

## SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

March 2016 – June 2016

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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](#).

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](#) 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**




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**

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**

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

	Scoping
	Evidence gathering
	Reporting

## Scrutiny Committee

5 April 2016

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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<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Issue Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Executive Member</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
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

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

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## Housing Panel

11 April 2016

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

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)

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 adaptations.	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