

# Agenda

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## Scrutiny Committee

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Tuesday 7 April 2026**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

**For further information** please contact:

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor

☎ 01865 252946

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

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## **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 Simon Ottino

Councillor Asima Qayyum

Councillor Anne Stares

Councillor James Taylor

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
<b>1 Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interest</b>	
<b>3 Chair's Announcements</b>	
<b>4 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	9 - 22
<p>The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2026 as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<b>5 Addresses by members of the public</b>	
<p>Public addresses relating to matters of business for this agenda. Up to five minutes is available for each public address.</p> <p><b>The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the <a href="#">Director of Law, Governance and Strategy</a> by 5.00 pm on Monday, 30 March 2026.</b></p>	
<b>6 Councillor addresses on any item for discussion on the Scrutiny agenda</b>	
<p>Councillor addresses relating to matters of business for this agenda. Up to five minutes is available for each address.</p> <p><b>The request should be received by the <a href="#">Director of Law, Governance and Strategy</a> by 5.00 pm on Monday, 30 March 2026.</b></p>	
<b>7 Watercourses and Ditches</b>	
<p>At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 July 2025, the Committee requested a report setting out the Council responsibilities in relation to managing and maintaining watercourses, ditches, streams and brooks that run alongside or through land owned by the City Council.</p> <p>Cllr Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford, Malcolm Peek, Property Services Manager and Michael Woods, Major Works Project Manager are invited to present the report and take part in</p>	

discussions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations.

*This report will be published as a supplement.*

**8 Review of Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy Councillor Applications** 23 - 28

Cabinet, at its meeting on 15 April 2026, will consider a report to approve the decision-making route for Councillor applications for Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy spend and approve amendments to with part 4 of the Council Constitution to reflect those arrangements.

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager have been invited to present the report and take part in discussions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations.

**9 Urgent Key Decisions End of Year Update 2025-2026** 29 - 34

The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 14 January 2025, requested a report summarising all urgent key decisions that have been taken in the 2025/26 municipal year.

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager have been invited to present the report and take part in discussions.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and agree any recommendations.

**10 Scrutiny Work Plan** 35 - 38

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.

The Committee is recommended to confirm its agreement to the Work Plan, or agree any amendments as required.

**11 Cabinet responses to Scrutiny recommendations** 39 - 48

At its meeting on 18 March 2026, Cabinet considered the following

reports from Scrutiny and made responses to the recommendations:

- More Leisure Annual Service Plan and Year 2 Update
- Nighttime Economy
- Fly-tipping and Litter Management
- Heat Network Update

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note** Cabinet's responses to its recommendations.

## 12 Endorsement of Working Group recommendations

Since the Scrutiny Committee's previous meeting on 3 February 2026, the following Working Groups have met:

- Finance and Performance Working Group (26 March 2026)
- Housing and Homelessness Working Group (31 March 2026)
- Climate and Environment Working Group (1 April 2026)

The Committee is asked to:

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

*This report will be published as a late supplement.*

## 13 Dates of future meetings

### Scrutiny Committee

- 9 June 2026

## **Information for those attending**

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

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- 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.

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## **Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 10 March 2026**

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### **Committee members present:**

Councillor Powell (Chair)	Councillor Rowley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Corais	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Latif	Councillor Miles
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Qayyum

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

Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor  
Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager  
Helen Bishop, Director of Communities & Citizens  
Diana Fawcett, City Centre Manager  
Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager  
Tina Mould, Environmental Sustainability Business Lead  
Maria Warner, Social Value and Sustainability Lead  
Bruce Thompson, ODS Head of Environmental Services  
Rob Jennings, SERCO Contract Manager

### **Also present:**

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy, Fairer Oxford  
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture  
Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Stares sent apologies.

*In Councillor Powell's absence, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Rowley, opened the meeting.*

### **106. Declarations of interest**

None.

### **107. Chair's Announcements**

None.

### **108. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on 3 February 2026 as a true and accurate record.

### **109. Addresses by members of the public**

None.

### **110. Councillor addresses on any item for discussion on the Scrutiny agenda**

None.

### **111. More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update**

Cabinet, at its meeting on 18 March 2026 will consider a report to update Cabinet on the highlights of the second year of the new leisure contract and approve the Annual Service Plan 2026-27, which is an annual requirement of the operator, aiming to align outcomes to the Council's priorities and to address health inequalities.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford, Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager, James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager, and Rob Jennings, SERCO Contract Manager, were present to respond to questions.

Councillor Munkonge provided a comprehensive summary of the report, noting that it provided an annual opportunity for a review of performance and the business plan for the next year. The Committee heard that overall, performance had exceeded expectation; specific details were provided.

*Councillor Qayyum and Councillor Corais joined the meeting.*

The Active Communities Manager emphasised the positive ongoing partnership work with Serco and the delivery of a youth hub in the past year, both of which have contributed towards public health and wellbeing goals.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Jarvis requested clarity on whether all the targets had been exceeded, as mentioned, with reference to specific data within the report. Secondly, more detail on the number of recorded visits was requested in order to provide a comparison with the previous year.

Councillor Miles requested disaggregated data in relation to the participation rates of women, girls, and young people in sport via membership numbers. Councillor Miles also asked how youth age groups are using the leisure centres in the evenings across different locations; references to existing positive examples were provided.

Noting the loss of space at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Councillor Ottino asked if there is confidence that people have been able to find alternative venues for some sports, and whether new sports, such as padel, have been considered as part of a broader programme of activities.

In response to Councillor Jarvis, the Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager explained that it is accurate to say that the 3% targets have been met or exceeded overall; any noted in the report that did not reach this number were not specifically targeted, such as swimming lessons. Therefore, the statement is true for targets which were set. An explanation of how data gaps from the previous year have been backfilled was also provided.

In response to Councillor Miles, the Active Communities Manager acknowledged that different interventions are required in relation to the youth hub to specifically target involvement of women and girls; examples of recent successes were noted, including the recent relaunch of girls' sessions at the East Oxford Community Centre. The Committee understood that feedback is sought from attendees to ensure plans are targeted and informed in the future.

The Active Communities Manager committed to checking the data relating to women and girls' attendance at the East Oxford Community Centre sessions.

The SERCO Contract Manager committed to sourcing disaggregated data on women and girls' attendance but explained that this relies on the self-reporting of members and customers.

In response to Councillor Ottino, the Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager explained that half of the sports hall space had been converted as it was underutilised; this is now an active zone (consisting of soft play, tag arena and climbing wall). The Committee also heard that the timetable has been reorganised to ensure that most activities are still facilitated.

The Active Communities Manager outlined ongoing partnership working with community groups which is encouraging people to become more active. Furthermore, details of consultations with younger groups and efforts to find funding for padel were detailed.

The Chair invited further questions.

Councillor Ottino expressed concern that young people do not have access to outdoor football and asked what could be done to provide another pitch.

Councillor Miles queried what other geographical areas of the city could be focused on to ensure young people have access to leisure services.

The Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager, in response to Councillor Ottino, confirmed that youth groups do have access to a regular weekly booking on the 3G pitch via the Youth Ambition scheme, however, it was noted that if feedback suggests this is not sufficient, there is an in-kind community fund that can be applied to in order to run other sessions. In response to Councillor Miles, the free under 17s city-wide swimming offer in Oxford was emphasised.

The SERCO Contract Manager also emphasised a 69% rise in under 18s activities across Oxford's leisure facilities which marked significant growth. The Committee heard of family inclusive sessions which are available and the SERCO Contract Manager invited any suggestions for future opportunities.

Councillor Munkonge also summarised the open weekends which take place across Oxford that offer activities to families for free; this particularly supports those who cannot afford to pay for leisure activities.

The Chair invited the Committee to consider possible recommendations.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet:**

- 1. That future reports provide More Leisure KPI outcomes broken down by gender, as well as youth participation by geographic venue, acknowledging that demographic in certain geographic areas differ. This is**

**to identify if there are any interventions required to address any gaps or segments that are underrepresented.**

- 2. That, as part of the service plan, Council and More Leisure set out what could be done to expand into non-traditional sports that are not currently offered in the leisure centres.**

*Councillor Powell joined the meeting during the discussion of recommendations.*

The Chair thanked Councillor Munkonge, the Active Communities Manager, the Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager, and the SERCO Contract Manager.

*Councillor Munkonge, the Active Communities Manager, the Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager, and the SERCO Contract Manager left the meeting and did not return.*

## **112. Nighttime Economy**

*Councillor Powell resumed the role of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.*

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 July 2025, the Committee requested an update on the Council's work to support the nighttime economy.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, and Diana Fawcett, City Centre Manager, were present to respond to questions.

Councillor Hollingsworth provided a comprehensive introduction to the report and explained that the council works hard to identify ways in which it can facilitate, encourage, and fix aspects of the nighttime economy in Oxford. The importance of creativity when supporting all groups in Oxford was emphasised.

The City Centre Manager guided the Committee through the presentation contained within the agenda pack.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

*Councillor Latif left the meeting and did not return.*

Councillor Ottino questioned the geographical focus of the work so far, noting that it perhaps excluded locations which could offer beneficial opportunities for the nighttime economy, such as some industrial spaces.

Councillor Jarvis queried the number of venues hosting live music and the regularity of these events. Secondly, he asked how far up the Cowley Road the audit surveyed and lastly, Councillor Jarvis emphasised that the capacity of each venue must be considered.

In response to Councillor Ottino, Councillor Hollingsworth welcomed the suggestion that a broader geographical area could be considered, however explained that the initial audit had been completed with limited resources and therefore, consideration was paid to what workload was feasible. Councillor Hollingsworth noted that the intention would be to identify next steps and focus points before expanding the workload. In response to Councillor Jarvis, it was noted that the capacity of venues is also an important consideration to ensure that more people can attend live music events.

In response to Councillor Jarvis, the City Centre Manager welcomed the suggestion to focus on the capacity of venues. In relation to regular live music, the Committee heard of the challenges officers experienced in finding venues which easily advertise their events. For the purposes of the audit, regular live music was classified as those events which takes place at least once a month in pubs, bars and nightclubs; this did not include theatres which had been analysed in their own category. Furthermore, clarification on the geographical areas covered within the audit was provided.

The Chair invited further questions.

Councillor Miles requested a definition of the nighttime economy and emphasised that it should consider a distinction between activities for adults, families, and children. Secondly, Councillor Miles asked how the impacts of the nighttime economy on residents are being assessed, specifically environmental factors and noise.

The City Centre Manager explained that whilst the audit had heavily focused on live music, it did also consider all forms of nighttime activity including events at libraries and museums; work going into the assessment of future opportunities for families and those under 18 at these venues was outlined. The Committee heard that analysis of existing licenses was not undertaken as licence conditions do not necessarily correlate with what a venue is being used for and what it has on offer in practice. The City Centre Manager explained that future work would look at impacts on residents.

Councillor Hollingsworth emphasised that it should be aimed for people who visit and live in Oxford to use the evenings to socialise and explore what the city has to offer.

The Chair invited further questions.

Councillor Jarvis asked whether a broader focus could be paid to offering live music more inclusively, and in scenarios which do not involve the sale of alcohol. Councillor Jarvis also queried whether the Council could work with promoters to support grassroots live music and whether alternative venues could be considered to support increased capacity for live music events. Finally, it was asked what could be done to support the safety of nighttime economy staff during their journey home.

Councillor Hollingsworth encouraged innovative and more inclusive approaches to supporting the commercial elements of the nighttime economy and recognised the challenges venues can face. In relation to supporting live music promoters, Councillor Hollingsworth noted his support for major events and developing relationships with the industry but also recognised that there is a shortage of space and land, and flexible approaches would be required. In relation to the safety of nighttime economy staff, engaging with venues and promoters was emphasised and the importance of addressing associated risks was acknowledged.

The City Centre Manager noted that promoters would be considered within the live music taskforce which is being established by the Council and details regarding ongoing work with the police in relation to the nighttime economy and staff safety were noted. The Committee heard that public transport must be considered in relation to staff commuting at night.

The Chair asked if alternative venues that are not focused on alcohol sales, such as cafes, could be more heavily encouraged in Oxford to promote accessibility; questions of resourcing were raised. Additionally, the Chair queried whether work has gone into liaising with local media outlets to promote the nighttime economy and to develop partnerships. Finally, the potential use of AI for collecting relevant data for the audit was suggested.

*The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor left the meeting.*

Councillor Hollingsworth supported the Chair's suggestion and emphasised that a nighttime economy that is broadly inclusive for all must be aspired towards; examples of how this could be done were noted. The consideration of minority groups was also emphasised to ensure everyone feels safe and welcome in the city at night. In relation to working with media outlets, Councillor Hollingsworth also welcomed the presence of grassroots media operators.

The City Centre Manager acknowledged that caution must be taken around the use of AI but also noted the gap in the market.

Councillor Jarvis suggested that council owned venues be more widely used for events within the nighttime economy.

*The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor rejoined the meeting.*

Councillor Miles, in relation to the Council's camping strategy for the city's parks, suggested that overnight events could be explored. The possibility of utilising the city's river spaces was also suggested. Finally, Councillor Miles emphasised the need to be creative with the use of venue spaces whilst also considering noise impacts on residents.

Councillor Hollingsworth noted that consideration of camping events would be within the remit of alternative council projects but appreciated that it was an interesting idea.

The Chair invited the Committee to consider possible recommendations.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet:**

- 1. That when considering the nighttime economy in relation to families and children, age groups are disaggregated into children up to age 11 and young people under 18.**
- 3. That the ongoing work maintains an open-minded approach to a wider range of nighttime activities, including bookshops, museums, the Covered Market, and other activities that are non-alcohol related.**
- 3. That late night cafés are categorised separately from other food-related venues.**
- 4. That consideration is given to include local promoters as part of the Live Music Taskforce.**
- 5. That the Council continues to engage with employers to identify how best to address the issues faced by workers travelling home late at night.**
- 6. That current analysis includes the capacity of venues, in addition to the number of venues.**

The Chair thanked the City Centre Manager and Councillor Hollingsworth.

*The City Centre Manager and Councillor Hollingsworth left the meeting and did not return.*

### **113. Fly-tipping and Litter Management**

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 July 2025, the Committee requested an update on the Council's work to mitigate fly-tipping and the work on litter management.

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, Helen Bishop, Director of Communities and Citizens Services, Tina Mould, Environment Sustainability Business Lead, Maria Warner, Social Value and Sustainability Lead, and Bruce Thompson, ODS Head of Environmental Services, were present to respond to questions.

Councillor Chapman provided a comprehensive introduction, noting that the report had been specifically requested by the Committee.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Ottino queried how effective the signage around the city is, why there are not more, and why signs are not automatically placed in fly tipping hotspots. More data regarding fly tipping locations and hotspots was requested. Councillor Ottino also asked what is being done to encourage communities to not fly tip and to be more proactive in keeping their areas free of rubbish.

*Councillor Qayyum left the meeting and did not return.*

Councillor Chapman noted that whilst fly tipping signage is not always useful and therefore is not always installed, it is generally a positive feature. Any installation delays are not related to budget matters but likely due to organisation of resources.

The ODS Head of Environmental Services noted that fly tipping hotspots are largely seasonal in nature and heavily linked to students occupying accommodation in term times. Issues with landlord responsibilities being upheld and poor bin store designs were also noted.

Councillor Chapman and the ODS Head of Environmental Services explained the collection rates of bulky waste in relation to fly tipping trends. It was noted that fly tipping predominantly occurs to the east of the city and the centre; reference was made to morning collections following events within the nighttime economy.

Councillor Jarvis queried the strategy for addressing fly tipping of smaller items around bins and asked what capacity there is for effectively dealing with litter in the parks. Councillor Jarvis also asked whether anything more could be done to handle the waste from licensed premises.

The ODS Head of Environmental Services outlined the identification of bins which are and are not used and expressed caution in removing bins as a method of deterring fly tipping. The Committee also heard that ODS usually responds positively to requests for additional bins and Members were assured that litter collection in parks is adapted

around weather to ensure a responsive service is delivered. In parks, it was also noted that bins are placed at exits to discourage dropping of litter around the wider park area and to ensure vehicles can easily reach the collection points.

The Director of Communities and Citizens Services informed the Committee that ODS are currently reviewing their approach to litter collection across the street scene. Suggestions of anti-fly tipping campaigns were also acknowledged for exploration.

Councillor Miles outlined a two-minute litter pick scheme which had been successful in Cutteslowe Park and suggested this be placed in additional settings. Councillor Miles also queried the deep cleaning schedule for main road stretches in high footfall areas of the city, especially in relation to litter and mess connected to the nighttime economy. Finally, it was asked what is done to manage litter picking on immediate side streets away from main zones.

*Councillor Chapman left the meeting and did not return.*

On Councillor Miles' suggestion, the ODS Head of Environmental Services committed to looking at the feasibility of litter picking boards in conjunction with the Director of Communities and Citizens Services, noting that it had previously been trialled. In relation to litter hotspots in the summer, the Committee heard that members of the public hosting gatherings in the parks are offered gloves and bags to collect their own rubbish; this has some success. In relation to deep cleaning of areas off the main roads, the approach varies dependent on the area; details were provided. The ODS Head of Environmental Services invited Members to notify him of any areas which require additional attention. Finally, the Committee were assured that every road throughout the city centre is swept thoroughly, and residential areas are attended throughout the day.

The Chair queried why the recycling rate has declined recently.

Councillor Ottino queried how certain the Council is of where litter is located; examples of litter embedded in hedges were referenced. A suggestion was made for more signage, perhaps designed by children.

*Councillor Miles left the meeting and did not return.*

The Environment Sustainability Business Lead confirmed that garden waste and paper recycling rates have declined in recent years. The Committee heard that this fits with national trends since the pandemic and Members also learned of issues with increasing waste contamination rates.

The Social Value and Sustainability Lead emphasised the steady decline in garden waste rates since the pandemic and an increase in domestic waste contamination. The Committee were informed that a new stream of work would be focusing on this to improve recycling rates.

In response to Councillor Ottino, the ODS Head of Environmental Services emphasised his confidence that the relevant teams are aware of the locations of litter requiring collection and clarified that litter in hedges is extracted thoroughly when hedges are trimmed annually.

Councillor Ottino raised concerns relating to collection from bin stores.

The Social Value and Sustainability Lead outlined the variable collection methods dependant on the owner of the bin store, including those on council owned land. The Committee understand that a focus on bin store design would be included in the upcoming workstream. The Social Value and Sustainability Lead and the ODS Head of Environmental Services also set out how waste is collected from various bin stores and the logistics of access requirements.

Community and education initiatives in relation to litter collection were also acknowledged and encouraged for consideration within future workstreams.

Councillor Ottino queried where responsibility lies for litter collection in ditches and waterways.

The ODS Head of Environmental Services outlined the responsibilities of ODS and emphasised that staff are not requested to collect litter in a manner which may be deemed unsafe. Furthermore, the shared responsibilities with the Environment Agency were also outlined.

The Committee understood that matters related to waterways would be discussed as a separate item at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair invited the Committee to consider possible recommendations.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet:**

- 1. To explore the provision of facilities in parks during the summer period to allow “2-minute litter picks” where this would be beneficial.**
- 4. To review the appropriateness of measures businesses, have in place to ensure that the waste they produce is managed responsibly and that they are encouraging their customers to dispose of litter appropriately.**

4. **To audit the use of signage in areas with high levels of fly-tipping and to consider where additional signage could be most effectively implemented.**
5. **That Council consider reengaging with education programmes and resources aimed at addressing behaviours and culture relating to litter and fly-tipping.**
6. **That future reports include a breakdown of locations with high levels of litter across the city, presented visually on a map where possible.**

The Chair thanked Councillor Chapman, the Director of Communities and Citizens Services, the Environment Sustainability Business Lead, the Social Value and Sustainability Lead, and the ODS Head of Environmental Services.

*Councillor Chapman, the Director of Communities and Citizens Services, the Environment Sustainability Business Lead, the Social Value and Sustainability Lead, and the ODS Head of Environmental Services left the meeting and did not return.*

#### **114. Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Committee **noted** the workplan.

#### **115. Cabinet responses to Scrutiny recommendations**

The Chair provided a summary of Cabinet’s responses to the Committee’s previous recommendations, as set out in the report.

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

#### **116. Endorsement of Recommendations from Working Groups**

The Committee **endorsed** the recommendation.

#### **117. Dates of future meetings**

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

**The meeting started at 6.15 pm and ended at 8.40 pm**

Chair .....

**Date: Tuesday 7 April 2026**

*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.*

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**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 15 April 2026

**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

**Title of Report:** Review of Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy Councillor Applications

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Decision being taken:</b>	For Cabinet to approve the decision-making route for Councillor applications for Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy spend and approve amendments to with part 4 of the Council Constitution to reflect those arrangements.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Thriving Communities A Well-Run Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None

<b>Recommendation(s):</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Delegate</b> the approval for Ward Member Budget applications to the Director of Communities and Citizens' Services, in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Property and Assets (where appropriate)
2.	<b>Delegate</b> the approval for Ward Member Community Infrastructure Levy spend applications to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Property and Assets (where appropriate)
3.	<b>Recommend</b> full Council to amend parts 4.4 and 4.7 of the Constitution to reflect the updated delegations.

**Information Exempt From Publication**

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

### Introduction and background

1. Ward Members are allocated Ward Member Budget (WMB) funding (currently £1,500) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding (currently £2,500) to spend over a 12-month period on anything that improves the economic, social, or environmental well-being of their ward. CIL is reserved to members whose wards are not covered by a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
2. The approval of WMB and CIL spend is reserved to the Executive, however as this would not be practical for every application to be taken to Cabinet, it is delegated to Officers to take the decisions. The process is set out in Part 4.7 of the Constitution.
3. The Ward Member Budget allocation may be spent only if it would benefit the member's own ward. Members may pool budgets across adjoining wards to benefit a wider area. The allocation can be spent on community projects benefitting groups or communities living or working in the ward such as:
  - a. Improving, refurbishing or cleaning up parts of the local area
  - b. Purchasing new street furniture or signage (having regard to any future servicing or maintenance requirements)
  - c. Supporting local groups, events or newsletters
4. CIL monies must be spent on local infrastructure which may include:
  - a. The provision of infrastructure
  - b. The improvement of infrastructure
  - c. The replacement of infrastructure
  - d. The operation and maintenance of infrastructure
  - e. Anything else to mitigate the demands development places on an area, including one-off feasibility studies to further proposals for capital projects
5. All WMB and CIL spend applications are subject to call-in to the Scrutiny Committee, as per part 17 of the Constitution. This ensures that all ward decisions receive scrutiny alongside decisions taken by the Executive, if called-in by four Councillors or the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

### Review of the Current Process

6. In July 2025, Committee and Member Services was requested to undertake a review of the current application to spend procedure and to offer recommendations to improve the decision-making process. Working with the Council's Fit for the Future Change Team, a review of the process, governance and feasibility has been assessed. The recommendations resulting from the review aim to a) simplify and improve the process for members; b) clarify the decision-making process, c) ensure that Member requests/ projects protect members from non-compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations 2015.

## **Improving the process for Members**

7. Proposed improvements to the process for members are:
  - a. The implementation of an online form, which will make the process easier for members to complete, with a paper form also available on request.
  - b. Removing the requirement for Members to get a quote from ODS for the works. Previously, members have been required to email ODS directly for a quote. Following the review, Members will submit the request for the work to the Council and be provided a quote by Officers. This will ensure consistency of quotes and remove Members from any responsibility for CDM
  - c. An annual pricing list of regular work will be provided to enable members to estimate budget, this includes litter bins, replacement benches, picnic tables and tree planting.
  - d. In future members will also be able to review the balance of their WMB and CIL monies through their own QL portal, enabling members to review their allocated budget in 'real time'. Members can continue to contact the relevant teams to receive the same information.
8. An annual report on the use of WMB and CIL will continue to be published on the Council website at the end of the financial year and will be sent directly to Members.

## **Improving Decision Making**

9. As with all financial decisions within the council, it is good practice that we have a clear record of who has approved spend. It is therefore proposed that, as budget holders, the Director of Communities and Citizens' Services will be responsible for approving WMB applications, and the Director of Planning and Regulation will approve CIL applications.
10. The proposed list of consultees in relation to applications includes the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) and the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer). Their role is to review the applications received but ultimately, since they do not hold the budget, they should not take the final decision.
11. Additional consultees for applications may include the Director of Property and Assets so that she can consider, where relevant any implications relating to the CDM Regulations 2015 to ensure all projects benefitting from the expenditure meet these requirements.
12. Any consultees listed above can delegate their responsibilities to a suitable officer within their department through their individual schemes of delegation.
13. All WMB and CIL spend decisions will be published on the Council's website via Mod.Gov, bringing these decisions in line with other delegated decisions from Cabinet, allowing further transparency about how Ward Member Decisions are made. All decisions about Ward Member Budget spend will continue to be subject to call-in and would be ultimately determined by the Scrutiny Committee.
14. These changes are designed to simplify and clarify the process for Members.

## **Impact of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015**

15. The Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations 2015 are the UK regulations aimed at improving health, safety, and welfare in construction projects, as per the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), which is the governing body,

overseeing Health & Safety in construction. It sets out roles and responsibilities for all parties involved including clients, designers, contractors, and workers, to ensure risks are managed from the planning stage through to completion.

16. Compliance ensures that construction projects are carried out safely, efficiently, and without harm to workers or the public. It is also a legal requirement, and failing to meet these obligations could have serious consequences.
17. Failure to comply could lead to project delays, fines, legal action, reputational damage, and in severe cases, imprisonment for duty holders.
18. To ensure the council is compliant with these requirements and remove the CDM risk for Members, Officers will review the requests, determine whether there are any CDM requirements and where necessary ensure these are included in the specification for the works and the quotes provided to Members.

### **Changes to the Constitution**

19. As per part 4.4 (Delegation to Officers), an amendment is proposed to remove the reference to 4.7 as not being able to be delegated to Officers.
20. To update the paragraph which sets out which decisions taken by officers under delegated powers that must be published to the Council website to include:
  - a. Any Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy application decisions
21. An amendment to Part 4.7 (d) (Ward Member Decisions):
  - a. Any WMB spend must be approved by the Director of Communities and Citizens' Services, following consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Planning and Assets.
22. An additional paragraph (e) at part 4.7 is proposed to clearly state the different decision-making route for CIL.
23. Any CIL spend must be approved by the Director of Planning and Regulation following consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer), the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Planning and Assets where appropriate.
24. These amendments to the Constitution will need to be recommended to full Council and will form part of a wider report including other proposed amendments to the Constitution.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

25. If the delegations and recommendations to Council to update the Constitution were not made, the ambiguities within the Constitution would remain around who should take decisions on member applications for WMB and CIL spend and what consultation is required before applications are determined. There would also be lack of clarity (and therefore potential liability for members) on responsibility for compliance with CDM Regulations (which needs to sit with Officers).
26. There is also the responsibility as to who should lead the report and discussion if the WMB or CIL spend was called in to the Scrutiny Committee. At present, there is

no clear decision taker who can assist with presenting and leading in respect of any WMB or CIL spend decisions that are called in.

### **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation**

27. There are no direct implications relating to the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation arising from the proposals to amend the delegations of authority to determine WMB or CIL spend applications. A future funding model for members to apply to fund projects within their wards would be a decision for the new unitary authority covering Oxford.

### **Financial implications**

28. As there are no proposed changes to the annual WMB or CIL funding, there are no financial implications arising from this report.

29. Any unspent allocations at the end of a financial year are carried forward unless Council agrees otherwise. If a ward member changes during the year without the full allocations having been designated (including any allocations carried forwards from a previous year), the replacement ward member will be able to allocate the remaining balance. Any changes to the annual figures reserved to each ward member, including any un-allocated funds being carried forward to a new fiscal year, would be reserved to Council during the consideration of the Council's budget.

### **Legal issues**

30. As is currently the case, no WMB or CIL spend applications will be processed during a pre-election period. (EG/10450/6/2/26)

### **Level of risk**

31. All WMB and CIL decisions will be reviewed by officers to ensure they comply with the CDM Regulations 2015. A separate risk register relating to all constructions projects is updated by the Building Safety and Compliance Surveyor, and going forward, will include all projects funded by WMB and CIL.

32. There are no other risks identified relating to the proposals.

### **Equalities impact**

33. No equalities issues have been identified in relation to the proposals.

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**Background Papers: None**

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**To:** **Scrutiny Committee**  
**Date:** 7 April 2026  
**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)  
**Title of Report:** Urgent Key Decisions End of Year Update

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Decision being taken:</b>	To provide the Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the urgent key decisions taken in this municipal year.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Well Run Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None

<b>Recommendation(s):</b> That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:
1. <b>Note</b> the list of urgent key decisions taken between March 2025 and March 2026;

<b>Information Exempt From Publication</b>	
N/A	N/A

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Appendix Title</b>	<b>Exempt from Publication</b>
N/A	N/A	N/A

## Introduction and background

1. The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025, requested a list of Urgent Key Decisions taken in the current municipal year. This followed a report from the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (previously Head of Law and Governance) setting out the actions taken for reducing the amount of urgent key decisions.

7. A previous report setting out the Urgent Key Decisions in the 2024-2025 municipal year was reported to the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Since February 2025, the Council now publishes a weekly forward plan for all delegated Key Decisions due to be taken, which allows for the legally required 28-day notice period to start earlier.
8. All urgent key decisions included within this report have been reported to full Council in July 2025 and January 2026, as per parts 15.17 and 17.10 of the Constitution.
9. The Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the urgent key decisions taken since the previous update was presented to Committee.
10. Measures implemented have seen a reduction in urgent key decisions and the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that they are only emerging where there is a real reason for which they have become urgent. A robust challenge is put in place on each one to ensure that they are only brought forward where strictly necessary.

### **Local Government Reorganisation – Interim Response to Government**

2. This decision, taken by Cabinet at their meeting on 19 March 2025, was to submit Oxford City Council's response to the Government's Local Government Reorganisation. The deadline was 20 March 2025 and had to coincide with other responses from local authorities in Oxfordshire.
3. As this was a response to a consultation, the decision was not considered Key, however as per section 17.1 of the Constitution, all resolutions by Cabinet are subject to a call-in period.
4. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 20 February 2025 to remove the call-in period under section 17.9 of the Constitution, due to the deadline to submit the response to Government and the significant amount of work that was required in order to finalise the submission on the part of the Council, including coordination with neighbouring authorities.
5. Alternative Options Considered – to keep the call-in period, which was concluded after the deadline for submission to Government. This is not considered appropriate because Oxford City Council wouldn't have been able to submit a joint submission to the Government alongside the Oxfordshire Councils and West Berkshire of an interim plan for Local Government Reorganisation and including three initial proposals; and to agree the Council's preferred option for the creation of three unitary councils.

### **OxWed LLP Funding Arrangements**

6. The decision, taken on 27 March 2025, the Group Finance Director to agree a follow-on loan agreement for existing and future loans to OxWed LLP.
7. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 25 March 2025 to remove the call-in period under section 17.9 of the Constitution.
8. Oxwed LLP is a partnership between Oxford City Council and Nuffield College Developments 1 Limited.
9. The partnership's purpose is to facilitate the development of land held by the partnership in the Oxpens area of the City.

10. There is an existing loan agreement in place which terminates on 31st March 2025. It is therefore necessary to agree a new loan agreement in order to allow Oxwed LLP to continue with the development proposals.
11. The background to and key terms of the agreement were agreed by Cabinet on 5 February 2025. This decision is therefore to agree to a loan agreement in accordance with those terms.
12. This decision did not result in any additional financial commitment beyond that already agreed by Cabinet and Council in providing loans to Oxwed LLP. Any additional loans beyond those already agreed would only be provided in line with separate Cabinet and Council approval.
13. Reasons for decision – the existing loan agreement ends on 31 March 2025 and a replacement loan agreement is required.
14. **To sell the freehold title of 64-65 Cornmarket Street**
15. The decision, taken on 2 May 2025 was to sell the freehold title of 64-65 Cornmarket Street.
16. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 25 April 2025 to remove the call-in period under section 17.9 of the Constitution owing to the need to progress the off market sale at pace in order to secure the transaction.
17. The reason this was taken as an urgent decision was due to the tight timescales for completion of the sale within 30 days, which, if not progressed, would leave the Council with a potential problematic property to manage in the future, with the possibility of high void costs and maintenance liabilities.
18. Alternative Options Considered – The alternative option is to not proceed with the sale. It is believed that an offer of this level would not be forthcoming from another purchaser due to the nature of the purchaser being a neighbouring freeholder and viewed as a “special purchaser” and the Council has a duty to secure the best value for the disposal of the land.

#### **Approval of National Homelessness Property Fund 1 resolution**

19. The decision, taken on 8 December 2025 was for the Director of Housing to approve the National Homelessness Property Fund 1 resolution, confirming the extension of the fund to 30th of April 2026 to be signed by the Director of Housing Services on behalf of the Council as a limited partner of the Fund and to authorise the entering in to of any required agreements on behalf of the Council required to give effect to the resolution, subject to legal review.
20. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 8 December to remove the requirement of the 28-day notice period under section 15.17 and call-in period under section 17.10 of the Constitution.
21. In July 2025 Cabinet approved the moving of the Council’s investment of £10m in National Homelessness Property Fund 1 (HNPF1) which was due to expire, into a new “evergreen” property fund, and gave necessary delegations to the Director of Housing to enable this reinvestment.
22. . As of December, the new fund was not yet ready, with legal work ongoing, so Resonance as managers of the fund asked all investors to support a resolution to extend the current fund until April 2026 to give more time.

23. Without taking this step, the Council would have been unable to reinvest in line with the decision of Cabinet on the 9 July 2025, once a new fund is ready and established.
24. Reasons for Decisions – On this basis the report therefore recommends to the Director of Housing to support this resolution to enable the extension, agreeing to enter into any required agreements to facilitate it. Without an extension the fund would close, risking the Council's £10m investment and the continued operation of the homes to house formerly homeless families.

#### **Purchase agreement of land situated at The Bungalow Sandy Lane, OX4 6LL**

25. The decision, taken on 18 December 2025 was for the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to approve the freehold purchase of the twelve (12) newly constructed affordable residential units to be constructed at the property known as The Bungalow, Sandy Lane, Oxford (OX4), for the sum of £2,820,000, and to be held in the Housing Revenue Account and provided as affordable housing at Social Rent tenure and to approve entering into all necessary agreements to facilitate the acquisition of the Property, including the purchase agreement, transfer deed, and any ancillary documents with the Seller (freehold owner). The acquisition comprises of 12 newly constructed affordable residential units, which will be managed through Oxford City Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and delivered as Social Rent tenures.
26. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 8 December to remove the requirement of the 28-day notice period under section 15.17 and call-in period under section 17.10 of the Constitution.
27. A report was presented to Cabinet on the 17 April 2024 which provided delegation as follows:
- “the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services; and the Head of Law and Governance to agree sites and enter into agreements and contracts relating to the spend of Retained Right to Buy Receipts, for the provision of additional affordable housing into the Housing Revenue Account, within this project approval”.
28. The report did not name this Property or provide certainty around the purchase details. This Property therefore falls outside the scope of the original approval and there is a need to have a decision in order to enable the agreements to be entered into.
29. The landowner wished to deliver the housing on site directly, though the Council has asked if they would be willing to sell it undeveloped they have confirmed that they are not willing to do so and wish to undertake the construction themselves.
30. The site has planning permission and, under the s106 agreement relating to that permission, the site is restricted to be developed and provided as Affordable Housing only, with an indication therein that the Council may be the ultimate owner of the provided accommodation. The developed Property cannot be sold on the open market as a result of the permission, and the s106 sets requirement that the 12 newly constructed units must be held by the Council or a Registered Housing Provider.
31. The risk to not proceeding would be for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to not secure 12 x newly constructed units, at Social Rent to alleviate pressures from the

General Needs Housing Register and prevent delivery of a new affordable housing opportunity on a parcel of land that is not allocated in the Local Plan

32. Alternative Options Considered – the risk to not proceeding would be for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to not secure 12 x newly constructed units, at Social Rent to alleviate pressures from the General Needs Housing Register and prevent delivery of a new affordable housing opportunity on a parcel of land that is not allocated in the Local Plan.

### **Replacement of Chillers at Oxford Ice Rink**

33. The decision, taken on 22 December 2025 was for the Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford to approve the proposal that Serco Leisure Operating Limited (incumbent operator) carry out the replacement of the chillers; at the Ice Rink, agree that the Director of Property & Assets, in consultation with the Group Finance Director, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Lead Cabinet Member, approves and finalises the mechanism and documentation required to implement the replacement of the chillers at the Ice Rink within the approved budget and approve spend of up to £1.5m, to be vired from existing budget lines within the capital programme.
34. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 15 December 2025 to remove the requirement of the 28-day notice period under section 15.17 and call-in period under section 17.10 of the Constitution.
35. The Council entered into a new Leisure Operator Contract (“LOC”) with Serco in 2024. Under the terms of the contract 3 of the centres are let on a full repairing and insuring basis, with Serco picking up all repairs and maintenance and capital lifecycle replacement. In respect of the Ice Rink and Ferry Leisure Centre, Serco as operator are liable for the first £100k of the cost of capital lifecycle replacement with the Council responsible for anything over and above the £100k threshold.
11. The last full condition survey on the Ice Rink was undertaken in 2018 with an update undertaken as part of the dilapidations in 2023. While it was known that the chillers were approaching end of life, it had been anticipated they would last until 2032. Unfortunately, they failed earlier and require replacement as they cannot be repaired. Without fully functioning chiller units the Ice Rink would not be able to operate. The Council has a legal obligation under the LOC to replace the failed chillers. The cost to replace was £1.5m with the Ice Rink running on temporary plant at the cost of £1,600 per week. Although Serco has funded the first £100k of costs this then fell to the Council; As such it was recommended that the chillers were therefore replaced as quickly as possible. The LOC provides that the Council can carry out the replacement itself or can agree with Serco as the Operator under the LOC to carry out the work on behalf of the Council.
36. The chillers will need to be designed and ordered, meaning 4-6 months before they are installed and able to service the Ice Rink. The cost of the temporary kit is not insignificant, and a Single Member Decision was sought to reduce the number of weeks the rink is dependent on temporary equipment.
37. Two alternatives were considered, the first being to continue running the Ice Rink on temporary kit until the outcome of the Ice Rink project is known. This has been discounted as is cost prohibitive.

### **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation**

38. There are no implications of Local Government Reorganisation arising from this report.

39. Where appropriate, any implications relating to LGR were reviewed when considering the decisions using the linked guidance from Government: [Financial decisions before local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

### Financial implications

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

41. Financial implications for each of the Urgent Key Decisions have been outlined above, and the Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) was consulted before each decision was taken.

### Legal issues

42. There are no financial issues arising from this report.

43. Legal issues for each of the Urgent Key Decisions have been outlined above, and the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) was consulted before each decision was taken.

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### Background Papers:

- 1 [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 14 January 2025, 6.00 pm | Oxford City Council](#)
- 2 [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 26 March 2025, 6.00 pm | Oxford City Council](#)
- 3 [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday 19 March 2025, 6.00 pm | Oxford City Council](#)
- 4 [Decision - Oxwed LLP Funding Arrangements | Oxford City Council](#)
- 5 [Decision - To sell the freehold title of 64-65 Cornmarket Street | Oxford City Council](#)
- 6 [Decision - Approval of National Homelessness Property Fund 1 resolution | Oxford City Council](#)
- 7 [Decision - Purchase agreement of land situated at The Bungalow Sandy Lane, OX4 6LL | Oxford City Council](#)
- 8 [Decision - Replacement of Chillers at Oxford Ice Rink | Oxford City Council](#)

## Scrutiny Work Plan

April 2026 to July 2026

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.

### Finance and Performance Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	26 March 2026	Quarterly Integrated Performance Report - Q3 2025/26
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	26 March 2026	OX Place - OCHL Business Plan
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	26 March 2026	OX Place - Development Sites Update

### Housing and Homelessness Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Housing and	31 March 2026	Housing Performance

Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)		
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	31 March 2026	Selective Licensing Year 3 Update

### Climate and Environment Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	1 April 2026	Local Area Energy Planning Update
Climate and Environment Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	1 April 2026	Social Housing EPCC Update

### Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	7 April 2026	Watercourses and Ditches
Scrutiny Committee	7 April 2026	WMB and CIL report
Scrutiny Committee	7 April 2026	Urgent Key Decisions Update

### Finance and Performance Working Group

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	14 April 2026	Impacts of congestion charge on Council car parks
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	14 April 2026	ODS - ODSTL 4 Year Business Plan
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	14 April 2026	ODS - ODSL Business Plan
Finance and Performance Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)	14 April 2026	ODS - Remuneration Policy
Finance and Performance Working	14 April 2026	OxWED Delivery Strategy

Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)		
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## Scrutiny Committee

Committee/Working Group	Meeting date	Reports
Scrutiny Committee	9 June 2026	Establishment of the Scrutiny Standing Working Groups and Review Group

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 18 March 2026  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee

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

<b>Recommendation(s): That the Cabinet:</b>
1. <b>Consider and respond</b> to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee as set out in the report.

<b>Information Exempt From Publication</b>	
N/A	N/A

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Appendix Title</b>	<b>Exempt from Publication</b>
N/A	N/A	N/A

## Overview and Summary

- The Scrutiny Committee met on 10 March 2026 and reviewed the following items:
  - More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update
  - Nighttime Economy
  - Fly-tipping and Litter Management
- Working Group meetings were also held to consider a range of reports:

### **Climate and Environment Working Group on 25 February 2026**

- EV Infrastructure Update
- Heat Network Update
- Net Zero Tracker

### **Housing and Homelessness Working Group on 26 February 2026**

- Allocations Scheme Review
- Measures to meet growing demand for Temporary Accommodation

3. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 grants the power to the Scrutiny Committee to make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive; and on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.
4. Following the meetings, Cabinet Members, in consultation with the relevant Officers were asked to agree, agree in-part, or disagree with the recommendations.
5. The tables below detail the recommendations made by Scrutiny for each report, which Cabinet will consider at their meeting on 18 March 2026. Cabinet has provided commentaries to inform the Committee of the rationale behind its decision. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were suggested.
6. Scrutiny wish to put on record:

#### Climate and Environment

The Climate and Environment Working Group noted concerns which have previously been raised by this Working Group regarding the risk of monopolistic behaviour and the potential for the Council to have limited leverage once infrastructure is installed and operational, further noting the importance of a robust approach to procurement of Heat Network.

#### Housing and Homelessness

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group noted the proposed changes to the Allocations Scheme and asked questions relating to relocation capabilities under unique circumstances such as trauma or mental health challenges, and noted the role of the Exceptional Circumstances Panel in dealing with these types of scenarios. The Working Group also delved into the practice envisioned for the new face-to-face offer in the city centre as means to prevent homelessness noting similar and successful practices by other local authorities. No recommendations were agreed; both reports were supported by the Working Group.

7. Minutes of the Scrutiny meeting held on 10 March 2026 can be viewed [here](#).
8. The Scrutiny Committee would like to thank Cabinet particularly Cllr Anna Railton (Zero Carbon Oxford), Cllr Linda Smith (Housing and Communities), Cllr Chewe Munkonge (A Healthy, Fairer Oxford), Cllr Alex Hollingsworth (Planning and Culture) and Cllr Nigel Chapman (Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies) for their contributions. The Committee was also grateful to Tina Mould (Environmental Sustainability Business Lead), Vikki Robins (Environmental Sustainability Manager), Rose Dickinson (Environmental Sustainability Manager), Richard Wood (Housing Needs and Strategy Manager), Tom Porter (Senior Strategy and Service

Development Officer), James Baughan (Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager), Hagan Lewisman (Active Communities Manager), Rob Jennings (Contract Manager – Oxford), Diana Fawcett (City Centre Manager), Maria Warner (Social Value and Sustainability Lead), Helen Bishop (Director of Communities and Citizens Services), Bruce Thompson (Head of Environmental Services, ODS) for their work and presenting the reports.

### **Financial implications**

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

### **Legal issues**

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

### **Level of risk**

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

### **Equalities impact**

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

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

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

### **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation**

19. Implications of Local Government Reorganisation for the reports listed above were outlined within the report when presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
20. Where appropriate, any further implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations using the linked guidance from Government: [Financial decisions before local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

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**Table 1 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee –  
More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update**

The table below sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2026 concerning the More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
1) That future reports provide More Leisure KPI outcomes broken down by gender, as well as youth participation by geographic venue, acknowledging that demographic in certain geographic areas differ. This is to identify if there are any interventions required to address any gaps or segments that are underrepresented.	Yes	This data will be provided in future reports.
2) That, as part of the service plan, Council and More Leisure set out what could be done to expand into non-traditional sports that are not currently offered in the leisure centres.	Yes	A note on this will be included in the service plan, with the intention to explore opportunities.

**Table 2 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee –  
Nighttime Economy**

The table below sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2026 concerning Nighttime Economy. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i><b>Recommendation</b></i>	<i><b>Agree?</b></i>	<i><b>Comment</b></i>
1) That when considering the nighttime economy in relation to families and children, age groups are disaggregated into children up to age 11 and young people under 18.	Yes	This distinction is helpful and we also recognise that all ages of children can be different with different interests and needs, and it's important that a nighttime economy appeals to all of them. We will reflect this in our approach to ensure there is inclusivity across all ages and make sure we flag this in discussions with key stakeholders.
2) That the ongoing work maintains an open-minded approach to a wider range of nighttime activities, including bookshops, museums, the Covered Market, and other activities that are non-alcohol related.	Yes	We will reflect this in our approach to ensure there is inclusivity across different ages and interests, and again flag this in discussion with stakeholders.
3) That late night cafés are categorised separately from other food-related venues.	Yes	These will be categorised separately so there is clear data available.
4) That consideration is given to include local promoters as part of the Live Music Taskforce.	Yes	The local promoters will be part of the Live Music Taskforce once assembled.
5) That the Council continues to engage with employers to identify how best to address the issues faced by workers travelling home late at night.	Yes	The Council will continue to engage with employers and Thames Valley Police where feasible.

6) That current analysis includes the capacity of venues, in addition to the number of venues.	Yes	This will be included going forward to ensure appropriate data is collected.
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**Table 3 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee –  
Fly-tipping and Litter Management**

The table below sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2026 concerning Fly-tipping and Litter Management. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i><b>Recommendation</b></i>	<i><b>Agree?</b></i>	<i><b>Comment</b></i>
1) To explore the provision of facilities in parks during the summer period to allow “2-minute litter picks” where this would be beneficial.	Yes	ODS will explore this, especially around appropriate trial locations and discuss funding options with OCC officers.
2) To review the appropriateness of measures businesses have in place to ensure that the waste they produce is managed responsibly and that they are encouraging their customers to dispose of litter appropriately.	No	This was not part of the scope of the paper and is not covered by the author’s roles. It will need to be discussed with the relevant officers. There is a regular dialogue between ODS and businesses, using its commercial services, about the timing of collections but late evening ones are not permissible under our current EA licences. CRT do conduct regulation of businesses and waste issues. The guidance in place specifically for the city centre ensures that commercial waste is removed during the busiest footfall periods in the daytime, to allow for street cleansing and safety.
3) To audit the use of signage in areas with high levels of fly-tipping and to consider where additional signage could be most effectively implemented.	Yes	ODS will explore the logging of fly-tipping activity where fly-tip signs are in place to ascertain effectiveness long-term and help inform future locations. This may require additional funding if more signage is required.

4) That Council consider reengaging with education programmes and resources aimed at addressing behaviours and culture relating to litter and fly-tipping.	Yes	OCC to explore options for a communication / engagement programme for litter and fly-tipping. There is a programme of engagement and education in place for improving residential waste collections, with a focus on increasing recycling.
5) That future reports include a breakdown of locations with high levels of litter across the city, presented visually on a map where possible.	In part	Mapping of litter levels is not currently possible but ODS will explore what data is available from audit activity and how this can be presented.

## Table 4 – Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Climate and Environment Working Group – Heat Network Update

The table below sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Working Group on 25 February 2026 and endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2026 concerning the Heat Network Update. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
1) That Cabinet formally write to Central Government seeking inclusion of Oxford in the first tranche of Heat Network Zones to be designated following the commencement of Heat Network Zoning Regulations, so that the Council will have clear statutory powers to enforce delivery against agreed plans, intervene in cases of non-compliance or underperformance, prevent monopolistic practices, as well as ensure transparency and appropriate safeguards.	Yes	This would be done, in hand with progressing to procure a Heat Network Developer for Oxford, via a Development Agreement.