

Council

Briefing note and supplementary papers

Date: **Monday 26 January 2026**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber - Oxford Town Hall**

The Council agenda, reports, this briefing note, and any other supplementary papers should be considered together.

This briefing note forms part of the papers to be considered at the Council meeting. It contains additional information; councillors' questions, public addresses; and amendments to motions.

All papers for this meeting can be accessed through the council's website.

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All public papers are available from the calendar link to this meeting once published

Briefing note

Information for councillors and additional papers to be considered.

	Pages
<p>6 Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting</p> <p>Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution relating to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.</p> <p>Up to five minutes is available for each public address.</p> <p>The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by 5.00 pm on 20 January 2025.</p> <p>The briefing note will contain the text of addresses submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available.</p> <p><i>A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items. Responses are included in this time.</i></p>	7 - 10
<p>11 Proposed Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045</p> <p>The Director of Planning and Regulations has submitted a report to approve the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan 2045 for public consultation and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, if no matters are raised that materially impact upon the Plan strategy, to submit the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for formal examination.</p> <p>Recommendation: Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan 2045 document for public consultation;2. Authorise all the supporting statutory documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), Policies Map and Equalities Impact Assessment;3. Authorise the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any necessary minor editorial corrections to the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045, IDP, Sustainability Appraisal and	11 - 26

Habitats Regulation Assessment, Policies Map, and to agree the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.

4. **Authorise**, following publication, the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any minor changes to the document deemed necessary as a result of the consultation.
5. **Authorise** submission of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for examination, following Regulation 19 consultation and any minor amendments made according to recommendation 3 or 4 and subject to there being no matters raised in the consultation that are considered to materially impact upon the Plan strategy.
6. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to invite the examining inspector(s) to recommend any modifications considered to be necessary in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

13 **Appointment of Committees for the remainder of the Council Year 2025/2026**

27 - 30

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) has submitted a report for Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the remainder of the Council year 2025-26, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15).

Recommendation: That Council resolves to:

1. **Approve** the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in Appendix 1: Committee Structure 2025-2026;
2. **Approve** the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in Appendix 2: Political Proportionalities on Council Committees 2026;
3. **Appoint** to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026;
4. **Agree** that all members of Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies;

Appendices 2 and 3 will be published as part of the Briefing Note.

20 **Questions on Notice from Members of Council**

31 - 46

Questions on notice from councillors received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.11(b).

Questions on notice may be asked of the Lord Mayor, a Member of the Cabinet or a Chair of a Committee. One supplementary question may be asked at the meeting.

The full text of questions must have been received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 1.00pm on 14 January 2026.

These, and written responses where available, will be published in the briefing note.

21 Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

47 - 50

Public addresses to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution and not relating to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.

Up to five minutes is available for each public address.

The request to speak accompanied by the full text of the address must be received by the [Director of Law, Governance and Strategy](#) by 5.00 pm on 20 January 2026.

The briefing note will contain the text of addresses and questions submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available.

*A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items.
Responses*

23 Scrutiny Committee update report

51 - 64

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has submitted a report which updates Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since the last meeting of Council.

Council is invited to comment on and note the report.

The report will be published within a supplement ahead of the meeting.

24 Motions on notice January 2026

65 - 78

This item has a time limit of 60 minutes.

Motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with the rules in Section 11 of the Constitution by the deadline of 1.00pm on 14 January 2026 are listed below.

Cross party motions are taken first. Motions will then be taken in turn

from the *Oxford Independent Group, Real Independent Group, Labour Group, Liberal Democrat Group, Green Group, Oxford Independent Alliance Group*, in that order.

Substantive amendments to these motions must be sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by no later than 10.00am on Friday, 23 January 2026 so that they may be circulated with the briefing note.

Minor technical or limited wording amendments may be submitted during the meeting but must be written down and circulated.

Council is asked to consider the following motions:

- a) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Cllr Jupp, Seconded by Cllr Miles)
- b) Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, Seconded by Cllr Mundy)

This briefing note is published as a supplement to the agenda and should be considered along with the agenda; reports; and other supplementary papers.

To: Council

Date: 26 January 2026

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin
2. Address from Martin Reed

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin

When I arrived in Oxford in the early '90's, one of the first campaigns I was involved in was to oppose the demolition of the dozens of houses on the south side of Botley Rd – you heard right: houses – to make way for the 'out-of-town' retail warehouses. Those very buildings are now being demolished, just 30 years on. To build much needed homes? No, to build tech labs.

Since then, we have seen the expansion of Blackbird Leys, the building of Barton Park. Proposals for or delivery of, housing on precious pockets of open space and local parks – Spindleberry in Blackbird Leys; Bertie Park and Redbridge Meadow in South Oxford and the Horse Fields in Iffley, to name but a few.

The Local Plan has stated clearly over the years that housing will be the priority for this Council. Have we come even close to solving the housing crisis? Hmm...

Yet, acres of brownfield are still identified in this Plan for employment. Maybe housing 'could' go there too. As the Scrutiny committee was told last week. But it should be designated for housing?

Because this City and this County, is not short of jobs, quite the opposite. And it is blessed with full employment.

It is short on housing. Homes fit for the future, at prices local residents can afford. It is also short on local parks, play spaces and nature.

The wealth inequalities in this City aren't because there are hundreds of people looking for work. They are because people don't earn enough in the jobs they do.

Because if you can't afford your rent or mortgage payments, or find somewhere affordable to live, everything else suffers. As it does if you can't easily access open green space and nature.

But just playing the housing numbers game won't solve this problem – as we've seen for the last 30 years. The building of 250 homes, for e.g., on the Wolvercote Paper Mill site was great – if you had upwards of £1/2m to spare to buy one. You're unlikely to find Oxford teachers, nurses and lab technicians living there.

And where is the data, that should be informing the discussion today:

- What is the proposed balance between new jobs (on the one hand) & new housing & green spaces in the city (on the other) & how has this been reached?

In particular, has any of the land previously identified for employment-use been firmly re-allocated for housing? This was a promised policy change around a common theme in many responses in previous consultations. If the plan continues to prioritise a huge increase in employment and economic growth over better provision for housing for the existing population's needs, then Oxford's housing crisis will continue to worsen, as will the related infrastructure issues including flooding, sewage, water scarcity, congestion, pollution and loss of green space.

How can the 'more of the same' strategy this Plan contains, that created and exacerbated these very real challenges we need to solve – result in anything other than more of the same?

- where is the summary report of responses to the last consultation, that should have informed this stage and the explanation of changes made in light of that consultation or the reasons for ignoring it. That information needs to be provided before the plan can properly be considered. The lack of its availability once again undermines democratic process in this City. It reinforces residents' feelings that 'there's no point in participating, no-one listens' and undermining the stated corporate priority to support thriving communities.

And finally, how can you possibly be expected to give full, due consideration to this 900 page document in the time given? The fact that the summary of the responses to the previous consultation is proving to also be very long is simply not a good enough reason not to provide it, but rather suggests more time and attention needs to be given to this entire process. What's the rush?

Be visionary. Be creative. Be courageous. It is in your gift to request more time, or dare I suggest, a different, more democratically-generated Plan, that is genuinely fit for the future this City and its current residents.

2. Address from Martin Reed

We are here to request that you remove Policy SPS8 Land at Meadow Lane from the draft new Local Plan and make the **full 2.5 acres** available as a local resource for outdoor education and nature connection, with the opportunity of a Heritage Lottery grant, to benefit children and young people and the future resilience of the city.

This ancient meadow is unsuitable for **any** housing:

It is now included in Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and easily qualifies as a City Wildlife Site. It provides the beautiful rural setting for Iffley's Conservation Area and draws many residents and visitors along the quiet route for active travel bordering the meadow. The value it brings, environmentally, socially and economically, is reflected in the Council's own multifunctionality scoring system, where it would score 13 /17 and it should be protected as Core Green infrastructure.

This particularly sensitive site is identified by the Council's own surveys as unsustainable. With 15 constraints in the Sustainability Appraisal (which is an underestimate, given all the errors and omissions) is the most constrained of any SPS site in this Local Plan. In particular, the site policy fails to recognise that the meadow itself is an essential part of the rural Conservation area and any building here would cause significant harm to the Conservation Area and fail to meet the heritage requirements of the NPPF.

The reduction in the minimum housing number from 29 to effectively ZERO confirms the site is **wholly unsuitable for any housing**. Keeping SPS 8 risks the **soundness of the entire plan**.

The Council needs to get the balance right: the benefits of any housing here would be far outweighed by the multiple harms of any development on this irreplaceable site.

I was born in Iffley and have wonderful memories of childhood. I grew up surrounded by open fields.

I believe a Meadow School on the Horse Fields would bring all the things I enjoyed in my childhood. The teachers from local schools within walking distance of the Horse Fields say this too, with benefits to:

1. mental and physical health
2. learning, social and practical skills and job opportunities
3. Connection between children and communities of different background
4. A feeling of belonging in the local landscape

They also say that it would address the high levels of disadvantage of the children in their catchment areas.

I am who I am because of the childhood experiences I had in nature.

The fields allowed me to be a child, unjudged by adults. I made camps, climbed trees, played games, and explored. I saw birds' nests with eggs in, watched ants' nests. I ran freely racing and laughing with other children of all backgrounds. We appreciated nature and were healthy and happy. We weren't Vitamin D deficient!

As a result of enjoying the outside, I have made lifelong friends.

I attribute my health to early physical activity.

I return mentally to these places that no longer exist, when I need space and peace and wish to remember these lovely times.

I still get artistic inspiration from childhood visions of these places and from the birds and animals I saw, which formed my early imagination.

I became a professional gardener as a result of enjoying the outside.

I was lucky: virtually everything apart from the Horse Fields has now gone.

I feel every child should have the opportunities I did.

The size of the Horse Fields meadow is **just large enough** at 2.5 acres to take managed footfall while protecting and nurturing the wildlife here.

And now we have the support from the local wildlife trust to make this a reality.

BBOWT are leading the submission of Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and the Ray (which we call RBOR), a £4.1 million National Lottery Heritage Fund bid with 12 partners across the landscape between Oxford, Bicester, Aylesbury. Our focus is nature, communities, and heritage, with a specific focus on reconnection, which aligns perfectly with the Meadow School Iffley proposal.

We are working with the organising committee of FOFI to pilot Meadow School sessions with Greyfriars Catholic School and draw up a proposal for working with them for our bid. Should our bid be successful, we can offer some funds to set-up and run the Meadow School, extra capacity, and expertise from our twelve partners and wider RBOR stakeholder network.

We are very excited to be involved in supporting the development of the meadow school, and are confident in FOFI's commitment and ability to develop a brilliant community resource that will last long after our five-year funding is up.

Opposition Group Amendments to the Proposed Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045

The Opposition Groups have been invited to submit amendments to the Proposed Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045. These have been published ahead of the meeting with the commentary from Officers.

A response to one of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee on 13 January 2026 has also been appended.

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Council

Local Plan Debate – Process for submitting amendments

Opposition Group Amendments

Deadline: These must be received by Committee and Members Services before 1.00pm on two working days before the meeting (Wednesday, 21st January 2026), and preferably earlier than that.

These are considered as substantive amendments to the submitted Local Plan and must be available in advance. These are published in the briefing note.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services and include his commentary before Committee and Members Services will accept these for publication.

Minor amendments, or individual amendments, arising as a result of the debate on opposition group proposals

Deadline: These must be set out clearly and legibly **on the form** (below) and emailed to Committee and Member Services in advance and by no later than **15 minutes before the start of this section of the debate**.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services before acceptance for debate. The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services will review these and decide if an amendment is minor and can be taken; or substantive and cannot be taken at this late stage. His decision is final.

Council needs to be clear what is being suggested along with the implications for the budget so the form should set out

- What is proposed and why;
- Impact on the Local Plan;
- Commencement and duration of the proposal.

Amendments will be taken in the order given to Committee and Member Services.

Debating minor/ individual amendments

These are taken separately or in groups as appropriate

1. Lord Mayor calls the amendment number
2. the amendment is taken as read – so the proposer and seconder should only speak briefly
3. the Lord Mayor will take one speaker from each Group.
4. If the seconder has not already spoken, they can do so.
5. Cabinet Member responds.
6. Proposer sums up.
7. Vote.

Proposer: Rosie Rawle Second: Lois Muddiman

What is proposed

Chapter 2: Housing

Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers

In the Policy Context for H11, add the following new bullet point: “The City Council welcomes opportunities for the establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the City”.

Officer advice is that this proposed amendment is not necessary. One of the context bullet points currently notes that: *“There is limited potential for additional sites in Oxford because of constraints such as the need to maintain safe navigation of the main river channels and avoiding conflict with the operational requirements of both the Canal and River Trust and Environment Agency.”* Policy H11 sets out 5 criteria for new moorings which provides helpful advice for those considering proposing this. In addition, and despite the limited potential for new sites within the city, Policy SPS14 on Redbridge Paddock requires the provision of new residential moorings: *“Proposals should include residential moorings and associated servicing facilities.”*

Should Council be minded to support this amendment, a bullet point could be added to the Policy Context of H11 to say: “The City Council welcomes establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the city.”

Chapter 3: Economy

Policy E3: Community Employment and Procurement Plans

Officer advice:

As background to all the proposed amendments to CEPPs, it is important to keep in mind that a similar policy was removed in its entirety from the Oxford Local Plan 2036 when the Inspector was concerned it was too onerous on developers, and that it went beyond the realms of planning and the Local Plan in terms of its requirements. There are risks associated with attempting to push this policy too far, these include the possibility of losing the policy entirely at examination and or making the requirements so rigorous they inadvertently become too difficult for applicants to comply with. Therefore, the policy has been carefully worded as currently drafted to ensure that it does not go further than we think will be accepted by our Inspector as sound.

Amendment 2a: Strengthening commitment to Community Employment Procurement Plans

In Policy E3, delete: “CEPPs will be expected to demonstrate consideration of all the following measures:” and replace with: “CEPPs will be expected to demonstrate commitments in all of the following measures, or provide reasonable justification for why it is not possible or appropriate:”

Officers consider that this proposed amendment is not necessary. The CEPP policy as drafted requires consideration of a number of measures which are designed to support the local economy and employment opportunities. In order to ensure that the right range of inclusive economy measures are delivered across a range of sites we want to encourage that the listed measures are considered but want to allow enough flexibility to allow for a bespoke approach based on specific developments and their individual requirements. Also, the policy is currently worded to try to avoid some of the issues which arose during the Local Plan 2036 examination where the Inspector took out the CEPP policy. It is worth noting that there are also other policies in this plan which tackle this wider issue e.g. Affordable Workspaces (Policy E4).

Notwithstanding officer comments, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the additional text as proposed could be added to Policy E3.

Amendment 2b: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices

In Policy E3, at bullet point f), add “although this is encouraged where possible”, after “other than apprentices” so that it reads: “f) Paying all employees (other than apprentices, although this is encouraged) the Oxford Living Wage”.

Officer advice is that the Oxford Living Wage is not itself a planning matter, and therefore the Local Plan cannot change the operational structure and parameters of the Oxford Living Wage, which is a defined scheme with multiple partners involved. It is not in the gift of the Local Plan to change how this applies or is operated. Policy E3 makes reference to the Oxford Living Wage as an indicator and measure which can be demonstrated through CEPPs as to the community benefit of the proposed development. Adding wording to the Local Plan that is stricter than the established Oxford Living Wage is not justified in this context and risks making (at least this aspect of) the policy unsound. Any changes to the Oxford Living Wage scheme should be direct changes through that forum, rather than indirectly through the Local Plan, which can't change the Living Wage scheme itself.

It is also worth noting that apprentices are often not paid more than the minimum wage but as they will alongside their wages, also have their tuition fees/ study costs paid for and time off work to complete their learning, it is likely to be the case in many circumstances that the total monetary equivalent of these benefits would exceed the Oxford Living Wage. This said, the policy wording as currently drafted does not prevent employers from paying the Oxford Living Wage to apprentices if they want to do so.

Notwithstanding the risks to the policy noted in officers comments, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the additional text as proposed could be added to Policy E3.

Amendment 2c: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard

In Policy E3, remove or “other social clauses appropriate to the development” in bullet point g). Officer advice is that the policy will work better if it includes some wording to allow for alternative wage models which achieve the same aims but agree this could be clearer if changed to the following:

“g) Use of contractors who commit to paying the Oxford Living Wage or other recognised living wage models. Recognised living wage models are listed in the supporting TAN”

Amendment 2d: Towards Living Wage Zones

In Policy E3, add the following bullet point to the list of measures: “Supporting the establishment of a Living Wage Zone, where payment of the Oxford Living Wage is secured for directly and indirectly paid employees who work on the site during and following construction”

Officer advice is that this goes beyond the independently agreed parameters of the Oxford Living Wage into operational decisions. It may be something that is explored within the context of the operation of the Oxford Living Wage but is not appropriate for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Chapter 4: Blue and Green Infrastructure

Amendment 3a: Preventing the net loss of playground space

In Policy G1, insert after “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of “, “playground space or”, so that it reads: “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of playground space, or other green infrastructure features such

as hedges or ponds where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest.

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary and also that it may have unintended negative consequences. There are many different types of play provision, some of which will be formal playgrounds but there are lots of alternative provisions which also provide play for children and young people (e.g. incidental play 'play on the way', spaces for girls etc.). Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure as drafted already states: *"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"* There are potential circumstances whereby loss of a playground is beneficial, for example if the need in the area is for a different kind of open space or facilities (e.g. where over time, the local homes are no longer predominantly occupied by families, or where the maintenance of the playground is not justified by its limited use) and the Plan should not prevent those beneficial changes.

However, should Council be minded to support this amendment, the proposed wording is considered appropriate wording.

Amendment 3b: Encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground

In the Policy Context for Policy G1, include a new bullet point: "The City Centre has a deficit of high quality, accessible playgrounds and the Council will welcome applications that seek to resolve or contribute to the resolving of, this deficit."

Officer advice is that this is not necessary because the Plan as drafted is already very supportive of play space and specifically in including this in our centres, for example: in Policy C2 about maintaining vibrant centres (which includes the city centre) states: *"enhancement and new opportunities for public realm and landscaping such as tree planting, including incorporation of small green spaces where people can stop, dwell, socialise and play,"*.

There is already additional policy support elsewhere in the Plan, Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure states: *"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"*

Also, at Policy G2: enhancement of green and blue infrastructure which says that proposals should demonstrate how they've considered: *"Health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all age groups and abilities, particularly children and teenagers;"*

More broadly, the City Council supports the concept of a play space in the city centre, however, without a site having been identified, there is little more the Local Plan can do to deliver it.

However, if Council is minded to support this amendment, the following wording is recommended to be added to Policy G1: *"The City Council will in particular welcome proposals which seek to make provision for play space within the City Centre"*

Chapter 5: Environment and Net Zero

Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects

In the Policy Context for Policy R1, add the following as a new bullet point: "The development of local renewable energy projects will be especially welcomed where they are community owned or owned by non-profit making organisations."

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary.

If Council is minded to make this amendment, the proposed wording could be added as the sixth bullet point in the Policy Implementation section of Policy R1.

Chapter 7: Communities

Amendment 5a: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities

In the Policy Context for Policy C1, “Establishments that promote community cohesion, health and wellbeing are particularly welcomed in the city centre, local, and district centres.”

Officer advice is that this amendment is not necessary. The list of town centre uses that will be appropriate in our centres at Policy C1 includes a number of such uses including: leisure, indoor sport, health centres, GPs and clinics and community facilities amongst others. In addition, Policy C5 also provides for this, making it clear that applications for new cultural and social venues, or increased capacity/more intensive use of existing venues, will be supported in all the centres in line with Policy C1; similarly that the City Council will seek to protect and retain existing facilities.

However, if Council is minded to support this amendment, the proposed words could be added as the third bullet point in the Policy Context section for Policy C1.

Amendment 5b: Building better local centres

In Policy C1, remove “and local centres” and add “and” after “city”, so that the sentence beginning “In the city,” reads “In the city and district centres, new Use Class E and other main town centre uses will be permitted where compatible with other policies in the plan, which include:”

After the list of Class E uses, add the following:

“In local centres, the following use classes will be welcomed where compatible with other policies in the plan:

- Retail, cafes and restaurants;
- Leisure and entertainment and indoor sports uses (e.g. gyms, leisure centres);
- Health centres, GPs and clinics;
- Community facilities;
- Residential (where compliant with the active frontages policy, including student accommodation in the city centre and district centres, but not in the local centres);
- Visitor attractions (Sui Generis uses including pubs, cinemas, live music venues, concert halls, dance halls);

New applications for the following will also be accepted in local centres:

- Short stay accommodation (in accordance with Policy E5 and where compliant with the active frontages policy C2).
- Offices, research and development and light industrial;”

Officer advice is that this proposed amendment would make the policy less effective (a key soundness test) because it is not clear how this would be applied when determining a planning application (e.g. would an application for short stay accommodation in a local centre be supported or not). It is not in the spirit of the NPPF, which clearly requires that all centres are deemed to be on the same level and treated the same (i.e. the important consideration is whether a site is within a centre or outside of a centre, not which type of centre it is) - the town centre definition applies to all district centres, local centres and the city centre).

Therefore the list of Town Centre uses is not one which has been designed for the Oxford Local Plan but one which is derived directly from the NPPF. The purpose of Policy C1 is purely to identify those centres which the City Council considers are suitable to accommodate that list of Town Centre uses. If the intent is to limit the uses which are suitable in the local centres, then the

alternative is to remove the list of local centres entirely and not deem them appropriate for Town Centre uses. Any proposals which did come forward for such uses in those centres would then be judged against the last three paragraphs of Policy C1 on a case by case basis.

However, please note we have given consideration to the comments made at Scrutiny and agree it would be possible to add another local centre to the list as the Greater Leys Local Centre.

Amendment 6: Protecting pubs

In Policy C5, after “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions”, “including pubs”, so that it reads, “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, including pubs, except in the following circumstances:”

Officer advice is that this is not needed as pubs are already referenced in the definition of cultural and social venues for the purposes of Policy C5. This is made clear in both the Policy Context and Policy Implementation sections. This is also explicit at the second paragraph of the policy where the requirement relates specifically to pubs and the associated Appendix which relates to this). There is no benefit to the policy in making this addition.

However if Council is minded to support this amendment it could be done by amending the title of the policy to: “Cultural and social venues, pubs and visitor attractions”, or by adding the text as proposed to Policy C5.

Reason

Chapter 2: Housing

Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers

The Local Plan already states that there is additional need for residential moorings across Oxfordshire, and the majority of that need arises from Oxford. We are aware that there has been a reduction in moorings on Osney Island. We believe there is therefore a clear need for the council to welcome, encourage and search for further site allocations to meet the current levels of need.

Chapter 3: Economy

Amendment 2a: Strengthening commitment to Community Employment Procurement Plans

Currently, this policy asks only for developers to show that they have considered a range of measures, but not explicitly to show their efforts to meet them or otherwise prove why they are unable to deliver against them.

Amendment 2b: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices

The minimum wage for an apprentice is £7.55 an hour - just over half the legal minimum wage for someone over 21 [1]. This is not a decent wage and problematically assumes that people undertaking an apprenticeship have another form of income, or are able to sustain themselves through family support, which is not always the case. In 2024, The National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) and National Union of Students (NUS UK) began a joint campaign calling for the minimum wage for apprentices to be raised to the Real Living Wage, describing the existing rate as “poverty pay” [2]. This amendment therefore encourages developers to pay apprentices the Oxford Living Wage, rather than explicitly excluding them from this criterion.

Amendment 2c: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard

The final clause of bullet point g) entirely undermines the principle of the Oxford Living Wage. It suggests that a decent liveable wage is something that can be substituted by another social benefit.

The Oxford Living Wage defines the minimum rate of pay that allows for a decent standard of living [3]. It cannot be substituted. This is especially important for subcontracted workers where pay tends to be lower and contracts and hours tend to be less secure.

Amendment 2d: Towards Living Wage Zones

This amendment would seek to extend Living Wage commitments to the lifetime of the property.

Oxford City Council's Corporate Strategy for 2024-28 commits to "Increase the number of people paid the Oxford Living Wage to improve the minimum standard of living" [4]. This amendment would require developers to play an important role in ensuring that the Oxford Living Wage is not only paid to workers employed during the construction phase, but also those in the end user phase (i.e. those who go on to work on the site in available units once they have been constructed). This can be delivered through:

- Becoming an Oxford Living Wage accredited employer, or guaranteeing the Oxford Living Wage is paid to directly and indirectly employed workers on the site during the construction phase
- Requiring and encouraging new occupants that move into the properties to pay their directly and indirectly employed workers the Oxford Living Wage (especially if the developer remains the landlord of the property)

The Living Wage Foundation defines a "Living Wage Zone" as a geographically defined area in which multiple employers are based, where all directly and indirectly employed workers are paid at least the real Living Wage or London Living Wage. The Foundation works with local councils, developers and construction companies across the UK to support them to embed the real Living Wage into city regeneration, large scale developments and industrial parks. They can therefore provide support to establish, accredit and monitor these zones. Key examples of this work include the Olympic Park in East London and the Meridian Water Development in North London.

This amendment encourages developers to consider their role in supporting the development of Living Wage Zones through their Community Employment Procurement Plan.

Chapter 4: Blue and Green Infrastructure

Amendment 3a: Preventing the net loss of playground space

Public playgrounds are vital community assets, providing a free, safe and secure environment for children to play. Following community campaigns for the protection and expansion of playgrounds across the city – from the campaign to Save Bertie Park [5] to the campaign for a playground in the city centre [6] – it is important that the City Council recognises the demand from residents. This amendment seeks to ensure that there will be no net loss of playground space across Oxford in the context of increasing pressures for development.

Amendment 3b: Encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground

As has been highlighted by a community campaign, the absence of playgrounds in the city centre means that children do not have a free, safe and secure environment to play, which is a barrier to families spending time in the city centre. Following a petition presented to Full Council on 25 November 2024, members voted in support of the principle of creating a children's playground in Oxford City Centre. This amendment seeks to ensure that this principle is carried into the new Local Plan.

Chapter 5: Environment and Net Zero

Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects

Community owned energy projects allow people and communities to take democratic control over their energy future, by generating, using, owning, and saving energy in their communities. They create community cohesion, based on a shared concern for the local and global environment, and

provide a source of long-term income to support community wealth building activities and other local causes. This fundamentally differs to renewable energy projects that deliver profits to private entities.

Chapter 7: Communities

Amendment 5a: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities

Our community districts and centres should encourage development that promotes community cohesion, health and wellbeing, rather than only a range of use-classes that may include establishments that deliver less value to communities or even generate harm to community health. This amendment seeks to demonstrate the council's support for and welcoming of applications that work towards providing a liveable city with strong communities.

Amendment 5b: Building better local centres

Short stay accommodation, offices, research and development and light industrial uses are better suited to city and district centres, rather than local centres. Regarding the former, the intention is to limit the establishment of short stay accommodation in residential areas. Regarding the latter, such uses are unlikely to offer the same kinds of core amenities and community value as the other categories listed. This amendment therefore shows a preference for those that do.

Amendment 6: Protecting pubs

The Guardian reported in that 366 pubs had been demolished or converted for other uses in 2025 as cost pressures take toll on the sector [7]. Pubs act as vital social hubs that can foster community cohesion and reduce isolation. These institutions require protection and our local plan should make this explicit. This amendment makes clear that they are included in the category of "cultural venues and visitor attractions", and the grounds of their protection explicit in our policy.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

[2] <https://www.nus.org.uk/apprentice-wage-gap-day>

[3] <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/living-wage/oxford-living-wage>

[4] <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/strategy/5>

[5] <https://savebertie.com/>

[6] <https://www.change.org/p/establish-a-children-s-playground-in-oxford-city-centre>

[7] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/dec/31/one-pub-a-day-closed-permanently-in-england-and-wales-in-2025>

Council

Local Plan Debate – Process for submitting amendments

Opposition Group Amendments

Deadline: These must be received by Committee and Members Services before 1.00pm on two working days before the meeting (Wednesday, 21st January 2026), and preferably earlier than that.

These are considered as substantive amendments to the submitted Local Plan and must be available in advance. These are published in the briefing note.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services and include his commentary before Committee and Members Services will accept these for publication.

Minor amendments, or individual amendments, arising as a result of the debate on opposition group proposals

Deadline: These must be set out clearly and legibly **on the form** (below) and emailed to Committee and Member Services in advance and by no later than **15 minutes before the start of this section of the debate**.

These must be discussed with the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services before acceptance for debate. The Director of Planning and Regulatory Services will review these and decide if an amendment is minor and can be taken; or substantive and cannot be taken at this late stage. His decision is final.

Council needs to be clear what is being suggested along with the implications for the budget so the form should set out

- What is proposed and why;
- Impact on the Local Plan;
- Commencement and duration of the proposal.

Amendments will be taken in the order given to Committee and Member Services.

Debating minor/ individual amendments

These are taken separately or in groups as appropriate

1. Lord Mayor calls the amendment number
2. the amendment is taken as read – so the proposer and seconder should only speak briefly
3. the Lord Mayor will take one speaker from each Group.
4. If the seconder has not already spoken, they can do so.
5. Cabinet Member responds.
6. Proposer sums up.
7. Vote.

Proposer _____

Seconder _____

What is proposed

Amendment 1

In Policy C7,

Replace each usage of "Oxfordshire County Council's Parking Standards for New Developments (as shown in Appendix 7.4)" with "Appendix 7.4".

At end of paragraph beginning "Cycle parking should be well designed..." add sentence "Cycle parking design should comply with LTN 1/20 "Cycle Infrastructure Design" section 11.4, "Cycle parking types and dimensions".

In Appendix 7.4,

Delete "Hotel/Guest Houses" from the "Residential" section (duplicate of the C1 Hotels row below)

In table row "C1 Hotels", after "1 cycle space per 5 car-parking spaces provided", add ", or 1 space per 5 non-resident staff plus 1 space per resident staff, whichever is greater".

After "F.1 Non-residential institutions (education, art gallery, museum, public library, public exhibition hall, place of worship, law courts)" add ", other than primary/junior schools, senior/secondary schools and non-residential higher/further education "

Add table row "F.1 Primary/junior schools: 1 space per 5 pupils, plus 1 space per 3 staff"

Add table row "F.1 Senior/secondary schools: 1 space per 2 pupils, plus 1 space per 3 staff"

Add table row "F.1 Non-residential higher/further education: 1 space per 2 students (based on anticipated peak number of students on-site at any one time) Plus 1 space per 5 staff"

Replace each instance of "1 space 50sqm" with "1 space per 50sqm" and "1 space 4 staff" with "1 space per 4 staff" (typos)

Officer response: The approach currently taken in the Local Plan is to use the County Council's cycle parking standards. This was considered to be a good approach, working with a partner and being able to rely on the County's background work which supports those standards. This should mean that the examination of the currently drafted standards goes smoothly. It should be noted that the standards as drafted are already framed as minimum standards. Officers are grateful for the spotting of typographical errors and will correct those prior to publication.

Should Council be minded to support this amendment, officers will need to prepare additional evidence and justification to support those changes in advance of the examination.

Amendment 2

In policy H6, add "d) The merger or combination of two or more dwellings that have previously been used as a single dwelling"

And re-letter subsequent list items accordingly.

Officer response: officers consider that this proposed amendment would weaken the policy by allowing the loss of dwellings currently protected. It would likely lead to the creation of some very large and very expensive homes in parts of the city where former villas have been converted into flats over time. Every year the City Council monitors and reports on loss of dwellings in the Authority Monitoring Report, losses which would be permissible under the amendment would have a clear impact in our monitoring of homes within the city. The policy as drafted is tightly worded to ensure that only a minimal level of loss of homes is permitted and only in specific circumstances where that loss would secure a community benefit. It is not considered that the creation of a single larger home (even if this is a reversion) is a community benefit like the others identified in the policy. Further to this, such a weakening of the policy would be harmful to the work to demonstrate that the City Council is doing everything possible to maximise housing capacity within the city. We are actively trying to find capacity for as many new homes as possible within the city and yet still are reliant on our neighbours to provide for a large number of homes towards our unmet need. In this context we do need to demonstrate that we are actively seeking to prevent loss of existing homes. Preventing loss of existing dwellings helps demonstrate that we are serious about attempting to maximise housing capacity within the city.

However, should Council be minded to support this amendment officers would need to assemble evidence and justification for this change in order to support it at examination.

Reason

Amendment 1: Cycle Parking Standards

Reasoning: to ensure that no categories of development have lower cycle parking requirements than under the existing Local Plan 2036.

Amendment 2: Merger of previously-divided dwellings

Reasoning: in certain circumstances, a person who has divided a dwelling, for example to separately accommodate a carer as an alternative to an annex or lodging within the main dwelling, can be left unable to restore it to its original state by policy H6, which prohibits most loss of dwellings. By permitting re-merging of previously split dwellings we hope to prevent people from becoming trapped by this corner case, while keeping such dwelling merges rare because relatively few dwellings have ever been split, and merging is a relatively expensive way to gain living space compared to relocating.

We also note that "loss" of dwellings via merger is much less significant than actual loss of living space to a different use or demolition, similar to how actual gain of new dwellings is more socially valuable than subdividing existing stock to cause technical gain of dwellings. The constraint that "The scale and nature of the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and with the surrounding area" remains in operation.

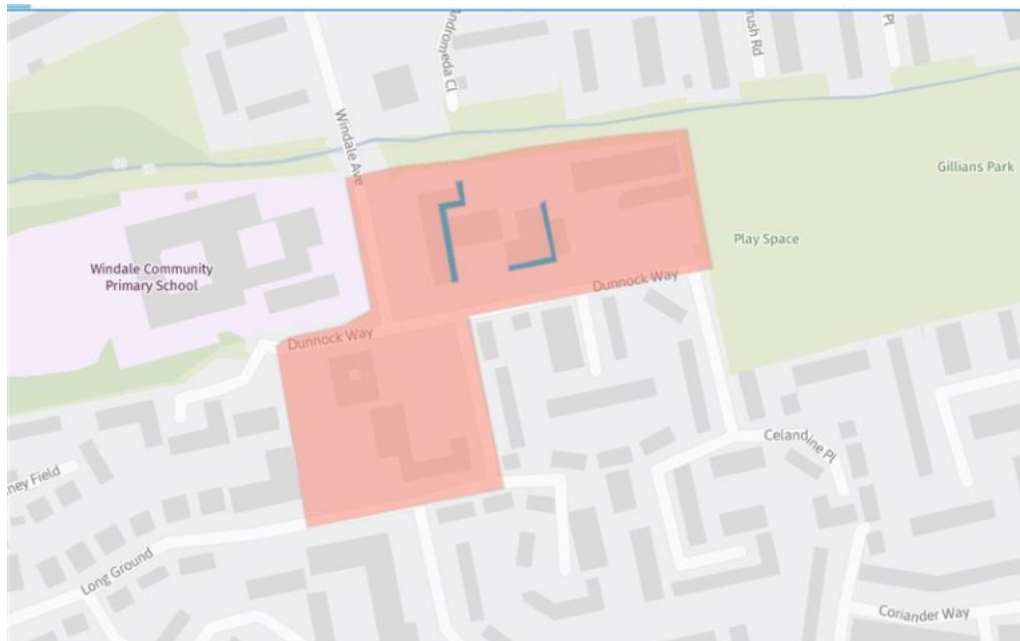
Scrutiny Recommendation – Local Centres

Scrutiny Committee recommended a review the defined local centres. District centres, local centres and the city centre, once defined, are treated as town centres in accordance with the NPPF. The intention of Policy C1 is to identify centres that meet the NPPF definition of a town centre, and which are therefore the centres to which new town centre uses are directed first. Town centre uses are also defined by the NPPF and are wide ranging. They include bars and pubs, nightclubs, health and fitness centres, offices, and visitor attractions. This is the main reason for designating centres. In addition, active frontages are defined within all centres. Within these active frontages, a proportion of Use Class E should be retained at ground floor level as set out in Policy C2. Therefore, local centres need to be considered suitable for a range of town centre uses and they need to have existing active frontage.

The NPPF is very clear that local centres must have more than neighbourhood significance, and must be more than a small parade of shops. In considering whether a centre has wider than neighbourhood significance, an important factor is whether there is a nearby larger centre that will serve the wider area. Also important is the variety and range of what is available.

Having reviewed our defined centres, officers do not consider that any should be removed from the list. However, there is a case to make for defining a Greater Leys local centre. Whilst there are few shops here, and it is also close to Blackbird Leys, there is a wide range of other facilities well on a par with other local centres that are defined. This shows that the centre is suitable for and can support a range of town centre uses.

Proposed additional local centre at Greater Leys:



However, officers are unable to see that there is enough of a cluster of uses in Littlemore where a local centre (suitable for town centre uses) or active frontage could be defined, and certainly not that have more than a neighbourhood significance. However, as noted, existing facilities would be protected and supported by other policies of the Plan.

Appendix 2: Political Proportionalities on Council Committees 2025-2026

The allocation of seats to political groups has been reviewed based on the political composition of the Council following the changes to the political structure on 12 January 2026. The allocations are shown in Table A below.

Labour Group: 21
Liberal Democrats Group: 9
Green Group: 9
Independent Oxford Alliance Group (IOA): 4
Oxford Independent Group (OIG): 2
Real Independents Group (RIG): 2

Independent (non-grouped): 1

Table A: Committees subject to proportionality rules

Committee	Seats	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Green	IOA	OIG	RIG	Total	Balance
General Purposes Licensing Committee	15	6	3	3	1	1	1	15	0
Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee	15	6	3	3	1	1	1	15	0
Appointments Committee	5	2	1	1	1	0	0	5	0
Audit and Governance Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	6	-1
Investigation and Disciplinary Committee	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	0
Planning Committee	11	5	2	2	1	1	0	11	0
Planning Review Committee	9	4	2	2	1	0	0	9	0
Scrutiny Committee	12	5	2	2	1	1	1	12	0
Standards Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	6	-1
Total seats allocated	85	36	16	16	8	4	3	83	-2
Rounded entitlement	85	37	16	16	8	3	3	83	-2
Real entitlement	85.00	37.18	15.93	15.93	7.08	3.56	3.56	83.26	

Percentage of seats allocated		(41.18)	(18.82)	(18.82)	(9.41)	(3.52)	(3.52)		
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Notes on the allocation of seats to political groups:

- There were:
 - One seat under allocated for Standards Committee, and Audit and Governance Committee.
- To resolve these issues the following steps were followed:
 - A seat on Audit and Governance Committee was unallocated.
 - The seat on Standards Committee was allocated to the Independent (non-grouped) Councillor.

Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026

Committee	Labour Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Green Group	Independent Oxford Alliance Group	Oxford Independent Group	Real Independent Group	Independent (non-grouped Members)
General Purposes Licensing Committee (15) And Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee (15)	1. Mary Clarkson 2. Mark Lygo 3. Simon Ottino 4. James Taylor 5. Naomi Waite 6. Louise Upton	7. Jo Sandelson 8. Theodore Jupp 9. Katherine Miles	10. Lois Muddiman 11. Rosie Rawle 12. Edward Mundy	13. Ian Yeatman	14. Ajaz Rehman	15. Mohammed Azad	
Appointments Committee (5)	1. Susan Brown 2. Ed Turner	3. Laurence Fouweather	4. Alex Powell	5. Judith Harley			
Audit and Governance Committee (7) 1 Vacant Seat	1. Tiago Corais 2. James Fry 3. Simon Ottino	4. Roz Smith	5. Dianne Regisford	6. Judith Harley			
Investigation and Disciplinary Committee (4)	1. Susan Brown 2. Susanna Pressel	3. Roz Smith	4. Kate Robinson				
Planning Committee (11)	1. Mary Clarkson 2. Alex Hollingsworth 3. Jemima Hunt 4. Anna Railton 5. Louise Upton	6. Laurence Fouweather 7. Mohammed Altaf-Khan	8. Dianne Regisford 9. Emily Kerr	10. David Henwood	11. Ajaz Rehman		

Planning Review Committee (9)	1. Nigel Chapman 2. James Fry 3. Mark Lygo 4. Simon Ottino	5. Theodore Jupp 6. Steven Goddard	7. Max Morris 8. Lois Muddiman	9. Ian Yeatman			
Scrutiny Committee (12)	1. Tiago Corais 2. Simon Ottino 3. Asima Qayyum 4. Mike Rowley 5. James Taylor	6. Mohammed Altaf-Khan 7. Katherine Miles	8. Alex Powell 9. Chris Jarvis	10. Anne Stares	11. Amar Latif	12. Mohammed Azad	
Standards Committee (7)	1. Lizzy Diggins 2. Susanna Pressel 3. Naomi Waite	4. Chris Snowton	5. Max Morris	6. Judith Harley			7. Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini

To: Council
Date: 26 January 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.

Responses are included where available.

Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the Cllr answering the original question.

This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.

Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth; Leader of the Council

SB1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

Question

Do you agree with me that some of the housing sites mentioned in the Oxford Growth Commission interim report, for example at Chalgrove, are neither proximal to employment sites nor to rail connections and are therefore likely to foster more car commuting? Will you robustly defend the need for a reduction in car commuting and resultant congestion to the Commission?

Written Response

I warmly welcome the Interim Oxford Growth Commission report and its emphasis on the importance in particular of agglomeration and building housing near the City and/or existing transport hubs. This council's LGR bid for a Greater Oxford is based on the importance of building more housing and employment sites next to existing conurbation and transport links. I welcome Cllr Smowton's support for this proposal and for building housing next to Oxford where it is needed through strategic release of the green belt.

SB2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

Question

Do you agree with me that while the Oxford Growth Commission interim report's support for rail is welcome, this leans heavily towards the Cowley

Written Response

No, I don't agree with Cllr Smowton. The Interim report is focused on projects that can be delivered effectively and quickly to encourage housing and growth.

Branch Line and gives insufficient attention to much-needed new stations at Ardley, Begbroke and Wantage & Grove? Will you represent to the Commission the need to get behind OxRail 2040 in its entirety?	<p>The Cowley Branch Line (the funding bid for which was led by the City Council) is, alongside Oxford Station, the rail project that will unlock growth quickest. Both these projects are also a pre-requisite for other rail projects across the county. It is right that the report focuses on delivering the branch line first.</p> <p>The interim report also clearly expresses strong support for rail plans and projects throughout, including stating, on page vi and page 9 and page 13 and page 14, that OxRail 2040 is very strong in its entirety, that it should be delivered, and that the commission is going to work to support the delivery of the plan and the Oxfordshire Metro.</p>
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SB3: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown

Question

What work has been done to identify a location for the city centre play park in the Broad Street and St Giles area since the cross-party support for such a facility?

Written Response

The city council has expressed its support for a city centre play area in principle. Explicit proposals for such a park on the highway would need to be brought forward by the County Council.

The Child Friendly City working group has trialled pop-up children's events at both locations.

A report on the outcomes of these events is currently being finalised by the County Council and will include recommendations. Early findings suggest that softer surfaces, such as grassed areas away from roads and fast cycle routes, are significantly more conducive to encouraging children's play.

As part of this work, the feasibility for permanent play space will be considered as will a decision on whether the City or County Council is best placed to utilise the funds available.

AR1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Railton**Question**

Inconsiderate and dangerous cycling remains a concern for the users of Florence Park. Is there a log of any complaints or any plans to address concerns?

Written Response

There is no record of any complaints other than the communications from the Cllr. There had been an offer from the County Council to provide some signs left over from another project. However, there has subsequently been no responses to numerous attempts to chase this offer.

There is an online form for residents to make comments or complaints here: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/xfp/form/165>

AR2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton**Question**

Which park locations have been short listed for the learner cycle park and what criteria have been used to identify the short list?

Written Response

The short list comprised: Croft Rd Rec, Cutteslowe Park, Florence Park, Milham Ford Park and Sunnymead Rec. This was based off the criteria below (in no particular order):

- Flood risk
- Safe access by bike (i.e. proximity to key cycling routes, low traffic streets)
- Access to car parking (since it would not be reasonable to assume everyone will cycle there and some people will drive)
- Access to ancillary facilities like toilets or a cafe
- Availability of space in the park

Provision of natural supervision (site lines)

AR3: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton

<p>Question</p> <p>As the portfolio holder is aware, Manzil Way Gardens played host to a winter wonderland during December. During the course of this event, vehicles caused significant damage to the grass. This compounded the damage already caused by vehicles used by contractors from St Hilda's College. Can the portfolio holder please outline what steps are being taken to ensure that events do not result in unnecessary damage to public spaces?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The main ruts were not caused by the short-term use of the site during the event but by the unauthorised access across the grass area by the St Hildas College maintenance vehicles over several weeks previously. The college now accepts this based on photographic evidence provided and has agreed to undertake restoration works at its own cost.</p> <p>All events on City Council land give an undertaking not to cause damage, so if they do they can be required to put it right – there is a standard clause in the agreement for this. In this case as I understand it the event did not cause any damage.</p>
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AR4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton

<p>Question</p> <p>As discussed during the previous meeting, Manzil Way Gardens was damaged by contractors from St Hilda's College. I am delighted that the portfolio holder has confirmed that St Hilda's will make good the damage. Can they please confirm the timeline for the completion of this work?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The works will commence in the next few weeks, weather dependent, and will include steps taken to address the compaction and re-seed the affected areas. Temporary fencing will be erected while the new grass re-establishes. The timeline for the grass to re-establish will be partly weather dependent.</p>
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AR5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton

<p>Question</p> <p>I was pleased to see the government propose new powers for councils to tackle pavement parking. Noting</p>	<p>Written Response</p>
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that responsibility for these powers lies with the County Council as the transport authority, pavement parking nonetheless represents a key issue for residents in East Oxford. Cowley Road in my ward is a particular hotspot. Will the portfolio holder take this opportunity to encourage the County Council to act as promptly as possible on pavement parking once the powers to do so are in place?

Yes, I would encourage the County Council to act promptly once the powers are in place. There are huge problems with antisocial pavement parking across the city but they will need to acknowledge that in some areas there may not be an alternative option.

AR6: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Railton

Question

The City Council passed a motion to make Oxford easier to walk and wheel around - and we assume this includes the winter months. In the last few weeks we have all experienced the dangerously icy conditions on pavements and cycle lanes and heard evidence of our residents falling from bikes or when walking, and others too fearful to leave their homes. This happened last winter too. We know that the City Council supply the grit bins and top-up the grit, but also that ODS do not provide the people power to actively grit pavements and cycle lanes. Therefore, could the cabinet holder offer some solutions to the problems of how to move the grit to our persistent problems areas - which might include better communications and/or work with community groups, colleges and secondary schools, senior scouts, trained volunteers, parish councils and local residents associations?

Written Response

The current gritting regime within Oxford is carried out to the County's specification and that does not include specific gritting of footpaths and cycle paths.

The Council's web pages are being updated to provide clearer advice to people around gritting, both what each council does and what residents can do with grit bins.

A more systematic gritting of key cycle paths and pavements is beyond the placement of a few grit bins, so options are also being explored with ODS into delivering this. Additional budget will be required for an increase in gritting – watch this space at budget council.

NC1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Chapman**Question**

Given the drive for "active travel" it was concerning to see some of the conditions on key routes and a number of injuries during the recent bad weather. Is there an opportunity for Oxford City Council, ODS & Oxfordshire County Council to improve the current processes for these routes?

Written Response

I refer the Cllr to the answer from Cllr Railton AR6.

The County Council, as Highway Authority, is responsible for road safety, and the specification and budget for the work undertaken by ODS in this space. The County Council specification does not include gritting of footpaths and cycle paths. Through our Labour members on the County Council, we are making representations about these matters not least because the County Council wants to encourage safe active travel like cycling yet is doing nothing yet to grit the growing number of cycle paths in icy weather. The cost to the local NHS is significant as is the pain suffered by individuals and the disruption to families and businesses by inevitable absence from work.

NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman**Question**

Storage of bin bags on the pavement on Cornmarket by some food businesses remains a problem - encouraging rodents and destroying the public realm. What enforcement action has been taken for non-compliance by businesses on Cornmarket in terms of the requirements for them to store their waste on their premises prior to the official collection time?

Written Response

I do agree this is an issue on Cornmarket and we are doing all we can to improve the situation.

The Food Business Operators are given advice on waste as part of the food hygiene Inspection programme. If there is a non-compliance in storing waste prior to collection, this is included in the Food Hygiene Rating Score. Presenting waste for collection on the street at the incorrect time is dealt with by the Community Response Team.

Businesses are required to present their waste on the highway to be collected by their Waste Collection Provider. In order to ensure that there is

	<p>no excess waste left out during the busiest parts of the day and due to vehicle restrictions, waste is collected normally in the early hours of the day. This assists with the movement and safety of the public and allows for cleansing operations.</p> <p>Officers have conducted several operations in relation to commercial waste in the city centre. Businesses and organisations have been written to and a number spoken to in relation to their presentation of waste. There has been a variety of further enforcement actions taken involving service of legal notices and penalty notices being issued to those causing the most nuisance.</p> <p>At the moment, ODS cannot collect and store waste overnight at Cowley Marsh or in their refuse vehicles so a late evening collection is not feasible. We do rely on businesses to co-operate with us but will issue legal notices and penalty notices where necessary.</p>
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NC3: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Chapman

Question

The public toilets at Manzil Way Gardens are a key resource for residents of East Oxford. However, 3/5 are currently out of order. I have previously received reassurances that these are on the list for reparative work. Can the portfolio holder please outline the timeline for reparative works, including when these facilities will again be open to the public?

Written Response

There were a number of defects in these toilets, which were actioned and rectified before Christmas. Unfortunately, this appears to be a recurring issue because of vandalism. The current repairs are scheduled to be completed by 30th January at the latest. We will also liaise with the Safer Oxford Team to explore any other avenues for addressing the antisocial behaviour.

AH1: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth

Question

Why is all the CIL money collected by the City Council from the numerous developments in Littlemore being funnelled into the Cowley Branch line and not being protected and used for the direct benefit of the Littlemore Community?

Written Response

The purpose of CIL is to raise funds for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Oxford City Council created a CIL scheme to cover the whole city, and the funds are used to deliver the creation of new, or the repairs of existing, infrastructure. Much of this infrastructure is social and community projects that is of benefit to the whole of Oxford. For example, recent CIL funds have been used to support cycling infrastructure across the whole city, and the wholesale reconstruction of the East Oxford Community Centre, a building which has been and will be used by people from the whole of Oxford and beyond.

Over the last 10 years (up to October 2025, which is when the latest figures are available for) Oxford City Council has received £5,439,784 in CIL for developments in the Littlemore ward. Of that sum £815,968 has been given to Littlemore Parish Council for it to spend on infrastructure as it wishes.

The allocation of funds to the Cowley Branch Line project will both benefit Littlemore, in creating a local railway station that has been missing for more than 50 years, and Oxford and Oxfordshire more broadly by providing a public transport option that will help to reduce private car journeys. It will also help to allow further development in Littlemore, which will generate further CIL funds. If the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan is passed and adopted then Littlemore Parish Council will have an increased share of those funds, which it can - and I am sure will - spend on local community needs.

AH2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth

<p>Question</p> <p>With the introduction of the congestion charge, it is anticipated that Oxford City Council-operated car parks will experience a reduction in usage and associated income.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide a detailed breakdown of the projected or realised revenue losses, disaggregated by individual car park?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council is aware there was a short-term reduction in usage at City Centre car parks, as would be expected with any significant change to the transport network. There was also a short-term increase in use of the City Council operated Park and Ride car parks.</p> <p>However, there is currently only limited data available to understand what the longer-term impact of the introduction of the Congestion Charge might be, and it is too soon to draw any meaningful conclusion.</p> <p>The City Council will be monitoring data closely over time in order to see if any clear pattern or change emerges to all City Council operated car parks.</p>
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<p>AH3: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can you please provide details of any impact upon the City Centre parking revenue following the introduction of the Congestion Charge?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>See AH2</p>

<p>AH4: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Given the ongoing uncertainty and lack of clarity around long-term support for the Bus Filter scheme and its financial implications, will the Council now reconsider the redevelopment of its car parks to offset operational losses, for example through housing or employment-led schemes, and if so, which sites are</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Car Parks continue to operate at a surplus, not an operational loss.</p> <p>The current Local Plan 2026 has policies that permit particular forms of development on some specific car parks, varying from location to location. These include Policy SP59 Union Street Car Park which would permit</p>

<p>currently under active consideration, and will this require an amendment to the draft Oxford Local Plan?</p>	<p>different forms of residential use along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area, Worcester Street and Becket Street car parks in Policy SP1 which covers the whole of the West End of the city centre and is expanded in more detail in the West End and Osney Mead SPD, and Policy AOC5 Summertown District Centre Policy which sets out the principles for rationalising land used for public and private car parking and the site specific Policy SP6 Diamond Place and Ewert House which would permit a range of uses along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area.</p> <p>There are no Local Plan policies preventing development on any car park sites, but other issues such as operational Flood Zones, impacts on Heritage Assets or the Green Belt might well need to be taken into account should any development be proposed. Any application for development on any car park site would need to be judged on its merits against all Development Plan policies and other material considerations. So there is no requirement to change any Local Plan policies.</p> <p>The City Council has been in ongoing discussion with local community groups in Summertown in relation to the Diamond Place site for some time about potential development, and that will continue. Of the other car parks specifically mentioned in the Local Plan policies there are currently no active plans for the redevelopment of Union Street, and the others are not owned by Oxford City Council.</p>
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AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth	
<p>Question</p> <p>What reasons did Balfour Beatty give for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Balfour Beatty provided several reasons for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project: relationships within the project teams, project delays related to planning and technical approvals and cost recovery and resource constraints as delay had disrupted the original resource planning.</p>

AH6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

Has the council appointed a new contractor for Oxpens Bridge and if so who is it?

Written Response

A procurement exercise has been undertaken to appoint a new contractor to deliver the bridge. The contractor, Jacksons Civil Engineering Group Ltd, has been selected and it is intended to appoint them once the regulatory procurement and governance standstill periods (as defined in the Procurement Act 2023 Section 51 regulations; these do not formally apply to this contract as the Framework being used was based on the previous regulations, but are regarded as best practice, and so are being followed here)

AH7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

How much has the council spent on buying steel for the Oxpens Bridge project without having a contractor in place

Written Response

The Council has not purchased steel for the bridge. The potential expenditure was added to the forward plan as it would be a key decision where it required, but it was not. It is now anticipated that this will occur after the contractor has been appointed.

AH8: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Hollingsworth**Question**

Building on the new site at Hill View, Mill Lane in Marston to create 159 new dwellings started last October. Despite concerns over building in green belt,

Written Response

The City Council has taken enforcement action regarding the development at Hill View Farm, but it is important to be aware of the limitations on the legal jurisdiction that applies to some issues, such as speeding by vehicles

using inappropriate roads for construction traffic and having the exit/entrance through a village with sheltered accommodation for vulnerable people, old buildings of preservation status and local schools; the building has gone ahead - and multiple breaches to the construction site management plan have been made. Residents have reported countless breaches of dangerous construction site traffic speeding, or vehicles using residential roads outside agreed times, caused school commuters danger; beautiful old buildings to crack, break and cause foundation damage. Recently the drilling of a deep trench for cabling to the site has caused further structural damage to the cottages adjacent. The planning enforcement team on the City Council have been inundated with evidence, however, they seem to have no cause of action to enforce changes/ agree compensation to residents for considerable housing damage. Thames Valley Police also refuse engagement with the issue of breaches of the traffic plan. How can you reassure us that the conditions within the construction site management plans which are placed on developers hold any weight - and that the City and County Council will actually hold developers, such as Bellway, to account?

on the public highways and civil issues between private individuals or between a private individual and an organisation or business.

In line with the council's Corporate Enforcement Policy, the Planning Enforcement Team has taken a graduated approach to addressing the issues raised by engaging with contractors and site operatives to resolve matters without the need to take formal enforcement action. However this option remains under consideration and may yet be used.

Officers have visited the site to undertake their own evidence gathering, particularly early in the mornings. Their engagement with the developer has secured additional signage on roads leading to the site, along with the provision of traffic marshals to ensure construction traffic accesses the site during the agreed hours and navigates to and from the site safely.

The City Council does not have the legal jurisdiction to enforce vehicle speeds on the public highway. Speeding is a road traffic offence, and Thames Valley Police are therefore the enforcing authority. A possible option for the affected local residents is to consider establishing a Community Speedwatch programme to support the Thames Valley Police in fining speeding vehicles, and get a greater engagement by Thames Valley Police in addressing issues where it is the authority with the enforcement powers.

Any damage to residential properties is a civil matter between the developers and those affected. The City Council has no jurisdiction to act in such matters nor the legislative authority to seek compensation on their behalf.

The City Council continues to monitor the site to address issues when they are raised, where it was the power to do so, and will be supportive as far as it can of issues where the legal jurisdiction sits with Thames Valley Police or are civil matters.

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Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

LS1: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

Question

There is a huge need in The Leys for community space. What is the current timetable for opening of the community centre?

Written Response

Currently, the community centre is set to be delivered in two phases with the building shell & core or envelope being delivered by Peabody, and the internal fit out by the Council. Construction works for the shell and core are due to start at the end of January/early Feb 2026, with completion programmed for March 2027. Delivery of internal fit out will follow and is programmed to take 12 months to complete, making occupation of the centre possible from March 2028. Officers are currently exploring delivery options to try and reduce that timeline.

LS2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

Question

Considering Sandy Lane football pitches, what specific plans are in place to ensure that the football pitches currently proposed for development will be replaced or relocated? It is vital for our community to maintain access to adequate sporting facilities, particularly for youth and grassroots football programs.

Written Response

A report to Cabinet on this development, including proposals to ensure the continued provision, or improvement, of the football pitches and facilities is on the Forward Plan for March 2026. Plans will be brought forward in more detail at this time. Consultation with the local football clubs has commenced and will continue, recognising the need for good community access to facilities, and the great work of local clubs like Blackbirds FC and Greater Leys FC who OxPlace and the council wish to work in close partnership with on this project.

LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith**Question**

Re Sandy Lane football pitches, where will the replacement pitches be located, and what is the timeline for their availability?

Written Response

Plans will be brought forward in more detail in the Cabinet report in March, as referenced above. Re-provision of the pitches and facilities will take place ahead of the commencement of any development for much needed affordable homes.

LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith**Question**

Residents at Knights road have been unable to access their rear gate for many months meaning they cannot for examples use their bicycles. They have raised this with Hill numerous times to no effect and residents' fences have been damaged many months ago with a fence erected on the other side which means residents cannot access the alleyway. Residents were promised action back in Oct 2025, so can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Council will be working with Hill to address these concerns.

Written Response

Hill and Peabody acknowledge that rear access to some of the existing properties on Knights Rd has been closed off since works started 2 years ago.

Works at Knights Road have been delayed by two main issues: the need to replace groundworks subcontractors who went into administration, and prolonged planning processes for two planning applications. The LPA has now approved both the S73 and the application for a new temporary Spindleberry Close access road, and Hill are now working with their sub - contractors to complete the necessary works to handover the first phase of the development. This will open up part of the site and allow rear access to these properties again.

Peabody will be contacting residents with a timetable for when they can expect to regain use of their rear gates, as well as agreeing a solution to the levels issue affecting one particular property.

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To: Council

Date: 26 January 2026

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Shavonne Allen
2. Kaddy Beck
3. Chaka Artwell
4. Dan Glazebrook

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Shavonne Allen

Madam Mayor, Councillors, thank you for hearing me today.

I am here to propose a county-wide Youth Council and Youth Mayor programme. For many centuries, Oxford has been known for its growth and innovation in multiple areas, such as education; however, we currently lack a modern, county-wide youth voice system.

This is why I am proposing today the establishment of a Youth Council and a Youth Mayor programme to enable young people across the county to become politically involved. By launching a Youth Council and a democratically elected Youth Mayor, Oxford would enrich its democracy as a whole.

This initiative would allow passionate individuals to become politically involved by representing the youth of Oxford in their own form of council, while also collaborating with both Oxford City and County Councils on decision-making and sharing their perspectives. This would enhance younger generations' understanding of politics across schools, communities, and alternative provisions throughout Oxford.

It would also allow young people to become involved in the wider community not just the one in which they live, but communities across Oxford as a whole. This would help break down socio-economic imbalances by bringing together young people from different backgrounds.

Oxford would be following the example of modern councils, such as Bristol and Lewisham, which already involve young people in decision-making through the formation of youth councils. By establishing a Youth Council, Oxford would further reflect itself as a diverse, forward-thinking city.

Thank you for hearing me today.

2. Kaddy Beck

I coordinate the campaign to save Bertie Park recreation ground in South Oxford. We have spoken many times about the loss of open space which this development would involve. This time, we'd like to talk about the planning process itself, and highlight objections raised by Thames Valley Police.

You have told us many times you want to build on Bertie Park because it's been on local plans for 20 years. So, we thought it was OK to cut and paste a policy from one plan to another.

When your principal planner said: "For reassurance, a site wouldn't automatically be carried over from one Local Plan to the next but would be subject to a new review of the current planning position and any constraints / opportunities," it was a light bulb moment!

The plan policy states "planning permission will only be granted ... if the existing Bertie Place recreation ground, including a replacement Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), is re-provided on land in plot B" behind Wytham Street.

The current plan was submitted in March 2019, but by that November it was already clear you had no intention of re-providing the recreation ground as required. You announced instead: "a smaller but more modern play area which would be open to the public," the land behind Wytham St was to become "a nicer environment for the community." I.e. you decided to depart from the plan policy before the current plan was even agreed in June 2020. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that plan policies be both up to date and deliverable. It is obvious that the submitted plan policy for Bertie Park was neither.

Your planning application was validated in May 2023. It normally takes 13 weeks for proposals to reach planning committee. The first date we were given was that August. For 2½ years you have drilled holes and held meetings. This is just such a waste of council tax money.

We have known for a long time that Thames Valley Police thought the land behind Wytham Street unsuitable for unaccompanied children. They have now officially submitted their advice.

The police say:

“Site B does not have any clear function or purpose, and significantly lacks surveillance, creating significant concern that there will be opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour to flourish in this area... This space is very difficult to activate and is highly likely to be a significant attractor for crime and antisocial behaviour. ...Careful consideration needs to be evidenced how legitimate activities will be promoted in this space and crime/ASB prevented/discouraged. This has not been achieved in the current application.”

They also say:

“The MUGA is located very close to residential properties creating a risk of noise having a negative impact on residents, neighbour disturbances and community tension. This space is a very challenging location for development, with no clear solution. I appreciate the community wish to retain this youth recreation facility, however if houses are to be built here then neither the current location or the previously suggested location in site B are appropriate locations for such a facility.”

The council has not listened to the voices of local residents. We hope that it will listen to the police.

Finally, in October last year, OCC published its Green Spaces Technical Advice note 9. This says if you want to argue that an open space (like Bertie Park) is surplus you would need to “demonstrate a long-term lack of public access and/or use.” You have not done this. It also says that in Oxford, there is no spare pitch capacity, and that, with the population of Oxford growing, if pitches (like our MUGA) are “lost without compensation then so is that opportunity.”

Our recreation ground sits at the heart of our community because it is a physical space where families meet and kids play together. If you build on it, it is gone forever. And so is the heart of our community.

3. Chaka Artwell

Does Oxford City Council believe it is right, correct, and just, for illegal migrants, and asylum seekers, are prioritised for housing, and welfare needs, by the Home Office and Local Councils, above native English men and women's housing needs?

4. Dan Glazebrook

The motion put forward by councillors Jupp and Miles rightly points out what the Friends of Grandpont Nature Park have been saying for some time - that the Oxpens bridge would not provide the floodproof route required for student housing at Osney Mead (rendering it a pointless replication of the existing two bridges in the same area) - and the incredible £14million price tag for the bridge would be far better spent elsewhere. For example - it is surely only a matter of time before there is a serious casualty on the A40 at Barton Park, where there have been several nasty accidents already as residents are forced to dodge speeding traffic every time they want to reach shops, schools or the doctor's surgery. The Council's building of the estate without a bridge or subway was directly counter to both the police's recommendations and County-wide traffic regulations.

Likewise, the lack of a crossing from South to East Oxford at Jackdaw Lane means residents of New Hinksey are forced instead on a long diversion round the Plain, the most dangerous cycling spot in Oxford, where there have already been fatalities. It would even be useful to have a bridge across the river directly from Osney Mead, to ensure users do not have to cross the flooded towpath under the railway bridge, where

a man tragically drowned just last winter. The one place a bridge is not needed is from Grandpont Nature Park to Oxpens Meadow, two sites already linked by an excellent, wide and well-used cycle and foot bridge just 100m from the proposed new one. Yet it seems the Labour Council prefer to use public money to pointlessly augment the private commercial developments of Oxford University than to address the safety and wellbeing of their own constituents.

When the residents of Grandpont and Osney started their campaign in 2024 they were told by a Labour cabinet member that it would not be possible to use Growth Deal funding for projects such as those being put forward today. They were told, quote, that “we couldn’t spend it elsewhere in the city. It can only be spent on infrastructure that enables new development or new housing.” And it is true that this is the usual criteria for projects receiving Oxfordshire Growth Deal funding. But Oxford City Council, unique amongst all the Councils in Oxfordshire, had by then managed to wangle itself an exemption from these criteria. Unlike all the other Councils, the City Council was and is allowed to use Growth Deal funding for projects that do not directly enable new development or new housing. So the funds could have - and can be - used for other projects.

Furthermore, it is now clear that the Oxpens River Bridge as currently conceived does not *itself* enable any new housing or development, whether directly or indirectly. When the bridge went to planning, Council officers were at pains to point out that, quote, “the future developments [at Osney Mead and Oxpens] could go ahead *without* the bridge”, that “The bridge is a standalone development that can be delivered on its own without the need for the Oxpens or Osney Mead allocations to be delivered *and vice versa*”; that “the Osney Mead development could still come forward [without the bridge]”; and that “if the bridge doesn’t go ahead then both the proposed developments [Osney Mead and Oxpens] could come ahead *on their own*.”

There you have it, in black and white: the bridge is not necessary, either for the Oxpens development or for Osney Mead. This is truer than ever since the Environment Agency vetoed the Council’s plans to floodproof the towpath between Osney Mead and Grandpont Nature Park in November 2021. The Council, to this day, don’t have the faintest idea how to floodproof this path, which means that to reach the new floodproof bridge from Osney Mead, users will have to cross a section of towpath that regularly floods - and, where, as I mentioned, someone tragically drowned just last year.

Last time I stood here, the Cabinet Member responsible responded with a long list of outdated documents referring to plans for the bridge. All of these were made redundant by the EA’s ruling in 2021.

The Council are now in breach of Homes England’s funding requirements, which, unlike the Growth Deal, the Council have not wangled an exception from, which state that funds can only be used for infrastructure that unlocks housing developments. The £1.5million they were awarded by that body for the bridge was provided specifically for a path that their application claimed would provide the floodproof exit out of Osney Mead required for residential planning permission to be granted on the site. In fact it will do nothing of the sort. You may, in the coming discussion, seek to ask council leaders how they expect to get millions more from this body for a project which it is not lawfully allowed to fund, as it will not - by their own admission - enable any housing.

Now the Council have diverted a further £3.7million from the local budget for the bridge, including £1million from the maintenance fund, which is supposed to be used to repair council homes. Enough is enough. It’s time to stop throwing good money after bad, and to start addressing the safety and wellbeing of the town’s working class residents rather than simply subsidising the wealthiest institution in the city with a pointless ornament for their commercial developments.

To: Council
Date: 26 January 2026
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Update from the Scrutiny Committee

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To update Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee and Working Groups.
Key decision:	No
Lead Member:	Councillor Alex Powell, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
1. Note the work of the Scrutiny Committee and the recommendations as set out in the report.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet responses	No

Introduction and Overview

1. This report provides an update on the activities of the Scrutiny Committee and its Working Groups since the last update to Council on 24 November 2025. It covers the period from 20 November 2025 to 21 January 2026.
2. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 grants the power to the Scrutiny Committee to make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet with respect to the

discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive; and on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

Update on Scrutiny Activities

3. Since the last full Council meeting, the Scrutiny Committee held meetings on 2 December 2025 and 13 January 2026 to consider a range of substantive items.

2 December 2025

- Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25
- Devolution

13 January 2026

- Workforce Equality Report
- Proposed Submission of Draft Local Plan 2045

4. The Committee also endorsed recommendations from the following Working Group meetings:

Housing and Homelessness Working Group – 13 November 2025

- Housing Complaint Handling Performance (Q1 and Q2)
- Building Safety & Compliance (Q1 and Q2)
- Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-28
- Decarbonisation update: Impact of Energy Efficiency Funding programmes (LAD1b and SHDF) and EPC programme

Climate and Environment Working Group – 17 November 2025

- Net Zero Tracker
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act Update

Finance and Performance Working Group – 26 November 2025

- OxWed LLP – Delivery Options for Oxpens (SJVG)
- ODS Clienting
- Treasury Management Annual Report 2024-25

5. In reviewing the abovementioned reports, the Committee submitted ?? recommendations to Cabinet, of which ?? were agreed.
6. Cabinet considered these at its meetings on 10 December 2025 and 13 January 2026. Written commentaries were provided to inform Scrutiny of the rationale behind Cabinet's decision. There is a table summary setting out in detail the recommendations and responses, included as Appendix 1. No table was produced for items where no recommendations were made.
7. Minutes of relevant meetings are provided below as hyperlinks:
 - [Scrutiny Committee 2 December 2025](#)
 - [Scrutiny Committee 13 January 2026](#)

Summary of discussions

Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25

8. The Committee raised concerns around why the housing targets had not been met and the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for the different wards within the city was not consistent. There were also comments about the downturn of large-scale sites within the city and if there was any provision for homes for an aging population. Finally, there were comments about the ongoing communications with the universities and the impact on student housing across the city in the emerging local plan.

Devolution

9. Reflecting on Local Government Reorganisation, the Committee raised uncertainties about how the Three Unitary Authority (3UA) model relates to the larger concept of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). Members asked about the Government's position on the MSA, in contrast to the more complex LGR landscape, and whether the MSA process might progress more smoothly given the broad agreement amongst authorities. In seeking further clarity, the Committee noted potential synergies between a smaller, place-based unitary and a larger strategic authority capable of securing investment and delivering major transport, planning and long-term environmental projects which could be channelled to local areas. The 3UA model was reiterated as essential to ensuring Oxford retains a meaningful voice within any future MSA, particularly given that this influence could be diminished under a county-wide unitary.
10. Some concerns were raised about Oxford identity in the Thames Valley, noting that many residents may not instinctively identify with the area, and the need to clearly communicate the benefits of Devolution including powers over issues like planning, infrastructure, skills and potentially tourism levies. The Committee then queried Swindon's place within the proposed geography, and noted that Swindon, not only initiated early discussions, but has strong economic and business links with Oxford, and is naturally aligned with the Thames Valley economy. Further to this, Swindon is viewed as a logical western end to the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.
11. Additionally, the Committee sought clarity on several governance-related issues: what arrangements are likely to accompany a MSA and how these would align with what the Council's current position; what decision-making powers would the Council retain or gain; how successful initiatives such as Oxford Direct Services (ODS) would be safeguarded within a larger strategic structure. It was explained that governance discussions will form the next stage once Government's response is known, and that a collegiate model is being explored. The Committee noted that whilst certain decisions would rest with the Mayor, the system is designed to avoid unilateral imposition. Lastly, in relation to devolved powers and budgets, the Committee heard that these would likely include strategic planning (for example, housing and environmental sustainability targets) and strengthened by the soft power of representing a large, economically strong region.

Workforce Equality Report 2025

12. The Committee was pleased with the data the Council publishes annually relating to recruitment and that it was meeting its' targets for 16.5% workforce representation from minority ethnic groups across the authority. There were also comments relating to the Council ensuring to issue fair pay decisions and progress towards the

incremental progression plan following staff completing their 6-month probationary period, along with further work on inclusive recruitment practices.

Proposed Submission of Draft Local Plan 2045

13. In discussing the proposed submission of the Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045, the Committee was minded to emphasise the importance of providing clear guidance on how planning can be designed to ensure Oxford creates child-friendly places and amenities, recognising that such practice has been adopted by other authorities. The Committee noted that children's needs should be addressed within the Local Plan policies, potentially through the Technical Advice Note. Acknowledging the current timeline for the Plan's implementation, the Committee requests that this matter be recorded and revisited in future.

Housing Complaint Handling Performance (Q1 and Q2)

14. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group acknowledged the positive feedback from the Ombudsman regarding the Council's complaint handling. It noted the current backlog and sought assurance that sufficient resource is in place, with Officers confirming new staff are being trained and the backlog is expected to be cleared by the end of Q3. Members raised questions about escalation routes when officers do not respond and highlighted the need for clear communication pathways for residents who wish to raise concerns without entering the formal complaint process. There were no recommendations.

Building Safety and Compliance Performance (Q1 and Q2)

15. The first point noted by Members was regarding subcontracted fire risk assessors not appearing on the professional register, which was raised by external auditors in their report to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group was reassured that an internal fire assessment team has been established following recommendations from the auditors and that auditors were positive about this progress. Members also discussed the anticipated impact of Awaab's Law and the likelihood of increased reporting and resource need. Lastly, the Working Group sought clarification on stairlifts provisions and implications for vulnerable residents to whom these were provided. It was clarified that stairlift provisions for residents are not legally required under LOLER, however as a result of this oversight, the Council agreed arrangements with residents and will reassess future arrangements. No recommendation was put forward by the Working Group.

Draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-28

16. A strong expression of support for the Strategy was offered by the Housing and Homelessness Working Group, welcoming the significant resident influence throughout its design. The Working Group welcomed the opportunity to track that the strategy's intentions are reflected in the way policies are delivered, and any plans to strengthen feedback loop from the Tenant Board.
17. Other points raised included resident involvement which often intersects with other areas of work such as EPC inspections. Members highlighted the importance of making sure that feedback from residents are captured consistently and channelled effectively across workstreams, including the work of Scrutiny. The Working Group also noted the need to avoid duplication of work and to ensure resident voices are not diluted. They welcomed the confirmation that efficient governance arrangements

are being reviewed with these considerations in mind. There were no formal recommendations made.

Decarbonisation update: Impact of Energy Efficiency Funding programmes (LAD1b and SHDF) and EPC programme

18. Discussions centred around the risk of large numbers of EPCs expiring simultaneously with Members noting the need to manage assessment cycles more evenly. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group also sought clarity on progress towards EPC targets and whether the Council remains on track to reduce properties below Band C by 2030. Other concerns raised pertained to resilience and future external funding, and tenant refusals to retrofit work. It was noted that these often stemmed from disruption, health issues, or misconceptions particularly surrounding insulation and air source heat pumps, which prompted the Working Group to highlight the importance of educating residents on these topics. No recommendations were made.

Air Quality Action Plan

19. The Climate and Environment Working Group noted the Air Quality Action Plan consultation booklet has effectively incorporated previous scrutiny feedback on ensuring information for the public is clear and easily digestible.
20. Points were raised regarding the extent to which delivery of the AQAP may be affected by county-level policies and measures, including the congestion charge. They queried whether the document sufficiently accounted for potential inconsistencies between administration and whether these differing positions were acknowledged. In the context of Local Government Reorganisation, the Working Group emphasised the need to maintain strong commitment to the excellent work being done, and to ensure that this positive trajectory continues. Some concerns were also noted from areas such as Woodstock Road and Hollow Way about potential displacement effects arising from temporary congestion measures, and the Group considered whether additional monitoring in these areas might be beneficial. The Working Group accepted the clarification that the 44 diffusion tube monitoring points previously assessed in relation to traffic filters align with those areas predicted to experience the most significant impacts from congestion related measures. Overall, the Working Group expressed general support for the draft Air Quality Action Plan. No formal recommendations were made.

Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act Update

21. Firstly, the Climate and Environment Working Group wished to ensure that the newly appointed Ecologists have the resources required to meet the Council's biodiversity commitments and duties. It noted that the team is still assessing its needs and would be in a position to forecast these in due course. Members queried Section 106 allocations and whether parameters should be set, however it was understood that a deliberate decision had been taken to retain simpler guidance to avoid placing unnecessary limitations on the biodiversity team. The Working Group also discussed the robustness of enforcing biodiversity policies within the Local Plan, and the potential to link certain elements to Section 106, both of which will need to be worked out within the forthcoming Biodiversity Net Gain document to formalise the Council's approach.
22. The Working Group welcomed and expressed thanks to Richard Hill and Sarah Hawes, both of whom joined the Council recently as Principal Ecologists

and extended its appreciation to the wider Environment Sustainability team for their contributions to the meeting.

Treasury Management Annual Report

23. There were no recommendations from the Finance and Performance Working Group.

ODS Clienting

24. The Finance and Performance Working Group initially proposed two recommendations to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group. However, as they related to the clienting function between Oxford Direct Services and the Council, they therefore fall to the Cabinet for a response, in line with the relevant schemes of delegation.

Acknowledgements

25. The Committee would also like to offer its thanks to all Council Officers, Members and Speakers who contributed to Scrutiny's work and meetings this reporting period.

Financial implications

26. Financial implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
27. Where appropriate, any further financial implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Legal issues

28. Legal implications for the reports listed above were outlined within the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Group.
29. Where appropriate, any further legal implications were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Level of risk

30. Risk Registers, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
31. Where appropriate, the risk register was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Equalities impact

32. Equalities Impact Assessments, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
33. Where appropriate, the Equalities Impact Assessments was reviewed when considering the recommendations.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

34. Consideration for Carbon and Environmental impacts, where appropriate, were linked to the reports presented at Scrutiny Committee or Working Groups.
35. Where appropriate, the Carbon and Environmental impacts were reviewed when considering the recommendations.

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Appendix 1: Scrutiny Recommendations and Cabinet Responses

Table 1 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in December 2025

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 10 December 2025.

Authority Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Funding Statement

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) For Cabinet to review the reporting of housing delivered, separating out those on sites of under 10 units where the requirement for affordable housing is not triggered within the covering report for future years.	Yes	We are happy to explore how additional clarity on this matter can be added to the covering report in future years.
2) For Officers to identify, if possible, the complex set of reasons as to why the housing completions reported are currently under the target or if not possible, explicitly state this.	Yes	The Covering Report currently states: <i>“Figure 2 below shows the cumulative projection is just under the target to meet the minimum of 10,884 dwellings to 2036 as set out in policy H1. There are likely to be a range of potential factors which have affected completion rates in recent years, these are difficult to separate out statistically, however officers are working hard to maximise opportunities to deliver housing to meet the target.”</i> We could amend this to read: <i>“There are likely to be a range of potential factors which in combination have affected completion rates in recent years, officers have explored possible explanations but these are difficult to separate out statistically and cannot be accurately isolated. However officers are working hard to maximise opportunities to deliver housing to meet the target.”</i>
3) For Cabinet to request officers to investigate bottlenecks with the current processes.	Yes	At the meeting, in response to questions about bottlenecks in the system, reference was made to the impact which

		legal delays and hold ups in receiving 3 rd party input into Section106 agreements can have. Officers will continue to work with external partners in exploring how these can be resolved efficiently.
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Biodiversity Strategy and Environment Act Update

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That Cabinet draw on the expertise of community and voluntary groups to provide input and support the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy; and actively inform the public about the criteria for good habitat, clearly promoting what good biodiverse habitat looks like so as to strengthen public understanding and support for practices (such as leaving verges uncut) that protect local species.	Yes	The Biodiversity Strategy will utilise input from community and voluntary groups, through creation of a steering group.

Recommendations relating to ODS Clienting (ODS Group Performance Report)

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) To increase the use of CCTV given that it has been the most effective measure for preventing fly-tipping.	Yes	CCTV cameras, overt and covert can be an effective tool in preventing and detecting fly-tipping. An investment in cameras, permanent signage on HRA stock where fly-tipping is a problem (usually around bin stores, alleyways and garages) and temporary signs during an enforcement operation would be useful methods to tackle these offences. This will need to be part of a detailed costed set of plans for certain HRA sites, which is what we plan to do in the next financial year.

<p>2) That repairs of play area equipment be reverted to a delegated budget arrangement, as this model has previously demonstrated greater efficiency and addresses the backlogs in maintenance.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Shareholder and Joint Venture Group has spoken to Officers. A project is underway on the clienting and commissioning of Oxford Direct Services by the council and this should be picked up by that process. To confirm, however, no delegated budget has been removed from ODS.</p>
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Table 2 – Cabinet response to the list of Scrutiny recommendations in January 2026

The table below sets out the response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made or endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee during its meeting on 13 January 2026.

Workforce Equality Report

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the current target for workforce representation of 17% for employees from minority ethnic groups be increased to a higher, evidence-based, figure in order to restrengthen the Council's recruitment from these groups.	Yes	The Council has achieved its current, formal target of 16.5% and has since been working towards 17%. It is appropriate to increase the target.
2) That Cabinet fully implement an anonymised, third-party reporting system, reflecting standard practice across the public and private sectors, to enable employees to raise concerns relating to harassment, bullying, discrimination, corruption and other workplace-related issues with confidence.	Yes	The Council is currently exploring options for a service. One provider is quoting around £300 per month plus vat for the service for the Council's workforce. An internal solution would not incur extra costs but would take up staff time.
3) Acknowledging there are challenges posed by low staff numbers and reliability of available data in this area, that future workforce equality reports include a dedicated section on gender reassignment, recognising this as a protected characteristic.	Yes, in part	As this group of employees is small and hesitant about sharing personal data, we do not wish to highlight numerical data on the group but would be happy to refer to the work we are doing to support employees and acknowledge gender reassignment as a protected characteristic. Non-binary, trans and gender questioning employees would be included. A separate section may not be required but this will be considered.

Proposed Submission of Draft Local Plan 2045

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) For officers to undertake a further review of the areas in Greater Leys, in particular Dunnock Way, and other sites such as Littlemore to be allocated Local Centres under Policy C1, noting their similarities to Underhill Circus.		Officers will carry out a further analysis of the list of Local Centres.
2) That the evidence-base is thoroughly examined to determine whether 10% biodiversity net gain is conclusively the most ambitious minimum the council could set.		Officers have reviewed the position and can confirm the following: The Environment Act 2021 sets a statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10%. The Planning Practice Guidance was updated last year to say that local plans should not seek a higher percentage than this statutory level 'unless justified'. To support a higher percentage we would need robust evidence to justify this approach, which would need to look at specific local need, as well as demonstrating opportunities to deliver it and looking at the impact on development viability. Because of the constrained nature of Oxford and the limited opportunities for development, and indeed for achieving BNG within the city, this is not considered to be an approach that could be justified and evidenced.
3) For officers to explore whether a higher threshold for the acceptability of loss of sports facilities could be incorporated in the Local Plan.		In the development of the Plan officers have reviewed all the green spaces in the city, and in some cases go further than the NPPF by attempting to preserve spaces in situ, because of their important functions that justify this and make it difficult to re-provide, e.g. as a wildlife corridor of functional floodplain. Other spaces are part of the supporting Green Infrastructure network, and these spaces follow the NPPF approach that development may be justified if re-provision can be made, or if they are shown to be surplus. We do not have a surplus of pitches, so pitches in use do require re-provision. Re-provision needs to be of equivalent or better quality and capacity but not necessarily

		quantity, so sometimes a smaller area of pitches, or enhanced pitches elsewhere, that can provide the same level of use, may be accepted.
4) For officers to reconsider the language in Policy C2(h) encouraging the development of city centre play amenity.		<p>The Plan is very supportive of play space and specifically in including this in our centres, for example: in Policy C2 about maintaining vibrant centres (which includes the city centre): <i>"enhancement and new opportunities for public realm and landscaping such as tree planting, including incorporation of small green spaces where people can stop, dwell, socialise and play;"</i>.</p> <p>There is policy support elsewhere in the Plan too, Policy G1: protection of green infrastructure states: <i>"Proposals impacting the following types of open space will need to be accompanied by additional evidence that demonstrates consideration of the following:...b) Parks and gardens, accessible greenspace and amenity greenspaces: i) the role of the space in supporting people to socialize, take part in informal recreation (particularly where facilities like children/youth play and outdoor gym equipment are present), or as an escape from the urban environment,"</i></p> <p>Also, in Policy G2: enhancement of green and blue infrastructure says proposals should demonstrate how they've considered: <i>"Health and wellbeing, including facilitating recreation and play for people of all age groups and abilities, particularly children and teenagers;"</i></p> <p>More broadly, the City Council supports the concept of a play space in the city centre, however, without a site having been identified, there is little more the Local Plan can do to deliver it.</p>

To: Council
Date: 26 January 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: **Motions and amendments received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18**

Councillors are asked to debate and reach conclusions on the motions and amendment listed below in accordance with the Council's rules for debate.

The Constitution permits an hour for debate of these motions.

Introduction

This document sets out motions received by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18 by the deadline of 1.00pm on 14 January 2026, as amended by the proposers.

All substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy by publication of the briefing note are also included below.

Unfamiliar terms are explained in the glossary or in footnotes.

Motions will be taken in turn from the Independent Oxford Alliance, Oxford Community Independents, Oxford Independent Group, Real Independent, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, Independent Oxford Alliance, Oxford Community Independents groups in that order.

Introduction

- a) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles)
- b) Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Mundy)

**a) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles) [Amendment proposed by Cllr Malik, seconded by Cllr Azad]
[Amendment proposed by Cllr Muddiman, seconded by Cllr Rawle]**

Liberal Democrat Group Motion

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
- Government can and does vary the rules of the Deal from time to time. Thus far, government has rightly prioritised the spirit and objectives of the Deal above the letter of the agreement.
- Doubt remains that the Oxpens bridge will be able to provide a dry route to Osney Island and thereby unlock housing, due to the low-lying railway underpass in-between.
- The Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) was strongly urged against pursuing the Oxpens bridge project to begin with.

Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:

- That the Growth Deal be varied as necessary to permit the funds to be used for other specified purposes in Oxford;
- That other options be explored to better employ the funds, including but not limited to:
 - Resurrecting the substantive scheme for Woodstock Road improvements to mitigate the effect of housing development to the north;
 - Revisiting the pedestrian bridge across the A40 at Barton Park which was dropped at planning stage, resulting in very real and significant safety concerns for residents;
 - Resurrecting the long-discussed plan for a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames at Jackdaw Lane, providing a safe and convenient alternative to the challenging Plain roundabout for residents of south and east Oxford.

Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

Real Independent Group Amendment

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.

- Government can and does vary the rules of the Deal from time to time. Thus far, government has rightly prioritised the spirit and objectives of the Deal above the letter of the agreement.
- Doubt remains that the Oxpens bridge will be able to provide a dry route to Osney Island and thereby unlock housing, due to the low-lying railway underpass in-between.
- The Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) was strongly urged against pursuing the Oxpens bridge project to begin with.
- There are already two excellent and well-used cycle and foot bridges in the immediate vicinity of the site of the proposed bridge.
- Grandpont Nature Park is a much loved site of precious biodiversity which enriches the lives of the local residents of Grandpont, Osney and beyond; workers at Osney Mead and elsewhere; students and staff at the City of Oxford College, and many others
- £8.8million of the funding for the Oxpens River Bridge (and associated pathworks) comes from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal's 'Homes from Infrastructure' fund, whose purpose is to finance "infrastructure to unlock key housing sites".
- £1.5million of the funding for the Oxpens River Bridge (and associated pathworks) comes from Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund, whose purpose is to finance infrastructure that is "necessary to unlock new homes."
- The Oxpens River Bridge (and associated pathworks) in its proposed location would not unlock the building of a single home.

Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:

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- That other options be explored to better employ the funds, including but not limited to:
 - Resurrecting the substantive scheme for Woodstock Road improvements to mitigate the effect of housing development to the north;
 - Revisiting the pedestrian bridge across the A40 at Barton Park which was dropped at planning stage, resulting in very real and significant safety concerns for residents;
 - Resurrecting the long-discussed plan for a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames at Jackdaw Lane, providing a safe and convenient alternative to the challenging Plain roundabout for residents of south and east Oxford.

Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

Council further resolves to:

- Cancel plans for the Oxpens River Bridge and its connecting pathworks to be built in Grandpont Nature Park
- Look again at the various proposals for a) a new bridge directly linking Osney Mead to Oxpens west of the railway and b) improving the route between the gasworks bridge and the city centre

If the amendment was approved, the motion would read:

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
- Government can and does vary the rules of the Deal from time to time. Thus far, government has rightly prioritised the spirit and objectives of the Deal above the letter of the agreement.
- Doubt remains that the Oxpens bridge will be able to provide a dry route to Osney Island and thereby unlock housing, due to the low-lying railway underpass in-between.
- The Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) was strongly urged against pursuing the Oxpens bridge project to begin with.
- There are already two excellent and well-used cycle and foot bridges in the immediate vicinity of the site of the proposed bridge.
- Grandpont Nature Park is a much loved site of precious biodiversity which enriches the lives of the local residents of Grandpont, Osney and beyond; workers at Osney Mead and elsewhere; students and staff at the City of Oxford College, and many others
- £8.8million of the funding for the Oxpens River Bridge (and associated pathworks) comes from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal's 'Homes from Infrastructure' fund, whose purpose is to finance "infrastructure to unlock key housing sites".
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- The Oxpens River Bridge (and associated pathworks) in its proposed location would not unlock the building of a single home.

Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:

- That the Growth Deal be varied as necessary to permit the funds to be used for other specified purposes in Oxford;
- That other options be explored to better employ the funds, including but not limited to:
 - Resurrecting the substantive scheme for Woodstock Road improvements to mitigate the effect of housing development to the north;
 - Revisiting the pedestrian bridge across the A40 at Barton Park which was dropped at planning stage, resulting in very real and significant safety concerns for residents;
 - Resurrecting the long-discussed plan for a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames at Jackdaw Lane, providing a safe and convenient alternative to the challenging Plain roundabout for residents of south and east Oxford.

Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

Council further resolves to:

- Cancel plans for the Oxpens River Bridge and its connecting pathworks to be built in Grandpont Nature Park
- Look again at the various proposals for a) a new bridge directly linking Osney Mead to Oxpens west of the railway and b) improving the route between the gasworks bridge and the city centre

Green Group Amendment

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
- Government can and does vary the rules of the Deal from time to time. Thus far, government has rightly prioritised the spirit and objectives of the Deal above the letter of the agreement.
- Doubt remains that the Oxpens bridge will be able to provide a dry route to Osney Island and thereby unlock housing, due to the low-lying railway underpass in-between.
- The Growth Board (now Future Oxfordshire Partnership) was strongly urged against pursuing the Oxpens bridge project to begin with.

- £8.8 million of the funding for the proposed Oxpens Bridge came from the Government Growth Deal via Oxfordshire County Council and £1.5 million of the funding came from Homes England.
- These 2 funds should be spent on unlocking affordable homes, which this bridge does not do.

Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves

- To ask the leader to write to all external funders to say that the bridge is not viable and to ask how the remaining funds could be reallocated.
- to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:
 - That the Growth Deal be varied as necessary to permit the funds to be used for other specified purposes in Oxford;
 - That other options be explored to better employ the funds, including but not limited to:
 - Resurrecting the substantive scheme for Woodstock Road improvements to mitigate the effect of housing development to the north;
 - Revisiting the pedestrian bridge across the A40 at Barton Park which was dropped at planning stage, resulting in very real and significant safety concerns for residents;
 - Resurrecting the long-discussed plan for a foot/cycle bridge across the Thames at Jackdaw Lane, providing a safe and convenient alternative to the challenging Plain roundabout for residents of south and east Oxford.

Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

If the amendment was approved, the motion would read:

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
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Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

If both amendments were approved, the motion would read:

Council notes:

- The cost of the Oxpens bridge has substantially increased since its original approval, and is Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX running considerably behind other Growth Deal projects.
- That government has the option to repurpose the money for use in other active travel schemes and entrust the County Council to manage this.
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Council therefore believes it would be sensible to examine alternatives, and open a conversation with the County and/or the Ministry on options that deliver greater benefits for the residents of Oxford.

Council therefore resolves

- To ask the leader to write to all external funders to say that the bridge is not viable and to ask how the remaining funds could be reallocated.
- to ask the Leader to write to the relevant Minister, in full consultation with the accountable body for the Growth Deal funds, requesting that in the event of the bridge not going ahead:
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Council notes that each of these schemes has been worked up in detail, and are thus available to re-visit, making any one of them attractive to a government which has the best interests of Oxford's residents at heart.

Council further resolves to:

- Cancel plans for the Oxpens River Bridge and its connecting pathworks to be built in Grandpont Nature Park
- Look again at the various proposals for a) a new bridge directly linking Osney Mead to Oxpens west of the railway and b) improving the route between the gasworks bridge and the city centre

b) Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Mundy) [Amendment proposed by Cllr Ottino, seconded by Cllr Qayyum]

Councillor Jarvis submitted a self-amendment to the motion; the motion now reads:

Council notes

1. Since September 2024 eight remand prisoners detained as a result of alleged activities with Palestine Action have participated in hunger strikes, including at least one individual from Oxford.¹
2. The prisoners are expected to be on remand for over a year before they face a trial², despite the CPS guidance suggesting the maximum time anyone should be held on remand is 182 days.³
3. Among the demands of the hunger strikers are:⁴
 - a) Immediate bail for the prisoners held on remand.
 - b) While they are imprisoned, for the prisoners to be able to send and receive communications without restriction, surveillance, or interference from the prison administration.
 - c) The right to a fair trial.
 - d) For Palestine Action to be de-proscribed.
4. All of those participating in the hunger strikes were detained for alleged activities with Palestine Action prior to parliament adding it to the list of proscribed organisations.
5. While some of the hunger strikers have ended their action, at the time of publication of this motion, four are still refusing food and are facing serious risk of long term health issues or death.⁵
6. Since the publication of this motion, three more of the hunger strikers have ended their protest. However, one individual remains on hunger strike and the bulk of the demands of the campaign, as highlighted by this motion, have not been met.
7. 67 MPs - including Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran - have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure the treatment of the hunger strikers is "humane" and that their human rights are upheld.⁶

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/16/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-may-die-without-lammy-intervention-lawyers-say>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jan/07/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-government>

³ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/prosecution-guidance/custody-time-limits>

⁴ <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/demands/>

⁵ <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/>

⁶ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64800/palestine-action-hunger-strike>

8. A number of other councils, including Belfast⁷ and Derry⁸, have passed motions expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers and for the government to enter proper negotiations with the prisoners to bring an end to the strikes.

Council believes

1. It is extremely concerning that these prisoners have felt that they had no other recourse to protest against their prison conditions but to engage in hunger strikes.

Council resolves

1. To request that the leader of the council:
 - a) Write to the Secretary of State for Justice and other relevant government ministers, requesting that they
 - i. Meet with the families and representatives of those on hunger strike.
 - ii. Enter negotiations to bring the hunger strikes to an end and to prevent any loss of life or long term health complications.
 - iii. Do everything they can to ensure that the prisoners on remand have their human rights respected and that they are treated humanely.
 - b) Write to local MPs Anneliese Dodds and Layla Moran requesting that they work to ensure that government ministers carry out the requests in resolves 1.

Labour Group Amendment

Council notes

1. Since September 2024 eight remand prisoners detained as a result of alleged activities with Palestine Action have participated in hunger strikes, including at least one individual from Oxford.⁹
2. The prisoners are expected to be on remand for over a year before they face a trial¹⁰, despite the CPS guidance suggesting the maximum time anyone should be held on remand is 182 days.¹¹
3. Among the demands of the hunger strikers are:¹²
 - a) Immediate bail for the prisoners held on remand.
 - b) While they are imprisoned, for the prisoners to be able to send and receive communications without restriction, surveillance, or interference from the prison administration.

⁷ <https://belfastmedia.com/belfast-city-council-backs-motion-supporting-palestine-action-hunger-strikers-in-england>

⁸

<https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=189&MId=2378&Ver=4>

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/16/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-may-die-without-lammy-intervention-lawyers-say>

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jan/07/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-government>

¹¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/prosecution-guidance/custody-time-limits>

¹² <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/demands/>

- c) The right to a fair trial.
 - d) For Palestine Action to be de-proscribed.
4. All of those participating in the hunger strikes were detained for alleged activities with Palestine Action prior to parliament adding it to the list of proscribed organisations.
 5. While some of the hunger strikers have ended their action, at the time of the publication of this motion, four are still refusing food and are facing serious risk of long term health issues or death.¹³
 6. Since the publication of this motion, three more of the hunger strikers have ended their protest. However, one individual remains on hunger strike and the bulk of the demands of the campaign, as highlighted by this motion, have not been met.
 7. 67 MPs - including Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran - have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure the treatment of the hunger strikers is “humane” and that their human rights are upheld.¹⁴
 8. A number of other councils, including Belfast¹⁵ and Derry¹⁶, have passed motions expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers and for the government to enter proper negotiations with the prisoners to bring an end to the strikes.

Council believes

1. It is extremely concerning that these prisoners have felt that they had no other recourse to protest against their prison conditions but to engage in hunger strikes.

Council resolves

1. To request that the leader of the council:
 - a) Write to the Secretary of State for Justice and other relevant government ministers, requesting that they **or officials representing them**
 - i. **Where written consent has been given by the prisoner**, meet with the families and representatives of those on hunger strike.
 - ii. ~~Enter negotiations to bring the hunger strikes to an end and to prevent any loss of life or long-term health complications.~~ **Where any form of protest within the prison and justice system occurs, reflect on that protest and engage with all stakeholders to ensure that any issues including those relating to prisoner safety, health, care and the effectiveness and efficiency of the justice system are reviewed; in particular with these cases, with the aim of bringing any hunger strikes to an end and thus preventing potential loss of life or long-term health complications**
 - iii. Do everything they can to ensure that ~~the prisoners on remand~~ **prisoners, whether they are on remand or serving custodial**

¹³ <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/>

¹⁴ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64800/palestine-action-hunger-strike>

¹⁵ <https://belfastmedia.com/belfast-city-council-backs-motion-supporting-palestine-action-hunger-strikers-in-england>

¹⁶ <https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=189&MId=2378&Ver=4>

- sentences, have their human rights respected and that they are treated humanely.
- iv. Review, far more regularly and systematically whether any proscribed organisation still needs to be proscribed, and in the light of the number and make-up of the people being arrested in relation to Palestine Action, review the proscription of that particular organisation urgently.
 - v. Because it conflicts with an individual's right to free speech, review whether simply saying you support a proscribed organisation should be an arrestable offence.
- b) Write to local MPs Anneliese Dodds and Layla Moran requesting that they work to ensure that government ministers carry out the requests in resolves

If approved, the Motion would read:

Council notes

1. Since September 2024 eight remand prisoners detained as a result of alleged activities with Palestine Action have participated in hunger strikes, including at least one individual from Oxford.¹⁷
2. The prisoners are expected to be on remand for over a year before they face a trial¹⁸, despite the CPS guidance suggesting the maximum time anyone should be held on remand is 182 days.¹⁹
3. Among the demands of the hunger strikers are:²⁰
 - a) Immediate bail for the prisoners held on remand.
 - b) While they are imprisoned, for the prisoners to be able to send and receive communications without restriction, surveillance, or interference from the prison administration.
 - c) The right to a fair trial.
 - d) For Palestine Action to be de-proscribed.
4. All of those participating in the hunger strikes were detained for alleged activities with Palestine Action prior to parliament adding it to the list of proscribed organisations.
5. While some of the hunger strikers have ended their action, at the time of writing, four are still refusing food and are facing serious risk of long term health issues or death.²¹
6. 67 MPs - including Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran - have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the Secretary of State for Justice to ensure the

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/dec/16/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-may-die-without-lammy-intervention-lawyers-say>

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jan/07/palestine-action-hunger-strikers-government>

¹⁹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/prosecution-guidance/custody-time-limits>

²⁰ <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/demands/>

²¹ <https://prisonersforpalestine.org/>

treatment of the hunger strikers is “humane” and that their human rights are upheld.²²

7. A number of other councils, including Belfast²³ and Derry²⁴, have passed motions expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers and for the government to enter proper negotiations with the prisoners to bring an end to the strikes.

Council believes

1. It is extremely concerning that these prisoners have felt that they had no other recourse to protest against their prison conditions but to engage in hunger strikes.

Council resolves

1. To request that the leader of the council:
 - a) Write to the Secretary of State for Justice and other relevant government ministers, requesting that they or officials representing them
 - i. Where written consent has been given by the prisoner, meet with the families and representatives of those on hunger strike.
 - ii. Where any form of protest within the prison and justice system occurs, reflect on that protest and engage with all stakeholders to ensure that any issues including those relating to prisoner safety, health, care and the effectiveness and efficiency of the justice system are reviewed; in particular with these cases, with the aim of bringing any hunger strikes to an end and thus preventing potential loss of life or long-term health complications
 - iii. Do everything they can to ensure that prisoners, whether they are on remand or serving custodial sentences, have their human rights respected and that they are treated humanely.
 - iv. Review, far more regularly and systematically whether any proscribed organisation still needs to be proscribed, and in the light of the number and make-up of the people being arrested in relation to Palestine Action, review the proscription of that particular organisation urgently.
 - v. Because it conflicts with an individual's right to free speech, review whether simply saying you support a proscribed organisation should be an arrestable offence.
 - b) Write to local MPs Anneliese Dodds and Layla Moran requesting that they work to ensure that government ministers carry out the requests in resolves

²² <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64800/palestine-action-hunger-strike>

²³ <https://belfastmedia.com/belfast-city-council-backs-motion-supporting-palestine-action-hunger-strikers-in-england>

²⁴ <https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=189&MId=2378&Ver=4>