

Minutes of a meeting of the COUNCIL on Monday 6 February 2017

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Members:

Councillor Altaf-Khan (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Humberstone (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Brown (Sheriff)	Councillor Cook
Councillor Abbasi	Councillor Anwar
Councillor Azad	Councillor Brandt
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Coulter	Councillor Curran
Councillor Fooks	Councillor Fry
Councillor Gant	Councillor Goddard
Councillor Goff	Councillor Haines
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Iley-Williamson
Councillor Kennedy	Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Malik	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Paule	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Price
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Sanders
Councillor Simm	Councillor Simmons
Councillor Sinclair	Councillor Smith
Councillor Tanner	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Tidball	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton	Councillor Wade
Councillor Wilkinson	Councillor Wolff

Apologies:

Councillors Tarver and Taylor sent apologies.

62. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

63. Minutes

With a change to Minute 58 to note that the Board Member's response to Sarah Lasenby's address was on behalf of all councillors from all political groups, Council agreed to **approve** the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 5 December 2016 as a true and correct record and that the Lord Mayor should sign these as such.

64. Appointment to Committees

There were no changes to appointments.

65. Announcements

The Lord Mayor announced

- the Christmas carol concert raised nearly £3000
- he had welcomed Princess Anne at the annual Farming conference and had welcomed the Indonesian ambassador on his visit to the city
- activities to mark World Cancer Day 4 February
- the holding of the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony
- there would be an event to mark 1 Day without us on 20 February
- the annual Oxclean would take place on 3 to 5 March

The Leader announced:

- he had asked the organisers of the excellent one-day exhibition on Holocaust Memorial Day if this could be displayed for a longer period;
- congratulations to the council's tenancy involvement team and the active leisure team in community services on their recent awards.

66. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

There were no addresses or questions.

67. Devolution Update – Combined Authority and directly Elected Mayor proposal

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 15 December 2016 which recommended Council to support in principle the submission of a devolution bid with a governance model based on the current two-tier structure for local government with a combined authority and elected mayor.

Council resolved to approve the inclusion of the City Council in the submission of a devolution bid to government for a combined authority and a directly elected mayor.

68. Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for Oxford

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 15 December seeking approval for the publication and submission of Oxford's sustainable energy action plan ('Low Carbon Oxford: A Route Map to 2020') to the EU Covenant of Mayors scheme.

Council noted that the submission of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan to the Covenant of Mayors fulfils the Council's decision of 20 July 2015 to sign up to the Compact of Mayors as these two initiatives are merging into a single global initiative.

69. City Executive Board Minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Thursday 15 December 2016 of City Executive Board

Council had before it the minutes of the City Executive Board meeting of 15 December 2016.

On Minute 99, councillors asked whether the Leader was proposing contributing to smart signs on the outskirts of the city to inform drivers of capacity at all park and ride sites; and whether the air quality management plan would be informed by the recent guidelines on air quality and human health. Councillors Price and Tanner said that the council would make use of the information on the impact of air quality on human health and the council would work with the County Council to provide car park management signs.

On Minute 101, Councillor Fooks asked whether the budget consultation had been adequate and meaningful given the 45 responses. Councillor Turner said that he had elected not to widely advertise the on-line consultation and good responses were received.

On Minute 104, councillors asked about the impact of the proposed transfer station on the park and ride; journey times; and whether there could be recycling and reuse of materials directly from the site such as glass crushed for aggregate. Councillors Price and Tanner said that the proposal still had to receive planning permission and those constraints may require a change in location. The use was also constrained by the site's proximity to a residential area. Redbridge was a large under-used site and other new and enlarged park and ride sites should be available in the next few years.

b) Minutes of meeting Thursday 19 January 2017 of City Executive Board

Council had before it the minutes of the City Executive Board meeting of 19 January 2017 but asked no questions.

70. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

Member of Council submitted written questions to members of the City Executive Board. The questions, written answers, and summaries of supplementary questions and answers are in the supplement to these minutes.

71. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Council heard addresses and questions to members of the City Executive Board from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Addresses were heard from:

1. Adam Berry
2. Sobiah Hussain
3. Rick Mower, Director of RAW Workshop
4. Liz Sawyer
5. Sarah Lasenby
6. Artwell
7. Jane Alexander

Board members responded to these addresses.

The Lord Mayor thanked those speaking.

The supplement to the minutes contains the full text and addresses delivered broadly as submitted; summaries where these were not delivered as submitted; and summarised verbal responses from the Board Members.

72. Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules - Stop the violent crackdown on innocent civilians in the Kashmir Valley

Council considered a petition meeting the criteria for debate under the Council's petitions scheme in line with the procedure for large petitions.

Council heard the head petitioner's address (attached to the supplement to the minutes) and considered the motions submitted in response to the petition.

Councillor Goddard withdrew his submitted motion asking the Council to take the action requested in the petition. Councillor Chapman proposed the motion submitted by Councillor Rowley and amended this as set out below. On being seconded by Councillor Goddard, debated and put to the vote this was declared carried.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

(1) Council thanks those concerned members of the public who have addressed and petitioned us on the subject of Kashmir. We share their grave concern for the safety and welfare of the people of Kashmir; we condemn the violence and lament the loss of life. We also share the petitioners' hope for a just peace.

(2) Council believes that a permanent resolution to the Kashmir dispute would bring considerable benefits to the people of Kashmir, enhance the overall peace and security of the region, and bring comfort to many Oxford's British Kashmiris with their family connections there.

(3) To those ends, Council calls on both elected Members of Parliament of Oxford and on MEPs living in Oxford to urge the Government to engage with international partners to:

(a) Press all sides in the dispute to condemn all political violence and any abuse of human rights, in particular the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and observe all international standards of human rights;

(b) Insist that all sides permit unimpeded access for international human rights monitors throughout Kashmir;

(c) Involve the people of Kashmir themselves in any dialogue as well as the state parties to the dispute;

(d) Protect civilians, promote peace, and work toward a negotiated and democratic solution that will allow the people of Kashmir to exercise their right to decide their own future free from coercion and intimidation.

73. Outside organisations/Committee Chair reports: Oxfordshire Partnerships Update Report

Council had before it a report from the Economic Development Manager (submitted on behalf of Councillor Price) giving an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Council noted the report.

74. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair.

Councillor Gant moved the report; thanked Councillor Tidball and the devolution review group for their work; reported that the Finance review group had concluded their work on the budget; and reported that Councillor Coulter would be chairing the new Health Inequality Panel.

He asked for suggestions for review topics.

Council noted the report without comment.

75. Motions on notice

Council had before it six motions on notice and amendments submitted in accordance with Council procedure rule 11.17, and reached decisions as set out below.

Council adopted motions:

- a. Support the Paris Climate Change Agreement
- b. Waiver of fees for interments of stillborn babies, babies and children
- c. Secondary School Funding and Pupil Places in Oxford
- d. City Council's response to One Oxfordshire

Two motions were not taken as the time for debate had elapsed:

- e. Avoiding a 'Hard Brexit'
- f. Supporting Local Social Enterprise

a) Support the Paris Climate Change Agreement

Councillor Tanner proposed his submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Landell Mills.

Councillor Simmons proposed his amendment, seconded by Councillor Brandt.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:

This Council is deeply concerned by the reported views of the president of the United States about climate change. We welcome the conclusion of the United Nations climate change conference in Marrakesh that the Paris Agreement should be implemented in full.

For the sake of Oxford's children and grandchildren we again commit this city to playing its full part in tackling climate change. We will continue to work to reduce CO₂ and other climate warming gases in Oxford. We will continue to embrace a low carbon future for the benefit of the people of Oxford and the wider world.

We congratulate the residents of Oxford on making big reductions in their carbon footprints at home, travelling and at work. We continue to support the aim of reducing Oxford's carbon footprint by 40% by 2020, compared to levels in 2005. In line with the Paris Agreement target, we pledge to work in partnership with others to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions across Oxford within the second half of the century. As part of this commitment we also pledge that the Council will, by 2050, use only 100% renewable energy. We ask the City Executive Board to set appropriate interim targets to ensure that these pledges are achieved.

Oxford City Council will carry-on reducing its own carbon footprint by at least 5% a year every year. We will continue to work with Low Carbon Oxford, the Low Carbon Hub, the

Covenant of Mayors, Climate Alliance and others to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of Oxford city.

We call on our MPs and MEPs to do all they can to support the Paris Climate Change Agreement. We call on the other councils of Oxfordshire, our twin cities and everyone in Oxford to redouble their efforts to prevent the over-heating of our planet.

b) Waiver of fees for interments of stillborns, babies and children

Councillor Wilkinson proposed her submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Wade.

After debate and being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:

Council is sympathetic to the suffering of families in Oxford who experience the loss of stillborn babies, babies and children and wishes to support grieving parents as much as it can.

Council notes that the number of interments of stillborn babies, babies and children in Oxford during the financial year 2015/2016 was as follows:

Botley Cemetery – 7
Headington Cemetery – 2
Wolvercote Cemetery – 6
Total – 15

Council further notes that the average number of such interments between 1998 and 2016 has been 18 per year, with a peak of 23 in financial year 2007/2008.

Income for fees and charges for 2015/16 interments of stillborn babies, babies and children in Oxford totalled £5,100.

Council notes the debate on baby loss in the House of Commons on 13 October 2016 and the excellent support given by Sands Stillborn and Neonatal death charity, and understands that some local authorities do not make a charge in these circumstances.

Council therefore requests the Chief Executive to investigate whether a mechanism for waiving fees charged by the Council for the burial of children or stillborn babies of Oxford residents might be introduced.

c) City Council's response to One Oxfordshire

With Council's agreement this motion was moved to be taken third in the debate.

Councillor Simmons proposed his submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Wolff.

Councillor Gant, having submitted an amendment, withdrew this on the advice of the Monitoring Officer that it would negate the spirit of the original motion.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:

This Council notes the One Oxfordshire proposals recently published by Oxfordshire County Council which make the case for a single, countywide unitary authority. This will involve the abolition of Oxford City Council.

This Council has just completed its own cross-party scrutiny review (Devolution Working Group) which looked at both local government reorganisation and devolution.

All these scrutiny recommendations have since been accepted by the City Executive Board.

This Council believes that the recommendations from the scrutiny review group remain relevant and should form the basis of a robust response from the City Council opposing the One Oxfordshire proposals.

d) Secondary School Funding and Pupil Places in Oxford

Councillor Tidball proposed her submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Price.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:

Continuing its decimation of funding for our children's education, the Tory Government's Fairer Funding proposals will hit disadvantaged children hardest and will leave 98% of schools facing a real terms cut in per-pupil funding.. That's an average cut to secondary schools of -£405,611 and an average loss per secondary school pupil of -£477. In Oxford, schools such as the Oxford Academy will face a damaging -£414,208 cut in its funding by 2019 and a -£616 cut per pupil.

This reform will place more pressure on the shortage of secondary school places in Oxford. The way in which school location and catchment areas have worked has meant that several areas of the city have been unable to count any one school as the school for their local community. Parental choice has simply not been operating effectively. As a result, children have been scattered across many different schools when they go into year 7, leading to the break up of friendships and local peer groups and long bus and cycle journeys across the city. It also causes huge amounts of stress for children with Special Educational Needs. By 2019, there will not be enough places in Oxford secondaries for all the children who are moving up in that year. The proposals for a new free school on the Meadowbrook site are controversial and have been delayed. An interim solution involving temporary buildings on the Cherwell School site, allowing time for a satisfactory long term alternative (possibly on Osney Mead) is being developed. It is vital that measures are put in place within the next few months to meet the 2019/20 'bulge'; and that time is given to find the best long term solution to meet the expected pattern of population growth across the city.

Council calls on our local MPs to support the City Council in opposing these funding reductions and calls on the City Executive Board to work with the University, the River Academy Trust and the City Council's planning team, and to consult with Oxfordshire County Council, to find a satisfactory long term solution to the capacity problems of Oxford's secondary schools.

e) Avoiding a 'Hard Brexit'

With Council's agreement this third motion was deferred till later in the debate to allow debate on the motion 'City Council's response to One Oxfordshire'. This was then not taken as the time for debating motions had then elapsed.

f) Supporting Local Social Enterprise

This was not taken as the time for debating motions had elapsed.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.40 pm

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To: Council
Date: 6 February 2017
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Board Members and Leader republished after the meeting to include supplementary questions and responses

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Board 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.
2. Responses are included where available.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report has been republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms are briefly explained in the glossary or explanatory footnotes.

Questions and responses

Board member for A Clean and Green Oxford

1. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Tanner – switch to green energy

With the prices of green (100% renewable) energy contracts becoming more price competitive with fossil fuel-derived energy, will the portfolio holder commit to making sure that the council switches to these contracts at the earliest possible date, especially given the commitment in his motion to reduce the Council's carbon emissions?

Response

With a finite budget our approach is to invest in reducing energy consumption and the cost of energy to the Council.. The greenest energy is the energy that isn't used. The next priority is local renewable energy generation. We pursue these options rather than pay a significant premium for green electricity through the National Grid. The Council is now generating c. 750,000kWh of clean electricity per year from our own PV arrays - 8% of our current electricity demand.

The CEB report on energy procurement in February 2016 outlined this approach, and also set a level for the premium the Council would be prepared to pay at 2% above standard price. The price premium for green electricity has been coming down and Officers are tracking this, and whenever new contracts are due for renewal, request prices for standard electricity and certificated green electricity (ie. having Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin - REGO status) - if no more than 2% premium then this will inform the decision to be made by the Head of Financial Services and the Lead Member.

2. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Tanner – Bonn Square

What measures are being taken to improve cleanliness and street lighting in Bonn Square?

Response

Bonn Square is washed weekly and litter picked 5-6 times a day. In addition, a deep clean is undertaken every 6 months, normally in February (subject to the weather) and August. The next deep clean will be undertaken within the next 3-4 weeks.

So far as the lighting is concerned, this was specially designed when Bonn Square was rebuilt and there has been a recent component failure that has temporarily reduced the lighting level in the area. Replacement parts have been difficult to source but we have now found what we need and all of the lights should be repaired and fully functional in the week commencing 6th February 2017.

3. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Tanner - parking charges for diesel vehicles

It is now recognised that diesel-fuelled vehicles are responsible for much of the highly hazardous very small particulates polluting the air in the city. Would you consider following the example of Westminster Council in raising parking charges for diesel vans and cars to improve the air quality in Oxford?

Response

Yes - the City Council is committed to encouraging more sustainable modes of transport and will ensure that the Westminster initiative is scrutinised when the pilot has been concluded. Since the first Oxford Transport Strategy in 1972 this Council has always recognised the importance of encouraging vehicles out of the city and the latest proposal to expand Seacourt Park & Ride reaffirms our commitment to this policy.

4. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Tanner – turning off engines

Poor air quality is a significant concern in the City and in St Clements. S.42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 sets out the legal requirement for drivers to turn off engines in stationary vehicles on the public highway. It is the responsibility of councils, not the police, to enforce this. Following the example of Islington, should leaflets be produced by the City Council to make this clear to drivers?

Response

Whatever steps we take to tackle pollution in Oxford must be effective and focus on what will do the most good. Encouraging drivers to turn off their engines is certainly part of this package but not necessarily the most crucial part. However I will investigate and see what can be done. Our main focus is on creating a Zero Emission Zone with the County Council and encouraging the take-up of electric vehicles.

Supplementary question

Would you agree that coaches running their engines in St Giles were causing air pollution and should these be asked to turn their engines off, perhaps with the threat of penalty fines?

Supplementary Response

These created a noisy environment as well, although the air quality in St Giles was not particularly bad even with the coaches. It was a question of where to best target resources but we will consider what action to take.

5. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Tanner – air quality measurements

What air quality measurements will be taken to provide evidence of impact on air quality once the new car parking (*at Westgate*) is opened?

Response

We have carried out air quality monitoring around the Westgate Shopping Centre for a number of years utilising several diffusion tubes at eight locations. Air quality monitoring will continue at and around the New Westgate Shopping Centre when it reopens. Full results of the air quality monitoring around the Westgate and across the rest of Oxford can be seen here: <https://oxfordshire.air-quality.info/>

If levels of pollution are above safe levels the City Council will insist that action is taken to bring those levels below the legal maxima.

Board member for Community Safety

6. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Sinclair – PSPO review

When will the council advise on the PSPO review and what opportunities will there be to partake in deliberations on the report?

Response

Following my press statement last week I am seeking to bring forward the CEB report to April from its current scheduled date of May. Councillors can input into the report through the scrutiny process and via briefings to Groups. We are writing to the consultation respondents to inform them of our proposed way forward.

Board member for Culture and Communities

7. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Simm - Chinese Community Advice Centre's grant

Many here will have enjoyed the Chinese New Year celebrations which were somewhat marred by the cut in the Chinese Community Advice Centre's grant. What is the reason for this?

Response

There were a number of reasons why funding was discontinued for the Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre at the end of the 2010/11 three year grant programme. At that point, all funded organisations were written to reminding them that their funding ended 31.03.11 and that there would be a new programme from April 2011.

It was a time when we were also waiting for decisions on funding cuts from the Coalition Governments Comprehensive Spending Review.

The decision not to fund the Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre (OCCAC) for their advice work from April 2011 was due to the level of competition we had from other organisations bidding for grants.

Between 2012/13 to 2014/15 the OCCAC received a total of £6,020 through the open bidding and small grant programmes for a variety of health and active community initiatives plus contributions towards room hire for their New Year celebrations. We have not received any application since.

8. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Simm – EOCC capacity

Based on information provided by the architects involved in looking at options for the East Oxford Community Centre redevelopment, supplemented by my own research, I have calculated that the Council's preferred Option 3 (which involves building a small new two-storey building behind the existing Fusion Arts building and selling off the north side of the EOCC site, the East Oxford Games Hall and Film Oxford) will result in a 45% loss of internal gross floor area for community use (or more if the loss of external space is also taken into account).

How does this square with the Council's aims as set out in the recent consultation that it wants to 'increase usage', 'offer a better multifunctional capacity' and appeal to a 'wide variety of groups' ?

Response

Whilst Option 3 would represent a net loss of floor space over the 3 existing community facilities, the intention is that the re-provided facilities could accommodate all of the existing activities (excluding the sports hall uses which could be accommodated in existing local sports facilities) in an improved environment, offering far greater flexibility and comfort of use.

Although the consultation supported this option, we are working in partnership with key cultural organisations to see if the scheme could attract funding from the Arts Council which could enable an amended scheme to be developed.

Supplementary question

Will there be time at the next reference group meeting to discuss 'option 3+'?

Supplementary Response

We are in discussion with two groups to see if we can raise funding to provide more community space and develop an imaginative scheme to make best use of the site and provide an efficient, enjoyable and usable space for the community. We are continuing to discuss proposals with the community association.

Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services

9. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Brown– contractors’ taxation

What has been done to assess the extent of the Council's potential exposure under the proposed changes to tax arrangements for off-payroll working in the public sector (Schedule 1 of the Draft Finance Act 2017)?

How many contractors are working off-payroll on engagement to the Council (either directly or via agencies) and who may need to be assessed to see whether these provisions apply? To what extent has such assessment been completed?

What approach is the Council taking to ensuring compliance with the proposed legislation and how far are measures in place to ensure such compliance?

What additional costs are anticipated as a result of the Council complying with this legislation (including, but not limited to the cost of additional Employer's National Insurance)?

Response

The consultation on the legislation for HMRC proposed changes for “off-payroll” working in the public sector (IR35) only closed at the end of January 2017. Whilst the legislation is not yet finalised, it is expected to come into effect from 6th April 2017.

At the moment council officers are still working out how this legislation will impact on the council and specifically the potential number of contractors working for us who would be covered by the new legislative provisions. Officers in HR, Payroll, Procurement, Legal and Reed our temporary staffing provider are currently working together on this.

Officers have attended several seminars run by industry professionals to improve understanding of the implications for us. We anticipate that by the end of February 2017 we should be clear about which of our contractors are affected, what our ongoing procedure will be for managing these circumstances and any potential financial implications. What we know at present is that the majority of our “off-payroll” workers are placed via an agency, and we anticipate that this legislation will only affect a minority of these people.

Supplementary question

Given that this can have serious consequences for us, can we be assured that officers will explore in detail potential exposure to risks because of our agency staffing arrangements?

Supplementary Response

Yes but we consider the risk low as we do not have many agency staff.

Board member for Housing

10. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Rowley – Gatehouse grant

The Gatehouse in St Giles had an average of 335 visits each week during January. 49% of the visitors were rough sleepers and this percentage is increasing every quarter. The Gatehouse offers food, clothing, referral onwards and general support

unconditionally. The Gatehouse anticipates a deficit this year of £17,000 in excess of income, owing to a decrease in income from a number of sources including the City Council. At the same time as the number of homeless people has increased, staff costs have had to increase to cope with additional regulation and supervision. This is despite the fact that the service is totally reliant on the commitment of 300-400 volunteers.

Will the Portfolio Holder undertake to look at how the £5,580 grant to the Gatehouse can be increased?

Response

The Council balances a number of priorities through its commissioning framework for rough sleeping in order to achieve the most favourable outcomes for homeless persons. A key priority for commissioning going forward is to prioritise bed provision in response to cuts from the County Council. It is therefore likely that many organisations currently funded will see reductions in the coming years.

The Council reduced the funding to the Gatehouse through mutual agreement with the organisation from £9,502 per year in 2013/14 to £5,860 per year from 2014/15 on, and it is not proposed that this is increased. A report to City Executive Board on 9th March 2017 will set out spending plans for 2017/18.

The Council is not one of the main funding sources for the Gatehouse, and their most recent accounts show the charity has assets in excess of £1m and around £200,000 cashable savings in reserve, which suggests that they are able to absorb this annual revenue deficit and continue the good work that they undertake.

Supplementary question

Were you aware that despite the apparently healthy position of the Gatehouse, they do not have enough reserves to continue long-term?

Supplementary Response

The grant was based on the accounts supplied but if the position is worse than we understood then this can be reviewed for the final report due for the Executive Board's consideration on 9 March. The Gatehouse is welcome to contribute to that and come to speak.

11. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley – Home Building Fund

How is the Council responding to the opportunities offered by the Government's new Home Building Fund (announced October 2016) which is intended to help, amongst others, small and community builders and regeneration specialists?

Response

The Home Building Fund is intended to provide development finance for private sector organisations to undertake development of five homes or more. As both the Council and its wholly owned housing company are classified as public sector organisations, we are not eligible to apply for loans from this funding source which in any case would be at commercial rates and therefore more expensive than finance raised from the Public Works Loan Board. However use of this fund will be considered when we are working with private sector partners on development and regeneration schemes along with other funding sources, to maximise viability where possible.

12. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley – Community Housing Fund

How is the Council responding to the opportunities offered by the Government's new Community Housing Fund (announced December 2016) which is intended to help, amongst others, community-led housing projects?

Response

The City Council has been awarded a total of £54,859 in Community Housing Fund, and we are now considering how this might be most effectively used.

Discussions have taken place with the DCLG to establish further guidance, and an appropriate specialist community-led housing adviser has been allocated to explore options. Following this, Officers will then formulate an informed approach and communications plan.

13. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - community based housing

With the formation of our Housing Company, the availability of Council owned sites, and funding to support community-based housing schemes, will the Council be embracing this moment to promote and champion a pilot community-based housing project and work with Oxford's community-led housing experts.

Response

The award of £54,859 is not a significant amount of funding, given the affordability issues and high land values in Oxford. As ever, site availability is the key issue and main barrier to development. Given this, the Council will need to work in partnership to maximise the opportunity that this funding presents and will work with stakeholders and community-led housing groups to deliver affordable and tangible outcomes within the available resources.

Supplementary question

Could council owned land be made available for a pilot scheme?

Supplementary Response

The option is always there and we will continue to explore options but a viable proposal has not yet been found.

14. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Rowley– rough sleeping beds

Can the Board member please supply the following information on provision for rough sleepers and homeless people:

- (a) How many temporary beds does the City currently provide for them?
- (b) What measures has the council taken since January 2016 to increase this figure?

Response

The County Council has to date funded support provision for the adult homeless pathway. This has funded 286 bed spaces, of which 252 are in Oxford. This funding is being cut (to zero by April 2019) and reduced provision will be funded going forward, through joint commissioning from April 2017 to March 2020. This is as set out in the report to CEB on 15th Sept 2016. The first change to this commissioning and the number of beds is on 1st June 2017. The City Council also intends to directly commission some support to maintain a target of 150 supported bed spaces available

to Oxford City connected clients. This will be further set out in detail in a report to CEB on 9th March 2017.

15. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley – homelessness budget

Is it true that the City Council is actually on-track to underspend its homelessness budget this year to the tune of around £150k? How does the portfolio holder justify this, and the £900k homelessness reserve at a time when there are increasing numbers of rough sleepers on Oxford's streets that need our support?

Response

The expected final spend for 2016/17 and commissioning plans for 2017/18 will be set out in a report to CEB on 9th March 2017. Services for rough sleepers and single homeless persons are going through a period of unprecedented change, and the Council has agreed some joint commissioning with partners to protect some services, and will directly commission to protect others. To date, there has been no loss of bed spaces in the adult homeless pathway, and the Council is taking a prudent approach to sustainably support services in the long term. As such, the Council will be re-focusing much of its commissioning in this area from 'wrap-around' services to bed spaces. Funding has been deliberately underspent in 2016/17 to provide additional funding in 2017/18 and 2018/19 as services transition.

The £900k homelessness reserve is a provision by the Council to provide a contingency, should it be required, over the term of the MTFP, for increased homelessness pressures. It is not earmarked to rough sleeping & single homeless services in particular. It is more prudent to use this fund to mitigate any increased cost pressures for statutory homeless provision, including temporary accommodation for persons to whom the Council has, or may have, a statutory duty. Nationally homelessness has increased, not least in response to benefits cuts, austerity, rising rents etc. To date however, our key performance measures for homeless acceptances and households in temporary accommodation are being maintained.

16. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - Iffley Open House

Will the portfolio holder join me in welcoming initiatives, such as the Iffley Open House, a group of volunteer housing campaigners who are working with residents, leaseholders and property owners to turn the empty car showroom on Iffley Road into temporary accommodation for the homeless?

Response

I welcome the fact that a group of homeless people are under cover and not subject to the extreme vulnerability of sleeping on the streets in winter. I was happy therefore to support the request for the owners to work co-operatively to prevent anyone being ejected back on to the street.

Having said that, the Iffley Open House is not a sustainable initiative that will provide accommodation for homeless people for anything but a short period. It is not linked into the wider network of commissioned services. The Street Population Outreach Team has visited the premises and made contact with the occupiers.

I am concerned for the welfare of the occupiers, particularly as related to the security of the building, and I have made these views known to those involved in the occupation and urged that they work with professional support services

I would welcome the provision of new affordable housing units that meet housing needs, and would seek for such accommodation to be well managed and to meet all relevant housing, welfare, health and safety, and planning requirements. There is no information to suggest that this building complies with these requirements.

17. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - Iffley Open House

In the light of Iffley Open House, will the portfolio holder agree to look into developing an Empty Space Protocol covering issues such as legal rights, property management, safety and insurance to encourage the safe use of empty properties to temporarily house the homeless, in particular over the cold winter months?

Response

emergency accommodation provision for rough sleepers in exceptionally cold weather (usually where forecasts predict that temperatures will fall to below zero for three consecutive nights), and this year is working with new providers that are considering opening up new venues under this protocol, making effective use of volunteers.

The Council does also have an Empty Property Strategy focused on bringing un-used properties back into effective use.

Developing an additional Empty Space Protocol is not considered an effective use of Council resources. It is incumbent on anyone proposing to operate a property to ensure full compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance, and where necessary, to seek the relevant permissions and licences from the Council.

18. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - Iffley Open House

Will the Council be doing outreach work with Iffley Open House residents to ensure that they don't have to rough sleep on the streets again after the empty car showroom is eventually demolished?

Response

The Street Outreach team has already visited the premises and made contact with the occupants, and has also been in touch with Wadham college.

As with any rough sleeper across the city, Oxford SPOT operates an assertive outreach service through its early morning and evening street shifts (not more than 48 hours apart) and seeks to engage with clients to end rough sleeping. This of course depends on the team securing access to the property however.

The Council would welcome initiatives from the Iffley Open House team to help support clients leaving this provision to move into suitable and sustainable accommodation.

19. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

How many times has the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol been triggered since the end of October 2016?

Response

In this winter period, SWEPE first opened on 29/11/16. It has been open for 18 nights, providing a safe and secure space for between 5 and 27 clients a night, and a total of 313 unique stays during these periods, across 5 venues.

Dates open:

29/11/2016 to 30/11/2016

26/12/2016 to 27/12/2016

02/01/2017 to 05/01/2017

12/01/2017 to 13/01/2017

19/01/2017 to 26/01/2017

Supplementary question

The SWEP was triggered for 2 nights but the temperature fell below freezing on 9 nights. Why was the protocol not triggered for 9 nights?

Supplementary Response

The protocol is triggered when the temperature is below freezing for 3 nights in a row. There is some discretion on this so we can review the policy and its application.

20. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2

During January 2017 there were several nights when temperatures in Oxford dropped to well below freezing. Do you agree that in cases of such low temperatures, the Council should be taking a more 'common sense' approach to triggering the SWEP (as recommended by Homeless Link and others) rather than waiting for three consecutive days of sub-zero weather?

Response

SWEP is opened on forecasts, not after three consecutive days of sub-zero weather. Discretion is also applied, for example, where forecasts are variable and near to zero, or where exceptionally bad weather conditions prevail. This discretion was applied to at least one of the periods SWEP was opened in January.

21. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley - No Second Night Out

Does Councillor Rowley accept that because of No Second Night Out policy, many of Oxford rough sleepers deliberately evade the official rough sleeping count, and official figures therefore significantly underestimate the extent of Oxford's homelessness issue?

Response

No. I see no correlation between the 'No Second Night Out' approach that is designed to provide prompt assistance to rough sleepers to get them off the streets as soon as possible, preventing further detriment to their well-being, and 'deliberate evasion' of the count. In any case, the official rough sleeping count is separate from the street outreach work of the Oxford SPOT team.

I am aware that some rough sleepers do seek to avoid notice for various reasons, not least because people sleeping rough have in the past been victims of unprovoked violence in Oxford. I certainly do not blame them for this, but I am certain that it has nothing to do with the NSNO approach, which makes efficient help available to rough sleepers wherever they are in the City.

The count operates under very strict protocols and with a DCLG verifier on the count itself. The count covers all parts of the city, including open ground, with a focus on all

sites where there have been reports of rough sleeping. It takes place in the hours after midnight on the night selected for this.

The Oxford City count this year (Nov 2016) was 33, compared with 39 in 2015. The Council also undertakes an estimate, using nationally agreed methodology, and that was 47. On any one night, it is expected that some people will have found a place to sleep off the streets, or who have not bedded-down at all.

There is a large and visible street presence of individuals in some parts of the city at present, although some of these persons have accommodation that they can access.

Supplementary question

If I can arrange a meeting with rough sleepers to explain how 'No Second Night Out' impacts them will you come and speak to them?

Supplementary Response

Yes. 'No Second Night Out' helps most people but I am aware it isn't suitable help for everyone on the streets.

Board member for Leisure, Parks and Sport

22. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Smith – Florence Park

Given that the council is reluctant to put up signs in Florence Park (the response to an earlier question to Council), would they consider painting a request to cyclists to cycle slowly and safely on the surface of the paths in the park at all entrances?

Response

We will talk about cycling in the park through at the next Friends meeting and then take a view on what may need to be done.

23. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Smith – Alexandra Park

At Council in December Cllr Smith provided a welcome update on plans to move part of the fencing around the grass tennis courts in Alexandra Park, Summertown. The Councillor said the work would be carried out "in the New Year". Could she provide an update and more detailed timing?

Response

The works are scheduled to start in March and complete in April 2017. We are currently in the process of procuring the new fencing.

Board member for Planning and Regulatory Services

24. From Councillor Goff to Councillor Hollingsworth – parking at JR

I recently had occasion to attend an outpatient appointment at the JR and experienced first hand the difficulties many are currently experiencing gaining access to the hospital due to an acute parking shortage, it took the 700 bus 40 minutes to get up the hill. On returning the next day by car things were much the same. This of course not only

directly affects ambulance admissions but plays havoc with clinic times and clinic transport. Can the member give an assurance that the City Council and Executive Board are doing as much as they can to bring pressure on the County Council, the bus operators and the Oxford Universities Hospitals Trust to improve access for patients and visitors?

Response

As I responded to a previous question, the Trust is currently developing a masterplan for its sites in Oxford, and the City Council has been in contact with them while that document is developed. When the Trust publish their plans, which we hope to happen soon, we will be working closely with them to make sure that the masterplan and the City Council's Local Plan align.

The problem of parking on the JR site is one that the Trust is looking to manage, and it is important that they use the limited parking spaces on the site to give priority to patients and their visitors.

Supplementary question

Is there scope to improve the 700 bus service eg extend it to weekends, reduce fares, make it more useful for hospital staff.

Supplementary Response

I am willing to consider options but there will then be costs to meet. All large employers need to consider how to get their staff to and from work. It's regrettable this wasn't tackled earlier.

25. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth – park and shuttle for JR

Would the City Council be prepared to play a strong/ leading role in developing a "park and shuttle" package for hospital staff to free up car parking spaces at the JR.

Response

The primary responsibility for managing staff car parking on the JR site is the Trust. Current Local Plan policy SP23 governs the John Radcliffe site; that policy requires the Trust to "minimise car parking spaces on site", a policy designed to reduce the impact of traffic congestion on Headington and Marston. The City Council will of course discuss options for better management of staff parking on the Trust's sites in Headington, and help to bring together interested parties, but in the end the decisions about managing the issue must rest with the management of the Trust.

26. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth –Seacourt P&R

Has the City Council undertaken a traffic management plan for the proposed expansion of Seacourt park and ride, and would increasing the capacity not lead to further congestion at the west end of Botley Road and elevated interchange with the A34?

Response

Yes, a detailed traffic management assessment has been undertaken and these were submitted as part of the planning application. In response to comments on the application further analysis has been undertaken which assesses the impact of additional trips on the network, including those trips resulting from the Westgate development, with and without the proposed expansion at Seacourt park and ride.

Information regarding this new work will be submitted to the Planning Authority in due course.

The models for the proposed scheme showed some minor increases in queueing times (of about six seconds) on the slip road in the morning, with decreases of 28 seconds for inbound traffic coming from West Way, making an average reduction in journey time of 0.5 seconds per vehicle. In the evening there is a small additional journey time of 10 seconds outbound along the Botley Road.

By contrast, without the scheme, there will be significant (measured in minutes not seconds) increases in journey times and queueing in all directions in both the morning and evening peak periods, with some modelled scenarios not able to accommodate all the traffic (indicating queues that would extend well beyond the junction, including onto the A34 and back into the city centre).

In summary, due to development in the city and the general increase in journeys associated with that the status quo ante is not the marker against which the proposed scheme should be assessed. Particularly since the park and ride site is already at capacity, the traffic management assessments of the proposed development should be compared with the 'do nothing' scenario, where additional trips must drive into the city centre due to lack of capacity at Seacourt park and ride.

27. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth - expanding Seacourt

What analysis of demand for car parking has been undertaken to justify expanding Seacourt, while proposing to lose capacity at Redbridge?

Response

The demand analysis is based on current usage data, and is published as part of the planning application. This shows that Seacourt is currently operationally full much of the time; demand will increase significantly when the Westgate opens, not least from the staff employed there. Redbridge, which serves traffic from a different catchment area, is currently rarely operationally full, and is judged likely to remain so even with increased demand from Westgate.

28. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth – smart signs

Why don't we have smart- signage around the city informing the motoring public about capacity in park and ride car parks around the city?

Response

This would be a County Council responsibility as highways authority. However the City Council would of course support such provision.

29. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth – Westgate car park charges

Will the car park at Westgate be cheaper than car parking at the City park and ride car parks?

Response

The Westgate Alliance has not yet announced the charges that they will implement at Westgate. However they have been in very regular contact with the bus companies, the City Council and the County Council, and are well aware of the importance of the park

and ride system in getting staff and customers to the new centre. This was something that was a critical part of the original planning application. It seems highly improbable therefore that they would now pursue a policy of undercutting the park and ride car park system.

30. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth- Westgate buses

Will the Board Member be minded to influence bus operators or Westgate operators to provide any kind of shuttle service from any of the existing park and rides to the Westgate Centre?

Response

The bus routes around the Westgate have been subject to extended deliberation over some years, and the provision of a bus priority route around the development, with extensive stops, has occupied an enormous amount of time and effort by City Council planners, County Council officers, the bus companies and the Westgate Alliance. The new centre will be served by very regular services from three of the Park and Ride sites.

31. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hollingsworth - local plan

Could the Councillor give council an update on emerging thinking around preferred options in the local plan consultation? Could he confirm if the proposed timetable for the second round of consultation is likely to be met? Could he also confirm if he is happy with the reach of the first round of consultation?

Response

Taking each of these three questions in turn:

- a) It would not be appropriate to speculate on what might or might not be preferred options for particular sites until the whole preferred options document is published this summer. However I hope that this first draft of Oxford's new Local Plan will reflect this Council's commitments to housing, to a successful economy, to the environment of our city and to the health and wellbeing of the people that live here.
- b) At present I believe that the proposed timetable will be met.
- c) I am broadly content with the reach of the first round of consultation, whose aim was not to be exhaustive but to go out to seek the views of those many of Oxford's residents who do not often engage with consultations on strategic planning. Combining different approaches, in particular social media and outreach work by our planning officers, the City Council was able to hear and take into account the views of many hundreds of people beyond the amenity groups and associations - who of course ably, readily and productively engage with consultations of this sort.

Board member for Young People, Schools and Skills

32. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Kennedy – programme assisting teachers with housing

The cost of housing continues to thwart efforts by Oxford's schools to attract and retain high calibre teachers. Why does the uptake of our programme to assist teachers with housing costs remain so poor and what more can be done to improve uptake?

Response

Current uptake

The teachers' loan scheme has been extended since it opened in 2014 to include secondary schools and wider eligibility for teachers for financial help. Although the scheme was slow to pick up in its initial form, since it was extended in December 2015 there has been a marked increase in activity.

To date, two loans have been completed and there are four live applications: three of these applicants are looking for property to buy and four teachers have discussed their housing options with Catalyst with a view to formally applying.

Improving uptake

Catalyst, who are responsible for publicity as well as administration, are active in keeping up the profile of the scheme with the schools. They regularly send publicity material to schools and hold drop in sessions to answer questions and take expressions of interest. So far, after school sessions have been held at Oxford Academy and Oxford Spire and they are looking to do more, particularly with the primary schools.

Both Catalyst and the Council are aware that the scheme eligibility criteria should help teachers meet their individual housing needs and aspirations and this is particularly so with house prices so high.

Features like the value limit for property purchase and areas where teachers are able to buy are set so that applicants have a reasonable choice of types and prices of housing. These will be kept under review to ensure that teachers can take advantage of changes in the local housing market.

Deputy Leader of the Council, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health

33. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner - Standingford House

Does Council have any plans for Standingford House, Cave Street and the neighbouring Council-owned building?

Response

Yes. As part of the Council's current capital programme, budget has been made available to invest in our commercial portfolio to both generate additional income and deliver economic growth. A project is underway with the objectives of both improving the existing building but also extending it to provide more space for small businesses.

Supplementary question

Is the intention to retain the building or sell it?

Supplementary Response

The intention is to retain the building, improve it and expand the provision of small units.

34. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner– cost of Seacourt expansion

What is the total estimated cost of expanding the Seacourt Park & Ride (including both planning and preparation costs to date and future budgeted costs)?

Response

The figures are in the table below:

Seacourt Park & Ride Extension																													
Capital Cost Additional 668 Spaces with Waiting Facility																													
	£																												
Spend over life of project to December 2016	294,122.68																												
Anticipated cost to complete project	3,941,781.00																												
Total cost of project	4,235,903.68																												
Expenditure by year to date																													
2014/15	40,071.80																												
2015/16	214,662.27																												
2016/17	39,388.61																												
	294,122.68																												
Revenue Implications	Base Budget																												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2016-17</th> <th>2017-18</th> <th>2018-19</th> <th>2019-20</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">(83)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(166)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(447)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(447)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">22</td> <td style="text-align: right;">45</td> <td style="text-align: right;">89</td> <td style="text-align: right;">89</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">11</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40</td> <td style="text-align: right;">39</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">(50)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(100)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(318)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(319)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">(50)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(160)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(320)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(320)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(110)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(160)</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	(83)	(166)	(447)	(447)	22	45	89	89	11	21	40	39	(50)	(100)	(318)	(319)	(50)	(160)	(320)	(320)		(110)	(160)	
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20																										
(83)	(166)	(447)	(447)																										
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	(110)	(160)																											
Parking Charges Income																													
Revenue Costs																													
Interest Charge																													
Contribution																													
As per MTFP (Revised Base Budget)																													
Appendix 3 annual increase in contribution																													

35. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner – NHS motion results

Further to the motion proposed by the Green Group, and passed with amendments by this Council, regarding the Council's views on the NHS Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) can the portfolio holder please update Council, and put on public record, the following:

- a) Has a reply been received from the Secretary of State for Health and other relevant government ministers?
- b) If so, what was that response and has it been published, discussed in any forum or replied to?
- c) If, and when, a response is received what is the suggested forum/timescale for discussing it?
- d) Has a reply been received from either of the City's MPs?
- e) If so, and as above, how has it been disseminated and responded to?
- f) Does the Council intend to submit its own response to the phase one consultation on the BOB STP (due to end April 2017)?
- g) If so, how will the response be formulated?

h) What more could the Council do to highlight the potential damage to local NHS services in as a result of the changes proposed in the BOB STP?

Response

To date there have been no responses received, and we will seek replies. We intend to submit a response to the phase one consultation on the BOB STP, which will reflect the sentiments of the motion agreed by Full Council. We will consider how best to highlight the consultation and the potential impacts of the proposed changes through our website and news releases.

36. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Turner – trading companies competition

In developing city owned trading companies - what measures will be used to prevent monopolies and unfair pricing developing?

Response

When a local authority forms a company to enter into competition with the private sector in regard to selling services to third party customers it immediately becomes subject to a wide range of new legislation and controls. For example, a local authority is prohibited from providing unfair financial or other advantages to its companies under the State Aid regulations (which are designed to eliminate any State-funded anti-competitive distortion of the market). In the unlikely event that a local authority company was ever able to obtain a very significant market share, it would be subject to the Competition Act 1998, which contains measures aimed at preventing abuse of a monopoly position. Furthermore, such advantages as are enjoyed by local authorities, eg in regard to Corporation Tax, immediately come to an end. It must face the full rigour of the tax regime. In this way, a local authority company must indeed compete on a level playing field with its competitors, and it will only achieve the market share it deserves.

In addition, as any City Council owned company will be subject to the governance provisions set out in its Shareholder's Agreement and its Articles of Association, the City Council itself will always be in a position to exercise a significant level of control over the nature of the trading undertaken.

37. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Turner - budget consultation

As the Board Member will be aware, the consultation on the draft budget for 2017/18 started on 19th December and ended on 27th January. One batch of consultation alerts requesting people to participate was emailed out on 20th January: this meant that the residents alerted in that batch have only had 7 days to read through the substantial documentation and make comments, yet the website shows the consultation period to be 39 days.

Can the Board Member please confirm the date on which the last batch of consultation alerts were sent to those who "have previously expressed an interest in receiving consultations related to Council Budget and Priorities"?

Response

The budget consultation period ran from 19th December 2016 to 27th January 2017. The consultation was promoted via our website, Facebook and Twitter. Unlike in some previous years where there has been quite targeted consultation which has been

costly, this year it was decided that it was more important to keep costs down and ensure the consultation provided value for money.

The budget consultation runs through the Christmas holiday period and it is always difficult to engage people in the survey when it opens as it is so close to Christmas so most responses come in after the New Year. We monitored responses on a weekly basis and saw by early January there were only 3 responses.

Therefore in the new year we continued to promote the survey and then decided to email people that had ticked 'Council Budget and Priorities' as an area of interest on the registration forms when they signed up to the online consultation portal. We didn't do this at the start of the process as members sometimes get 'consultation fatigue' from being sent too many consultation alerts, this is particularly the case by the end of the year, so we try to only do this when we think our other means of promotion such as the website, Facebook etc. are not reaching sufficient people. The last batch of alerts were issued on 20th January but as stated above the survey had been promoted widely before then.

Supplementary question

Should we review the consultation process and methods to get a better response?

Supplementary Response

We have tried various methods with mixed results. It can require a disproportionate effort to elicit informed responses to decisions on spending £5.50 per week per household.

Leader of the Council, Board Member for Corporate Strategy and Economic Development

38. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Price– planning training

In view of the inconsistent voting by some members on the East Area Planning Committee at two meetings on an identical application for change of use of the downstairs space in respect of Unit 5 Ashfield Way, does the Board Member believe that additional planning training is required for members?

Response

Members of Planning Committees reach decisions on the basis of the reports before them and the oral contributions from officers, together with the discussion that takes place among the members themselves. It is thus entirely possible that in cases like this, where there are number of planning issues to weigh up, members may come to different conclusions on the basis of the way in which the issues have come out. The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services has already set up a programme of four member development sessions and a planning members tour for the coming municipal year.

Supplementary question

Is there enough space in the city for community use generally?

Supplementary Response

We have a steady stream of requests for community space but the only way to address this is through the local plan.

39. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Price– trading companies scrutiny

With the development in new city council owned trading companies, how will opposition Members be able to partake in city council decision making and scrutinise operations?

Response

The trading companies owned by the Authority will be subject to their own Articles of Association and their respective shareholder's agreements, these being the principle governance mechanisms by which any "parent" authority exercises control over its subsidiaries. As the sole owner of the housing and the proposed direct services companies, the Council will, of course, exercise real control over its subsidiaries, as the directors remain employees of the Council. The Council's interests as shareholder will be formally represented by the members of the City Executive Board, whose decisions will be subject to scrutiny in exactly the same way as any other Council decision-making body.

40. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price – structure of the housing company and the direct services company

Could the Leader provide council with information on the structure of the housing company and the direct services company (who the shareholder(s) is/are, membership of the board, reporting, monitoring etc)?

Does he think there is a case for having one or more elected member on each of the boards, possibly including one not from the ruling party group?

Response

The housing company (Oxford City Housing Limited) already exists, but the formation of the proposed direct services company is yet to be agreed. In both cases, however, the companies would be wholly owned by the Council, and so both companies would be obliged to act in the interests of its shareholder, the Council. The board of the Housing Company is made up of three senior Council officers, who must report, and are formally accountable, to the shareholder (represented by the members of the CEB). There will be regular formal meetings between the company directors and the shareholder.

As the directors of the company will be responsible for its day to day operation, it is currently considered that the individuals best placed to act in this essentially operational role are senior Council officers who have experience and expertise in the relevant operations. Indeed, in many cases they are simply continuing the work they currently perform for the Council. In any event, the directors are, of course, fully accountable to (and may be removed by) the shareholder.

41. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Price – tourist levy

The Portfolio Holder will be aware of the London tourist tax proposal by Mayor Sadiq Khan at a cross-party event on 27 January 2017. He proposed that London Local Authorities should be given the option of imposing a tourist levy which would be used to pay for infrastructure and environmental improvements in the city.

Will the Portfolio Holder undertake to explore this tax-raising measure, perhaps at a rate of £1 per tourist per night, which could fund improvements to our beautiful but sometimes threadbare city?

Response

This measure has been explored by a number of local authorities and by the LGA, but the Treasury has been adamant in rejecting the suggestion. The devolved powers of the Mayor of London are more extensive than those available to other authorities but there continues to be interest in securing Treasury agreement to implement this type of tax and the City Council will continue to support any lobby grouping that takes up the cudgels.

42. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Price - 1 Day Without Us

The 1 Day Without Us national day of action is going to be held on 20th February 2017 to celebrate the contribution of migrants to the UK, to coincide with the UN World Day of Social Justice. Various ways to support this include wearing badges and lanyards, posting pictures showing support on social media, having a meal or social event with migrants who are friends, work colleagues and neighbours, or attending meetings, marches or rallies.

Can the Leader please indicate whether he supports this day of action and indicate in what way(s) the city council intends to promote it?

Response

The Lord Mayor is holding a lunchtime event on that day in the Town Hall. Members of the public are welcome to join the celebration; a press release will be sent out and the event will be widely publicised on social media.

We would of course be happy to promote and publicise other ways in which the day could be marked. The City Council has already placed on record its appreciation of the massive role that migrant workers currently play in our city, whether in the universities, hospitals, high tech businesses, restaurants, cafes and hotels or the retail sector. And it is worth remembering that the growth of the car industry in the city in the inter-war period was extensively fuelled by migration from Wales, Ireland and Scotland; many of these families still live in Oxford. The Council continues to work closely with a range of voluntary and charity groups through the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Coordination Group to support migrants who need help and guidance to rebuild their lives.

43. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Price – encouraging school visits

There has been a reduction in the number of visits by school and pre-school groups to cultural attractions in our city. Could the Portfolio Holder advise what is being done to encourage young people through their schools and pre-school playgroups to visit the museums, colleges, cathedral and other cultural attractions in this city at a time when funding for schools and pre-schools is falling?

Response

It is not clear on what evidence the claim of a reduction is based. Our own evidence does not bear this out and in fact museums in Oxford appear to be bucking a national downward trend. The Museum of Oxford's attendance figures from pre-booked groups have been fairly consistent year on year – averaging around 1460 per year. To mitigate any potential decline the Museum has been working with between 8 and 10 'relationship' schools to encourage pupils to visit for family activities outside the formal learning programme. This approach has resulted in consistently high attendance at family activities - 1789 people attended events in 2015/16, and the projected figure for 2016/17 is 2000. The Oxford University Museums have had consistent primary and secondary school attendance for the past two years with 84,348 in 2015 and 84,355 in 2016. Christ Church has recorded increases in their school attendances from 1100 in

2014/15 to 2216 in 2015/16, and 1452 to date in 2016/17. School children visiting The Story Museum increased from 5,422 in 2014-15 to 7,935 in 2015-16.

The City Council uses its service level agreements with organisations that we grant-fund to encourage engagement with young people. For example the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra has provided 40 free tickets for their concert in February aimed at children aged 8-12 years old.

As well as encouraging young people to visit cultural organisations and events, the City Council and its cultural partners are taking opportunities into the environments where young people live and learn.

Oxford Playhouse, for example, is delivering positive cultural experiences within local primary schools through the Primary Playmaker scheme, a writing project for Yrs 5 & 6. Each participating pupil works with a professional playwright to write a short play, some of which are then selected to be performed by professional actors. This year Oxford Playhouse is working with 6 schools (around 150 children), 5 of which are in East Oxford in key target areas. Oxford Playhouse is also currently working with up to 15 young people in Littlemore aged 12-16 each week during term to develop play-writing skills. They plan to extend this programme in the coming years to other areas in Oxford. Fusion Arts are delivering a programme of drama sessions on the subject of Healthy Food and Food Sustainability for school children at Bayards Hill.

Supplementary question

Could these figures be examined in more detail – for example by cohort, visiting group, and place of visit? For instance the costs of visits can be prohibitive when a £60 fee for the Natural History Museum is added to coach hire. Is there ringfenced funding for school visits?

Supplementary Response

Charging fees for things that were previously free is concerning but another way of filling the funding gap for the universities. I'm not aware there was ringfenced funding in school budgets and we have no control over these. I will ask for more detailed figures.

44. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Price – Christmas decorations

Does the council think that the standard of Christmas decoration in the City was high enough and can we look forward to better quality Christmas lights and decorations in the city centre next year?

Response

This year's budget for our Christmas lights was £40k pa, covering installation, removal and hire. Personally, I thought that they brought a welcome level of Christmas cheer to the city centre, but clearly a bigger budget could have purchased a more elaborate set of decorations. Our current suppliers underperformed in the installation of the lighting scheme this year and we have negotiated a reduction in their fee to reflect this. This was the last year of their contract.

Officers have undertaken the following actions which we expect to lead to an improved scheme in future years:

- negotiated a partnership with the Westgate Oxford Alliance so that we tender for our scheme in conjunction with their tender for Christmas Decorations in the new Westgate Centre. Their budget is substantially higher and will bring more value to

the city council's contract, by creating synergy between the two schemes and creating one customer journey through the city over the festive period

- designed the contract so that city centre businesses will be able to enhance the scheme if they choose to participate.

The tender returns for the new contract/scheme for 2017-19 are currently being evaluated.

45. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Price – Westgate opening

Is the City Council able to advise on the opening date for Westgate Centre?

Response

As far as we know, the early part of October 2017 is still the estimated opening period.

46. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price – Article 50 vote

Cllr Price and I recently heard Andrew Smith MP explain that he would vote to trigger article 50, whether or not amendments were added to the bill in Parliament. Does Cllr Price think this course of action is in the best interests of the people of Oxford? If not, would he join me in urging Mr Smith instead to support the amendment tabled by his party colleague Heidi Alexander MP, which calls for a second Parliamentary vote and a referendum once the terms of Brexit are fully known, and in likewise urging Mr Smith to vote against article 50 without such an amendment?

Response

'Caveat emptor' is wise advice. In the context of the vote to trigger Article 50, it would be wise to know in advance what policy priorities and preconditions are being proposed by the government before deciding whether to cast a vote for or against the initiation of the negotiating process. There are a number of amendments proposed to the draft Bill setting out such preconditions eg on the rights of current EU citizens working and living in the UK, employment and equality rights, environmental protections and a second Parliamentary vote which, if they are not agreed, would lead me to vote against the Bill if I were an MP. Leaving the European Union remains, in my view, an economic folly on a scale equivalent to the return to the Gold Standard in 1925; well described by Keynes in 'The Economic Consequences of Mr Churchill'.

To: Council

Date: 6 February 2017

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

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. This report was republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This lists the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and verbal responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Adam Berry - budget cuts for Donnington Doorstep Family Centre
2. Address by Sobiah Hussain – relating to petition on situation in Kashmir
3. Address by Rick Mower, Director of RAW Workshop (social enterprise based on Blackbird Leys) – relating to motion on social enterprise
4. Address by Liz Sawyer – Seacourt Park and Ride extension
5. Address by Sarah Lasenby,
6. Address by Artwell - East Oxford Community Centre
7. Address by Jane Alexander – Leisure provision

Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Adam Berry - budget cuts for Donnington Doorstep Family Centre

My name is Adam Berry, I'm 15 years old and I attend St. Gregory the Great Catholic School. I am talking today on the matter of the budget cuts for Donnington Doorstep Family Centre. The family centre are currently in a position of crisis which means that the centre does not have an adequate amount of money to run the full 6 days of the week (as they did before). The drop-in service has now been cut to 1 half-day a week, which is very devastating for parents and their children who attend the centre.

The centre is quite often mistaken for a playgroup. The services which Donnington Doorstep provides are much more broad and useful than those provided by a playgroup. Donnington Doorstep provides a safe, caring and friendly place for parents to take their young children, and receive support (including family support).

Most parents who attend the centre are aware of the services that Donnington Doorstep provides to its local community, which the council funding body often disputes due to the small area it serves. Donnington has always been at a disadvantage due to its small size, although Doorstep has always helped people from many different areas.

Donnington Doorstep is the heart of Donnington, with such a welcoming set of services, which are currently at stake.

The Services that Doorstep provide were starting to collapse in March 2016 when the County Council's contract of £60,000 per annum, ended. This was very frustrating for the centre and caused in to cut down on services so they were only open for 5 days a week, which then led to 4 days, which then led to 4 half days. And now, we're in the catastrophic situation that leaves Doorstep only opening for 1 half day a week, and nothings to say this won't end soon as well.

I appreciate the Oxford city council isn't responsible for the budget cuts, but I am here requesting city council lobby County Council to find a means to support Donnington Doorstep so that this valuable community asset can survive.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Simm, Board Member for Culture and Communities

Thank you for speaking to us. Councillors who are trustees at the centre are as devastated as you are about the loss of funding when the Sure Start and Children's Centre funding was cut. We are looking at ways to be more self-sufficient and have asked the county council for enough funding to keep going till we reach that position. The drop in service is key and well used, and we do have other sessions with secured funding. We need your support and that of other users to help with the campaign to keep the services running and increase the Doorstep and drop in service again.

2. Address by Sobiah Hussain – relating to petition on situation in Kashmir

Chief executive, Lord Mayor, Members of the Council

I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to speak about the tragedies suffered by I am grateful for the time afforded today to speak about the tragedies suffered by Kashmiris over the last two centuries. The debate about Kashmir is long standing and has come before the government on many occasions. The recent upsurge in violence in the Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir in the last six months, has brought this matter to the forefront once again; the videos shown on social media have appalled thousands of Kashmiris who are resident in the UK.

I have links to Kashmir, my grandparents and wide family members reside in Kashmir, it is deeply upsetting to see this conflict continue without any real solution on the horizon. My family live close to the line of control and we hear many stories of the suffering endured by Kashmiris and it is deeply upsetting.

It is of great concern, that no real progress appears to have been made over the years, the Kashmiris are still suffering and the abuse is being allowed to continue, people are being maimed and scarred and lives are being destroyed. The UN Resolution includes the option for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to have the right of self-determination, although there have been some advances, the Kashmiris still have no referendum.

The conflict does not receive as much world attention as it should, we need to press our governments to do more to help build a resolution to the longstanding crisis. The uprising because of the violence had been met with strong resistance; the response of the police cannot be ignored, the police and security forces have acted disproportionately and there are clear abuses of power.

People of Jammu and Kashmir deserve freedom, to live in peace, free from fear of persecution, discrimination, abuse, rape and torture, let them have access to education and health. They have suffered for too long; human rights abuses occur daily and we should not stop fighting to help them.

Councillors we would like you to be the voice for Oxford-based Kashmiri people. Please raise our concerns about the plight of the people of Jammu and Kashmir with national and European MPs. Please ask them to apply pressure on Government Ministers to work hard to resolve this conflict.

We greatly need your help so that Kashmiris can live normal lives. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

This speech was considered as part of the debate on the related submitted petition.

3. Address by Rick Mower, Director of RAW Workshop (social enterprise based on Blackbird Leys) – relating to motion on social enterprise

RAW Workshop is a social enterprise based in Blackbird Leys.

We operate a large joinery workshop and wood recycling service. Over 85% of our workforce will be facing prejudice and disadvantage. Our Crew includes people with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health illness, folks in recovery from addiction and ex-offenders.

We also engage younger people and currently support projects for Young Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Young Offenders.

Our mission is to prove that people, no matter the life-path they have walked, can be Exceptional rather than being the Exception. We don't focus on the negative. We focus on the ability.

We do that not by nice partly educated middle class people like me standing up and saying 'everyone has value, give them a chance'. Rather we do it by showing – by making products and providing services that are high-quality, competitively priced and robust. We say 'give us a chance to supply you' and you'll see how good people can be. When you get a good product – it's an unequivocal statement about ability and quality. Not an opinion.

The truth is that people who have had to struggle and survive have a resilience and a level of sheer grit that is not properly recognised. RAW is a place where that tenacity and ability is nurtured and channelled into brighter futures.

Month on month RAW is increasing the amount of human social impact it delivers (1,400). This comes in the form of employment, training and skills, or just somebody not sitting at home, being isolated and watching Jeremy Kyle. Being part of somewhere with pride, ambition and creativity is life-enhancing and, ultimately, reduces call on services.

Of course, buying locally adds a huge amount of value to the local economy and also makes difference to the environment. Rather than buying large products – such as parks furniture – from elsewhere in the country or even abroad, you create a significant reduction in carbon emissions alone.

The reality of the world is that funding is being cut but we don't want to be funded. We want to trade, create an example and be a place that grows, employing more and more people from disadvantaged backgrounds on merit. If we can create our own income to a sufficient level it leaves more to go around for organisations that don't have that ability. That's a very simple way that we can also support wider social impact.

Finally, I would like to give a recent example of how smart procurement has made a difference. With the energetic support of Linda Smith, we were able to secure an order with Oxford City Council for 15 park benches. These were high-quality, delivered on time and created in excess of 150 hours of local social impact. They generated benefits for the local economy, helped us employ local people and probably saved a large, dirty delivery lorry rolling into our city.

I'm incredibly proud that RAW makes social, quality, economic and environmental sense. It changes lives and is embedded in our community. On behalf of all the Crew at RAW, thank you for listening to me.

QUESTION: How many more park benches do you want?

Joking aside, how can we ensure that we're front of mind for the procurement teams? We make a large range of products – both interior and exterior – and also work with clients to develop bespoke products so we can adapt to City Council specs.

We also offer a wood recycling service to building companies and developers – how can we ensure that when contractors win Oxford City contracts, they know we can supply that service to them?

We're not asking for favours. We're asking to compete and get in front of the right people so we can keep growing a sustainable social enterprise that self-funds, and goes on creating unique opportunities for people to make the most of their lives and breaking cycles of deprivation.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services

Thank you for this. I have visited your workshop and Councillor Smith is also a strong supporter of social enterprises and has submitted a motion to encourage us to take these more seriously in our procurement process. We all recognise the value of social enterprises and will try to support these where we can.

4. Address by Liz Sawyer – Seacourt Park and Ride extension

Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is the second time that I have come to talk to you about the Seacourt Park and Ride expansion plan. I come now as a member of the Oxford Flood Alliance.

I have made my objections regarding the application's contravention of local and national planning policy to the relevant councillors and officers, and I appreciate the discussions that I have had with them. I focus now on a concerning and potentially tragic aspect of this development: the risk to life.

I want to make you, the full Council, aware of the real hazards this application creates. As you know, the site for the proposed car park extension is in the functional floodplain, and will flood far more regularly than the existing car park does. It slopes gradually down, away from Botley Road, towards the river. It is more low-lying, and would be accessed by the public via two ramps from the existing site. On average, the new site is 80cm lower. But both car parks undulate, so some areas can be badly flooded while others are still passable. Parts of the proposed new car park would be a full 2 metres lower than parts of the existing one. Those lower areas will be under water that is deeper than a fully-grown man before the floodwater starts to come close to the Botley Road.

Therefore, it is quite wrong to compare the risks posed by the new car park to the safety record of the existing Park and Ride, as the planning application does. The flooding in the new area will be both more frequent and much, much deeper.

Now, I grew up in Tewkesbury, where people know from experience about the dangers of flood waters. And yet people have still been killed there in flood events. To show how dangerous flood water is, here are 9 of the Automobile Association's 'flood facts':

1. Most drowning deaths happen within only 3m of a safe point.
2. Two thirds of those who die in flood-related accidents are good swimmers.
3. A third (32%) of flood-related deaths are in vehicles.
4. Just 15cm of fast-flowing water can knock you off your feet and be enough for you not to be able to regain your footing.
5. It's a challenge to stand in waist-deep water flowing at only 1m/s (2mph). By 1.8m/s (4mph, walking speed) everyone is washed off their feet.
6. If the speed of the flood water doubles, the force it exerts on you or your car goes up four times.
7. Just 60cm of standing water will float your car.
8. Just 30cm of flowing water could be enough to move your car.
9. A mere egg cupful of water could be enough to wreck an engine.

Remember the proposed car park is 80cm on average lower than the existing one, and more than twice that in places. This application opens up the real risk of a large body of deep floodwater that is easily accessible to the public.

I give you just one of the many flaws in the inadequate 'flood response plan' in the application. The document recommends closing the lower car park in times of flood merely by putting up signs, and that the site not be manned in times of flood. But what is to prevent someone from slipping down the ramps into the water as they approach the bus stop? Would the council ever allow a bridge to be built that had no safety railings? And suppose the council puts up signs at 8.30pm in anticipation of flooding,

but at 11pm someone moves one to get their car out of the slightly flooded car park, and forgets to put it back? How many cars will drive down the ramp into the lower car park the following morning before the council employee returns and replaces the sign? People could drive down into deepening water, and be unable to drive their cars back out, up the ramp. Many scenarios are possible, but the flood response document considers not a single one. The entire emergency plan is 640 words long, shorter than this address. It reads as an afterthought to the planning application, an irresponsible, negligent afterthought. There is no way to make such a planning application safe: hence national planning guidelines prohibit such developments in the functional floodplain, on the grounds of public safety.

I urge you to think very seriously before allowing this application to proceed. Thank you.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

Thank you for this, your correspondence and the meeting we had to discuss this. The area planning committee will be asked to make the decision and I will seek to ensure that the concerns you have raised are adequately addressed in the final planning application.

5. Address by Sarah Lasenby,

Address to Full Council

After I addressed you on the subject of democracy and debates I had a response from Bob Price. He wrote: **Party whips are used in all democratic legislatures - in Europe, America and elsewhere.**

I understand that there are circumstances when whipping is a helpful method to get certain things done expeditiously but I believe is not relevant when there is a debate. In these situations the leaders of the groups should trust their councillors to decide what is right for the citizens of Oxford.

Bob Price continued

There is nothing anti democratic about the process of agreeing a party line - it reflects the fact that candidates are elected on a specific manifesto and that should be implemented. All groups on the Council decide whether to have a group decision on each topic that comes up or leave it to a free vote; our decision depends on the topic and its relationship to our policies and values.

What were the **values** of the Council that made it imperative to use a whip to control the way the councillors voted after they had heard and participated in a debate on saving Temple Cowley Pools that had been triggered by the signatures of over 1500 people?

The signatures on the petition relating to the loss of Temple Cowley Pools were easy to collect. Many people came up to ask to sign without prompting. I have not asked them if they knew what the specific manifesto item was on this subject that is why I am asking for information about this. The people of Cowley and East Oxford desperately want to have a replacement pool and soon. They are missing the now demolished pool.

This Council needs to demonstrate the democracy we all value. I believe this must include not whipping your councillors when there is a debate triggered by the people. Otherwise it is clear you do not believe in listening to the people and that you do not take your debates seriously.

The pool has now been demolished despite it being suggested that it would be better not to do this till after the planning application has been heard.

Ah me. In these circumstances we must ask that you start planning for a replacement pool. You cannot do this too soon; many of the local people cannot get to Blackbird Leys and are desperate. Specially those without cars.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Price, Leader of the Council

No other issue has been so thoroughly analysed and debated over so long. We have limited funding and provision for leisure facilities and must spend our resources wisely and economically. We are limited in what we can realistically provide and do not have capacity or space to provide a pool for everyone who wants one.

Councillor Gant raised a point of order and asked the Leader to distance himself from comments made by the speaker about a named council officer. The Leader concurred.

6. Address by Artwell - East Oxford Community Centre

At the last Full Council meeting I asked, indeed. I begged and pleaded with you, the Elected Councillors, to halt the Council's plans for East Oxford Community Centre, until Cllr Simms, the portfolio holder for Communities, could actually attend and explain the Council's plans; and their preferred option 3, to the multitude who had attended the last public meeting with the expectation of consulting and engage with Cllr Simms regarding the future of East Oxford Community Centre.

I was informed at the last full council meeting that Cllr Simms had a previous engagement and was unable to be present at the public consultation meeting in December and no substitute Councillor was sent in place of Cllr Simms. I was informed that Cllr Simms would be willing to address the people of East Oxford in order to present the Council's plans and to hear the concerns of the people of East Oxford.

It is now February and the people of East Oxford have still not been given a chance to consult with Cllr Simms as promised at the last Full Council meeting.

Inviting the Chair of East Oxford Community Association and one other Trustee to a private meeting, is no substitute for holding a public consultation meeting with the variety of people who care about the future role of East Oxford Community Centre.

For the second time I am addressing the Full Council asking that the Council's plans for East Oxford Community Centre be halted until the portfolio holder, Cllr Simms, is willing to publicly address and consult with the people of Oxford East.

Many people in Oxford East are genuinely concerned with the future of this vibrant and well used Community Centre. A variety of East Oxford people are concerned that the Council's preferred third option could result in a forty percent reduction in Community space in East Oxford. I believe Cllr Simmons and Cllr Wolf's "option three plus" better fits the community space needs of the people of East Oxford and this option needs to be thoroughly shared with Cllr Simms.

I call once again on Cllr Simms to urgently attend a public meeting in order for a proper, meaningful and open consultation to happen, regarding the future of East Oxford Community Centre.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Simm, Board Member for Culture and Communities

I have continued, and will continue, to meet and talk to the people of east Oxford and the East Oxford Community Centre Association about the council's plans as these progress because that is my job.

7. Address by Jane Alexander – Leisure provision

She departed from her submitted speech and a summary is given below

She attended the Scrutiny meeting on Monday 30 January and was disappointed by the lack of transparency by council officers and some councillor and, as a disabled person found much of what was said disappointingly inaccurate.

She spoke about the need for transparency, and for councillors to be actively involved in scrutinising and holding the council to account rather than taking information at face value. She spoke about the problems with Blackbird Leys pool including inadequate changing and poor access to the pool, how busy it was and the difficulty of getting there compared to getting to Temple Cowley pools and urged councillors to investigate for themselves.

Response given at the meeting by Councillor Smith, Board Member for Leisure Parks and Sport

I am sorry to hear about the problems at the committee and hope these can be resolved. The level of subsidy this council paid per leisure visit has reduced from £3 in 2006 to a target of zero this year and we hope to start to make a profit for the city. User group meetings are public and advertised and your specific concerns may be better raised there. We understand the views of Cowley residents and need to encourage use of the new pool, and with this in mind Fusion have contacted previous members and users of Temple Cowley Pools.

Councillor Gant said that as the Chair of the scrutiny committee he was well aware of that proceedings should be audible and had he been made aware of the problems at the time and so was unable to address these.