

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

Table 1 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in December 2025

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 10 December 2025.

Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) For Cabinet to review the reporting of housing delivered, separating out those on sites of under 10 units where the requirement for affordable housing is not triggered within the covering report for future years.	Yes	We are happy to explore how additional clarity on this matter can be added to the covering report in future years.
2) For Officers to identify, if possible, the complex set of reasons as to why the housing completions reported are currently under the target or if not possible, explicitly state this.	Yes	The Covering Report currently states: <i>“Figure 2 below shows the cumulative projection is just under the target to meet the minimum of 10,884 dwellings to 2036 as set out in policy H1. There are likely to be a range of potential factors which have affected completion rates in recent years, these are difficult to separate out statistically, however officers are working hard to maximise opportunities to deliver housing to meet the target.”</i> We could amend this to read: <i>“There are likely to be a range of potential factors which in combination have affected completion rates in recent years, officers have explored possible explanations but these are difficult to separate out statistically and cannot be accurately isolated. However officers are working hard to maximise opportunities to deliver housing to meet the target.”</i>
3) For Cabinet to request officers to investigate bottlenecks with the current processes.	Yes	At the meeting, in response to questions about bottlenecks in the system, reference was made to the impact which

		legal delays and hold ups in receiving 3 rd party input into Section106 agreements can have. Officers will continue to work with external partners in exploring how these can be resolved efficiently.
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Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That Cabinet draw on the expertise of community and voluntary groups to provide input and support the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy; and actively inform the public about the criteria for good habitat, clearly promoting what good biodiverse habitat looks like so as to strengthen public understanding and support for practices (such as leaving verges uncut) that protect local species.	Yes	The Biodiversity Strategy will utilise input from community and voluntary groups, through creation of a steering group.

Recommendations relating to ODS Clienting (ODS Group Performance Report)

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) To increase the use of CCTV given that it has been the most effective measure for preventing fly-tipping.	Yes	CCTV cameras, overt and covert can be an effective tool in preventing and detecting fly-tipping. An investment in cameras, permanent signage on HRA stock where fly-tipping is a problem (usually around bin stores, alleyways and garages) and temporary signs during an enforcement operation would be useful methods to tackle these offences. This will need to be part of a detailed costed set of plans for certain HRA sites, which is what we plan to do in the next financial year.

<p>2) That repairs of play area equipment be reverted to a delegated budget arrangement, as this model has previously demonstrated greater efficiency and addresses the backlogs in maintenance.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Shareholder and Joint Venture Group has spoken to Officers. A project is underway on the clienting and commissioning of Oxford Direct Services by the council and this should be picked up by that process. To confirm, however, no delegated budget has been removed from ODS.</p>
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Table 2 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in January 2026

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 13 January 2026.

Workforce Equality Report

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the current target for workforce representation of 17% for employees from minority ethnic groups be increased to a higher, evidence-based, figure in order to restrengthen the Council's recruitment from these groups.	Yes	The Council has achieved its current, formal target of 16.5% and has since been working towards 17%. It is appropriate to increase the target.
2) That Cabinet fully implement an anonymised, third-party reporting system, reflecting standard practice across the public and private sectors, to enable employees to raise concerns relating to harassment, bullying, discrimination, corruption and other workplace-related issues with confidence.	Yes	The Council is currently exploring options for a service. One provider is quoting around £300 per month plus vat for the service for the Council's workforce. An internal solution would not incur extra costs but would take up staff time.
3) Acknowledging there are challenges posed by low staff numbers and reliability of available data in this area, that future workforce equality reports include a dedicated section on gender reassignment, recognising this as a protected characteristic.	Yes, in part	As this group of employees is small and hesitant about sharing personal data, we do not wish to highlight numerical data on the group but would be happy to refer to the work we are doing to support employees and acknowledge gender reassignment as a protected characteristic. Non-binary, trans and gender questioning employees would be included. A separate section may not be required but this will be considered.

Proposed Submission of Draft Local Plan 2045

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) For officers to undertake a further review of the areas in Greater Leys, in particular Dunnock Way, and other sites such as Littlemore to be allocated Local Centres under Policy C1, noting their similarities to Underhill Circus.		Officers will carry out a further analysis of the list of Local Centres.
2) That the evidence-base is thoroughly examined to determine whether 10% biodiversity net gain is conclusively the most ambitious minimum the council could set.		Officers have reviewed the position and can confirm the following: The Environment Act 2021 sets a statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10%. The Planning Practice Guidance was updated last year to say that local plans should not seek a higher percentage than this statutory level 'unless justified'. To support a higher percentage we would need robust evidence to justify this approach, which would need to look at specific local need, as well as demonstrating opportunities to deliver it and looking at the impact on development viability. Because of the constrained nature of Oxford and the limited opportunities for development, and indeed for achieving BNG within the city, this is not considered to be an approach that could be justified and evidenced.
3) For officers to explore whether a higher threshold for the acceptability of loss of sports facilities could be incorporated in the Local Plan.		In the development of the Plan officers have reviewed all the green spaces in the city, and in some cases go further than the NPPF by attempting to preserve spaces in situ, because of their important functions that justify this and make it difficult to re-provide, e.g. as a wildlife corridor of functional floodplain. Other spaces are part of the supporting Green Infrastructure network, and these spaces follow the NPPF approach that development may be justified if re-provision can be made, or if they are shown to be surplus. We do not have a surplus of pitches, so pitches in use do require re-provision. Re-provision needs to be of equivalent or better quality and capacity but not necessarily

		quantity, so sometimes a smaller area of pitches, or enhanced pitches elsewhere, that can provide the same level of use, may be accepted.
4) For officers to reconsider the language in Policy C2(h) encouraging the development of city centre play amenity.		<p>The Plan is very supportive of play space and specifically in including this in our centres, for example: in Policy C2 about maintaining vibrant centres (which includes the city centre): <i>"enhancement and new opportunities for public realm and landscaping such as tree planting, including incorporation of small green spaces where people can stop, dwell, socialise and play;"</i>.</p> <p>There is policy support elsewhere in the Plan too, Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure states: <i>"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"</i></p> <p>Also, in Policy G2: enhancement of green and blue infrastructure says proposals should demonstrate how they've considered: <i>"Health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all age groups and abilities, particularly children and teenagers;"</i></p> <p>More broadly, the City Council supports the concept of a play space in the city centre, however, without a site having been identified, there is little more the Local Plan can do to deliver it.</p>