

Remote meeting

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 30 November 2020

www.oxford.gov.uk



Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Azad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Curran

Councillor Donnelly

Councillor Gant

Councillor Gotch

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Simmons

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Tarver

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fry

Councillor Garden

Councillor Haines

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Howlett

Councillor Iley-Williamson

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor McManners

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Simm

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Tanner

Councillor Taylor

Councillor Upton

Apologies:

Councillors Arshad, Harris, Malik and Tidball sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

43. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

44. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 5 October 2020 as a true and correct record.

45. Appointment to Committees

There were no changes of appointments to committees.

46. Announcements

The Lord Mayor, Cllr Lygo, reminded Council this was his first event as the newly installed Lord Mayor. His chosen charities for the year were Wood Farm Youth Centre, Ark-T, and Oxfordshire Mind.

He reminded members of the special council meeting on 5 January at 5.30pm, and to watch online the virtual Mayor Making.

He congratulated Cllr Hayes for winning the Local Government Information Unit's Environment and Sustainability Pioneer award for 2020 and Cllr Tidball for being nominated for their Covid-19 champion award.

He congratulated the Monitoring Officer Anita Bradley on her appointment as Director of Law and Governance for Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council; thanking her for her time with the council and wishing her well.

He then invited the City Rector to speak.

The Leader of the Council congratulated the three civic office holders on taking up their offices.

She asked Council to note the success in trials of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and the huge hopes it brings for the city and the world: and to congratulate the research team on their achievement.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

48. Project Approval and Allocation of Housing and Growth Deal Funding for Affordable Housing Delivery

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services seeking project approval and delegations to enable capital grant allocations to be paid to Registered Providers and Community-Led Housing providers for schemes within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal programme, using grant received from Oxfordshire County Council for this purpose.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve a revision to the general fund capital budget in 2020/21 of £3,123,000, for the initial grant payment in relation to the William Morris Close site, and a further capital budget for 2021/22 of £347,000 to fund the remaining grant balance payable for that scheme all of which will be funded by capital grant income from Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD).

49. Project Approval and Allocation of Next Steps Accommodation Programme Funding for Affordable Housing Delivery & Homelessness Prevention

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services seeking project approval and delegations to enable capital spend, under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, using grant received from Government for the purpose of acquiring additional Council housing for the purpose of reducing rough sleeping.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve a revision to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget in 2020/21 of £1,195,750 for the initial purchase of 5 properties, to be funded by capital grant from MHCLG/ Homes England of £150,000; by Oxfordshire Housing and Growth (OGD) Deal funding of £275,000; and HRA Council borrowing of up to £770,750.

50. Appointment of Head of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Council considered the report of the Head of Business Improvement asking Council to designate the Council's Monitoring Officer and to appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Leader and Group Leaders thanked the current Monitoring Officer Anita Bradley for her guidance and clarity of thought, and her skill and professionalism in her roles as Monitoring Officer and Head of Law and Governance, and wished her well in her new post.

The Chair of the Appointments Committee Cllr Brown introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Designate** the newly appointed Head of Law and Governance, Susan Sale, as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 4 January 2021.
2. **Appoint** the newly appointed Head of Law and Governance, Susan Sale, as the Council's Returning Officer and as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 4 January 2021.

51. Council and Committee meetings programme March 2021 - May 2022

Council considered the report of Head of Law and Governance which sets out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for 1 March 2021 to 31 May 2022, including moving a Council meeting to 6.00pm on 22 March 2021

The Leader of the Council Cllr Brown introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 March 2021 to 31 May 2022 attached at Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme in the event that there is any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remits which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

52. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 14 October 2020 of Cabinet

Minute 76 – Oxford City Council's response to the Planning for the Future White Paper August 2020

Cllr Wolff asked if any communication from MHCLG relating to the Council's response had been received.

Cllr Hollingsworth reported that no response had been received but that the government itself now seemed less enthusiastic about the consultation proposals.

Cllr Roz Smith asked if a copy of the Council's official response to the consultation could be added to its website.

Cllr Hollingsworth said he would ask officers to add this.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 11 November 2020 of Cabinet

Minute 88 – Alcohol and Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Cllr Wolff asked about options for reporting problems and if councillors could be informed if a PSPO is in force in their ward.

Cllr Upton replied that the PSPOs included a map of the areas covered but she would ask officers to notify councillors of the orders affecting their wards.

The dog control order covered the whole city, the alcohol PSPO covered areas where there was good evidence of a persistent problem. Councillors could report matters via the saferoxford email.

Cllr Gant asked about the need to have documentary evidence of a problem for the new PSPO; whether Cabinet was content with the remits of the both the previous and new PSPOs; and if any formal processes were started under the PSPO and if so were there any that could not have been handled under other powers.

Cllr Upton explained that the newly-lapsed PSPO had rolled-over previous orders and did not require a full evidential base in support. The new Order requires a fully evidence based approach to setting the areas covered, so coverage is more restricted.

No fixed penalty notices were issued, but officers used it many times to request people to hand over their alcohol or to make it difficult for drinkers to gather where such gatherings could cause distress.

53. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

35 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 14 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the full document pack containing these minutes.

54. Partnership report: Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Lord Mayor took this and the next item before the public speaker was heard at around 7.00pm.

Council had before it the report on behalf of the Leader of Council, Cllr Brown, on the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and the Engagement Draft of the Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development included as an appendix.

Cllr Brown introduced the report, outlining the benefits of the partnerships and the Board in allowing the local authorities (as the individual decision making bodies) to meet together and with other partners to take forward common goals and leverage funding to benefit the county.

Cllr Brown answered questions from councillors:

- On the relationships between the many different partnerships and bodies involved in and around the Growth Board, each partnership works on deciding and delivering on common areas works. Democratic accountability then lay with the individual decisions made by each council.
- There was no decision on whether to re-timetable the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to fit with revised Local Plan timetables. She would encourage and emphasise that young people form a vital part of and should engage in the consultations.
- She hoped that fellow council leaders reported back to their councils in similar fashion, but had no information about their reporting.

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel members noted the wide-ranging remit of the Board and the accountability, and welcomed the report which gave members an opportunity to discuss and comment on the Board's work.

Council noted the report and the appendix.

55. Scrutiny Committee update report

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

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report and the matters discussed at the committee and standing and review panels and answered questions. He thanked officers involved in the scrutiny function for their support.

Council noted the report.

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

Cllr Haines left the meeting at this point.

There was one address to Council.

Janet Philips spoke in support of motion 16a on Improving coronavirus testing and tracing.

Cllr Upton thanked Ms Philips for her speech and her support for the motion, and noted the effective work of the Oxford University testing and tracing system. She and invited Ms Philips to listen to the debate on the motion.

The full text of this speech as submitted is set out in the document pack containing these minutes.

57. Motions on notice 30 November 2020

Council had before it 12 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed:

- a) Improving coronavirus testing and tracing [amendment agreed by all parties]
- b) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 Workplace
- c) Community Safety Universal Basic Income [as amended by the proposer]
- d) Supporting the climate and ecological emergency [as amended]

Motions not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished:

- e) Charitable donations from members' allowances
- f) Homelessness and Social Housing
- g) Pavement parking
- h) Defining 'Net Zero' buildings
- i) Chinese New Year
- j) The Permitted Deportation of EU Nationals Found Rough Sleeping
- k) Student fees
- l) Fireworks

a) Improving coronavirus testing and tracing

Cllr Upton seconded by Cllr Simmons proposed the submitted cross-party motion, with additional words at the end agreed by all three groups, as set out in the briefing note. Cllr Gant supported the motion.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Oxford City Council expresses concern that, so far into the COVID pandemic, the country still does not have an adequate testing and tracing system, putting the people of Oxford at increased risk of suffering from coronavirus.

Test and trace has been proven in countries with a properly functioning system to be a successful strategy to manage and contain COVID-19 outbreaks.

Numerous experts have repeated that, to be effective, testing and tracing needs to be managed and carried out at a local level. However, instead of funding local bodies – which have the expertise, experience and vital local connections – this Government has squandered billions of pounds of public money on private companies (though the system has still been misleadingly named ‘NHS’ Test & Trace). This poor performance has contributed to the failure to contain COVID outbreaks and, ultimately, to an increased loss of life. This lack of integration into normal local NHS services (which would allow GPs to contact positive cases with crucial and timely medical advice) could and probably will cost lives. This lack of integration with local authorities prevents the timely offering of financial and practical support.

In late recognition that its tracing performance could not improve without local participation, NHS Test and Trace have in recent months passed to local authorities the names of people with positive tests whom they failed to reach. In short, they are getting local authorities to clean up their mess.

This Council believes the only way to fully rectify the situation is for full control to be passed to local authorities, with the necessary funding to do the job properly, with national input providing any support necessary to ensure effective co-ordination.

We believe a local scheme will:

- Improve traceability
- Enable increased and targeted testing, including asymptomatic testing
- Be better integrated into existing Council COVID support services
- Be a more cost-effective solution
- Achieve greater community engagement
- Allow for the engagement of local volunteers

Pressure is building on the Government both to use local authorities more and to cease contracting out ‘NHS’ Test and Trace’ to private companies.

This Council agrees to add its voice to those challenging the current, failed system by asking the Leader to:

- Call on our Director of Public Health and the leader of the County Council to support more local authority engagement in testing and tracing.

- Write to our MPs asking them for their support.

Council also recognises the tireless work of the Oxford Vaccine Group who, in partnership with AstraZeneca, have taken us a giant step closer to ending the pandemic.

Council particularly applauds the decision to make the vaccine available on a not-for-profit basis around the world.

b) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 workplace and community safety

Cllr Aziz, seconded by Cllr Taylor 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:

This Council notes more than 40,000 calls and contacts were made to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline during the first three months of the Covid-19 lockdown, as reported by the BBC in July 2020.

Domestic Abuse is a common form of violence, overwhelmingly impacting women and girls globally and nationally and here in Oxford. Men and children are also impacted by domestic abuse as are non-binary and LGBTIQ+ people.

According to women's groups, at least twenty six women including children have been killed in domestic homicides since the lockdown started, the eldest victim was over 82 years old and the youngest were four and two, killed alongside their mother.

Domestic Abuse impacts people of all ages, genders, race, disabilities and class, as well as work places, places of worship, places of learning and all communities.

This Council recognises people with insecure immigration status are especially vulnerable to seeking help due to the Hostile Environment, leaving many homeless and facing additional threats with pregnant migrant women facing particular risks.

This Council recognises the Covid pandemic, lockdowns and restriction of movement, means there is a greater need for increased protection and support for victims and survivors in Oxford.

This Council resolves:

to ask the Head of Business Improvement to submit a report to Cabinet setting out proposals to

- Develop a Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy for Oxford City Council and encourage Oxford's workplaces to do the same. As the government instructs people to work from home over the next six months, this council encourages all workplaces to prioritise domestic abuse as a work place and community safety issue.
- Support and build links with trade unions and employers to implement work place domestic abuse policies.

- Raise awareness and provide information on how to help friends, family members and colleagues affected by domestic abuse.
- Campaign and lobby for increased sustainable and emergency funding from central government for organisations working with victims and survivors, especially services for BAME women, which are hugely underfunded.

This Council thanks Oxford's frontline domestic abuse workers, charities and organisations for their life saving work.

c) Universal Basic Income

Cllr Garden, seconded by Cllr Gant proposed the submitted motion including the proposer's minor amendment as set out in the briefing note,

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council recognises that financial security is critical to a stable and thriving society. Yet, too many people are without enough money to meet their basic needs. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is an opportunity to revolutionise a welfare system that is no longer fit for purpose.

The Bank of England predicts that unemployment levels will rise to 7.7% by the middle of next year. Oxford will not be immune. Businesses closing, zero hour contracts and gig economy adding further uncertainty. Housing is expensive and too much income is being spent on rent or mortgages so we can expect an increase in evictions and homelessness. These trends are likely to persist and worsen as climate change intensifies requiring significant industry restructuring.

Demand for financial state support is anticipated but there's little confidence that Universal Credit will be sufficient. The system is intrusive and demeaning, and has caused much distress and hardship even before the current crisis. Many are expected to fall through the gaps.

Financial inequality impacts social cohesion and productivity. The consequent cost to the health, police, education and social services are immense.

We need a more flexible and supportive social security infrastructure to allow society to cope with the necessary changes. Poverty and inequality pose great threat to the economic recovery. But with the right support, individuals could be empowered to embark on new enterprises and retraining for new careers. Rebuilding can be successful, and support the much need transition to a low-carbon high-tech economy, but we need a strong confident innovative workforce.

UBI would provide every adult (regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status) with a fixed, regular and unconditional income to relieve some of the financial pressures facing households. It's a monthly grant sufficient to contribute to the basic needs of food, shelter and education. It is a fair way of eliminating poverty, guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, and improving well-being. It helps the local economy by providing stability and security; allowing people to thrive rather than just survive.

There have been several trials of basic income internationally and most recently in Finland. Results have been encouraging. Spain is rolling it out as part of their COVID-19 response measures.

The Scottish government is considering the practicalities. The UK government has not come out in support as yet, but several authorities (Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Hull in the north, and Brighton and London in the south) are calling for trials. This requires political will and Oxford should stand in solidarity with them.

The Council calls on the Leader:

1. to write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy requesting that the government considers *a pilot study of Universal Basic Income*;
2. to circulate the response from the government to all council members once the reply is received.

d) Supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill

Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Cllr Hayes proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note. Cllr Simmons tabled a proposed further amendment to this:

replace points 3 and 4 with the following:

3. publicly expressing its support for many of the aims of the CEE Bill by expressing strong support for proposals, such as Labour's Green Economic Recovery, which accelerate or increase investment in green infrastructure and jobs;

4. where this is not already the case, aligning the Council's own future strategies, policies and targets with the aims and goals of the CEE Bill

Cllr Hayes accepted the further amendment, changing his amendment. Cllr Simmons then accepted the changed amendment, which with Council's assent became the substantive motion for debate.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Council notes that while Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency in May last year, Boris Johnson's Government is not responding with the necessary urgency to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Council regrets that the Government's recently announced climate budget contains just £3bn of new funding, meaning that its level of ambition pales in comparison to Germany's €42.8bn green stimulus and France's €35bn.

Council notes that on 12 August 2020 the CEE Bill Alliance launched the campaign for the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill which was presented to Parliament on 2 September. This is a Private Members' Bill (PMB) written by scientists, lawyers

and activists; gathering support from a broad range of campaign groups, businesses, charities and individuals. The bill has the potential to become the most significant move forward since the Climate Change Act 2008 (which also notably started as a PMB).

At the time of writing, 81 MPs have supported the Bill with co-sponsors from Labour, Green, and Liberal Democrat MPs.

The Bill is a Presentation Bill (which does not involve a debate or a vote in Parliament but is a way of drawing attention to an issue which requires a real change in the law). The nature of the Bill could see the creation of a Citizens' Assembly that would put forward recommendations, contributing to the work of both the UK Government and UK Parliament in delivering an essential climate and ecological emergency strategy.

This Council recognised the urgency of the climate and ecological emergency in January 2019 subsequently holding its own Citizen Assembly in Autumn 2019 and setting up its own Climate Emergency Review scrutiny group. All of these highlighted the important role of the Westminster Government in galvanising action.

This Council therefore wishes to express its strong support for *urgent climate action and significant new national funding to match the scale of the climate emergency and jobs crisis we face by:*

1. *welcoming the CEE Bill for raising awareness and sharing ideas; and*
2. asking the Leader to write to the City's MPs asking them to sign the CEE Bill Early Day Motion (no. 832) as well as offering their public support and backing for its aims and goals;
3. *publicly expressing its support for many of the aims of the CEE Bill by expressing strong support for proposals, such as Labour's Green Economic Recovery, which accelerate or increase investment in green infrastructure and jobs*
4. where this is not already the case, aligning the Council's own future strategies, policies and targets with the aims and goals of the CEE Bill.

e) Charitable donations from members' allowances

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

f) Homelessness and Social Housing

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

g) Pavement Parking

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

h) Defining 'Net Zero' buildings

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

i) Chinese New Year 2021

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

j) The Permitted Deportation of EU Nationals Found Rough Sleeping

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

k) Student fees

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

l) Fireworks

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.15 pm

Signed as a correct record

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 25 January 2021

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.

To: Council
Date: 30 November 2020
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report was 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

Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing and Housing the Homeless

1. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Rowley – ONS data on homelessness

Question	Written Response
Data published by the ONS in October 2019 showed Oxford to consistently have the highest number of homeless deaths per head of population outside of three London Boroughs and Blackburn (data was	Every death of a homeless person is a tragedy and even a single death is one too many. There can be no single definitive answer to the question, but the sad truth is that people with experience of rough sleeping die young – the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports the average age of death for a homeless person is 45 for men and 43 for women, compared with 76 and 81 in the general population.

1. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Rowley – ONS data on homelessness

averaged over six years). On 11 November 2020, the Portfolio Holder reported another three deaths – a tragedy that I am sure touched many people and I join Cllr Rowley in expressing my condolences to the victim's friends and family.

Can the Portfolio Holder provide any explanation as to why homeless deaths in Oxford are so high as a proportion of the population?

The ONS also reports that 95% of homeless people who died in England and Wales in 2018 were in urban areas, and we know that Oxford has historically attracted a number of homeless people from our rural neighbouring districts and further afield. For example, one of the people identified in the recent Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board review had only been in Oxford for a day or two before he sadly died.

The council is working towards not just ending deaths of people who are homeless, but ending the need for anyone to sleep rough in the city. Following the "everyone in" initiative in spring we are accommodating up to 118 people at any one time who may otherwise need to sleep rough. So far we have housed 261 people in total under "everyone in" arrangements, with 112 of these now having been supported into more permanent housing. This includes a number of people who had previously been sleeping rough on a long-term basis.

Interim housing also means we can continue to offer help to everyone sleeping on our streets this winter. We have recently been successful in winning £2m in short-term and long-term funding from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). The short-term funding will help with the cost of interim housing, provide deposits and rent in advance for people to move into private rented housing, and help Aspire to refurbish empty properties and bring them back into use as move-on accommodation. The long-term funding will help us to buy five one-bedroom properties as part of a programme to deliver 20 Housing First homes as permanent social housing by March 2021, along with three years of support costs.

The ONS data involves very small numbers overall, and as such one or two fewer or additional deaths would significantly change the proportion of deaths overall. We believe homelessness cannot be dealt with in Oxford alone, and a countywide steering group is in the process of developing a strategy for tackling homelessness, with a focus on single people and rough sleepers. We have taken the lead in bringing together the County Council, District Councils and health services together with Oxford City Council to address the systemic issues which lead to homelessness. We will also continue to press national Government for the funding and co-ordinated policies needed to end the need for people to sleep rough.

2. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Rowley – Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

<p>Question</p> <p>Government has recently invited bids for its £50m Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund from local authorities or consortia led by Local Authorities. Applications closed on Nov 12, for schemes to be completed by December 2021.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member update council on any action taken by this council in respect of this initiative?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Officers considered this when it came out in early October, the expression of interest was 16/10, so a very short period to think about and a submission deadline of 12/11. Schemes would need to be completed and reported on by December 2021. It is essentially an initial pot of money for 9-16 projects nationally (so sizeable projects) that will be used to inform approaches to the use of the larger Social Housing decarbonisation fund announced previously at headline level only. The launch of the latter is subject to the spending review but it is expected to be sometime during 2021/22. The objective of this initial funding pot is to test a range of issues related to whole property retrofit and is meant to look at how to upscale the Whole House Retrofit Innovation Competition that has been running at Sutton, Nottingham and Cornwall. So things to be explored are both technical, supply chain development (skills/capacity) and how to drive down unit cost. As we haven't got 'oven ready' whole retrofit schemes ready, the size of the project, the tight timescale given we would be starting from scratch; we were not in a position to put in a credible bid. We will however be tracking this and are actively preparing for a range of Government funding opportunities to try and lever in more money to support our carbon reduction agenda.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Thank you for the clear answer as to why we could not bid for this fund. Would it be better if the Council had 'oven ready' schemes prepared so that they could be put forward at short notice to take advantage of such funds?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>Yes, it would be better to take advantage of this scheme, but given the very short window between announcement and closing of the fund, there is not time to prepare a bid that would benefit the community. Hopefully the government will revert to better longer term financial planning and longer application periods for of such funds so we can take advantage in the future.</p>

3. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Clarkson – Restarting tourism in the city

Question

Tourism is a main source of income for Oxford. What proposals are in place to re-start the tourist trade and protect the local jobs that rely on that trade?

Written Response

The impact of the pandemic on this sector is something that we are taking very seriously. In 2019 around 17,000 jobs in Oxford were in the visitor economy.

The City Council has been facilitating Government grants throughout the coronavirus pandemic, and has established quick turnarounds while still carrying out robust counter-fraud checks. We have already provided £26.6m of Government funding to almost 1,800 businesses in the city to support them through the coronavirus pandemic. While we don't have specific data, a significant amount of these grants and reliefs were to retail and visitor economy businesses. Most recently are taking applications for the most recent "Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)" and "Additional Restrictions Grant".

In addition, we have to date allocated £100,000 from our capital programme and secured around £135,000 of other grant funding to support the reopening of the city. Examples of some of the work so far includes:

- Additional staff resource to work closely with businesses and other stakeholders to support them through the pandemic
- Public Realm interventions throughout the city centre including George Street, Cornmarket, Broad Street, St Michaels Street to support businesses and allow visitors to enjoy the city as it reopened.
- Signage and marketing to support the city to reopen and support visitors safely e.g. promoting the "We are Good to Go" campaign and funding the England Originals campaign. This also included launching the City Council led "Rediscover Oxford" Campaign. This was very successful in promoting the city and supporting increased footfall working with local partners such as Experience Oxfordshire and Oxford Bus Company.

Moving forward the work in this area continues to evolve. Some commitments already made for next

3. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Clarkson – Restarting tourism in the city

	<p>stages of work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated funding for a visitor coach parking strategy. • Promotion of overnight stays, most directly through the work on Boswells. • Working closely with Experience Oxfordshire on how we can support them in future years • Further marketing campaigns e.g. we are about to launch the Experience Oxford at Christmas campaign in partnership with Experience Oxfordshire. <p>Officers are also working with neighbouring authorities and OxLEP on options to support tourism in Oxfordshire as a whole as part of the countywide economic recovery plan.</p> <p>More specifically in the city officers are working with local business closely to understand the issues they face to inform an Oxford specific economic recovery plan. This will cover a range of sectors within the economy but will include measures relating to the visitor economy. This will be embedded into our economic strategy to be launched in the New Year. A key part of this work is to not only encourage visitors to return but to also improve visitor expenditure whilst in the city which can be low for those visiting as part of wider coach tours.</p> <p>In summary some of the workstreams being explored include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support/survival – promotion of what is available so our businesses understand what support is out there to support through the crisis, but also to help businesses pivot their models to a new normal • Competitiveness – broadly promotion and marketing to ensure we are well placed to attract visitors back, both tourists, but also conferences etc. • Destination management – when visitors to come back, how are we co-ordinating and managing this. This ranges from the practical (e.g. coaches and crowds) to more place-based responses such as culture, events and public realm improvements.
<p>Supplementary Question Makes no mention of</p>	<p>Verbal Response We are looking at our budget and whether we can</p>

3. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Clarkson – Restarting tourism in the city

restoring the grant to Experience Oxfordshire. Why is that? The recent Oxfordshire Economic Recovery plan shows Cambridge recovering more quickly than Oxford. Do you have any thoughts as to why that is?

support Experience Oxfordshire and are discussing the support we can give them. Our work with them on Rediscovering Oxford and on getting grants and funding shows where we have a lot of success working closely with them.

I can't say precisely why there are differences but initial evidence shows a very high no of people still working from home - Oxford is 3rd or 4th highest for workers still working at home. This may be one factor impacting on footfall and on local businesses. We will continue to see how we can support city centre businesses.

Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services

4. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Chapman – Enforcement activity

Question

Oxford has experienced a tremendous increase in car journeys resulting in significant congestion, illegal parking and speeding. Enforcement seems inadequate.

How many enforcement officers are employed by Oxford City Council per area of responsibility (e.g. housing, traffic, PSPO's etc.)?

How are they deployed across the city? What more can be done?

Written Response

Traffic enforcement such as parking and speeding is carried out by the police and the County Council. The Council cannot use those enforcement powers because the legislation reserves them to the police and the County Council.

The Council's vehicle enforcement role is limited to the legislation that we can enforce that is relevant such as taxi licensing, abandoned vehicles, parking enforcement in council operated car parks and idling engines.

The resource per area of enforcement responsibility is listed below:

- Building Control 0.5FTE
- Food safety 4.3FTE
- Health & safety 0.5FTE
- Environmental Protection (commercial noise, environmental permitting etc) 3.3FTE
- Licensing: Alcohol, taxi licensing, animal welfare, street trading, skin piercing etc 9.8FTE
- Planning enforcement 2FTE
- Tree Officers 2FTE
- Private rented sector enforcement 15.4FTE
- Anti Social Behaviour and community safety: 7.7FTE

4. From Councillor Garden to Councillor Chapman – Enforcement activity

- Community response, e.g. domestic noise, enviro crime, flytipping, litter, idling engines, PSPOs, domestic and commercial waste 12FTE
- Abandoned vehicles 1FTE
- Car parks 6FTE

Resources are deployed so that the Council meets national requirements, deals with local priorities including any reactive work and ensures that ongoing work programmes are fulfilled.

Enforcement is a specialised and complicated function that often demands evidence of officer competency, with some legislation being reserved to specific officers. Lower level enforcement activity across a wide range of areas has been concentrated in the Community Response Team which has enabled an efficient and effective service to be provided in a flexible manner, with more complicated cases being passed to other smaller specialist teams after the first response has been made.

5. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Chapman - social distancing road signs

Question

The initial joint City/County response to encourage social distancing in certain areas of the City through the use of painted arrows on the pavement and limited lamppost signs has had very limited impact. In addition, the signs are now disappearing and the paint fading.

Are there any other plans in the pipeline to refresh/improve upon the current arrangement?

Written Response

The City Council's response to encourage social distancing in the city centre and Cowley involved a broad suite of measures, including symbols on pavements, signage within the city centre as well as at bus stops and Park & Rides, city centre ambassadors, significant media coverage, and repeated social media messaging. Other than a few instances of larger gatherings of young people, overall public behaviour within the city centre appears to have been very responsible. Therefore I would question what evidence sits behind the Member's assertion that the measures have had 'very limited impact'.

The introduction of the Government's New National Restrictions came just one week after the introduction of Tier 2 restrictions and so overtook our plans for new signage that were being prepared for that purpose. We are now awaiting more detailed confirmation of the arrangements post 2 December such that new signage and other appropriate measures to help encourage safe social distancing can be commissioned.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, statutory Deputy Leader

6. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Turner – closure of Boswells

Question	Written Response
<p>Does the Cabinet Member think that the closure of Boswells is attributable to unfair competition with the Westgate centre and its cheap car parking?</p>	<p>No. The closure of Boswells reflects the much reported difficulties faced by retailers and particularly department stores across the country. This was recognised by the Board of Boswells and reported in the Oxford Mail in November 2019, when it stated <i>‘The Board has been intensively pursuing all options for preserving the business but due to prevailing adverse retail conditions has concluded that the store is likely to close in 2020.’</i> Pressed further by the BBC, one of the Directors said that Westgate was not to blame.</p>

Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford; non-statutory Deputy Leader

7. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Active travel priorities and proposed schemes

Question	Written Response
<p>The award of £2.98m to the County Council as part of Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Grant (125% of allocated funding) is, I am sure the Portfolio Holder will agree, a good result. Even better is the news that all of this will now be spent in Oxford as the LEP has agreed to fund the schemes in Bicester and Witney. However, this sum still falls slightly short of the estimate for the full list of proposed schemes</p>	<p>Financial investment in Oxford to meet our transportation, environmental, and economic goals is welcome. When our local government sector is so unfairly underfunded, we rely increasingly on external funding to meet our aims. The 125% Tranche 2 allocation is positive for Oxford, especially bearing in mind the 50% allocation for Tranche 1.</p> <p>We will continue to be a trusted and engaged stakeholder in the delivery phase of Tranche 2 through regular officer and member meetings.</p> <p>As we were not involved in the planning work to date and there is a lot of detail to be discussed and finalised, we are not yet in a position to say whether there are specific elements we do or do not wish to see progressed. As we have also seen the County Council’s</p>

7. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Active travel priorities and proposed schemes

<p>for Oxford (total cost: £3.18m).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the Portfolio Holder provide us with an indication of his Active Travel priorities and how the City Council is planning to work with the County during the forthcoming delivery phase? • Do the Portfolio Holder support all elements of the £3.18m bid? • If not, can they say which schemes he does not wish to see progressed? 	<p>current Conservative administration demonstrate a lack of leadership, consistency, and courage on recent emergency transport plans, we are also establishing the strength of their commitment.</p> <p>Our Active Travel priorities are below, and as such we support the broad principles of the Tranche 2 bid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing the car congestion that clogs up Oxford's narrow roads, harms our local economy, and pollutes our air and climate - delivering infrastructure which enables safe cycling and walking - developing low traffic neighbourhoods as a way to create the people's streets, so that children from different homes can play in the streets they share, and neighbours can meet in the street to build friendships - We believe that traffic filters, school streets and new segregated cycleways can be effective tools for achieving these goals - We are also clear that consultation must precede the introduction of radical changes, so that the people who know their streets better than anyone else are able to shape their own communities.
---	---

8. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Use of Active Travel (Tranche 2) funds

Question	Written Response
<p>Does the Portfolio Holder know whether any of the money recently granted to the County Council for Active Travel (Tranche 2) works with Oxford will be used for repairs & renovation of existing cycle track marking, or transport initiatives which do not directly support Active Travel?</p> <p>Will it press the County Council to ensure these resources are not used for routine maintenance?</p>	<p>It is our understanding that the Tranche 2 bid explicitly excluded any routine maintenance of existing infrastructure. The Government's guidance was clear that they were funding, "meaningful plans to reallocate roadspace to active travel. Anything that did not meaningfully alter the status quo on the road would not be funded." (Grant Shapps MP letter to Cllr Ian Hudspeth 13 November 2020)</p> <p>Yes, the City Council will use its role as stakeholder in order to strongly endorse the most impactful use of the Tranche 2 funds in Oxford.</p>

9. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Zero Emission Zone timetable

Question	Written Response
<p>Can the Portfolio Holder update us on the timetable for the introduction of the ZEZ (Zero Emission Zone) including the consultation and later expansion of the initial air quality zone.</p>	<p>The timetable for the ZEZ Pilot and wider ZEZ is set out in consultations documents available via: www.oxford.gov.uk/zez</p> <p>The consultation was delayed by just a few days this month because of the Government's introduction of a second lockdown. We felt that it was appropriate for consultation to take place when businesses were not immediately and urgently adapting to a suddenly announced lockdown by the Government. For consultation to be effective, it needs to truly enable people to take part and listen to what they say.</p> <p>I regret that the member opted to rush out a press notice expressing 'dismay' at the slight delay. Effective scrutiny could have been performed by directly requesting an explanation. With time running out to achieve effective climate action, environmentalists urgently need to build widespread public confidence in the possibility of change. It is unhelpful to that cause, which I think we agree is important, to have members express concern, seemingly for party political gains. Opposition and scrutiny are helpful for ensuring Council policies get into a better place, but I know that Oxford climate campaigners (who raised these exaggerated concerns with me only to see them overtaken by the launch of the consultation) do not feel this rush for press attention to be examples of effective opposition and scrutiny. I agree and would encourage the member to listen to climate campaigners who want parties to put down their narrow partisan differences to work closely together wherever possible.</p>

10. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – ZEZ and CONNECT traffic modelling

Question	Written Response
<p>Can the Portfolio Holder advise what traffic modelling work they are privy to in formulating ZEZ proposals and the CONNECT proposals, either undertaken by themselves or provided by the County Council and how they can come to any serious recommendations without this information?</p>	<p>Traffic data for the ZEZ Pilot is available on our website here</p> <p>For the wider ZEZ and Connecting Oxford, traffic modelling is being developed by Oxfordshire County Council which will inform consultation on the wider ZEZ due to be launched next year.</p>

11. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – enforcing the ZEZ

Question How will the City Council enforce the ZEZ and what cost estimates have they received for new ANPR cameras, and are these cost estimates good value?	Written Response The ZEZ will be enforced with the use of ANPR cameras. Further details of enforcement is available in the formal consultation document on www.oxford.gov.uk/zez Oxfordshire County Council will be responsible for procurement and operation of ANPR cameras which will be funded in part by grant funding secured by Oxford City Council.
Supplementary Question How many Automatic Number Plate Recognitions Cameras (ANPRs) would be installed for each of the 1 st and 2 nd phases	Verbal Response The County Council has agreed it will use APNR cameras but has not decided how many. It is using the 1 st phase as a pilot phase to explore the final requirements of the ZEZ, and will use the data from this to decide how many cameras are needed for the 2 nd phase.

12. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hayes – Electronic Road Pricing trial

Question Since the Treasury is now investigating Electronic Road Pricing as an alternative to fuel duties, due to the roll out of electric vehicles for which no fuel duties are paid, would the PH be supportive of EPR trial in Oxford? [Note that one local group, the Cowley Area Transport Group, has already suggested this].	Written Response We would need to understand the details of any proposal in more detail, which of course depends upon the conclusion of the investigation referenced. We would need to understand how it would interplay with other initiatives in the city that we are actively pursuing e.g. the Zero Emission Zone before considering it further. For example, we would want to understand more about the emerging national proposals. What we would not want to inadvertently do through a trial would be to deter people in the coming years from moving from petrol and diesel engines to electric by introducing a pricing scheme that could be perceived as a deterrent. We have communicated with the Department for Transport for a detailed outline of their investigation and their planned timetable for conclusion. I will contact the one local group you mention, Cowley Area Transport Group. A glance at their website shows a large photograph of the group's organisers Hazel and Steve Dawe, who, happily, I know from their time as Green Party council candidates, so I can simply discuss this with them.
--	--

13. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Hayes – Shops offering car park discounts	
<p>Question</p> <p>Debenhams department store in Oxford has recently been advertising a promotion to attract shoppers, in the form of a sign in-store saying “2 hours free parking when you spend £50”. Shoppers are asked to photograph their parking ticket and present it at the checkout for a refund up to the value of £10.00. Like the decision to allow the Westgate centre to set its own parking charges, this clearly undermines council’s ability to use policy to encourage the kind of travel choices we all wish to see in our city.</p> <p>Does the Cabinet member have a view on this initiative by Debenhams, and are there any mechanisms by which the council can engage with them on the matter?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Unfortunately, we do not have any specific powers to stop this from happening. However, I have asked that the City Centre Management team to contact the manager of Debenhams to see if their approach can be rebalanced to also include reimbursing bus tickets and park and ride parking so as not to encourage car travel over public transport to the city.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>I would be pleased to be appraised of any response received from the shop.</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>I will copy you into any response I receive on this.</p>

14. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – free parking at Park and Ride	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder provide a report on the success or otherwise of free parking at the park and rides over the summer period and what it cost in terms of lost revenue?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As set out in the published decisions notice for 07/08/2020, the Council worked in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to provide free parking at all of Oxford’s five park and ride sites 7-days per week for the month of August, to make it easier for people to visit the city centre, rediscover Oxford, spend money in the local economy, and so support business and protect jobs. It was a supportive initiative at a challenging time for all retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses, when city centre footfall was still heavily down on last year (circa 60%) and the number of vacant units was rising. It was also a measure of support for Park & Ride services which have suffered from the guidance being to avoid public transport unless necessary (they were at the time of this decision running at 15% of usual capacity), and so support a return to use of a vital travel mode into the city centre.</p> <p>Officers received information from Oxford Bus Company, which operates the park & ride services, that the free parking offer for August had a significant and much needed impact in assisting the city centre with its recovery at this difficult time. They have advised they</p>

14. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – free parking at Park and Ride	
	<p>would have anticipated only a modest increase in the absence of the scheme based on the trajectory they were seeing from June through to July. However, with the scheme, they saw 30% more passengers on Mondays to Fridays than they would have expected to see, with 34% more on Saturdays and 27% on Sundays.</p> <p>The impact on parking revenue is not a straightforward calculation because COVID impacts meant no previous year data could be used, and the only basis was usage figures in the months from March to early-July which were also severely impacted. Within these limitations, officers estimated the potential revenue loss for the 3 City Council sites at circa £30-35k.</p>
Supplementary Question	Verbal Response
<p>Is there any analysis of how the percentage increase in passenger numbers translated into increased spending in city (eg from figures on the average spend per visitor) and how that compares with the cost of providing free parking?</p>	<p>We do ask businesses how much benefit the P&R scheme brings: we have discussed with Westgate Alliance and they report the P&R is beneficial to their businesses, but we cannot provide a quantitative assessment of the benefits.</p>

15. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Aristotle bridge repairs	
Question	Written Response
<p>Would the Cabinet Member confirm whether an inspection of Aristotle bridge has now been carried out by County, and whether liaison with Network Rail has taken place with a view to repairing the collapsing ramp?</p>	<p>We understand from County Council colleagues that repairs have been carried out to the ramp but following an assessment some further work is required to mitigate local concerns raised.</p>
Supplementary Question	Verbal Response
<p>Having been there this weekend, I can report the ramp hasn't been mended and you can see the underside of the ramp. It needs to be mended quickly or it will collapse.</p> <p>The cattle on Port Meadow are eating the disintegrating plastic structures: with 2 recent deaths repairs are now urgent.</p>	<p>I will talk with the County Council about the position and about getting repairs carried out.</p>

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks

16. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Linda Smith – community groups’ tree planting

<p>Question</p> <p>At the last Council, the Portfolio Holder helpfully clarified the situation regarding the Council’s willingness and interest in planting more trees and supporting community groups to do likewise. Given the Council’s limited resources, will she agree to provide to responsible community groups the information (location, tree species, planting instructions etc) they need to galvanise volunteers to scale up tree planting in the City?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>More community group interest in tree planting is always welcomed. Groups need to register their interest with ODS’s Park Service. In doing this the service can engage with the groups to guide them, and see if a site is viable along with other formalities such as on-going maintenance after planting has taken place.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>How do groups register their interest with ODS and the city council – is there a formal process or an informal one?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>If you know of people, ask them to email me (Cllr Linda Smith) so that we can make best use of their kind offers of help and participation</p>

17. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Linda Smith – signs for Cutteslowe Horticultural Therapy Nursery and Garden Centre

<p>Question</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member advise whether the installation of signs has now been agreed for the Cutteslowe Horticultural Therapy Nursery and Garden Centre and, if so, the timescale for their installation?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Yes the signs have been agreed with the Nursery and they are part of a programme of works which will be completed before the end of the financial year (March 2021).</p>
--	--

18. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Hollingsworth – Reconsidering land use planning

Question	Written Response
<p>In view of the Government's intention to revise its housing algorithms and place a renewed emphasis on housing within urban areas, coupled with the changes in work and travel patterns as a result of COVID (which look set to persist), will the City Council begin a review of its housing plans?</p> <p>In particular, will it reconsider the use of land currently used for low density car parking and consider whether some of the land, or space above, could be released for affordable housing.</p>	<p>It is far from clear what the Government is currently doing in relation to planning, whether it is the highly damaging proposals contained in the planning White Paper, or the proposed revisions to the formula for the Standard Methodology for calculating minimum levels of housing need. In any case if and when revised figures for the Standard Methodology are produced, they would be used as the starting point for a new Local Plan, and would not be relevant to an existing Local Plan.</p> <p>All Councils are required to review their Local Plans at least every five years and as the current Local Plan process has shown to do so properly, with meaningful public consultation and engagement, takes around four years. I have already made clear in responses to previous questions that the City Council will in this municipal year begin the preliminary steps towards a new Local Plan, probably to 2040, and that will be confirmed in the new Statement of Community Involvement, due to be reported to Cabinet in the New Year.</p> <p>As with the current Local Plan, it seems highly likely that the quantum of housing need for Oxford will be driven by the need for affordable housing rather than the baseline set by the Governments Standard Methodology.</p> <p>In the meantime the councillor may wish to take the opportunity to refresh himself about the policies in the current Local Plan for Union Street, the West End – including the Oxpens and Beckett Street car parks - and the SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) for Diamond Place, all of which already propose exactly the redevelopment principles which he wants to see.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Specifically in relation to Diamond Place: am I correct that the retail, housing and level of parking remains as set out in the in the SPD?</p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p>The SPD expanded on the previous Local Plan (to 2026). However all policies which have changed between the previous Local Plan and the now-current Local Plan (to 2036) now must be applied in the SPD.</p> <p>So some elements remain as important as before (eg the re-provision of the community centre) but the it is the new Local Plan's policies, eg around car free developments in sustainable areas, which now apply to this location.</p>

19. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Oxford Living Rent**Question**

Can the Portfolio Holder update Council on the work being done to introduce an Oxford Living Rent?

Written Response

The officer team responsible for the City Council's work in the private rented sector have been focussing this year on the renewal of the HMO licensing scheme and the promotion of the selective licensing scheme currently out for consultation, and of course have been further prioritising work with tenants and landlords relating to the current health crisis. Work on the longer-term project of formulating and developing an Oxford Living **Rent*** project will begin during the next municipal year.

**Corrected from the briefing note which referred incorrectly to 'living wage'*

20. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – development of Iffley Meadows**Question**

Aside from their role as a Planning Authority, is the Council or any of its companies involved in any way in the controversial development of Iffley Meadows (the area of land in Iffley Village bounded by Meadow Lane and Church Way).

Written Response

The site in question, some of which has been allocated for development in the recently approved Oxford Local Plan 2036, has been acquired by Oxford City Homes Limited with the intention of developing the allocated site at Meadow Lane (the adjacent Memorial Field site has also been acquired because the vendor sold the sites together, but this is not allocated for development in the Local Plan).

The development of 29 homes, will include at least 12 homes for social rent, and another three will be expected to be shared ownership or another affordable tenure, in line with the Council's planning policies.

The site has been allocated for housing in the Local Plan, a Plan which made clear the desperate need for more homes for Oxford's current and future citizens, in particular affordable housing. What would be controversial would be to pay lip service to that need but then do nothing to bring forward sites and homes that address it. This site makes a small but important contribution to meeting the need for new homes, and was subject to full and robust examination during the Local Plan making process

21. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – 'Right to co-op' campaign (private sector renting)

21. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – ‘Right to co-op’ campaign (private sector renting)

Question

I would like to draw Cllr Hollingsworth's attention to the ['Right to Co-op' campaign](#)

If successful, this would enable renters who have occupied a shared property for 3 years or more to take control of their homes by transferring ownership from the private landlord to a cooperative. They could either run the home as a co-op themselves, optionally contracting a secondary co-op to provide them with governance, management and maintenance services. Or they could opt for an existing co-op to take over their home. The proposals include measures to prevent property speculation, and financial protections for existing landlords. Although an actual "right to coop" would require primary legislation, there are things that a local council could do to encourage this, e.g.

- Promote the Community-Led Housing Hub to renters for support in setting up a co-operative and buying a suitable home.
- Provide 5-year loans to help co-ops buy properties. After those 5 years the co-op would have gained sufficient equity in the property, and have a financial track record, to be able to secure better deals from ethical and other lenders.
- Work with existing housing co-operatives in London to leverage their considerable asset base (worth hundreds of millions of pounds) and their cash holdings to support new co-operatives.
- Provide loan and grant funding through his Innovation Fund and the Community Housing Fund for property improvements and extensions.

Is this something he would be willing to investigate, given the unaffordability and insecurity of much accommodation in the private rented sector?

Written Response

A ‘Right to Co-op’ is an interesting proposal, but as the Councillor says, one that would require primary legislation and a complex system of valuation systems that would need to be set at a national level, and of course a willingness by national government to proceed in such a direction. As such it is probably best until such time as the Council might realistically be able to shape such a policy, rather than divert limited officer resources away from issues where we can make an immediate difference, such as the selective and HMO licensing schemes.

The Council is already working closely with local community-led housing groups, and reported on that work in some detail to Scrutiny, the Cabinet and to Council in 2019.

22. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt P&R

22. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt P&R

<p>Question</p> <p>The Seacourt Park & Ride extension was to be completed in mid-October. It is still unfinished. Would the Cabinet Member advise the new completion date and whether the payback period, estimated at 17 years in January 2020, will now be extended?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>First, I must apologise that the answer I gave at the last Council meeting has turned out to be wrong. The answer was both given to me and in turn given by me in good faith, but relied on over optimistic assumptions that there would be no further disruptions to the supply chain for building materials caused by Covid. That I gave a wrong answer to Council is a matter of considerable personal regret, and I am sorry to have done so.</p> <p>Latterly the effects of Covid-19 have impacted on the labour force in the supply chain for a number of products that are incorporated in the works both from the United Kingdom and continental Europe, with both permeable paving blocks and specialist lighting components having suffered increased lead in time due to manufacturing levels being reduced and in some cases stopped – most recently by concerns over mink farms in Denmark.</p> <p>Nonetheless the team managing the contract for the Council have identified a solution that will enable the phased opening of car parking space from the end of this month utilising temporary lighting and access options. The final completion of the building and all landscaping are ongoing but are expected to be completed and into use early in the New Year, subject to there being no further unpredicted supply chain disruptions.</p> <p>However there is no change to the estimated payback period.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>I'm pleased to hear the work is nearly complete. Solar panels on the roof of the bus shelter would provide power for lighting the shelter. Has this been option considered, or could it be considered now?</p>	<p>Written Response after the meeting</p> <p>The new building is being heated with an air source heat pump, has low energy lighting, and has a sedum roof, which precludes installing solar panels directly on the building itself. However PV cells will be installed on the cycle sheds which will provide the power for the building. In addition the car park lights are low energy LED. In answer to the specific question therefore, yes this option has been considered, and while the panels won't go on the roof the installation on the cycle sheds will provide the energy required to power the building while also allowing for the green roof to remain on the building.</p>

23. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Educational provision in Littlemore

23. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Educational provision in Littlemore

Question	Written Response
<p>The 2011 census states Littlemore’s population was 5,646 (2011 Census) living in 2759 dwellings, this has grown to a population of 6,580 in 2019 (source OCC Localinsight) and the number of dwellings has increased by a similar ratio. New developments approved after 2019 in Littlemore will evidence further a population increase.</p> <p>During this time Littlemore has also seen a reduction in the number of schools to housing developments and a shrinkage in size or existing schools also due to new housing developments.</p> <p>The tipping point for a new primary school is 450 new dwellings.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder reassure Littlemore residents that Littlemore’s educational needs will be addressed in this area of high deprivation?</p> <p>And how the educational needs of this rapidly expanding population will be met?</p>	<p>Oxfordshire County Council is the Local Education Authority and has the statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all children of statutory school age living in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The most up-to-date assessment is the 2019-2023 Pupil Place Plan which was published in November 2019 and can be found on County Council’s website. The Pupil Place Plan shows how the County Council expects school provision to change throughout its duration. It brings together information from a wide range of sources and sets out the issues the County Council will face in meeting its statutory duties for providing nursery and school places up to 2023 and beyond.</p> <p>The County Council provided the following evidence to support the Oxford Local Plan 2036, a statement which is reported in the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP):</p> <p><i>“Current pupil forecasts indicate that sufficient primary and secondary school places to meet Oxford’s growth can be provided through existing school, including some further intensification of use, and the new schools already planned, i.e. the new primary school at Barton West and the new Swan secondary school. However it may be that particular concentrations of growth will require additional school provision. Therefore the County Council requests that land be available adjacent to or very close to, an existing school site. In particular the County welcomes the identification of land in the Osney Mead/ Oxpens area to facilitate the expansion of school capacity.”</i></p> <p>These requirements were then embedded by the City Council in the Local Plan 2036.</p> <p>The City Council’s IDP is currently being updated and will take full account of forecast population growth and the distribution of sites (within and on the edges of Oxford), and will be informed by the latest Pupil Place Plan, as will the update to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) being developed by all the county’s local authorities working together under the co-ordination of the County Council.</p>

24. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Liaison with County Council over infrastructure in Littlemore

24. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Hollingsworth – Liaison with County Council over infrastructure in Littlemore

Question

Will the portfolio holder responsible for planning reassure Littlemore residents he will liaise with county council counterparts to ensure that infrastructure including transport and education will be addressed in Littlemore's rapid expansion, and will kindly address the need for a new primary school?

Written Response

I refer the Councillor to the answer to question 23, which explains the process by which this process is already ongoing.

Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford

25. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Upton – University COVID case numbers

Question

There is lots of confusion around the inclusion, or not, of University COVID case numbers in the Oxford-wide figure.

Can the Portfolio Holder clarify the situation and what is going to happen going forward?

Written Response

Up until the week ending 13th November, the University of Oxford's case numbers were not being included in the nationally reported figures. This was due to the University having a separate testing facility for their students which was being reported in to the national system but not registering as Oxford cases.

This issue was recognised in September when the weekly reporting commenced and was raised with government a number of times. The Health Protection Board and the Oxfordshire System's Leaders Group have been considering this data alongside the national data when making decisions. The university's data is publicly available on its website.

The situation was finally rectified and the University data included in the nationally reported figures for the week ending 13th November and this will continue to be the case moving forward.

26. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Upton – Oxford Safer Streets Bids

Question

I am sure the Portfolio Holder will join me in welcoming funding being directed into East Oxford as a result of the successful Oxford Safer Streets Bids (Project Breakaway and

Written Response

City Council officers are working with the police and other partners on implementation of the bids deliverables. In particular, CCTV improvements involves possible extensions to the Council's existing public space CCTV

26. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Upton – Oxford Safer Streets Bids

East Oxford Safer Home Zones) and thank Thames Valley Police for making the applications. As with a lot of Government funding at the moment, the money has to be spent quickly.

How/what can the City Council do to help expedite the work?

cameras. Community engagement is another important element, with the local Hub offering to assist in this area - we have assigned an officer to liaise with police. In addition ODS have done the technical drawings for siting secure cycle parking on streets to be used for the Traffic Regulation Order applications by Oxfordshire County Council.

27. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Upton cycling infrastructure improvements

Question

What improvements for cyclists, in the form of cycleways or other bike infrastructure, has the City Council achieved this year?

Written Response

The city council's remit is limited as we are not the highways authority. Nonetheless, this financial year we have:

- installed 54 bike racks (108 spaces) in the city centre, on Speedwell Street, Ship Street, New Road and North Parade as part of an ongoing commitment to increase the amount of city centre and district centre bike parking spaces
- installed 130 additional bike parking spaces at Park & Ride sites (Redbridge, Peartree and Seacourt), in order to help commuters to cycle the last miles of their journey into the city
- created a temporary bicycle lane through the pedestrianised section of George Street, which meant that a successful scheme for hospitality businesses did not affect a key cycle route in the city
- committed to the Oxford Greenways Project, alongside Oxfordshire County Council and the University of Oxford, which will fund the creation of a concept masterplan for new cycle and walking routes from nearby towns and villages to key employment, transport and retail sites in the city.

We also intend to install additional city centre and localities bike parking, some of which has been delayed by the need for increased pavement space to allow social distancing, and to progress a feasibility study for cycling infrastructure in Shotover.

Supplementary Question

What progress has there been in making new cycleways?

Verbal Response

The County Council is responsible for cycleways on the public highway. We have completed the riverside routes, and sections in Cuckoo Lane and Boundary Brook Lane funded by the County Council

The Oxford Greenways project will scope out approximately 10 off-road routes into the city from surrounding villages and towns, so we have 'shovel ready' routes ready to bid for future Government funding (allowing us to take advantage regardless of short deadlines) or to consider in the longer term.

28. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Tidball – Syrian refugee families resettlement

Question

Can the Cabinet Member advise how many Syrian refugee families were rehoused in Oxford in 19/20 and in the current financial year, and how many refugees the City hopes to rehouse in the year 21/22 under the new Global Resettlement Scheme?

Written Response

Oxford is a City of Sanctuary and shares the vision that the UK must be a welcoming place of safety and is proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

The City Council has accommodated 30 families, a total of 129 people through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme. Oxford is in the top 3 of districts in the South East in terms of number of people accommodated under the scheme. These families arrived between December 2015 and October 2018. The experience of the programme demonstrated that families required considerable support to settle into their communities, access healthcare, learn English and access jobs to enable them to support themselves. A number of families have needed continued support since 2015.

Families need to move into full time employment or have access to long term disability benefits in order to be able to build a sustainable future in Oxford and in particular to be able to afford their private rented housing beyond the period of subsidy provided under the programme. The refugee resettlement programme works with refugees who are particularly vulnerable, and the large number of complex barriers they face, including trauma, physical health difficulties and lack of qualifications, mean accessing employment can be exceptionally challenging. The employment rate for adults in our programme is low, which has resulted in a number of families needing continued support beyond that funded by the government scheme.

This challenge has been reflected nationwide in the delivery of the SVPRS. In addition, in Oxford's housing market, finding homes for families in the Private Rented sector is increasingly a challenge.

Accordingly, in 2019/20 the council's focus was on supporting those families who had arrived under the scheme towards independence. We have successfully bid for additional funding to increase support for English Language Training and continue to work closely with partners to identify gaps and develop support initiatives. This includes convening a Refugee Employer Group

28. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Tidball – Syrian refugee families resettlement

	<p>Meeting to explore and share volunteering, training and work opportunities; development and delivery of a series of Work Based ESOL courses to include, Customer Service, Self-Employment and Construction Skills; a Social Recruitment Charter to encourage employers to offer opportunities to the vulnerable including the migrant community, and mapping of ESOL provision across the city to help the migrant community to have better access to what is on offer.</p> <p>The SVPRS scheme was due to be replaced by the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) in April 2020, but the schemes were paused in March due to the COVID 19 pandemic.</p> <p>Government have recently announced that to fulfil its' original commitment of 20,000 232 families will be resettled to complete SVPRS commitment, early in the New Year. A decision is still awaited as to when the new UKRS scheme will restart.</p> <p>Officers are currently undertaking work to inform consideration of the council's future participation in the scheme. This includes looking at options for how families can be adequately supported and routes to employment / access to affordable housing might be improved given that the funding provided by government under the scheme is insufficient to cover the medium to long term costs of resettling families in Oxford.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question Having resettled 30 families between 2015 and 2018: how many have the council settled since then?</p>	<p>As Cllr Tidball was not present a the meeting, a written answer is to be supplied</p>

29. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Tidball – capital spend on the fabric and structure of community centres

<p>Question Could the Cabinet member clarify the council's approach to capital spend on the fabric and structure of community centres? At the moment, the</p>	<p>Written Response The Council's Community Centre Lease approach was agreed in the 2016 Community Centres Strategy. It is based on two approaches in respect of the different legal status of the Associations at that time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For those Associations who held a lease with security of tenure under the 1954 Landlord and Tenant Act the Council agreed to grant new 25 year
--	--

29. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Tidball – capital spend on the fabric and structure of community centres

position appears to be that the council will directly fund build costs (though under this administration this has been spread extremely unevenly across the city). For any further structural maintenance or upgrade, there appears to be a wholly artificial division between works to the exterior of the buildings, which are paid for by the council, and works inside, which fall on the tenant. However, in both cases the benefit in terms of enhancing and maintaining the value of the asset accrues to the council as building owner. In addition, facilities within centres such as toilets are often used by a far wider constituency of external groups and the general public than just those engaging in formal organised activities run by the centre.

Would it not be fairer for all capital costs for building works on its own buildings to be funded by the council?

leases with a right for either party to break on the 10th and 20th anniversary and with the tenant again benefiting from security of tenure. The leases were to be otherwise substantially on the same terms as previously. Under the 1954 Act on renewal a tenant is entitled to a market rent lease. Notwithstanding this the Council agreed not to charge rent and to continue to fund external and structural repairs and buildings insurance.

2. The remainder of the Associations held a licence to occupy. Most of these were terminable at any time on 12 months' notice. The Council agreed to grant these Associations 25 year leases with a right for either party to break at regular fixed points (on 12 months' notice) and excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the 1954 Landlord and Tenant Act. This arrangement put these Associations onto a leasehold footing with a length of term which would enable them to apply for external funding. The repairing obligations under the lease were offered on the same basis as under the licence and again the Council agreed not to charge rent and to continue to fund external and structural repairs and buildings insurance.

The majority of the Associations have now completed their new leases with the Council. Most of the Associations have, in negotiating these leases, instructed independent solicitors who would have fully explained to their clients the implications of the leases they were proposing to enter.

All the new leases included a schedule of responsibilities for both the landlord (OCC) and the tenant (Community Association). This was to ensure that all parties fully understood their repairing and health and safety responsibilities.

It is common landlord and tenant practice for repairs to be shared between parties and often the landlord wishes to keep control of repairs to the structure and exterior. Usually if the landlord repairs elements, the tenant reimburses all those repair costs via a service charge. For the community centres, the Council has agreed to take on responsibility for repairs to the external and structural elements and buildings insurance without any recharge to the tenant in recognition of the value to each community that the Associations deliver which is in line the Council's corporate objectives. So far as internal non-structural elements and fixtures are concerned, the Council

29. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Tidball – capital spend on the fabric and structure of community centres

	<p>continues to require the Associations to take on responsibility where these items are in disrepair.</p> <p>All associations have now been offered 25 year leases which importantly means they are able to apply for and obtain grant funding from external sources for the enhancement of facilities for each community. Once a lease has been granted to an Association, it has exclusive occupation of its premises and therefore will be able to control who uses its facilities.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Where precisely is the line drawn between repair costs attributed to the landlord (the council) to whom the value accrues and the tenant who does not completely regulate access to the building but provides some wider community facilities.</p>	<p>As Cllr Tidball was not present at the meeting, a written answer is to be supplied</p>

30. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Tidball – Supporting families during holiday season

<p>Question</p> <p>Food poverty and free school meals have been a big part of the pandemic response.</p> <p>What measures are in place to support families during the upcoming holiday season?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Council has already put in place the food supply infrastructure to ensure that anyone subject to food poverty or that is eligible for free school meals during the upcoming holiday season can have their needs met.</p> <p>Following the pandemic response during the Spring and Summer, we began to transition people from the Council providing services relating to food poverty, to a more self-sustainable model. To aide this we supported people to access food vouchers via the Council support helpline – in total over a 1000 vouchers were distributed to individuals, households and to those young people eligible for free school meals. In between September and October approximately 465 families transitioned.</p> <p>Recently, during the half term, the Council issued 316 food vouchers for children that would be eligible for free school meals – this is to protect children from food poverty.</p> <p>The work we have undertaken thus far and the</p>
---	--

30. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Tidball – Supporting families during holiday season

intelligence we have collated from the support we have provided has put the Council in a strong position to gauge the level of demand that we will need to cater for during the holiday season.

It is essential to note the Council was pro-active in securing food pipelines and put in place a contract with SOFEA to ensure this is sustainable till the end of this financial year.

We also have a comprehensive community food infrastructure in place, ranging from food larders, distribution infrastructure and a whole food network in place. We have been working with Good Food Oxford and the Community Food system to start to map out what community food services are being provided and potentially where any gaps may be within the system so that we are able to tackle these. As a precaution we also have a stock over around a 1000 non-perishable emergency food parcels should we need to either use these or supply these into the system.

Recently, the Government has announced a £170m budget allocation for food and fuel poverty. We are now scoping out a detailed needs analysis in preparedness for the winter based on the work we have already taken, and the infrastructure we have in place. We will be submitting our proposal to the County Council on behalf of the residents of this city so that we can draw down the sufficient funding/resource needed to protect people and children from food, and fuel poverty.

We already have the infrastructure/voucher system in place; it is merely a matter of ensuring the funding matches the needs we are trying to meet. Officers are working on making this happen.

Supplementary Question

With Children who have no recourse to public funds and are not eligible for free school meals, there is a need to make sure they are looked after. We should ensure this happens in Oxford even if we can't do this nationally.

As Cllr Tidball was not present a the meeting, a written answer is to be supplied

31. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown – Oxford Living Wage (OLW) adoption

Question	Written Response
<p>Will the Leader join me in taking this further opportunity, following Living Wage Week, to recognise and congratulate the organisations in Oxford that have adopted the Oxford Living Wage?</p>	<p>I was delighted we were able to recognise so many new OLW Employers at our Living Wage Week event last week. We have been working towards that day for some time and my only regret was that I wasn't able to shake their hands in person! It was a great opportunity to bring good local employers together to discuss a shared agenda. I found the event inspiring.</p> <p>We agreed with those present that we will be producing new case studies and promotional material with our Network of OLW Employers to promote them as businesses and the benefits of OLW. We are aiming to grow a network of OLW Employers that work together not just on the OLW but other aspects of being an ethical and inclusive employer.</p> <p>28 new employers were recognised and I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate and thank them once more.</p>

32. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown – Oxford Living Wage and University of Oxford

Question	Written Response
<p>Is there any pressure that the Leader can apply, following the very welcome adoption of the Oxford Living Wage by the University of Oxford to apply pressure to the individual Colleges to do the same?</p>	<p>I never stop raising this issue with individual colleges, the Conference of Colleges, and also with the University of Oxford. I have also written to each individual college that does not yet pay the Oxford Living Wage more than once. We do plan to hold further discussions with the colleges. We had conversations, pre-pandemic, with the Conference of Colleges, alongside the University, and we know that a group of colleges have been considering adopting OLW. There are some complexities around the wider benefits that colleges offer to their employees. This has been part of those discussions, but we think the scheme should be kept simple and needs to focus on hourly pay in line with the Living Wage Foundation's criteria. In light of the University being officially recognised as an OLW employer, we will take the opportunity to pursue further discussions with the colleges as part of our Strategy to grow OLW through this difficult financial period.</p>

32. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Brown – Oxford Living Wage and University of Oxford

Supplementary Question

Thank you for your persistence.
Could we consider an event specifically for the colleges

Verbal Response

I would be happy to raise this with the Oxford University Conference of Colleges, and ask those colleges with OLW status to promote the benefits. I am happy to use every mechanism open to us to persuade Oxford University colleges who I see as having a duty above all others to adopt the OLW: I think it shocking they don't see it as their duty to employ local people at a living wage, and hope they see it as a good thing to adopt.

33. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Brown – Oriel College Rhodes working party

Question

Can we have an update on the Rhodes statue at Oriel college?
How many times has the working party met, and can we see the minutes of the meetings?

Written Response

The Council has not received any formal submissions or updates from the college.
As you know, Oriel College has set up an independent commission to consider submissions and seek evidence and Cllr Shaista Aziz is sitting on that commission. One of the Council's heritage planners has recently attended a meeting of the commission by invitation.
The decisions, remit and management of the meetings of the working group is, entirely properly, a matter for Oriel College and not for this council, so I have no further information to offer.

34. From Councillor Henwood to Councillor Brown – Oriel College Rhodes working party 2

Question

I have written to Oriel College asking the Dean to acknowledge, on the university's website, that a working group is working towards the removal of the Rhodes statue and to publish the meetings on their website.
Can the Leader of the Council also encourage the university to publish the working groups' minutes, along with publishing the minutes on the city council's website?

Written Response

While I would of course support maximum transparency in Oriel College's decision making on the future of the Rhodes statue, I repeat that the decisions, remit and management of the meetings of the working group is, entirely properly, a matter for Oriel College and not for this council. I suggest that if Councillor Henwood seeks information about the workings of Oriel College he should ask them directly.

35. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Brown –

Question

Will the Leader join me in welcoming in the warmest possible terms the election of President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-Elect Kamala Harris in the US, in expressing the hope that this marks a turn away from the kind of divisive, demonising, mendacious, bigoted, centralising political discourse represented by the outgoing president and, sadly, in some aspects of the policy of his friend our own Prime Minister, and in pledging to keep Oxford the open, tolerant, free, inclusive, cosmopolitan city we are all proud to call home?

Written Response

Yes

This page is intentionally left blank

To: Council

Date: 30 November 2020

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions taken in Part 2 of the agenda – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

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

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

1. Address by Janet Phillips – in support of motion 16a on Improving coronavirus testing and tracing

1. Address by Janet Phillips – in support of motion 16a on Improving coronavirus testing and tracing

Liz Peretz, Isabel Tucker and I have been campaigning throughout the pandemic with We Own It and Keep Our NHS Public for local testing and tracing that is run and carried out by our public health authorities. These are the bodies with the necessary expertise and experience, and the vital community knowledge. At the same time, we've been calling for the misleadingly named 'NHS' Test and Trace to be shut down. In our view, it has been not only a scandalous misuse of public money, involving corruption and cronyism, but a disastrous failure as far as bringing the virus under control is concerned.

Though expert after expert has repeated the message that testing, to be effective, needs to be located within our communities, it soon became clear that the Government would rather go on tinkering with 'NHS' Test and Trace, in an attempt to 'fix' it, than close it down, and transfer funding to local authorities. But, in our view, 'NHS' Test and Trace cannot be fixed because its model is fundamentally flawed. The only way to fix testing and tracing in the UK is finally to hand the money and the work over to our local public health bodies.

In recent months, the Government has talked about more local involvement, but so far that has meant passing the names of people who test positive and whom 'NHS' Test and Trace fail to contact to local councils – in many cases, several days after their tests. Paid staff – as in the local contact-tracing operation set up by our own DPH and City Council – as well as teams of volunteers in other parts of the country, have been doing wonderful work reaching most of the people handed over to them. And they are then in a position to provide information on how to self-isolate, as well as support. In effect, though, these local operations are just mopping up for 'NHS' Test and Trace. The information on contacts traced needs to be fed back into the central system. So far, our local bodies have had no influence over the shape and scope of the programme of testing and tracing.

Many councils have recognised the foolishness of the current set-up, and have been frustrated by not being able to do more. We decided that the way forward was for local authorities to show that they are serious about wanting proper local operations in order to really make a difference – that a loud clamour for funding and resources to be diverted to local authorities might finally get the Government to see sense and take the necessary action.

We are delighted that, as a result of our discussions, Craig Simmons, Louise Upton and Andrew Gant have proposed a cross-party motion to the Council, which, if passed, would enable the first steps to be taken towards gaining higher-level support to push the Government (perhaps in partnership with other local authorities) for the means to set up a fully-fledged local programme of testing and tracing. We urge you all to vote in favour of this motion.

But time is of the essence. Some might think that with several vaccines now looking effective, including the one developed in our own city, and the rolling out of vaccination imminent, it is too late to be bothering now to fix the testing and tracing mess. It could, however, be many more months before everyone who needs to be vaccinated is vaccinated. In that time, especially if adherence to basic social distancing and hygiene break down, there will be more illness, more strain on the NHS, more economic loss and more deaths. Having good testing and tracing could prevent much of this.

And another reason for getting testing and tracing right now is so, hopefully, we have it right for the future: so the message is clear that this work belongs always with our public health bodies – not with private companies that come forward with no expertise but, we believe, rake in handsome profits while failing to even do properly what they've been contracted to do. Fixing local and public testing and tracing now would be a significant victory against those who want to outsource more of our health services. With Brexit proper only weeks away, and the danger of all manner of new trade deals, the matter of keeping our NHS public is also one of urgency.

What could a good locally-run testing and tracing operation do?

- Decide who should be tested, where and how
- Choose which groups should have access to repeated testing, whether they have symptoms or not, for example, health workers, care workers, teachers or students
- Use local public labs for a cheaper and faster turnaround of results
- Provide financial and moral support to people who need to self-isolate
- Address issues of inequality, and how they contribute to transmission and self-isolation problems; provide special accommodation for those who are not able to self-isolate effectively in their own homes
- Deploy fast tests in specified situations
- Involve GPs
- Encourage collaboration between different institutions, to create economies of scale and greater efficiency
- Develop a strategy for reducing infection throughout Oxfordshire to zero.

So, please vote for motion 16a. Once passed, the real work will begin. We would urge you then, without delay, to begin discussions with our DPH and the County Council, and together to start mapping out what a local operation would look like, to set in motion the preparations for the local testing and tracing programme we hope we will all soon have.

Thank you.

Response

The Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford, Cllr Louise Upton, gave a short a verbal response thanking the speaker for her work and her speech.

This page is intentionally left blank