

Divisions Affected – ALL

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 JUNE 2026

Protocol for Flag Flying

Report by the Director for Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - i) **NOTE** the draft Protocol, and
 - ii) **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet

Executive Summary

2. This is a proposed Protocol for Flag Flying for Oxfordshire County Council, which establishes a clear and consistent framework for the display of flags on Council buildings and land. The protocol has been developed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and national guidance, while recognising the cultural, civic and symbolic significance of flag flying.
3. The protocol sets out the Council's approach to routine flag flying, including arrangements for existing flagpoles, established annual commitments, and the management of flag displays during the transitions between County Hall, Midland House and Speedwell House. It also defines roles and responsibilities, delegating decision-making to the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, with appropriate consultation, to ensure decisions are fair, transparent and aligned with the Council's values and Public Sector Equality Duty.
4. In addition, the protocol provides detailed operational guidance on the appropriate use and positioning of flags, compliance with planning regulations, and procedures for flying flags at half-mast. It also introduces a structured process for considering one-off requests, including clear criteria to ensure that requests reflect the Council's values, avoid political or commercial use, and are sensitive to community cohesion.

5. The protocol seeks to balance the role of flag flying as a means of recognising significant events and communities, with the need to mitigate potential controversy and ensure consistency in decision-making. It reinforces that flag flying is one of a wider range of ways in which the Council demonstrates support for communities and occasions throughout the year.
6. The Committee is invited to consider the proposed protocol and provide any comments prior to it being taken to Cabinet on 14 July, 2026.

Financial Implications

7. All financial implications are included within Annex A (the draft Protocol).

Comments checked by:

Bick Nguyen-McBride, Finance Business Partner, bick.nguyen-mcbride@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

8. All legal implications are included within Annex A (the draft Protocol).

Comments checked by:

Esma Basbaydar, Principal Solicitor (Litigation, Employment & Property), Esma.basbaydar@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex A: Draft Protocol for Flag Flying

Contact Officer: Susannah Wintersgill, Susannah.wintersgill@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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