

Tuesday, 25 November 2025

Tel: 01993 861000

e-mail: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of the Council which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 3 December 2025 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Carl Rylett (Vice-Chair), Elizabeth Poskitt, Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Mike Baggaley, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, Adam Clements, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Roger Faulkner, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Paul Marsh, Martin McBride, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Tim Sumner, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of Council on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 28)**
To approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 1 October 2025 and the extraordinary meeting held on 12 November 2025.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair, Leader, Members of the Executive, Head of Paid Service, Director of Finance or Director of Governance.
5. **Participation of the Public**
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's [Public Participation Rules](#).

The deadline for submission is 2.00pm, two clear working days before the meeting.

6. **Questions by Members**
The following questions have been submitted by Members of Council to Members of the Executive, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 5A, Rule 12).

Written responses will be circulated to Members and published on the Council's website at least one working day prior to the meeting. A Member submitting a question is entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting which must arise directly from the question or the response to it.

The supplementary questions and answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.

Question 1: From Councillor Julian Cooper to Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:

How much income does the authority get from the Town Council relating to the Guildhall, Chipping Norton?

Question 2: From Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning:

Following a public petition signed by over 2000 people asking for the council to protect Woodford Way car park from being developed will the Executive Member now reconsider this site being developed as part of the new Local Plan?

Question 3: From Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:

Given the decision by Liberal Democrats at the County Council to impose a congestion charge in Oxford can the Leader confirm if such a scheme could be imposed on towns like Witney?

Question 4: From Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment:

The County Council has announced changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres in Oxfordshire that will likely impact sites here in West Oxfordshire. There is a concern amongst residents that these changes could increase fly-tipping. Given that the clear up of fly-tipping is the responsibility of the District Council will there be extra resources for enforcement in West Oxfordshire?

Recommendations from the Executive

7. Council tax support 2026/27 (Pages 29 - 42)

Purpose

To consider and recommend to Full Council the revised Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2026/2027

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree the increase to income bands from 1 April 2026 of 3.5% or the inflationary increase in welfare benefits, whichever is greater.
2. Agree that any surplus in the Hardship Fund is transferred over to 2026/2027.

Reports from Officers

8. Proposals for Devolution to a Mayoral Strategic Authority (Pages 43 - 56)

Purpose

This report provides information on the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Government. This is in response to the Government's devolution policy and seeks to position our region in the next round of devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions, and agree to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date;
2. Consider and present views to the Executive on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme;
3. Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority;
4. Note that a further report will be brought to Council prior to any final decision on the creation of a Strategic Authority;

5. Note the informal Devolution Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.

9. **Appointment of Independent Member of the Audit and Governance Committee (Pages 57 - 60)**

Purpose

To appoint one appropriately skilled and experienced member of the public to be an “independent member” of the Audit & Governance Committee.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Appoint Victoria Field to the Council’s Audit & Governance Committee as an Independent Member for the remainder of the 4-year term ending on 25 September 2028.

10. **Constitution Working Group Recommendations (Pages 61 - 100)**

Purpose

To consider the recommendations made by the Constitution Working Group on 19 November

Recommendations

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree the amendment (shown in Annex A) to Part 3C of the Constitution Audit and Governance terms of reference following a recommendation from the Council’s external auditor that the Council clarifies, within its Constitution, the responsibility for the assessment of the Council’s Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies as part of the annual budget setting process.
2. Agree to remove Rule 5 of the Council Procedure Rules “Special meetings” as well as any other reference to special meetings.

11. **Programme of Meetings 2026/27 (Pages 101 - 112)**

Purpose

To invite Council to set a programme of Council and Committee meetings for the civic year 2026–2027.

Recommendation

That Council Resolves to:

1. Approve the Programme of Meetings for 2026/27, as detailed at Annex A and Annex B;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme of meetings, in the event that there is any future decision of the Council to change the committee structure, frequencies of committees or sub-committees, or committee remits that impacts the programme of meetings;
3. Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Business Manager to set meeting dates for committees and sub-committees that meet on an ad-hoc basis (Performance and Appointments Committee, Development Control Committee, Licensing Committee, Licensing Panel, Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee, Standards Sub-Committee), member training, member briefing sessions, and any

further working groups established by the Council.

4. Note that rule 6 of the Council Procedure Rules (Part 5A of the Constitution) allows each committee to set its own start time.

Motions on Notice

12. Motion A: Protecting Fire Services in West Oxfordshire

Proposed by: Councillor Liam Walker

Seconded by: Councillor Nick Leverton

Council notes:

1. That Oxfordshire County Council is currently considering proposals that include the potential closure of *two* on-call fire stations within West Oxfordshire: Eynsham Fire Station and Woodstock Fire Station.
2. That both stations provide vital emergency response capability for their communities and surrounding areas, and their crews contribute significantly to safeguarding residents, businesses, heritage assets, and critical transport infrastructure.
3. That West Oxfordshire is a growing district, with new housing developments, increased traffic volumes, and expanding commercial activity—all of which place greater, not lesser, demand on local emergency response capacity.
4. That the loss of either station could risk slower response times, reduced local resilience, and diminished fire cover for incidents such as road traffic collisions, flooding, and property fires.

Council believes:

1. That maintaining strong, localised fire and rescue provision is essential for community safety and public confidence.
2. That any reduction in fire cover within West Oxfordshire is unacceptable and would represent a step backwards in protecting residents, especially in rural and semi-rural areas.
3. That decisions on fire station closures must prioritise public safety above financial or administrative considerations.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Formally oppose the proposed closure of Eynsham and Woodstock Fire Stations.
2. Ask the Council Leader write to the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Safety urging her to withdraw the proposals and to commit to maintaining full operational status at both stations.
3. Support local firefighters and residents in campaigning to retain emergency fire cover in West Oxfordshire.

(END)