

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 7 April 2026
Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Recommendations from the Working Groups for endorsement at the Scrutiny Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To endorse the recommendations from the Working Groups.
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Chairs of the Scrutiny Working Groups
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:
1. Endorse the recommendations from the Climate and Environment, Housing and Homelessness, and Finance and Performance Working Groups.
2. Note the recommendations to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group.

Information Exempt From Publication
Information contained in or appended to this report is deemed exempt from publication under Schedule 12A paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Recommendations to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group - 2 April 2026	Yes

Overview

- The Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse the recommendations from the following Working Groups held since the previous meeting:

Finance and Performance Working Group – 26 March 2026

- Integrated Performance for Q3 2025/26
- OX Place Financial Business Plan, Development Sites update and Period 9 Monitoring report [SJVG]

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 31 March 2026

- Housing Performance 2025/26
- Selective Licensing Year 3 update

Climate and Environment Working Group – 1 April 2026

- Social Housing EPCC update
- Local Area Energy Planning update

2. The recommendations due at Shareholder and Joint Venture Group on 2 April 2026 were endorsed through delegated authority by the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor, in consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. They have been included as an exempt appendix (Appendix 1) for the Committee to note.
3. Cabinet Members, in consultation with the relevant Officers, will either, agree, agree in-part, or disagree with the recommendations. The tables below detail the Working Groups' recommendations for endorsement by the Committee. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were suggested.
4. The Working Groups wish to put on record:

Finance and Performance

The Finance and Performance Working Group reflected that delivery performance has not aligned with current optimism bias assumptions, and suggested a more realistic starting point may be needed, with scope to adjust as performance improves. There was also a clear view that recruitment and retention pressures currently reflected across multiple services should be recognised as a single corporate risk to better capture their scale and impact. In addition, concerns were raised that existing budget provision for damp, mould and retrofit works underestimates the likely ongoing demand. Members therefore emphasised the need for more realistic medium-term planning assumptions to avoid repeated in-year budget adjustments.

Housing and Homelessness

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group reflected on the positive progress made over the past year in relation to the Council's housing offer and performance against key targets. Members noted in particular the development of the tenant strategy and look forward to reviewing how this is put into practice in future reporting. The Working Group also recognised the successes of the Selective Licensing scheme and was fully supportive of the ongoing work that the council is doing in this area including driving up standards in the private rented sector and ensuring tenants are better protected.

Climate and Environment

The Climate and Environment Working Group noted the updates on Social Housing EPC particularly the work being undertaken to identify and replace gas boilers with air source heat pumps. Members supported this. They felt the council could be an exemplary authority and accelerate the rollout of air source heat pumps moving away from bad technologies and make full use of newer, more sustainable technologies available.

5. The Working Groups wish to thank Cabinet Members and Officers who contributed to the meetings.

Financial implications

6. Financial implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Working Groups.

Legal issues

7. Legal implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Working Groups.

Level of risk

8. Risk Registers, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Working Groups.

Equalities impact

9. Equalities Impact Assessments, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Working Groups.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

10. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Working Groups.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

11. Implications of Local Government Reorganisation for the reports listed above were outlined within the report when presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
12. Where appropriate, any further implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations using the linked guidance from Government: [Financial decisions before local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

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**Table 1 – Recommendations of the Finance and Performance Working Group –
Integrated Performance for Q3 2025/26**

The table below sets out the recommendations made by the Finance and Performance Working Group on 26 March 2026 for endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2026. The Cabinet will be asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That Cabinet, in the light of experience, reviews whether the current optimism bias remains appropriate, including whether a higher starting point (such as 50%) should be considered, with scope to reduce this (back to 45% or 40%) where delivery performance improves.		
2) That Cabinet considers whether recruitment and retention should be recognised and managed as a single corporate risk, rather than being reflected separately across individual service risk registers.		
3) That Cabinet reviews whether current and future budget assumptions for damp, mould and retrofit works are sufficient, in light of emerging experience, including whether higher baseline provision should be built into the MTFP.		

**Table 2 – Recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group –
Housing Performance 2025/26**

The table below sets out the recommendations made by the Housing and Homelessness Working Group on 31 March 2026 for endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2026. The Cabinet will be asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) Officers to provide the Working Group with data relating to the number of homeless people being housed in hotel accommodation and the length of time those people have occupied hotel accommodation.		

Table 3 – Recommendations of the Climate and Environment Working Group – Social Housing EPC Update

The table below sets out the recommendations made by the Housing and Homelessness Working Group on 1 April 2026 for endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2026. The Cabinet will be asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That Cabinet adopts a policy that makes air source heat pumps as the default heating system for all social housing properties going forward. In recognition that in emergency situations a gas boiler may still be required, installation of gas boilers should only be permitted in those circumstances.		

**Table 3 – Recommendations of the Climate and Environment Working Group –
Local Area Energy Planning Update**

The table below sets out the recommendations made by the Housing and Homelessness Working Group on 1 April 2026 for endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2026. The Cabinet will be asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That Cabinet assess whether action areas identified through LAEP that are not currently in the draft Local Plan 2045, could be incorporated, including a gap analyses to identify where the Local Plan does not yet reflect LAEP priorities, as well as a feasibility check on whether they can be integrated at this stage.		

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