

Agenda

Scrutiny Committee

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Tuesday 9 September 2025**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Long Room - Oxford Town Hall**

For further information please contact:

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor

📞 07485 309899

✉ 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.

*View or subscribe to updates for agendas, reports and minutes at
mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk.*

All public papers are available from the calendar link to this meeting once published

Committee Membership

Councillors: Membership 12: Quorum 4 substitutes are permitted.

Councillor Alex Powell (Chair)

Councillor Mike Rowley (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Councillor Mohammed Azad

Councillor Tiago Corais

Councillor Chris Jarvis

Councillor Dr Amar Latif

Councillor Katherine Miles

Councillor Edward Mundy

Councillor Simon Ottino

Councillor Asima Qayyum

Councillor Anne Stares

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

		Pages
1	Apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of interest	
3	Chair's Announcements	
4	Minutes of the previous meeting	9 - 22
	The Committee is asked to approve the set of minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2025 as a true and accurate record.	
5	Addresses by members of the public	
	Public addresses relating to matters of business for this agenda. Up to five minutes is available for each public address.	
	The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the <u>Director of Law, Governance and Strategy</u> by 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 3 September 2025.	
6	Councillor addresses on any item for discussion on the Scrutiny agenda	
	Councillor addresses relating to matters of business for this agenda. Up to five minutes is available for each address.	
	The request should be received by the <u>Director of Law, Governance and Strategy</u> by 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 3 September 2025.	
7	Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025	23 - 72
	Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 September 2025, will consider a report to seek approval to adopt the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025.	
	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens' Services, Helen Bishop, Director of Communities and	

	<p>Citizen Services and Jiajia Miao, Corporate Consultation Officer.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations.</p>	
8	<p>Budget Review Group Scope</p> <p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy has submitted a report outlining the Scope and Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Group, established by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 10 June 2025.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Scope for the 2026-27 Budget Review Group 2. Approve the Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Group 3. Delegate authority to the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor, in consultation with the Scrutiny Chair and Budget Review Group Chair, to amend the scope as needed. 	73 - 86
9	<p>Scrutiny Work Plan</p> <p>The Work Plan is driven to a very large extent by the Cabinet Forward Plan. The Scrutiny Committee agrees its priorities for items coming onto the Forward Plan, which then form part of its Work Plan.</p> <p>The Committee is recommended to confirm its agreement to the Work Plan, or agree any amendments as required.</p>	87 - 90
10	<p>Cabinet responses to Scrutiny recommendations</p> <p>At its meeting on 13 August 2025, Cabinet considered the following reports from Scrutiny and made responses to the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxpens River Bridge Update • Local Plan 2042 Climate Change and Resilience • Annual Air Quality Status Report <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note Cabinet's responses to its recommendations. 	91 - 100
11	<p>Endorsement of Recommendations from Working Groups</p>	

Since the Scrutiny Committee's previous meeting on 5 August 2025, the following Working Groups have met:

- Housing and Homelessness Working Group (2 September 2025)
- Climate and Environment Working Group (4 September 2025)

The Committee is asked to:

2. **Endorse** the recommendations from Working Groups.

The recommendations following these meetings will be published as a supplementary agenda.

12 Dates of future meetings

Scrutiny Committee

- 14 October 2025
- 11 November 2025
- 2 December 2025
- 13 January 2026
- 3 February 2026
- 10 March 2026
- 7 April 2026

All meetings start at 6:00 pm.

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.

Members Code – Other Registrable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing** of one of your Other Registrable Interests*** then you must declare an

interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members Code – Non Registrable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests, then you must declare the interest.

You must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room, if you answer in the affirmative to this test:

“Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.”

Otherwise, you may stay in the room, take part in the discussion and vote.

*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.

** Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person’s quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

*** Other Registrable Interests: a) any unpaid directorships b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority c) any Body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 5 August 2025

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members present:

Councillor Powell (Chair)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Mundy

Councillor Qayyum

Councillor Rowley (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Jarvis

Councillor Ottino

Councillor Stares

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Jenny Barker, Regeneration and Development Lead

Also present:

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Azad and Miles sent apologies.

22. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

23. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reminded the Committee that item 7 contained an exempt appendix and requested that if any member wished to discuss this, they indicate this to allow the Committee to enter private session.

24. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2025 as a true and accurate record.

25. Addresses by members of the public

The Committee heard one public address from Mr. Glazebrook from Friends of Grandpont Nature Park.

The Chair invited Mr. Glazebrook to address the Committee as follows:

Almost 2000 people, the vast majority of them local residents, have now signed the petition against the Oxpens River Bridge and its connecting paths. There are many reasons people are up in arms - the ecological destruction involved, the lack of democratic consultation, the fact that there are already two excellent pedestrian and cycle bridges within quarter of a mile of the site, the misuse of £10million of public money intended to facilitate affordable housing - but what I want to focus on today is how the bridge singularly fails to meet its own intended purpose - to provide a floodproof connection from Osney Mead to Oxpens.

The local plan 2036, at pages 134-135, specifies the need for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge to link Osney Mead with the other side of the river. The local plan also makes clear that a flood evacuation path out of Osney Mead is required for planning permission to be granted for the site. The notes on Policy SP2, covering Osney Mead, state that "The site specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate how the development will be safe otherwise planning permission will not be granted. It is recognised that the FRA may not be able to demonstrate a dry risk/ low hazard rating route to dry land." (134, 9.23)

So the local plan specifies the need for both a new bridge linking Osney Mead to the other side of the river, and a floodproof route out of Osney Mead. These two things have subsequently been combined into plans for a single floodproof connection reaching all the way from Osney Mead across the river, as is made clear in several official documents, including for example, the pathworks optioneering report commissioned by the City Council and produced by Stantec in 2022.

But there is a problem. The Council decided not to build this bridge directly from Osney Mead to Oxpens, as envisaged by the local plan, but instead to build it on adjacent community-owned green space, from Grandpont Nature Park to Oxpens Meadow. What this meant was that, to reach this new bridge from Osney Mead, users would now have to go across a stream and under a railway bridge along a section of the towpath that frequently floods.

To solve this problem, the City Council commissioned Stantec to develop a project called the Osney Pathworks, to create a new floodproof path linking Osney Mead to the planned new bridge. The preferred plan was to erect floodwalls under the railway bridge. But the Environment Agency vetoed this proposal in 2022, as it would cause further flooding elsewhere. None of the other solutions suggested by Stantec meet current standards, and their report admitted there is no solution available which

adequately addresses the flooding issue whilst also meeting current safety standards for cycling and walking.

This remains the case today. There is still no solution to the issue of flooding on the path between Osney Mead and the proposed new bridge.

This makes the bridge completely redundant. It does not serve the basic purpose for which it is required in the local plan - to provide a new floodproof connection from Osney Mead across the river.

This is very serious, because, as I said, without such a connection, the 600 new graduate rooms planned for Osney Mead cannot be granted planning permission. This raises the possibility of a fourth bridge within a quarter of a mile having to be built, directly connecting Osney Mead and Oxpens, as originally envisaged by the local plan.

The City Council is now right on the verge of committing up to £14million of public money and causing irrevocable damage to a cherished piece of countryside on our doorstep, for a bridge that singularly fails to meet its basic purpose. We urge you - please do not be a party to this shocking waste of money and biodiversity. The 2000 mostly local residents who have signed up to our campaign of course believe that the bridge in its current location should be scrapped altogether. However, at a bare minimum, it is abundantly clear that no further funds should be committed so long as there remains no viable plan to floodproof the connection between Osney Mead and the new bridge. Without this in place, the bridge serves no purpose that is not already met by the two existing bridges in the area.

If you would like to be in touch about this, or to see any of the documentation I have referred to today, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Friends of Grandpont Nature Park.

The Chair thanked Mr. Glazebrook and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Ottino sought to clarify the role of the Scrutiny Committee when discussing item 7, noting limitations to its powers and the need to ensure it does not encroach on the role of other committees. The Chair confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee is not a decision-making body but can deliberate and comment on reports before them. The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to constrain their questions to those relevant only to the report provided and to declare any relevant interests.

Councillor Altaf-Khan noted his understanding that the report in item 7 related to the capital programme and a request for more money to pursue the project. As such he expressed his belief that the Scrutiny Committee is entitled to question the Cabinet Member on this and discuss the report. The Committee also heard that Councillor Altaf-

Khan did not see the value in repeating any historic discussions relating to planning and design of the project.

The Chair reminded members that questions at this stage of the meeting should relate only to Mr. Glazebrook's address.

The Committee asked no further questions.

The Chair thanked Mr. Glazebrook.

Councillor Mundy joined the meeting.

26. Councillor addresses on any item for discussion on the Scrutiny agenda

The Committee heard one address from Councillor Muddiman.

The Chair invited Councillor Muddiman to address the Committee as follows:

Dear Scrutiny Committee.

The controversial Oxpens Bridge, which would be in my ward, is on your agenda today. I urge you to use all your powers of scrutiny on this item, when considering the upcoming Cabinet decision to allocate further funds to this project.

Because:

- 1. It is not a sensible use of millions of pounds of public funds to build a new river bridge for the small number of affordable homes that might be built on the Oxpens/Osney Mead developments.*
- 2. Cyclists and pedestrians travelling between the train station and these 2 developments are unlikely to use this route.*
- 3. There already are 3 routes over the River Thames on this section of the river, all within 2 minutes cycle ride of the proposed new bridge. 2 of them are car free.*
- 4. If these funds are to provide infrastructure for affordable homes, they could be much better spent elsewhere, e.g. A bridge over the ring road at Barton to provide a safe route for school children.*
- 5. If these funds are to enable the future development of Osney Mead, by providing safe egress in times of flood, then this bridge does not provide that.*

6. *Any pedestrians or cyclists leaving Osney Mead to escape a flood, would still need to pass under the railway bridge to reach the bridge and higher ground. This area regularly floods, and this project does not provide a flood free route.*
7. *Any future plan to link the existing cycle path from Osney Mead to the proposed Oxpens Bridge would need to lower the footpath under the railway bridge, beside the river, in an area that already floods regularly. There are no current funds for this and no solution that does not impact flooding, on the flood plain.*
8. *If Oxford University would like a new bridge at this location they should fund it. Not the public purse.*

It would be unwise to delegate authority to officers to allocate additional funding to this highly controversial project when:

1. *The outcome of legal proceedings is still unknown.*
2. *From a cost-benefit analysis, the multi-million-pound bridge would provide infrastructure to a relatively small number of new homes and the funds could provide far greater benefit elsewhere.*
3. *Existing bridges close to the proposed site already provide a car free link over the River Thames.*
4. *The proposed bridge does not provide a flood free exit from Osney Mead, which may be needed to gain planning permission for future development on Osney Mead.*

For full transparency on this controversial project, I urge you to recommend that Cabinet must authorise any further spending, rather than a delegated officer.

The Chair thanked Councillor Muddiman and invited questions from the Committee; there were none.

The Chair thanked Councillor Muddiman.

27. Oxpens River Bridge Update

Cabinet, at its meeting on 13 August 2025, will consider a report to agree to the virement of underspend in the current capital programme to increase the project budget in the capital programme for the Oxpens bridge; to accept additional funding for the construction of the bridge from external bodies, and to agree to amending and entering legal agreements as necessary for the funding, construction and transfer of the bridge.

The report was before the Scrutiny Committee to consider and make any recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, and Jenny Barker, Regeneration and Development Lead, were present to respond to questions.

The Chair invited Councillor Hollingsworth and the Regeneration and Development Lead to present the report.

Councillor Hollingsworth introduced the report and explained that the principle and original plans for the Oxpens River Bridge project are evidenced in documentation dated back to at least 2008, including policies which were approved by the Council. Several examples were provided including a 2013 SPD. The Committee heard therefore, that the project has been in the pipeline for a long time and did not suddenly appear in 2021.

The Regeneration and Development Lead introduced the Cabinet report, explaining that it seeks to update members on the considerable amount of work that has been undertaken in preparation for delivery of the project in 2026. The Committee heard that the opportunity to deliver the Oxpens Bridge in 2026 had been identified based on the ability to shut the river to move the sections of the bridge into place, and the fact that the area floods in winter months. Furthermore, the Regeneration and Development Lead also explained that the report seeks delegation to enable the Council to enter into necessary agreements, including funding, to enable the delivery of the project.

In relation to the bridge itself, the Regeneration and Development Lead also highlighted the benefits the project would bring to walking and cycling residents of Oxford, and the opportunities it will bring for growth in the West End of the city. An overview of the funding complexities of the project was also provided.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hollingsworth and the Regeneration and Development Lead for their presentation.

The Chair asked that members firstly focus on questions suitable for public discussion, and reserve questions requiring confidential session discussion for later.

Councillor Ottino queried why funds need to be transferred to cover deficits, and whether if further funding from external sources is not obtained, the project could go ahead.

Councillor Altaf-Khan recognised that the delays experience in the project to date caused the requirement for additional money. The Cabinet Member was therefore asked whether it is expected that other considerable projects in the future would also require additional funding.

Councillor Rowley sought clarification on where the powers for delegating extra funding lie, and secondly, whether there is confidence that as much as possible has been done to mitigate further cost increases.

Councillor Hollingsworth, in response to Councillor Altaf-Khan's question, explained that it is not unusual in the current context that capital programmes require further funding given the global price rises caused by events in Ukraine and the pandemic which have generated an unpredictable landscape for construction costs worldwide. In regards costs linked to legal challenges, Councillor Hollingsworth noted his general support of judicial reviews but explained that these costs in relation to planning applications are part of a wider debate which impacts most councils and not something with Oxford City Council can control. In response to Councillor Rowley, it was emphasised that extensive reviews have considered the detail of the project's requirements in efforts to minimise costs as far as possible and necessary work has been undertaken with the Environment Agency.

In response to Councillor Ottino, the Regeneration and Development Lead explained that the report sets out the intention to extend the budget in order to spend more, and the virement of funds within the capital programme is necessary to do this. Funding is being sought externally to replace the funds vired. In response to Councillor Altaf-Khan's concern about repeated overspend on projects, it was explained that the Council works hard to avoid overspend, however the influence of increased construction costs and those required for sustaining internal staff and design teams through delays has culminated in unavoidable additional costs. The Committee heard of the measures being taken to try and reduce these costs, as summarised in the report.

The Chair invited further questions.

Councillor Stares asked where the budget is coming from; specifically, whether money is being transferred from the housing budget. If this were the case, Councillor Stares queried whether this would be a good use of public funds.

Councillor Jarvis firstly asked, in relation to the expansion of the budget envelope and how this sits within the capital programme, whether the slippages for this project sit in addition to the optimism bias built into capital projects, and what the implications of this could be to the Council budget as a whole. Secondly, it was asked what would happen if external funding were not secured, and finally, whether there is a risk of cost fallacy in how confident the Council is that the project will go ahead.

The Chair asked firstly whether the costings within the report account for the possibility of any further delays, and whether, if necessary, further money would be requested again in the future for any subsequent delays. Secondly, the Chair requested confirmation that there would not be impacts on other aspects of the capital programme in light of additional spend on this project if no other bodies come forward to provide funding.

In response to Councillor Stares, Councillor Hollingsworth confirmed that none of the funding for the Oxpens project is from the housing budget and explained that the money was received from Oxfordshire County Council who were recipients of government funding for the Oxfordshire Growth Deal. It was also explained that in the instance that the project did not go ahead, then the funds to cover the costs incurred by Oxford City Council would be kept, and the remainder of the money would be returned to Oxfordshire County Council. In regards the budget envelope, Councillor Hollingsworth explained that there is an optimism bias built into the capital programme and based on previous evidence of spend. Finally, in responses to concerns about cost fallacy, Councillor Hollingsworth referred to paragraph 27 of the report and explained the use of three pots of money.

The Regeneration and Development Lead further summarised the use of the capital salary budget, the energy works budget, and the maintenance budget. It was clarified that these are direct pots from which money can be vired within the financial year, if necessary, without wider impact on the capital programme. In response to budget allowance in the instance of further delays due to judicial appeal, the Regeneration and Development Lead advised the Committee that this had not been factored into budget considerations. It was however noted that if the appeal were to go ahead, the project would be unlikely to meet the 2026 timeline, and the budget would need to be reviewed.

The Chair invited further questions.

Based on the discussion, Councillor Ottino sought to clarify the intention of the report's recommendations with the Cabinet Member and the Regeneration and Development Lead. It was understood that the report seeks to ask Cabinet to extend the budget though the virements listed above in order to allow the opportunity to secure other funding to enable the project to proceed.

The Chair asked in the event that money is not forthcoming, would there be another paper before Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee to consider any additional spend required. Councillor Hollingsworth confirmed that this would occur but also expressed a hope that it would not be required.

Councillor Mundy asked what lessons have been learned from this project and whether, in retrospect, there has been a failure to consider less attractive projects which could have involved fewer resources and less spend.

The Chair, in relation to the judicial review, asked whether in putting forward this paper to Cabinet on the assumption that there will be no further delays, the Council may be endangering itself by making budgetary assumptions.

Councillor Hollingsworth, in response to Councillor Mundy's question, noted that the principle of the Oxpens Bridge has been in place for a long time without significant

strategic opposition within the Council. As such, the Committee heard that in principle, this was the right project and approach to have taken as it aims to connect different parts of the city. In response to the Chair, Councillor Hollingsworth explained that it has been deemed better to progress as planned with the project and update the Cabinet now, with the understanding that if the appeal against the judicial review does cause further delays, another update will be provided and plans would be reassessed.

At this time the Committee considered Appendix 2 of the report in confidential session.

The Committee resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Appendix 2 to the Oxpens River Bridge Update Report on the grounds that their presence would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Committee returned to public session.

The Chair invited any final questions; there were none.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hollingsworth and the Regeneration and Development Lead for their contributions.

The Chair invited the discussion of recommendations.

Councillor Altaf-Khan expressed the view that the report was for Cabinet to consider carefully.

The Chair informed the Committee that he would attend the next Cabinet meeting to represent the views discussed by the Scrutiny Committee within this meeting.

The Chair suggested a recommendation relating to the potential for modelling the possible implications on costing of further delays from judicial review processes, should they occur.

Councillor Ottino expressed some objection, noting broad concern relating inequalities when some communities do not have the financial ability to mount robust objections to planning applications in the way other wards may. It was noted that requiring projects to provide modelling for possible scenarios could incur higher costs. The Chair acknowledged the matter but explained that his suggested recommendation is not speculative, but likely, as the review is ongoing, and costs are not yet accounted for. As such, the matter was noted as distinct from Councillor Ottino's broader concern around modelling all future projects.

The Committee discussed the proposed recommendation.

Councillor Jarvis clarified that the recommendation would not require any budget extension, just research within the existing workload of officers already employed by the Council. The Chair agreed and noted that the recommendation would be focused on encouraging more specific analysis to ensure the Council is better prepared if there were to be further delays.

Councillor Rowley noted that the recommendation may have already been accounted for by the ongoing work of officers and therefore found it to be unnecessary.

The Regeneration and Development Lead clarified that the Council had not yet priced in for delays resulting from another judicial review or appeal but could conduct some modelling based only on assumptions of inflation. As a result, it would be a high-level piece of analysis.

Councillor Jarvis seconded the recommendation. The Committee voted in favour of the recommendation.

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation(s) on the report to Cabinet:

- That Cabinet undertake high-level remodelling and assess potential impact of the judicial review appeal progressing to a hearing, particularly around timescales and future costings, to ensure the Council is better prepared and has a more informed basis for decision-making.

The Chair, in response to Councillor Muddiman's earlier address, confirmed that from the discussions during this meeting, the report to Cabinet was not seeking to delegate powers to make budgetary decision to officers; any decisions would be for Cabinet to make.

28. Scrutiny Work Plan

The Chair informed the Committee that an updated work plan had now been published.

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor informed the Committee that the work programme was published on the Council website and would be updated monthly to support alignment with other committee workstreams and to support transparency. It was also noted that any adjustments to the workplan would be agreed by the Chair.

The Committee **agreed** the workplan.

29. Cabinet responses to Scrutiny recommendations

The Chair informed the Committee that he had attended the last meeting of Cabinet and explained that of the 8 recommendations put forward from the Scrutiny Committee, 6 were agreed in full, 1 was agreed in part, and 1 was rejected. The Chair provided a summary of Cabinet’s decisions on all 8 of the recommendations, as detailed within the agenda.

The Committee **noted** Cabinet’s responses to its recommendations.

Councillor Hollingsworth and the Regeneration and Development Lead left the meeting and did not return.

30. Endorsement of Recommendations from Working Groups

The Chair informed the Committee that the Climate and Environment Working Group had met on 22 July.

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor summarised the four recommendations made.

The Committee **endorsed** the recommendations from Working Groups.

31. Dates of future meetings

The Committee **noted** the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.23 pm

Chair
2025

Date: Tuesday 9 September

*When decisions take effect:
Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued.

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

To: Cabinet
Date: 17th September 2025
Report of: Director of Communities and Citizen Services
Title of Report: Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To seek approval to adopt the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Corporate plan 2024-2028

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025; and Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Citizen Services to publish the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy and to make any typographical amendments as may be required, before publication.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title
Appendix 1	Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025
Appendix 2	Equalities Impact Assessment - Citizens and Community Engagement Policy 2025
Appendix 3	Risk Register - Citizens and Community Engagement Policy 2025
Appendix 4	Public Consultation Results - Citizens and Community Engagement Policy 2025

Background and Introduction

- Oxford City Council has a longstanding commitment to engaging with citizens and communities on the decisions that affect them. The Council takes a proportionate and targeted approach to ensure that views from diverse groups and communities are reflected in the decision-making process.

2. The Citizens and Community Engagement Policy, included at Appendix 1, sets out the framework for how the Council engages with citizens and communities, with the aim of better understanding their needs and increasing their involvement in decisions that impact their lives.
3. This Policy supersedes the Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17.
4. The Citizen and Community Engagement Policy includes the following key elements:
 - An overview of the factors influencing citizen and community engagement, including Oxford's diversity and recent housing sector reforms.
 - The principles that underpin the Council's citizen and community engagement activities, including flexibility, proportionality, transparency and clarity, timeliness, feedback, inclusiveness and accessibility, and strengthening tenant voice.
 - An outline of the Council's channels and approaches to citizen and community engagement.
 - The Council's internal information-sharing and engagement coordination mechanisms.

Development of the Policy

5. The principles of citizen and community engagement in the policy were informed by key sources, including the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association (LGA), helping to shape the framework.
6. The Citizen and Community Engagement Policy aligns with obligations introduced by the Social Housing Act, particularly regarding tenant engagement and the protection of tenant rights. It sets forth how the Council will fulfil these obligations through enhanced engagement and service improvements tailored to tenant needs.
7. The Citizen and Community Engagement Policy was developed in collaboration with the Scrutiny Officer and Director of Corporate Strategy, and with valuable input from the Policy Officer Group, Housing, Communities, Citizen Experience and Contact Centre teams, along with contributions from Councillor Chapman.
8. The public consultation was carried out between 29 May and 26 June 2025, with 197 responses collected and analysed, as set out in Appendix 4. The results showed strong support for the Council's approach to community engagement, with over 80% agreeing with the policy's key principles and 93% saying it's important for residents to be involved in local decisions. People reported taking part in various ways, like online surveys, the Residents' Panel, and speaking with councillors. However, some concerns were raised about trust, communication, and accessibility. In response, the policy places greater focus on providing clear, timely feedback and offering a range of accessible ways for people to get involved—helping to build trust and show that residents' views are taken seriously. A more detailed breakdown of the consultation findings is provided in Appendix 4 – Public Consultation Results.
9. The policy has also been updated to reflect Cabinet's feedback on the Citizen Experience Strategy, including the need for more in-person consultation in outlying

areas, support for language interpretation where needed, and proactive engagement with children under 12.

Monitoring and Reporting

10. The Council will monitor engagement efforts to ensure departments use existing insights and avoid over-consultation.
11. Engagement findings will be reviewed, and departments will report on how feedback influences decision-making, ensuring transparency and demonstrating the impact of citizen input.
12. Feedback mechanisms will ensure that citizen input shapes policy proposals. Engagement results will be published, and the 'You Said, We Did' section on the Council's online portal will highlight how feedback has influenced decisions.
13. The policy will be reviewed once per year to ensure that it is still current.

Financial implications

14. There are no immediate or planned direct financial implications of this Citizen and Community Engagement Policy as it reflects programmes that are funded within existing budgets.

Legal issues

15. While there is not a statutory requirement to have a citizen and community engagement policy, there is new guidance from the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Associations on Consultation Principles. Local Authorities should adopt those principles to engage stakeholders in policy and legislative developments. The Policy has been developed in line with public consultation, the details of the consultation undertaken is set out in Appendix 4.

Level of risk

16. See Appendix 3 for the Risk Register.

Equalities impact

17. The Citizen and Community Engagement Policy is based upon our principles of engagement, which includes inclusiveness and accessibility. This is defined as: "the Council is committed to providing all citizens and communities with the opportunity to participate in engagement activity, as it recognises this leads to improved outcomes. This includes marginalised and/or under-represented groups and groups which are typically more challenging to engage with".
18. See Appendix 2 for the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Report author	Jiajia Miao
Job title	Consultation Officer
Service area or department	Communities and Citizen Services
e-mail	Jmiao@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:	
1	<u>Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17</u>
2	<u>Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023</u>
3	<u>Consumer Standards 2024</u>

CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

<u>DOCUMENT CONTROL:</u>	
TITLE:	Citizen and Community Engagement Policy
DATE:	<i>TBC</i>
REVIEW DATE:	<i>TBC</i>
CABINET PORTFOLIO:	Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
SENIOR OFFICER:	Helen Bishop, Director of Communities and Citizens
AUTHOR(S):	Sally Hicks, Business Intelligence Lead Jiajia Miao, Corporate Consultation Officer

CONTENTS

PURPOSE	2
---------------	---

POLICY CONTEXT	3
KEY DEFINITIONS.....	4
INTRODUCTION	4
BACKGROUND & OXFORD CONTEXT	5
PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT	7
INTERNAL INFORMATION-SHARING AND ENGAGEMENT COORDINATION	11
CITIZEN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES.....	12
INCENTIVES	13
DATA, DEMOGRAPHICS & INTELLIGENCE	13
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT COUNCIL MEETINGS	14
MONITORING AND REPORTING	14
FURTHER READING	14

PURPOSE

The Citizen and Community Engagement Policy Statement sets out how Oxford City Council engages its citizens and communities in decision-making. It provides the framework for how the Council engages with citizens and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs, perspectives and priorities, and to facilitate meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect them.

POLICY CONTEXT

This Policy Statement is underpinned by the Cabinet Office's guidance on Consultation Principles (March 2018)¹ and sets out the framework for how the Council will deliver activity in support of the priorities within the Council's Corporate Strategy 2024-28.

This policy aligns with new obligations under the Social Housing Act, particularly in the areas of tenant engagement and the protection of tenant rights. It sets forth how the Council will fulfil these obligations through enhanced engagement and service improvements tailored to tenant needs.

It should be read in conjunction with the following related Council documents:

- [Corporate Strategy 2024-28](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Thriving Communities Strategy 2023-27](#)
- [Citizen Experience Strategy 2023-25](#)
- [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Consultation & Engagement Toolkit](#)
- [Public Involvement Project Brief Template](#)
- [Question design guidelines.](#)
- [Statement of Community Involvement](#)

This Policy Statement supersedes the Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 and the Consultation Strategy 2010-13.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Engagement – the act of involving or seeking feedback from citizens and communities.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance> [accessed 14 December 2023]

Consultation – the act of exchanging information and opinions about an issue, proposal, or decision to reach a better understanding of it to decide or reach a conclusion.

Citizen – “citizens” are those who live, work in, and visit the City Council and/or the City of Oxford.

Community – having defining characteristics such as place, identity, or interest in common.

Online Activities – engagement which citizens and communities interact with on a digital platform, including consultations, questionnaires, or surveys.

Stakeholder – a citizen or community with an interest, concern, or ‘stake’ in an issue, proposal, or decision.

INTRODUCTION

Oxford City Council recognises that communities and citizens possess valuable insight, experience, and capabilities that should play a significant role in shaping local government decisions.

As such we are committed to nurturing strong, inclusive communities where active community and citizen involvement is at the forefront of our decision-making.

As a dynamic city where different community identities intersect, the Council recognises that effective engagement must reflect this complexity. While individual communities have their unique characters, they broadly relate to one or more of the following:

- Communities of Place – People living in specific geographic areas of the city.
- Communities of Identity - Groups who share commonality in their sense of self, such as ethnicity, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Communities of Interest – Individuals connected by shared activities or interests, including students, business and academic visitors, Council tenants, allotment holders, cyclists, theatregoers and users of parks, roads, community buildings, or public transport.

This Policy Statement seeks to deliver on that commitment through effective engagement, ensuring that all voices are heard and facilitating participation in the Council's decision-making processes.

This involves working with communities and citizens to build supportive channels for dialogue and engagement to enhance the relationship and accountability between citizens, communities, and the Council, which in turn leads to better and more sustainable outcomes.

The Council has a longstanding commitment to engaging with citizens and communities about the decisions that affect them and has adopted a proportionate and targeted approach to enable views from diverse groups and communities to feed into the decision-making process.

BACKGROUND & OXFORD CONTEXT

Oxford is a vibrant and diverse city, shaped by both unique opportunities and significant challenges. While its economy is powered by knowledge, innovation, and tourism, stark inequalities persist across the city. Oxford's population continues to grow, yet it remains one of the least affordable places to live in the country. At the same time, the climate emergency presents an urgent and ongoing threat. Understanding Oxford's citizens and communities is central to Oxford City Council's approach to engagement; however, the 'Oxford context' is outlined in detail within other related Council documents (*as referenced in the 'Policy Context' section*). To avoid duplication, this information is not repeated in this Policy Statement.

The Council engages with citizens and communities in a variety of ways, including through:

- **Oxford's 48 City Councillors** – They provide a direct link between citizens and communities and the Council's decision-making mechanisms. One of City Councillors' most important roles is advocating and being a voice for citizens and communities, which includes raising enquiries with Council officers on behalf of individual citizens.
- **Residents' Panel** – A dedicated panel of Oxford residents, broadly representative of the city's population, that provides regular input on a range of issues and helps shape Council decisions and proposals.
- **Annual Residents' Survey** – An online survey sent to the Residents' Panel each year, giving Oxford residents the opportunity to share their views on a range of topics including how the Council is performing and what they think about the services we provide.
- **Online Consultation and Engagement Portal** – A platform where residents can comment on Council proposals and documents, including policy and strategy documents, as well as the annual budget. This platform is also used by the Council to publish engagement outcomes and share feedback with participants.
- **Planning Involvement** – The *Statement of Community Involvement* sets out the Council's approach to involving the community and stakeholders in shaping planning policy documents and decisions on development proposals in Oxford.

- **Localities Team** – A team that brings together the skills and experience of Council staff and partners to support residents, address local needs, reduce inequalities, and build strong, resilient, and thriving communities. This includes hosting fortnightly online learning sessions open to community groups and organisations that support local people.
- **Public involvement at Council meetings** – Community representatives and individual citizens can regularly speak at Full Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee, and other meetings of Elected Members, using their right to raise issues and share their views directly with decision-makers.
- **Tenant, Leaseholder, and Shared Ownership Engagement** – recent national reforms, including the **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023** and the **Consumer Standards (2024)**, have placed greater emphasis on empowering tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners. These reforms make it a statutory requirement for councils to involve residents in shaping the housing services they receive and to be accountable for their performance.

Oxford City Council's **Tenant Involvement Team** ensures compliance with these requirements, promoting meaningful engagement with tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders through a range of channels and initiatives:

- **Independent Tenant Satisfaction Survey** - Conducted annually with an external partner, this survey measures tenant satisfaction and enables the Council to benchmark performance against similar authorities.
- **Tenants in Touch** – A quarterly publication for tenants, focused on topics that matter most to residents and designed to keep them informed and engaged.
- **Annual Report** – Produced each year to report on landlord services, including key statistics and compliance with the Consumer Standards and housing regulations.
- **Focus Groups** – Regular sessions with tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners to explore service improvements and identify priorities, which are central to improving customer experience and value for money.
- **Task and Finish Reviews** – Short-term reviews requested by service managers to investigate specific concerns and help enhance service delivery.
- **Resident Ambassador Meetings** – Monthly meetings with a core group of engaged residents to discuss reports, outcomes, and ongoing challenges.
- **'You Said, We Did' Reporting** – Collation and communication of engagement results across service areas, ensuring transparency, accountability, and follow-through on resident feedback — thereby fostering stronger trust and confidence among residents in the Council's decision-making processes.
- **Resident Recruitment and Outreach** – Ongoing efforts to involve more tenants and leaseholders in engagement activities. Resident involvement is seen as essential to improving Council services.

- **Community Engagement Activities** – The team also supports and delivers wider engagement events such as roadshows and drop-ins, often prioritised through internal service commissioning.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Council's principles of citizen and community engagement are designed to be broad and flexible enough to reflect the diversity of Oxford, ensuring that engagement activities are as inclusive as possible. This includes making sure our consultation and engagement practices fully consider individuals' protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Council recognises co-production as a best-practice model for deep and meaningful engagement, where residents, service users, and community groups are treated as equal partners in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services. Unlike traditional consultation, co-production involves continuous collaboration throughout a project's lifecycle and includes such methods as co-design workshops, lived experience forums, community led research and resident evaluation boards. This approach strengthens trust, ensures services are shaped by lived experiences, and supports more inclusive and responsive outcomes—particularly for those who may face greater barriers to engagement. It is about finding out what is important to our residents, focusing on their strengths and talents and enabling them to do what they do best via the co-production process. Embedding co-production within our engagement approach aligns with the Council's commitment to the Thriving Communities Strategy, its ethos and practice as a local authority of sanctuary, and recent national standards for tenant involvement, such as the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and the Consumer Standards.

The Council has also voluntarily adopted the Socio-Economic Duty under the Act. This means that decision-makers must consider relevant evidence and the potential impact of strategic decisions, with the aim of reducing inequalities that arise from socio-economic disadvantage. In doing so, it is essential to give due regard to the views and lived experiences of Oxford's citizens and communities.

The Council's principles of citizen and community engagement, outlined below, adhere to the Gunning Principles, which provide a robust legal foundation for meaningful public consultation. While more detailed information is available on the Local Government Association (LGA) website (see also the 'Further Reading' section of this document), the Gunning Principles can be summarised into four core principles:

- Consultation must take place before decisions are made
- Sufficient information must be provided to allow for informed responses
- Adequate time should be given for consideration and response
- Consultation responses should be conscientiously considered in decision-making

The Council's Principles of Citizen and Community Engagement are:

1. Flexibility

The Council will adopt a flexible approach to engagement, enabling open and sustained conversations with citizens and communities. The type and breadth of engagement will vary depending on the issue and the stage of development of the proposal or decision. This flexibility allows the Council to learn and act quickly.

Engagement activities may take a variety of forms – from online consultations, questionnaires, and surveys to public meetings or feedback gathered through service delivery.

To ensure effectiveness, the Council will identify the appropriate individuals, groups, or communities to engage at each stage of a proposals or decision's development.

2. Proportionality

The type and scale of citizen and community engagement will be proportionate to the potential impact of the proposal or decision, and the degree to which it can be influenced.

For instance, localised issues affecting a small area of the city may involve a smaller-scale, targeted engagement, and more collaborative decision-making. On the other hand, citywide issues may require broader engagement activities; in these cases, while the Council is often the decision-maker, the views of citizens and communities will be an important part of the decision-making process.

Some engagement activities, particularly statutory consultations, may also be subject to predetermined requirements (e.g., citywide scale).

3. Transparency and Clarity

Engagement activities will have clear objectives — setting out the proposal or decision being considered, its stage of development, and how it aligns with the Council's broader strategic aims.

The scope of the engagement will be clearly defined, including what elements of the proposals are open to influence and what decisions have already been made. The Council will be transparent about how input can shape outcomes, and what the next steps will be, to help manage expectations of citizens and communities.

Sufficient, accessible information will be provided to support informed participation. Relevant materials will be made publicly available in a timely manner. The Council remains committed to sharing balanced, transparent, and objective information to help citizens and communities understand the issues.

All general communication channels (e.g., the Council website, Tenant Portal, newsletters, social media, posters) and more targeted communications (e.g.,

emailing lists, community networks, direct outreach) will be used, as appropriate to the audience and issue.

4. Timeliness

Engagement will begin at the earliest appropriate stage in the development of a proposal or decision when the matter is still under consideration and there is a meaningful opportunity for influence.

Engagement timelines will be proportionate and realistic, allowing enough time for thoughtful participation. If engagement takes place over holiday periods, the Council will assess and mitigate any negative impact on participation. Typical timeframes for engagement range from two to twelve weeks, depending on the nature of the proposal/decision and the capacity of communities to respond. Each engagement period will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Feedback

The Council is committed to capturing and using feedback from engagement activities to shape proposals and inform decisions. This helps ensure that decisions are well-informed, transparent, and reflective of the views and experiences of Oxford's citizens and communities.

Public consultation on this policy highlighted that the biggest barrier to participation is the belief that individual opinions won't make a difference. To build trust and show that residents' voices matter, the Council will strengthen its feedback loop — providing clear, timely updates on how public input has influenced decisions.

In making decisions and developing policy, the Council will:

- Publish engagement results – Clearly set out the responses received through engagement activities and explain how these have informed the process. Results, including the number of responses, will be published within twelve weeks of the engagement closing, in line with relevant data protection legislation.
- Provide feedback to participants - Share with respondents how their contributions have influenced the proposal or decision, and maintain open communication channels for follow-up, including updates on final decisions and implementation plans.
- Ensure objective analysis – Assess all information and viewpoints fairly and impartially to ensure an accurate interpretation of the results.
- Be responsive to feedback - Take the voices of citizens and communities seriously and be prepared to revise plans where appropriate in response to engagement findings.

- Prioritise meaningful engagement - Ensure that engagement is given appropriate time, space, resources, and attention, with a genuine commitment to understanding and incorporating the views of citizens and communities into proposals and decisions.

6. Inclusivity and Accessibility

The Council is committed to ensuring that all citizens and communities, including marginalised and under-represented groups, can participate in engagement activities. Inclusive engagement leads to better, more equitable outcomes and helps ensure that all voices are heard, especially those that are typically harder to reach.

To maximise participation, information will be clear, easy to understand, and available in a variety of accessible formats. While the Council adopts a 'Digital by Design' approach to enhance accessibility, convenience, and efficiency through online services, it also recognises the importance of alternative methods. These include face-to-face appointments, telephone support, printed newsletters and letters, workshops, posters, leaflets, and public noticeboards, helping to prevent digital exclusion and ensure equitable access to engagement opportunities.

The Council will also consider incorporating a physical presence in future consultations — particularly in areas further from the city centre — to ensure that residents across all neighbourhoods have equal opportunity to participate. Where appropriate, support such as language interpreters will be offered to enable more inclusive and representative engagement.

In recognition of the Council's commitment to becoming an age- and child-friendly city, proactive efforts will be made to engage children under the age of 12. Their perspectives and lived experiences are important in shaping the policies and services that affect their daily lives. Engagement methods will be tailored to be age-appropriate, accessible, and meaningful, while meeting all necessary legal and safeguarding requirements. Where appropriate, the Council will work with schools, youth organisations, and family networks to help ensure younger residents have the opportunity to take part in shaping the city's future.

Where appropriate, the Council will also carry out Equality Impact Assessments and convene policy review task and finish groups — particularly where proposals directly affect residents — to ensure equity is embedded in decision-making from the outset.

7. Strengthening Tenant Voice

In line with the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, the Council is committed to strengthening engagement with tenants and leaseholders. This includes establishing regular opportunities for consultations, providing accessible channels for feedback, and ensuring clear, transparent

communication about tenant rights and the ways they can influence housing services and decisions.

These principles are further elaborated in the **Consultation & Engagement Toolkit**, which offers practical guidance on applying the Gunning Principles to engagement processes. The toolkit includes resources such as the **Public Involvement Project Brief Template**, designed to help structure consultations to meet these standards. Staff and stakeholders are encouraged to use this toolkit when designing, implementing, and evaluating consultations, ensuring alignment with the Council's commitment to transparent and effective engagement.

INTERNAL INFORMATION-SHARING AND ENGAGEMENT COORDINATION

To avoid duplication of consultations and make the best use of citizen insights, the Council will establish and maintain a coordinated approach to information-sharing across departments. This ensures that feedback from engagement activities is easily accessible internally, and that departments align in their use of community and citizen insights.

1. **Centralised Data Repository:** A centralised repository will store engagement insights and feedback, enabling all departments to access data from prior consultations. This system allows teams to reference past engagements and reduce the need for repeated consultations on similar topics.
2. **Engagement Activities Tracker:** An internal tracker will document all planned and completed engagement activities, providing visibility of timelines across departments. This tool helps minimise the risk of duplicative outreach to the same community groups. The Consultation Officer and Communications Manager will meet monthly to review the tracker, ensuring that all engagement activities receive the necessary publicity and support.
3. **Citizen Engagement section in the Horizon Scan:** A dedicated section within the monthly **Horizon Scan** document will facilitate the sharing of engagement activities across departments, helping to minimise the risk of overlapping engagement efforts.
4. **Feedback Loop:** Each department will periodically share updates on how community insights have influenced decisions, projects, or policies. This transparency ensures alignment, reinforces accountability, and demonstrates the impact of engagement efforts across teams.
5. **Members Notification:** When commissioning community or citizen engagement activities, the Council will notify relevant ward members, particularly for localised engagements, and the portfolio holder responsible for the related policy or service area. This ensures transparency and provides an opportunity for elected representatives to contribute local knowledge and context to the engagement process.

CITIZEN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

The Council engages with citizens and communities in a variety of ways, tailoring the approach to each specific case. The Council's primary goal is to create an inclusive and responsive engagement process that not only informs but actively involves citizens and communities in shaping the proposals and decisions that impact their lives. This collaborative approach enhances the quality and effectiveness of the proposals and decisions.

The Council's approaches to citizen and community engagement include:

- **Digital Engagement:** Utilising online platforms and social media to reach a wider audience and facilitate real-time interaction.
- **Local Media:** Informing the local media outlets, such as newspapers and radio stations, to share key council initiatives and engagement opportunities, particularly for residents who may be digitally excluded.
- **Public Consultations:** conducting surveys, public meetings, and workshops to gather diverse perspectives from a wide range of citizens, groups, and communities.
- **Collaborative Projects:** Partnering with local organisations, schools, and businesses to support community-led initiatives and enhance collective engagement.
- **Locality Learning Sessions:** Hosting local forums to discuss specific issues relevant to different areas of the city. These sessions aim to support residents, respond to local needs, reduce inequalities, and build strong, resilient communities. Locality Managers will utilise both Council-managed and independent venues, such as community centres, to facilitate accessible and tailored learning sessions that engage a broad spectrum of residents.
- **Youth and Minority Engagement:** Developing targeted programmes to involve young people and minority groups in civic activities. For example, the **Youth Voice Panel** gathers feedback from young people under the age of 18 to ensure their voices are heard.
- **Localities and Community Associations:** Leveraging community centres, including non-Council-managed centres, to reach broader groups of citizens and provide accessible pathways for participation.

The Council's engagement approach is further supported by the **Citizen Experience Strategy**, which outlines how the Council ensures a positive experience for citizens accessing its services and engaging with the Council. A key element of this strategy is the **Channel Management Plan**, which aims to streamline the various contact channels available to citizens. This plan focuses on optimising both in-person and digital channels - ensuring that residents who are more likely to be digitally excluded, such as older citizens, can access telephone or face-to-face support without delay, while encouraging and supporting those who can use digital channels to do so. By improving the consistency and efficiency of these contact channels, the Council aims to create a better overall experience for citizens and improve demand management.

INCENTIVES

Incentives can be a useful tool for encouraging citizen and community participation in engagement activities. Where they are used, the following principles must be followed:

- **Participation-only requirement:** Respondents must not be asked to do anything beyond agreeing to take part in the engagement or consultation activity to qualify for an incentive.
- **No financial cost:** Incentives must not require participants to spend money. For example, discount vouchers should not be used, as these require respondents to pay the remaining balance. Monetary vouchers may be permissible, as determined by the Council's Constitution and authorised by the Group Finance Director, because they do not require participants' personal expenditure.
- **Data privacy:** Incentives must not be used to collect personal information. Any personal data provided (e.g., to deliver a voucher or enter a prize draw) must be stored separately from consultation responses and handled in line with data protection legislation.
- **Clear communication:** Participants must be informed in advance about the nature of the incentive, whether a cash alternative is available, how and when the incentive will be issued, and (if applicable) how and when winners will be announced.
- **Fair prize draws:** If a free prize draw is used, winners must be selected fairly and transparently, in line with the laws of chance. An independent draw process must be followed and supported by a clear audit trail. While the draw process will not be made public, an explanation can be provided on request.

DATA, DEMOGRAPHICS & INTELLIGENCE

The Council gathers a broad range of local data and intelligence, including demographic information, to support the delivery of services and inform decision-making. This data plays a key role in shaping proposals, identifying community needs, and designing inclusive engagement approaches.

All relevant data and insights are considered during the development of policies, services, and other decisions to ensure that they are evidence-based and responsive to the city's diverse population.

Much of this information is publicly available and published on the [Council's website](#) contributing to transparency and wider community understanding.

In addition, the Council collects valuable insight through its **Residents' Panel**, **Tenant Involvement Insights** and the **Annual Residents' Survey**, all of which help capture the views, experiences, and priorities of Oxford's residents. By tracking feedback over time, as is the case, for example, for the Annual Residents' Survey, the Council can better understand the impact of its decisions and adapt its approach to ensure it

continues to meet the' needs of citizens and communities. Regular reporting of these insights also helps maintain transparency and accountability, further strengthening the Council's commitment to equitable and inclusive engagement

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council holds a range of meetings - including Full Council, Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels - many of which are open to the public. These meetings provide opportunities for citizens and communities to observe proceedings and watch local democracy in action. In most cases, citizens and communities can participate in meetings following relevant meeting procedures and the Council's Constitution.

Locality Teams support this process by helping to gather and represent community views where relevant.

Further details are available on the Council's website.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Council is committed to continuous improvement, and this applies equally to how we engage with citizens and communities.

To ensure engagement activities remain effective and meaningful, the Council will regularly monitor and review its engagement practices using tools such as the centralised data repository and the engagement activities tracker. This includes checking how well departments are using existing insights, incentive tools, helping to reduce duplication and avoid over-consultation.

Engagement outcomes will be reviewed, with departments expected to report on how feedback has shaped proposals or decisions. This process ensures transparency, accountability, and a clear link between citizen input and Council actions.

Established feedback mechanisms support this approach. Citizens and communities are informed about how their input has been considered and used — for example, through published engagement summaries and the 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' section on the Council's online consultation and engagement portal.

FURTHER READING

- [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Guidance on consulting residents](#)
- [The Gunning Principles](#)
- [Consumer Standards 2024](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)

Why do an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

1. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is part of Oxford City Council's **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010)**.

The General PSED enables Oxford City Council to:

- a. **identify and remove discrimination,**
 - b. **identify ways to advance equality of opportunity,**
 - c. **foster good relations.**
2. **An EqIA must be done before making any decision(s)** that may have an impact on people and/or services that people use and depend on.
 3. An **EqIA form is one of many tools** that can simplify and structure your equalities assessment.
 4. We are passionate about equalities, and we highly recommend that **Corporate Management Team (CMT) reports and all projects must attach an EqIA.**

A good EqIA has the following attributes:

1. **Comprehensively considers the 9 protected characteristics.**

1. Age	6. Race & Ethnicity
2. Disability	7. Religion or Belief
3. Gender Reassignment	8. Sex
4. Marriage & Civil Partnership	9. Sexual Orientation
5. Pregnancy & Maternity	NEW- Socio-economic inequalities (voluntary adoption)

2. It has **considered equality of treatment** towards service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
3. Sufficiently considered **potential and real impact** of proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members.
4. **Systematically recorded and reported** any potential and real impact of your proposal or policy on service users, residents, employees, partners, council suppliers & contractors, and Council Members
5. **Collected, recorded, & reported sufficient information and data** on how your policy or proposal will have an impact.
6. Offers **mitigations or adjustments** if a PSED has been impacted.
7. Provides clear **justifications** for your decisions.
8. It is written in **plain English** with simple short sentence structures.

Section 1: General overview of the activity under consideration

1.	Name of activity being assessed.	Review and Refresh of Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 (to be renamed 'Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025')	2.	The implementation date of the activity under consideration:	17 th September 2025
3.	Directorate/Department(s):	Business Intelligence Unit	4.	Service Area(s):	Community and Citizens' Services
5.	Who is (are) the assessment lead(s): Please provide: -Name -Email address	Jiajia Miao jmiao@oxford.gov.uk Sally Hicks shicks@oxford.gov.uk Helen Bishop hbishop@oxford.gov.uk	6.	Contact details, in case there are queries: Please provide: -Name -Email address	Jiajia Miao jmiao@oxford.gov.uk Sally Hicks shicks@oxford.gov.uk Helen Bishop hbishop@oxford.gov.uk
7.	Is this a new or ongoing EqlA?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	8.	If this is an extension of a previous EqlA, please indicate where the previous EqlA is located and	The initial EqlA for the Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 is available on the Council's website here: https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s18760/Appendix%20%20Initial%20EqlA%20-%20Community%20Engagement%20Policy%20Statement.pdf (Council meeting, 29 September 2014).

		<input type="checkbox"/> Extension to existing EqlA	share the link to the said EqlA.	The 2014 EqlA has been taken into account in completing this EqlA, however given that the preceding EqlA is now 10 years old, it was decided that it was appropriate to complete a new EqlA to supersede all previous EqlAs for this policy.
9.	Date this EqlA started:	23/11/2023		
10.	Will this EqlA be attached to Corporate Management Team (CMT) reports/updates, which will be published online?	No	11. Give a date (tentative or otherwise) when this assessment will be taken to the CMT.	

Section 2: About the activity, change, or policy that is being assessed.

12.	Type of activity being considered: Check the most appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change to an existing activity	
		<input type="checkbox"/> New Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Others. Please specify:			
13.	Which priority area(s) within Oxford City Council's Corporate strategy (2024-2028) does this activity fulfil? Please check as needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good, affordable homes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong, fair economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thriving Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zero Carbon Oxford	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well run council

14.	<p>Which priority area(s) within <u>Oxford City Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2022)</u> does this activity fulfil?</p> <p>Please check as needed.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsive services and customer care.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diverse and engaged workforce.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership & organisational commitment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding and working with our communities.
15.	<p>Outline the aims, objectives, & priorities of the activity being considered.</p>	<p>To review and refresh the outdated Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 and ensure the adoption of an up-to-date policy that sets out the Council's approach to engagement. Priorities: That the Council adopts an updated policy, which is a key document forming part of the Council's Policy Framework. The refreshed policy will set out the Council's approach to engagement, which will ensure clarity across the Council and among Elected Members and the public.</p>			
16.	<p>Please outline the consequences of not implementing this activity.</p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Existing activity does not fulfill Corporate Objectives, -existing activity is discriminatory and not fulfilling Council's PSED, ... to name a few. 	<p>The existing Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 is many years out of date and does not necessarily reflect current practices, as there have been many developments since the existing policy was adopted (e.g. new iterations of the Corporate Strategy, development of other key strategies, advancements in the use of digital technologies etc.). The existing policy forms part of the Council's Policy Framework - documents that make up the Policy Framework should be kept up to date as they are key documents for the Council. Having an outdated policy could lead to a lack of clarity across the Council and among Elected Members and the public as to the Council's approach to engagement. This could lead to a lack of engagement by citizens and communities on the decisions and proposals that affect them which, in turn, could lead to decisions being made by the Council without a clear understanding of citizens' and communities' needs and wishes. Not having a clear engagement policy could further lead to public disenfranchisement and distrust and this could potentially lead to reputational damage for the Council.</p>			

Section 3: Understanding service users, residents, staff and any other impacted parties.

<p>17. Have you undertaken any consultations in the form of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups?</p> <p>Please provide details— -when, -how many, and -the approach taken.</p>	<p>The public consultation on this policy was conducted via the Council's consultation website between 29 May and 26 June 2025, with 197 responses collected and analysed. The results showed strong support for the Council's approach to community engagement, with over 80% of respondents agreeing with the key principles outlined in the policy. Additionally, 93% of respondents felt it was extremely or very important for residents to be involved in decisions that affect them or their neighbourhood.</p> <p>The development of the policy document involved input from a wide range of City Council service areas and groups, including:</p> <p>Councillor Chapman Policy Officers Group (internal Council officer group) Communities Change Board Equalities Steering Group Locality Learning Session Tenant Involvement Team Residents' Panel Localities Team Citizen Experience Team CMT Scrutiny Committee</p>
<p>18. List information and data used to understand who your residents or staff are and how they will be impacted.</p> <p>These could be— -third-party research, -census data, -legislation,</p>	<p>The Council collects a wide range of local data and intelligence, including related to demographics. This information is used by the Council in exercising its functions and delivering services, while also being used to inform the development of proposals. All relevant data and intelligence will be taken into account during the development of individual proposals/decisions; and will also inform the approach to engagement.</p> <p>Data may include: - Census 2021</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -articles, -reports, -briefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - published 2023 - Community Health Profiles - Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - 2019 - Socio-economic Duty insight benchmarking and data - Information available on the Council's website here: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/statistics-oxford - Thriving Communities Strategy Insights - Citizen Experience Strategy Insights - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Insights
19.	<p>If you have not done any consultations or collected data & information, are you planning to do so in the future?</p> <p>Please list the details –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -when, -with whom, and -how long will you collect the relevant data. 	<p>N/A - see sections 17 and 18</p>

of

Section 4: Impact analysis.

20.	<p>Who does the activity impact?</p> <p>Check as needed.</p> <p>The impact may be positive, negative or unknown.</p>	<p>Service Users</p> <p>Members of staff</p> <p>General public</p> <p>Partner / Community Organisation</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No</p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/></p>
-----	--	--	---	--	---

	City Councillors	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
	Council suppliers and contractors	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>

21.	Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any protected characteristics as stated within Equality (Act 2010)?					
Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Don't know	Data/information/evidence supporting your assessment	Analysis & insight Mitigations
Age		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	<p>The updated policy will set out how the Council engages its citizens and communities in decision-making. It will provide the framework for how the Council engages with citizens and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs and facilitate meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Specific, individual Equalities Impacts</p>

				www.oxford.gov.uk		<p>Assessments will be undertaken during the development of individual proposals/decisions. This overarching Equalities Impact Assessment takes account of the fact that thorough, detailed assessments will be undertaken in relation to individual activities, proposals and decisions.</p> <p>The policy provides guidance on the framework for engagement, rather than the specific equalities considerations for individual proposals/decisions - as consideration and assessment of equalities issues will be undertaken at the project-level.</p>
Disability (Visible and invisible)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above

Gender re-assignment		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Race, Ethnicity and/or Citizenship		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above

Religion or Belief		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Sex			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Socio-economic inequalities such as: - income and factors that impact income. -access to jobs This was voluntarily adopted by Oxford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above

City Council on the 13th of March 2024.						
Other (voluntary consideration) Council of Sanctuary or For example: Migrant, refugee, or asylum seekers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above
Other For example: - Unpaid carers - Prison population - Homeless population -Council suppliers & contractors -Cabinet Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See section 18.	Same as above


Section 5: Conclusion(s) of your Full Impact Assessment

22.	Conclusions.					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop and reconsider the activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust activity before beginning the activity and continue to monitor.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with activity but continue to monitor.	<input type="checkbox"/> No major change(s) or adjustments and continue with the activity. No need to monitor in the future.
23.	<p>Please explain how you have reached your conclusions above.</p> <p>The updated policy will set out how the Council engages its citizens and communities in decision-making. It will provide the framework for how the Council engages with citizens and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs and facilitate meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Specific, individual Equalities Impacts Assessments will be undertaken during the development of individual proposals/decisions. This overarching Equalities Impact Assessment takes account of the fact that thorough, detailed assessments will be undertaken in relation to individual activities, proposals and decisions.</p> <p>The overarching policy provides guidance on the framework for engagement, rather than the specific equalities considerations for individual proposals/decisions - as consideration and assessment of equalities issues will be undertaken at the project-level.</p>					

Section 6: Monitoring and review plan.

The responsibility for maintaining a monitoring arrangement of the EqlA action plan lies with the service/team completing the EqlA.

These arrangements must be built into the performance management framework such as KPIs or Risk Registers.

24.	<p>Who or which team or service area will be responsible for monitoring equalities impact?</p> <p>For example-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - team, -directorate, -service area, -Equalities Steering Group,etc. 	<p>Business Intelligence Unit, Community and Citizens' Services</p> 		
25.	<p>Who (individual, team, or service area) will be responsible for carrying out the EqlA review?</p>	<p>Business Intelligence Unit, Community and Citizens' Services</p>		
26.	<p>How often will the equality impact be reviewed for this activity?</p> <p>For example-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -quarterly, -yearly, etc. 	<p>When the policy is next refreshed/reviewed.</p>	27.	<p>Date when the EqlA will be reviewed again.</p> <p>tbc</p>

Section 7: Sign-off

54

Name: Jiajia Miao
Job Title: Consultation Officer
Signature:
Jiajia Miao

Name: Gail Malkin
Job Title: Head of People
Signature:
G Malkin

Name: Full Name
Job Title: Type here
Signature:

Name:
Job Title:
Signature:

Name: Full Name
Job Title: Type here
Signature:

Name: Full Name
Job Title: Type here
Signature:

Name:
Job Title:
Signature:

Name: Full Name
Job Title: Type here
Signature:

Name: Full Name
Job Title: Type here
Signature:

Suggested list of people to include are:

- 1) Project lead/manager.
- 2) Head of service area or team.
- 3) Person who completed the EqlA.
- 4) EDI Lead.
- 5) EDI Specialist.
- 6) For joint projects, please consider the following:
 - 1. Other project leads
 - 2. Other service area and/or team lead/managers.

This is not an exhaustive list.

You have now reached the end of the assessment.

⚠ Please appended this to any reports and project files for reference.

This page is intentionally left blank

Ref	Title	Risk Description	Opp / Threat	Risk Treatment	Date Raised	Owner	Gross			Current			Target		Control / Mitigation Description	Date Due	Action Status	% Progress	Action Owner
							P	I	Score	P	I	Score	P	I					
		Legal challenge related to community engagement activities caused by issues with compliance or process in the engagement activity.	Threat	Reduce	11/06/25	Emma Jackman	5	5	25	1	5	5	1	5	Project briefs require service teams to identify potential legal risks and develop action plans to mitigate them.	10/06/26	Ongoing	50%	Consultation Officer
		Insufficient resources to execute this plan.	Threat	Reduce	12/06/25	Emma Jackman	4	3	12	2	3	6	1	3	Annual consultation plan in place to help estimate the resources required. Regularly review the consultation tracker with key stakeholders to ensure alignment. Coordinate with service areas at the start of each project. Streamline engagement processes and promote self-service where appropriate.	10/06/26	Ongoing	50%	Consultation Officer
		Insufficient budget to carry out the public engagement activities in the Plan.	Threat	Reduce	12/06/25	Emma Jackman	3	3	9	1	3	3	1	3	Citizen and Community Engagement Plan based upon current resource level. Ongoing assessment of value for money provided by suppliers, and pursuit of the best possible deal.	10/06/26	Ongoing	60%	Consultation Officer
		Decision-making is compromised due to lack of input from some groups.	Threat	Reduce	11/06/25	Emma Jackman	4	3	12	3	3	9	2	3	Promote consultation opportunities across diverse communities and organisations through the Your Oxford newsletter. Refresh the Oxford Residents' Panel annually and promote it regularly via the weekly newsletter. Ensure a strong physical presence in future consultations, including drop-in sessions and face-to-face engagement.	10/06/26	Ongoing	50%	Consultation Officer
		Services don't engage effectively with communities after plan adoption.	Threat	Reduce	11/06/25	Emma Jackman	3	3	9	2	3	6	1	3	Consultation Officer to share best practice and audit engagement. Public Involvement Board to review project briefs to ensure appropriate engagement with Communities.	10/06/26	Ongoing	60%	Consultation Officer

THE RISK REGISTER IS FORMATTED AS A TABLE. PRESS TAB ON THE LAST TABLE CELL TO INSERT A NEW ROW.

Risks should be identified that may affect the Council's ability to achieve its business objectives, execute its strategies successfully or limit its ability to exploit opportunities.

Risks can be identified through a number of methods, including:

- A 'brainstorming' session or workshop with the whole management team and relevant stakeholders
- Interviews or questionnaires with key stakeholders
- Meetings with smaller groups of people

There are a wide range of methods available that can be used to identify and understand risks. The method that you select will depend upon the type of risk(s) that you are dealing with but typically a management team workshop is the method most commonly used.

Additionally, existing sources of information could help inform this stage. Some examples are listed below:

- Service / corporate plans, strategies and objectives
- Existing risk registers
- Risks or issues raised by internal audit or other scrutiny body
- Risks identified through budget setting processes
- Health & safety risk assessments
- Business continuity risk assessments
- Partnership, programme or project documentation (e.g. business case or project risk register)
- Experience of those participating in the risk identification process

It is the responsibility of those identifying risks to decide which sources of information they should consult. This may be one or more of the sources listed above or it could be something else you think is appropriate.

As well as direct risks to the achievement of our objectives it is important to think broadly about uncertainties that may have an impact on the organisation. The diagram shown below illustrates a variety of different risk themes, expanding on PESTLE prompts, which the organisation could face. Think also in terms of these themes when identifying risks.



Once identified, the risks need to be described in sufficient detail and recorded in a consistent format to support effective decision making on the way that the risk is managed. It is crucial for risks to be defined properly at this stage. Failure to do so can result in confusion about the exact nature of the risk, ineffective risk controls being implemented, or the risk analysis being over or underestimated.

The description of the risk should include the following elements:

- Risk Title – a short and concise header for the risk
- Description – expanding on the risk title outlining the situation or event that exposes us to a risk.
- Risk Cause – also known as the trigger event. Situations or factors which result in the risk becoming a reality.
- Risk Effect – the likely consequences if the risk materialises (The negative impact - consider worst likely scenario)

When describing a risk try not to describe the impact of the risk as the risk itself or define risks with statements which are the converse of objectives. Focus upon the uncertain event that would result in those impacts.

Types of Risk to consider	
Strategic / Commercial	
1	Under performance to specification
2	Management will under perform against expectations
3	Collapse of contractors
4	Insolvency of promoter
5	Failure of suppliers to meet contractual commitments (quality, cost, time)
6	Insufficient capital
7	Market fluctuations
8	Trade/Banking crises
9	Fraud/theft
10	Partnership failing to deliver desired outcomes
11	Situation is not insurable (cost of insurance outweighs the benefit)
Economic / Financial / Market	
1	Exchange rate fluctuation
2	Interest rate instability
3	Inflation
4	Shortage of working capital
5	Failure to meet projected revenue targets
6	Market developments will adversely affect plans
Legal and Regulatory	
1	New or changed legislation may invalidate assumptions upon which the activity is based
2	Failure to obtain appropriate approval e.g. planning consent
3	Unforeseen inclusion of contingent liabilities
4	Loss of intellectual property rights
5	Failure to achieve satisfactory contractual arrangements
6	Unexpected regulatory controls or licencing requirements
7	Changes in tax or tariff structure
Organisational / Management / Human factors	
1	Management incompetence
2	Inadequate corporate policies
3	Inadequate adoption of management practices
4	Poor leadership
5	Key personnel have inadequate authority to fulfil their roles
6	Poor staff selection procedures
7	Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities
8	Vested interests creating conflict and compromising overall aims
9	Individual or group interests given unwarranted priority
10	Personality clashes
11	Indecision or inappropriate decision making
12	Lack of operational support
13	Inadequate or inaccurate information
14	Health and Safety constraints
Political	
1	Change of government policy
2	Change of government
3	War and disorder
4	Adverse public opinion/media intervention
Environmental	
1	Natural disasters
2	Storms, flooding, tempests
3	Pollution incidents

4	Transport problems (including aircraft/vehicle collisions)
Technical / Operational / Infrastructure	
1	Inadequate design
2	Professional negligence
3	Human error/incompetence
4	Infrastructure failure
5	Operation lifetime lower than expected
6	Increased dismantling/decommissioning costs
7	Safety being compromised
8	Performance failure
9	Residual maintenance problems
10	Scope creep
11	Unclear expectations
12	Breaches in security/information security
13	Lack or inadequacy of business continuity

Risk Evaluation and Prioritisation

Once risks have been identified the risk matrix is the main tool for prioritising risks so we can establish which risks are most significant and therefore are in need of greater attention and resources. It also allows us to compare different types of risk with each other across the council.

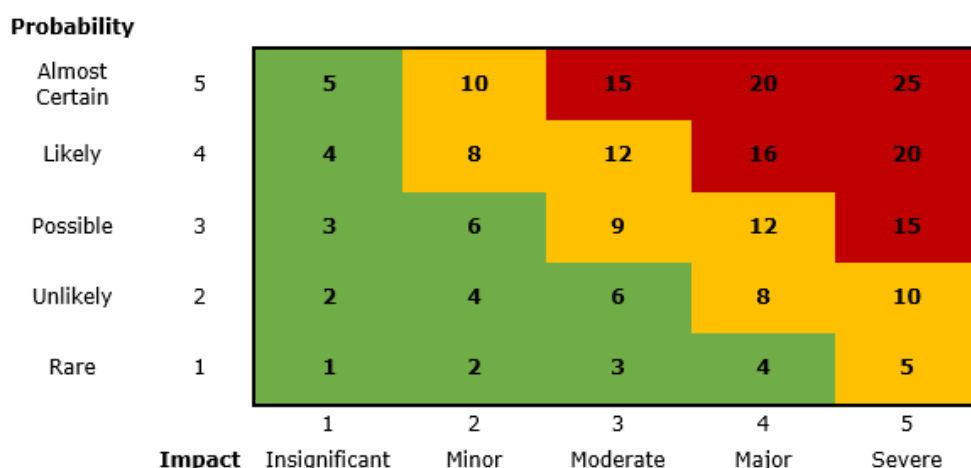
Each risk should be analysed using a five by five matrix for (1) the likelihood it will happen and (2) the impact if it did occur. This assessment should be made on three different basis:

- Gross risk – risk level if existing key controls and mitigations were not in place or not effective.
- Current risk – risk level after existing controls and mitigations are taken into consideration.
- Target risk – anticipated risk level following the introduction of planned controls and mitigations.

Assessing the gross risk allows consideration of the dependency the organisation has upon the existing key controls and informs decisions around risk treatment, and selection of an appropriate target risk level, considered in the next section of this toolkit. It is often helpful to consider the Current Risk first, and then ask yourself what the impact and likelihood of the risk might be if the key controls were not in place.

It is the risk owner's responsibility to ensure the controls they believe are reducing the risk are effective and are working in practice. Controls that are not yet in place should not be considered within the current risk.

Each identified risk should then be plotted onto the risk matrix.



When considering the likelihood of a risk happening you should select the number from 1 to 5 from the risk matrix that you think it will be over the next 12 months (it can be longer or shorter; some risks in the Strategic Risk Register are better considered over 3 to 5 years, some operational risks will be considered over 3 to 6 months). This score will require an element of judgement when considering how likely an event is to occur and you should consider the following:

- Has this event happened before in the Council? (How frequently?) Has this event happened elsewhere? (How frequently?)
- How likely is it that one or more of the causes/ triggers of the event will occur?
- Has anything happened recently that makes the event more or less likely to occur?

The following tables provide some support in quantifying the risk in terms of likelihood and impact.

Risk Probability Assessment Criteria

Scale	Description	Likelihood of Occurrence	Probability of Occurrence
1	Rare	1 in 10 years	The event may occur in certain circumstances
2	Unlikely	1 in 3 years	The event could occur
3	Possible	1 in 2 years	The event should occur
4	Likely	Annually	The event will probably occur
5	Almost certain	Monthly	The event is expected to occur or occurs regularly

When you select the impact you should give consideration to the factors outlined in the risk matrix. For example, if the risk you are scoring has a low financial impact but a high impact on our reputation then you would select the most appropriate number between 1 and 5 that relates to the level of reputational impact. Once again, this score will have an element of judgement.

Risk Impact Assessment Criteria

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Financial	<£50k per annum	£50k - £250k per annum	£250k - £500k per annum	£500k - £750k per annum	>£750K per annum
Service Delivery	No impact to service quality, limited disruption to operations	Minor impact to service quality, minor service standards are not met, short term disruption to operations, minor impact on a partnerships	Significant fall in service quality, major partnership relationships strained, serious disruption in service standards	Major impact to service quality, multiple service standards are not met, long term disruption to operations, multiple partnerships affected	Catastrophic fall in service quality and key service standards are not met, long term catastrophic interruption to operations, several major partnerships are affected
Reputation	Public concern restricted to local complaints which do not attract local media attention.	Minor adverse local / public / media attention and complaints	Adverse national media public attention	Serious negative national or regional criticism	Prolonged, regional & national condemnation
Compliance & Regulation	Minor breach of internal regulations, not reportable	Minor breach of external regulations, not reportable	Breach of internal regulations leading to disciplinary action Breach of external regulations, reportable	Significant breach of external regulations leading to intervention or sanctions	Major breach leading to suspension or discontinuation of business and services
Strategic	Little impact on the organisational strategy	May have an impact on achieving organisational strategy	Would impact on the organisational objectives	Would require a significant shift from current strategy and objectives	Would require a fundamental change in strategy and objectives

Risk Treatment

Once risks have been identified and scored based on current controls the next step is to decide what action needs to be taken to manage them. Generally speaking, there are four approaches to treating risk: Treat, Tolerate, Terminate or Transfer:

Action	Description	Options
Treat / Reduce	Controlling the likelihood of the risk occurring, or controlling the impact of the consequences if the risk does occur	Reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring AND / OR Mitigating the impact if the risk does occur
Tolerate / Accept	Acknowledging that the ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or that the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained.	The ability to take effective action against some risks may be limited or the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained in which case the risk is accepted on an "informed" basis.
Terminate / Avoid	Not undertaking the activity that is likely to trigger the risk	Changing the direction or strategy and revisiting objectives or improving channels of communication Obtaining further information from external sources or acquiring expertise Reducing the scope of the activity or adopting a familiar, proven approach Deciding not to undertake the activity likely to trigger the risk
Transfer	Handing the risk on elsewhere, either totally or in part – e.g. through insurance.	Financial instruments such as insurance, performance bonds, warranties or guarantee. Renegotiation of contract conditions for the risk to be retained by the other party. Seeking agreement on sharing the risk with the other party. Sub-contracting risk to a consultant or external suppliers. NB. It may not be possible to transfer all aspects of a risk. For example, where there is or reputational damage to the organisation.

When considering further action required to manage the risk, and indeed the appropriateness of existing controls, an assessment of treatment options should be made alongside a consideration of the Council's risk appetite and tolerance for the current level of risk.

A further consideration is the efficiency of risk treatment in relation to the cost effectiveness of the proposed actions to be taken. Firstly the cost of implementation has to be considered (time, manpower, budget, etc.). The impact expected if no action is taken, should be weighed against the cost of action and the reduction of the impact. There should be a direct benefit from the cost implementation in terms of the reduction of the level of the risk.

Plans should then be put into place to manage the risk with key milestones identified and clear owners – ensuring that they are 'SMART' – Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound.

Oxford City Council has focused on the Red, Amber, Green status of risks in determining the risk appetite of the organization. Red risks are considered unacceptable and every effort must be made to reduce the risk to the organization.

The risk appetite is reviewed periodically or when there are significant changes to the organisation. Changes to the risk appetite level would require a change to strategy and would therefore require approval of the Cabinet.

This page is intentionally left blank

Citizen and Community Engagement Policy Consultation

The activity ran from 29/05/2025 to 26/06/2025

Responses to this survey: **197**

Key findings:

The consultation received strong support for the Council's commitment to community engagement, with several clear themes emerging:

- **Strong support for engagement principles:** Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the principles outlined in the draft policy, including flexibility, proportionality, transparency, timeliness, feedback, inclusiveness, and strengthening tenant voice.
- **Resident involvement is highly valued:** 93% of respondents said it is either *extremely* or *very important* for residents to be involved in decisions that affect them or their neighbourhood.
- **Engagement is already happening in various forms:** A majority of respondents reported having engaged through online surveys (76%), the Residents' Panel (58%), and speaking with local councillors (49%).
- **Barriers remain, particularly around trust and awareness:** The most commonly cited barrier was feeling that residents' opinions won't make a difference (48%), followed by not knowing enough about the issues (39%) and lack of time (38%).

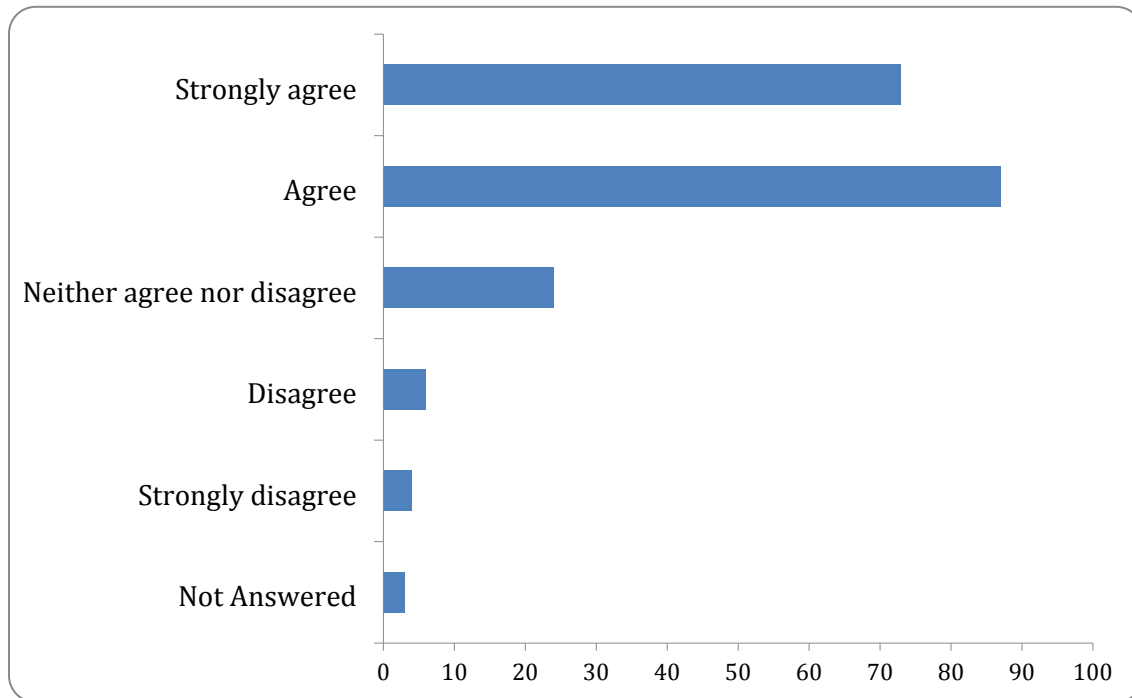
These findings suggest that while residents value and engage with council decision-making, there are still challenges to address, particularly in improving trust, communication, and accessibility.

Detailed results:

A total of 197 people responded to this survey. Most respondents (95%) took part in the consultation as residents of Oxford. A small number of responses came from local businesses (1.5%), community groups or residents' organisations (1.5%), and a local elected Member (0.5%).

The Policy outlines the principles guiding community engagement activities on pages 6 to 10. These include flexibility, proportionality, transparency and clarity, timeliness, feedback, inclusiveness and accessibility, and strengthening tenant voice. To what extent do you agree or disagree that these principles should underpin citizen and community engagement?

There were 194 responses to this part of the question.

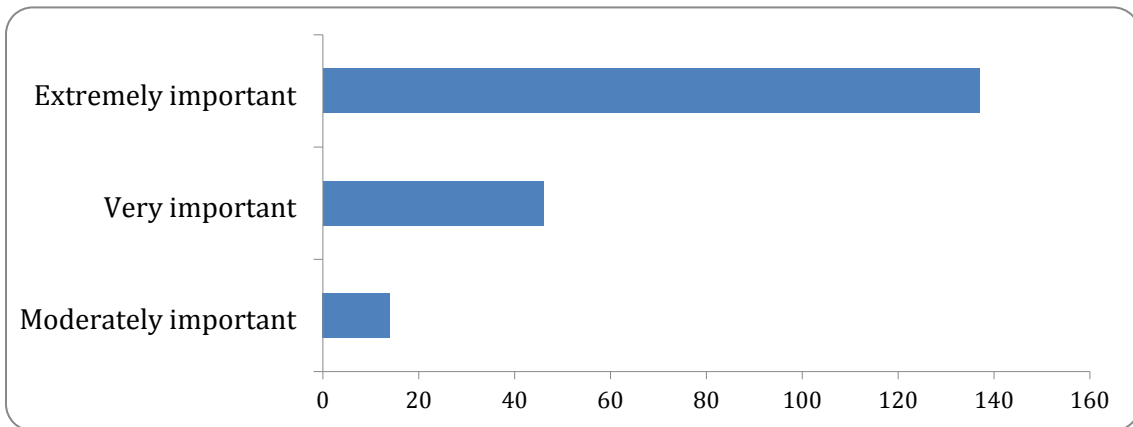


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	73	37.06%
Agree	87	44.16%
Neither agree nor disagree	24	12.18%
Disagree	6	3.05%
Strongly disagree	4	2.03%

Not Answered	3	1.52%
---------------------	---	-------

Oxford City Council is committed to involving residents in its decision-making process. How important do you think it is for residents to be involved in decisions that affect them or their neighbourhood?

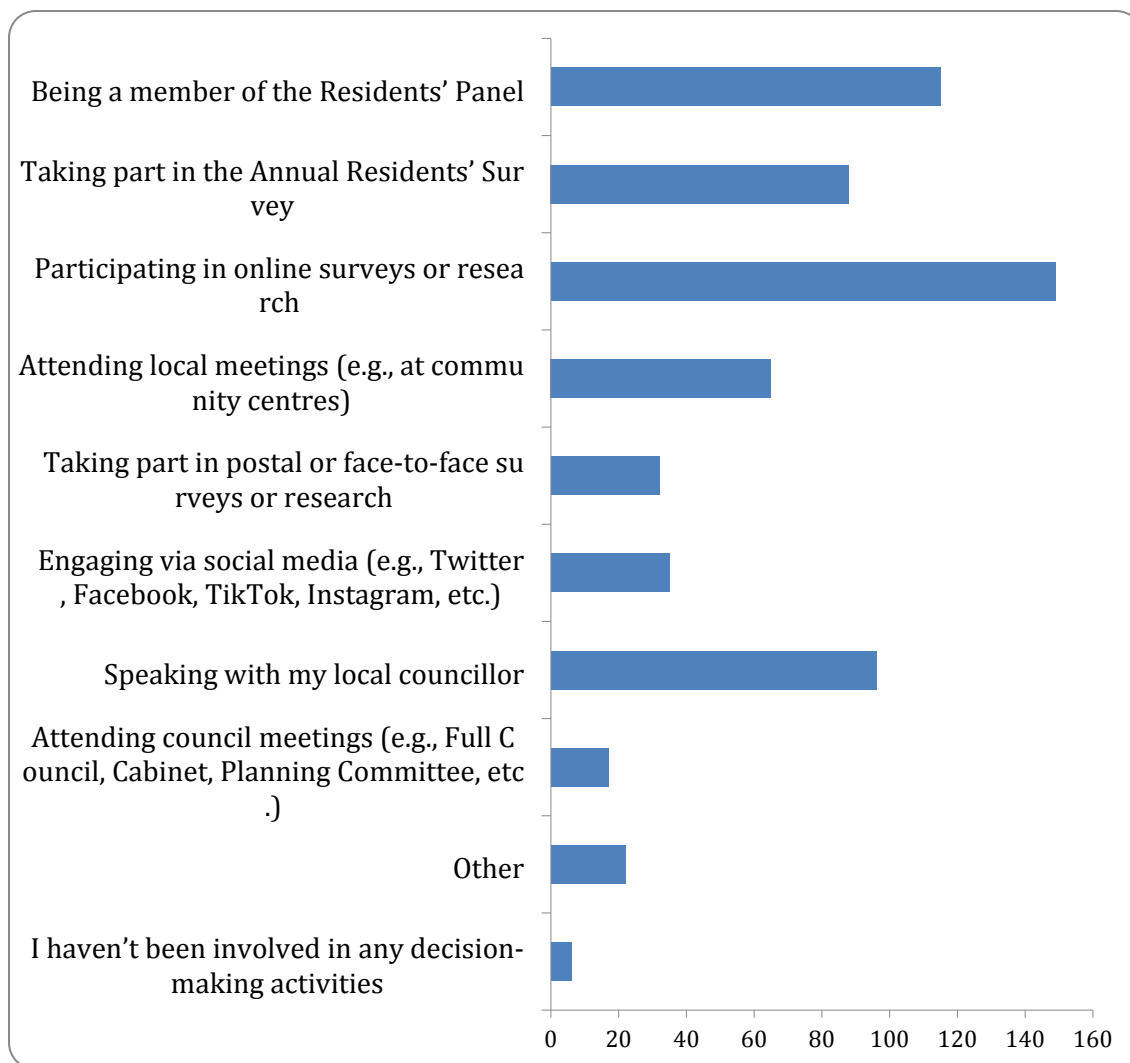
There were 197 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	137	69.54%
Very important	46	23.35%
Moderately important	14	7.11%
Slightly important	0	0.00%
Not at all important	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

In which of the following ways, if any, have you been involved in decisions that affect you or your neighbourhood?

There were 197 responses to this part of the question.

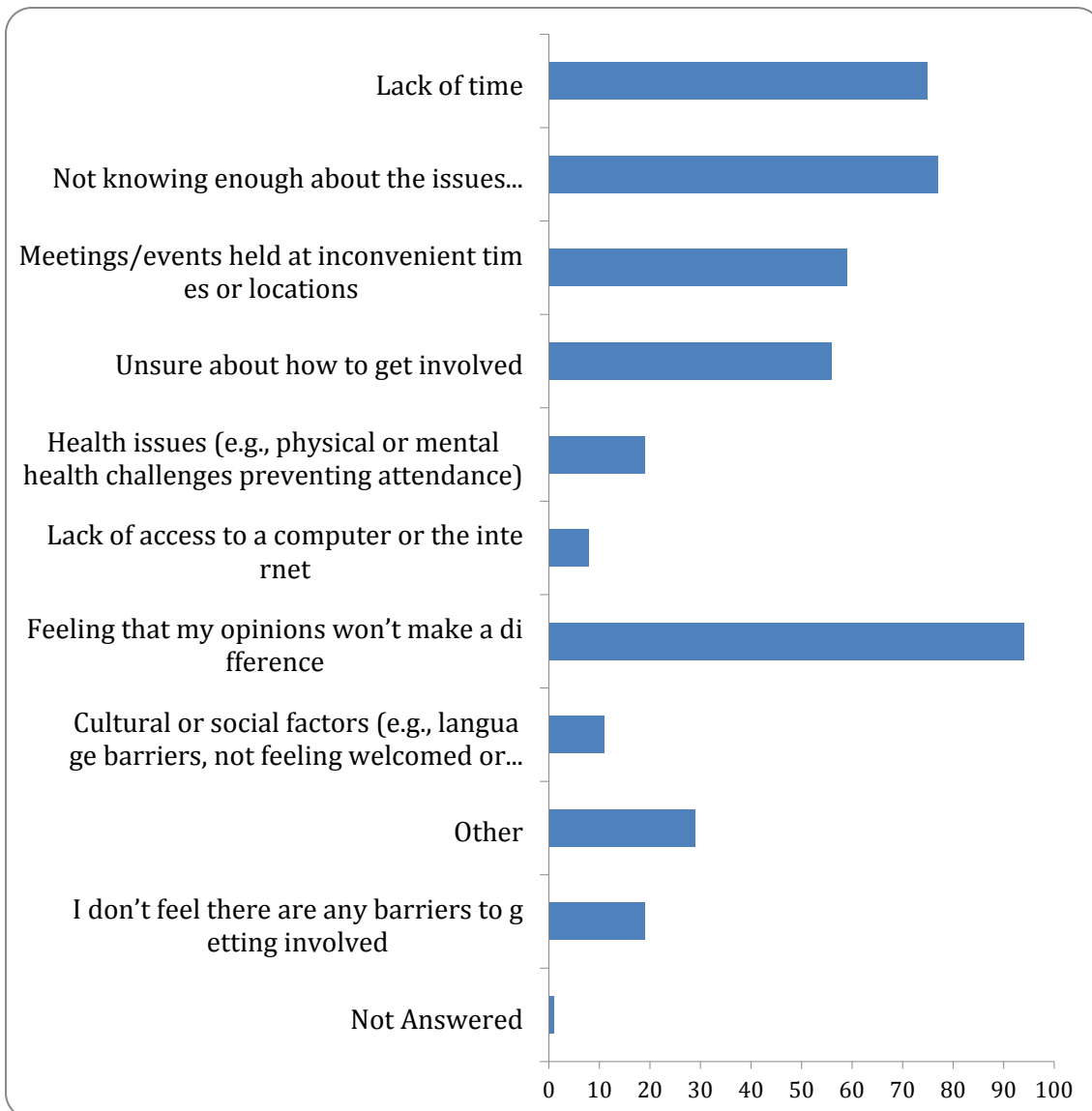


Option	Total	Percent
Being a member of the Residents' Panel	115	58.38%
Taking part in the Annual Residents' Survey	88	44.67%
Participating in online surveys or research	149	75.63%
Attending local meetings (e.g., at community centres)	65	32.99%
Taking part in postal or face-to-face surveys or research	32	16.24%
Engaging via social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, etc.)	35	17.77%
Speaking with my local councillor	96	48.73%
Attending council meetings (e.g., Full Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee, etc.)	17	8.63%
Other	22	11.17%

I haven't been involved in any decision-making activities	6	3.05%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

What do you feel are the barriers, if any, to getting involved in the decision-making process?

There were 196 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Lack of time	75	38.07%

Not knowing enough about the issues being discussed	77	39.09%
Meetings/events held at inconvenient times or locations	59	29.95%
Unsure about how to get involved	56	28.43%
Health issues (e.g., physical or mental health challenges preventing attendance)	19	9.64%
Lack of access to a computer or the internet	8	4.06%
Feeling that my opinions won't make a difference	94	47.72%
Cultural or social factors (e.g., language barriers, not feeling welcomed or represented)	11	5.58%
Other	29	14.72%
I don't feel there are any barriers to getting involved	19	9.64%
Not Answered	1	0.51%

In your view, are there particular areas or services where you think we should engage with residents more often?

There were 125 responses to this part of the question.

A summary of the most frequently mentioned aspects where residents feel more engagement is needed:

- **Traffic and Transport:** LTNs, Traffic filters, public transport, roadworks, parking, cycling, e-scooters, and coordination between City and County councils on traffic decisions.
- **Planning and Development:** Concerns include a lack of transparency and feedback in planning processes, worries about the loss of green spaces, a strong desire for more proactive community involvement, and the need for affordable housing alongside balanced land use.
- **Social Issues and Services:** Key topics include youth services, social housing, food banks, mental health support, rising crime rates, rough sleeping, and antisocial behaviour.
- **Environment and Green Spaces:** While many residents urge stronger protection of green spaces, opinions vary on the Council's climate emergency initiatives—some demand more action, while others question the approach.

Do you have any further comments on the Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025?

There were 67 responses to this part of the question.

The most commonly mentioned themes include:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Residents are interested in understanding how their input is considered and used. There is a desire to see visible outcomes from engagement and for councillors to be more responsive to community feedback.
- **Communication and Process Clarity:** Some residents find current documents and processes difficult to understand due to their length, complexity, or use of technical language. There is interest in using clearer, plain English, simplifying steps, and providing better guidance on how to get involved and influence decisions.
- **Representation and Inclusive Engagement:** Residents have expressed a desire for more balanced outreach that includes a wider range of voices, such as older adults, disabled individuals, and those without digital access. Suggestions include using diverse participation methods, like citizen juries, to support broader involvement.

This page is intentionally left blank

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 9 September 2025
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Scope of Work for the Scrutiny Budget Review Group 2026/27

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To agree the scope of work for the Budget Review Group 2026/27
Key decision:	No
Lead Members:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee Councillor James Fry, Chair of the Budget Review Group
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the scope of work for the 2026/27 Budget Review Group; Agree the Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Group; Delegate authority to the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor, in consultation with the Scrutiny Chair and Budget Review Group Chair, to amend the scope as needed.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Budget Review 2026/27 Scoping Document	No
Appendix 2	Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Budget Review Group 2026/27	No

Introduction

1. Each year, Oxford City Council follows a statutory process to set a balanced budget within a prescribed timeline, as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This process is essential for managing the Council's finances ensuring its soundness and good governance. A key part of this process is the Budget Review Group, who is tasked to examine how resources are allocated across the Council's services and consider the wider financial challenges it faces. This report outlines the proposed scope of work for the Budget Review Group and asks the Committee to agree a clear plan for their scrutiny activities.

Budget Review Group 2026/27

2. At its meeting on 10 June 2025, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish the annual Budget Review Group to carry out a focused review of the draft budget proposals for the 2026-27 financial year, as well as the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2028-30.
3. The Budget Review Group ("the Group") will comprise the same membership as the Finance and Performance Working Group, consisting of four councillors, to ensure continuity of the work undertaken by said Working Group. They are: Cllr James Fry (Chair), Cllr Chris Smowton, Cllr Chris Jarvis and Cllr Ian Yeatman. Substitutions will be permitted for the Budget Review Group, though it is hoped that advance planning and scheduling of its meetings will help minimise the need.
4. A total of 5 meetings will be held during December 2025 and January 2026, aligning with the key stages of the Council's budget cycle, and will be thematically structured to enable an in-depth examination of directorate budgets, council-owned companies, and financial assets.
5. Areas of focus for this year to include financial mitigation strategies, the impacts of inflation and cost-of-living crisis, and sustainability of the Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL), Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL) and Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL)¹ business plans. The Group will assess income stream risks, borrowing plans, contingencies, optimism bias assumptions and the Capital Programme's deliverability. Attention will also be given to the use of emerging technologies such as AI, challenges in staff recruitment and retention, and the financial implications of the local government restructure.
6. Full details of the Budget Review Group scope is set out in Appendix 1. Also included as Appendix 2 is the Terms of Reference guiding the work of the Group.
7. Cabinet Members and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) will be invited to attend meetings where their input is required to inform the work of the Group. As well, members of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group and the Climate and Environment Working Group will be invited to contribute respectively to the review of housing-related and environmental sustainability budgetary matters, though they will not have powers to formulate or agree any recommendations.
8. At the end of the project, a report detailing the Budget Review Group's findings and final recommendations will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for

¹ Trading under OX Place, including its subsidiaries Oxford City Housing Investment Limited and Oxford City Housing Development Limited

consideration and approval and then reported onward to Cabinet and the Budget Council in February 2026.

Alternative Options Considered

9. The Committee could decide not to agree the proposed scope for the Budget Review Group however it would need to clearly define and agree its expectations. Failure to agree on the scope may risk delaying the review process and could ultimately undermine the role of scrutiny in the Council's budget-setting for the coming year.

Other implications

10. Whilst the Budget Review Group is a non-decision-making body, recommendations made as an outcome to the review process could influence future operational priorities. The Committee should be mindful of potential impacts on community relations and public perception, particularly where changes to budget may affect the delivery of service.

Financial implications

11. Any financial implications arising from matters considered by the Budget Review Group will be detailed in the reports presented and discussed during the scheduled meetings.

Legal issues

12. Any legal implications arising from matters considered by the Budget Review Group will be detailed in the reports presented and discussed during the scheduled meetings.

Level of risk

13. Risks arising from matters considered by the Budget Review Group will be detailed in the reports presented and discussed during the scheduled meetings.

Equalities impact

14. Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments will be linked to the reports presented to the Budget Review Group.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

15. Where appropriate, Carbon and Environmental Considerations will be linked to the reports presented to the Budget Review Group.

Report author	Celeste Reyeslao
Job title	Scrutiny and Governance Advisor
Service area or department	Committee and Member Services
Telephone	01865 252946
e-mail	creyeslao@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

This page is intentionally left blank

Scrutiny Budget Review 2026/27 – Scoping Document

Review Topic	Budget Review 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan to 2028/30
Lead Member Review Group	Councillor James Fry
Other Review Group Members	<p>Councillor Chris Jarvis; Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton; Councillor Ian Yeatman</p> <p><i>Members of the Housing and Homelessness Panel will be invited to scrutinise Housing-related budgetary items:</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Theodore Jupp (Chair); Councillor Lizzy Diggins; Councillor Edward Mundy; Councillor Rosie Rawle; Councillor Anne Stares</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Climate and Environment Panel will be invited to scrutinise the Environmental Sustainability-related budgetary items:</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Katherine Miles (Chair); Councillor Judith Harley; Councillor Jemima Hunt; Councillor Kate Robinson</i></p>
Substitutes	<p>Substitutes will be permitted for Budget Review Group meeting. Members should make every effort to attend meetings to help ensure continuity. However, given the tight timescales within which the Budget Review Group is required to meet (with very limited scope for alternative meeting dates) and the need to ensure cross-party representation at those meetings, advance notice is requested.</p> <p>Should Budget Review Group members be unable to attend one or more of the Budget Review Group meetings, they should contact the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor at their earliest convenience to advise the meeting date(s) they cannot attend and their named substitute. Members must seek their own substitute from their political group as normal.</p>
Officer Support and allocated hours	Scrutiny and Governance Advisor support – approx. 2-3 days per week from mid-December 2025 to mid-February 2026. Additional support from the Group Finance Director and other Senior Officers.
Background	<p>The Budget 2026/27 paperwork will be published for consultation on 2 December 2025 ahead of a final decision by Full Council on 23 February 2026 (<i>reserve date 4 March 2026</i>).</p> <p>Scrutiny has formed a Budget Review Group to scrutinise the budget proposals in detail before reporting to Cabinet in February 2026.</p>
Rationale	To scrutinise the Council's draft budget for 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan for the following three years and provide public assurance of the Council's budget setting processes and decisions.

Key lines of inquiry	<p>Areas of focus for the Budget Review Group this year to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress of financial mitigation strategies arising from the various pressures on Council finances • The interaction, robustness and financial impact of the financial returns to the Council from Oxford Direct Services and OX Place business plans – including scrutiny of the ODS and OX Place Business Plans and their importance in relation to the financial sustainability of the Council • Specific consideration of the Council's planning regarding macroeconomic factors such as inflation and the cost-of-living crisis • The robustness of plans and risks to the Council's anticipated income streams, particularly relating to parking, commercial property and the Council's companies • The robustness of the HRA Business Plan • Assessment of overall strategy and individual proposals to mitigate lost income and to reduce costs, including the deliverability of proposals for income generation and savings • Planned borrowing levels and the impact of the changes arising from Minimum Revenue Provision • Levels of contingencies and earmarked reserves • Deliverability of the Capital Programme and its relation to previous iterations of the Medium-Term Financial Plan • The realism of optimism bias assumptions applied to the Capital Programme • The risk of slippage in the revenues projected from commercial properties if new lettings are delayed • Progress with, and opportunities to further exploit, emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to increase productivity/efficiency • The impact of staff recruitment and retention on the ability to realise the MTFP (e.g. achievement of performance targets, unplanned expenditure on temporary staff, delivery of plans and priorities and increasing pressure on existing staff) • The impact of the new Government on local government finances and plans for Local Government restructure • The impact of budget proposals on service users and the wider community
Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robust independent scrutiny of budget proposals ▪ Detailed consideration of key lines of inquiry ▪ The production of an evidenced based report with recommendations ▪ Broad agreement on conclusions and recommendations amongst Review Group members ▪ The majority of recommendations are agreed by the Cabinet
Methodology/ Approach	<p>Evidence gathering to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget briefing by Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management and the Group Finance Director; • Reviewing Budget 2026/27 paperwork, including options or bids presented to Members; • Submitting written questions to CLT and reviewing their responses;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with CLT and Business Leads 		
Specify Witnesses/ Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management ▪ Group Finance Director ▪ Chief Executive ▪ Deputy Chief Executive – Place ▪ Deputy Chief Executive – City and Citizens’ Services ▪ Director of Law, Governance & Strategy ▪ Director of Corporate Strategy (Interim) ▪ Director of Housing ▪ Director of Communities & Citizens ▪ Director of Property Assets ▪ Director of Planning & Regulatory Services ▪ Director of Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability ▪ Head of People ▪ Chief Information & Technology Officer ▪ Community Safety Service Manager ▪ Active Communities Manager ▪ Property Services Manager ▪ Culture and Community Development Manager ▪ City Centre Manager ▪ Strategic Finance Manager ▪ Committee and Member Services Manager ▪ Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead ▪ Environmental Sustainability Lead ▪ Managing Director (Oxford Direct Services) ▪ Managing Director (OX Place) ▪ Head of Facilities Management ▪ Finance Business Partners 		
Out of scope	N/A		
Projected start date	2 December 2025	Draft Report Deadline	26 January 2026
Meeting Frequency	5 meetings in December 2025 to January 2026	Projected completion date	By 11 February 2026 Cabinet

Draft outline of meetings – all held remotely via Teams

Meeting one – Tuesday 9 December 2025, 6:00 – 8:00pm

1. Introduction from the Cabinet Member and Group Finance Director
Attendees: Cllr Ed Turner and Nigel Kennedy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current local context• Budget-setting process to date• Overview of the whole budget – including areas of particular risk and/or tension, options presented to Members and potential trade-off options in terms of savings/income, key areas of growth or income generation, impact of particular elements of the budget on local people/groups• How previous discussions with Finance and Performance Working Group and any recommendations associated with those discussions (including Budget Review Group recommendations for the 2025/26 budget) have fed into the budget-setting process for 2026/27 Other Attendees: Clare Paterson
2. Initial inquiry and generation of questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An opportunity for BRG to discuss and start generating questions
<p style="text-align: center;">NOTE: Written questions from BRG – deadline: Monday 15 December 2025, 10am Questions to be sent to NK (for circulation to CLT): Monday 15 December 2025, 5pm Officer response deadline: Monday 29 December 2025, 10am</p>

Meeting two – Tuesday 6 January 2026, 6:00 – 8:00pm

1. Review of budget proposals for service areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place Directorate (Tom Bridgman)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Economy, Regeneration & Sustainability (Clive Tritton / Carolyn Ploszynski, Dave Scholes, Jenny Barker)○ Environmental Sustainability (Tina Mould)• Planning & Regulatory Services (David Butler)• Property Assets (Jane Winfield, Emma Gubbins, Malcolm Peek, David Hunt, Jason Jones)• Capital Programme – General Fund (Paul Swaffield, Malcolm Peek)• OX Place (Kevin Lowry, Tim Bacon (or their successors) and David Watt)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ OX Place Business Plan○ OX Place Client (Tom Bridgman) Other attendees: Nigel Kennedy, Clare Paterson, Andrew Friar, Jason Jones and Paul Swaffield <p><i>Members of the Climate and Environment Working Group will be invited to participate in the Scrutiny of the Environmental Sustainability element of this meeting.</i></p>
2. Formulation of recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BRG members to formulate recommendations based on discussions

Meeting three – Wednesday 7 January 2026, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

1. Review of budget proposals for service areas

- City and Citizens' Services Directorate (**Tom Hook**)
 - Communities & Citizens (**Helen Bishop, Hagan Lewisman, Paula Redway**)
 - Leisure Services (**Hagan Lewisman**)
 - Housing (**Nerys Parry, Bill Graves, Richard Wood**)
 - Information & Technology (**Rocco Labellarte**)
 - Community Safety Services (**Richard Adams**)
- Capital Programme – HRA
- Oxford Direct Services (**Simon Howick, Paul Concannon and Chris Urwin**)
 - ODS Business Plan
 - ODS Client (**Mish Tullar**)

Other attendees: **Nigel Kennedy, Clare Paterson, Emma Burson, Andrew Friar, and Paul Swaffield**

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group will be invited to participate in the Scrutiny of the Housing element of this meeting.

2. Formulation of recommendations

- BRG members to formulate recommendations based on discussions

Meeting four – Thursday 15 January 2026, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

1. Review of budget proposals for service areas

- Corporate Services (**Caroline Green**)
 - Law, Governance & Strategy (**Emma Jackman and Jonathan Malton**)
 - Local Government Reform (**Mish Tullar, Lucy Cherry and Clare Keen**)
 - People Services (**Gail Malkin**)
 - Finance Services (**Nigel Kennedy, Clare Paterson, Phil McGaskill, Laura Bessell, Bill Lewis, Annette Osbourne**)

Other attendees: **Nigel Kennedy, Clare Paterson and Andrew Friar**

2. Formulation of recommendations

- BRG members to formulate recommendations based on discussions

Meeting five – Tuesday 20 January 2026, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

1. BRG Final Recommendations

- Members to consider and agree the list of recommendations

2. Draft Report of the Budget Review Group

- To consider the Draft Budget Review Group report

NOTE: Final Recommendations deadline: Tuesday 20 January 2026, end of meeting
Final Draft of the BRG Report for submission to Scrutiny Committee: Thursday 22 January 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

Terms of Reference

Scrutiny Budget Review Group 2026/27

1. Purpose

The Budget Review Group is a time-limited task and finish sub-group of the Scrutiny Committee. It is constituted to undertake focused review of the Council's draft budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan covering the subsequent period.

2. Status

The Budget Review Group is a non-decision-making body established under the delegated authority of the Scrutiny Committee. Its role is to provide detailed scrutiny and advisory oversight of the Council's budget and wider financial matters. The Group reports its findings and recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee for formal consideration and approval, with onward reporting to Cabinet and the Council as appropriate.

3. Scope of Work

The Budget Review Group will:

- Review the Council's draft budget proposals, including revenue and capital allocations, savings, and growth bids
- Contribute to the development of the Council's annual budget-setting process
- Examine financial performance and data, identifying areas of underperformance or concern
- Scrutinise the financial performance and strategic direction of Council-owned companies
- Review income streams and asset portfolio management, including council-owned buildings, commercial property, and car parks
- Assess the Capital Programme with a focus on project delivery, risk management, prioritisation, and alignment with the Council's strategic objectives
- Make evidence-based recommendations to support robust decision-making and financial oversight

4. Membership

Membership will be set by the Scrutiny Committee and drawn from all non-executive members. It is not required to reflect the Council's political make up.

For continuity, both membership and chairing of the Budget Review Group will mirror that of the Finance and Performance Working Group, consisting of four councillors.

The quorum shall be 2 members. Substitution will be allowed.

5. Chairing

The Chair will be responsible for leading meetings and reporting the Group's findings and recommendations back to the Scrutiny Committee. The Chair may also be invited to present these outcomes to Cabinet or Full Council.

In the absence of the Chair, members present shall elect an acting chair for that meeting.

6. Meetings and ways of working

- The Scrutiny Committee will agree the scope of work of the Budget Review Group and therefore has final agreement on its recommendations.
- The agenda will be issued in advance, however the usual requirement for 7 days' notice do not apply.
- The Budget Review Group will meet 5 times during December 2025 and January 2026, aligned with the key stages of the Council's budget cycle. Meetings will be thematically structured to enable in-depth scrutiny of directorate budgets, council-owned companies, and financial assets:
 - Meeting 1 – Introductory session with Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management and the Group Finance Director
 - Meeting 2 – Review and examination of service directorate, council-owned companies, and council assets
 - Meeting 3 – Review and examination of service directorate, council-owned companies, and council assets
 - Meeting 4 – Review and examination of service directorate, council-owned companies, and council assets
 - Meeting 5 – Agreement of final recommendations and review of the draft Budget Review Group report
- Additional meetings may only be held with the approval of the Monitoring Officer.
- Members are expected to review papers in advance and contribute constructively to discussions with a focus on evidence-based scrutiny.
- Written questions may be submitted in advance via the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor.
- Meetings are not legally required to be held in-person and are not subject to the Local Government Act 1972 requirement to be held in public.

7. Attendees

Officers or Cabinet Members shall attend the meetings where their input is required to inform the work of the Budget Review Group.

Directors and Company Secretaries of Council-owned companies may be invited to attend for relevant items relating to their companies.

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group may be invited to contribute to the review of housing-related budgetary matters; however, they do not have powers to formulate or agree recommendations of the Budget Review Group.

Members of the Climate and Environment Working Group may be invited to participate in the examination of budgetary issues related to environmental sustainability but do not have powers to formulate or agree recommendations of the Budget Review Group.

8. Access to information

The Budget Review Group will have access to relevant papers, including financial papers and information concerning Council-owned companies. It may request additional information as necessary to support its work.

9. Confidentiality

Meetings of the Budget Review Group will involve the consideration of information that may be personal, confidential or commercially sensitive. All such information must be treated confidential by those in attendance unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer, following a request to share information outside of the meeting.

10. Relationship with Scrutiny

The Budget Review Group supports the broader work of the Scrutiny committee. It acts in an advisory and investigative capacity, with its outputs feeding into the formal scrutiny process through the submission of a final reporting of its recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

This page is intentionally left blank

Scrutiny Work Plan

September 2025 to November 2025

www.oxford.gov.uk



The Scrutiny Committee agrees an annual work plan detailing key issues – affecting Oxford and its people – selected for review. While the plan sets out the work of scrutiny for the year, it also includes flexibility to address topical issues and forthcoming Cabinet decisions as they arise.

The Work Plan is informed by suggestions received from elected members and senior officers, and it is reviewed at every Scrutiny Committee meeting to ensure it remains current and relevant. Members of the public are invited to contribute topics for consideration by submitting a [suggestion form](#). See our [Get Involved](#) webpage for further details on how you can participate in the work of scrutiny.

Topics included in the plan may be examined directly by the Scrutiny Committee, delegated to standing Working Groups, or explored in greater depth by time-limited Review Groups. Recommendations from the Working Groups and Review Groups need to be endorsed by the Committee.

The Committee also reviews the Council's [Forward Plan](#) at each meeting and determines which Cabinet decisions it wishes to consider before the decision is made. In addition, the Council has a 'call in' process to allow decisions made by the Cabinet to be reviewed by the Committee before they are implemented.

Housing and Homelessness Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	2 September 2025	Introduction on the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	2 September 2025	Re-procurement of Housing First support service
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	2 September 2025	Housing Performance
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	2 September 2025	Annual update on Allocations and Lettings

Climate and Environment Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	4 September 2025	Heat Network Update
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	4 September 2025	EV Infrastructure Update
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	4 September 2025	Local Area Energy Planning

Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	9 September 2025	Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025
Scrutiny Committee	9 September 2025	Budget Review Group Scope

Finance and Performance Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	11 September 2025	Online Payments System Rollout - Update Report
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	11 September 2025	Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q4 2024/25
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	11 September 2025	Quarterly Integrated Performance Report Q1 2025/26
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	11 September 2025	Optimism Bias relating to sizeable commercial properties in the city centre

Climate and Environment Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Climate and Environment Working	8 October 2025	Net Zero Tracker

Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)		
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	8 October 2025	Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act update

Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	14 October 2025	Annual Safeguarding Report
Scrutiny Committee	14 October 2025	Project Approval and Delegations for Westlands Drive and Halliday Hill affordable housing scheme
Scrutiny Committee	14 October 2025	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Finance and Performance Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	29 October 2025	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27

Scrutiny Committee – Special meeting

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	3 November 2025	Local Government Reorganisation

Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	11 November 2025	Devolution

Housing and Homelessness Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	4 November 2025	Housing Complaint Handling Performance (Q1 and Q2)
Housing and	4 November	Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-27

Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	2025	
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	4 November 2025	Housing Carbon Reduction

Finance and Performance Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	26 November 2025	Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q2 2025/26
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	26 November 2025	Delivery options for land at Oxpens

Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	2 December 2025	Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy

To: Cabinet
Date: 13 August 2025
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To submit the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee for Cabinet's consideration.
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet:
1. Considers and responds to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee as set out in the report.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

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

Overview and Summary

- The Scrutiny Committee met on 5 August 2025 and reviewed the following items:
 - Oxpens River Bridge Update

- Working Group meetings were also held to consider a range of reports:

Climate and Environment Working Group on 22 July 2025

- Net Zero Tracker

- Local Plan 2042 Climate Change and Resilience
 - Annual Air Quality Status Report
3. Following the meetings, Cabinet Members, in consultation with the relevant Officers were asked to agree, agree in-part, or disagree with the recommendations.
 4. The tables below detail the recommendations made by the Committee and its Working Groups for each report, which Cabinet will consider at their meeting on 13 August 2025. Cabinet has provided a commentary on each recommendation to inform the Committee of the rationale behind its decision. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were suggested.
 5. Minutes of the Scrutiny meeting on 5 August 2025 is available [here](#).
 6. The Committee and its Working Groups would like to note on record:
 - In its consideration of the Oxpens River Bridge update, the Committee asked a number of important questions, including: the implications of expanding the capital envelope on the wider capital programme; the risks if external funding is not secured; whether the project is at risk of falling into cost fallacy and whether budget slippages are in addition to the optimism bias already built into the programme. They also explored whether Council has adequately accounted for the likelihood of further legal proceedings or delays and raised concerns that a further judicial review hearing could significantly impact the project timeline and budget furthermore.
 - Having considered details of the report, the Committee acknowledged its limitations in making formal recommendations to Cabinet but strongly urged that all decision relating to the Oxpens River Bridge be carefully thought of and made by Cabinet itself, rather than delegated to officers.
 - More broadly, the Committee highlighted the issue of inequalities in access to justice, such as through the judicial review process, and encouraged the Council to consider these more explicitly in the delivery of future projects, particularly in areas where communities are more likely to mount legal challenges.
 - The Committee heard and acknowledged the points made by Mr Glazebrook (Friends of Grandpont Nature Park) and Councillor Lois Muddiman who both made an address to the Committee and wish to thank them for their contributions.
 - In relation to Local Plan 2042 Climate Change and Resilience, the Climate and Environment Working Group underscored the importance of incorporating building cooling, particularly in public buildings, as an integral part of design. The Group suggested that, if not already included, the design checklist should feature examples of various cooling measures, including passive solutions, to help guide future development proposals.
 7. The Scrutiny Committee would like to especially thank Cabinet Members Cllr Alex Hollingsworth (Planning and Culture) and Cllr Anna Railton (Deputy Leader – Zero Carbon Oxford) for their contributions. Scrutiny is also grateful to Jenny Barker (Regeneration and Development Lead), Tina Mould (Environmental Sustainability

Business Lead), Dan Young (Principal Planner – Spatial & Economic Development) and Pedro Abreu (Principal Air Quality Officer) for their participation in presenting reports and responding to questions during the recent meetings.

Financial implications

8. Financial implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
9. Where appropriate, any further financial implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Legal issues

10. Legal implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
11. Where appropriate, any further legal implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Level of risk

12. Risk Registers, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
13. Where appropriate, the risk register was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Equalities impact

14. Equalities Impact Assessments, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
15. Where appropriate, the Equalities Impact Assessments was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

16. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
17. Where appropriate, the Carbon and Environmental impacts were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Report author	Celeste Reyeslao
Job title	Scrutiny and Governance Advisor
Service area or department	Law, Governance and Strategy
Telephone	01865 252946
e-mail	creyeslao@oxford.gov.uk

**Table 1 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee –
Oxpens River Bridge Update**

The table below sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 5 August 2025 concerning the Oxpens River Bridge Update. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That Cabinet undertake high-level remodelling and assess potential impact of the judicial review appeal progressing to a hearing, particularly around timescales and future costings, to ensure the Council is better prepared and has a more informed basis for decision-making.	Yes	<p>The discussion at the Scrutiny Committee raised this recommendation having heard that it is difficult to fully estimate the costs that would be incurred if there was another delay to the project caused by the Judicial Review process and an appeal against the original rejection of the JR. That is because those costs will be based on the length of the delay, which is outside the control of the City Council.</p> <p>It is likely that a delay due to Judicial Review beyond Autumn 2025 would result in the delivery of the project being pushed from 2026 to 2027, to avoid construction over the period of highest flood risk. The high-level cost of such a delay will be reported verbally at the meeting.</p>

**Table 2 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Climate and Environment Working Group –
Local Plan 2042 Climate Change and Resilience**

The table below sets out the draft Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Working Group Working Group on 22 July 2025, endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5 August 2025. The Cabinet is asked to amend or agree a formal response as appropriate.

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Local Plan 2042 include clearer support for renewable energy schemes, particularly the potential for solar panel installations on terraced houses through community-led energy schemes.	Agree	<p>The new Local Plan will set out clear support for renewable energy generation, as is the case in the first draft plan that is currently subject to consultation, as we agree this is important. However, it is crucial that flexibility is retained in relation to what format this generation takes – i.e. not specifying rigidly that generation come from a particular technology. This will allow proposals to respond to particular characteristics of each site, and help future-proof the policies (e.g. should new technologies become suitable in future).</p> <p>We will consider how best to respond to proposals for community-led energy schemes, and whether the currently proposed policies can suitably cover this, or whether additional wording is needed and incorporate if necessary (potentially through supporting text).</p>
2) That there is greater robustness demonstrated in the Local Plan 2042 supporting text acknowledging the urgency of climate action when balancing the need to address climate emergency through retrofitting heritage buildings to support decarbonisation against the need to minimise harm to heritage assets.	In-part	<p>The proposed draft policies in the current Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 consultation strongly respond to the need for both mitigating impacts on climate change and adapting to it. Whilst the supporting text to the policies is yet to be drafted, we will also ensure that this message comes through strongly here.</p>

		<p>The new Local Plan 2042 proposes policy on retro-fitting of existing buildings, including historic buildings, in order to support applicants in making the best possible application. This is a new policy compared with the adopted Local Plan as we agree it is a key challenge we need to help applicants respond to. As the plan develops, we will continue to set out that, wherever possible, these applications will be supported, however, it should be noted that we also have a statutory duty towards protecting the historic environment which we must balance in preparing a legally compliant Local Plan.</p> <p>Whilst the vast majority of buildings in Oxford do not have a heritage designation, we are clear that heritage designations do not need to be a barrier to retro-fit but do necessitate additional care and consideration in designing such projects which the policy seeks to address. Having previously sought advice on this issue, there are limitations in how much further Local Plan policy can go, however, we will consider how we can further support such projects, whether this is through additional messaging in supporting text, or through other associated guidance (e.g. Technical Advice Notes) as we agree it is an important objective for the city.</p>
3) That the Plan explicitly references the potential use of energy offsetting funds from developers for retrofit improvements to schools and community buildings, recognising the wider public benefit of public buildings rather than individual residential buildings, and criteria applied to the allocation of these funds prioritises maximum community impact.	In-part	<p>Firstly, it should be noted that the proposed policy is clear that use of offsetting should be a last resort and that the preference is for net zero carbon to be achieved onsite first. Where offset funds are collected, it will be important that these funds are spent on projects that are identified through a fair and transparent methodology and that the funding is utilised for delivering true offsetting. We would agree that these would ideally be securing additional benefits for wider communities wherever possible – such as focusing on</p>

		<p>community buildings and/or social housing – but there may also be other important criteria.</p> <p>The methodology for administering these funds, including identifying suitable projects, is a work in progress that will continue to be developed as the Local Plan progresses, though separately to the Local Plan itself.</p> <p>We will look for ways to reference in the Local Plan examples of how we would wish to utilise funds generated from offsetting going forward, including that they can secure wider benefits for the community wherever possible. We will also factor the recommendation into the considerations of the wider process of creating the fund and its ongoing governance, which will ultimately need to be approved separately at an appropriate time (e.g. once the overarching policy approach has been tested at examination).</p>
4) That there is specific language acknowledging the potential for loss and damage associated with new and existing properties in areas of high flood risk, and that local plan policies ensure applicants take account of these potential impacts in future planning and climate resilience design features to minimise possible damage (e.g. positioning of plugs, use of specific materials on the ground floor that can cope with flood damage).	Agree	<p>The term “loss and damage” is a broad concept typically used internationally to refer to the consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to.</p> <p>In the Oxford context, the Local Plan 2042 is focused on adaption and mitigation that can be secured through the development process, whilst avoiding/mitigating risks now and in future wherever possible.</p> <p>To that end, the Local Plan includes a specific draft policy (Draft Policy G9) which is proposed to ensure that new development is designed in a way that is resilient to future climate change, including appropriate adaptation measures that can address a range of climate hazards like flooding and overheating where necessary. We agree that the Local Plan also has a role in highlighting the key risks in the city, such as flood risk and risk from overheating, at least at a high level, and will ensure this is a part of the supporting text.</p>

		<p>Proposed policy G9 also includes language that seeks to ensure applicants take these risks into account in designing their development and this will be expanded on in supporting text as it is drafted. The priority for the policies is to ensure that a strong framework is put in place setting out the key considerations which we want applicants to respond to where it is within their power. This can then provide a hook for additional supporting guidance (e.g. Technical Advice Notes) which can provide further detail and specific examples of resilience measures which might be suitable to meet the policy's requirements.</p>
--	--	---

Table 3 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Climate and Environment Working Group – Annual Air Quality Status Report

The table below sets out the draft Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Working Group Working Group on 22 July 2025, endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5 August 2025. The Cabinet is asked to amend or agree a formal response as appropriate

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Air Quality Action Plan incorporates specific measures addressing the use of diesel generators associated with street trading, construction and similar activities, reflecting the Council's regulatory responsibilities in relation to street trading and seek to reduce air quality impacts.	In-part	<p>We acknowledge the importance of addressing air quality impacts associated with diesel generator use in street trading, construction, and similar activities. As part of the development of the city's new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), we commit to exploring this issue further.</p> <p>However, at this stage, we are unable to commit to specific measures in detail, as the AQAP is still subject to internal review(s) and will also undergo a full public consultation process. This will ensure that any proposed actions in the final document are informed by stakeholder input and reflect a balanced, realistic, and evidence-based approach.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank