

## Law & Governance

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Date: 17 October 2022

Dear Councillor Snowton, Chair of Scrutiny Committee,

I am writing to formally notify you of an urgent key decision which has not been notified on the Forward Plan for 28 days, as required by the Council's Constitution (Part 15.17).

The urgent decision to be taken on 25 October 2022 concerns the approval of expenditure of c.£400,000 from the Council's financial reserves to make a one-off ex-gratia payment of £500 to Oxford City Council staff to reflect the cost of living crisis, in recognition of the severe impact of the financial pressures facing staff, aiming to provide support in the difficult financial climate.

Ordinarily, this would be a Council decision as it relates to terms and conditions of employment for all staff, however the next Council meeting is not until 28 November 2022. Due to the urgent need for provision of support, I am of the view that it would not be practicable to wait for Council to make this decision at the end of November 2022.

This will be a key decision due to the payment likely having a significant effect on people living or working in at least two wards, but there is insufficient time to notify the decision on the Forward Plan for 28 days. To ensure the provision of support for Council staff, the decision needs to proceed at pace. The expenditure was not anticipated in the budget agreed by Council on 16 February 2022 and will be met from reserves.

It is proposed that the decision is taken by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the other statutory officers and Group Leaders. The decision would be taken using the urgency powers delegated to the Chief Executive in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution.

### 9.3 Role of Head of Paid Service

...  
(b)

The Head of Paid Service is authorised to take any urgent action necessary to protect the Council's interests and assets where time is of the essence and it is impracticable to secure authority to act where such authority would otherwise be required.

The Head of Paid Service, in so acting, will be guided by budget and the policy framework, will consult the other Statutory Officers before acting and will report, in writing, as soon as practicable to the body which would otherwise have been required to give the necessary authority to act.

Key decision procedures and call in procedures (Parts 15 & 17) will apply to any key decisions taken under this authorisation.



I am of the view that the Council should aim to allow the usual two day time period for call in to support transparency so I am not seeking your permission to waive members' rights to call in the decision under Part 17.9 of the Constitution.

Please note that a copy of this letter will be attached to the public decision notice of this urgent key decision and the urgent key decision will be reported to the meeting of Council in November 2022.

With best wishes,



Susan Sale  
Head of Law and Governance