

**To:** Council

**Date:** 17 July 2023

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

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

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Council on the activities of the Scrutiny function
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lucy Pegg, 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.	

Appendices
None

## Introduction

1. This report provides an update on Scrutiny activity during the period from 08 March 2023 to 30 June 2023.
2. During the period from 08 March 2023 to the end of the 2022/23 municipal year the Scrutiny Committee did not meet and there were three Panel meetings (Climate and Environment Panel – 09 March 2023; Housing and Homelessness Panel – 13 March 2023 and 24 April 2023). In addition, Companies Scrutiny Panel joined the meeting of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group on 27 April 2023. The following reports were submitted to Cabinet in March and April 2023:

### *March 2023*

- Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2023
- Integrated Care System Draft Strategy Update

- Integrated Performance Report for Q3 2022/23
- Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford
- Fleet Decarbonisation
- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

*April 2023*

- No Scrutiny reports
3. The reports submitted in March received Cabinet responses, the majority of which were positive.

### **Scrutiny Committee 2023/24**

4. Since the start of the 2023/24 municipal year up to 30 June 2023, the Scrutiny Committee has met once, on 07 June 2023. At this meeting a new Chair, Councillor Lucy Pegg was elected – taking on the role from Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton. Councillor Mike Rowley was elected Vice-Chair.
5. The Committee agreed to establish the same four standing panels as in the previous municipal year: Housing and Homelessness, Finance and Performance, Climate and Environment and Companies Scrutiny Panels. It was noted that that Companies Scrutiny Panel will continue to join Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meetings as non-voting members to enable more effective and efficient scrutiny of the Shareholder function. These meetings will not be clerked by the Scrutiny Officer, meaning there is capacity within the Scrutiny function for other work; allocation of this capacity will be kept under review as the year progresses.
6. The membership of the standing panels is as follows:

**Housing and Homelessness Panel (6):**

Councillor Lizzy Diggins (Chair), Councillor Paula Dunne, Councillor Laurence Fouweather, Councillor Jabu Nala-Hartley, Councillor Rosie Rawle, Councillor Jo Sandelson

**Climate and Environment Panel (4):**

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth (Chair), Councillor Paula Dunne, Councillor Emily Kerr, Councillor Katherine Miles

**Finance and Performance Panel (4):**

Councillor James Fry (Chair), Councillor Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Councillor Chris Jarvis, Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton

**Companies Scrutiny Panel (4):**

Councillor Mike Rowley (Chair), Councillor Katherine Miles, Councillor Alistair Morris, Councillor Diko Walcott

7. The Committee also agreed to establish a Budget Review Group for 2023/24, comprising the same membership as the Finance and Performance Panel. A scope for the Budget Review Group will be submitted to a future Committee meeting for approval.
8. The Committee agreed that all meetings of standing panels and review groups would take place virtually, unless there is a compelling need to hold an in-person meeting.

9. In addition to the agreement of the Scrutiny Operating Principles for 2023/24, one substantive report was considered on 07 June 2023:
  - Housing Management System Implementation (*Cabinet report*)
10. The report on the Housing Management System Implementation set out the significant business disruption and delay during system implementation before the system reached 'business as usual' in November 2022. An external 'lessons learned' report (exempt) had been produced, which was summarised in Appendix 2 to the report, and re-enforced the need for project managers to have regard to the lessons learned when embarking on a project. The report also detailed proposals for the Council to further exploit the Housing Management System and outlined the budgetary implications surrounding this further development.
11. The Committee asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the implementation of the lessons learned, the timescales for further system exploitation, whether any further delays in the system implementation were anticipated, procurement, budget, disaster recovery and software implementation processes. In particular, the Committee noted the significant disruption to system implementation as a result of data migration issues and wanted to understand whether the Council had processes in place to capture the system at a fixed point in time when it was working, so that if/when issues were identified the Council could abort further implementation and revert back to that fixed point in time and then continue implementation from the point at which the system was working. One recommendation was agreed.

### **Cabinet Responses to Recommendations: June 2023**

12. The following reports were submitted to Cabinet in June 2023:
  - Housing Management System Implementation
  - Tenancy Agreement
13. All recommendations contained in the Housing Management System Implementation and Tenancy Agreement reports received positive responses.
14. In addition, the Cabinet agreed its formal response to the recommendations of the Child Poverty Review Group, which were first submitted to Cabinet in June 2022.

### **Housing and Homelessness Panel**

15. The Housing and Homelessness Panel has met twice during the reporting period, on 13 March 2023 and 24 April 2023. The following report was considered and submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for approval before submission to Cabinet in June 2023:
  - Tenancy Agreement

### **Finance and Performance Panel**

16. The Finance and Performance Panel has not met during the reporting period.

## Climate and Environment Panel

17. The Climate and Environment Panel has met twice during the reporting period, on 09 March 2023 and 27 June 2023. The following reports were considered and submitted to Cabinet in March 2023:

- Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford
- Fleet Decarbonisation

18. The following reports were considered on 27 June 2023 and will be submitted to Cabinet in July 2023:

- DRAFT Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Retrofit Guidance for Historic Buildings Technical Advice Note
- Biodiversity Update [presentation]

## Companies Scrutiny Panel

19. The Companies Scrutiny Panel joined Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) meetings as non-voting members on 27 April 2023 and 21 June 2023 to consider reports relating to OX Place, Barton Oxford LLP and Oxford Direct Services. The panel will continue to operate under the revised arrangements established in the 2022/23 municipal year, in that members of the panel will continue to join SJVG meetings as non-voting members to enable more effective and efficient scrutiny of the Shareholder function. Commercial confidentiality prevents the provision of a summary report.

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