

**To:** Council

**Date:** 28 November 2022

**Report of:** Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

**Title of Report:** Scrutiny Committee Update Report

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Council on the activities of the Scrutiny function
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation:</b> That Council resolves to note the update report.	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

## Introduction

1. This report provides an update on Scrutiny activity during the period from 17 September to 10 November 2022.

In October, Council appointed Cllr Anna Railton to membership of the Scrutiny Committee. At the time of writing, it was noted that the intention was to appoint Cllr Hunt to replace her at the November Council.

## Scrutiny Committee 2022/23

2. During this reporting period, the Committee met twice, on 11 October and on 07 November. A summary of each meeting is set out below.

### **Scrutiny Committee: 11 October 2022**

3. At its meeting on 11 October 2022, the Committee considered a report on the Budget Review Group which the Committee had agreed to establish on 05 July 2022. The report set out the proposed scope for the group which was approved by the Committee.
4. Two substantive reports were considered on 11 October 2022:
  - Development Brief for Botley Road Retail Park (*Cabinet report*)
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan (*Cabinet report*)
5. The report on the Development Brief sought endorsement from Cabinet for the brief itself, the purpose of which was to provide guidance to those who sought to bring forward development of the site and other interested parties. The Committee explored the rationale for the briefing and discussed various details. Two recommendations were made each of which was intended to improve the clarity of the document.
6. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan report sought Cabinet approval for endorsement of the plan, allocation of budget, and delegation of authority to enter into contract with Government for delivery of the plan on behalf of the Council. The Committee established that the funding was intended to replace the EU Structural Investment Funds which were larger and so less funding was available than previously. The Committee explored how the funding was to be targeted and managed. Three recommendations were made. One encouraged greater collaboration with partners, one sought more focus on areas of deprivation, and the third related to periodic reporting to members.

### **Cabinet Responses to Recommendations: October 2022**

7. The following reports were submitted to Cabinet in October 2022:
  - Development Brief for Botley Road Retail Park
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan
8. Both recommendations on the Development Brief were agreed. The three recommendations on the UKSPF Investment Plan received positive responses.

### **Scrutiny Committee: 07 November 2022**

9. Owing to technical difficulties, members of the Scrutiny Committee met informally via Zoom on 07 November.
10. Three substantive reports were considered:
  - Procurement Strategy 2022-2025 (*Cabinet report*)
  - Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 (*Cabinet report*)
  - West End and Osney Mead SPD (*Cabinet report*)
11. The Procurement Strategy report sought approval for the new Corporate Procurement Strategy. The Committee welcomed its detail on social value commitments and outcomes. The Committee heard that earlier drafts of the

strategy had included more detail and that it was intentionally broad. The Committee, though, made six recommendations all of which related to providing more explicit commitments in regard to social value.

12. The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund recommended that Cabinet granted approval to submit a funding bid in the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund 2.1 bidding round, which sought a government funding contribution towards a retrofit programme for around 300 council houses; delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice, and the Head of Housing Services, to finalise the bid documentation for submission; recommended to Council that it granted approval for the release of HRA capital funding; delegated authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services to spend the HRA funds; noted that officers are developing plans for tenants' involvement; and noted that officers had entered into contracts with consultants to develop the proposals and complete the associated documentation for submission.
13. The Committee probed the rationale for having targeted groups of houses and established that this was to maximise the number of properties that could be retrofitted and explored why targeting was not based on need. The Committee made one recommendation which asked that the rationale be set out and sought comment on whether future targeting would follow the same approach.
14. The West End and Osney Mead SPD recommended that Cabinet: adopted the revised West End and Osney Mead SPD; approved the West End and Osney Mead SPD as a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications on sites in the area; authorised the Acting Head of Planning Services (Planning Policy), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections; and approved the revocation of the Oxpens Masterplan SPD and of the Oxford Station SPD.
15. After detailed discussion, the Committee made seven recommendations. These were principally intended to improve clarity with some seeking progress reports on particular aspects mentioned in the SPD.

### **Cabinet Responses to Recommendations: November 2022**

16. The following reports were submitted to Cabinet in October 2022:
  - Procurement Strategy 2022-2025
  - Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1
  - West End and Osney Mead SPD
17. The recommendations on the Procurement Strategy were all agreed. The recommendation on the SHDF bid was agreed. The recommendations on the SPD were largely agreed.

### **Housing and Homelessness Panel**

18. The Housing and Homelessness Panel met once during this reporting period, on 06 October 2022, and considered a substantive report to Cabinet on the draft Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy

19. The report recommended that Cabinet noted progress made to develop a new Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy; approved the draft Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy for public consultation; approved the launch of the statutory six week public consultation; and delegated authority to make any necessary minor amendments prior to the launch of the consultation.
20. The Panel commended the wide-ranging nature of the strategy and made five recommendations. These recommendations largely focussed on making the documentation more accessible.
21. Cabinet agreed all five recommendations.

### **Finance and Performance Panel**

22. The Finance and Performance Panel did not meet during this reporting period.

### **Climate and Environment Panel**

23. At its meeting on 07 November, the Scrutiny Committee approved the scope for the Climate and Environment Panel and agreed that Cllr Jemima Hunt would be Chair. The Committee agreed that Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr Emily Kerr, and Cllr Katherine Miles would also sit on the Panel.
24. The Panel has not met during this reporting period but meeting dates were in the process of being agreed in consultation with the Chair.

### **Companies Scrutiny Panel**

25. The Companies Scrutiny Panel joined the Shareholder and Joint Venture meeting as non-voting members on 05 October for a specially convened OxWED meeting, and on 02 November to consider reports relating to OxPlace and BOLLP. Commercial confidentiality prevents the provision of a summary report.

<b>Report author</b>	Richard Doney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07485 311341
e-mail	<a href="mailto:rdoney@oxford.gov.uk">rdoney@oxford.gov.uk</a>