

PERFORMANCE, ASSETS AND STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 June 2025
5.30 - 8.32 pm

Present: Councillors Porrer (Chair), Gawthrope Wood (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Dalzell, Davey, Griffin, and Sheil

In attendance (including online): Councillors Bick, Bird, Holloway, Nestor, Todd-Jones, and Wade

Officers (including online): James Elms (City Services Director), Jody Etherington (Chief Finance Officer – Section 151 Officer), Dan Kalley (streaming), Matthew Stickley (Scrutiny Officer, Clerk), Jane Wilson (Chief Operating Officer),

2x/1/P&A Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Hugh Clough. Councillor Naomi Bennett attended as substitute.

2x/2/P&A Declarations of Interest

Councillor Baigent declared an interest as a member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. Councillor Bennett asked that it be recorded that she was a member of the Green Group and not subject to a party whip.

2x/3/P&A Minutes

The unapproved minutes of meetings of previously constituted Overview and Scrutiny Committees were presented. The Chair noted that because the remits of the two newly established Overview and Scrutiny Committees did not exactly mirror the previously constituted committees, the minutes were to be presented to the first meetings of both of the newly established Overview and Scrutiny Committees for approval.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

2x/4/P&A Public Questions

There were no public questions. The Chair advised the committee that if public questions were submitted to the committee in future that they may be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member for response.

2x/5/P&A The Role of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities

The Chair introduced the item by outlining the role of scrutiny in local authorities, emphasising both pre-scrutiny and post-scrutiny and that the overview and scrutiny committees should be collegiate, with members working beyond political differences to act as a critical friend to the Cabinet and wider council. She explained that members of the committee had the opportunity to shape its work programme for the year, both during and outside of meetings of the committee. Officers clarified that the Housing Board, the terms of reference for which were still being finalised, was not a scrutiny committee but an advisory body of the Cabinet.

2x/6/P&A Update on Budget-Setting Timetable 2026-27

The committee received a verbal update on the 2026-27 budget-setting timetable. Officers explained that a report would be presented to Cabinet in July 2025 outlining the timeline and that an ambitious programme of savings was already in place. It was noted that quarterly financial monitoring by Cabinet would be introduced from September 2025 and that financial reporting would be embedded in the performance management framework from the second quarter onwards.

The committee discussed the alignment of the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund. In response to questions, it was clarified that while the two remained legally separate, the processes for their management and oversight would be synchronised. The committee also considered the timing of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and officers confirmed that it would be refreshed in the autumn and presented to Council in February 2026 to allow forecasting and final budget-setting to be aligned more effectively than in previous years.

It was noted that reports for the July 2025 meeting of Cabinet would be published in early July 2025, and that statutory consultation would be required, with the detail of the consultation to be determined by Cabinet.

The committee noted that further updates on the budget-setting process would be brought forward for consideration at the future meetings of the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2x/7/P&A Update on Changes to Performance Management Framework and Approach

The committee received a verbal update on the development of a new performance management framework. Officers reported that work was underway to assess current measures and to identify whether these were the most suitable indicators of performance. It was noted that a Members' Workshop would be arranged to enable input from councillors. It was further noted that a Customer Feedback Report, including findings from customers and the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen, would be considered by Cabinet in July 2025.

The committee discussed how best to structure its work plan. In response to questions, officers confirmed that Members would receive a template in advance of the planned workshop. It was also clarified that while staff would use one form of dashboard, Members would be provided with a different version designed to give a more strategic overview of the council's performance.

The committee noted that the Corporate Hub's priorities for the coming year included developing the performance management framework, embedding HR structural changes, aligning the budget process, implementing changes required by the Procurement Act 2023, establishing a Programme Management Office, and overseeing Local Government Reorganisation.

There was further discussion about procurement. In response to questions, officers advised that an update on procurement processes could be provided at the September 2025 meeting of the committee. The committee was also informed that a new Communications and Engagement Strategy was being developed, with updates to be provided to the Chair and Vice Chair.

2x/8/P&A Update on the Shared Services Partnership Agreement

The committee received an overview of the shared services partnership. Officers advised that a recommendation would be presented to Cabinet to renew the agreement for five years, which would provide stability of service delivery while retaining a clear exit clause.

The committee discussed the recent appointment of a new Chief Digital and Information Officer for 3C ICT and expressed interest in scheduling a future deep dive into the service. Officers confirmed that contingency planning for disaggregation of service was already in place but that the risk was considered

low. In response to questions, it was clarified that while previous deep dives had been considered by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, a session could also be arranged for this committee.

The committee noted that no further shared services items were currently planned for its work programme. It was agreed that officers would liaise with the Chief Digital and Information Officer to confirm a suitable date for attendance at a future meeting and would recirculate confidential background papers previously considered.

2x/9/P&A Update on Stock Condition Survey Commissioning

The committee received a presentation from the Head of Property Services on the stock condition survey. The committee discussed the inclusion of tenant experience measures such as the punctuality and courtesy of officers and the ease of making booking arrangements.

The committee also explored how survey results would feed into the maintenance and repair programme. Officers explained that the data would be fully integrated into existing systems. The issue of access refusals was also discussed, and it was clarified that a tenant not being at home when an officer visited should not be recorded as a formal refusal.

2x/10/P&A Update on Housing Performance and Social Housing

The committee received an update from officers on the Housing Development Programme and the Housing Revenue Account. It was confirmed that quarterly development updates would continue to be reported to Cabinet.

The committee noted positive progress in certain schemes and was advised that rehousing work was ongoing. Members were also informed that a Quarterly Housing Performance Report had been presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in February 2025. Officers clarified that no regulatory judgment was expected from the regulator, but that comparisons with judgments made in respect of other authorities could be drawn.

2x/11/P&A Overview and Scrutiny Annual Business: Work Programme and Forward Plan

The Chair and Scrutiny Officer introduced the draft forward plan and work programme.

Members acknowledged that the work programme would be further discussed and be updated as appropriate following the meeting but proposals were tabled such that:

- The September 2025 meeting would consider the Budget Consultation, an update on 3C ICT, and the impact of the Procurement Act 2023.
- The November 2025 meeting would focus on performance management following the workshop, the Cambridge Growth Company, and the Customer Feedback Report.
- The January 2025 meeting would consider the 2026-27 budget and the initial implementation of the performance management framework.
- The March 2026 would focus on further implementation work and Local Government Reorganisation.

The committee discussed other potential areas of work, including the possibility of a Housing Task and Finish Group once the relevant report had been published. It was acknowledged that the Chair and Vice Chair would manage the agendas to ensure that items more appropriately dealt with by Cabinet were directed accordingly.

Officers advised that the forthcoming review of the Constitution would provide an opportunity to consider introducing a scoring matrix for prioritising scrutiny topics.

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm

CHAIR