

To: Council

Date: 20 March 2023

Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: Scrutiny Committee Update Report

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

Appendices
None

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on Scrutiny activity during the period from 21 January 2023 to 07 March 2023.
2. During this reporting period, Cllr Nadine Bely-Summers resigned as a member of Council and there is thus a vacancy on the Committee which will be filled following the by-election. The Chair and Committee thank former Cllr Bely-Summers for her contribution to the Committee's work.
3. At its meeting on 01 February 2023, the Committee elected Cllr Snowton to replace Cllr Landell-Mills on the Finance and Performance Panel and Cllr Miles to replace Cllr Landell-Mills on the Companies Scrutiny Panel

Scrutiny Committee 2022/23

4. During this reporting period, the Committee met twice, on 01 February 2023 and 06 March 2023. A summary of each meeting is set out below.

Scrutiny Committee: 01 February 2023

5. Two Cabinet reports were considered on 01 February 2023:
 - Oxford Local Plan 2040 Focused Consultation on Housing Need
 - Implementing the Covered Market “Masterplan”
6. The Oxford Local Plan 2040 Focused Consultation on Housing Need report recommended that Cabinet approve the Regulation 18 Part Two document for public consultation; approve the associated update to the Oxford Local Development Scheme 2023-28; and delegate authority to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections prior to going out to consultation. The Committee made no recommendations but was grateful to the Cabinet Member and officers for attending and answering the Committee’s questions.
7. The Implementing the Covered Market “Masterplan” report recommended that Cabinet approve the Covered Market Masterplan and concept proposals. It also recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director Development, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, and the Cabinet Members for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, Finance and Asset Management, and Planning and Housing Delivery, to finalise the scope of works, undertake the necessary procurements, and enter into contracts for the regeneration of the Covered Market within the agreed budget. It also recommended that, subject to Council approval of the Budget, Cabinet authorised a capital budget of £6.87m to deliver the project and also that Cabinet approved the payback of previously spent feasibility funding into the feasibility budget.
8. The Committee commended the ambition of the Masterplan and was keen that its ambitions should be realised. The Committee noted that the project team and key stakeholders had agreed a set of six ambitions under the following headings: inclusivity; sustainability; evolution; increase footfall; heritage; distinctiveness. The Committee made one recommendation under the inclusivity heading asking that consideration be given to the provision of gender-neutral lavatories.
9. The Committee also received a report on its site visit to the Covered Market and endorsed the recommendations of the Budget Review Group for submission to Cabinet.

Finance and Performance Panel

10. The Panel met on 26 January 2023. It considered a report on Park and Ride/Car parking income provided by the Head of Corporate Property and considered Scrutiny Performance Monitoring. The Panel also approved the report of the Budget Review Group and recommended that the Scrutiny Committee submit it to Cabinet.
11. The Budget Review Group had made 11 recommendations to Cabinet. One of these sought a reversal of a proposed efficiency saving, namely funding for an archivist. Three recommended the provision of detailed information to Members regarding the ODS Depot, the cemetery, and the Covered Market. Two

recommendations related to how funds the Council had not initially anticipated receiving should not be used for ongoing costs. Two recommendations related to the Council's investment portfolio with one questioning if the Council's approach was overly cautious and the second sought progress on diversification of the portfolio away from commercial property. The last three recommendations related to transport, with one focused on a particular car park, one which challenged the Council over assumptions made about Park and Ride charges, and the third asked for greater analysis and explanation of assumptions regarding ZEZ revenue.

Cabinet Responses to Recommendations: February 2023

11. A report on Implementing the Covered Market "Masterplan" was submitted to Cabinet on 08 February 2023 alongside the Budget Review Group's report. In addition, the Committee's report on the recommendation it made regarding the Disciplinary Policy in advance of January's Council meeting, which had been accepted and incorporated in advance of Council, was submitted. One of the recommendations of the Budget Review Group was only accepted in part but all other recommendations in the three reports were accepted.

Scrutiny Committee: 06 March 2023

12. Three Cabinet reports were considered on 06 March 2023:
 - Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2023
 - Integrated Care System Draft Strategy Update
 - Integrated Performance Report for Q3 2022/23
13. The annual update of the Business Plan recommended that Cabinet agreed the draft Council Corporate Business Plan priorities for 2023/24; delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make further minor amendments before implementation; noted the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the Corporate Business Plan 2022/23. The Committee made three recommendations to Cabinet. The first related to how progress would be measured under the next iteration of the four year plan; the second seeking explicit mention of partnership working with Thames Water; the third seeking updates on the delivery of the Urban Forest Strategy.
14. The Integrated Care System Draft Strategy Update presented information on the production of a new Integrated Care Strategy by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West and recommended that Cabinet noted the content of the report for information. The Committee made five recommendations to Cabinet. The first sought clarity as to what budget was available to the new ICB; the second and third recommended that the Council work as part of the ICB to ensure that particular attention is paid to the dangers of vaping and of vaccine hesitancy and misinformation; the fourth sought to encourage the Council to ensure that the action plan for the Strategy paid particular attention to the specific needs of particular demographic groups; the fifth sought to highlight the importance of indoor air quality.
15. The Integrated Performance Report recommended that Cabinet noted the projected financial outturn for 2022/23 as well as the position on risk and performance at 31 December 2022 and that it noted the change in timing of the insurance contract

procurement exercise. The Committee made one recommendation which sought detail about which areas of work were proposed to be suspended as a result of an overspend on the Housing Revenue Account owing to increases in material prices and work demand.

16. Cabinet is due to meet on 15 March 2023; responses to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations arising from its March meeting will be reported in the next Scrutiny update report to Council.

Housing and Homelessness Panel

17. The Housing and Homelessness Panel was due to meet on 02 March 2023 but this meeting was rescheduled for 13 March 2023. The Panel is expected to consider an update on the development of a Tenants Forum, a report on damp and mould in Council owned and managed accommodation, the Housing Performance reports for Q2 and Q3, and the Cabinet report on the Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Any recommendations arising from the meeting on 13 March 2023 will be reported in the next Scrutiny update report to Council.

Climate and Environment Panel

18. The Climate and Environment Panel is due to meet for its inaugural meeting on 09 March 2023 to consider the Cabinet report on Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford. The Panel has also requested reports on the Net Zero Master Plan, Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, and Fleet Decarbonisation. Any recommendations arising from the meeting on 09 March 2023 will be reported in the next Scrutiny update report to Council.

Companies Scrutiny Panel

19. The Companies Scrutiny Panel joined the Shareholder and Joint Venture meeting as non-voting members on 01 March 2023 to consider reports relating to OX Place, OxWED and BOLLP. Commercial confidentiality prevents the provision of a summary report.

Report author	Richard Doney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07485 311341
e-mail	rdoney@oxford.gov.uk