

# **County Council**

**12 September 2023**

## **Agenda**

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

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

**Tuesday, 12 September 2023 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.



Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

September 2023

*Committee Officer:*

***Colm Ó Caomhánaigh***

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# AGENDA

**1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 (**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 the Cabinet, scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups.

**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 11 September 2023. Requests to speak should be sent to [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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. Questions with Notice from Members of the Public**

**8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council**

**9. Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23 (Pages 11 - 24)**

Report (**CC9**) on the Council's treasury management activities for the financial year 2022/23.

**Council is RECOMMENDED to note the Council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2022/23.**

**10. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 25 - 28)**

Report (**CC10**) of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 July 2023.

**MOTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

*WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS WITH NOTICE MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE PROPER OFFICER IN WRITING BY 9.00 AM ON THE MONDAY BEFORE THE MEETING*

**11. Motion from Councillor David Bartholomew**

Cabinet has approved the proposals for new infrastructure to support housing in Didcot and welcomes the millions of pounds offered by Government, but the Planning & Regulation Committee have rejected the proposals. This Council therefore welcomes the intervention by the Secretary of State to resolve the impasse.

**12. Motion from Councillor Charlie Hicks**

Years of Conservative cuts have eroded Oxfordshire's bus network, especially in rural and deprived areas.

To improve bus services for Oxfordshire residents, Council and operators, via the Enhanced Partnership, are delivering a new fleet of electric buses and improvements at Park & Ride sites.

To build on these successes, Council wishes to explore options to bring buses back into public control, as other local authorities are doing, and to make further bus services improvements. Therefore, Council asks Cabinet to consider:

1. Funding in 2024/25 a detailed feasibility study into options of setting up:
  - (i) Oxfordshire bus franchising,
  - (ii) An Oxfordshire municipal bus company, and/or
  - (iii) A "Transport for Oxfordshire" public transport body (akin to Transport for West Midlands)
2. This study should be informed by an initial assessment of the public transport needs of Oxfordshire's underserved and deprived communities, including isolated rural communities, shift workers, women, disabled, and young people. It should also assess community and on-demand bus services integration within these models;
3. Working with unions, public transport and taxi operators, police and other stakeholders to address gender-based violence on public transport and safe night-time travel for shift workers;

4. Improving communications highlighting the current and proposed new bus services to be introduced alongside the Oxford traffic filters (akin to the TfL Superloop comms);
5. Piloting car-free Sundays with free bus travel in Oxford and Market Towns in 2024, where there is local support, to showcase how reduced congestion leads to better bus services.

### **13. Motion from Councillor Jane Hanna**

This Council notes:

- That a new rail station north of Grove was estimated in an independent opinion in 2018 to become the fifth busiest station in Oxfordshire, attracting at least one million users, and was subsequently included in the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study, the County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, and has safeguarded sites under the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan. An estimated 'high value for money' of £2.48 for each £1 expended means the scheme has a strong economic case.
- National campaigning to win support from government for small funding allocation to progress plans for the station failed in 2022, despite this area experiencing a 34% population increase.
- That the Council budget and the Cabinet commitment of new funding in 2022/23 and 2023/24 supports investment through project development work. As a result, a Strategic Outline Business Case for the new Oxford–Eynsham–Witney–Carterton 'Windrush Line' has recently been completed successfully.
- That project development work on Wantage and Grove Station would build on this example and would fit with ambitions of increased investment in an inclusive, integrated, county-wide active and sustainable travel network fit for the 21st century, to improve choice and reduce car journeys.

Council therefore calls on Cabinet to consider building on the 2018 Statement of Opinion by commissioning, before the end of this financial year, while funding resources remain available, a DfT-compliant Strategic Outline Business Case, and an initial assessment of financing options for a new rail station for Wantage and Grove.

### **14. Motion from Councillor Sally Povolotsky**

This Council notes:

- In 2022 a survey commissioned by Action Aid UK found nearly one in eight women in Great Britain had recently struggled to buy menstrual products — either for themselves or for a dependent.
- The survey found, of those who has struggled to afford menstrual products, 75% had needed to prioritise spending money on food and 49% needed to prioritise spending money on gas/electric.
- A number of Councils across the UK have already set up or agreed to schemes to provide free period products, including Oxford City Council.

- 35% of teenage girls said they had taken time off school because of their period which is a 7% increase since 2019.
- A YouGov survey showed two thirds of Britons supported making it a legal requirement for local authorities to provide free period products.

Council strongly believes:

- The cost-of-living crisis has forced many women to prioritise other household essentials such as food, clothes and heating over menstrual products.
- No one should ever have to experience period poverty.

Council resolves to ask Cabinet to:

- Look into a period pant scheme, akin to reusable nappy schemes, to help with the costly purchase of more climate friendly products for all ages.
- Promote the national school period product scheme to *all* Oxfordshire schools and monitor gaps in uptake.
- Make free Menstrual products accessible in every council owned building in the county.

## **15. Motion by Councillor Bob Johnston**

Oxfordshire County Council deplores in the strongest terms the draft proposals to close station ticket offices in the County. This is because such a move will exclude all the digitally challenged from easily purchasing tickets, among whom are numbered many travellers that are elderly, disabled, or both.

All rail users will be denied easy purchase of the full range of tickets, including some of the cheapest tickets. It will make split ticketing and the redemption of delay/repay vouchers difficult, if not impossible.

The assumption on which the proposal is based is highly questionable, with impartial data showing that at some stations as much as 50% of the tickets purchased are through ticket offices. Furthermore, it will restrict the advice available on ticketing: it is quicker for an experienced operator to issue a ticket than to supervise somebody else to do the same. There is also evidence that the tickets currently purchased from ticket offices are either high value or for complicated journeys.

Council therefore

- urges all Members to sign the online petition about the proposed closures to ensure that the move is discussed in Parliament;
- asks the Leader of Council to send a response opposing the closure of all ticket offices in Oxfordshire and
- asks the Cabinet Member covering library services, should the closures take place, to investigate what support the county library service can offer digitally challenged users of the rail network to obtain best value, especially during the current cost-of-living crisis.

## **16. Motion by Councillor Andrew Gant**

Oxfordshire County Council is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in our county. We believe that:

- everyone has the right to seek safety, and everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- the Government's 'anti-refugee' laws undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;
- people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;
- the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;

Council resolves to:

(i) defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK by signing the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;

(ii) call on the UK Government to repeal the Illegal Migration Act and the Nationality and Borders Act, withdraw the UK–Rwanda partnership,

(iii) request Cabinet to

- work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;
- continue to lobby against any UK Government plans to build or repurpose facilities in Oxfordshire to detain or warehouse people seeking safety;
- work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Oxfordshire;
- consider joining the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

## **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.