

To: Council
Date: 6 October 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

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 14 July 2025. It covers the period from 12 July 2025 to 30 September 2025.

Update of Activities

2. Since the last full Council meeting, the Committee held two meetings, on 5 August 2025 and 9 September 2025, to consider a range of substantive items:

5 August 2025

- Oxpens Bridge River Update

9 September 2025

- Citizen and Community Engagement Policy 2025
- Budget Review Group Scope 2026/27

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

Climate and Environment Working Group – 22 July 2025

- Net Zero Masterplan Update
- Local Plan 2042 Climate Change and Resilience
- Annual Air Quality Status Report

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 2 September 2025

- Re-procurement of Housing First Support Service
- Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy
- Housing Service Q1 Performance for 2025/26
- Social Housing Allocations and Lettings Report

Climate and Environment Working Group – 4 September 2025

- Heat Network Update
- Local EV Infrastructure
- Local Energy Area Planning

4. Cabinet considered 16 Scrutiny recommendations across the various aforementioned items during its meetings on 13 August 2025 and 17 September 2025, providing commentary on each to inform the Committee of the rationale behind its decision. Of the which, 10 were agreed, 5 partially agreed, 0 not agreed. 1 recommendation was neither agreed or disagreed.
5. A table summary of recommendations and responses is included as appendices. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were made.
6. Minutes of relevant meetings are provided below as hyperlinks:
- [Scrutiny Committee 5 August 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 9 September 2025](#)
7. The Scrutiny Committee and its Working Groups wish to put on record:
- In its review of the Oxpens River Bridge update, the Committee raised a number of critical questions regarding the project's financial and procedural risks, including concerns about the potential impact of expanding the capital envelope on the wider capital programme, risks posed if external funding is

not secured, the possibility of the project succumbing into cost fallacy and whether budget slippages are additional to the optimism bias factored into the programme. The Committee scrutinised the Council's preparedness for the likelihood of further legal proceedings or delays, emphasising that any additional judicial review could significantly affect the project timeline and budget furthermore.

- Acknowledging the limitations in making formal recommendations on this topic, the Committee urged that all key decisions relating to Oxpens River Bridge be made directly by Cabinet, not delegated to officers.
 - The Committee wish to formally thank Mr Glazebrook (Friends of Grandpont Nature Park) and Cllr Lois Muddiman for their contributions on the Oxpens River Bridge item.
 - The Committee formally agreed the scope and Terms of Reference for the Budget Review Group to guide its examination of the Council's 2026-27 annual budget proposals.
8. The Committee extends its thanks to the Cabinet Members for their valuable contributions. They are also grateful to Council Officers for their hard work in preparing and presentation of the reports, as well as for responding to questions.

Financial implications

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

Legal issues

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

Level of risk

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

Equalities impact

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

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

17. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.

18. Where appropriate, the Carbon and Environmental impacts were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

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