

**To:** Council

**Date:** 15 July 2024

**Report of:** Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

**Title of Report:** Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023/24

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To provide Council with a summary of Scrutiny activity during the 2023/2024 municipal year
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lucy Pegg, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2023/24
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That Council resolves to note the update report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A	Breakdown of Scrutiny recommendations 2023/24

## Introduction

1. This report provides a summary of Scrutiny activity during the 2023/24 municipal year.
2. During 2023/24 the Scrutiny Committee held 11 meetings (9 ordinary meetings, 1 informal remote meeting and 1 extraordinary informal remote meeting); the Finance and Performance Panel held 4 meetings, the Housing and Homelessness Panel held 5 meetings; the Climate and Environment Panel held 5 meetings; and the Budget Review Group held 4 meetings. The Companies Scrutiny Panel joined 5 Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meetings as non-voting members with speaking rights.

## Scrutiny Committee

3. The membership of the Scrutiny Committee during 2023/24 was as follows:
  - Cllr Lucy Pegg (Chair)
  - Cllr Mike Rowley (Vice Chair)

- Cllr Mohammed Altaf-Khan
  - Cllr Lubna Arshad
  - Cllr Shaista Aziz (*from 27 November*)
  - Cllr Tiago Corais
  - Cllr Lizzy Diggins
  - Cllr Sandy Douglas
  - Cllr Paula Dunne (*replaced by Cllr James Fry on 02 October*)
  - Cllr James Fry (*from 02 October*)
  - Cllr Chris Jarvis
  - Cllr Mark Lygo (*until 27 November*)
  - Cllr Edward Mundy (*until 23 October*)
  - Cllr Dr Christopher Snowton
  - Cllr Imogen Thomas (*from 27 November*)
4. At its first meeting of the municipal year, on 07 June 2023, the Committee reconstituted the following Scrutiny standing panels and review groups for 2023/24:
- Finance and Performance Panel
  - Housing and Homelessness Panel
  - Climate and Environment Panel
  - Companies Scrutiny Panel
  - Budget Review Group
5. A breakdown of Scrutiny recommendations and whether they were agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed is set out at **Appendix A**.
6. On a number of occasions throughout 2023/24, the Committee and/or Panels were disappointed with Cabinet responses to some of its recommendations. At its final meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year, the Committee agreed to note this in its annual report. The Committee was of the view that some Cabinet responses during 2023/24 did not address the overall thrust of recommendations – which were discussed at length during meetings where the relevant Cabinet Member was generally present. There were times when Scrutiny felt that responses were not provided in line with the intended spirit of recommendations. Whilst recognising Scrutiny cannot require Cabinet to respond in a certain way to its recommendations, the Committee wanted to place on record its expectation that Cabinet engages constructively with Scrutiny going forward.

### **Finance and Performance Panel and Budget Review Group**

7. The Finance and Performance Panel membership during 2023/24 was agreed as follows by the Scrutiny Committee on 07 June 2023: Cllr James Fry (Chair), Cllr Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Cllr Chris Jarvis and Cllr Dr Christopher Snowton. The membership of the Budget Review Group mirrored the membership of the Finance and Performance Panel.
8. At its meeting on 04 December 2023, following changes to the political composition of the Council, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to expand the membership of the Finance and Performance Panel to six Members and appoint the following: Cllr James Fry (Chair), Cllr Tiago Corais, Cllr Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Cllr Chris Jarvis, Cllr Dr Amar Latif and Cllr Dr Christopher Snowton. The membership of the

Budget Review Group continued to mirror the membership of the Finance and Performance Panel.

9. The Finance and Performance Panel met 4 times during the municipal year to consider finance and budgetary issues and decisions, review the Council's budget position and monitor quarterly performance of Scrutiny-selected Key Performance Indicators.
10. The Budget Review Group met 4 times during January 2024. The work of the Budget Review Group concluded with the submission of a report containing 9 recommendations to Cabinet, which was then subsequently presented to Council for noting in February 2023. Of the 9 recommendations, 7 were agreed, 1 was agreed in part and 1 was not agreed.

### **Housing and Homelessness Panel**

11. The Housing and Homelessness Panel membership during 2023/24 was agreed as follows by the Scrutiny Committee on 07 June 2023: Cllr Lizzy Diggins (Chair), Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr Laurence Fouweather, Cllr Jabu Nala-Hartley, Cllr Rosie Rawle and Cllr Jo Sandelson.
12. At its meeting on 04 December 2023, following changes to the political composition of the Council, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to appoint the following to the Housing and Homelessness Panel: Cllr Lizzy Diggins (Chair), Cllr Shaista Aziz, Cllr Mary Clarkson, Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr Rosie Rawle and Cllr Jo Sandelson.
13. The Housing and Homelessness Panel met 5 times during the municipal year to consider strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions, homelessness and housing services performance.

### **Climate and Environment Panel**

14. The Climate and Environment Panel membership during 2023/24 was agreed as follows by the Scrutiny Committee on 07 June 2023: Cllr Alex Hollingsworth (Chair), Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr Emily Kerr and Cllr Katherine Miles.
15. At its meeting on 04 December 2023, following changes to the political composition of the Council, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to expand the membership of the Climate and Environment Panel to six Members and appoint the following: Cllr Alex Hollingsworth (Chair), Cllr Shaista Aziz, Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr James Fry, Cllr Emily Kerr and Cllr Katherine Miles.
16. The Climate and Environment Panel met 5 times during the municipal year to consider strategic climate and environmental issues and decisions, progress and performance monitoring, and delivery of existing strategies, policies and projects.

### **Companies Scrutiny Panel**

17. The arrangements established in 2022/23 for the Companies Scrutiny Panel continued in 2023/24, whereby members of the Panel were invited to attend meetings of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) as non-voting members, with a view to providing more effective and efficient Scrutiny oversight of the shareholder function.

18. The Companies Scrutiny Panel membership during 2023/24 was agreed as follows by the Scrutiny Committee on 07 June 2023: Cllr Mike Rowley (Chair), Cllr Katherine Miles, Cllr Alistair Morris and Cllr Diko Walcott.
19. At its meeting on 04 December 2023, following changes to the political composition of the Council, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to appoint the following to the Companies Scrutiny Panel: Cllr Mike Rowley (Chair), Cllr Katherine Miles, Cllr Alistair Morris and Cllr Ajaz Rehman.
20. The Companies Scrutiny Panel joined 5 SJVG meetings as non-voting members during the municipal year to consider items relating to Oxford Direct Services Ltd, OX Place, Barton Oxford LLP and OxWED Ltd.

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## Appendix A: Breakdown of Scrutiny recommendations 2023/24

Meeting date	Committee/Panel	Report title	Number of recommendations made	Agreed	Agreed in part	Not agreed
07 June 2023	Scrutiny Committee	Housing Management System Implementation	1	1		
27 June 2023	Climate and Environment Panel	Draft Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Retrofit Guidance for Historic Buildings Technical Advice Note	7	5		2
		Biodiversity Update	4	4		
04 July 2023	Scrutiny Committee	Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2022/23 and Safeguarding Policy 2023-26	4	3		1
		Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) Charter/Pledge	6	6		
		Citizen Experience Strategy	2	2		
05 July 2023	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Housing Performance Monitoring	0			
		Future Resettlement Commitments for New Refugee Families	2	2		
		Tenant Satisfaction (STAR) Survey	1		1	
02 August 2023	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Expansion of the Housing First Programme	1	1		
		Update on Customer Complaints and Feedback	1	1		
		Action Plan Update on the Housing and Homelessness Panel Mini-Review on Tenant Involvement and Empowerment	0			
	Scrutiny Committee	Out of Hospital Care Team Provision	0			
		Delivery of a New Burial Space	1	1		

\*Cabinet response did not indicate whether recommendations agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.

\*\*Cabinet response to one or more recommendation was 'n/a'.

05 September 2023		The Leys Pools & Leisure Centre – Youth Hub	1	1		
06 September 2023	Finance and Performance Panel	Integrated Performance Report Q1 2023/24	0			
		Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23	0			
		Scrutiny Performance Monitoring	0			
12 September 2023	Climate and Environment Panel	HRA Energy Efficiency Projects 2023/24	2	2		
		Citywide Smoke Control Area Declaration	2	2		
		Air Pollution	2	2		
		Net Zero Masterplan	0			
05 October 2023	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Update on the Housing First Programme in Oxford	0			
		Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment	0			
10 October 2023	Scrutiny Committee	Utilities Procurement 2024-2028	0			
		Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge	0			
		Delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Oxford	4	4		
16 October 2023	Scrutiny Committee (Extraordinary Informal Remote Meeting)	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule Partial Review for Consultation	0			
		Oxford Local Plan 2040 Regulation 19 Consultation Document	8	6		2
06 November 2023	Scrutiny Committee	Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations 2024/25	2	2		
		FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project Grant Funding Bid	0			

\*Cabinet response did not indicate whether recommendations agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.

\*\*Cabinet response to one or more recommendation was 'n/a'.

		Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal	2	2		
29 November 2023	Climate and Environment Panel	Biodiversity Action Plan for Oxford City Council Parks and Nature Areas – September 2023 Review	4	1	1	2
		Retrofit	3	2		1
		Net Zero Masterplan	0			
04 December 2023	Scrutiny Committee	Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23	1	1		
		Equalities Update	7	5		2
		Review of Glyphosate Use by Oxford Direct Services to Manage Weeds on Behalf of Oxford City Council	4	2		2
		Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review: Council Action Plan	1	1		
05 December 2023	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Building Safety & Compliance within Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Stock	0			
		Housing Performance Monitoring	0			
		Housing Complaint Handling Performance Q1 & Q2 2023-24	0			
		City of Sanctuary Accreditation	1	1		
06 December 2023	Finance and Performance Panel	Integrated Performance Report Q2 2023/24	2	2		
		Treasury Management Mid-Year Report	1	1		
		Background and Implications of Local Authority Section 114 Notices	0			
		Acquisition vs Leasing of Properties and the HRA	0			

\*Cabinet response did not indicate whether recommendations agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.

\*\*Cabinet response to one or more recommendation was 'n/a'.

		Scrutiny Performance Monitoring	0			
16 January 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Private Rented Sector Regulation Policies – Results of Consultation	2	2		
		DAHA Accreditation and Domestic Abuse Review Group Update	4	2	2	
		Draft Corporate Strategy 2024-28 for Consultation	5*			
		Leisure Management Contract	8**	6		1
22 January 2024	Finance and Performance Panel	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25	0			
		Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting Report 2024/25	0			
		Corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Review	7*			
06 February 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28	1	1		
		Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25	1	1		
		Budget Review Group Report	9	7	1	1
27 February 2024	Climate and Environment Panel	Biodiversity Net Gain	2	1	1	
		Citywide Retrofit Strategy	2	1	1	
		Net Zero Masterplan	0			
		Heat Network & Zoning	0			
04 March 2024	Scrutiny Committee	Request for Exceptional Circumstances Relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy	3	1		2
		Oxfordshire Food Strategy – City Action Plan	5	2	2	1
		Voluntary Adoption of the Socio-economic Duty	0			
07 March 2024		Allocation of Preventing Homelessness Grant 2024/25	1		1	

\*Cabinet response did not indicate whether recommendations agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.

\*\*Cabinet response to one or more recommendation was 'n/a'.



	Housing and Homelessness Panel	Implementation of Selective Licensing	1	1		
		Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment	1	1		
		Tenant Satisfaction (STAR) Survey 2023	0			
20 March 2024	Climate and Environment Panel	Tree Planting	4	3	1	
		Energy Generation/Solar Potential on Council Buildings	2	2		
26 March 2024	Finance and Performance Panel	Integrated Performance Report Q3 2023/24	4	4		
		Scrutiny Performance Monitoring	0			
		Strategic Review of Services Across Community Services – Draft Terms of Reference	0			
		Strategic Review of Services Provided by Oxford Direct Services (ODS) – Draft Terms of Reference	0			
11 April 2024	Scrutiny Committee (Informal Remote Meeting)	Adult Exploitation	2	1	1	
		Tourism Review Group Update	0			
		Oxford City Council Annual Business Plan 2024-25	1	1		
			<b>142</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>

*During 2023/24, Cabinet did not indicate whether 12 recommendations were agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed; providing a written commentary only.*

*Cabinet responded 'n/a' to one recommendation, as it agreed the recommendation was already an established practice.*

*\*Cabinet response did not indicate whether recommendations agreed, agreed in part, or not agreed.*

*\*\*Cabinet response to one or more recommendation was 'n/a'.*

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