

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

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

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
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.

60

Recommendations relating to ODS Clienting (ODS Group Performance Report)

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
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.
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.	No	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.

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

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
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.	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

		<p>quantity, so sometimes a smaller area of pitches, or enhanced pitches elsewhere, that can provide the same level of use, may be accepted.</p>
<p>4) For officers to reconsider the language in Policy C2(h) encouraging the development of city centre play amenity.</p>		<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>

Table 3 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in February 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 3 February 2026.

Debt Recovery Strategy

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment																																														
1) That a summary report on council debt recovery activities at all stages is provided to Scrutiny and Cabinet at a future meeting to ensure there is awareness in this area of the council's work.	Yes	<p>A complete summary report of debt recovery stages will be presented at the next available scrutiny meeting; here is a breakdown of the current number of accounts in recovery and the stage.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Recovery Stage</th> <th>Jan 2026</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No - Reminder 1 - RM1</td> <td>2333</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£1,451,097.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Reminder 2 - RM2</i></td> <td>593</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£275,657.81</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Reminder 3 - RM3</i></td> <td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£9,949.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Final - FIN</i></td> <td>5989</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£5,293,928.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Summons - SUM</i></td> <td>470</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£427,840.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Liability Order - LO</i></td> <td>1004</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£1,043,312.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Arrangement - ARG</i></td> <td>705</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£457,762.94</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Attachment of Benefits - AOB</i></td> <td>669</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£330,238.48</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Attachment of Earnings - AOE</i></td> <td>249</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£204,631.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Enforcement Agents - BLF</i></td> <td>4226</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£4,116,804.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No - Charging Order - CHO</i></td> <td>117</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>value</i></td> <td>£127,559.20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Recovery Stage	Jan 2026	No - Reminder 1 - RM1	2333	<i>value</i>	£1,451,097.12	<i>No - Reminder 2 - RM2</i>	593	<i>value</i>	£275,657.81	<i>No - Reminder 3 - RM3</i>	31	<i>value</i>	£9,949.99	<i>No - Final - FIN</i>	5989	<i>value</i>	£5,293,928.37	<i>No - Summons - SUM</i>	470	<i>value</i>	£427,840.92	<i>No - Liability Order - LO</i>	1004	<i>value</i>	£1,043,312.30	<i>No - Arrangement - ARG</i>	705	<i>value</i>	£457,762.94	<i>No - Attachment of Benefits - AOB</i>	669	<i>value</i>	£330,238.48	<i>No - Attachment of Earnings - AOE</i>	249	<i>value</i>	£204,631.57	<i>No - Enforcement Agents - BLF</i>	4226	<i>value</i>	£4,116,804.41	<i>No - Charging Order - CHO</i>	117	<i>value</i>	£127,559.20
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<p>2) That Cabinet considers incorporating clear, plain language summary within letters issued to individuals in addition to links to further information online, given the prevalence of digital exclusion and unfamiliarity with local government terminology. This would reduce reliance on residents needing to follow online links to understand the purpose and implications of the letters.</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>Billing and Recovery Documents Local Taxation</p> <p>Every element of our billing and recovery documentation, including SMS messaging, has been developed using evidence based behavioural insights provided by Dr Amy Jones, a behavioural scientist and recognised expert in local taxation communications. In designing these materials, careful consideration was given to the strict legislative requirements governing the content of local taxation documents, ensuring that all mandatory information remained fully compliant.</p> <p>While further amendments through supplementary inserts is possible, Dr Jones emphasised the importance of keeping all key information within the main billing and recovery documents themselves. She advised that, wherever possible, the most important messages should be presented prominently on the front page to maximise clarity, comprehension, and customer engagement. We</p>																

	<p>think this is in line with the spirit of the scrutiny recommendation.</p> <p>We have included a link which makes clear her thoughts and our response to how our document should be presented:</p> <p>The Insights of Dr Jones</p> <p>Members also asked for information on translation services in considering this matter so it is provided below:</p> <p>Availability of Translation and Interpreting Services</p> <p>Oxford City Council offers a full range of translation and interpreting services through its provider Word360. These services include telephone interpreting, face-to-face interpreting (including British Sign Language), video interpreting and document translation.</p> <p>Residents can access these services by contacting the Council's main switchboard on 01865 249811 or by visiting the Customer Service Centre, where staff can arrange the required language support.</p> <p>In addition to English, the recovery team is multi-cultural, with the following languages also spoken:</p> <p>Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati</p> <p>Translation Services in the Oxford City Complaints Process</p> <p>These translation and interpreting services are available to support residents when making a complaint. The services are intended to ensure that all residents can communicate effectively with the Council and access services regardless of language barriers.</p>
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	<p>Translation Services Provided by Enforcement Agents Engaged by the City Council</p> <p>XL Enforcement</p> <p>Offer a range of in house language support through their multilingual team.</p> <p>In addition to this internal capability, the organisation can produce written communications in over 100 languages using Google Translate and works with Cymon for high quality Welsh translations. These tools also support their digital engagement channels, including Telsolutions campaigns, and are being built into the development pipeline for the bespoke DebtorApp. To ensure full accessibility for all service users, XL Enforcement also provides large print documents, Braille, dyslexia friendly formats, British Sign Language interpreters, and RelayUK for hearing impaired customers. They are further enhancing real time communication by moving towards the use of Samsung Translate across all enforcement agents' Samsung smart devices while on the road.</p> <p>Jacobs Enforcement</p> <p>provides a full translation service for customers across all contact points, supporting communication in any language through its partnership with TheBigWord, a professional provider offering telephone, online, and in person translation on demand.</p> <p>Agents also carry language identification tools on their iPads, enabling them to quickly identify a customer's preferred language and arrange a translator as needed.</p> <p>Where appropriate and authorised by the debtor, translation can also be facilitated through trusted community groups.</p>
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		In addition to these services, the organisation benefits from the wide language skills of its Enforcement Agents and can provide accessible formats such as sign language interpretation, Braille, and other specialist communication support.
3) That the timescales of meetings with advice centres is revisited to ensure they correspond to their capacity and availability, noting that critical role of advice centres as both a key contact point for residents and a source of specialist advice and support.	Yes	We have asked advice centres about this; so far, the Council has not yet received a response with regards to reinstating these meetings at times that align with capacity and availability of advice centres. Once this is confirmed, Council will ensure the meetings can be scheduled accordingly. Advice centres are indeed valued partners and points of contact.

Noticeboards Update

66

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) Subject to the agreement that Council will commit to actively managing and operating the noticeboards as recommended in the budget review process, that clear guidelines are developed for the use of noticeboards, including how new items and updates are managed, and the responsibilities of key holders.	In Part	Agreed, subject to budget discussion.

Table 4 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in March 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 10 March 2026.

More Leisure Annual Service Plan (Year 3) and Update

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That future reports provide More Leisure KPI outcomes broken down by gender, as well as youth participation by geographic venue, acknowledging that demographic in certain geographic areas differ. This is to identify if there are any interventions required to address any gaps or segments that are underrepresented.	Yes	This data will be provided in future reports.
2) That, as part of the service plan, Council and More Leisure set out what could be done to expand into non-traditional sports that are not currently offered in the leisure centres.	Yes	A note on this will be included in the service plan, with the intention to explore opportunities.

70

Nighttime Economy

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That when considering the nighttime economy in relation to families and children, age groups are disaggregated into children up to age 11 and young people under 18.	Yes	This distinction is helpful and we also recognise that all ages of children can be different with different interests and needs, and it's important that a nighttime economy appeals to all of them. We will reflect this in our approach to ensure there is inclusivity across all ages and make sure we flag this in discussions with key stakeholders.

2) That the ongoing work maintains an open-minded approach to a wider range of nighttime activities, including bookshops, museums, the Covered Market, and other activities that are non-alcohol related.	Yes	We will reflect this in our approach to ensure there is inclusivity across different ages and interests, and again flag this in discussion with stakeholders.
3) That late night cafés are categorised separately from other food-related venues.	Yes	These will be categorised separately so there is clear data available.
4) That consideration is given to include local promoters as part of the Live Music Taskforce.	Yes	The local promoters will be part of the Live Music Taskforce once assembled.
5) That the Council continues to engage with employers to identify how best to address the issues faced by workers travelling home late at night.	Yes	The Council will continue to engage with employers and Thames Valley Police where feasible.
6) That current analysis includes the capacity of venues, in addition to the number of venues.	Yes	This will be included going forward to ensure appropriate data is collected.

Fly-tipping and Litter Management

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) To explore the provision of facilities in parks during the summer period to allow “2-minute litter picks” where this would be beneficial.	Yes	ODS will explore this, especially around appropriate trial locations and discuss funding options with OCC officers.
2) To review the appropriateness of measures businesses have in place to ensure that the waste they produce is managed responsibly and that they are encouraging their customers to dispose of litter appropriately.	No	This was not part of the scope of the paper and is not covered by the author’s roles. It will need to be discussed with the relevant officers. There is a regular dialogue between ODS and businesses, using its commercial services, about the timing of collections but late evening ones are not permissible under our current EA licences.

		CRT do conduct regulation of businesses and waste issues. The guidance in place specifically for the city centre ensures that commercial waste is removed during the busiest footfall periods in the daytime, to allow for street cleansing and safety.
3) To audit the use of signage in areas with high levels of fly-tipping and to consider where additional signage could be most effectively implemented.	Yes	ODS will explore the logging of fly-tipping activity where fly-tip signs are in place to ascertain effectiveness long-term and help inform future locations. This may require additional funding if more signage is required.
4) That Council consider reengaging with education programmes and resources aimed at addressing behaviours and culture relating to litter and fly-tipping.	Yes	OCC to explore options for a communication / engagement programme for litter and fly-tipping. There is a programme of engagement and education in place for improving residential waste collections, with a focus on increasing recycling.
5) That future reports include a breakdown of locations with high levels of litter across the city, presented visually on a map where possible.	In part	Mapping of litter levels is not currently possible but ODS will explore what data is available from audit activity and how this can be presented.

Heat Network Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That Cabinet formally write to Central Government seeking inclusion of Oxford in the first tranche of Heat Network Zones to be designated following the commencement of Heat Network Zoning Regulations, so that the Council will have clear statutory powers to enforce delivery against agreed plans, intervene in cases of non-compliance or underperformance, prevent monopolistic practices, as well as ensure transparency and appropriate safeguards.	Yes	This would be done, in hand with progressing to procure a Heat Network Developer for Oxford, via a Development Agreement.