



To: Members of the Audit & Governance Committee

Notice of a Meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee

**Wednesday, 5 January 2022 at 2.00 pm
County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND**

Please note that Council meetings are currently taking place in-person (not virtually) with social distancing at the venue. Meetings will continue to be live-streamed and those who wish to view them are strongly encouraged to do so online to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection.

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

Places at the meeting are very limited due to the requirements of social distancing. If you still wish to attend this meeting, you must contact the Committee Officer by 9.00 a.m. four working days before the meeting and they will advise you if you can be accommodated at this meeting and of the detailed Covid-19 safety requirements for all attendees.

Please note that in line with current government guidance *all* attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of the meeting.

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

January 2022

Committee Officers: *Lucy Tyrrell, Tel 07741 607834;
E-mail: lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

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

Co-optee: Dr Geoff Jones

Notes:

- ***There will be a pre-meeting held virtually on Friday 31 December 2021 at 10.00 a.m. for the Chair, Vice-Chair and Opposition Spokesperson.***
- ***There will be a private Treasury briefing for all Councillors at 12.45 p.m. on the day of the Committee meeting.***
- ***Date of next meeting: 16 March 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/lnsite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or 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.

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 17 November 2021 and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

Currently council meetings are taking place in-person (not virtually) with social distancing operating in the venues. However, members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting 'virtually' through an online connection. Places at the meeting are very limited due to the requirements of social distancing. While you can ask to attend the meeting in person, you are strongly encouraged to attend 'virtually' to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection.

Please also note that in line with current government guidance all attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of the meeting.

Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9.00 a.m. on the day preceding the published date of the meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9.00 a.m. four working days before the meeting i.e. 9.00 a.m. on 29 December 2021. Requests to speak should be sent to lucy.tyrrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk. You will be contacted by the officer regarding the arrangements for speaking.

If you ask to attend in person, the officer will also advise you regarding Covid-19 safety at the meeting. 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 9.00 a.m. 2 working days before the meeting i.e. Friday 31 December 2021. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

5. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 (Pages 9 - 30)

2.10 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance

The Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 outlines the Council's strategic objectives in terms of its debt and investment management for the financial year 2022/23.

Changes to the Treasury Management Strategy will be recommended to Council to be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance.

The Audit & Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to endorse the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 as outlined in the report.

6. Financial Management Code - Summary Compliance Assessment (Pages 31 - 42)

2.25 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance.

This is the second annual report to those charged with governance on the Council's compliance with the FM Code and follows an initial assessment for 2020/21 that was considered by Audit & Governance Committee in January 2021.

The report sets out the outcome of the compliance self-assessment undertaken for 2021/22 which has found that the Council is well placed to meet the requirements of the FM Code.

The Audit & Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to endorse the assessment of compliance against the Financial Management Code for 2021/22 (Annex 1)

7. Internal Audit Plan - Progress Report (Pages 43 - 72)

2.40 p.m.

Report by Director of Finance.

This report presents the Internal Audit progress report for 2021/22.

The committee is RECOMMENDED to

a) Note the progress with the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan and the outcome of the completed audits.

b) Note the Blue Badge Enforcement Strategy.

8. Provision Cycle Implementation Update (Pages 73 - 86)

3.00 p.m.

Report by Director of Law & Governance.

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of the Procurement Hub since the recent transformation activities. It seeks to confirm to the Committee that any outstanding actions which have been identified as requiring change or improvement since then, have happened, and provides more information on the structural changes which have happened in the procurement function since this point.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) ***note the update and improvements made to the Procurement Hub in the last year since the restructure, and***
- (b) ***endorse and confirm completion of the Action Plan as detailed in Annex 1.***

9. Constitution Review Update (Pages 87 - 90)

3.20 p.m.

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The purpose of the Working Group is to make recommendations to this Committee on potential changes to the Constitution. The Committee endorsed an outline approach which envisaged the Committee receiving a draft, revised version of the Constitution in March 2022. The Committee did however affirm that achieving a Constitution that is fit for purpose and understandable by the public, members and officers was the key consideration.

The Constitution Working Group has met twice and it has become apparent that the timescale in which to produce an updated Constitution that is fit for purpose and understandable is not achievable within the initial anticipated timescale.

The Constitution Working Group, therefore, ask the Committee to extend the deadline for the review until July 2022

The Committee is RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***To note the progress made to date with the Constitution Review; and***
- (b) ***To note the concerns of the Constitution Review Working Group around delivery of a new Constitution by the end of March 2022 and to extend that deadline until 31 July 2022.***

10. Appointment of Independent Persons (Pages 91 - 92)

3.30 p.m.

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

In recent years, the work of the Committee has benefited from the co-option to it of an Independent Member, Dr Geoff Jones. While it is not a statutory requirement to do this, it is recommended best practice to do so. The perspective and challenge afforded by an Independent Co-opted Member is integral to the purpose of an effective audit committee, as has been proven through the services of Dr Jones.

It is also recommended best practice that this independent perspective is refreshed periodically. As such, this report sets out a proposal for seeking public interest in the role of an Independent Co-opted Member for this Committee. This proposal involves a public advertisement against the CIPFA skills and competencies framework for audit committee members. The appointment, and any remuneration for it via a Special Responsibility Allowance, will be for Full Council to determine.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed approach for recruiting and appointing two Independent Co-opted Members to this Committee.

11. Audit Working Group Report (Pages 93 - 94)

3.45 p.m.

Report by the Director of Finance.

This report presents the matters considered by the Audit Working Group meeting of 15 December 2021.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

12. Work Programme 2021/22 (Pages 95 - 98)

3.50 p.m.

To review the Committee's work programme and training schedule for 2021/22.

Close of meeting