

# Minutes of a meeting of the COUNCIL on Monday 1 October 2018

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## Committee members:

Councillor Cook (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Simmons (Sheriff)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Aziz
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Curran
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Donnelly
Councillor Fry	Councillor Garden
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Gotch
Councillor Haines	Councillor Harris
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Howlett
Councillor Iley-Williamson	Councillor Kennedy
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan
Councillor Lygo	Councillor McManners
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Rush
Councillor Simm	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Tarver
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Tidball
Councillor Turner	

## Apologies:

Councillors Malik, Gant, Goff, Humberstone, Tanner, Upton and Wolff sent apologies.  
Councillors Iley-Williamson and Turner arrived after the start of the meeting.  
Councillors Fry and Tidball left at the break.

## **26. Declarations of interest**

Minute 41 a, 41 e

Councillor Turner declared he would not take part as he was on a secondment to the Foreign Office and so would not take part in Council debates or decisions on matters of government foreign policy. He left the chamber for these debates.

Minute 41 c

Councillor Harris clarified that although he was a barrister taking legal aid cases, the motion would have no impact on his income and his DPI\*. Accordingly he remained in the chamber and took part in the debate.

Minute 41 d

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan noted he had a personal interest but not a DPI as he was the subject of the motion. With the permission of the Lord Mayor he took the opportunity to unreservedly apologise to Council, councillors and residents for causing distress by naively and with poor judgement sharing unsuitable posts on Facebook two years ago. He left the chamber for this debate.

Minute 41 f

Councillor Brown and Djafari-Marbini declared that the motion affected their DPI as they were employed by OUH Trust. Councillor Hollingsworth's DPI was also affected as his spouse was employed by the Trust. They left the chamber for this debate.

(Councillor McManners confirmed that as a GP he was not employed by the Trust and unaffected by this motion.)

*\* DPI is a disclosable pecuniary interest.*

## **27. Minutes**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 23 July 2018 as a true and correct record subject to correcting subject to correcting text in Minute 15 'to read 'older people's champion'.

## **28. Appointment to Committees**

On being proposed by the Lord Mayor, seconded and put to the vote, the recommendation of the Standards Committee was agreed.

**Council resolved to appoint Dorian Hancock, Littlemore Parish Councillor, as the co-opted non-voting member of the Standards Committee representing the four Parish Councils in Oxford until May 2020.**

## **29. Announcements**

The Lord Mayor thanked the Deputy Lord Mayor and Sheriff for their help with civic events, and reported highlights of the last two months.

The Sheriff reported on the unsuccessful round-up but successful count of clearly healthy and active cattle on Port Meadow.

The Leader thanked those who had supported her sponsored abseil down the John Radcliffe tower.

### **30. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

There were no addresses or questions.

### **31. Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q1**

*This item was taken after the break to allow the Board Member to present it.*

Council considered a report of the Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement, submitted to the City Executive Board on 18 September 2018, updating Council on finance risk and performance and seeking agreement for new expenditure requests for 2018/19.

Councillor Turner, Board Member for Finance and Asset Management, presented the report and moved the recommendations which were adopted on being seconded and put to the vote.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. approve the increase of the HRA capital budget for Social Rented Housing Acquisitions by £0.444 million to a total of £1.479 million. This will be fully funded by Retained Right to Buy capital receipts; and
2. approve the additional capital budget for the Replacement of the Housing Computer System of £0.450 million.

### **32. Dispensations - Localism Act 2011**

Council considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance, submitted to the Standards Committee in 11 September, recommending that Council approve a number of general dispensations under the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Aziz, Chair of that Committee, moved the recommendations which were adopted on being seconded and put to the vote.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. approve, under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, the general dispensations, listed at paragraph 4 of this report **and including a dispensation for recipients of Universal Credit**, for all elected and co-opted Members of Oxford City Council;
2. agree that those general dispensations should remain in force for a period of four years; and
3. agree that the granting of individual dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 be delegated to the Monitoring Officer.

### **33. Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy effective from 31 Jan 2019**

Council considered a report of the Head of Community Services, submitted to Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee on 19 September 2018, setting out the revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy to take effect from 31 January 2018.

Councillor Cook, in his capacity as Chair of that Committee and moved the recommendations which were adopted on being seconded and put to the vote.

**Council resolved to:** adopt the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy attached to the report on this agenda with effect from 31 January 2019.

### **34. Barton Park planning permission 13/01383/OUT**

Council considered a report of the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services recommending that Council makes a modification order to amend the time period to submit reserved matters applications on planning permission 13/01383/OUT.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Transport, presented the report, answered questions, and moved the recommendations which were adopted on being seconded and put to the vote.

**Council resolved to:**

1. make a modification order under section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of planning permission 13/01383/OUT to enable further applications for reserved matters to be submitted for approval in respect of the development at Barton Park; and
2. delegate to the Development Management Services Manager (soon to be the Acting Head of Planning Services), the taking of any associated action following the making of the modification order.

### **35. City Executive Board Minutes**

**a) Minutes of meeting Tuesday 14 August 2018 of City Executive Board**

There were no questions.

**b) Minutes of meeting Tuesday 18 September 2018 of City Executive Board**

**Minute 61 Scrutiny Committee Reports – Fusion Lifestyle**

Councillor Simmons asked about progress on the audit of Fusion Lifestyle's performance data requested by Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Linda Smith replied that the audit would be carried out to ensure these well scrutinised figures were accurate and reliable.

### **Minute 63 – Consultation on Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan**

Councillor Goddard asked if his thanks and appreciation could be recorded for the hard work of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan team and the neighbourhood forum who had brought the plan to this stage.

### **36. Questions on Notice from Members of Council**

Councillor Iley Williamson arrived during this item.

30 written questions on notice were submitted. These, written responses, and summaries of the 14 supplementary questions and responses are set out [in the printed pack of these minutes](#).

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

There were two addresses to Council and two questions to Board Members.

1. Artwell gave an address asking what measure the Council would make to ensure that Oxford people who are concerned to campaign for justice of the Semitic people of Palestine could do so without being labelled 'anti-Semitic following the Council's adoption of the IHRA code (*International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*)
2. Judith Harley gave an address asking about the use by council staff of the Cowley Marsh Car Park
3. Artwell asked whether the Council would reconsider its use of glyphosate in light of new evidence.
4. Nigel Gibson reiterated his previous statement that in his view the charges at the Council's leisure centres were still not correct and still resulted in Oxford City Council discriminating against disabled people, and asked how many times people with Bonus Cards had been charged £2 after evening peak hours.

The full text of these speeches and question where these were read as submitted; responses from the Board Members in writing before the meeting; and summaries of verbal responses given at the meeting are set out [in the printed pack of these minutes](#).

### **38. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions**

This item was taken before the public addresses.

Council had before it the report of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Brown, outlining the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Councillor Brown introduced the report and answered questions.

Council noted the report without comment.

### **39. Scrutiny Committee update report**

This item was taken before the public addresses.

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

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair Councillor Henwood introduced the report.

Council noted the report without comment.

### **40. Motions on notice**

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

**Council resolved to adopt the following motions as set out in these minutes:**

- a. Freedom of the City for Benny Wenda
- b. Opposition to Investment in Fracking
- c. Improve Legal Aid
- d. Brexit and the Sustainable Communities Act
- e. Oxford Weighting

**Council resolved not to adopt Motion d – call for resignation- as set out in these minutes.**

**Motion g** - Building a statutory youth service - was not taken as the time allocated for debate had elapsed.

#### **a) Freedom of the City for Benny Wenda**

This item was taken before the break.

Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Howlett, proposed his submitted motion, amended as set out in briefing note. He expressed Council's condolences for the people of Sulawesi affected by the tsunami and earthquake, and explained that the proposal made no comment about the independence movement but recognised contributions as a campaigner for peaceful democracy and to the wider life of the city.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amended motion was agreed.

**Council resolved to adopt the following motion:**

**To request the Chief Executive in consultation with the Lord Mayor to convene a special meeting of Council at a later date to consider conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City on Benny Wenda, in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.**

## **b) Opposition to Investment in Fracking**

This item was taken before the break.

Councillor Roz Smith left the chamber for the duration of the debate and then returned.

Councillor Howlett, seconded by Councillor Hayes, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Councillor Hollingsworth proposed and Councillor Howlett agreed an amendment to correct the name of the pension fund and include the 'pool fund' manager Brunel Pension Partnership.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amended motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the submitted motion, as amended to correct the name of the pension fund and add the fund managers.

### **Council resolved to adopt the following motion:**

Oxford City Council reaffirms its opposition to investment in fossil fuels. We deeply regret the investment by the Oxfordshire Pension Fund (*the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) in Oxfordshire, with LGPS Pool fund manager Brunel Pension Partnership (Brunel)*) in companies which are promoting and engaging in fracking in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Campaigners calculate that out of a total pension fund of £2 billion (£2,174,177,881), £84 million (£83,645,909) or 3.85% is invested in companies which practice fracking. The pension fund has indirect fracking investments in Shell of £24,560,465 and direct investments in BHP Billiton — £4,936,494, EOG Resources — £3,908,397, Marathon Oil — £2,819,711 and Pioneer Natural Resources — £2,650,534.

Oxford City Council is part of LGPS in Oxfordshire through which it provides pensions for our staff.

Oxford City Council believes that:

- Investment in fracking is damaging to the environment
- Investment in fracking is not a sound investment for the future
- Fracking goes against the City Council's commitment to help combat climate change.

**Oxford City Council resolves to call on the LGPS in Oxfordshire (Oxfordshire Pension Fund) and pool fund managers Brunel Partnership to disinvest in fracking in particular and fossil fuels in general and to invest instead in renewable energy, and asks the Chief Executive to inform the pension fund managers of this resolution.**

### **c) Improve Legal Aid**

Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Roz Smith, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amended motion was agreed.

#### **Council resolved to adopt the following motion:**

Council notes that:

1. Legal Aid was created as part of the post-war welfare state of which Liberals such as Keynes and Beveridge were key architects;
2. Legal Aid, providing legal advice and legal representation, is a vital ingredient of a democratic society without which access to justice would depend on wealth;
3. Legal Aid, already grossly under-funded, is being subjected by the Government to unprecedented further cuts, which will result in a £600 million reduction by 2019/2020, a 40% real terms cut since 1997;
4. As a result many of the poor and vulnerable are being denied access to justice; and
5. The faith of the public in the legal system is being undermined by under-staffing and chaos in our courts.

Council therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Recognize the concerns of the legal profession at all levels about this issue;
2. Consider how the reduction in legal aid provision is affecting the Government's ability to comply with its international human rights obligations, and to ensure that effective remedies are provided under British legislation.
3. Undertake an urgent independent review of the cumulative effect of legal aid reductions on the provision of access to legal advice and assistance, taking evidence from professionals, from agencies which assist litigants such as Citizens Advice Bureaux and Law Centres, and from people who are themselves affected by the lack of legal aid support, to include recommendations to ensure adequate legal aid provision;
4. Abandon the cuts planned for 2019/2020.

#### **Council accordingly resolves to ask the Leader of the Council:**

1. **to ask the Oxford MPs Layla Moran and Anneliese Dodds to write to the Prime Minister to communicate the resolution of the Council as expressed above;**
2. **to ask Oxfordshire County Council to join us in this request to the Prime Minister.**



**d) Call for resignation**

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan left the chamber for the duration of this debate and then returned.

The Monitoring Officer advised councillors that the motion was non-binding and if agreed would not compel the councillor to resign and reminded them of that the independent investigation found the Code of Conduct was not engaged so no sanctions under the Code could be applied.

Councillor Haines, seconded by Councillor Harris, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note: Council calls for Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan to resign and step down immediately as an Oxford City Councillor following his reposting of articles on Facebook, especially the claim that Cancer is not a disease but a business.

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

**e) Brexit and the Sustainable Communities Act**

Councillor Turner left the chamber for the debate on this motion and then returned.

Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Garden, proposed the submitted motion with minor amendments as set out in the briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion as amended by the proposer was agreed.

Council agreed the submitted motion as amended by the proposer.

**Council resolved to adopt the following motion:**

This Council notes the recent use of Section 5A(b) of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 by Plymouth City Council to demand that the Government releases “all government departmental information and analysis pertaining to the impacts upon Plymouth’s communities and businesses of the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union, including any information deemed by the government to be confidential”. Like Oxford, where a report commissioned by Finance Panel has identified the risks to our City posed by Brexit, Plymouth City Council had also identified a number of risks to the economic and social wellbeing of its communities as a result of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

**Council agrees to similarly invoke the Sustainable Communities Act and asks the Leader of the Council to write on its behalf to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, so that this Council can obtain the accurate and up-to-date information it needs to best engage with businesses, institutions and communities and inform its own actions with respect to protecting Oxford, the Council and Council services from the effects of the Government’s approach to Brexit.**

**f) Oxford Weighting**

Councillors Brown, Djafari-Marbini and Hollingsworth left the chamber for the duration of this debate and then returned.

Councillor Bely-Summers, seconded by Councillor Aziz, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

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

**Council resolved to adopt the following motion:**

Oxford is the most expensive city to live in the UK. A band 2 porter working for the NHS Hospital trusts and renting a single bedroom flat in Oxford can expect to pay 85% of their wages on rent.

For staff in higher bands the situation is little better. As a result the NHS in Oxfordshire has twice the national vacancy rate. Patient care is undermined; vital cancer operations are being delayed. Staff are having to work extra shifts due to high living costs and high number of vacancies.

With a much higher proportion of BAME staff among the lower bandings these issues are disproportionately affecting them.

Local MPs support the Oxford Weighting for NHS staff to help address the recruitment and retention crisis. NHS employers would like to see additional funds to help them recruit the workforce needed to provide care for the local population.

**Oxford City Council resolves**

- 1. to campaign publicly for Oxford Weighting for NHS staff and against in work poverty with officer resources allowing data collection around this vital issue to contribute to the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy and tackle inequalities;**
- 2. to use its influence via Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board to call for higher wages for all;**

**to give a clear message to our NHS partners that the health of our Oxford residents is vitally important at a time when health inequalities are increasing especially in the most deprived areas of Oxford.**

**g) Building a statutory youth service**

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

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Monday 26 November 2018**

**To: Council**  
**Date: 1 October 2018**  
**Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Board Members and Leader**

## 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 is republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

## Questions and responses

### Board member for Culture and City Centre

#### **1. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Brown (Clarkson) – Town Hall accessibility**

Could the Leader provide an update on the progress and likely report date of the accessibility audit of the Town Hall?

#### **Written response**

The access audit has been undertaken and officers are working on a paper to update on the audit and outline the next steps. This report should be ready by November.

#### **2. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Clarkson – city centre retail health**

- a) Can the Portfolio Holder please clarify the figures attributed to the City Council in the Oxford Mail article of 17th August concerning the amount of business rate relief issued by the Council. How much of the stated £31m that is awarded is

part of a mandated Government scheme and how much is given as discretionary relief by the Council? How many businesses benefit from the latter?

- b) In the light of the recent closures of longstanding local, independent traders, can the Portfolio Holder please state how the Council is supporting small traders in the city centre?
- c) Does the Council track the number of vacant retail units in the City Centre? If so, can she provide trend data?
- d) What percentage of Westgate units are currently let?
- e) The Council has previously used footfall as an indicator of the health of Oxford's City Centre retail economy. As the Portfolio Holder will be aware, this is quite a blunt measure of 'success'. A more informative measure is conversion rate, the sales per visitor.
- f) Does the Council collect such information?
- g) Or any more sophisticated measures such as dwell time or detailed flow data on visitor movements – that can be used to better understand why so many businesses say they are suffering despite an expanded retail offer and apparently increasing footfall?

**Written response**

a)

BUSINESS RATES RELIEF - AT 1-06-2018		
	£000's	Number
Mandatory (Charitable) Relief	25,764	549
Mandatory Small Business Rate Relief	2,162	733
Mandatory Transitional Relief	2,144	n/a
Mandatory Empty Property Relief	758	139
Discretionary Relief	40	6
<b>2017 Spring Budget Reliefs</b>		
Public House Relief	80	86
Supporting small businesses	5	7
Local discretionary revaluation relief	211	181
Local newspaper relief	2	1
	<b>31,166</b>	<b>1,702</b>

Of the £31m quoted, **£30,827,226.20** is either Mandatory Relief/Empty property relief/Transitional Relief or Small Business Rate Relief, awarded in accordance with Rating legislation. **£338,309.05** is Discretionary Relief, which includes the 2017 Spring budget reliefs and Local Newspaper Relief. 275 businesses benefit from a discretionary rate relief.

- b) At least 6 retailers forums are held annually with city centre businesses –‘Talk of the Town’ plus twice a year a larger business forums are delivered and led by the Leaders from City and County.

Regular email updates are sent to businesses sharing key information on such issues as promotion, events, road works etc. 121 visits to city centre businesses are conducted regularly by the City Centre Manager.

The City Centre Taskforce was launched in September. A partnership between the public and private sectors provides an ideal vehicle for city centre stakeholders to realise their collective aspirations for the city centre and equip the city to respond to the challenges of growth. It also contributes significantly to the development of a vibrant, sustainable and safe economy and promotes the vitality and viability of the city centre. The Taskforce is a voluntary partnership who will work together to create greater economic prosperity for the City Centre and the City of Oxford in general. Its members comprise of representatives of the City Centre business community, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, Oxford University and other key stakeholders. Its members acknowledge that there are many parties that have ownership, statutory responsibilities or committed business interests in the City Centre and that by working together in a constructive manner, more will be achieved than by working alone. The Taskforce will aim to create the conditions for business in the city centre to prosper. It will do this by advocacy, encouragement, facilitation and where it is in a position to do so, it will take direct action.

### **City Centre Taskforce Aims**

- To develop Oxford’s city centre through helping to improve the public realm, increasing footfall and growing business revenues.
- To represent the interests of businesses throughout OX1 and to support their needs and objectives.
- To foster strong, fruitful relationships with public and private sector organisations involved in the development of Oxford city centre.
- Shape and influence organisational agendas to develop a shared strategic approach to the city centre’s development

### **How these aims will be delivered**

The City Centre Taskforce will deliver these aims by ensuring there is regular, frequent communication with its constituent members – the businesses in OX1 – in order to ensure it understands and can represent their needs. To this end it will adopt a structure to enable broad participation among city centre businesses and make full use of their expertise and knowledge.

### **Structure**

The Taskforce will appoint a Chairperson, elected by members, to hold office for a one year term (with a maximum of 3 continuous terms of office). The Chairperson will always be drawn from the private sector. The Taskforce will

also have as an executive resource, the Oxford City Centre Manager, a post that is funded by Oxford City Council. The Oxford City Centre Taskforce reports to the Economic Growth Steering Group (EGSG) and in turn the Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership (OSP). It will take a task and finish approach to a range of city centre issues that require the attention of OSP's strategic partners. The Taskforce will comprise a Forum and a series of area and/or thematic networks as required from time to time. The Forum will meet a minimum of once every six months or more regularly as it sees fit. The network groups will meet as frequently as they deem necessary to undertake their business. Each member of the Taskforce is responsible for representing their organisation as well as the wider partnerships and networks in which they are involved. They are also expected to take forward the work of the City Centre Taskforce in their own organisations and other partnerships/networks.

City Centre Manager works with and provides support to 'Independent Oxford' such as 2018's Christmas Campaigns and the Independent Compendium. City Centre Ambassadors liaise regularly with the city centre businesses, helping to improve the visitor welcome and reduce ASB on the streets.

We continue to provide relief to small businesses both through the Small Business Rate Relief scheme, and the Spring budget additional relief, Supporting Small Business Relief as a result of the 2017 revaluation. In total we have issued some £31 million in different types of business rates relief to more than 1,700 local businesses in the current financial year.

- c) A count is carried out by the planning policy team usually every six months of the secondary and primary frontages across the city. This data shows the vacancy rates in the city centre have consistently sat below regional and national average. The City Centre Manager also conducts counts on just the city centre premises on an adhoc basis to regularly check the health of the city centre and liaises with letting agents to understand what stage any empty units are at in the process of letting, i.e advertised, leased, fit-out. It is worth noting it usually takes at least between 4-6 months from the signing of a lease for the shop to open so many empty units will appear vacant but a new tenant has been secured.

The number of voids in the city centre currently stands at 36 vacant units, of which 2 have been let and 7 are undergoing redevelopment. This confirms a June 2018 Centre for Cities study which found vacancy rates in Oxford to be 8% compared with 12% nationally.

As the City Council is only responsible for some of the retail units in the City Centre, with other landlords including Oxford colleges, Prudential and other commercial property companies – there is no easy way to gather data and it is only post-Westgate that we have done so. However, the City Council did commission Carter Jonas to undertake a retail study, published May 2017.

As part of this report, the surveyor undertook an analysis in 2016 which found the number of vacant outlets in Oxford City Centre to be some 9.07%, which is below the national average of 11.18%. Although the vacant floorspace (8.22%) is slightly above the national average (7.92%), this probably reflects the impact of the redevelopment of the Westgate Centre. Overall we consider that the centre is performing relatively well in terms of vacancy levels.

- d) This would need to be confirmed by Westgate but their last official update was 95% let and they have reported footfall is above their own forecasts. As

expected, the 'Westgate effect' has benefitted other retailers, with footfall in the city centre up 8 per cent over the past six months and 17 million visits; again bucking national trends.

- e) Commercial agents Carter Jonas, reported consumer expenditure in Oxford grew by 2.0 per cent and is forecasting growth at 1.3 per cent this year, which it says is 'noticeably above the national average'. Retail spend per square foot in Oxford is 10 per cent higher than the average across the UK.
- f) Retailers and businesses are not inclined to share sales data as it is commercially sensitive information. There have been a few initiatives run in the past 4 years to do so but most business chose not to be involved.
- g) Technology is currently being explored by the City Centre Manager and Smart Oxford Officer to see what is available to collect such data, although budget is an issue.

### **3. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Clarkson – Covered Market**

- a) Can the Portfolio Holder please explain the criteria used to determine a business is local and independent (and therefore considered appropriate for the Covered Market)?
- b) This is in light of men's tailoring and country wear shop Leonard Jay moving in. My understanding is that they are a London-based retailer. With three stores in London. I am not certain how they meet the 'local' criteria.
- c) What is the portfolio holder doing to attract a new fresh food trader to the Covered Market to replace Hedges Butchers?

#### **Written response**

- a) The leasing strategy states that the council wishes to **encourage** occupation by sole traders, independents and local retailers. It defines "independent" with limited (usually less than 10) other shops. There is no definition of local. It is important that there is some flexibility in the Leasing Strategy so that we don't have too many units standing empty because potential tenants don't fit rigid criteria.
- b) in view of the above there is no absolute requirement for a business to be local. This retailer demonstrated a good fit with the covered market and this particular unit (selling similar branded goods to the outgoing tenant) but with the addition of tailored menswear.
- c) Officers are in discussions with a number of potential tenants. The overall challenge is to secure a quantum of new tenants, and seek to manage a mix, including provision of fresh food, which can support the covered market as an attractive destination in which traders can be commercially successful.

## Board member for Customer Focused Services

### 4. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Chapman – Blenheim Drive trees

I have recently been contacted by constituents about the non-replacement of felled trees at the southern end of Blenheim Drive in my ward.

Can the board member outline the budgeting arrangements for tree maintenance in the City?

#### **Written response**

The Council has an expenditure budget of £498k to manage and maintain over 100,000 trees and has a planting budget of £15k for all replacements across the city. The vast majority of the budget is spent on surveying all of the trees across the city (including highways) on a rolling 3 yearly programme and undertaking tree works prioritised on a risk basis.

The trees at Blenheim Drive were on Section 42 Highways land. The city receives approximately £18k funding from the county council to manage approximately 6,000 Section 42 trees. This budget covers the survey, maintenance and possible replacement of highways trees.

Due to the historic poor standard of the existing planting pits at Blenheim Drive, their relationship to the surrounding roads/footpaths and a multitude of underground services, highway tree planting needs to be carefully planned and funded. This cost is reduced on grass verges where the excavation and engineering costs reflect that. At Blenheim Drive to remove the existing stump, re-excavating the planting pit to the correct standard and replanting the tree, costs approximately £3k per pit. So five tree pits on Blenheim Drive would cost approximately £15k to plant trees alone. This doesn't include the costs associated with young tree maintenance including watering.

Therefore we have no plans to replace the trees that were removed from Blenheim Drive.

#### **Supplementary question**

If there is a total budget of £500k for trees in the city, why is so little of the budget allocated for street trees? £15k seems a small part of the total budget to replace these trees so could these be replaced?

#### **Response**

The total budget provided trees in parks and open spaces and areas owned by the City Council. The amount provided under our S42 agency agreement is much less, as indicated, and from a different budget. Any replacements would absorb most of the budget specifically allocated for street trees.

Additionally a considerable amount of work is needed to provide good quality planting pits for any new trees.



## **5. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Chapman – drain clearing**

Does the new arrangement between the city and county councils for highway maintenance extend to keeping drains cleared?

If so, could the board member explain why parts of Woodstock Road in my ward and elsewhere regularly experience large and deep puddles which take a long time to clear, even after relatively short periods of precipitation?

### **Written response**

Oxford Direct Services' new highway maintenance responsibilities include the maintenance and emptying of road gullies on the Principle Road network. There are often issues across the City with the speed in which surface water can flow away from carriageways and is often due to the main sewer being at or near capacity which creates a backup of surface water. Woodstock Road, in places, has had historical drainage issues. The recent work undertaken by the County Council between Morton Road and South Parade included the installation of enhanced drainage ahead of the carriageway resurfacing to alleviate some of the known issues. We would encourage Members to report specific highway drainage issues via FixMyStreet so they can be investigated during the occurrence and the appropriate action taken.

## **Board member for Healthy Oxford**

## **6. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Upton – Five Mile Drive facilities**

Is Cllr Upton yet able to let us know why it has taken so long to provide changing facilities at Five Mile Drive Park, and to confirm that facilities, though limited, will be available this season?

### **Written response**

As Cllr Goddard is aware, the cost of providing a new modular unit at Five Mile Drive, turned out to be significantly more than the £50k originally assigned to this project. I have worked with officers to allocate a further £20k. Officers have also worked closely with Summertown Stars FC, who will be the main users of this facility, and they have recently confirmed that they are able to provide £12k towards the project. This will allow us to deliver the non-cladded building option. Officers are currently waiting to hear from the ward councillors whether they would like to contribute to the cost of cladding.

We have provided portaloos as a temporary measure, and certainly aim to have the finished facility in place well before the end of this season.

## **7. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Upton – cycle lane layouts**

Can Cllr Upton let us know whether any part of the recently awarded cycling grants is available to look at cycle lane layouts?

### **Written response**

Within the recently awarded Growth Deal funding there is £1.4m this financial year for walking and cycling connector routes in Oxford. The money is under the control of the County Council and year 1 funding will include planning and design work for some schemes and construction for others. This complements the Growth Deal money being spent on the main road corridors in the city (Woodstock, Banbury, Botley and the South

East corridors) and the Access to Headington project, some of which will be spent on design and some on actually building improved infrastructure for cyclists. The details of the first year Growth Deal projects across the county can be found here:

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/719/growth\\_board\\_announces\\_first\\_round\\_of\\_projects\\_to\\_receive\\_housing\\_and\\_growth\\_deal\\_funding](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/719/growth_board_announces_first_round_of_projects_to_receive_housing_and_growth_deal_funding)

As we work towards a Zero Emission Zone in the centre of Oxford, achieving modal shift to walking and cycling will be vital.

## **Board member for Housing (Building better homes)**

### **8. From Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Rowley – Great Estates electric car points**

I understand that the City Council estates team are improving car and cycle parking for residents, where there is a recognised need, by creating spaces on deep grass verges, for instance in front of the 3 blocks of flats in Amory Close, Cowley.

As a council wishing to increase and encourage cleaner forms of transport would it not be a good idea to install one or two electric charging points at the same time?

#### **Written response**

Further to the Council's commitment to roll out of charging points throughout the City, we recognise the requirement going forward of taking a similar approach amongst estates and parking areas.

During the recent design and planning stages of the Great Estates project work at Amory Close, consultation was undertaken around proposed layout of facilities, and no request was received for charging points to be considered as part of the upgraded parking facilities. Consequently, the current works and design were carried out in response to the parking requirements suggested during the consultation. However, during the work being undertaken, cable is set and sunken into the grass verges and curtilage as a matter of process for replacement/further lighting points infrastructure. This then would allow any points to be installed going forwards should the need or demand be necessary. This is becoming a standard procedure on upgraded hard-standing and redesigned communal areas to allow us to future proof design.

Should the requirement become evident for users at the scheme for electric charging, this can be undertaken.

This Council also encourages use of the travel hierarchy that would promote use of walking, cycling and public transport over use of the individual car user. We hope the spaces will encourage residents to park their car and use cleaner forms of transport.

#### **Supplementary question**

Would the Great Estates programme consider providing covered cycle racks as these are better used than uncovered cycle racks?

#### **Response**

We do consider installing covered cycle racks where appropriate and the cost/benefit analysis shows these will be worthwhile.

## Board member for Planning and Transport

### 9. From Councillor Gotch to Councillor Hollingsworth – affordable housing policy

Will the portfolio holder confirm that affordable housing incorporated in future planning consents will total 50% of dwelling numbers, as per City policy and not as at Barton Park, with 'affordable' defined as relative to Oxford salaries, not market valuations or rents?

#### Written response

The City Council's policy for affordable housing is clearly laid out in the documents that make up the current Local Plan, in particular the Sites and Housing Plan. The Barton Park AAP, as adopted by this Council, also forms part of the current Local Plan. The Local Plan, along with the NPPF and all other relevant planning policy documents such as Neighbourhood Plans form the suite of policies against which any planning application must be judged.

As the Councillor is surely aware, the granting of planning consents is a quasi-judicial process in which each application must be judged on its own merits against the relevant planning policies. It will be up to the relevant Committee, or officer in the case of a delegated application, to make the final decision and must do so without instruction from this Council.

The policies and definitions used for affordable and social housing are clearly laid out in the relevant planning policy documents. To save the Councillor the trouble of downloading the document and reading it, the Sites and Housing Plan, adopted in 2013, states in Policy HP3 that "Planning permission will only be granted for residential development on sites with capacity for 10 or more dwellings, or which have an area of 0.25 hectares or greater, if generally a minimum 50% of dwellings on the site are provided as affordable homes. A minimum 80% of the affordable homes must be provided as social rented, with remaining affordable homes provided as intermediate housing".

The same document defines 'Social Housing' as "Homes that are let at a level of rent generally set much lower than those charged on the open market, available to those recognised by the Council as being in housing need, and offering long term security of tenure (through Secure or Assured tenancies). The rent should currently be calculated using the formula set out in Appendices C and D of Housing Corporation Circular 27/01 – Rent Influencing Regime – Implementing the Rent Restructuring Framework. Should this circular be revoked at any time, the City Council would use a weekly rent figure equivalent to 30% of the lower quartile net income (after deductions) for full-time employees working in Oxford, pending any revised formula adopted or supported by the Council."

The same glossary defines Intermediate Affordable Housing as "Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents. These can include shared ownership, affordable rented housing and intermediate rent. The Council will consider the suitability of other forms of intermediate housing, such as low-cost market housing, in light of its genuine affordability to those in housing need."

The Barton Park AAP, which sets planning policies specific to that site, adopted a policy of 40% of all dwellings to be social housing, and no intermediate affordable housing, because of the additional infrastructure costs involved in bring the site forward for development.

### **Supplementary question**

Would you accept that despite the Local Plan policies not all developers take the policies on board and provide expected levels affordable housing?

### **Response**

In the case of live applications on which councillors may take planning decisions, all councillors must be careful not to state their position in advance of having all the facts.

## **10. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hollingsworth – micro dwellings**

It was reported in The Guardian (23rd August 2018) under the heading 'are these the worst new flats in Britain' that Ilford Council has given permission to self-contained single person apartments as small as 13sqm in size (approximately 3.6m x 3.6m) and 15sqm for a double; this has been made much easier by recent central Government planning policy changes which enables commercial to housing conversions under permitted development thereby bypassing the planning process.

Indeed, I am aware of one 16sqm two-person conversion near me.

Can the Portfolio Holder say whether we know how many more 'micro' developments have occurred in Oxford and, considering they breach local standards (minimum 37sqm for a single person dwelling and 50sqm for a two-person dwelling), what we can do about this?

### **Written response**

The question – or possibly the original report – has a number of errors, but raises a serious issue. First, there has been no such thing as Ilford Council since 1965; Ilford is in the London Borough of Redbridge. Secondly and more importantly, Redbridge LBC did not 'give permission' for these flats – thanks to the change to permitted development rights that allows the conversion of office buildings into homes these flats did not require planning permission, and were thus able to entirely bypass Redbridge's planning processes.

It is not for nothing that the head of the TCPA (Town and Country Planning Association) describes this "as the most shameful built environment policy of the post-war period". As permitted development, these conversions are not required to meet the national space standards, nor can Councils seek affordable housing provision from them. This was a deliberate decision of Government when it first introduced this change to permitted development regulations in 2013.

As the councillor may recollect, when the changes were introduced the City Council was so concerned about the potential impact that it sought to impose a city wide Article 4 Direction to remove this permitted development right entirely; unfortunately the then Coalition Government blocked this approach. The Council then applied for and received approval for a different Article 4 Direction which removed these permitted development rights on Key Protected Employment sites, but this has meant that other offices can be converted in this way.

Unfortunately, despite widespread concerns being expressed across the sector and across the country about the results of this policy, the Government reaffirmed its support for the change to permitted development rights in 2017, meaning that the Council can do nothing to prevent conversions of this sort.

While I can confirm that there are a total of 68 such applications on the Uniform database, that will include sites where it was deemed that permitted development rights did not exist and withdrawn applications, and possibly multiple applications for the same site. The sizes of the resulting flats can only be gathered by manual inspection of each application. Collating the data requested by the councillor will take a little time, but when it has been collated it will be circulated to all members. I hope that they will then use that data to lobby the Government to reverse this wholly misguided and destructive policy.

### **Supplementary question**

Is there anything else we can do to limit applications being submitted for this type of development?

### **Response**

No, because under permitted development rights we have no control over creating what are effectively new slums and the government, having seen the poor quality developments as a result of this policy, made the policy permanent. We have to publicise how detrimental these policies and these developments are.

## **11. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Hollingsworth – parking in Headington**

Residents in Headington are complaining about increased levels of parking on pavements following the substantial tariff rise at Headington car parks over the summer.

Can the Board Member please update Council with the following information:

- i. The total number of vehicles using each of the Headington car parks in July, August and September 2018, and comparable figures for July, August and September 2017.
- ii. Total income derived from parking charges for each of the Headington car parks in July, August and September 2018, and comparable figures for July, August and September 2017.
- iii. A breakdown of the above figures showing the length of stay i.e. numbers of vehicles parking for 0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-6, 6-8 and 8-24 hours, and after 8pm.
- iv. Number of local resident/business permits issued during the months specified above in 2017 and 2018.

### **Written response**

As September hasn't finished, I have provided the data for June, July and August instead. The figures for these three months show a reduction in use of 4%, and an increase in income of 15%. These figures would not appear to support the premise of the question.

The usage figures for these three months are as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19
June	14,271	13,729
July	14,392	13,739
August	13,970	13,335
Total	42,633	40,803

The income figures are as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19
June	£28,131	£32,613
July	£27,654	£33,168
August	£24,994	£27,160
Total	£80,779	£92,941

The breakdown of by month and by tariff band is as follows:

2018/19	0-1 Hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-24 hours	Fixed	Total
June	7,688	3,858	1,249	444	265	225	13,729
July	7,800	3,907	1,147	428	227	230	13,739
August	7,485	3,989	1,067	340	231	223	13,335
2017/18	0-2 Hours		2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-24 hours	Fixed	Total
June	12,351		757	697	249	217	14,271
July	12,524		689	740	251	188	14,392
August	12,164		807	610	208	181	13,970

The number of parking permits issued was as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19
June	1	1
July	0	1
August	4	3
Total	5	5

## **12. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hollingsworth – Woodstock Road cycle track**

Will the Council exercise its powers of persuasion on the County Council to extend the Woodstock Road cycle track southwards from Frenchay Road?

### **Written response**

Yes, but that is not always a guarantee of success. I believe that County Council officers have explained the issues and costs to the Councillor and his County Councillor colleagues. The councillor, and his colleagues, might wish to consider apply their ward/division budgets to the issue, as that might prove even more persuasive for the County Council.

In the meantime Oxford Direct Services is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council officers to deliver walking and cycle route improvements in the City funded via the Growth Deal, and will raise this location for future consideration.

### **Supplementary question**

Is there an estimated cost for this extension and could I be sent this?

### **Response**

You can make enquiries of the County Council. City and county councillors have put substantial amounts of their ward budgets to local highways schemes in Carfax and in St Clement's wards. This makes a more persuasive case for getting the works done. This may be an option in this case.

## **13. From Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Hollingsworth – 'homes in gardens' inspections**

I would like to thank Cllr Chapman for forwarding the officer response to my supplementary question (at the last Council meeting) regarding thermal imaging data to check for unauthorised 'homes in gardens'

As the funded work is ongoing would Cllr Hollingsworth agree that officers should be advised to informed local councillors that letters to householders are about to be sent out in their ward, and provide safety shoes and hard hat for the officer making the site visit?

### **Written response**

Planning enforcement visits are carried out by the Council for a wide range of reasons, including checks for unauthorised dwellings. Notifying ward councillors in advance every time such a routine visit is due to occur or a letter relating to a planning enforcement activity is sent seems excessive and unnecessary.

Where officers are targeting a particular area for significant enforcement activity they are already notifying the ward councillors.

All council staff, including planning enforcement staff and building control officers, wear clothing appropriate to the nature of their visit and the work that might need to be undertaken during that visit.

### **Supplementary question**

Is this in place as ward councillors in Headington area did not know that a large number of letters about enforcement had been sent? And are ordinary clothes and shoes suitable for these visits?

### **Response**

Appropriate clothing is worn: heavy boots and hard hats may not be appropriate for an enforcement visit.

*(After the meeting it was separately confirmed that the process of notifying ward members about batches of enforcement letters was started in July 2018)*

## **Board member for a Safer and Greener Environment**

### **14. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – city centre benches**

I have heard different reasons for why benches have been removed from Oxford City Centre – a move which has been criticised by elderly and disabled individuals in the Oxford Mail (2nd September).

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm whether, or not, the benches were removed in the belief that they would help tackle anti-social behaviour or for some other reason?

Can the Portfolio Holder also confirm how many benches were removed and where and when they will be relocated or replaced?

### **Written response**

This reproduces the press statement given at the time.

Over the weekend, working in partnership with Thames Valley Police, we removed two benches from Gloucester Street, near Friars Entry, to stop prolific and years-long anti-social behaviour. We have been hearing concerns from residents, business owners and tourists about racial abuse, intimidation, abuse of customers, and drug taking and dealing from several users of the benches. NewRiver, which manages Gloucester Green, is currently installing four new benches in Gloucester Green. These, alongside the benches around the trees in the square, aim to ensure disabled people, the less mobile, and the elderly continue to have somewhere to stop and rest. We want Oxford's city centre to be safe and accessible for absolutely everyone.

### **Supplementary question**

When deciding where to place or remove public seating, what consideration is given to people with mobility issues or who need to rest frequently?

### **Response**

There is no specific consideration, but I will ask officers to bear these factors in mind in the overall planning of public seating.



### **15. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – blue badge holders and the ZEZ**

Will Disabled Permit ("blue badge") holders be exempt from the proposed 2020 Zero Emission Zone?

#### **Written response**

Yes.

### **16. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – ZEZ and air quality**

When Oxford City Council applied for central Government funds for the 2020 Zero Emission Zone did it draw the Government's attention to the statement by Ricardo Consultants that such a zone would have "potentially little overall effect on air quality", and if not, why not?

#### **Written response**

The statement highlighted has to be read in the full context of the report which sets out the benefits of introducing a zero emission zone. The feasibility study which is informing the proposals for the zero emission zone has been published and is readily available via the [Oxford City Council website](#).

#### **Supplementary question**

The statement by Ricardo Consultants about the minimal impact of the ZEZ was tucked away in the report: why was no attention drawn to this and why is the conclusion not given more consideration?

#### **Response**

It is true that the initial red zone of the ZEZ will have little impact on overall air quality. However the expansion of the ZEZ into the proposed orange and green zones will have a markedly larger effect. Hence the evaluation and conclusions in the report.

### **17. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – air quality in city centre**

What are the latest statistics for the levels of harmful vehicle emissions in

- (1) Queen Street;
- (2) St Aldates?

#### **Written response**

Details of the latest measurements of air quality across the City can be viewed in the Air Quality Annual Status Report available on the [Oxford City Council website](#).

#### **Supplementary question**

Will the proposals in the Zero Emission Zone to move buses from Queen Street to St Aldates after 2020 increase NO<sub>2</sub> emissions there beyond the legal limit?

#### **Response**

We have seen a steady decrease in emissions on St Aldates over the years and have no reason to assume this will not continue past 2020 and offset any increase from buses moving from Queen Street. So there is no reason to expect the changes will cause an increase beyond the legal limit

### **18. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – air quality and buses**

By how much are emissions in Queen Street expected to fall as a result of the planned transfer of bus services from Queen Street to St Aldates?

#### **Written response**

We do not have such data available. Monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub> in Queen Street in 2017 found levels to be at 28µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The legal limit is 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

### **19. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – LEZ for HGVs**

Will the Council take immediate steps to introduce a Low Emission Zone for HGVs as London has already done, and if not why not?

#### **Written response**

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are currently working together to introduce a Zero Emission Zone in the City. As part of this proposal we are considering how we can reduce emissions from all sectors, including HGV's.

#### **Supplementary question**

Why are you not creating a Low Emission Zone which will save lives?

#### **Response**

Because we are creating a Zero Emission Zone instead.

### **20. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – feed in tariffs**

The Feed-In Tariffs (FITs) Scheme is the government's subsidy scheme for generation of renewable electricity from small-scale low-carbon installations. A recent Government consultation, which closed on 13th September 2018, sets out a proposal to close the export tariff alongside the generation tariff on 31 March 2019, which would mean full closure of the FITs scheme to new applications after 31 March 2019.

Given this Council's stated commitment to small-scale renewables, did it submit a response objecting to these proposed changes?

If not, will the Council be submitting a late response doing so?

#### **Written response**

Along with a range of stakeholders, the City Council lobbied Clare Perry MP, Minister of State at BEIS in August 2018 via letter asking her to consider the impacts of the removal of export tariff.

There has been a raft of consultations from BEIS over the summer, and it is simply not possible to respond to each one. Officers have prioritised those where we believe we can exercise the maximum benefit for the City Council, for example, the consultation on the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Fund.

## **21. From Councillor Harris to Councillor Hayes – electric charging points**

In view of the Council's plans to trial pop-up electric charging points in Frenchay Road, Rutherway and Lonsdale Road please state:

- A. Why these roads were chosen for the trial?
- B. How many pop-up charging points are planned for each of the three named roads?
- C. How the trial will be monitored?
- D. Whether the Council expects the trial to impact on existing residents' parking?

### **Written response**

Oxford residents were asked for nominations for streets to trial a maximum of twenty pop-up charging points in one road.

The trial will be evaluated on a number of factors: the performance of the chargers; the cost effectiveness of the technology and “whole street” installation model; the prospect for commercialisation of the charger technology at scale; the user experience of using specific chargers and accessing chargers; and the experience of residents living on the street relating to the presence of the chargers.

No changes to the Controlled Parking Zone for the selected street will be requested.

### **Supplementary question**

Can you confirm that no parking places are lost as a result of putting in the electric charging points?

### **Response**

I have no information on this but would assume the number of spaces should remain the same overall.

## **Board member for Supporting Local Communities**

## **22. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Simm - SVPRS/VCRS**

This Council has a long history as a City of Sanctuary and – over the last three years - chose to welcome 30 refugee families in Oxford under the Government-funded Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS). My understanding is that the Council has now stopped welcoming refugees despite the Government scheme continuing until May 2020.

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform Council of the Executive’s on-going policy with respect to the SVPRS/VCRS?

### **Written response**

This updates the briefing provided to all Councillors in July. Oxford continues to lead the way among local authorities in the South East in engaging with the Government’s Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) and Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) programme

We have settled 29 families, which will rise to 30 families including 129 individuals by the end of October 2018. As far as the most up to date available figures show that is

more than any other locality in the South East - where there is already very significant pressure on housing – including cities like Southampton which is a significantly larger city than Oxford.

Locality	Population	No of families settled
Oxford	160,000	29 – rising to 30
Southampton	253,000	25
Reading	218,000	12
Brighton	160,000	10
Cherwell	145,000	6 – rising to 12
South and Vale Districts	266,000	8
West Oxfordshire	109,000	6

Oxford City Council has taken 25 families under SVPRS, three under VCRS and one family under a Community Sponsorship Scheme. Oxford has been one of the few local authorities to participate in VCRS and we have taken more families under the scheme than any other council in the South East.

Many of the families have complex needs and Oxford City Council, has successfully worked with partners including Asylum Welcome, Connection Support and Refugee Resource to build expertise and capacity in the provision of support to facilitate the successful integration of families into their local Oxford communities.

Internal evaluation of the Oxford programme has been positive, but has highlighted the need to further focus on integration and independence especially helping people to find work. While children have very rapidly adapted to their new school environments and learning English, many of the adult family members continue to need support in this area.

All families are accommodated in the private rented sector in the city with their housing costs met by Government funding. However, the funding is for five years only and so it is important to help all families find employment, so they can avoid a cliff edge situation - which might see them having to move - once the Government funding runs out.

Nationally, the Home Office are confident of meeting their target of resettling 23 000 refugees under the resettlement schemes by 2020. Therefore, Oxford City Council has decided to focus on the successful integration of its 30 families for the final two years of the Schemes rather than bring further families into the city.

We will however provide support to any group wishing to resettle a family under the Community Sponsorship Scheme. This, together with the expansion of Cherwell's Scheme, could provide further reunification opportunities for overseas-based relatives of those families already settled in Oxford. Furthermore, if the Government extend the resettlement programme beyond 2020 then, subject to our successful delivery of the current programme, Oxford City Council would be willing to consider participation.

### **Supplementary question**

I have been told that in some cases because the scheme has stopped organisations no longer receive funding to continue their integration work. We are taking a high number of families but can take more because we have a centre of excellence.

Should we continue to offer refugee families a home and support here and find ways to make this successful?

### **Response**

Thank you for acknowledging the work we and our partner charities do to support these families. We want families to be successfully integrated with children in school and adults in work and this is proving more time consuming than we originally thought. It would be worth discussing this further.

## **Deputy Leader of the Council; Board member for Leisure and Tackling Homelessness and Improving the Private Rented Sector**

### **23. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Linda Smith – Fusion 1**

The Portfolio Holder will no doubt be aware that Oxford Bangladeshi Islamic Centre and Mosque had been due to mark the religious holiday Eid al-Adha in Leys Pool and Leisure Centre's main sports hall on 21st August but were told at the last minute by Fusion that a full event management plan including 'anti-terrorism measures' was required resulting in the event being relocated to a less satisfactory venue.

Has the Portfolio Holder sought an explanation from Fusion and can she share it?

### **Written response**

There was an administration problem with this booking and Fusion have issued an apology. I have also met with Fusion to discuss actions which can be taken to avoid another situation like this, and measures will be put in place to improve staff training. The 'anti- terrorism form' is a standard form concerned with the safety of participants at large public events: it was given to this group in error because of a misunderstanding about the nature of the event planned.

### **24. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Linda Smith – Fusion 2**

The Portfolio Holder, along with other members, will have seen the extended exchange between Oxford Hoops and Fusion lifestyle regarding an attempted booking.

Has the Portfolio Holder followed this up with Fusion and what will be improved going forward as a result?

### **Written response**

This is regarding a booking at Oxford Spires Academy that is not within our leisure contract with Fusion.

Fusion have advised us that Oxford Hoops had an outstanding debt that meant that no further bookings could be taken until paid, (this is a standard for block bookings). The debt has now been paid, however, as a consequence of Oxford Hoops delay in payment booking times they requested are not available. Oxford Hoops have been accommodated with alternatives times.

### **25. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Linda Smith – Fusion 3**

At the time of writing (23 September) Fusion Lifestyle's accounts to 31 December 2017 do not appear to be publicly available on the Companies House, Charity Commission or Fusion Lifestyle websites.

The deadline for submission is [was] 30 September.

Could the board member inform us if she has seen the accounts, what the headline income and expenditure figures are, and if there are specific matters in the accounts which will be of interest to members of this council?

#### **Written response**

We have not yet seen the accounts. Fusion have confirmed they will be adopted at their AGM shortly and will be sent to us immediately following this.

### **Leader of the Council, Board Member for Economic Development and Partnerships**

### **26. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Brown – Kassam Stadium**

Partly as a result of Oxford United's poor start to the season, public discussion of the desirability of a new ground has revived to a certain extent.

Could the Leader confirm if she has had any discussions with the club, the owners of the Kassam stadium and other stakeholders since becoming leader?

Can she confirm that the council will play an active in pro-active part in seeking the best possible solution for the club, its fans, and the city as a whole?

#### **Written response**

Oxford United play an important role in the city and since becoming leader I have met with both them and Firoz Kassam to talk through their plans, most recently last week.

Clearly there are currently issues that the club needs to resolve and the city council is supportive of Oxford United and the good work they do in our local communities and will provide them with any advice that they need.

### **27. From Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Brown – informing ward members**

Would the leader agree that members should be informed of officers' high level actions in their wards in advance? For instance the serving of a Community Safety Order?

#### **Written response**

The council undertakes a huge volume of work across the city and having good officer / member relationships is very important to make sure we are able to meet the needs of residents.

From my experience our officers have a good understanding of what matters needs to be communicated with local members.

I would recommend that you meet with the community safety manager and talk through your specific concern about the CSO as any matters that could end up in court have more complex sensitivities around them and they cannot always be shared in advance of the action being undertaken.

### **Supplementary question**

Do you think it is important that ward councillors are informed about major issues in our wards so we are not surprised by a large volume of correspondence about a problem we are not aware exists?

### **Response**

As far as we are aware, as far as practicable officers do keep ward councillors apprised of significant matters in their ward, in advance, where appropriate and if you feel this is not happening then please contact the relevant officers.

## **28. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown - Oxford Democracy Cafes**

Will the Leader join me in welcoming the new series of monthly Oxford Democracy Cafes – organised by Oxford Compass - to reinvigorate the discussion of democracy?

Discussion topics so far have included 'changing our broken electoral system', 'localism' and 'participative democracy'?

Will she also agree to receive the notes from these meetings to feed in to our own constitutional review?

### **Written response**

I would be happy for the council to receive the notes from the Democracy Cafes and consider these. Anything that encourages debate and participation in the democratic process is to be welcomed. As a Council we encourage participation in democracy.

Where appropriate suggestions should be considered as part of the council's constitutional review alongside any other suggestions - subject of course to the bounds of the legislative framework within which we work.

## **29. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Brown – Westgate disabled access**

Could Cllr Brown update Council on her and the Chief Executive's contacts with the Westgate Alliance about the matter of access for disabled people, as mandated in the April meeting of Full Council?

### **Written response**

Blue Badge parking spaces for the Westgate centre have been identified and are on the Westgate website. Pick up and drop off points and signage are outstanding and require permission from the Local Transport Authority. This issue has been raised with Westgate Alliance and the County Council as Local Transport Authority, but the matter has not yet been concluded. We will continue to pursue this matter with both parties to seek resolution.

### **Supplementary question**

Will you provide further updates?

### **Response**

Discussions need to take place and actions need to be agreed between the Westgate Alliance and Oxfordshire County Council as resolution of the issues are in fact their responsibility. We hope this will be resolved soon: we will ask for updates and keep councillors informed.

### **30. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown - expressway**

Given the recent announcement on the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and the mounting opposition in Oxfordshire against the project, will the Council re-consider its position NOT to oppose the Expressway road?

### **Written response**

We discussed this at the last Full Council meeting. I raised this at the Growth Board meeting on 25 September and at my instigation the Growth Board agreed to write to Government Ministers and Highways England to explain the issues and express our concerns over both the uncertainty around the choice of route and that the expressway must be properly integrated with public transport.

So last week I signed and sent the following letter from the Oxfordshire Growth Board, which reflects our position on the Expressway:

The Oxfordshire Growth Board welcomes the announcement of a preferred corridor for the Expressway, a decision which removes some of the uncertainty around the project.

The Board is however disappointed that a decision has not been made on the route around Oxford at this stage, and that there are still two options under consideration. This is particularly concerning because:

- It does not allow our communities to fully understand the likely impact of the project and leaves a significant level of residual uncertainty in many locations;
- The speed/pace of consultation and next stages of the project means we are now looking at this decision potentially not being made for another two years;
- During this time, we will be working with and consulting communities on Oxfordshire's Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, so it will be harder to factor in the Expressway and what it might mean for this (and related) work.

This position is likely to impact a wide range of Stakeholders in scale/size, and carries the risk of making your proposed Engagement programme harder to manage.

At the Oxfordshire Growth Board's meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September, an update report on Expressway was considered, which included reference to a set of principles which we are now looking to inform future decision-making. These say that any decision on the Expressway should:

- i.* Help to secure a more sustainable and integrated Oxfordshire Transport Network by:
  - a.* Linking with and strengthen key transport hubs, such as integrated bus, rail and Park and Ride facilities.



- b. Securing opportunities for the development of new Park and Ride connections to Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge and rapid bus links between the three cities and surrounding market towns.
- c. Providing enhanced local connections to reduce transport pressures on local roads around key settlements.
  - ii.* Minimise its environmental damage and avoid sensitive areas such as areas with SSIs and protected habitats.
  - iii.* Support growth and the investigation of new settlement options through Joint Spatial Plans.
  - iv.* Be future proofed, in terms of taking account of modal shift and innovation such as the rise of autonomous vehicles.

We would welcome further discussion on how this project may progress to enable it to bring a greater degree of certainty to Oxfordshire's spatial, infrastructure and investment planning.

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**To: Council**

**Date: 1 October 2018**

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

## **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. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council and represents the views of the speakers.
3. This report is republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, written responses, and summaries of further verbal responses.

## **Addresses and questions taken in Part 2 of the agenda.**

### Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Artwell – IHRA code
2. Address by Judith Harley – Cowley Marsh Car Park

### Questions in part 2

3. Question from Artwell – use of glyphosate
4. Question from Nigel Gibson – Why is Oxford City Council STILL Discriminating Against the Disabled, and WHAT PRICE DISABILITY

## Addresses in part 2

### 1. Address by Artwell – IHRA code

Oxford City Council has bravely offered support to the oppressed people of Palestine by twinning with Ramallah, a Palestinian city in the central West Bank. This is to be welcome and celebrated, especially as Ramallah is only 12 miles from the village birthplace of Ahed Tamimi, a 17-year-old Semitic Palestinian girl who was imprisoned last year for slapping an Israeli soldier when (as it was reported) a soldier shot her fifteen-year-old cousin in his head.

However, Oxford City Council has also adopted the IHRA definition of anti-semitism, which effectively outlaws all criticism of the 'Jewish Only' State of Israel, and of British Jewry. The courage of Ahed Tamimi in confronting the Israeli military needs to be matched by all people, especially first world people, and Oxford people need to use their courage and liberty to speak for the Semitic people of Palestine who live under a military occupation, which is brutal in my opinion, administered by the official 'Jewish Only' State of Israel.

What democratic measures will Oxford City Council make to ensure that Oxford people who are concerned to campaign for justice for the Semitic people of Palestine, can lawfully campaign without being labelled 'anti-Semitic?'

A statement from Oxford City Council is especially important, as the IHRA code interprets criticism of the 'Jewish Only' State of Israel as 'anti-Semitism.'

### **Written Response from Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council**

I have already highlighted in this chamber that neither the definition nor the examples cited in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance declaration document preclude anyone from criticising Israeli government policy, but quite rightly demand that the language used to do so is appropriate. Indeed, in July I voiced my strong opposition to Israel's Nation State Law, that Jewish people have an exclusive right to national self-determination that doesn't extend to those of other faiths in that country.

*There was no further response at the meeting.*

## 2. Address by Judith Harley – Cowley Marsh Car Park

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

Just over a year ago, in August 2017, the City Council granted itself planning permission to temporarily extend, for up to 5 years, the City Council's Marsh Road Depot, and to reconfigure and extend the adjoining Cowley Marsh Park car park.

The decision notice was issued in September 2017.

Condition 14 of the grant of approval states:

“Prior to use, a management plan outlining the control measures to be employed at the Cowley Marsh Park car park in order to prevent misuse of the car park for long-stay / commuter purposes must be submitted to, and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority. The measures outlined in the plan must subsequently be implemented upon occupation.”

How is it that “misuse of the car park for long-stay / commuter purposes” does not seem to apply to employees of ODS?

The car park management plan was approved in February this year. It states:

1.1 The Marsh Recreation Ground Car Park will be managed in line with similar facilities at other Council owned Park locations;

1.2 Pay and Display machines will be sited at convenient points and a parking tariff will be applied.

Planning officers deemed this plan acceptable, and in compliance with condition 14. However, it is now October. The extended car park and Depot have been occupied for several months, yet there are still no car park Pay and Display machines. The management plan measures have not been implemented on occupation, so the City Council is in breach of planning condition 14. What will you do about this?

When the expansion proposal and budget were debated by the CEB in June 2016, I asked about the proposed use of the extended car park.

The CEB's reply envisaged enlarging the car park “for recreation users and Direct Services employees and reduce parking problems in the neighbourhood”.

Where else in Oxford has a City Council owned public car park been declared for use by City Council employees?

The City Council's stated policy is to encourage use of public transport and cycles, rather than use of private cars. Employees of ODS should be encouraged to use public transport, just like everyone else, and leave Cowley Marsh Car Park available for users of Cowley Marsh Park. How, exactly, will the Council encourage such behaviour? I asked this same question at Council over two years ago, in July 2016. The essence of the reply I received was that the Depot workers had to start so early that they couldn't use public transport and had to use private vehicles. Many residents start work just as early as ODS employees, yet they do not have the privilege of a free public car park at their disposal.

Our dilemma is, as acknowledged by the June 2016 CEB, that if ODS workers cannot park in the Cowley Marsh car park they will cause problems by parking on neighbouring streets – which they do already, especially in neighbouring Owen's Way and Temple Road. On-street parking in neighbouring streets should remain available for residents and their visitors, but the only remedy from the Council to protect this is to threaten to impose a CPZ on Temple Cowley, which residents do not want. Many properties are Victorian terraces with no off-street parking, and recent developments have minimal parking provision thanks to the City Council's short-sighted planning policies. The solution is clearly to relocate ODS. Removing ODS and the Depot would remove much

of the local parking problems. It would also remove considerable noise nuisance, and unsociable working practices, from the area. ODS have now had one year of their temporary planning permission. What progress have they made in their relocation plans?

We would like to liaise with the City Council over the tariff structure for the Cowley Marsh car park so that local businesses, especially the Marsh Harrier and MOT business are not adversely affected.

So, in summary:

1. The Depot expansion planning condition 14, car park management plan measures, have not been implemented on occupation, and the City Council is in breach of this planning condition. What will be done to rectify this, and when?
2. How is it that “misuse of the car park for long-stay / commuter purposes” does not seem to apply to employees of ODS?
3. Where else in Oxford has a City Council owned public car park been declared for use by City Council employees?
4. Employees of ODS should be encouraged to use public transport, just like everyone else, and leave Cowley Marsh Car Park available for users of Cowley Marsh Park. How and when, exactly, will the Council encourage such behaviour?
5. What progress have ODS made in their relocation plans?
6. Will the City Council agree to liaise with local residents over the tariff structure for the Cowley Marsh car park so that local businesses, especially the Marsh Harrier and MOT business are not adversely affected?

### **Written Response from Councillor Chapman, Board Member for Customer Focused Services**

It is absolutely right and proper that the planning rules are applied fairly and consistently in accordance with our policy. After investigating this matter, it would appear that there have been a number of minor issues that have culminated in delaying the swift implementation of a parking scheme. However, I am pleased to confirm that these concerns have now almost been resolved and therefore imminent progress will be made.

As regards your second question, ODS is committed to encouraging staff to use public transport. We currently operate a staff loan scheme, which enables employees to purchase reduced annual bus permits, although regrettably this does not meet the needs of a significant proportion of our staff because they live away from the bus routes servicing Oxford City and start at 5 am.

I can confirm that no car park operated by the City Council has been declared for the sole use of City Council staff. This includes Marsh Road car park, as whilst staff may elect to use this facility there is nothing to prevent others from doing so.

I believe I have addressed your fourth point, although to reiterate we are committed to encouraging use of public transport and will always explore options on how best to maximise this. That having been said, it is my view that we do need to adopt a pragmatic approach. Whilst the depot may not currently be situated in the optimum location, the Council for the time being does need to operate services from this area. To effectively manage this, it is essential that staff are recruited. However, as with any employer, it is not always possible to recruit staff from the local vicinity. In these instances, where staff are required to commute and public transport is not an option,

given the particularly early start required, they will naturally look to drive and park elsewhere.

As you have noted, it was acknowledged that if the Marsh Road car park ceased to be an option, it is highly likely that these staff would look for the nearest alternative. In this instance, the most probable outcome would be to park on-street, which would not be welcomed by most residents. I can confirm that before any parking scheme is implemented, a consultation period is undertaken. This will provide customers with an opportunity to comment on the proposal including the tariff structure. It is certainly not our intention to make the parking situation worse in Marsh Road.

In respect of Cowley Marsh Depot itself, this is Oxford Direct Services' main operations centre, with all Oxford's waste collection lorries, street cleaning vehicles, spare bins and de-icing salt stockpiles. While we are continually looking across our operations to see if there are better ways to locate and configure them, there are no current plans to change arrangements at Cowley Marsh.

*There was no further response at the meeting.*

## Questions in part 2

### 3. Question from Artwell – use of glyphosate

Question to Councillor Chapman, Board Member for Customer Focused Services, The former Oxford City Council Board Member for a Cleaner and Greener Oxford, Councillor Tanner, supported the City Council's public use of the weed killer Round Up; stating that the Council's position could be amended if the link between Round Up and cancer is better established. Councillor Tanner was replying to a Green Councillor who had questioned the safety of the City Council's Parks department using Round Up for weed control in the City.

It has been reported in the Guardian on the 10th August 2018, that Mr Dewayne Johnson has been awarded \$298m in damages after a Jury at San Francisco's Superior Court of California found that Monsanto had failed to warn consumers of the risk posed by its weed killers. The Californian Court accepted that Johnson, a former school groundskeeper's Lymphoma cancer was caused by continual contact with Glyphosate; the main ingredient of Round Up and a chemical that in 2015 the World Health Organisation has stated was "probably carcinogenic to humans." (Guardian on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016.)

Clearly, it is time for Oxford City Council to put the safety of its employees and the residents of Oxford first and reform its public use of this Glyphosate containing weed killer.

### **Will Oxford City Council now ban the use of all Monsanto manufactured weed killers, because of the clear danger, which Glyphosate causes to human health?**

#### **Written Response from Councillor Chapman, Board Member for Customer Focused Services**

A detailed response (below for reference) regarding the use of glyphosate was provided to the July Council meeting (23.07.18). Therefore we will continue to use the product in a controlled manner whilst it is still licenced.

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*Response to July Council meeting*

*ODS (via a specialist contractor, Charlton Environmental) applies glyphosate in accordance with manufacturers and industry standards to all street pavements and associated hard surface areas two to three times annually throughout the city (approximately 320 litres used in total). This is carried out as a pedestrian operation and is a spot treatment only, meaning only visible weeds are targeted. We do this using controlled droplet applicators (CDA), and so very little visible residue is left behind on the street surface. This helps to minimise the volume of pesticide being applied, and is the safest method of application available for our operators and for the public. This method of application uses far less product, down from 200L per hectare through*



*conventional knapsack sprayers, to between 15L and 40L per hectare using CDA machines. The products themselves have also changed, so that formulations are now safer to the public, operatives and wildlife, and most are 'clean label' and do not now even carry an irritant warning.*

*In recent years we have also applied glyphosate around the bases of all trees, so that the need for strimming throughout the season is minimised. This was brought in due to concerns surrounding the strimming causing damage to the trees across Oxford, and is usually a one off treatment in April, or in line with the first cut of the season.*

*We continue to monitor any debate about the future licencing of this product and we will only continue to use it whilst it is licenced.*

### **Supplementary response from Councillor Nigel Chapman**

Studies have produced mixed results. Some have reported a link between glyphosate and cancer and illness but studies in 2016 and 2017 have found no link. Overall there is no scientifically established link between the chemical and cancer or danger in its use. The product is still licensed. So we consider it is still proper that we use this in a safe and correct manner.

#### **4. Question from Nigel Gibson – Why is Oxford City Council STILL Discriminating Against the Disabled, and WHAT PRICE DISABILITY**

Question to the Councillor Linda Smith, Board Member for Board member for Leisure and Tackling Homelessness and Improving the Private Rented Sector

In two previous Council meetings I've brought to your attention the way in which you are discriminating against the disabled and others qualifying for a Bonus card by increasing the admission charge by 53.85%, from £1.30 to £2.00.

I am surprised that you have chosen to do nothing about this. Last time Councillor Smith provided us with a list of all the benefits that Bonus Card holders may receive, as though that was some sort of explanation. The result is that someone who qualifies for those benefits is now using central government money to subsidise your operator Fusion. I didn't think this is how it was supposed to work.

You have continued to charge a peak rate of £2 between 4 and 8 pm during weekdays – as Councillor Smith explained last time, this is apparently to discourage the disabled and other Bonus Card qualifiers from taking their exercise at times when more worthy people deserve to be able to go. Worse, these charges continue to be made even after 8pm when they should reduce by 50p.

This is something that could have been fixed the first time I brought it to your attention. I cannot believe that a Labour administration would willingly discriminate against the disabled in this way, and continue to endorse Fusion charging more than what is shown on the Price List. I understand that the Fusion computer system cannot be changed to accommodate this pricing profile, so you surely must question yourself as to who suggested it in the first place and why they thought they could get away with it.

**Can you tell me how many times people with Bonus Cards have been charged £2 after 8pm during weekdays and after 4pm at weekends since the prices were raised in April?**

##### Background

The 2018/19 increases for the Bonus Card concession increases were buried in the middle of an Appendix 7 of the budget document voted through by Council in February.

The Council offers a concessionary rate, called a Bonus card, for a range of people in need, including the disabled and their carers and different types of income support. The admission price for these concessions was increased by 53.85% from £1.30 to £2.00 at the start of April, with no advance warning, and discriminates against the disabled and those on benefits who now have to find extra money in order be able to participate in exercise. The pricing shown on the Fusion websites is in line with the Budget appendix, but not what people are being charged.

##### Written Response from Councillor Linda Smith, Board Member for Leisure

My response is the same as that I gave verbally at the last Council meeting on 23 July. In summary:

The scheme does not discriminate against disabled people. I would remind you that the Bonus card is available to people in receipt of many different benefits and offers generous discounts. The more generously low off-peak pricing is to encourage use when the centre is less busy. Fees are just part of ensuring accessibility for all residents: we also offer free swimming for under-17s and free swimming lessons for children whose families are in receipt of benefits. We will be working with Fusion on better disabled access and improving their IT systems.

### **Supplementary response from Councillor Linda Smith**

The simple answer to the question is that there is no evidence of overcharging so **there are no times** people with Bonus Cards have been charged £2 after 8pm during weekdays and after 4pm at weekends.

I have spoken to Fusion's manager who assures me that this is not something which should happen. If anyone has been overcharged in error they should contact the leisure centre with details of the Bonus Card and time of the visit and ask for a refund.

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