

To: Council
Date: 14 July 2025
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Update from the Scrutiny Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To update Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee and Working Groups.
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1.	Note the work of the Scrutiny Committee and the recommendations as set out in the report.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet responses	No
Appendix 2	Exempt Scrutiny recommendations for SJVG and responses	Yes

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on the activities of the Scrutiny Committee and its Working Groups since the last update to Council on 24 March 2025. It covers the period from 13 March 2025 to 11 July 2025.

Committee Arrangements for 2025/26

2. The Committee met for the first time in 2025/26 municipal year on 10 June 2025, and agreed its operating principles to guide its work for the year. The Committee also agreed to establish three Working Groups to focus on key areas of Council activity. Each working group was assigned remits aligned with the Council's strategic priorities. Membership and Chair appointments were confirmed as follows:

Finance and Performance Working Group (4 members):	Cllr James Fry (Chair), Cllr Dr Christopher Smowton, Cllr Chris Jarvis and Cllr Ian Yeatman
Housing and Homelessness Working Group (5 members):	Cllr Theo Jupp (Chair), Cllr Lizzie Diggins, Cllr Rosie Rawle, Cllr Anne States and Cllr Edward Mundy
Climate and Environment Working Group (4 members):	Cllr Katherine Miles (Chair), Cllr Jemima Hunt, Cllr Kate Robinson and Cllr Judith Harley

3. The Budget Review Group was reconstituted to be given the task of examining the Council's annual budget proposals for the following year. Findings of all Working and Review Groups will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee accordingly.
4. Additionally, the Committee agreed to recommend that Council amalgamate its Operating Principles into Part 13 of the Constitution. This would formalise key aspects of the committee's work and enable the Constitution Review Group to review its procedures annually in future years.

Update of Activities

5. Since the last full Council meeting, the Committee held three meetings, on 26 March 2025, 10 June 2025 and 1 July 2025, to consider a range of substantive items:

26 March 2025

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Update
- Urgent Key Decisions End-of-Year Update

10 June 2025

- Leisure Investment Programme Update and More Leisure Service Annual Plan
- Oxford Local Plan 2042 Regulation 18 Consultation Document
- Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report

1 July 2025

- Domestic Abuse Policy for Service Users
- Tourism (and Accommodation Business Improvement District presentation)
- Citizen Engagement Strategy

6. The Committee also endorsed recommendations from the following Working Group meetings:

Climate and Environment Panel – 27 March 2025

- Energy Efficiency Update
- Carbon Offsetting (Local Carbon Oxford) Update
- Zero Carbon Industrial Decarbonisation Update

Finance and Performance Panel – 14 April 2025

- Social Value and Procurement (Act and Regulations) Update
- ODS Group reports

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 24 June 2025

- National Homelessness Property Fund 1
- Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

7. Cabinet considered 19 Scrutiny recommendations across the various aforementioned items during its meetings on 9 April 2025, 18 June 2025 and 9 July 2025, providing commentary on each to inform the Committee of the rationale behind its decision. Of the which, 12 were agreed, 5 partially agreed, 1 not agreed. Cabinet did not indicate its position on 1 recommendation, providing only a written commentary.
8. Further to this, 1 recommendation was made in relation to ODS Acquisitions Strategy which was accepted by the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group at its meeting on 29 April 2025. A table summary of these recommendations and responses is included as appendices. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were made.
9. Minutes of relevant meetings are provided below as hyperlinks:
 - [Scrutiny Committee 26 March 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 10 June 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 1 July 2025](#)
10. The Scrutiny Committee wish to put on record:
 - Its appreciation for the constructive engagement with Serco Group during the review of the Leisure Investment Programme and More Leisure Service Annual Plan.
 - Recognition of the importance of the scrutiny-commissioned review on Tourism (and ABID) in Oxford that has provided valuable insights, and development of strategies to enhance the city's tourism offer and ensure it meets the needs of both visitors and residents.
 - It's view that the implications of AI require more careful consideration across a range of council functions, but particularly in regard to the Citizen Experience Strategy.
11. The Committee would like to thank the Cabinet Members for their contributions. They were also grateful to invited guests and Council Officers for their hard work and presentation of the reports, as well as answering questions.

Financial implications

12. Financial implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
13. Where appropriate, any further financial implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Legal issues

14. Legal implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
15. Where appropriate, any further legal implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Level of risk

16. Risk Registers, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
17. Where appropriate, the risk register was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Equalities impact

18. Equalities Impact Assessments, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
19. Where appropriate, the Equalities Impact Assessments was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

20. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
21. Where appropriate, the Carbon and Environmental impacts were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

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