



# **County Council**

**19 May 2015**

## **Agenda**

## Declarations of Interest

### The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

### Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, or

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

### What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

### List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

**Employment** (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on (01865) 815270 or [glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a hard copy of the document.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

To: Members of the County Council

## ***Notice of a Meeting of the County Council***

**Tuesday, 19 May 2015 at 10.00 am**

**County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND**



Joanna Simons  
Chief Executive

May 2015

Contact Officer: **Deborah Miller**  
Tel: (01865) 815384; E-Mail: [deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, notice is given that Items 3, 7 and 12 will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is to provide an *aide-memoire* to assist the clerk of the meeting in the drafting of minutes.

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***Members are asked to sign the attendance book which will be available in the corridor outside the Council Chamber. A list of members present at the meeting will be compiled from this book.***

***A buffet luncheon will be provided***

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Election of Chairman for the 2015/16 Council Year**
- 2. Election of Vice-Chairman for the 2015/16 Council Year**
- 3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 22)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2015 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

**4. Apologies for Absence**

**5. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note**

Members are reminded that they must declare their interests orally at the meeting and specify (a) the nature of the interest and (b) which items on the agenda are the relevant items. This applies also to items where members have interests by virtue of their membership of a district council in Oxfordshire.

**6. Official Communications**

**7. Petitions and Public Address**

**8. Appointments**

To make any changes to the membership of the Cabinet, scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups.

**9. Report of the Returning Officer**

**RETURNING OFFICER REPORT**

**BY-ELECTION HELD ON 7 MAY 2015  
WITNEY WEST & BAMPTON DIVISION**

Members are asked to receive the following report from the County Returning Officer on the outcome of the by-election for the Witney West & Bampton Division held on 7 May 2015:

Voting were as follows:

Liz Leffman	Liberal Democrat	472
Calvert Charles Stuart McGibbon	Labour	800
James Francis Mills	Conservative	3465
Nick Owen	Green Party	462
Jim Stanley	UKIP	678

James Francis Mills was accordingly elected County Councillor for the Witney West & Bampton Division.

## 10. Cabinet Membership and Delegation of Cabinet Functions

Report by the Leader of the Council (CC10).(To Follow)

***Council is RECOMMENDED to note the delegations made by the Leader of the Council with regard to the functions of the Cabinet.***

## 11. Committees and Review of Political Balance (Pages 23 - 36)

Report by the County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (CC11)

The Council is required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis. The report sets out how the rules operate and seeks approval for adjustments which are necessary to achieve the balance across and within committees to comply with the rules.

In summary the changes necessary are:

- (a) To obtain balance across the scrutiny committees, the Green Group has a seat on the Performance & Scrutiny Committee. There are no unfilled seats;
- (b) To obtain balance across the other committees of the Council and overall the Green Group has a seat on the Remuneration Committee and the Conservative Independent Alliance Group have an additional seat on the Planning & Regulation Committee. There are no unfilled seats

***The Council is RECOMMENDED:***

- (a) ***to confirm the political balance on committees shown in Annex 2 to the report;***
- (b) ***to appoint to committees the councillors and co-opted members shown in Annex 3, subject to any changes reported in any amended schedule and at the meeting;***

## 12. Scrutiny Committees - Annual Report (Pages 37 - 56)

The report is structured to reflect the activity of the Council's three scrutiny committees; Performance Scrutiny, Education Scrutiny and Health Overview & Scrutiny and the Cabinet Advisory Groups. The report highlights the work carried out by each Committee to scrutinise service activity and performance as well as Cabinet decisions taken over the past year.

The Audit and Governance Committee has reviewed this report and welcomed the positive impact that the committees have had in the past year. The report has also been reviewed by the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

***Council is RECOMMENDED to receive the report.***

### **13. Audit & Governance Committee - Annual Report (Pages 57 - 70)**

The Annual Report sets out the role of the Audit & Governance Committee and summarises the work that has been undertaken both as a Committee and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2014.

***Council is RECOMMENDED to receive the report.***

### **14. Officer Scheme of Delegation (Pages 71 - 72)**

Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (**CC14**).

At its Annual Meeting, Council is required to agree the officer scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution. The Scheme of Delegation forms Part 7.3 of the Constitution and gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, directors and to other chief officers whose titles and/or areas of responsibility are set out in Part 2, Article 11 of the Constitution.

This report highlights some minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and to Article 11 principally to reflect the service areas of certain Chief Officer posts.

***Council is RECOMMENDED to note the amendments to Article 11 and to Part 7.3 of the Constitution and to approve the Scheme of Officer Delegation (Part 7.3) as amended.***

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#### **Pre-Meeting Briefing**

There will be a pre-meeting briefing at County Hall on **Monday 18 May at 9.15 am** for the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders

## OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 April 2015 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 3.25 pm.

**Present:**

Councillor Anne Purse – in the Chair

Councillors:

Lynda Atkins	Mark Gray	David Nimmo Smith
Jamila Azad	Patrick Greene	Neil Owen
David Bartholomew	Tim Hallchurch MBE	Glynis Phillips
Mike Beal	Pete Handley	Susanna Pressel
Maurice Billington	Jenny Hannaby	Laura Price
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Nick Hards	G.A. Reynolds
Kevin Bulmer	Neville F. Harris	Alison Rooke
Nick Carter	Steve Harrod	Rodney Rose
Louise Chapman	Mrs Judith Heathcoat	Gillian Sanders
Mark Cherry	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	John Sanders
John Christie	John Howson	Les Sibley
Sam Coates	Ian Hudspeth	Roz Smith
Yvonne Constance OBE	Bob Johnston	Lawrie Stratford
Steve Curran	Richard Langridge	John Tanner
Surinder Dhesi	Stewart Lilly	Melinda Tilley
Arash Fatemian	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Michael Waine
Neil Fawcett	Sandy Lovatt	Richard Webber
Jean Fooks	Mark Lygo	David Williams
Mrs C. Fulljames	Kieron Mallon	David Wilmshurst
Anthony Gearing	Charles Mathew	

*The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**8/14 MINUTES**  
(Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 March 2015 were approved and signed subject to the following addition to Minute 6/15, page 5...those opposing the amendment reminded Council of the importance of having a plan in place to prevent uncontrolled developments taking place in Oxfordshire”...

**9/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Janet Godden and Zoe Patrick.

**10/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

Council thanked Mr Robert Bullard for the dedication in his book which read as follows: "To: Oxfordshire County Council Library Services With thanks for all your wonderful resources (in particular Oxford Central Library) and endlessly helpful counter staff."

Councillor Lindsay Gale, Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services thanked Mr Bullard for his dedication and paid tribute to the Library Service Staff.

A portrait of each of the councillors had been drawn by children in schools in South Africa, to raise money for the schools. Some 20 years ago, Keith Borien, a former Education Officer at Oxfordshire County Council had set up a link between Oxfordshire and South Africa (OCSAL) which made sure that surplus or replaced school furniture did not end up in landfill, but rather went to schools in South Africa where it was truly appreciated and greatly needed. From that start grew BEFSA, the Borien Education Fund for South Africa, which among other things organised exchanges between Head teachers in both countries, as well as fundraising and continuing the gift of furniture unwanted in our more affluent part of the world. Alderman David Turner had for many years been Chair of the Committee which related to this charity, born and nurtured by this Council. As Chairman of the Council, she very much wanted to help this charity. She urged Councillors to make a donation by buying their portrait.

The Chairman reminded members about her forthcoming Charity Dinner on 15 May 2015 to raise money for Thomley Hall in Oxford.

**11/14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item 6)

The Council received the following Petitions:

A Petition from the residents of Chipping Norton and surrounding area requesting that the County Council to take the HGV's using the A44 out of Chipping Norton town centre by using the proposed lorry route and to reinstate the Small Towns Strategy in the LTP4.

A Petition from the local residents and businesses of Didcot requesting the County Council to reject the proposal for a bus lane through the pedestrianised zone in Didcot Town Centre.



## **12/14 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

(Agenda Item 8)

10 questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers (where asked) are set out in Annex 1 to the Minutes.

In relation to Question 2 (Question from Councillor Cherry to Councillor Nimmo Smith) Councillor Nimmo Smith gave an undertaking to check on the situation regarding the replacement of fading lines at the Harriers Banbury Academy (Bloxham road into Harriers view and provide Councillor Cherry with a written answer.

## **13/14 REPORT OF THE CABINET**

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to paragraph 2 (Flood Risk Management Consultation Responses) (Question from Councillor Coates) Councillor Rose gave an undertaking to provide an update on the funding for the second phase of the project (implementation) and provide Councillor Coates with a written answer.

In relation to paragraph 10 (Child Sexual Exploitation Update – OSCB Report and Report on CSE) (Question from Councillor Gill Sanders) Councillor Tilley gave an undertaking to rearrange the previously cancelled question and answer session on the detailed report for members.

In relation to paragraph 10 (Child Sexual Exploitation Update – OSCB Report and Report on CSE) (Question from Councillor Pressel) Councillor Tilley gave an undertaking that the Council would bid for their share of the £40m government grant for work within this area.

## **14/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK GREENE**

(Agenda Item 10)

With the consent of Council Councillor Greene moved and Councillor Lilly seconded his motion as amended below in strikethrough and bold:

### **RESOLVED:**

“This Council is concerned and alarmed at the recent number of major traffic accidents that have occurred on the A34 in the Oxfordshire County area in recent months that have caused real damage not only to the Oxfordshire economy but to that of the country.

It is recognised that much of the problems arise from the volume of heavy goods vehicles that are restricted to 60mph. Much frustration to ~~fast~~ **outside** lane vehicles arises when two heavy vehicles are in the process of

overtaking and with vehicle governors that may well be slightly at variance causing the overtaking procedure to last much too long.

In recent times there has been talk of making heavy goods vehicles travel in convoys, however the matter is extremely urgent and this Council asks the leader to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask that he makes urgent representation to Highways England to request that there is an enforcement order made to restrict all heavy goods vehicles to only use the **slow inside lane in each direction** between junction 13 on the M4 to junction 9 on the M40. This measure will in all respects make these vehicles travel in convoys and make the road safer and less liable to accidents.”

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was carried by 51 votes to 0, with 9 abstentions:

**RESOLVED:** (by 51 votes to 0, with 9 abstentions)

“This Council is concerned and alarmed at the recent number of major traffic accidents that have occurred on the A34 in the Oxfordshire County area in recent months that have caused real damage not only to the Oxfordshire economy but to that of the country.

It is recognised that much of the problems arise from the volume of heavy goods vehicles that are restricted to 60mph. Much frustration to outside lane vehicles arises when two heavy vehicles are in the process of overtaking and with vehicle governors that may well be slightly at variance causing the overtaking procedure to last much too long.

In recent times there has been talk of making heavy goods vehicles travel in convoys, however the matter is extremely urgent and this Council asks the leader to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask that he makes urgent representation to Highways England to request that there is an enforcement order made to restrict all heavy goods vehicles to only use the inside lane in each direction between junction 13 on the M4 to junction 9 on the M40. This measure will in all respects make these vehicles travel in convoys and make the road safer and less liable to accidents.”

#### **15/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BOB JOHNSTON**

(Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Johnston moved and Councillor Howes seconded the following motion as amended with Council’s agreement by Councillors Rodney Rose and Nick Hards in bold italics/strikethrough:

~~The~~East West rail link, and ~~and~~ the developments on the Cowley branch are welcome news. ***Chiltern Rail, Oxfordshire Highways, DfT and other partners continue to meet to hopefully progress the Cowley Branch Line venture.*** However more could be achieved by a comprehensive plan encompassing the whole County, reducing strain on our road infrastructure that we have responsibility for maintaining. This could include the re-opening

of stations at places like Grove/Wantage and Yarnton and the line to Witney and Carterton as well as the redoubling of the remainder of the Cotswold line within Oxfordshire. Rail services can play an important part in the future economic and social life of the County. For example the proposed services directly to Heathrow ~~could~~ **will** be extended to both Banbury and Bicester **and beyond**, rather than terminating in **just** Oxford.

~~In the meantime the Council needs to lobby~~ **The Council calls on** the Department For Transport and others **to continue to produce** for modern electric rolling stock for the newly electrified lines to Oxfordshire, **whilst welcoming the recent arrival from Japan of the start of deliveries of the new trains.**"

Following debate, the motion as amended was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** (by 60 votes to 0)

East West rail link and the developments on the Cowley branch are welcome news. Chiltern Rail, Oxfordshire Highways, DfT and other partners continue to meet to hopefully progress the Cowley Branch Line venture. However more could be achieved by a comprehensive plan encompassing the whole County, reducing strain on our road infrastructure that we have responsibility for maintaining. This could include the re-opening of stations at places like Grove/Wantage and Yarnton and the line to Witney and Carterton as well as the redoubling of the remainder of the Cotswold line within Oxfordshire. Rail services can play an important part in the future economic and social life of the County. For example the proposed services directly to Heathrow will be extended to both Banbury and Bicester and beyond, rather than terminating in just Oxford.

The Council calls on the Department for Transport and others to continue to produce modern electric rolling stock for the newly electrified lines to Oxfordshire, whilst welcoming the recent arrival from Japan of the start of deliveries of the new trains."

## **16/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TANNER**

(Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Tanner moved and Councillor Fooks seconded the following motion as amended with Council's agreement by Councillor Jean Fooks in bold italics/strikethrough:

"The Council calls on each of the candidates in the ~~five~~ **Six** Oxfordshire constituencies:

- (a) ~~to speak up for local government;~~ **to stand up for the vital importance of local government , requesting adequate funding and devolution of both powers and budgets to a local level;**
- (b) to pledge to build the homes and provide the improved transport that Oxfordshire desperately needs;

- (c) to support our schools, colleges and universities;
- (d) to back a vibrant low carbon economy;
- (e) to commit to a Living Wage and a more equal society;
- (f) to promote an international, tolerant and safer county;
- (g) to respond to the needs of our scientific, automotive, agricultural and military communities;
- (h) to invest in our hospitals and the National Health Service in the county;
- (i) to support and safeguard our elderly and disabled residents, and our young people;
- (j)

We expect those elected to represent Oxfordshire in the House of Commons to work tirelessly for a prosperous, fairer, greener and more beautiful Oxfordshire for all and urges every resident who can to use their vote in the General Election on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor David Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded the following amendment in bold italics/strikethrough:

"This Council calls on each of the candidates in the ~~five~~ **six** Oxfordshire constituencies:

- a) to speak ~~out~~ **up** for local government **and not to vote for the slow decline we have had since 1979;**
- b) to pledge to build the homes and the improved transport that Oxfordshire desperately needs **rather than trumpet vague figures the private sector might possibly achieve;**
- c) to support our schools, colleges and universities **by not charging fees and stop introducing academies and free schools;**
- d) to back a vibrant low carbon economy **with a real Green New Deal programme of activities that will deliver the targets;**
- e) to commit to a living wage and a more equal society **reversing the trend over the last 20 years;**
- f) to promote an internationally, tolerant and safer County **by not pandering to xenophobes and racists;**
- g) to respond to the needs of our scientific , automotive, agricultural and military communities **and all the other groups who make up our society rather than consistently doing the bidding of the business community;**
- h) to invest in our hospitals and the National Health Service **by rejecting the privatisation of services completely.**
- i) to support and safeguard our elderly and disabled residents and our young people **not with empty rhetoric but real well funded programmes of support.**

We expect those elected to represent Oxfordshire in the House of Commons to work tirelessly for a more prosperous, **equal, peaceful,** greener **and more sustainable** Oxfordshire for all and urge every resident **who is still registered** to use their vote in the General Election on May the 7th."

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 57 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles then moved and Councillor Constance seconded the following amendment shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

"The Council calls on each of the candidates in the five Oxfordshire constituencies:

- (a) to speak up for local government;
- (b) to pledge to build the homes and provide the improved transport ~~that Oxfordshire desperately needs;~~ ***where needed***
- (c) to support our schools, colleges and universities;
- ~~(d) to back a vibrant low carbon economy;~~
- (e) to commit to a Living Wage and a more equal society;
- (f) to promote ~~an international, tolerant and a safer county;~~
- (g) to respond to the needs of our scientific, automotive, agricultural and military communities;
- (h) to invest in our hospitals and the National Health Service in the county;
- (i) to support and safeguard our ~~elderly and disabled~~ vulnerable residents. ~~and our young people;~~

We expect those elected to represent Oxfordshire in the House of Commons to work tirelessly for ~~a prosperous, fairer, greener and more beautiful Oxfordshire for all~~ and urges every resident who can to use their vote in the General Election on May 7th.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 27.

The substantive motion as amended was then put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 16, with 11 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:** (by 33 votes to 16, with 11 abstentions)

"The Council calls on each of the candidates in the six Oxfordshire constituencies:

- (a) to stand up for the vital importance of local government , requesting adequate funding and devolution of both powers and budgets to a local level;
- (b) to pledge to build the homes and provide the improved transport where needed;
- (c) to support our schools, colleges and universities;
- (d) to commit to a Living Wage and a more equal society;
- (e) to promote a safer county;
- (f) to respond to the needs of our scientific, automotive, agricultural and military communities;

- (g) to invest in our hospitals and the National Health Service in the county;
- (h) to support and safeguard our vulnerable residents.

We expect those elected to represent Oxfordshire in the House of Commons to work tirelessly for Oxfordshire and urge every resident who can to use their vote in the General Election on May

#### **17/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR NEVILLE HARRIS**

(Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Harris moved and Councillor Williams seconded the following motion:

“I move that, at the earliest possible time following the General Election, the Oxfordshire County Council decant (travel) to the House of Commons Westminster en - bloc to meet, at individual members own expense or otherwise, and to enable its unified case in relation to Oxfordshire's future to be put directly to the County's Members of Parliament. The discussions and representations to include 'cross council' concerns on present and future Government funding and policies on all matters affecting Oxfordshire's residents including: all types of infrastructure, the Council's full range of services and the discharge of its statutory duties.

Detailed organisational arrangements to be made by the relevant officers in conjunction with group leaders and other pertinent members.”

With the consent of Council, Councillor David Williams proposed that his amendment as set out in the Schedule of Business, Annex 1 be withdrawn.

With the consent of Council, Councillor Glynis Phillips proposed that his amendment as set out in the Schedule of Business, Annex 1 be withdrawn.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth proposed and Councillor Lilly seconded the following amendment in bold italics and strikethrough:

“I move that, at the earliest possible time following the General Election, the Oxfordshire County Council ~~decant (travel) to the House of Commons Westminster en - bloc to meet, at individual members own expense or otherwise,~~ and invites ***all Oxfordshire's elected Members of Parliament to County Hall*** to enable its unified case in relation to Oxfordshire's future to be put directly to the County's Members of Parliament. The discussions and representations to include 'cross council' concerns on present and future Government funding and policies on all matters affecting Oxfordshire's residents including: all types of infrastructure, the Council's full range of services and the discharge of its statutory duties.

Detailed organisational arrangements to be made by the relevant officers in conjunction with group leaders and other pertinent members.”

Following debate the amendment was put to the vote and was carried by 52 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.

The substantive motion, as amended was then put to the vote and it was:

**RESOLVED:** (by 55 votes to 0, with 1 abstention)

I move that, at the earliest possible time following the General Election, the Oxfordshire County Council invites all Oxfordshire's elected Members of Parliament to County Hall to enable its unified case in relation to Oxfordshire's future to be put directly to the County's Members of Parliament. The discussions and representations to include 'cross council' concerns on present and future Government funding and policies on all matters affecting Oxfordshire's residents including: all types of infrastructure, the Council's full range of services and the discharge of its statutory duties.

Detailed organisational arrangements to be made by the relevant officers in conjunction with group leaders and other pertinent members.

#### **18/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS**

(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded the following amendment:

“Knowing the impact that the reductions in revenue support grant have had over the last 5 years on vital services and the likely impact of even stronger cuts will have on the most vulnerable in our Community in future years, Oxfordshire County Council calls on the party leaders of the Conservative Labour and Liberal Democrats to abandon their plans to impose even further cuts on local Government and to recognise that local Government plays a vital role in our community and should no longer bear the burden of an economic policy known as ‘Austerity’ that is of dubious merit and limited effectiveness.

The Chief Executive to write to all three party leaders with a copy of this motion.”

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 50 votes to 2.

**RESOLVED:** Accordingly.

#### **19/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR COATES**

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Coates moved and Councillor Williams seconded the following motion:

“Having undertaken a deep review of the future Transport Strategy the County Council is of the opinion that one of the key issues to easing congestion on Oxfordshire roads is to encourage more travellers to take non car options such as walking, cycling and public transport by bus and train.

Knowing that choices of transport modes essentially comes down to an economic decision based on the cheapest options this Council calls on the Government to divert part of the £18billion already committed for road building to rail expansion and reductions in rail fares , bus subsidies and new cycle support networks.

The County Council also considers that now is maybe the time to consider bringing ALL of the rail system back into public ownership and control and to end rail franchises that see large scale public funding underpinning massive profit taking by private companies.

The Chief Executive to forward copies of this motion to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Transport on the 11 May 2015.”

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 34 votes to 16, with 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED:** Accordingly.

## **20/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR COATES**

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Coates moved and Councillor Williams seconded the following motion:

“The County Council is concerned at the recent report by the World Wildlife Fund Living Planet Index that 50% of wildlife has gone from the planet over the last 45 years. Clearly this includes substantial numbers of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish disappearing from, the Oxfordshire ecosystem since 1970.

One estimate for UK wildlife decline since 1970 is about a 58% reduction. The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust has said this report is valid for our area, in terms of their observations.

The County Council has already shown its concern with bee colony collapse and is pledged to support the species with a programme designed to assist bee communities to prosper. However the WWF Living Index Research suggests a deeper and even more serious concern across a wide spectrum of creatures that constitute our local Oxfordshire Wildlife.

The Council requests that the report currently being undertaken by the Local Nature Partnership is circulated to all members and considered by Cabinet to illustrate what may be done to reverse the decline in wildlife population numbers here in Oxfordshire.”



Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was carried by 36 votes to 15, with 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED:** Accordingly.

**21/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS**  
(Agenda Item 17)

The time being 3.30pm this motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1 set out in the Council's Constitution.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

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## QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. The time allowed for this agenda item will not exceed 30 minutes. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>1. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</b></p> <p>May I request the Leader and/or the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy to write a strong letter to the Highways Agency to declare Oxfordshire's disappointment at the state of the central carriageway and verges of the A34 in this county (covered in plastic and waste, especially around the Hinckseys but far from exclusively), to point out that this reflects badly on the County whether rightly so or not, when it is the HA's responsibility? The same request also applies to being a good neighbour where illegal ragwort grows unrestricted as is the case throughout the length of the A34 and is free to distribute its seeds at its own whim.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The Highways Agency has a Litter Strategy which was published in 2014. In this document their vision is "A network predominantly free from litter, without compromising safety and delivered affordably". Officers have spoken to EM, the Highways Agency contractor for the A34, and they have confirmed that central reserve litter picking is programmed to fit in with other works, in order to minimise disruption and is undertaken by the relevant District Council.</p> <p>With regard to ragwort, EM have a Ragwort Control Policy which was issued in early 2012 which explains how they will deal with any ragwort which is either reported to them or identified during routine inspections.</p> <p>I have asked officers to make the Highways Agency aware of your concerns at their next meeting with them.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Could I point out that the A34 around Botley Interchange yesterday was equally revolting and would be grateful if you add that to you discussions with the Highway Agency?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Yes I will.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>2. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</b></p> <p>Will the cabinet member for Environment tell me if contractor Skanska has the capacity to contract out all the line painting in Oxfordshire and then have a schedule in place to have white/yellow lines renewed before they start to fade? Or furthermore has the budget cuts that continue to hit Oxfordshire County Council mean that the funding is no longer able to sustain the line painting program in Oxfordshire? I therefore ask the highways department at OCC to draw up a report on line painting which should be made available to the public.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The majority of budget for replacement of white lines was included in the Area Stewardship budget when it was introduced in 2011. Some councillors have used this budget to refresh lining over the years but others have had other priorities for their fund allocation. As you know, the Area Stewardship Fund has been withdrawn as part of this year's budget reductions and so we will not be able to refresh all the lines in the county but will be remarking statutory and safety lining as and when this is required.</p> <p>Skanska is able to contract in line marking resources as required by OCC. They are currently not contracted to replace all lines before they start to fade, but replace lines as and when OCC instruct them to.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Thank you for your response. However, I have been up to the Academy to check whether the lines had been repainted and unfortunately some were still faded. When will the works be done please?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I will look into the matter and provide you with a written response.</p>
<p><b>3. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</b></p> <p>Could the Leader of the Council confirm that he has given his backing to a large scale expansion of Kidlington Airport focused on the concept that the London Oxford Airport will be a hub for a network of international</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>I'm not sure which newspaper Cllr Williams has been reading but I can confirm either he misread the article or I was misquoted. I have never said anything about a large scale expansion of Kidlington airport. I have said that I recognise that the runway length is similar to that of London City airport giving it the potential to fly many destinations within Europe. I've also stated that I've used</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p>scheduled commercial flights?</p> <p>What evidence does he have of the economic viability of such a project and does he appreciate the environmental damage that will be caused by increased Co2 emissions locally and the impact on the people of Kidlington of having an international airport virtually within yards of their front door.</p>	<p>the airport to fly to Jersey and found the service simple and easy to use. In fact I checked in and went through security 15 minutes after leaving my house.</p> <p>It is in our interest to work in partnership with what could be a key transport hub in the future. Our support to date is based on the fact that use of the Airport is well below the number of passengers a year it is licenced for, so we are working to support them in providing new services which will support local people and growth. These would be services that support the local economy – providing better access into Oxfordshire with the potential to actually reduce emissions with reduced distance to travel compared to Heathrow and Gatwick.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Can we take it that you are in favour of a massive expansion?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I am not in favour of massive expansion of Kidlington Airport, but the Airport is currently underutilised so I am in favour of full utilisation of the existing capacity of the Airport.</p>
<p><b>4. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</b></p> <p>Recently the County Council announced it wants to build a number of new Park and Rides on the Oxfordshire Green Belt. Although it is true that the figures using Park and Rides have increased on what basis have traffic planner concluded that such large extra numbers will be required?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) proposes expansion and updating of the Park &amp; Ride system. With 100,000 homes and 85,000 jobs planned in Oxfordshire by 2031, Park &amp; Ride will play an important role in keeping car traffic out of the city whilst providing a convenient travel option for those who do not have direct bus access to the city's main destinations. The additional spaces proposed have taken into account the spare capacity in the current system, the number of additional users resulting from growth in the county, and the number of people currently driving into the city who would switch to Park &amp; Ride as a result of the measures in the OTS.</p> <p>The extra capacity would be delivered over the next 20 years. Further work is needed to determine the best exact locations for new Park &amp; Ride sites. No specific sites are proposed at this stage. It is worth noting that some of the</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	existing sites are already located within the Oxford Green Belt.
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Is that an agreement that you are going to build on the greenbelt?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>We have already had to build on the green belt for the existing Park &amp; Ride sites and we will need to consider the possibility of building on green belt on the locations identified for future sites.</p>
<p><b>5. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</b></p> <p>Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that the introduction of the Self Registration system for voters has been a disaster for democracy with a drop of over 11,000 in the City alone (over 10% decline) and nationally taking well over 1million people off the register. As all the Districts are recording significant declines what is the County Council trying to do to encourage voters to register?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>The deadline for registering to vote does not expire until Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Since the dissolution of Parliament and the start of the restricted period, the election process will receive a significantly higher profile through the national press and television coverage, highlighting the surrounding issues. It is envisaged that this will also lead to an increase in the number of people registering their right to vote. This is likely to intensify from the Publication of Persons Nominated, which is due to take place on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Indeed the Electoral Commission recently has announced that one million online registration applications have been made since 16 March.</p> <p>It is therefore perhaps premature, at this time, to determine whether registration is greater or lower than previously. In any case, this would be a question that Cllr Williams should ask the City and District Council Electoral Registration Officers.</p> <p>This is because the maintenance and publication of the Register of Electors is a function of the respective City and District Councils. Each of these Councils has a dedicated page on their websites explaining the process for registering to vote, how to ask for postal votes and proxy votes, and also directing members of the public to the on-line registration service at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote">https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote</a> , which is the preferred method for registration. Each authority has undertaken proactive public engagement and registration work.</p> <p>However, the County Council has also assisted the City and District Councils</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	<p>under Regulation 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001. This says that a County Council may disclose county council-held data to electoral registration authorities to assist them in their role of maintaining the electoral register. Information has therefore been disclosed to each of the City and District Council Electoral Registration Officers under agreed data sharing processes for a two-fold purpose in connection with Individual Electoral Registration: firstly to enable them to verify persons already on the electoral register; and secondly to identify other persons who may not be on the register and/or who may be of voting age on the day of the election. The County Council has therefore fulfilled its responsibilities and has contributed directly to ensuring that electoral registration is maximised.</p> <p>Beyond this, as the elections this year are not for the full County Council, no additional proactive work has been commissioned. Given the constraints on resources, it is not appropriate to commission general or targeted publicity which, in any event, could lead to the contention that the Council was interfering in elections in which it has no part, either democratically or statutorily.</p> <p>I am confident, however, that the County Council has played its part fully in assisting County and District Council partners in their responsibilities for voter registration.</p> <p>I can confirm that at all opportunities recently including many visits to schools I have stressed the importance of voting.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Can I take the response to mean that in fact you are not going to help the districts in trying to get as many people registered before deadline of 20 April.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>If you look at a recent article from the LGC on 9 April, it has stated that since there was been a Government campaign to get people to register on line (the shortfall of a million voters that had disappeared previously) a million have registered on line, so actually I think the system is working. The County Council certainly has been playing its part in making people aware to vote and register. I</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	think you have got to wait until 20 April before you can actually make a decision as to whether it has been a success or not.
<p><b>6. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</b></p> <p>Recently the Leader of the Council was photographed warmly receiving a petition from the Disinvest in Fossil Fuels Campaign and apparently wished them well in their efforts to convince local authorities to withdraw their pension funds' investments from fossil fuels.</p> <p>Does this mean that the Leader of the Council will be writing to the Oxfordshire Pensions Committee urging them to invest in safer long term securities than fossil fuels and will he immediately order the orientation away from investment in fossil fuel companies in the County Councils own day to day investment portfolio.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>No.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>If the Leader isn't planning to act on the suggestion given as a result of the petition, can I ask what action he is planning to take and what his response might be?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>The documents were passed on to the Pension Committee and that is what I stressed and said I would do, and it is for the Pension Committee to make any decision accordingly.</p>



<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>7. COUNCILLOR GILL SANDERS</b></p> <p>Can Councillor Carter please assure the parents, students and staff of Rose Hill Primary School that the fabric of the building, including roofs and windows, will be repaired and improved to adequate standards before they all have to face another cold winter and can you tell me when the necessary work will be done? If our children are to improve their performance and achieve good results they and their teachers need decent accommodation in which to work.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS &amp; CUSTOMER SERVICES</b></p> <p>Rose Hill Primary School has been assessed based on the standard qualifying criteria and the asphalt roof repair including the clerestory windows are currently on the 2015 /2016 programme. We have been able to allocate funding to address these issues in the coming financial year, though as always, this will still need to be prioritised against the on-going competing demands of schools across the whole of Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Following the OCC funding gateway process, once the detail planning of this work commences, the timings and logistical details will be discussed with the school to minimise any impact.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Thank you for your reply. I am still a little concerned you have said that the issues about Rose Hill School would be addressed in the 2015/16 programme. Can you assure me that the children of Rose Hill School will not have to go through the same conditions they experienced last winter and whilst I recognise, as you say, things need to be prioritised against the on-going competing demands of schools across Oxfordshire. Are there any other schools that actually suffer the same kind of problems with heating that Rose Hill experienced?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Chairman, let me assure Councillor Sanders that it is not a County Council conspiracy to ensure that all children under a certain age remain cold during the winter. Occasionally there are heating problems, occasionally boilers malfunction as was the case, distressingly I accept, at Rose Hill. It was distressing because it was a substantial problem with a heating system there which could not be sorted as soon as we would have liked. There have been one or two other schools in the county where there have been problems with heating, not as severe as Rose Hill I have to admit. As far as next year is concerned I have asked for assurances that the other boilers at the school will also be overhauled in good time so that there is a proper service on all aspects of the heating system and as Councillor Sanders knows there will be repairs done to the roof and the clerestory windows during the next programme. There is also going to be some other windows replaced or repaired but there is only a limited amount of money available for them, but the worst of those will be sorted as well.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	<p>In 2016/17 the School Direct Grants reverts to the schools themselves and so we will have to make new and different arrangements with the relevant schools should large capital programme repairs be needed and they be unable to meet them themselves. But they will have to come up with their own sort of rolling programme that will tie in with our own ability to assist them.</p>
<p><b>8. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>This Council is making various changes as a result of the horrific crimes uncovered in the course of the Bullfinch trial. We have recognised that councillors need to be better informed and ask more searching questions. The obvious way of ensuring that this happens is to have all the scrutiny committees chaired by opposition members. When will the Conservatives at last agree to follow good practice and make this important change?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>I think that it's inappropriate to link these two matters. May I remind you that committees are cross-party and not solely reliant on the Chairman to ask searching questions.</p> <p>To answer your question, I would say that it's important that the best person is chosen for the job, rather than having to abide by any rules or quotas, such as the Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>I wonder if the Leader is aware that the serious case review does link the governance of the Council with the Bullfinch cases and in view of this there is a public perception that if the administration also chairs scrutiny for instance, Education Scrutiny, that is wrong and it looks as though you are wanting to be in control of everything and I wonder what the Leader is going to do about this?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I think that perhaps there has been a different sort of leadership over the last few years, which is not controlling. It is also interesting that the Chairman of Performance Scrutiny Committee is actually from the opposition.</p> <p>The point I was making is that all members have the ability to ask searching questions and I think it is appropriate they do, and they shouldn't just reply on a chairman to be asking appropriate questions. It should be about all members, including members of the opposition who are on scrutiny committees during that period and I think that is my answer to the question.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>9. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>Please can you put pressure on the DfE, which is being very unhelpful about the bids that Cherwell School is putting in to pay for an expansion? This year the school has had to turn away more than 200 children, of whom 100 live in the catchment area, including in Jericho, which is very close to Cherwell School. There is no other secondary school anywhere nearby, so the families that didn't get a place are distraught.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <p>The Cherwell School is an academy and as such the Council has no locus in relation to bids that its trust might make to the Education Funding Agency. I share your disappointment, and that of your constituents, that The Cherwell's bid to the EFA was unsuccessful as the Council had hoped to support a joined up scheme along the same lines as it is supporting at Cheney School. The Council will therefore proceed with discussions with The Cherwell School to agree a modest expansion of one form of entry (30 extra places per year group) funded from developer (Section 106) contributions.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Thank you for this answer, I just wondered if you could please give us an indication of the timescales when we might hope to see an actual increase in the size of Cherwell School.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Sorry no I don't have a timescale, we will do it as soon as we can though.</p>
<p><b>10. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>The performance of Oxfordshire children who are eligible for free school meals is far below the level of children on free school meals nationally, in every key stage. How do you account for this and what are you doing about it?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <p>The Education and Learning team in CEF are working closely with colleagues in Early Intervention and Children's Social Care to support schools and are developing a strategy for closing the attainment gap in Oxfordshire.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b>  Yes, now I wondered if Chair I might ask a question of Peter Clark with regard to this. Is it an oversight or is it intentional that the Cabinet Member has omitted to answer half my question?	<b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b>  The Chairman indicated that she was satisfied that the question had been answered and brought the item to a close.

Division(s): N/A

## COUNTY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2015

### COMMITTEES & REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

#### Report by the County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

1. The Council is required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis. A note is attached (**Annex 1**) which summarises how the rules operate. This note also outlines the co-opted members.
2. A schedule is attached (**Annex 2**) showing the initial arithmetical product of the rules for the Council's committees. The figures in brackets show the adjustments which are necessary to achieve the balance across and within committees to comply with the rules.

In summary the changes necessary are:

- (a) To obtain balance across the scrutiny committees, the Green Group has a seat on the Performance & Scrutiny Committee. There are no unfilled seats;
  - (b) To obtain balance across the other committees of the Council and overall the Green Group has a seat on the Remuneration Committee and the Conservative Independent Alliance Group have an additional seat on the Planning & Regulation Committee. There are no unfilled seats
3. The rules relating to political balance do not apply to the three Joint Consultative Committees but so far as is possible political balance is sought. Please note the decrease in the number of members on the Oxfordshire County Council & Teachers Joint Consultative Committee (TJC) from 11 to 5. There will also be a reduction in the number of representatives from the Teaching Unions in recognition on both sides that the size of the meeting is not conducive to meaningful discussion and consideration of the issues raised by both sides; in addition with the increasing number of Academies the Committee's responsibilities extend to an ever diminishing number of schools.
4. A schedule is attached (Annex 3) showing the present committees and their membership (with the exception of the TJC where the numbers of members have changed). Where changes are notified prior to the Schedule of Business being published these will be included in an amended Annex 3.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

5. **The Council is RECOMMENDED:**
- (a) **to confirm the political balance on committees shown in Annex 2 to the report;**
  - (b) **to appoint to committees the councillors and co-opted members shown in Annex 3, subject to any changes reported in any amended schedule and at the meeting;**

### **PETER CLARK**

County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

Background Papers: Nil  
Contact Officers: Sue Whitehead, Principal Committee Officer  
Tel: 01865 810262

May 2015

## Local Government & Housing Act 1989 - Political Balance

### General Description of the Rules

1. For most local authority committees and sub-committees and for certain other appointments, the 1989 Act requires the Council to allocate seats to political groups in accordance with the groups' proportionate strength on the Council as a whole.
2. The political balance requirement applies only where political groups have been set up, but where it does apply the allocation to committees has to be reviewed annually. A review is also required on the formation of a new political group or if requested by a member newly joining a group.
3. A committee must review the allocation of seats on its sub-committees following any change in the committee's membership as a result of a 1989 Act review.

### The Allocation

4. The allocation process depends on the proportionate strengths of the political groups and the nature of the committee, sub-committee or other body concerned. The following rules apply:
  - (i) Where a group has an overall majority on the Council, that group is entitled to a majority of the seats on each committee and sub-committee. For this purpose only, the calculation must include seats occupied by voting co-optees on a scrutiny committee or sub-committee concerned with education.
  - (ii) Each political group is entitled to its proportion of the total number of seats on all the committees added together, according to the ratio of the number of members of the group to the number of members of the Council.<sup>1</sup>
  - (iii) Subject to (i) and (ii) above, each group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats on each individual committee.
  - (iv) For sub-committees and some other bodies, a group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats regardless of the total number of seats involved (but still subject to the majority rule in (i) above).
  - (v) The allocations of seats to political groups are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Where the allocations leave a seat or seats unfilled on a committee, sub-committee or other body those seats must be allocated to any independent members of the Council.
5. Except where a "no dissent" alternative (as described below) is adopted, application of these principles, "so far as reasonably practicable", is

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<sup>1</sup> The Council has in the past sought so far as possible to apply this principle to the total seats on scrutiny committees and "other" committees also, but this is not a legal requirement

mandatory. Once the allocations have been agreed under this procedure, the appointment of individual members must then be made in accordance with the wishes of the respective groups.

### **Alternatives where “No Dissent”**

6. The requirement to allocate seats according to political groups’ proportionate strengths can be overridden by some other arrangement, either in relation to all committees, sub-committees and other bodies or in relation to any individual committee, sub-committee or other body, provided that no councillor votes against the alternative arrangement when it is proposed.

### **Co-opted members on Committees**

7. A number of Committees have co-opted members:

Audit & Governance Committee – One representative of the Business Community (nominee on Annex 3)

Pension Fund Committee – 2 voting co-opted members representing the District Councils – 2 District Councillors appointed by the District Council.

Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Under Section 8(2)(a) of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, as amended by by Section 28 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012, 5 District Councillors are appointed by the District Councils. By agreement with all partners of the joint committee there are also 3 non-voting co-opted members in order to assist it in its work.

Education Scrutiny Committee – Under the Localism Act 2000 there are 4 voting co-optees who vote only on matters relating to education functions representing:

The Church of England – nominated by the relevant Diocesan Board of Education;

The Roman Catholic Church – nominated by the Bishop of the relevant Diocese;

Primary Schools Parent Governors – by advert and election process

Secondary and Special Schools Parent Governors – by advert and election process.



**ANNEX 2****Political Proportionality : Product of Local Government & Housing Act Formula****Committees subject to Proportionality Rules**

	Seats	Cons & Inds	Lab	Lib Dem	Green	Total	Balance	Further Adjustment required
Performance Scrutiny Committee	10 (11*)	5 (6*)	2	2	0	9	-1	Additional 1 seat allocated to Conservative Independents Alliance Group to preserve majority on 11 person committee *
Education Scrutiny Committee	7 (11*)	4 (8*)	2	1	0	7	0	Additional 4 seats allocated to Conservative Independents Alliance Group to preserve majority on 15 person committee (when voting co-optees counted)*
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0(1)</b>	<b>16(17)</b>	<b>-1</b>	
<b>Notional Entitlement</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Balance</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>		

Planning & Regulation Committee	12	6	3	2	0	11	-1	
Pension Fund Committee	7 (9*)	4 (6*)	2	1	0	7	0	Additional 2 seats allocated to Conservative Independents Alliance Group to preserve majority on 9 person committee (when voting co-optees counted)
Audit & Governance Committee	9	5	2	2	0	9	0	
Remuneration Committee	6	3	1	1	0	5	-1	Additional 1 seat allocated to Conservative Independents Alliance Group to preserve majority on 7 person committee (when voting co-optees counted)
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0(1)</b>	<b>32(33)</b>	<b>-1</b>	
<b>Notional Entitlement</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-1</b>	
<b>Balance</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>		

<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-3</b>	
<b>Legal Entitlement</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Balance</b>		<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>		

Nominations to Joint Committees

	Seats	Cons & Ind	Lab	Lib Dem	Green	Total	Balance
Health Overview & Scrutiny Joint Committee	7	4	2	1	0	7	0

# Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees

## Audit & Governance Committee (10)

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (5)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>
Bartholomew		Azad	Hannaby
Constance Hallchurch Lovatt Wilmshurst		Hards	R. Smith

### Non-Voting Co-opted Members (3)

#### *Representative of the Business Community:*

Dr Geoff Jones, PO Box 636, Oxford OX1 9AZ

#### *Independent Members (Complaints handling) (2)*

Ms Nina Alphey, Leith Lodge, Perry Hill, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3RB

Ms Ann Griffiths, c/o County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

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## Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee (3)

Three Councillors one of whom must be a Member of the Audit & Governance Committee\*

\* When sitting as the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel one member of the Sub-Committee sits with one officer and one independent person.

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## Appointment Sub-Committee (Variable) (6)

Six Councillors at least one of whom must be a member of the Cabinet

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## Fire Service Discipline Sub-Committee (3)

Three Councillors at least one of whom must be a member of the Cabinet

\*\*\*\*\*

**Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board (14)**

- Comprising:
- Leader of the County Council
  - Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
  - Cabinet Member for Public Health & the Voluntary Sector
  - Chair of Oxfordshire Healthwatch Oxfordshire
  - Chairman of the Adult Health & Social Care Partnership Board
  - Chairman of the Children & Young People’s Partnership Board
  - Chairman of the Health Improvement Partnership Board
  - Vice Chairman of the Adult Health & Social Care Partnership Board
  - Vice Chairman of the Children & Young People’s Partnership Board
  - Vice Chairman of the Health Improvement Partnership Board
  - Director for Children’s Services
  - Director of Public Health
  - Director for Social & Community Services
  - Area Director (Designate), Thames Valley NHS Commissioning Board

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**Pension Fund Committee (11)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (6)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Atkins		Dhesi	Fooks
Greene		Hards	
Langridge			
Lilly			
Lovatt			
Owen			

**Voting Co-opted Members (2)**

***District Council Representatives:***

- District Councillor Hywel Davies, Yule Cottage, 41 School Road, Finstock, Oxon OX7 3DL
- District Jerry Patterson, 17 Woodcroft, Kennington, Oxford OX1 5NH

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**Planning & Regulation Committee (12)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (7)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (3)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>
Bartholomew		Cherry	Johnston
Fulljames		Phillips	Purse
Greene		Tanner	
Handley			
Lilly			
Owen			
Reynolds			

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**Remuneration Committee (7)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (4)</b>	<b>Green (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Hudspeth	Williams	G. Sanders	Patrick
Mathew			
Rose			
Wilmshurst			

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**Pension Benefits Sub-Committee (3)**

Three Councillors at least one of whom must be a member of the Remuneration Committee

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**Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel (1)**

**Conservative  
Independent  
Alliance (1)**  
Mallon

**Green (0)**

**Labour (0)**

**Liberal Democrat (0)**

**County Council Representatives  
on Staff Consultative Bodies**

**Oxfordshire County Council Joint Consultative Committee  
for Uniformed Members of the Fire Service (7)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (4)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Chapman Heathcoat Lilly Rose		Lygo Pressel	Patrick

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**Oxfordshire County Council & Teachers' Joint Committee (5)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance(3)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
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**Oxfordshire County Council &  
Employees Joint Consultative Committee (7)**

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (4)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Lovatt Rose Sibley Wilmshurst		Christie Azad	Johnston

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# Membership of Scrutiny Committees

## Education Scrutiny Committee (15)

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (8)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Bulmer		G. Sanders	Howson
Gray		S. Curran	
Hallchurch			
Handley			
Harrod			
Langridge			
Lovatt			
Waine			

### Voting Co-optees (4)

**Representing the Church of England:** Mrs Sue Matthew, 107 Southmoor Road, Oxford, OX2 6RE

**Representing the Roman Catholic Church:** Vacancy

### Parent Governor Representatives:

**Primary:** Vacancy

**Secondary and Special:** Vacancy

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## Performance Scrutiny Committee (11)

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (6)</b>	<b>Green (1)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>
Atkins	Coates	Brighthouse	Fawcett
Constance		Christie	Godden
Gray			
Harrod			
Lilly			
Matthew			

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# Joint Committees

## Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (15)

<b>Conservative Independent Alliance (4)</b>	<b>Green (0)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Bulmer Constance Hallchurch Sibley		Dhesi Price	Rooke

**District Council Representatives (5):**

- District Councillor Martin Barrett, Wychwoods, Church View, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2NE
- District Councillor Dr Christopher Hood, Kestrals, 20 Hilliers Close, Sydenham, Oxon, OX39 4NG
- City Councillor Susanna Pressel, 7 Rawlinson Road, Oxford OX2 6UE
- District Councillor Rose Stratford, 8 Queens Court, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6JX
- District Councillor Alison Thomson, 28 Elm Road, Faringdon SN7 7EJ

**Co-optees Members (3)**

- Moria Logie, Willow House, 25 High Street, Standlake, Oxon OX29 7RH
- Dr Keith Ruddle, Hill Lawn House, 22 New Street, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 5LJ
- Mrs A. Wilkinson, Carrig House, 3 Pullensfield, Headington, Oxon OX3 0BU

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**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

# **Scrutiny Annual Report**

**2014 – 2015**

## **Foreword**

2014-15 has been a busy year for our Scrutiny Committees. It has also been a time of change for the Cabinet Advisory Groups, as two have reported on their findings.

Our Committees have been involved in improving service provision, informing policy development, and ensuring transparency in service delivery. We have held service deliverers to account and addressed issues of concern for our community.

Following the introduction of the governance arrangements and the Monitoring Officer's Governance and Constitutional reviews, our Scrutiny Committees have been responding to recommendations. It has been cemented that scrutiny committees are an effective means of reviewing educational issues, health services and performance management as well as that transparency and targeted scrutiny are essential.

The Service & Resource Planning process for 2015/16 to 2017/18 set out a number of pressures for the County Council to deal with and as we look forward the role of the Scrutiny Committees will become increasingly important to ensure service delivery is not compromised as budgets continue to reduce.

Scrutiny plays a pivotal role in delivering democracy and ensuring the Council's services are delivered to the highest standards. Faced with uncertain times as governance processes are set to change we remain committed to our scrutiny role. Challenging and scrutinising specific service areas, to ensure that the Council delivers effective services to the communities that live and work in Oxfordshire remains our priority.

**Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE** – Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Cllr Mark Gray** – Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee

**Cllr Yvonne Constance OBE** – Chairman of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Introduction

Since the last Scrutiny Annual Report, the scrutiny function has made some changes as part of the Governance and Constitutional Reviews. The committees have become more strategic in their focus and look at issues in a more cross cutting way. They have driven a more towards greater openness and transparency which manifests itself as services being more open to challenge.

The Governance Review looked at the decision-making arrangements which took effect in May 2013 and assessed their effectiveness in engaging members more fully and integrating policy and performance management more closely.

The Constitution Review assessed the full Constitution and in particular key sections such as the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Contract and Financial Procedure Rules – updating, clarifying and improving the rules which underpin the Council's governance.

The reviews noted the Scrutiny Committee's must continue to work towards developing a more targeted focus, on key issues and performance. For example, using member briefings to increase specialist knowledge and carrying out reviews of specific areas of concern. Furthermore the reviews requested that Cabinet Advisory Groups ensure they are contributing effectively and visibly.

The scrutiny functions responded by striving for greater clarity on issues of concern, holding regular Chairmen's meetings to share information and holding service deliverers to account publicly. Where matters fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee the Chairmen of the relevant Scrutiny Committees determine which of them will assume responsibility for the particular issue to ensure effective scrutiny and to avoid duplication.

The Council has faced a continually changing and difficult working environment this year and the Scrutiny Committees have needed to respond. They have ensured a focus on priority issues where their scrutiny can add real value and insight. They have strived to inform decision making and challenged process and service delivery where they can make the most impact and affect outcomes for Oxfordshire residents. This is an area the Committee's will continue to work on in the coming year to ensure they are focused in the right directions.

This Scrutiny Annual Report provides an overview of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2014/15.

This report is structured by Committee. It explores some of the areas of work each of the Committees have undertaken over the last year and highlights where influence has been greatest. The intention of the report is to provide an overview of the work of the Scrutiny Committee's and Cabinet Advisory Groups. It emphasises areas where scrutiny has had a tangible impact on decision-making, and therefore on the lives of the people of Oxfordshire. The broad range of case studies demonstrates the nature and breadth of issues that the committees have scrutinised.

The response of responsible authorities to the recent Serious Case Review into Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire is an important area for scrutiny in the coming year. All three committees will have a role in scrutinising activity to address the recommendations in the report.

Membership details for the Scrutiny Committees are provided in Annex 1.

## Performance Scrutiny Committee

The Performance Scrutiny Committee has a membership of 11 county councillors and is chaired by Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE. The county councillor membership is politically proportional to the membership of the Council. The Committee met 8 times in 2014/2015. Some of its key functions, as outlined in the Constitution, include:

- Responsible for scrutinising the performance of the council
- Providing a focused review of corporate performance, directorate performance
- Financial reporting and budget scrutiny
- Responsible for raising queries or issues of concern that may occur over decisions being taken in relation to adult social care, to provide a specific committee for addressing such queries.
- The committee that discharges the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Crime and Justice Act 2006, to review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by community safety partners.

### Budget Process

The Performance Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for scrutinising budget proposals. The preparation of budget proposals for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18 was a refresh of the previous year's budget but provided just as much challenge for the council as in previous years due to the further savings that were required. Cuts to the grant the council receives from government and a limited ability to raise funds through increases in council tax mean that by 2018 the Council will have made savings of £292m since 2010. So far the council has worked hard to deliver efficiencies and savings of £204million. But we still have a further £88m worth of annual savings to make. As the need to make savings continues, the necessity to make significant cuts to service provision become more likely.

The Committee are committed to the principle of transparency in the budget setting process and have continued to ensure that there is effective challenge to proposals; not just through their scrutiny, but improved briefing and engagement of all members at an early stage in the process.

During their deliberation of the budget proposals the Committee identified a number of issues that it urged Cabinet to consider over the coming year prior to the next budget planning cycle:

- Reviewing the potential impact and related increase in cost of paying social care providers at a level that allowed them to pay care workers the living wage.
- The interdependency between the reshaping of early help services and the need for wider change to the shape and structure of services across the whole Children, Education and Families directorate.
- The opportunity for the library service to develop in a way that supports a broader move to digital access of our services.
- Asking directorates to review the level of challenge within performance indicators and the proposed targets, to ensure that they are realistic and manageable.

Overall the Committee sent a clear message to Cabinet that there was a need to maintain the quality of Council services when making savings, particularly where they are delivered through contracts. As a result the Committee identified the need to be directly involved in the scrutiny of contract performance, to ensure that effective public scrutiny takes place. The Committee also asked Cabinet to consider the need to maximise income generation opportunities across all directorates.

### Performance Management

Having spent the first year taking a broad perspective across all service areas, the Committee have created a tighter focus to scrutiny this year. They have held more detailed discussions about specific service areas, enabling a more in depth consideration and challenge.

The Council spend £450m on commissioned services. This equates to 65% of the councils non-schools total budget and capital programme. As the need to make savings deepens it becomes more crucial to ensure that commissioned services deliver the quality services expected. The Performance Scrutiny Committee has demonstrated their commitment to this principle by focusing attention on the performance and management of contracts.

Last year, the Committee identified concerns with the effectiveness of the highways contract. Following a public investigation of the performance of the highways contract by the Committee there was an initial improvement in performance. The Committee have continued to monitor performance in this area and investigated the implementation of actions recommended following a peer review, together with officers and representatives from Skanska. The Committee identified that there was still improvement to be made in planning work to respond to problems of managing a declining road system, communications between the council and provider, and monthly performance management. The Committee urged officers to expedite their work to implement these improvements.

### Safeguarding of Children

The Performance Scrutiny Committee acknowledges its vital role in scrutinising the work that the council undertakes, together with partners, to safeguard children. The members are committed to ensuring the council is effectively safeguarding the most vulnerable people within our communities.

Through the quarterly scrutiny of performance it became clear to the Committee that the council's children's social care services were under pressure. They regularly reported high numbers of children being placed on child protection plans and coming into our care, with an accompanying difficulty in carrying out reviews and visits to these children within the required timescales. The early stages of the service and resource planning process also revealed that this was causing considerable pressure on budgets. The Deputy Director for Children's Social Care, together with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, were invited to speak to the Committee. The Committee explored the current levels of demand and caseloads and discussed the underlying causes. The Committee were reassured by observations from OFSTED inspectors that caseloads per social worker were in line with or below the national average. They were then encouraged by early plans for a pilot in the north of the county to tackle the underlying causes of the current demand.



The pilot will focus on neglect and more joined up working practices. The Committee invited officers to return to report on the findings of the pilot. Members will further explore how to maximise the benefit from any identified good practice, both challenging and supporting the service to work out appropriate solutions

In May 2014 the Cabinet Advisory Group on the Strategic Assurance Framework for Safeguarding Children and Young People made a series of recommendations to Cabinet. A cabinet advisory group is a task and finish group set up to examine topics selected by Cabinet which align to corporate council priorities. The purpose of this group was to consider the existing strategic assurance framework for safeguarding children and young people and make any recommendations to Cabinet for changes. One of the recommendations adopted by Cabinet was for the Performance Scrutiny Committee to review how they monitor and performance manage the key safeguarding and child protection work of the Council and its key partners.

Consequently, the Committee have initiated closer working with the Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board (OCSB) and invited Maggie Blyth, the independent chair of the board to present her annual report. The Committee discussed the work of the Kingfisher Team in safeguarding those children at risk of child sexual exploitation. It was agreed that Maggie Blyth would return to the Committee later in the year to present the findings of an independent review of the team later in the year; giving the Committee to consider implications for the council. The Committee explored in some detail the safeguarding risk presented by children who go missing regularly. They were particularly concerned with how reporting in this area can be improved across partners to better understand how missing children can be better supported and protected. It was agreed that further work would be carried out between the board and the council to propose effective reporting around missing children, to be discussed in March 2015.

#### Adult Social Care

As well as recognising the vital role in scrutinising the work that the council undertakes with children, the Performance Scrutiny Committee also acknowledges an equivalent responsibility to scrutinise adult social care activity.

Through the quarterly scrutiny of performance the Committee members identified that there was a continuing trend of poor performance around the Council's reablement services provided by Oxford Health and commissioned by the Council. Reablement offers short term support designed to help people regain independence after ill health. The contract is managed through the Joint Commissioning Team so the deputy director attended the Committee to provide further evidence and discuss the Committee's concerns. The Committee examined the contract arrangements and performance in detail and revealed underlying causes around workforce availability and community based referrals. Work is taking place within the service, the results of which will be further scrutinised by the Committee to ensure that it an effective response to the underlying problems is implemented.

The Committee also explored the wider issue of adult safeguarding, seeking to understand the extent of the Council's responsibility. The Committee addressed issues around the referral process, definitions of abuse and appropriate monitoring and performance tools. The key outcome was an agreement for the Committee to

examine the annual report of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board, later this year and then in all subsequent years. The Committee wish to use their examination as an opportunity to ask searching questions, explore information in more depth and ensure agreed actions are implemented.

### Call In

The call-in procedure allows the Performance Scrutiny Committee to compel the Cabinet to reconsider a decision made by its members, but not yet implemented. There must be compelling grounds for review. The Committee has considered two call in requests this year.

#### Middleton Stoney Road, Bicester: Proposed Road Humps and Puffin Crossing

The Cabinet Member for the Environment had made a decision to create road traffic calming measures on the Middleton Stoney Road, in line with a previous planning application to Cherwell District Council. The Committee explored the grounds for the call in and agreed that there was sufficient doubt about the process and nature of the public consultation carried out prior to the decision being made to mean that it was not 'proper' consultation. The Committee referred the decision back to Cabinet on the grounds that there was insufficient consultation with local county councillors.

#### Proposed Pelican Crossings - A415 Marcham Road and Ock Street, Abingdon

The Cabinet Member for the Environment made a similar decision to provide and move pelican crossings in Abingdon, again in line with a previous planning application. The Committee considered it was the responsibility of the council to carry out an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the wider traffic network. They also challenged officers on the basis that although guidance had been referred to it was not explicitly guidance that related to the sighting of pedestrian crossings. The Committee agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet on the grounds that neither the officer's report nor the Cabinet Member's decision appeared to be based on the Department of Transport Guidance into the assessment of pedestrian crossing sites; and that the Cabinet Member did not take due account of the impact of the changes on the wider local traffic network.

### Forward Planning

The council continues to face challenging and changing times. There is likely to be a further squeeze on funding following the general election. In response, the organisation is considering a new shape and structure as it modernises. The Committee will look to identify issues that are of most significance to the council as a basis for the forward plan of work.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee is committed to strengthening its role in providing robust challenge to the performance of the council. Over the next year the Committee will continue to conduct public scrutiny of the performance of commissioned services and focus on holding detailed discussions about specific service areas, enabling a more in depth consideration and challenge. The Committee also seeks to maximise the effect of its role in scrutinising the way in which the most vulnerable members of society are safeguarded.

## **Education Scrutiny Committee**

The Education Scrutiny Committee has a membership of 11 county councillors, 4 co-opted members and is chaired by Cllr Mark Gray. The county councillor membership is politically proportional to the membership of the Council. The Committee met 4 times in 2014/2015.

In 2014/2015 there was a standing working group chaired by Cllr John Howson, focusing on educational attainment. The group met 3 times and it concluded its work in January 2015, when a report of its key findings was presented to and endorsed by the Committee.

The Education Scrutiny Committee provides a county wide view of the provision of all the schools in Oxfordshire. As stated in the Terms of Reference of the Committee, the key functions of the Committee include:

- To assist the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
- To provide a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
- To promote joined up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire;
- To review the bigger picture affecting academic achievement in the county so as to facilitate the achievement of good outcomes;
- To represent the community of Oxfordshire in the development of academic achievement across the county, including responding to formal consultations and participating in inter-agency discussions;
- To contribute to the development of educational policy in the county.

#### Educational Attainment of Vulnerable Groups

Educational performance above the national average at Key Stage 2, and in line with the national average at Key Stage 4. However there are specific vulnerable groups where attainment is noticeably below that of the same cohort nationally. The Committee identified the need to focus on improving outcomes for low attainers and disadvantaged groups.

The Committee uncovered causes for the underperformance of vulnerable groups and challenged officers as regards the support measures in place to narrow the gap in attainment. The Committee highlighted the importance of establishing links to the Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance and the Schools Forum, and expressed a strong commitment to the principle that raising high aspiration for students is everyone's responsibility.

Looking specifically at the performance of white working class boys, members brought in their own expertise and local knowledge to propose actions for tackling underperformance, and provided concrete examples of best practice from the schools in their areas. Members stressed the importance of role models and mentoring, parental involvement, motivation, and working with voluntary organisations.

As regards looked after children, the Committee raised concern over the high rates of persistent absence among this group, and presented a challenge to officers on the

actions needed to further improve the attainment of the 355 looked after children in Oxfordshire. The Committee highlighted the need to raise the profile of the Virtual School and increase understanding of what it means to be a Corporate Parent among school staff. The chairman committed to visiting the Virtual School team, and sent a message that the challenge for the council was around those schools not undertaking their corporate parenting role.

The educational attainment working group carried out further work into understanding the reasons for low attainment and making sure the right provisions are in place for raising attainment. In addition to reviewing the outcomes at different Key Stages, the working group also looked at the monitoring tools used by officers in their understanding of how successful schools are at achieving their educational aims and how schools can be supported to improve outcomes in the current climate where local authorities have few remaining powers.

The work of the group revealed that there are wide disparities between the best and worst schools in the county irrespective of whether they are council maintained schools, voluntary aided or controlled schools or an academy of any description. The group noted that major concern remains over the lack of progress towards the closing of the gap between different groups despite the provision of Pupil and Service Children Premiums.

At the recommendation of the working group a School Improvement Framework briefing for all councillors was organised in June 2014.

#### Pupil Premium

The pupil premium is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. Schools use pupil premium differently, and the Committee has sought to understand and scrutinise how pupil premium is being used in schools in disadvantaged areas.

Two schools were invited to give evidence about their use of pupil premium. East Oxford Primary School and St Francis Church of England Primary School presented to the Committee their work using the pupil premium and discussed some of the challenges the schools face. The Committee commended the excellent work of the two schools and emphasised the importance of sharing examples of good practice. The Committee will continue to monitor the use pupil premium and attainment of vulnerable groups across schools in Oxfordshire.

#### Strengthening the Links with the Schools Forum

As part of its role in reviewing governance agreements and resource allocation, the Committee invited the Schools Forum to address the Committee.

Oxfordshire Schools Forum is made up of representatives of schools and academies in the County, and acts as a consultative body on some issues and a decision making body on others. The forum is responsible for decisions on:

- How much funding may be centrally retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant

- Any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next
- Proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools
- Changes to the scheme of financial management

Members heard from Carole Thomson, chair of the Schools Forum, about the role and work of the organisation. The Committee explored how the relationship between the council and the Schools Forum can be strengthened and urged officers to consider developing a compact on collaboration across wider matters other than finance. It was agreed that further work will be undertaken with the Chair of the Schools Forum, the Cabinet Member and the Chairman of this Committee around the introduction of a compact. Members identified that one way of strengthening ties with the Schools Forum is for members of the Committee to attend the meetings of the Schools Forum to better understand their working. The conversation with the chair of the Schools Forum triggered further interest in school funding and this was considered at subsequent meetings of the Committee.

#### Use of Schools Revenue Balances

The Committee was keen to understand the current levels of reserves held by council maintained schools and academies in Oxfordshire. In particular, the committee raised concerns over schools keeping large reserves and presented a challenge to officers on the steps taken to claw back money when unreasonable amounts have been kept by schools. The Committee firmly championed the principle of 'today's funding for today's children' and urged schools to make sure money is spent to ensure that every child is able to make educational progress.

Members also raised concern over the position with regard to academy balances, and asked officers to seek a meeting between the Committee and the Commissioner for Schools and to contact the commissioner with a view to getting some assurance on academy balances.

The Committee sent a clear message that the money in reserves should be spent for the education of today's children and asked Cabinet to support a robust approach to the discussion with school with a view to claw back surplus balances.

As a result of the Committee's request to challenge schools with surplus balances, a report was presented to the Committee on the maintained schools identified as having consistently retained surplus revenue balances, and on the work undertaken to challenge these schools about the plans for use of these balances. The Committee were given assurance that the schools identified in the report will be clearly advised that large balances retained over a period of years was not acceptable. It was emphasised that the majority of schools identified in the report had sound reasons for those balances such as being a very small school where changes in numbers of pupils can have a devastating effect on budgets. The Committee identified that it was necessary to take a school by school approach and officers confirmed that they were meeting with a small number of schools where there was particular concern to send a clear message that the County Council is taking this issue seriously.

The work challenging schools on use of balances is expected to be completed by spring 2015.

### Universal Free School Meals

The Children and Families Act placed a duty on state-funded schools in England to provide free school meal for all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children with effect from September 2014. The Committee received a progress report on the introduction of the new arrangements in July 2014 and subsequently asked for a report on the associated implementation costs of the new arrangements to schools and the council.

The Committee raised concerns that, given the automatic entitlement to free school meals granted by the new arrangements, some parents might choose not to declare their entitlement under the original criteria. This would have a direct impact on the allocation of pupil premium funding in schools. Members discussed how parents can be made aware of the importance of continuing to register for free school meals and provided examples of good practice from local schools. The Committee asked officers to further consider how parents can be encouraged to fill in their claims and how the pupil premium information could be obtained in other ways.

### Forward Planning

The Committee will continue to look at the attainment of vulnerable groups, focusing specifically on children with special educational needs and children on the edge of care. Members have invited the Regional Ofsted Inspector to address the Committee regarding the role of Oxfordshire County Council and local authorities generally in education. The Committee will continue to use its expertise to make recommendations and help disseminate information and best practice. The Committee remains committed to providing challenge and scrutiny to ensure that the council delivers on its role as champion of all children in Oxfordshire.

## **Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is a joint Committee and has a membership of 7 county councillors, five district councillors, three co-opted members and is chaired by Cllr Yvonne Constance OBE. The Committee met five times in 2014/15. Some of the prime functions of the Committee include:

- Reviewing and scrutinising any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Oxfordshire.
- Reviewing and scrutinising services commissioned and provided by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers.

The Committee elected a new Chairman, Cllr Yvonne Constance OBE, in September who took over from Cllr Stratford who joined the Cabinet. The constitution was updated to reflect new local authority regulations for health scrutiny. The Committee have looked at a variety of health related issues and services to ensure the best health care provision for the residents of Oxfordshire. The Committee have ensured Healthwatch Oxfordshire, the independent organisation for patient experiences of

health and social care in Oxfordshire, is a permanent feature on their agenda. During the past year there have been five significant issues covered by the Committee.

#### South Central Ambulance Service

The performance of the South Central Ambulance Service has been and continues to be a concern for the Committee. Demand for services has risen in Oxfordshire which has put significant pressure on performance delivery. While Oxford, Cherwell and Oxford City districts perform well the increase in demand has shown a reduction in performance in South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse. Delays in rural areas are the biggest challenge for the ambulance service. A point highlighted following some serious incidents in these areas which were brought to the attention of members. Additionally the service has seen a change in the pattern of 111 activity which had increased demand and put pressure on the workforce.

These strains on the service combined with concerns about ambulance response to specific incidents led the Committee to call South Central Ambulance Service to account three times in 2014/15. The ambulance service were invited by the Committee to present in detail the difficulties they were facing and provide answers to delays in their response to specific incidents.

While the South Central Ambulance Service performs well in comparison to some areas of England the Committee were keen to understand how national standards were filtering down to the local level. It was essential for the members to understand how ambulance delays were impacting in other areas and what continuity planning the service had in place. The connection with other partners was a key feature to discussions with an emphasis on more joined up working to deal with challenges. Financial cuts to the service are well rehearsed at national levels, but that does not mean Oxfordshire's residents should have a compromised service.

The Committee have challenged the service and their commissioners and emphasised the importance to them of providing a consistent service across Oxfordshire. The Committee continue to monitor service delivery and will delve into the response to specific incidents where they are unsatisfied with the response to ensure that processes are improved and policies reviewed in order to ensure lessons are learnt.

#### Delayed Transfers of Care

Delayed Transfers of Care continues to be an area of poor performance by Oxfordshire. The number of days of delay for people waiting for social care and further health services is over targets. While efforts to address social care capacity show promise and much progress has been made, all the relevant agencies have acknowledged that there is more to be done in this area.

As a well-publicised and often criticised area this has been on the Committee's radar for some time so it is well placed to take a system wide view of the problem. The Committee pushed for a wide reaching discussion with the main health partners to understand why delayed transfers of care continues to be a problem and how that affects performance in other social care areas. The Committee were given a detailed presentation which highlighted the problems of an increasing ageing population,

changes in demand for services and resource capacity. While health care professionals have been coming together to develop a whole systems plan for addressing unacceptable levels of discharge delays, improvements have been slow.

To ensure they were not looking at delayed transfers of care in isolation the Committee were careful to link in wider social care issues including performance of the reablement service and the utilisation of community hospitals. They probed on ways services could be improved and explored what other issues were at play, including resources, staff retention and housing adaptations. During discussions the Committee were able to flush out some further concerns, including how best to deal with the costs of patient delays.

The Committee emphasised the need for effective whole systems collaboration and that they will be watching closely developments within the Better Care Fund as this should be a means to deliver better outcomes and greater efficiencies through a more integrated service across health and social care.

Having such a wide reaching discussion meant the Committee decided there were some other important issues they needed to explore. Most fittingly outcomes based commissioning and how that could contribute to future service delivery.

### Community Hospitals

The Committee have taken an interest in community hospitals this year, as concerns were brought to light about adequate provision. These hospitals provide sub-acute and rehabilitation care, as well as palliative care for people who are not able / do not wish to die at home. Oxfordshire has eight sites with specialist services at some, including stroke rehabilitation and fragility fracture. Oxford Health, NHS Trust Foundation, who provide the service, explained to the Committee the improvements to models of care that had been made over the last two years, including discharge planning.

Concerns about bed numbers, staffing and future provision were addressed. Despite a reduction in actual open beds the Committee understood that the overall service had become more productive with activity remaining high and no detrimental impact on patient safety, quality or satisfaction rates. It was clear that challenges for sustainable and high quality delivery of community hospitals focused around the increased acuity and dependency of the patient population, recruitment of nursing and medical staffing and the state of the community hospital estates.

Recruitment of high calibre nursing staff is not a unique problem to Oxfordshire. It is a national challenge affecting all areas of social and medical care. Members were concerned at the scale of the problem that seemed to be developing. They queried what incentives could be made for nursing staff and what efforts were being made to attract nurses to consider community nursing.

The Committee satisfied themselves that provision in community hospitals was currently meeting the needs of residents. However they acknowledged that a careful juggling act will be required to ensure a balance of resources against need, especially taking into account future growth. The Committee stressed how the



community hospitals were seen as a valuable community resource and were pleased that actions were in place to mitigate challenges.

### Primary Care Services

It quickly came to the attention of the Committee this year that they needed to look into the provision of primary care services within Oxfordshire. National concerns about the sustainability of GP services were at the forefront of their minds. With the Departments of Health and NHS England describing their vision of 'Transforming Primary Care' the members wanted to get to the root of the national strategic priorities for improving general practice and what they would mean at a local level.

With Health and Social Care services facing a number of challenges including demographic changes, changes in public expenditure regarding access, workforce pressures and economic and financial challenges, this was a topic of great importance. Oxfordshire's significant growth is set to put further pressure on primary care resources and the members were keen to understand the local challenges and what needed to be done to address need.

Excellent turn out at the Committee meeting considering this item proved to the Committee the importance being placed by the care partners. With a good balance of partners invited the Committee were able to generate an in-depth analysis of the issues surrounding primary care services and to hear what it is like at the 'coalface'.

Collaborative working within Oxfordshire has been generating discussion on the formation of primary care federations. Representatives of two of these federations addressed the committee to explain what benefits they offer to member practices and how services can be improved.

The Committee welcomed understanding better the challenges facing general practice and how the emerging vision and strategy to address these challenges would sustain and improve the quality of primary care.

The strain on resources combined with growth plans in Oxfordshire highlighted to the Committee that there is a risk of a shortfall in medical services as the population of Oxfordshire grows and so they undertook to promote this gap in the current planning system.

While noting the concerns are wider than Oxfordshire the Committee undertook to keep abreast of developments in primary care, both nationally and locally and to continue to actively engage with partners to ensure a good primary care service is maintained within Oxfordshire.

### Understanding Substantive Change in Services

In order to have real impact the Committee wanted to ensure that all health providers in Oxfordshire can be held to account regarding service changes. In light of this the Committee agreed a "toolkit", in consultation with health providers to cement a joint understanding of substantive changes in services and when the Committee need to be consulted on such changes. Improving this understanding means the Committee now has an enhanced capability to scrutinise service changes by health partners and

ensure that changes to services are not made without proper consideration of the effect on service users.

### Forward Planning

The Committee is keen to make service delivery and patient experience central to its work. In addition to reviewing and scrutinising planned changes in the provision of healthcare in Oxfordshire, the Committee will be looking carefully at the impact on patients. The Committee will continue to scrutinise performance and quality of service issues as they arise and hold health partners to account where services are unacceptable. Improving the quality of care and ensuring value for money for Oxfordshire residents remains at the forefront of the Committee's work. The planned usage of the Better Care Fund in Oxfordshire, will be a key part of the Committee's work in the coming year.

### **Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAG)**

There is currently one Cabinet Advisory Groups in operation - Children's Early Intervention Services. Two further Cabinet Advisory Groups - Children and Young People's Safeguarding Assurance & Minerals and Waste finalised their work during 2014. The Income Generation Cabinet Advisory Group remained dormant.

#### Early Intervention CAG (*active*)

The role of the Children's Early Intervention Cabinet Advisory Group is to explore the issues related to the future provision of early intervention services for children in Oxfordshire and make recommendations with particular regard to cost-saving. The key tasks and responsibilities of the group are:

- To consider the emerging national evidence and policy relating to children's centres and early intervention services.
- To undertake visits to children's centres and early intervention hubs as necessary to help inform thinking.
- To conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy and possible options.
- To liaise with other organisations operating within Oxfordshire, whether national, regional or local.
- To consider relevant benchmarking with other authorities.
- To consider any petitions, received by the Council which may be of relevance to the topic area under consideration.
- To submit findings and recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Advisory Group met eight times in 2014/15. Work to date has focused on a needs analysis based on deprivation, the district level current provision and the potential impact of differing funding mechanisms. The group also made a visit to Gloucestershire in December to explore Gloucestershire County Council's approach to the same issues. The CAG will report to Cabinet in Summer 2015.

#### Children and Young People's Safeguarding Assurance (*finalised*)

The Children and Young People's Safeguarding Assurance Arrangements Cabinet Advisory Group was set up to consider the existing strategic assurance framework

for safeguarding children and young people. It was chaired by Cllr Melinda Tilley as the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families.

The group reported to Cabinet on 13 May 2014, when all 14 recommendations were accepted. These are now being implemented with progress against the action plan being monitored.

The group last met in July 2014 to review the action plan for taking the recommendations forward. This was the last meeting.

Recommendations of the Cabinet Advisory Group which have been implemented include:

- Bi-annual safeguarding briefings for councillors on the work of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and associated issues. The first of these took place on 21 January 2015 and the next is scheduled for 17 June 2015.
- The annual report of the OSCB has been shared widely throughout the organisation. The report was emailed directly to all councillors, and has been seen at CCMT, the Corporate Parenting Panel, Cabinet and full Council.
- Formal protocols are now in place for the joint working between the OSCB and the Children's Trust, and between the OSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The Performance Scrutiny Committee has reviewed the current safeguarding key performance indicators.
- The Education Scrutiny Committee has received the Virtual School of Looked After Children Annual Report.
- Locality-specific information on children's safeguarding and corporate parenting has been provided to member locality meetings. This will be an annual item.
- The Director for Children's Services reported to Cabinet on action taken in response to the serious case review for Child H on 25 November 2014. Bi-annual reports to Cabinet will cover all serious case reviews in the preceding 6 month period.
- The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel has been reviewed.

Other on-going work includes:

- A review is being undertaken to understand and rationalise the working relationships between external partners, including the OSCB and Community Safety.
- The Director for Children's Services is considering further improvements with regards to communication and briefings for members on all aspects of children's safeguarding.

#### Minerals and Waste (finalised)

The Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group was formed in July 2013 to provide member engagement in the process of developing the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Recognising the legitimate interest of a range of members in this issue it was not subject to the usual rules around maximum size and political balance.

The group has held nine meetings, concerned in particular with strategic planning issues and the need to refresh the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment, including consultation with stakeholders, and discharge of the Duty to Co-operate. The Group reported to Cabinet, including in its deliberations on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Part 1 - Core Strategy) on 25 November 2014, to which a number of members contributed.

The group has had no further meetings as the Core Strategy is awaiting a Full Council decision following the Cabinet meeting, prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. Further meetings may be required as the Council moves towards adoption of a full Plan, however as this will follow the Inspector's report they are likely to fall in 2016.

#### Income Generation (dormant)

The Income Generation Cabinet Advisory Group was formed in July 2013 to explore options for increasing income generation as part of meeting the required savings target in the developing MTFP. The group focussed on reviewing the scope for changes to charging and trading, and oversaw redrafting of the corporate charging policy, which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2013.

With input from other councillors, officers and members of the public, the group identified a number of ideas for income generation and channels of enquiry to pursue, with recommendations made to Cabinet on 28 January 2014. A number of avenues of work continue to be taken forward by officers, and Cabinet have signalled the intention to reinstate the Cabinet Advisory Group in 2015/16.

Membership details for the active Cabinet Advisory Group is provided in Annex 2.

### **Conclusion**

The Council has faced a number of challenges this year, not least of which was passing a difficult budget in the face increasing need over diminishing resources. Furthermore it was subject to an Ofsted inspection on children's services and serious case review, adding additional pressure.

Scrutiny Committees have played an important role in identifying areas of concern, honing in on them and working to achieve satisfactory outcomes for communities and service users. The Committees have settled into their roles, following finalisation of the constitutional and governance reviews. The Committees strive for transparency and through regular Chairman meetings have improved communications channels and avoided duplication in working.

The broad remits of the Committees continue to be a challenge for them to ensure proper attention is given to pressing issues. It is necessary for the Committee's to use their powers to challenge performance and analyse the work of the council and those who provide services to have a positive impact on outcomes. Scrutiny remains an essential part of the Council's working and will become ever more important as resources are squeezed and the operating model for the council changes.

## **Annex 1 Scrutiny Committee Membership**

### **Performance**

Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Lynda Atkins  
Councillor John Christie  
Councillor Sam Coates  
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE  
Councillor Janet Godden  
Councillor Mark Gray  
Councillor Steve Harrod  
Councillor Simon Hoare  
Councillor Charles Mathew

### **Education Scrutiny**

Councillor Mark Gray (Chairman)  
Councillor Michael Waine (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Kevin Bulmer  
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE  
Councillor Steve Curran  
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE  
Councillor Pete Handley  
Councillor Steve Harrod  
Councillor John Howson  
Councillor Sandy Lovatt  
Councillor Gill Sanders

### *Co-Optee*

Mrs Sue Matthew

### **Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE (Chairman)  
District Councillor Susanna Pressel (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Kevin Bulmer  
Councillor Surinder Dhesi  
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE  
Councillor Laura Price  
Councillor Alison Rooke  
Councillor Les Sibley  
District Councillor Martin Barrett  
District Councillor Dr Christopher Hood  
District Councillor Rose Stratford  
District Councillor Alison Thomson

### *Co-Optees*

Dr Keith Ruddle  
Mrs Anne Wilkinson  
Moria Logie

**Annex 2 Cabinet Advisory Group Membership**

**Early Intervention**

Councillor Melinda Tilley (Chairman)  
Councillor Mark Gray (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Janet Godden  
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles  
Councillor Gill Sanders

**AUDIT &  
GOVERNANCE  
COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2014**

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## **Chairman's Introduction**

As the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee I am very pleased to present this annual report which sets out the role of the Audit & Governance Committee, and summarises the work we have undertaken both as a Committee, and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2014.

The Audit and Governance Committee performs an essential role ensuring that good governance is maintained, with a strong system of internal control and risk management. These are the foundations upon which the Council can meet its challenges head on and continue to be effective in delivering good outcomes.

An important part of being effective as an Audit and Governance Committee is the relationship with both our Internal and External Auditors. We continue to have a strong working relationship with both.

The Committee operates in accordance with the good practice guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) in 2013.

Finally I should like to take this opportunity to give my personal thanks to all the officers, Geoff Jones Chairman of the Audit Working Group, my Vice Chairman Cllr Sandy Lovatt and without exception, all fellow Committee members who have contributed and supported the work of the Committee in such a meaningful and positive way throughout the past year.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID WILMSHURST**  
Chairman, Audit & Governance Committee

## Role of the Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee operates in accordance with the “Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities” produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in 2013. The Guidance defines the purpose of an Audit Committee as follows:

1. Audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management.
2. The purpose of and Audit Committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes. By overseeing internal and external audit it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.

The key functions of the Audit and Governance Committee are defined within the Council's Constitution; the relevant extract is attached as Annex 1 to this report. In discharging these functions the Committee is supported by the Audit Working Group, their terms of reference are attached as Annex 2 to this report.

## Key Activities

In this section the activities of the Committee in 2014, including the Audit Working Group, are summarised under the headings of the key functions.

### Internal Control

The 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement was agreed by the Committee, and included six areas for action to improve existing governance arrangements. The Committee actively monitors progress with the implementation of these actions. The six key areas are:

Secure Data Transfer  
Data Quality  
Business Continuity  
Partnerships Governance  
Commercial Services Board  
Hampshire IBC Partnership for Finance and HR Services

In response to Internal Audit and Risk Management reports the Committee has looked in detail at the following areas:

Business Strategies for delivery of savings  
Adult Social Care Client Charging including Fairer Charging  
Adult Social Care LEAN project  
Adult Social Care Implementation of the new IT System  
Adult Social Care Payments to Providers.

During 2014, the Committee commenced receiving cyclical presentations from the "Corporate Leads" who monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the key governance processes. During the presentations the Leads set out their framework for monitoring and reviewing the key system, and the assurance it provides.

The Committee receives regular progress reports from the Chief Internal Auditor, including summaries of the outcomes from Internal Audit work. Through the Audit Working Group, the Committee monitors the progress with the implementation of management actions arising from audit reports.

### Key Areas of Focus in 2015

- **Implementation of the new management information system for Adult Social Care;**
- **Major Programmes;**
- **The Commissioning Cycle;**
- **Go live of the Hampshire IBP Partnership.**

## **Risk Management**

The Committee through the Audit Working Group has continued to undertake a cyclical review of the Directorate Risk Registers, and receive the quarterly risks management reports from the Chief Internal Auditor.

Whilst overall the reports received have demonstrated the process for reporting and escalating risks is being maintained, it was noted that the corporate risk register has not been regularly reviewed. This needs to be addressed in 2015/16.

A review of the Risk Management Strategy is to be undertaken during 2015.

### **Key Areas of Focus in 2015**

- Risk Management Strategy
- Corporate Risk Register

## **Internal Audit**

We approved the Internal Audit Strategy for 2014/15, and the quarterly Internal Audit Plans, which gives members the opportunity to challenge and influence the plan where the Committee has identified areas of concern.

The reports of the Chief Internal Auditor to both the Audit and Governance Committee and also the Audit Working Group has enabled emerging issues arising from Internal Audit activity to be considered on a timely basis, including where appropriate working with the Senior Officers to seek assurance that matters are being dealt with promptly and effectively.

The annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, commissioned annually by the Committee is not yet concluded.

The resourcing of Internal Audit continues to be an issue, in particular the recruitment of new staff. Resource issues has again impacted on the delivery of the Audit Plan which is a concern; however, based on the evidence of the reports presented to the AWG and the Committee, the team continues to provide an effective challenge and therefore assurance on the key risk activities.

### **Key Areas of Focus in 2015**

- Strategy and resourcing of Internal Audit.

## **External Audit**

The Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young, attended all the committee meetings in 2014, providing regular updates on their work plan and any matters arising. In addition during 2014, they have provided the Committee with sector updates for consideration that highlight key themes, issues and priorities for local government. These have been well received and are very helpful to the Committee.

The external auditors have an open invitation to attend the Audit Working Group. They do not routinely attend, but do receive all the papers.

The Committee also met with the external auditors in a private session and are satisfied they are free to carry out their duties without restrictions. We are also assured that if identified they would bring any material issues to the attention of the Committee.

#### **Key Areas of Focus in 2015**

- **Maintaining a strong working relationship with Ernst and Young**

#### **Anti-Fraud and Corruption**

The Audit Committee receives regular updates from the Chief Internal Auditor on any reported matters of suspected fraud, including investigations. In 2014 there was a material fraud within the Print Unit, and in accordance with the Council's zero tolerance to fraud the matter was referred to the Police, and there was a successful prosecution.

The Council was successful in a bid for funding to support counter-fraud initiatives, and during 2015 will be working in collaboration with other public sector organisations to create a "Fraud Hub", lead by Oxford City.

We received a report on Whistleblowing from the Monitoring Officer, that highlighted there have been very few cases. Overall the Council has a strong system of internal control so it is not unexpected there is very little fraud identified; however nationally statistics show that fraud is on the increase, so it is important that we all remain vigilant.

#### **Key Areas of Focus in 2015**

- **Fraud Hub - including proactive counter-fraud work**
- **Review of National Fraud Initiative data matches**

#### **Annual Accounts Process**

The 2013/14 Accounts were prepared on time and presented to the Committee for comment. We received the External Auditors report in September 2014 when it was very pleased to note that high standards had been maintained with no material issues reported.

#### **Key Areas of Focus in 2015**

- **Change management resulting from the transfer of functions to the Hampshire IBC Partnership, and the Impacts Project within OCC.**

## Treasury Management

The Committee receives reports from the Treasury Management Team three times a year, exercising its stewardship role. The Committee:

- Reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy;
- Received the mid-term performance report; and,
- Received the annual report.

There were no material issues to note.

The committee members attended an industry update briefing presented by Arlingclose in January 2015 covering new legislation and potential risks; to help inform the review of the 2015 Treasury Management Strategy.

### Key Areas of Focus in 2015

- Continued scrutiny over the Treasury Management process.

## Governance

Committee agreed the Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 that explained how the County Council had complied with the code of corporate governance.

During 2014 the Committee reviewed the Corporate Governance Framework and the Code of Corporate Governance; and, contributed to the governance and constitution review.

The Committee also received the following reports, the annual report of the Monitoring Officer; the annual report of the Local Government Ombudsman; the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA); and, the Fire and Rescue Service Annual Statement of Assurance there were not material issues or concerns.

The Committee has not received any reports in respect of investigations into allegations of misconduct under members' code of conduct. The Committee has not granted any dispensations from requirements relating to interests as set out in the code of conduct for members.

The Committee is responsible for the work of the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee which in 2014/15 was a panel of members, chaired by a member of the Audit & Governance Committee. They carry out a range of appeals and tribunals:

Type of appeal	Number in 2014/15	Result
<b>Member Appeals:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appeal against dismissal</li></ul>	1	Not upheld.

Type of appeal	Number in 2014/15	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal against redundancy selection</li> </ul>	1	Not upheld
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising concerns at work appeals</li> </ul>	2	Not upheld
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary and Capability appeals</li> </ul>	0	
<b>Job Evaluation formal appeals</b>	0	
<b>Home to School Transport Appeals</b>	57	24 appeals upheld (wholly or in part) 30 appeals refused 3 appeals withdrawn

## **Membership, Meetings & Attendance**

### **Audit and Governance Committee**

The Audit and Governance Committee comprises of nine elected members representing the three main political parties and a Co-opted Member, Dr Geoff Jones.

The Audit Working Group, chaired by Dr Jones, comprises three elected members from the Committee, plus officers. Papers for the Audit Working Group are circulated in advance to all members of the Audit and Governance Committee. All members of the Committee can attend the working group meetings.

### **Officers**

The Audit and Governance Committee continues to be well supported by Officers, providing reports either in accordance with the Committee's work programme, or at the request of the Committee. In 2014 the Chief Finance Officer, the Head of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Internal Auditor routinely attended the meetings. These same officers also attended the Audit Working Group meeting.

### **External Audit**

The External Auditors, Ernst and Young, have attended all the Audit and Governance Committee meetings.

### **Meetings**

The Audit and Governance Committee met six times in 2014 and the Audit Working Group met six times. Work programmes are used by both the Audit Committee and the Audit Working Group to ensure requirements of the Committee are fulfilled. The programmes are reviewed with officers at each meeting and added to when appropriate to ensure ad-hoc investigations instigated by the Committee are reported.



## ANNEX 1 - Audit & Governance Committee Functions

The following are the functions of the Audit & Governance Committee extracted from the Constitution – Part 2 Article 8 Section 1(a).

- (1) The functions relating to elections specified in Section D of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations.
- (2) The functions in relation to the designation of particular officers for certain purposes specified in Paragraphs 39, 40, 43 and 44 in Section I of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations.
- (3) The functions in relation to the approval of the statement of accounts etc. specified in Paragraph 45 in Section I of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations including the Annual Governance Statement (including Statement on Internal Control).
- (4) To monitor the risk, control and governance arrangements within the Council, together with the adequacy of those arrangements and those of others managing Council resources:
  - to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, guidance, standards, codes and best practice, whether external or internal;
  - to provide assurance on the effectiveness of those arrangements both generally and for the purposes of the Annual Governance Statement, including arrangements for reporting significant risks; and
  - to ensure coordination between internal and external audit plans to maximise the use of resources available as part of a total controls assurance framework;and to draw to the attention of the appropriate scrutiny committee any issues which in the Committee's view would benefit from a scrutiny review or further investigation.
- (5) To consider and comment on the Council's External Auditor's annual work plan, the annual audit letter and any reports issued by the Audit Commission or the Council's External Auditor. Where issues affect the discharge of executive functions, to make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet, and where any issues affect the discharge of non-executive functions, to make recommendations to the appropriate Council Committee.
- (6) To systematically monitor:
  - the performance and effectiveness of Internal Audit Services processes within the Council, including undertaking an annual review using key performance indicators e.g. client satisfaction, percentage of plan completed, percentage of non-chargeable time;
  - the strategic Internal Audit Services Plan and annual work plan, advising on any changes required to ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled;
  - resourcing for the service, making recommendations to the Cabinet and Council on the budget for the service;

- arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption; and
- the system for Treasury Management

and to draw to the attention of the appropriate scrutiny committee any issues which in the Committee's view would benefit from a scrutiny review or further investigation.

- (7) To promote high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.
- (8) To grant dispensations to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the code of conduct for members.
- (9) To receive report from member-officer standards panels appointed to investigate allegations of misconduct under the members' code of conduct.
- (10) To advise the Council as to the adoption or revision of the members' code of conduct.
- (11) To implement the foregoing in accordance with a programme of work agreed by the Committee annually in advance, and to report to the Council on the Committee's performance in respect of that programme.
- (12) The Committee will appoint an Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee which will have the following responsibilities and membership:

Responsibilities:

- (i) The determination of appeals against decisions made by or on behalf of the authority as specified in Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Functions Regulations.
- (ii) To hear and determine appeals in cases where the relevant procedure rules require this function to be performed by a formally constituted committee or sub-committee.
- (iii) To hear and determine appeals in other cases under the relevant procedure rules.

Membership:

The Appeals & Tribunal Sub-Committee will meet as needed and its membership will be:

- (i) A member of the Audit & Governance Committee (or substitute)
- (ii) Two other members of the Council (one being a Cabinet member in the case of Fire Discipline issues)

## **ANNEX 2 - Audit Working Group Terms of Reference**

### **Membership**

The Audit Working Group shall comprise of:-

the independent member of the Audit and Governance Committee who will chair the Group, together with three members of the Audit and Governance Committee, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Committee. There will also be up to three named members of the Audit and Governance Committee who will deputise as required.

The Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer and Head of Law and Governance, and the Chief Internal Auditor, or their representatives shall attend the Group meetings.

Members of the Group and their deputies should have suitable background and knowledge to be able to address satisfactorily the complex issues under consideration and should receive adequate training in the principles of audit, risk and control.

All members of the Audit and Governance Committee can attend Audit Working Group Meetings as observers.

### **Role**

The Audit Working Group shall:

act as an informal working group of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to audit, risk and control to enable the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities effectively in accordance with its terms of reference (Part 2 Article 8 Section 1a of the Constitution);

routinely undertake a programme of work as defined by the Audit and Governance Committee;

consider issues arising in detail as requested by the Audit and Governance Committee;

receive private briefings on any matters of concern;

at least annually hold a private session with the External Auditors not attended by any officers, and a further private session on Internal Audit matters with the Chief Internal Auditor only.

## **Reporting**

The Chief Finance Officer will report to the Audit and Governance Committee on matters identified by the Group following consultation with the Chairman and members of the Group.

## **Meeting**

The Group shall meet regularly in cycle with the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Group may invite any officer or member of the Council to attend its meetings to discuss a particular issue and may invite any representative of an external body or organisation as appropriate.

## **Confidentiality**

The Group will meet in private to allow full and frank consideration of audit, risk and control issues.

All matters discussed and papers submitted for the meetings including minutes of the previous meeting must be treated as confidential. Papers will be circulated in advance to all members of the Audit and Governance Committee for information whether attending the Group or not.

Where any other member wishes to inspect any document considered by the Group and believes that s/he has a 'need to know' as a County Councillor, the procedure in the Council's Constitution relating to Members Rights and Responsibilities (Part 9.3) shall apply.

Updated .....February 2015

Review Date.....February 2016

Officer Responsible      Ian Dyson, Chief Internal Auditor  
Telephone 01865 (32)3875  
lan.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Division(s): N/A

## **COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2015**

### **OFFICER SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

#### **Introduction**

1. At its Annual Meeting, Council is required to agree the officer scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution.

#### **Scheme of Delegation**

2. The scheme of officer delegation is contained in Part 7.3 of the Council's Constitution. The Scheme of Delegation itself gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, directors and other chief officers whose titles and/or areas of responsibility are set out in Part 2, Article 11 of the Constitution. Copies of the amended sections of the Constitution have been placed in the Members' Resource Room.
3. The Constitution was fully reviewed last year and no significant changes were made to the Scheme of Delegation other than those mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5.

#### **Changes under Constitution Review**

##### **Part 2, Article 11 – Officers**

4. The Articles were amended to reflect the service areas of the Chief Legal Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Policy Adviser.

##### **Part 7.3 – Scheme of Delegation**

5. The Scheme of Delegation has not been amended other than to add, for the avoidance of doubt, that any exercise of delegation making incorrect references to any part of the Constitution or statute shall not of itself invalidate the authorised delegation. This is not a change, more a pragmatic reflection that the established principle of delegation should not be frustrated by any inaccuracy in reference. No other change has been made.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

6. Council is **RECOMMENDED** to note the amendments to Article 11 and to Part 7.3 of the Constitution and to approve the Scheme of Officer Delegation (Part 7.3) as amended.

### **PETER CLARK**

Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Glenn Watson, Principal Governance Officer: (01865) 815270

May 2015