

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

Cabinet response to Scrutiny Committee recommendations in April 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 7 April 2026.

Watercourses and Ditches

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That there is greater urgency in drawing up local flood risk action plans for the identified areas, specifically but not limited to Lobelia Road and Campbell Road, as well as other high flood risk areas.	No	Flood risk action plans are not a formal function, therefore the City Council does not have the power/remit, duty, funding or resource to develop or implement plans to manage flood risk throughout the City. We do have a remit to, and will continue to, formally investigate flood events and propose recommendations in accordance with Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act – as we have done for Lobelia Road and other locations. Recommendations made within these reports are for a number of stakeholders (residents, Thames Water, Highways etc.), and we have no power to compel others to take action. However, where appropriate, and opportunity exists; we will look for funding sources to help stakeholders implement recommendations from the formal reports, and further look to implement flood risk management measures where funding/opportunities arise – for example the SuDS Planters at New Hinksey School, and extensive water butt planter roll-out in Florence Park and the Lye Valley area, both of which have been implemented in the past 18 months.

2) That there is clear framework setting out: - the undertaking of routine clearances and ad hoc collection - relevant timelines and circumstances, including when litter can safely be removed from watercourses - a list of current equipment available to complete the clearance, together with any additional equipment that would be required to enable greater levels of removal.	n/a	Responsibility for waterways and ditches is shared across the Council, ODS (as contractor) and the Environment Agency. As such, any approach to matters such as routine and reactive maintenance, operational frameworks, equipment provision, and data collection will require appropriate coordination between all relevant agencies. Given there is need to engage with all partners, further work is required before a position can be confirmed. A full response addressing the recommendations will therefore be provided in due course.
3) That Council work with ODS to start keeping records of the number of reactive repairs being undertaken to better inform any needs for maintenance plans.	n/a	Responsibility for waterways and ditches is shared across the Council, ODS (as contractor) and the Environment Agency. As such, any approach to matters such as routine and reactive maintenance, operational frameworks, equipment provision, and data collection will require appropriate coordination between all relevant agencies. Given there is need to engage with all partners, further work is required before a position can be confirmed. A full response addressing the recommendations will therefore be provided in due course.

Review of Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy Councillor Applications

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the annual pricing list of regular work also itemises the permissions required for each work in order to provide members with all, if not most, information needed to submit a complete application.	n/a	A centralised list is not possible as this can depend on the location of works and size of the project. Members are advised to submit a request via the Members' Enquiry Form for any projects intending to use Ward Member Budget or Community Infrastructure Levy for projects to

		install new infrastructure to establish if any permissions would be required and if the proposals are viable. The annual spend list referenced is a rough outline for Members as to what the expected costs of certain items, however these are advisory and are subject to change due to size and location of the project, but also external factors outside of the Council's control (such as costs of materials). Members will also need to ensure there are no ongoing costs for a project, but if so, this would need to be reviewed with the relevant Officers, via the Members Enquiry Form, to discuss the ongoing revenue costs to maintain the new infrastructure and if it will be covered via service areas annual budgets. The items listed below are part of the annual list and include the relevant permissions: • Permission would need to be sought from the land owner to place litter/dog bins depending on where these are being placed. If placed on highway/pavement, then permission would need to be sought from County Highways. The OCC Green Space team may also need to be involved if being placed within public parks. • Installation of additional benches/picnic tables, depending on where they are going, land owners consent or the OCC Green Space team if being placed in a public park. • Tree planting, to seek any permissions from the OCC Green Space team. May also be worth checking with the Tree officers in the Planning department, if any tree planting would affect any
--	--	--

		adjacent trees that may be protected A comment at the Committee related to the use of Councillor CIL spend for lighting in parks, this would be out of the scope for using this funding and would need to form part of the centralised CIL spend, for which Members are required to raise these with the Director of Planning and Regulation, via the Members' Enquiry Form, so the service area is aware of the request.
--	--	---

Integrated Performance for Q3 2025/26

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
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.	Yes	We can consider this when we undertake the next iteration of the budget and MTFP.
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.	n/a	Whilst recruitment and retention are reflected in service risk registers, it is also the subject matter of Risk 3 in the Corporate Risk Register. This is "Workforce Sustainability" and concerns recruitment and retention challenges in key areas such as Legal, ICT and Environmental Health.
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.	Yes	We included £0.8m in the 25/26 budget round for damp and mould and based on our experience during 2025/26 have increased this budget by a further £0.7m to £1.5m for 2026/27. We will continue to review the position over the 2026/27 year. For retrofit we have included as much capital resources as the HRA business plan will allow up to 2030 at which point we will review.

Housing Performance 2025/26

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
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.	Yes	Data on Temporary Accommodation to be provided by agreement with the Chair of the Working Group.

Social Housing EPC Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
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.	In-part	Air source heat pumps are not suitable in all instances (e.g. flats) and other technologies will need to be installed such as Ground Source Heat Pumps and other electrical forms of heating. Heat pumps require a new design and enabling works prior to replacing a gas boiler, this means that fast replacement is not always possible e.g. when heating systems break down so like for like replacement will be required in certain circumstances. A draft Energy and Sustainability strategy is currently under internal consultation and will subsequently be presented to cabinet. This proposes gas boilers should not be installed from 2036 in line with the governments original plan to phase out gas boilers (now scrapped). In the meantime, it is proposed that gas boiler replacements are gradually replaced with low carbon heating (where appropriate e.g. well insulated properties). This

		phased approach will allow a transition period in order to train and develop the industry and prove the technologies in Oxford's housing stock. The other factor is limited HRA funds available for low carbon heating installation and additional funding requirements for the uplift in cost compared to a gas boiler replacement.
--	--	--

Local Area Energy Planning Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
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.	n/a	The LAEP is being closely developed with planning input. The Local Plan 2045 has just completed the Regulation 19 consultation, with the next step being submission to the Secretary of State, which is likely to take place in June 2026. Whilst the Council can propose modifications for the Inspector to consider as part of the examination process, we do not currently envisage that these would be necessary to align the Local Plan with the emerging work of the LAEP. A gap analysis exercise can take place to check if there are any areas which do not reflect the LAEP's priorities in due course however. Whilst the detail of the city LAEP is still emerging, the work is expected to support the Local Plan objective of helping the city meet its net zero carbon targets and to complement various policies including ensuring new buildings are net zero carbon in operation and supporting retrofitting of existing buildings. Where particular infrastructure interventions are identified through the LAEP process, it may be appropriate to incorporate these into future updates of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which

		supports the Local Plan and identifies key infrastructure needs in the city (and is a live document). This will depend upon there being sufficient detail around these projects (e.g. timescales for delivery, costs etc) and we will keep this under review as the LAEP continues to be developed.
--	--	---

Cabinet response to Scrutiny Committee recommendations in July 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 30 June 2026.

Annual Review of the Council of Sanctuary Framework 2025-2028

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) The updated Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to be published as part of the updated report and circulated to the Scrutiny Committee	Yes	Officers will share the updated KPIs with members of the Committee once prepared.
2) Further, localised data and information regarding the refugees housed in Oxford, to be included within the report next year and to be shared with the Scrutiny Committee	Yes	Officers will prepare and circulate available data with committee members shortly.
3) To include Community Associations within the updated Action Plan	Yes	The Action Plan will be amended to include this.
4) A bench-marking exercise against similar authorities to the City Council have succeed in positive housing outcomes, linked to government data	Yes	Officers will seek to benchmark our outcomes for homelessness duties for people leaving Home Office accommodation. This will only be possible if national government collects this level of detail, or similar LAs are willing to share their information. Officers will update on this work in next year's report.

5) The No Recourse to Public Fund (NRPF) protocol, once finalised with Oxfordshire County Council, to be returned to the Scrutiny Committee for review	Yes	Agreed, with acknowledgment that Oxfordshire County Council are the document owner and scrutiny committee may only be able to provide comment.
6) Measure the impact of the Council comms team regarding myth busting against misinformation	Yes	Officers will seek to develop measures of success and report back in next year's report.

Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) Tenants Unions to be involved in the evaluation of the implementation of the policy	Yes	Officers will engage with tenant unions and relevant third sector organisations as part of the ongoing evaluation of the policy's implementation, drawing on their insight into the experience of private renters in Oxford
2) Further and regular data to be provided regarding the enforcement of the policy to be shared with the committee and included within future reports brought to the committee	Yes	From 2027/28, MHCLG will require mandatory quarterly reporting from local authorities on private sector housing enforcement activity under the Renters' Rights Act. In the interim, the Council is voluntarily providing this data. Officers will share this with the committee on a regular basis and ensure relevant enforcement data is included in future reports brought to scrutiny.
3) For further information to be brought to Councillors regarding Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, including a briefing to be scheduled	Yes	Officers are very happy to provide members briefings on their work including property licensing, the Renter's Rights Acts, private sector housing enforcement activities or any other subjects that might be helpful to members.

HRA Policies

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) Within the Voids Policy, for there to be consideration for the wider community and social impact	Yes	The specific recommendation was for an exceptional void to be addressed with urgency so that, for example, a burnt down property does not blight the local community. It was agreed at the meeting this will be written into the voids procedures.
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	Yes	This recommendation was made in respect of the Complaints Policy and was agreed to.
3) Within the Complaints Policy, to ensure there is clarity on repeated complaints and tightening the wording for public clarity	Yes	This recommendation was agreed and the amendment was made to the policy.