



To: **Members of the Audit & Governance Committee**

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

Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 2.00 pm

Room 2&3 - 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

Committee Officers: Committee Services
Email: committees.democraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Chair – to be confirmed
Deputy Chair – to be confirmed

Councillors

Brad Baines
Felix Bloomfield
Ted Fenton

Jane Hanna OBE
Jenny Hannaby
Nick Leverton

Ian Middleton
Glynis Phillips
Roz Smith

Co-optee

Dr Geoff Jones

Notes:

- ***Date of next meeting: 18 September 2024***

AGENDA

- 1. Election of Chair for the 2024-25 Council Year**
- 2. Election of Deputy Chair for 2024-25 Council Year**
- 3. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
- 4. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note**
- 5. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2024 (**AG3**) and to receive information arising from them.

6. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. 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 your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

7. Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (Pages 9 - 60)

Report by Monitoring Officer

The Audit & Governance Committee has the responsibility of approving the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) each year.

Local authorities are required to prepare an AGS to be transparent about their compliance with good governance principles. This includes reporting on how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the previous year and setting out any planned changes in the coming period.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit & Governance Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, subject to the Monitoring Officer making any necessary

amendments in the light of comments made by the Committee, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, and the Section 151 officer.

8. Treasury Management - Annual Performance 2023/24 (Pages 61 - 74)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that the Council and Audit & Governance Committee receives a report on Treasury Management activities at least four times per year. This report is the final report for the financial year 2023/24 and sets out the position at 31 March 2024.

Throughout this report performance for the 2023/24 financial year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit & Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2023/24.

9. Update on 2023/24 Statement of Accounts (Pages 75 - 224)

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

This report sets out the latest position on the preparation and audit of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts including:

- Authorisation of the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 and period of public inspection.
- An update on the external audit of the 2023/24 accounts as well as the backstop arrangements for the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) Consider and approve the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 at Annex 1.
- (b) Note the update on the outstanding information on the back stop arrangements for the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

10. Internal Audit Charter (Pages 225 - 244)

Report by Executive Director of Resources

This report presents both the Internal Audit Charter and the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme for 2024/25. These are subject to annual review.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the Internal Audit Charter.
- b) Note the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.

11. Counter Fraud Plan and Update (Pages 245 - 256)

Report by Executive Director of Resources.

This report presents a summary of activity against the Counter Fraud Plan for 2023/24, which was previously presented to the July 2023 Audit & Governance committee meeting.

The report also presents the Counter Fraud Plan for the coming year 2024/25.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

- a) Note the summary of activity against the Counter Fraud Plan for 2023/24.
- b) Approve the Counter Fraud Plan for 2024/25.

12. Risk Management Update (Pages 257 - 262)

Report by Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

This report sets out updates to Risk Management and an overview of the latest strategic risk register which contains the Council's most significant risks. The strategic risk register is closely managed by the Council Management Team and reported into the Strategic Leadership Team as part of the Council's Business Management and Monitoring Reports. These combined reports contain performance, risk and finance progress updates against the delivery of the current strategic plan priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

- To note the Risk Management Update

13. Constitutional Changes from HR (Pages 263 - 266)

Report of the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

There is a need to change the approach to hearing and deciding on appeals in employment relations matters in respect of officers of the council to reflect best practice and to reduce delay in dealing with the appeals process.

As a result there will be a need to update the current Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out in Part 8.4 of the Council's Constitution and to amend other relevant clauses in the Constitution to reflect those changes.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

1. Support the proposed changes to the appeals process in respect of employee relations matters and the resultant changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the changes.
2. Delegate to the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to draft the necessary changes to the Constitution for approval by Council.

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

1. To approve amendments to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in Part 8.4 of the Council's Constitution and any consequential amendments to the Constitution.

14. Ernst & Young Update (Pages 267 - 308)

To receive a update from Ernst & Young.

15. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 309 - 310)

To review the Committee's work programme.

Close of meeting

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

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.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then 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.