

**SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

**March 2016 – June 2016**

**Published on: 24/03/16**

The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its inhabitants. Time is allowed within this plan to consider topical issues as they arise throughout the year as well as decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board. This document represents the work of scrutiny for the remainder of the 2016/17 Council year and will be reviewed monthly by the Scrutiny Committee.

The work plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior council officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our [suggestion form](https://ecitizen.oxford.gov.uk/citizenportal/form.aspx?form=Scrutiny_Committee_Suggestion).

The following criteria may be used by the Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and prioritise suggested topics:

* *Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest?*
* *Is it an area of high expenditure?*
* *Is it an essential service / corporate priority?*
* *Can Scrutiny influence and add value?*

Some topics will be considered at Scrutiny Committee meetings and others will be delegated to two standing panels. Items for more detailed review will be considered by time-limited review groups.

The Committee will review the Council’s [Forward Plan](http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=345&RD=0) at each meeting and decide which executive decisions it wishes to comment on before the decision is made. The Council also has a “call in” process which allows decisions made by the City Executive Board to be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented.

**Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel responsibility and membership**

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| **Committee** | **Remit** | **Nominated councillors** |
| Scrutiny Committee | Overall management of the Council’s scrutiny function. | Councillors Simmons (Chair), Hayes (Vice-Chair), Coulter, Darke, Fry, Gant, Hollick, Henwood, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Pegg, Smith and Taylor |
| Finance  | Finance and budgetary issues and decisions | Councillors Simmons (Chair), Fooks, Fry & Hayes |
| Housing  | Strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions | Councillors Smith (Chair), Benjamin, Gotch, Henwood, Sanders & Wade; Geno Humphrey (co-optee).  |

**Current and planned review groups**

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| **Topic** | **Scope** | **Nominated councillors** |
| Guest Houses | To review the case for interventions to prevent exploitation in guest houses | Cllrs Coulter (Chair), Paule, Royce & Simmons |
| Budget Review 2016/17 | To review the Council’s 2016/17 draft budget and medium term financial plan | Finance Panel Members  |
| Equality & Diversity | To review barriers faced by under-represented groups in employment and anti-discrimination practices. | Cllrs Hayes (Chair), Altaf-Khan, Taylor & Thomas |

**Indicative timings of 2015/16 review panels**

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| **Scrutiny Review** | **Aug** | **Sept** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **March** | **April** | **May** |
| Budget Review 2016/17 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Guest Houses |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Equality and diversity |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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|  | Scoping |
|  | Evidence gathering  |
|  | Reporting |

**Scrutiny Committee**

**5 April 2016**

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Executive Member**  | **Lead Officer** |
| Youth Ambition | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on spend and outcomes of the Council’s Youth Ambition programme. | Councillor Pat Kennedy – Young People, Schools and Skills | Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager  |
| Preventing isolation | Scrutiny item | To consider the Council’s role in tackling loneliness among the elderly. This follows a previous item in February 2015. | Councillor Dee Sinclair - Crime, Community Safety and Licensing | Luke Nipen, Communities Specialist Officer |
| Graffiti | Scrutiny item | To receive a progress update on the Council’s approach to preventing and removing graffiti, particularly on private property. This follows a previous item in December 2014. | Councillor John Tanner - Climate Change and Cleaner Greener Oxford | Doug Loveridge, Streetscene Services Manager |
| Tree Management Policy | Scrutiny item | To consider the Council’s Tree Management Policy, which was adopted in 2008 and last reviewed in 2011. | Councillor Mark Lygo – Leisure, Sport and Events  | Stuart Fitzsimmons, Parks & Open Spaces Manager |
| Recommendation Monitoring – Local Economy | Scrutiny item | To monitor progress following the recommendations of the Local Economy Review Group in June 2015. | Councillor Bob Price – Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy and Economic Development  | Laurie-Jane Taylor, City Centre Manager |
| Discretionary Housing Payment Policy - 2016 revision | Forward Plan item | The report seeks approval of the revised Discretionary Housing Payment policy for 2016. This policy is amended in response to changes in the government’s welfare policy and the amount of government grant paid to Local Authorities. | Councillor Susan Brown – Customer and Corporate Services | Paul Wilding, Revenue and Benefits Programme Manager |

**7 June 2016**

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Executive Member**  | **Lead Officer** |
| Educational Attainment | Scrutiny item | To consider an independent report on the Council’s educational attainment investments produced by Oxford Brookes University. | Councillor Pat Kennedy, Board Member for  | Tim Sadler, Executive Director for Community Services |
| Employment of interns, apprentices and work experience students | Scrutiny item | To receive a briefing on how many interns, apprentices and work experience students have been taken on by the Council and in which departments. Consider career progression and tasks undertaken. | Councillor Pat Kennedy – Young People, Schools and Skills | Jarlath Brine, OD & Learning Advisor |
| Planning Enforcement | Scrutiny item | To consider how planning compliance is monitored, what enforcement action is taken and whether this is relayed to the appropriate Planning Committee. | Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services | Patsy Dell, Head of Service - Planning and Regulatory |
| Planning and Regulatory Service Plan | Scrutiny item | To consider a combined service plan for the Planning and Regulatory service. This is expected to bring together various action plans into a single updated document.  | Councillor Alex Hollingsworth - Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services | Patsy Dell, Head of Service - Planning and Regulatory |
| Report of the Equality and Diversity Review Group | Scrutiny item | To review report of the Equality and Diversity Review Group which has explored barriers faced by under-represented groups in employment at the Council and anti-discrimination practices. | Councillor Bob Price – Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy and Economic Development | Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer |
| Westhill Farm | Scrutiny item | To receive a briefing on the proposed demolition of Westhill Farm in Shotover Woods. | Councillor Mark Lygo – Leisure, Sport and Events | David Edwards, Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing  |

**Finance Panel**

**7 April 2016**

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Executive Member**  | **Lead Officer** |
| Council Tax exemptions | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on the numbers and financial implications of different types of Council Tax exemptions and discounts and consider how abuses are detected and prevented. | Councillor Susan Brown – Customer and Corporate Services | Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager – Revenues and Benefits |
| Oxfordshire Credit Union (TBC) | Scrutiny item | To receive a briefing on the role of Oxfordshire Credit Union and the support provided by the City Council in light of regulatory changes.  | Councillor Bob Price – Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy and Economic Development | Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services |
| Low Carbon Hub Funding Model | Scrutiny item | To receive an update from Steve Drummond (Low Carbon Hub) on how the Low Carbon Hub are adapting their funding model. This follows a previous item in October 2015.  | Councillor Ed Turner – Finance, Asset Management and Public Health | Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services |

**Housing Panel**

**11 April 2016**

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Executive Member**  | **Lead Officer** |
| Tenant involvement | Scrutiny item | Joint session with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel to consider how tenants are involved in decisions that affect them.  | Councillor Mike Rowley - Housing | Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Manager |

**Outstanding items from 2015/16 work programme**

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Comment** |
| Arrangements for dealing with employment, training and HR matters | Scrutiny item | To consider whether the Council would benefit from having different arrangements (e.g. a Personnel Committee) to deal with employment, training and HR matters for staff. | Higher priority item. Would require a review group or one-off panel. |
| The Oxford Transport Strategy / Maintenance of roads and pavements | Scrutiny item | To consider what proportion and what elements of highways work are contracted out, the quality of sub-contractors' work and how this is monitored. | Lower priority item. Little opportunity to influence. |
| Public Communications | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on changes to the Council’s communications and reputation management functions. | Lower priority item. |
| Complaints received by the City Council | Scrutiny item | To monitor complaints made about the City Council. | Lower priority item. Complaints to be included in 2016/17 integrated performance reports |
| Heritage listing process | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on the heritage listing process now that heritage assets are given more prominence in planning decisions and Neighbourhood Plans are being drawn up. | Lower priority item. Reports to CEB not selected for pre-decision scrutiny. |

**Long list of suggestions for 2016/17 scrutiny work plan** (deadline for suggestions 20 May 2016)

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| **Agenda item** | **Issue Type** | **Description** | **Lead Officer** |
| City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order | Scrutiny item | To monitor the impacts of the City Centre PSPO, including the numbers and types of early interventions and enforcement actions. | Richard Adams, Community Safety and Resilience Manager |
| Devolution plans for Oxfordshire | Scrutiny item | To monitor the progress of devolution proposals for Oxfordshire. | Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive |
| Oxfordshire Growth Board  | Scrutiny item | To monitor agendas and minutes published by the Board. | Paul Staines, Oxfordshire Growth Board Programme Manager |
| Local Plan | Scrutiny item | To consider one or more aspects of the Local Plan which is subject to review | Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory |
| Fusion Lifestyle performance | Scrutiny item | To monitor an annual Fusion Lifestyle contract performance dashboard. | Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services |
| Discretionary Housing Payments | Scrutiny item | To monitor Discretionary Housing Payments spend mid-way through the year. | Paul Wilding, Revenue & Benefits Programme Manager |
| Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations | Forward Plan item | To consider a report on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2017/2018. | Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer |
| Planning Annual Monitoring Report | Forward Plan item | To consider the effectiveness of planning policies contained within Oxford’s Local Development Plan. | Rebekah Knight, Planner |
| Transfer Station for Recycled Material | Forward Plan item | Proposal to create and operate a Council managed Transfer Station for City collected co-mingled recyclate, green waste, street arisings and engineering works spoil. | Roy Summers, Deputy Head of Direct Services |
| Performance monitoring  | Scrutiny item | Quarterly reports on a set of Corporate and Housing service measures chosen by the Committee. | N/A |
| Response to national policy changes | Scrutiny item | To receive a briefing on the City Council’s responses to Government housing and welfare policy changes. | TBC |
| Homelessness prevention funding | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on homelessness prevention funding from April 2017, including the expected impacts of County Council funding cuts and plans to mitigate these. | Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer |
| Under-occupation in the Council’s housing stock | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on the levels of under-occupation in the Council’s housing stock and efforts to reduce under-occupation, including support and incentives for downsizing. | Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager |
| Choice Based Lettings refusal reasons | Scrutiny item | To receive a briefing on reasons given by Choice Based Lettings applicants for refusing Council properties, including requests for minor adaptions. | Tom Porter, Allocations Manager |
| Great Estates | Scrutiny item | To receive an update on progress made in developing masterplans for estates and working up and delivering a rolling programme of priority improvement schemes. | Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager |
| A Housing Company for Oxford | Scrutiny item | To monitor progress of the Housing Company for Oxford in its first year of operation. | David Edwards, Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing |
| Rents performance | Scrutiny item | To monitor the Council’s rents performance including current and former tenant arrears. | Tanya Bandekar, Revenue and Benefits Service Manager |
| Empty Property Strategy | Scrutiny item | To consider a refresh of the Council’s Empty Property Strategy 2013-18. | Mel Mutch, Empty Residential Property Officer |
| Tenant satisfaction | Scrutiny item | To monitor tenant satisfaction survey results.  | Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager |
| Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy | Forward Plan item | To review the Council’s draft budget for 2017-18 and Medium Term Financial Strategy | Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services |
| Budget monitoring | Forward Plan item | To monitor the Council’s finances at the end of each quarter. | Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services |
| Treasury Management Strategy 2017-18 | Forward Plan item | To consider the Treasury Management Strategy 2017-18 and monitor Treasury performance. | Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager |
| Capital Strategy 2017-18 | Forward Plan item | To consider the Council’s Capital Strategy for 2017-18 | Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services |