OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of the Audit & Governance Committee

Notice of a Meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee

Wednesday, 16 September 2026 at 1.00 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 OBE
Chief Executive

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

Membership

Chair – Councillor Roz Smith
Deputy Chair - Councillor John Shiri

Councillors

Ron Batstone	David Hingley	Leigh Rawlins
Andrew Crichton	Saj Malik	
James Fry	Gavin McLauchlan	

Co-optee

Kate Cartwright
Paul McGinn

Notes:

- ***11 November 2026***

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

2. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note

3. Minutes (Pages 9 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2026 and to receive information arising from them

4. 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 to present a petition must be submitted no later than 9am ten working days before the meeting.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting (11 September 2026).

Requests should be submitted 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.

5. Treasury Management Quarter 1 Performance Report 2026/2027 (Pages 17 - 30)

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This report is the first for the 2026/27 financial year and sets out the position at 30 June 2026.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to NOTE the Council's treasury management activity at the end of the first quarter of 2026/27.

6. Progression on Statement of Accounts 2025/2026 (Verbal Update)

Verbal Update from the Chief Accountant

The Audit and Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to NOTE the update on the progression on the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26.

7. Internal Audit 2026/27- Progress Report (Pages 31 - 70)

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

This report provides an update on the Internal Audit Service, including resources, completed and planned audits.

The report includes the Executive Summaries from the individual Internal Audit reports finalised since the last report to the May 2026 Committee. Since the last update, there have been no red reports issued.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to NOTE the progress with the Council's Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27 and the outcome of completed audits.

8. Ernst and Young Update (Pages 71 - 80)

Report by the external auditor Ernst and Young LLP

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to NOTE the report, 'Rebuilding audit assurance: the path to an unqualified opinion. Year ended 31 March 2026'.

9. Update on the implementation of the Council's Commercial Strategy (Pages 81 - 90)

Report by the Director of Financial and Commercial Services

In response to a request from the Committee, this paper sets out how the council ensures value for money is achieved on behalf of residents and communities.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to NOTE the actions taken by officers to ensure value for money is achieved through third party contracts.

10. Monitoring Officer Annual Report (Pages 91 - 106)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

This report provides a comprehensive overview from the Monitoring Officer of democratic and ethical governance activities during the municipal year 2025-26 (from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026). The report is aligned with the functions of the Audit and Governance Committee, which is responsible for ensuring high standards of conduct among councillors and co-opted members.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to CONSIDER and ENDORSE the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report for 2025/26.

11. RIPA Policy (Pages 107 - 126)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Council may occasionally need to carry out covert surveillance. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (‘the Act’) and supporting Codes of Practice provide the legal framework under which public bodies may lawfully undertake covert surveillance.

Codes of Practice under the Act require that elected members review the Authority’s use of activities within the scope of the Act periodically and review the Authority’s Policy annually. This report provides a summary of the covert activities undertaken by the council between April 2025 and March 2026 for review by the Committee.

The Committee is recommended to:

a) **NOTE the Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 included in the annex of this paper and to comment on any changes to the policy that the committee would wish the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer to consider; and**

b) **CONSIDER and NOTE the use of any activities within the scope of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act by the Council.**

12. Appointments to Category B Outside Bodies (Pages 127 - 132)

Report by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

The report asks the Audit and Governance Committee to consider Member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council’s responsibilities, but which are the responsibility of the Committee - and not Cabinet - to appoint.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to AGREE the appointments to Category B outside bodies listed in Annex 1 to this report until July 2027.

13. Audit Working Group Update (Pages 133 - 136)

Report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

The Audit Working Group (AWG) met on 2 September 2026. The group received an update on the implementation of management actions arising from the audit of Bridge Management and the audit of Highways Contract Management, which were both undertaken in 2025/26.

The Audit and Governance Committee is recommended to NOTE the report.

14. Audit & Governance Committee Work Programme (Pages 137 - 138)

To review the Audit and Governance Committee’s Work Programme for 2026-27

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.