

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 30 June 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:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

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

Information Exempt from Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Report and Recommendations for the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group	Yes

Overview and Summary

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

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 24 June 2026

- HRA Policies [Report for Cabinet and Council]

- Housing Services Performance Report Quarter 4 and Resident Engagement “You Said, We Did” Report Quarter 4 2025-26 [Scrutiny Commissioned Report]
 - Housing Consumer Standards Improvement Plan 2026-27 [Scrutiny Commissioned Report]
 - Housing Work Programme Review [Scrutiny Commissioned Report]
2. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 grants the power to the Scrutiny Committee to make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive; and on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.
 3. The recommendations for the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) on 25 June were endorsed through delegated authority to the Scrutiny and Governance Advisor, in consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. The report has been included as an exempt appendix for the Committee to note. The Finance and Performance Working Group reviewed the following reports:
 - OX Place Monitoring April (P1) (Report for SJVG)
 - OX Place Development Sites Updates (Report for SJVG)
 - OX Place Reserves Policy (Report for SJVG)
 - OX Place Dividends Policy (Report for SJVG)
 - OX Place Draft 2026/27 Budget (Report for SJVG)
 - OX Place Draft year-end Position pre-audit (Report for SJVG)
 4. The SJVG meeting was cancelled due to the red heat alert, and the report will be formally reported at their next meeting on 5 November 2026.
 5. If endorsed, the 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.

Summary of Discussions

6. For the HRA Policies, due to be recommended by Cabinet for Council to approve, there were questions around the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Policy regarding the order of work and subsequent timescales for it to be completed. The Working Group were told the priority would be to rescue individuals stuck in lifts and then the other timeframes would be for the securing and fixing of the lift, depending on specifics determined contactors. Any defined targets for repairs were not currently suggested as the policy was proposing alternative measures to this.
7. There was a request to link with the complaints procedure, but this policy was seen as a preventative approach, with a monitoring mechanism linked to complaints and wider health and safety systems.
8. Regarding the Complaints Policy, there were questions around those received by social media from residents, which would need to be formally submitted for processing. The Working Group were told the policy had been drafted with expectations of social media trends, suggesting there could be an increase in complaints, but there was not a significant issue at present.

9. Referring to stage 2 escalation for complaints, there were queries if a full response would be received within specified 20 working days, as set out by the Housing Ombudsman Service. Officers noted that they usually respond quicker than the specified timescale, but always consider the associated risks, health and safety concerns, disrepair, vulnerability, and any repeated service failures before responding. The Housing Ombudsman Service requests that an annual report is published, and a self-assessment is completed through the quarterly Residents' Complaints Panel, which then reports to the Tenant and Leaseholder Board.
10. There were comments regarding the work contracted to Oxford Direct Services (ODS) and evidence of the complaint statistics being on a negative trajectory. Officers noted that the policy outlined an independent oversight from the Council for ODS complaints, referring to guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service and resident feedback. It was noted ODS would only be responsible for stage 1 complaints, and the Council would process any complaints escalated.
11. Regarding the Voids Policy, there was a suggestion to link community and mental health support where a property becomes void and requires major work as a result of a traumatic or major incident, such as a fire. Officers noted it was not yet referenced within the policy, but the current processes lend to considering community impact and exceptional void impacts.
12. For the Housing Services Performance Report for Quarter 4, there were positive comments around the compliance of safety check rates along with the value and presentation on the report.
13. There were comments on the damp and mould reporting in connection with access issues and resource pressures. It was recognised that there was a period where additional resource was required to clear the backlog, which has since been achieved. However, the Working Group were made aware this could increase again; to manage this, officers are streamlining processes and reviewing date to enable the prediction of trends. This will enable more proactive responses in partnership with ODS.
14. For the Resident Engagement "You Said, We Did" Report Quarter 4 2025-26, there were comments on the positive value of the report and on the responses from the residents. It was noted that not all policies have been approved by Council, but the tenant satisfaction measures and the perceptions of the Council as a landlord had seen a significant improvement in recent months.
15. For the Housing Consumer Standards Improvement Plan 2026-27, the Working Group commented on the quality of the report but noted a delay for the health and safety internal audits. It was noted that the initial target dates did not consider the resulting actions from the audit.
16. There were also questions about the next phase of implementing feedback within the improvement plan, including further engagement with tenants. It was commented that feedback is continually collected and actioned, with communication actions being embedded within the resident engagement strategy action plan.
17. The Working Groups wish to thank Cabinet Members and Officers who contributed to the presentation of reports and discussions.

Financial implications

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

Legal issues

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

Level of risk

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

Equalities impact

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

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

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

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

23. Implications of Local Government Reorganisation for the reports listed above were outlined within the report when presented at the Working Groups.

24. 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 Housing and Homelessness Working Group –
HRA Policies**

The table below sets out the recommendations made by the Housing and Homelessness Working Group on 24 June 2026 for endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 30 June 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) Within the Voids Policy, for there to be consideration for the wider community and social impact.		
2) Within the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Policy, to ensure complaints for Oxford Direct Services (ODS) have a robust oversight procedure and to ensure the timescales within the policy are clearly defined.		
3) Within the Complaints Policy, to ensure there is clarity on repeated complaints and tightening the wording for public clarity.		

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