

County Council

10 December 2024

Agenda



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

To: **Members of the County COUNCIL**

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 10 December 2024 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.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

November 2024

Committee Officer:

Colm Ó Caomhánaigh

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AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024 (**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 (Pages 15 - 16)

To make any changes to the membership of scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups and to note any changes to the Cabinet made by the Leader of the Council.

Council is requested to note the formation of a Cabinet Committee.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19 November 2024, the Cabinet agreed to the following arrangements for the exercise of executive functions:

The establishment of a Cabinet Committee to be known as the Shareholder Committee. The committee will operate under [Constitution Part 4.3 Cabinet Committees](#). As agreed by Cabinet, the Membership of the Shareholder Committee shall be all members of the Cabinet, and the agreed Terms of Reference are attached.

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 9 December 2024. Requests to speak should be sent to 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. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 17 - 22)

Report from Leader of the Council.

The report summarises the decisions from the Cabinet meeting on 19 November 2024.

10. Treasury Management Mid Term Review 2024/25 (Pages 23 - 34)

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

In this report, the performance for the first half of the year (1 April to 30 September 2024) is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.

Council is RECOMMENDED to note the Council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2024/25.

11. Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 (Pages 35 - 66)

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

This report invites the Council to consider the Scrutiny Annual Report and formally receive it.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to

- a) Receive the Scrutiny Annual Report.**

12. Appraisal Process for the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) (Pages 67 - 92)

Report of the Director of HR and Cultural Change

The recommendations in this report are those which were endorsed by the Remuneration Committee for Council approval.

The Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the proposed changes to the appraisal process for the Chief Executive (Head of the Paid Service) as set out by the South East Employers (SEE) review report (Annex 2).**
- b) Delegate authority to the Remuneration Committee to constitute the Appraisal Panel and undertake the appraisals for the Chief Executive.**

- c) **Approve amendments to the Constitution to include acting as an Appraisal Panel and undertaking Chief Executive's appraisals to the terms of reference to Remuneration Committee at Part 5.1C and to delegate to the Director of Law and Governance and the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution.**

13. Financial Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations (Pages 93 - 98)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

To approve amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.

Council is RECOMMENDED to

- a) **Approve the amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations, as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee.**

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 FRIDAY BEFORE THE MEETING

14. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves - Farming

This Council considers that the government's changes in its Autumn budget to Inheritance Tax treatment of farmland, increases to employers' National Insurance and introduction of a new fertiliser tax on key agricultural imports will have a detrimental cumulative impact on family farms across Oxfordshire.

This Council notes with concern that these family farm taxes risk:

- Adversely affecting local farmers' potential to employ people in Oxfordshire's rural economy;
- Damaging the ability for family farmers to pass on their farms to their children; and
- Making food production at competitive prices more difficult for us as a county.

This Council requests Cabinet to ensure that:

1. Its own policies are as supportive of local farmers as reasonably possible;
2. The newly integrated Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership ('OxLEP') prioritises the local rural economy in its governance structure and ongoing development of its strategic plan;

3. The Cabinet Member for the Environment organises a meeting with local farmers and elected members of all political groups to listen to their concerns with a view to informing the Council's and OxLEP's ongoing policy development.

This Council requests the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ask that introduction of these family farm taxes be reconsidered for the sake of environmental protection and food security.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

15. Motion by Councillor Charlie Hicks - Citizens' Assembly on the Future of Transport in Central Oxfordshire

This Council agreed to set up a Citizens' Assembly on the Future of Transport in Central Oxfordshire as part of its last budget. This Council considers that it is time for such a Citizens' Assembly, focused on reducing congestion, to be established. It should happen this financial year.

This Council notes that its ambitious suite of traffic management measures is due to be rolled out in the very near future. These include Oxford's traffic filters and workplace parking levy, which are now largely enshrined in the Council's budget and will take place unless there is a change of administration next year.

If all such measures go ahead, Oxfordshire motorists could be hit by £57million in fines in fines and charges, broken down as follows:

- Expanded Zero Emissions Zone £25m;
- Traffic Filters £11m;
- Workplace Parking Tax £21m.

For clarity, the purpose of a Congestion Citizens' Assembly would be to assess the likely effectiveness of such measures, provide recommendations on existing proposals and advise as to whether other measures might be given effect after next year's local elections as supplements or substitutes for such policies, putting residents' voices at the heart of the decision-making process.

Council requests Cabinet to establish a Congestion Citizens' Assembly of Central Oxfordshire citizens, with an advisory group to comprise elected members, local businesspeople, public sector leaders from the Council's health, education and blue light partners, civil society and faith group leaders, and academics with relevant expertise in the field.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

16. Motion by Councillor Ian Middleton - Badger culling

In 2018 this Council passed a motion stating that it was opposed to the licensing of a badger cull in Oxfordshire.

When DEFRA announced badger culling would be phased out by 2025, many people believed that the cull had ended. Sadly, culling in Oxfordshire intensified, seemingly with the intent of shooting as many badgers as possible before the deadline with over 50% of the county in the killing zones.

Numerous scientific reports show that culling is ineffective as a control measure, yet DEFRA, the NFU and British Cattle Veterinary Association and others continue to advocate its use.

While it's welcomed that the Labour government has abandoned plans to allow up to 100% of badgers to be killed in some areas, there was a hope that they would cancel the cull altogether and focus on cattle based measures, including support for farmers over improved biosecurity, and a move towards testing and vaccination.

However it now seems likely that the government will permit the cull to continue for at least the next 5 years meaning even more badgers in Oxfordshire will be senselessly slaughtered.

This Council therefore :

1. Re-affirms our opposition to badger culling which has been shown to be an ineffective control measure for Bovine tuberculosis.
2. Asks the Cabinet to consider a specific policy that badger culling will not be permitted on Council-owned land.
3. Requests that the Leader writes to DEFRA making clear our continued opposition to the cull and any extension of it in size and scope.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

17. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves - Congestion Commission

This Council considered setting up a Congestion Commission as part of its last budget debate. This measure was not taken up at the time. However, this Council now considers that it is time for such a commission to be established.

This Council notes that its ambitious suite of traffic management measures is due to be rolled out, in large measure, before the next set of elections to Oxfordshire County Council in May 2025. These include Oxford's traffic filters and workplace parking tax, which are now largely enshrined in the Council's budget and will take place unless there is a change of administration next year.

If all such measures go ahead, Oxfordshire motorists could be hit by £57million in fines and charges over a five-year period broken down as follows:

- Expanded Zero Emissions Zone £25m;
- Traffic Filters (Four-sector Plan) £11m;
- Workplace Parking Tax £21m.

For clarity, the purpose of a Congestion Commission is not to water down or frustrate the administration's policies, for which there is budgetary provision. Rather, its object would be to assess the likely effectiveness of such measures and advise as to whether other measures might be given effect after next year's local elections as supplements or substitutes for such policies.

Council requests Cabinet to establish a Congestion Commission to comprise elected members, local businesspeople, public sector leaders from the Council's health, education and blue light partners, civil society and faith group leaders, and academics with relevant expertise in the field.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

18. Motion by Councillor Liz Brighthouse - Dark Skies

This Council, being concerned about the lack of political governance in relation to Dark Skies, the plan to switch off many of the county's streetlights between 11pm - 6.30am, calls on the Cabinet to carry out a full consultation before bringing this back for decision making. Such consultation to include all county councillors alongside community groups and particularly those working with women and girls.

Note: The motion, if passed, would constitute the exercise of an executive function in which case it will be referred to the Cabinet together with any advice the Council may wish to give, in accordance with Rule 13.5.1 (i) of the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

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.