

To: Standards Committee
Date: 17 March 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)
Title of Report: Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	This report proposes the Committee approve the general dispensation as set out at section 2 of the report for a period of four years.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	None
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Standards Committee resolves to:
1. Approve , under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, the general dispensations for all elected and co-opted Members of Oxford City Council to remain in force for a period of four years from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2030

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
N/A	N/A	N/A

Introduction and background

1. The Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') prevents Members from participating in any business of the Council where they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) unless they have sought a dispensation under Section 33 of the Act. Applications must be made in writing, and dispensations may be sought for a period of up to four years. Dispensations may be sought on the following grounds:
 - a) That so many Members of the decision-making body have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter that the business of the meeting would be impeded
 - b) Without a dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote
 - c) The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the area
 - d) No Member of the Cabinet would be able to participate on the matter without a dispensation
 - e) It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation

General Dispensations

2. The standing dispensations require reapproval and, as this is not delegated to the Monitoring Officer, this report is brought to the Standards Committee to seek approval. It is proposed that the general dispensations, outlined below, are extended to December 2028, to allow members to speak and vote on the following items:
 - a) **Determining an allowance** (including special responsibility allowances), travelling expense, payment or indemnity given to Members
 - b) **Housing**: where the Member (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the particular tenancy or lease of the Member (their spouse or partner);
 - c) **Housing Benefit/Universal Credit**: where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) receives housing benefit;
 - d) Any **Ceremonial Honours** given to Members;
 - e) Setting the **Council Tax** or a precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (or any subsequent legislation); and
 - f) Setting a **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme** or Local scheme for the payment of business rates (including eligibility for rebates and reductions) for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (or any subsequent legislation)

Delegation to the Monitoring Officer

3. The power to grant individual dispensations is granted to the Monitoring Officer to ensure a timely consideration of an application for dispensation as set out in the Constitution.

Alternative Options Considered

4. To not approve the general dispensation to all elected and co-opted members of Oxford City Council, however this would not be considered to be appropriate and would prevent decision making in relation to issues such as Council Tax setting and budget setting. A general dispensation has been in place since 2018 (and renewed in 2022) which will expire later in the year.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

5. There are no direct implications of Local Government Reorganisation with this decision. Any future decision relating to general dispensations would be a matter for the new Unitary Authority.

Financial implications

6. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal issues

7. The Legal implications are as outlined in the body of the report.

Report author	Jonathan Malton
Job title	Committee and Members Services Manager
Service area or department	Law, Governance and Strategy
Telephone	01865 602767
e-mail	jmalton@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:	
1	Localism Act 2011
2	Part9RolesofOfficers.pdf

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