

<b>To:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	27 November 2017
<b>Report of:</b>	Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of Report:</b>	Scrutiny briefing
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Council on the activities of the scrutiny function

## Appendices

*Appendix 1 - Scrutiny work plan – November 2017*

*Appendix 2 - Scrutiny recommendation tracker – September to November 2017*

## Introduction

1. My last report to Council was the annual report for 2016/17, so this is my first normal update since July. During that time Scrutiny have held various meetings to consider a wide range of issues affecting the city and City Executive Board decisions.
2. Scrutiny is losing its supporting officer, Andrew Brown, who has been appointed to the position of Committee and Member Services Manager. Until a new Scrutiny Officer is in post our work will be supported by both Andrew Brown and John Mitchell.

## Work plan

3. We are making good progress through the items in our annual work plan. The coming months will be a busy time as the Finance Panel's Budget Review gets underway and the Oxford Living Wage review draws to a close.

## Recent and planned activity

### The Scrutiny Committee

4. Since my last normal update to Council, Scrutiny Committee meetings have been held on 7 September, 9 October and 7 November. The following items have been considered by the Committee:

- Assessing disabled impacts in planning
  - Oxford Design Review Panel
  - Grant Allocations 2016/17 Monitoring Report
  - Planning Annual Monitoring Report
  - Review of Discretionary Housing Payments Policy
  - Review of Financial Inclusion Strategy
  - Council performance 2017/18 – quarter 1
  - Review of Community Grants Programme and Commissioned Advice Strategy 2018-2021
5. The next Committee meeting will be held on 5 December. Agenda items are expected to include a review of Community Protection Notices, isolation in older people and an update on the implementation of Scrutiny recommendations on equality and diversity.

### **Housing Panel**

6. The Housing Panel met on 27 July 2017, 11 September, 12 October and 13 November to consider reports from officers on the following housing issues and decisions:
- Fire Safety in tower blocks
  - Tenant Scrutiny Panel tower project update
  - Housing performance 2016/17 – quarter 4
  - Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022
  - Options paper on additional homelessness provision for the city
  - The use of empty buildings as temporary accommodation for homeless people
  - Regulating the private rented sector
  - Draft housing assistance and disabled adaptations policy 2018
  - Housing performance 2017/18 – quarter 1
  - Lucy Faithful Housing
  - Void property management
  - Tenant involvement
  - Rent performance

### **Finance Panel**

7. The Finance Panel met on 4 September and considered the following items:
- The implications of Brexit
  - Budget monitoring 2017/18 – quarter 1
  - Treasury Management annual report performance 2016/17
  - Additional funding for feasibility studies for investment property development opportunities
8. The Panel will meet on 7 December to consider the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20, treasury management performance and mid-year spend against budgets. The Panel will then conduct the annual Scrutiny review of the Council's budget proposals in early 2018, reporting to the City Executive Board in February.

### **Companies Scrutiny Panel (previously Scrutiny Shareholder Panel)**

9. This Panel looks at issues and decisions relating to Council-owned companies. The Panel met on 6 November to review the progress of Oxford Direct Services Limited (ODSL) and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited (ODSTL). The Panel will meet again in December to consider the business plan for the two Direct Services companies before it is presented to the Shareholder.

### **Oxford Living Wage Review Group**

10. The Review Group have now completed their evidence gathering, having met with a number of witnesses including employers, workers, trade union representatives, professionals, academics and faith groups. The Review Group are now in the process of formulating their conclusions and recommendations before reporting to the Scrutiny Committee and the City Executive Board early in the New Year.

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