

# Agenda

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## Companies Scrutiny Panel

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Monday 13 December 2021**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Remote (Zoom)**

**For further information** please contact:

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer, Committee Services Officer

☎ 01865 252191

✉ [DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk)

**Members of the public can attend to observe this meeting and.**

- may register in advance to speak to the committee in accordance with the [committee's rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

Information about speaking and recording is set out in the agenda and on the [website](#)

Please contact the Committee Services Officer to register to speak; to discuss recording the meeting; or with any other queries.

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## **Committee Membership**

Councillors: Membership 6: Quorum 3: substitutes are not permitted.

Councillor Nigel Chapman

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Tom Landell Mills

Councillor Katherine Miles

Councillor Edward Mundy

Councillor Lucy Pegg

Apologies and notification of substitutes received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting. Substitutes for the Chair and Vice-chair do not take on these roles.

# Agenda

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1 Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Announcements and verbal updates from the Chair and/or the Scrutiny Officer</b>  Announcements and verbal updates on matter relevant to the agenda items or to the operation of the Panel from the Chair; Scrutiny Officer; or with the Chair's permission from other officers in attendance.	
<b>4 Notes of the previous meeting</b>  <b>Recommendation:</b> that the open and confidential notes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 be approved.	7 - 12
<b>5 Tree Planting and Management</b>  The Scrutiny Committee has asked the Companies Scrutiny Panel to consider a report concerning tree planting and management by ODS, specifically in light of discussions arising from the Council's Urban Forest Strategy. ODS representatives Laura Harlock, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Jason Munro, Head of Service (Operations), and Simon Howick, Managing Director, have been invited to attend for this item.  The Panel is asked to consider the report, <b>NOTE</b> it, and <b>AGREE</b> any recommendations the Panel may wish to make to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group or to the Cabinet.	13 - 14
<b>6 Items to be considered in private</b>  <b>Items to be considered in private - matters exempt from publication</b>  If the Panel wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda or at any other point in the meeting, it will be necessary for the Panel to pass a resolution to that effect in	

accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. .

The Panel may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **7 Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports**

Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports for consideration are listed separately below.

### **8a ODS reports**

15 - 48

To consider the ODS reports to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting on 20 December 2021, of which there are two.

The Panel is asked to consider the report and **AGREE** the questions or issues it wishes to raise at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting.

Simon Howick, ODS Managing Director, will be present to support the presentation of this report and answer any questions arising.

### **8b OCHL report**

No OCHL report is scheduled for this meeting.

### **8c Barton Report**

No Barton report is scheduled for this meeting.

### **8d OxWED report**

No OxWED report is scheduled for this meeting.

## **9 Date of the Next Meeting**

Meetings are scheduled to be held on:

24 March 2022 (OCHL, Barton and OxWED)

07 April 2022 (ODS)

The Panel is also asked to note that an additional meeting is likely to be arranged around early February to consider an OxWED paper, which is due to go to a meeting of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group later that month.

## **Information for those attending**

### **Recording and reporting on meetings held in public**

Members of public and press can record, or report in other ways, the parts of the meeting open to the public. You are not required to indicate in advance but it helps if you notify the Committee Services Officer prior to the meeting so that they can inform the Chair and direct you to the best place to record.

The Council asks those recording the meeting:

- To follow the protocol which can be found on the Council's [website](#)
- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

Please be aware that you may be recorded during your speech and any follow-up. If you are attending please be aware that recording may take place and that you may be inadvertently included in these.

The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

### **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 (ie 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.

#### **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". The matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

\*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.

## Minutes of a meeting of the Companies Scrutiny Panel on Wednesday 24 November 2021



### Committee members present:

Councillor Chapman	Councillor Fry
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Miles
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Pegg

### Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

### 17. Apologies for absence

None

### 18. Declarations of Interest

None

### 19. Announcements and verbal updates from the Chair, the Scrutiny Officer, and/or the Monitoring Officer

The Panel commented on the value of having relevant officers present for more complex or important reports. The following was **AGREED**:

- 1) That the Chair and Scrutiny Officer would discuss the reports after publication to identify who to invite
- 2) That Simon Howick, Managing Director of ODS would attend the meeting on 13 December 2021

### 20. Items to be considered in private

The Panel resolved to move into private session on the grounds that the presence of the public would likely involve the disclosure of exempt information in accordance with paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### 21. Notes of the previous meeting

The record of the meeting of 18 October 2021 was **AGREED** subject to any amendments to be sent by the Chair to the Scrutiny Officer.

## **22. Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports**

Minutes of the consideration of the relevant Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports are detailed below.

## **23. OCHL report**

### **a) OCHL minutes**

Panel members discussed the OCHL report, and a number of issues were **AGREED** to take up at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. Details of this are included within the confidential minutes.

## **24. Barton Report**

### **a) Barton minutes**

Panel members discussed the Barton report, and a number of issues were **AGREED** to take up at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. Details of this are included within the confidential minutes.

## **25. OxWED report**

### **a) OxWED minutes**

Panel members discussed the OxWED report, and a number of issues were **AGREED** to take up at the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. Details of this are included within the confidential minutes.

## **26. ODS report**

### **a) ODS minutes**

No report to consider.

## **27. Date of the Next Meeting**

The dates of the next meetings were **NOTED**.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm**

Chair .....

**Date: Monday 13 December 2021**

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## ODS Parks and Open Spaces Service – Tree Service Overview

At a scrutiny meeting in September 2021 the Committee asked for a briefing on the state of tree management in ODS. The following areas were asked to be covered:

- 1) The state of tree management at the moment: how many trees are ODS looking after,
- 2) How many staff ODS have to look after them,
- 3) Current service levels regarding tree works, capacity to absorb additional tree planting and management,
- 4) What would be required to support additional tree planting in terms of staff, equipment and money.

This paper seeks to provide answers to the above points raised.

The purpose of the Tree Service is to:

- Carry out the cyclical tree inspection programme on Oxford City Council owned trees (circa 100,000 trees).
- Survey the County Council's trees under the S42/S42+ agreement.
- Ensure tree works that have been recommended as a result of the cyclical survey are carried out.
- Generate external income such as tree works and surveys.
- Respond to tree related queries in line with the Oxford City Council Tree Management Policy. Please note there are tree surveyors in the City Council's Planning Department that deal with planning related enquiries including Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Areas.
- Provide an out of hours call out e.g. during storms.
- Planting and aftercare of trees.

The Oxford City Council Tree Management Policy specifies the current service level ODS's Tree Service operates to. The Tree Policy has been in place since 2008 and is periodically reviewed in consultation with members and is approved through the scrutiny process.

The overall aim of the Tree Management Policy is to ensure that Oxford's tree stock is retained, enhanced and increased in the most proactive manner whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the public and property.

The Council's stock is inspected on a cyclical inspection regime. Trees are surveyed once every three years. The inspection is designed to assess the tree's condition and health. The inspection highlights any work that may be required on a risk basis to ensure that the trees are retained in the best possible condition.

Following an inspection a priority is given to recommended works. This enables the Service to organise a balanced schedule of works. All tree works are carried out according to the British Standard BS3998: 2010 Tree Work – Recommendations. Works include, crown lifting over footpaths, removal of dead branches etc.

The Tree Service consists of:

- 1) Tree Contracts Supervisor (Grade 6)
- 2) Tree Team Supervisor (Grade 6) – currently on secondment to City Council
- 3) Tree Surveyor (Grade 5)

The surveyors are qualified and experienced in the arboricultural profession. Additional support for admin such as procurement comes from the wider Parks Service.

During the spring/summer months a seasonal worker undertakes the watering of newly planted trees.

These three posts are directly line managed by the ODS Parks and Open Spaces Service Manager.

### *Tree Planting*

As part of the cyclical inspection programme the surveyors identify potential planting locations for trees across all City Council owned sites. The Service on average plants 90 trees a year across all site types from the budget that is delegated by the City Council.

In line with the policy every tree felled would be replaced to ensure that over the years the City retains its tree stock for future generations. Although it is recognised that it is not always practical or prudent to replace a tree in the same location or with the same species that was previously planted.

During the autumn/winter the wider Parks Service undertakes the planting of new trees. As previously mentioned a seasonal worker from April – September waters the newly planted trees once a week. In line with best practice newly planted trees are watered for the first three years to help with root establishment. In addition to watering the seasonal worker also carries out:

- mulching,
- formative pruning and
- checking/ removal of stakes and ties.

The question of what resources would be required if tree planting is increased is difficult to answer without the number of additional trees we would be required to plant. For guidance:

- 1) The cost per tree is £661 +vat. This covers the planting and 3 years of aftercare. Please note that trees planted along roads have the additional cost of excavating a tree pit. The UK average is £4-5k per pit. Tree pits need to be excavated to avoid disturbing underground utilities and the surrounding pavement.
- 2) The current seasonal worker is at capacity with the watering so a significant increase in tree planting would require financial investment in additional staff and equipment such as a towable water bowser.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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