



## **Cabinet Tuesday, 27 January 2026**

### **ADDENDA**

#### **7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 3 - 46)**

Cabinet will receive the following reports:-

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

- a) Budget and Business Planning (TO FOLLOW)
- b) Fix my street (TO FOLLOW)
- c) Business Management and Monitoring Report (Public Health Focus) (TO FOLLOW)
- d) Parking Permits (TO FOLLOW)

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

- a) The Virtual School
- b) Attainment
- c) Fostering

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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 27 January 2026**

#### **Scrutiny of Budget Proposals 2026/27 to 2030/31 Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and agree its response to them, for inclusion within the Council budget papers, and
  - b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations. However, it is advised that in order to fulfil its duty to report to Council on how it has taken any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee into account under Part 3.2 2(e) of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework and Procedure Rules), that it formally responds to the recommendations on receipt and issues these responses to Council.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds constitutional responsibility for providing Scrutiny of the Cabinet's budget proposals. This year, all members were invited to participate in the budget scrutiny process, in

addition to the standard all-member briefings to introduce the budget proposals.

4. The purpose of this report is threefold: i) to provide to Cabinet the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's response to the budget proposals prior to deciding the details of the budget to be proposed at Council for ratification, ii) to inform members of Council of the issues identified by the Scrutiny Committee, and iii) to provide assurance to the public that the proposed budget has been subject to robust scrutiny and challenge.
5. The Committee would like to put its thanks on record to all Cabinet members and Directors attending the meeting. Whilst it is convention to recognise the immense work undertaken to develop the proposed budget, the scale of uncertainty and late announcement by government of the funding settlement means that the delivery of a proposed budget this year has been much more pressured than usual, and the Committee wishes to express its gratitude to all those involved in turning it around for consideration.

## SUMMARY

6. With the budget scrutiny item requiring an all-day meeting, only a brief summary to provide members of the public a flavour of the issues explored is detailed in the table below. The minutes for the meeting, as well as a recording, can be found at:  
<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1172&MId=7847&Ver=4>

Budget Context and cross-cutting issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current levels of borrowing in relation to prudential borrowing limits</li> <li>- The causes of lower council tax base growth relative to government projections</li> <li>- Alternatives to the 4.99% rise in Council tax predicated within the Fairer Funding Review</li> <li>- The latest guidance from government about the Dedicated Schools Grant and managing negative reserves, and its expected impacts on the Council's financial position</li> <li>- The interdependencies of capital expenditure and s.106 monies</li> </ul>
Resources (including Law and Governance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reductions to the mortuary budget and the sufficiency of the current capacity</li> <li>- Plans for the Crisis and Resilience funding</li> <li>- The level of consultant input to deliver the Council's IT Strategy</li> </ul>
Public Health and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The challenges in accounting for savings within Public Health where savings are both long-term and often accrue to the NHS</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use of s.106 monies to support Public Health work</li> <li>- The relationship between grant-funded Public Health work and the Council's broader Marmot County ambitions</li> </ul>
Environment and Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How detailed plans for capital expenditure on Public Realm Improvements would be consulted on</li> <li>- Uses of Extended Producer Responsibility funding</li> <li>- The efficacy of subsidising park and rides in relation to the Council's strategic objectives</li> <li>- The impacts of implementing a charge for non-Oxfordshire residents at Household Waste and Recycling Centres and the potential for cross-county collaboration</li> <li>- How congestion charge, zero emission zone and traffic filter income was accounted for within the Council's wider budget</li> <li>- The increase in cost of the Watlington Relief Road project and whether viable alternative options existed</li> </ul>
Economy and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The options for tackling flooding where the drainage infrastructure was not the responsibility of the Council.</li> <li>- The value of investments in strategic planning before the shape of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution had taken place</li> </ul>
Fire and Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for greater fee income</li> <li>- Potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation for the Fire &amp; Rescue Service and the sufficiency of funding</li> </ul>
Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fee levels agreed with social care providers within the wider context of market stability and financial sustainability</li> <li>- The financial aspects of partnership working, particularly in relation to investments to prevent 'bed blocking' and where returns accrue</li> <li>- The workings and oversight of budgets pooled between the Council and NHS partners</li> </ul>
Children, Education and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whether capital receipts from the sale of Woodeaton School might lower the necessary level of capital expenditure associated with the project</li> <li>- Agency spend levels and plans to reduce them</li> <li>- The negative reserve related to SEND expenditure and the likely impacts of recent</li> </ul>

	government statements on ceasing the ability to run a negative reserve
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7. The Committee makes six formal recommendations. The budget proposals put to the Committee included a £5.4m gap for the forthcoming financial year, and growing pressures beyond that. Given the inherently political nature of such suggestions and scrutiny's apolitical role, it is more appropriate that discussions as to how the Council will deliver a balanced budget are heard at its Budget Council meeting. The main thrust of the Committee's recommendations, therefore, is to seek that members are provided with relevant information when making their decisions. Further recommendations are made to allow members to be assured of the school meal quality, unblocking a source of Council tax income, and ensuring that there is sufficient oversight of key areas of capital expenditure at the delivery stage.
8. The Committee also makes a number of observations, which do not require any formal response but exist to make general comments and advice from the Committee to Cabinet.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & OBSERVATIONS

### Additions to the Council Budget Report

9. A very significant policy development over the last year within the Council over the last year has been its decision to pursue becoming a Marmot County. In doing so, the Council recognises the close interrelationship between inequalities and health outcomes and pledges to tackle health inequalities and improving health fairness in Oxfordshire by working with local partners across local authorities, communities, public services, businesses, and voluntary sector organisations. The reason for addressing committing to address health inequalities through partnership is the recognition that the causes of inequality and poor health outcomes are complex and multi-layered and require a response which calls on the capacity, skills and resources of all parts of civic society. When looking at the Council itself, responsibility for addressing inequalities similarly extends beyond the narrow boundaries of Public Health, and is a holistic, corporate responsibility.
10. The funding structure of the Council's Public Health work obscures this cross-Council responsibility. Public Health has a number of services it is statutorily required to provide, and is given a ring-fenced grant by central government to deliver them. This focuses greater attention on these areas within the budget, because they have specific resource allocations next to them with measurable expected outputs, whereas the Council's wider Marmot agenda does not in the same way. Yet the preventative impact of addressing Marmot-inequalities on health outcomes is potentially far more significant.

11. The Committee referenced very positively the Director of Public Health's 2025 Annual Report, which addressed issues around tackling the negative health impacts of climate change. The Committee's view is that members, particularly given the size of the new intake of members since the election, should be provided with greater detail as to the cross-Council nature of addressing health inequalities when finalising the budget, and that the topic of climate change may be useful in illustrating this.

**Recommendation 1: That greater detail of the contribution non-Public Health areas make to the Council's Marmot agenda is provided within the Council's budget report, particularly in relation to mitigating the negative health impacts of climate change**

12. Following on from the above in light of the structure of Public Health's funding and responsibilities, the Committee wishes to make point that, whilst Public Health money cannot be spent on other areas of the Council owing to its ring-fence, the opposite is not true: the Council is not precluded from using monies from other budgets to support Public Health activity. Whilst it does not make suggestions as to which other budgets might be used for this purpose, the Committee suggests that it is important Cabinet and Council remain cognisant of the possibility.

**Observation 1: Noting Public Health funding comes from a ringfenced grant, that this does not preclude other budgets within the Council from contributing to Public Health activities**

13. The following recommendation is very straightforward; fees for 2 hour parking within Oxford City Zone 2 were agreed in last year's budget but omitted from the draft schedule of fees and charges for the current budget. This was confirmed at the budget scrutiny meeting to be an oversight, and the Committee simply asks that it be corrected.

**Recommendation 2: That 2 hour parking in Oxford City in Zone 2 is included within the list of fees and charges in the Council's budget report.**

14. The Committee discussed at some length proposals to make available £3m to cover planning-related design changes and an increased risk and contingency owing to the scheme's complexity. The deliverability and suitability of other options, particularly the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras to prevent Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic travelling through Watlington, was debated at some length. However, no clear consensus position was reached.
15. It is the view of the Committee that member understanding would be greatly enhanced by knowing how the decision to proceed with the Watlington Relief Road was reached, the alternative options which were considered, and the reasons the current proposal was chosen over the available alternatives. The Committee's view is that the options appraisal undertaken when deciding to proceed with the Watlington Relief Road scheme would be a straightforward

way to share this information, and it asks that members are availed of this information as part of the budget report at Council.

**Recommendation 3: That Council is provided with the options appraisal used when assessing to progress with the Watlington Relief Road as part of the budget report.**

16. Concerning the Watlington Relief Road, the need for an additional £3m to address cover price rises owing to delays in obtaining planning consent, and the costs of measures to secure that consent, was criticised by the Committee. The presence of a valuable natural asset – a chalk stream – was known from the outset, and could and should have been incorporated into plans and costings from an earlier stage. Some of those additional costs would still have accrued: the need to purchase additional land, for instance. However, not all would, and members would have been in possession of more accurate costings when deciding whether to agree to make budgetary provision for it.
17. Whilst the increase in cost is unwelcome, the main point of concern is a broader one. The Council is able to make good these cost-increases on a project of this size. However, it is also undertaking projects such as HIF1 and HIF2, which are considerably more complex and expensive. Increases in costs on a similar scale on those projects would pose a far more pressing challenge. The Committee seeks to highlight to Cabinet the imperative to improve project management and monitoring of costs now in order to avoid significant problems in the future.

**Observation 2: With HIF1 and HIF2 upcoming, similar levels of overspend to the Watlington Relief Road would not be sustainable, and the Council's project management and monitoring of costs will need to improve**

18. A further area of discussion by the Committee concerned the Council's proposals to charge non-residents for use of Household Waste and Recycling Centres. The Committee noted that there are areas, particularly in the north of the county, where non-residents are much closer to Oxfordshire Waste and Recycling Centres than ones hosted by their own authorities. Application of a fee could either encourage those residents to drive further and use the amenities provided by their own authorities, or worse, could encourage fly-tipping.
19. The Committee appreciates the points made in response to these issues about the proposed charge being set lower than in neighbouring authorities, and the need for review of the impacts of the new charge. However, it remains of the view that this is sub-optimal, and that reciprocal agreements with neighbouring authorities for cross-border access are a far superior solution. Requiring partnership working, the Committee recognises that delivering this solution is not within the exclusive gift of the Cabinet to deliver, but it wishes nonetheless to highlight its significant desirability and to encourage the Cabinet to continue to pursue it as far as possible.



**Observation 3: Recognising the limits to the Council's power when working with partners, reciprocal agreements with neighbouring councils to enable cross-border access to recycling centres should remain a clear priority**

### **Oversight of the Details of Capital Expenditure**

20. One area of proposed capital expenditure strongly supported by committee members was the provision of £1.5m in Public Realm Improvement funding. The purpose of that funding is 'to increase maintenance and enhance public-realm assets, strengthening towns and the city as attractive, vibrant destinations.'
21. Whilst the Committee is strongly behind making such resource available, it also recognises that to maximise the impact of such resources requires a high level of local knowledge to ensure that delivery plans truly address local priority needs. It is important, therefore, that delivery plans are consulted on with local members, and the Committee suggests that this best be done through Locality meetings.

**Recommendation 4: That plans for Public Realm Improvement expenditure are brought to members at Localities meetings.**

### **Tax Base Expansion and Other Cross-Cutting Advice**

22. There exists a gap between the anticipated increases to the Council tax base next year as estimated by the billing councils (district and city) and the figure used by central government when estimating Core Spending Power, a key determinant of the level of grant provided. Next year, the council tax base is expected to grow by 1.33%, as opposed to a central government assumption of 1.85%. The main contributor to this discrepancy is a delay in the Valuation Office Agency in issuing council tax bands for approximately 2000 homes in the South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse areas. Whilst it is expected that the annual lost income of £2.4m can be recouped in the future, and the Council has a reserve to cover such incidents, this delay is sub-optimal in that it introduces increased risks of non-payment as well as lost income on balances. The Committee is sure that the Cabinet is also keen to secure this income as soon as possible, and recommends that the Council writes to the Valuation Office Agency seeking to expedite the issuing of council tax bands to these 2000 homes.

**Recommendation 5: That the Council writes to the Valuation Office Agency to raise the issue of 2000 homes without council tax bands**

23. In its discussion of the proposal to invest £3.1m of capital expenditure in a new IT strategy, one of the queries raised was the amount of money which would be spent on external consultant resource. In response, it was explained

to the Committee that the primary elements of the strategy concerned new hardware for Council staff, and the migration of systems to the cloud. The implementation of these would fall primarily to existing staff with little use of consultants.

24. The Committee welcomes confirmation that the IT Strategy will be implemented primarily through in-house staff, but wishes to reiterate to the Cabinet the importance in addressing the Council's upcoming financial challenges in maximising the use of existing staff, and growing the number employed staff in place of temporary staff. The Council is addressing this through its People and Culture Strategy, but performance on this metric requires constant vigilance, particularly as Local Government Reorganisation progresses.

**Observation 4: The Council must be vigilant and remember the importance of making use of in-house capacity over consultants in the implementation of the IT strategy, and elsewhere**

### **School Meal Quality**

25. Having recommended to Cabinet in last year's budget scrutiny that school meal price increases be stepped more gradually due to concerns over the impact of price increases for parents and carers, the decision to hold the price of school meals is welcomed. However, it is recognised that in December food price inflation was running at 5.4%, and employer national insurance costs have increased since the last budget was agreed. The Committee supports the proactive action taken by the Council to find efficiencies to enable price freezes in the face of rising costs to provide the service. However, one area it is keen to ensure is not compromised is the quality of food itself. Members were assured that the efficiencies found had not had a deleterious effect on the quality of the food provided, though an example of one of the efficiencies found was the move from using fresh food to frozen. This is a change to what is put on the plate, and could therefore have an impact on quality.
26. The Committee seeks that the Council assures itself that the quality of the food it is serving is good enough, not by making its own assumptions but by asking the end users of the school meal service, i.e., the children. It is not intended that this exercise be an onerous task, and the Committee has been informed that a number of schools have undertaken surveys of children's views on school meal quality. The Committee requests that the feedback from those surveys be weighed before ultimately setting school meal fees.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council collates and reviews direct feedback from children, where available, from schools, concerning the quality of current school meals**

## FURTHER CONSIDERATION

27. The Committee is expected to return to its formal budget scrutiny process towards the end of 2026, once there are new proposals to scrutinise. In the meantime it will continue to monitor key aspects of the budget through its work programme.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
29. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
30. Under Part 3.2 2 (e) of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework and Procedure Rules), the Cabinet shall take into account any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee in finalising its [budget] proposals for submission to the Council for consideration. In submitting the proposals the Cabinet will report to the Council on how it has taken into account any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Tom Hudson Scrutiny Manager <a href="mailto:tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk">tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07791 494285

January 2026

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

**Issue:**                      **Budget Proposals for 2026/27 to 2030/31**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):**              **Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>**              **27 January 2026**

**Response to report:**

*Enter text here.*

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<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

## Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That greater detail of the contribution non-Public Health areas make to the Council's Marmot agenda is provided within the Council's budget report, particularly in relation to mitigating the negative health impacts of climate change		
2. That 2 hour parking in Oxford City in Zone 2 is included within the list of fees and charges in the Council's budget report.		
3. That Council is provided with the options appraisal used when assessing to progress with the Watlington Relief Road as part of the budget report.		
4. That plans for Public Realm Improvement expenditure are brought to members at Localities meetings.		

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

5. That the Council writes to the Valuation Office Agency to raise the issue of 2000 homes without council tax bands		
6. That the Council collates and reviews direct feedback from children, where available, from schools, concerning the quality of current school meals		

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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 27 January 2026**

### **Fix My Street Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

## **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's use of the Fix My Street platform at its meeting on 05 December 2025.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety, Paul Wilson, Operations Manager (Operations), and Matthew Timms, Team Leader (Engagement) – Highway Maintenance for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

## SUMMARY

5. The Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety introduced the Fix My Street item, explaining that the platform enabled the public to report highway defects and issues, and had seen around 41,000 reports since January 2025 – a growth of 4000 on the report provided to the Committee, presumably incorporating an additional month of figures. While acknowledging the system's imperfections, he emphasised its role within a wider transformation programme aimed at improving customer experience, with several workstreams underway to address known issues. Ongoing collaboration with colleagues was highlighted, alongside recognition that not all users were satisfied with the service.
6. In its consideration of the item, the Committee explored items such as recent cleansing of older reports and safeguards associated with such action, the purpose of 'superusers' and the process to become one, ways to make reporting more accurate and efficient, the cost benefits of different approaches to filling potholes, the prevalence of 'find and fix', quality inspections of work undertaken, and communication with members.
7. The Committee makes eight recommendations, which broadly align behind the issues of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of repairs, and improving communication with residents, particularly around updating them on reported defects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **'Find and Fix'**

8. Many of the Committee's recommendations follow the most regular comments made by residents to members about the Fix My Street platform.
9. The first is the frustration experienced when a pothole is reported and fixed, but others nearby are not filled at the same time. The report to Committee and discussions held afterwards determined that 'Through a "find and fix" approach, crews are empowered to repair additional issues not originally specified in the initial instruction.' However, this was counterbalanced by the need to prioritise works on a risk-based approach.
10. According to a Freedom of Information request to all Highways Authorities, Devon County Council undertook the highest number of pothole repairs in the country between January 2022 and September 2025.<sup>1</sup> It also receives the highest number of reports, suggesting that, as a highway authority, Devon faces a more challenging position even than Oxfordshire (which, incidentally, had the seventh highest number reported). Devon has begun a trial whereby all potholes are filled, rather than those which are a safety hazard.<sup>2</sup> The Committee is of the view that, whilst 'find and fix' does operate in Oxfordshire, it could be extended

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<sup>1</sup> [The British pothole crisis exposed: over 5 million repairs and 3.3 million reports since 2022 - cinch](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Devon's pothole repair trial to get underway soon - News](#)

significantly. Though it is appreciated that Devon is only undertaking a trial, there are strong reasons to think that preventative action will save money in the long run, and undertaking multiple repairs in the same location will prove more efficient as well as reducing overall risk than a less efficient but more prioritised approach. As such, the Committee seeks that the Council contact Devon County Council to learn from their experience of this trial, and consider implementing something similar.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council extends "find and fix" powers, including considering a trial similar to Devon County Council's recent trial's approach.**

11. Following on from this, one simple way of communicating to residents that additional potholes in the area have been noted – even if they are not immediately fixed – is simply to mark them with spray paint. Doing so would be reassuring for members of the public for very little extra effort, and the Committee recommends that this start happening.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council considers marking additional defects with spray paint to show residents that issues have been noted, even if not immediately fixed.**

### **Interim Repairs**

12. The second area of frustration raised by residents to members concerns the quality and durability of repairs which have been undertaken. The Committee is content to accept the point made that these are two different issues: it is not uncommon for interim fixes to be put in place to avert danger whilst awaiting a longer-term solution. These are, of course, not as durable as permanent solutions. In order to be assured of quality, the Council's policy is to review 20% of repairs. In view of the frustrations expressed by residents to members, the Committee is of the view that this should be increased; poorly fixed roads are easily damaged in cold weather, meaning that there is the potential that the costs avoided by increasing the percentage of works which are quality assured may mitigate if not fully the cover the cost.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council increases the percentage of road defect repairs that are quality assured from the current 20% level.**

13. In relation to the issue of interim repairs, improved communication around the status of interim repairs and expected timescales for permanent fixes would allay much of the confusion and frustration arising from this issue.
14. A secondary issue on this is the reports of defects being marked as 'fixed' following an interim intervention. The Committee appreciates that in making safe a defect through an interim measure, the problem is fixed from a Council risk perspective – it is no longer an immediate danger - but there remains work to do to make it safe in the long term. This longer-term perspective is generally the one taken by members of the public, and it would be helpful if the Council's processes were to align with it.

**Recommendation 4: That the Council uses Fix My Street to update residents, especially regarding the status of interim repairs and expected timescales for permanent fixes, and keeps notifications active until permanent repairs are completed.**

#### **Other**

15. Alongside written reports, photos can be submitted on Fix My Street and are a very useful tool when staff seek to risk assess and prioritise new reports. The Committee discussed whether, in order to make the process more efficient and decisions of priority more informed, pictures could always be required as part of the making a report. It was responded, however, that this would not be a practical solution, given not every highway defect is in a place where it is safe to take a picture.
16. The Committee takes this on board, but it does not consider that simply because there are instances where the idea is impractical, that it does not work at all. There are categories of repair, pavement issues for example, which do remain safe to photograph. Being alert to the equalities considerations - for instance wheelchair or mobility scooter users are more likely to find disrepair of pavements problematic than those who do not use them but may be less likely to use smartphones – the Committee suggests there remains value in reviewing whether to require photographs in suitable categories in order to improve the efficiency of initial risk assessment and triage.

**Recommendation 5: That the Council considers requiring photos for appropriate categories of reports – those where it is safe and practical - to improve the quality of initial submissions.**

17. With regards to pavements and other footways, it is the view of the Committee that public understanding of the Council's responsibilities regarding potholes is fairly well understood as are the thresholds for non-intervention. This is not the case for pavement repairs. This is not helped by the way thresholds are communicated. For instance, if a resident clicks through to the 'footways and pavement damage' section of the Fix My Street website, they are met with the following:

## Report your problem

→ Click the map or drag the pin to adjust the location

🔍 Or [search for a different location](#)

We take different action depending on the issue.  
This category is for issues relating to the surface of the pavement. If you are reporting issues such as **littering or fly tipping**, please do so under the **Rubbish and Environment Category**.



In comparison, when they navigate through to report a pothole they are presented with the intervention criteria and system of prioritisation:

## Report your problem

→ Click the map or drag the pin to adjust the location

🔍 Or [search for a different location](#)

Not everything meets our criteria for fixing.  
On roads the size of the pothole must be **40mm depth and/or 150mm diameter**.  
On paths the size of the pothole must be **20mm depth and/or 100mm diameter**.  
If the location is on a cycle path, at a junction, bend or in the wheel track this may increase the priority.



18. The Committee considers that it would be helpful in setting expectations amongst residents and defuse some of their frustrations if the criteria for intervention in pavement repairs were to be explained more fully here, and publicised more broadly also.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council improves communication with the public about the criteria for pavement repairs, as residents often do not understand why some pavements are not fixed.**

19. Since launching the concept as a trial in 2019, the Council has been training 'super users' to inspect potholes, footpaths, blocked drains and damaged kerbing, and allowing direct work orders to be made to the Council's contractors.

20. Though the concept of super-users was valued by members of the Committee, it was suggested that the Council was not maximising the effectiveness of the current volunteers. Some criticism was put forward that members on the committee had been trained as super users but had received little guidance as to what was expected of them, and that there had not been any follow-up despite the fact that they had not made any reports. The Council's listing on Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action's website – one of the main portals for volunteering in the county – suggests that 'ongoing support' is provided, but does not outline any expectations of those who register.<sup>3</sup> It is not possible with current evidence to know whether the lack of follow-up for committee members was representative or not, but the Committee's comment remains the same: volunteers willingly take work off paid Council staff, and if through a small investment in outlining expectations and improved support, the Council can leverage the willingness of community-minded residents and receive significant returns on this investment. The Committee seeks that the Council does so.

**Recommendation 7: That the Council provides expectations of super-users, and implements more post-training support.**

21. The final recommendation is something of a summary recommendation. In the report presented to the Committee, it was reported that, of 41,000 highway defects identified and actioned, approximately 25% originated from Fix My Street. It is the view of the Committee that this number is actually a good indicator of public confidence in Fix My Street as a reporting system. If steps are taken to improve the outcomes of reports, and communication with residents is improved – such as those being recommended by the Committee – then this number will naturally increase. As a means of measuring this improvement, the Council should therefore set and monitor a target which increases this percentage.

**Recommendation 8: That the Council develops a target for the percentage of defects originating from Fix My Street to increase the current 25% figure, which is considered too low.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

22. The Committee is conscious that the primary interest in Fix My Street, potholes, is scheduled to be considered by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2026. Any further scrutiny, therefore, will take place in conversation with that committee in order to prevent duplication.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

23. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed

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<sup>3</sup> [FixMyStreet Super User - raise work orders for potholes, damaged kerbs and blocked drains](#)

by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.

24. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Tom Hudson  
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January 2026

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

**Issue:** **Fix My Street**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **27 January 2026**

**Response to report:**

*Enter text here.*

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<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

## Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council extends "find and fix" powers, including considering a trial similar to Devon County Council's recent trial's approach.		
2. That the Council considers marking additional defects with spray paint to show residents that issues have been noted, even if not immediately fixed		
3. That the Council increases the percentage of road defect repairs that are quality assured from the current 20% level.		
4. That the Council uses Fix My Street to update residents, especially regarding the status of interim repairs and expected timescales for permanent fixes, and keeps notifications active until permanent repairs are completed.		
5. That the Council considers requiring photos for appropriate categories of reports – those where it is safe and		

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<b>practical - to improve the quality of initial submissions.</b>		
<b>6. That the Council improves communication with the public about the criteria for pavement repairs, as residents often do not understand why some pavements are not fixed</b>		
<b>7. That the Council provides expectations of super-users, and implements more post-training support.</b>		
<b>8. That the Council develops a target for the percentage of defects originating from Fix My Street to increase the current 25% figure, which is considered too low.</b>		

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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 27 January 2026**

## **Business Management and Monitoring Report (with focus on Public Health)**

## **Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Business Management and Monitoring (BMMR), with a specific focus on the Public Health service area, at its meeting on 05 December 2025.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Inequalities, Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, Kate Holburn, Deputy Director of Public Health, Sam Read, Public Health Programme Manager, and Carys Alty, Head

of Migration Policy and Partnership, for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

## **SUMMARY**

5. The Director of Public Health clarified that his remit included statutory public health, communities and asylum and migration. The report covered the ring-fenced public health grant budget and related functions including asylum, domestic abuse, and additional grants for drug, alcohol and smoking cessation. Performance across these areas was outlined, with amber-rated issues identified for discussion.
6. The Head of Corporate Finance reported that, as of October, there was no forecast variation for public health against a gross budget of just under £43 million, which included the £37 million ring-fenced public health grant and other grants such as domestic abuse and drug and alcohol treatment. An underspend of £0.9 million for 2024/25 had been transferred to the public health reserve, now totalling £4.6 million, with a forecast drawdown of £2.7 million for 2025/26. The scale of public health funding within the council's overall budget was emphasised.
7. The issue having been raised in the Committee's September meeting when considering the performance of Children, Education and Families, the Deputy Director of Public Health introduced the children and young person's substance misuse service. It was described as a small team with dedicated workers in family centres. The service provided psychosocial interventions for prevention, early intervention, and treatment, supporting both young people using substances and those affected by others' use. Interventions ranged from brief advice and drug diversion schemes to structured treatment, with clinical support rarely required. National reporting focused only on structured treatment, which represented just part of the service's work.
8. Following the introduction, the Committee began its questioning. Its questioning focused exclusively on aspects relating to Public Health, including the implications of being a Marmot County, the adequacy of domestic abuse refuges, smoking cessation, health checks, health visits, drug and alcohol services, and support for asylum seekers.
9. The Committee makes three recommendations, which seek to bring greater clarity over how Marmot principles will be embedded throughout the Council, recognise and monitor the health benefits and risks of vaping, and to learn lessons from the Homes for Ukraine scheme in other aspects of the Council's asylum and immigration policy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10. The Committee recognises that narrowing the inequalities gap takes time and that it is important to bring about meaningful change by working in partnership with a range of organisations including the NHS. This makes illustrating

meaningful change over the course of the Council's strategic plan is challenging. Nonetheless, it remains important to know that the Council is being effective, both internally and through partnership working with the NHS and other bodies.

11. The Committee understand that currently, and the for the next two years, the Council has the support of the Institute of Health Equity to understand what data say are the most pressing expressions of health inequality in the county. This will ultimately lead to a series of recommendations for Oxfordshire's health 'system' which will provide a framework for planning with partners how to implement or scale long-term interventions to tackle Oxfordshire's specific health inequalities within a challenging financial environment. It is, however, vague as to what the Council thinks it needs to do, how it will do and by when in order to reach a shared cross-system approach that will begin to deliver on the Council's Marmot objectives. Over the course of an administration, the Council has the opportunity to make significant progress towards embedding Marmot principles and establishing interventions, particularly given the input of the Institute of Health Equity. The Committee would like it to outline its plans to do this more clearly.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council clarifies its plan as to how it will lead on developing with system partners a shared understanding of and common approach to addressing local health inequality priorities.**

12. One of the key metrics monitored by Public Health is the proportion of smokers in the county, and Oxfordshire has seen significant success in this area following the launch of its Smoke Free Strategy in 2020. The percentage currently stands at approximately 7.5%, having previously stood at approximately 11%. Importantly, this number counts the number of tobacco smokers, and not those who vape. The number who vape is not monitored.
13. The Committee recognises that there is significant nuance to understanding the health impacts of vaping. For instance, for those who give up smoking cigarettes and take up vaping instead, there is a significant health benefit. However, those who pick up vaping having not previously been a smoker will experience negative health outcomes by doing so.<sup>1</sup> Basic monitoring of vaping levels, therefore, is unhelpful in understanding the impacts on public health of vaping. However, vaping clearly does carry negative health impacts, and likely outsized impacts in certain cohorts, such as the young. On this basis, it is important that the Council as the body responsible for public health in the county seeks to reduce these harms as far as possible. The first step in addressing this is to collate and monitor data. Notwithstanding the challenges, this is what the Committee recommends that the Council begin to do.

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the negative health outcomes of vaping are still contested given that vaping remains a relatively new phenomenon. Nonetheless, the following detail areas of concern which it would be preferable for non-smokers to avoid: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html> and <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/what-does-vaping-do-to-your-lungs>

**Recommendation 2: That the Council devises a relevant metric or metrics to enable it to understand vaping prevalence in the county, to allow it to take informed steps to reduce its harms.**

14. The Committee devoted some time during this item to understand the Council's responsibilities and performance around asylum and immigration. One important issue explored was over the evolving immigration policy landscape, in which national government has implemented a scheme of 'community sponsorship,' which enables community organisations to host and provide practical support to resettled families.<sup>2</sup> The Council is directly involved in this process, needing to approve requests to host a family in its area so as to allow the impacts on local services to be considered.
15. It was confirmed that the Council had been involved in discussions about resettling a family, but that the application had fallen through due to the difficulties of finding appropriate accommodation. At present, no families have been resettled in Oxfordshire under this scheme. In readiness for possible new arrivals, however, the Committee is keen that Public Health reviews the successes and areas for improvement from the Homes for Ukraine scheme to ensure that lessons are learnt on the types of support necessary to help families settle, in order that any families arriving under this scheme might have the greatest chance to integrate and thrive.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council undertakes a review of the successes and areas for improvement of the Homes for Ukraine scheme to inform the types of support necessary to maximise the chances of arriving families integrating and thriving under Community Sponsorship**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

16. The Committee expects to continue its ongoing oversight of the Council's BMMR report, with the focus at its April meeting to be Adult Social Care. The Committee has also requested that a progress report be presented in December 2026.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.'
18. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

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<sup>2</sup> Additional details may be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship/community-sponsorship-guidance-for-prospective-sponsors#introduction>



Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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January 2026

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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**Issue:** **BMMR (with a focus on Public Health)**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** **Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Inequalities**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>** **27 January 2026**

**Response to report:**

*Enter text here.*

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<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

### Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council clarifies its plan as to how it will lead on developing with system partners a shared understanding of and common approach to addressing local health inequality priorities.		
2. That the Council devises a relevant metric or metrics to enable it to understand vaping prevalence in the county, to allow it to take informed steps to reduce its harms.		
3. That the Council undertakes a review of the successes and areas for improvement of the Homes for Ukraine scheme to inform the types of support necessary to maximise the chances of arriving families integrating and thriving under Community Sponsorship		

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 27 January 2026**

#### **Parking Permits**

### **Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

## **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Parking Permit system at its meeting on 05 December 2025.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment & Highways, and Phil Whitfield, Head of Network Management, for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

## **SUMMARY**

5. The Cabinet Member opened the discussion, noting that the committee had previously received a verbal update in September 2025 and was now returning for a more substantive discussion. He explained that main parking permits had been digital for three years, with the visitor parking permit system moving online the previous December.
6. The Director of Environment & Highways and Head of Network Management elucidated further, highlighting that the report addressed all previously raised concerns, particularly the proposal to extend the current contract by two years. This extension would allow time for due diligence and a thorough procurement process for a new system. Improvements had already been made to the system based on committee and user feedback, focusing on user-friendliness and efficiency. Ongoing discussions aimed to review and challenge the system's performance, ensuring it met expectations for the remainder of the contract. Both officers stressed the importance of continuous improvement and responsiveness to user concerns.
7. The Committee's questioning was extensive, covering issues including the layout and usability of the permit website, the capabilities of the IT system, priorities for future procurement and whether to extend the contract and – if so - for how long, the challenges of GDPR in relation to supporting residents to help with local parking enforcement, and the different reasons for PCNs (Parking Charge Notices).
8. The Committee makes seven recommendations and a broader observation, which relate to its views on the forthcoming procurement for a new system, and a series of broader suggestions as to how the parking permit system might be improved.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATION**

### **Procurement for the New System**

9. It is worth making clear from the outset that the Committee is highly critical of the current online parking permit system, and that their dissatisfaction is mirrored by residents. Listening to resident complaints and frustrations arising from this system takes up a disproportionate amount of councillor time, particularly for those who represent divisions in the city. Across the two meetings where this issue has been considered, members have highlighted the following criticisms:
  - Unintuitive and confusing, to the point that IT savvy people struggled to navigate the 'terrible' system
  - Inefficient in that significant extra support is needed to help residents navigate
  - Text-heavy

This list is not exhaustive, and merely represents comments made by members in providing scrutiny to the broader parking permit system.

10. As detailed above, the Committee was informed of the Council's intention to extend the current contract by two years, which would allow time for due diligence and a thorough procurement process for a new system. The Committee appreciates that there are multiple elements to this system, which contribute to its challenging mechanics for end users. The complexity of the Council's permit system is a policy issue which manifests itself in more complex programming. The system relies on different providers for the front back end, and the two require integration in order to work seamlessly together. Simply changing the back-end provider, therefore, is not a complete solution although it does open up more options for finding solutions. Equally, it notes that changes are being made to the current system to address some of the most pressing issues, but as the report says, 'any radically different user experience would require the reprourement of a new system'.
11. Overall, the Committee is of the view that the Council's current level of performance in delivering a permit system is sufficiently poor, creating significant angst and frustration amongst residents, that the contract should not be extended for two years but, as the Council has the option to do, to prioritise and expedite the making of improvements to the system and only extend for a single year. An additional year would take the contract end date to May 2027, which is feasible with a 12-month procurement period.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council recognises the urgent need for improvements in the online parking permit system, and extends the current contract by only one year**

12. As mentioned in the preceding section, certain members are all too well aware of the frustrations experienced by residents with the current system, and know which issues should be a priority for the Council to address. The Council should make use this knowledge at an early stage of the procurement process to enable it to identify the issues, understand their causes, and to incorporate solutions into the design specification which will go out to tender. The Committee seeks that it does so.

**Recommendation 2: That as part of the early scoping process for the procurement, the Council involves members in reviewing the current system to identify, understand and design-out current flaws**

13. In discussion during Committee, the following point was met with support from officers and the Cabinet member, so it is hoped that the wider Cabinet will also be supportive.
14. The conclusion of the Committee is that the existing system has not delivered satisfactorily for residents, and that it is imperative that a better system be implemented. Part of delivering that, lies in what the Council decides are its priorities, and how those priorities are weighted in assessing the suitability of

different tenders. The previous tender had a weighting of 58% quality, 30% cost and 12% on societal benefit.

15. Notwithstanding that quality formed the primary weighting in the original contract, what has been delivered has not been good enough. To see an improvement, either the Committee would like to see a further rebalancing away from price considerations and towards having a good system that will work for residents, and/or for the Council to review the criteria by which it judges quality so that the score more accurately reflects the end user experience.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council prioritises quality and functionality over price in its weighting for the procurement of the new online parking permit system and/or reviews the measures it uses to adjudge quality to make them more reflective of end user experience.**

16. One learning point arising from the issues experienced with the parking permit system is that for policy and the technical solutions to implement that policy must be aligned.
17. Explaining why Oxfordshire faced more problems than other authorities with the same service provider, the report to the Committee pinpointed the problem as one of complexity. 'The difference which is believed to be creating the issues for Oxfordshire which isn't seen elsewhere, is the complexity of the scheme itself.' This level of complexity, however, is recognised to be a policy position: 'Whilst the permit scheme could be simpler on the ground for residents, visitors and businesses would lose benefits. Our scheme recognises not only the different users we need to cater for, but also that different areas have different needs.' The problems experienced illustrate what happens when technology is put to use in implementing a policy for which its architecture is not well suited.
18. The Committee is keen that Cabinet recognises the importance of having policy positions inform technical requirements in the forthcoming tender, but equally understanding the perils of trying to implement a policy for which its technology is not well suited. To that end, and in view of the Committee's preference for a faster procurement, the Committee also recommends that the Council undertake a review of its CPZ (Controlled Parking Zone) and wider parking policy as a matter of urgency.

**Observation 1: It is vital to recognise that technological requirements and capability, and Council policy, must inform one another, and that failure to align the two can render functional technology sub-optimal.**

**Recommendation 4: That the Council reviews its CPZ and parking strategy urgently, to allow it to inform the Council's technological requirements**

### **Broader Improvements**



19. One consequence highlighted by members of the Committee of the move from a paper to an online permit system was that residents are no longer able to tell whether a car is parked with a valid permit. This means they are reliant on the activity and schedule of enforcement officers, and cannot proactively report cars parking in areas they are not allowed to. This is an issue of frustration to some residents, yet the Committee's exploration of possible avenues to address it consistently ran a similar challenge: the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which preclude the public from having general access to the data being held by the Council.
20. The Committee clearly does not wish to ask the Cabinet to contravene the requirements of GDPR, meaning it will not be possible for residents to regain fully their level of access under the paper-based permit system. However, one idea which had some promise, being far more restricted in access and targeted towards the Council's reason for holding permit-related data, was the creation of a small number of suitably trained 'super-users,' residents able to access the Council's systems and check the validity of a particular vehicle's permit.
21. GDPR is a complex area of legislation, and the Committee was unable to explore the viability of developing such 'super users' at its meeting. It does, however, recognise that residents are no longer able to support the Council in enforcing parking regulations, which is to the detriment of both. The Committee would like to see some action taken to re-empower residents, and asks that the Cabinet agree to investigate whether, and how, the Committee's suggestion might be implemented.

**Recommendation 5: That the Cabinet investigates the viability of enabling trained 'super-users' to check the permit status of a particular car and report it to the Council without violating GDPR**

22. During discussion at the September and December committees issues around how individuals are informed that their permits are expiring were explored. Having been assured in the report submitted to the Committee that 'emails are sent to account holders advising them their permits are due to expire' members queried whether those without e mail were written to instead. This question could not be answered immediately at Committee. If, on investigation, the Council finds that it does not write to those without e mails as a matter of course, then on equality grounds the Committee recommends that the Council do so.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council, if it does not already do so, adopts a policy of writing to non-visitor permit users who do not have e mails to warn them when their permits are shortly to expire.**

23. A further query explored was the degree to which GPs were aware of their responsibilities in helping unregistered carers access relevant parking permits. Whilst members were assured that carers were advised that it was sometimes necessary to secure a letter from the GP and that such letters were submitted on a regular basis, the overall level of awareness was not known. The Committee considers it to be a small investment in time and effort to raise

awareness around this with GPs, and one which could be of significant help to a cohort of people who require it. As such, the Committee requests of Cabinet that it do so.

**Recommendation 7: That the Council works to raise awareness amongst GPs about their role in supporting unregistered carers access parking permits**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

24. Having heard a verbal update at its September meeting, and been provided a report at its December meeting, the Committee does not anticipate that this issue will be considered again during the current civic year. It may, however, wish to do so in the following year.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

25. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
26. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Tom Hudson Scrutiny Manager <a href="mailto:tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk">tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07791 494285

January 2026

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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**Issue:**                      **Parking Permits**

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):**              **Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management**

**Date response requested:<sup>2</sup>**              **27 January 2026**

**Response to report:**

*Enter text here.*

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<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

## Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council recognises the urgent need for improvements in the online parking permit system, and extends the current contract by only one year		
2. That as part of the early scoping process for the procurement, the Council involves members in reviewing the current system to identify, understand and design-out current flaws		
3. That the Council prioritises quality and functionality over price in its weighting for the procurement of the new online parking permit system and/or reviews the measures it uses to adjudge quality to make them more reflective of end user experience.		
4. That the Council reviews its CPZ and parking strategy urgently, to allow it to inform the Council's technological requirements		
5. That the Cabinet investigates the viability of enabling trained 'super-users' to check the		

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<b>permit status of a particular car and report it to the Council without violating GDPR</b>		
<b>6. That the Council, if it does not already do so, adopts a policy of writing to non-visitor permit users who do not have e mails to warn them when their permits are shortly to expire.</b>		
<b>7. That the Council works to raise awareness amongst GPs about their role in supporting unregistered carers access parking permits</b>		

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