



To: Members of the Audit & Governance Committee

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

Wednesday, 19 November 2014 at 1.00 pm in Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Peter G. Clark.

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

November 2014

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Membership

Chairman – Councillor David Wilmshurst
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Sandy Lovatt

Councillors

Jamila Azad
David Bartholomew
Tim Hallchurch MBE

Jenny Hannaby
Nick Hards
Simon Hoare

Roz Smith

Co-optee

Dr Geoff Jones

Notes:

- **Date of next meeting: 14 January 2015**

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 contact Glenn Watson on (01865) 815270 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 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2014 (**AG3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

5. Governance and Constitution Review (Pages 13 - 40)

1:10

Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (**AG5**).

In April 2013, the Council adopted new governance arrangements which came into effect following the May 2013 elections. The Council asked its Monitoring Officer to review the effectiveness of these decision-making arrangements a year after their coming into operation, along with the underlying Constitution. His recommendations will be considered by Full Council on 9 December.

This report highlights the emerging issues. The Committee previously gave attention to this matter in September 2014 but wished to have a more full discussion at this meeting.

Audit & Governance Committee is asked to comment on the review and to RECOMMENDED Cabinet to consider and endorse the direction of travel of the review.

6. Corporate Governance Leads - Presentations to Audit & Governance

1:50

There are eleven 'Corporate Leads' that provide assurance on an issue for governance purposes. The Audit & Governance Committee has asked to be given presentations from each Corporate Lead during the year so that they can better understand each area, particularly focusing on the assurance process:

- How Corporate Leads assure themselves (and then directors) that things are well within their areas; and
- How Leads decide that issues need to be mentioned for 'Action'; and

- How leads ensure that their area complies with regulations and the law.

Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer will give a presentation on Financial Management and Bethan Morgan, County Emergency Planning Officer will give a presentation on Business Continuity.

7. Treasury Management Mid Term Review 2014/15 (Pages 41 - 54)

2:15

Report by Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer (**AG7**).

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Revised) 2011 recommends that members are informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice a year. This report ensures this authority is embracing Best Practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Cabinet to note the Council's Mid-Term Treasury Management Review 2014/15.

8. Ernst & Young - Annual Audit Letter (Pages 55 - 64)

2:35

Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15 Audit (**AG8**).

A representative of the Audit Commission will present the Letter.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider and receive the Letter.

9. Audit Working Group Report (Pages 65 - 68)

2.50

Report by the Chief Internal Auditor (**AG9**).

The report summarises the matters arising at the meeting of the 6 November 2014.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

10. Annual Governance Statement - Action Plan Progress (Pages 69 - 80)

3.10

Report by the County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (**AG10**)

The County Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good

Governance in Local Government.

Corporate Governance is the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives.

The quality of corporate governance arrangements is a key determinant of the quality of services provided by organisations.

Audit & Governance Committee approved the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2013/14 in July 2014. The AGS lists six 'Actions' to be carried out in 2014/15. This report is the first of three during 2014/15 which will describe progress and any other plans that we have for each of these Actions.

The Audit & Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the progress on the AGS Actions.

11. Openness of Local Bodies Regulations (Pages 81 - 86)

3.30

Report of the County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (**AG11**).

The Government has introduced new Regulations to ensure that members of public are able to report on meetings of local government bodies. This effectively allows the press and members of the public to film, photograph or record any Council meetings that are open to the public. The Regulations also require a written record to be kept, and reported, of certain decisions taken by officers. This report summarises the main changes.

A protocol has been produced by the Council setting out how the rights to film, record and commentate on meetings will be implemented. This Protocol on Filming, Recording and Use of Social Media at Council Meetings is attached as an Annex, which the Committee is asked to endorse.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the changes brought about by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and to endorse the Protocol attached as an Annex to this report.

CLOSE OF MEETING

3.50

Pre-Meeting Briefing

There will be a pre-meeting briefing at County Hall on **Thursday 13 November 2014 at 2.00 pm** for the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Opposition Group Spokesman.