



To: Members of the Audit & Governance Committee

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

Wednesday, 16 March 2022 at 2.00 pm

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

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

Stephen Chandler
Interim Chief Executive

Committee Officers: Cameron MacLean
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Membership

Chair – Councillor Roz Smith
Deputy Chair - Councillor Brad Baines

Councillors

Donna Ford
Nick Leverton
Dan Levy

Ian Middleton
Michael O'Connor
Judy Roberts

Ted Fenton
Vacancy

Co-optee

Dr Geoff Jones

Notes:

- **Date of next meeting: 11 May 2022**

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 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 - 12)**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 05 January 2022.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**

5. **Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report (Pages 13 - 30)**

2.10 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance.

In accordance with The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Audit Committee Guidelines for Local Authorities 2018, it is recommended practice for an annual public report to be produced and reported to Council demonstrating how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities.

The Audit & Governance Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to review the draft report, agree any amendments, and finalise in preparation for presentation to Council by the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee.

6. **Government's Measures to Improve Local Audit Delays (Pages 31 - 34)**

2.25 p.m.

Report by Director of Finance

The Government is continuing to prioritise measures to improve timeliness and support capacity as part of the response to the [Redmond Review](#) on Local Authority financial reporting and external audit.

The Audit and Governance Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the key measures outlined in Section 3.

7. **Scale of Election Fees 2022-23 (Pages 35 - 44)**

2.40 p.m.

Report by Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets, and Investment

The Audit and Governance Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the Scale of Election Expenses for the Financial Year 2022/23 for any poll associated with the County Council during the year (Annex 1).

8. **Counter Fraud Update (Pages 45 - 52)**

2.55 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance

This report presents a summary of activity against the Counter Fraud Plan for 2021/22, presented to the July 2021 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 2021/22.

9. Operation Edifice Investigation (Pages 53 - 70)

3.10 p.m.

Report by Corporate Director – Commercial, Development, Assets & Investment (CDAI)

This report presents a summary of the investigation named 'Operation Edifice' conducted by the Council's Counter Fraud team since September 2020 and overseen by the Corporate Director CDAI.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to -

- (a) Note the findings from the 'Operation Edifice' investigation.
- (b) Consider the management response and Action Plan resulting from the investigation in Annex 1.

10. Proposed Oxfordshire Code of Conduct (Pages 71 - 88)

3.25 p.m.

Report by Director of Law and Governance

Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authority must adopt 'a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that capacity.

The Audit and Governance Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the revised Councillors' Code of Conduct at Appendix (1) for implementation from 1 May 2022.

11. Report of the Audit Working Group (Pages 89 - 92)

3.55 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance.

This report presents the matters considered by the Audit Working Group at its meeting on meeting of 21 January 2021.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

Close of meeting

An explanation of abbreviations and acronyms is available on request from the Chief Internal Auditor.

Pre-Meeting Briefing

There will be a virtual pre-meeting briefing at on **Monday, 14 March at 10.00 a.m.** for the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Opposition Group Spokesman.