken by Council or the Cabinet if delegated powers had not been given to an officer:

- under an express delegation granted at a meeting of Cabinet, Council or a Committee.
- in accordance with Part 4.4 of the Constitution as follows:
  - Awarding a contract where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
  - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds or leaseholds granting new leaseholds (excluding assignments and rent reviews) where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
  - Making a regulatory order which affects a number of people, for example a Public Space Protection Order or a Parking Place Order
  - Where the effect of a decision is to grant a licence or permission or it affects the rights of citizens
  - Discharging any other express delegation from Cabinet or a Cabinet Member a committee or Council.

These requirements **do not** apply to:

- planning and licencing matters where there are established arrangements for recording decisions: or
- decisions which are purely administrative or operational in nature

All other officer decisions should be recorded on an officer decision form but do not need to be published. They must though be stored so as to ensure that they are not lost should an officer leave the authority.

### **Exempt or Confidential information**

Information relating to a delegated officer or single member decision does not have to be made public if it is exempt or confidential. Summary information from this decision sheet (excluding all exempt or confidential information) will be published on the Council's website.

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<sup>1</sup> the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012/2089 (Regulation 13(4)) and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014/2095 (Regulation 7)

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## Key or Non Key Decision

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Have a significant effect on people living or working in a least two wards or
- Involve spending, income, or saving a significant amount – whether an amount is significant depends on the Council’s total budget for the service involved. For this Council ‘significant’ in budgetary terms is:
  - Expenditure, income, or savings of £750,000 or greater in the context of the medium term financial strategy,
  - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds with a consideration over £500,000 in the context of the medium term financial strategy except for disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation
  - Acquiring or disposing of leaseholds where either the rental value is in excess of £250,000 per annum and/or the premium is £750,000 except for statutory lease renewals under Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation.
  - Acquiring or disposing of easements with a value over £750,000 and/or rental value over £250,000 each year

A key decision can only be taken and recorded here if notice of it has been published on the Forward Plan for at least 28 clear days. Key decisions taken by officers may be “called in” by any four councillors or the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee within two days of the notice of decision being published.

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