

June 2026

# Scrutiny

annual report

2025/26



OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# 1 Introduction

The past year has been a period of significant activity and progress for the Overview and Scrutiny<sup>1</sup> function at Oxfordshire County Council (the Council). Its primary focus has continued to ensure that the council's decisions and policies are subject to rigorous examination and that they reflect the needs and aspirations of our community. With many new members coming onto the Council and Scrutiny function to share their ideas, increasing public engagement, and collaborating with various service areas, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have striven to enhance transparency, accountability,

and effectiveness in local governance. This annual report provides an overview of the function's key areas of focus and recommendations, highlighting the impact of our work on the council's operations and the community at large.

The report covers the work of the last civic year, from Annual Council in May 2025 to Annual Council in May 2026.

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**1** Unless overview is specifically mentioned the term 'scrutiny' refers to both overview and scrutiny. A distinction is often drawn between 'overview' which focuses on the development of policy, and 'scrutiny' which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.



## What is Overview and Scrutiny?

In the Council most major decisions are taken by the Cabinet members, either through ‘single member decisions’ or formal meetings of the whole Cabinet. The Cabinet is made up of elected councillors from the controlling political administration. During the municipal year 2025-26 this was a Liberal Democrat administration.

In operating an ‘executive’ (Cabinet) decision-making governance model, the Council is required by law to have an Overview and Scrutiny (“Scrutiny”) function, made up of elected councillors who are not on the Cabinet. The Scrutiny function acts as a counterweight to the Cabinet, empowering its cross-party membership of ‘backbench’ councillors to hold the Cabinet and its decision takers to account for the Council’s performance and its decisions, and to strengthen council decision-making. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Scrutiny Committee) can also investigate any issue that affects the county

or its residents, regardless of whether it is within the direct responsibility of the Cabinet. The work of Scrutiny helps to provide assurance that the Council is performing well, delivering value for money, and taking the best decisions it can to improve public services and the quality of life for the residents of Oxfordshire through influencing existing policy and informing policy development.

A Scrutiny Committee has no power to require that decisions be reversed or policies changed. It operates in a very similar fashion to Parliament’s select committees in that it seeks to engage relevant and informed individuals, consider policy or performance in light of the evidence gathered and present, in what is referred to as a ‘critical friend’ approach, recommendations for the relevant decision-maker to consider how improvements might be made. When Scrutiny makes a recommendation it is a legal duty that the recommendation be responded to in writing by the relevant Council decision-maker.



## The Shape of Scrutiny at Oxfordshire County Council

The Scrutiny function at the Council has seven Committees:

- 1. Education and Young People** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 2. Performance and Corporate Services** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 3. Place** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 4. People** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 5. Oxfordshire Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 6. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 7. Horton Joint Health** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**This report primarily focuses on the work of the Education and Young People, Performance and Corporate Services, Place, and People Overview and Scrutiny Committees.**

The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a joint Committee (meaning it includes members of the district and city councils within Oxfordshire) has its own annual reporting arrangements. This document can be read [here](#). Likewise, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of representative members from all councils within the named area and has been the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council to administer since September 2025. Details of their work is included in the Health Scrutiny annual report at the link above.

The Horton Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee established by the Oxfordshire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has not met since September 2019, although any activity would be included within the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee Annual Report.

## Overview and Scrutiny function



**Cllr Glynis Phillips (chair)**

Performance and Corporate Services



**Cllr Liam Walker (chair)**

Place



**Cllr Liz Brighthouse (chair)**

Education and Young People



**Cllr Ian Snowdon (chair)**

People

### Membership

Cllr Glynis Phillips (Chair)

Cllr Ian Middleton  
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Brad Baines

Cllr Will Boucher-Giles

Cllr Tom Greenaway

Cllr Dr Nathan Ley

Cllr Kieron Mallon

Cllr John Shiri

Cllr Roz Smith

### Membership

Cllr Liam Walker (Chair)

Cllr Bethia Thomas  
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Thomas Ashby

Cllr Chris Brant

Cllr Laura Gordon

Cllr Emily Kerr

Cllr Lesley Mclean

Cllr Susanna Pressel

Cllr Leigh Rawlins

### Membership

Cllr Liz Brighthouse,  
OBE (Chair)

Cllr Andy Graham  
(Deputy Chair)

Cllr Dr Izzy Creed

Cllr Rebekah Fletcher  
(from September 2025)

Cllr Georgina Heritage

Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith

Cllr Emma Markham

Cllr Toyah Overton

Cllr John Shiri  
(May-September 2025)

Cllr James Plumb

Fraser Long  
– Catholic representative  
co-optee

Toby Long  
– Anglican  
representative co-optee

Hana G  
– Young Person co-optee  
(until November 2025)

Katie N  
– Young Person co-optee  
(until January 2026)

Peace Nnaji  
– Parent Governor co-optee  
(from February 2025)

### Membership

Cllr Ian Snowdon  
(Chair)

Councillor Toyah Overton  
(Deputy Chair)

Councillor James Barlow

Councillor Will Boucher Giles

Councillor Imade Edosomwan

Councillor Judith Edwards

Councillor Lee Evans

Councillor Rebekah Fletcher

Councillor Georgina Heritage

# 2 Scrutiny in numbers

Number of  
meetings held

**25**

Reports  
to cabinet

**39**

Members  
of public involved  
(public speakers)

**34**

Number of  
substantive items  
considered

**61**

Working  
group reports

**0**

Click-throughs  
to agendas

**8,549**

Working group  
recommendations

**0**

Cabinet response breakdown  
(based on responses received at time  
of publication)

**67 accepted** (64 per cent)

**29 partially accepted** (28 per cent)

**9 rejected** (8 per cent)

**67 no reply**

Scrutiny  
recommendations

**172**

**Scrutiny in numbers can provide interesting insights. However, it is important to recognise its limitations. Quality of scrutiny is more important than quantity, meaning that a higher number of substantive items is not necessarily a good thing.**

Equally, when scrutiny has looked at an issue and not found anything it wishes to make a recommendation on it will not make a report to Cabinet. Lastly, there is no optimum number for what constitutes 'success' in terms of Scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet. This number will always be impacted by two variables: the value of the recommendation itself, and the willingness of an executive to engage with suggestions from Scrutiny.

**Noting the caveats above, the numbers tell us a number of things:**

- The Scrutiny function has undertaken significantly more scrutiny over the last year compared to the previous year. The number of meetings has almost doubled, from 19 to 37, and the number of substantive items considered over the year increasing by approximately 50 per cent, from 19 to 27 and 42 to 61 respectively. The outputs from these meetings, reports and recommendations have also almost doubled in number, from 22 to 39, and 90 to 172 respectively.
- Cabinet's responses to Scrutiny recommendations are broadly stable, with over 9 in 10 recommendations responded to accepted fully or partially.
- Public engagement in the Scrutiny function has increased significantly – the number of click throughs to Scrutiny agendas has increased from last year, averaging a little over 700 per month, and the number of public speakers has almost doubled from 18 to 34.
- There is a high number of no responses. It is important to recognise that this is as much a function of the timing of when recommendations were issued as much as issues around making responses within the statutory deadline. On the latter, however, there remains work to do, which will be detailed later in the report.
- Despite the increase in output, no working groups have completed their work. However, it should be noted that a working group on lessons learned from the Woodeaton school academisation process has been established but is yet to complete its work.

**Call-in**

Call-in is a statutory function that enables councillors to challenge decisions that have been taken by an executive decision-maker, such as Cabinet or a Cabinet member, before they are implemented. This power was not used in the period covered by the report. One request was made, regarding the Congestion Charge, was requested but failed to meet the threshold required for a successful call-in.

The Council's Constitution requires that provisions relating to call in are monitored annually. This process has recently been undertaken as part of the Council's wider review of its Constitution. The Council agreed to revise comprehensively its process last year, meaning it was not put forward for further amendment this year.

# 3

# Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Chair's introduction

An effective scrutiny function helps to improve service provision and inform policy.

This year the committee decided to focus on the performance of the individual services such as Public Health, Highways, Children and Adults Social Care to question how key decisions have been made and address issues of concern to the local community such a parking permits, road maintenance and Customer Services.



**Cllr Glynis Phillips (chair)**

The Committee is the forum for considering issues which are genuinely corporate and this has enabled non-executive members to challenge and make their views known in crucial issues such as the Budget, the Council's Strategic Plan, Devolution, the commitment of the Council to becoming a Marmot Place, and the reshaping of its Social Value and Community Asset Transfer policies. The outcomes of these initiatives and policies should have significant impacts on our residents

I am grateful to my fellow committee members including the Deputy Chair Cllr Ian Middleton for their perceptive questions and commitment to scrutiny to ensure that local services improve and that value for money is a central consideration The Committee has considered twice the number of items from last year, with a similar increase in the number of recommendations made to Cabinet

My thanks also go to Cabinet members and senior officers who have attended the meetings for their willingness to engage with the Scrutiny process.

Special thanks to Tom Hudson and Ben Piper for their enabling work on behalf of the Committee.

**Cllr Glynis Phillips, Chair of Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

## Membership

Cllr Glynis Phillips (Chair)  
Cllr Ian Middleton (Deputy Chair)  
Cllr Brad Baines  
Cllr Will Boucher-Giles  
Cllr Tom Greenaway  
Cllr Dr Nathan Ley  
Cllr Kieron Mallon  
Cllr John Shiri  
Cllr Roz Smith

## Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
Click-throughs to agendas	<b>1,483</b>	
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	<b>0</b>
<b>16</b>	Scrutiny recommendations	<b>74</b>
Members of public involved (public speakers)	<b>2</b>	
Cabinet response breakdown*		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>36 accepted (49 per cent)</b></li><li>• <b>14 partially accepted (19 per cent)</b></li><li>• <b>6 rejected (8 per cent)</b></li><li>• <b>18 no reply (24 per cent)</b></li></ul>		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

## Key areas of focus and achievements

The core of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work is best summarised by a number of key themes it has worked towards over the last civic year.

### Member Engagement

As the scrutiny committee with responsibility for overall corporate activity, Performance and Corporate Services has a particular duty to give all members a greater understanding and voice in relation to crucial changes being decided by the Council.

### Budget

The Committee takes a lead role in the scrutiny of the budget and the corporate plan. However all councillors have to make decisions about the Council's budget and the Committee made budget Scrutiny available to all members, both in pre-briefings and in-committee scrutiny. This attracted a wider cross-section of members beyond the committee's membership. Amendments to the budget are proposed at the budget Council meeting and the primary aim within Scrutiny this year was to increase the level of understanding about the budget and to better understand the implications of any amendments.

### Devolution

The issue of devolution affects a wider geographical area than Oxfordshire, with discussions over establishing a 'foundation strategic authority' with new powers and access to new funding involving councils across the Thames Valley together with central government. Due to the partnership nature, and because central government is the ultimate decision-maker as to the shape and membership of any future strategic authority, the Council's ability to shape the ultimate outcome is limited. Scrutiny's role has been to provide the opportunity for non-executive members to better understand the implications for the residents of Oxfordshire and to make recommendations to the Cabinet.

## **High Spend and High Public Interest**

It is important that the Committee prioritises consideration of those areas with the most significant spend, as well as those which are of highest concern to the public. To that end, Adult Social Care (twice) and Children's Social Care, reflecting approximately 40% and 30% of the Council's directorate budget respectively have been looked at, as well as issues of significant concern such as Parking Permits, Fix My Street and Customer Services.

One of the key assurances given by Cabinet from these items was that funding secured by the Council for rebuilding youth services will be spent on a needs-led basis, rather than simply extending existing services.

The recommendations agreed by Cabinet in relation to Parking Permits and Fix My Street included raising the proportion of pot hole repairs being quality assured, to improve overall standards and reduce the number of repaired potholes failing shortly after being repaired, and a number of measures to ensure that Fix My Street – the primary interface with residents – better communicated with those using the service to address frustration around unclear expectations or not knowing whether works were planned. Likewise, Cabinet's response to the Committee's recommendations over Parking Permits means that the Council will prioritise functionality and ease of use over price in the forthcoming procurement for a new parking permit IT system, residents without email addresses will be written to warning them of the upcoming expiry of their permits, and GPs will be made more aware of their responsibilities for helping unregistered carers access permits.

It is expected that the Committee will continue to provide Scrutiny of the decision-making and value for money of large capital projects which attract high levels of public interest, for example the Watlington Relief Road.

## **Cross-cutting, Corporate Issues**

The other major focus of the Committee has been to look at issues which cut across the whole of the Council, rather than being limited to a specific service area. Topics falling within this category include the Council's Strategic Plan, which outlines its high-level priorities, the Our People and Culture Strategy, the performance of the Public Health service following the Council's commitment towards making Oxfordshire a 'Marmot Place', and its review of the Social Value and Community Asset Transfer policy.

These are all important areas owing to the breadth of their impact. Indeed, activity around Social Value, Community Assets and the Marmot Place agenda extend significantly beyond the Council's own activity and into local partnership working. In this area, particularly, the Committee through its recommendations has effected meaningful change.

## **For instance:**

- From consideration of the Our People and Culture Strategy work is being undertaken to ensure that unused apprenticeship levy funds are redirected to organisations in the county who can use them.
- The Social Value Policy discussions have resulted in commitments by Cabinet to partner with other anchor institutions to ensure that social value priorities are consistent locally, and that the Council will develop a report to show how it will ensure social value is integrated corporately to ensure all areas are pulling in the same direction. Specifically, social value targets will be integrated with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to support its delivery.
- The Committee has ensured that plans for how the Council intends to begin its journey towards addressing the broader structural determinants of inequality are developed as part of its Marmot Place pledges.
- The Cabinet agreed to include within its proposals to Council for the Strategic Plan a commitment to improve access to renewable energy infrastructure.

## **How Scrutiny made a difference**

The committee made a clear difference by broadening member involvement in major council decisions, improving transparency and access to information, and influencing developing practical outcomes which will benefit residents.

# 4 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Chair's introduction

I am pleased to introduce this report on the Committee's work during the 2025/26 municipal year in which members have examined a wide range of important issues affecting communities across Oxfordshire, from transport, highways and road safety to environmental management, planning and the significant implications of local government reorganisation. Throughout, the Committee has sought to provide constructive, evidence-led scrutiny with a clear focus on how decisions are experienced by residents, businesses and local communities.

This report reflects the Committee's commitment to asking difficult questions in a constructive and non-partisan way, improving transparency, and strengthening accountability in decision-making.

I would like to thank Committee Members for their thoughtful contributions over the course



of the year, and Cabinet members, officers, and external partners for their engagement with the scrutiny process.

To quote Cllr Gant, then the Cabinet member for Transport Management, in response to our recommendations at Cabinet in March, "it was an excellent discussion and the recommendations are indeed practical and robust and cover a number of important areas." I hope this report demonstrates the value of effective scrutiny in supporting better outcomes for the people and places we serve.

**Cllr Liam Walker, Chair of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

## Membership

Cllr Liam Walker (Chair)  
 Cllr Bethia Thomas (Deputy Chair)  
 Cllr Thomas Ashby  
 Cllr Chris Brant  
 Cllr Laura Gordon  
 Cllr Emily Kerr  
 Cllr Lesley Mclean  
 Cllr Susanna Pressel  
 Cllr Leigh Rawlins

## Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
Click-throughs to agendas		<b>3,532</b>
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	<b>0</b>
	Scrutiny recommendations	<b>74</b>
Members of public involved (public speakers)		<b>20</b>
<b>Cabinet response breakdown*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>16 accepted (21.62 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>10 partially accepted (13.51 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>1 rejected (1.35 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>47 no reply* (63.51 per cent)</b></li> </ul>		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

\* The high number of 'no replies' reflects the fact that at the time of drafting all recommendations from the last two meetings, of which there were a particularly high number, were in the process of being responded to within the statutory timeframe.

## Key areas of focus and achievements

### Introduction and overall impact

The Committee's work during the past municipal year has sought to focus on impact: how the Council decisions on transport, highways, planning, environmental management, place based services and significant changes to governance arrangements are experienced by residents, businesses and communities across Oxfordshire.

Across the year, the Committee consistently moved beyond presentation and reassurance to make sure that it probes the evidence before decision-makers as well as delivery and accountability. The Committee's impact was rooted in sustained, informed challenge across multiple meetings. This ensured that issues were not simply noted and moved on from, but, rather, were returned to, refined and strengthened.

Members have scrutinised a range of topics that matter to residents from the seemingly mundane but immediately visible verge and vegetation management, part night lighting, to future bus regulation options, the temporary congestion charge, the strategic direction for Oxford city centre development, and the Council's work on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In each case, Scrutiny supported clarification of proposals, articulation of trade offs and assurance that community impact and democratic accountability remained central to decision making.

### Transport policy, network management and future regulation

Inevitably, Transport remained a central theme throughout the year, with the Committee providing a structured forum for examination of the relationship between strategic policy and day to day experience.

August saw an extraordinary meeting scheduled to consider the temporary congestion charge proposals. Eight members of the public addressed the Committee and eight recommendations were put forward to Cabinet. The majority of these

were accepted, albeit in part, which means, that it is thanks to the Committee that monitoring data has been published regularly.

In September, the Committee considered future bus regulation options ahead of Cabinet decision making. Members tested the assumptions underpinning different models for bus services (whether or not the Council should adopt a franchise model where it ran the bus service or, if not, how involved it should be). The Committee probed how each option would affect reliability, affordability and coverage, particularly for rural communities and young people. The Committee emphasised that governance choices should be judged not only on speed of implementation but on their ability to deliver tangible improvements for passengers and to align with the Council's wider transport and climate objectives. Whilst it did not make recommendations at that point, it did insist that further proposals should be considered by the Committee.

As well as bus regulation, the Committee explored the OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail in November. Its five recommendations were all broadly accepted by Cabinet and the key theme of those recommendations was integration – ensuring work was undertaken in a timely fashion so that district councils could take advantage of the work already undertaken when drawing up their Local Plans.

Across the year, members also scrutinised congestion management and network performance by questioning whether the evidence being used genuinely reflected conditions on the ground. Particular attention was paid to how transport data was presented, how impacts were measured across different communities, and how uncertainty was acknowledged rather than obscured.

That challenge mattered. By pressing for clearer baseline data, disaggregated impacts and more transparent presentation of uncertainty, Scrutiny strengthened the evidential foundations on which future transport decisions will rest. In doing so, the Committee reinforced the principle that monitoring is not a peripheral activity but, rather, a core part of responsible and transparent delivery.

## **Bus services, rural transport and accessibility**

As well as bus regulation options, the Committee's scrutiny of bus services and rural transport focused on whether policy commitments translated into real accessibility for residents.

Members challenged the reliance on high level performance metrics where these did not always capture localised pressures, unmet need or, indeed, the experience of passengers. Scrutiny explored how transport performance affected access to employment, healthcare (including hospitals), and essential services, particularly in rural areas.

By repeatedly returning to questions of fairness, reliability, accessibility, and inclusion, Scrutiny contributed to a narrative which reinforced that transport systems must be judged not only on efficiency but on who they serve and, importantly, how well they do so.

Recommendations included ensuring the public is aware of which buses are available and what services might be used, using plain English terms that the public understand, and making sure that bus stops are accessible for all.

## **School Streets and practical delivery**

The Committee's examination of the School Streets programme demonstrated Scrutiny at its most practical and delivery focused.

Whilst almost unanimously supportive of the programme's aims, Members focused on the details that determine success: consistency of signage, enforcement arrangements, communication with schools and parents, and how issues at individual sites were identified and addressed.

As a result of this scrutiny, officers committed to stronger monitoring arrangements, clearer standards and more systematic logging of issues, enabling targeted follow up where schemes were not operating as intended. Scrutiny's role here was not to delay progress, but to support assurance that intended outcomes are matched by effective implementation.

## **Road safety and the Vision Zero approach**

The Committee maintained a strong focus on road safety, treating Vision Zero, the Council's strategy to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads, as a live commitment rather than a static strategy.

Members scrutinised action plans, queried delays in updates, and pressed for clearer links between strategy and observable outcomes. Particular emphasis was placed on pedestrian safety, post collision response, and the balance between education, enforcement and engineering.

Through sustained questioning, Scrutiny reinforced the importance of keeping prevention at the centre of road safety policy and ensuring that commitments translate into measurable change.

## **Highways maintenance, verges and vegetation management**

Highways maintenance featured prominently in the Committee's work, reflecting its visibility and importance to residents, as evidenced by 62% of residents in the 2025 Residents' Survey considering it the most important of the Council's services for local people.

In September, the Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of verge and vegetation management. Members explored how the Council balanced biodiversity objectives with road safety, accessibility and public expectations. Scrutiny examined the consistency of cutting regimes, communication with parish and town councils, and how residents were informed about the rationale for different approaches.

Members also tested whether current arrangements provided sufficient transparency and responsiveness when concerns were raised locally. As a result, the Committee made recommendations aimed at improving communication, reviewing payments to parish and town councils, and strengthening the Council's ability to explain and evidence the benefits of its approach to biodiversity led management.

The Committee has often called for online visibility and did so here, too, with a recommendation being accepted around progressing the digitisation of an online platform setting out who owns and who is responsible for verges and vegetation. That will aid transparency which will ultimately benefit residents.

The Committee also considered a report on highways defects in February. Members examined patterns in defect reporting, questioned the durability of repairs, and probed the interaction between weather, contract management and inspection regimes. Importantly, Scrutiny also explored the pressures created by rising compensation claims and the feedback loops between repair quality and financial risk.

This questioning prompted clearer explanations from officers about prioritisation, quality assurance and contractor accountability, and reinforced the need for consistent communication with members and communities about what can be fixed quickly and what cannot be – and the reasons for that. Whilst Scrutiny cannot fill potholes, it can force clarity about why they appear and how systems respond and it did so.

On these two important issues, the Committee played a critical role in improving understanding, transparency and accountability around how decisions are made, and why some outcomes differ across the network.

### **Planning, minerals, waste and city centre development**

In considering planning related matters, the Committee played a vital role in connecting local concern with strategic oversight.

September scrutiny of the strategic context for Oxford city centre development highlighted the Committee's role in testing clarity of vision, governance and accountability. Members explored how county and city responsibilities interacted, how major sites were being progressed, and how uncertainty was being managed following changes to assumptions.

The Committee is always pleased to hear from the public about items for its work programme

and letters from two parish councils on minerals and waste issues led to a report on this in April. These concerns were used as a starting point for structured questioning, ensuring that officer responses engaged directly with community experience whilst remaining grounded in regulatory frameworks.

This approach reinforced trust in the scrutiny process and ensured that community voices informed, rather than bypassed, formal decision making.

### **Local Government Reorganisation and governance change**

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was a significant strand of the Committee's work during 2025/26. The Government's plans to end the two-tier system whereby Oxfordshire's residents are served by both the county council and a district council will lead to wholesale change across local government throughout the county.

Whilst the County Council's Cabinet had put forward a proposal for one unitary authority, the City Council had proposed three unitary authorities, and the remaining districts had proposed two.

In September, the Committee received and scrutinised a formal progress update on the Council's work. Members examined the rationale underpinning the County Council's preferred option, the engagement undertaken with residents, partners and town and parish councils, and the potential implications for service delivery, democratic accountability and neighbourhood governance. Scrutiny focused on whether the proposed approach genuinely reflected the statutory criteria, local evidence, and the concerns being expressed by communities.

This scrutiny was revisited and developed further at the November meeting, as the Committee considered the direction of travel ahead of Cabinet decision making. Members tested how feedback from engagement and scrutiny was being incorporated, the readiness of the programme to move to the next phase, and the risks associated with pursuing reorganisation alongside the ongoing delivery of vital front line services.

Through this work, the Committee provided a formal mechanism for transparent public examination of a complex, county wide change programme. Scrutiny's contribution helped to ensure that decisions on LGR were informed not only by structural ambition, but by realism about capacity and impact as well as the importance of maintaining public trust during a period of uncertainty and change.

The Committee's recommendations led to the Council committing to engaging, accessible, and interesting public communications regarding LGR and, also, that greater attention should be paid to neighbourhood governance and area committees within its proposals.

### **Environmental protection and illegal waste: making accountability unavoidable.**

The Committee's scrutiny of illegal waste dumping near Kidlington demonstrated the distinctive value of a public, cross agency forum. Whilst it was disappointed by the absence of the Environment Agency, it was pleased to welcome a representative from Cherwell District Council to the table.

Members interrogated how responsibilities were shared between the County Council, Cherwell District Council, and the Environment Agency, and why escalation and communication had not happened sooner. This scrutiny brought into the open the limitations of existing enforcement powers and highlighted the complexity of responding to organised waste crime.

Crucially, Scrutiny ensured that lessons were identified, not defensively but constructively. Officers acknowledged weaknesses in early communication and committed to clearer escalation routes and member notification in future cases. Scrutiny's impact here lay in making systemic learning explicit rather than implicit.

### **Public engagement, clarity and transparency**

Across all areas of work, including local government reorganisation, the Committee consistently emphasised the importance of plain English, accessible reporting and meaningful engagement.

Members repeatedly challenged reports that obscured key messages or relied on technical language without explanation, reinforcing Scrutiny's role as both a critical friend to officers and an advocate for the public interest.

### **How Scrutiny made a difference**

Over the course of 2025/26, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee improved the quality and transparency of transport monitoring and evidence, strengthened delivery and consistency in programme based initiatives including School Streets, and ensured that road safety remained focused on prevention rather than process.

The Committee also highlighted systemic pressures in highways maintenance, including verge and vegetation management, supported the robustness of environmental and lighting proposals through constructive challenge, and provided structured, visible scrutiny of major governance change, including local government reorganisation.

This was not opposition for its own sake, but cross-party, constructive challenge that improved decisions before and after they were made.

### **Looking ahead**

As Oxfordshire faces continuing challenges around transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, growth and wholesale structural change to local government, the Committee is well placed to build on the foundations laid during 2025/26.

The year established a clear expectation that ambition must be matched by evidence, delivery by monitoring, and reassurance by accountability. Scrutiny's task in the year ahead will be to maintain that standard in the interests of residents and communities across the county.

# 5 Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Chair's introduction

**It has been a demanding and, at times, challenging year for children and young people's services in Oxfordshire. It has, therefore, been a year in which scrutiny has mattered.**

The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has deliberately focused its work on how systems operate in practice, how decisions affect families, and how confidently we can say that the right children are being supported at the right time. Impact and outcomes have been our focus.

Throughout the year the Committee has engaged openly with officers, Cabinet Members, partners and, importantly, members of the public. Some of the evidence heard has been encouraging and has demonstrated progress, innovation and commitment across the system. Some evidence has been uncomfortable. Scrutiny's role is to create the space for both.

As a Council, we are the corporate parent for some of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children. That role brings with it a collective responsibility for every councillor to take an active interest in whether children in our care are safe, supported, and able to achieve their potential. The Committee has reflected that responsibility in its scrutiny of the Virtual School, SEND provision, attendance, alternative provision and safeguarding arrangements, and in its insistence that lived experience is heard alongside performance data.



**Liz Brighthouse, OBE (chair)**

The Committee has taken a firm but constructive approach, returning repeatedly to themes such as inclusion, attendance, early intervention, co-production, and the lived experience of families. In doing so, it did not seek to obstruct improvement but to strengthen it..

I would like to thank fellow Committee members for their thoughtful and collegiate contributions, our co-opted members for grounding our work in lived experience, and both Cllr Gaul as the Cabinet Member for Children's Services as well as officers for their willingness to engage robustly but constructively with scrutiny. I would also like to acknowledge the parents and carers who have taken the time to share their experiences with us. Their voices have made a difference.

At Cabinet in March, Cllr Gaul described the Committee as "a really useful place where we get sufficient check and challenge... in a very constructive environment." That is precisely our intention!

**Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OBE, Chair,  
Education and Young People Overview  
and Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

## Membership

Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OBE (Chair)  
 Cllr Andy Graham (Deputy Chair)  
 Cllr Dr Izzy Creed  
 Cllr Rebekah Fletcher (from September 2025)  
 Cllr Georgina Heritage  
 Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith  
 Cllr Emma Markham  
 Cllr Toyah Overton  
 Cllr John Shiri (May-September 2025)  
 Cllr James Plumb  
  
 Fraser Long  
 – Catholic representative co-optee  
 Toby Long  
 – Anglican representative co-optee  
  
 Hana G  
 – Young Person co-optee (until November 2025)  
  
 Katie N  
 – Young Person co-optee (until January 2026)  
  
 Peace Nnaji  
 – Parent Governor co-optee (from February 2025)

## Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
Click-throughs to agendas		<b>2,435</b>
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	<b>0</b>
	Scrutiny recommendations	<b>18</b>
Members of public involved (public speakers)		<b>12</b>
Cabinet response breakdown*		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>12 accepted (66.67 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>3 partially accepted (16.67 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>0 rejected (0 per cent)</b></li> <li>• <b>3 no reply (16.67 per cent)</b></li> </ul>		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

## Key areas of focus and achievements

**The Committee's work in 2025–26 has been shaped by the recognition that, whilst systems supporting children and young people are under significant pressure, such pressure cannot become an excuse for drift. Across education, SEND, safeguarding and early help, members focused on how well different parts of the system connect, how clearly responsibilities are understood, and how consistently improvement is delivered.**

Rather than treating issues in isolation, the Committee has sought to take a joined-up approach, returning to key themes across the year in order to test how effectively different parts of the system work together and whether improvement is being sustained over time.

The Committee's impact has rested on sustained challenge, clear expectations and formal recommendations designed to strengthen policy design, delivery and monitoring.

## Supporting inclusion and educational outcomes

### Attainment and narrowing gaps

The Committee considered provisional attainment data not as a scoreboard but as a diagnostic tool. Whilst Oxfordshire continues to perform at or above national averages in several headline measures, scrutiny focused on the persistent gaps affecting disadvantaged children, particularly disadvantaged white British pupils, and children with SEND.

Members questioned whether existing interventions were sufficiently targeted and whether support across early years, school improvement, attendance and safeguarding was aligned effectively. Recommendations emphasised the need to share best practice more systematically, to strengthen engagement between councillors, schools and communities, and to ensure that inclusion, safeguarding and curriculum reform are embedded within the county's education and inclusion strategy.

These discussions reinforced that attainment cannot be separated from belonging, attendance and wellbeing which helped to reposition achievement as a whole-system responsibility rather than an isolated education issue.

### The role of the Virtual School

The Committee's examination of the Virtual School Annual Report highlighted the importance of strong corporate parenting and trauma-informed practice.

Members focused on progress in attendance, exclusion and continuity of education, and on how effectively partnerships support children placed out of county. Scrutiny reinforced that improving outcomes for children in our care requires sustained, visible leadership and continued oversight across the system. The two recommendations, which were accepted, emphasised the importance of continued focus on targeted attendance interventions and, also, the need for strengthened communication between governing boards and social workers.

## SEND system improvement and accountability

### Local Area Partnership monitoring

One of the most significant pieces of scrutiny during the year was the Committee's examination of progress against the SEND Local Area Priority Action Plan. This had been in place since the Area Partnership (i.e., the County Council and the Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board) was informed by Ofsted that it required improvement in September 2024. Consideration of the Priority Action Plan took place at an additional meeting called after publication of the report of the SEND Monitoring Visit by Ofsted.

Officers attended from both the Integrated Care Board and the Council as well as the Independent Chair of the SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board and the Chair of the Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum.

Members welcomed Ofsted's finding of 'effective action' but focussed their scrutiny on whether improvements were sufficiently embedded to withstand ongoing demand, workforce pressure and financial constraints. Recommendations pressed for clearer plans that explain not only what is improving but how improvements will be sustained over time.

This scrutiny helped to shift the focus from reassurance to resilience, underlining the need for long-term planning, transparent governance, and continued engagement with children, young people and families. The Committee hopes that its recommendations around clear plans for long-term sustainability of targeted SEND support will come to fruition for the betterment of the children and young people who need it.

### Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)

The Committee considered the EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) policy and guidance, reflecting the complexity and sensitivity of this area. Whilst the packages are used by a relatively small number of families (around 70 at the time of the January meeting when the Committee considered the topic for a second time), the total cost is around £3.8 million per annum. Each package is bespoke with the most expensive at around £300k per year, with most falling between £60k and £100k annually.

Evidence from parents and carers highlighted the impact of inconsistent processes, unclear communication and delay. Scrutiny therefore focused on clarity, accessibility and trust, ensuring that both policy and guidance were examined through the lens of lived experience and accountability.

The Council needed to have a policy in place, not only for legal reasons but so that its management of the expenditure was fair, and the Committee reviewed the proposed policy before it went to Cabinet for approval. However, it was concerned by the seeming level of concern over the accompanying guidance. The Committee therefore considered that, after it had been rewritten in a co-produced way with parents and carers, it should return to the Committee.

The Committee established that, despite the efforts of the Council, it had not been possible to co-produce the guidance and that, whilst there was consensus over some elements, some concern remained from some quarters. The Committee made recommendations to make the guidance clearer and easier to use.

## **Attendance, safeguarding and early intervention**

### **Attendance as a system issue**

The Committee's scrutiny of attendance reinforced that it is not merely an education metric but a safeguarding and wellbeing concern.

Members explored how attendance information is used to trigger early help, how responsibilities are shared between schools and the local authority, and how barriers such as anxiety, mental health need and unmet SEND are addressed before absence becomes entrenched. Whilst no formal recommendations were moved, the Committee's encouragement of capturing parental feedback regarding recent policy updates and the engagement that follows was accepted in the meeting so that, ultimately, barriers to attendance are overcome.

### **Safeguarding oversight**

In considering the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, the Committee focused on learning, accountability and transparency.

Members welcomed improvements in governance and multi-agency working, while pressing for clearer public visibility of priorities and outcomes and a continued focus on children's voices in practice. The Committee's call for a sustained, smart educational campaign to support parents, particularly regarding online threats, will lead to parents and carers being more confident in approaching their child's online activity. They also said that, in next year's report, data relating to self-harm and the effectiveness of new screening tools should be specifically addressed. This will enable members to ensure effective monitoring as well as providing transparency.

## **Early years and best start in life.**

Scrutiny of early years provision and the Best Start in Life agenda highlighted the importance of early intervention to later outcomes.

Members focused on sufficiency, workforce capacity and persistent development gaps for children eligible for free school meals, reinforcing that sustained improvement depends on strong early years provision rather than later remedial action.

### **Listening to families and communities**

Across the year, the Committee heard directly from parents, carers, and organisations representing them. These contributions informed scrutiny questions, shaped recommendations and strengthened the Committee's ability to test policy and practice against people's actual experience.

The Committee also benefited from the membership of two young co-opted members, each of whom has since chosen to leave the Committee. As this reporting cycle draws to a close, the Committee agreed to recruit further co-optees and will be recommended to co-opt the two successful candidates.

### **How scrutiny made a difference**

During 2025/26, the Committee reinforced accountability in SEND system improvement, strengthened the treatment of attendance as a safeguarding and inclusion issue, ensured that EOTAS policy and guidance were scrutinised alongside lived experience, and supported stronger corporate parenting through sustained examination of the Virtual School.

This was deliberate, evidence-based challenge aimed at improving services for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

## Looking ahead

The challenges facing children and young people's services are unlikely to diminish in the short term. Financial pressures, rising demand as well as national policy change will continue to test the system.

The Committee enters the next municipal year with a clear sense of purpose. Scrutiny will continue to focus on impact, sustainability and accountability, ensuring that ambition is matched by delivery and that improvement is felt by children, young people and families.

The Committee's fundamental role will remain what it has been throughout 2025-26 – asking difficult questions in the service of better outcomes.

# 6 People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Chair's introduction

**Adult social care and public health services continue to face significant and sustained pressures, both locally and nationally.**

**Rising demand, increasing complexity of need, ongoing workforce challenges and persistent inequalities mean that the Council's responsibilities towards adults in Oxfordshire require careful oversight and robust challenge.**

Against this backdrop, the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has played an important role in examining how effectively services are responding, how statutory duties are being discharged, and how the Council's strategic ambitions are translating into outcomes for residents.

During the 2025/26 Council year, the Committee focused on a number of core themes: preparedness for external inspection and assurance, support for unpaid carers, safeguarding adults, health inequalities, transitions into adulthood, supported living and housing, and the Council's statutory duties relating to domestic abuse safe accommodation. Throughout the year, Members sought to adopt a constructive and evidence-based approach, acting as a critical friend to Cabinet and officers while ensuring that the voices and experiences of residents remained central.



**Cllr Ian Snowdon (chair)**

I would like to thank Committee Members for their thoughtful contributions, challenge and cross-party engagement, the Cabinet Members and officers who attended meetings for their openness and responsiveness. I hope that this report demonstrates both the breadth and depth of scrutiny undertaken during the year and provides a strong foundation for the Committee's work in the coming municipal year.

**Councillor Ian Snowdon  
Chair of the People Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee, 2025/26**

## Membership

Councillor Ian Snowdon (Chair)  
 Councillor Toyah Overton (Deputy Chair)  
 Councillor James Barlow  
 Councillor Will Boucher Giles  
 Councillor Imade Edosomwan  
 Councillor Judith Edwards  
 Councillor Lee Evans  
 Councillor Rebekah Fletcher  
 Councillor Georgina Heritage

## Activity in brief

Number of meetings held	Reports to cabinet	Working group reports
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
Click-throughs to agendas		<b>1,099</b>
Number of substantive items considered	Working group recommendations	<b>0</b>
	Scrutiny recommendations	<b>5</b>
Members of public involved (public speakers)		<b>0</b>
<b>Cabinet response breakdown*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>0</b> accepted (0 per cent)</li> <li>• <b>2</b> partially accepted (40 per cent)</li> <li>• <b>2</b> rejected (40 per cent)</li> <li>• <b>1</b> no reply (20 per cent)</li> </ul>		
*(based on responses received at time of publication)		

## Key areas of focus and achievements

### Impact of Scrutiny in 2025/26

The impact of the Committee's work during 2025/26 is best understood in terms of how scrutiny has shaped focus, strengthened assurance, and influenced the approach taken to key areas of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's remit, rather than through discrete service changes attributable solely to scrutiny.

A key development has been the evolution of the Committee's approach to Adult Social Care assurance following the Council's first Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment. Scrutiny moved beyond one off consideration of inspection findings towards an intention to monitor improvement over time. By focusing on the substance of the CQC findings and the Council's response through the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan, the Committee has established a clear expectation that areas identified for improvement will be revisited on a continuing basis.

The Committee has also contributed to raising the visibility of issues not previously subject to detailed scrutiny in recent years, including domestic abuse safe accommodation and support for unpaid carers. In doing so, scrutiny provided a forum to examine statutory duties, service provision and wider system pressures, bringing these areas into clearer focus for Members and officers.

More broadly, the Committee has reinforced a consistent emphasis on system-wide issues, including prevention, early intervention and the interaction between housing, workforce capacity and demand. These changes have been reflected in the Committee's forward work programming, with an intention to return to key themes and track progress over time.

### Key Areas of Focus and Scrutiny Activity

Over the course of the 2025/26 Council year, the work of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was shaped by a small number of significant strategic pressures and system-wide challenges, rather than by a large volume of discrete topics. Chief among these was the increased focus on external assurance, improvement and accountability within Adult Social Care, set against a wider backdrop of growing demand, increasing complexity of need and persistent inequalities across Oxfordshire.

### CQC Local Authority Assessment

The most significant moment in the Committee's work was the publication of Oxfordshire County Council's first CQC local authority assessment under the new inspection regime. The inspection, and the 'Good' overall rating that followed, provided both reassurance and a clear framework for the Committee's scrutiny going forward. While Members welcomed the positive headline outcome, scrutiny deliberately focused less on the rating itself and more on the substance of the findings: where the Council was performing well, where improvement was required, and how learning from the inspection would be embedded into routine practice.

In this context, the Committee's role shifted increasingly towards ongoing assurance and monitoring of improvement, rather than one off challenge. Discussions explored how the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan responded to both CQC findings and earlier LGA peer review feedback, and how progress would be tracked over time. Members were particularly interested in consistency and timeliness of assessments, communication with residents and carers, and equity of access for rural and marginalised

communities, areas which the CQC identified as requiring improvement and which also reflected concerns raised consistently through committee discussions.

The inspection has already begun to shape the future direction of People scrutiny, providing a shared reference point against which Members expect to measure progress. Rather than revisiting inspection findings in isolation, the Committee signalled its intention to return to these themes through targeted updates, using CQC quality statements and improvement actions as a structure for scrutiny over the medium term. In doing so, the Committee aims to maintain focus on sustained improvement beyond the immediate inspection cycle.

### **Safeguarding Adults**

Safeguarding adults formed a second, closely related strand of the Committee's work, reinforcing the emphasis on system effectiveness, learning and accountability. Through consideration of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report and follow up discussion, Members examined how safeguarding responsibilities were shared across agencies, how learning from safeguarding adult reviews was disseminated, and how professional judgement and person centred practice were balanced within increasingly pressured services. Issues such as thresholds, multi agency risk management and workforce capacity were explored not as isolated concerns but as indicators of wider system resilience.

Alongside assurance and safeguarding, the Committee repeatedly returned to the importance of prevention, early intervention and system flow, particularly where blockages or delays risked increasing demand downstream. This theme was evident in scrutiny of unpaid carers support,

transitions into adulthood, supported living and domestic abuse provision. In each area, Members explored how effective identification, early support and accessible pathways could reduce crisis driven intervention later, while recognising the practical constraints created by housing shortages, workforce pressures and fragmented responsibilities across local systems.

### **Unpaid Carer Support**

Support for unpaid carers, for example, was considered not only in terms of the services commissioned, but through broader questions of visibility, identification and sustainability. Members highlighted that carers' needs often cut across health, social care and community services, and that improvements depended as much on culture, communication and data sharing as on formal service provision. The Committee's interest in the proposed Carers Strain Index reflected this wider concern with proactive, needs led approaches rather than reactive support.

Similarly, scrutiny of transitions into adulthood and supported living focused on how effectively different parts of the system joined together around individuals and families. Members consistently emphasised the importance of early planning, joined up commissioning and housing availability, recognising that pressures in one part of the system, particularly specialist housing, had consequences across others, including safeguarding, mental health and financial sustainability.

## Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation

Domestic abuse safe accommodation, considered at the Committee's final meeting of the year, brought many of these themes together. Scrutiny examined statutory compliance under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, but also highlighted capacity constraints, move on challenges, data limitations and the lived experience of service users navigating complex systems at a point of crisis. Members' recommendations reflected an emerging interest in longer term outcomes and system learning, rather than focusing solely on immediate access or throughput.

Across all these areas, the Committee adopted an increasingly outcome focused and system aware approach, looking beyond individual services to understand how different pressures interacted. The CQC inspection in particular provided a unifying context for this work, helping to align scrutiny around shared priorities of quality, equity, communication and continuous improvement.

As the Council moves into the next phase of its improvement journey, the Committee is well placed to use these themes as a through line for future scrutiny, ensuring that progress is sustained, transparent and grounded in the experience of Oxfordshire residents.

The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee enters the next municipal year with a strong base of evidence, emerging data and constructive working relationships, which will support continued effective scrutiny of services that have a profound impact on the lives of Oxfordshire's residents.

# 7 Other Areas of Work

## Briefings

It is common for Scrutiny Committee members to be briefed by officers on areas of particular interest or relevance. Although briefings are designed to equip Scrutiny members to undertake their role, the briefings can also be of wider relevance. Over the reporting period Scrutiny has hosted Scrutiny briefings on:

- Budget Proposals
- Customer Service Centre

# 8 Reflections and Future Ambitions

## Reflection

### Performance Against Previous Priorities

In last year's annual report, the Scrutiny function identified two areas for specific focus: maximising the opportunity afforded by the election of so many new councillors, and improving public engagement. In both areas the function has shown success.

Whilst Committee memberships did move throughout the year, approximately two thirds of the members on the Council's internal Scrutiny committees were newly elected members. This presented clear challenges with twice as many meetings, reports and recommendations having taken place over the last year. Meanwhile, there has been a similar level of acceptances by decision makers despite the increased number of recommendations, which demonstrates that Scrutiny's input continues to make a positive difference. Likewise, with an increase in the business considered by Scrutiny there has been a comparable increase in public engagement at our Scrutiny Committees. Whilst not the only measure, this demonstrates that Scrutiny considers matters of interest to our residents.

## Priorities for Future

Some priorities at individual level have been detailed in the Committee reports above. The actions below detail the broader priorities of the wider Scrutiny function over the coming municipal year.

### Local Government Reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – in whatever form government ultimately decides it wishes to take forward – will involve deep and far-reaching change. It will also entail large amounts of complex work whilst the current councils – County, Districts and City – remain responsible for delivering services for residents. This Council's Scrutiny function recognises its threefold responsibility in this area:

1. To enable Scrutiny of LGR as it is designed.
2. To ensure that Scrutiny is fully considered and built into the governance arrangements of the future unitary council/councils to maximise the value non-executive members can add
3. To maintain scrutiny of the council's performance of its responsibilities and functions during the transitional period.

## Performance

Members are consistently reminded that Scrutiny is a collective endeavour. As highlighted by the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in its statutory guidance on Scrutiny, 'The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.' The successes of Scrutiny elucidated above, therefore, do not belong to the Scrutiny function alone, but to the whole organisation. Equally, however, there are steps which the Council could take to improve Scrutiny's effectiveness and add further value.

The most important area is in relation to Cabinet's responses to the recommendations made by Scrutiny. Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's governance framework and works on the basis of influence. There is a requirement that Scrutiny's recommendations be replied to. In a small number of instances this has not happened in a timely fashion. It is important that this is addressed in a constructive manner and will remain an area of focus going forward.

# 9 Thanks

**Scrutiny is a collective endeavour, which requires open working between individuals and groups. Much work is undertaken by the Chairs outside the Committee setting to manage changes or ensure the smooth-running of meetings, committee members in their preparation and engagement, Cabinet members for attending to defend their policy, and officers for preparing the reports and providing detail in discussion. Thanks is given to all.**

Particular thanks from this year is given to Peace Nnaji, Hana G, Katie N, Fraser Long, and Toby Long for their willingness to give up their time and share their expertise as co-opted members of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**“A really useful place where we get sufficient check and challenge... in a very constructive environment.”**

— Cllr Gaul, March 2026

# 10 Contacting Scrutiny

If you would like to contact scrutiny with suggestions, ideas or comments please email [scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Meetings of its committees are open to the public and are livestreamed, the link to which can be found on the relevant meeting agenda which can be accessed from this page:

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

We also welcome members of the public sharing their views on relevant items on the agenda in person or via MS Teams.

To know what is coming to a particular committee it is possible to register for updates via :

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ielogon.aspx?lp=1&RPID=1954675&HPID=1954675&Forms=1&META=mgSubscribeLogon>



**Tom Hudson,**  
Scrutiny Manager

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Richard Doney,**  
Scrutiny Officer

- Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- People Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Ben Piper,**  
Democratic Services Officer

- People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2025/26



**Omid Nouri,**  
Scrutiny Officer (Health)

- Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
- Thames Valley JHOSC
- Also supports and coordinates the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board