



To: **Members of the Audit & Governance Committee**

***Notice of a Meeting of the Audit & Governance
Committee***

Wednesday, 23 November 2022 at 2.00 pm

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

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on the Live Stream link on the website.

Stephen Chandler
Interim Chief Executive

November 2022

Committee Officers: Committee Services
Email: committees.democraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Chair – Councillor Roz Smith
Deputy Chair - Councillor Brad Baines

Councillors

Yvonne Constance OBE
Ted Fenton
Nick Leverton

Ian Middleton
Freddie van Mierlo
Michele Paule

Judy Roberts

Co-optee

Dr Geoff Jones

Notes:

- ***Date of next meeting: 18 January 2023***

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/lnsite/Elected+members/> or email democracy@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.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
- 2. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note**
- 3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

'Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection. To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Thursday 17 November 2022. Requests to speak should be sent to jonathan.deacon@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 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

5. Draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22 (Pages 9 - 10)

Report by the Director of Finance.

The report summarises the status of the audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts and provides the latest position on the Infrastructure Asset issue impacting on both the 2020/21 and the 2021/22 accounts.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the current status of the Statement of Accounts for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

6. Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 Update (Pages 11 - 18)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

On 20 July 2022, the Committee approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2021/22. Local authorities are required to prepare an AGS to be transparent about their compliance with good governance principles and to give an opinion on the effectiveness of those arrangements. As part of the process, authorities are expected to highlight particular areas of focus for the year following. The report updates the Committee on the eight particular areas of focus identified for 2022/23.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to receive the update on the actions from the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 and to make any comment upon them.

7. Annual Whistleblowing Report (Pages 19 - 32)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

A revised Whistleblowing Policy was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 17 November 2021. The revised policy draws from best practice elsewhere and benefited from prior consideration by the Audit Working Group. It focuses primarily on employees, councillors and contractors. A copy of the policy is attached to the report.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the number of incidents of Whistleblowing during the 2021-22 financial year. The nine whistleblowing incidents are recorded in the report.

8. Counter Fraud Plan - Progress Report (Pages 33 - 38)

Report by the Director of Finance.

This report presents a summary of activity against the Counter Fraud Plan for 2022/23, presented to the July 2022 Audit & Governance committee meeting. The Counter Fraud plan supports the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy by ensuring that the Council has proportionate and effective resources and controls in place to prevent and detect fraud as well as investigate those matters that do arise.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the summary of activity against the Counter Fraud Plan for 2022/23.

9. Audit Working Group update - 9 November 2022 meeting (Pages 39 - 40)

Report by the Director of Finance.

This report sets out the matters considered by the Audit Working Group at the meeting held on 9 November 2022.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

10. Treasury Management Midterm Review 2022/23 (Pages 41 - 58)

Report by the Director of Finance.

The report covers the treasury management activity for the first half of 2022/23 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021. It provides an update on the anticipated position and prudential indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 agreed as part of the council's budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2022

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the council's treasury management activity the first half of 2022/23.

11. Ernst & Young Update

A verbal update from the representatives of the external auditors, Ernst & Young.

12. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Statement of Assurance 2021-22 (Pages 59 - 70)

Report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 sets out a requirement for all fire and rescue authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters through publishing an Annual Statement of Assurance. It covers activities across the Service including Fire and Rescue response, Road Safety, Emergency Planning, and Trading Standards.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider and approve the Community Safety Services Statement of Assurance 2021/22 document for publication.

13. Community Safety Services Annual Report 2021/22 (Pages 71 - 102)

Report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The Community Safety Services, Annual Report is a public facing document detailing performance across the directorate's strategic priorities between 2021 and 2022. The report details how Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service met its responsibilities to protect communities, reduce harm and save lives. It covers activities across the Service including Fire and Rescue response, Road Safety, Emergency Planning, Gypsy and Traveller Services and Trading Standards.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider and approve the Community Safety Services Annual Report 2021/22 for publication.

14. Committee's Work Programme 2022/23 (Pages 103 - 104)

To review the Committee's Work Programme.

Close of meeting