

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 8 October 2024



Committee members present:

Councillor Miles (Chair)	Councillor Corais (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Latif	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Yeatman (for Councillor Stares)	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Officer
Celeste Reyeslao, Scrutiny and Governance Advisor

Also present:

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Stares sent apologies.
Substitutes are shown above.

31. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

32. Chair's Announcements

The Chair stated that Fairtrade City had been added to the longlist of proposed Scrutiny items that the Committee would consider; and a report on the City of Sanctuary Framework was due to Cabinet in December and had been added to the Work Plan

33. Minutes

The Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024 as a true and accurate record.

The Committee agreed to consider item 7 next on the agenda, followed by items 5, 6 and 8.

Cllrs Yeatman, Corais and Regisford joined the meeting.

34. Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, and Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Services introduced the report, noting the Council was not obliged to have a LGA peer review but wanted to have external oversight and to formulate plans to improve services in the city. An Action Plan had been drafted, with areas of focus being partnerships, communication around regeneration work and improved technology for use by Officers and Councillors.

Councillor Rowley requested the Committee initially focus on Community Engagement, with Councillor Brown noting the ongoing process with the Localities Team, and improved communications with those who do not traditionally engage with the Council.

Councillor Corais then discussed the overall ambition of the Council. Councillor Brown highlighted the high expectations of the authority, and the ongoing work with external organisations, such as Oxford hospitals and the Council's Homelessness Prevention Team, ensuring homeless people are accommodated when leaving hospital.

The Head of Corporate Services noted the Government approach to prevention first, which translated into work at a local level by meeting regularly with Council's partners. Health inequalities and working with the Health and Wellbeing Board, shaping a County-wide strategy.

Councillor Miles asked about the review of the Council-owned Companies. Councillor Brown noted as part of the peer review it involved learning from other authorities including the provision of improved governance and scrutiny. Councillor Brown highlighted the ongoing partnership with other authorities, such as Hounslow Council.

Finally, Councillor Miles concluded with a review of the ongoing priorities for the Town Hall. Councillor Brown noted the allocation of funds for projects, and the continuing balance between space for staff and commercial. It was noted the Town Hall is a grade 2 listed building, which prevents certain challenges to make the building carbon zero building. The Head of Corporate Services noted the potential use of the basement and other un-allocated parts of the building, which would be reviewed as part of a feasibility study.

The Committee thanked the officers across the Council, involved with their ongoing work with the Peer Review, and to the Corporate Policy and Partnership Officer who organised and collated the review.

The Committee noted the report; there were no recommendations.

Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy left the meeting and did not return.

35. Work Plan and Forward Plan

The Committee was informed that three items had slipped from the October agenda due to recent changes to the Forward Plan, including Corporate Debt Policy, Anti-social

Behaviour Review and Thriving Communities Strategy Update. The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor advised that the three items were currently deferred to November but that further changes to the Work Plan was anticipated to align with the further changes to the Forward Plan. Amendments to the Work Plan would be liaised and agreed with the Chair.

36. Report back on recommendations and from Scrutiny Panel meetings

The Committee noted that on 11 September 2024, Cabinet considered recommendations related to two reports, responses to which were set out in the Cabinet supplement report:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Charter/Pledges annual Update

The Scrutiny and Governance Advisor advised that the Finance and Performance Panel had met on 4 September and considered three substantive items: Council Strategy 2024-28 KPI's; Integrated Performance Report Q1 2024-25; and Treasury Management Annual Report 2023-24. The Panel made 2 recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the Integrated Performance Report and Treasury Management Report, both were agreed by Cabinet. The Climate and Environment Panel had met on 10 September 2024 and considered four substantive items: Net Zero Masterplan; Annual Air Quality Status Report; Local Area Energy Planning and Mitigation Measures Regarding Local Grid Constraints; and Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) Expansion. The Panel made 5 recommendations relating to the Annual Air Quality Status Report and ZCOP Expansion, three of which were agreed by Cabinet, one not agreed, and one agreed in-part. Responses to all recommendations were set out in the Cabinet supplement report.

37. Dates of future meetings

Councillor Latif noted that meeting on the 1 April 2025 would clash with the Festival of Eid.

The date of future meetings were noted.

The meeting started at 6:03 pm and ended at 6:50 pm

Chair

Date: Monday 4 November 2024

*When decisions take effect:
Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired
Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued
All other committees: immediately.
Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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