

This report is public	
Annual Council Business Report 2025/2026	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	21 May 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Not applicable
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	Not applicable
Report of	Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To note the results of the by-elections 1 May 2025 district elections and to consider the appointments and allocation of seats on Committees for municipal year 2025/2026 in accordance with the duty under Section 15 Local Government Housing Act 1989, to ensure that this reflects the political make-up of the Council following the elections. The political representation of members on committees needs to be considered on an annual basis.

1. Recommendations

**** The recommendations are also included in the relevant section of the report ****

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the results of the District by-elections held on 1 May 2025.
- 1.2 To note the constitution of Political Groups and notification of Group Leaders which has been notified in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
- 1.3 To note the appointment of the Deputy Leader of the Council, the membership of the Executive and Executive portfolios for the municipal year 2025/2026.
- 1.4 To agree the allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements as set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 To agree that the allocation of seats on the Licensing Acts Committee reflects the General Licensing Committee.
- 1.6 To appoint members (and where required, substitute members) to serve on each of the committees in accordance with the nominations made by political groups (Appendix 3).

- 1.7 To appoint a non-Executive representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.8 To appoint a representative and named substitute to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.9 To appoint a representative and named substitute to the Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.10 To appoint an Executive member representative and an Executive member substitute to the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee.
- 1.11 That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make changes required to the Constitution as a result of the changes referred to in this report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the results of the District Elections, the membership of the Political Groups and Group Leaders and appointment of the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 The Council is required to appoint Committees and other members bodies that are not part of the Executive. Membership of the Council's Committees is agreed annually at the Annual Council Meeting.
- 2.3. The appointment of the Deputy Leader and the Executive are a matter reserved to the Leader of the Council

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer, 12 May 2025			
Legal	The allocation of seats to the Political Groups is in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 and related regulations mentioned in the report. It is a legal requirement for Council to appoint a Leader, agree proportionality after an election and make appointments to committees. It is for the Council Leader to appoint the Deputy Leader and the other Executive members, and to allocate Lead Member responsibilities. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 12 May 2025			
Risk Management	None			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary

Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	N/A, this report is pursuant to a statutory requirement			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	The political groups have been consulted on aspects of this report.			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Principal Councils are required to hold in every year an annual meeting of the full council. In an election year, this must be held on the eighth day after the retirement of councillors or such other day within 21 days immediately following the day of retirement as the council may fix.

- 3.2 This meeting fulfills that requirement and ensures that the council has conducted the business required in legislation and the Council's Constitution to ensure governance arrangements are in place for the forthcoming municipal year.

4. Details

1 May 2025 District By-election Results

- 4.1 Following the resignations of councillors in the Banbury Cross and Neithrop, Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown and Deddington wards, by-elections were held on 1 May 2025. Councillors were elected as set out below. As the councillors were elected in a by-election, their term of office is for the remainder of the term of the councillor they have replaced as set out below.

Ward	Elected	Party	Term of office
Banbury Cross and Neithrop	Fiaz Ahmed	Conservative	Three years
Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown	Henry Elugwu	Labour	Two years
Deddington	Zoe McLernon	Conservative	Two years

Recommendation

- 1.1 To note the results of the District by-elections held on 1 May 2025.

Constitution of the Council and Constitution of Political Groups and Political Group Leaders

- 4.2 The current constitution of the Council (48 Members) is:
- 17 Liberal Democrat (35.42%)
 - 12 Labour / Labour & co-operative party (25.00%)
 - 11 Conservative (22.92%)
 - 4 Green (8.33%)
 - 4 Independent¹ (8.33%)
- 4.3 The constitution of Political Groups and Group Leaders as notified to the Proper Officer is:
- Liberal Democrat (17 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor David Hingley
 - Labour (12 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Amanda Watkins
 - Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance (12 Members, all Conservative Group members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Ford)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves

¹ Councillor Donna Ford has advised the Proper Officer that she has stood down from Conservative Party and is now an Independent.

Cherwell District Council

- Green and Independent Alliance (5 Members, comprising 4 Green members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Broad)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
- Independent (2 Members, comprising 2 Independent Members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley

4.4 In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Members have given notice of their wish to be regarded as Members of the Political Groups as set out below.

Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance	Green and Independent Alliance	Independent Group
Cllr David Hingley (Group Leader)	Cllr Amanda Watkins (Group Leader)	Cllr Edward Fraser Reeves (Group Leader)	Cllr Ian Middleton (Group Leader)	Cllr Les Sibley (Leader)
Cllr Lesley McLean (Deputy Group Leader)	Cllr Dr Chukwudi Okeke (Deputy Group Leader)	Cllr Nigel Simpson (Deputy Group Leader)	Cllr Tom Beckett (Deputy Group Leader)	Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Gordon Blakeway	Cllr Rebecca Biegel	Cllr Fiaz Ahmed	Cllr John Broad	
Cllr Chris Brant	Cllr Besmira Brasha	Cllr Phil Chapman	Cllr Fiona Mawson	
Cllr Jean Conway	Cllr Mark Cherry	Cllr Donna Ford	Cllr Linda Ward	
Cllr Grace Conway-Murray	Cllr Becky Clarke MBE	Cllr Ian Harwood		
Cllr Gemma Coton	Cllr Dr Isabel Creed	Cllr Kieron Mallon		
Cllr Nick Cotter	Cllr Andrew Crichton	Cllr Nicholas Mawer		
Cllr Frank Ideh	Cllr Henry Elugwu	Cllr Zoe McLernon		
Cllr Simon Lytton	Cllr Lynne Parsons	Cllr David Rogers		
Cllr Julian Nedelcu	Cllr Kerrie Thornhill	Cllr Douglas Webb		
Cllr Robert Parkinson	Cllr Dom Vaitkus	Cllr Barry Wood		
Cllr Rob Pattenden				
Cllr Chris Pruden				
Cllr Alisa Russell				
Cllr Dorothy Walker				
Cllr John Willett				

- 4.5 The Labour Group and Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance have the same number of members. The respective Group Leaders have agreed that they will jointly be referred to as the official opposition.

Recommendation

- 1.2 To note the constitution of Political Groups and notification of Group Leaders which has been notified in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Leader of the Council

- 4.6 The appointment of the Leader of the Council is a Council function in accordance with provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended. The Leader of the Council comes from the majority political grouping.
- 4.7 In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended and the Council's Constitution, the Leader of the Council will hold office for a four-year term until:
- they resign from the office
 - (following local elections) their successor becomes entitled to act as Leader
 - they are removed from office by resolution of the council,
- 4.8 Councillor David Hingley was appointed Leader of the Council at the Annual Council meeting on 22 May 2024 and, as none of the bullets above are applicable, continues in this capacity.
- 4.9 The Leader of the Council shall be the Chairman of the Executive. It is their responsibility to determine the size and membership of the Executive (providing the membership comprises between two and nine members, not including the Leader). The Leader shall also determine the remit of each portfolio. Council does not have any decision-making in this regard.
- 4.10 All executive functions are vested in the Leader and it is the Leader's responsibility to determine how such functions shall be delegated. This responsibility can be a simple re-affirmation of the existing delegation of executive functions to Executive, and Officers. The Council does not have any decision-making role in this regard.

Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive 2025/2026

- 4.11 The Leader of the Council, Councillor David Hingley, will advise Council of their appointment of Deputy Leader and the Executive Portfolios for the Municipal Year 2025/2026.

Recommendation

- 1.3 To note the appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council, the membership of the Executive and the Executive Portfolios for 2025/2026.

Committee Appointments 2025/2026

- 4.12 The current constitution of the Council is set out at paragraph 4.2. The current constitution of Political Groups is set out at paragraph 4.3.

- 4.13 The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis. Appendix 1 summarises how the rules operate.
- 4.14 Appendix 2 sets out the arithmetical product of the rules for the Council's Committees. The figures in Appendix 2 show the adjustments which are necessary to achieve the balance across and within committees to comply with the rules.
- 4.15 To achieve balance on Planning Committee and the Appeals Panel, the Labour Group Leader and Conservative and Independent Alliance Group Leader have agreed that the Labour Group will have five seats on Planning Committee and two seats on Appeals Panel with the Conservative and Independent Alliance having four seats on Planning Committee and three on Appeals Panel until the October Council meeting. The allocation will then be switched and committee memberships amended at the October Council meeting.
- 4.16 The Licensing Acts Committee allocation of seats is not subject to the political balance requirements. Due to the crossover with the functions of the General Licensing Committee, it is recommended that the make-up of the Licensing Acts Committee reflect the make-up of the General Licensing Committee, and the same Members are appointed to both Committees.
- 4.17 Appendix 3 (to follow) sets out Group nominations to serve on each of the committees in accordance with the political balance requirements.
- 4.18 Members appointed to Committees shall hold office until no later than the next Annual Council meeting, unless appointments are amended by Group Leaders and notified to the Proper Officer or a Member ceases to hold office.

Recommendations

- 1.4 To agree the allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements as set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 To agree that the allocation of seats on the Licensing Acts Committee reflects the General Licensing Committee.
- 1.6 To appoint members (and where required, substitute members) to serve on each of the committees in accordance with the nominations made by political groups (Appendix 3).

Appointment of Representatives to Joint Bodies

- 4.19 Council is required to agree at its Annual Meeting appointments to the joint bodies of which the Council is a member and has a seat/seats in line with the Terms of Reference of that joint body. Appointments are made for the municipal year and the Members appointed hold office until no later than the next Annual Council meeting, unless the nomination is amended or they cease to hold office.

Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 4.20 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has responsibility to “review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health services in its area” and to make referrals to the Secretary of State about proposals where it considers proposals for service change, or consultations, have been inadequate. It discharges that responsibility to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (‘the Committee’).
- 4.21 OCC, Cherwell District Council (CDC), Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, The Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council (“the Constituent Councils”) have under powers in Section 8(2)(a) of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and associated Regulations, formed a joint committee between the Councils to discharge the functions of Oxfordshire County Council given to it under that Act.
- 4.22 The voting membership of the Committee comprises 12 non-executive members of the Constituent Councils, including 1 Member from each district/city Council.
- 4.23 Council is asked to appoint a (CDC) representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026. The representative cannot be a member of the Executive.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 4.24 Oxfordshire County Council and the NHS have a duty to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board. The Board is the principal structure in Oxfordshire with responsibility for promoting the health and wellbeing of the people of the county.
- 4.25 The rules on political proportionality do not apply to the Health and Wellbeing Board not to any sub-committees set up by it.
- 4.26 The membership of the Board includes elected Member representatives and officers from the Oxfordshire local authorities, local GPs and Healthwatch Oxfordshire. The Board’s Terms of Reference set out that the representative from each district/city Council must either be the Leader or the relevant Executive/Cabinet member.
- 4.27 Council is asked to appoint a representative and named substitute to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the municipal year 2025/2026.

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

- 4.28 The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examines and reviews how the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley carries out their responsibilities of ensuring that Thames Valley Police runs effectively and supports the Police and Crime Commissioner in their work.
- 4.29 The Panel’s Terms of Reference set out that the membership included 14 elected Members, including one from each of the Oxfordshire district/city Councils.
- 4.30 The Panel’s Terms of References state: “Appointments of elected Members to the Panel shall be made by each of the Authorities in accordance with their own procedures and in making their appointments to the Panel each individual authority shall have regard to the requirement in the Act that appointments shall be made

with a view to ensuring that the 'balanced appointment objective' is met so far as is reasonably practicable. It is recognised that each Authority may choose to appoint from within the membership of the majority group."

- 4.31 Council is asked to appoint a representative and named substitute to the Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2025/2026.

Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (OLJC)

- 4.32 In early 2025 the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (OLJC) replaced the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.
- 4.33 The Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire ("constituent authorities") formed to enable and facilitate the Constituent members working together to deliver the aims of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long Term Sustainable Development.
- 4.34 As the Joint Committee is constituted to be able to discharge executive functions if delegated to it by the constituent authorities, then the appointed person must be from the Cabinet/Executive of the constituent authorities. There should be one member from each constituent authority. It is custom and practice for this person to be the Leader of the Council.
- 4.35 Each constituent authority shall appoint a substitute (also being an Executive member). The substitute member shall have the same rights of speaking and voting at the meetings as the member for whom the substitution is made. It is permissible to appoint a specific individual substitute or any Cabinet/Executive member.
- 4.34 Council is asked to appoint an Executive member as the council's representative and named substitute (also an Executive member) to the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.
- 4.36 The former Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Groups for planning, housing, infrastructure, and environment have been disbanded and do not need to be appointed to. There is provision within the OLJC Terms of Reference for the establishment of Task and Finish Groups, but none have been established to date.
- 4.37 In the event that decisions delegated to this OLJC require it, a Joint Scrutiny Committee consisting of each Constituent Authority's Chair of its Scrutiny Committee, may be convened. Notwithstanding, decisions of the OLJC may be scrutinised by each Constituent Authority as part of its own arrangements.

Recommendations

- 1.7 To appoint a non-Executive representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.8 To appoint a representative and named substitute to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.9 To appoint a representative and named substitute to the Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panel.

- 1.10 To appoint an Executive member representative and an Executive member substitute to the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To amend the appointments. This is not recommended as nominations have been submitted by Group Leaders following consultation with their Groups and in accordance with the proportionality calculations.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The Council is required to note the results of the District Council by-election note the appointment of the Executive and portfolio allocation, agree the allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements and not subject to political balance requirements, to agree the appointments to each of the Committees in accordance with the nominations made by political groups and agree appointments to joint committees.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Local Government & Housing Act 1989 – Political Balance
Appendix 2	Allocation of seats on committees subject to political balance requirements and not subject to political balance requirements 2025/2026
Appendix 3	Committee appointments 2025/2026
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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