

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 25 March 2026**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Carl Rylett (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Mike Baggaley, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, Adam Clements, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Roger Faulkner, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Levertton, Dan Levy, Paul Marsh, Martin McBride, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance and Regulatory Services), Phil Martin (Director of Place), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant) and Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance:

CL.87 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Hugo Ashton, Phil Godfrey, Andrew Lyon, Thomas Ashby and David Cooper*

*Councillor Cooper arrived late to the meeting.

CL.88 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

CL.89 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Corrections of the minutes were proposed as follows; corrections to the spellings of the names of Phillip Martin and Michele Mead.

The minutes, as corrected were proposed by Councillor Andy Graham and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright.

Council

25/March2026

These for voted on and approved unanimously.

Voting record – For 39, Against 0, Abstentions 0

CL.90 Receipt of Announcements

The Chair thanked members for attending his recent fundraising quiz night, which raised £2,031 for charity, and advised that he would circulate invitations in due course for a community event in support of Christian Aid Week. He noted that this was the final meeting of the Civic Year and invited group leaders to pay tribute to retiring councillors.

Councillor Andy Graham stated that Councillor Julian Cooper, Ward Member for Woodstock and Bladon, 1986-2006 and 2010-2026, current Chair of the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee and Chair of the Council in 2022/23 would not be standing for re-election. Councillors from across the Chamber paid tributes to Councillor Cooper for his work and longstanding commitment.

Councillor Michele Mead paid tribute to the following Councillors from her group who would be retiring;

- Councillor Nick Leverton, Carterton South Ward, 2018-2026
- Councillor Martin McBride, Carterton North East Ward, 2018-2026, Chair of the Council in 2021/22
- Councillor Adrian Walsh, Ducklington, 2023-26

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development, Councillor Duncan Enright, reported on the outcomes of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund programmes, highlighting support provided to local businesses, employment and skills initiatives, and investment in facilities such as the Hexagon Business Centre. He also reported recent developments at Marriotts Walk, including the opening of a new independent café, the launch of a trader-funded Easter egg hunt, and the reintroduction of umbrella decorations.

The Executive Member for the Environment, Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, encouraged participation in the Great British Spring Clean and advised that litter-picking equipment was available through the Council. She also updated members on progress following the motion on poor mobile phone reception, confirming that ward-level information had been submitted for technical consultation and that further correspondence with Government would follow.

The Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, Councillor Rachel Crouch, announced that £5,000 had been secured from Oxfordshire County Council to support an active travel “walking bus” initiative for schools, which had launched successfully and would continue, with scope for expansion to another primary school.

The Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, Councillor Andrew Prosser, provided updates on the near-completion of decarbonisation works at Windrush Leisure Centre, progress on feasibility studies for EV charging infrastructure across the district, and publication of the Council's biodiversity duty report.

The Chief Executive reported on a recent presentation of Oxfordshire local government reorganisation proposals to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) officials, confirming that Government remained on track with its previously announced decision-making timelines.

CL.91 Participation of the Public

There was no participation of the public.

CL.92 Questions by Members

Questions by Members, as listed on the agenda, and the responses to those questions, which were circulated in advance, were taken as read.

The Chair invited the questioners to ask a supplementary question if they wished and then invited the relevant Executive Members to respond.

The Written Questions, Written Answers, Verbal Supplementary Questions and Verbal Supplementary Answers are detailed in a separate document appended to the Minutes of the Meeting.

CL.93 Recommendations from the Constitution Working Group

Councillor Alaric Smith, as the Chair of the Constitution Working Group (CWG), introduced the report. The purpose of the report was to present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group related to delegations for regulatory matters, a review of the planning committee process and Member Questions.

Councillor Smith stated that the report contained recommendations on three different matters.

- Recommendation one was related to regulatory functions, which ensured that the delegations relied upon by the Environmental and Regulatory Service Team are explicitly codified in the Constitution as opposed to needing to rely on general delegations
- Recommendations two to seven arose following a review of the Council's planning arrangements by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The review focused on what is

going well, identifying barriers to success and areas for improvement. It resulted in a number of recommendations which had been considered by an officer working group and the Constitution Working Group. These included; changing the name of the committees, merging the area-based planning sub-committee to a single sub-committee and the subsequent changes to the Constitution and meeting schedule. There were a number of other low level, administrative changes which were included for transparency, but that Council were not being asked to formally consider, as they either did not meet the threshold to require a Council decision or they had not been taken forward by the CWG.

- The final recommendation was related to strengthening the rules around member questions, including; a word limit of 250 words, a time limit of 1 minute for supplementary questions, and a requirement to rotate member questions on the agenda in a similar fashion to motions.

Members debated the proposed changes to the planning committees, raising the following points;

- The existing requirements in the Council's Constitution mandated a vote on the item which was under discussion to be taken after three hours, and that this was not suitable for planning meetings. It was suggested this be looked at.
- The proposal to combine the area-based sub-committees into one sub-committee did not sufficiently take into consideration local knowledge nor the distinction between the Uplands and Lowlands areas.
- The timeliness of the proposals was challenged in light of upcoming changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was stated that any changes should not pre-empt this and should instead be reactive. In particular, concerns about some meetings being very long, and with a very high workload for members were raised.
- Why some of the documents did not show tracked changes. Officers explained that they were new documents.
- Other members stated that the CWG and PAS had taken into consideration the arguments about local views, which were important but that the changes would ensure greater consistency of decision making. It was also re-iterated that PAS was an independent body, and that the CWG took the view, though not unanimously, to agree with the recommendations.
- Changes in national policy were expected to be introduced.
- The proposals should have been referred to the Development Control Committee prior to the recommendations being considered by Full Council.
- The combined committees would improve efficiencies and ensure consistent decision making. It would also make it easier to arrange substitute members.
- Communications to parish council would need to be considered as proposed government changes to the national scheme of delegations would also be affecting them.

Council

25/March2026

- One Councillor with experience of working at a different authority stated that two separate sub-committees were the source of inconsistency which developers could exploit.
- Neighbouring authorities with similar geographies all operated a single planning committee, and the changes would align with preparation for local government reorganisation.

In summing up, Councillor Smith stated that the changes to the committee structures would not fix the frustrations with the planning system that some raised, but that it would ensure the consistency of decision making. He also explained that while the changes would result in politically proportional committees, as per the requirements in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, he did not think the changes would add a political element to decision making, as Councillors would still be required to act apolitically.

Council voted on the recommendations in three parts.

Council resolved to:

- I. Approve the updates to Part 4E: Functions in Relation to Regulatory Matters, as shown in Annex A.

Voting record – For 42, abstentions 1, against 0

Council resolved to:

8. Agree to amend the rules for Member Questions, as shown in Annex F, Part 5A Council Procedure Rules to:

- a) Introduce a word limit of 250 words on Member Questions.
- b) Introduce a time limit of 1 minute for supplementary Member Questions.
- c) Rotate the order of Member Questions by political group, in the same way that Motions rotate.

Voting record – For 43, abstentions 0, against 0

Council resolved to:

2. Agree to rename the Development Control Committee to “Strategic Planning Committee”, with effect from the start of the 2026/27 civic year.
3. Agree to combine the two area planning sub-committees (Lowlands and Uplands) into a single, district-wide 12-Member “Development Management Sub-Committee” (quorum 3), with effect from the start of the 2026/27 civic year.

Council

25/March2026

4. Agree to amend Part 3C: Committee Functions, as shown in Annex C, from the start of the 2026/27 civic year to give effect to recommendations 2 and 3.
5. Agree that the new Development Management Sub-Committee will meet on the Lowlands meeting dates in 2026/27, with the Uplands dates held for overspill meetings, should the sub-committee need to adjourn and reconvene.
6. Request that the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel meets to consider the implications of changing the planning committee structure for the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-27 and formally report back to the May Council meeting with any recommendations.
7. Agree that the Process for Determining Planning Applications (Annex D) and Roles and Responsibilities on Planning Committees (Annex E) be included in the Constitution as appendices to Part 6Q: Members Planning Code of Good Practice.

For 22, against 17, abstentions 4.

Councillor Andrew Beaney requested that his vote against the recommendations be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

There was a brief adjournment, with the meeting recommencing at 3:25pm.

**CL.94 Motion A - Response to the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework
Proposed by Councillor Andy Goodwin, Seconded by Councillor Early**

Councillor Goodwin proposed the motion, and Councillor Genny Early had seconded this.

The motion was as follows;

“West Oxfordshire District Council has responded to a Government consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), backing some elements of the reforms but urging Ministers to rethink proposals that could weaken local planning powers.

The consultation proposes a number of fundamental changes to the current NPPF. West Oxfordshire District Council supports the changes in the new draft framework, that create a clearer structure and bring together guidance that currently sits in several different places. This should simplify the process for Councils to prepare local plans, reducing costs and speeding up the process.

However, the response also highlights several significant concerns:

- Nature recovery and climate resilience are treated as secondary considerations rather than fundamental planning principles.

- The proposal to move more policy detail from local plans into nationally set planning rules. This is a step too far and local plans must continue to play a strong role in shaping development at the local level, reflecting the unique needs and circumstances of individual areas.
- Reduced evidential requirements could hamper the ability of local planning authorities to robustly scrutinise applications and make well-informed, legally sound decisions. Ensuring proportionate but adequate supporting information is critical to maintaining confidence in the planning process.
- The lack of transitional arrangements for the decision-making policies, which are proposed to take effect immediately upon publication of the final Framework. This approach risks rendering certain adopted local plan policies - including relatively recently adopted policies - out of date or subject to significantly reduced weight in decision-making. Such an outcome would undermine plan-led decision-making and create uncertainty for local authorities, applicants and communities.
- The serious implication this has for policies such as the recently adopted net-zero carbon requirements set out in the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (Written Ministerial Statement Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update (13 December 2023)), because locally set energy standards would not be allowed for in the new draft national planning rules.
- The proposals for an overly permissive approach towards new development within and outside towns and villages and in locations near well-served railway stations, without reflecting the special conditions arising in a National Landscape.
- The unsustainable further upward pressure on housing targets that will already be extremely challenging to deliver, as well as reduced local control over major energy and digital infrastructure projects.
- The proposal that ‘medium scale’ developments of up to 50 homes could avoid on-site affordable housing requirements and other established planning requirements.

The Council resolves:

- I. To request the Leader of the Council to write the Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning), and our West Oxfordshire Members of Parliament to highlight the concerns raised above.”

Councillor Andrew Beaney proposed an amendment to the motion, which was to add “such as permission in principle” to the sixth bullet point so that it read “The proposals for an overly permissive approach towards new development, such as permission in principle”. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Alex Wilson and accepted by the proposer and seconder.

The motion was debated as amended, with members raising the following points;

- The draft NPPF undermined localism.

25/March2026

- National changes would reduce the powers of local planning authorities and conflict with locally developed plans; particular reference was made to the Council's emerging local plan.
- Members highlighted local initiatives such as zero-carbon energy schemes, arguing that councils should retain the ability to set higher environmental and energy standards than those proposed nationally.
- Concerns were raised that the framework prioritised making it easier for developers to build houses over creating sustainable, liveable communities.
- Members highlighted local initiatives such as zero-carbon energy schemes, arguing that councils should retain the ability to set higher environmental and energy standards than those proposed nationally.
- Particular concern was expressed about the impact on net-zero ambitions embedded in recently adopted local plans and area action plans, despite welcome national moves on solar panels and heat pumps.
- The proposed "blanket approach" was criticised as overly permissive, risking harm to local character, the natural environment and community wellbeing.

Cllr Genny Early as the seconder, having reserved her right to speak, highlighted concerns about the increased centralisation of power under the proposed NPPF changes, warning that this undermines local decision-making and the value councils bring to their communities. Cllr Early highlighted the risk that locally developed initiatives and significant work on the local plan, including Cap Zero and area action plans, could be overridden or lost.

Cllr Goodwin summed up the debate and supported the need for planning reform but argued that proposed NPPF changes risked over-centralisation, weakening local decision-making, climate ambition and nature recovery, and undermining locally tailored planning policies. Concerns were raised about overly permissive development, reduced evidential requirements, lack of transitional arrangements, restrictions on higher local energy standards, and the risk that medium-scale developments could erode affordable housing provision and mixed communities.

The motion was voted on as follows;

For – 34, Abstentions - 7, Against 0

The Council resolved:

To request the Leader of the Council to write the Rt Hon Matthew Pennycook, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, and our West Oxfordshire Members of Parliament to highlight the concerns raised above.

Council

25/March2026

CL.95 Motion B - Protecting Historical Figures in Banknotes Proposed by Councillor Liam Walker

This motion was not considered, as the time limit for motions had been exceeded.

CL.96 Motion C - Discretionary Business Rate Local Discount and Engagement Proposed by Councillor Ruth Smith, Seconded by Councillor Michael Brooker

Councillors Michelle Mead and Alex Wilson left the meeting.

Councillor Ruth Smith introduced the item. Councillor Smith read out the motion as follows;

“2026 has seen the introduction of a new Business Rates system, with updated rateable values and changes to sector-specific rate relief.

Councillors have been hearing from town centre businesses that the increases are a shock and a threat to the viability of their businesses. There are reports that it is hard to speak to council advisors about the changes.

This Council would like the Executive members and CEO to consider adopting a Local Discounts and Incentives policy to safeguard the prosperity of West Oxfordshire’s high streets, local jobs and to promote growth within and relocation to the district, in the post 2026 rates landscape.

In addition, assurances are sought that small businesses eligible for the Supporting Small Business Relief scheme can access clear information about how their rates will vary year on year until the full new rate is reached.

Council notes:

- The finance team perform their business rates functions excellently every year, as evidenced by External Audit and internal audit.
- Business Rates are set by national government. WODC is responsible for collection.
- The powers for granting discretionary rate relief by Councils are provided in Sections 44a, 47 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, which was amended by the Localism Act 2011 to incorporate wider powers to grant relief under discretions.
- The Council website has the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy at the bottom of the Rate Relief page. This policy lists Local Discounts and Incentives as a category under its powers, but does not contain a section indicating any policy for that category of relief.

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-rates-and-rate-relief/rate-relief/>

Council resolves to:

1. Agree that the Executive and CEO should consider whether a Local Discount and Incentives policy could enhance the economic objectives and wellbeing of the District.
2. Agree that communications with small businesses and all residents be reviewed and improved to ensure they all understand the 2026-27 £800 cap and how that will vary during transition to their new rates in the coming years.”

Council

25/March2026

Councillor Micheal Brooker seconded the motion and emphasised the importance of supporting local businesses, which were stronger contributors to the local economy than national chains.

At this point the Chair, proposed suspending Council procedure rule 12A, before moving onto the debate. Procedure rule 12A only allowed 60 minutes for motions, which at this point had been reached. The motion was seconded by the vice-chair and voted on as follows.

For 23, Against 10, 1 Abstention

Council Resolved to:

1. Suspend Council Procedure Rule 12A in order to allow more than one hour for motions.

The Council then debated the motion, raising the following points;

- Significant increases in business rates from 2026 were causing concern and confusion among local businesses, despite transitional relief, and members felt the Council should do more to explain and support businesses through the changes.
- Members highlighted that the Council's discretionary rate relief policy includes scope for local discounts and incentives, which were not currently used, and suggested these could help support local businesses, high streets, and economic wellbeing.
- The importance of small and medium-sized businesses, charities, and community organisations to the local economy and community life was emphasised, with concerns raised that rising rates and wider cost pressures could threaten their viability.
- It was noted that existing reliefs were available and that an updated discretionary rate relief policy was due to be considered by the Executive, alongside a need to improve communication and engagement with affected businesses.

Council resolved to:

1. Agree that the Executive and CEO should consider whether a Local Discount and Incentives policy could enhance the economic objectives and wellbeing of the District.
2. Agree that communications with small businesses and all residents be reviewed and improved to ensure they all understand the 2026-27 £800 cap and how that will vary during transition to their new rates in the coming years.

Council

25/March2026

Voting record for 38 for, Against 0, Abstentions 2.

Councillors Andrew Beaney and Sarah Veasey left the chamber.

CL.97 Motion D - Bring Thames Water back into public ownership Proposed by Councillor Early, Seconded by Councillor Arciszewska

Councillor Genny Early introduced the motion, and explained she was altering her own motion. The motion, as altered read as;

“This Council notes:

- The Recent Channel 4 docudrama ‘Dirty Business’ was shown in February 2026 and featured pollution of rivers in West Oxfordshire. □ The River Windrush was polluted by sewage discharges from Burford Sewage Treatment Works (STW) for a total discharge duration of 338 hours in 2024, which equates to around 14 days. (Estimates based on Thames Water data, <https://top-of-thepoops.org/waterway/thames-water/river-windrush>; accessed 16 March 2026).
- Five STWs in the Evenlode catchment each discharged untreated sewage for over 2000 hours in 2024, which equates to more than 83 days. Data from Thames Water STW ‘Event Duration Monitors (<https://earthwatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Water-Qualityin-the-Evenlode-Catchment-2024.pdf>; accessed 16 March 2026).
- During a cross-party EFRA Committee hearing in September 2025, Emma Hardy (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Water and Flooding in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)) clarified the high threshold for special administration, stating: "If it comes to special administration... it's if a company can't perform its basic duty, so if your water doesn't come out your taps and your sewage isn't being taken away". Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee,
- There was a serious interruption to water supply in the OX7 and OX29 postcodes due to a burst water main in March 2026 that caused severe water supply interruptions (low pressure or no water) for thousands of residents and businesses in Oxfordshire. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq6qp0146ggo>; accessed 16 March 2026).

This Council further notes:

- Raw sewage contains dangerous pathogens, including E. coli, hepatitis A, and parasites, which pose severe risks through direct contact or ingestion. Exposure causes gastrointestinal infections (vomiting, diarrhoea), skin/eye/ear infections, and respiratory issues. It is a major cause of waterborne diseases like cholera and dysentery.
- Thames Water are responsible for 72 billion litres of sewage discharged into rivers since 2020, with 2024 data indicating a 50% increase in raw effluent dumped.
- Thames Water have paid out £7.2bn to shareholders since 1989, including £158.3m in 2024. This Council believes:

25/March2026

- That the next step is to bring Thames Water should be brought into a special administration regime (SAR) and then back into some form of non-profit, public ownership. This Council resolves:
- To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Prime Minister calling for Thames water to be brought into public ownership. Page 15
- To request that the letter to the Prime Minister also asks that in the meantime no dividends should be made to Thames Water Shareholders, nor bonuses to Thames Water Management until all rivers in the region meet all clean water standards.
- To request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly invites Thames Water to report on a quarterly basis to WODC on how much raw sewage has been pumped into West Oxfordshire rivers and the progress towards preventing this.”

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska seconded the motion, as altered.

Members debated the motion, raising the following points;

- Serious and longstanding sewage pollution across West Oxfordshire’s rivers and communities was highlighted, with untreated discharges, flooding incidents, and disruption to residents, businesses, schools, and public spaces, which members attributed to Thames Water’s failure to maintain adequate infrastructure.
- Members referred to Thames Water’s financial position, high levels of debt, dividend payments, and what was described as a failure of both the privatised model and its regulatory oversight, which they deemed as resulting in poor service and environmental harm.
- Support was expressed for calling on the Government to place Thames Water into special administration and move towards non-profit public ownership, to ensure investment is directed into infrastructure rather than shareholder returns.
- It was emphasised that current local measures, including engagement with Thames Water, planning controls, and Grampian conditions, had been limited in effect and insufficient to resolve the scale of the problem, particularly in the context of planned housing growth.
- Members stressed the need for stronger accountability, independent oversight, and clearer reporting on sewage discharges affecting West Oxfordshire.
- While views differed on whether privatisation itself or regulation was the primary cause, there was broad agreement in seeking intervention to protect residents, public health, and the natural environment.
- The motion was supported as a necessary signal to the Government that the current situation was unacceptable requiring decisive action

Council resolved to:

- To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Prime Minister calling for Thames water to be brought into public ownership.

Council

25/March2026

- To request that the letter to the Prime Minister also asks that in the meantime no dividends should be made to Thames Water Shareholders, nor bonuses to Thames Water Management until all rivers in the region meet all clean water standards.
- To request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regularly invites Thames Water to report on a quarterly basis to WODC on how much raw sewage has been pumped into West Oxfordshire rivers and the progress towards preventing this.

Voting record – 33 for, 0 against, 4 abstentions

At this point the three-hour time limited allowed for meetings under 12A of the Council's Constitution had been reached.

The Chair proposed suspending this rule to allow the remaining motions on the agenda to be considered. This was seconded by the Leader of the Council.

The motion was voted on and fell. The meeting was then closed.

Voting record – For – 3, Against 24

CL.98 Motion E - Protecting precious habitats in West Oxfordshire Proposed by Councillor Arciszewska, seconded by Councillor Pearson

This motion was not considered as the time limit for motions had been exceeded.

CL.99 Motion F - The impact of the new restrictions imposed at the Household Waste and Recycling Centres in Oxfordshire on the residents of West Oxfordshire, proposed by Councillor Roger Faulkner, seconded by Councillor Sarah Veasey.

This motion was swapped with Motion B on the request of the Leader of the Conservative Group. As they were both Conservative motions, the Chair and the meeting agreed to this.

Councillor Faulkner introduced the motion, which was read out as follows;

“For eleven consecutive years, under a variety of political leaderships, Oxfordshire County Council was the top performing County Council Waste Disposal Authority. In the County Council's own Satisfaction Ratings of Services Survey in 2025 it showed that 72% of residents were satisfied with the Household Waste and Recycling Centres, with only 16% being dissatisfied. This success reflects both the hard work of staff and the responsible behaviour of Oxfordshire residents.

Despite this positive record, the County Council has introduced new rules for the recycling centres including a mandatory booking system and the requirement to provide proof of address on arrival.

This Council notes that:

1. These rules place additional bureaucratic barriers for residents wishing to access the recycling centres.
2. Reduced access to recycling centres risks diverting waste into District Council collection services and to an increase in fly-tipping , both of which place additional practical and financial burdens on the District Council.
3. These changes risk undermining both Oxfordshire's high recycling rates in recent years and the public's satisfaction with waste and recycling services.
4. This Council therefore resolves to request that the Executive Member for the Environment writes to the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet asking them to reconsider these restrictions, assess their impact on District waste and recycling services and work with all local authorities to ensure that waste and recycling centre policies continue to provide an accessible and effective service for the residents of Oxfordshire.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Veasey, who stated that the restrictions were onerous on residents and confusing. The restrictions should be reconsidered by the County Council.

The Motion was debated as follows;

- Some members stated that the motion provided anecdotal evidence and that there was no evidence that booking systems increased fly tipping incidents.
- That the slots were easily bookable online although it was accepted that the extra step was an annoyance, and also potentially prevented those with no internet access from using the tip.
- The booking system may exacerbate hoarding disorders as it added an additional barrier to disposing of waste.
- There were concerns that the booking system would exacerbate fly tipping.

Councillor Steve Cosier proposed amending the motion, removing the fourth resolution, and replacing it with “The Council therefore resolves that the Executive Member for the Environment writes to the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet and asking them to carry out an evidence-based review after six months, covering access, bookings, staff resilience, recycling, worker safety, fly tipping and district collections”. Councillor Cosier explained that taking any action after only a few months of the changes being in place felt premature, and the amendment sought to alleviate this.

Council

25/March2026

Councillor Graham seconded this.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed changing the amendment to ask the County Council Cabinet to reconsider the changes after six months and in the meantime consider the changes. As this was not accepted by the proposer, the original amendment as proposed by Councillor Cosier was voted on.

Councillor Dan Levy, a West Oxfordshire District Councillor as well as the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation stated that he had no issue with the amendment and that the Cabinet would look upon it favourably, as they would likely look to review the changes after a period anyway.

The amendment was voted on as follows

For 29, Against 14, Abstentions 0.

Councillor Faulkner summed up, challenging the statements that there had been no increase in fly-tipping or restrictions on visits by some members. He provided anecdotes of frustrations that residents in his ward had raised to him. While noting that the amendment had been accepted and would therefore be supported as the substantive motion, he expressed hope that referring the matter to the County Council would highlight the concern, anxiety and worry felt by many residents and prompt a full reconsideration of the scheme.

37 for, 4 against, 1 abstentions

CL.100 Motion G - Policy into Action, Proposed by Councillor Michael Brooker, seconded by Councillor Ruth Smith

This motion was not considered as the time limit for motions had been exceeded.

The Meeting closed at Time Not Specified

CHAIR