

County Council

11 February 2025

Agenda



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

To: Members of the County COUNCIL

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 11 February 2025 at 10.30 am

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#). Please note, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

January 2025

Committee Officer:

Colm Ó Caomhánaigh

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AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. 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.

4. Official Communications

5. Appointments

To make any changes to the membership of scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups and to note any changes to the Cabinet made by the Leader of the Council.

6. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak on an item on the agenda at this meeting, or present a petition, can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection. Requests must be submitted no later than 9am one working day before the meeting i.e., 9am on Monday 10 February 2025. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am on the day of the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

7. Pay Policy Statement 2025 / 26 (Pages 15 - 34)

Report of Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires all councils to agree and publish a pay policy statement every financial year. In addition, the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (updated in 2014) requires that councils

publish prescribed information on senior pay, jobs, and organisational structures.

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Approve and adopt the 2025/26 pay policy statement and agree to its publication on the council website and intranet, as required by The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) and the Code of Practice on Data Transparency.**

8. Gender Equality and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports (Pages 35 - 62)

Report of the Director of Human Resources and Cultural Change

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average (mean or median) earnings of men and women across a workforce. Whilst reporting the council's gender equality pay gap is a statutory requirement, reporting of the ethnicity pay gap is currently voluntary, and a matter of best practice.

Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Note and approve the council's statutory gender equality pay gap report of 2024 for onward submission to the Gender Pay Gap Service, and making it available to the council's employees, and on the council's website by 30 March 2025.**
- b) **Note the council's voluntary ethnicity pay gap report of 2024.**

9. The Use of Urgency Provisions (Pages 63 - 66)

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Constitution makes provision for urgent decisions to be made exempt from call-in on the agreement of the Chair of the Council. When this occurs, it must be reported to the next meeting of Council.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note

(a) the exemptions from Call-in of the following decisions:

- **Cabinet on 17 December 2024 - Oxfordshire County Council response to Government Consultation on Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Council Meetings**
- **Shareholder Committee (Cabinet Committee) on 17 December 2024 - Changes to the Articles of Association and Board Director Appointments**
- **Cabinet on 9 January 2025 - Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**
- **Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services on 21 January 2025 - Formal Approval of Schools Funding Formula 2025/26**

10. Budget and Business Planning 2025/26 - 2027/28 (Pages 67 - 392)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

This report is the culmination of the Budget and Business Planning process for 2025/26 to 2027/28. It sets out the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2025/26, medium term financial plan to 2027/28 and capital programme to 2034/35, together with a number of strategies and policies that the Council is required to approve for the 2025/26 financial year.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) have regard to the statutory report of the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (at Section 3) in approving recommendations b to d below;**
- (b) (in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve:**
 - **the council tax and precept calculations for 2025/26 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:**
 - (i) a precept of £533,328,633;**
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,911.40;**
 - **a budget for 2025/26 as set out in Section 4.4;**
 - **a medium term financial strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in Section 4.2);**
 - **the Financial Strategy for 2025/26 at Section 4.5;**
 - **the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2025/26 at Section 4.6 including**
 - (i) the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer's recommended level of General Balances for 2025/26 (Section 4.6), and**
 - (ii) the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2025/26 to 2027/28 (Section 4.6.1)**
- (c) (in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:**
 - **the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2024/25 to 2034/35 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Section 5.1;**
 - **a Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2034/35 as set out in Section 5.4 which includes new capital proposals set out in Section 5.3.**
- (d) (in respect of treasury management – at Section 5) approve:**
 - **the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 at Section 5.2 including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Specified Investment and Non-Specified Investment Instruments.**
 - **that any further changes required to the 2025/26 strategy be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and**

the Cabinet Member for Finance;

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.